

A Study about the reality of children sexual abuse in Gaza strip

Abstract.

The study was implemented at the first half of October, 2009, on a sample of 390 children from both sexes aged between 8 to 15 year old.

The study was applied in all provinces using 6 focus groups per each province where each focus group targeted from 12 to 16 children.

The following results were reached:

- 7% of the sample were exposed to sexual abuse.
- 55.5% of the children in the sample faced sexual abuse by a known person.
- 60% of the children in the sample who faced sexual abuse didn't ask for help from any body during or after the aggression.
- 40% of the children who faced sexual abuse didn't tell anybody about this aggression.
- Half of the sample had little information about sexual abuse.
- One- third couldn't differentiate between what is behind a touch, is it a bad or a good purpose.
- Half of the sample didn't realize that the aggressor may be one of the family members.
- 80% of the sample expected that their reaction during aggression would be screaming and running away.
- More than 85 events of sexual abuse against children were recorded during the study including the testimonies of children in the sample.

First: problem addressed by the study and its importance

Introduction:

The problem of sexual abuse in general and especially against children forefronts the interest of all institutions working with children and human rights over the world. Also, everyone agrees on rejecting and combating all forms of children abuse.

The problem of sexual abuse is considered as one of the most dangerous problems that rises in the Palestinian society, and that deserves a special focus from all officials and responsible persons in order to limit its consequences.

The Palestinian society has a nightmare that this lesion becomes a phenomena that invades each house, while according to the available information, the number of cases is on a rise, taking into consideration that many people prefers to keep such things as secrets especially within the traditions and customs of the Palestinian community, which prevent discussions and speeches about sexual culture what contributes in exacerbating the crisis day after day.

Accordingly, children's rights must be maintained and guaranteed by the protection of law, as this aggravation may be due to the lack of law enforcement against aggressors in the shadow of the paralysis of the Palestinian legislative and executive institutions. On the other hand, members of the community resort to self protection methods causing many violations especially against children who lack self-defense.

This study comes in the context of the philosophy of the center as it cares about children protection through its awareness and guidance program. As it also considers this program as one of the priorities of the Palestinian community that needs to have larger attention especially within the significant increase in the number of cases that were exposed to attacks in comparison with the number of such cases during the last years.

The problem addressed by the study:

The current study focus on the reality of sexual abuse against children aged between 8 to 15 years old in all the provinces of the Gaza strip, this study is of high importance where we are lacking in the Palestinian library, especially in Gaza such studies and researches addressing the reality of sexual abuse against children.

All what is said with regard to this topic is only considered as personal opinions that do not define the spreading magnitude of this lesion, and that come among a theoretical speech away from the actual fact of this lesion and simultaneously with the occur of several cases of sexual abuse displayed in local medias and civil centers working in the field of children or human rights.

The cases detected by police offices and hospitals are within the reported cases and did not specify the cases that were hidden intentionally or unintentionally. Therefore, the Palestinian center for democracy and conflict resolution responded to the need of studying the extent of the spreading of sexual abuse against children in the Gaza strip.

The problem of the study can be summarized in the following basic question and sub questions:

"What is the fact of sexual abuse against children aged between 8 to 15 years old in Gaza strip?"

Sub-questions:

1. What is the degree of information possessed by children aged between 8 to 15 years old about sexual abuse forms?.
2. What is the degree of information possessed by children aged between 8 to 15 years old about methods used by the aggressor?
3. What is the degree of information possessed by children aged between 8 to 15 years old about the person who may cause them sexual harm?
4. What is the degree of information possessed by children aged between 8 to 15 years old about the places where sexual abuse may happen?
5. How far do children have information about the reaction of a child being exposed to sexual abuse?
6. To what extent will children ask for help if exposed to sexual abuse?
7. What is the extent of information possessed by children about real information of cases exposed to sexual abuse?
8. What is the percentage of children exposed to sexual abuse within the sample of the study?

The objectives of study:

1. To know the extent of information possessed by children about sexual abuse.
2. To determine the percentage of children exposed to sexual abuse in the Gaza strip.

The importance of the study:

The importance of the study rises from the following considerations:

1. The dare of the presented issue in terms of privacy in the Palestinian community.
2. Currency of information presented in the study.
3. The lack of studies and reports that talk about the magnitude of the lesion.
4. Providing a resource of information for those who work in the field of children protection.

The study axis:

- **Time:** the study was conducted during the period (3/10/2009 – 15/10/2009).
- **Place:** the study was conducted in the five provinces of the Gaza strip.
- **Human resources:** the study was conducted on a random sample of children (aged from 8 to 15 years old).
- **Subjectivity:** the study examined the fact of sexual abuse against children (aged from 8-15 years old) at the provinces of Gaza strip.

The terms of the study:

- **Sexual harassment:** a behavior imposed from one person on another having sexual signs, where the aggressor uses his power without the acceptance of the other part.
- **Sexual abuse:** is a sexual intercourse between a child and an adult as a response to the adult's sexual desires using power and domination.
- **Rape:** is imposing sexual intercourse against the desire of the victim by making use of the position and domination, betraying him or making use of a psychological, mental or physical disability.
Rape doesn't express sexual desire or emotions towards the victim but violent attack aiming at humiliating the victim through using sex as a mean to practice violence.
- **Sexual harassment against children:** is making use of child in satisfying sexual desires of an adult or a teenager. Sexual harassment means every agitation targeting a child intentionally, whether by obliging him to watch explicit scenes, sexual or nude pictures or by touching his Genitals or by direct sexual abuse with its known forms the normal and abnormal ones.
- **The aggressor:** is a person who is older than the victim with at least five years and could be one of the victim's relatives or having confidential relation with him, or an unknown person. An aggressor can be any one of the community members.

Second: The theoretical frame

Highlights about sexual harassment:

- Sexual harassment is not an expression of admiration.
- Sexual harassment is not an expression of desire.
- Sexual harassment is not an attempt of courtship.
- Sexual harassment is not a form of interaction and healthy relations between the two sexes.
- Sexual harassment happens in general and private places (street, family house, school and work).
- Sexual harassment starts with sexual looks towards the victim and may end with sexual abuse.

Types of harassment or sexual abuse against children:

1. Whistle and wink.
2. Looks and sexual jokes.
3. Verbal caresses, sexual comments and tips.
4. Dirty pornographic and embarrassing speech.
5. Phone calls or via internet.
6. Touching sensitive areas of children.
7. Inciting the child to touch the sensitive areas of the aggressor.
8. Undressing the child to see his genitals.
9. Exposing the child to pornographic films and views.
10. Photographing the sensitive areas of the child.
11. Hugging the child for sexual purposes.
12. Kissing the child excessively.
13. Spelling bad words with the child.
14. Rapping.

The degrees of sexual abuse according to its difficulty:

1. **Rape:** imposing a full sexual process by using power or temptations through playing.. etc
2. **Shameful actions:** touching the child's genitals, or demanding from the child to touch the genitals of the other person who is older and more powerful.
3. **Observation:** obliging a child to watch articles, websites, films and sexual images.
4. **Caresses:** including winks , whistles and sexual jokes.

Rape:

Rapping is considered as one of the cruelest and hardest forms of violence practiced against any community member, and considered by the law as a crime that violates the victim's body, psychology and his social entity.

Rape crimes are spreading in the human societies including our society since ancient times causing several victims among women and girls, where they used

to keep it as a secret. Despite the recently success of the feminine movement and professional institutions in breaking the silence and lightening these crimes through intensified publishing in media and educational activities which encourages many raped victims to talk about their suffering and convict the aggressor, we still have some social restrictions and ancient thoughts that blame the victim and prevent him from talking about the crime they were exposed to.

Consequences of sexual abuse against child:

The child, who is exposed to sexual harassment, usually suffers an early sexual provocation leading to hyper sexual activity. A child at this age scientifically doesn't know sexual desires like elders but this hyper sexual activity can be considered under what is called bad behaviors being obliged to do it without having a real will inside him and he may turn into an aggressor.

Evidences to detect children victims of sexual abuse:

Evidences are divided into two parts behavioral and physical:

I. Physical evidences for sexual harassment:

1. Scratching the neck and sensitive areas.
2. Abnormal smell or secretions from the sensitive areas.
3. Bloody and torn underwear.
4. Pains accompanied with peeing, setting, walking.
5. Blood in defecation or urination.
6. Injuries in sensitive area; redness, pain when touching sensitive areas.
7. Evidences of infection, inflammation and fungi.

II. Behavioral evidences of sexual harassment:

1. Imitating sexual acts, especially oral ones.
2. Acquiring lots of information about sex exceeding normal range.
3. Sexual inspirations in children drawings and writings.
4. Using sexual terms in dialogues.
5. Sexual behaviors with other children or adults.
6. Fear and refuse to visit one of his parents' friends or relatives without Clear reasons and avoid being with him in the same place.
(Unexpected behavioral changing towards a particular person he used to love).
7. Lack of confidence in self and in others.
8. Unreasonable hostility towards children, animals and some particular persons.
9. A change in child's personality without any clear reason, where he becomes secluded and isolated from his friends and family and all his lovers, instead of being active and opened to life.
10. The victim may get back to some child behaviors such as bed- wetting, sucking fingers or using some child words that he was used to when he was a child especially if he is at the primary stage.

11. The victim refuses to take off his clothes and shows fear, troubles and discomfort.
12. Clear disturbance when taking a bath.
13. Eating disorders.
14. Elder children show much hostility to themselves like causing themselves injuries and taking excessive medicines in an attempt of a suicide.
15. Attempt of sexual abuse to other children.
16. Elder children show lack of care in self, appearance and personal cleanness as well as low educational achievements as they also refuse to participate in school and show disobedience and many runaway from school.
17. An increase in suicide and aggressive thoughts as well as a low respect for self and for others.

How does the abuse happen?

There are many steps for transforming a child into a sexual abuse victim:

1. Courtship and temptation:

Sexual abuse on children is an intentional action with premeditation, one of its conditions is being alone with the child, and in order to achieve this, the aggressor tempts the child to practice with him an activity such as playing a game.

It is worthy to note that almost all sexual aggressors are people related to the victim (one of his relatives) and even if the aggressor is not a relative he usually seeks to establish a relation with the victim's mother or one of his relatives before asking to take care of the child or to take him to a place that seems to be innocent such as a general garden.

But if the first attempt has happened by a relative adult like the father or the mother's husband or any other relative, and was accompanied with assurances, the child may respond to it, especially children tend to bend to adult's authority. In such cases, warnings to speak to strangers is useless, but this blind trust starts to decrease with the second attempt, and the child may try to withdraw but the secrecy plot associated with warnings by the adult has already confused the child and transformed this abuse into a game of small secrets that we should keep it for ourselves only. The adult usually starts his abuse by caressing the child and asking him to touch his genitals associating this ask with an assurance that it's just a game and that they will for example buy some sweets adored by the child after this game.

Unfortunately, there are many other ways of abuse that have no relations with delicacy, where the aggressors who are much violent and ruder tend to use violent and threatening means to make the child obey their sexual capricious. In such cases children takes this threats into considerations especially if they have

experienced the aggressors' anger with their mother or with any one of their family members. Although sexual abuse with all its forms has deep influence and effects on children, but forced harassment still have deeper and harder effects on children where it causes them hard shocks.

2. Sexual interaction:

Sexual abuse on children like any other addicting behavior has a progressive nature, it starts with caressing the child or touching him, but it soon turns to deeper sexual practices.

3. Secrecy:

Keeping secrets is very important for the aggressor in order not to be punished from one side, and to guarantee an ongoing dominance on his victim, and since the aggressor knows that his behavior is violating the law, he does everything to convince the victim with the negative consequences of blabbing. The aggressor may also use personal threats against the child like hurting his sister, his brother or his mother if he talked about this secret and it would not be surprising among all these threats that the child prefers to keep silent.

A child usually keeps the secrets inside him until it starts to be harder and more hurting than he can afford causing him much pain and confusion or if the secret was discovered by agreement and not by coincidence. Other children keep this secret all their life or for long time, where this experience for them is so shameful and hurting that they try to forget, and is never discovered until long time when the psychologists discovers that these secret experiences are the roots for all the psychological problems they are suffering.

Methods used by the aggressor:

There are no specific ways for sexual abuse against children, many of the aggressors get closer to children using delicacy in order to give them a feeling of security before abusing them, Some others give children gifts and sweets, others may give unrealistic promises, and many others make use of threatens, power and cruelty and sometimes beating which is rare to happen because the aggressor fears to leave some effects on the victim's body which raises doubts about him.

Scene of the abuse:

Crimes of sexual abuse against children may happen any where, at home at the child's room that should be the safest place and at the house play ground as well as at neighbors' home, at the shop and at the school in addition to kindergartens and in cars.

How can we differentiate between good and bad attitudes?

As children and teenagers we should observe here three main things related to the aggressor or the victim that are:

1.The generation:

When the difference between your age and your friends age is more than two years, the relation between you would not be normal nor equal, because there is a difference in thinking and behaving, accordingly it is safer to take care and better to refuse to talk about the development of your body especially genitals, including watching and touching it others bodies.

2. Physical force:

Your friend may be stronger than you; this may lead him to force you to practice any sexual activity by attacking, beating or threatening you.

3. The position: is when a friend makes use of his ability to influence his group in attacking you or leading his friends to attack you.

Revealing of sexual abuse:

Sexual abuse is characterizes by secrecy factor, where the aggressor usually threatens and blames the victim in order not to tell any body about the aggression pretending that it will cause difficult problems, these threats leave the child with fears that force him not to talk about the aggression.

Revealing of sexual abuse happens in several ways including the victim talking about this aggression with whom he feels secure, however, children in early childhood and early adolescence rarely take about such aggressions. teenagers are more like to tell someone of whom they trust about this aggressions where they have more linguistic and experiential abilities and usually this happens gradually until the victim feels safety and protection, even though many teenagers didn't succeed to talk about their suffers until they grow up and become mature.

In many other cases, victim relatives discover the aggression through some psychological and behavioral changes that appear on the victim and sometimes some physical effects such as injuries and redness over genitals that cause them hurts.

Factors that prevent a child from talking about the abuse:

The main factors are the feelings that accompany the child during the sexual abuse and after it, such as: fearing the aggressor, or feeling the responsibility towards the event, also the child may misunderstand the event where the aggressor uses some nice ways and expressions to get closer to him in addition to the child's feeling of shyness to show his genitals and then to talk about this event.

In many times the child feels guilty, and fears to be blamed for this aggression by his family members and would be his position in front of them especially if the aggressor is a member of the family.

We assure on the necessity of talking about the abuse because every child has the right to live in a healthy environment, and we say to all children and teenagers who have been exposed to sexual abuse in all generation that you are

not the offenders, the only aggressors are the persons who attack you, so don't cooperate with them and do not hide the abuse as a secret, instead, you have to ask help from any close person you or just resort to any official place, because it is the only way of punishing the aggressors and preventing them from committing other abuses. Also you are not the only victim, there are many victims who talked about being sexually abused and revealed from it.

When the child could be exposed to sexual harassment?

The child may face different types of harassment since the age of birth, where he faces this danger at any time he could be away from his parents.

Who is the aggressor?

According to the scientific definition, the aggressor is a person who is older than the victim with at least five years, also the aggressor may be someone close to the child such as father, mother and uncle as well as neighbor, teacher or a friend of the family or any other person.

You may find some aggressors who honestly love their children, but they find themselves facing life attitudes beyond their control, they are usually introverted and have no friends and they could be deprived of any one who may give them moral support and passion.

Reasons for sexual abuse:

1. Lack of sexual awareness for children in different ages.
2. Parents refusing to talk about sexual harassment against their children.
3. Curiosity which characterizes some children what makes them easy victims.
4. The economical factor which forces the children to work in unsecured places, or makes members of one family sleep in the same room.
5. Lack of parents control to what their children watch through media.
6. Sexual attitudes which the parents may practice in front of their children.
7. The psychological problems of the aggressor.

Child rights in international conventions:

1. The Geneva convention regarding child protection in 1924:

It is the first international convention formulated after the first international war, accordingly it included the effects of war through its articles on the child right of nutrition, getting treatment and helping homeless children and providing safe places for them.

2. Child rights declaration in 1959:

Released on the 14th cycle of the United Nations General Assembly on the 20th of November 1959 and it has assured on the following principles:

1. All children enjoy these rights without discriminations.
2. The right to protect his own life.
3. The right of Nationality.
4. Treatment and entertainment rights of disabled children.
5. The right of free obligatory education.

3. The child right convention in 1989:

It was the fastest convention in signing and execution where it was adopted on the 20th of November 1989 and set into access after the signature of 20 nations on the 2nd of September 1990, and it includes a preamble consisting of three parts:

1. Preamble: it states some general principles in which the convention is based on.
2. The first part: it includes the commitment of the contracted parties to work on protecting children rights stated in this part such as the right to live, the right of nationality and health care as well as the child life with his parents, the alternative family at need and the freedom of expression.
The nation resorts to the principle of the best interest of children when conflicting about these rights.
3. The second part: it is related to establish a committee concerned with monitoring how far the contracted parties are committed.
4. The third part: it is related with procedural matters of the convention like nation's signatures, its time of execution and the number of nations that should authenticate on it as well as its written languages.

Children rights in the Palestinian Laws:

The Palestinian legislator treated the Palestinian child rights in many articles and laws, on the base the Palestinian basic law in addition to many other laws including the Palestinian child law, the labor law and the criminal law.

1. Children right in basic law:

Considered as the basic law that states general rules without details, the Palestinian constitution allocated the article 29 of it for child rights considering mother and child care as a national duty, and that children have the right of:

1. Protection and full care.
2. Do not use them or ask them to do some duties that may cause them harm.
3. Protecting them from abuse, and being hit even from their relatives.
4. In case being sentenced judicially for committing a crime, children shall be treated in a way that reforms them and they shall be separated from adult criminals.

The article 24 related to free obligatory education can be understood to be one of the organized articles related to child rights.

These articles were related specifically with child rights but this does not mean that the child does not enjoy other rights stated in the basic law like (the right of having a house, the freedom of expression, a clean environment, transportations...etc)

2. Child rights in the Palestinian child rights:

This is the detailed law of child rights that states in details the way to respect these rights and the guarantee to be implemented –according to the asset- law defined the child in its first article as every one aged less than 18 years old.

The second article of the child right law aims at:

1. Developing childhood in Palestine with what it has like privacy.
2. Raising up the child on being proud of his national identity, nationalism and religious.
3. Preparing the child for a free responsible life in a civilized community.
4. Protecting child rights in surviving and promotion as well as a free secure life.
5. Raising the awareness of the community with child rights.
6. Involving the child in the social fields of life.
7. Raising up the child on grace ethics.

The observer for these aims find out that all of them starts with similar words such as: raising up, preparing and protecting as well as raising awareness

without determining who will be responsible for doing that, it would have been better to determine the responsibility of the state towards the child and percentage of realizing these rights not only the law.

3. Child protection in Palestinian Penal law:

The penal law is the shield of immunity for both individuals and society's rights. Through different articles; the Palestinian penal law had treated crimes whose victims are children with high level of cruelty to deter offenders, such as:

1. Convicting killing newborns even if the murderer is the mother (article 226).
2. Convicting the attempt to overthrow the fetus or miscarriage even if the doer/actor is the mother (articles 175,176).
3. Convicting caregiver in case of abandon the child or refrain custody and financial support (articles 184,185,186).
4. Convicting concluding marriage contract for a girl aged less than 15 years (article 182) unless she reached the age of puberty (article 183).
5. Convicting sexual relations with a girl aged less than 15 years out of marriage (article 156).
6. Convicting allowing a child to live in a house of prostitution (article 165).

Third: Similar studies and statistics

1. A study by the Palestinian Center for Democracy and Conflict Resolution in 2006:

The Palestinian Center for Democracy and Conflict Resolution (PCDCR) implemented a study about violence against children in the Gaza strip and the West Bank, in 2006, targeting 3000 children.

Regarding the sexual abuse, the study showed that:

- 6% of children were exposed to stripping their clothes, (3.8% of them were exposed to this accident only once).
- 5.7% of children were hugged under sexual aims (2.9% off them faced this accident only once).
- 6.5% of children were exposed to touch their genitals (2.9% of them faced this accident only once)
- 8.1% of children were forced to making shameful actions such as saying bad words, (3.9% of them were forced to do these shameful and nasty actions only once).
- 6% of the children were forced to see sexual pictures (2.7% of them were forced to see the sexual pictures only once).
- 4.7% of the children were exposed to excessive kissing (2% of them were forced to do this only once),
- 3.2% of children were raped (1.1% of them were raped only once).

Regarding the answers of the children about the persons who practiced sexual abuse against them, the answers were “fathers, brothers, one of the relatives, strangers” with different percentages according to the form of abuse.

According to the place where the abuse might have happened , between 20% to 30% of the children said that they were exposed to sexual abuse at their houses.

Regarding the children answers about the methods which were used by the aggressors to lure them to practice sexual abuse against them, their answers were varied, where 30% of the sample said that the aggressor lure them by asking help from them, others said that the aggressor used gifts or threatening by killing them.

Regarding the children feelings after sexual abuse, 35% of the sample said that they felt unsafe and angry, and their reactions were as follow:

- 36% of them resorted to whom they trust.
- 22.6% of them resorted to psychological counselor of the school.
- 15% of them did not talk or resort to any one.
- 62 % of them who were exposed to sexual abuse thought to ask for help.
- 40% of them resorted to their mothers to ask for help.

- 28% of them restored to their fathers.

Regarding the advices that they received from others, 4% said that they were provided with safe environment and 18% of them were taken to the police offices.

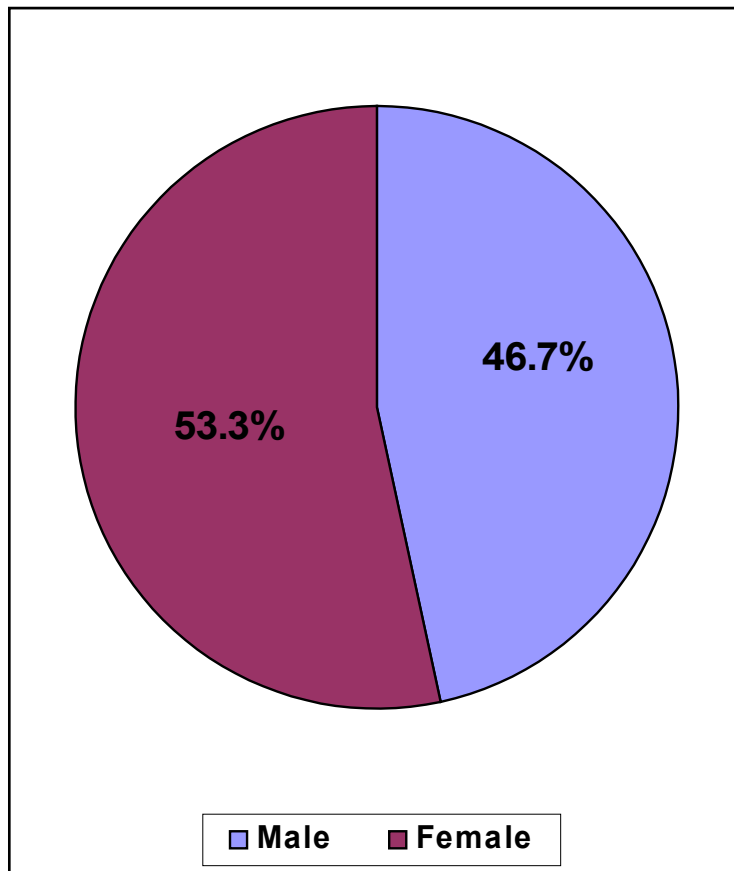
2. Rawda Baser study:

Rawda Baser the director of “woman studies center” in the west bank implemented a study about sexual abuse on children and its effects on the Palestinian society, the study targeted 652 universities' students of both sexes and they found out that 30.5% of the sample were exposed to sexual abuse once before the school age, 5.7% said they were exposed to sexual abuse by one of their families, and 11.6% were exposed to sexual abuse from one of their relatives in addition to 13.2% who were exposed to sexual abuse by a stranger.

Fourth: Characteristics of the sample

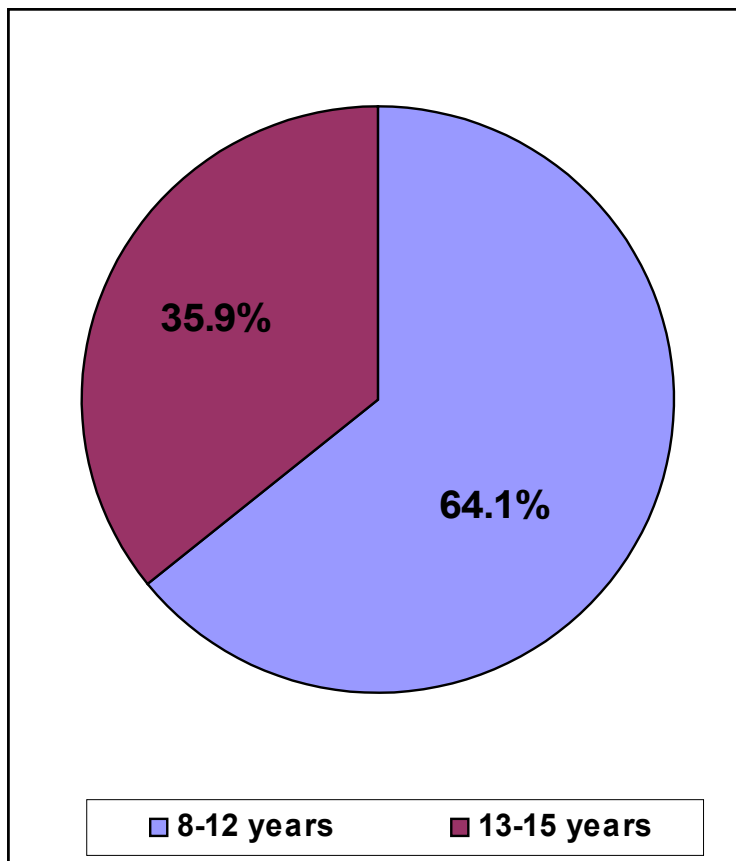
1. Distribution of the sample according to the sex:

sex	number	Percentage
Male	182	46.7%
Female	208	53.3%
Total	390	100%



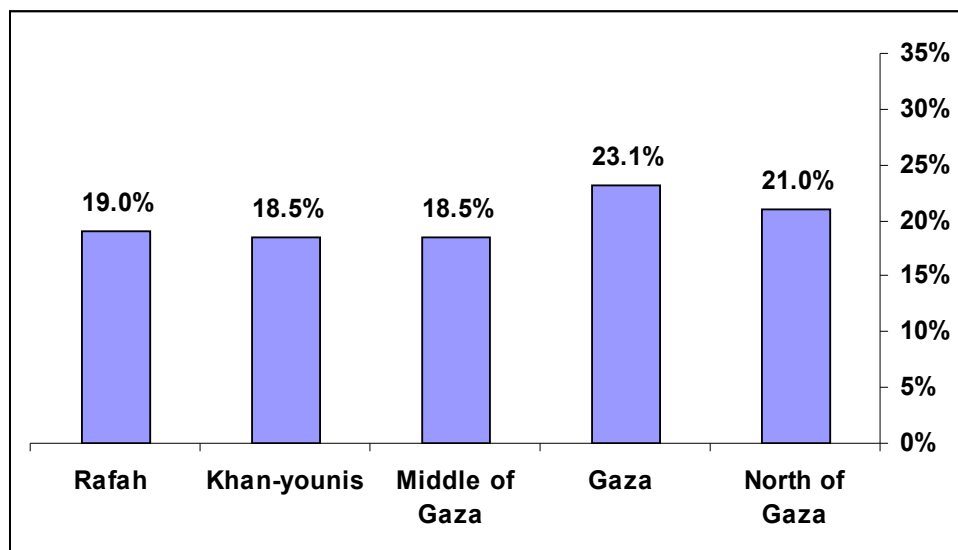
2. **Distribution of the sample according to age categories:**

Age category	number	Percentage
8-12 years	250	64.1%
13-15 years	140	35.9%
Total	390	100%



3. **Distribution of the sample according to the governorates:**

Governorate	number	Percentage
North of Gaza	82	21.0%
Gaza	90	23.1%
Middle of Gaza	72	18.5%
Khan-younis	72	18.5%
Rafah	74	19.0%
Total	390	100%



Fifth: Study results

1. Children information about sexual abuse:

From the debate we can notice that the majority of children have little information about sexual abuse where children defined sexual abuse to be "touching sensitive areas of the body", "saying bad words" or "exposing the child to indecent images".

Researches deepened the discussion with children and asked them about the type of sexual abuse they know, and they got different information where half of the sample gave many information and details while others' answers were not enough and added little information.

Answers mentioned about sexual abuse forms were as follows:

1. Touching sensitive areas of the child body.
2. Taking off child's clothes, stripping and photographing him.
3. Forcing the child to view sexual pictures and movies.
4. Embracing the child for sexual purposes.
5. Excessive kissing of the child.
6. Saying bad words and terms for the child.
7. Raping.

2. Children information about the difference between the good and the bad touch:

From children answers we can notice that the majority of the children can distinguish between good and bad touch, while the rest of the children cannot.

Children answers about good touch were as follows:

1. Touch of love and compassion of father and mother.
2. Friend touches with peaceful aim.
3. Doctor touch to achieve cure.
4. The committer of good touch is a known person.
5. Good touch don't cause harm for the child.
6. Teacher touch with thankful aim.

Children answers about the bad touch were as follow:

1. The committer of bad touch is a stranger.
2. Harming children.
3. Person who causes it has bad intention.
4. Touching the sensitive parts of the body.
5. Usually occurring in abandoned places.

We presented three touches to the children to discuss them largely, mother touch with sympathy aim, teacher touch with thankful aim and doctor touch in order to achieve the cure, we found out that all these touches do not hide sexual abuse for children with the vote of the majority of the sample, while 10% of the sample said that teacher touch can be considered as sexual abuse for children.

3. Methods which used by aggressors to participate sexual abuse against children:

We can found out from the children answers that children do know the methods that the aggressor is using to practice sexual abuse against them.

The following methods are arranged according to the proportion of its recurrence in a descending order:

1. Tempting children by gifts and money.
2. Using children innocence.
3. Using violence against children.
4. Asking help from children.
5. Threatening children

4. Offenders of sexual abuse against children:

From the children results we can notice that, children have various information about persons who can practice sexual abuse against children. The majority of the sample found out that the aggressor is an unknown person, sometimes the aggressor is one of the relatives, such as: (Uncle - cousin – nephew).

5. Places where sexual abuse can occur:

Regarding the places where sexual abuse can occur, most of the children answers focused on the abandoned places, schools and markets. Children answers were arranged in descending order as follows: abandoned places – shops - super market – schools - houses - transportation (car and bus) - public facilities (parks, clubs, gardens) - streets - the sea - homes of relatives - the workplace – and the neighbors houses.

6. The first reaction of children if exposed to sexual abuse and their ask for help:

Asking a sample of children about their first reaction if exposed to sexual abuse from any one and with any form, 312 children forming a percentage of 80% of this sample said that they will shout and run away.

Regarding those who will ask for help if they were exposed to sexual abuse and to whom they will resort, the study showed that 85% of these children will ask for help and 5% did not answer this question while the remaining percentage will not ask for help.

To whom they will resort?? Answers were different, some of them said father, mother and others said police or relatives and some of them said brother, friend or teacher or counselors in school.

7. Fact stories of sexual abuse heard by children:

According to the answers of children in the study sample, there were several stories heard by children about sexual abuse in the Gaza strip. More than 85 realistic stories were recorded in Gaza Strip.

In many stories mentioned by children, children said that they couldn't do anything; some others resorted to their families who in turn resorted to police station to report on the aggressor.

The cruelty of sexual abuse against children in the stories mentioned by the children of the sample can range from verbal abuse, photographing by Mobil camera, and Kidnapping, as well as taking off children clothes until it reached it highest level which is rap and murder.

But in many stories the aggressor was not known, so he did not obtain the appropriate punishment to prevent him from repeating such action again, where the child only screamed and run away to his house and asked for help from his parents.

We can notice from the large number of stories mentioned by children in the sample the spreading of sexual abuse phenomena in the Palestinian society.

8. Children who are victims of sexual abuse:

The study found that (27) children from the sample forming a percentage of (7%) were exposed to sexual abuse and (23) of them were exposed only once, while many others were exposed to abuse more than once.

Among the (27) children, two children were exposed to verbal harassment and the rest were exposed to sexual abuse.

In (12) Cases of sexual abuse, the aggressor was stranger to the child, while in (15) other cases the aggressor was known.

1. Driver: (4) cases
2. Seller/owner of the supermarket: (4) cases
3. Teacher: (2) cases
4. Neighbor's son: (4) cases
5. Student in the school: one case

From the results we can notice that the aggressor was outside the children social environment, although many studies have confirmed that a proportion that is not few of sexual abuse occur in the child's family, but in this study no children confirmed that they were exposed to sexual abuse by one of his relative. This leads us to thinking on these search result

When we asked children victims of sexual abuse about their first reaction after being exposed, there answers varied, some of them tried to beat or rejected the aggressor, or screamed and also escaped from the place, and some of them resorted to their father or someone of trusts "school counselor, director of the school." While some of the children said they did not do anything when they were exposed to sexual abuse.

By asking victims of sexual abuse about their feelings after the accident they said with few words that they were upset after the attack and sad, their answers arranged as follows: sadness - fear - anxiety - unity and isolation- terror - pain and fatigue - anger - depression - stress - lack of self-confidence and others- grief - the desire to suicide.

It is worth to say that 60% of the children who were exposed to sexual abuse, spoke to others about this bad experience which they faced, while the rest did not talk to anyone.

By asking the children who talked with others, 87.5% of them reported that they spoke to their fathers while the rest spoke to their brothers or to the counselors in the schools.

And when we asked children who were exposed to actual sexual abuse 60% of them said that they did not ask for help from anyone, not during or after the abuse, while the rest asked for help from police, counselors, brother or someone in the place of the event

Sixth: Recommendation

1. Implementing researches and studies about sexual abuse phenomena in more details.
2. Implementing activities and programs for children and caregivers to raise their awareness about sexual abuse.
3. Implementing awareness campaigns to encourage the sexual abuse victims to inform the police about the accident, to punish the criminal.
4. Increasing and unifying the governmental and nongovernmental efforts in order to reduce the spread of this phenomenon.