THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Determinants of Child Sexual Abuse in Amhara Regional State: The Case of Debremarkos Town and Bahir Dar City, Northwest Ethiopia

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Abstract:
Child sexual abuse is becoming one of the tragic and sensitive global issues. It has been hidden in most parts of the world for several decades. Certainly, childhood sexual abuse is a subject that has received much attention in recent years. Despite the lack of accurate and well organized worldwide statistics on the prevalence of child sexual abuse, there is a general agreement among sociologists, social workers, counselors, forensic psychologists, law enforcement detectives, medical examiners and other child protection professionals that the problem is common and serious particularly in cities. In Ethiopian where talking publicly about the issue, let alone conducting research, is considered as a taboo until recent years. This study is conducted to explore the causative factors for such abuse and the effect it brings on victims, their families and the society at large. Specifically the following objectives are addressed in this study: Describing the socio-economic characteristics of the victims and offenders ,Exploring the causative factors of sexual abuse in Bahirdar city and Debremarkos town ,Find out the effects of child sexual abuse in the study areas and Identifying policy gaps and make recommendations for advocacy and henceforth policy change. Qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used in this study. Specifically, household survey, key informant interviews and focus group discussions is used to collect data. The study finding reveled that Child sexual abuse is a current challenge to the protection of children in Ethiopia in general and study areas in particular, mostly affecting girls. The vice manifests itself in various ways, like sexual harassment, rape, bad touches, and use of bad language on children, child marriages, and exposure of children to pornography and commercial sexual exploitation of children. The various government structures still remain ill prepared and ill equipped to contend with the challenges. Many child victims have dropped out of school, others have been deliberately sent into marriage while others have found a life on the streets. The justice system for such children still remains unresponsive, riddled with corruption and ill facilitation. If anything is a priority, prevention of CSA should be put on the agenda of decision makers at international level, regional and national level so that this vice is reduced; otherwise, this may have far reaching consequences on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals to health, literacy and poverty. The researcher forwarded the following major recommending remarks: Strengthen households economically so that they can meet the needs of their households. This should ensure that they are meeting the needs of their children both in and out of school. Strengthen the capacity of CBOs to increases ownership of the interventions activities and government to design programs to stem and mitigate the impact of child marriages and commercial sexual exploitation of children. There is need to identify positive norms, values and practices among traditional institutions and use them in the promotion of child protection Interventions against sexual abuse. Empower children to take informed decisions on their sexuality, right from childhood. Encourage sex education in homes and at schools so that children utilize all avenues for socialization to grow up to be assertive when CSA perpetrators advance them.

Keywords: Child, child abuse, child sexual abuse, vulnerability factors, family

1.1. Introduction
Smith (2002) defined the term "child sexual abuse" as "activities encompassing like exposing a child to verbal sexual advances, kissing children in a socially unacceptable manner, fondling or touching breasts, buttocks and genitals, exhibitionism, penetration of vagina or anus with sexual organs or with objects without the consent of the person."

Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) –adopted by the United Nations in 1989– exhorts States parties to take "all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child". Similarly, the United Nations International Committee on the Rights of the Child has emphasized the importance of member countries prohibiting all forms of physical punishment and degrading treatment of children (CRC, 2006).

Nevertheless, Child sexual abuse is becoming one of the tragic and sensitive global issues. It has been hidden in most parts of the world for several decades. Reports of cruel and humiliating punishment, genital mutilation of girls, neglect, sexual abuse, homicide, and other forms of violence against children have long been recorded, but the grave and urgent nature of this global problem has only recently been revealed. (A. Reza, J. A. Mercy and E. Krug, 2002, in UN General Assembly report, 2006).

Despite it is impossible to provide exact figures on the number of children worldwide who are victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, due to a lack of data at the national levels, different studies and estimates on the problem reveal the severity of the problem and its growing nature.

The nature of the crime constituting child sexual abuse is intertwined with the issue of victim secrecy. Research began exposing sexual abuse of children as a problem of sizable proportions in the late 1960s and early l970s (Watson, 1984) though sexual abuse is extensively undisclosed and underreported (Bagley, 1992; Courtois & Watts, 1982; Finkelhor & Browne, 1986; Slager-Jorne, 1978; Swanson & Biaggio, 1985; Tsai & Wagner, 1978, in Nancy Faulkner1997-2006).

However, estimates from the year 2000 by World Health Organization (WHO) suggest that, worldwide, 1.8 million children were involved in prostitution and pornography, and 1.2 million were victims of trafficking. Furthermore, it estimated that in 2002, "150 million girls and 73 million boys under 18 experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence" (Website: www.unicef.orgi).

Though the rate of sexual abuse reports is dramatically increasing, even today, it is the most misunderstood problem compared with other forms of abuse, poverty, diseases, drought, and other socioeconomic traumas (Finkehlor, 1984, in Alemayehu Haileye, *2007*). Indeed, it is difficult to imagine an area of inquiry that is more complex, more emotionally laden, more controversial, and misunderstood than is the area of child sexual abuse (ibid).

Certainly, childhood sexual abuse is a subject that has received much attention in recent years. Despite the lack of accurate and well organized worldwide statistics on the prevalence of child sexual abuse, there is a general agreement among counselors, forensic psychologists, social workers, law enforcement detectives, medical examiners and other child protection professionals that the problem is common and serious particularly in cities. For example, Small (1997) found that approximately 20% of females and 5% to 10% of males are sexually abused in childhood and adolescence. Currently, another worldwide sexual abuse statistics reported that 1 out of 3 women have experienced rape or sexual assault (Walkefield, 2006). Similarly; this report also indicated that 5 to 10 percent of men report a history of childhood sexual abuse. However, studies in the cases of alleged child sexual abuse were virtually non-existent until the last two or three decides (McBride, 1996).

Similarly, in Ethiopia the problem was even more neglected owing to the fact that it is an emotionally charged topic scrambling the basic social institution, including, the family. In spite of the fact that child sexual abuse has potentially severe and long-term effects on all aspects of a child's development, it is quite true that such kind of problems are considered as very minor and secondary especially in the third world countries like us where other numerous socio-economic problems are conspicuous. Hence, the true magnitude of sexual exploitation of children has yet clearly defined. Definitive statistics are difficult to find because child sexual abuse is a crime that believed to be grossly under-reported (Small, 1997).

Early identification of sexual abuse victims appears crucial to reduction of suffering, enhancement of psychological development, and for healthier adult functioning. Moreover, most scholars focused on dealing the consequence of sexual abuse after its occurrence. There are also mounting evidences and works that talk about the prevalence of the problem except their accuracy. Despite the attention that child sexual abuse has received in recent years, the victimization of children has not declined (Lutzker, 1998). Besides its multitude negative impact, Finkehlor (1994) argued that sexual abuse is becoming one of a phenomenon in human life that no civilization completely eradicates just like poverty, homelessness, and political operation.

From this, every rational thinker can easily understand the presence of complex, and challenging contributing factors for the occurrence and existence of the problem. The current researchers do not believe that dealing about the prevalence and/or its psychological and socio-economical impact brings a change for reducing or abolishing the problem. Instead, the present study focuses on the factors contributing to child sexual abuse, one of scarcely thought but vital aspect to solve the problem. As a result, little knowledge was found on the factors, and the problem-solving strategies failed to address the problem and the target groups. That is why this study is conducted to explore the causative factors for such abuse and the effect it brings on victims, their families and the society at large.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Child abuse constitutes a violation of the most basic rights of children and adolescents, which are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All persons under the age of 18 have the right to physical and psychological integrity and to protection from all forms of violence.

Nevertheless, a significant number of children suffer from the extreme poverty and malnutrition worldwide. According to report by UNICEF 2009, because of various social and cultural reasons, children and adolescents suffer violence in the home, at school, in legal and child protection systems, at work and in the community. Thus, children and adolescents are abused precisely in those spaces and places that should offer them protection, affection, developmental stimulation, shelter and promotion for their rights.

A meta study from the University of Barcelona by Pereda et al. (2009) analyzed 65 research studies across 22 countries to estimate an "overall international figure" for such abuse and found that an estimated 7.9% of men and 19.7% of women globally experienced sexual abuse prior to the age of 18 and in U.S.A; the rates were 7.5% for males and 25.3% for females. In addition, the highest prevalence rate of child sexual abuse geographically was found in Africa (34.4 %.) Europe showed the lowest prevalence rate (9.2%) while America and Asia had prevalence rates between 10.1% and 23.9%. South Africa has the highest prevalence rates for both men

(60.9%) and women (43.7%). Jordan also presents the second-highest prevalence rate for men (27%), followed by Tanzania (25%). Rates between 10% and 20% are reported for males in Israel (15.7%), Spain (13.4%), Australia (13%) and Costa Rica (12.8%), while the remaining countries all have prevalence rates below 10%. For women, seven countries reported prevalence rates above 20%: Australia (37.8%), Costa Rica (32.2%), Tanzania (31.0%), Israel (30.7%), Sweden (28.1%), the United States (25.3%) and Switzerland (24.2%).

In Ethiopian, millions are also victims of harmful traditional practices such as early marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), physical punishment, and labor exploitation (Zewdineh B., Haile, 2008).

A cross-sectional study conducted by Worku D, Gebremariam A, and Jayalakshmi S. (2005) in Jirren high school (in south west Ethiopia) by taking   a total of 323 female students of grade 9 indicated that the prevalence of CSA was 68.7%. The data also indicated that among the different forms of sexual abuses, verbal harassment was the most common (51.4%) followed by sexual intercourse, 18.0% and unwelcome kissing, 17.1%. Indeed, the study showed that the overwhelming majority (86.4%) considered sexual abuse to be a major social problem.

According to Save the Children Denmark, 2012 from the Amhara region, the second most populated region, with a population of over 20 million, many children arrive to the capital (Addis Ababa) knowing nobody, with (probably) no money and no contacts. "Enforced child marriages, abuse, and the prospects of ending their days in the grip of poverty are factors pushing Ethiopian girls as young as nine years of age, to risk their childhood and their lives in the city. And many factors push the girls away from the region, including poverty, peer pressure and abuse, child marriage being one of the most common explanations girls provide." Arranged marriages are widespread in the region, where young girls, children are forced to marry adult men, all too often this 'union' results in rape, abuse and violence, from which the innocent child is forced to flee, only into the clutches of exploitation, violence and abuse.

In Ethiopian where talking publicly about the issue, let alone conducting research, is considered as a taboo until recent years, the available handful studies primarily focused on dealing about child abuse in general and prevalence rates and its consequences in particular. For example, Gobena (1998) conducted the first comprehensive study about child sexual abuse, but great emphasis was given for the prevalence of the problem and he included only female respondents. Similarly, others like Tesfaye (2003) and Yohannes (2003) studied about the problem focusing on female students. There are also evidences of using large number of non-victims and very small number of victims of sexual abuses in their inquiry.

Though, it can be said that only few western researchers like Finkehlor (1984) and Small (1997) have researched about the dominant factors contributing to children sexual abuse, there is great inconsistency in results due to their differences in methodology and focus point of study. More specifically, in developing countries like Ethiopia, the problem has taken the attention of researchers and the government recently, hence, not well-understood.

Generally, there are few studies talking about sexual abuse; and most of them have been focused on the prevalence and its consequence. As a result, at present we have only rough hypothesis about the risk factors and very little evidence. That is why; the current study is done to examine the characteristics of the victims and the perpetrators, contributing factors that increase individuals' vulnerability to sexual abuse, and risk factors that motivate offenders to commit such crime.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective of the Study
The general objective of this study was to investigate the contributing factors for child sexual abuse in Bahirdar city and debremarkos town of Amhara Regional State.

1.3.2. Specific objectives of the Study
    1. Describing the socio-economic characteristics of the victims and offenders
    2. Exploring the causative factors of sexual abuse in Bahirdar city and Debremarkos town
    3. Find out the effects of child sexual abuse in the study areas.
    4. Identify policy gaps and make recommendations for advocacy and henceforth policy change.

1.4. Definition of Key Words
    ➢ Child abuse: - Exposing a child for activities /behaviors/ that is beyond their physical and psychosocial development.
    ➢ Child sexual abuse: In this study, child sexual abuse refers exposure of dependent and minor children to sexual activities to which they are unable to give informed consent through threat, force, violating the social taboos, and creating physical and psychosocial pain for personal sexual satisfaction or some other gain of the perpetrator.
    ➢ Contributing factors: - In this study, contributing factors, involve group of situations that increase the likelihood that a child will be exposed to sexual abuse and/or factors that increase the possibility of the offender to cause harm on the child. They have been observed from the following two complementary concepts.
    ➢ Vulnerability factors: - refers to situations that increase the likelihood that a child will be exposed to sexual abuse or is victimized.
    ➢ Risk factors: - denote factors that raise the likelihood that an adolescent or an adult will cause harm on a child.
    ➢ Child protection: To refer to systems and structures that prevent and respond to violence, exploitation and abuse against children – including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labor and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage (Oak Foundation, 2010).

➢   Family: A group consisting of one or more parents, their offspring and close relations. This group provides a setting for social and economic security, transmission of values, protection and affection for its members. This group is related by blood, is inter-generational and may not leave in the same place.

➢   Child: Every human being below the age of 18

2. Methodology

2.1. Conceptual Framework

The study adopted a cross-sectional study methodology, triangulating both qualitative and quantitative methods. This study was designed on the understanding that meaning, interpretations and perceptions Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) varies from one community to another and changes over time and has its roots in the socio-cultural, political and social organization of the communities. It is highly subjective and better understood from the contexts and perspective of the vulnerable groups and the community at large, who experience and live with it. In addition, using this method, the researcher was in position to make statistical inferences to larger populations and allow them to generalize findings and hence increase the external validity of the study. It also made it possible to collect data on many variables, from a large number of subjects and from dispersed subjects. Finally, the method enabled the study to focus on generating detailed information on the causes, effects as well as policy gaps and recommendations for curbing child sexual abuse in Bahirdar city and Debremarkos town.

2.2. Study Area and Population

The study area constituted Bahirdar city and Debremarkos town of Amhara regional state, Ethiopia. Based on the 2007 Census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), the Amhara Region has a population of 17,214,056 of whom 8,636,875 are men and 8,577,181 women.

Bahirdar is the capital city of Amhara Regional state and located 563km, Northwest of Addis Ababa. According to national census conducted by Central Statistics Authority (CSA) in 2007, it has a total population of 221,991 of whom 108,456 are males and 113, 535 are females. Bahirdar is one of the leading tourist destinations in Ethiopia, with a variety of attractions in the nearby Lake Tana and Blue Nile river. The city is known for its wide avenues lined with palm trees and a variety of colorful flowers.

Debre Markos (also previously called Mankorar) is a town in east-central Ethiopia. Located in the Misraq Gojjam Zone of the Amhara region. The city is named Debre Markos after its principal church, which was constructed in 1869 and dedicated to St. Mark. Based on the 2007 national census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), this town has a total population of 62,497, of whom 29,921 are men and 32,576 women. The majority of the inhabitants practiced Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, with 97.03% reporting that as their religion, while 1.7% of the population said they were Muslim and 1.1% were Protestants.

According to Baseline study of sexual abuse and exploitation of children in Bahirdar city (2005) by Forum on Street Children-Ethiopia (FSCE), Children under difficult circumstances in the city were estimated to be 4,773 with an approximately even proportion of male and female children (2442 female and 2331 male).

There were in total 1,371 street children (34.4% female and 65.6% male). Children on the street accounted 306 of these children (18 female and 288 male). Off the street children, on the other hand, constitute 1,065 of these children (454 female and 611 male).

In addition to street children, sexually abused and exploited children, orphan and unaccompanied children, abandoned children, child prostitutes were reported to be found in the town in large numbers. The factors taken as contributing to commercial sexual exploitation of children include poverty, peer group influence, parent's death, child trafficking, dispute with parents, and class repetition or dismissal from school (BoLSA Amhara National regional state, 2002/3).

The study population comprised total of 180 respondents which included children, parents, and community members as the primary respondents. Other respondents included duty bearers charged with provision of services to abused and vulnerable children namely: Children and youth Office, Police Officers, Health professionals, as well as Managers and experts in NGOs(Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment (FSCE) previously named as Forum on Street Children-Ethiopia, bahirdar area project and Organization for the prevention, Rehabilitation and Integration of Female Street Children (OPRIFS) which are operating in bahirdar city and Facilitator for change in debremarkos district and CBOs involved in child protection activities (medhanyalem Idiar working in debremarkos town).

2.3. Data Collection Methods

The study collected both qualitative and quantitative data through a number of methods including review of literature, household interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

2.3.1. Household Interviews

Household interviews targeted the wider community who were selected using random methods, were conducted by the use of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered by research assistants through personal interview method. The data enumerators were supervised thoroughly to ensure validity and reliability of the data collected.

2.3.2. Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGD) were a key method of data collection for this research project. FGDs were mainly held with children in both study areas and FGD participants were purposively selected. The FGDs provided feedback on the most prevalent forms, nature, causes and effects of child sexual abuse in the study area.

2.3.3. Key Informant Interviews

Key informant Interviews using an unstructured interview guide were held with duty bearers and service providers involved in child protection activities. Key informants were purposively selected, based on their roles. A semi-structured interview guide that allows for in-depth interviews was used to cover for the most prevalent forms, nature, causes and effects of child sexual abuse in the study area.

2.3.4. Review of Literature

Both available official and grey literature on the magnitude, causes, effects and policy recommendations on child sexual abuse was reviewed and excerpts extracted to feed into primary data from the survey and non-survey methods of data collection. The study relied on secondary data, on reported cases of child sexual abuse, which was obtained from records of both government agencies and NGOs so as to obtain data on the nature of child sexual abuse (socio-economic characteristics of the victims and offenders, causative factors of sexual abuse and its effect.)

2.4. Data Collection Tools

As already alluded to above, the data collection tools were designed and deployed. The design of the questionnaire considered the content of individual questions, simplicity, sequencing, layout and reproduction. Focus group discussion guide for children were also developed. The other tool that was used for the study is the in-depth interview guide for experts', service providers and duty bearers working in governmental and nongovernmental organizations in both study areas.

2.5. Data Analysis

2.5.1. Quantitative Data

Data analysis involved reducing accumulated data to manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns, and applying statistical analysis techniques. Data was categorized, ordered, manipulated and summarized to obtain answers to the objectives. The process involved data preparation and undertaking statistical analysis.

Data processing included cleaning and organizing data for analysis. This included receiving of the questionnaires, editing the information contained in these research instruments and coding. Editing, both at the field and at the office was carried out at the end of each day, to detect errors and omissions, and to correct them when possible. This guaranteed data accuracy, consistency, uniformity, completeness, and orderliness. Coding allowed data entry into a computer to enable manipulation for statistical analysis. A computer based data structure using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was developed. Data was transformed into the SPSS computer based software through the keyboard interface. The computer based data was then manipulated using SPSS software to produce descriptive statistics. Analyzed data was interpreted in line with study objectives, and conclusions drawn.

2.5.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

Focus groups and key informant interviews were moderated by the researcher, in line with note taking. Tape recorded data was transcribed to form texts for each interview. Analyses proceeded simultaneously with data collection by comparing data from one interview with that from another.

2.6. Ethical Consideration

This research put research ethical standards at the center. The research assistants and all the research team members were fully aware of the fact that research ethics are part and parcel of research and anything that compromises adherence to ethical standards equally compromises the validity of the findings. The researchers first seek an informed consent from the respondents prior to the interviews. They assured them of confidentiality of their responses and that information has not been used for anything else other than the study purpose; the interviews took place in socially approved settings and were conducted in consideration and honor of the community values and norms. In the reporting of findings, individual identifications have been removed to respect the need for anonymity and guarantee confidentiality in reporting responses; only second names have been used.

3. Presentation of Findings, Interpretation, Discussions and Conclusions

Under this chapter, primary and secondary sources of information were used. These include data from the household survey with selected community members and abused children found in different organizations, KII, FGDs and statistics from Police and NGOs working in both study areas. Information from household survey shows the perspectives of adults separate from those of children on the situation of CSA in the study areas. Generally, the information triangulated shows the nature, extent, causes, effects and policy recommendations for curbing CSA in Bahirdar city and Debremarkos town.

3.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Community Members Involved in the Study

In order to gain an insight into what constitute the socio-economic features of the respondents in both study areas, the following variables: respondents' age, marital status, number of children respondent has, status of living with children, if the respondent has children. The following were the findings: -

3.1.1. Respondents' area
The survey reached 72(60%) of the community participants from Bahirdar city and 48(40%) from Debremarkos town. This was inconsideration of population spread and urban nature of the study areas where Bahirdar is a seat for the region's government and the capital city of the Amhara regional state. Currently, it is one of the fast-growing cities in Ethiopia and hosting large number of inhabitants.

3.1.2. Respondents' age
Most (38.3%) of the adult respondents were aged between 40 years and above, followed by the age group 33-39 (31.6%), 26-32 who constituted 20% and the age group, 18-25 who comprised 10%. The data shows more than half of the participants in this survey are adults whose age is on average to form family and to have children in Ethiopian context.
 Table one below shows the age of adult respondents who participated in this survey.

Age Groups	Frequency	Percent
18-25	12	10
26-32	24	20
33-39	38	31.6
40 and above	46	38.3
Total	120	100

Table 1

3.1.3. Marital Status
The survey reached 64.16% people who were married and 19.16% single, 9.6 divorced and 7.5 widowed adult community members. Table 2 below explains this further.

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	77	64.16
Single	23	19.16
Divorced	11	9.16
Widowed	9	7.5
Other	-	-
Total	120	100

Table 2

3.1.4. Respondents with Children
From the survey findings, 90% of the respondents have children while 10% do not have children; this data is more suitable to understand how parents treat their children and helps to evaluate their level of understanding and practice about CSA. Table 3 below substantiates this.

Status	Frequency	Percent
Yes	108	90
No	12	10
Total	120	100

Table 3

3.1.5. Respondent's Number of Children
Majority (50.6%) of the respondents had 1-2 children, followed by 27.3% with 3-4 children while 11.5% and 10.7% had 5-6 and 7-above children respectively. This could be attributed to the age ranges of the persons interviewed who were mainly below 25 years and are expected to have small family sizes. The table below explains this at length.
Table 4 showing the number of children per adult respondent
Majority (37.96%) of the respondents had 1-2 children, followed by 30.55% with 3-4 children while 20.37% and 11.11% had 5-6 and 7-above children respectively. This could be attributed to limiting number of children and small family sizes in the major urban areas. The table below explains this at length.

Number of children	Frequency	Percent
1-2	41	37.96
3-4	33	30.55
5-6	22	20.37
7 and above	12	11.11
Total	108	100

Table 4

3.2. Nature and Magnitude of Child Sexual Abuse

This study sought to understand the nature and magnitude of child sexual abuse in the two study areas. Data on nature and magnitude was obtained mainly from records of police office, NGOs working on child sexual abuse and rehabilitation centers and through key Informant Interviews and survey instrument in the study area.

3.2.1. Commonality of CSA

Majority of the adult survey respondents (95%) indicated that cases of child sexual abuse are common in both study areas, while 5% thought that they are not. In a sum, CSA is very common in Bahirdar city and Debremarkos town. Table 8 below sheds more light to this.

Common	Frequency	Percent
Yes	114	95
No	6	5
Total	120	100

Table 5: the commonality of CSA

3.2.2. Groups of Children at Risk of Sexual Abuse

Majority of the respondents (81.66%) indicated that girls are the most vulnerable to child sexual abuse as compared to boys (18.33%). It was found out that they are mostly girls who are exposed to defilement, bad touches, sexually suggesting language, and exposure to genitals, commercial sexy work and pornography.

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Girls	98	81.66
Boys	22	18.33
Total	120	100

Table 6: Groups most at risk

3.2.3. Age Categories Most at Risk

It was found out that vulnerability to sexual abuse increases with the age of a child. In fact, they are mainly children between 16-17 years who are at most risk of sexual abuse followed by those between 12-15 years, then 6-11 years, 1-5 years and those below one year. Table 7 explains this.

Age group	Frequency	Percent
Below 1 year	-	-
1-5	4	3.33
6-11	11	9.16
12-15	31	25.83
16-17	72	60
Above 17	2	1.66
Total	120	100

Table 7

3.2.4. Most Child Abusers

Majority of the children, it was found out, are sexually abused by neighbors, followed by parents, teachers, step mothers, house helps, step fathers, uncles, mothers and aunties. Neighbors, take advantage of often busy parents to defile their neighbors‟ daughters. Some parents, especially fathers defile their own daughters while the mothers use a bad language on them.

Teachers, defile girls, often promising them better grades, and sometimes a good life when they „marry‟ in future. Unfortunately, the victims never marry the teachers. Step mothers use sexually intimidating language on their step children while step fathers defile their step daughters, citing loose kinship ties as a reason. House helps, defile boys while parents are busy with work while uncles and aunties use a sexual language on children, expose these children to pornography and sometimes fondle them. Table 8 explains this further.

Category	Frequency	Percent
Father	36	30
Uncles	10	8.33
Aunts	2	1.66
Mother	1	0.83
Stepmother	11	9.16
Stepfather	12	10
Neighbor	44	36.66

Teachers	1	0.83
House helps	3	2.5
Total	120	100

Table 8

Other perpetrators named include Bajaj drivers, petty business owners such as video hall owners, government workers and religious leaders.

3.2.5. Annual Occurrence of CSA

From the survey, 63.33% of the respondents admitted that sexual abuse occurs sometimes, while 20% said that it occurs so many times in a year, and 13.33% said that it has not occurred recently but it occurs. Only 3.33% said that it never occurs in a year. On a whole as shown in table 9 below, child sexual abuse occurs many times in a year in both study areas.

Status	Frequency	Percent
Many times	24	20
Sometimes	76	63.33
Never	4	3.33
Not recently but this has happened	16	13.33
Total	120	100

Table 9

3.2.6. Areas CSA Occur Mostly

The study found out that CSA occurs most in homes, followed by markets and then hotels, bars, road sides and school areas. Table 10 shows this in details.

Place	Frequency	Percent
Homes	72	60
School	5	4.16
Markets	12	10
Roadsides	8	6.66
Other areas (hotels, bars, pensions'…..)	23	19.16
Total	120	100

Table 10

3.3. Reporting Status of CSA

The survey found out that 60.83% of CSA cases that occur end up in communities and are not reported to the authorities. Reasons given include feeling of shame to disclose sexual abuses, fear of breaking kinship ties, lack of awareness on some forms of sexual abuse and feeling as if they are normal relations, long distances to the Police Station, and length procedures in the justice system which sometimes do not yield fruit, corruption. Table 11 explains this further.

Status	Frequency	Percent
Yes	47	39.16
No	73	60.83
Total	120	100

Table 11

3.4. Survey Data from Abused Children

For the purpose of identifying the demographic variables of victim children, the situation of the sexual abuse as well as consequences, it was necessary to collect data from selected samples of victim children. And this was done in two NGOs namely Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment (FSCE) previously named as Forum on Street Children-Ethiopia and Organization for Protection and Rehabilitation of Female Street Children (OPRFS) which were working on psycho-social interventions including medical, psychological, educational and financial supports in the city of Bahirdar.

During the time of data collection in the organizations, a total population of 84 sexually abused children (82 girls and 4 boys) were getting counseling and rehabilitation services. Out of the 84 sexually abused children, 67 (4 boys and 63 girls) were getting the service from FSCE and the remaining 17 (all girls) from OPRIFS. Even though the age of beneficiary children ranged from preschoolers to 18 years old, children between the ages of 11 – 18 years and those who took the service for one year and more were selected for the study. The rationale behind selecting this group of samples was that they are believed to give adequate information than children of early and middle childhood period. Thus, total samples of 32 respondents were taken from the two organizations.

3.4.1. Sex Category

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	-	-
Female	32	100
Total	32	100

Table 12: Socio – Demographic Information of Respondents

The data presented in table 1 reveals that all participants (32 client children) are female children. Where it is easily possible to understand, girls are mostly victims of CSA cases than boys.

3.4.2. Age Category

Age category	Frequency	Percent
11-14	12	37.5
15-18	20	62.5
Total	32	100

Table 13

The subjects' age ranged from 11 to 18 years. Those who are between 11 and 14 constitute 37.5% of the total samples and the remaining 62.5% of them are between 15 and 18 years of age.

3.4.3. Level of Education

Level of education	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate (no class attended)	1	3.12
1-5	8	25
5-8	19	59.37
Above 8	4	12.5
Total	32	100

Table 14

With respect to educational profile of respondents, 59.37% of them are in elementary and junior secondary school levels while the remaining 25% are from grade one to five where this indicates that since the focus of the study was on children majority their grade level is up to grade eight.

3.4. Findings from FGDs, KIIs and In-depth interviews (qualitative information) Child Sexual Abuse Cases According to
Children and youth office, Police Officers, Health professionals, as well as Managers in Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) involved in child protection activities.
According to Debremarkos town and Bahirdar city Police office, For the past 18 months, Police in both study areas have received and handled a total of 248 CSA cases, 98 from Debremarkos and the reaming from the city of Bahirdar. An interview held with police officers working in child protection units in both study cites revealed that the figure above doesn't show the real occurrence of child sexual abuse cases where most offenses are handled either in the community, with in the family or they may be kept secret on the hand of the offender and the victim. The willingness of an abused child to report such abuse to the authorities is very important because it provides the first accounts against which investigations begin and services are determined depending on the form of abuse. But in most cases some girls do not report CSA cases to authorities because they fear to be victimized in the community. Girls feel ashamed of the mockery associated with reporting. Reporting cases of defilement brings shame not only to the girl but also to her family. The child gets ashamed and stigmatized in the community and may not even marry. In order to evade shame, parents find it easy to negotiate and settle cases outside the legal system.

3.5. Causes of Child Sexual Abuse
This study identified a number of factors responsible for and or contributed to the vice of Child sexual abuse in the study areas. These factors operated at three levels (individual, family and community level) and all the three level factors work jointly to undermine the welfare of a child. These are illuminated in the following paragraphs:

3.5.1. Lack of Awareness of Some Forms of Sexual Abuse
Many people are unaware of other forms of sexual abuse other than making sexual intercourse with children. Some regard commercial sex work as normal means of survival for especially orphans while other regard child marriages arranged by families in high esteem as being a channel for starting a family so that the, daughters"don't get spoilt when they grow and lack a man to marry them. Others are unaware that fondling is bad and may result into series sexual offenses. During FGDs with girls at OPRFS Bahirdar area project, it was revealed that some girls perceived themselves to be mature enough for sexual intercourse, while many others perceived sexual relations as an easier way of getting money compared to other forms of work. These perceptions expose particularly girls from

impoverished families to sexual exploitation. In one of the group discussions also revealed that sexual relations among children is perceived to be normal. One voice reported that children engage in regular sexual relations with their age mates; sometimes girls are forced while in others they enter into such relations with knowledge. However, it was only in instances where a girl was forced into sexual relations that it was considered abnormal and therefore a case to report.

Children also perceive that it is beneficial for a child to engage into sexual relations when still young. In Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment (FSCE) Bahirdar district, girls in an FGD reported that having sexual relations before 18 years reduces the pain a person has during sexual relations. For us they told us that if you do, those things" (sexual relations) when you are still young, you can benefit when you grow up (laughter). They say that if I don't do them before 18 years that I will get a lot of pain if I do them when I grow (laugher).

From the perspectives of social workers (working in east Gojjam zone youth and children office) however, children have become disrespectful of their parents' advice, especially children coming from urban background. Because of their recognition of rights, parents are not enforcing discipline; many parents felt sidelined from the child care and rearing process because of the fear that enforcing rules on children would result into their arrest. One Iddar leader of Debremarkos madehnyalem said, you find girls with men on the road. You cannot do anything about her; some parents are even taken to police because of disciplining their children. So, what can you do? Some girls instead of knowing that they are in problems, they tell you about how you are abusing their rights; others even threaten to commit suicide. Misconception of rights and the lack of adequate knowledge about CSA breed this practice unconsciously.

3.5.2. Children's Lifestyle

In terms of lifestyle, many children take pride in simple things like hair dressing, clothing and admirations of modern items that many children in external environment live. This is particularly the case with girl children coming from urban areas. Unfortunately, many of their parents are unable to guarantee to them these needs. Many girls are lured and trapped into sexual activities, because of their desires for things beyond the ability and willingness of their parents and relatives to support. Many girls are not only victims but also willing and actively involved in such highly risky-behavior.

According to one expert/ psychologist working in facilitator for change, working in Debremarkos district some children engage in prostitution in order to obtain their needs. Many young boys and girls also spend time laboring in business activities around market centers and bus station areas.

Children's lifestyle is in most cases is influenced by peers. Yet family environment within which children live does not offer enough opportunities for the girls and boys to receive necessary support. Furthermore, children's desires are also influenced by the social expectations for their identities. In both study areas, findings reveal that a girl is expected to be smart. Whereas there are differences, generally the findings revealed attributes such as good clothing, shoes, cosmetics, and hair style" as some of the defining features of a decent adolescent girl. Unfortunately, many parents are either unwilling or unable to support their daughters with such needs. As a result, girls often find alternative avenues for getting these desired items in order to fit in the community. In addition, some boys also engage in drug abuse which exposes them to the risk of committing sexual offenses against other children.

Findings also revealed that some of the children are forced to go and work in risky places where they are sexually induced. This was particularly the case with Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC). Such children work in bars, restaurants in the community; engage in prostitution works and house servants in which they are paid little money for survival. Unfortunately, these places expose girls to further sexual exploitation by the clients and bosses they work for. Many OVC who are less care for sometimes end-up in working as housemaids in towns and this exposes them more to CSA from their employers.

3.5.3. Orphanhood and Vulnerability of Children

Orphanhood of children is a serious driver that exposes them for CSA. Many children who are orphans receive little protection from those who care them. They lack school fees and some hardly even find shelter for their accommodation. Data from the study reveals that such children are employed as house girls and or are children from families where the ability of parents to protect and provide them with the basic resources is limited by condition and will. The findings reveal cases where children employed as house girls are sexually exploited.

The practice of employing house servant is a culture of most urban households and elites who spend most of the time away from home. Housemaids are usually employed to work for a limited time frame and they are expected to leave. Most are coming from the rural poor family background. Their incomes are minimal; their time of work is exceptionally big as compared to other work. Using children as housemaids also constitute to child labor abuse. Ethiopia is also a signatory to the international convention on the rights of a child. Therefore, the continued practice of involving children to work as housemaids is testimony of the fact that the Government of Ethiopia still has a lot to do in order to guarantee children's protection.

Some of orphans have lost parents to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. HIV/AIDS changes the family structure, robbing children of the productive members, putting children in situations of overwhelming responsibility of looking after siblings, and this is further complicated by the fact their kin and kith often take advantage of the limited resources left for them.

3.5.5. Poor Parenting

Parenting of children in urban Ethiopia today has undergone several challenges. This study illustrates these challenges from the perspectives of both children and experts working in the area. Children lack parental love and moral guidance because the parents come back when they are drunk or they may not consider it as their responsibility as a parent while the mothers cannot fill in these gaps completely. In urban centers, parents spend most of the time at work; they wake up very early and come back very late after

work. Children spend most of their time at home without any guidance. In terms of resources, findings indicated that many parents spend available resources on meeting personal needs as demanded by their lifestyle while focusing less on providing children with the basic needs. In terms of resources, many children are denied support of key resources they need for a health living deliberately or out of need.

In absence of support from parents, children in some places find for themselves even in the presence of their parents. In rural parts of Ethiopia, A child walks about seven kilometers away from home to fetch and sell firewood, water to buy exercise books and pens. In this process, they are cheated and sometimes lured in child sexual abuse by the people who take advantage of their situation. As a result of these factors many children particularly girls are forced to resort to sexual relations in order to meet their needs. Many girls are abused in the context of limited support from parents and such girls have also become mothers to other children delivered in the same context. As a result, many children run to streets where they stay hence children cannot be guaranteed protection against CSA once they are on streets.

KII held with psychologist working in facilitator for change, Debremarkos explains that: In terms of skills, many parents have limited competencies in handling challenges children face in their life. They rebuke and beat children rather than counseling them. Both the mothers and father have little skills in parenting. Many children are mistreated by their step mothers; they deny them education while they load them with work, at a time when they are expected to be in school. When a girl finds conditions at home hard to live in, she decides to go for marriage before she reaches the age for marriage. Children are unruly because of lack of guidance. Children currently are driven by anything they see interesting and only realize they are in trouble when they either get pregnant or are infected with HIV/AIDS. Lack of parental guidance makes it hard for children to cope with the challenges they face. Children-parent relationship is very important in ensuring prevention and protection of children against sexual harassment and abuse**.** Findings from this study reveal that there are various gaps in parenting. In line with the above idea an in-depth interview held with social worker reveled this: the family structure has greatly changed in many communities from extended to nuclear; this has reduced the role of informal/traditional structures such as aunties and uncles in providing particularly information relating to sexuality to children. Single parenthood has also increased. Children do not find adequate guidance from both the father and the mother. Child care has now turned into a private issue for the family not the community. These days a child is not for the community but, my child".

3.5.6. Limited Regulation of Public Places

Communities have public facilities like bars, chat and shesha houses and video halls which operate with little regulation. Such places without borders are used as centers where perpetrator hide and defile girls. Parents often try to warn children and their parents not to allow entry of children in such public video centers and night bars but children still sneak from their parents and go for them. Sometimes, even parents fail to realize the importance of restricting children from such places. Enforcement of the law against CSA in many communities of Ethiopia is compromised by the failure of such lodging facilities/night bars to guarantee that persons under 18 years do not use them or are not used for sexual relations in such facilities; instead they are driven by the demand for money, which the users of such facilities pay. Where arrests are made in such places, it is always after network communications by the concerned local people. In addition, there are also bars and restaurants where children serve and are sexually aroused. Many girls working in bars and those hired to do prostitution come from highly vulnerable families in rural settings; where bar owners get them from.

3.5.7. Negative Influence of Media

The media can inform, educate, entertain, and influence the viewers and listeners regarding their perception towards children, law enforcement agencies and the procedure for seeking justice. Media also have roles to raise awareness of children's rights and responsibilities, ensure children's rights are promoted and protected, report on failures and neglect. Unfortunately, electronic media pose threats to protection of children against sexual abuse. Some children watch programmes on TVs that influence them to bad conduct inform of dressing among others. Watching TV shows require some level of parental guidance. Unfortunately, parents are never there always to guide children to be selective while watching video/ TV programmes. In addition, discussions revealed that many places like cinema halls and video show centers are a serious center of attraction for children in the community, but without adequate control over what is shown to children.

3.5.8. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a serious factor in family stability. It creates communication gap between parents, sending fear among family members and compromises the ability of both parents to provide for children. In this study, CSA was directly linked to domestic violence. According to police offer working in east Gojam zone, Debremarkos: Domestic violence is a common practice in the community and many children who are neglected are also victims of domestic violence. Due to unequal power relations, fights and quarrels among parents result in denial of paternity to their children. Continuous fighting in families has been reported to be greatly contributing to domestic violence leading to separation and divorce in families. Unfortunately, in cases where parents separate, children are left to become vulnerable to abuse; they are not considered adequately once this takes effect. Although, there are instances where some mothers, abandon children to their fathers, (even as young as about 3 -4 weeks), in most cases, fathers abandon their child rearing roles to the mothers in situations of domestic violence. Once this happens, children are left with mothers without any income for their maintenance. Domestic violence where the parents separate or divorce, children are left to stay with their father; who many times leaves children with housemaids and houseboys. Children in such situations are vulnerable to sexual exploitation by fathers, housemaids and neighbors. Some men in the community force their daughters into having sexual relations with them. The study

further found out that sometimes even drunkard fathers, lose senses and just engage their daughters in sexual intercourse. Unfortunately, because of the parent-child relations, very few girls in such circumstances ever ask or complain.

3.5.9. Family Neglect

Family neglect entails many forms; from denial of scholastic materials, to care at home which mainly affects children. Many children are denied food, education and shelter by their parents. Denial of basic needs like clothing, sanitary pads and food at school makes children vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Some children are neglected by their parents because they did something against what the parents wanted. Many girls who were denied basic needs resorted to befriend boys and men in villages who supported them and in return, girls offered sexual relations. In addition, many girls who get pregnant were neglected by both their parents and the perpetrators who made them pregnant. Parents sometimes chase their daughters away from home once they are impregnated. As a result, such girls end-up in marriage when they are not ready. Girls are both psychologically tortured by the experiences through which they got pregnant while at the same time they get isolated at home.

Many such girls are forced to resort to other forms of behaviors in order to survive. Others opt to leave their homes in order to start their own lives while others also look for work. Many such girls worked as maids in towns and waitresses in restaurants. Children working in such conditions are not only economically exploited but also carry other risks. They are lured into sex by their employers because of their vulnerability. For those working at home, similar problems are met; house-girls often get in conflict with husbands to the women over sexual relations. In public places, children are abused, sexually lured, while others shun them because they are dirty. In bars, customers sexually arouse them as they promise them little money for their survival and bigger things they never receive. These contexts also predispose young girls to the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. One voice in an FGD with children said held in bahirdar,

Most parents here are not well-off; their ability to provide for basic needs is limited. So, if a girl meets a boy who is willing to provide-she simply accepts and the relationship starts that eventually leads to pregnancy. But now if a parent that produced you abuses you, for instance when you ask for help (sanitary pads) during your periods (menstrual periods), you are abused; why not go to the boy-friend willing to provide?). Lack of basic needs therefore drive children to CSA.

3.5.10. Poverty

This stands out as one of the major push factors contributing to child sexual abuse in the study areas. The prevailing poverty situation has made many households unable to meet their basic needs. As a result, children, especially, the girl child is thus extremely vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation. In order for children to meet their basic needs, many opt to engage in commercial sex or give in to sexual advances in return for favors and gifts.

3.5.11. Urbanization

Urbanization has come with construction, industrialization and other services which have made children prone to sexual abuse. Children frequently migrating from the rural part to the urban area are in search of job, education and better life in the urban areas. With the growth of business in the urban areas, many people have come from far and wide to seek employment. Many of those that are employed in the factories, hotels/bars and house servants in private households are at a great risk to be sexually abused. In support of the above argument one social worker from OPRFS indicates that most children abused in the city of Bahirdar are coming from different areas, especially they immigrate from the rural part and from small town to the city where they are new to life that they are starting which makes them at a risk of sexual exploitation.

3.5.12. Chronically Sick Parents/ Disabled Parents

Some of the respondents in focus group discussion highlighted that the presence of an either chronically ill parent or disabled parent was also pushing children to commercial sex. It was revealed that households in this condition are in most cases unable to meet their needs, and children are then forced to find for themselves and their siblings: the finding of focus group discussion with abused children indicates:

"I used to live with my aunt until I reached 6 when my aunt passed away. I returned to my mum who was unable to send me to school. I started working as a house servant and later as a bar maid at the age of 15 years. Slowly I got lured into commercial sex to earn some extra money because my mother was sick and bed ridden, yet my brothers and sisters needed to eat".

3.6. Barriers to Reporting Cases of Child Sexual Abuse

The findings from the study indicated that majority of the cases are not reported to the relevant authorities. The extent to which cases are reported reflect awareness and recognition that CSA is a crime and an abuse that needs to be deterred in the community. Incommunities, there are a number of centers from which child protection authorities where cases can be reported. Informal protection centers such as parents, peers, and teachers, guardians, which then are expected to link survivors of CSA to the formal centers, the police and other concerned authorities. Through the interviews conducted with police, project officers working in NGOs and with some abused children the study identified some of the key barriers to reporting cases of child sexual abuse in the study areas. These factors operate at four levels (at individual, family, community and institutional level).

3.6.1. Fear of Shame

The willingness of an abused child to report such abuse to the authorities is very important because it provides the first accounts against which investigations begin and services are determined depending on the form of abuse. According to the findings, some girls do not report CSA cases to authorities because they fear to be victimized in the community. Girls feel ashamed of the mockery associated with reporting.

Findings also reveal that reporting cases of defilement brings shame not only to the girl but also to her family. The child gets ashamed and stigmatized in the community and may not even marry. In order to evade shame, parents find it easy to negotiate and settle cases outside the legal system. According to formative dialogues, children get involved in sexual relations so early and parents get fed-up with them; when they are married off, it is an opportunity for them. A girl in many families is the center of respect for a family and once she is defiled, the entire family gets ashamed and loses respect. Therefore, fear of shame and being embarrassed become tools of vulnerability for a survivor. As a result of fear of shame, there is Concealment of information relating to defilement.

3.6.2. Negotiation of Cases

Many responses from the police in both study cites indicate that the practice of settlement of case outside the law compromise on the prospects for reporting cases of defilement. Many cases of defilement are settled within the community through negotiations. Defilement of a girl is used as an avenue of getting money. Once a child is defiled, parents from both families sit and negotiate on terms of composition of the girls 'family. Sometimes the negotiations are done by parents while in some instances they are done by the boys who perpetrator defilement. Usually the victims are hardly consulted or engaged in such negotiations.

3.7. Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse

The findings from the study indicate that child sexual abuse has negative effects on the child, the community and the country as a whole. The consequences can be summarized as follows;

3.7.1 High School Dropout Rate

It was revealed that very many children, most especially the girl child is dropping out of school at a high rate in both study areas. This is mainly attributed to increased cases of early pregnancies due to unwanted sexual intercourse. This is therefore affecting the children's chances of obtaining an education.

3.7.2. Offensive Treatment by Abusers

It was revealed that children especially those engaged in commercial sex work suffer inhuman and derogatory treatment by their abusers. Many of them are beaten, abused or forced to do terrible things against their will. One of the respondents formerly engaged in commercial sex work stated that *"it's very bad sometimes, some men take you, rape you while beating you, some force you to have anal sex and after they insult you and chase you without paying you anything"*(*In*-depth interview with child found in OPRFS).

3.7.3. Contraction of HIV/AIDS and STIs

Child sexual abuse exposes children to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. This is most common especially for children engaging in commercial sex, who have little control of the use of protection by their abusers.

3.7.4. Increased Number of Street Children

The study revealed that there has been a steady increase in the number of street children in both areas. Although, this is attributed to various factors, respondents equally identified child sexual abuse as contributing to this problem. Given that many of the young mothers are unable to look after their children, many of the children opt for the street as they are left to find for themselves. This only further exposes them to further abuse.

3.7.5. Physical Complications

According to one health officer working in government hospital, Bahirdar city: It was revealed that many of the children who are sexually abused face a number of physical challenges. These include;
  * Body - tears especially around the vagina, penis or anus resulting into bleeding and pus
  *Loss of control over urine
  *Abdominal pain
  *Difficulty in movement i.e. walking with legs far apart due to pain.
  *Bareness in a situation where the uterus is removed
  *Pregnancy, usually leading to unwanted abortions and consequently, death.

3.7.6. Psychological; these also have devastating impact [negative] on the life of the victim/survivor. These impact directly on their brain and therefore dictate their behavior. These effects can be realized in both the short and long terms and they include: (as stated in the time of interview with psychologist working in OPRFS).
  *Mistrust for people especially those of the same sex as the perpetrator
  *Withdrawal from social events and continuous desire to be alone
  *Frequent or no bathing/washing at all

*Poor eating habits that is, desire to eat frequently or complete loss of appetite
*Poor Concentration and forgetfulness
*Extreme fear on seeing a member of the same sex as the offender i.e. Trauma. This might be manifested in a shiver or a shaky voice.
*Difficulty in relating and maintaining relationships with others especially with members of the same sex as the offender.
*Regressive behavior such as bed-wetting habits
*Clinging tendencies
*Sleep disturbances e.g. experience nightmares
*Aggressiveness for no justifiable reason
*Frequent emotional outbursts e.g. crying, quarrelling for no good reason.
*Sexualized behavior where a child starts looking for someone to have sex with and might begin dressing seductively.
*Self – hatred
*Severe Depression
*Suicidal attempts
*Mental illnesses

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusion
Child sexual abuse is a current challenge to the protection of children in Ethiopia in general and study areas in particular, mostly affecting girls. The vice manifests itself in various ways, like sexual harassment, rape, bad touches, and use of bad language on children, child marriages, and exposure of children to pornography and commercial sexual exploitation of children. The various government structures still remain ill prepared and ill equipped to contend with the challenges. Many child victims have dropped out of school, others have been deliberately sent into marriage while others have found a life on the streets. The justice system for such children still remains un responsive, riddled with corruption and ill facilitation. If anything is a priority, prevention of CSA should be put on the agenda of decision makers at international level, regional and national level so that this vice is reduced; otherwise, this may have far reaching consequences on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals to health, literacy and poverty.

4.2. Recommendations
Keeping children healthy in all spheres (socially, psychologically, physically and economically) is not only the task of a single or certain institutions where it needs collaborative effort of all duty bearers. Based on the findings of this study the following points are recommended to all concerned structures of the society.

1. Strengthening of Community-Based Structures for Child Protection.
2. Strengthen households economically so that they can meet the needs of their households. This should ensure that they are meeting the needs of their children both in and out of school.
3. Strengthen the capacity of CBOs to increases ownership of the interventions activities and government to design programs to stem and mitigate the impact of child marriages and commercial sexual exploitation of children.
4. There is also need to design guidelines to parenting of particularly adolescents and empower parents with skills for parenting children. This will increase the quality of relationship between parents and their children and encourage children to share issues with their parents.
5. There is need to regulate business activities which impact on children negatively.
6. There is need to identify positive norms, values and practices among traditional institutions and use them in the promotion of child protection Interventions against sexual abuse.
7. Empower children to take informed decisions on their sexuality, right from childhood. Encourage sex education in homes and at schools so that children utilize all avenues for socialization to grow up to be assertive when CSA perpetrators advance them.
8. There is need to raise community awareness about the importance of reporting cases of child marriage and CSA cases, and the procedures for seeking justice.
9. Awareness-raising in communities and stakeholders to remove social and cultural barriers to the continued education of children who have been abused.

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