

Lived Experiences of Men Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse in India:  
A Phenomenological Exploration

A Dissertation  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
BY

Alankaar Sharma

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Elizabeth B. Lightfoot, Adviser

December 2017

© Alankaar Sharma, 2017

## Acknowledgements

There are many people whom I would like to thank for their generosity, wisdom, and support during the course of this research project and my doctoral education. First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the 11 men participants in this study who chose to share with me some of their most personal stories. I am forever thankful to them for their time, openness, and trust.

With much respect and gratitude, I acknowledge my adviser Dr. Elizabeth Lightfoot. Thank you for your kindness, mentorship, and unwavering support not just during the dissertation process but throughout my doctoral journey. I owe the completion of this dissertation to your encouragement and thoughtful guidance. You have been like the Rock of Gibraltar to me during this PhD, and I shall forever be grateful for it.

I am very thankful to my committee members Dr. Wendy Haight, Dr. Priscilla Gibson, and Dr. Rebekah Pratt. I am indebted to you for your guidance, patience, and feedback, and for coming on board at a very crucial juncture. I could not have asked for a more supportive committee!

I thank the faculty members at the School of Social Work for helping me learn and grow as a social work researcher and academic. I am particularly thankful to Dr. Jeffrey Edleson, Dr. Megan Morrissey, and Dr. Jane Gilgun who have supported me and contributed to my learning at different stages of the program.

I am also thankful to Dr. Paul Rosenblatt; thank you for your wisdom and support, and for being such an amazing teacher of qualitative research.

I am very thankful to School of Social Work staff members, Jan Goodno, MacKenzie Case, Peggy Pond, Karen Borchardt, and Cindy Pavlowski, for their invaluable support and cooperation. Thanks also for the many laughs that I have shared with you over the years. You have been amazing and were one of the best parts of Peters Hall for me.

I would like to thank Dr. Ramona Alaggia for her willingness to share with me an interview guide that she had used in her research on child sexual abuse; this guide was extremely helpful to me in developing my interview schedule for this research.

I thank the civil society organizations and activists in India who helped me in my recruitment efforts. Thank you very much for your inspirational work to end violence and advance human rights.

I thank my mom, Surinder, and dad, Bhushan, for their boundless love and steadfast support every step of the way throughout my life, and for inspiring me to become an educator. Papa, I am grateful to you for teaching me the value of the written word. How I wish you were here to hold this dissertation in your hands! Mama, thank you for your unshakeable confidence in me, for being my biggest cheerleader, and for always holding me in your heart. I love you!

I am thankful to, and for, some amazing people who are my friends. Abel, thank you for your wonderful friendship; it is doubtlessly my biggest and most precious gain from the PhD program. Valandra, I feel proud to call you my friend; thank you for your spirit, laughter, affection, and advice. Tasha, I am so grateful for our irregular but so-very-important phone conversations; they helped me stay focused and motivated,

especially during times when focus and motivation were difficult to find. Matt, I really appreciated your company, travel stories, and help during my initial few months in Minnesota as an international student. I am also thankful to Michaela, Katharine, and Charissa, my PhD cohort colleagues, for their camaraderie.

Finally, I am thankful to my partner, Arpita, for being the wind beneath my wings. Thank you for sticking with me and holding my hand through the many ups and downs of this PhD journey. This dissertation is as much a fruit of your emotional labor as it is of mine. I love you in my bones and your companionship means the world to me!

## Abstract

Adult men survivors of child sexual abuse are an under-studied, under-addressed, and stigmatized population in India. Research on child sexual abuse in India is still in its nascent stages and has not progressed significantly beyond studies of prevalence. Within existing literature, little research has examined how child sexual abuse impacts the lives of boys and men survivors. In this phenomenological study, I sought to understand the lived experiences of Indian men sexually abuse during childhood and the meanings they construct of their abuse experiences. Using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 11 men who self-identified as having experienced sexual abuse during childhood. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. I identified five superordinate themes: heteropatriarchal social environment, impact of child sexual abuse, meanings of child sexual abuse, disclosure, and perceived relationship between sexual abuse and sexual orientation. Findings indicate the centrality of heteropatriarchy to the experiences of men survivors, with social norms, values and practices regarding masculinity often having a profound impact on how survivors make sense of their abuse experiences. Child sexual abuse can have profound and lasting influences on survivors' lives in multiple ways, such as through shame and guilt, and silencing and minimization of their experiences by others. Disclosure and talking about abuse experiences is often fraught with challenges for men survivors, not only during childhood but in later life as well. Others' responses to disclosure are important but unfortunately these are often unhelpful and non-supportive, ranging from offering no response at all to blaming the victim. Finally, findings suggest that many gay, bisexual and queer survivors perceive their sexual orientation to be a

consequence of their abuse experiences. In a heteropatriarchal social environment, this can significantly complicate their experiences of abuse as well as of understanding their own sexual orientation. Implications for practice, policy, and future research are discussed.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	ix
Chapter I: Introduction .....	1
Problem and Significance .....	1
Purpose and Objectives .....	5
Terminology .....	6
Overview of Dissertation .....	7
Chapter II: Literature Review .....	8
Global Incidence and Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse .....	8
Child Sexual Abuse Prevalence in India .....	10
Theorizing Men and Masculinities .....	13
Social Construction of Masculinities in India .....	36
Men Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse .....	38
Gaps in the Literature, and this Research Study .....	58
Chapter III: Research Methods .....	61
Research Question .....	61
Methodology .....	61
Research Design .....	71
Trustworthiness .....	90
Summary .....	93
Chapter IV: Abbreviated Case Studies .....	94

	vii
Participant 1: Arunanshu .....	94
Participant 2: Dhruvan .....	96
Participant 3: Harendra .....	97
Participant 4: Harith .....	99
Participant 5: Himank .....	100
Participant 6: Indivar .....	102
Participant 7: Mohan .....	103
Participant 8: Prabodh .....	104
Participant 9: Tanmoy .....	105
Participant 10: Tarun .....	108
Participant 11: Tejesh .....	110
Chapter V: Results .....	112
Superordinate Theme 1 - Heteropatriarchal Social Environment .....	113
Superordinate Theme 2 - Impact of Child Sexual Abuse .....	137
Superordinate Theme 3 - Meanings of Child Sexual Abuse .....	162
Superordinate Theme 4 - Disclosure .....	179
Superordinate Theme 5 - Perceived Relationship Between Sexual Abuse and Sexual Orientation .....	194
Summary .....	201
Chapter V: Discussion .....	203
Trauma and Long-Term Impact .....	203
Relationship to Children .....	210

	viii
Meanings of Abuse .....	213
Barriers and Responses to Disclosure .....	217
Sexual Abuse and Sexual Orientation .....	226
Chapter VI: Limitations and Implications .....	231
Limitations .....	231
Implications for Social Work .....	233
References .....	246
Appendices	
Appendix A: Interview Schedule .....	285
Appendix B: Consent Form .....	288
Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer .....	291
Appendix D: Internet-Based Resources for Learning More About Child Sexual Abuse and/or Support Services for Men Survivors .....	292

### List of Tables

Table 3.1	Sample description .....	75
Table 5.1	List of superordinate and subordinate themes.....	112
Table 5.2	Overview of subordinate theme 1a (Patriarchy) .....	114
Table 5.3	Overview of subordinate theme 2a (Impact of abuse on self) .....	138
Table 5.4	Overview of subordinate theme 2b (Impact of abuse on interpersonal relationships) .....	149
Table 5.5	Overview of subordinate theme 4a (Barriers to disclosure) .....	179
Table 5.6	Overview of subordinate theme 4b (Response to disclosure) .....	189

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

#### Problem and Significance

In 2007, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, released a report of its national study on child abuse (Kacker, Varadan & Kumar, 2007), which was the first official report on this subject in the country. The statistics it provided were staggering, although unfortunately not surprising for those who had been working in the civil society sector on issues of child abuse and children's rights. Over 53% of all children surveyed reported that they had experienced some form of sexual abuse, where sexual abuse was defined as any "inappropriate sexual behaviour with a child" (Kacker et al., 2007, p. 3) and included a wide range of contact and non-contact behaviors that were classified in two categories of "severe forms of sexual abuse" (p. 73) and "other forms of sexual abuse" (p. 73). 'Severe forms' of abuse include rape, sexual touching or fondling, forcing a child to exhibit their genitals, and photographing a child in the nude; 'other forms' of sexual abuse included behaviors such as forcible kissing, making sexual advances toward a child, exposing one's genitals to a child, and exposing a child to pornography. Of the children who reported histories of sexual abuse, nearly 53% were boys. According to the 2011 census data, India's population is 1.21 billion, with children (0-18 years) comprising 39% of the total population (Childline India Foundation, n.d.). Using these data, the number of children who have experienced sexual abuse in India comes to over 250 million, and the number of boy children who have experienced sexual abuse comes to 132.5 million. For the sake of comparison, the number of sexually abused boys in India is approximately equal to the combined total population of the six most

populous states in the US (United States Census Bureau, 2017), namely California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois and Pennsylvania.

The government study referenced above and some other reports from the civil society sector have gradually begun to bring attention to the enormous magnitude of child sexual abuse as a pressing concern and a serious threat to children's safety and rights. Attention is slowly coming also to the under-acknowledged and under-addressed population of men and boys who have experienced child sexual abuse. From my own professional experience of working as a social worker in India in the field of child abuse and protection, I know that only a handful of civil society organizations used to focus on addressing child sexual abuse in the 1990s, although women's rights organizations did address it as an important concern in their activism and interventions. These organizations primarily worked with girls and women survivors of sexual abuse. Since mid-2000s there has been a gradual increase in the number of civil society organizations that have begun to work on child sexual abuse, although these organizations are still limited in number. Many of these organizations try to address sexual abuse of boys too, for example by including information on boys as vulnerable to sexual abuse in their websites, social awareness campaigns, school-based prevention education programs, and offering psychosocial support services for boys who have experienced sexual abuse. General public's attention has been brought to sexual abuse of boys through reports in the news media of some extreme cases. For example, recently the case of a 16-year-old boy from Mumbai was widely reported who was repeatedly raped over a year by 15 other teenage boys (Rao, 2017). There are also sporadic examples of popular media contributing to social awareness about sexual abuse of boys. For example, famous

Bollywood actor Aamir Khan dedicated an episode of his popular talk show *Satyamev Jayate* to child sexual abuse which included discussion on and with men survivors (Aamir Khan Productions, 2012), and a movie titled 'I am' included a story about a man sexually abused in childhood (Suri & Onir, 2011).

While general awareness of child sexual abuse, and along with it, awareness of sexual abuse of boys, has gradually grown in India over the last 15-20 years, survivors' voices have been largely missing from the mainstream discourse. This is not surprising given the widespread and oppressive social shame and stigma associated with experiencing sexual violence for people of all genders, including men. Men survivors' voices are lacking from the discourse on account of several factors, not the least of which are the many myths that surround sexual abuse of boys in India. Some examples of these myths are: boys do not get abused, only gay boys get abused, boys do not get affected by sexual abuse, boys always enjoy sex etc. Such myths about sexual abuse of boy children are prevalent not only in India but in other countries as well (e.g. Nalavany & Abell, 2004). There now are a few examples of men survivors whose voices have pierced through this silence around boy children's sexual abuse; these men have courageously shared their personal stories of abuse experiences. Examples of these important contributions are a talk by an activist called Harish Iyer (TEDxCRCE, 2016) and a website campaign to challenge sexual abuse of boys, featuring personal stories of seven men survivors ([www.endtheisolation.wordpress.com](http://www.endtheisolation.wordpress.com)).

Survivors' voices are vital. They are important to inform direct interventions such as psychosocial and therapeutic services, and policies and programs intended to challenge

and address child sexual abuse. They are also important to consider while developing prevention programs to ensure that such programs take into account children's needs and concerns. It is also important that survivors hear from other survivors to know that they are not alone; and that their experiences, while unique, are also shared in some ways by many others who have been sexually abuse in childhood. It is also important that members of society hear from survivors to know what they can do as parents, partners, friends, siblings, professionals, and community members to help and support those around them who may have experienced child sexual abuse. Survivors' voices are not just important but necessary to end the silence around child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse is known to impact survivors' lives in a wide variety of ways. Experiencing sexual abuse in childhood is associated with short- and long-term psychological and behavioral problems such as depression, trauma, anxiety, low self-esteem, substance use and dependence, sexual offending, or high-risk sexual behaviour (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Beitchman et al., 1992; Dube et al., 2005; Easton, 2014; Holmes & Slap, 1998; Putnam, 2003; Romano & De Luca, 2001; Valente, 2005); physical health problems (Sikes & Hays, 2010), and relational challenges and problems (Denov, 2004; Kia-Keating, Sorsoli and Grossman, 2010).

Gender often plays an important role in how survivors experience child sexual abuse at the time it occurs as well as later in life. Child sexual abuse often can be a gender-transgressive experience for men and boys in several different ways. Many men and boys who are survivors of child sexual abuse face silencing, blaming, fear,

stigmatization and ostracization when others or they themselves perceive their abuse as a transgression of gender norms.

While the body of knowledge on child sexual abuse in general, and sexual abuse of boys in particular, has grown remarkably in the last three decades, sexual abuse of girls still remains the primary focus of the scholarship on this subject (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Lillywhite & Skidmore, 2006). Even when sexual abuse of boys is considered, the attention paid to the role of masculinity in informing and shaping survivors' experiences has remained limited (Kia-Keating, Grossman, Sorsoli & Epstein, 2005).

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to explore men survivors' lived experiences of child sexual abuse and the meanings they make of their abuse experiences. This was an exploratory study, which is appropriate since there is hardly any literature on men survivors of child sexual abuse from an Indian context. I used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to focus on men's lived experiences. I paid particular attention to the sociocultural notions and expectations about masculinity, and investigated the relationship between such norms and men's lived experiences of sexual abuse in childhood. My primary purpose was to understand and bring attention to men survivors' lived experiences. As is the case with all qualitative research, the purpose of this research was not to come up with a definitive account of men survivor's lived experiences. The findings of the study should be seen as open-ended as well as open to further nuancing and revisions. They also do not reflect the experiences of all men survivors of child sexual abuse in India.

As a secondary objective of the study, the findings will hopefully contribute to development of services, programs, and policies that are responsive to the needs of men and boy survivors of child sexual abuse, and effective in challenging some of the structural factors that marginalize and silence men survivors and their experiences.

### **Terminology**

For the sake of clarity, I will define below some of the important terms and concepts that I have used in this dissertation.

**Child.** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines children as people aged 0-18 years. This is the definition I have used in this dissertation.

Occasionally I have used the term adolescent to refer to teenaged children.

**Child sexual abuse.** Child sexual abuse is defined as the use of a child for sexual gratification by an older or more powerful person, and involves both touch and nontouch behaviors (Gilgun & Sharma, 2008). Touch behaviors include, but are not limited to, penetration of a child's vagina, mouth, or anus by penis, other body parts, or inanimate objects; simulated intercourse; genital touching; deep, sexualized kissing; touching of other body parts such as breasts, nipples, and buttocks. Non-touch behaviors include exhibitionism; voyeurism; exposure to age-inappropriate sexual activity or material; and use of a child in pornography. For the purpose of this research, child sexual abuse was operationalized as non-commercial forms of sexual abuse only; commercial sexual exploitation of children (such as prostitution of children, or trafficking of children for sexual purposes) is an important issue with its unique dynamics and challenges which were beyond the scope of this study.

**Heteropatriarchy.** Heteropatriarchy can be understood as a system of several interconnected beliefs, including assumptions such as every person is born either male or female, and this identity remains fixed for the entirety of a person's life; sex assigned at birth determines a person's gender; sex/gender creates clear and distinct differences in relation to behavior, appearance, interests, personality traits, and abilities; sexual or romantic relationships may be legitimate and acceptable only when they occur between males and females; and heterosexual couples are best positioned to have and raise children so that children can be exposed to both male and female traits and abilities (Harris, 2011).

**Survivor.** Person who experienced sexual abuse during childhood.

### **Overview of Dissertation**

In Chapter II, I will review the literature pertaining to prevalence of child sexual abuse globally and in India, theoretical perspectives for understanding men and masculinities, and consequences of child sexual abuse for men survivors. In Chapter III, I will discuss the research question, research methodology, and research design including sampling, data collection, and data analysis methods; I will also discuss ethical considerations, and trustworthiness and quality of the study. Chapter IV will present abbreviated case studies for each of the study participants. In Chapter V, I will present the study findings. In Chapter VI, I will discuss the findings of the study in relation to current research literature. Finally, in Chapter VII, I will identify some of the notable limitations of the study and also discuss the implications of its findings for social work practice, policy, and future research.

## CHAPTER II

### Literature Review

In this chapter I will survey the literature related to men and masculinities, and male survivors of child sexual abuse. I will first discuss the prevalence and incidence of male child sexual abuse globally and in India. I will then introduce and critique some prominent theoretical perspectives on men and masculinities, namely sex role theory, hegemonic masculinity theory, and inclusive masculinity theory. Later I will discuss social construction of masculinities in the Indian context. I will then review the literature on outcomes and dynamics of child sexual abuse for men survivors. Finally, I will identify some gaps in the current literature, and introduce this research study.

#### Global Incidence and Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse

While there exist strong variations in available data on the prevalence and incidence of sexual abuse of boy children globally, it is unambiguous that this is a significant and serious concern. Some common reasons for variations in data have to do with the use of different definitions, methodological approaches, and quality of research (Finkelhor, 1994), making it difficult to compare data from different sources. A relatively recent meta-analysis of available literature by Barth, Bermetz, Heim, Trelle and Tonia (2013) concluded that the worldwide prevalence of sexual abuse of boy children was in the range of 3-7%; to estimate the prevalence rate, the authors examined four categories of child sexual abuse in the studies they reviewed, namely non-contact abuse, contact abuse, forced intercourse, or mixed sexual abuse (i.e. when a study investigated different forms of abuse but reported prevalence of only one form, or the form of abuse was not

specified). Another meta-analysis by Stoltenborgh, van IJzendoorn, Euser, and Bakermans-Kranenburg (2011) found self-reported child sexual abuse among males to be about 7.6%. These authors used the definition of child sexual abuse from the Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-3) as their reference point, and looked at studies using definition of child sexual abuse similar to NIS-3, broader than NIS-3, and stricter than NIS-3; the NIS-3 definition of child sexual abuse covered intrusion by penis, finger, or objects, molestation with genital contact, as well as noncontact forms of sexual abuse. The combined prevalence of studies using NIS-3 or similar definitions for male samples was 10.7%, that of studies using a broader definition was 7%, and that of studies using a stricter definition was 6.9%. Pereda, Guilera, Forns and Gómez-Benito (2009) arrived at a similar statistic when they conducted a meta-analysis of child sexual abuse prevalence studies conducted internationally, and found that 7.9% of men had experienced some form of sexual abuse before the age of 18.

National, state and local level studies conducted in the USA indicate a child sexual abuse prevalence level of between 1-16% for males (Bolen, 2001). Some scholars have suggested that prevalence rates of male child sexual abuse are as high as 29% of all children for noncontact forms of abuse, whereas when exclusively considering anal penetration, these figures can be as high as 14% of all children (McGuffey, 2008). Through an extensive review of the literature on the prevalence of child sexual abuse, Putnam (2003) found that 7.9% of all adult men had been sexually abused as children. With regard to incidence rates, the NIS-3 reported an incidence rate of 6.8/1000 for females and 2.3/1000 for males (Sedlak & Broadhurst, 1996) in a nationally representative sample of 42 counties across the US for male and female children, through

collecting data on cases that were investigated by the child protection services (CPS), cases that were screened out by the CPS without investigation, and cases that came to the attention of community professionals but were not reported to the CPS. Another survey on victimization of children and youth reported a 1-year incidence rate of 67/1000 for males in a nationally representative sample of 2,030 children aged 2-17 years and living in the contiguous US, as having experienced sexual victimization (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner & Hamby, 2005). Some have argued that the statistics on prevalence and incidence of male child sexual abuse do not represent the true extent of its magnitude since they rely on self-reporting, which typically suffers from under-reporting due to a number of reasons (Dhaliwal et al., 1996; Violato & Genius, 1993), some of which are discussed later in this chapter.

### **Child Sexual Abuse Prevalence in India**

In India, child sexual abuse remains an under-acknowledged, under-explored, and under-researched issue. Sexual abuse of boys has received even lesser attention within the broader field of child sexual abuse. Most studies on child sexual abuse in India have taken place in the last ten to fifteen years; most of these are quantitative studies to explore self-reported prevalence of child sexual abuse in India. Among the largest was a study by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (2007) that was based on responses from 12,447 children in the age group of 5-18 years across 13 different states of India; 51.9% of this sample comprised of boys and 48.1% were girls. 53.22% of the child respondents in this study were found to have experienced at least one form of sexual abuse, including contact and non-contact types of abuse, with 21.9% reporting a severe form of sexual

abuse (defined as “sexual assault, making the child fondle private parts, making the child exhibit private body parts, exhibiting private body parts to a child, [and] photographing a child in the nude” (p. 14)). Amongst those reporting having experienced at least one form of abuse, 52.94% were boys, and amongst those reporting a severe form of sexual abuse, 57.3% were boys. Studies conducted by non-government civil society organizations have also revealed similarly high levels of child sexual abuse prevalence in India. A survey of 2,211 school-going children in the southern Indian metropolitan city of Chennai by Tulir – Centre for the Prevention and Healing of Child Sexual Abuse (2006) revealed an overall prevalence rate of 42%, with 39% for girls and 48% for boys; this study too used a broad definition of sexual abuse encompassing a wide range of contact and non-contact forms of sexual abuse. A study by a Delhi-based non-government organization called Sakshi found that 63% of the girl respondents in the study had experienced sexual abuse at the hands of a family member (Krishnakumar, 2003). Yet another research by a Bangalore-based non-profit organization, Samvada, surveyed 348 girls and found that 83% of the sample reported having experienced at least one form of child sexual abuse (Saravanan, 2000). It is relevant to note that many of the studies cited above are not academic or peer-reviewed studies. These were primarily studies of prevalence, conducted by civil society organizations trying to bring attention to the issue of child sexual abuse; these studies typically used convenience sampling. A few peer-reviewed studies have also measured the prevalence of child sexual abuse in certain specific geographic contexts. Krishnakumar, Satheesan, Geeta and Sureshkumar (2014) surveyed 15-19 year old adolescents in the state of Kerala to ascertain the prevalence of child sexual abuse (defined as fondling a child’s genitals, making the child fondle an adult’s

genitals, vaginal or anal intercourse, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to pornographic materials). 35% of the girls and 36% of the boys in this study reported a history of sexual abuse. In this study, however, types of abuse included in the operational definition of child sexual abuse and those listed in the results are sometimes disparate. Also, the study treats site of abuse (e.g. public transport, social gatherings) and behaviors constituting abuse (e.g. forcible kissing) as mutually exclusive categories, which raises methodological concerns. In a retrospective review of cases of children below 16 years referred for medicolegal examination to a large public hospital in northern India between 2000-2003, Sharma and Gupta (2004) found that nearly 31% of the cases were of sexual abuse; girls were victims in 77.8% of the cases studied, and the remaining 22.2% victims were boys. This study included only contact forms of abuse, ranging from fondling of genitals to sexual intercourse. Karthiga, Tamilselvi and Ravikumar (2014) conducted a survey among a convenience sample of 100 women students of an engineering college in southern India and found that 73% had been sexually abused before the age of 16. This study, however, is affected by significant methodological limitations. It does not define child sexual abuse, so it is difficult to interpret the findings regarding abuse prevalence. Moreover, the estimated prevalence is based on just one yes/no question in the questionnaire which asked study informants if they were sexually abused in childhood, without explaining what was meant by sexual abuse, thereby further complicating interpretation of results.

In a study with men who have sex with men (MSM), Tomori and colleagues (2016) found that prevalence of child sexual abuse among study participants was 22.4% and prevalence was significantly higher in southern India. The definition of child sexual

abuse in this study included only contact forms of sexual abuse, specifically unwanted sexual touching and sexual intercourse before the age of 16. In another study with MSM, Mimiaga and colleagues (2015) found that nearly 25% of participants had experienced sexual abuse in childhood. This study also defined child sexual abuse as unwanted sexual contact.

Since most of the studies in India have predominantly focused on establishing significance of child sexual abuse as a serious concern through capturing its prevalence, there is little extant research on other dimensions of abuse, such as the lived experiences of abuse for survivors.

### **Theorizing Men and Masculinities**

It would be relevant to track the rapidly growing global body of literature on masculinities and review some of the prominent ideas that have influenced this field of study, which might relate to experiences of men survivors of child sexual abuse since gender often plays a central role in how survivors experience and make sense of their abuse experiences.

**Sex role theory.** The contemporary scholarship and activism on men and masculinities started emerging primarily in North America in the 1970s and early 1980s in relation and response to the feminist movements of the time (Clatterbaugh, 1997; Connell, 2007; Seidler, 2006). From about mid-twentieth century until 1980, the dominant framework for understanding masculinity had been the sex role theory (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1987; Connell, 2007; Pleck, 1987). The sex role theory was based on the work of Talcott Parsons who postulated that every society needed some of

its members to perform ‘instrumental’ roles (e.g. competition and logical action) while the rest were required to perform ‘expressive’ roles (e.g. caring and creativity), and that men were suited for instrumental roles whereas women were suited for expressive roles within the family and broader society (Pease, 2007). These two roles were seen as linked to one another in a complementary fashion within this framework, and considered necessary for smooth functioning of the family and society (Connell, 2007; Pease, 2007). Therefore, it was considered important for boys and girls to be socialized in accordance with the aforementioned culturally prescribed roles. As Pleck (1987) explained, this theory held that “for individuals to become psychologically mature as members of their sex, they must acquire male or female “sex-role identity,” manifested by having the sex-appropriate traits, attitudes, and interests that psychologically “validate” or “affirm” their biological sex” (p. 21). This framework assumed that social expectations and norms for boys and girls, and men and women, would shape individual behavior by forcing people to conform through continual processes of positive and negative enforcement (Segal, 1990).

***Critique of sex role theory.*** The sex role theory was quite influential in informing literature on sex and gender until the 1970s when its influence began to wane (Pleck, 1987). This theory helped move the discourse on sex and gender from essentialism or biological determinism, to social determinism. The essentialist theories of gender proposed that masculine or feminine traits were innate to a person (Buchbinder, 1994; Segal, 1990). The sex role framework argues that the sex roles were “a matter of the production, from one generation to the next, of... *gender personalities*” (Carrigan et al., 1987, p. 143, italics in original) and therein provides “a powerful solution to the problem

of how to link person and society” (Carrigan et al., 1987, p. 144). However, its social determinism logic is deeply flawed. As Carrigan and colleagues (1987) noted, it fails to reflect the everyday realities of people’s lives; they pointed out that if it were accurate then all fathers should have been responsible fathers who were also professionally successful, which is clearly not the case. Moreover, the framework fails to differentiate between social expectations of people and their individual practices, and consequently perceives any variation from the cultural expectations as an example of deviance or failure (Carrigan et al., 1987). Another significant criticism of the sex role theory is that it does not adequately address men’s economic and political power over women (Pease, 2007). It has also received criticism because it is exclusively focused on “one normative standard of masculinity that is white, middle class and heterosexual” (Pease, 2007, p. 555), and posits a “non-existent homogeneity to social life” (Segal, 1990, p. 69).

The interaction of rising influence of feminism in the 1970s with the sex role theory resulted in a noticeable increase in the volume of literature on men in sex roles literature (Carrigan et al., 1987). It had a significant impact on the initial ‘men’s liberation’ movement of the 1970s as well, and authors from this movement proposed that since sex roles were socially determined, liberating men from social conventions would be a positive development (Pease, 2007). One of the focus areas of such freeing of men was to encourage men to be accepting of a wider range of emotions than what the traditional masculine role allowed (Segal, 1990). However, much of this literature was uncritical and simplistic. As Carrigan et al. (1987) have noted, “‘Do men need women’s liberation?’ was a common question or point of reference, and the response was resoundingly ‘Yes’—for the benefit of men” (p. 151). This literature did not largely

engage with wider social problems of inequity and power, and assumed a symmetry between the sex roles oriented oppression of women and men (Kimmel, 1987; Pease, 2007).

From an Indian perspective, this theory would have similar flaws as have been pointed out by its critics from the Western countries. It would arguably consider only a normative standard of upper caste, middle class, heterosexual masculinity, and be ignorant or dismissive toward other and diverse masculinities. Since many of the participants in the present study identified as gay, bisexual or queer, this theoretical perspective would be woefully inadequate in understanding their experiences.

The sex role theory assumed masculinity to be an essential, uncomplicated, monolithic, and static entity; it followed what Brod (1987) considered a “reductionist understanding of masculinity” (p. 5). Therefore, its influence within the field of not just masculinities but also the broader field of women’s and gender studies diminished considerably in the 1980s and 1990s (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016; Pease, 2007; Pleck, 1987).

**Hegemonic masculinity theory.** Hegemonic masculinity is a theoretical framework that examines and highlights power relations between men and women, and among men. It describes “(1) a position in the system of gender relations; (2) the system itself; and (3) the current ideology that serves to reproduce masculine domination” (Levy, 2007, p. 253). This framework has become ubiquitous in literature studying masculinities over the last 20-25 years. A major strength of this framework is that it allows room for multiples contestations of power with regard to gender identities and relations, and therefore offers a more diverse, complicated, and less unidirectional account of

masculinities (Beasley, 2012). Within this framework, masculinities are seen as not static but spatially and historically situated (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997). The roots of this framework can be traced back primarily to the late 1980s and early 1990s in the work of Connell (1987, 1995), supported by works of other masculinities scholars such as Kimmel (1987, 1994, 1996), Donaldson (1993), and Messerschmidt (1993).

In this framework, one group of men – who practice hegemonic masculinity – use the power accorded to them by structural factors such as gender, class, and race, to force their interpretation of masculinity on the rest of society and use this interpretation to suppress other expressions of masculinity and women in general (Connell, 1995, 2005). Connell (1995, 2005) based it on Gramsci's notion of hegemony which is a sociopolitical situation wherein one particular group of individuals holds supremacy and long-lasting social control over other groups which the dominant group does not view as its allies (Litowitz, 2000). The dominant group exercises control through expression of violence, sense of entitlement, control over resources etc. Within the framework of hegemonic masculinity, the dominant group of men enjoys a privileged status in society as compared to women and girls and non-hegemonic men, by virtue of patriarchy (Bhasin, 1993). In this way, this framework, being the interpretation of masculinity by the dominant group, also provides an idealized measure for testing boys and men to determine the size of their manliness (Tharinger, 2008). Those who fall short face subjugation, and often stigmatization, by those who conform to the standards of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is rooted in, and legitimized by, the system of patriarchy that supports dominance of men and subordination of women (Connell, 2005). Therefore, this framework is congruent with feminist theory in acknowledging patriarchy as one of the

primary vehicles of oppression and division among people along the lines of gender (Hoffman, 2001).

Men and boys exert power, dominance and control over women and girls in a wide variety of ways. Some examples that illustrate the exercise of power by men over women and the higher social values of boys, are son preference and sex-selection of fetuses; neglect of girl children in food and nutrition distribution; burden of household work on girls and women; lack of education and employment opportunities; lack of freedom of mobility for women and girls; domestic violence against women and girls; sexual harassment of women at workplace; genital cutting and mutilation; trafficking for the purpose of prostitution; and men's control over women's bodies, reproduction, and sexuality (Bhasin, 1993; Parrot & Cummings, 2006).

However, control over women is not the only form of control that comprises hegemonic masculinity. The group of men who conform to the idea of hegemonic masculinity also exerts power, dominance, and control over other groups of men who espouse marginalized and non-hegemonic forms of masculinity. The theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity does not necessarily assume that all men are part of this select hegemonic group of individuals. It posits multiple masculinities, and assumes that within a patriarchal framework, some men have more power than other men, and that the former group of men have not only power over women, but potentially over the latter group(s) of men as well. This more powerful and domineering group of men espouse the idea of an exalted sense of masculinity in accordance with the patriarchal norms, values, and practices, thereby attempting to live up to the cultural ideal of masculinity; this

legitimizes their power over women and non-hegemonic men. This exalted idea of masculinity includes, but is not limited to, compulsory heteronormativity, sexual prowess and virility, contempt for feminine-identified behaviors, homophobia, physical strength, and emotional stoicism. At the same time, there are other forms of masculinity that not only differ from hegemonic masculinity, but can also potentially resist, contest and challenge it (Gilgun & McLeod, 1999). Non-hegemonic or subordinate forms of masculinity may include queer men (gay, transgender, bisexual), men in caring and nurturing professions, emotive men, working class men, men belonging to racial and ethnic minorities, stay at home fathers etc. It is also important to acknowledge that the aforementioned construction of hegemonic masculinity is contextually largely based on a Western view of masculinities; globally, hegemonic masculinity is not a monolithic concept and involves regional and local variations based on unique and diverse sociocultural contexts. In India, for example, the cultural archetype of the ‘real man’ represents the dominant narrative of masculinity (Osella & Osella, 2007; Verma et al., 2006). In a sexual context, this category is typically claimed by the penetrating partner, and enjoys a position of power and privilege over other categories such as ‘effeminate men’ and ‘penetrable men’ (Osella & Osella, 2007).

This is not to say that men occupying marginalized spaces with reference to hegemonic masculinity cannot, or do not, engage in patriarchal practices. In fact, Connell (2005) has suggested that many men—whether they espouse the hegemonic or non-hegemonic forms of masculinity—support the notion of hegemonic masculinity, for this results in a “patriarchal dividend” (p. 79) that helps maintain the status quo of men’s collective power over women in the larger society, and greater advantage in terms of

privilege and social value. Within the different groups that espouse forms of masculinity that do not belong to the dominant and powerful archetype of hegemonic masculinity, there are struggles for power to be the dominant and most powerful sub-group within these subordinate groups (Coles, 2008).

Also, masculinities, including hegemonic masculinity, are not static or unchanging, but are constructed in relation to other forms and axes of power, such as class, race, religion, or sexual orientation (Connell, 2005; Kaufman, 1994; Messerschmidt, 1993). In this way, the concept of hegemonic masculinity embraces West and Zimmerman's (1991) idea of gender, which is that gender is the "activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category [male or female]" (p. 127). This means that men have the option of choosing, if they so want, which gender related behaviors to exhibit, and which to shun, depending on their social, cultural, political, and temporal contexts. It is possible for men to adhere to the culturally dominant archetype of hegemonic masculinity in one context and situation, and choose not to do so in another context and situation. While the concept of hegemonic masculinity does provide an ideology, a grand narrative, for how to be masculine to all men, men may subjectively use it as a guide and apply its principles to their individual lives. As Coles (2008) has suggested, men who may be subordinated by hegemonic masculinity do not reject it in totality; instead, they sometimes espouse the elements of hegemonic masculinity that offer them privilege, and discard the rest.

Since hegemonic masculinity represents the culturally dominant archetype of masculinity emanating from patriarchal values and norms, it is important to identify the different practices that maintain hegemonic masculinity in everyday lives. Non-adherence to these practices can result in stigmatization and marginalization as not ‘real’ men (Alden & Parker, 2005) and can even lead to violence and abuse (Brooks, 2000). Some such practices which reflect the core aspects of hegemonic masculinity are identified and described below. However, it must be acknowledged that these ideas, and descriptions thereof, are not exhaustive, and may not contain all of the ideas that constitute the dominant archetype of hegemonic masculinity.

**Misogyny.** Misogyny, defined as the “feeling of enmity towards the female sex... specifically acted out in society by males, often in ritualistic ways” (Gilmore, 2001, p. 9), is one of the central features of the archetype of hegemonic masculinity. It is a patriarchal masculinist practice that is based on a strong resistance to identifying with anything that might be considered feminine. Men trying to embrace hegemonic masculinity not only actively resist feminine-identified behaviors in their own behavior, but also treat feminine-identified behaviors and activities in other men with disgust, contempt, and ridicule. From an early age, boys are taught to engage in “no sissy stuff” (Brannon, 1976). Boys who display non-traditional and gender atypical behavior as opposed to the commonly accepted masculine behaviors, are labeled as ‘sissy’ and effeminate by their peers and by society in general, and face increased risk of stigmatization, ostracization, and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse (Brooks, 2000). They also receive disapproval of adults and peers, who often make attempts to then ‘rectify’ such ‘faulty’ behavior. For example, Kane (2006) in her research with parents of preschool children observed that

when male children played with dolls or painted their fingernails, often their parents – particularly heterosexual fathers – actively opposed these choices and behaviors. On the other hand, when boys conform to the norms and ideals of hegemonic masculinity, they often receive acceptance and approval of their other boy peers (Renold, 2001). This phenomenon of such treatment of feminine-identified behaviors in other men and boys has been termed as effeminophobia by some scholars (Richardson, 2009; Sedgwick, 1993). Effeminophobia upholds patriarchy, and supports hegemonic masculinity by insulting and threatening men who deviate from the expected gender norms of masculinity, and by rewarding men who conform to these norms. As Richardson (2009) has eloquently explained:

Firstly, the effeminate man is moving down the gender ladder and renouncing his masculine privilege by ‘doing’ femininity. In an era where masculinity is thought to be ‘in crisis’, the spectacle of a man actively renouncing his masculine privilege is, for some people, a disconcerting image. Secondly, and more importantly, the effeminate man is exposing the plasticity of gender. When a man ‘does’ femininity he demonstrates that masculinity is not the natural property of male bodies... He shows that gender is not fixed but flexible. (p. 529)

Therefore, it is clear that misogyny and effeminophobia are ways of perpetuating patriarchy, and of suppressing any threat to it. As Kimmel (2001) has noted, the “notion of anti-femininity lies at the heart of contemporary and historical constructions of manhood, so that masculinity is defined more by what one is not rather than who one is” (p. 119).

In India, misogyny and effeminophobia play a significant role in how hegemonic masculinity is defined. For instance, Verma and colleagues (2006) found that the cultural archetype of the ‘real man’ was constructed as devoid of any effeminate attributes, which were perceived as characteristics of homosexual men.

***Heteronormativity.*** Heteronormativity is the “mundane production of heterosexuality as the normal, natural, taken-for-granted sexuality” (Kitzinger, 2005, p. 477). Heterosexuality is considered an important norm that all men are compulsorily expected to follow in order to assert themselves as masculine men, and to be perceived by others as such (Jones, 2006; Kimmel, 2001). Such learning begins at an early age. In a study with parents of preschool children, Kane (2006) found that many parents would be worried if their sons displayed feminine-identified behaviors, since it indicated to them that homosexuality might be their child’s sexual orientation. As one heterosexual mother in this study mentioned, “If he [her son] was acting feminine, I would ask and get concerned... I would try to get involved and make sure he’s not gay” (p. 162).

The hegemonic heteronormative script of masculinity not only rigidly prescribes the sex of men’s sexual partners, but also carries recommendations for expected sexual behavior. Not only is heterosexuality considered a rule, men and boys are also expected and encouraged to “be sexual” with women and girls (Pelias, 2008; Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009; Wood, 2001), meaning that they should be actively seeking sex with women and girls, and asserting their sexual interest in them, in order to be considered genuinely masculine. In this way virility emerges as an important concept. It is a widely held cultural belief, with roots in evolutionary biology, that men have a biological need to

engage in sexual intercourse frequently, and are biologically predisposed to having sex with multiple women partners in order to fulfill their natural role of spreading their genes (Lorentzen, 2007). Sex between young boys and older women is also sometimes considered a masculine practice (Duncan & Williams, 1998). In a study of heterosexual college men, in which many participants felt that 'being a man' was strongly linked to a societal and cultural expectation to have frequent sex and have multiple intimate women partners (Pérez-Jiménez, Cunningham, Serrano-García & Ortiz-Torres, 2007).

***Homophobia.*** Centrality of homophobia within the discourse of hegemonic masculinity has been well discussed and documented (Connell, 1987, 2005; Kimmel, 2001; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Lehne, 1998, Martino, 1997; Pascoe, 2005; Phillips, 2005). Homophobia has been defined as “terror surrounding feelings of love for members of the same sex and thereby a hatred of those feelings in others” (Lorde, 2001, p. 234). Blumenfeld (1992) has suggested a broader definition of homophobia, viewing it as a socially constructed prejudice, calling it “both the belief that heterosexuality is or should be the only accepted orientation and the fear and hatred of those of the same sex” (p. 15). It refers to a general disapproval and disgust for gay and lesbian men and women. Some scholars have emphasized the need to understand homophobia as a social construct, as opposed to viewing it as a phobia in a traditional psychological sense, since it is learnt by observing and interacting with others in society regarding appropriateness of certain gender-related behaviors, and inappropriateness of others (McCann, Minichiello & Plummer, 2009).

Previously I have discussed how heterosexuality is socially considered gender-appropriate behavior for men and boys. Therefore, homosexuality is considered gender non-inappropriate behavior. Connell (1987) has emphasized that “contempt for homosexuality and homosexual men” (p. 186) is an integral part of hegemonic masculinity, since “the most important feature of contemporary hegemonic masculinity is that it is heterosexual” (p. 186). “Gayness,” according to Connell (2005), “in patriarchal ideology, is repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity, the items ranging from fastidious taste in home decoration to receptive anal pleasure” (p. 78). Therefore, homosexual masculinities are a form of marginalized masculinities (Connell, 2005).

In the Indian context, some researchers have argued that men’s sexual behaviors are not necessarily linked to their gendered identities. It is therefore possible for straight-identifying men to engage in same-sex sexual activities without bringing into question their masculinity (Asthana & Oostvogels, 2001; Osella & Osella, 2007). Same-sex sexual activity among men is often framed as fun, and not sex (Osella & Osella, 2007). That said, the ‘real man’ masculinity is produced in contrast to masculinities that may be penetrated (Osella & Osella, 2007). Therefore, for men to be considered ‘real men’ it is important for them to penetrate and not be penetrated. At the same time, such tacit acceptance of same-sex sexual behavior among does not indicate an absence of homophobia. Barker and colleagues (2011) found widespread prevalence of homophobic attitudes among Indian men in a multi-country study; 89% of men in India surveyed in this study agreed with the statement that being around homosexual men made them uncomfortable.

One way to look at homophobia is to view it as contempt for people who are sexually attracted to others of the same sex, or in this case, men and boys who are sexually attracted to other men and boys. As Bersani (1987) has observed, “to be penetrated is to abdicate power” (p. 212). This alleged loss of power that happens when men are penetrated in a sexual context, not only threatens the power of the individuals being penetrated, but also the overall structure of patriarchy (Pascoe, 2005), since patriarchy is premised on the collective power of men in society over women. Men are expected to be the ones to sexually penetrate women, and not be penetrated themselves.

Another way of understanding homophobia is by looking at it in a broader sense, to include contempt towards gender non-conformist behavior, instead of merely looking at it from the narrower lens of perceived sexual orientation of people who are the targets of such contempt. Pascoe (2005) framed this concept in such a way in their research with American adolescent boys, where they claimed that the term homophobia did not fully represent the nature and range of contemptuous activities of such nature, and instead used the term ‘fag’:

‘Fag’ is not necessarily a static identity attached to a particular (homosexual) boy... becoming a fag has much to do with failing at the masculine tasks of competence, heterosexual prowess and strength or an [*sic*] anyway revealing weakness or femininity, as it does with a sexual identity. (p. 330)

According to this perspective, homophobia is not limited to contempt toward homosexual men and boys, but also extends to heterosexual men and boys who might display gender non-conformist behaviors, which may lead to them being perceived as, or

compared to, homosexuals and/or women. For instance, in a study on the politics of masculinity among adolescents in schools, Martino (1997) discovered that one boy had been made the target of homophobic abuse by his peers because he had been seen carrying an art file, and had been taunted and assaulted by other boys who called him 'fag art boy'. This could have happened because doing art is stereotypically considered a feminine activity associated with girls and women more than boys and men, who are generally associated with 'masculine' activities such as sports. Another example could be of men who are medical nurses, who are sometimes assumed to be homosexual because nursing is popularly viewed as women's domain, since caring roles are assigned to women under patriarchy (Harding, 2007). Their gender atypical profession largely contributes to them being perceived by others as gay men, regardless of their actual sexual orientation.

That people who are homosexual, or are perceived to be homosexual, face a significant risk of violence and abuse due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation, is widely documented in scholarly literature on gender and sexuality (Brooks, 2000; D'Augelli, Grossman & Starks, 2006; Factor & Rothblum, 2007; J. Hunter, 1990; Janoff, 2005; Martino, 1997; Ryan & Rivers, 2003; Tharinger, 2008; Thurlow, 2001; Tomsen & Mason, 2001; Trotter, 2006). Boys who are gender atypical in their identity and/or behavior are at higher risk of being persecuted, stigmatized, mistreated and violated (Brooks, 2000), and their mistreatment could include acts such as violent assault, sexual assault, mugging, stalking, being threatened with physical violence, and robbery (Factor & Rothblum, 2007).

***Invulnerability.*** The archetype of hegemonic masculinity paints invulnerability and invincibility as ideas men ought to measure up to, in order to qualify as masculine men. Mass media portrayals of men often include projecting them as strong and tough (Pérez-Jiménez, Cunningham, Serrano-García & Ortiz-Torres, 2007), and masculine toughness in the face of adversity is often celebrated in society. On the other hand, boys are shamed and mistreated if they admit to dependency or vulnerability (Pollack, 2006). The mainstream sports culture also associates masculinity with toughness and invulnerability (Messner & Sabo, 1994). Eagerness to compete with others, and dominate the competition is considered an essential element of being masculine (Beutel & Marini, 1995; Messner 1992).

The expectation of invulnerability and toughness for men in order to realize the cultural ideal of hegemonic masculinity also contributes to men's reluctance in asking for help or discussing any problems they might be facing, because for many men that amounts to revealing their vulnerability (Schofield et al., 2000). As compared to women, men find it more difficult to seek help regarding emotional and psychological troubles (Schofield et al., 2000), and regarding problems of sexual nature (Nobis, Sandén & Elofsson, 2007), even though they may be suffering because of such problems. Möller-Leimkühler (2002) observed that merely entertaining the thought of seeking help and support for men facing emotional difficulties clashes with their gender-norm expectations, and documented six different kinds of hurdles that men face in terms of seeking help, namely, loss of status, loss of control and autonomy, a sense of incompetence, a sense of dependence, and damage to identity. While these ideas are based on a Western understanding of masculinities, they find resonance globally,

including India. For instance, in a multi-country study by Barker and colleagues (2011), despite high levels of depression and suicidal thoughts, only 11% Indian men sought help to deal with feelings of sadness, disappointment and frustration as compared to 93% of women in a similar situation; these trends were similar to those observed in other countries from the global South in the same study. In this way, many men force themselves, and/or are forced by the sociocultural norms regarding masculinity, to spend their lives behind a façade of invulnerability, even when they may be hurting and needing support.

***Stoicism.*** Hegemonic masculinity encourages men to maintain a largely stoic, stolid, or impassive personality. Men and boys are expected to “don a mask of emotional bravado” (Pollack, 1995, p. 42) to hide their emotions, or avoid them altogether (Garde, 2003). Regulating expression of emotions is something males learn at a very young age as they try to adopt the gender-identity of ‘boy’ (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009). Scholars researching gender norms and expressions among children have found schooling of male children’s behavior with regard to encouraging them to hide their emotions—especially those of fear and pain—regularly taking place in important social spaces such as schools (Oransky and Marecek, 2009) and playgrounds (Messner, 1992). When Oransky and Marecek (2009) asked high school students what should one do if they wanted to be macho, one boy summed up an important rule of hegemonic masculinity in these words: “Not to care about emotions or other people’s emotions or even your own. I think it’s all, like, suppressing emotions” (p. 225). Another research participant in a study by Pollack (2006) that explored adolescent boys’ perspectives on emotions and feelings, said, “If something happens to you, you have to say, “Yeah, no big deal,” even when you’re really

hurting” (p. 193). Boys fear that expressing emotions will project them as effeminate or homosexuals in the eyes of others (Oransky & Marecek, 2009), and this fear keeps them from displaying emotions, given the widespread prevalence of misogyny and homophobia discussed earlier. Instead, boys are encouraged to espouse emotional strength as constructed within the framework of hegemonic masculinity, which includes a strong emphasis on ideas and values such as independence, self-reliance (Finkelhor, 1985; Paine & Hansen, 2002), and rational and decisive thinking, with little room for emotions (Struve, 2007). These norms foster emotional isolation and lack of emotional intimacy among men, including between heterosexual men, since emotional closeness and sharing is often viewed as gender atypical behavior for boys and men.

That said, boys and men are allowed, even encouraged, to display feelings of aggression, since it conforms to the hegemonic masculine norms. While growing up, boys learn that being masculine is associated with being aggressive (Evans & Wallace, 2008; Toomey, 2001). In a study of men in prison, one participant informed Evans & Wallace (2008) about some of his ideas on bringing up his son: “In today’s world you can’t teach them to be placid and a fucking pacifist. It just won’t happen. You’ve got to teach them obviously the right from wrong and to keep your wits about ya... If someone hits you, you hit em back” (p. 496). Some might argue that a sample drawn from prison population cannot reflect the realities of the mainstream society. However, research studies from the mainstream populations have brought forward similar views. Phillips’s (2005) study of adolescent boys and media messages found that for the majority of the boys in the study, masculinity was tied to practices of violence. One of the boys described his experiences with practicing violence in these words:

I went to a school with a very big fighting emphasis ... And I wasn't really into fighting. But EVERYBODY was being mean to me. And so just, sooner or later, I just up [*sic*] and beat someone up. And then all of a sudden everybody ... liked me. Cuz that's just what you have to do to earn their respect. (p. 226, capitals in original)

Sometimes men use aggression and violence as a way of expressing or dealing with their emotions. In their analysis of issues concerning men living with depression, Branney and White (2008) have discussed that violence towards others and self could be one of the ways in which men could possibly deal with depression, and this is tied to the cultural ideals of hegemonic masculinity. In another study of men with depression, Brownhill et al. (2005) have stated that while men and women often experience depression similarly, they typically manifest it in their behaviors differently. They offered a model of men's ways of 'doing depression', which they called the 'big build'. According to this model, the trajectory of men's behaviors while dealing with depression, informed by cultural notions of masculinity, could include an escalation of behavior to perpetrating violence against others, and suicide.

***Critique of hegemonic masculinity theory.*** The hegemonic masculinity theory has been, and continues as, a tremendously influential theoretical perspective in the field of critical studies of men and masculinities, and has truly enjoyed a global appeal beyond just the narrow band of Western countries (e.g. Johnson, 2017; Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger & Hamlall, 2013; Nunn, 2013) and across of a wide range of academic and professional disciplines such as media and cultural studies (e.g. Hatfield, 2010),

geography (e.g. Nunn, 2013), sports (e.g. Light & Kirk, 2000), education (e.g. Skelton, 1997), public health (e.g. Wall & Kristjanson, 2005), political science (e.g. Kronsell, 2005), and social work (e.g. Cowburn & Dominelli, 2001). It has also been an important framework to guide and inform research on men and violence (Hall, 2002), from the perspectives of perpetration as well as victimization (e.g. Chan, 2014; Messerschmidt, 2000; Schrock & Padavic, 2007; Stoudt, 2006). Its non-linear, non-monolithic and non-static approach toward masculinity has allowed for interesting and complicated analyses of masculinities and power, and remains an enduring and appealing feature of this theory. As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) have observed, “the fundamental feature of the concept remains the combination of the plurality of masculinities and the hierarchy of masculinities... [and it] has stood up well in 20 years of research experience” (p. 846).

Despite its influence, ubiquitousness and popularity in this field, hegemonic masculinity theory has received some criticism. Seidler (2006) has criticized it for taking a “top-down” approach to understanding masculinities “that orders the relationship between diverse masculinities only in terms of power and subordination” (p. xix), and for assuming a stance that aligns with radical feminist understandings of men and masculinities which, according to Seidler, “[frame] masculinities as the problem that needs to be solved” (p. 4). Demetriou (2001), Moller (2007), Hirsch and Kachtan (2017) and several others have acknowledged the contribution this theoretical framework has made to understanding masculinities, but have also critiqued the framework for inadequate nuance, and have recommended ways of expanding and further complicating the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Wetherell and Edley (1999) have pointed out that this theory does not account for ways in which men sometimes comply with, but also

simultaneously resist the cultural ideals of masculinity, and does not consider the “multiple and inconsistent discursive resources available for constructing hegemonic gender identities” (p. 352). Pringle (2005) has written that a significant problem with this theory is that it assumes a clear division between hegemonic and marginalized masculinities, which sounds similar to Wetherell and Edley’s (1999) criticism of the theory as “too neat” (p. 352). McCormack (2012) has argued that hegemonic masculinity theory offers a restricted conceptualization of hegemony that does not account for the possibility of non-oppressive conceptualizations of hegemony. According to McCormack (2012), this theoretical lens provides great utility as long as one stays within the boundaries of such restricted conceptualization of hegemony and hegemonic masculinity, but not otherwise.

**Inclusive masculinity theory.** The inclusive masculinity theory is a relatively recent addition to theoretical perspectives on men and masculinities. It is based on the work of Anderson (2009, 2011, 2012; Anderson & McCormack, 2016; Anderson & McGuire, 2010) and has mainly emerged from study of sports cultures. Anderson (2011, 2012) argues that the relevance of hegemonic masculinity theory has diminished in recent times (at least in Western societies) because social attitudes toward gay men have improved and become less hostile. He contends that “while hegemonic masculinity theory has maintained great utility in times of high homophobia, ... it nonetheless fails to accurately account for what occurs in a macro or even local culture of *decreased* cultural homophobia” (Anderson, 2011, p. 569, italics in original). Anderson (2011; Anderson & McCormack, 2016) discusses this theory in relation to ‘homohysteria’, which he defines as the fear of being perceived by others as gay. In this perspective, a culture is considered

to be homohysteria if it meets these three conditions: awareness that gay people exist, antipathy toward gay people, and assumption that gender and sexuality are conflated (Anderson & McCormack, 2016). This framework contends that the hegemonic masculinity theory is appropriate for times of high homophobia, but as its influence dwindles, the mechanisms which hegemonic masculinity has traditionally used to regulate and police subordinate masculinities no longer hold sway (McCormack, 2012). The major contribution of this theory, according to Anderson and McCormack (2016), is that it provides a framework for explaining inter-cultural and inter-generational variance in men's gendered behaviors with regard to homophobia and homosociality.

Anderson (2009) invited academics to take up this theoretical lens for analyzing masculinities and men's gendered practices, and many have responded to his call. While much of the scholarship that uses inclusive masculinity theory is still within the field of study of sports cultures, this theory is beginning to see application in other fields also, such as social network analysis (e.g. Scoats, 2017), education (e.g. Anderson, Adams & Rivers, 2012; McCormack, 2011), and media studies (e.g. Morris & Anderson, 2015). Given the premise of this theory as applicable to societies where homophobia has diminished significantly, its applicability to the Indian context is suspect because homophobia is pervasive and widespread in the Indian society (Barker et al., 2011).

***Critique of inclusive masculinity theory.*** This is a relatively recent and still evolving theory, and some scholars have raised some important and legitimate concerns regarding its utility. Bridges and Pascoe (2014) have complicated and problematized the assumption at the foundation of this theory, which is that homophobia is diminishing, and

argued that it is not so straightforward. While they acknowledge that homophobic sentiments against gay people may indeed have reduced in certain contexts and instances, they argue that the ‘fag discourse’ continues to be a powerful way in which gender is policed and regulated by and among young men in Western societies. Ward’s (2008, 2015) research with White men who identify as straight and also have sex with other men demonstrates that while these men’s sexual practices may superficially seem to subvert conventional ideas about hegemonic masculinity, they in fact embody and reinforce boundaries of gender, sex, and race.

de Boise (2015) has also brought into question the assumption of decline of homophobia, and criticized this theory saying that it approaches gender and sexuality from an “ahistorical and essentialist” (p. 328) perspective. de Boise (2015) says that it is too simplistic to claim that homophobia is on the decline solely on the basis of evaluating people’s speech acts. Homophobia, de Boise (2015) argues, is not just what people say but also the structural and institutional mechanisms that uphold it. Criticizing the theory, de Boise (2015) says:

At best, an idea of inclusive masculinity is a catchall attempt to describe behaviors which do not fit within a cultural stereotype of machismo. At worst, however, it is actively dangerous in that it conflates the hard-fought legal rights won by gay rights activists with a mistaken belief that because homophobic speech and violence are less apparent in public contexts, that we are nearing some historical end-point for gender and sexuality discrimination. This has the potential to close down

discussions around how we should be continuing to change attitudes toward gender and sexuality. (p. 334)

O'Neill (2015) has expressed concern that this theory is reflective of a growing postfeminist sensibility in academic literature, signifying a worrisome epistemological shift in how gender and masculinities are approached. According to O'Neill (2015), this theory engages with feminist thought in a highly selective and problematic manner; uncritically assumes that progressive social change in Anglo-American societies is linear and uncomplicated, thereby drawing upon imperialist understandings of the relationship between Western and non-Western societies; fails to adequately consider the centrality of heterosexuality to cultural notions of masculinity; and fails to include sexism and misogyny in its analysis. Anderson and McCormack (2016) themselves have acknowledged that the focus on inclusive masculinity theory is not on patriarchy. This arguably represents a significant gap in what this theory has to offer in terms of advancing and complicating the understanding and analysis of men and masculinities.

### **Social Construction of Masculinities in India**

In this section I will consider the sociocultural notions and practices regarding masculinities in the Indian context. Emerging international scholarship has demonstrated strong similarities across geographic and cultural contexts vis-à-vis social construction of masculinity, with men often mentioning similar types of physical attributes, sexuality, and personality characteristics as markers of their masculinity (Duvvury & Nayak, 2003). At the same time, these notions are influenced by the local context including sociocultural, political, and economic factors (Duvvury & Nayak, 2003).

India is a patriarchal society, and as Kulkarni (2014) writes, “masculinities are deeply implicated in a whole host of problems looming over the country, ranging from an abysmally low sex-ratio to communal violence” (p. 54). Indian masculinities have been historically and deeply influenced by factors such as colonization, religion, and caste (Kulkarni, 2014; Srivastava, 2007). With regard to contemporary masculinities, studies with young people show that the culturally exalted version of masculinity in the Indian society is that of *asli mard* (real man) (Verma et al., 2004, 2006). Findings from Verma and colleagues’ (2004, 2006) intervention research with men in Mumbai aged 18-29 years reveal that the predominant conceptualization of *asli mard* for the participants referred to a man who was “handsome, strong, muscular and virile” (Verma et al., 2006, p. 137). Important and desirable attributes in men included the ability to provide for and take care of one’s family, physical power over other men, sexual potency and prowess to establish superiority and control over women, and hostility and disdain toward homosexual or effeminate men. These attitudes are corroborated in the more recent International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES; Barker et al., 2011) in which 81% of the men participants agreed with the statement ‘a man should have the final word about decisions in his home’, 65% of men agreed with ‘there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten’, 61% agreed with ‘men are always ready to have sex’, 91% agreed with ‘men should be embarrassed if unable to get an erection’, and 86% agreed with ‘to be a man, you need to be tough’.

It is noteworthy that India also has some pro-feminist men’s groups and organizations, the earliest of which started in the 1980s in response to the second-wave feminist movement of the 1970s, and there also exists a strong gay rights movement that

is primarily mobilized around the colonial anti-sodomy law which criminalizes homosexuality (Kulkarni, 2014).

### **Men Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse**

The feminist movement of 1970s had a profound impact on bringing attention to child sexual abuse (Barrett, Trepper & Fish, 1990; Breines & Gordon, 1983; Gordon, 1988; Olafson, Corwin & Summit, 1993). Although discussions on child sexual abuse in early literature from this time period focused primarily on girl children and women survivors, the attention they brought to the issue paved way for sexual abuse of boy children to be discussed within the mainstream discourse. Also, social work researchers were at the forefront of illuminating the field of child sexual abuse research in early 1980s when it was in its nascent stages (Olafson et al., 1993). While many of the early works on child sexual abuse recognized that boys too were sexually abused, most of this early literature did not pay any significant attention to sexual victimization of boy children. In one of the earliest reviews of literature on child sexual abuse, Finkelhor (1984) pressed that the field of sexual abuse of boys was “in crying need of research” (p. 230). Similarly, Urquiza and Capra (1990) wrote that “if the body of literature concerning female victims is still in its infancy..., the parallel body of literature concerning males may best be described as in an embryonic stage” (p. 126).

Since then, the body of literature on men and boys who have experienced child sexual abuse has considerably grown, especially in the last 15 years. Studies examining prevalence and incidence, mental and physical health effects, disclosure and help-seeking, coping skills, healing and recovery, and lived experiences of abuse have started

to emerge. That said, research on sexual abuse experiences of boys and men still continues to be an under-studied field.

I will now discuss some of the significant themes in current literature on child sexual abuse in relation to boys and men. There is robust evidence to indicate that girl children outnumber boy children in terms of exposure to sexual abuse (Dube et al., 2005; Putnam, 2003; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011). As a practice firmly rooted in patriarchy—as feminist scholarship on the subject has established—child sexual abuse impacts girls and women disproportionately. Therefore it is reasonable that most research studies on child sexual abuse have concentrated on girl and women survivors, as evidenced by meta-analyses of child sexual abuse studies which show that there are fewer studies that focus exclusively on men and boys or include them as part of the sample, and the proportion of men or boys in study samples is usually smaller as compared to girls or women (e.g. Barth et al., 2013; Ji, Finkelhor & Dunne, 2013; Jumper, 1995; Pereda, Guilera, Forns, & Gómez-Benito, 2009; Rind & Tromovitch, 1997; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011). It is not the purpose of the present study to compare the experiences of men survivors with those of women survivors or any other group. Therefore, the literature that I will review below will be largely limited to studies examining experiences of men or boy survivors. It is also relevant to mention that the field of research on child sexual abuse in India is surely in its nascent stage and has not developed much beyond the prevalence studies which I have discussed in an earlier section of this chapter. There is a dearth, a gaping hole within the current literature, with respect to qualitative studies which could offer depth and nuance into understanding Indian survivors' experiences. Significantly for this research, I have not been able to locate any major study that focuses on the experiences of men and

boys except one or two recent studies which have narrowly looked at sexual abuse of male children from a biomedical perspective. Since there is only a wafer-thin body of research on child sexual abuse within the Indian context, most of the studies I will refer to are from other countries. I will include research evidence from India, as and when appropriate, in this literature review.

**Effects of child sexual abuse.** Sexual abuse can potentially have profound and multiple outcomes for survivors, during childhood and/or later as adults. A considerable portion of literature on men and boy survivors of child sexual abuse is understandably and justifiably devoted to examining the effects of sexual victimization on survivors' lives. Predominantly this impact has been understood from the perspective of abuse as psychological injury and the literature has mainly focused on psychological sequela and mental health consequences of abuse.

*Mental health effects of child sexual abuse.* Research has found that exposure to sexual abuse among boy children is related to a wide range of negative mental health or behavioral outcomes in later life. Exposure to sexual abuse in childhood may be related to men's increased risk with respect to depression anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and a variety of other mental health issues (Bagley, Wood & Young, 1994; Briere & Elliott, 2003; Briere, Evans, Runtz & Wall, 1988; Dimock, 1988; Dube et al., 2005; Paolucci, Genuis & Violato, 2001). Briere and Elliott (2003) conducted a geographically stratified survey-based study using random sampling with 1,442 men and women participants across the United States, and found that exposure to child sexual abuse was associated with elevated scores on all 10 Trauma Symptom Inventory (TSI) scales. A

nationally representative US-based study by Molnar, Berkman and Buka (2001) found that 82% of men who had experienced child sexual abuse reported a lifetime psychiatric disorder; comparatively, this statistic was 51% for men who did not report having experienced child sexual abuse.

While there is a general agreement within current literature that child sexual abuse has significant adverse mental health outcomes for men survivors, there are some dissenting voices which argue that long-term psychological effects of child sexual abuse in males are overstated (Rind & Tromovitch, 1997; Rind, Tromovitch & Bauserman, 1998). Rind and Tromovitch (1997) and Rind et al. (1998) conducted meta-analyses of nationally representative studies in the US and concluded that child sexual abuse was not associated with pervasive harm, and harm was not intense when it occurred. The authors also concluded that a significantly smaller number of males experienced psychological harm as a consequence of abuse, compared to female victims. These meta-analyses have been criticized for being methodologically flawed and morally questionable (for a detailed critique, see Dallam, 2001).

***Behavioral effects of child sexual abuse.*** Experience of sexual abuse may have an exacerbating effect on men survivors' self-damaging behaviors. Men and boys who have experienced sexual abuse in childhood are more likely to think about committing suicide (Garnefski & Arends, 1998; O'Leary & Gould, 2009; Martin, Bergen, Richardson, Roeger & Allison, 2004; O'Leary & Gould, 2009) or attempting suicide (Bagley et al., 1994; Briere et al., 1988; Dube et al., 2005; Garnefski & Arends, 1998; Martin et al., 2004). An Australian study with a clinical sample of men who were sexually abused in

childhood found that these men were up to 10 times more likely to report suicide ideation than the control group (O'Leary & Gould, 2009). Another Australian study of adolescents by Martin et al. (2004) found that boys who reported high distress about sexual abuse were 10 times more likely to make suicidal plans or threats, and 15 times more likely to attempt suicide as compared to boys who did not report having been sexually abused. Molnar et al. (2001) found that in the US, men who were sexually abused as children experienced a 4-11 times greater risk of attempting suicide. In a representative study with 12-19 year old secondary school students in the Netherlands, Garnefski and Arends (1998) found that sexually abused boys were 13 times more at-risk of attempting suicide. While child sexual abuse is a risk factor for suicide, Oates (2004) has warned against assuming a straightforward relationship between the two as this relationship is prone to be impacted by other factors such as family dysfunction and other adverse life events.

There is scant literature on factors which increase men survivors' vulnerability toward suicide. Easton, Renner and O'Leary (2013) have responded to this gap in the literature; they found that the risk of attempting suicide among men survivors was exacerbated by variables such as severity of sexual abuse, use of force during abuse, high adherence to traditional social norms of masculinity, and level of depressive symptoms. O'Leary and Gould (2009) examined this issue qualitatively, and identified familial and social isolation, violent or aggressive behavior, blaming self for the abuse, pervasive feelings of fear or anxiety, general and frequent confusion, and alcohol or drug use as coping mechanisms as risk factors for suicidal behaviors among men survivors. In terms of resilience against suicidal behaviors, Easton and Renner (2013) found in their cross-sectional study of men with histories of child sexual abuse that older age, years of

cohabitation with a spouse or partner, and maternal support with regard to disclosure worked as protective factors against suicidal ideation. More research is needed in this area in order to provide better support services to men and boy survivors.

Some studies have found that exposure to sexual abuse in childhood may influence men survivors' behaviors in relation to addictive alcohol consumption and substance use (Afifi, Henriksen, Asmundson & Sareen, 2012; Harrison, Edwall, Hoffman, & Worthen, 1990; Holmes & Slap, 1998; Ray, 2001; Rohsenow, Corbett & Devine, 1988). Rohsenow et al. (1988) suggested that such behavior might be a coping mechanism to deal with negative emotions and experiences (e.g. powerlessness) related to child sexual abuse.

Researchers have found sexual abuse in childhood to influence sexual behaviors in later life for men survivors. Sexual abuse may contribute to sexual acting out (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Paul, Catania, Pollack & Stall, 2001; Romano & De Luca, 2001); sexual addiction, sexual compulsivity, or sexual hyperactivity (Chan, 2014; Dimock, 1988; Giugliano, 2006; Najman, Dunne, Purdie, Boyle & Coxeter, 2005; Perera, Reece, Monahan, Billingham & Finn, 2009); and avoidance of sex or sexual inhibition (Gill & Tutty, 1999). However, sexual compulsivity or hyperactivity seems to be a more common occurrence among men survivors than sexual inhibition (Aaron, 2012; Vaillancourt-Morel et al., 2016). Aaron (2012) reasons that this may be on account of the gendered pathways to making sense of abuse that many boys survivors take based on cultural messages that encourage them to seek out sexual activities, as opposed to girls who are discouraged from expressing themselves sexually.

Another way in which sexual abuse in childhood may affect men survivors is with regard to their engagement in sexual risk-taking behaviors (Paul et al., 2001; Putnam, 2003). There is some literature from the field of HIV and AIDS which suggests that child sexual abuse may increase men's risk of HIV infection through unsafe sexual practices. Zierler et al. (1991) in their study among college students in north-eastern US found that the risk of HIV infection for men who reported a history of sexual abuse was double that of men who did not. When studying HIV-risk among Puerto Rican men who have sex with men (MSM), Carballo-Diéguez and Dolezal (1995) found that men who had experienced sexual abuse before age 13 were significantly more likely than non-abused men to engage in unprotected anal sex. Similar findings have been made by other researchers as well (e.g. Dilorio, Hartwell & Hansen, 2002; Jinich et al., 1998).

A recent multi-site mixed methods study by Tomori et al. (2016) has discussed the impact of child sexual abuse on HIV-risk behaviors among MSM in India, and found that experience of sexual abuse in childhood is associated with elevated HIV-related risk factors for MSM. The qualitative as well as quantitative findings of this study suggested that gender-nonconformity among boys is a risk factor for sexual abuse. While this study makes a useful and timely contribution to the field of child sexual abuse research in India, its scope is restricted to the MSM community and its focus is primarily epidemiological as it looks at HIV-related risk factors. In another epidemiological study in a metropolitan city in India examining psychological distress and HIV risk among MSM, Mimiaga and colleagues (2015) suggested that gender nonconforming boys may experience increased vulnerability toward child sexual abuse, but did not discuss how these might be connected.

There is little research that illuminates why men who have experienced child sexual abuse engage in high-risk sexual behaviors such as unprotected sex or transactional sex.

*Effects of child sexual abuse on men survivors' relationships.* There is a rather narrow and limited body of research on men survivors' relational challenges against a background of their sexual abuse experiences. Kia-Keating, Sorsoli and Grossman (2010) have published, which to my knowledge is, the only major study in the neglected area of how men survivors develop long-term bonds, disclose emotions, and negotiate intimacy in relationship contexts. Their findings revealed survivors' relational challenges during childhood characterized by isolation, lack of consistent emotional intimacy with caregivers, and lack of predictable support. The findings also revealed relational challenges in adulthood in the form of persistent barriers to developing relationships, and struggles with emotional expression within intimate relationships. The authors also found pathways to relational recovery, such as through finding safe relationships, finding others who had experienced similar struggles, and helping others. Easton, Leone-Sheehan, Sophis and Willis (2015) in their study of turning points in healing processes for men child sexual abuse survivors also found that meaningful personal relationships with romantic partners or friends can make vital contributions to men survivors' recovery from abuse by providing much-needed love and care.

There exists little research in the area of men survivors who are fathers, and their relationships with their children. Wark and Vis (2016) have conducted a review of the slim literature that focuses on this subject; they could locate a total of just 11 studies over the last 22 years. Several of the studies they reviewed reflected that for some fathers,

sexual abuse experiences contributed to their physically or emotionally abusive, or neglectful, parenting practices (e.g. Craig & Sprang, 2007; Newcomb & Locke, 2001). However, some of these studies also reflected that some fathers were actively challenging the notion of intergenerational transmission of abuse by giving their children abuse-free legacies (e.g. Martsof & Draucker, 2008). In studies by Denov (2004) and Martsof and Draucker (2008), some men survivors feared that if they had children they might sexually abuse them; this resulted in their decision of not having children. Denov (2004) found that a history of sexual abuse could prevent some fathers from developing emotional closeness with their children. At the same time, some other studies such as the ones by Draucker and colleagues (2011) and Easton and colleagues (2015) have found that fatherhood could be a healing or helpful experience for some men survivors of child sexual abuse.

**Silencing.** One of the most important experiences that many survivors, including men and women, go through following child sexual abuse is silencing, which refers to the reluctance or fear to disclose about the abuse, as well as reluctance to acknowledge oneself to be a victim of sexual abuse (O'Leary & Barber, 2008). Silencing regarding their experiences of abuse can be self-imposed (when survivors decide to not disclose because of feelings of guilt or shame that they internalize from wider social beliefs and attitudes), or imposed by others (when others refuse to believe the survivors, or tell them to not disclose to anyone else), or both.

Social norms regarding masculinity may cause silencing among men and boy survivors. Different studies have repeatedly shown that male survivors of child sexual

abuse face significant difficulties in disclosing their abuse (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Dorais, 2002; Easton, Saltzman & Willis, 2014; Etherington, 1995; Holmes, Offen & Waller, 1997; O'Leary, 2001; Sorsoli, Kia-Keating & Grossman, 2008; Spiegel, 2003; Watkins & Bentovim, 1992, 2000). There is a gap between the official statistics on the prevalence and extent of male child sexual abuse, and statistics of such abuse based on retrospective self-reporting by survivors, indicating further that males find it challenging to disclose abuse (Etherington, 1995). A study by O'Leary and Barber (2008) with a sample of 145 men and 151 women on gender differences in child sexual abuse disclosure by survivors found that not only were males significantly less likely than females to disclose their abuse at the time of its occurrence, but it also took them significantly longer than females to disclose and discuss their childhood experiences of abuse with someone later in life. Other research studies have also found that male survivors are likely to be more reluctant to disclose than females (DeVoe & Faller, 1999; Gries, Goh & Cavanaugh, 1996), although some others have not found gender to be a significant predicting factor vis-à-vis disclosure of abuse (DiPietro, Runyan & Fredrickson, 1997). An India-based study with men who have sex with men by Tomori and colleagues (2016) indicated that participants who had experienced child sexual abuse were reluctant to disclose their abuse experiences to their family members or friends because of fear of the abuser.

As a consequence of silencing, male survivors often do not get to share their stories with others and get the help they need and deserve, and others do not get to gain a better understanding of male survivors' experiences. Importantly, such silencing of survivors is strongly influenced by popular and stereotypical notions of gender norms (Alaggia, 2005;

Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Bell & Belicki, 1998; Carnes, 2000; Dimock, 1988; Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis & Smith, 1990; Holmes & Slap, 1998; M. Hunter, 1990; Kelley, Brant & Waterman, 1993).

Several researchers have observed that men and boys who have faced sexual abuse find it difficult to disclose and discuss their experiences since this would paint them as victims of violence, wherein they would have been vulnerable and not in control (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Blanchard, 1987; Dimock, 1988; Lew, 1990; Paine & Hansen, 2002). One of the major reasons behind boys' and men's difficulties in disclosing their experiences of abuse is their gender socialization along the lines of stereotypical gender norms (Dorais, 2002; Paine & Hansen, 2002), which in turn results in a whole host of factors that affect disclosure. Cultural norms tied to hegemonic masculinity in most patriarchal societies – including India – do not provide a space for men and boys to occupy the role of a victim in virtually any sphere of their lives. Vulnerability and victimization are typically associated with effeminacy (Kia-Keating, Grossman, Sorsoli & Epstein, 2005). Boys have little guidance for the phenomenon of victimization (Blanchard, 1987). To 'be a man' means to be invulnerable and invincible according to traditional social norms of masculinity. Since child sexual abuse poses a serious threat to such invincibility, it is not a matter of surprise that men could find it challenging to disclose their experiences of victimization and vulnerability. Moreover, it has also been discussed earlier that many men find it very difficult to discuss emotional issues with others, since being emotional is considered a sign of weakness (McGuffey, 2008), and therefore considered non-masculine. Within the context of child sexual abuse, which

could be an emotionally overwhelming and harrowing experience for any child, such reluctance could result in silencing.

Another way of silencing survivors is when their disclosure of abuse is not believed or not taken seriously. Survivors' families, communities and professionals too might contribute to their silencing by not believing male survivors, or by aligning their views with widely prevalent myths. In their analysis of comparison between national prevalence studies, and studies on men receiving psychiatric help through mental health professionals, Holmes, Offen and Waller (1997) proposed that prevalence statistics in the national prevalence studies were higher because of four main reasons: professionals were less likely to identify a male patient's psychiatric problem as potentially linked to their childhood experiences of sexual violence; professionals sometimes do not believe the disclosure of sexual abuse by their male patients; professionals may respond in ways that contribute to the silencing of the survivors; and professionals are failing to ask their patients about the possibility of having been abused in their childhood. In their study with 111 psychologists, psychiatrists, and nurses, Lab, Feigenbaum, and De Silva (2000) discovered that these professionals often did not explore the possibility of their male patients being victims of child sexual abuse. Richey-Suttles and Remer (1997) found that psychologists were less likely to consider sexual abuse for males than they would for females, even when they had been presented with identical case studies. There is a paucity of studies particular to social work, which have explored social workers' views vis-à-vis male child sexual abuse, especially in recent times. Pierce and Pierce (1985) provided some evidence of prevalence of such attitudes that contribute to survivors' silencing in the area of social work, through their study on response of child protection

services in the US to reports of child sexual abuse. They found that the protective agencies were less likely to remove a boy from his home, as opposed to a girl, upon substantiation of the report.

Survivors' families too may sometimes participate in such silencing of their experiences. In an Indian study published recently, Subramaniyan and colleagues (2017), who investigated barriers to seeking psychiatric help for child sexual abuse survivors in a public hospital, found that parents of boys who had been sexually abused sometimes minimized their child's experiences on account of the child's gender; they believed that because the child was a boy, he would not be significantly affected by the abuse experiences or would be able to overcome the experience without professional assistance. For instance, a father in one of their case studies said the following about his 9-year-old child who had experienced abuse: "He is a boy; he neither lost a hymen nor will get pregnant. He should behave like a man, not a sissy." While this study brings attention to the neglected area of how sexual abuse survivors seek help within the public health system in India, it suffers from several limitations. The study is based on just three cases which are only briefly described, description of the research methods is sketchy (the authors just say that they used the "frame work" (p. 203) method for qualitative data analysis but do not provide any details or citations), and the interviews were based on just one primary question. In another research, Sahay (2013) studied family members' attitudes toward female and male child sexual abuse survivors, and found that survivors often faced indifference, silencing, and sometimes even violence when they told their parents about their sexual abuse experiences; they were sometimes asked to keep the abuse a secret or to ignore it. Like the previous research, this study too is affected by

some important methodological and also ethical concerns even as it illuminates a little-explored area of study in the Indian context. The study sample included 130 victims of child sexual abuse but the author provides little information on how the sample was selected. Also, the author says that study participants, which included minor children, were “not forced but encouraged to participate in [the] study by making them understand that this study was for the welfare of others like them” (p. 155). Such approach arguably carries significant implications for the informed consent process and raises ethical concerns.

**Responsibility and guilt.** Men and boys who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse may also feel, or are made to feel, that they are somehow responsible for their sexual victimization, and that they contributed in some way to their own abuse.

One of the ways in which this might manifest in survivors’ lives is when survivors tend to see their experiences of child sexual abuse as non-abusive. Fondacaro, Holt and Powell (1999) found that 41% of the male prison inmates in their study did not view those sexual experiences during childhood as abusive, which would have been classified as child sexual abuse under many widely accepted professional definitions. This could have been a result of various factors, such as the gender norms that do not stigmatize boys for engaging in sexual activity at an early age the same way as girls would be stigmatized in a similar situation, they could have been too embarrassed to label their experiences as abusive since they might have seen it as exposing their vulnerabilities, or they might have seen these as coming of age experiences for a boy or perceived themselves as sexually accomplished men. In another study by Nelson and Oliver (1998)

focusing on the issue of consent within adult-child sexual contact, boys older than 10 years typically described their sexual encounter(s) with older women as consensual and desirable, even when every encounter had been initiated by a woman who was at least four years older than the boy. In the majority of cases it was clear that the boy had been dominated or manipulated by the woman. This was because the idea of sex with an older woman was congruent with the patriarchal themes of sexual prowess and masculine potency for these boys, and therefore the boys constructed these experiences as status enhancing. Seeking and having sex with women are associated with men's virility and normative heterosexuality, within the context of hegemonic masculinity as discussed earlier. It is therefore possible that many men and boys fail to see their abuse as an act of violence, because the experience of being sexual with women fits well with the discourse of hegemonic masculinity. The earlier they can see themselves achieving the milestones of being a man, the more gratifying it could be for them with regard to asserting themselves as masculine men in their own eyes as well as in the eyes of the world. It must also be acknowledged however, that many men and boys do feel ashamed of their sexual contact with women during childhood, especially when such sexual experiences had been with their own mothers (S. V. Hunter, 2009). This could perhaps be because mother-son sexual relationships and behaviors belong to the incest taboo, and therefore do not find any positive recognition within the discourse of patriarchy or hegemonic masculinity.

Sometimes boys may get gratification, enjoyment, or pleasure out of the sexual experience, while at the same time experiencing negative reactions because of the coercive and/or manipulative nature of the sexual abuse. Penile erection, ejaculation,

and/or experiencing orgasm or other feelings of pleasure may indicate to boys that they participated in their own abuse, wanted it, and were responsible for it. In Alaggia and Millington's (2008) qualitative study of men who had been sexually abused as children, some men expressed disgust at the fact that their bodies would respond with arousal to sexual stimulus by their abusers. Another participant in this study shared his thoughts regarding the abuse he had faced as a child, and said, "I wanted it. I mean I stayed there. I let it happen, it felt good ... when I ejaculated it felt great. But then after I'd feel, like, sick to my stomach" (p. 269). The internal conflicts men and boys often face while making meaning of their abuse is evident in this quote. The boy is torn between enjoying the experience, and being repulsed by it. Such feelings of confusion can lead to ideas about their willing participation in the abuse. Once again, sexual norms for boys as per hegemonic masculinity celebrate boys' sexual virility and prowess. Against this backdrop, it is likely that many boys would see themselves as active participants in their abuse if they experienced sexual arousal and pleasure, especially if the perpetrators were women, since sexual experiences with women are constructed as normative within hegemonic masculinity.

Traditional gender socialization of boys includes emphasis on self-reliant, independent, and decisive thinking (Finkelhor, 1985; Paine & Hansen, 2002; Struve, 2007). 'Real men' are also expected to know how to avoid problems (Dorais, 2002). As a result, many boys may also feel confused about their own role in their sexual experiences of abusive nature, since they are supposed to have made their own decisions. These factors can come together during incidents of sexual victimization, leading to much confusion in boys' minds about the event, and eventually their conscious or passive

acceptance of the event as non-abusive, or perceptions of having willingly participated in the abuse. The possibility of men and boys blaming themselves, to varying degrees, for their own abuse becomes even more likely because perpetrators of child sexual abuse often tend to blame their victims for the sexual activity (Veach, 1999).

Such ignorance and misinformation regarding male survivors exists among men in the larger society as well. Spencer and Tan (1999) asked male and female college students about their perceptions regarding a hypothetical case of sexual violence against a male person at different ages, and found that respondents who were men were more likely to blame the male victim for his abuse at any age, as compared to the women respondents. This indicates that attitudes and perceptions that assign blame to the victims and survivors for their own abuse are shared by men in general, and not just by men who are survivors of child sexual abuse. This also indicates a deep-seated internalization of gender stereotyping among many men and boys, and the ensuing lack of perspective to view fellow men and boys as vulnerable and potential victims of sexual assault.

**Anxiety regarding masculinity.** Since victimization is not something for which the cultural ideals of masculinity prepare men and boys (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Blanchard, 1987; Dimock, 1988), experiencing victimization can be a gender-transgressive experience for many survivors. As discussed earlier, in a context of sexual abuse, boys may feel vulnerable and not in control. Since invulnerability and control are associated with the socially constructed idea of ‘being a man’, such experiences can make men and boys feel like their masculinity has been damaged or weakened through these experiences.

There are other factors too that may contribute to survivors' anxieties regarding their masculinity. An important one among them is homophobia. Most perpetrators of sexual abuse against children, including male children, are men (Banyard, Williams & Siegel, 2004; Finkelhor et al., 1990; May-Chahal, 2006). Also, most sexually abused male children are abused by other males (McGuffey, 2008). Sexual abuse by another man or boy can lead to worries about their own sexual orientation in the minds of the survivors, since heteronormativity and homophobia are integral and inextricable norms of hegemonic masculinity. When boys experience sexual abuse, they may fear that they would get labeled as 'wimp', 'gay', 'queer', or 'faggot' (Dimock, 1988; Finkelhor, 1985). They may question their own sexual orientation (Gartner, 1999b; Gilgun & Reiser, 1990; Scott, 1992, Tremblay & Turcotte, 2005), or fear that others would question their sexual orientation (Gartner, 1999b; Dhaliwal et al., 1996; Dorais, 2002; Gilgun & Reiser, 1990; Scott, 1992). In a study by S. V. Hunter (2009) of men and women who had had sexual experiences with adults when they were 15 or younger, many men participants who had had early sexual experiences with other men, worried that they had been chosen by their perpetrators because of their own concealed homosexual traits, or that they would become homosexual as a consequence of their experience. This also sometimes leads to survivors' reticence with regard to disclosing and reporting abuse (Dimock, 1988; Kia-Keating et al., 2005; S. V. Hunter, 2009; Hussey, Strom & Singer, 1992). This could also lead to psychological problems for the survivors, such as social withdrawal, isolative behavior, and depression (Scott, 1992). Not only the survivors, but their parents also may have significant concerns over the developing sexual and gender identities of their children on account of sexual abuse (Deblinger & Heflin, 1996; McGuffey, 2008; Rogers

& Terry, 1984). In a study of parental responses to child sexual abuse, McGuffey (2008) found that many fathers whose sons had been abused believed that their sons needed some sort of additional intervention on their part, because these children had been abused by other men. Some fathers used traditional 'masculine' activities such as sports to help their sons overcome the adversity of sexual abuse, since they believed that boys could learn how to compete and dominate on a sports field, especially since they had been dominated by other males during their abuse. Many other parents believed that boys needed to learn to be aggressive so as to prevent their masculinity from being compromised. As one of the stepfathers in this study said, "I don't want [my son] to be pushed around by other boys... He needs to know that just because a man pushed him around and forced him to do things he didn't want to do [being sexually violated], he can be strong too" (p. 225). These themes of strength, aggression, dominance, and competition, are integral aspects of hegemonic masculinity.

Such fears and anxieties over the perceived 'loss' of masculinity may translate into a profound sense of shame for some survivors. As Feiring, Taska, and Lewis (2002) have pointed out, the "phenomenological experience of shame is a desire to hide the damaged self from others, to disappear, or die" (p. 79) and that this shame for the survivors is a "state in which the whole self feels defective, often as a result of a perceived failure to meet self-imposed standards" (p. 79). These standards are often the norms, values and practices associated with the cultural ideal of masculinity.

Sometimes the fears and anxieties regarding masculinity, or outcomes of these fears and anxieties, find expression in survivors' behavior in the form of hypermasculinity.

Mosher and Sirkin (1984) stated that “any situation that challenges or threatens masculine identity activates this structure [asserting power and dominance physically and in interpersonal relations, especially with women], thereby motivating and organizing the personality for participation in hypermasculine behaviors” (p. 152). It could be argued that while this definition and conceptualization is old, it is still acceptable, because the hypermasculinity inventory that Mosher and Sirkin developed on the basis of this conceptualization is still being used by scholars for research purposes (see for example Fisher, 2007; Jamison, 2006; Parrott & Zeichner, 2003). Hypermasculinity is an extreme adherence to hegemonic masculine norms, especially with regard to violence and aggression. Since child sexual abuse is a situation that carries the potential to pose a serious threat to the masculinity of a man or boy survivor, some survivors embrace hypermasculinity as a way of managing such a threat (S. V. Hunter, 2009; Levant, 1997; McGuffey, 2008; Scott, 1992). They could engage in risky nonrelational sexual behavior, act out physically and/or sexually aggressively against others, or attempt sexual conquests (Levant, 1997). This also ties in with anger being one of the few ways of letting out emotions that is available to men and boys within the framework of hegemonic masculinity. With child sexual abuse being a potentially disturbing and overwhelming experience, it is possible that boys and men who are survivors could use anger and aggression as significant methods for channeling their emotions. In Alaggia and Millington’s (2008) study of men survivors, several participants repeatedly talked about the anger and rage they felt and expressed, in relation to their experiences of sexual victimization. One of the participants said, “I went through a very volatile period, where yeah I was going to kill people, man... I was really freaking” (p. 270). Aggression

amongst men and boy survivors could also be a way of them distancing themselves from others, in order to prevent against a possibility of interpersonal closeness that could expose their vulnerabilities, or result in stigmatization (Scott, 1992).

### **Gaps in the Literature, and this Research Study**

Literature on sexual abuse of boys at a global level has evolved since 1980 when it was nearly impossible to find a mention of this subject in professional and research literature (Alaggia & Millington, 2008). Both qualitative and quantitative studies have now looked at this issue from different angles and have made useful contributions towards developing a greater understanding of the problem, including in the area of exploring the influences of gender in the lives of survivors within the context of child sexual abuse.

Theoretical perspectives to study men and masculinities have also evolved from looking at masculinity as a static, linear and monolithic entity, to a more critical, complicated and pluralized understanding of masculinities. Based on this review of theoretical approaches, hegemonic masculinity theory is the most appropriate conceptual perspective for this study because of its attention to power, patriarchy, and hierarchy of masculinities. It may be assumed within this perspective that sexual abuse in childhood presents a status-diminishing challenge vis-à-vis the hierarchy of masculinities for men survivors. Therefore, their lived experiences of sexual abuse, especially against a backdrop of heteropatriarchy, are an important area of study. In contrast, the sex role theory is an inadequate and flawed perspective for reasons outlined earlier. Inclusive masculinity theory is not an applicable lens for this study either. Notwithstanding the

valid and important critique of this theory discussed previously, the basic premise of the theory that it works in a post-homophobic social climate does not apply to the Indian context where homophobia is pervasive and institutionalized in the country's laws.

While some previous studies have examined this issue using the conceptual perspective of hegemonic masculinity (e.g. Chan, 2014; McGuffey, 2008), many have not, although most have discussed the role of conventional gender stereotypes. This in itself mirrors a gap in the literature. Not every man and boy who has faced sexual victimization during childhood would frame his experiences within hegemonic masculinity. The meanings that survivors give to their experiences at one point in time or in one sociopolitical context may or may not be the meanings they give to the same experiences at a different point in time or in a different sociopolitical context. Also, different men do masculinity differently (Connell, 2005). It could very well be that their way of being masculine is one among the non-hegemonic forms of masculinity, and as a result, the interpretations of sexual abuse experiences could also be different for them. It is possible that sexual abuse itself could influence someone to review and revise their way(s) of doing masculinity. This is because masculinity is not a monolith (Connell, 2005), but is instead a dynamic concept that is open to variation and change. Therefore, there is a need for studies that explore such variations, so that responses at different levels could fit what men and boy survivors actually experience.

There are several gaps in the literature that I have identified in this chapter. First and foremost, there is no research in India that has child sexual abuse as its focus and studies the lived experiences of men survivors. The razor thin body of research on men

and child sexual abuse in India is limited to adult men who have sex with men (MSM), and has a clear biomedical focus and scope as it primarily looks at HIV risk among MSM. Other research on child sexual abuse in India has not progressed much beyond retrospective and quantitative prevalence research.

Some of the areas where more research with respect to men survivors are needed include how abuse experiences impact their intimate relationships, and relationships with their children for survivors who are fathers; disclosure experiences; protective factors that promote resilience among survivors; and the meanings that survivors make of their abuse experiences in different ways and at different stages of life.

## CHAPTER III

### Research Methods

In this chapter, I will describe the research methods used in this study. I will discuss interpretive phenomenology as the methodological framework for this study. Next I will discuss Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as an appropriate method for this study. Then I will describe the research design including sampling and inclusion criteria, data collection procedures, reflexivity and researcher positionality, ethical considerations, and data analysis. Finally, I will discuss trustworthiness and quality of this study.

### Research Question

The research question for this study is: What are the lived experiences of child sexual abuse for adult men survivors in India, particularly in relation to the sociocultural notions of masculinity?

### Methodology

The focus of this study is to understand how the experience of abuse is lived by men survivors through other experiences, such as interpersonal relationships, intimate relationships, communication with family and friends etc., and as embedded in the larger sociocultural context. Phenomenology was therefore an appropriate approach for this study, since it seeks to describe how a phenomenon plays out in the lives of different individuals (Moran, 2000), and understand several individuals' lived experience of that particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Within the broad frame of phenomenological research, I used interpretive phenomenology. More specifically, I used

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as developed and described by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009).

**Interpretive phenomenology.** Phenomenology is both a philosophical perspective as well as a research method (Lopez & Willis, 2004; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). The central idea of phenomenology is to understand and describe phenomena as they are experienced by persons who have lived through them (Creswell, 2007; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Phenomenological research is interested in understanding the subjective meanings individuals make of the objects of their consciousness. Phenomenology is particularly interested in paying attention to people's everyday worlds, and the taken-for-granted realities in people's routine lives (Daly, 2007).

There are philosophical, and ensuing methodological, variations within phenomenology. Two important philosophical schools of thought within phenomenology are descriptive phenomenology and interpretive, or hermeneutic, phenomenology (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). The origins of descriptive phenomenology are rooted in the work of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who was a German philosopher and mathematician. On the other hand, the origins of interpretive phenomenology are rooted in the work of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), who too was a German philosopher, and a student of Husserl. While a detailed discussion of the philosophical foundations of these approaches, and the differences between them, falls beyond the scope of this discussion, it is relevant to briefly discuss and distinguish between them in order to establish the appropriateness of interpretive phenomenology to this research project.

Husserl (1970) defined phenomenology as “the science of essence of consciousness,” and argued that consciousness must be understood by overcoming any personal biases (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). In other words, researchers must be able to move away completely from their lived realities and subjective experiences, in order to appropriately describe the phenomena as experienced by the participants (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007; Tymieniecka, 2003).

On the other hand, Heidegger’s perspective of phenomenology, which he mainly described in his influential book *Being and Time* (1927/1962), was premised on the philosophical assumption that human beings always find meaning and significance in their world through their average everyday lives (Draucker, 1999). In this perspective, the purpose of phenomenology is then to “[seek] to reveal the frequently taken for granted shared practices and common meanings embedded in our day-to-day experiences” (Diekelmann, 1992, p. 73). These taken for granted shared practices and common meanings, according to Heidegger, are based on the social, cultural, and temporal context of the person (Campbell, 2001; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Such acceptance and centrality of the concept of context and situatedness of the person differentiates Heidegger’s perspective from that of Husserl, wherein the idea of context is peripheral (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007).

In order to understand interpretive phenomenology, it is important to appreciate Heidegger’s concept of person (Leonard, 1994). For Heidegger, the primary question is “what it means to *be* a person and how the world is intelligible to us at all” (Leonard, 1994, p. 45, italics in original). Therefore, the fundamental assumption here is that the

person is always situated within the world, and makes sense of the world through relationships, practices, and language based on the culture they are born into (Leonard, 1994). In Heidegger's (1975) own words:

The world... is such that we do not in fact specifically occupy ourselves with it, or apprehend it, but instead it is so self-evident, so much a matter of course, that we are completely oblivious to it (p. 165).

This underlines the significance of paying attention to people's taken-for-granted everyday lives, since it is through these everyday lives that they experience the world, and therefore it is through these everyday lives that their world can be understood. Paying attention to everyday lives for a phenomenological researcher means paying attention to the social, cultural, and historical world of people. This perspective believes that the world and the person are in a constant state of dialogue, where neither is the person a radical agent free to choose and become whatever, nor is the world available to be apprehended without the person's active involvement. The person lies somewhere in between these two extreme positions. The person can therefore exercise choice or put up resistance to the social, cultural, historical, and familial environments that they are located in, while simultaneously being influenced by the same. While the person may exercise some choice in personalizing the common and dominant ways of being in a culture, there also exist meanings that are shared with other members inhabiting the world on account of the culture they have in common with each other (Leonard, 1994).

The phenomena themselves are not important to be studied through phenomenology; what is important are the meanings ascribed to phenomena by persons,

which in turn is based on their social, cultural, and historical contexts (Leonard, 1994).

This is especially important for social sciences and human services, since understanding what a particular phenomenon means to a person can lead to appropriate interventions to help and support that person, instead of using a blanket approach that the person may not relate to at all. Also notable is that in Heideggerian perspective, persons interpret their world not as a result of their individual consciousness in any theoretical and cognitive manner, but as a result of their cultural and linguistic traditions based on their context (Leonard, 1994). In other words, persons embody their cultural contexts through common practices (Benner, 1985; Leonard, 1994).

Thus, to do interpretive phenomenological research is to focus on the phenomenon being studied, by understanding and interpreting the meanings embedded in participant narratives, with the knowledge that these meanings are often based on participants' sociocultural contexts (Benner, 1994; Crist & Tanner, 2003; Leonard, 1994; Maggs-Rapport, 2000). This makes interpretive phenomenology particularly useful for understanding human experience and larger sociocultural factors that shape meanings ascribed to human experiences (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007).

The experience of being a male survivor of child sexual abuse is often embedded in the sociocultural notions of what it means to be a man. Therefore, understanding the lived experience of being a male survivor, and the meanings that survivors construct of their abuse experiences based on their social and cultural contexts are areas that can be investigated through interpretive phenomenology. It is not abuse per se that is the focus of this study, but the lived experiences of abuse, and the meanings that survivors make of

abuse. This is congruent with interpretive phenomenological methodology, as inspired by Heideggerian philosophy. Moreover, interpretive phenomenology is particularly appropriate for social work research because of its commitment to understanding human experiences as situated within social, cultural, familial, and historical contexts, which is in agreement with social work's commitment to the person-in-environment approach.

The purpose of interpretive phenomenology is to expand understanding of and increase sensitivity to people's lived experiences, shared practices, and ways of being (Dreyfus, 1995; Diekelmann, 1992), rather than generate theory or result in prediction (Crist & Tanner, 2003). An essential part of this is to describe the lived experiences of the research participants for the audience.

In interpretive phenomenology, the researcher is not a mute observer, but an active participant. In this perspective, background understandings of the researcher are not only important, but it is virtually impossible for the researcher to abandon them (Benner, 1994; Koch, 1995; Lopez & Willis, 2004; Mitchell, 1993). The researcher works as an interpreter (Benner, 1994) by discovering embedded meanings in participant narratives through connecting personal experiences to common practices and cultural contexts, and it is this process of co-construction of interpretations by the researcher and the participants that makes interpretations meaningful (Koch, 1995). To fulfill their role as interpreter, the researcher must have an initial understanding of the phenomenon under review (Maggs-Rapport, 2000), which can later be supported, refuted, or expanded through participant narratives during the analysis process.

**Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.** Within the larger ambit of interpretive phenomenology, this study followed a methodological approach known as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA is a phenomenological approach to social science research that allows researchers an opportunity to explore ways in which people make sense of their lived experiences and the various meanings that research participants assign to these significant life experiences (Smith et al., 2009; Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005). According to IPA pioneers Smith et al. (2009), IPA researchers are “especially interested in what happens when the everyday flow of lived experience takes on a particular significance for people. This usually occurs when something important has occurred in our lives” (p. 1). IPA agrees with, and is based on, the broader epistemological foundations of interpretive phenomenology described previously in that it focuses on the lived experience, and is interested in exploring personal experiences through individuals’ own accounts and perceptions of a phenomenon as experienced by them within the subjective contexts of their personal and social world (Smith & Osborn, 2008). It also perceives the role of the researcher as an active participant in the research process. In IPA, the research process involves a ‘double hermeneutic’ wherein “the participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world” (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 53). Thus, the researcher is continuously involved in the process of interpreting participants’ unique and subjective relationship to their world while being embedded in a world of their own. IPA is in line with the Heideggerian conceptualization of phenomenology as an “explicitly interpretative activity” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 25) wherein research

participants' lived experiences are the focus of research and the researcher's access to these can only happen through a process of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009).

The aforementioned double hermeneutic within IPA also engages two major interpretative positions: empathic hermeneutics and questioning hermeneutics (Ricoeur, 1970, as cited in Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008). The hermeneutics of empathy seeks to understand and reconstruct participants' lived experiences from their own perspectives, "trying to understand what it is like, from the point of view of the participants, to take their side" (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 53). The questioning hermeneutics is the hermeneutics of suspicion that draws upon theoretical knowledge and perspectives from outside the participants' lived experiences in order to understand better the phenomenon under study (Smith et al., 2009). This questioning hermeneutics position requires the researcher to explore participants' accounts in search of answers to critical questions such as "What is the person trying to achieve here? Is something leaking out here that wasn't intended? Do I have a sense of something going on here that maybe the participants themselves are less aware of?" (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 53). This double hermeneutic may also be understood as striking a balance between the 'emic' and 'etic' positions that are often discussed in qualitative research literature. The emic (insider) position requires the researcher to attend to participants' accounts of their lived experience and to prioritize their worldview in understanding and reconstructing their stories; the etic (outsider) position is the interpretative position from where the researcher uses external knowledge to make sense of participants' stories in ways that help answer research questions (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005). This "centre-ground position" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 36) that IPA assumes in order to engage in a process of interpreting

participants' lived experiences is considered appropriate as long as it serves to illuminate or disclose the meanings of lived experiences (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006; Reid et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2009); the interpretative process must always stay centered around participants' phenomenological world (Reid et al., 2005).

IPA is a form of idiographic as opposed to nomothetic inquiry (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008). This means that IPA studies focus on the particular and attempt to offer "detailed, nuanced analyses of *particular* instances of lived experience" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 37, italics in original), allowing for in-depth engagement with a specific phenomenon. IPA studies involving more than one participant focus on bringing forth both commonalities and shared meanings between different participant accounts as well as the individual nuances and distinctive voice within each account (Smith et al., 2009). Nomothetic studies, in contrast, focus on groups and populations and seek to arrive at probabilistic conclusions about their units of analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2008). IPA is also somewhat distinct from more conventional phenomenological studies in that it focuses on "personal meaning and sense-making in a particular context, for people who share a particular experience" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 45) whereas traditional phenomenological inquiry focuses on the "common structure of [a given phenomenon] as an experience" (p. 45) and attempts to extract the 'essential' features of a phenomenon.

IPA was an appropriate method for this research. Since there is an acute paucity of local research studies in India that focus on child sexual abuse in general and men survivors of child sexual abuse, this research is exploratory in nature. Most of the available literature is in the form of quantitative studies that have focused on prevalence

and incidence of abuse. Since through this study I sought to address the lack of in-depth qualitative studies, and because the focus of this study was the meanings that adult men survivors make of their abuse experiences and how the phenomenon of child sexual abuse appears in the lives of adult men survivors with reference to gender norms, identities and expectations, IPA was an appropriate choice. IPA is based on the conviction that participants are experts on their own life experiences, which resonated with my understanding and vision for this research; I wanted to understand participants' stories in their own words, center their experiences, and amplify their voices through this research.

IPA is also particularly suitable for applied research (Reid et al., 2005), such as social work research. IPA has become increasingly popular in the field of service user research by offering an inductive model that allows helping professionals an opportunity to service users' views, perceptions and experiences with regard to significant and meaningful events in their lives (Reid et al., 2005). Since I had hoped that the findings of this research would help social workers in India and elsewhere develop a deeper and more nuanced understanding of men survivors' lives and experiences, as well as better services and policies with regard to child sexual abuse and its survivors, IPA was deemed to be a good fit for this study.

While IPA was originally developed within the field of health psychology in specific and psychological inquiry in general, it has been used in a range of other professional areas and academic disciplines such as occupational therapy (Clarke, 2009), performance arts (Hefferon & Ollis, 2006), business and entrepreneurship (Cope, 2011),

peace and conflict studies (Funkeson, Schröder, Nzabonimpa & Holmqvist, 2011), psychiatry (Young, Bramham, Gray & Rose, 2008), gerontology and aging (Reynolds, Vivat & Prior, 2011), grief and bereavement (Begley & Quayle, 2007), death and dying (Rassool & Nel, 2012), and nursing (Griffiths, Schweitzer & Yates 2011). IPA has also been used to illuminate the experiences of survivors of child abuse and other forms of interpersonal violence; Back, Gustaffson, Larsson and Berterö (2011), for instance, used IPA to explore sexually abused children's experiences with the legal process in Sweden. Due to its appropriateness for applied and service user research, IPA studies can make useful contributions to social work, albeit currently it is not a popular method within social work research (Houston & Mullan-Jensen, 2011).

Finally, IPA was a useful choice from a pragmatic standpoint as well. While the field of phenomenology, specifically interpretive phenomenological inquiry, is rich and the literature on the subject extensive, much of it is written in language that many consider dense and confusing (Chenail, 2009). Smith et al. (2009) and Smith and Osborn (2008) offer in IPA an approach that is laid out in accessible language with its different steps such as sampling, data collection, analysis and report writing comprehensibly described. Due to these features IPA is a useful approach for early career researchers such as myself undertaking their first major phenomenological research study.

### **Research Design**

**Sampling.** Given the aim of this study to explore in-depth adult men's lived experiences of sexual abuse, purposive sampling method was used to find research participants. The purposive sampling technique is most suitable for IPA research because

samples that are selected purposively can offer insights into the particular experience being studied (Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2009) note that participants are “selected on the basis that they can grant us access to a particular perspective” (p. 49); it is therefore important that the participants “‘represent’ a perspective, rather than a population” (p. 49). In this case, purposive sampling was used to recruit adult men participants who could offer insights into the phenomenon of child sexual abuse as a lived experience. IPA is also attentive to the issue of pragmatism influencing sampling decisions in qualitative studies involving human experiences; as Smith and Osborn (2008) have pointed out, “one’s sample will in part be defined by who is prepared to be included in it!” (p. 56).

The eligibility criteria for inclusion in this study was that the participants had to be men living in India, they had to be within the age bracket of 18-60 years, they had to self-identify as having experienced sexual abuse or unwanted sexual contact in childhood, and they had to have conversational knowledge of English.

**Recruitment and sample.** Permission to conduct this study was received from the Institutional Review Board of University of Minnesota. For the purpose of recruitment, I enlisted cooperation of civil society organizations and individuals working in the areas of violence prevention, child abuse prevention, gender and sexuality rights, or providing support services to survivors of violence and abuse in India. I reached out to such organizations and individuals located in different parts of India, explained my research to them, and requested them to share the recruitment flyer (Appendix C) with any potential participants, or post it to a relevant listserv or to their social media channels (e.g.

Facebook or Twitter). People interested in knowing more about the study or participating in it then contacted me voluntarily, based on my contact information (email address and phone number) mentioned in the recruitment flyer. I discussed with them study objectives and participation in the study, confirmed their eligibility, and answered any questions they had. If they agreed to meet in person for an interview following this discussion, I proceeded to set up a meeting. These recruitment efforts resulted in 11 men participating in the study.

One of the key features of IPA is its interest in rich and in-depth data; it is more interested in gathering rich data from a smaller number of participants as opposed to gathering less in-depth data from a large number of participants, thereby investing more in depth of the data than breadth. In fact, IPA proponents have argued that because of the explicit commitment IPA has toward developing detailed interpretative accounts of participants' lived experiences of a particular phenomenon, realistically a meaningful IPA study can only be conducted with a small sample size (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008). Moreover, discussing abusive experiences from childhood is typically a difficult experience for survivors in any society and culture; this task becomes more onerous when child sexual abuse is considered taboo, such as in India. Adult men survivors experience significant barriers in coming forward to share their experiences. Also, qualitative studies typically focus on gathering in-depth data and therefore do not offer anonymity unlike some survey-based quantitative studies, making it more challenging for people to volunteer as participants. Given these methodological and pragmatic concerns, a sample size of 11 participants was appropriate for this study.

*Description of sample.* Table 3.1 below describes the study participants. The sample had three men who identified as straight (or heterosexual), six identified as gay (or homosexual), one identified as bisexual, and one identified as queer. With regard to their level of education, seven participants had completed a graduate degree, three had completed an undergraduate degree, and one had finished high school. The youngest participant was 26 years old and the oldest participant was 53. The mean age of the sample was about 37 years and the median age was 39 years. The participants were located in six different large cities across India.

According to 2014 Government of India data, only 20.4% of Indian men have undergraduate or above education level (National Sample Survey Office, 2016). Therefore, this was a skewed sample with regard to level of education, as 10 out of 11 participants had at least an undergraduate degree. With respect to age, the median age of the sample was greater than the national median age for men in India, which is 27.2 years according to the current estimate (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017).

In this chapter and all subsequent chapters in this dissertation, all names used for study participants, or included as part of interviews excerpts, are pseudonyms in order to protect participants' identities. In accordance with guidance from American Psychological Association (APA) on ethical use of data from research participants (Lee & Hume-Pratuch, 2013), I have left out some unimportant identifying details about the participants, and occasionally altered some participant characteristics (such as their hometown or home state, city of residence, professional designation etc.) where I

believed that it would not significantly alter the context or interpretation of their narratives, in order to further obscure and protect participants' identities.

Table 3.1

*Sample description*

Participant	Age at the time of interview	Sexual orientation	Education	Approximate age at onset of abuse	Perpetrators
Arunanshu	27	Gay	Graduate degree	7-8	One (older friend, male)
Dhruvan	43	Straight	Graduate degree	10-11	One (maternal uncle)
Harendra	53	Straight	High school diploma	2	Multiple (older boy in the neighborhood, adult tenant living in the same household as extended family)
Harith	36	Gay	Undergraduate degree	8-9	Multiple (older male cousins)
Himank	26	Gay	Graduate degree	7-8	Multiple (male friend from the neighborhood, male classmate, granduncle, teenage employee at the supermarket)
Indivar	30	Straight	Graduate degree	6	Multiple (older teenage boys, adult men, and one adult woman living in the neighborhood, female tuition teacher)

Mohan	39	Gay	Undergraduate degree	5-6	One (older male cousin)
Prabodh	43	Queer	Undergraduate degree	13-14	Multiple (adult men in the neighborhood, adult male strangers)
Tanmoy	40	Bisexual	Graduate degree	7-8	Multiple (older male cousin, stranger hotel employee - male, stepmother)
Tarun	39	Gay	Graduate degree	6	Multiple (older male friends from the neighborhood)
Tejesh	35	Gay	Graduate degree	6-7	One (older distant male cousin)

**Data collection.** Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews with participants. Since phenomenological inquiry is grounded in understanding a certain phenomenon from the perspective of individuals who have experienced it directly, interviews are an appropriate method for data collection for such research (Creswell, 2007; Daly, 2007). In-depth in-person interviews with individual participants are considered to be one of the most optimal ways of exploring participants' narratives, thoughts and feelings, and are therefore the preferred means for data collection for most IPA studies (Reid et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2009). They also allow for greater opportunities for rapport building between the researcher and participant (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

The interviews were semi-structured because it was important that participants had an opportunity “to tell their stories, to speak freely and reflectively, and to develop their ideas and express their concerns at some length” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 56). Within IPA, participants are considered experts on their own lived experiences and it is therefore crucial that they can tell their stories in words and ways of their choice and in as much detail as possible (Reid et al., 2005). Semi-structured interviews facilitate such data gathering. Semi-structured interviews are focused conversations with the purpose of exploring a certain area of interest. The researcher enters the interview with some questions to pursue and with an intention of “try[ing] to enter, as far as possible, the psychological and social world of the respondent” (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 59). Semi-structured interviews permit the researcher and participant to have a purposive “co-determined interaction” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 58) where the initial focus of the interaction may be determined by the researcher’s prepared questions but one in which the participant can also introduce an issue or topic about which the researcher may not have thought (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008). In other words, semi-structured interviews through their flexibility provide space for respondents to have a greater control of the interview process than structured interviews. As experiential experts, the importance of participants having such control and flexibility cannot be overestimated. Semi-structured interviews also allow researchers the freedom to explore interesting areas that may emerge in the course of the interaction with participants.

I used an interview schedule to guide the semi-structured interviews (Appendix A). The purpose of the schedule was to facilitate the interaction between the researcher and participants. An interview schedule is a useful data collection tool in qualitative

phenomenological research as it requires the researcher to do some focused thinking about the different topics that the interview might cover (Smith & Osborn, 2008). It also allows the researcher to think about and prepare the language and wording for certain sensitive questions in advance so that during the interview the researcher has a greater opportunity to focus more thoroughly on participant's words, thoughts and feelings (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Smith et al. (2009) have recommended that questions in the interview schedule should be phrased in such a manner that they are expansive, open, and allow for in-depth detailed responses from the participants, while avoiding questions that are over-empathic, manipulative, leading or close-ended. I attempted to follow this advice in preparing the interview schedule for this study.

The interviews explored topics such as growing up years, family life, messages received about gender, personal attitudes and beliefs regarding gender, sexual abuse experiences, disclosure and help-seeking in relation to abuse experiences, others' reactions and responses to sexual abuse disclosures, how and where the participants learned about sex and sexuality, concerns about one's gender identity or sexual orientation in relation to abuse experiences, and how can men survivors be helped. I also asked the participants to share any information, emotions, or opinions which they felt were important to their narratives but which I might not have asked through my questions. I also encouraged them to lead the conversation into any direction they wanted or thought was important.

It is relevant to address the source of questions in the interview schedule. Before going into the specifics of this study, some general discussion on researcher's ideas and

assumptions before entering the research would be pertinent. Heidegger (1927/1962) has discussed and embraced the idea of “fore-conception” (p. 191) in a significant departure from Husserlian descriptive phenomenology. According to Heidegger, the process of interpretation cannot be free of pre-suppositions such as prior assumptions and preconceived notions (Smith et al., 2009). This understanding of the phenomenological research process requires the researcher to be reflexive (Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2009) noted that in the initial stages of research itself (as early as choosing a topic to study), researchers begin to reflect on their previous knowledge and experience vis-à-vis the subject of study and potential participants. They have suggested that the research questions, while typically not theory-driven, can emerge out of a comprehensive literature review. As one proceeds with the research process, one would need to try to suspend one’s preconceptions regarding what one might find while collecting data, including during constructing data collection instruments (Smith et al., 2009). IPA acknowledges that this aim of suspension of preconceptions is never fully achievable (Smith et al., 2009) since one cannot always suspend one’s preconceptions entirely and also because one may not even be aware of all the preconceptions one holds. The questions in my interview schedule came from my professional experiences, personal experiences, and an extensive review of the literature on men and boy survivors of sexual violence. I must also acknowledge with gratitude Dr. Ramona Alaggia’s help in development of the interview schedule for this study. Dr. Alaggia is a researcher in the area of child sexual abuse disclosures (see Alaggia, 2004, 2005; Alaggia, Collin-Vézina & Lateef, 2017; Alaggia & Millington, 2008) who shared with me, with permission to use, the short version of an interview guide that she had used in one of her research

projects on child sexual abuse disclosures. I incorporated and adapted several questions from her interview guide into my interview schedule for this study.

Since the participants were located in different cities across the country, after scheduling mutually agreeable meeting dates with each of the participants via email or phone, I traveled to the cities where the participants were located for the purpose of interviewing them. I conducted two interviews with each participant, except one participant who could only be interviewed once (a second interview was originally scheduled with this participant, but he had to cancel on account of sudden ill health and subsequent hospitalization of a family member; no other mutually convenient interview date could be subsequently scheduled as soon after he had to travel for business). More than one interview with study participants is advised in interpretive phenomenological research to conduct repeated interviews with the same participants, since it allows the researcher and the participant to revisit some of their earlier discussions, as well as increases the size of the text, or data, which in turn provides greater clarity, redundancy, and confidence while doing the analysis that is plausible and truly interpretive (Benner, 1994). This was a useful strategy in this research because occasionally some participants wanted to revisit some of their earlier responses, sometimes they needed more time to think about certain topics, and sometimes upon reflection they wanted to return to an earlier question and talk more about it at a later stage.

All interviews were conducted in English. The average length of one interview was about 74 minutes and median length was 67 minutes. The shortest interview lasted 37 minutes whereas the length of the longest interview was 126 minutes. The interviews

were conducted at a location of participants' choice. These locations were typically the participant's home and sometimes a hotel room. All interviews were conducted in private closed-door areas.

In interpretive phenomenology interviewing as well as in IPA interviewing, it is paramount that the researcher allows and encourages the participants to tell their stories in their own words (Benner, 1994; Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008). This is to ensure that the participants shape their narrative accounts as opposed to the researcher taking on this responsibility. That is, the participants tell their stories the way they want them to be told and heard. Open and active listening is an integral part of this process (Benner, 1994; Smith et al., 2009). Also important is to keep the interviews free of jargon and heavy-sounding words while asking questions, in order to let the story be told in participants' own words through everyday language. As Benner (1994) has pointed out, "by phrasing the question on foreign, academic (abstract) terms, we cut participants off from their everyday language use, thereby cutting them off from their ordinary spontaneous responses" (p. 108). To remove the participants from their spontaneous responses would have been against the very nature of this research, and therefore I strove to keep the interviews as simple (in terms of language use) and conversational as possible.

Besides the interviews, I wrote field notes before and after the interviews as additional data to help contextualize data from the interviews. The field notes had a four-part structure as recommended by Bogdan and Bilken (2007). The first part was a description of the interview setting; the second part comprised of an account of the

interview; the third part comprised of observer comments; and the fourth part included any memos. Observer comments refer to the researcher's thoughts and feelings during or after the interview. Memos are typically mentioned at the end of the field notes, and contain researcher's ideas regarding any concluding thoughts, and/or areas to be explored in the next interview. Writing field notes was helpful in reflexivity as well as interpretation of data during data analysis.

**Ethical considerations.** When I met a participant for the first interview, I started with giving him information about the research aims and process, and went over the consent protocol. I also gave the participants a copy of the consent form (Appendix B). This process included informing the participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any point in time during the interview process without facing any negative repercussions whatsoever (for example, with regard to their relationship with a non-government organization that may have provided them with initial information regarding this study and my contact details). This conversation also involved talking to participants about the nature of questions that I might ask and the length of the interview. During the interviews, I tried to look out for any verbal and/or non-verbal signs of distress. When I noticed emotional distress, I responded by backing away from that line of questioning and/or reminded the participant that they could take a break, not answer that question, or discontinue the interview.

To compensate the participants for their time, I offered them Indian Rupees 150 at the end of each interview. At the end of the interview process with each participant, I

shared with them a list of websites and online support services that offer information about child sexual abuse or support to survivors (Appendix D).

**Data management.** The interviews were digitally recorded, with prior permission of the participants, and transcribed verbatim for the purpose of data analysis. The audio files were stored on a secure file storage service of the University of Minnesota, and my personal password-protected computer during the process of transcription. While preparing the interview transcripts, I masked all identifying information such as any names and occasionally added unimportant extraneous information (for instance writing that a participant had three siblings when they actually had two, if I concluded that the number of siblings had no consequence on interpretation of data vis-à-vis the research question) in order to ensure that the transcripts contained only de-identified data. The audio files were erased as soon as the transcripts were prepared.

**Reflexivity and researcher positionality.** As mentioned earlier, IPA assumes that researchers cannot be free of pre-suppositions, and encourages researchers to weave their knowledge and experiences into the hermeneutical process of data interpretation. This, however, must be done consciously and in ways that show commitment to actual data. IPA researchers are therefore advised to maintain a reflexivity journal to keep a record of the processes they followed during research and their interpretations of data (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008), and broadly to maintain a “reflexive attitude in which self and other—and the relationship between them—are explicitly examined as part of the research process” (Shaw, 2010, p. 236). Following this advice, I maintained a reflexivity journal throughout the process of research, starting from developing the research question

all the way to analysis and report writing. In this journal I recorded my thoughts, opinions and feelings on how my engagement with this study influenced the process of research. I also used this journal to acknowledge my pre-suppositions and assumptions as and when I became aware of them. I found that this process helped me listen better to the participants during the interviews and to the data during analysis.

Part of staying reflexive during the research process was to acknowledge and examine my positionality with respect to this study and the participants. As a social worker, I have been engaged with preventing and addressing child sexual abuse and sexual and gender-based violence, and promoting children's rights as well as gender and sexuality rights in India for over 15 years. This work has allowed me numerous opportunities to closely work and interact with adult and child survivors of child sexual abuse and their families. These experiences have given me some perspectives on the nature of possible meanings that survivors may make of their abuse experiences. I have witnessed survivors' resilience and also observed how deeply significant the experience of sexual abuse can be for them. I have been frustrated by the lack of support for survivors of sexual violence at societal and institutional levels, and I have been encouraged by the enthusiasm of many people working to break the silence around child sexual abuse.

I have also been involved with understanding and examining the issue of masculinities through my academic and practice work in India and other countries. I approach my work on masculinities and on sexual and gender-based violence from a pro-feminist standpoint. My professional and personal alignment with the feminist

perspective is relevant because I believe analyses of these issues must center gender as a core category that profoundly influences people's experiences. This perspective is infused through this entire research project, starting with framing the research question, to choice and application of methods and interpretation of findings.

As a cis-gender man from India, I also have personal experiences to draw upon with regard to masculinities, sexualities, and child sexual abuse in India. I have known and supported several friends and family members who have experienced sexual abuse during childhood, including some who are men. While growing up in India during my childhood and adolescent years, I have experienced multiple instances of sexual harassment by adults who were strangers, in public and private places. However, I have not experienced serious sexual abuse or assault. I also have many firsthand experiences of the rigid patriarchal sociocultural context of Indian society. As I did not—and do not—conform to many stereotypes of hegemonic masculinity, I experienced severe and prolonged bullying in high school and later as well in relation to my gender expression.

At personal and professional levels, I have tried to critically examine my own position as a cisgender man in a patriarchal society and work to diminish men's patriarchal privilege in support of gender equity. This work has helped me become more aware of patriarchal systems and practices.

As I listened to the study participants during interviews, I found that sometimes their experiences resonated with some of mine, and I could relate to some of their challenges, frustrations, and resilience. At these times, I needed to exercise caution and not assume that I understood the participants fully. In other words, I had to adopt the

stance of “not knowing” (Daly, 2007, p. 5). As Daly (2007) has pointed out, adopting this stance in qualitative research does not mean that the researcher “knows nothing or asks nothing” (p. 5) but rather approaches what the participants are saying with respect and openness to other meanings and interpretations. I found that reflexive journaling was immensely helpful in this regard.

**Data Analysis.** Analysis in IPA is an inductive and iterative process that “begins with the detailed examination of each case, but then cautiously moves to an examination of similarities and differences across the cases, so producing fine-grained accounts of patterns of meaning for participants reflecting upon a shared experience” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 38). At the focus of IPA analysis are the meanings participants make of their lived experiences; “the aim is to try to understand the content and complexity of those meanings rather than measure their frequency” (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 66).

I analyzed the data using the six-step approach that Smith et al. (2009) have recommended for IPA. This approach is iterative and non-linear, meaning the researcher is free to move back and forth between the different steps, and within and between interview transcripts. Given below is a brief description of each of the six steps that I followed while interpreting and analyzing the data.

***Reading and re-reading.*** In this first step of the IPA data analysis process, focus is on immersing oneself completely in the data and becoming as intimately familiar with it as possible. The idea is to center the participant’s voice as the focus of analysis.

Since I transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews myself, I had an opportunity to listen to the participants’ voice and actually hear them tell their stories

again through this process. Since transcribing happened a few months after the interviews, I appreciated the transcribing process as it often mentally transported me back to the interview setting and refreshed my memories of the time spent with each participant. Before transcribing an interview, I sat and listened to it in its entirety at least once. Later, I read and re-read the interview transcripts several times. I also took notes during this process as well as referred to my field notes which sometimes helped provide more context to the transcripts. In the notes I took while reading and re-reading transcripts, I noted my initial thoughts, feelings and observations. I also made a note if any of the moments in the transcripts “[flew] up like sparks,” to use Barritt, Beekman, Bleeker and Mulderij’s (1983) expression.

***Initial noting.*** In this step I continued taking notes, a process that had begun in the previous step. My aim was to develop detailed comments and notes, based on my evolving understanding of the data through listening to the interviews, and reading and re-reading interview transcripts. I tried to achieve this by analyzing each transcript separately where I made exploratory observations and comments regarding what I thought was going on in the data. Some of the comments had a phenomenological focus (i.e. by adhering close to the issues, concerns and meanings explicitly articulated by the participant) while others were more interpretative (i.e. more conceptual, attempting to interpret the participant’s issues, concerns and meanings in the context of their psychological and social world, and trying to understand how and why the participant has above issues, concerns and meanings). Smith et al. (2009) caution that that these interpretative comments must be “inspired by, and [arise] from, attending to the participant’s words, rather than being imported from outside” (p. 90) but also reassure

that “as long as the interpretation is stimulated by, and tied to, the text, it is legitimate” (p. 89-90). I tried to heed their advice and tried to ensure that my interpretative comments were closely tied to the data but also allowed me to bring in my personal and professional experiences and knowledge.

***Developing emergent themes.*** In this step I focused on “mapping the interrelationships, connections and patterns between exploratory notes” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 91) made during the previous step of the analysis process. This step involved the complex task of “turning notes into themes” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 92) in order to arrive at “a concise and pithy statement of what was important in the various comments attached to a piece of transcript” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 92). I tried to achieve this through a process involving close line-by-line coding of the transcript while simultaneously consulting my exploratory comments from the previous step. The coding was done in NVivo for Mac (version 11), a software program designed for analysis of qualitative data. The codes applied labels to segments of data. I then examined the codes to identify emergent patterns within the interview; these patterns were considered themes. The idea was that these emergent themes would bespeak not only the participant’s original words and phrases but also the researcher’s interpretations, thereby hopefully contributing to the development of a comprehensive account co-constructed by the participant and the researcher.

***Searching for connections across emergent themes.*** This step entailed an exploration of the relationships between different emergent themes within one participant’s transcripts and mapping how these different themes might hang together.

This step involved an iterative refining of the emergent themes, where some themes were dropped from the analysis, some were clustered together, and some others were subsumed under a new broader theme known as a superordinate theme.

*Moving to the next case.* After completing the previous four steps for one participant, I moved to the next participant and repeated steps one through four for this new participant. I repeated this process for all 11 participants in this study. Smith et al. (2009) advise that it is important for each participant's narrative to be analyzed on its own terms, which requires the researcher to try and sideline their learning and ideas from other participant narratives before and while analyzing a new narrative. I tried following the step-by-step guidelines for the analysis process to aid in helping realize such idiographic commitment to data analysis.

*Looking for patterns across cases.* Finally, I explored patterns across participants and grouped emergent themes across all interviews into superordinate and subordinate themes. This involved an iterative process similar to the one followed in the fourth step of analysis (searching for connections among emergent themes), but this time it was across interviews. I rearranged and refined the thematic structure several times while continually returning to the transcripts to ensure that the individual and unique voice of each participant was preserved and illuminated within the thematic structure. The superordinate and subordinate themes were chosen not simply on the basis of their prevalence within data but also taking into consideration other important factors such as "the richness of the particular passages that highlight the themes and how the theme helps illuminate other aspects of the account" (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 74-75).

The data analysis process yielded five superordinate themes. Four of these themes had subordinate themes, some of which had sub-themes of their own. A list of the superordinate and subordinate themes can be found in Table 5.1 in the following chapter.

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness of a study refers to the confidence that research generates in its interpretation of the data (Daly 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative research is concerned with basing its findings on what the participants tell the researchers, and matters of quality of such research are concerned with understanding and representing well what the participants tell the researchers (Gilgun, 2005). Smith et al. (2009) have recommended certain criteria developed by Yardley (2000, 2017) to assess the quality of an IPA study.

It is noteworthy that Smith et al. (2009) use the term ‘validity’ of research instead of ‘trustworthiness’. I prefer to use the term ‘trustworthiness’ while referring to quality of this research. Qualitative researchers have recommended paying attention to trustworthiness since it emphasizes producing results that are grounded in the information received from the participants rather than the positivist ideas of reliability and validity (Gilgun, 2010; Daly, 2007). That said, I do not perceive this semantic difference as indicative of a conceptual conflict with Smith et al. (2009); they, in fact, acknowledge that there is a “growing dissatisfaction with qualitative research being evaluated according to the criteria for validity and reliability” (p. 179). My decision to avoid the term ‘validity’ is based on the idea that it is most commonly associated with quantitative research wherein it has a specific and precise meaning. To think differently regarding

quality of qualitative research would require the use of a different term such as ‘trustworthiness’.

Yardley’s (2000, 2017) criteria for the quality of qualitative research encompasses the following four principles: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. These are discussed below in relation to the present study.

The first principle is *sensitivity to context*. This refers to the researcher’s attentiveness to the socio-cultural context of the participants and the available literature on the subject of study. Building rapport with the participants and respecting their rights, concerns and voices throughout the study are part of being sensitive to their context. I conducted an extensive literature review on child sexual abuse and how it might affect men and boy survivors, as well as to study how the experience of child sexual abuse might relate to men survivors as gendered beings. I paid close attention to the participants’ narratives when analyzing data and writing the report. This principle was particularly significant because the sociocultural context in which the participants and their sexual abuse experiences were embedded was critical to this study.

The second principle is *commitment and rigor*. In IPA studies these can be demonstrated through the attentiveness of the researcher toward the participants during data collection as well as through careful analysis of data (Smith et al., 2009). During the data collection phase, I strived to ensure that the participants were aware of their rights; that I tried to conduct the interviews in a manner which allowed the participants to think, speak, and be heard; and that I treated all participants with respect and communicated to

them my commitment to the study and study participants. I have tried to value and highlight participants' distinct voices while writing up the research report, such as by using participants' own words and phrases through inserting extracts from the interviews, thereby hopefully crafting a space for the participants to speak for themselves through this research. For every theme that I have identified and discussed in this research, I have included interview extracts from some or all of the participants for whom that particular theme was present.

The third principle is *transparency and coherence*. I have tried to be transparent by disclosing in detail the process I followed to conduct this research, including choice of research method, sampling, data collection methods, and analysis. Coherence may refer to many things, including if the analysis and findings are logical and make sense, and if the approach taken by the researcher fits the conceptual foundation of the research method. I have discussed the epistemological orientation of IPA and why I concluded that IPA was a good fit for this research project.

The fourth and final principle is *impact and importance*. It is crucial that the research "tells the reader something interesting, important or useful" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 183). To my knowledge, this is the first qualitative study focused on men child sexual abuse survivors' lived experiences in India. I hope that this study will be able to partially but meaningfully address the paucity of research on child sexual abuse in India in general, and on men survivors of child sexual abuse in India in particular. I also hope that findings of the study are be able to contribute to the gradually growing global body of knowledge on men survivors of child sexual abuse.

## Summary

Interpretive phenomenology was an appropriate methodology for this study since it focused on the lived experiences of child sexual abuse for adult men survivors in India. Specifically, the study utilized the IPA method for data collection and interpretation. 11 participants were recruited using purposive sampling method. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, and were supplemented by the researcher's field notes. Data were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were analyzed using Smith et al.'s (2009) six-step approach to IPA. Trustworthiness and quality of the research was established using Yardley's (2000, 2017) criteria for assessing validity of qualitative studies, focusing on the principles of sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. The process of data analysis and interpretation yielded five superordinate themes and several subordinate themes which are listed and described in the following chapter.

## Chapter IV

### Abbreviated Case Studies

This chapter includes short introductions to each of the research participants. The purpose of these short introductions is to provide abbreviated case studies as well as to introduce the readers of this research to the study participants in a way that goes beyond a quick demographic summary and humanizes participants' stories. I hope that these case studies will help situate participants' lived experiences, as described in the results chapter of this dissertation, within the context of participants' individual and social lives. Understanding the context in which participants' lived experiences are located is an important part of IPA (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith et al., 2009).

#### **Participant 1: Arunanshu**

Arunanshu was a 27-year-old gay man, teaching English literature at an alternative private high school in Bhopal. He referred to himself as a “relationships person” and had been dating an Italian man who was working in India for a multinational company. He said that he was an introvert but also “great with people in the sense that it [was] easy for [him] to make people like [him].” He spent a lot of time going to the gym because he felt nervous about “getting older or getting fat,” and wanted to exercise in order to not gain weight. He mentioned watching pornography as one of his hobbies; he said that he did not assign positive or negative notions to this habit and watched pornographic videos regularly before going to bed.

Arunanshu grew up in a nuclear family in Dehradun. His father was a banker while his mother ran her own business. He also had a brother who was 7-years younger. He had grown distanced from his immediate and extended family over the years,

primarily in relation to his sexual orientation as gay, but his relationship with his immediate family members was gradually improving and growing closer over the previous year and a half. As a child, he experienced ridicule within his immediate and extended family for not being academically successful, and was also bullied and body shamed in school by his peers – initially for having what others perceived as excessive body hair and later for showing signs of baldness in his late teens.

Arunanshu experienced child sexual abuse as a seven or eight year old by one of his peers who was a year older than him. The older boy was his friend who lived in the neighborhood and told him to “play a game” in which both of them performed oral sex on each other. Later, around the same time, he engaged in mutual sexual activity with 2-3 other boys from the neighborhood who were of similar age, at least one of whom became manipulative toward him in terms of seeking sexual contact. Following these experiences, Arunanshu said that he felt “very sexually aroused” during his childhood and adolescence, and frequently had sexual contact with boys his age.

As an adult, Arunanshu said that he experienced a high sexual drive which sometimes posed emotional and relational challenges for him. He said, “I enjoy the act of sex very much. And my libido is very high in terms of having sex with my partner, my boyfriend or my lover, but also outside of that to the point that I can have sex with a guy in the morning, and then have sex with another guy in the afternoon, and then have sex with my boyfriend in the evening. And all three of them will be equally intense and equally physically excruciating.” This, Arunanshu claimed, made it difficult for him to stay monogamous or faithful to his romantic partners and caused him anxiety in terms of how these behaviors might affect his romantic relationships.

**Participant 2: Dhruvan**

Dhruvan was a 43-years-old professionally accomplished corporate accountant. He identified as straight and was married with two children. He described himself as a “well-grounded,” “fair-thinking,” and a “very loving” person. He grew up in a middle-class family. His father had a progressively degenerative disease which led to disability and required an increasing amount of caregiving over time. He and his older brother were the only children of their parents. His brother married someone outside of their caste, which his parents found unacceptable initially but eventually reconciled with the son and daughter-in-law. His brother’s marriage influenced Dhruvan’s life too because when he and a woman he had met in college started dating, his parents insisted on getting them married as soon as possible because his girlfriend was from the same caste and his parents were worried that he “might change [his] mind and... might marry somebody out of caste.” Dhruvan married at 22. Dhruvan felt emotionally very close to his parents and saw his caregiving role toward them as a core part of his identity. He and his wife, however, had grown emotionally distant over the years because Dhruvan felt that there were things that he could not share with his wife without him feeling judged.

Dhruvan was sexually abused by his mother’s younger brother who used to live nearby. There was a VHS player in his uncle’s house, and Dhruvan used to go there as a child for sleepovers in order to watch movies. The abuse started when Dhruvan was 10 or 11 years old. His uncle would come and lie with Dhruvan when he would be asleep at night, and sexually molest him. Referring to the start of abuse, Dhruvan said, “The first memory of something of this nature happening was, I remember in the middle of the night somebody was meddling with my private parts.” The uncle also made Dhruvan hold

his genitals, masturbate him, and perform oral sex on him. Once he made Dhruvan perform oral sex on him when they were sleeping in a large room with about 15 other people, all of whom were members of their extended family who had gathered together for a wedding. The abuse continued for nearly four years, until Dhruvan was 15, and stopped when Dhruvan was sent by his parents to a different city for further education.

Dhruvan did poorly in studies in school and experienced low self-esteem, but did very well academically and socially when he went abroad to pursue graduate studies in business, which helped him have a successful career.

Altruism had been an important value and motivation for Dhruvan's life. He said that he wanted to become a volunteer paramedic in his post-retirement future. He carried a first-aid kit with him every time he travelled long distance because he thought a co-passenger on the journey might need his help. He also felt strongly about child sexual abuse and wanted to support civil society efforts aimed at abuse prevention and survivor support. He particularly wanted to advocate for harsher punishment for child sexual abuse perpetrators. Speaking impassioned about laws against child sexual abuse, he said, "I don't want any other child to go through what I have gone through. I'm very clear about it. And as I said, maybe down the line at some point, I want to lobby for a very very severe punishment for people who get caught abusing children. Not only in our country but anywhere else, because it's very personal to me. I think that the laws are very lenient... they have not done anything to curb this menace."

### **Participant 3: Harendra**

Harendra was a 53-year-old businessman from Surat. He owned a successful printing press which he started at the age of 18 when he moved from Maharashtra, his home state, to Surat in the state of Gujarat. He was a person with dyslexia and experienced academic challenges throughout his schooling as a result of lack of awareness of dyslexia and support for dyslexic students. Consequently, he decided not to pursue further education after high school and started his own business instead.

Harendra was the youngest of six children and all of his siblings were significantly older than him. As a child, he was sent to live with one of his sister's marital family where he was sexually abused around the age of eight or nine. The abuse, which continued for about 6-7 months, was perpetrated by an unrelated adult man who was renting a portion of the premises as a tenant. The first time the perpetrator sexually abused Harendra was on the night of Diwali festival while celebrations were going on in the household. The abuse stopped when the perpetrator moved out and relocated to another city after 6-7 months of the first incident. The abuse involved penetrative sex.

Harendra recalled that he had been sexually abused prior to the above incident as well, when he was 2-years-old and was sexually abused by a teenage boy from the neighborhood who had Harendra perform oral sex on him.

Harendra identified as heterosexual and had been married twice. He first married in his early 20s and he referred to this relationship as "disastrous." This marriage didn't last long and ended in divorce. He married again later and had two children with his current wife. Referring to his current marriage, he said, "I can't say that I am very very happily married", and acknowledged that his wife "makes [all] the adjustments." Their son was 15 and daughter was 18.

In recent years, he had become interested in Buddhist philosophy and learnt to practice a certain style of meditation known as *vipassana*. He considered his meditation practice instrumental to his recovery and healing from sexual abuse. He had also started a civil society organization to raise social awareness about child sexual abuse in the city.

#### **Participant 4: Harith**

Harith was a 36-years-old financial consultant. He lived in Hyderabad but in the past had lived and extensively traveled in different parts of the world. Harith said that he “came out to [himself]” as gay at the age of 31; he was married to a woman at the time but was now divorced. He had a daughter as well. He had been partnered with a man for about three years at the time of interview.

Harith grew up in a large joint family in the state of Karnataka; he said that there was a “massive army of people” on the paternal and maternal sides of his family, which “brought in a lot of cousins” into the household. There were at least 15-16 people living in the household at any given time. Harith was the youngest in the family. As an adolescent, Harith was very interested in reading medical thrillers by Robin Cook and imagined himself to be Jack Stapleton, the lead character from Cook’s novels.

It was in this household that Harith was sexually abused by two of his cousins around the age of 8-9 years. One was Babu, his first cousin who lived in the same household; he was a 16-17 years old adolescent when he sexually molested Harith and made Harith fondle his genitals. Kalyan, the other perpetrator, was Babu’s younger brother. Harith believed that Kalyan had noticed the sexual contact between him and Babu, after which Kalyan too had started molesting him and making him fondle Kalyan’s genitals. In both cases the abuse continued for about 5-6 years.

Harith was an avid dancer and photographer. He was part of an amateur group of dancers doing synchronized Bollywood style dancing. He had also been doing cinematography for independent LGBT-themed short movies and screening them at queer film festivals within and outside India.

**Participant 5: Himank**

Himank was 26, a software engineer, and worked as a manager in a leading telecommunications company in New Delhi. His father died when he was only 6-months-old and he and his older sister were raised by his mother and grandmother. His mother ran the family business which his father used to run prior to his death. Until the age of 10 he grew up in a joint family along with his father's younger brother, his wife and children. The relationship between his mother and his uncle's family grew strained and his mother decided to separate from the joint family, which resulted in a happier phase of life for Himank because "there were no tensions of the joint family and [he] could do whatever he wanted."

As a child, he described himself as a "very soft spoken, sensitive kid" who would "burst into tears for small things" and would "silently listen to whatever people said." Himank's mother and grandmother were very doting toward him and he shared a close relationship with them. Himank said that as a child he was "tied to his mom's apron strings" for many years.

Himank recalled four separate events in his childhood where he received unwanted sexual contact. The first of these happened when he was 7-8 years old and involved a boy from the neighborhood of similar age. They used to play together. One time when they were playing, the other boy pulled Himank into a bathroom, stripped him

and himself, and fondled his body including his genitals. This behavior by the other boy happened 7-8 times over the course of next 2-3 years. The second event occurred when he was 8-9 years old and involved his granduncle (whom Himank did not know very well) at a wedding in the family, for which Himank had traveled with his mother to another city. Members of his extended family were sleeping in a few large rooms. Early one morning, most people had left the room to attend some wedding-related event but Himank was asked by his mother to continue sleeping in the same room. His granduncle, who was the only other person left in the room, came and lied down next to him, started kissing him on his lips and fondling his genitals; this continued for about an hour. The wedding was a three-day affair and his granduncle molested him twice over this period. The third event occurred when Himank was 7-years-old and had gone to a supermarket near his residence to buy something his mother had sent him to buy. There was an older teenage boy who worked at the supermarket who asked Himank to follow him to a storage area under the pretext of searching for the item Himank had gone there to buy. Once there, he started fondling Himank all over, including his genitals, and also rubbed his own genitals against Himank's body. This behavior happened about 10 times over the course of next three years. Himank mentioned that this boy at the supermarket was a "very friendly" person. Finally, the fourth event was a one-off incident where one of his classmates in primary school grabbed and fondled his private parts while they were sitting in the school auditorium for some event.

Himank's grandmother had passed away a few years ago and he now lived with his mother. He identified as gay. He was not in a long-term relationship but was actively dating other men.

**Participant 6: Indivar**

Indivar was a 30-year-old heterosexual married man, working as a graphic artist for a television channel in Mumbai. He grew up in Ghatkopar, a suburb of Mumbai, in a lower-middle class family in a *chawl* (a tenement style multi-occupancy residential building). The neighborhood witnessed a significant amount of gang-related violence and criminal activity. Indivar recalled witnessing several stabbings and other brutally violent incidents as a child growing up in this neighborhood. “People,” Indivar said, “didn’t really have time for each other... because they were trying to figure out where tonight’s dinner is going to come from.” Indivar grew up in a joint family of eight adults and children in their small 350-square feet apartment inside the *chawl*.

Indivar experienced sexual abuse in an unoccupied room of the same *chawl*. When Indivar was 8-9 years old, nearly every evening several children, adolescents and young adults living in the *chawl* would get together for “make believe beer parties” in this unoccupied room where they would pretend to have beer by drinking bottles of Canada Dry, a non-alcoholic carbonated drink. It was a mixed-gender group comprising of nine boys and three girls. In terms of age too it was a diverse group; some of the group members were in the age range of 4-14 years, there were four older boys in the age category of 17-22 years, and there was one older girl who was about 21-years-old. The older group members frequently engaged in sexual activities with each other and with younger children, as well as made younger children perform sexual activities with others. Indivar described the sexual activities in this way: “So there would be 12 naked people in one room. And there was no video pornography at the time, there were only print magazines. So the 12 naked people... would be trying to imitate what was happening in

the print magazines including boys with boys, and girls with boys, and multiple girls with one boy, and multiple men with one boy... It was a no holds barred, and sexual, very energized sexual orgy.” This activity continued for about six years, until Indivar was about 14-15 years old. There were clear power differences within the group along the lines of gender and age, with older males being most powerful in deciding which activities will take place and who will participate in these activities. It stopped when some of the older group members moved out of the *chawl*.

Indivar experienced sexual abuse in a separate incident as well, when he was six years old and had gone to a different city with his family for a wedding. An uncle sexually molested him under the pretext of giving him a bath. The uncle made Indivar perform oral sex on him and also penetrated him with his penis and fingers. This was a solitary incident.

Indivar said that he had experienced sexual abuse by a woman tuition teacher as well. When he was a child his parents used to send him for English language classes. There the tuition teacher would undress herself as well as the students. Indivar recollected that there was never any sex involved, in terms of penetrative sex. But there was a lot of pleasing her in whatever way it was required.”

Indivar had been going through therapy to address trauma based on his sexual abuse experiences. He was also involved with activism around child sexual abuse in India and had independently created a music video to raise social awareness about the issue.

#### **Participant 7: Mohan**

Mohan lived in Thane, Maharashtra, which is also where he had grown up in a conservative business family. Initially he and his parents lived in a joint family system

but later his father started his own business venture and separated along with his wife and children from the joint household. Later Mohan took over his father's electric goods business. As a child, Mohan described himself as "very quiet, very shy" who "had lots of inhibitions and a lot of anxiety." Because of these traits, later he found it challenging even as a young adult to enter the family business because he "was very shy to speak to people, to tradesmen and traders, and to talk about money with customers." He described his parents as "verbally abusive" who were "very disapproving of their children." He got married to a woman at the age of 25-26 and had two children. Around the same time, he realized that he was gay and had a sexual interest in men. He continued to stay married to his wife but also had romantic and sexual relationships with men. He felt emotionally very close to his children.

While living in the joint family, Mohan experienced sexual abuse perpetrated by one of his older cousins when Mohan was 5-6 years old and his cousin was 14-16 years old. Mohan's cousin made him masturbate him and also showed him pornographic images from magazines: "He would call me, and take off his pants, and ask me to masturbate him. So I would sit next to him on his bed, and I would hold his penis and shake it... I did not know what it meant to ejaculate... I had never seen him ejaculate, because when it was time to ejaculate I think he would just suddenly get up and go to the bathroom." The abuse continued over a period of two years. One time the cousin asked Mohan to have oral sex with him by putting his penis in his mouth. Mohan refused to do so and this also marked the end of sexual abuse because following this incident Mohan decided not to continue sexual contact with his cousin.

### **Participant 8: Prabodh**

Prabodh was 43-years-old, single, based in Bangalore, and a financial consultant in the corporate sector. He was also a trustee of a non-government organization and was very involved in the organization's work in the area of commercial sexual exploitation of children. He had had both heterosexual and same-sex relationships although most of his relationships had been with women. He did not identify as heterosexual or homosexual, but said that he was "definitely queer." Prabodh grew up in a joint family with his parents, grandparents, three uncles and their families, and one aunt and her children.

As an adolescent, Prabodh experienced sexual contact with adult men on several occasions. His first experience was with an adult man living in his neighborhood when he was 13-14 years old: "Everyday I would go to school he would stare at me and I would stare back at him and be very scared without knowing what was my fear about but that it was taboo. And then he would keep on calling me until one day I went with him. And I remember him, and us hugging... and then him suggesting that I penetrate him and I didn't know what he was talking about... and him saying, 'If not you then let me penetrate you.'" This man took Prabodh to his place on several occasions. In a separate incident, Prabodh recalled that when he was 16-17, he was asked by another adult man, a stranger he had met at a shopping mall, to accompany him to his workplace which was a workshop for making garments: "So he took me to his workshop... There was no foreplay and probably that was all I wanted to do. And he said he wanted to penetrate me, and I said that no I'm not interested, and he said, 'Then... you might as well go.' And I didn't want to go. And I remember after having penetrated and having ejaculated, he wiped himself off with some... pieces of cloth lying around."

**Participant 9: Tanmoy**

Tanmoy was a 40 years old documentary filmmaker and theatre artist from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. He identified as bisexual and said that he had “had lots of sex with men... and significant relationships with two women.” His relationship status was single at the time of interview.

His father, whom he described as “very hypermasculine,” was a violent person who frequently perpetrated physical violence against his mother. His mother committed suicide when he was 12. His father remarried and perpetrated violence against his second wife also. His own relationship with his father was difficult too; he said that his father was “extremely verbally abusive” and “very controlling.” He had sought therapy to try to “heal that relationship” but he said that it had been challenging for him “because [his father] remained while [his] mom didn’t.” His father had died two years ago of cancer. He had a younger brother who was employed in the naval armed forces.

Tanmoy had experienced sexual abuse multiple times in disparate contexts during his childhood and adolescence. At the age of 7-8 years, he was abused by his first cousin who was 10 years older than him. The cousin told Tanmoy to perform oral sex on him and later had penetrative sex with him when Tanmoy was 14. This was an ongoing abusive relationship that continued for several years, well into their adulthood. It ended when Tanmoy was in his mid-30s, when Tanmoy broke off all contact with his cousin after he tried to “rape” Tanmoy in a state of drunkenness while his teenage son slept next to them. Describing his relationship with this cousin, Tanmoy said: “Every time I met him... it would happen. And it was a continuous sort of a thing. He had two children, wife... And I never could refuse him... My heart starts beating even now when I think

about it. Because that was a relationship that was most intimate, and the most secret, and the most dual of all relationships possible.”

Tanmoy was also sexually abused by a male hotel employee in Ranchi where he had gone on a family vacation with his parents. The employee fondled his genitals and wanted him to go into his bedroom. A friend’s older brother too had sexually abused him on several occasions under the pretext of playing games; he would take off Tanmoy’s clothes and fondle his genitals.

He described sexually inappropriate and abusive behavior toward him by his father as well as his step-mother. He remembered being coerced by his stepmother while he was a teenager; he said: “My stepmother wanted to sleep with me, and that freaked the shit out of me. She would ask me to lie down next to her, and she would talk about how she sexually used to miss my dad [when he was away]. It was just a little weird. It was that she would ask me physically to lie down, but it became very uncomfortable and I would say, “I don’t want to lie down,” and she would say, “Yes, do.” And that was really painful.” In relation to his father’s behavior, he recollected an incident from his childhood when his mother was still alive: “Once he sort of felt me up. Felt me up playfully in front of my mother, and he said, “Oh he’s growing up! Look how he hardens,” and other things like that, which I thought was quite abusive. And it was in a way because he had no right to feel me up. Even though my mother kept on saying that he is your own son, how can you do this, how can you say this.”

Tanmoy said that as an adult he had engaged in a lot of risky sexual activity; he felt that he was a “sex addict” and struggled with it. He had been in therapy for a long time and had found it helpful in addressing his high-risk sexual behavior.

He was preparing to leave the house where he had grown up and currently lived. “This house has experienced a lot of violence,” he said, “It is very difficult at one level to stay here... but now I have come to terms with it and I am ready to leave this place.” He saw this move as part of the process of his recovery from childhood adversity and his difficult relationship with his deceased father: “I am going to leave this place very soon. Shut this place down. I am complete with it.”

**Participant 10: Tarun**

Tarun was 39, single, gay, living in Gurgaon, working for a European multinational company, and called himself a “film buff.” He grew up in Bangalore although his family was originally from Rajasthan. He spoke fondly of his family environment during his growing up years: “Most memories of my growing up are pretty fantastic in the sense that I only have a recollection of a lot of play and abandon and a lot of freedom because both my parents were working. I didn’t have... micromanaging kind of parents in my life.” As a child, Tarun described himself as a “very playful, mischievous, high-energy, very outdoorsy” child who was “extremely curious.” He mentioned that as a child he was empathic and good at picking up on others’ emotions: “I was also very sensitive in the sense that if anyone around me was acting slightly different than how they would usually then I could pick on it. So I could sense that somebody was down, or somebody was distracted, or somebody was being aloof.”

He grew up with his younger sister, parents, and paternal grandparents in a small housing complex. He was sexually abused by some of his older male friends living in the same apartment complex with whom he used to regularly go out to play in the evenings. The abuse went on for 3-4 years; it started when Tarun was about six years old and

stopped around nine. Tarun described the abuse as follows: “There were very few girls in our colony... And the boys were largely in two age brackets. There was a whole bunch of us which was my age, and then there was a whole bunch which was 5-6 years elder to us. So they were all 14 to 16 and we were all six, eight, nine. But we all played together... One of the things that I started noticing was very often, like once every couple of days, there would be this one older boy walking off into... a wooded enclosure behind the colony... and it always intrigued me... And I remember that every time it would be a different older boy and a different younger boy, and that there were a few younger boys who were common and the older boys would keep changing. And I was never one of those boys... At one point I asked this really close friend of mine who was actually an older boy. Funnily enough, this was the person who was always watching my back and making sure I always got my turn in the games and making sure that I did my homework... So I asked him once... He said, “Would you like to go?” and I said, “Yeah of course,” and he said, “Soon.” And he was my first abuser actually.” This older boy and one or two other older boys then started taking turns taking Tarun into the small room behind the apartment building several times a month where he was sexually abused by them, which ranged from kissing and fondling him, making him masturbate them, making him have oral sex with them, to having penetrative anal sex with him. The abuse stopped when Tarun was nine because his family moved out of the apartment complex to start living in a different part of the city and therefore he stopped meeting and playing with this group of friends.

Tarun described his family as very close-knit. He said that he had many friends across the world with whom he felt very close. He spoke about his deceased maternal

grandmother as a role model for him because of her wisdom and compassion even though she had not received any formal education. He recalled the following incident with her with much fondness: “She was on her deathbed when I was in my mid-20s and I was trying to spend time with her over whatever little time was left. I had gone across one weekend... In those days there was a lot of pressure to marry from home because I wasn’t out to my parents... And she said, “Don’t marry because you are being asked to. Marry only if you want to.” And that was the last thing she said before she passed away and I am pretty sure she knew I am gay or that I am not interested in women.”

### **Participant 11: Tejesh**

Tejesh was a 35 years old gay man with a degree in social psychology who was working as a manager in a cancer support non-profit organization in Chennai. His parents were from Tamil Nadu but he had grown up in Bihar. His parents had returned to their home state after retirement and Tejesh had joined them a few years later. He lived with his parents while his older brother and sister lived in different states. He described his family as “slightly educated, middle class, urban Indian family” that was “somewhere between close knit and hands off.”

Tejesh was sexually abused by his distant cousin who had come to work in the household as domestic help for a few months when Tejesh was six or seven. This older boy was 14-15 years old. He would ask Tejesh to remove his shirt and fondle his upper body but not the genitals. This behavior occurred regularly for two or three months and stopped when the cousin moved back to his village to be with his native family.

Tejesh referred to himself as a “foodie,” who was interested in different aspects of food such as talking and reading about food. He was an avid food blogger with an active presence on social media.

## CHAPTER V

### Results

In this chapter I will present the findings of this study. Table 5.1 below presents a summary of superordinate and subordinate themes, which are discussed in detail later in the chapter.

Table 5.1

*List of superordinate and subordinate themes*

	Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
1	Heteropatriarchal social environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Patriarchy</li> <li>b. Heteronormativity and homophobia</li> <li>c. Silence about sexuality</li> </ul>
2	Impact of child sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Impact of abuse on self</li> <li>b. Impact of abuse on interpersonal relationships</li> <li>c. Impact of abuse on relationships with (their) children</li> </ul>
3	Meanings of child sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. ‘Very mixed feelings’: Confusion and lack of understanding</li> <li>b. ‘I understood that it is not to be spoken about’: Secrecy</li> <li>c. ‘It was like a game of cricket’: Sexual abuse as pleasure and excitement</li> <li>d. ‘Literally a game’: Sexual abuse as play</li> </ul>

		<p>e. ‘I thought it was the way in which fathers showed their affection’: Sexual abuse as love or intimacy</p> <p>f. ‘I never thought I could do anything about anything’: Helplessness and agency</p> <p>g. ‘A shitty secret that everyone thinks I am a boy but what they don’t know is that I am actually a girl’: Perceived effeminacy</p>
4	Disclosure	<p>a. Barriers to disclosure</p> <p>b. Response to disclosure</p>
5	Perceived relationship between sexual abuse and sexual orientation	

### **Superordinate Theme 1 - Heteropatriarchal Social Environment**

It was evident in most participants’ narratives that they had grown up in, and continued to inhabit, a social environment of heteropatriarchy. This superordinate theme is discussed below through three subordinate themes: patriarchy, heteronormativity and homophobia, and silence about sexuality.

**Subordinate theme 1a - Patriarchy.** Patriarchy is a core element of heteropatriarchal social environment. Most participants shared examples of how, in their social environments, there existed distinct boundaries between males and females with regard to behaviors, expressions, and attributes that were considered appropriate. These

ranged from expectations regarding academic achievement and language use to individuals' behaviors and mannerisms. As Harith said, "You grow up in a society which is always dictating how men need to be." Arunanshu shared his experiences of growing up in a sociocultural environment that emphasized this distinction between boys and girls:

I remember being a child belonging to a school setup and belonging to a neighborhood and belonging to a family where, you know, there was a clear boy-girl distinction in the sense that boys were supposed to be more outgoing, more upfront. I mean the impetus on them being more academically bright was more than that of a girl because they have to often have a job, and have to get married, and all of that. So I remember that as a child I very clearly saw... very clear gender roles and gender behaviors that were put upon boys and girls.

This subordinate theme is illustrated through three sub-themes below, one of which further has several sub-themes. Table 5.2 below presents an overview of this subordinate theme and its sub-themes.

Table 5.2

*Overview of subordinate theme 1a (Patriarchy)*

Subordinate theme	Sub-themes	Sub-sub-themes
Patriarchy	'You have to earn, you have to be strong, you have to be rude, you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'My beard is stronger than my father's': Physical features and strength.</li> </ul>

	<p>have to be fit to fight’: Expectations regarding masculinity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Powerful, dominating, and in control’: Mental toughness and emotional stoicism.</li> <li>• ‘A man who can take charge of things’: Independence and control.</li> <li>• ‘Somebody who stands on his own legs and takes care of his family’: Provider and protector.</li> </ul>
	<p>‘Are you a girl?’: Effeminophobia.</p>	
	<p>‘I think you are a girl, and we will find out that whether you are or not’: Gender-based bullying and shaming.</p>	

***‘You have to earn, you have to be strong, you have to be rude, you have to be fit to fight’: Expectations regarding masculinity.*** Participants discussed being exposed to various ideas and expectations regarding how they were supposed to behave and express themselves as men or boys. While some of the participants personally believed in these notions, others observed them as prevalent in the society without subscribing to these constructs themselves. These ideas encompassed a vast range of personal attributes and social activities such as academic achievement, mannerisms, sports, professional success,

bodily characteristics, emotional expressions, romantic relationships, and sexual drive.

As Tejesh said, men were expected “to have a job and a career, to be assertive, to be stronger emotionally and physically, to marry and have children. That is how society is.”

*‘My beard is stronger than my father’s’*: *Physical features and strength*. Several participants brought up the idea of how they grew up in environments where physical strength was considered an important feature of being masculine. Indivar shared an anecdote from his childhood, reflecting how physical strength was significantly associated with his masculine identity:

My mother used to send me out to pick up dishwashing soap, which at the time used to come in 10 kilogram bags. So she would send me out to buy it from the store. On the way back, because you are carrying 10 kg and walking with it for about 20 minutes, all the veins are all pumping. “Hey, I am a man! That’s who I am. All the woman stuff is not for me. This is what I am for. Let me climb [the stairs] and carry and provide and do all those things.”

Several other participants also discussed the societal expectations they had encountered with regard to physical strength as an essential attribute of being a man. For instance, Tejesh said:

I remember, like, once there was a discussion about how much strength each one of us had. So I remember [a male family member] removing his shirt and showing this is what a man’s strength is.

Mohan too said that he had experienced expectations regarding masculinity while growing up.

So there were expectations. You have to earn, you have to be strong, you have to be rude, you have to be fit to fight. All these were the messages I got.

Physical strength is not the only characteristic men require in order to be considered masculine men. Participants discussed several other bodily features that influenced—enhanced or diminished—their status in society as men. For instance, Indivar talked about facial hair and its impact on how masculine he was perceived by others during adolescence:

A lot of Indian men don't really grow a lot of facial hair already in their teens. It sort of develops over time. So it was the same with me. It took a little while, it took its time to come. And some of the men who were really burly already as 17 or 18-year-olds would say, "Hey you can't grow any hair. Ha ha! You must be a girl."

Arunanshu discussed facial and body hair, as well as listed several other bodily attributes, which he considered linked to his ideas and experiences of masculinity.

I look masculine enough physically in the sense that I naturally have a beard, I have a darker complexion, I have heavy eyebrows, I have a balding head, I genuinely have a hairy body, I am neither too fat nor too thin, I have a thickish body. I have always exercised enough to have some biceps. And so all of those become my way of expressing my sexuality in the masculine way of it, and I think that kind of makes me comfortable. I know that I am naturally on the masculine side anyway.

For Arunanshu, having a 'masculine' body was not simply associated with his gender identity but also with his sexuality as a gay man. He said that he once was "ashamed of having a hairy body" but "over time... learnt to understand that there are guys who are attracted to strongly hairy, manly bodies also." However, his understanding of his bodily

features in relation to his sexuality was not restricted to just his sexual or romantic relationships; these bodily features were relevant to his innate sense of being a gendered and sexual person:

When I was growing up, because I had a relatively muscular lean body, I remember me being attracted to myself also. So there were times when I would masturbate to myself, looking at myself in the mirror... So my masculinity in the sense that how my body appears is a very important part of my sexuality. I mean being muscular, having a beard which is strong in the sense that my beard is stronger than my father's, so that is also a very important part of my thing. So I define masculinity with those aspects.

*'Powerful, dominating, and in control': Mental toughness and emotional stoicism.*

While physical strength seemed to be an important expectation regarding masculinity in participants' narratives, mental toughness appeared to be important as well. The idea of mental toughness can take many forms. Tejesh said that the society expected men to be "assertive" and "stronger emotionally." Tarun, on the other hand, mentioned, "I have a lot of masculine qualities in me in the sense that I am a very head-driven, insights-driven person, which in my mind is a very masculine thing." Thus Tarun constructed his intellectual ability as an innately gendered attribute. Mohan discussed the social expectations regarding masculinity that he had observed and experienced:

I think my definition has been you have to be powerful, dominating, and in control of people who are in the family... Yeah I think you have to be strong and everything... You cannot cry. You cannot seek support, you only have to provide support. So that's what I think is a man.

Being stoic is often considered a masculine attribute, as is the ability to stay stoic in the face of emotional pressure and negative experiences. Mohan talked about how showing affection or crying were seen as unmasculine behaviors that men were expected to shun:

For a long time it was not okay to be, to show any feelings of any softness, or even to be affectionate with your children. Even if [other men showed affection], maybe they would do it in their house but not in front of other people. Even not among relatives. They would not show their affection for children, or not cry and everything... The only time men are allowed to cry is when there is a death in the house. So that is accepted. But otherwise you cannot cry. So I challenged that, and I questioned that, and I was often ridiculed for being soft.

*'A man who can take charge of things': Independence and control.* Participants discussed that self-reliance and control over people or situations were often considered important masculine attributes. Tejesh said that personally to him, being a man meant being “someone who can lead the life and face problems, and basically live life on his own terms and live confidently in our society.” Harendra mentioned that socially, men were expected to “be in command over [any] situation.” Personally, he found being the leader of his business organization a masculine experience: “I run my own business where I am looked upon as a head, which I think is a very manly thing to do.” Prabodh alluded to the notion that in a patriarchal society men are expected to assume control within relationships and social contexts, when talking about his parents’ marriage which he saw as a “very queer relationship.” He shared that his mother may have experienced

some disappointment within her marriage because his father did not fit the cultural stereotype of a protective husband.

[Their marriage] was gender non-normative and I think my mother might have had some bit of sadness around it. So I sometimes keep on telling her that do you ever realize that you might be very attracted to men who are very typically patriarchal men? There is a certain longingness for a man who is a protector, and a man who can take charge of things, and a man who can, you know, be the man. Then she says, "I don't know."

If assuming control is considered a status-enhancing experience with regard to masculinity, lacking control is typically viewed as a weakness, and consequently, unmasculine. This is illustrated in the following exchange between Mohan and I:

Interviewer: Can you tell me a story of a time when you felt inadequate as a man, or felt that you were not man enough?

Mohan: Yeah, quite a lot of times. I think that was when, for example not being able to stand up for myself in the face of perceived oppression by some relatives where maybe some relative is powerful and forceful enough and dominates an argument and I feel it's unfair and unjust. I don't know if that is gender-related or it's just that I feel weak at the time. Powerless, not in control.

In this instance, Mohan speculated that feeling powerless or not in control could make him feel inadequate vis-à-vis his masculinity.

*'Somebody who stands on his own legs and takes care of his family': Provider and protector.* Many participants discussed the significance of the idea that as a man they were expected to perform the role of the primary provider in the family, and that taking

care of the family was considered one of the primary responsibilities of men in society.

Tejesh said that he considered providing for oneself and one's family an important attribute for men.

I wouldn't qualify it as right or wrong, but I would see a man as a, in the role as a provider. Someone who can sustain himself and a set of people around him, like maybe his biological family or otherwise. So I see it in that way.

Dhruvan echoed a similar sentiment and said that taking care of one's family was the most important duty for men.

I believe, first and foremost, that the biggest factor in being a man is in terms of being a good son, being a good father, and of course, being a good citizen, a law-abiding citizen, and most importantly, somebody who stands on his own legs and takes care of his family in the best possible manner.

For men, the role of being a breadwinner is often tied to their earning ability.

Therefore the ability to make money and have a financially rewarding career is also associated with the notion of masculinity, as illustrated in the following quote by Mohan:

I think material gains, success in business, and being a parent, these I think are the only things that made me feel accomplished... as a man, yeah... I think bearing children is the greatest accomplishment according to my value system. But yes, definitely making money made me feel a sense of success and achievement. So if it's a masculine thing then yes that fulfilled my manly needs.

***'Are you a girl?': Effeminophobia.*** Sociocultural ideals regarding masculinity are typically linked to misogyny (the contempt or prejudice against women) and effeminophobia (the disdain toward effeminacy) (Allan, 2017; Kimmel, 1994; Sedgwick,

1993). As Kimmel (1994) has observed, men in patriarchal societies are often “riding gender boundaries, checking the fences [they] have constructed on the perimeter, making sure that nothing even remotely feminine might show through” (p. 132). There was strong evidence for this within the participants’ interviews. Several participants expressed a desire, compulsion or expectation to put distance between themselves and the feminine in terms of their everyday behaviors and preferences. For instance, Mohan spoke about his interest in theater during his schooldays and how he was stopped from pursuing it because it was perceived as feminine by the older men in his family:

I remember that during the summer vacation [some schools] would have these workshops advertised. And yeah, I remember now that there was one workshop that I really wanted to go to, and my mother said no. She also went, explored, and said that she was equally excited about it. But then I think it was a decision of the men in the house that no, boys don’t do that; if he goes there then something will change in his mind.

Indivar shared several incidents from his childhood and adolescence of others picking on certain actions and admonishing him for them because of their perception of these actions as innately feminine:

[A] cousin of ours who [used to live] with us would also say, [*“Tu ladki hai kya?”*] [*“Are you a girl?”*]] because I had a habit of talking on the phone a lot. Because I never thought it was a feminine thing to do. I thought it was talking to somebody on the phone. It is the same as talking to somebody sitting across the table. She would say, “Are you a girl? You talk so much on the phone!”

Himank too remembered multiple instances of being told not to do certain things because others identified them as feminine:

There were 3-4 of us sitting in the TV room, my aunt included. And we were just, you know, watching TV. And there was this one nice song that I really liked dancing to. And I started dancing to it, okay, in front of everyone. And then, like, my aunt started giggling in a very sneering way. And you know, then she passed a comment, like, “No. What are you doing? Don’t dance like girls in front of everyone. It’s not a good thing.”

Even when men desire to express themselves in ways that may be feminine-identified, they sometimes feel the pressure to check themselves because of effeminophobia. Arunanshu, for instance, said:

As I grew older I think my inability to express myself in an effeminate manner, you know, comes from that bias towards femininity, or expressing my gender through the feminine side of it. I know that I can be girly if I want to but because of the expectation of my gender being masculine and this and that, because I was bullied... even though I hid it so strongly from everybody.

He went on to say that he had grown a little more relaxed in terms of expressing himself effeminately in certain familiar contexts, but continued to feel a strong need to keep such behavior in check.

A lot of people in my school [Arunanshu’s workplace] know that I'm gay... They also know about my boyfriend and my ex, they know everything about it... If I do behave effeminately naturally around them, I let it pass. As in it's not something I would worry so much about. Like if I jerk my neck in a certain manner or if I move

my hand like this [moved his index finger] or whatever, just to make a point or show something, it would be okay because they kind of already know that I am gay. And so I would let myself pass and say “*chal yeh tune kiya*, you’ve done it but it’s okay, let it pass” but there are very clear, very strong guards, my self-guards that I keep in not allowing myself to show it that way.

***‘I think you are a girl, and we will find out that whether you are or not’: Gender-based bullying and shaming.*** There exist costs to opposing or disrespecting gender norms in patriarchal societies. Reprimanding or punishing individuals—men and boys as well as women and girls—for actions or behaviors that others may perceive as inappropriate for their gender is an important feature of patriarchy (Brannon, 1976; Brooks, 2000; Jewkes, 2002; Kane, 2006; Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing & Malouf, 2001). While men and boys are typically rewarded for conforming to gender norms, they also may be subjected to ridicule or punishment if and when they challenge or move away from what is considered appropriate masculine behavior.

Many participants discussed their experiences of being shamed, bullied or reprimanded when they deviated from the societal norms vis-à-vis masculinity. Arunanshu shared an experience from his childhood of being beaten by his mother for not going out of the house to play sports with other boys in the neighborhood:

There was this one time when my mom slapped me and beat me and tore my shirt and she like beat me very badly in a way to, like, push me out of the house.

Literally slapped me left, right and center. She broke my shirt buttons. Pushed me out like “*kyun nahi ja raha hai bahar? Ja bahar, ja bahar*. Go out, go out.” [Why aren’t you going out? Go out.]. She... did that because she was just so frustrated by

the fact that even though I had friends my age who were willing to take me to play cricket specifically (laughs), I did not want to. And I did not want to because one, I did not enjoy cricket and any other game that involves a ball, but also because I did not want to. ...And my mom's beating me that day, that evening, was because her premise was “why are you not going out like other boys?”, “when all the other boys are playing, why are you sitting inside?”, “you should be like other boys, you should be going out to play, you should not be sitting inside the house”. And though she never explicitly said “you are sitting inside the house like a girl”, but I know that if I were a girl and sitting inside, she would not have beaten and slapped me to step outside.

Mohan talked about his experiences of being shamed for having certain feminine-identified mannerisms:

I think there are times when I have been ridiculed for my mannerisms. Or somebody imitated me or the way I spoke something, like the intonation of the inflection of the voice. So if I did something like that, which probably meant just as a way of being gentle and not being very dominating, I was just being careful and my tone of voice, and somebody imitated me. And that has happened many many times. Right from childhood till even adulthood. So I tried to mask that as much as possible. So that is where I feel inadequate as a man. Yeah, I think it's about my mannerisms.

Prabodh talked about his experiences of gender-based bullying against himself and some of his classmates during his school years, where influential adults such as teachers tolerated or were complicit in the bullying behaviour of some students:

Rebuke, humiliation, you know... I think teachers participated in it, directly or obtusely... For example, if a group of boys was making fun of maybe two or three guys for being effeminate, I can't remember a single incident where a teacher chastised them, or when it would become an issue that you cannot do this, or you shouldn't do this. I can't remember a single messaging from a teacher. But I can remember some moments maybe with teachers where if a particular boy, it wasn't necessarily always about me, but if a particular group of boys was saying, "Oh Sir, he's like a woman," or "He's a lady," or whatever, I do remember teachers may be even smirking.

Tanmoy shared an incident where he had experienced violence from other students in his school because of his active interest in dance:

A de-robing tried to take place in a school bus with eight boys trying to strip me. So that was very violent. And they didn't manage to strip me but they had almost undone my pants... Yeah this was in the school bus itself. And my brother stood and watched also. It was quite interesting. And he couldn't do anything because probably he was two years younger. And I didn't realize it then but I took a lot of hurt. And that was because I used to dance in the bus. In the bus I used to continue dancing. And I think that sort of poked them that "oh I don't think you are a boy, I think you are a girl, and we will find out that whether you are or not."

**Subordinate theme 1b - Heteronormativity and homophobia.** Many participants, particularly those who identified as gay or bisexual, mentioned the pervasiveness of heteronormativity and homophobia in their sociocultural environment. Tejesh, for instance, shared that his identity was internally acceptable to him but he was

worried and anxious about it not being socially acceptable to be gay in Indian society. He had only observed heteronormative relationships around him, and this made him nervous about his own sexual orientation.

Very early I realized that I was one of them [gay people]. Like maybe a person who is attracted to his own gender. So I knew that. I was very *pukka* [sure] about that. But I didn't share it with anyone. So again the whole confusion was about, not about if this is the right thing. I was never into this whole thing of morally right or wrong. I was very sure that okay fine, this is how I am. But whether it is socially right, I was always confused about that. Whether this will be accepted or not. Because all around me I could see people marrying women.

Tejesh had also observed influential people in his life espousing homophobic attitudes, which contributed to his anxiety about being gay. He shared an incident of a teacher in his school, which was a religion-affiliated school, discussing homosexuality in homophobic terms.

And there was one more incident where we had a value education class. So we had a Jesuit priest again, who was not one of the regular teaching faculty... He was good. We used to discuss many aspects of life. But then once again, he narrated a story where a young man was pursuing him. That young man took him to his house and all that. [The priest] started talking about homosexuality. So... this priest said that "this boy, this person was from a good family but do you think that would help him in any way? Would you really, would he really be able to marry and be a father to a kid? And would that really help?" So again putting it in bad light. So my only

questions were that is it really important to, is it for everyone to marry and have kids, like is that all you have in life?

It is noteworthy that same-sex relationships are not legally recognized in India and it is uncommon to see same-sex couples cohabiting in the society (Naik, 2017), which likely explains why Tejesh may have perceived being gay and being married as mutually exclusive.

Tarun said that conversations around sexuality and sexual or romantic relationships were exclusively heteronormative when he was an adolescent: “At least in my school there was no sex education, there was not even a whisper of anything other than heterosexuality.”

Arunanshu remembered homophobic remarks of his schoolmates in their conversations about sex and sexuality:

I remember in Grade 9 and 10 people were coming and talking about masturbation and saying questions like “what hand do you use” and “how many times you masturbate” and “this is how you can prolong your masturbation”. You know those dialogues would happen and I remember listening to a lot of it. I don't think I ever contributed to any of those dialogues but yeah those dialogues were happening. But again it was very heterosexual in its nature. I don't remember anybody talking about it at all. If at all there was a dialogue about it, about homosexuality, it would be making fun of it, or you know, ridiculing it, or saying it mockingly because, you know, you are making fun of the other person.

Participants' experiences of observing heteronormativity or experiencing homophobia were not limited to their childhood or adolescence. Tanmoy—a bisexual man—shared that his father—whom he described as “very hypermasculine”—had expressed approval of his sexual relationships as an adult with women while disapproving of similar relationships with other men:

Once he said, “I at least get girls home and not pansies home,” or something he said. It was almost like we wouldn't discuss this topic because obviously it came to his mind or his head that I might be gay or whatever it is.

Tarun shared his challenges and frustrations about navigating a heteronormative and homophobic Indian society as an adult gay man:

It is really really hard to be a gay man in India. So if I go beyond the masculine/feminine thing and look at my orientation then I have huge struggles, because it is really hard to be open about it. I am out to a lot of people, including my friends, my sister, not so much to my work colleagues here but in my previous firm I felt comfortable. I'm not out to my parents. I date actively, other men. I am sexually active. To the extent that I can I also stand up for gay rights, like I go to pride, I participate in whatever else like petitions, this, that, I don't know if you know [name of a prominent Indian queer rights activist] but I do whatever I can do to support his legal battles... I still think I hold it with a whole lot of illegitimacy so far as India is concerned, and even globally. I have traveled so much and it is not that much better. That, when I cross it with the sense of being a man, creates all sorts of dissonance and anger and frustration, and sense of cynicalness and less

hope that in my lifetime at least it can change. And there are so few role-models of married gay men with kids that, you know, I really don't know anybody like that. Which then leaves you with having to navigate your own subjective interpretation of how to exist, and thrive, be yourself, and yet hold yourself with dignity.

**Subordinate theme 1c - Silence about sexuality.** Patriarchy and silence about sexuality are conceptually related to one another in the Indian society. As Ramasubban (n.d.) notes, “widespread “norms” of universal marriage, monogamy and procreative heterosexuality involving chaste women and masculine men and enforced by the triumvirate institutions of patriarchal family, caste and community, contribute to a consensual societal framework of silence about sexuality” (p. 94). Many participants discussed that there was a general climate of silence about sexuality around them while they were children or adolescents, and that they had little access to any channels of information on sex and sexuality such as within family or at school. Tarun said:

Nobody had ever spoken to me including my parents or teachers saying that oh you'll reach puberty and then you'll grow armpit hair and you'll start having an erection and women are different and they have a vagina. None of this was ever spoken by anybody in the existence of my life. The only way you figured this is through friends, conversations and whatever wrong information you get from those kind of things. No awareness at all, except for what was happening. And that also in my mind I couldn't have figured. If you would have asked this 7-year-old, “Is this sex?” I would have said, “What is that?” because I had never heard that term before. Yeah, no awareness around any of this.

Many participants shared that no parent figure in their immediate or extended family explained to them anything about sex or sexuality, and as a consequence they felt ignorant about these matters. Indivar spoke about the silence about sexuality that permeated his social environment:

I don't think I knew anything about sex at all... Because, you know, it's not a thing that happens, right? I now joke about how we import all the children from China or something because we don't have sex in this country. We don't even talk about it. It doesn't happen. So it was like that. We didn't know where we came from.

Dhruvan shared that as a child, his curiosity to learn about sex and sexuality was met with violence.

Everybody was embarrassed to talk about it [sex]. When I say embarrassed, it was just not the thing of those times to talk about it. I remember asking my brother, in those days they used to have these advertisements of *nirodh* [condoms] and sanitary napkins, Carefree [a popular brand of sanitary napkins]. I remember asking my brother, I think I was in [grade] eighth or ninth, I asked what are these things, and I remember he started hitting me.

Himank discussed the gendered nature of conversations on matters related to sex and sexuality. Since he grew up as an only male person in a family where there were three female persons, he mentioned that girls and women typically experienced greater inhibition in discussing sexuality.

Typical Indian family, you know. Whenever such things come on TV, they'd just flip the channel. And also because, like I said I lived with three other women, my

mom, my sister and my grandmother. And women are generally more shy talking about all these things. So yeah, definitely not at home at all.

At school too, silence about sexuality was pervasive in many participants' experience. For many, there were no sexuality education classes at school whatsoever. Any mention of sex or sexuality was typically limited to biology curricula on the topic of reproduction. For instance, Arunanshu discussed that the discussion in his school happened just once during the entirety of his school years, and this was limited to reproductive biology.

I: Did you receive any sex education at school?

P: It was just sexual. There were two chapters in biology.

I: Okay. So was it sexual education or was it just anatomy, just biological?

P: No it was when sexual intercourse, it was about that. So and then the penis goes inside the vagina, and then sperms through ejaculation, and then that goes and fertilizes the egg and then it becomes a zygote and it went like that. There wasn't any talk about sex as an entity. It was sexual reproduction.

In instances where teachers delivered sexuality education, or discussed social, relational or psychological aspects of sex and sexuality, it was rarely comprehensive and mostly colored with moralistic notions informed by compulsory and procreative heterosexuality and/or homophobia. For instance, Indivar described the solitary sexuality education session that took place at his school:

So we had one sex education session at school. And the teacher was so embarrassed that he didn't write 'sex' on the board, he wrote 'secks'. Because how do you write 'sex' in front of kids. So that's how far as my knowledge of sex went. I actually

spelt it as 'secks' for a very long time, because that's what he did and that's what we were taught.

Prabodh mentioned that while there were no separate sexuality education classes at his school, his biology teacher also discussed some social aspects of sexuality which clearly emanated from sexist and patriarchal views.

I remember our biology teacher once told us that, you know, women don't really enjoy sex. They love the chase and all the drama around it but not the sex itself.

And I remember having thought even at that age, "His poor wife!"

Tejesh narrated an incident where his biology teacher, while discussing the human reproductive system, went into a discussion on homosexuality and mentioned gay people as vectors of disease.

Since it was biology, so we had something on AIDS. So she was explaining the reasons and all, and then suddenly it went to homosexuality, and "you know, who, what they are?" she asked us. Many students said "yes, people who are attracted to their own gender." "You know, that is one of the reasons why AIDS spreads? And you know, I have read in magazines that in Africa and all, there are these places where people go" and she made a very sad face.

The lack of information sources based in families and schools on sex and sexuality does not indicate that the participants did not access other potential sources of information on this subject. Young people often have agency and look for ways to discover information on sex and sexuality, even when it is not made accessible or readily available by those in positions of power around them. Moreover, patriarchal societies allow men and boys comparatively greater permissiveness to talk about sex and sexuality,

and have sexual experiences. The sources participants in this study typically gravitated toward were pornography, popular media, newspapers or magazines, or peer networks. Mohan, for example, discussed that he learnt about sex and sexuality through his peer group.

I started masturbating only when I was in sixth, standard sixth [grade sixth]. That was when, I must have been about 12 years old. I think I might have learnt about it around that time only. From what you pick up from schools and colleges and people started making fun and then you realize, for a moment you wonder why are they making fun of this, what's so funny, because it's about nudity, and slowly with the context it dawns upon you that oh this is probably what happens for a child to come into place. So I think it would be one of those natural processes. I don't remember anybody clearly explaining to us that this is what happens.

Arunanshu discussed that there were regular conversations in his all-boys peer group about sex, mostly in terms of sexual attraction or aggression toward girls, or aggression toward other boys.

I think it started in grade eight itself. People would talk about penises, their penises, them getting an erection, and how this girl was hot or whatever. And in Grade 9 it became very graphic and explicit where people would talk about how they would want to fuck the girl, fuck the other girl and all that. In abuse, in like abusive language also [inaudible]. They would say things like "I'll fuck your ass", "*Teri gaand maar doonga agar tu aisa kare to*" [I'll sodomize you if you do that].

Harith mentioned that he picked up knowledge on sex and sexuality from books that were available to him within his home, but also through pornography and chatting

with his peers. Discussing the nature of conversations he and his peers would have about sex and sexuality and the pornography they would access together, he said:

See again it's that age where people like to talk about their penises, the boys especially, who's big, and the small one is the butt of everybody's jokes and all that stuff. And it's all in, I think, naïve jest. It's not like a derogatory thing or something like that, I guess. But yeah, the conversations were very often laced with sexual innuendos and all those things. Sexuality part of it, like I said, it's always like if there is a boy who is interested in another boy, he has to be a *hijra*. So that's about it. It ended there, so nobody wanted to be a *hijra* obviously. So there is no concept of gays or lesbians. Lesbians were cool I guess, because we saw it in porn.

Although it was very yuck types. But again, boys like to see lesbians. So I guess that kind of got accepted as a norm. But no, there was no gay porn at all obviously. But again, generally when we were talking, there was a lot of talk about sex and girls and all that bravado and machismo and all that jazz.

It is noteworthy that the peer-group conversations and pornography that Harith mentioned are defined by their patriarchal, heteronormative, and homophobic character. The misinformed idea that being attracted to someone of the same sex would mean that the person is a *hijra* is not only homophobic as it stigmatizes same-sex sexual relationships between boys or men, it is transphobic as well in its underlying assumption that being *hijra* is shameful. *Hijra* are a social group in South Asia which includes "those who aspire to and/or undergo castration, as well as those who are intersexed. Though some *hijras* refer to themselves in the feminine, others of them say that they belong to a third gender and are neither men nor women" (TARSHI, 2005, para. 3).

Tarun also talked about learning about sex and sexuality through watching pornography along with a group of friends, and his experiences too reflect heteronormativity and pervasive silence about sexuality.

Yeah my first ever memory of anything that was related to the act of sex was through porn which was watched collectively at these boys' [Tarun's friends] houses. And then you know there are always some people who think they are more knowledgeable and then they feel like we should share it with our buddies, so they say, "*Ab yeh yeh karega, ab yeh karega, yahan yeh hota hai*" [Now he will do this, now he will do that, this is how it happens]. You know, their interpretations, I don't even remember half of it. But yeah I saw porn and it was all heterosexual porn as you can imagine. That was our first education so to speak. And then whatever discussion happened among us and all of that. And of course we were having erections so we would sometimes jerk off during porn. Ourselves, not each other. Yeah, never in a conversation otherwise, except between the boys, but never involved a girl in these conversations, never involved teachers, never involved parents, not even cousins actually. These topics we wouldn't bring up even though we were really close. Just through porn, I think.

While the participants could explore ways to access information on sex and sexuality, such activities were typically not seen as socially acceptable and hence were clandestine. Arunanshu narrated an incident when his parents found him watching pornography.

I remember this one time when I was caught masturbating also and watching porn. My father was very angry with me. My mother saw what was happening and so

yeah I was scolded the next day. I listened to it. My mom was like, “Do you even feel weird while watching porn or do you think it’s a natural thing?” And I was like, “*Nahi nahi* mummy [No, mom], I’m really sorry. I think watching porn is bad. Maybe I’m not showing it on my face but I am very shameful, ashamed” and all that. But really I was not.

It is interesting and important to note that while Arunanshu’s parents had not made any avenues available to him for learning about sex and sexuality throughout his childhood and adolescence, they seemed keen to punish him for exploring his sexuality through watching pornography.

On account of the pervasive silence about sexuality in their everyday lives, the participants had very little knowledge of sex, sexuality or sexual abuse when their sexual victimization took place. When asked “what was your knowledge about sexual matters at the time abuse happened,” participants typically provided responses such as “I had no awareness of it. I did not know that there was something like that that existed in the world” (Arunanshu), “Almost none,” “Very patchy” (Dhruvan), “Zero” (Harendra), “It was zero. It was absolutely non-existent,” (Harith), “Zero. Zero,” (Himank), “I don’t think I knew anything about sex at all” (Indivar), “No awareness at all, except for what was happening,” (Tarun), and “Nothing” (Tejesh).

### **Superordinate Theme 2 - Impact of Child Sexual Abuse**

Participants discussed various ways in which abuse experiences had impacted their life; many shared that it had influenced them in profound and lasting ways. Abuse often impacted survivors not just at an intrapersonal level but also their interpersonal relationships. This superordinate theme is illustrated through three subthemes: impact of

abuse on self, impact of abuse on interpersonal relationships, and impact of abuse on survivors as fathers.

**Subordinate theme 2a - Impact of abuse on self.** Several participants discussed how sexual abuse in childhood had had a major impact on them as a person. They experienced this impact in various ways; sometimes they could identify the specific ways in which abuse experiences influenced their lives and sometimes they could articulate a general sense of abuse impact, an overall perception that abuse had been a significant and lasting experience in their lives even when they did not or could not point to any specifics. Some of the important ways in which abuse experiences impacted the participants are discussed in the following sections. Table 5.3 below provides an overview of this subordinate theme.

Table 5.3

*Overview of subordinate theme 2a (Impact of abuse on self)*

Subordinate theme	Sub-themes
Impact of abuse on self	‘I had this huge burden tied to my leg and I was asked to run’: Pain and trauma.
	‘I don’t occupy the full space that I deserve’: Impact on self-actualization.
	‘I feel dirty, you know’: Shame and guilt.
	‘I got hooked on to sex’: Impact on sexual desire and behavior.

***‘I had this huge burden tied to my leg and I was asked to run’: Pain and trauma.***

Many participants described their abuse experiences as emotionally painful and traumatic events that caused significant upheaval in their lives. Harendra, for example, likened the experience to a huge emotional burden that he had to carry.

As a child, as a child going through that childhood... I had this huge burden tied to my leg and I was asked to run. So what happened was constantly stumbling and falling. But I am glad I ran it. Somehow I ran it. So that's where I think my resilience took over. There have been many times, many times that I just hated to live. I just didn't want to live. Much into my adult life also I said I just can't take it.

Abuse often led to stress and pain at the time it happened and also across the lifespan. Many participants discussed how they continued to struggle with the trauma of abuse well into their adulthood. Tanmoy shared his challenges of being a child sexual abuse survivor and discussed the damaging impact that abuse experiences had had on his life.

So when we used the word survivor, I don't know whether I have actually survived the sexual abuse, or if I have survived insanity, or killing myself, because at some point when I was 21 or 22. Or practicing unsafe sex where I would get HIV and I would die. Those kind of impulses of sexual suicides were very much sort of part of my thing.

Harendra, who was 53 years old at the time of interview, discussed that sexual abuse in childhood continued to be a challenging and traumatic experience for him and that he was not certain if he would ever be able to fully recover from the trauma of abuse.

It's just that it's extremely painful sometimes. There are times when I said my god, as much as I think I'm over it, I still, it seems like there is one more hill to climb. I

am not too sure if I'll be able to say that, you know, you are completely over it. I guess that's something that I really will have to take to my grave, and that I feel very sad about. I wish I am able to. I am trying. It's not that I am not trying. I am trying in every which way that's possible, but then the human part of me says that it's not over yet. So that is frustrating at times. So I truly believe that this should not happen to any child, because... I regret a lost childhood, you know. I think that's my biggest regret.

Some participants discussed that it was difficult for someone else to know and understand the pain they went through, because others did not share their experiences. Arunanshu, for instance, felt that others could never fully comprehend how abuse had impacted his life.

I don't think my boyfriend, or my ex, or my parents, or anybody else sees the intensity of the struggle that I have to fight inside of me. I don't think anybody else sees that. And if they do see it or sense it, they don't know the intensity of the fight that I have to go inside of me. But it is there. And it is, it is, it is just very strong, you know. And so that is, that is something I wanted you to know, that when they say that abuse is not easy, it is not easy.

As painful as the experience of abuse was, some participants mentioned that they found it challenging to be able to express their pain. Harendra, for instance, associated the inability to express emotional pain with his masculinity.

This is also my male thing, you know. I don't want it to be seen like that. It's a very important thing for own this thing. It's a male thing... How can I be crying, you know? So it's a male thing.

It is important to note, however, that not every participant in this study shared the lived experience of emotional pain and trauma on account of sexual abuse in childhood. Himank, for instance, said that abuse experiences did not lead to painful memories regarding the events for him.

It didn't have a negative effect on me. I was not hurt, or violated, or anything. So because nothing happened at the end of it... I didn't feel a need for doing anything the next time. Or even while something was going on, I never felt hurt. So I never felt a need to rebel against it or do anything about it.

Mohan too said that he “was never hurt or felt tormented by this incident or this memory [referring to sexual abuse].” It may be argued that his experiences were influenced by the agency that he was able to exercise in his relationship with the cousin who abused him. When his cousin told him to perform oral sex on him, Mohan refused and also discontinued sexual contact with him: “I said, ‘I don't want to do this.’” He said that he had previously found sexual contact with his cousin pleasurable, but did not feel prepared to have oral sex with him. His articulation of agency was clear when he said:

Till the time I was enjoying it, I was doing it. I think I started realizing when he threatened me, when he started threatening me. So when he started threatening me, I said, “I don't want to do it anymore.”

By saying no to oral sex, Mohan was successfully able to stop all sexual contact with his cousin despite the cousin's efforts to coerce him otherwise. In Mohan's case it may be hypothesized that expressing agency in a way that achieved its intended consequences worked as a protective factor that helped mitigate the trauma of abuse.

*'I don't occupy the full space that I deserve': Impact on self-actualization.* Some participants discussed an overall feeling of being 'held back' in their personal and professional lives in relation to their abuse experiences. It appears that one of the meanings some survivors made of their abuse experiences was that these experiences prevented them from actualizing themselves fully and worked as an obstacle to professional success. For instance, Tarun discussed that he perceived an association between his abuse experiences and his general reticence to express himself more fully in front of others, within the personal and professional spheres of his life.

I still do sometimes question whether I really own up my gifts and my talents as much as I feel internally... I don't occupy the full space that I deserve. Like I'm always shrinking slightly in the background... I think some of it could be personality-related things also, but some of it has to do with just this living in the shadows for too long. Like one of the ways in which I was coping as a teen was that I would just recede because some of the attention was negative attention and the positive attention wasn't meaningful necessarily, so the best way was to just to enter a room full of people and just fade in the background so that then you could be left alone, and that sometimes takes away from expressing yourself fully. And it took me years to undo that actually, and I'm still undoing it in the sense that not just a room full of people, but wherever I feel that this is a space that I deserve, I always am a little shy of acknowledging it or I'm like no it's not a big deal, and I think that somehow it comes from, it's linked to it [referring to abuse experiences].

Dhruvan also shared similar ideas that his abuse experiences prevented him from actualizing himself as well as from being more successful professionally.

I feel I could be slightly better than what I am. That is my regret, nothing else. I feel that on a scale of 1 to 100, I am proudly at 100, okay? But the people who are doing really well are at 150. The extra mile, as they say, is no traffic jams, right? It's quite like that. I have felt that certain qualities held me back of going that extra mile. I am talking in terms of self-actualization... Maslow's hierarchy of needs makes a lot of sense to me. I have felt, I have felt, I feel like I am still not self-actualized. There are still some things which are holding me back, and I attribute it to what I went through when I was abused.

Harendra talked about a nebulous feeling of being incomplete as a person: "Thanks, unfortunately, thanks to CSA I think, that is what kills a child. That inadequacy stays. That you don't feel complete somehow. You don't know what it is. But you just don't feel complete." He also referred to the idea that abuse prevented him from actualizing himself: "perhaps if this had not happened my life would have taken a completely different turn. Not that I have anything lacking in my life, in terms of many things but I still feel that it killed me in my pursuit of being a human, a complete human, I think."

***'I feel dirty, you know': Shame and guilt.*** Emotions of shame, self-blame and guilt in relation to child sexual abuse experiences were prominently reflected in the narratives of many participants. Many men perceived themselves as complicit in their own abuse.

Tanmoy said that he felt "dirty" as a consequence of his experiences of sexual abuse, not just as a child when the abuse occurred but continued to feel that way as an adult as well, especially in relation to any sexual activity.

I realized later on that I was a very happy, innocent, and good, sincere child. And very playful, imaginative, and other things like that. I really wasn't a dirty sort of

kid or whatever who was doing things, which later on I felt a sense of being dirty.

Like after sex I always have to take a bath, you know. It is a sort of thing that's always been there. And I realize when I was reading the Kite Runner [a bestselling fiction book], and this boy says that I feel dirty, and I was thinking to myself that that's exactly what I feel. I feel dirty, you know.

Arunanshu talked about his stressful struggle to see himself as a "good person" because one of the meanings he had constructed of his abuse experiences was that he was not a good person because of those experiences. He experienced "self-inflicted guilt" that prevented him from perceiving himself as a "good person".

Therefore the abuse [has been] the centrally defining thing in my life from seven or eight years old to now when I'm 27 years old. It still defines so much of me even now. I think it defines my career choice also. The whole point of being a teacher is that I wanted to tell myself again and again that I need to do something good, to tell myself that I am good. And when I am teaching I am doing something good for the world, I am doing something good for others because teaching is a noble profession by all means, and if I'm doing that then I'm a good person.

Tarun remembered feeling guilty for his abuse for many years as an adult, as he held himself responsible for not resisting the perpetrators against abuse.

Often you think that it was you who was doing something and you have all these stories in your head saying that oh you went along, and when they asked do you want to play you said yeah of course, and then even after knowing what it was you continued doing it.

Tanmoy had continued to have a sexual relationship, as an adult, with one of his

cousins who had perpetrated sexual abuse against him when he was a child; the sexual relationship that started with his cousin abusing him had never ceased. The ongoing nature of this relationship caused feelings of guilt in Tanmoy toward his cousin's family, thinking that he was wronging them in some way by continuing to have sex with his cousin.

So these are the things which frightened me, because it happened as early as 2012... The thing with my cousin was that it [referring to their sexual relationship] sort of became more active when my dad's illness happened. Whenever there was more stress, it would happen. But it was always a struggle. I would always sort of push it away. Because I was so guilty about his wife and guilty for him. It was as if it was my guilt, not his guilt. Though I would be never asking for it.

Harendra said that it took him "30-35 years [to] forgive myself for [the abuse]."

Harendra's narrative reflects the guilt he had experienced around his abuse experiences directly as well as indirectly. Harendra talked about perceiving himself as complicit in his own abuse. He said that he struggled with questions such as "You couldn't have been abused, I mean why did you not fight him?" He shared that he at times felt inadequate as a man for not stopping his abuse from happening or continuing.

I mean how could you, being a man, not stop it? And when you say you didn't like it, so why did you not stop it? So that inadequacy stays. I think it is like you question yourself too much. That you were never man enough to stop it.

Furthermore, him talking about "forgiving" himself for his abuse experiences indicates his feelings of guilt around sexual abuse.

*'I got hooked on to sex': Impact on sexual desire and behavior.* Some participants reported that their abuse experiences influenced their sexual desires and behaviors in later life. For some participants, this influence occurred in terms of a perceptible increase in their desire to engage in sexual activity. For instance, Arunanshu mentioned a heightened sexual drive that started in response to his sexual abuse experiences at an early age, and it increased in intensity as he grew older.

The thing is I got hooked on to sex or sexual pleasure, sexual gratification that would be a better word to use. I got hooked to sexual gratification at a very young age. And as I grew older and older, I got more hooked on to it.

For Arunanshu, this heightened sexual desire caused feelings of guilt and low self-worth and prompted him to become socially isolated as he saw himself inferior to others because of experiencing such desire and increased sexual activity in response to desire.

I was practicing sex much before I was emotionally, physically, or mentally ready for it. But my dependence towards that sex became stronger and stronger as I grew older and older. And that sexual gratification, that desire for sexual gratification that was increasing, that sex addiction really, or that addiction towards sex and sexual gratification, it became stronger and stronger. The strength of that made me more isolated because there was this self-inflicted guilt that I don't deserve everybody's love, and to strengthen that belief that I don't deserve everybody's love because I'm hooked to sex now.

Dhruvan reported an increase in sexual drive in relation to his abuse experiences. He also saw his sexual drive as an indicator of his masculinity, and he wanted to address some of the challenges posed by sexual abuse through proving himself as sexually

competent.

I have felt that it contributed to an increase in libido... The psychological, the physiological damage that it did, probably wanted me to prove myself, prove something more to myself, you know. So there was no, definitely no drop in masculinity, I have to tell you.

Interestingly, Dhruvan did not view this particular effect of child sexual abuse as a negative consequence in his life. When questioned about how his increased sexual drive may have influenced his life, he answered that it was a positive outcome that helped him become more confident in communicating with women.

Interviewer: Okay. So you mentioned that after some time, post-abuse, you felt an increase in libido, an increase in sexual drive. How did that impact your life?

Dhruvan: Fortunately it has not impacted my life negatively. It has only impacted it positively. And as I said, I started communicating more with girls. I couldn't muster up the courage to communicate with girls when I was going through abuse. There was an odd feeling inside me. As I said, I am not able to describe that feeling. But after that, as I realized that people were warming up much better to me than what people were like in school, I started communicating more to them.

Tanmoy, who said that he was addicted to sex, discussed engaging in unsafe and frequent sexual behaviour in response to the trauma of abuse he had experienced, where he wanted to deliberately put himself at significant risk of illness and even death. He observed this to be addictive behavior and said that such addiction to sex remained a persistent challenge for him, and he saw this challenge as linked to his abuse experiences.

I think I find issue with... my addictive sort of thing, because I sometimes think I take these risks that are part of my traumatic sexualization since I am aware of it. And I find that a struggle. However I also think that I am in the process of healing and at some point maybe I will wish it away, maybe it will go away. But there is a struggle still there.

Mohan also mentioned that his abuse experiences had probably contributed to him engaging in “unhealthy” and “risky” sexual behavior later in life. He mentioned that during his abuse experiences, he had found a validation of his personhood by the perpetrator in sexual situations alone. Later in life, he sought validation for himself by engaging in high-risk sexual behavior where he attempted to offer sexual pleasure to others in order to feel respected and affirmed by them in return.

It was only during the time when he [the perpetrator] needed a physical release, is when he would call me. And I think that’s the only time he even gave me that space in his life, that sense of importance that I mattered. I wonder if that also leads to whatever sexual activity I had later where I had the sense that you are important only as long as you are, I think now I understand that. Because I went into unhealthy behavior, risky behavior, and in the process of analyzing it I realized that why I am doing it is because oh he is giving me importance so that means I have to do whatever he wants... Now while processing I understand it might have come from there. Because otherwise you are not important to me, you don’t matter, you are invisible, but only during this time I am even talking to you, or even giving you that space in my personal space and asking you to do something, and I am talking to you about magazines and showing you books and would you like to read this

book, see this image. So in that sense there was some acknowledgment of me, right?

**Subordinate theme 2b - Impact of abuse on interpersonal relationships.** Many participants felt that their abuse experiences had impacted their interpersonal relationships, particularly their romantic or sexual relationships. This subordinate theme is further explored through three sub-themes below. Table 5.4 below provides an overview of the sub-themes for this subordinate theme.

Table 5.4

*Overview of subordinate theme 2b (Impact of abuse on interpersonal relationships)*

Subordinate theme	Sub-themes
Impact of abuse on interpersonal relationships	‘I feel taken advantage of’: Challenges regarding emotional intimacy.
	‘It’s not like I don’t want sex’: Impact on sexual relationships and intimacy.
	‘Just totally withdrawn, listless, going through the motions’: Social isolation and withdrawal.

***‘I feel taken advantage of’: Challenges regarding emotional intimacy.*** Sexual abuse sometimes contributed to difficulties in relation to their emotional intimacy with others. For Mohan, for example, sexual abuse contributed to a feeling of mistrust toward others including his wife.

I don’t know whether it was the sexual act itself, but the very abusive nature of it, in the sense being taken advantage of, I think it is constantly in my, it blurs my

perception. So I feel taken advantage of by most people, including my spouse... I think we have been married for like 19 years now. So at least in the last 10 to 12 years I have realized that it has impacted my perception of what she is saying or what she is doing.

***'It's not like I don't want sex': Impact on sexual relationships and intimacy.*** In

some instances, sexual abuse experiences posed challenges with regard to monogamy and fidelity between the participants and their romantic partners. In the previous section, I have discussed and illustrated that Arunanshu perceived a strong increase in his sexual desire and frequency of sexual activity following his abuse experiences. He mentioned that the increased desire and activity had made it challenging for him to stay committed to monogamy in his romantic relationships even when he and his partner expected their relationship to be exclusive and monogamous.

It [referring to sexual abuse] has deeply deeply impacted and it has deeply deeply also impaired a stable, healthy relationship. It has deeply impaired it and affected it by impairing it also in many ways, by making it disbalanced. My expectation of myself in a relationship is much higher than the expectation I put on the other person. As in I do a lot for the other person. My relationship with my partners romantically, is very giving, is very fatherly, is very emotional... It is intensely sexual. Very sexual. My relationship with my ex and my current boyfriend is more sexual than a lot of other guys, other people that I have heard of or talked about, it is much higher than that. It is much more intense sexually also. But it is impaired. The biggest way in which it is impaired, my relationship, is the whole point of physical loyalty or fidelity. In the sense that for me, sex still gives such a big high,

and because sex in itself is such a pleasurable idea for me, I enjoy sex. I enjoy the act of sex very very very much. And my libido is very high in terms of having sex with my partner, my boyfriend or my lover, but also outside of that to the point that I can have sex with a guy in the morning, and then have sex with another guy in the afternoon, and then have sex with my boyfriend in the evening. And all three of them will be equally intense and equally physically excruciating... And so the biggest way in which [the abuse] has impaired is my own ability of... staying faithful to a person. It is very difficult for me to do that... And then I will go in that abusive pattern of pleasing my boyfriend because that guilt of having sex with somebody else will eat me up inside. So I will become more and more submissive towards my lover and then my lover will then take charge of that... So I will either break up. If the person is himself healthy, he will go away. If he is not healthy, or if he also enjoys taking power, which was the case with my ex, he would hold that against me to put me more under his submission. So I would in turn start feeling more and more less worthy about myself because I had sex with somebody else and I would increasingly become submissive towards this person, he would take advantage of me to make me feel even more worthless, and I would in turn push out and have sex with more other guys. So that cycle would continuously eat me up. And it takes me, I am telling you, I am telling you that I have to spend so much of my energy, I have to write so much in my diary, I have to talk to my therapist time and again, I have to remember that my boyfriend is important, that I cannot cheat on him, that I cannot physically stay unfaithful to him, I have to remind myself time and again.

Sometimes sexual abuse experiences posed challenges in relation to men survivors' sexual relationships. Harendra mentioned that he had experienced significant difficulties in his sexual relationships.

Then college came, and a lot of friends. I had girlfriends. But always there was something that when it came to, you know, when you actually had to get physical, there was a major problem. You know, the fear, which even continues in me till date... It's just a fear. It's just a fear. I am extremely scared of, I don't know why. Extremely scared of intimacy... Largely sexual intimacy. Also emotional intimacy. I don't want to give myself into anyone. So that's the bottom-line.

He discussed that societal expectations around masculinity and sexual drive complicated this challenge for him. Speaking about how men are expected to behave and perform in society, Harendra said that an expectation he had observed was that "as a man, perhaps in marriage you must have sex three times a week." He further said that these expectations about men's sexual drive put pressure on him: "Expectations about sexual drive. Which primarily is very difficult for me. While the intent is there but then something stops me." He explained that his fear of sexual intimacy was linked to his abuse experiences.

I think that CSA has an effect on intimacy on people. Or at least on me... But honestly, there is a problem... I think what happens is that when you go through an experience, which you are not ready for, I think that confusion remains. I think... when age-appropriate sexual behavior doesn't happen, that confusion sets in and it stays. It's a long haul. It's a long haul. So there's this constant conflict in me, you know. What do I do, what do I do, what do I do, you know. Well, it's not like I

don't want sex. I'd like to have it. But then there is something that is, fear, I think it is fear of getting intimate with someone. I really don't know. I am unable to put my finger on it.

Tarun discussed that he had experienced a challenge, linked to his abuse experiences, in his romantic relationships where he noticed a pattern of desiring and moving toward sexual intimacy with his partners sooner than his partners might expect or want. He mentioned that there was an "overly sexualized tone" to his romantic relationships which often hindered his friendships with his dating partners or even pushed them away.

The other significant thing which I have learnt later, not too soon but obviously in the last decade of work with this [referring to abuse experiences], is that... with men that I have become attracted to, there is a certain overly sexualized tone to it. In the sense that the need for a physical touch comes up too quickly for me. Because that's the only way in which I can make an intimate connect early on. So if I'm dating, I often find myself having to watch myself to not become, you know, too wanting of a physical thing too quickly, because it kind of stops the relationship from growing. And for sure like several men have been put off by it which meant that something else that could have happened, like a friendship, or even a deep love, or a connect, has not happened. And I think that... partly it could be sexual drive, but I think it's not just that. It's just that there is a certain codification of what intimacy with men would mean, which if it doesn't have a large component of sexual relationship, it becomes like I'm not able to relate beyond a point... And I

think that sometimes comes in the way of pursuing a companionship either because I lose interest as soon as it happens or the other person gets put off... they feel like it is too early and this is all I am looking for... which is not the intent but that is the impact it leaves on the other person. So I'm struggling a bit on that front.

Tanmoy said that in the past he had observed a tendency within himself to sexualize all forms of touch, including non-sexual touch in platonic relationships. In the context of talking about feeling "dirty" as a consequence of sexual abuse, he said:

Every touch then becomes sexualized to me. For a long time, I couldn't distinguish between what is an affectionate touch and what is a sexual touch. So friendships and other things, and everything was really blurred. It's been a very difficult thing to sort of sift it out.

Finally, Himank believed that his sexual abuse experiences had influenced his role within his sexual relationships. One of the meanings he constructed of his abuse experiences was that they had contributed to the fact that he often participated in his sexual relationships with men as the receiving partner and not as the penetrating partner.

I was always at the receiving end in all of these sexual contacts that I had as a child... I mean when I have sexual contact with adult partners now, that's how I expect, and you know, that's how the sexual contact is even now. I mean essentially that's the role I play in a sexual relationship... So in all, even in homosexual encounters, sexual encounters, there is an inherent role-play of sorts, right? There's one who is the slightly more dominant, or the giving partner, and there's one who is the taking partner. Right? So because... in my child sexual experiences I was at the

receiving end, even in my current adult sexual encounters, I always play the role of the taking one.

***‘Just totally withdrawn, listless, going through the motions’: Social isolation and withdrawal.*** Several participants shared that their abuse experiences had the outcome of them becoming isolated and withdrawn from their families, friends and community members for many years following abuse. Arunanshu discussed that he felt a strong desire to be “invisible” within his school and community as an adolescent and continued to feel that way in his adulthood. He said that as an adolescent his “self-consciousness about [himself] was... extreme” because he did not want others to view him as “a freak on the street.” He related this self-consciousness to his abuse experiences, specifically the guilt which resulted from finding these sexual experiences pleasurable as well as his belief at the time that he had participated in his abuse.

I remember not having anybody to talk to. I remember not having anybody. And the second was the sexual gratification [in the context of sexual abuse experiences] and the guilt that came with it. Those two things kind of started with this sense of isolation because I felt that I’m dirty, and that I don't deserve, and that is why people are not loving me. And why am I dirty, why I don't deserve it is because I'm doing something that nobody else is doing. Right, and that self-imposed feeling of inadequacy constantly kept bombarding me with feeling less and less about myself. So it just continued like that. And many things slowly and slowly added to that, added to that, compounded it, and so it became a real thing for me very quickly. As I became a teenager it became a real thing for me to not feel deserving or loved.

Arunanshu discussed that the social isolation that he had started experiencing in childhood continued to be a challenge for him through adolescence and into adulthood as well.

I remember in grade seven and eight I would look at myself and be like, “Thank god no one is looking at me”. And I remember that instance, I was very glad that I was invisible. And that feeling of wanting to be invisible does come every now and then. Even now sometimes I literally want to be invisible. There're times when I go inside the bathroom and I lock myself in, even now in school, I would lock myself in, I'm having a great day, nothing is wrong, everything is perfectly fine, but I would just be so overwhelmed by what's happening around me—it might be because of work or whatever, I do have a very hectic work schedule more often than not, and I love it, I like it a lot—but there would be instances when I'm like okay I don't want to engage with people. And I go to the bathroom and I I just lock myself in for 30 seconds and be like “okay nobody's seeing me right now, nobody's seeing me right now, nobody's seeing me right now” and then I would walk out. You know, that happens to me even now.

Tarun said that as an adolescent he believed that his attraction for other boys and men was a consequence of the same-sex nature of his abuse experiences, and this meaning that he had constructed of his abuse led him to become increasingly withdrawn from his friends and community members during his adolescence and continued into his early adulthood.

I think it just came head-on in the teens where I really started to figure out so what's going on kind of a thing, and I would find myself attracted to men, the boys

in the class, older men, younger men, whatever. And I was like this is all wrong, and this all has to do with the abuse that has happened, though I wasn't calling it abuse, I used to just have this whatever kind of you know, that those things that happened kind of thing. There wasn't, I wasn't comfortable talking about it to anyone, absolutely anyone. So it was all bottled up and so for about, till about, till I got into my MBA, I was pretty much basically just walking through life. Like all my, all of my kind of more innocent qualities of curiosity and the general gay abandon and all of that as a child was kind of becoming diminished. So I was getting into a shell, I was becoming more and more withdrawn, and I often sometimes think that I was quite amazed that I never thought of suicide... which amazes me because I was very dark at one point. Just totally withdrawn, listless, going through the motions enough to functionally say hi, hello, and you know get by with the social exterior but people could sense that I was becoming a different person than the child I was.

**Subordinate theme 2c - Impact of abuse on relationships with (their) children.**

Significantly, participants' child sexual abuse experiences sometimes influenced their relationships with children in their families and communities in general, and with their own children in particular. Some participants discussed that their abuse experiences had contributed to their protectiveness toward children, particularly against sexual abuse, and sometimes also influenced their parenting practices as fathers.

Tanmoy said that he felt strongly protective toward children:

I have never had a thought of abusing a child, in my head. Not even a thought. Not even a flicker. I have only thought of protecting them. In fact it has been the

reverse. I have only done protection, child protection, and other things. Educated a lot of my friends around this issue, spoken about it, make them educate their children about it.

Dhruvan discussed that his abuse experiences had helped him become more vigilant toward any signs of inappropriate touching between adults and children around him. The following excerpts from his interview suggest that one of the meanings he had derived from his abuse experiences was to become a watchful community member. It is noteworthy that he perceived children to be more at-risk of sexual abuse by strangers as compared to family members.

Whenever I see adults who are not the parents of children, around children, I generally keep looking at the adult. I look at their touching patterns of the kid... When I say 'not parents' I don't mean grandparents and all, please don't get me wrong. I'm talking about outsiders. I generally keep looking at them to figure out what they are doing because this is something which has come to me. I keep doing that because obviously I want to nip anything in the bud if I see something in my own way. So I generally keep a watch on all of those things. Not only on my children but all children.

I'm always watchful about what's going on around me. Unnecessary, unneeded contact between an adult not related to a child, be it a boy or a girl, or too much of a close contact between somebody who is not required to be in close contact, if I see them, I just keep watching everything very carefully.

Similarly, Indivar also observed that he was sometimes very vigilant about adults' interactions with children in his vicinity. He narrated a specific incident to illustrate this observation.

I think we were a bunch of friends. We were at a mall where somebody was buying something in an apparel store. And there was this family which had come there, with what I assume was the father, mother, and a little girl about, say, 10 or 12 years old... The girl was buying some clothes. And the father constantly kept going into the trial room with her. And you could hear her saying that, you know, please go out. I don't remember the exact words, but she was very clearly not okay with the father being in the room. But he kept going back in and, sort of, being thrown out constantly. And after she came out, he would sort of lift her skirt and turn her around to, sort of, you know, "I just want to make sure that you are looking perfect for the" whatever it is that they were going to. And she was constantly in tears. And the mother was standing on the side, almost not paying attention to anything. So I don't really know exactly what happened at the time. But it [referring to his own abuse experiences] sort of just came back. And I assume that I had sort of parked it somewhere to not visit again, or whatever it is that people do with traumatic memories. But it suddenly came back at the time. And for some reason I just went to this man and said, "Look, she doesn't want to be in there. So you are not gonna go in there." And he sort of got very defensive, you know. "Hey, I am the father of this child. And who are you?" And at the time I was also growing a long beard and long hair and all those things. So, you know, it wasn't exactly a civilized looking person telling a father how to behave with the child. But I was very adamant with

him at the time. I was like “You are not gonna do it. And I’m going to stand here till you guys are done shopping. And if I see that you are going back in, then I am going to follow you to your house. And I am going to stand outside so you don’t trouble the girl.” I am not usually the confrontational kind of a person, but something just went click.

Some participants also talked about being particularly concerned about protecting their own children against sexual abuse and an increased attentiveness in that regard. Mohan said that his abuse experiences had influenced his and his wife’s parenting style and caused them to develop more trust in his relationship with his children. He also discussed being more vigilant to their children’s safety at school and other places.

Interviewer: Let me ask you, have your experiences in childhood of abuse, abusive experiences in childhood, have they influenced in any way the way you parent or you care for your kids?

Mohan: Yes, yes, I think yes, definitely. So I am, for example, very particular with my kids that no matter what, I keep telling them this and building the trust.

Sometimes you can’t just tell them because it’s too cognitive for the child’s age.

You need to develop the trust. So there’s a very conscious parenting that I’ve brought in. Whatever they tell us, we acknowledge. Whatever they tell us. And we even verbally express a lot of times that no matter what happens, I trust you enough to tell me the truth, and if you come and tell me anything I will believe you and I will support you... So although we don’t explicitly tell them about, I mean did not tell them till a certain age about sexual abuse, we told them that we trust them...

And then the second thing is we stood up for them. So even if it was a little fight or

something, we would tell the other, whoever is involved, that this is not okay, this is okay, while still building boundaries for the child... And taking care who the child is interacting with, and keeping a track of all the times, where the child is at what time, without being too intrusive because that can be over-controlling... For example, the school transport, or in the school while they are there. So we check out the schools. Are there areas that are isolated in the school like the corridors or the passages, is there an area where the child has to traverse alone, or are there times when they are not being supervised.

For a few participants, their relationship with their children contributed to their healing and recovery from the trauma of sexual abuse. For Harendra in particular, the relationship with his son was profoundly influential in his healing process. Harendra was abused by a tenant living in the same house as he and his sister's marital family. The first instance of abuse occurred on the night of Diwali festival when Harendra was eight or nine years old, and the abuse continued for several months after that. Shame and guilt were central elements of Harendra's narrative. Harendra had a remarkable experience when his son was eight years old, similar age as he when he was first abused, which can be considered a turning point in his life vis-à-vis overcoming the trauma of abuse. On the night of Diwali, he looked at his son and saw him as a vulnerable and innocent child. In this moment, he realized that he must have been similarly vulnerable when he was abused, and was therefore not to blame for what happened.

And then for me the huge thing was that it was only when my son was growing up, when he was 8 or 9, it hit me so hard, that oh my god, you were so young when it happened to you! That was my major trigger for me. Till such time it was very deep

in my psyche that I didn't know what, but when I saw this boy, he was 8-years-old, and it was Diwali again, and I just went to the bathroom and I cried. I said oh my god, you were so small when it happened! So all the rationale that I had given, that I had asked for it, it all fell. You get it?... So it was his growing up. And then actually I saw myself as a 8-year-old at that point in time. Then that's when I said how could this child ask for something like this! So it was his growing up that, you know, that I actually forgave myself for the first time, saying that no I didn't ask for this, I don't think any 8-year-old or a 9-year-old child would ask for something like this.

### **Superordinate Theme 3 - Meanings of Child Sexual Abuse**

This theme describes the different meanings men survivors constructed of their abuse experiences while they were still children and experiencing abuse.

**Subordinate theme 3a - 'Very mixed feelings': Confusion and lack of understanding.** Several participants talked about feeling confused about what was going on in reference to their experiences of sexual abuse. Sometimes they talked about struggling to understand these experiences as children. Himank mentioned that he felt this way in the context one of his abuse experiences, where an older male working at a supermarket near his house molested him.

The guy in the supermarket... Again, actually for 90% of the time I didn't realize what he was doing to me. Like he would just stand behind me and rub his penis against me. I had no idea what he was doing. I'd just feel like warm. Again, I didn't realize what was, I had no idea what was going on.

He said that he felt similarly when one of his relatives, an older man, sexually molested him at a family wedding event.

When my relative, when my uncle did that to me, I had no idea what was going on. I had no idea what he was doing to me. It just happened and then I just went on and started playing or whatever. Right? So I didn't make anything of what was going on.

Prabodh said that when a perpetrator asked him to have penetrative sex, he did not understand what the older man was suggesting.

And I remember him, and us hugging, and it was, it was, the stink was unbearable but I remember us hugging, and then him suggesting that I penetrate him and I didn't know what he was talking about. I must have been 13 or 14.

In other instances, participants described a feeling of confusion about what was going on. Dhruvan, for instance, talked about feeling confused about being touched in a sexual manner by his uncle during the night while sleeping.

The first memory of something of this nature happening was I remember in the middle of the night somebody was meddling with my private parts. And I didn't know what feeling was it because, you know, those days you didn't communicate with people much and you didn't read much about things.

He further said that he did not know what to make of this experience, and as a consequence, had "mixed feelings" toward it and felt "very confused."

It was a mixed feeling, as I said, to the point that I didn't talk about it to anybody.

Because if it was a good or a very bad thing, I would have spoken about it. I would

have told at least some of my friends... because that is the time when your schoolmates and everybody talks about sexually becoming active, masturbating etcetera. But I never spoke about this to anybody because my feelings were mixed. It was neither bad nor good. If it was very good I would have told it to somebody, if it was really very bad I would have told it to somebody else. But I did neither of them. So I felt that the feeling was very mixed. The man was lying behind me every night, and cuddling around, and making me feel his private parts, and doing all those things. And as I said, very mixed feelings. I don't know how to describe it other than saying that I was very confused.

Mohan also had a similar experience where he felt confused because he felt pleased as well as repulsed by the sexual activity between him and the perpetrator of abuse.

He asked me to perform oral on him [for] which I was not prepared in my mind... At that time in my mind as a child, it just felt wrong or repulsive. And not even that, even just what I was regularly doing, I felt repulsed... Actually because I wasn't clear, although I felt I enjoyed it, I think there was another part of me that said no this is something not right, and I didn't know how to get out of it.

In Harith's experience, it was the same-sex nature of the abuse that contributed to confusion in his mind because it contrasted with the heteronormative social environment around him.

I also was completely guilt-ridden and confused as to what is exactly going on. Because you are always, you watch something on TV, or you go to a movie and you see a man and a woman doing things, and Chase [referring to James Hadley

Chase, an English author famous for writing thriller novels] had a man doing—no I was too young for Chase—but then generally stereotypically you are always seeing a man and woman doing all these things, but you never see a man and a man doing any of those things. So I was sort of, you know, confused and slightly guilt-ridden obviously.

**Subordinate theme 3b - ‘I understood that it is not to be spoken about’:**

**Secrecy.** Many participants discussed that the sexual contact or relationship between them and their perpetrator(s) was supposed to remain a secret. Tanmoy, referring to the abusive relationship between him and his older cousin, said that it “was a relationship which was the most intimate, and the most secret, and the most dual of all relationships possible.”

Harendra shared that he was asked by the perpetrator to keep the sexual contact between them a secret: “He said don’t tell anyone about it. He never threatened me though, but he said never tell anyone.” Contrary to Harendra’s experience, Indivar shared that he was threatened by his uncle who abused him during a family gathering for a wedding, to keep the sexual contact a secret.

I remember him putting the fear of dogs in me at the time. Because the family had a very very nice little german shepherd dog, which he brought into the bathroom after he told me never to tell anybody that, you know, we had had a bath together, because, you know, “why should you have to, because I am so nice to you, and look I cleaned you up so nicely,” and all those things. So then he brought the dog in, and then he said, you know, “If you tell anyone, this dog will eat you up.”

Sometimes participants learnt that their abuse experiences were secretive on account of where and how these experiences took place. For example, Harith said, “We only used to do it when nobody [was] around.” Tanmoy said that the clandestine nature of his sexual abuse experiences conveyed to him the message that these were to be kept a secret.

So suddenly there was, post my mom going, there was lots of sex, and they were all very abusive and violent in nature. Physically aggressive, there was no gentleness. It was just this surreptitious thing, behind houses, closed doors, somewhere where people are not there, playing becomes sort of this thing. So you never spoke about it to the adult world.

Mohan narrated an incident with his cousin who abused him. His cousin’s mother walked into the room while the two of them were engaged in some sexual activity. The cousin’s flustered reaction communicated to Mohan the idea that their sexual relationship was a secret affair.

I remember that his mother walked into the room when he was just about putting his pants back on. And when he was putting his pants on, he had not yet zipped himself up, and she walked in. So he bent forward to hide, as if he was wearing shoes or looking for his shoes. And his mother came to ask for something and he said, “Go out, go out for a bit, go out for a bit.” And she said, “Okay, doesn’t matter, I’m just asking a question.” But he yelled back and said, “Don’t you understand?” So the woman left... I understood later that it was something to be done in hiding, and especially so after that incident when his mom had walked in and he completely had to hide it... So the only thing I understood without words is

that it is not to be spoken about.

**Subordinate theme 3c - ‘It was like a game of cricket’: Sexual abuse as pleasure and excitement.** The experience of sexual contact in the context of sexual abuse was sometimes physically and/or emotionally pleasurable or exciting for some participants. Mohan, for example, said that the experience of seeing his older cousin nude and touching his genitals was a pleasurable experience for him.

I feel that he should not have done that to me, although I enjoyed it. Liked seeing him naked and doing the things he asked me to do.

I knew deep down that something excited me about seeing him nude, and to see his genitals, and to touch them. And that gave me some gratification.

Tejesh said that he gradually started liking the physical contact between him and the perpetrator sometime after it started.

He removed his shirt, on the upper part of his body, and he asked me to do that.

And he just used to fondle me... It’s certainly sexual abuse, but nothing involving the genitals. So I wasn’t sure of what’s happening. But I very clearly remember that after a point I started liking it.

Dhruvan shared that while the sexual contact between him and the perpetrator was physically pleasurable to some extent, he felt emotionally conflicted about it because he felt it was a secret that he could not talk about with anyone else.

It was a combination of pleasure, because as I said, somebody was, I felt that somebody was trying to make you feel good about it. Because it felt good.

Somebody was caressing your private parts and it was a good feeling. It was a mixed feeling, as I said, to the point that I didn’t talk about it to anybody.

Arunanshu said that while he initially did not enjoy the sexual contact between him and his friend in the neighborhood who had initiated sexual contact with him, he slowly began to like the experience.

I remember that it happened once and I don't think I enjoyed it but I was okay with it. I don't remember how many times it happened before I started liking it but I know I started liking it eventually. And then I would look forward to, like, play this game with him. So I became sexually active because I was having sex with him, or whatever that version of sex with him.

Arunanshu further discussed that he liked this sexual contact for emotional reasons too, as he started seeing the physically pleasurable aspects of this relationship as a way of emotionally feeling good about himself, against a backdrop of low self-esteem.

You know you have your own pressure where you are telling yourself that you are not worth it and that you have people around you who are telling you that you are not worth it... And so the only friend that I had at that time was my sex abusive partner. The only way I could feel good about myself was by masturbating, or was by seeking sex with one of my friends... Apart from these two recourses, I had no other way to feel good about myself.

Tarun said that he had experienced his abuse experiences, for the most part, as both physically and emotionally pleasurable. He attributed emotional pleasure to the fact that he considered the perpetrator a close friend who was older and caring toward him.

I always thoroughly enjoyed it, and [calling these experiences] abuse [is] an adult's interpretation. But as a kid it was a delightful thing in the sense that it always felt good physically all the time. And the emotional part of feeling good was because it

was such a close friend and it felt like you were included even more in his affection for you.

Tarun further described feeling special in the context of his sexual relationship with one of the perpetrators, and that he derived emotional pleasure out of this feeling of specialness.

This Suresh [the older boy who initiated sexual abuse] was my best friend. Then he was a gorgeous boy. Like he was very very handsome. Like I knew everybody in the building thought that he was going to be a movie star, in the apartment complex. So there was a certain sense of you know, “he likes me more than anybody else” kind of a thing.

Indivar referred to the abuse experiences of sexual contact between him and other children and adults in his neighborhood as physically pleasurable but also a way for him to escape boredom. In this sense these experiences were also emotionally satisfying for him to some extent.

I am not sure they were not pleasurable. I am sure there was some amount of pleasure, just pure biological pleasure involved. But I think mentally, I wasn't exactly looking forward to them, in terms of how after growing up and becoming an adult you look forward to the pleasurable act of sex. It wasn't that. It was, like I said, it was like a game of cricket. I didn't really get any pleasure out of it, but it was fun in that when I was home there was never any fun... I didn't look forward to it for the pleasure of it... It was a way to pass the time, because there was no internet, or phones, or even a lot of television channels at the time... So there was no fun anywhere else... There was an activity happening. It was a planned thing.

There was something to do that was fun to do. Psychologically or mentally, I don't think I was pleased. The body was, yes.

Some participants described their abuse experiences as “thrilling.” For Harith, his abuse experiences offered him a certain kind of thrill because he was aware that these experiences were taboo: “I knew that it was bad but I used to get this thrill that I was doing something forbidden.” He further said:

I mean I was 14-15 and he [referring to his older cousin] was like 17 or 18 or something like that. By then I knew that this is where I get thrilled. And although it was not a wanted beginning, but it kind of started off, and you know, we kind of were like playing with each other and all those things.

**Subordinate theme 3d - ‘Literally a game’: Sexual abuse as play.** Several participants described understanding sexual contact with the perpetrator(s) as a form of play. Arunanshu mentioned that his friend, who started the sexual contact between them, told him that this was a game they were playing.

He did not do it like it was threatening me or something. He just said, “Let’s play a game.” And he said, “The game is called *nanga-punga*.” That's what he called it at that time and he said that “let's play the game” and “so in this game, this is what happens. Imagine you are a girl. I'm a boy.” He said that. I remember that, I remember him saying that to me very clearly.

Literally just started with the game. It was a game. There was no guilt associated with it. There was no good and bad towards it. It was just something that, it was a game. Literally a game. That's what it was.

Tejesh mentioned that his older cousin invited him to play a game with him, and the game was that he would remove their clothes and fondle Tejesh.

So he was around 14-15... I was six or seven... There was no one at home. Then he started, like, let's just play.

Himank said that he, on his own, understood the sexual contact between himself and an older boy in the neighborhood to be a kind of play.

So the first one I told you, which was my friend who lived on the terrace. The first time he did it, I mean I didn't realize what was going on. I thought we were just playing. It was the way of playing, I thought. So the first 2-3 times I thought that way.

Tanmoy, on the other hand, described how an older boy who abused him made up games for them to play in which this older boy would often take off Tanmoy's clothes and do sexual activities.

The distinct one I remember with my friend's elder brother, in that same house, we used to play these games. We used to say toss a key and whoever gets chosen will take his clothes off. And it was one of those games where somehow it would always fall like I was the chosen one. And then, so you had to take your clothes off... And then he would play these games in the sort of dark room where he would sort of fondle me and everything else. And then he said we would have an operation sort of a thing, and he would choose me as the person to operate on, and then he would take off my clothes and do things.

**Subordinate theme 3e - 'I thought it was the way in which fathers showed their**

**affection’:** **Sexual abuse as love or intimacy.** One of the meanings participants sometimes constructed of their abuse experiences was to see it as love or emotional intimacy between themselves and the abuser. Tejesh, for instance, talked about how he tried to make meaning of his sexual relationship with the older cousin as perhaps a romantic relationship that could develop into a long-term relationship with them living together similar to heterosexual couples.

At some point I was wondering whether the two of us could live separately or things like that. Are we supposed to be together?... I didn't really understand what was going on. But I had those things like two boys, can they live together?

Arunanshu explained how he started understanding his sexual abuse experiences as a way for him to desire and receive love.

Sex abuse also became my way of accepting love, and wanting love, and taking love. So that sex with [the friend who started sexual abuse]... that sex kind of in many ways started to replace the love, or started to replace that acceptance of love, or that wanting of love... Because I was anyway getting increasingly distant from my father as I grew older and older. Because my father wasn't there and then I wasn't academically bright so my father took that against me also and so he was not very happy with me, and he was anyway, my father is by virtue of who he is, is an abusive person. Emotionally abusive. He has been emotionally abusive to my mother also. Not physically, not in any other way, but emotionally he is abusive by virtue of who he is... And then my mother and father, by virtue of their upbringing, and my mom being busy, inflicted that upon me by constantly telling me to do so much more than what I was doing, just to be acceptable in their eyes. And I never

really got acknowledgment for what I was doing right anyway... It was always “I’m not good at this”, “I’m not good at that”. And so the sex abuse that was becoming increasingly the sex addiction became more than just sex. It became a kind of my understanding of love also, that that's how I accept love.

Harendra said that he had understood sexual abuse by the man who was a tenant in his older sister’s marital household as fatherly affection. His sexual abuse happened when he was living away from his parents, and with the aforementioned sister’s family. He mentioned that he was surprised when his father did not behave in a sexual way toward him.

I also distinctly remember that there were moments when I was with my father, and I would think why is my father not doing the same things that that man did to me. So now I think it was, you know, it came under the guise of affection. It came under the guise of fatherly affection. So now I think, now much later in my life I am like connecting the dots, like yeah I used to think why is my dad not doing the same thing to me. You know, actually expecting him to do this, because I thought it was the way in which fathers showed their affection.

**Subordinate theme 3f - ‘I never thought I could do anything about anything’:**

**Helplessness and agency.** Some participants expressed that they experienced helplessness in dealing with their abuse experiences as children. Prabodh, for instance, shared that there was a situation when he was 13-14 years old and had gone over to the house of an adult man living in his neighborhood because this man had been calling him over to his house. The man asked Prabodh to be the penetrating partner and have sex with him. When Prabodh didn’t understand him, he said, “If not you then let me penetrate

you.” He had sex with Prabodh on this and several other occasions subsequently. Prabodh expressed feeling helpless at the time.

I mean there was never any force, but I thought at that point in time that if I don't give in, how can I get out of here? How can I get out of his room? Not that I tried. Not that I said no, I will not do it.

Dhruvan also said felt helpless in dealing with abuse because he had mixed feelings about it and because he could not figure out a way of communicating what he was experiencing with any of his family members.

I felt helpless. I felt helpless in the sense that I obviously couldn't communicate this back to my parents or to my own brother. My brother was very short tempered then. He's short tempered now as well. I didn't even think about talking about it to anybody. I remember that vividly that couldn't approach anybody and ask them whether this was right or wrong.

Tanmoy, while referring to the abuse during childhood by one of his older cousins with whom he continued to have a sexual relationship for several years as an adult too, expressed helplessness in terms of his inability to say no to this cousin for sexual contact between them. He said, “I never thought I could do anything about anything.” He further said:

And he [referring to his older cousin] was 10 years older than me. So if I was 7, he would be 17. So he had probably reached his post-puberty and everything. So then, there was oral sex there. He asked me, I mean he sort of told me what to do... He had penetrative sex with me when I was 14 and he was 24, so it was 7 years later.

And then it continued till 2012, the relationship. And he was married, and he had 2 children. And he tried raping me while he was drunk, in 2012 itself, while his teenage son was sleeping next to me. So that freaked the shit out of me. And there was another incident while he had come over here. And then I said, after my dad passed away, I suddenly said, "I don't want to meet you anymore." Because every time I met him, and they said oh family or whatever it is, it would happen. And it was a continuous sort of a thing... And I never could refuse him.

It is important to note that participants' experiences of helplessness were not uniform or universal. While some men experienced helplessness at some points in time in relation to their abuse experiences, some men also experienced agency at times. Tarun, for example, talked about his experience of saying no to anal sex after one of the older boys had anal intercourse with him and ejaculated inside his body.

I just remember this one time when he ejaculated in me, the next day I told him don't do it again. He said why. I said because then I will have babies and you guys were saying that this is how babies are made. And I just remember him laughing and saying okay okay we won't do it.

I wasn't hurt. I wasn't feeling any pain. I was pretty numb I think. But what I do remember is that the next time this guy, this friend of mine, he said let's go again tonight, I... basically told him don't do this, this act of coming in me. And it stopped after that. So this was the only one time when I was ejaculated in. And I think these boys had some conversation going on amongst themselves all the time and no other boy did that to me though we had oral sex, and I masturbated them,

and at some point they started masturbating me. But nobody ever penetrated me again.

Mohan also said no to his older cousin when this cousin demanded that Mohan perform oral sex on him. Until then, this cousin was having Mohan masturbate him.

I said, “I don’t want to do this.” And it wasn’t potentially a dangerous situation, I just said no. Because he wasn’t actually dragging me into the room or doing anything like that. So I said no, I’m not going to do it. And 2-3 times I remember that he threatened me of consequences. I still didn’t go but I was scared, and finally I said, “No, I will not do it.” I mean I was very clear.

**Subordinate theme 3g - ‘A shitty secret that everyone thinks I am a boy but what they don’t know is that I am actually a girl’: Perceived effeminacy.** A few men in the study said that one of the meanings they had made of their abuse experiences as children was that the sexual experiences contributed to or resulted in their perception of self as effeminate. In this respect, some participants perceived sexual abuse experiences to have impacted their gender expression or identity. Gender identity refers to “a person’s deeply felt, inherent sense of being a boy, a man, or male; a girl, a woman, or female; or an alternative gender (e.g., genderqueer, gender nonconforming, gender neutral) that may or may not correspond to a person’s sex assigned at birth or to a person’s primary or secondary sex characteristics,” (American Psychological Association [APA], 2015, p. 862) and gender expression may be understood as “the presentation of an individual, including physical appearance, clothing choice and accessories, and behaviors that express aspects of gender identity or role” (APA, 2015, p. 861).

Tanmoy said that he saw a connection between his abuse experiences and his self-perceived effeminate mannerisms and behavior.

I wasn't effeminate as such as a child, but I think after the abuse there was a period, or various abuses, which slowly moved me towards effeminacy.

Tanmoy attributed this connection between sexual abuse and gender expression to the nature of his abuse experiences in which he was anally penetrated by several perpetrators. He described an incident from his adolescence when he thought he was, or was becoming, a woman as a consequence of his sexual abuse relationships.

I remember one thing very interesting. I was standing in front of the mirror, and I said, "I think I'm growing breasts."... And my parents laughed and said you are not growing breasts, you are growing a chest. These are not breasts, you know... In a way puberty was sort of hitting me, and I was thinking of myself more as a woman. And I think there was a gender sort of stuff going on inside. Because I had always been the penetrated... And during those years I became more and more effeminate, more and more feminized in the classical sense. I thought I had to be the girl, you know. I was more girly. Yeah. So the effeminacy was a very strong complex which formed during that time, and affected my gendered way of growing up because I was just hitting puberty then.

It is important to note that Tanmoy did not see the impact of sexual abuse on just his gender expression (becoming more effeminate in his behavior) but also on his gender identity (perceiving himself as a girl/woman).

Tarun discussed that being the receiving partner in penile-anal penetrative sexual activity between him and one of the older boys who perpetrated abuse contributed a sense

of confusion in his mind about his gender identity in terms of whether he was a boy or a girl, and he started thinking that perhaps he was a girl.

I remember in the colony where I stayed where I first started getting abused, those boys were actually my best friends, the ones who were abusing, and much before I started getting abused I have this vague memory of them talking about sex, and how men have sex with women and then they ejaculate and that's how babies are produced. So when I started getting abused and I would get ejaculated into, I started figuring out that I was actually a girl, that I must be a girl because otherwise why am I the person who was getting ejaculated into. But I also simultaneously knew that I was a boy. I mean in my rational mind I knew I was a boy. We had grown up knowing, and we had studied girls and boys, and we knew the difference. I knew that my sister was a girl. So that was kind of a, you know like a shitty secret that I would have inside that oh how everyone thinks I am a boy but what they don't know is that I am actually a girl.

Tarun further shared that he also thought that his abuse experiences had an influence on his gender expression. He said that he internalized the idea that he was a girl based on his sexual abuse, and this belief “pronounced [his] feminine behavior”. He said, “I thought that oh I am girly, girlish because of all of that.” He explained:

So the effeminate thing started slightly late in school. It wasn't right from the beginning because I think it showed, my sense is it showed after the abuse. More pronouncedly.

A variation in this subordinate theme came from two participants, Mohan and Harendra, who perceived effeminacy as not an outcome of abuse but as a contributing

factor to it. They both thought that they were perhaps effeminate as children, and this quality attracted the perpetrator toward them. Harendra said, “Sometimes I think that maybe there was something in me that was a little effeminate or girly that made this man also look at me. I don’t know.” Mohan also shared a similar feeling.

So in my knowledge I was vibrating softness, femininity, homosexuality, so I got drawn into that [referring to abuse]. How is it my other cousins don’t have that same experience?... He probably didn’t find them attractive enough for this. He chose me after all, so there must be something in me that he found was [attractive].

#### **Superordinate Theme 4 - Disclosure**

Disclosing sexual abuse and seeking help to deal with consequences of abuse can be an important element in survivors’ journeys toward recovery and healing. This theme explores men survivors’ barriers to disclosure, and responses they received from people and professionals to whom they disclosed.

**Subordinate theme 4a - Barriers to disclosure.** Disclosure was a challenging venture for many participants and they experienced several kinds of obstacles that impinged on their ability to share their experiences with family members, friends, or professionals. They experienced these obstacles both at the time abuse was ongoing as well as later in life. Table 5.5 below presents a list of the sub-themes for this subordinate theme.

Table 5.5

*Overview of subordinate theme 4a (Barriers to disclosure)*

Subordinate theme	Sub-themes
-------------------	------------

Barriers to disclosure	‘It was my fault that I seduced him’: Guilt.
	‘This is not something to share with somebody’: Shame.
	‘I am more concerned about his discomfort’: Protecting the perpetrator.
	‘This is not something I want to put them through’: Protecting others from feeling hurt.
	‘A, you are having sex. And B, you are having sex with a man. That’s like, hello!’: Same-sex nature of abuse.
	‘What are you cribbing about?’: Fear of minimization of experiences.

***‘It was my fault that I seduced him’: Guilt.*** One of the barriers to disclosure for some participants was their perception that they were somehow complicit in their own abuse. Dhruvan expressed that he should have spoken to someone when the abuse was ongoing to seek help but did not do so because of the guilt he felt.

I should have spoken about it to somebody, and nipped it in the bud so to speak, but I didn’t. I didn’t feel like talking about to anybody. I had, I probably had a sense of guilt, shame, whatever you wanna attribute it to. Those were the things that went on in my mind. I didn’t talk about it to anybody.

Tanmoy said that he felt responsible for the abuse and this thought prevented him from talking about it to anyone.

It was like a secret pact that I cannot talk about this to anyone. That partly it was my fault that I sort of seduced him.

Prabodh shared that a lack of overt coercion or violence by any of the perpetrators resulted in his perception that he had participated willingly in sexual activities with them.

You know, nobody has tied me up, and kidnapped me, and raped me or anything of that sort. In some sense I have contributed to where I have been. So, you now, what was there to tell?

***'This is not something to share with somebody': Shame.*** Several participants shared that they felt embarrassed and shameful about their abuse experiences, and this served as an obstacle to their willingness or ability to disclose. The sexual nature of the activities taking place between the survivors and the perpetrators was a major cause of shame and embarrassment, and in a society where sex and sexuality are taboo subjects, survivors did not know how and with whom to discuss what they were experiencing. Harith, for example, said that the sexual behavior between him and the perpetrator was too difficult to understand for himself and also to express to anyone in his family.

There was one incident where he actually made me jerk him off, and when he came I freaked out. I completely freaked out because I didn't know what the whole thing was. And I literally, I remember that I ran and then showered like 4-5 times. I must be like 12-13 then. And I, because I was growing up, I already had my own sexual stirrings happening. And I didn't understand what exactly, you know. I thought it was blood initially, and it was all over my hands, and I just like literally got, I didn't cry but I got slightly uncomfortable... I didn't feel the need to go and run and tell anybody that this is what has happened. Who would I go and tell that, you know? There was no way that I could go and tell this to somebody. This is not something to share with somebody.

Harendra too shared that the sexual nature of his relationship with the perpetrator was too shameful, and prevented him from talking about it to anyone.

Shame. How do I say it? How do I actually go and tell someone that this man actually did the act of whatever? How do you do it? What could an 8-year-old child know of sodomy and stuff like that?... To date the only that comes to mind is ‘yuck’. And it, you know, repulses me even today after 42 years.

***‘I am more concerned about his discomfort’: Protecting the perpetrator.*** Some of the participants did not disclose their abuse experiences because they were trying to protect the perpetrator. These participants were often sheltering the perpetrator from disrepute or shame from being outed as a sexual abuser in the family or the larger community. Tanmoy, for example, said that he did not tell her sister-in-law—wife of the cousin who had sexually abused him—about the sexual relationship between him and her husband because he feared that such a disclosure could be very damaging to his cousin. He said, “I would just clamp up and not tell her anything else because I was afraid that it would ruin him.”

Dhruvan said that he did not want to talk about his abuse to anyone in his family because the uncle who had abused him had been experiencing some personal challenges and he did not want to add to his difficulty by making such a disclosure.

That’s an uncle of mine whom my parents have helped quite a bit ever since he went into a problem. I don’t want any negative emotions going his way. He’s already disturbed... He’s a mentally disturbed person right now. I thought we’ll just let sleeping dogs lie, you know.

Mohan said that he felt that his cousin who had abused him had changed as a person, and that the relationship between them had also evolved and changed over time. Because of these reasons, he did not want to disclose that he was abused by this cousin to anyone in the family because he did not want this cousin to be shamed.

As I grew up, I think [talking about abuse experiences] became irrelevant after a certain point in time. And we had developed new relationships with those people. Of course families break away, and after settling down and having established their identities as separate entities, then we again rebuild our bonds. So we had rebuilt our bonds as different families who were connected by a common ancestry. Then we had relations with their spouses and their children. So we are now uncles to their children... The cousin who abused me, he has also changed a lot. So evidently I can see that he is not the same person as he was, and it would not be right for me to bring that up or to shame him in any way, because he was also in many ways a child at that time. He was just I think in 14 to 16, that age group. So it doesn't make sense.

It is interesting to note that Mohan observed that his cousin too was a child when he perpetrated sexual abuse. This information seemed to have helped Mohan to look past some of his cousin's actions and develop a new relationship with him. Mohan further mentioned that he had made active attempts to make his cousin comfortable around him and address any worry his cousin might have felt on account of the idea that Mohan might disclose their sexual relationship during childhood to other family members.

I think the only area is the discomfort when I meet this cousin again... I am more concerned about his discomfort. I am wondering whether he would be hesitating to meet me now, now that he is married, he has children, is he scared that I might bring up this issue, or give away certain details. So I am more concerned about that. And initially there was hesitation from my side also. So later as we started interacting a bit more, I saw that hesitation from him. It's not arrogance but hesitation. So then I tried to make him as comfortable as possible, so that he could trust that Mohan is not going to cause any problems, is not going to reveal information.

***'This is not something I want to put them through': Protecting others from feeling hurt.*** Sometimes men survivors hesitated to disclose their abuse experiences because they wanted to protect other non-offending people in their families from feeling hurt or discomfited. Mohan said that he had not discussed his abuse experiences with anyone in his family because "it would hurt a lot of people." Tejesh shared that while he had disclosed to his mother that he had experienced sexual abuse, he did not tell her about the actual identity of the abuser since the abuser was a member of their extended family and related to his mother.

I had to place it very gently. So I did mention this but I didn't mention because she would freak out, because after all he is a relative. He's related to her, he's her cousin's son. So I did say it was someone at school.

Dhruvan said that he had not talked to his parents about his abuse experiences because he was worried that learning about their son's sexual abuse would cause them anxiety or distress.

But I have never spoken about it to my parents. I didn't want to bother them with regards to these thoughts, because I'm sure this will, I'm sure this is not something I want to put them through, you know.

Moreover, Dhruvan observed that his parents were struggling with health and financial challenges that took up much of their time and energy. He decided that because of these reasons he did not want to "disturb" his struggling parents by talking to them about his abuse experiences.

I couldn't communicate to my parents. As I told you, my mom was sick and my father was already physically challenged. And we were struggling financially.

I didn't want to disturb my parents, they were struggling to make ends meet.

***'A, you are having sex. And B, you are having sex with a man. That's like, hello!': Same-sex nature of abuse.*** Since all the participants had been sexually abused by older boys or men (a few had also been abused by women), the same-sex nature of abuse emerged as a significant barrier to disclosure of abuse experiences for some men survivors. Tanmoy said that when he observed stigma around same-sex sexual activity in his social environment, it prevented him from talking about his abuse experiences to anyone.

In these apartments where we were staying in Ranchi, that one of the boys was caught with another boy, and there was a hush-hush talk, and thought to myself oh shit, the same thing has happened to me and I shouldn't be talking about this at all. And then the word gay came about and I thought to myself that this is something not to be talked about.

Harith discussed that as a child he felt very confused about how to understand and make meaning of his abuse experiences because sex itself was taboo and same-sex sexual activity was even more taboo. This confusion prevented him from disclosing these experiences to anyone.

Should we even ask about it, maybe not. Should we even tell this to somebody? No, because it is already wrong. A, you are having sex. And B, you are having sex with a man. That's like, hello! So all these thoughts when you don't have a certain exposure to information. I wouldn't even say right or wrong information, you don't have information at all. So you tend to get even more conflicted and confused, and nobody talks about the words gay or lesbian or queer. Now I am talking very openly and saying those words, but I wouldn't even dare to utter that word for a while. So it was like that.

***'What are you cribbing about?': Fear of minimization of experiences.*** Some of the participants also discussed that the fear of others minimizing their abuse experiences was a significant barrier to disclosure. Mohan said that as an adult he saw little reason to disclose to anyone in his family that he was sexually abused by one of his cousins because his family members would not have taken his disclosure very seriously.

Even if I told anybody, those people, even his family is not going to take it seriously. There might be some discomfort for a day or two, but they would take it as a minor thing. And what am I going to achieve? Nothing.

Harendra shared that he feared that he would not be believed by others if he disclosed to them his abuse experiences.

Even now I feel like nobody will believe me. That's crazy. That's so typical when we see the kids in the work that we do. When children say, "Please don't tell my mother, they will never believe me," I can a 100% associate with that.

Indivar discussed his observation that because some of the sexual activities in his abuse experiences were with women, he feared that others in society would not take his experiences seriously and would minimize them.

And when there is a male that says, "I was abused," then it's very difficult to digest. Because then it's like, "What are you talking about? Man up! You are a man. You just got to have sex with a 20-year-old woman, what's wrong with you? This is the stuff that goes down in history, you know. A 9-year-old having sex with a 20-year-old girl. So you should be happy. What are you cribbing about?"

He further said that since men and boys were expected in society to enjoy sex in all contexts and were often regarded positively for having sex with women older than them, these internalized social expectations and values had been a barrier for him with regard to recognizing his abuse experiences as abusive.

When these things [referring to abuse experiences] came up in my head, I said, "What are you crying for? You had sex before most of the kids in college even knew how it was done. What are you cribbing about? Are you a girl?"

Indivar also discussed that it was perhaps harder for men and boys to disclose their experiences of sexual abuse as compared to women and girls because of the popular perception in society that child sexual abuse exclusively takes place between male perpetrators and female children. He acknowledged that it might have been easier for him

to talk about his abuse experiences with others in society if he were a woman; being a man had made it more difficult for him to be taken seriously as an abuse survivor in his opinion.

If I were a woman, it could have been a lot easier to open up because people are used to listening to those stories [referring to stories about sexual violence against women]. [People] are used to reading articles about a woman getting raped or a girl getting molested. What we are not used to listening to is a boy abused, or a man was molested by a bunch of other men, or a man was molested by a woman. We are not used to that, and what we are not used to doesn't go down easy ever. So maybe it was harder actually being a man... So yeah, maybe it was harder to open up being a male, because people are just not used to listening to that side of the story. You know, the role of the male is to be abuse and the role of the female is to get abused. And when there is a male that says, "I was abused," then it's very difficult to digest.

Tarun alluded to a similar idea and said that there is a general acceptance among people of the fact that sexual violence frequently takes place against women and girls but people continue to be unfamiliar with sexual violence against men and boys, and tend to perceive all sexual activity between boys as a rite of passage or as boys being boys. This would also amount to minimization of survivors' experiences when violence against them is normalized in this fashion.

I have a feeling that while the women thing is brought up, I mean not that it's disclosed because there is still so much of trauma and shame around it, but at least it is getting attention because of the rapes and the violence against women... But I

think there is a large part of the Indian population... who still think that for men this is a part of growing up. *Ki woh to karte hain, ladke toh* they shag each other [That boys are into this, boys shag each other] and whatever else.

**Subordinate theme 4b - Response to disclosure.** When survivors disclose their abuse experiences, responses of others to disclosure can assume a great deal of significance. Responses to disclosure from others were varied for participants in this study. While some of the responses were supportive and affirming, many times others responded in a negative or unsupportive manner. Table 5.6 below presents a list of the sub-themes under this subordinate theme.

Table 5.6

*Overview of subordinate theme 4b (Response to disclosure)*

Subordinate theme	Sub-themes
Barriers to disclosure	‘I can help you out’: Supportive and sympathetic.
	‘Okay now go and do your homework’: Silence.
	‘She thought I was strong enough to put that behind me and move on in life’: The expectation to get over it.
	‘You asked for it’: Blame

***‘I can help you out’: Supportive and sympathetic.*** Some of the responses that the participants received were supportive because the person to whom they disclosed listened to them without judgment and offered help. Himank disclosed about his abuse experiences to a fellow student from another country when he was in graduate school. Subsequently he disclosed several other of his friends and they too were supportive.

I spoke to this guy... He was very supportive and encouraging, and he told me, "If you need help with it, let me know. I can help you out. You should at least talk about it with your other friends if you feel the need for it."... And all the other people after that whom I have chosen to speak to about this, either my straight friends or gay friends, have been very very fine with it. So I have never had a shocked or a negative reaction to this at all.

Indivar said that he had disclosed his abuse experiences to his wife, who was his girlfriend at the time. He said he was anxious about disclosing but felt it was important to disclose this to his future wife, and was pleasantly surprised by her supportive response in which she offered to work with him to find appropriate therapeutic support.

I told her exactly what had happened. She was supportive. I didn't expect it... But she was very supportive, and she said, "You are saying it like it's your fault or something. We'll just get you on to a therapist because you clearly need help." And she didn't make it sound like, you know, how people will say, "You're mad, go to a psychiatrist" or something. She sort of said, "It's like you've broken a bone, and it's dislodged and causing a lot of swelling and other related problems. So let's get you to a doctor and get the bone fixed."... So that was nice, because I got, for the first time I think, I got a supportive response.

Dhruvan told his wife about his abuse experiences, and her response was sympathetic.

My wife was feeling very sorry for me. She was in tears. I remember that reaction of hers. She felt that I have been through a lot of turbulence, and she felt very sorry for me at the time.

***'Okay now go and do your homework': Silence.*** Several participants reported that when they disclosed, the other person responded with silence or brushed it off and did not offer any response whatsoever. Harith said that he told his older brother about his abuse, but the brother's response was dismissive.

I told my brother once. But then I think he was also kind of subjected to this. And he told me later on after many years though. But when I told my brother, obviously he is three years older than me, at least I am outspoken and all but he was very reserved, so he just brushed me away... So my brother being a very quiet person, he didn't even say anything. He just said okay and just go do your thing. Because I don't think he also knew what to say when I went to him.

Indivar shared that his mother asked him to go and do his homework when he told her that he had been experiencing some rectal pain after an uncle had sexually abused him at a wedding.

So I went to my mother and said, "Look it's hurting here." And she said, "What have you been doing," which was always the first response when I asked for help. "What have you been doing?" "I haven't been doing anything," I said. "Why would it hurt there? Did you eat something wrong? Or did you have loose motions [colloquial term for diarrhea] or anything?" So I said, "No. It's just been hurting since that wedding." So she said, "Okay. Why didn't you tell me before?" So that is when I told her "Look this uncle asked me not to tell anyone before. That dog was gonna eat me up or something. So I was really scared." So she was like "Which uncle are you talking about?" So I told her the name, I mean the relationship, because I didn't know the name. And she said, "Are you sure of this?" I said,

“Yeah, I am sure of it. Why? I am telling you this. What do you mean if I am sure of this?” So she said, “Okay now go and do your homework, we’ll talk about it later.” That was the only response. And the later never happened. And I don’t know what it was, but I never went back to her to talk about it. Because, you know, I was expecting some help to come my way which never really did. So I never brought it up with them again, with my mother or anybody else in the family. And she never asked me again.

While the aforementioned excerpts relate to the time when the participants were children, sometimes even as adults their disclosure of sexual abuse was met with silence by listeners. Tarun, a gay man, said that his heterosexual men friends typically found it challenging to respond when he told them about his abuse experiences and usually attempted to brush it off.

Heterosexual men friends are uncomfortable talking about it, and they are like *haan haan sabke saath hota hai* [yeah yeah it happens to everyone], forget it *na* [no], look at how you are now, it’s fantastic, blah blah. And there is a certain kind of passing over the conversation as if it makes them uncomfortable... I know they come from a point of supportiveness but their way of showing it is to not have a conversation.

***‘She thought I was strong enough to put that behind me and move on in life’:***

***The expectation to get over it.*** In a few of the participants’ experiences, when they disclosed, the other person asked them to quickly deal with and get over the impact of abuse in their lives. Arunanshu discussed an incident when he, as an adolescent, wrote a letter to his mother disclosing about his sexual abuse experiences. His mother’s response

was of anger toward him; she expected him to quickly put those experiences behind him and not let them interfere with his life any longer.

I told my mom in a letter that I wrote to her long time back. I think she caught me either having sex or something. She caught me doing something and I was like okay I'm in big trouble. So I kind of wrote a letter to her, a long letter to her, in which I confessed a lot of sex, sexual abuse that I had gone through. And she read it and she was like very staunchly angry [and] pissed at me for that... I kind of wanted that letter to tell her that I was having, that I was a victim also in many ways, and that I enjoy sex with guys because I have a history when it has happened so many times with me... At least what I took away from that dialogue that we had that day with my mom and I was that "It happened in the past, it doesn't mean you have to continue doing it. So it's not okay that you are doing it now".

Dhruvan felt that his wife, who had been sympathetic when he disclosed his abuse experiences to her, expected him to get over his abuse on account of being a man. Since he was a man, his wife perceived him as innately emotionally capable of dealing with his abuse by himself.

The first person to whom I spoke about it was my wife when she, you know, she said she felt sorry for me but at the same time she felt that I could handle it. That's also because of the fact that she realized I was a man, and probably she thought I was strong enough to put that behind me and move on in life. And that's probably the thinking of the society as a whole.

**'You asked for it': Blame.** Some participants were blamed by others for their abuse when they disclosed their abuse experiences. Harendra went to see a psychiatrist as a

young adult to seek help for the abuse he had experienced. This psychiatrist was the first person to whom he disclosed his abuse experiences. The psychiatrist told him in the first meeting that he had asked to be abused and was responsible for it because he had not protested against it.

At 23, 25, I knew I needed help. I needed help. But where do you go to? And I couldn't talk to anyone else in the family. So I went to, you know, someone said psychiatrist and I went. Just walked in. I went in and said, straight to him I went and told him that I think I was abused as a child. So that's when CSA was all coming out and stuff like that. So he was like yeah, so what, you asked for it. You kept quiet, no? So I ducked my head down and came out.

Harendra described this meeting as having had profound consequences for him. As a result of this meeting, for nearly 24 years Harendra blamed himself for his own abuse and viewed himself as complicit in it.

I just went to this guy and he said oh you asked for it. It was just a 5-minute thing... I think I was probably 24. From 24 to until I addressed it at maybe 48 or something, what stayed in my mind was that I asked for it.

Tanmoy shared that when he told his brother about his sexual abuse experiences, the brother responded by saying that he must have enjoyed these experiences.

And when I told my brother about this, my brother said, "Well if you have had so much of sex for a long time, you must have enjoyed it."

### **Superordinate Theme 5 - Perceived Relationship Between Sexual Abuse and Sexual Orientation**

Eight out of 11 participants (five of whom identified as gay, one as bisexual, one as queer, and one as straight) shared that at different times in their lives they had contemplated if their sexual abuse could potentially have impacted their sexual orientation. Many of these participants had believed at some point in time—even though they may have changed their opinion eventually—that their abuse experiences had led to, contributed to, or otherwise impacted their sexual orientation.

Tarun said that he “got in touch with his [sexual] orientation independent of the abuse” but mentally linked it to his abuse experiences as though there were a cause-effect relationship between his sexual abuse and sexual orientation. He said that for many years he was preoccupied with thinking about the connection between abuse and orientation.

It was a preoccupation for a long time... For a long time I thought that they [sexual abuse and sexual orientation] were related and I thought *ke agar yeh nahi hua hota* [if the abuse hadn't happened] then I wouldn't have liked boys and then my life would have been so much better because then I would have no pressure to be, you know, then I could have been a normal person. And normal was heterosexual, and I would get married and have kids and etcetera etcetera. My parents would be happy because they wouldn't have to force me to get married, and all of the social and cultural things that come with it.

He said that he initially started emotionally focusing on his abuse experiences in response to a growing awareness of his sexual orientation and a desire to change it to heterosexual. He perceived that his sexual orientation was a result of his abuse, and if he could somehow address his abuse experiences then perhaps he could possibly also change his sexual orientation to heterosexual.

See for the longest time, like I was telling you, I thought that the abuse led to the attraction for men. Right? Till my early 20s for sure... it was all linked, it was pretty much an obvious thing. It wasn't even a question. So the whole psychology was that somehow if the abuse can be clarified and put to rest then it will make me heterosexual and that thought was even entertained because it seemed like the right thing to do in this country, in the sense that to live meaningfully one had to marry and one had to have kids, and then all stakeholders would be happy, I would just be another regular guy and not this guy who stands out... So those days, early 20s, may be even late teens, it was all linked. I was like I had to find a fix for the abuse. The moment the abuse is fixed, I'll turn hetero. The moment I turn hetero, I can then find a girl, and life will be good.

Tejesh too said that during adolescence when he started experiencing sexual attraction toward other boys and men, he saw it as resulting from his abuse experiences. Similar to Tarun's experience, Tejesh too had wished at a certain time in his life that he had not experienced abuse because he thought that not having had the abuse experiences would have helped him live life as a heterosexual person.

When I was in my adolescence, when I used to have these feelings for boys, so I used to rationalize it with this experience... So I used to rationalize that because of this I have this. I don't have, I didn't have any bad feelings for him because of the incident, but I had, for some time in my life I had bad feelings for this guy because I thought that he had taken away a part of me, like my chances of being a normal person who could enjoy this normal life, getting married, having children.

Arunanshu also said that as an adolescent, for a certain time period he attributed him being gay to his sexual abuse experiences.

I think also in Grade 7 and 8 clearly, and then maybe some parts of Grade 9 and 10 also, I used to feel that the reason that I enjoy sexual gratification and the reason why I now identify myself as gay is because of the sex abuse that I had as a child. He further said that he resented being gay because he felt that his sexual desires and behaviors were socially unacceptable or stigmatized, whereas those of straight boys in his social environment were considered acceptable and legitimate.

If I was not attracted to guys sexually, it would have been easy for me to be these guys. Because they are presumably straight and therefore it is okay when they touch their dicks but I cannot because I am gay and so it is weird for me.

Mohan said that he initially thought that him being gay had something to do with his sexual abuse experiences in childhood, but upon further contemplation later, came to the understanding that he was gay before abuse and that his being gay was perhaps the reason why he had been sexually abused by his cousin.

For some time I had this confusion that maybe I was homosexual because of this experience that I had early on in childhood. But I think when I did a bit of introspection I realized that no, that was not it, that was not the reason. Maybe I got picked because I was already inherently gay... I feel it was the vibration... So in my knowledge I was vibrating softness, femininity, homosexuality, so I got drawn into that. How is it my other cousins don't have that same experience?... He probably didn't find them attractive enough for this. He chose me after all, so there

must be something in me that he found was. So I think it was not that event that influenced my sexuality in any way. I was anyway gay. I was born gay.

Mohan also shared that his confusion regarding whether or not his sexual orientation was an outcome of his sexual abuse experiences got clarified through his interactions with his therapist, who told him that sexual abuse did not induce homosexuality in people. An important detail in Mohan's account is that he did not go into therapy to address his sexual abuse because he did not consider this experience traumatizing; instead he went into therapy while he was coming to a realization that he was gay, which was cause of concern for him at the time.

First of all I was never hurt or felt tormented by this incident or this memory [referring to sexual abuse]. What was bothering me more was the fact that I realized that I was gay. That's the reason I went into therapy. And when I went into that therapy, and at that time when I expressed it, I brought it up as a possible theory. Could this be it? And the first response I got from the therapist is that no, that is not the reason, definitely not. You are the way you are and that's how this is. That was some input I got from the therapist. And then after that, any therapy sets off a process of introspection, thinking, and further action... A few years of introspection brought me to the conclusion that no, it couldn't have impacted me that way.

It is interesting to note that the participants whose interview excerpts are presented above did not lament or shun their attraction for other boys or men per se, but resented that their social identity as gay was stigmatized, or that they could not enjoy the social acceptance and opportunities that straight men and boys had access to on account of their sexual orientation. In other words, their resentment or disappointment toward their same-

sex attractions often emerged in response to the heteronormativity and homophobia that they observed in their sociocultural environment. I found further evidence of this in Himank's narrative where he discussed that initially he perceived a cause-effect relationship between his sexual orientation as a gay man and his abuse experiences, but such perception of a link between orientation and abuse did not cause him distress because he felt okay about being gay.

I felt that because I had a lot of sexual contact with men when I was a kid, it kind of induced homosexuality into me. But later on in life I realized that they are two independent dimensions. At certain points in life I thought that these two were related... I was not angry or agitated about it. But that's because I was never angry or agitated about the fact that I was gay. I was never depressed about it. I always accepted it, even while growing up in college and even through high school and so on. So yeah, I mean, although I attributed it to that but the fact that I was completely okay with being gay, I did not take that in a negative way. I didn't blame anything. I just thought there was some cause and effect. That's it.

I mean there was some confusion there about how was that possible [referring to his perceived association between sexual orientation and sexual abuse]. But you can't always decode the brain how it works, right? So I just kind of stored it away, thinking that even it is, what's the big deal? I am happy with the way I am. So what's the big deal about it. But I don't think I was either happy or sad about it.

Himank felt okay about being gay and therefore did not feel anxious about the link he perceived to exist between his abuse experiences and his sexual orientation. Himank had been educated at one of India's top engineering schools. The primary reason why he felt okay about being gay, he said, stemmed from his confidence that his education would lead to financial independence, which he hoped would allow him to have a lifestyle where he need not care about what others thought of his sexuality. He also shared a very close relationship with his mother and sister, and was confident that their love for him would not dissipate if and when he came out to them as gay.

I would always try to postpone or avoid the question of “hey what will happen when the time comes for me to marry in the traditional way, and when everyone starts asking questions” and so on. I always postponed that. And I was okay with postponing that because I was confident that I would have a good future. Right? That, you know, I have worked so hard, I have gone to a good college, I will get a good job, and so I'll come to it when the time comes... Because I was not shackled by my family, thinking that “hey I have to go into family business; and then if I don't get married then they might throw me out of my family business; or that I am from such a poor family that even if I am gay, at the end of it society won't accept it.”... Because I had this confidence backing me up that I might be in a decent position later on in my life, and okay fine, my mom will be really concerned about me not getting married, but I'll come to it when the time comes. So that kind of made me okay with the fact that I am gay in a society where it is not okay to be gay.

Tarun articulated why he and some other gay men survivors of child sexual abuse might perceive their sexual orientation as a result of their sexual abuse, within a homophobic sociocultural environment.

I was making a point about using your abuse as a crutch to become more acceptable to homophobia, or even to your own homophobia against yourself. So for a long time till you come to grace your orientation, and you still think it's a bad thing, or you are less than normal, or this is a queer element, you look for reasons for why you might be like this. So abuse kind of becomes a very handy thing to give an explanation to yourself first, and then to others, that I am abnormal because I was abused. And first you play that tape internally to make your own self calmer. Then when you express it to other people, especially the world at large, you also find this story getting more motivation. Because you see that when you are talking about your orientation, people are uncomfortable, and the moment you bring up the abuse as a trump card, as an explanation, the other person's stance towards you softens, and suddenly they become more accepting of you as a human being.

In this way, some gay men survivors' perception of their sexual orientation as linked to their sexual abuse may be understood as a way to cope with homophobia in society, including internalized homophobia.

### **Summary**

Five superordinate themes were identified through an analysis of the interview data: (1) heteropatriarchal social environment, (2) impact of child sexual abuse, (3) meanings of child sexual abuse, (4) disclosure, and (5) perceived relationship between

sexual abuse and sexual orientation. Findings show that survivors' experiences were typically located within a sociocultural context of heteropatriarchy. Child sexual abuse can have profound, long-term, and multiple effects on men survivors. It may impact them at personal and interpersonal levels, including their relationships to children in their families and in the wider community. Survivors made a variety of meanings of child sexual abuse while they were still children. Disclosure regarding sexual abuse in childhood was typically a complex experience for men survivors, fraught with challenges such as guilt and shame. Since most perpetrators of sexual abuse of boys are other boys or men, the same-sex nature of abuse experiences presented a significant challenge for survivors vis-à-vis disclosure, given their heteronormative social context. While disclosure recipients' responses were occasionally supportive and sympathetic toward survivors, they were largely unhelpful as they ranged from abject silence to expecting the survivors to get over abuse, and blaming the victim. Finally, many men survivors had believed at some point that their sexual orientation had been influenced or shaped by their sexual abuse experiences; this perceived relationship between sexual abuse and sexual orientation was often framed within a climate of heteropatriarchy.

## CHAPTER VI

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of adult men in India who have experienced sexual abuse during childhood, and understand the meanings they make of their sexual abuse experiences. Based on an IPA analysis of data, I identified five superordinate themes, which are heteropatriarchal social environment, impact of child sexual abuse, meanings of child sexual abuse, disclosure, and perceived relationship between sexual abuse and sexual orientation. This chapter contains a discussion of the findings and their relation to current literature. In particular, I will discuss trauma and long-term impact of abuse in the lives of men survivors, survivors' relationship to children, meanings that survivors constructed of their abuse experiences, and barriers and responses to disclosure of abuse experiences by survivors. I will also examine the relationship between child sexual abuse and sexual orientation. Many of the findings are consistent with existing research on men survivors of child sexual abuse from other countries, and some findings expand and contribute to the current knowledge on men survivors.

#### **Trauma and Long-Term Impact**

An important finding of this study is that child sexual abuse can have significant, multiple, and long-term impacts on the lives of boys and men who experience it. It can cause emotional pain and trauma over the lifetime and be a significant obstacle to self-actualization. Many participants in this study spoke about the profound influence which sexual abuse had had on them and their interpersonal relationships. Data show that men

who experience sexual abuse during childhood may feel burdened by shame or perceive themselves as complicit in abuse; their abuse experiences may impact their sexual behaviors; their sexual or romantic relationships may experience strain in relation to emotional or sexual intimacy; and abuse experiences may impact survivors' social relationships in ways that lead to isolation and withdrawal. These findings are consistent with many other studies on men's experiences of child sexual abuse, although none of them are based on an Indian context. It is interesting to note the striking similarities in survivors' experiences in this study and those reported in studies from Western countries. These findings also expand current knowledge on men survivors' experiences of child sexual abuse.

**Emotional pain and stress.** That child sexual abuse can have significant and lasting impact on men survivors' well-being immediately following the abuse and over the lifespan is well-documented in various research studies from different parts of the world (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Dube et al., 2005; Chan, 2014; Easton, 2014; Gartner, 1999a; Holmes & Slap, 1998; Hunter, 2009; Maikovich, Koenen & Jaffee, 2009; Maniglio, 2009; O'Leary, 2009; Segurado et al., 2008; Sigurdardottir, Halldorsdottir & Bender, 2014; Turner, Taillieu, Cheung & Afifi, 2017). Data in the current study demonstrate that child sexual abuse remains an emotionally painful and distressing experience in the lives of many adult men survivors several years or even decades after abuse took place, including when survivors have participated in therapy and other activities (such as activism to bring attention to child sexual abuse in society, spiritual practices etc.) that they perceived as helpful with recovery and healing from abuse. This finding is in line with research that has found that many men survivors continue to feel

long-term emotional pain and stress in relation to their childhood experiences of sexual abuse for many years following abuse (Draucker & Petrovic, 1996; Dube et al., 2005; Durham, 2003a; Fater & Mullaney, 2000; Gilgun, 1991; King, Coxell & Mezey, 2002; Valente, 2005).

At the same time, it is important not to essentialize men survivors' experiences. While many participants expressed feelings of emotional pain in relation to their sexual victimization, there were a few who did not find these experiences to be particularly emotionally traumatic. Why some survivors may experience child sexual abuse as more emotionally painful than other survivors may depend on a wide range of factors including abuse dynamics, self-esteem, shame and self-blame, coping skills, interpretation of abuse experiences by survivors, social support, and family and peer relationships (Marriott, Hamilton-Giachritsis & Harrop, 2014; Whiffen & MacIntosh, 2005). For instance, in this study, one of the participants said that the abuse experiences "didn't have a negative effect" on him, and that he did not feel "hurt or violated." It is possible that relational proximity to the perpetrator and the nature of abuse he experienced may have played a role in his perception of his abuse experiences. Relational proximity to perpetrator and experience of penetrative sex have been known to increase long-term harm among sexual abuse survivors (Beitchman et al., 1992; Briere & Elliott, 2003; Najman, Nguyen & Boyle, 2007; Trickett, Noll, Reiffman & Putnam, 2001). In Himank's case, all perpetrators were acquaintances at best, and none of his sexual abuse experiences involved penetrative sex. These factors perhaps mitigated his exposure to emotional pain and trauma. For men survivors, factors which mitigate harmful effects of child sexual abuse remains a complex and under-researched topic that requires further investigation;

the limited but growing scholarship on resilience among men survivors (Crete & Singh, 2015; Gilgun, 1991; Graves, Borders & Ackerman, 2017; Kia-Keating et al., 2005) may provide some interesting insights with regard to this important question.

**Shame and guilt.** Men survivors in this study expressed feelings of intense shame and guilt with respect to their sexual abuse experiences. Many participants perceived themselves as complicit in their own abuse; many of these participants felt during their childhood that they were somehow responsible for their own abuse and some of them continued to occasionally feel this way as adults also. Their perception of guilt and complicity emerged from feeling that they did not say no to abuse, did not fight the perpetrator, went along with the abuse, or had hurt the perpetrator's family members by having a sexual relationship with the perpetrator. Not being able to resist the perpetrator is tied to the notion of masculinity for many men survivors (Chan, 2014), including for some participants in this study. Men and boys are expected to be physically and emotionally strong as evidenced by the narratives of many participants in this study. Such expectations may contribute to men survivors feeling that they failed to protect themselves and consequently feel guilty and responsible toward their sexual abuse.

Several participants also felt shameful of their abuse experiences. As children, some of them felt ashamed that they had participated in sexual activity with another person and found it embarrassing to share this information with their parents or other family members. Some men survivors continued to feel shameful of these experiences as adults and reported feeling "dirty" as a consequence of abuse. As all participants had experienced abuse by male perpetrators (two participants had experienced abuse by male

and female perpetrators), the same-sex nature of abuse also contributed to feelings of shame for some men survivors. In Indian society where sexuality is taboo (Abraham, 2001; Bhattacharjee, 2000; Dewey, 2009; War & Albert, 2013), heteronormativity and homophobia are pervasive (Hadler, 2012; Ramasubban, 2008, War & Albert, 2013), and parent-child communication about sex and sexuality is uncommon (Aggarwal, Sharma & Chhabra, 2000; Bhattacharjee, 2000), it is not difficult to imagine why experiencing sexual activity in an abusive context, and then talking about it with adults and family members could be an intensely embarrassing and shameful experience for children and adolescents.

Many participants in this study mentioned that they had sometimes experienced physical pleasure or emotional comfort through sexual contact with perpetrators, which arguably contributed to their feelings of guilt and self-blame. When men survivors experience sexual arousal, desire or pleasure in sexual contact with the perpetrator, it may often lead them to think that they were responsible for their abuse because they wanted or enjoyed it (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Romano & De Luca, 2001).

Other research studies, usually based on Western contexts, have also found shame and guilt as important themes in the lived experiences of child sexual abuse survivors in general (Alaggia, 2004; Aakvaag et al., 2016; Feiring & Taska, 2005; Ullman & Filipas, 2005) and men survivors particularly (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Dorahy & Clearwater, 2012; Sorsoli et al., 2008).

**Impact on sexual behaviors and desire.** Child sexual abuse can impact men survivors' sexual desire and behaviors. Several participants in the current study had

experienced heightened sexual arousal and desire post-abuse, while some others had participated in high-risk sexual behaviors such as frequent unprotected sex with strangers. One of the participants mentioned avoidance of sexual activity as one of the effects of sexual abuse. These findings are in alignment with existing research which has found that early sexualization through child sexual abuse may contribute to sexual acting out (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Romano & De Luca, 2001), powerful desire for, or addiction to, sex (Chan 2014; Dimock, 1988; Giugliano, 2006), sexual risk taking (Chandy, Blum & Resnick, 1996; Holmes & Slap, 1998; Homma, Wang, Saewyc & Kishor, 2012; Paul et al., 2001; Putnam, 2003), or avoidance of sexual activity with others (Bruckner & Johnson, 1987, as cited in Dhaliwal et al., 1996; Gill & Tutty, 1999; Maltz, 2002). It is important to relate some of these behaviors to societal notions of masculinity. Existing research indicates that boys and men are slightly more likely to display externalizing behaviors vis-à-vis child sexual abuse (e.g. aggression) as compared to girls and women who tend to display more internalizing behaviors (e.g. depression) (Hornor, 2010; Romano & De Luca, 2001). Since boys in patriarchal societies tend to receive more positive messages about sex as compared to girls (Aaron, 2012) and gender-diverse children, including in India (Abraham, 2001; Verma et al., 2004, 2006), it is likely that boys and men who have experienced child sexual abuse may try to externalize the trauma of sexual abuse through behaviors such as elevated sexual desire, sexual compulsivity, and high-risk sexual activity (Aaron, 2012; Sigurdardottir et al., 2014). As one of the participants in this study shared, increased sexual desire and corresponding increase in sexual activity with women post-abuse was an outlet for him to address the perceived mental and physical effects of sexual abuse, and he experienced his elevated

sexual drive—which he perceived to be a marker of his masculinity—as having had a positive impact on his life. In this way, men survivors’ experiences and the meanings they make of these experiences are often filtered through a lens of patriarchal notions about masculinity.

**Impact on self-actualization.** An area where this research expands the literature on experiences of men survivors of child sexual abuse is the impact of abuse on self-actualization. The term self-actualization was made popular by Abraham Maslow (1943) in his theory of human motivation, wherein he stated that “what a [person] can be, [they] must be” (p. 383) and referred to self-actualization as the innate “desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming” (p. 382). While frequently used in academic literature and wider society, the term has remained notoriously nebulous and difficult to operationalize (Krems, Kenrick & Neel, 2017). Here I operationalize it using Couture, Desrosiers and Leclerc’s (2007) definition which refers to self-actualization as the “capacity to maximize use of one’s abilities and resources” (p. 111). Data in current research show that several men survivors believe that sexual abuse experiences hurt their chances of optimally realizing their full and unique potential in personal or professional spheres of their lives. Many participants experienced a feeling of a general incompleteness in their lives or felt that they were being held back from progressing or developing as individuals as a consequence of their sexual victimization. To my knowledge, no research with people who have experienced child sexual abuse, or men survivors specifically, has explored the relationship between abuse experiences and survivors’ understanding of their effect on self-actualization.

**Silencing and minimization of experiences.** Despite the evidence to suggest that child sexual abuse can have profound and long-term influences on the lives of men and boys who are exposed to it, men survivors may feel that their abuse experiences are not taken seriously by others. This is reflected in narratives of some participants in this study where survivors shared their fears that others would not believe them, or their accounts of others minimizing or dismissing their abuse experiences. This phenomenon of silencing of survivors is discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

### **Relationship to Children**

It is relevant to discuss how men survivors may make meaning of their abuse experiences in relation to children, and how abuse may influence any relationships between survivors and children. The data in current study demonstrate that child sexual abuse may indeed influence adult men survivors' relationships with children in not only their own families but also in the wider community. Research studies show that adult survivors of child sexual abuse may face certain challenges or concerns as parents, such as physical or emotional distance from their children (Denov, 2004; Sigurdardottir, Halldorsdottir & Bender, 2012; Wark & Vis, 2016), difficulty establishing clear generational boundaries (DiLillo & Damashek, 2003), harsh disciplining practices (DiLillo & Damashek, 2003), higher child physical abuse potential (Craig & Sprang, 2007), and fear of sexually abusing own children (Denov, 2004; Price-Robertson, 2012). However, as Wark and Vis (2016) observe, fatherhood is not entirely problematic for men survivors, and data in current study support this opinion. Some participants discussed that they were more protective of their children because of their own abuse

experiences; they stayed vigilant about where their children were and who they were with, as well as tried to develop a bond of trust between themselves and their children so as to instill confidence in children to disclose to them any adverse or threatening experiences. Researchers have indicated that sometimes fathers may become, or think they would become, overprotective as parents because of their own sexual abuse during childhood (Etherington, 1995; Price-Robertson, 2012). It may be argued that a pronounced protectiveness toward their children may be partly on account of the sociocultural notion that men should be the providers and protectors for their families. Many participants in this study mentioned that the society expected this of them as men, and some participants also espoused this idea as an important part of their self-identity as men.

For a few men in this study, their relationship with their children was a significant aspect of their recovery and healing from abuse. For one participant in particular, facing his 8-year-old son at a festival was a turning point because he had been first abused at around the same age and during the same festival. As he looked at his son, he realized how young and vulnerable he himself must have been when the perpetrator abused him the first time. He said that until then he had perceived himself as complicit in his abuse, but seeing his son in this way helped him see his own experiences in a different light. He realized that he was a victim and therefore not to be blamed for his own sexual victimization. This finding is in agreement with studies from Western countries which show that parenthood can be a healing experience for men survivors of child sexual abuse (Easton et al., 2015; Wark & Vis, 2016).

It is noteworthy that many participants mentioned that their abuse experiences had helped them become protective of children in the wider community and not just in their own family. In fact, many participants who spoke about being protective toward children did not have children of their own. They said that they remained alert to signs of inappropriate behavior toward children by adults around them and occasionally even intervened in such situations when they perceived an adult behaving sexually inappropriately toward a child. Some participants had spoken to their friends or family members about sexual abuse as an important risk to children's safety and encouraged them to take steps to educate themselves and their children on this subject. Therefore, one of the meanings that men survivors may construct of their abuse experiences is to protect children in their social environments from sexual abuse. This is an interesting finding because thus far the research that has explored men survivors' relationship to children, which has been predominantly based on Western social contexts, has almost exclusively focused on survivors as fathers and their relationships with their own children. Thus, the present study expands the existing knowledge on men survivors' relationship to children, especially from a global South perspective. It is possible that this finding may be associated with the fact that between one-fourth to one-fifth of India's population lives as part of a joint family structure (Niranjan, Nair & Roy, 2005), and therefore it may be argued that adults in such societies have more opportunities of being in caretaking roles with respect to children who are not their own, as compared to Western societies. Moreover, the Indian society is considered to be a community-oriented collectivist society (Laungani, 1999; Raval, Martini & Raval, 2007) and therefore adults' roles and responsibilities in relation to children in the wider society assume greater significance.

Protectiveness toward children—their own as well as in the wider community—as one of the meanings that some men survivors construct of their abuse experiences offers a counter-narrative to the contested but widely popular stereotype that men who have experienced sexual abuse go on to become perpetrators of child sexual abuse themselves (Glasser et al., 2001; Teram, Stalker, Hovey, Schachter & Lasiuk, 2006; Wark & Vis, 2016). While men who were sexually abused in childhood are overrepresented among child sexual abuse perpetrators (Lambie & Johnston, 2016) and there is some evidence to suggest that sexual abuse in childhood may increase the risk of sexually offending against others in a minority of men victims (Glasser et al., 2001), most men who were victimized as boys do not sexually abuse children as adults (Salter et al., 2003). The factors that mediate the relationship between victimization and subsequent perpetration for some men survivors who do abuse children are complex and an important area of inquiry (Glasser et al., 2001; Lambie & Johnston, 2016; Lambie, Seymour, Lee & Adams, 2002; Wilcox, Richards & O’Keeffe, 2004). However, it is crucial to challenge the stereotype that all or most men survivors of childhood sexual abuse will become perpetrators since it further victimizes child sexual abuse survivors. The damaging effects of this stereotype for men survivors can be so strong that some men may internalize it and begin to fear that they might sexually abuse their children and consequently become physically or emotionally distant from them (Alaggia, 2005; Denov, 2004; Teram et al., 2006).

### **Meanings of Abuse**

How abuse survivors understand, interpret, and make meaning of their abuse experiences is important because it can influence resiliency among survivors (Grossman,

Sorsoli & Kia-Keating, 2006; Marriott et al., 2014). Moreover, the meanings men and boy survivors make of their abuse *as* men and boys is important to explore the gendered nature of these experiences. In this study, some of the important meanings that the participants had made during childhood of their abuse experiences were confusion or lack of understanding about what was happening, sexual abuse as a secret, sexual abuse as pleasure and excitement, sexual abuse as a game or play, sexual abuse as love, helplessness toward abuse as well articulations of agency within abuse contexts, and perceived effeminacy as a consequence of abuse or a contributing factor toward abuse.

Feeling confused or helpless with regard to sexual abuse can be a challenging experience for boys because these feelings often conflict with the social notions about masculinity which dictate that men should be mentally tough, independent, and in control. Participants in this study mentioned that these notions were considered important elements of a masculine identity in their sociocultural contexts.

It is important to also consider children's experiences of agency in abuse contexts. Agency can be understood as "the capacity for human beings to make choices and to impose those choices on the world; to act on one's own behalf; the ability to confident action" (Andersen, 2008, p. 27). A few of the participants in this study said that they were at times able to resist abuse by saying no to participating in certain behaviors, and in one case, also able to stop abuse from continuing further. There is scant research on children's agency and resistance in relation to their sexual abuse experiences in the current literature on child sexual abuse and this dimension of survivors' experiences needs further exploration.

A few participants in this study understood their abuse experiences as having influenced their gender expression; they felt that abuse had either made them effeminate or further accentuated effeminacy within their behaviors and mannerisms. Within existing research that examines relationship between child sexual abuse and gender expression of men survivors, scholars have primarily examined how child sexual abuse can contribute to hypermasculine behaviors among men survivors. Hypermasculine behaviors among men survivors—such as engaging in sexual or other forms of aggression, desiring sexual conquests, and homophobic behaviors—often emerge out of a need to ‘prove’ their masculinity because they might perceive sexual victimization as threat to, or erosion of, their masculine identity (Levant, 1997; Lisak, 1994; McGuffey, 2008; Scott, 1992; Tremblay & Turcotte, 2005). However, there is little research that explores survivors’ comprehension of their abuse experiences as contributing toward an effeminate gender expression. When considered from this perspective, child sexual abuse can be understood as a potentially feminizing experience for some men and boy survivors. In a patriarchal social environment, such feminization of the masculine identity is a threatening prospect for men and boys. Men and boys who are seen as effeminate are often subjected to ridicule and reprimand in Western societies (Brooks, 2000; Higdon, 2011; Horn, 2007; Swearer, Turner, Givens & Pollack, 2008; Young & Sweeting, 2004) as well as global South contexts (Bhana, 2005; Mayeza, 2017). Many participants in this study, including those who perceived their abuse as having contributed to effeminacy in their behaviors, shared many painful and distressing experiences of being bullied and shamed during childhood and adolescence because of others’ perception of them as effeminate. It may be reasonably argued that some men who think sexual abuse

contributed to effeminacy might view it as an erosion of their manliness, and consequently attempt to overcompensate for this perceived inadequacy by engaging in hypermasculine behaviors. However, the participants in the current study who believed that sexual victimization had contributed to their effeminate behaviors did not engage in aggression or other hypermasculine behaviors although they did experience other negative effects of sexual abuse. This demonstrates and also underlines the relevance of a poststructuralist view of masculinities as “actively constructed and not fixed” (Chan, 2014, p. 250). Just because some men survivors may perceive sexual abuse as a feminizing experience does not indicate that they would ‘naturally’ gravitate toward hypermasculinity. This is also in step with McGuffey’s (2008) observation that men and boy survivors “do not turn to hypermasculinity on their own, the result of a more or less natural psychological response to a perceived threat to their gender and sexual identities” (p. 235) but they often do so under pressure from social actors (e.g. family members) who “push and encourage” (p. 235) them to adopt hegemonic masculine practices and behaviors. Therefore, social forces of heteropatriarchy that often inform and regulate men and boys’ gendered behaviors are at the center of such practices, and not simply survivor’s internal psychological processes (McGuffey, 2008). Also, men survivors’ meaning making practices in relation to their masculinity are complex and layered as opposed to following linear or simplistic trajectories.

Finally, two participants felt that they were effeminate in their gender expression prior to abuse and that such effeminacy had contributed to their abuse; they believed that their effeminate gender expression was partly why the perpetrator had found them attractive. Purcell, Malow, Dolezal and Carballo-Diéguez (2004) have suggested that

gender nonconformity among boys can be a risk factor for child sexual abuse. Their idea found corroboration in a study by Sandfort, Melendez and Diaz (2007) which found that gay and bisexual adult men who considered themselves to be effeminate were more likely to have experienced childhood sexual abuse. Roberts, Rosario, Corliss, Koenen and Austin (2012) also found gender nonconformity among children before age 11 years to be a risk indicator for childhood sexual abuse. The India-based study by Tomori et al. (2016) on HIV risk within communities of men who have sex with men (MSM) also found gender nonconformity to increase vulnerability to child sexual abuse. These studies suggest that boys who are gender atypical or nonconforming may be at greater risk of sexual victimization. When perpetration of child sexual abuse is considered from a feminist perspective as an innately gendered practice inextricably linked to patriarchy (Bolen, 2001; Cossins, 2000; Durham, 2003a; Solomon, 1992; Whittier, 2016), then one way of inspecting the link between gender nonconformity and sexual victimization is to understand it as yet another manifestation of heteropatriarchal oppression wherein subordinate masculinities are marginalized and dominated over by hegemonic masculinity. The discourse of hegemonic masculinity mandates policing and regulation of subordinate masculinities, and sexual abuse of gender nonconforming boys may be understood as a manifestation of such policing and regulation.

### **Barriers and Responses to Disclosure**

Talking to others about experiences of childhood sexual abuse as well as about any thoughts, emotions and memories associated with these experiences can be important for survivors because disclosure can pave way for timely access to helpful resources and

services and is generally considered to be a significant part of the recovery and healing process (Alaggia, Collin-Vézina & Lateef, 2017; Sorsoli et al., 2008). Since child sexual abuse is seldom a one-time event, a timely disclosure by a child while abuse is ongoing may also help prevent further abuse (Hébert, Tourigny, Cyr, McDuff & Joly, 2009). The secrecy around child sexual abuse allows for it to continue at individual and societal levels (Tang, Freyd & Wang, 2007). Because many survivors never tell anyone, the incidence and prevalence statistics on child sexual abuse typically suffer from the problem of not representing its actual scale and magnitude.

Although girl children are 2.5 to 3 times more likely to be sexually abused than boys (Putnam, 2003), boys and men survivors are less likely to disclose abuse and more likely to delay disclosure (Alaggia et al., 2017; Ghetti, Goodman, Eisen, Qin & Davis, 2002; Hébert et al., 2009; London et al., 2008; Mohler-Kuo et al., 2014; O'Leary & Barber, 2008; Priebe & Svedin, 2008). There exist many barriers in society with regard to men and boys talking to others about their abuse experiences. Men survivors in the current study identified several of these barriers, such as guilt, shame, trying to protect the perpetrator from consequences of perpetrating abuse, trying to protect others from feeling hurt, fear that their experiences would not be taken seriously, and same-sex nature of their abuse. Other than these barriers which the participants explicitly identified, there are other barriers which relate to the experiences of participants in this study, for instance emotional stoicism and silence about sexuality.

I have discussed earlier in this chapter the role of shame and guilt in emotional trauma for men survivors. When survivors feel ashamed of their abuse experiences and/or

feel responsible for them, it impinges on their willingness to disclose these experiences to others. Previous research too has found shame or guilt to be significant barriers to disclosure for men survivors (Collin-Vézina, Sablonnière-Griffin, Palmer & Milne, 2015; Dorahy & Clearwater, 2012; Sorsoli et al., 2008).

Another finding of this study is that some survivors do not disclose because they might be trying to protect the perpetrators from embarrassment or other potential harm that they could face on account of being outed as a child molester or sexual abuser. Some survivors felt sorry for the perpetrators because of latter's circumstances unrelated to abuse, some felt that their relationship with the perpetrator had undergone significant change in the intervening years, some believed that the perpetrator had also been a victim of sexual abuse and thus felt sympathy for him, and some wanted to protect the perpetrator from shame and embarrassment within their extended family. These findings expand the current understanding of barriers to disclosure as there is little information on men and boy survivors' reluctance to tell others about their victimization on account to trying to protect the perpetrator from potentially negative consequences.

There is some evidence in extant research to show the survivors sometimes feel reticent to disclose abuse because they are trying to protect non-offending family members or friends from feeling hurt or distressed. Crisma, Bascelli, Paci and Romito (2004) found in their study of one male and 35 female adolescents who had experienced sexual abuse that some survivors did not disclose, or delayed disclosure, because their non-offending parents were going through relationship problems or other personal difficulties and they did not want to burden them by revealing to them their abuse

experiences. In another study of three male and 23 female adolescent survivors of child sexual abuse, Schönbucher, Maier, Mohler-Kuo, Schnyder and Landolt (2012) found that many survivors did not disclose their abuse because they feared that potential recipients of this information would not be able to emotionally cope with it or because they did not want to emotionally burden others by revealing distressing information about themselves. Similarly, Berliner and Conte (1990) in their study of two male and 21 female children who had experienced sexual abuse found that some children were reluctant to disclose because their non-offending parent depended financially or emotionally on the abuser. It is noteworthy that boys constituted only a small portion of the participants in the aforementioned studies, which indicates that men and boy survivors' avoidance or delaying of disclosure requires further investigation. Findings of the current study are congruent with extant research on this topic. Some survivors in this study felt unwilling to talk about their abuse experiences with certain people in their immediate or extended families because they wanted to protect others from emotional stress or pain that may arise out of knowing that the participants had undergone sexual abuse during childhood. Sometimes survivors disclosed abuse but masked abuser's identity if the abuser was related to the recipient of this information. Some survivors felt that they did not want to burden their parents because the latter were preoccupied with financial or health problems.

Since all participants in the study had been abused by another male person (a few were also abused by women), the same-sex nature of abuse emerged as a barrier to disclosure for many survivors. In heteronormative and homophobic societies like India (Hadler, 2012; Ramasubban, 2008; War & Albert, 2013), it is understandable why this

might be a significant obstacle to disclosure for many men and boy survivors since sociocultural factors play a major role in the disclosure process (Fontes & Plummer, 2010). This finding is in step with studies from other parts of the world which demonstrate that men and boy survivors, regardless of their sexual orientation, often worry about being perceived or labeled as gay when abused by other men or boys due to pervasive homophobia in society (Alaggia, 2005; Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Collin-Vézina et al., 2015; Gruenfeld, Willis & Easton, 2017; Holmes et al., 1997; Holmes & Slap, 1998).

Data from the current study show that survivors feel apprehensive about not being believed or not taken seriously, should they disclose their abuse experiences. For some survivors, such apprehension was attributable to the idea that the society does not see boys and men as possible victims of sexual violence. This finding is consistent with extant research from Western countries (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Andersen, 2011; Broussard, Wagner & Kazelskis, 1991; Denov, 2004; Easton et al., 2014; Gagnier, Collin-Vézina & Sablonnière-Griffin, 2017; Holmes et al., 1997; Teram et al., 2006) and a few studies from India (Sahay, 2013; Subramaniyan et al., 2017). In a patriarchal climate, boys are expected to desire and enjoy all sexual activity, particularly with girls and women. In India, same-sex sexual activity is also sometimes perceived by men and boys as *masti* (fun) which is construed as an activity solely for the purpose of pleasure without having any major consequences on their masculinity as a social role (Chopra, Dasgupta & Janeja, 2000). Thus, same-sex sexual activity during adolescence, while considered taboo, is also sometimes understood as a situational mutual behavior between

boys, a rite of passage. For some participants in this study, these societal norms and attitudes had a silencing effect.

In addition to the aforementioned barriers to disclosure which the participants specifically pointed out, there also exist other barriers which relate to the heteropatriarchal sociocultural environment surrounding participants' lives. Data indicate that many participants grew up in an environment where sexuality was taboo and they did not receive any information or knowledge from any significant adults about sexuality or sexual abuse. In an environment of widespread silence about sexuality and lack of access to appropriate knowledge about sexuality and sexual abuse, it is difficult for children to disclose. They may not have the language or vocabulary to talk about their abuse experiences, they may feel shy about disclosing because of the sexual nature of these experiences, or they may not understand perpetrator's actions and therefore feel confused about the abuse itself. Indeed, several participants in the current study reported that they did not understand what the perpetrator was doing to them in the context of abuse and felt confused about it. Moreover, a sociocultural suppression of sexual knowledge and lack of permission to talk about sex and sexuality within families often means that children feel inhibited to disclose anything of a sexual nature to their parents, including about sexual abuse (Fontes & Plummer, 2010). Research indicates that low or inadequate knowledge about sexuality can increase a child's vulnerability toward sexual abuse (Finkelhor, 1984; Finkelhor et al., 1990), and make it challenging for survivors to disclose (Gilgun, 1986). On the other hand, there is some research evidence from Western countries to suggest that sexual abuse education can encourage disclosure by survivors (Finkelhor, Asdigian & Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995; Walsh, Zwi, Woolfenden & Shlonsky, 2015) or encourage

earlier disclosure (Gibson & Leitenberg, 2000). While sexual knowledge or sexual abuse knowledge does not mean that a child will definitely report any abusive experience to others immediately, it can help children better understand what is going on and give them language and permission to talk about abuse.

Another sociocultural factor to consider is emotional stoicism that is typically expected of men and boys. Emotional stoicism as a desirable masculine quality emerged as an aspect of participants' heteropatriarchal social environment in this study. Individual or societal expectations to conform to this norm can have a significant influence on preventing or delaying disclosure among men survivors (Chan, 2014; Easton et al., 2014; Kia-Keating et al., 2005; Romano & De Luca, 2005). Talking about emotional pain and other traumatic effects of abuse, and seeking help may be perceived as unmasculine behaviors, which may deter men and boy survivors from communicating about their abuse experiences to others.

It is noteworthy that not a single participant in this study had ever made a formal disclosure or complaint regarding their sexual victimization to a law enforcement or child protection agency. This perhaps reflects not just societal silencing but also the complications and challenges of criminal justice system mechanisms and legal processes for sexual violence survivors in India.

Disclosure recipients' responses and reactions to disclosure by survivors are crucial (Jonzon & Lindblad, 2004; Münzer et al., 2016). In this study, some participants mentioned positive outcomes of disclosure. They said that the person(s) to whom they had disclosed (primarily friends or romantic partners) believed them, offered them

sympathy and emotional support, and occasionally helped connect them with psychosocial support or therapeutic services. It is relevant to note, however, that disclosure in each of these cases happened several years after abuse events, when the survivors were adults. However, for many participants the experience of disclosure was not positive or reassuring. I have discussed earlier that many men survivors felt uneasy about disclosure because they worried that they would not be believed or that others would minimize their abuse experiences. Unfortunately, data show that men survivors' apprehensions were not groundless. Some participants were blamed or held responsible for their sexual victimization by disclosure recipients, in one case even by a therapist. Victim blaming is sadly a common experience for child sexual abuse survivors, including for men and boys (Alaggia, 2005; Payne, Button & Rapp, 2008), and helping professionals also sometimes perpetuate and partake in this oppressive practice. Another aspect of this issue concerns the widespread silence about sexuality as reflected in participants' accounts in this study. A major reason why there is such lack of access to knowledge about sex and sexuality for children has to do with the cultural non-recognition of children as sexual beings. Perspectives from across the world reflect the deeply held cultural belief in that children are people without sexuality (Haaken & Lamb, 2000; Martin & Torres, 2014; Merghati-Khoei, Abolghasemi & Smith, 2014; Robinson, 2005), and hence are kept away from any information on sex and sexuality lest it morally corrupt them. Smith and Woodiwiss (2016) warn that the misconception that children lack sexuality is dangerous because it can lead to the unintentional consequence of "removing [abused children] from the protective cloak of childhood innocence" (p. 2184) and diminishing the wrongfulness of their abuse. The protection which society typically

extends to children on account of assuming that they are asexual and therefore sexually innocent, can be called into question if they are perceived to have found pleasure from sexual experiences within the context of abuse or when they did not resist abuse.

Perhaps an equally, if not more, disturbing response to disclosure is silence on the part of recipients, which effectively amounts to denial of abuse. For many participants in this study, their disclosures while they were children were met with downright silence from recipients; the survivors disclosed abuse and the other person said nothing in response or asked them to go away. It is possible that the recipients in these instances felt uncomfortable with thinking or talking about sex or sexual abuse, especially with a child, given the climate of silence about sexuality and pervasive ignorance about child sexual abuse. As discussed earlier, children are often perceived as people without sexuality and any interaction with children on topics of sex and sexuality is often considered to have a morally corrupting influence on them; it is possible that the recipients avoided talking about children's abuse experiences with them due to this reason. Moreover, since many of the abuse incidents involved same-sex sexual contact, perhaps the listeners felt uncomfortable about such contact within a sociocultural context of heteronormativity and homophobia. It is also possible that they had never considered that boys could be sexually abused—an erroneous but popular notion that has its roots in the patriarchal system of society—and therefore felt confused by the disclosure and incompetent to respond in any manner. Another possibility, which one of the participants in the current study pointed out, is that they had experienced sexual violence themselves and their own unresolved trauma could have made it difficult for them to offer any response.

Another category of responses to disclosure is recipients' expectation of survivors to quickly move past their abuse experiences, without receiving appropriate help. For at least one survivor in this study, such an expectation by the recipient was tied to patriarchal notions of masculinity which lead people to believe that men are emotionally strong and therefore intrinsically capable of dealing with child sexual abuse without external help.

Several of the response categories discussed above demonstrate that disclosure may not always be a safe and comforting experience for men survivors of child sexual abuse. When the listeners are unprepared to listen, respond, and support; when they take on accusatory and victim blaming stances; or when they minimize the survivors' experiences, they can make the road to recovery and healing more challenging for the survivors. As discussed above, recipients' unhelpful responses are often associated with the heteropatriarchal sociocultural context. Therefore, these unhelpful responses need to be understood as embedded within heteropatriarchy and therefore mirroring broader sociocultural factors that deny recognition and support to men survivors, as opposed to individual failures of disclosure recipients.

### **Sexual Abuse and Sexual Orientation**

It is not uncommon for men survivors to think if exposure to sexual abuse during childhood may have had any influence on their sexual orientation (Alaggia, 2005; Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Dhaliwal et al., 1996; Dimock, 1988; Easton et al., 2014; Easton, Leone-Sheehan & O'Leary, 2016; Purcell, 2004; Roller, Martsolf, Draucker &

Ross, 2009; Teram et al., 2006). It must not be assumed, however, that there is a 'causative' relationship between exposure to child sexual abuse, and sexual orientation.

In the present research, most participants shared that they had interpreted their sexual abuse experiences as having had an effect on their sexual orientation. While one heterosexual participant (out of a total of three) shared that he had questioned his sexual orientation in relation to sexual abuse, seven out of eight participants who identified as gay, bisexual, or queer, shared that they had done so. It is relevant to consider that all participants had experienced same-sex abuse, while some had experienced other-sex abuse as well. Survivors' questioning of their sexual orientation on the basis of sexual abuse is in itself a significant finding which is congruent with extant research on survivor experiences. However, it is perhaps even more important to note that the stress which gay, bisexual or queer (GBQ) men survivors often experienced when they associated their sexual orientation with their sexual victimization, had mostly to do with the heteronormative and homophobic structure of society. Several participants discussed that internally they felt okay being gay or feeling attracted to other boys or men; many participants talked about enjoying same-sex desire and sexual contact within a context of mutual sexual exploration. They also discussed their awareness that their sexual orientation was not widely acceptable in a heteronormative society. Because of this, many survivors wished they were heterosexual so they could feel accepted within their families and the larger society, and enjoy the privileges that heterosexual people take for granted. It may therefore be argued that when they perceived a link between their abuse and sexual orientation, the shame and stress associated with being GBQ in a homophobic society complicated the experience of sexual abuse and exacerbated their emotional pain

and confusion. In contrast, as mentioned before, only one out of the three heterosexual participants in this study discussed questioning his sexual orientation in relation to his sexual victimization. While the two groups (heterosexual and GBQ participants) are too small to allow for any conclusive comparison, these differences reflect that heterosexual men survivors did not have to expend a similar amount of emotional energy disentangling sexual abuse from sexual orientation, as compared to GBQ survivors. This may be attributable to the fact that heterosexuality is the dominant and normative sexual orientation and heterosexual people are not discriminated and castigated like GBQ peoples. Therefore, heterosexual men survivors arguably do not have to feel as anxious about whether their heterosexual orientation was in any way an outcome of their sexual abuse in childhood, although they may still worry about being perceived by others as gay on account of their same-sex abuse experiences or question if sexual abuse 'made' them homosexual (Easton et al., 2014; Teram et al., 2006).

When considering the impact of homophobia and heteronormativity on men survivors of child sexual abuse, it is important to remember the heteropatriarchal constitution of the Indian society and culture. Homosexuality continues to be considered a crime according to the Indian legal system, punishable by imprisonment for ten years to life, despite the many and ongoing legal challenges to this oppressive law that has its roots in India's colonization by the British (Bhaskaran, 2002; Bronitt & Misra, 2014; Sheikh, 2013). Homophobia is not just enshrined in the law, it is pervasive in society as well. For men, being homosexual is considered unmanly (Verma & Mahendra, 2004). In a recent multi-country survey-based research on gender attitudes and practices in seven countries, 92 percent of men respondents from India said that they would feel ashamed if

they had a homosexual son, and 89 percent of men respondents from India said that being around homosexual men made them uncomfortable (Barker et al., 2011). Although homosexuality was removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) by American Psychological Association (APA) in 1973, and Indian Psychiatric Society officially clarified its position in 2014 that homosexuality is not a mental illness (Iyer, 2014), homosexuality continues to be pathologized through deeply problematic practices such as conversion therapy by psychiatrists and promises of ‘treatment’ and ‘cure’ of homosexuality by religious or spiritual gurus (Kalra, 2012; Singh, 2016). Participants in the current study also indicated the widespread prevalence of homophobia and heteronormativity in their sociocultural environment. Against this backdrop of extreme homophobia and marginalization of GBQ peoples, it is understandable why confusion regarding sexual orientation could add an extra layer of emotional burden for men survivors of child sexual abuse.

Finally, it is also important to consider that some GBQ men survivors may think that they were abused because of their sexual orientation, when the perpetrator is another boy or man. One participant in the present study thought that him being gay could have attracted the abuser to him. While this participant did not blame himself for the abuser’s actions, it is possible that some others would. Moreover, research studies show that sexual minority individuals are more likely to experience sexual abuse in childhood (Balsam, Rothblum & Beauchaine, 2005; Friedman et al., 2011; McLaughlin, Hatzenbuehler, Xuan & Conron, 2012; Saewyc et al., 2006). It is likely that many GBQ men and boy survivors would experience internalized homophobia; based on this, one of the possible meanings they can make of their sexual abuse is that they invited it due to

their sexual orientation (Andersen, 2011). Such interpretation of abuse experiences could exacerbate challenges for GBQ men survivors trying to embrace and articulate their sexuality in a heteropatriarchal society.

## CHAPTER VII

### Limitations and Implications

#### Limitations

As with any research, this study had several limitations that warrant acknowledgement and discussion. The first limitation of this study has to do with its recruitment strategy. I recruited participants primarily through activists, professionals, and organizations working on child abuse, gender and sexuality issues, or providing support services to survivors of child sexual abuse in India. Since the participants were self-selected, they had to have direct or indirect access to these individuals or organizations to learn about the study. There were many other men survivors who would not have been connected to these activists or organizations and therefore did not have a similar opportunity to learn about the study. It would be reasonable to assume that men survivors who are connected to resources of potential psychosocial support would be fewer than those who do not; as a consequence, I was not able to reach out to the latter group in this research. Moreover, the experiences of survivors connected to such individuals or organizations might be qualitatively different from those who were not. For example, some of those in the latter group might not even self-identify as having experienced child sexual abuse, and might experience denial. This study could not account for their experiences and emotions.

Another possible limitation could be that this study had only three heterosexual participants as compared to eight GBQ participants. Therefore, experiences and concerns of heterosexual survivors may not be adequately reflected in this study. A few reasons

could possibly explain overrepresentation of GBQ individuals in the sample. One, extant research has shown that GBQ individuals are at greater risk of sexual abuse in childhood as compared to heterosexual individuals (Balsam et al., 2005; Friedman et al., 2011; McLaughlin et al., 2012; Saewyc et al., 2006). Two, because of the heteropatriarchal oppression of GBQ peoples in India, it is likely that more GBQ individuals would be connected with individuals, groups or organizations working on gender and sexuality issues and therefore had a greater opportunity to know about this study due to the recruitment strategy mentioned earlier.

One of the significant limitations of the study concerns the choice of language for data collection. I only recruited participants who were conversant in English. India is a vast and linguistically diverse country with 22 scheduled and 100 non-scheduled languages (Government of India, 2001). While English is spoken and understood by a sizable and growing minority of people, most people are not familiar with it. According to one estimate, nearly one third of the country's population knows conversation-level English (Crystal, 2004). Participation in this study was available to only those who spoke English, leaving out a much bigger part of the population.

Research projects that utilize interviews as the only or primary method of data collection, such as the present study, carry an inherent bias toward people who are extroverted and articulate, as it could be argued that they would be more willing to participate in in-person interviews than those who are introverted and not very comfortable with describing their experiences and expressing their emotions through words. While I acknowledge that relying solely on interviews for data collection could be

a limiting factor by potentially restricting participation from men who are not extroverted or articulate, it is unavoidable in IPA research as it relies heavily on participants' words to understand their lived experiences.

While recruiting participants, I tried to approach activists, professionals, groups, and organizations located in different parts of the country to share with them information about this research. This pan-India recruitment strategy helped me recruit participants from six different cities across the country. However, all of these were large, major cities. A large part of India's vast population lives in small towns and villages but none of the participants were located in such regions, which is another limitation of this research. Resource and support organizations as well as therapeutic services are typically concentrated in bigger cities, which could explain the regional demographics of the study sample.

Finally, this study did not adequately explore issues of class or caste which might also have influenced, shaped, or otherwise intersected with men survivors' experiences of child sexual abuse. Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1991) concept of intersectionality asks that research on people's experiences should take into account different intersecting dimensions of their social identity. While the focus of this research has been to understand how the gendered identities of men survivors in a heteropatriarchal society could influence their experiences of child sexual abuse, it is likely that class and caste aspects of their identity would intersect with gender in their lives in unique ways to influence how men survivors experience and make meaning of sexual abuse in childhood.

### **Implications for Social Work**

This study has several implications for social work practice, policy, and future research. These are discussed below.

**Implications for practice.** First and foremost, social workers working in the areas of children's rights, child protection, or child sexual abuse must recognize that sexual abuse of boy children is a serious concern with potentially harmful long-term consequences for survivors. Current literature shows that mental health professionals often do not ask men clients about sexual abuse histories and when they do ask, they are inconsistent and unsystematic in their methods of enquiry (Holmes et al., 1997; Lab et al., 2000). When survivors disclose, helping professionals too sometimes silence them by dismissing or minimizing their experiences, or blaming them for their own victimization. Therefore awareness, training and education among helping professionals is crucial. Social work agencies and educational institutions should provide such training for social workers, non-government organization (NGO) staff, and other helping professionals working at the frontlines of child protection or with sexual violence survivors.

There are very few organizations working on child sexual abuse in India; even fewer work on sexual abuse of boys and with men survivors. An important implication of this study is that there need to be more support organizations and services focused on child sexual abuse, which address and include boys and men survivors' concerns and issues.

Since heteropatriarchy is an oppressive force that complicates, in multiple ways, the experience of child sexual abuse for men and boy survivors, social workers need to work on examining, challenging, and addressing their own patriarchal and homophobic

attitudes and beliefs as well as within the larger social work community. Social workers and NGO workers are members of society, and as such, are not immune to the heteropatriarchal norms, values and practices that are dominant and widespread in their sociocultural contexts. Critical self-reflexivity is an important social work skill in this regard. Continually working on self to identify and address heteropatriarchal attitudes and privileges should be an integral part of social work education, supervision, and continuing education for social workers.

Social workers need to be at the forefront of generating social awareness about child sexual abuse including sexual abuse of boys. In India, child sexual abuse faces pervasive social denial and is rendered hidden through various myths such as child sexual abuse is a Western import, it does not take place in joint families, only strangers abuse children, children often lie and make up stories about sexual abuse etc. Social denial of sexual abuse of male children is even more pronounced. This creates an unsafe environment for child sexual abuse survivors to talk about their experiences with family members, friends, or in the larger society, and seek help. Many participants in this research shared their opinion that sexual abuse of boys was not recognized, and they had hesitated to disclose their abuse experiences because of a fear that they would not be believed or their experiences would be denied or minimized by others. Organizations working on children's rights and sexual violence should therefore work on breaking the silence and building social awareness about child sexual abuse and its dynamics in Indian culture and society. Social marketing campaigns and information, education and communication (IEC) materials on child sexual abuse which address sexual abuse of boy children are therefore important.

Building social awareness on sexual abuse of boys is necessary but not sufficient to address survivors' concerns as highlighted by this research. This research calls attention to patriarchy and homophobia as core aspects of survivors' experiences that create problems and complications vis-à-vis disclosure, help-seeking, and resolution of trauma. It is therefore imperative to challenge patriarchy and homophobia in society at interpersonal, institutional and systemic levels. Therefore, collaborative efforts among civil society organizations working on children's rights, women's rights, and sexuality rights are key.

Feminist perspectives and approaches are critical to preventing and addressing child sexual abuse, including sexual abuse of boys and working with men survivors, because they bring attention to the vital gender and sexuality rights aspects of working against child sexual abuse from an anti-heteropatriarchal standpoint. Therefore, social work practice to support men survivors of childhood sexual abuse should engage with feminist principles and perspectives, and focus on socio-political change that challenges inequitable gender practices and support sexual diversity and rights (Andersen, 2011). Andersen (2011) has argued that social work with men survivors can learn from the feminist movements in many ways. Men survivors of child sexual abuse can come together to build communities of survivors that reflect on the gender and sexual politics of sexual violence against men and boys; scrutinize hegemonic masculinity as an oppressive construct; reimagine masculinities in ways that reject such oppression; and realize that for men too, personal is political. Social workers working from (pro)feminist and anti-oppressive perspectives can help facilitate such processes of community

building, reflection, and co-construction of critical knowledge. Such communities can come together physically or online.

As mentioned earlier, a key finding of this study is that patriarchal norms, values, and practices complicate men survivors' experiences of abuse and work as obstacles in receiving empathy and support from others around them. Within a heteropatriarchal framework, men survivors of sexual violence cannot lay claim to hegemonic masculinity; their status as victims of sexual violence precludes them from membership to this exalted category. Exposing patriarchy as an oppressive and marginalizing force in the lives of men and boys who have experienced child sexual abuse can help with engaging men and boys in ending gender-based violence in society. While patriarchy hurts women, transgender, and non-binary peoples disproportionately, it can hurt men too as illustrated by the findings of this study. Helping members of privileged groups acknowledge the cost of oppression to not just the marginalized communities but also to themselves, can inspire their participation in anti-oppression activism (Goodman, 2011).

Social workers engaged in therapeutic practice with men who have experienced child sexual abuse should acknowledge the centrality of individual and societal notions about masculinity to men survivors' experiences, and recognize that hegemonic masculinity offers a deeply problematic and restrictive template for men and boys to develop their identities as men. While therapists are advised against imposing any theoretical frameworks on clients, they can explore masculinity issues with clients to check if any of clients' concerns or perceptions vis-à-vis abuse relate to their gender identity as men. The patterns in which hegemonic masculinity may influence men

survivors' lived experiences, as identified in this research, can therefore be of some help and guidance to therapists in identifying specific areas to explore in therapeutic work with men survivors.

In direct practice, mental health professionals are advised to explore issues of shame and guilt in working with men survivors since such meanings of abuse prevent survivors from disclosing, seeking help, and coming to terms with abuse. Van Vliet's (2009) research can offer useful advice to professionals in this regard. It demonstrated that therapists can help clients modify and overcome shame by identifying external causes and influences for triggering events, moving toward attributions of accountability that are less central to a person's self-identity, and believing that change is possible.

This study, along with past research, shows that men survivors of child sexual abuse may experience negative mental or social health outcomes, such as long-term emotional pain and trauma, curtailed self-actualization, shame and self-blame, sexual behavior issues, emotional or sexual intimacy issues, and social isolation and withdrawal. Mental health professionals should, therefore, explore the possibility of a history of child sexual abuse when working with men struggling with any of the aforementioned issues.

Therapists are also advised to explore the different meanings that men survivors could have made of their abuse experiences. The meanings that participants in this study made of their abuse experiences while they were still children, such as confusion, helplessness, secrecy, perceived effeminacy, pleasure and excitement, sexual abuse as play, and sexual abuse as love and intimacy can work as tentative ideas for therapists to explore and see if they resonate with the client's experience. Sometimes learning about

the different meanings which men survivors make of their abuse experiences can be helpful for other survivors because they may learn that they were not alone in making sense of their abuse in a certain way. This can also help with identifying important areas to focus on within the therapeutic relationship, and thus contribute to treatment planning.

This study also brings attention to the relationships of men survivors who are fathers, with their children. Participant narratives in this research challenge the simplistic and problematic victim-to-offender assumption, and demonstrated that parent-child relationships can be a source of healing and recovery for men survivors. In therapy, this aspect of fathers' lives can be explored. Wark and Vis (2016) recommend that "a curious investigation of the male survivor's growth and resiliency in the aftermath of abuse can open up space for the person to consider how the abuse experience has provided a source of strength and compassion as a parent" (p. 9). Working on this aspect of participants' lives, Wark and Vis (2016) suggest, can offer survivors "an opportunity to have one's narrative move beyond victimization" (p. 9) and help them use "their role as parent to pass on an abuse-free legacy to their children" (p. 9).

Finally, this research's findings with regard to impact of abuse on men survivors' self, interpersonal relationships, and their relationships with children provide useful ideas to mental health professionals to explore with their clients who are men survivors. In working with GBQ survivors in particular, the question "Am I gay/bisexual/queer because of sexual abuse in childhood?" is often crucial to explore and address within therapy.

**Implications for policy.** For many years the Indian legal framework did not adequately address sexual abuse of boy children; sexual abuse of male children was primarily addressed under the problematic anti-sodomy law (Sharma, 2008). This scenario changed in 2012 when Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act was passed. POCSO is a gender-neutral law that comprehensively covers penetrative and non-penetrative as well as contact and non-contact forms of sexual abuse. However, implementation issues abound which curtail the new law's effectiveness. A recent study by Centre for Child and the Law (2016) on POCSO Act implementation in Delhi found that courts designated to handle POCSO Act cases typically lacked the infrastructure to allow for child-friendly mechanisms enshrined in the law (e.g. separate entrance for children into the courtroom, waiting room for children and their families, toilet within close proximity of the courtroom, and audio-visual equipment to record children's evidence) from becoming ground-level realities. This study also found that support services for child victims were "sporadic and intermittent" (p. 24). Lengthy delays in trials, low conviction rates, administrative problems, and lack of appropriate oversight also undercut POCSO Act's effectiveness in working with child victims of sexual abuse (Agnihotri & Das, 2015; Centre for Child and the Law, 2016; Mathur, 2016). Implementation of the Act also suffers from lack of appropriate training of law enforcement, medical examination, and prosecution agencies. In one case a 16-year-old girl, who had allegedly been raped by her father, decided not to testify against her father after initially testifying against him; the court issued a perjury notice against the child in this case (Shivananda, 2017). Anecdotal evidence shows that children and their family members are sometimes not believed when they approach the police, and dissuaded from

filing sexual abuse complaints (Bhasin, 2017). These issues demonstrate that the criminal justice system is ill-equipped to deal with child victims of sexual abuse. The case where a child was charged with perjury reveals the ignorance and apathy of the criminal justice system toward dynamics of child sexual abuse, lived experiences of abuse survivors, and processes of disclosure and help-seeking. The findings of this study show that child sexual abuse is often a confusing experience for survivors, frequently complicated through emotions of shame and self-blame. Apathetic and insensitive responses by the law enforcement and judicial systems can compound survivors' trauma, amounting to secondary victimization. Therefore, significant infrastructural investment by the government is warranted to implement the provisions of POCSO Act, as well as in terms of training of police, medical professionals, lawyers and magistrates, and child welfare agencies.

This research calls attention to the acute silence about sexuality that permeates the Indian sociocultural landscape. Non-recognition of children as people with sexuality, and little space within families, schools and communities to access appropriate and accurate information about sex and sexuality, add to the challenges that men survivors of child sexual abuse face. Silence about sexuality can contribute to confusion, shame and guilt, and hinder disclosure. It can also limit other people's ability to respond sensitively and appropriately to disclosure. It also perpetuates myths that can be hurtful to sexual abuse survivors. Nationwide adoption of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) programs in schools can help address the challenge of silence about sexuality, and recognize children as individuals with sexuality, agency, and rights. Currently, sexual education programs in India are fragmented, inconsistent, and fraught with structural challenges such as lack of

political will and religious fundamentalism (Das, 2014). It would be important for CSE curricula to include information on child sexual abuse, patriarchy, masculinities, and diversity in sexual orientations. These programs should be accompanied by simultaneous work with families and communities to equip adults with knowledge and skills to talk about sex and sexuality with children in an age-appropriate, scientifically accurate, and culturally sensitive manner. Implementation of CSE programs is congruent with children's rights agenda as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other rights-based international conventions (UNESCO, 2009).

This research calls for dismantling homophobia as it complicates trauma and perpetuates silencing for men survivors of child sexual abuse. Homophobia continues to be state-sanctioned and institutionalized in India in the form of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) which is a colonial era anti-sodomy law that criminalizes any same-sex sexual activity. Opposition to IPC Section 377 has emerged as a critical site for social action and legal advocacy in favor of rights of sexual minorities in India. Previously some children's rights NGOs have been apprehensive or tentative in supporting anti-377 civil society efforts because the government argued that this law was necessary to extend protection to male victims of child sexual abuse (Sharma, 2008). With the gender-neutral POCSO Act of 2012, this argument has become redundant, paving way for what ought to be unequivocal support from the children's rights sector for decriminalization of homosexuality through a reading down of IPC Section 377 to exclude from its purview same-sex sexual activity between consenting adults.

**Implications for future research.** Based on this study and previous research in the area of men survivors of child sexual abuse, there are several recommendations for future research. While literature on sexual abuse of boys has grown steadily over the last few years, it still remains an under-researched and under-addressed topic in social work research. Therefore, research on various aspects of sexual abuse of boy children and men survivors of child sexual abuse is needed to address the gaps in current literature.

In India, there is a dearth of methodologically sound qualitative as well as quantitative research on child sexual abuse generally, and men and boy survivors of sexual abuse specifically. India-based literature on child sexual abuse has hardly progressed beyond quantitative prevalence studies, which too are limited in number. This presents a major opportunity for researchers to contribute breadth, depth, and nuance to research literature on child sexual abuse in India. More studies need to explore and understand the lived experiences of sexual abuse for survivors. Also, the current research is a cross-sectional study. Qualitative as well as quantitative longitudinal studies are needed to investigate how sexual abuse in childhood impacts men survivors over the course of their lifetime, and the different ways in which men survivors make sense of their abuse experiences at different stages of life.

The sample for this study was an exclusively urban sample, with a high degree of formal education. Future research should involve studies with more diverse samples to confirm, expand, challenge, or nuance findings of this study as well as from the larger body of scholarship on men survivors of child sexual abuse. Intersectional perspectives in research with survivors, which take into account various aspects of survivors' social

identity, such as class and caste, can make a significant contribution to developing a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of survivors' lived experiences. Therefore, future research need to attend to the important idea of intersectionality.

One of the key findings of this study is that many, but not all, men survivors experience emotional pain and trauma in relation to their experience of sexual abuse in childhood. Also, child sexual abuse does not impact the mental health or interpersonal and social relationships of all men survivors in a uniform or similar way. Specifically, in the Indian context, the factors that build resilience among some men survivors against the negative outcomes of child sexual abuse would be an interesting area to explore for future research.

Another finding of this study, which expands the current understanding of relationships of men survivors with children, is that some men survivors try to engage actively in protecting not just their own but also children in the wider community from sexual abuse. Men survivors' participation in community-level efforts to prevent and address child sexual abuse, and how that may be connected to survivors' own recovery and healing from abuse, would be interesting questions to explore in future research.

While globally the research on barriers to disclosure and processes of disclosure for men and boy survivors has shown promising growth and complexity in recent years (Alaggia et al., 2017), to my knowledge there is no research in India that has explored this area in any significant detail. Considering the importance of disclosure—from the perspective of both how it is made and how it is received—to how survivors might make sense of their abuse experiences and seek support, this would be a significant area for

future research inquiry. Cultural barriers as well as facilitators of disclosure should be examined in particular. Future research can also focus on general public and helping professionals' attitudes and beliefs regarding sexual abuse of boys, as these are likely to inform their responses to disclosure. Research may also be undertaken with other stakeholders such as parents and teachers to identify their concerns and beliefs vis-à-vis sexual abuse of boy children. Such research may also include examining the preparedness of these stakeholders in receiving and supporting disclosures of sexual abuse by children.

Finally, most research studies on men and boys' experiences of sexual abuse are retrospective studies with adult survivors. There is little extant research that directly engages children who have experienced sexual abuse (Alaggia et al., 2017). It is important to hear directly from children about their lived experiences of sexual abuse, and to represent and amplify their voices through research. Creative methodological approaches can be utilized in doing research with children in this area, since they may not always be linguistically proficient or comfortable in articulating their emotions and experiences through a traditional research interview. Arts-based research methods such as photovoice (Johnson, 2011), graphic elicitation (Bagnoli, 2009), or participatory drawing (Literat, 2013) can be helpful in this regard.

## References

- Aakvag, H. F., Thoresen, S., Wentzel-Larsen, T., Dyb, G., Røysamb, E., & Olf, M. (2016). Broken and guilty since it happened: A population study of trauma-related shame and guilt after violence and sexual abuse. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 204*, 16-23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2016.06.004>
- Aamir Khan Productions (Producer). (2012). *Child sexual abuse: Break the silence* [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.satyamevjayate.in/watch-the-episodes/child-sexual-abuse/watch-full-episode-hindi.aspx>
- Aaron, M. (2012). The pathways of problematic sexual behavior: A literature review of factors affecting adult sexual behavior in survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity, 19*(3), 199-218. doi:10.1080/10720162.2012.690678
- Abraham, L. (2001). Redrawing the *Lakshman Rekha*: Gender differences and cultural constructions in youth sexuality in urban India. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, 24*(S1), 133-156. doi:10.1080/00856400108723441
- Afifi, T. O., Henriksen, C. A., Asmundson, G. J. G., & Sareen, J. (2012). Childhood maltreatment and substance use disorders among men and women in a nationally representative sample. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 57*(11), 677-686. <https://doi.org/10.1177/070674371205701105>
- Aggarwal, O., Sharma, A. K., & Chhabra, P. (2000). Study in sexuality of medical college students in India. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 26*(3), 226-229.
- Agnihotri, S., & Das, M. (2015, December 10). The Pocso Act: A quick review [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://kafila.online/2015/12/10/the-pocso-act-a-quick-review-srishti-agnihotri-and-minakshi-das/>
- Alaggia, R. (2004). Many ways of telling: Expanding conceptualizations of child sexual abuse disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 28*(11), 1213-1227. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2004.03.016>
- Alaggia, R. (2005). Disclosing the trauma of child sexual abuse: A gender analysis. *Journal of Loss and Trauma, 10*(5), 453-470. doi:10.1080/15325020500193895
- Alaggia, R., & Millington, G. (2008). Male child sexual abuse: A phenomenology of betrayal. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 36*, 265-275. doi:10.1007/s10615-007-0144-y

- Alaggia, R., Collin-Vézina, D., & Lateef, R. (2017). Facilitators and barriers to child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosures: A research update (2000-2016). *Trauma, Violence, B& Abuse*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/1524838017697312
- Alden, H. L., & Parker, K. F. (2005). Gender role ideology, homophobia and hate crime: Linking attitudes to macro-level anti-gay and lesbian hate crimes. *Deviant Behavior*, 26, 321-343. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/016396290931614>
- Allan, J. A. (2017). Masculinity as cruel optimism. *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/18902138.2017.1312949>
- American Psychological Association (2015). Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People. *American Psychologist*, 70(9), 832-864. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0039906>
- Andersen, T. H. (2008). Speaking about the unspeakable: Sexually abused men striving toward language. *American Journal of Men's Health*, 2(1), 25-36. doi:10.1177/1557988307308107
- Andersen, T. H. (2011). Against the wind: Male victimization and the ideal of manliness. *Journal of Social Work*, 13(3), 231-247. doi:10.1177/1468017311410002
- Anderson, E. (2009). *Inclusive masculinity: The changing nature of masculinities*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Anderson, E. (2011). Masculinities and sexualities in sport and physical cultures: Three decades of evolving research. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 58(5), 565-578. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2011.563652>
- Anderson, E. (2012). Shifting masculinities in Anglo-American countries. *Masculinities and Social Change*, 1(1), 40-60. doi:10.4471/MCS.2012.03
- Anderson, E., & McCormack, M. (2016). Inclusive masculinity theory: Overview, reflection and refinement. *Journal of Gender Studies*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/09589236.2016.1245605
- Anderson, E., & McGuire, R. (2010). Inclusive masculinity theory and the gendered politics of men's rugby. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 19(3), 249-261. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2010.494341>
- Anderson, E., Adams, A., & Rivers, I. (2012). "I kiss them because I love them": The emergence of heterosexual men kissing in British institutes of education. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 41(2), 421-430. doi:10.1007/s10508-010-9678-0

- Asthana, S., & Oostvogels, R. (2001). The social construction of male 'homosexuality' in India: Implications for HIV transmission and prevention. *Social Science and Medicine*, 52, 707-721.
- Back, C., Gustafsson, P. A., Larsson, I., & Berterö, C. (2011). Managing the legal proceedings: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of sexually abused children's experience with the legal process. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 35(1), 50-57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2010.08.004>
- Bagley, C., Wood, M., & Young, L. (1994). Victim to abuser: Mental health and behavioral sequels of child sexual abuse in a community survey of young adult males. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 18(8), 683-697. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(94\)90018-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(94)90018-3)
- Bagnoli, A. (2009). Beyond the standard interview: The use of graphic elicitation and arts-based methods. *Qualitative Research*, 9(5), 547-570. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794109343625>
- Balsam, K. F., Rothblum, E. D., & Beauchaine, T. P. (2005). Victimization over the life span: A comparison of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual siblings. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73(3), 477-487. doi:10.1037/0022-006X.73.3.477
- Banyard, V. L., Williams, L. M., & Siegel, J. A. (2004). Child sexual abuse: A gender perspective on context and consequences. *Child Maltreatment*, 9(3), 223-238. doi:10.1177/107755904266914
- Barker, G., Contreras, J. M., Heilman, B., Singh, A. K., Verma, R. K., & Nascimento, M. (2011). *Evolving men: Initial results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)*. Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Instituto Promundo.
- Barrett, M. J., Trepper, T. S., & Fish, L. S. (1990). Feminist-informed family therapy for the treatment of intrafamily child sexual abuse. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 4(2), 151-166. doi:10.1037/0893-3200.4.2.151
- Barritt, L., Beekman, T., Bleeker, H., & Mulderij, K. (1984). Analyzing phenomenological descriptions. *Phenomenology & Pedagogy*, 2(1), 1-17.
- Barth, J., Bermetz, L., Heim, E., Trelle, S., & Tonia, T. (2013). The current prevalence of child sexual abuse worldwide: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Public Health*, 58(3), 469-483. doi:10.1007/s00038-012-0426-1

- Beasley, C. (2012). Problematizing contemporary men/masculinities theorizing: The contribution of Raewyn Connell and conceptual-terminological tensions today. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 63(4), 747-765. doi:10.1111/j.1468-4446.2012.01435.x
- Begley, M. & Quayle, E. (2007). The lived experience of adults bereaved by suicide. *Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention*, 28(1), 26-34. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1027/0227-5910.28.1.26>
- Beitchman, J. H., Zucker, K. J., Hood, J. E., DaCosta, G. A., Akman, D., & Cassavia, E. (1992). A review of the long-term effects of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 16(1), 101-118. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(92\)90011-F](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(92)90011-F)
- Bell, D., & Belicki, K. (1998). A community-based study of well-being in adults reporting childhood abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 22(7), 681-685. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(98\)00045-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(98)00045-3)
- Benner, P. (1985). Quality of life: A phenomenological perspective on explanation, prediction and understanding in nursing science. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 8(1), 1-14.
- Benner, P. (1994). The tradition and skill of interpretive phenomenology in studying health, illness, and caring practices. In P. Benner (Ed.), *Interpretive phenomenology: Embodiment, caring, and ethics in health and illness* (pp. 99-127). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Berliner, L., & Conte, J. R. (1990). The process of victimization: The victims' perspective. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 14, 29-40. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(90\)90078-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(90)90078-8)
- Bersani, L. (1987). Is the rectum a grave? *October*, 43, 197-222.
- Beutel, A. M., & Marini, M. M. (1995). Gender and values. *American Sociological Review*, 60(3), 436-448.
- Bhana, D. (2005). What matters to girls and boys in a black primary school in South Africa. *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 175(2), 99-111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0300443042000230410>
- Bhasin, K. (1993). *What is patriarchy?* New Delhi, India: Kali for Women.
- Bhasin, R. (2017, May 21). As POCSO cases rise, infra, implementation remain problem areas. *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/as-pocso-cases-rise-infra-implementation-remain-problem-areas/>

- Bhaskaran, S. (2002). The politics of penetration: Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. In R. Vanita (Ed.), *Queering India: Same-sex love and eroticism in Indian culture and society* (pp. 15-29). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bhattacharjee, S. (2000). Sexuality under wraps: Acknowledging adolescence in India. In J. Mirsky & M. Radlett (Eds.), *No paradise yet: The world's women face the new century* (pp. 1-18). London, UK: The Panos Institute and Zed Books.
- Biggerstaff, D., & Thompson, A. R. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A qualitative methodology of choice in healthcare research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 5*(3), 214-224.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14780880802314304>
- Blanchard, G. (1987). Male victims of child sexual abuse: A portent of things to come. *Journal of Independent Social Work, 1*(1), 19-27.
- Blumenfeld, W. J. (Ed.) (1992). *Homophobia and how we all pay the price*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Blumer, H. (1954). What is wrong with social theory? *American Sociological Review, 18*, 3-10.
- Bolen, R. M. (2001). *Child sexual abuse: Its scope and our failure*. New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Branney, P., & White, A. (2008). Big boys don't cry: Depression and men. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment, 14*, 256-262. doi:10.1192/apt.bp.106.003467
- Brannon, R. (1976). The male sex role: Our culture's blueprint of manhood, and what it's done for us lately. In D. David & R. Brannon (Eds.), *The forty-nine percent majority: The male sex role* (pp. 1-45). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Breines, W., & Gordon, L. (1983). The new scholarship on family violence. *Signs, 8*(3), 490-531.
- Bridges, T., & Pascoe, C. J. (2014). Hybrid masculinities: New directions in the sociology of men and masculinities. *Sociology Compass, 8*(3), 246-258.  
doi:10.1111/soc4.12134
- Briere, J., & Elliott, D. M. (2003). Prevalence and psychological sequelae of self-reported childhood physical and sexual abuse in a general population sample of men and women. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 27*(10), 1205-1222.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2003.09.008>

- Briere, J., Evans, D., Runtz, M., & Wall, T. (1988). Symptomatology in men who were molested as children: A comparison study. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 58(3), 457-461. doi:10.1111/j.1939-0025.1988.tb01606.x
- Brod, H. (1987). Introduction: Themes and theses of men's studies. In H. Brod (Ed.), *The making of masculinities: The new men's studies* (pp 1-17). Boston, MA: Allen & Unwin.
- Bronitt, S., & Misra, A. (2014). Reforming sexual offences in India: Lessons in human rights and comparative law. *Griffith Asia Quarterly*, 2(1), 37-56.
- Brooks, F. L. (2000). Beneath contempt: The mistreatment of non-traditional/gender atypical boys. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 12(1/2), 107-115. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J041v12n01\\_06](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J041v12n01_06)
- Broussard, S., Wagner, W. G., & Kazelskis, R. (1991). Undergraduate students' perceptions of child sexual abuse: The impact of victim sex, perpetrator sex, respondent sex, and victim response. *Journal of Family Violence*, 6(3), 267-278.
- Brownhill, S., Wilhelm, K., Barclay, L., & Schmied, V. (2005). 'Big build': Hidden depression in men. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 39(10), 921-931.
- Buchbinder, D. (1994). *Masculinities and identities*. Carlton, Australia: Melbourne University Press.
- Campbell, R. (2001). Heidegger: Truth as Aletheia. In R. Small (Ed.), *A hundred years of phenomenology: Perspectives on a philosophical tradition* (pp. 73-89). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Carballo-Diéguez, A., & Dolezal, C. (1995). Association between history of childhood sexual abuse and adult HIV-risk sexual behavior in puerto rican men who have sex with men. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 19(5), 595-605. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(95\)00018-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(95)00018-4)
- Carnes, C. N. (2000). *Forensic evaluation of children when sexual abuse is suspected* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Huntsville, AL: National Children's Advocacy Center.
- Carrigan, T., Connell, B., & Lee, J. (1987), Hard and heavy: Toward a new sociology of masculinity. In M. Kaufman (Ed.), *Beyond patriarchy: Essays by men on pleasure, power, and change* (pp. 139-192). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Central Intelligence Agency (2017). *The world factbook*. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2177.html>

- Centre for Child and the Law (2016). *Report of study on the working of special courts under the POCSO Act, 2012 in Delhi*. Bangalore, India: Author.
- Chan, S. T. M. (2014). The lens of masculinity: Trauma in men and the landscapes of sexual abuse survivors. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 23*, 239-255. doi:10.1080/15313204.2014.932733
- Chandy, J. M., Blum, R. W., & Resnick, M. D. (1996). Gender-specific outcomes for sexually abused adolescents. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 20*(12), 1219-1231. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(96\)00117-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(96)00117-2)
- Chenail, R. J. (2009). Making phenomenological inquiry accessible: A review of Jonathan A. Smith, Paul Flowers and Michael Larkin's *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*. *The Weekly Qualitative Report, 2*(26), 156-160.
- Child Welfare Information Gateway (2007). *Definitions of child abuse and neglect*. Retrieved from [http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/statutes/define.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/define.cfm)
- Childline India Foundation (n.d.). Child in India. Retrieved from <http://www.childlineindia.org.in/child-in-india.htm>
- Chopra, R., Dasgupta, C., & Janeja, M. K. (2000). Understanding masculinity. *Economic and Political Weekly, 35*(19), 1607-1609.
- Clarke, C. (2009). An introduction to interpretative phenomenological analysis: A useful approach for occupational therapy research. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 72*(1), 37-39.
- Clatterbaugh, K. (1997). *Contemporary perspectives on masculinity: Men, women, and politics in modern society* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Coles, T. (2008). Finding space in the field of masculinity: Lived experiences of men's masculinities. *Journal of Sociology, 44*(3), 233-248. doi:10.1177/1440783308092882
- Collin-Vézina, D., Sablonnière-Griffin, M. D. L., Paler, A. M., & Milne, L. (2015). A preliminary mapping of individual, relational, and social factors that impede disclosure of childhood sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 43*, 123-134. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.03.010>

- Connell, R. (2007). Sociology. In M. Flood, J. K. Gardiner, B. Pease, & K. Pringle (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of men and masculinities* (pp. 573-576). Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Connell, R. W. (1987). *Gender and power*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Connell, R. W. (2005). *Masculinities* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society, 19*(6), 829-859.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243205278639>
- Cope, J. (2011). Entrepreneurial learning from failure: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. *Journal of Business Venturing, 26*(6), 604-623.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2010.06.002>
- Cossins, A. (2000). *Masculinities, sexualities and child sexual abuse*. The Hague, The Netherlands: Kluwer Law International.
- Couture, M., Desrosiers, J., & Leclerc, G. (2007). Self-actualization and poststroke rehabilitation. *International Journal of Rehabilitation Research, 30*(2), 111-117.  
doi:10.1097/MRR.0b013e32813a2ea5
- Cowburn, M., & Dominelli, L. (2001). Masking hegemonic masculinity: Reconstructing the paedophile as the dangerous stranger. *The British Journal of Social Work, 31*(3), 399-415. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/31.3.399>
- Craig, C. D., & Sprang, G. (2007). Trauma exposure and child abuse potential: Investigating the cycle of violence. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 77*(2), 296-305. doi:10.1037/0002-9432.77.2.296
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), 1241-1299.  
doi:10.2307/1229039
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crete, G. K., & Singh, A. A. (2015). Resilience strategies of male survivors of childhood sexual abuse and their female partners: A phenomenological inquiry. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling, 37*(4), 341-354. doi:10.17744/mehc.37.4.05

- Crisma, M., Bascelli, E., Paci, D., & Romito, P. (2004). Adolescents who experienced sexual abuse: Fears, needs and impediments to disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 28(10), 1035-1048. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2004.03.015>
- Crist, J. D., & Tanner, C. A. (2003). Interpretation/analysis methods in hermeneutic interpretive phenomenology. *Nursing Research*, 52(3), 202-205.
- Crystal, D. (2004, November 19). Subcontinent raises its voice. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2004/nov/19/tefl>
- D'Augelli, A. R., Grossman, A. H., & Starks, M. T. (2006). Childhood gender atypicality, victimization, and PTSD among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 21(11), 1462-1482. doi:10.1177/0886260506293482
- Dallam, S. J. (2001). Science or propaganda?: An examination of Rind, Tromovitch and Bauserman (1998). *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 9(3-4), 109-134. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J070v09n03\\_06](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J070v09n03_06)
- Daly, K. J. (2007). *Qualitative methods for family studies & human development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Das, A. (2014). Sexuality education in India: Examining the rhetoric, rethinking the future. *Sex Education*, 14(2), 210-224. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2013.866546>
- de Boise, S. (2015). I'm not homophobic, "I've got gay friends": Evaluating the validity of inclusive masculinity. *Men and Masculinities*, 18(3), 318-339. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X14554951>
- Deblinger, E., & Heflin, A. H. (1996). *Treating sexually abused children and their nonoffending parents: A cognitive behavioral approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Demetriou, D. Z. (2001). Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity: A critique. *Theory and Society*, 30(3), 337-361.
- Denov, M. S. (2004). The long-term effects of child sexual abuse by female perpetrators: A qualitative study of male and female victims. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 19(10), 1137-1156. doi:10.1177/0886260504269093
- Denzin, N. K. (2001). *Interpretive interactionism* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- DeVoe, E. R., & Faller, K. C. (1999). The characteristics of disclosure among children who may have been sexually abused. *Child Maltreatment, 4*, 217-227.
- Dewey, S. (2009). "Dear Dr. Kothari...": Sexuality, violence against women, and the parallel public sphere in India. *American Ethnologist, 36*(1), 124-139.  
doi:10.1111/j.1548-1425.2008.01104.x
- Dhaliwal, G. K., Gauzas, L., Antonowicz, D. H., & Ross, R. R. (1996). Adult male survivors of childhood sexual abuse: Prevalence, sexual abuse characteristics, and long-term effects. *Clinical Psychology Review, 16*(7), 619-639.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358\(96\)00018-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358(96)00018-9)
- Diekelmann, N. L. (1992). Learning-as-testing: A Heideggerian hermeneutical analysis of the lived experiences of students and teachers in nursing. *Advances in Nursing Science, 14*, 72-83.
- DiLillo, D., & Damashek, A. (2003). Parenting characteristics of women reporting a history of childhood sexual abuse. *Child Maltreatment, 8*(4), 319-333.  
doi:10.1177/1077559503257104
- Dilorio, C., Hartwell, T., & Hansen, N. (2002). Childhood sexual abuse and risk behaviors among men at high risk for HIV infection. *American Journal of Public Health, 92*(2), 214-219.
- Dimock, P. T. (1988). Adult males sexually abused as children: Characteristics and implications for treatment. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 3*(2), 203-221.
- DiPietro, E. K., Runyan, D. K., & Fredrickson, D. D. (1997). Predictors of disclosure during medical evaluation for suspected sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 6*, 133-142. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J070v06n01\\_09](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J070v06n01_09)
- Donaldson, M. (1993). What is hegemonic masculinity? *Theory and Society, 22*(5), 643-657.
- Dorahy, M. J., & Clearwater, K. (2012). Shame and guilt in men exposed to childhood sexual abuse: A qualitative investigation. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 21*, 155-175. doi:10.1080/10538712.2012.659803
- Dorais, M. (2002). *Don't tell: The sexual abuse of boys*. Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Draucker, C. B. (1999). Knowing what to do: Coping with sexual violence by male inmates. *Qualitative Health Research, 9*(5), 588-601.

- Draucker, C. B., & Petrovic, K. (1996). Healing of adult male survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *Image: Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 28(3), 325-330.
- Draucker, C. B., Martsof, D. S., Roller, C., Knapik, G. P., Ross, R., & Stidham, A. W. (2011). Healing from childhood sexual abuse: A theoretical model. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 20(4), 435-466.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2011.588188>
- Dreyfus, H. L. (1995). *Being-in-the-world*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Dube, S. R., Anda, R. F., Whitfield, C. L., Brown, D. W., Felitti, V. J., Dong, M., & Giles, W. H. (2005). Long-term consequences of childhood sexual abuse by gender of victim. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 28(5), 430-438.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2005.01.015>
- Duncan, L. E., & Williams, L. M. (1998). Gender role socialization and male-on-male vs. female-on-male child sexual abuse. *Sex Roles*, 39(9/10), 765-785.
- Durham, A. (2003a). *Young Men Surviving Child Sexual Abuse: Research Stories and Lessons for Therapeutic Practice*. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons.
- Durham, A. (2003b). Young men living through and with child sexual abuse: A practitioner research study. *British Journal of Social Work*, 33(3), 309-323.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/33.3.309>
- Duvvury, N., & Nayak, M. B. (2003). The role of men in addressing domestic violence: Insights from India. *Development*, 46(2), 45-50.
- Easton, S. D. (2014). Masculine norms, disclosure, and childhood adversities predict long-term mental distress among men with histories of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 38(2), 243-251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2013.08.020>
- Easton, S. D., & Renner, L. M. (2013). Factors from Durkheim's family integration related to suicidal ideation among men with histories of child sexual abuse. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 43(3), 336-346. doi:10.1111/sltb.12020
- Easton, S. D., Leone-Sheehan, D. M., & O'Leary, P. J. (2016). "I will never know the person who I could have become": Perceived changes in self-identity among adult survivors of clergy-perpetrated sexual abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/0886260516650966
- Easton, S. D., Leone-Sheehan, D. M., Sophis, E. J., & Willis, D. G. (2015). "From that moment on my life changed": Turning points in the healing process for men

recovering from child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 24(2), 152-173.  
doi:10.1080/10538712.2015.997413

- Easton, S. D., Renner, L. M., & O'Leary, P. (2013). Suicide attempts among men with histories of child sexual abuse: Examining abuse severity, mental health, and masculine norms. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 37(6), 380-387.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2012.11.007>
- Easton, S. D., Saltzman, L. Y., & Willis, D. G. (2014). "Would you tell under circumstances like that?": Barriers to disclosure of child sexual abuse for men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 15(4), 460-469.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0034223>
- Etherington, K. (1995). Adult male survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 8(3), 233-241.
- Evans, T., & Wallace, P. (2008). A prison within a prison?: The masculinity narratives of male prisoners. *Men and Masculinities*, 10(4), 484-507.  
doi:10.1177/1097184X06291903
- Factor, R. J., & Rothblum, E. D. (2007). A study of transgender adults and their non-transgender siblings on demographic characteristics, social support, and experiences of violence. *Journal of LGBT Health Research*, 3(3), 11-30.  
doi:10.1080/15574090802092879
- Fater, K., & Mullaney, J. A. (2000). The lived experience of adult male survivors who allege childhood sexual abuse by clergy. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 21, 281-295. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/016128400248095>
- Feiring, C., & Taska, L. S. (2005). The persistence of shame following sexual abuse: A longitudinal look at risk and recovery. *Child Maltreatment*, 10(4), 337-349.  
doi:10.1177/1077559505276686
- Feiring, C., Taska, L., & Lewis, M. (2002). Adjustment following sexual abuse discovery: The role of shame and attributional style. *Developmental Psychology*, 38(1), 79-92. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.38.1.79>
- Finkelhor, D. (1985). Sexual abuse of boys. In A. W. Burgess (Ed.), *Rape and sexual assault: A research handbook* (pp. 97-109). New York, NY: Garland.
- Finkelhor, D. (1994). Current information on the scope and nature of child sexual abuse. *The Future of Children*, 4, 31-53.

- Finkelhor, D., Asdigian, N., & Dziuba-Leatherman, J. (1995). Victimization prevention programs for children: A follow-up. *American Journal of Public Health, 85*(12), 1684-1689.
- Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., Lewis, I. A., & Smith, C. (1990). Sexual abuse in national survey of adult men and women: Prevalence, characteristics, and risk factors. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 14*(1), 19-28. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(90\)90077-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(90)90077-7)
- Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R., Turner, H., & Hamby, S. L. (2005). The victimization of children and youth: A comprehensive, national survey. *Child Maltreatment, 10*(1), 5-25. doi:10.1177/1077559504271287
- Finkelhor, D. (1984). *Child sexual abuse: New theory and research*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Fisher, T. D. (2007). Sex of experimenter and social norm effects on reports of sexual behavior in young men and women. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 36*(1), 89-100. doi:10.1007/s10508-006-9094-7
- Fondacaro, K. M., Holt, J. C., & Powell, T. A. (1999). Psychological impact of childhood sexual abuse on male inmates: The importance of perception. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 23*(4), 361-369. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(99\)00004-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(99)00004-6)
- Fontes, L. A. & Plummer, C. (2010). Cultural issues in disclosures of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19*(5), 491-518. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2010.512520>
- Friedman, M. S., Marshal, M. P., Guadamuz, T. E., Wei, C., Wong, C. F., Saewyc, E., & Stall, R. (2011). A meta-analysis of disparities in childhood sexual abuse, parental physical abuse, and peer victimization among sexual minority and sexual nonminority individuals. *American Journal of Public Health, 101*(8), 1481-1494. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2009.190009
- Funkeson, U., Schröder, E., Nzabonimpa, J., & Holmqvist, R. (2011). Witness to genocide: Experiences of witnessing in the Rwandan Gacaca courts. *Peace and Conflict, 17*(4), 367-388. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10781919.2011.599736>
- Gagnier, C., Collin-Vézina, D., & Sablonnière-Griffin, M. D. L. (2017). The journey of obtaining services: The realities of male survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma, 10*(2), 129-137. doi:10.1007/s40653-017-0141-4
- Garde, J. (2003). Masculinity and madness. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 3*(1), 6-15. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14733140312331384578>

- Garnefski, N., & Arends, E. (1998). Sexual abuse and adolescent maladjustment: Differences between male and female victims. *Journal of Adolescence*, 21(1), 99-107. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.1997.0132>
- Gartner, R. B. (1999a). Relational aftereffects in manhood of boyhood sexual abuse. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 29(4), 319-353.
- Gartner, R. B. (1999b). Sexual victimization of boys by men: Meanings and consequences. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy*, 3(2), 1-33. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J236v03n02\\_01](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J236v03n02_01)
- Ghetti, S., Goodman, G. S., Eisen, M. L., Qin, J., & Davis, S. L. (2002). Consistency in children's reports of sexual and physical abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 26(9), 977-995. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(02\)00367-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(02)00367-8)
- Gibson, L. E., & Leitenberg, H. (2000). Child sexual abuse prevention programs: Do they decrease the occurrence of child sexual abuse? *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 24(9), 1115-1125. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(00\)00179-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(00)00179-4)
- Gilgun, J. F. (1986). Sexually abused girls' knowledge about sexual abuse and sexuality. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 1(3), 309-325.
- Gilgun, J. F. (1991). Resilience and the intergenerational transmission of child sexual abuse. In M. Q. Patton (Ed.), *Family sexual abuse: Frontline research and evaluation* (pp. 93-105). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gilgun, J. F., & McLeod, L. (1999). Gendering violence. *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*, 22, 167-193.
- Gilgun, J. F., & Reiser, E. (1990). The development of sexual identity among men sexually abused as children. *Families in Society*, 71(9), 515-523.
- Gilgun, J. F., & Sharma, A. (2008). Child sexual abuse. In C. Renzetti & J. Edleson (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of interpersonal violence* (Vol. 1, pp. 122-125). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gill, M., & Tutty, L. M. (1999). Male survivors of childhood sexual abuse: A qualitative study and issues for clinical consideration. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 7(3), 19-33. doi:10.1300/J070v07n03\_02
- Gilmore, D. (2001). *Misogyny: The male malady*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Giugliano, J. (2006). Out of control sexual behavior: A qualitative investigation. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity, 13*(4), 361-375.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10720160601011273>
- Glasser, M., Kolvin, I., Campbell, D., Glasser, A., Leitch, I., & Farrelly, S. (2001). Cycle of child sexual abuse: Links between being a victim and becoming a perpetrator. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 179*, 482-494. doi:10.1192/bjp.179.6.482
- Goodman, D. J. (2011). *Promoting diversity and social justice: Educating people from privileged groups* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gordon, L. (1988). The politics of child sexual abuse: Notes from American history. *Feminist Review, 28*, 56-64.
- Government of India (2001). *Data on language*. Retrieved from the website of the Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner:  
[http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census\\_Data\\_2001/Census\\_Data\\_Online/Language/data\\_on\\_language.aspx](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/Census_Data_Online/Language/data_on_language.aspx)
- Graves, E. G., Borders, L. D., & Ackerman, T. A. (2017). Resilience to child sexual abuse in male college students. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling, 39*(2), 149-162. <https://doi.org/10.17744/mehc.39.2.05>
- Gries, L. T., Goh, D. S., & Cavanaugh, J. (1996). Factors associated with disclosure during child sexual abuse assessment. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 5*(3), 1-19.  
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J070v05n03\\_01](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J070v05n03_01)
- Griffiths, M., Schweitzer, R., & Yates, P. (2011). Childhood experiences of cancer: An interpretative phenomenological analysis approach. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing, 28*(2), 83-92. doi:10.1177/1043454210377902
- Grossman, F. K., Sorsoli, L., & Kia-Keating, M. (2006). A gale force wind: Meaning making by male survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 76*(4), 434-443. doi:10.1037/0002-9432.76.4.434
- Gruenfeld, E., Willis, D. G., & Easton, S. D. (2017). "A very steep climb": Therapists' perspectives on barriers to disclosure of child sexual abuse experiences for men. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 26*(6), 731-751.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2017.1332704>
- Haaken, J., & Lamb, S. (2000). The politics of child sexual abuse research. *Society, 37*(4), 7-14.

- Hadler, M. (2012). The influence of world societal forces on social tolerance: A time comparative study of prejudices in 32 countries. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 53(2), 211-237. doi:10.1111/j.1533-8525.2012.01232.x
- Hall, S. (2002). Daubing the drudges of fury: Men, violence and the piety of the 'hegemonic masculinity' thesis. *Theoretical Criminology*, 6(1), 35-61.
- Harding, T. (2007). The construction of men who are nurses as gay. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 60(6), 636-644. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04447.x
- Harris, A. P. (2011). Heteropatriarchy kills: Challenging gender violence in a prison nation. *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy*, 37, 13-65.
- Harrison, P. A., Edwall, G. E., Hoffman, N. G., & Worthen, M. D. (1990). Correlates of sexual abuse among boys in treatment for chemical dependency. *Journal of Adolescent Chemical Dependency*, 1(1), 53-67.  
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J272v01n01\\_04](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J272v01n01_04)
- Hatfield, E. F. (2010). "What it means to be a man": Examining hegemonic masculinity in *Two and a Half Men*. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 3(4), 526-548. doi:10.1111/j.1753-9137.2010.01084.x
- Hébert, M., Tourigny, M., Cyr, M., McDuff, P., & Joly, J. (2009). Prevalence of childhood sexual abuse and timing of disclosure in a representative sample of adults from Quebec. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 54(9), 631-636. doi:[10.1177/070674370905400908](https://doi.org/10.1177/070674370905400908)
- Hefferon, K. M., & Ollis, S. (2006). 'Just clicks': An interpretative phenomenological analysis of professional dancers' experience of flow. *Research in Dance Education*, 7(2), 141-159. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14647890601029527>
- Heidegger, M. (1927/1962). *Being and Time*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Heidegger, M. (1975). *The basic problems of phenomenology*. (A. Hofstadter, Translator). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Higdon, M. J. (2011). To lynch a child: Bullying and gender nonconformity in our nation's schools. *Indiana Law Journal*, 86(3), 827-878.
- Hirsch, D., & Kachtan, D. G. (2017). Is "hegemonic masculinity" hegemonic as masculinity?: Two Israeli case studies. *Men and Masculinities*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X17696186>

- Hoffman, J. (2001). Defining feminism. *Politics*, 21(3), 193-200. doi:10.1111/1467-9256.00151
- Hohendorff, J. V., Habigzang, L. F., & Koller, S. H. (2017). "A boy, being a victim, nobody really buys that, you know?": Dynamics of sexual violence against boys. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 70, 53-64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.05.008>
- Holmes, G. R., & Slap, G. B. (1998). Sexual abuse of boys: Definition, prevalence, correlates, sequel, and management. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 280, 1855-1862. doi:10.1001/jama.280.21.1855
- Holmes, G. R., Offen, L., & Waller, G. (1997). See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil: Why do relatively few male victims of childhood sexual abuse receive help for abuse related issues in adulthood? *Clinical Psychology Review*, 17(1), 69-88. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358\(96\)00047-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358(96)00047-5)
- Homma, Y., Wang, N., Saewyc, S., & Kishor, N. (2012). The relationship between sexual abuse and risky sexual behavior among adolescent boys: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 51(1), 18-24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2011.12.032>
- Horn, S. S. (2007). Adolescents' acceptance of same-sex peers based on sexual orientation and gender expression. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 36(3), 363-371. doi:10.1007/s10964-006-9111-0
- Hornor, G. (2010). Child sexual abuse: Consequences and implications. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, 24(6), 358-364. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedhc.2009.07.003>
- Houston, S., & Mullan-Jensen, C. (2011). Towards depth and width in qualitative social work: Aligning interpretative phenomenological analysis with the theory of social domains. *Qualitative Social Work*, 11(3), 266-281. doi:10.1177/1473325011400484
- Hunter, J. (1990). Violence against lesbian and gay male youths. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 5(3), 295-300.
- Hunter, M. (1990). *Abused boys: The neglected victims of sexual abuse*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Hunter, S. V. (2009). Beyond surviving: Gender differences in response to early sexual experiences with adults. *Journal of Family Issues*, 30(3), 391-412. doi:10.1177/0192513X08321493
- Husserl, E. (1970). *Logical investigations*. (J. N. Findlay, Translator). New York, NY: Humanities Press.

- Hussey, D. L., Strom, G., & Singer, M. (1992). Male victims of sexual abuse: An analysis of adolescent psychiatric inpatients. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 9(6), 491-503.
- Inwood, M. (1997). *Heidegger: A very short introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Iyer, M. (2014, February 7). Homosexuality is not a disease, psychiatrists say. *The Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Homosexuality-is-not-a-disease-psychiatrists-say/articleshow/29965430.cms>
- Jamison, D. F. (2006). The relationship between African self-consciousness, cultural misorientation, hypermasculinity, and rap music preference. *Journal of African American Studies*, 9(4), 45-60.
- Janoff, D. V. (2005). *Pink blood: Homophobic violence in Canada*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Jewkes, R. (2002). Intimate partner violence: Causes and prevention. *The Lancet*, 359, 1423-1429.
- Ji, K., Finkelhor, D., & Dunne, M. (2013). Child sexual abuse in China: A meta-analysis of 27 studies. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 37(9), 613-622. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2013.03.008>
- Jinich, S., Paul, J. P., Stall, R., Acree, M., Kegeles, S., Hoff, C., Coates, T. J. (1998). Childhood sexual abuse and HIV risk-taking behaviour among gay and bisexual men. *AIDS and Behavior*, 2(1), 41-51.
- Johnson, G. A. (2011). A child's right to participation: Photovoice as methodology for documenting the experiences of children living in Kenyan orphanages. *Visual Anthropology Review*, 27(2), 141-161. doi:10.1111/j.1548-7458.2011.01098.x
- Johnson, M. (2017). Gendering pastoral power: Masculinity, affective labour and competitive bonds of solidarity among Filipino migrant men in Saudi Arabia. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24(6), 823-833. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2015.1090411>
- Jones, A. (2006). Straight as a rule: Heteronormativity, gendercide, and the noncombatant male. *Men and Masculinities*, 8(4), 451-469. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X04268797>

- Jonzon, E., & Lindblad, F. (2004). Disclosure, reactions, and social support: Findings from a sample of adult victims of child sexual abuse. *Child Maltreatment, 9*(2), 190-200. doi:10.1177/1077559504264263
- Jumper, S. A. (1995). A meta-analysis of the relationship of child sexual abuse to adult psychological adjustment. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 19*(6), 715-728. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(95\)00029-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(95)00029-8)
- Kacker, L., Varadan, S., & Kumar, P. (2007). *Study on child abuse: India 2007*. New Delhi, India: Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.
- Kalra, G. (2012). Breaking the ice: IJP on homosexuality. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 54*(3), 299-300. doi:10.4103/0019-5545.102463
- Kane, E. W. (2006). "No way my boys are going to be like that!": Parents' responses to children's gender nonconformity. *Gender & Society, 20*(2), 149-176. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243205284276>
- Karthiga, R. K. J., Tamilselvi, A., & Ravikumar, R. (2014). Child sexual abuse in Madurai, India: A literary review and empirical study. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 23*(6), 727-744. doi:10.1080/10538712.2014.929606
- Kaufman, M. (1994). Men, feminism, and men's contradictory experiences of power. In H. Brod & M. Kaufman (Eds.), *Theorizing masculinities* (pp. 142-163). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kelley, S. J., Brant, R., & Waterman, J. (1993). Sexual abuse of children in day care centers. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 17*(1), 71-89. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(93\)90010-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(93)90010-3)
- Kenway, J., & Fitzclarence, L. (1997). Masculinity, violence and schooling: Challenging 'poisonous pedagogies'. *Gender and Education, 9*(1), 117-134. doi:10.1080/09540259721493
- Kia-Keating, M., Grossman, F. K., Sorsoli, L., & Epstein, M. (2005). Containing and resisting masculinity: Narratives of renegotiation among resilient male survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity, 6*(3), 169-185. doi:10.1037/1524-9220.6.3.169
- Kia-Keating, M., Sorsoli, L., & Grossman, F. K. (2010). Relational challenges and recovery processes in male survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 25*(4), 666-683. doi:10.1177/0886260509334411

- Kimmel, M. S. (1987). The contemporary “crisis” of masculinity in historical perspective. In H. Brod (Ed.), *The making of masculinities: The new men’s studies* (pp. 121-153). Boston, MA: Allen & Unwin.
- Kimmel, M. S. (1994). Masculinity as homophobia: Fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity. In H. Brod, & M. Kaufman (Eds.), *Theorizing masculinities* (pp. 119-141). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kimmel, M. S. (1996). *Manhood in America*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Kimmel, M. S. (2001). Masculinity as homophobia: Fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity. In S. M. Whitehead & F. J. Barnett (Eds.), *The masculinities reader* (pp. 266-287). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Kimmel, M. S., & Mahler, M. (2003). Adolescent masculinity, homophobia, and violence: Random school shootings, 1982-2001. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 46(10), 1439-1458. doi:10.1177/0002764203251484
- King, M., Coxell, A., & Mezey, G. (2002). Sexual molestation of males: Associations with psychological disturbance. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 181(2), 153-157. doi:10.1192/bjp.181.2.153
- Kitzinger, C. (2005). Heteronormativity in action: Reproducing the heterosexual nuclear family in after-hours medical calls. *Social Problems*, 52(4), 477-498.
- Koch, T. (1995). Interpretive approaches in nursing research: The influence of Husserl and Heidegger. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 21(5), 827-836.
- Krems, J. A., Kenrick, D. T., & Neel, R. (2017). Individual perceptions of self-actualization: What functional motives are linked to fulfilling one’s full potential? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 43(9), 1337-1352. doi:10.1177/0146167217713191
- Krishnakumar, A. (2003, October). Silent victims. *Frontline*, 20(21), 90-91.
- Krishnakumar, P., Satheesan, K., Geeta, M. G., & Sureshkumar, K. (2014). Prevalence and spectrum of sexual abuse among adolescents in Kerala, South India. *Indian Journal of Pediatrics*, 81(8), 770-774. doi:10.1007/s12098-013-1260-z
- Kronsell, A. (2005). Gendered practices in institutions of hegemonic masculinity: Reflections from feminist standpoint theory. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 7(2), 280-298. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616740500065170>

- Kulkarni, M. (2014). Critical masculinity studies in India. In R. K. Dasgupta & K. M. Gokulsing (Eds.), *Masculinity and its challenges in India: Essays on changing perceptions* (pp. 54-72). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company.
- Lab, D. D., Feigenbaum, J. D., & De Silva, P. (2000). Mental health professionals' attitudes and practices towards male childhood sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 24(3), 391-409. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(99\)00152-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(99)00152-0)
- Lambie, I., & Johnston, E. (2016). "I couldn't do it to a kid knowing what it did to me": The narratives of male sexual abuse victims' resiliency to sexually offending. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 60(8), 897-918. doi:10.1177/0306624X14567664
- Lambie, I., Seymour, F., Lee, A., & Adams, P. (2002). Resiliency in the victim-offender cycle in male sexual abuse. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 14(1), 31-48.
- Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 102-120. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp062oa
- Laungani, P. (1999). Understanding mental illness in India and Britain. *International Journal of Health Promotion and Education*, 37(4), 144-157. doi:10.1080/14635240.1999.10806117
- Lee, C., & Hume-Pratuch, J. (2013, August 22). Let's talk about research participants [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2013/08/lets-talk-about-research-participants.html>
- Lehne, G. (1998). Homophobia among men: Supporting and defining the male role. In M. Kimmel & M. Messner (Eds.), *Men's lives* (pp. 237-149). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Leonard, V. W. (1994). A Heideggerian phenomenological perspective on the concept of person. In P. Benner (Ed.), *Interpretive phenomenology: Embodiment, caring, and ethics in health and illness* (pp. 43-63). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Levant, R. F. (1997). Nonrelational sexuality in men. In R. F. Levant & G. R. Brooks (Eds.), *Men and sex: New psychological perspectives* (pp. 9-27). New York, NY: John Wiley.
- Levy, D. P. (2007). Hegemonic masculinity. In M. Flood, J. K. Gardiner, B. Pease, & K. Pringle (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of men and masculinities* (pp. 253-255). Oxon, UK: Routledge.

- Lew, M. (1990). *Victims no longer: Men recovering from incest and sexual abuse*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Light, R., & Kirk, D. (2000). High school rugby, the body and the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity. *Sport, Education and Society*, 5(2), 163-176. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/713696032>
- Lillywhite, R., & Skidmore, P. (2006). Boys are not sexually exploited?: A challenge to practitioners. *Child Abuse Review*, 15, 351-361. doi:10.1002/car.952
- Lisak, D. (1994). The psychological impact of sexual abuse: Content analysis of interviews with male survivors. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 7(4), 525-548. doi:10.1002/jts.2490070403
- Literat, I. (2013). "A pencil for your thoughts": Participatory drawing as a visual research method with children and youth. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 12(1), 84-98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691301200143>
- Litowitz, D. (2000). Gramsci, hegemony, and the law. *Brigham Young University Law Review*, 2000(2), 515-551.
- Lombardi, E. L., Wilchins, R. A., Priesing, D., & Malouf, D. (2001). Gender violence: Transgender experiences with violence and discrimination. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 42(1), 89-101. doi:10.1300/J082v42n01\_05
- London, K., Bruck, M., Wright, D. B., & Ceci, S. J. (2008). Review of the contemporary literature on how children report sexual abuse to others: Findings, methodological issues, and implications for forensic interviewers. *Memory*, 16(1), 29-47. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09658210701725732>
- Lopez, K. A., & Willis, D. G. (2004). Descriptive versus interpretive phenomenology: Their contributions to nursing knowledge. *Qualitative Health Research*, 14(5), 726-735. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732304263638>
- Lorde, A. (2001). I am your sister: Black women organizing across sexualities. In C. Bull (Ed.), *Come out fighting: A century of essential writing on gay and lesbian liberation* (pp. 234-239). New York, NY: Nation Books.
- Lorentzen, J. (2007). Masculinities and the phenomenology of men's orgasms. *Men and Masculinities*, 10(1), 71-84. doi:10.1177/1097184X07299331
- Maggs-Rapport, F. (2000). Combining methodological approaches in research: Ethnography and interpretive phenomenology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 31(1), 219-225. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2648.2000.01243.x

- Maikovich, A. K., Koenen, K. C., & Jeffee, S. R. (2009). Posttraumatic stress symptoms and trajectories in child sexual abuse victims: An analysis of sex differences using the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 37(5), 727-737. doi:10.1007/s10802-009-9300-x
- Maltz, W. (2002). Treating the sexual intimacy concerns of sexual abuse survivors. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 17(4), 321-327. doi:10.1080/1468199021000017173
- Maniglio, R. (2009). The impact of child sexual abuse on health: A systematic review of reviews. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 29(7), 647-657. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2009.08.003>
- Marriott, C., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., & Harrop, C. (2014). Factors promoting resilience following childhood sexual abuse: A structured, narrative review of the literature. *Child Abuse Review*, 23, 17-34. doi:10.1002/car.2258
- Martin, G., Bergen, H. A., Richardson, A. S., Roeger, L., & Allison, S. (2004). Sexual abuse and suicidality: Gender differences in a large community sample of adolescents. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 28(5), 491-503. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2003.08.006>
- Martin, K. A., & Torres, J. M. C. (2014). Where did I come from?: US parents' and preschool children's participation in sexual socialisation. *Sex Education*, 14(2), 174-190. doi:10.1080/14681811.2013.856291
- Martino, W. (1997). 'A bunch of arseholes': Exploring the politics of masculinity for adolescent boys in schools. *Social Alternatives*, 16(3), 39-43.
- Martsof, D. S., & Draucker, C. B. (2008). The legacy of childhood sexual abuse and family adversity. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 40, 333-340.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396.
- Mathur, A. (2016, October 25). Delhi: Many POCSO cases pending due to infrastructure deficiencies, say judges. *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from <http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/delhi-many-pocso-cases-pending-due-to-infrastructure-deficiencies-say-judges-3101421/>
- May-Chahal, C. (2006). Gender and child maltreatment: The evidence base. *Social Work & Society*, 4(1), 53-68.

- Mayeza, E. (2017). 'Girls don't play soccer': Children policing gender on the playground in a township primary school in South Africa. *Gender and Education*, 29(4), 476-494. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2016.1187262>
- McCann, P. D., Minichiello, V., & Plummer, D. (2009). Is homophobia inevitable?: Evidence that explores the constructed nature of homophobia, and the techniques through which men unlearn it. *Journal of Sociology*, 45(2), 201-220. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783309103347>
- McCormack, M. (2011). Hierarchy without hegemony: Locating boys in an inclusive school setting. *Sociological Perspectives*, 54(1), 83-101. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sop.2011.54.1.83>
- McCormack, M. (2012). *The declining significance of homophobia: How teenage boys are redefining masculinity and heterosexuality* [Oxford Scholarship Online]. doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199778249.001.0001
- McGuffey, C. S. (2008). "Saving masculinity:" Gender reaffirmation, sexuality, race, and parental responses to male child sexual abuse. *Social Problems*, 55(2), 216-237. doi:10.1525/sp.2008.55.2.216
- McLaughlin, K. A., Hatzenbuehler, M. L., Xuan, Z., & Conron, K. J. (2012). Disproportionate exposure to early-life adversity and sexual orientation disparities in psychiatric morbidity. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 36(9), 645-655. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2012.07.004>
- Merghati-Khoei, E., Abolghasemi, N., & Smith, T. G. (2014). "Children are sexually innocent": Iranian parents' understanding of children's sexuality. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 43(3), 587-595. doi:10.1007/s10508-013-0218-6
- Messerschmidt, J. (1993). *Masculinities and crime: Critique and reconceptualization of theory*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Messerschmidt, J. W. (1993), *Masculinities and crime*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Messerschmidt, J. W. (2000). Becoming "real men": Adolescent masculinity challenges and sexual violence. *Men and Masculinities*, 2(3), 286-307. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X00002003003>
- Messner, M. A. (1992). *Power at play: Sports and the problem of masculinity*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

- Messner, M. A., & Sabo, D. F. (1994). *Sex, violence and power in sports: Rethinking masculinity*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.
- Mimiaga, M. J., Closson, E. F., Thomas, B., Mayer, K. H., Betancourt, T., Menon, S., & Safren, S. A. (2015). Garnering an in-depth understanding of men who have sex with men in Chennai, India: A qualitative analysis of sexual minority status and psychological distress. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 44*, 2077-2086.  
doi:10.1007/s10508-014-0369-0
- Mitchell, G. J. (1993). The same-thing-yet-different phenomenon: A way of coming to know—or not?. *Journal of Nursing Science Quarterly, 6*(2), 61-62.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/089431849300600204>
- Mohler-Kuo, M., Landolt, M. A., Maier, T., Meidert, U., Schönbucher, V., & Schnyder, U. (2014). Child sexual abuse revisited: A population-based cross-sectional study among Swiss adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 54*(3), 304-311.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.08.020>
- Möller-Leimkühler, A. M. (2002). Barriers to help seeking by men: A review of sociocultural and clinical literature with particular reference to depression. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 71*(1-3), 1-9. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0165-0327\(01\)00379-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0165-0327(01)00379-2)
- Moller, M. (2007). Exploiting patterns: A critique of hegemonic masculinity. *Journal of Gender Studies, 16*(3), 263-276. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09589230701562970>
- Molnar, B. E., Berkman, L. F., & Buka, S. L. (2001). Psychopathology, childhood sexual abuse and other childhood adversities: Relative links to subsequent suicidal behaviour in the US. *Psychological Medicine, 31*(6), 965-977.  
doi:10.1017/S003329170105432
- Moran, D. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Morrell, R., Jewkes, R., Lindegger, G., & Hamlall, V. (2013). Hegemonic masculinity: Reviewing the gendered analysis of men's power in South Africa. *South African Review of Sociology, 44*(1), 3-21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21528586.2013.784445>
- Morris, M., & Anderson, E. (2015). 'Charlie is so cool like': Authenticity, popularity and inclusive masculinity on YouTube. *Sociology, 49*(6), 1200-1217.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038514562852>
- Mosher, D. L., & Sirkin, M. (1984). Measuring a macho personality constellation. *Journal of Research in Personality, 18*(2), 150-163.

- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Münzer, A., Fegert, J. M., Ganser, H. G., Loos, S., Witt, A., & Goldbeck, L. (2016). Please tell!: Barriers to disclosing sexual victimization and subsequent social support perceived by children and adolescents. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *31*(2), 355-377. doi:10.1177/0886260514555371
- Naik, Y. (2017). *Homosexuality in the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court of India*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Najman, J. M., Nguyen, M. L. T., Boyle, F. M. (2007). Sexual abuse in childhood and physical and mental health in adulthood: An Australian population study. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *36*(5), 666-675. doi:10.1007/s10508-007-9180-5
- Najman, J., Dunne, M., Purdie, D., Boyle, F., & Coxeter, P. (2005). Sexual abuse in childhood and sexual dysfunction in adulthood: An Australian population-based study. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *34*(5), 517–526.
- Nalavany, B. A., & Abell, N. (2004). An initial validation of a measure of personal and social perceptions of the sexual abuse off males. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *14*(5), 368-378. doi:10.1177/1049731504265836
- National Sample Survey Office. (2016). *Education in India: NSS 71<sup>st</sup> round (January-June, 2014)*. New Delhi, India: Author.
- Nelson, A., & Oliver, P. (1998). Gender and the constructions of consent in child-adult sexual contact: Beyond gender neutrality and male monopoly. *Gender & Society*, *12*(5), 554-577.
- Newcombe, M. D., & Locke, T. F. (2001). Intergenerational cycle of maltreatment: A popular concept obscured by methodological limitations. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *25*, 1219-1240.
- Niranjan, S., Nair, S., & Roy, T. K. (2005). A socio-demographic analysis of the size and structure of the family in India. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *36*(4), 623-651.
- Nobis, R., Sandén, I., & Elofsson, K. (2007). Masculinity and urogenital cancer: Sensitive issues in health care. *Contemporary Nurse*, *24*(1), 79-88.
- Nunn, N. (2013). 'It can be dangerous for the uterus': Hegemonic masculinity and cooperative recycling in São Paulo, Brazil. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *20*(6), 794-810. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2012.716400>

- O'Leary, P. (2001). Working with males who have experienced childhood sexual abuse. In B. Pease & P. Camilleri (Eds.), *Working with men in the human services* (pp. 80-92). Sydney, Australia: Allen and Unwin.
- O'Leary, P. J. (2009). Men who were sexually abused in childhood: Coping strategies and comparisons in psychological functioning. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 33(7), 471-479. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.02.004>
- O'Leary, P. J., & Barber, J. (2008). Gender differences in silencing following childhood sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 17(2), 133-143. doi:10.1080/1053871080916416
- O'Leary, P. J., & Gould, N. (2009). Men who were sexually abused in childhood and subsequent suicidal ideation: Community comparison, explanations and practice implications. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 39(5), 950-968. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcn130>
- O'Neill, R. (2015). Whither critical masculinity studies?: Notes on inclusive masculinity theory, postfeminism, and sexual politics. *Men and Masculinities*, 18(1), 100-120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X14553056>
- Oates, R. K. (2004). Sexual abuse and suicidal behavior. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 28(5), 487-489. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2004.04.002>
- Olafson, E., Corwin, D. L., & Summit, R. C. (1993). Modern history of child sexual abuse awareness: Cycles of discovery and suppression. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 17(1), 7-24. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(93\)90004-O](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(93)90004-O)
- Oransky, M., & Marecek, J. (2009). "I'm not going to be a girl": Masculinity and emotions in boys' friendships and peer groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 24(2), 218-241.
- Osella, C., & Osella, F. (2007). South Asian masculinities. In M. Flood, J. K. Gardiner, B. Pease, & K. Pringle (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of men and masculinities* (pp. 577-580). Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Paine, M. L., & Hansen, D. J. (2002). Factors influencing children to self-disclose sexual abuse. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 22(2), 271-295.
- Paolucci, E. O., Genuis, M. L., & Violato, C. (2001). A meta-analysis of the published research on the effects of child sexual abuse. *The Journal of Psychology*, 135(1), 17-36. doi:10.1080/00223980109603677

- Parrot, A., & Cummings, N. (2006). *Forsaken females: The global brutalization of women*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Parrott, D. J., & Zeichner, A. (2003). Effects of hypermasculinity on physical aggression against women. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity, 4*(1), 70-78.
- Pascoe, C. J. (2005). 'Dude, you're a fag': Adolescent masculinity and the fag discourse. *Sexualities, 8*(3), 329-346.
- Pascoe, C. J., & Bridges, T. (2016). Exploring masculinities: History, reproduction, hegemony, and dislocation. In C. J. Pascoe & T. Bridges (Eds.), *Exploring masculinities: Identity, inequality, continuity, and change* (pp. 1–34). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Paul, J. P., Catania, J., Pollack, L., & Stall, R. (2001). Understanding childhood sexual abuse as a predictor of sexual risk-taking among men who have sex with men: The urban men's health study. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 25*(4), 557-584.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(01\)00226-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(01)00226-5)
- Payne, B. K., Button, D., & Rapp, L. (2008). Challenges to doing sexual violence work. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 17*(3), 374-393.  
doi:10.1080/10926770802425049
- Pease, B. (2007). Sex role theory. In M. Flood, J. K. Gardiner, B. Pease, & K. Pringle (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of men and masculinities* (pp. 554-555). Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Pelias, R. J. (2008). Making my masculine body behave. *International Review of Qualitative Research, 1*(1), 65-74.
- Pereda, N., Guilera, G., Forns, M., & Gómez-Benito, J. (2009). The prevalence of child sexual abuse in community and student-samples: A meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review, 29*(4), 328-338. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2009.02.007>
- Perera, B., Reece, M., Monahan, P., Billingham, R., & Finn, P. (2009). Childhood characteristics and personal dispositions to sexually compulsive behavior among young adults. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity, 16*(2), 131–145.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10720160902905421>
- Pérez-Jiménez, D., Cunningham, I., Serrano-García, I., & Ortiz-Torres, B. (2007). Construction of male sexuality and gender roles in Puerto Rican heterosexual college students. *Men and Masculinities, 9*(3), 358-378.

- Phillips, D. A. (2005). Reproducing normative and marginalized masculinities: Adolescent male popularity and the outcast. *Nursing Inquiry*, 12(3), 219-230. doi:10.1111/j.1440-1800.2005.00271.x
- Pierce, R., & Pierce, L. H. (1985). The sexually abused child: The comparison of male and female victims. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 9, 191-199.
- Pleck, J. H. (1987). The theory of male sex-role identity: Its rise and fall, 1936 to the present. In H. Brod (Ed.), *The making of masculinities: The new men's studies* (pp. 21-38). Boston, MA: Allen & Unwin.
- Pollack, W. (1995). Deconstructing dis-identification: Rethinking psychoanalytic concepts of male development. *Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy*, 12(1), 20-45.
- Pollack, W. S. (2006). The "war" for boys: Hearing "real boys" voices, healing their pain. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 37(2), 190-195.
- Price-Robertson, R. (2012). Child sexual abuse, masculinity and fatherhood. *Journal of Family Studies*, 18(2-3), 130-142. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5172/jfs.2012.18.2-3.130>
- Priebe, G., & Svedin, C. G. (2008). Child sexual abuse is largely hidden from the adult society: An epidemiological study of adolescents' disclosures. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 32(12), 1095-1108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.04.001>
- Pringle, R. (2005). Masculinities, sport, and power: A critical comparison of Gramscian and Foucauldian inspired theoretical tools. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 29(3), 256-278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723505276228>
- Purcell, D. W., Malow, R. M., Dolezal, C., & Carballo-Diéguez, A. (2004). Sexual abuse of boys: Short- and long-term associations and implications for HIV prevention. In L. J. Koenig, L. S. Doll, A. O'Leary, & W. Pequenat (Eds.), *From child sexual abuse to adult sexual risk: Trauma, revictimization, and intervention* (pp. 93-114). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Putnam, F. W. (2003). Ten-year research update review: Child sexual abuse. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 42(3), 269-278. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-200303000-00006>
- Ramasubban, R. (2008). Political intersections between HIV/AIDS, sexuality and human rights: A history of resistance to the anti-sodomy law in India. *Global Public Health*, 3(S2), 22-38.
- Ramasubban, R. (n.d.). Culture, politics, and discourses on sexuality: A history of resistance to the anti-sodomy law in India. In R. Parker, R. Petchesky, & R. Sember

- (Eds.), *SexPolitics: Reports from the Front Lines* (pp. 91-125). Retrieved from <http://www.sxpolitics.org/frontlines/book/index.php>
- Rao, S. (2017, August 3). 16-year-old boy 'raped' for a year, names 15 teens. *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from <http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/16-year-old-boy-raped-for-a-year-names-15-teens-4779799/>
- Rassool, S. B., & Nel, P. W. (2012). Experiences of causing an accidental death: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Death Studies, 36*(9), 832-857.
- Raval, V. V., Martini, T. S., & Raval, P. H. (2007). 'Would others think it is okay to express my feelings?': Regulation of anger, sadness, and physical pain in Gujarati children in India. *Social Development, 16*(1), 79-105. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9507.2007.00373.x
- Ray, S. L. (2001). Male survivors' perspectives of incest/sexual abuse. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care, 37*(2), 49-59. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6163.2001.tb00618.x
- Reid, K., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2005). Exploring lived experience. *The Psychologist, 18*(1), 20-23.
- Renold, E. (2001). Learning the 'hard' way: Boys, hegemonic masculinity and the negotiation of learner identities in the primary school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 22*(3), 369-385.
- Reynolds, F., Vivat, B., & Prior, S. (2011). Visual art-making as a resource for living positively with arthritis: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of older women's accounts. *Journal of Aging Studies, 25*(3), 328-337.
- Richardson, N. (2009). Effeminophobia, misogyny and queer friendship: The cultural themes of Channel 4's *Playing It Straight*. *Sexualities, 12*(4), 525-544.
- Richey-Suttles, S., & Reamer, R. (1997). Psychologists' attitudes toward adult male survivors of sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 6*(2), 43-61.
- Rind, B., & Tromovitch, P. (1997). A meta-analytic review of findings from national samples on psychological correlates of child sexual abuse. *The Journal of Sex Research, 34*(3), 237-255. doi:10.1080/00224499709551891
- Rind, B., Tromovitch, P., & Bauserman, R. (1998). A meta-analytic examination of assumed properties of child sexual abuse using college samples. *Psychological Bulletin, 124*(1), 22-53.

- Roberts, A. L., Rosario, M., Corliss, H. L., Koenen, K. C., & Austin, S. B. (2012). Childhood gender nonconformity: A risk indicator for childhood abuse and posttraumatic stress in youth. *Pediatrics*, *129*(3), 410-417. doi:10.1542/peds.2011-1804
- Robinson, K. H. (2005). 'Queerying' gender: Heteronormativity in early childhood education. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, *30*(2), 19-28.
- Rogers, C. M., & Terry, T. (1984). Clinical intervention with boy victims of sexual abuse. In I. R. Stuart & J. G. Greer (Eds.), *Victims of sexual aggression* (pp. 91-104). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Rohsenow, D. J., Corbett, R., & Devine, D. (1988). Molested as children: A hidden contribution to substance abuse? *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, *5*(1), 13-18. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0740-5472\(88\)90032-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0740-5472(88)90032-3)
- Roller, C., Martsof, D. S., Draucker, C. B., & Ross, R. (2009). The sexuality of childhood sexual abuse survivors. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, *21*(1), 49-60. doi:10.1080/19317610802661870
- Romano, E., & De Luca, R. V. (2001). Male sexual abuse: A review of effects, abuse characteristics, and links with later psychological functioning. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *6*(1), 55-78. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1359-1789\(99\)00011-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1359-1789(99)00011-7)
- Ryan, C., & Rivers, I. (2003). Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: Victimization and its correlates in the USA and UK. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, *5*(2), 103-119.
- Saewyc, E. M., Skay, C. L., Pettingell, S. L., Reis, E. A., Bearinger, L., Resnick, M., Murphy, A., & Combs, L. (2006). Hazards of stigma: The sexual and physical abuse of gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents in the United States and Canada. *Child Welfare*, *85*(2), 195-213.
- Sahay, S. (2013). Making of victim a patient: Sexually abused children and the consequences of unprofessional help. *Psychological Studies*, *58*(2), 153-163. doi:10.1007/s12646-013-0183-0
- Salter, D., McMillan, D., Richards, M., Talbot, T., Hodges, J., Bentovim, A., Hastings, R., Stevenson, J., Skuse, D. (2003). Development of sexually abusive behaviour in sexually victimised males: A longitudinal study. *The Lancet*, *361*(9356), 471-476. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(03\)12466-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(03)12466-X)

- Sandfort, T. G. M., Melendez, R. M., & Diaz, R. M. (2007). Gender nonconformity, homophobia, and mental distress in Latino gay and bisexual men. *Journal of Sex Research, 44*(2), 181-189. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00224490701263819>
- Saravanan, S. (2000). *Violence Against Women in India: A Literature Review*. Retrieved from <http://www.isst-india.org/PDF/Violence%20Against%20Women%20India.pdf>
- Schofield, T., Connell, R. W., Walker, L., Wood, J. F., & Butland, D. L. (2000). Understanding men's health and illness: A gender-relations approach to policy, research, and practice. *Journal of American College Health, 48*, 247-256.
- Schönbucher, V., Maier, T., Mohler-Kuo, M., Schnyder, U., & Landolt, M. A. (2012). Disclosure of child sexual abuse by adolescents: A qualitative in-depth study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27*(17), 3486-3513. doi:10.1177/0886260512445380
- Schrock, D. P., & Padavic, I. (2007). Negotiating hegemonic masculinity in a batterer intervention program. *Gender & Society, 21*(5), 625-649. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243207304975>
- Schrock, D., & Schwalbe, M. (2009). Men, masculinity, and manhood acts. *Annual Review of Sociology, 35*, 277-295.
- Scoats, R. (2017). Inclusive masculinity and Facebook photographs among early emerging adults at a British university. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 32*(3), 323-345. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558415607059>
- Scott, W. (1992). Group therapy with sexually abused boys: Notes towards managing behavior. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 20*(4), 395-409.
- Sedgwick, E. K. (1993). *Tendencies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sedlak A. J., & Broadhurst, D. D. (1996). *Third National incidence study of child abuse and neglect: Final report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Segal, L. (1990). *Slow motion: Changing masculinities, changing men*. London, UK: Virago Press.
- Segurado, A. C., Batistella, É, Nascimento, V., Braga, P. E., Filipe, E., Santos, N., & Paiva, V. (2008). Sexual abuse victimisation and perpetration in a cohort of men living with HIV/AIDS who have sex with women from São Paulo, Brazil. *AIDS Care, 20*(1), 15-20. doi:10.1080/09540120701459657

- Seidler, V. J. (2006). *Transforming masculinities: Men, cultures, bodies, power, sex and love*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Sharma, A. (2008). Decriminalising queer sexualities in India: A multiple streams analysis. *Social Policy & Society*, 7(4), 419-431.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746408004399>
- Sharma, B. R., & Gupta, M. (2004). Child abuse in Chandigarh, India, and its implications. *Journal of Clinical Forensic Medicine*, 11, 248-256.  
doi:10.1016/j.jcfm.2004.01.009
- Shaw, R. (2010). Embedding reflexivity within experiential qualitative psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 7(3), 233-243.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14780880802699092>
- Sheikh, D. (2013). The road to decriminalization: Litigating India's anti-sodomy law. *Yale Human Rights and Development Law Journal*, 16, 104-132.
- Shivananda, A. (2017, January 18). A case of perjury against a minor: The POCSO Act and its implementation. *Live Law*. Retrieved from <http://www.livelaw.in/case-perjury-minor-pocso-act-implementation/>
- Sigurdardottir, S., Halldorsdottir, S., & Bender, S. S. (2012). Deep and almost unbearable suffering: consequences of childhood sexual abuse for men's health and well-being. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 26, 688-697. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6712.2012.00981.x
- Sigurdardottir, S., Halldorsdottir, S., & Bender, S. S. (2014). Consequences of childhood sexual abuse for health and well-being: Gender similarities and differences. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 42, 278-286.  
doi:10.1177/1403494813514645
- Sikes, A., & Hays, D. G. (2010). The developmental impact of child abuse on adulthood: Implications for counselors. *Adulthood Journal*, 9(1), 26-35. doi:10.1002/j.2161-0029.2010.tb00069.x
- Singh, P. (2016). Between legal recognition and moral policing: Mapping the queer subject in India. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 63(3), 416-425.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2016.1124700>
- Skelton, C. (1997). Primary boys and hegemonic masculinities. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 18(3), 349-369.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0142569970180303>

- Smith, J. A. (2004). Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 1*, 39-54.
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 53-80). London, UK: Sage.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, method and research*. London, UK: Sage.
- Smith, M., & Woodiwiss, J. (2016). Sexuality, innocence and agency in narratives of childhood sexual abuse: Implications for social work. *British Journal of Social Work, 46*, 2173-2189. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcw160
- Solomon, J. C. (1992). Child sexual abuse by family members: A radical feminist perspective. *Sex Roles, 27*(9-10), 473-485.
- Sorsoli, L., Kia-Keating, M., & Grossman, F. K. (2008). "I keep that hush-hush": Male survivors of sexual abuse and the challenges of disclosure. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 55*(3), 333-345. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.55.3.333
- Spencer, T. D., & Tan, J. C. H. (1999). Undergraduate students' reactions to analogue male disclosure of sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 8*(4), 73-90.
- Spiegel, J. (2003). *Sexual abuse of males: The SAM model of theory and practice*. New York, NY: Brunner-Routledge.
- Srivastava, S. (2007). Indian masculinities. In M. Flood, J. K. Gardiner, B. Pease, & K. Pringle (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of men and masculinities* (pp. 329-331). Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Stoltenborgh, M., van IJzendoorn, M. H., Euser, E. M., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J. (2011). A global perspective on child sexual abuse: Meta-analysis of prevalence around the world. *Child Maltreatment, 16*(2), 79-101. doi:10.1177/1077559511403920
- Stoudt, B. G. (2006). "You're either in or you're out": School violence, peer discipline, and the (re)production of hegemonic masculinity. *Men and Masculinities, 8*(3), 273-287. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X05282070>
- Struve, J. (2007). *Socialization and its impact on male survivors of sexual abuse*. Retrieved from <http://malesurvivor.org/ArchivedPages/social.html>

- Subramaniyan, V. K. S., Reddy, P., Chandra, G., Rao, C., & Rao, T. S. S. (2017). Silence of male child sexual abuse in India: Qualitative analysis of barriers for seeking psychiatric help in a multidisciplinary unit in a general hospital. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 59(2), 202-207. doi:10.4103/psychiatry.IndianJPsychiatry\_195\_17
- Suri, S., & Onir (Producers), & Onir (Director). (2011). *I am* [Motion Picture]. India: Anticlock Films.
- Swearer, S. M., Turner, R. K., Givens, J. E., & Pollack, W. S. (2008). "You're so gay!": Do different forms of bullying matter for adolescent males? *School Psychology Review*, 37(2), 160-173.
- Tang, S. S. S., Freyd, J. J., & Wang, M. (2007). What do we know about gender in the disclosure of child sexual abuse? *Journal of Psychological Trauma*, 6(4), 1-26. doi:10.1080/19322880802096442
- TARSHI. (2005). Did you know: Language. In *Plainspeak*, Issue 1. Retrieved from <http://www.tarshi.net/index.asp?pid=220>
- TEDxCRCE. (2016, December 7). *Harish Iyer: Being a survivor of male child sexual abuse* [Video file]. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dR\\_yh-9jyU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dR_yh-9jyU)
- Teram, E., Stalker, C., Hovey, A., Schachter, C., & Lasiuk, G. (2006). Towards malecentric communication: Sensitizing health professionals to the realities of male childhood sexual abuse survivors. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 27, 499-517. doi:10.1080/01612840600599994
- Tharinger, D. J. (2008). Maintaining the hegemonic masculinity through selective attachment, homophobia, and gay-baiting in schools: Challenges to intervention. *School Psychology Review*, 37(2), 221-227.
- Thurlow, C. (2001). Naming the "outsider within": Homophobic pejoratives and the verbal abuse of lesbian, gay and bisexual high-school pupils. *Journal of Adolescence*, 24, 25-38.
- Tomori, C., McFall, A. M., Srikrishnan, A. K., Mehta, S. H., Nimmagadda, N., Anand, S.,... Celentano, D. D. (2016). The prevalence and impact of childhood sexual abuse on HIV-risk behaviors among men who have sex with men (MSM) in India. *BMC Public Health*, 16, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-016-3446-6>
- Tomsen, S., & Mason, G. (2001). Engendering homophobia: Violence, sexuality and gender conformity. *Journal of Sociology*, 37(3), 257-273.

- Toomey, M. (2001). *How gender affects our relationship to anger and violence and to self-expression and accountability*. Retrieved from [http://mtoomey.com/book\\_gender.html](http://mtoomey.com/book_gender.html)
- Tremblay, G., & Turcotte, P. (2005). Gender identity construction and sexual orientation in sexually abused males. *International Journal of Men's Health, 4*(2), 131-147.
- Trickett, P. K., Noll, J. G., Reiffman, A., & Putnam, F. W. (2001). Variants of intrafamilial sexual abuse experience: Implications for short- and long-term development. *Development and Psychopathology, 13*(4), 1001-1019.
- Trotter, J. (2006). Violent crimes?: Young people's experiences of homophobia and misogyny in secondary schools. *Practice, 18*(4), 291-302.
- Tulir – Centre for the Prevention and Healing of Child Sexual Abuse. (2006). *Doesn't every child count?: Research on prevalence and dynamics of child sexual abuse among school going children in Chennai*. Chennai, India: Author.
- Turner, S., Taillieu, T., Cheung, K., & Afifi, T. O. (2017). The relationship between childhood sexual abuse and mental health outcomes among males: Results from a nationally representative United States sample. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 66*, 64-72.
- Tymieniecka, M. T. (2003). Introduction: Phenomenology as the inspirational force of our times. In M. T. Tymieniecka (Ed.), *Phenomenology world-wide: Foundations—expanding dynamics—life-engagements: A guide for research and study* (pp. 1-10). London, UK: Kluwer Academic.
- Ullman, S. E., & Filipas, H. H. (2005). Gender differences in social reactions to abuse disclosures, post-abuse coping, and PTSD of child sexual abuse survivors. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 29*(7), 767-782. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.01.005>
- UNESCO (2009). *International technical guidance on sexuality education: An evidence-informed approach for schools, teachers and health educators*. Paris, France: Author.
- United States Census Bureau (2017, November 18). U.S. and world population clock. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/popclock/>
- Urquiza, A. J., & Capra, M. (1990). The impact of sexual abuse: Initial and long-term effects. In M. Hunter (Ed.), *The sexually abused male, Vol. 1. Prevalence, impact, and treatment* (pp. 105-135). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Vaillancourt-Morel, M., Godbout, N., Sabourin, S., Briere, J., Lussier, Y., & Runtz, M. (2016). Adult sexual outcomes of child sexual abuse vary according to relationship

- status. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 42(2), 341-356.  
doi:10.1111/jmft.12154
- Valente, S. M. (2005). Sexual abuse of boys. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 18(1), 10-16. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6171.2005.00005.x
- Van Vliet, K. J. (2009). The role of attributions in the process of overcoming shame: A qualitative analysis. *Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 82(2), 137-152.  
doi:10.1348/147608308X389391
- Veach, T. A. (1999). Child sexual offenders' attitudes toward punishment, sexual contact, and blame. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 7(4), 43-58.  
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J070v07n04\\_04](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J070v07n04_04)
- Verma, R. K., & Mahendra, V. S. (2004). Construction of masculinity in India: A gender and sexual health perspective. *The Journal of Family Welfare*, 50, 71-78.
- Verma, R. K., Mahendra, V. S., Pulerwitz, J., Barker, G. T., Van Dam, J., & Flessenkaemper, S. (2004). From research to action: Addressing masculinity and gender norms. *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, 65(4), 634-654.
- Verma, R. K., Pulerwitz, J., Mahendra, V., Khandekar, S., Barker, G., Fulpagare, P., & Singh, S. K. (2006). Challenging and changing gender attitudes among young men in Mumbai, India. *Reproductive Health Matters*, 14(28), 135-143.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080\(06\)28261-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080(06)28261-2)
- Violato, C., & Genuis, M. (1993). Problems of research in male child sexual abuse: A review. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 2(3), 33-54.  
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J070v02n03\\_03](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J070v02n03_03)
- Wall, D., & Kristjanson, L. (2005). Men, culture and hegemonic masculinity: Understanding the experience of prostate cancer. *Nursing Inquiry*, 12(2), 87-97.  
doi:10.1111/j.1440-1800.2005.00258.x
- Walsh, K., Zwi, K., Woolfenden, S., Shlonsky, A. (2015). School-based education programmes for the prevention of child sexual abuse. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, Issue 4, Art No. CD004380.  
doi:10.1002/14651858.CD004380.pub3
- War, R. J., & Albert, S. (2013). Sexuality and 'silence' among Khasi youth of Meghalaya, Northeast India. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 15(S3), S351-S364.

- Ward, J. (2008). Duse-sex: White masculinities and 'authentic' heterosexuality among dudes who have sex with dudes. *Sexualities, 11*(4), 414-434.  
doi:10.1177/1363460708091742
- Ward, J. (2015). *Not gay: Sex between straight white men*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Wark, J., & Vis, J. (2016). Effects of child sexual abuse on the parenting of male survivors. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. Advance online publication.  
doi:10.1177/1524838016673600
- Watkins, B., & Bentovim, A. (1992). The sexual abuse of male children and adolescents: A review of current research. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 33*(1), 197-248.
- Watkins, B., & Bentovim, A., (2000). Male children and adolescents as victims: A review of current knowledge. In G. C. Mezey & M. B. King (Eds.), *Male victims of sexual assault* (pp. 35-77). London, UK: Oxford University Press.
- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1991). Doing gender. In J. Butler (Ed.), *The Social Construction of Gender* (pp. 102-121). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Wetherell, M., & Edley, N. (1999). Negotiating hegemonic masculinity: Imaginary positions and psycho-discursive practices. *Feminism & Psychology, 9*(3), 335-356.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353599009003012>
- Whiffen, V. E., & MacIntosh, H. B. (2005). Mediators of the link between childhood sexual abuse and emotional distress: A critical review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 6*(1), 24-39. doi:10.1177/1524838004272543
- Whittier, N. (2016), Where are the children?: Theorizing the missing piece in gendered sexual violence. *Gender & Society, 30*(1), 95-108. doi:10.1177/0891243215612412
- Wilcox, D. T., Richards, F., & O'Keefe, Z. C. (2004). Resilience and risk factors associated with experiencing childhood sexual abuse. *Child Abuse Review, 13*, 338-352. doi:10.1002/car.862
- Wojnar, D. M., & Swanson, K. M. (2007). Phenomenology: An exploration. *Journal of Holistic Nursing, 25*(3), 172-180.
- Wood, J. T. (2001). *Gendered lives: Communication, gender, and culture* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

- Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology & Health, 15*, 215-228.
- Yardley, L. (2017). Demonstrating the validity of qualitative research. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 12*(3), 295-296.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262624>
- Young, R., & Sweeting, H. (2004). Adolescent bullying, relationships, psychological well-being, and gender-atypical behavior: A gender diagnosticity approach. *Sex Roles, 50*(7-8), 525-537.
- Young, S., Bramham, J., Gray, K., & Rose, E. (2008). The experience of receiving a diagnosis and treatment of ADHD in adulthood: A qualitative study of clinically referred patients using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. *Journal of Attention Disorders, 11*(4), 493-503.
- Zierler, S., Feingold, L., Laufer, D., Velentgas, P., Kantrowitz-Gordon, I., & Mayer, K. (1991). Adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and subsequent risk of HIV infection. *American Journal of Public Health, 81*(5), 572-575.

## Appendix A

### Exploring lived experiences of adult men survivors of child sexual abuse

#### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Respondent's ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview date: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

*Participant information:*

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest level of education attained: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship status: \_\_\_\_\_

Sexual orientation: \_\_\_\_\_

Disabilities, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Could we start with you telling me a bit about yourself?

*Prompts and follow-up questions:*

- a. What do you do for a living?
- b. Past professions/employment?
- c. What is your family like?
- d. What are your interests and hobbies?

2. Could you please talk to me about your growing up years?

*Prompts and follow-up questions:*

- a. Would you please tell me what was your family like as you were growing up?
- b. What were you like as a child?
- c. What were you like as a teenager?
- d. How about your interests and hobbies during childhood and adolescence?
- e. Did you have friends? What were some of the major activities you used to participate in with your friends?
- f. Did you want to take up a certain profession when you grew up?

- g. Did you have any childhood or teenage idols?
3. I would now like to talk to you about gender. Growing up, what are some of the messages you received about how boys were expected to behave?
- Prompts and follow-up questions:*
- What were your ideas about what kind of a man you wanted to be?
  - Do you remember adults in your family, neighborhood, school etc. telling you to be a man, or to behave like other boys? What did they say or do?
  - Do you remember adults telling you that you were behaving like a girl, or telling you not to behave like a girl? What did they say or do?
4. Could we now talk about the sexual abuse you experienced during childhood? Could you please tell me about the circumstances of the abuse?
- Prompts and follow-up questions:*
- How old were you when the abuse started?
  - At that time, what were your thoughts about what was going on?
  - How would you describe your relationship with the offender at that time?
  - What did you think you could do about it?
  - What did the offender say to you about the abuse?
  - Were you told things by the offender or others, which were confusing?
  - Were you mistreated in any other way?
5. What was your knowledge about sexual matters at the time?
- Prompts and follow-up questions:*
- How did you learn about sex and sexuality?
  - Did you receive any sex education at school?
  - Sometimes adolescents talk to each other about sex and sexuality. Do you remember having any such conversations with your peers while growing up? What were some of the things you and your peers discussed regarding sex and sexuality?
  - Do you think your knowledge of sexual matters influenced how you understood or experienced your sexual abuse?
6. Let us talk about gender again for some time. What do you think is an essential part of being a man? This could be personality traits, social attributes, physical image, or anything else that comes to your mind when you think of what it is to be a man.
- Prompts and follow-up questions:*
- Could you describe in your own words what it means to be a man to you? How would you describe your own masculinity?
  - Do you think society expects men to be a certain way? What do you think are expectations made of men by the society?
  - Do you think you fit the society's ideas about how to be a man?
  - Can you tell me a story of a time when you felt good or accomplished about being a man?
  - Can you tell me a story of a time when you felt inadequate as a man, or felt you were not "man enough"?
7. When you were being abused, did you ever decide to talk to anyone about it?

*Prompts and follow-up questions*

- a. What was their reaction or response?
  - b. What factors contributed to your telling or not telling?
  - c. Do you feel the fact that you are a boy contributed in any way to your telling or not telling?
  - d. Do you think your identity as a boy influenced the response of the people you told?
8. Who did you think was to blame for the abuse?
  9. Has your status as a man influenced how and with whom can you discuss your experiences of child sexual abuse as an adult?
  10. Have you ever had any concerns about your masculinity in relation to the abuse?
  11. Have you ever had any concerns about your sexual identity in relation to the abuse?
  12. Do you think abuse in childhood has influenced your relationship with your intimate partners as an adult? In what ways?

*Prompts and follow-up questions:*

- a. Do you think your identity as a man has anything to do with this?
13. Do you think abuse has influenced your relationship with other significant individuals in your life, such as with your friends, or parents, or your kids? In what ways?

*Prompts and follow-up questions:*

- a. Do you think your identity as a man has anything to do with this?
14. Do you feel abuse in childhood has influenced your life as an adult in any other way that we haven't discussed so far?

*Prompts and follow-up questions:*

- a. Is any of this connected with your personal ideas about being a man, or society's ideas about being a man?
15. Do you feel abuse would have influenced your life differently had you not been a man but a person of another gender?
  16. Has the experience of abuse in any way changed the way you see yourself as a man, or present yourself as a man in the society?
  17. How do you think can the men who are survivors of child sexual abuse be helped?

*Prompts and follow-up questions:*

- a. What services can be provided to them?
  - b. What policies can be designed, changed, or implemented better?
18. Is there anything I have not asked you, that you feel is important for me to know to do this research?

## **Appendix B**

### **CONSENT FORM**

#### An Exploration of Experiences of Adult Men Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse in India, with Focus on Gender and Masculinity

You are invited to be in a research study that explores how notions of masculinity influence the experiences of adult men survivors of child sexual abuse. You were selected as a possible participant because you had approached the primary investigator expressing your interest in participation. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Alankaar Sharma, PhD Candidate, School of Social Work, University of Minnesota.

#### **Background Information**

The purpose of this study is to learn how ideas about being a man shape and inform the abuse-related experiences of adult men survivors of child sexual abuse, and the meanings men survivors make of their own abuse with reference to their masculinity.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to participate in up to three face-to-face individual interviews of 90-120 minutes each. The questions asked during the interviews will relate to history and circumstances of abuse, how ideas about gender may influence one's experiences of abuse, and how men survivors may be helped. The interviews will be held on a date decided together by you and the researcher, based on mutual convenience, and at a mutually decided place that offers privacy. With your permission, these interviews will be audiorecorded, and later transcribed.

#### **Risks and Benefits of being in the Study**

There are no benefits for participating in this research. The risks for participating in this study are related to the stirring up of painful memories and emotions as you talk about your experiences of child sexual abuse. Some people experience anxiety after the interview is completed. Should you require psychosocial support or more information

regarding child sexual abuse following the interview, a list of online resources will be offered to you. You are free to terminate a particular interview, or your participation in this research at any time without penalty.

**Compensation:**

You will receive Rupees 150 for each interview, to compensate you for your time. You will receive this compensation amount regardless of whether you complete the interview or not.

**Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. However, the following information is not limited by confidentiality and may be released as governed by law: 1) information about a child being maltreated or neglected 2) information about an individual's plan to seriously harm him/herself 3) information about an individual's plan to seriously harm another person. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. The interviews will be digitally recorded with your permission. These digital files will be saved in a password-protected computer that only the researcher has access to. The researcher will prepare transcripts of the interviews, which is a written record of everything that is said during the interview. These transcripts will not contain your real name or any other information that may be used by another person to identify you. As soon the transcript is prepared, the researcher will destroy the audio recording of the interview.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or with any professional agency or individual through which you may have come to know about this study. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Alankaar Sharma. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Alankaar at 3236/2, Sector 44-D, Chandigarh, India, phone: +91 904 198 4184, email: sharm087@umn.edu. You can also contact Alankaar's advisor, Prof. Elizabeth Lightfoot at 105 Peters Hall, Gortner Ave, St. Paul, MN 55108, USA, phone: +1 612 624 4710, email: elightfo@umn.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455, USA; phone: +1 612 625 1650.

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

**Appendix C**  
**Recruitment Flyer**

**1 in 6 boys is sexually abused  
before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday**

**Men needed to participate**

in research that explores how adult men understand their experiences of sexual abuse during childhood.

**If you are an adult man in the age group of 18-60 years, and have experienced sexual abuse or unwanted sexual contact during childhood, you are invited to participate in this study.**

Participation involves:

- Upto three confidential face-to-face interviews, each lasting 1.5-2 hours.
- Language of interviews will be English.
- Rupees 150 for each interview as compensation for your time.
- Interview times and locations based on your convenience and comfort.

Your participation in this research will be **completely voluntary**, and will take place in an environment of **respect and confidentiality**.

**Contact**

**Alankaar Sharma**

Email  
**sharm087@umn.edu**

Phone  
**+91 9041984184**

## Appendix D

### Internet-based resources for learning more about child sexual abuse and/or support services for men survivors:

- [www.malesurvivor.org](http://www.malesurvivor.org) (Offers online support services and resources for survivors as well as professionals. Focused specifically on sexual victimization of boys and men.)
- [www.darkness2light.org](http://www.darkness2light.org) (Offers resources and support services for the prevention of child sexual abuse.)
- [www.tulir.org](http://www.tulir.org) (Information about child sexual abuse and its prevention, especially in the context of India. Tulir – Centre for the Prevention & Healing of Child Sexual Abuse is an NGO working on child sexual abuse prevention and intervention in India.)
- [www.rahifoundation.org](http://www.rahifoundation.org) (Information about child sexual abuse, especially in the context of India. Recovery and Healing from Incest (RAHI) is an NGO working on child sexual abuse prevention and intervention in India.)
- [www.lin6.org](http://www.lin6.org) (Website dedicated to information resources on male survivors of child sexual abuse. Offers an online chat helpline for men survivors. Contains a dedicated section on myths and facts regarding male child sexual abuse. Also recommends books and movies that men survivors may find helpful in processing their abuse experiences and healing from abuse).
- [www.isurvive.org](http://www.isurvive.org) (Website with an international audience offering free online peer-support forums for adults who are child abuse survivors.)
- [www.livingwell.org.au](http://www.livingwell.org.au) (Online resource website for men who have been sexually abused, and for their partners, families and friends).