

A comparative analysis among Private and Government school teachers on Child Sexual Abuse awareness in Delhi NCR

Nidhi Sharma¹ , Dr. Geeta Mishra²

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Continuing Education and Extension, University of Delhi¹
Associate Professor, Department of Continuing Education and Extension, University of Delhi²

Abstract:

The study examines the awareness level among private and government school teachers in Delhi NCR. Child sexual abuse is a growing issue with a few restraints. This paper sheds light on the crucial role of teachers in being the frontline warriors in the prevention of child sexual abuse. Thus, assessing the awareness level on the prevention of CSA was the most important factor of the study. The data was collected with the help of a questionnaire and a 5-point Likert rating scale. The included parameters in the study were the teachers' ability to recognise CSA signs, the vulnerable group, and mandatory legal programmes. Findings indicate that the government school teachers show a significantly higher level of CSA awareness as compared to private school teachers in terms of CSA and its signs. Government school teachers have received training from the government-directed training programs whereas private school teachers lacked such programmes to increase their awareness level.

Keywords: CSA (Child sexual abuse), POCSO Act (Protection of Children from Sexual offences), NCPCR (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights), Komal short-film, Childline 1098

Introduction:

Child sexual abuse is a prevalent issue in modern society. With access to media and an increase in dual-income families, children are relying more on their school environments. School bridges the gap between family and society and enables a child to become a contributing member of society. Not limited to it, school is a site of empowerment as well, where children develop their conscience and learn to voice out their concerns. Amidst all, teachers play a crucial role in depositing the knowledge in the empty accounts of children. Thus, making them empowered and aware. Moreover, the teachers play a significant role in the early detection of CSA by recognising the symptoms associated with it and providing support to their students. Child sexual abuse is an issue that can be found among all the sections of society, such as all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. However, the stigma attached to the issue hinders the process of active teachers' involvement in such awareness programmes, which in turn obstructs a child's pathway to safety. The government has many training initiatives as per the guidelines provided by NCPCR, which are being implemented in government schools, whereas private schools take their own initiatives by outsourcing experts from the external agencies.

The preparedness and awareness may vary depending on the type of institution. There may be differences in training opportunities and access to child sexual abuse prevention programmes as well.

In India, the POCSO Act, 2012, which was later amended in 2019, provides a comprehensive framework. As per the law, there is a mandatory reporting of the CSA incident; failing which, the person is liable to a fine and 6 months' imprisonment. Thus, examining the difference between the awareness in both types of schools is crucial to understand the level of teachers' training to handle such cases as per the law. The programs such as Komal short film, childline number and POCSO training programmes can help enhance teachers' knowledge and awareness related to child sexual abuse.

Purpose of the study:

There are many studies that have been done on the CSA in the past. However, the studies related to the comparison between the private and government schools are present to understand the gap in training among school teachers from both schools. Thus, the study seeks to compare both the schools' teacher awareness levels related to the CSA. The study will further help in identifying the similarities and differences between the two schools, which will help contribute to improved teacher training and policymaking for the prevention of child sexual abuse.

Literature review:

Theoretical framework:

a. Michel Foucault's Power-Knowledge framework:

Michel Foucault argues that Power and knowledge have a symbiotic and reinforcing relationship. Knowledge is shaped by power. Foucault rejected the idea of 'traditional power' which was help was state in the past. He argued that the power operates everywhere through social institutions, discourses, and everyday practices (Foucault, M. 1980). Power and knowledge are interconnected, as power produces knowledge, and in return knowledge regulates behaviour and legitimises power. In the context of study, schools are the site of knowledge production for children and teacher both. Institutions hold power to reinforce knowledge which can help in identifying and preventing child sexual abuse.

b. Banking-model of Paulo Freire:

The concept of banking model was developed by Paulo Freire in his book 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed'. The concept was used to criticise the conventional education system, which did not let students develop critical conscience, as teachers treated students like empty bank accounts and deposited repeated information in them (Freire, P. (2000)). However, in this context, the knowledge can be deposited to raise critical consciousness in students to empower them. If the teachers are the authority and knowledge holders, they should be trained adequately to empower children.

Government Initiatives for Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse in India

a. Legal Framework – Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act)

The act came into force in 2012 and was later amended in 2019 with the addition of sexual assault as aggravated. The act provided child-friendly legal procedures for reporting the CSA incidents. Under the law, the statement provided by the child is considered the final testimony. The act also defines and differentiates sexual assaults, sexual harassment and child sexual abuse material. The act highlights the mandate of reporting the CSA incident, failing which the person will be liable to a fine and 6 years in prison. The assaults have been divided into aggravated and non-aggravated assault. The aggravated assaults are those, where the abuse is committed by the person holding an authoritative position (Teacher, principals, doctor and police officer, etc).

b. Child protection schemes and mechanisms

The Ministry of Women and Child Development launched 'Integrated Child Protection Scheme' in 2009 that is built of centralised child protection system including Juvenile Justice Boards, District Child Protection Units and Child Welfare committees. The scheme supports children in need, including child sexual abuse victims.

c. POCSO e-box

It is an online complaint system for children to report sexual abuse, however, children may not have access to internet. Thus, the provision of placing complaint boxes in the schools as well to make anonymous complaints. The POCSO e-box was developed by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

d. Childline 1098

Childline 1098 is a 24 hour emergency line operating across India. The childline can be easily memorised by the children in reverse counting and not only help children but adults as well to report the issues related to child sexual abuse, child labour, and missing children (Childline India Foundation, n.d.).

e. Komal short-film

The animated short film was created by Childline India Foundation and Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration, became a primary link to talk about the sensitive issue of child sexual abuse. The short film uses child-friendly language, translated to over 30 languages and can be shown to any age group. The film teaches about safe and unsafe touch and helps children identify the situation where they may get abused. Thus, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued instructions to schools recommending the screening of short film komal as a part of child safety and awareness Central Board of Secondary Education, 2015). However, the film was screened more in government schools through training programmes which also included the parents. Whereas, the private schools' implementation clearly depended on their discretion.

f. POCSO Awareness Campaigns

The government conduct nationwide awareness campaign on POCSO Acts. The training sites of this programme are schools, anganwadi centres, and media campaigns.

Related studies:

- The study entitled 'To Assess Knowledge of the Parents and Teachers Regarding Sexual Offences among School Children' conducted a study in Sheopur district and reported that 67% of teachers had poor knowledge of CSA despite having high educational qualifications. Significant knowledge gaps were reported in the knowledge and implementation (Jaiswal and Meena, 2024)
- The study entitled 'Assessment of knowledge, attitude, and practice among teachers toward child abuse and neglect in Malappuram, Kerala conducted a study among 157 teachers and reported that 91.2% of the teachers were aware of child abuse and neglect (Shivappa et al., 2023).
- The study entitled 'Child Sexual Abuse in Schools in India: A Critical Analysis adopted a mixed-method approach to understand the reporting mechanism and awareness level in schools. The study reported the need for an effective reporting procedure and process in protecting children's rights and safety (Nath & Kaur, 2023).
- As per the study 'Gender and personal safety sensitization in schools: A qualitative inquiry into response practices to children's disclosures of sexual abuse', the teachers showed invalidating and evasive attitudes towards children's disclosure of CSA incidents. A gap was found in institutional practices and state-level policies related to child sexual abuse prevention (Ramakrishna et al., 2025).

Methodology:

The study used the comparative and exploratory research design for the target group, which was 100 teachers from private and 100 teachers from government schools. Since, the issue is sensitive, and the stigma is attached to it, the data was collected with the help of Google Forms to keep the anonymity of the teachers' identity and school name. The teachers belonged to Delhi NCR and were chosen on the basis of snowball sampling. Further, the data was analysed with the help of Excel; statistical tests such as inferential statistics followed by t-tests to compare the means.

The following objectives and research questions were studied:

Objectives:

1. To compare the private and government school teachers' awareness level of the term 'child sexual abuse'.
2. To compare and identify the gaps in the awareness level of the POCSO Act between private and government school teachers.

3. To assess the knowledge on mandatory reporting of CSA incidents under POCSO Act between private and government school teachers.
4. To understand the perception of the importance of teacher training in the prevention of CSA between private and government school teachers.

Research Questions:

- Q.1** What is the difference between private and government school teachers in the awareness level of the term ‘child sexual abuse’?
- Q.2.** What are the gaps in awareness levels of the POCSO Act between private and government school teachers?
- Q.3.** What is the level of knowledge on the mandatory reporting of CSA incidents under POCSO Act between private and government school teachers?
- Q.4** What is the perception of the importance of teacher training in the prevention of CSA between private and government school teachers?

Findings:

1.1 Gender profile

School/Gender	Male	Female	Other
Government School	19	81	0
Private School	44	55	0

Comparison of Number of Teachers on the basis of Gender

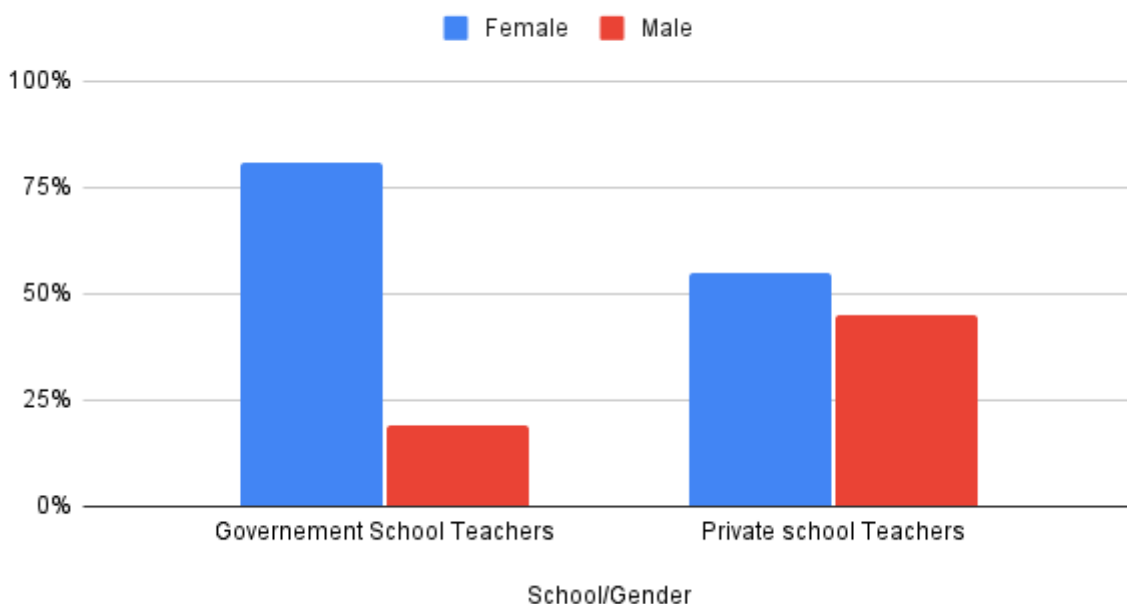
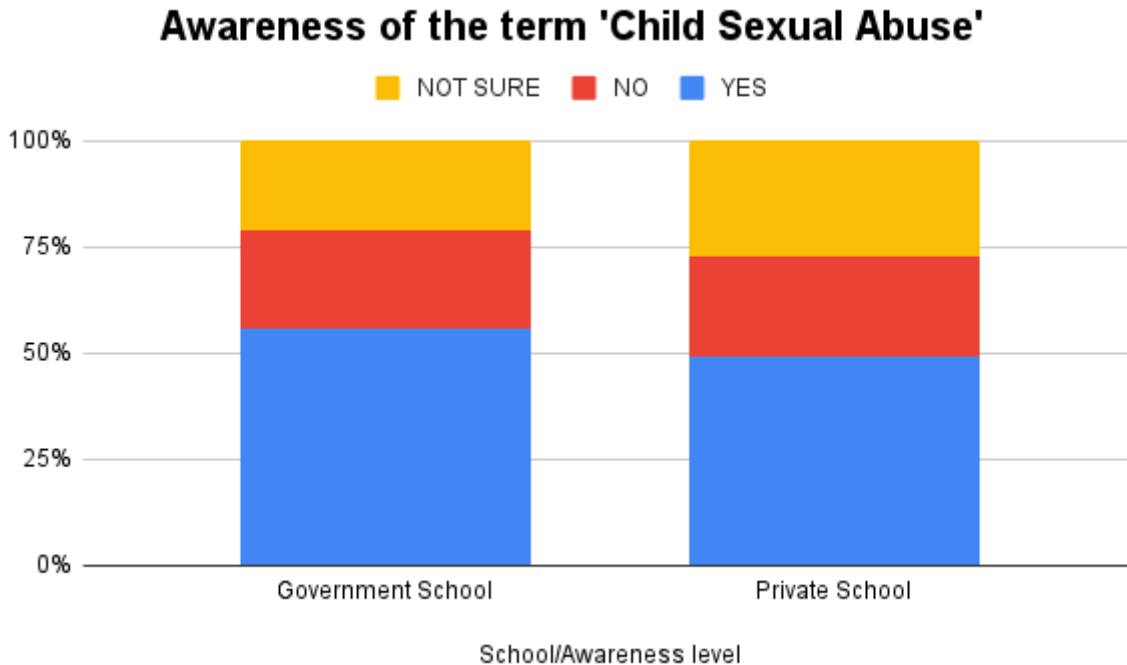


Fig. 1.1. Table representing the profile of respondents based on gender

The above tables and chart represent the gender profile of the respondents. As per the table, in government schools, 19% of teachers were male, while 81% were female. Whereas in private schools, 44% of teachers were male, and the remaining 55% of teachers were female. Conclusively, both schools have a higher percentage of female teachers.

1.2. Awareness of the term ‘Child Sexual Abuse’

School/Awareness level	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Government School	56	23	21
Private School	49	24	27



The above table and chart represent the level of awareness in teachers related to the term ‘child sexual abuse’. In government schools, 56% of teachers were aware of the term ‘child sexual abuse’, while 23% of teachers were not aware of it, and 21% of teachers were ‘not sure’ of it. Whereas in private schools, 49% of teachers responded ‘Yes’ while 24% of teachers responded ‘No’, and 27% of them responded ‘Not sure’. This variation in the ‘No’ and ‘Not sure’ between government and private schools shows a significant difference in the awareness between private and government schools, where government schools show a high level of awareness. As per t-test results, We don’t have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. So, we accept H₀ that is there is no difference between govt and private school awareness level.

1.3 Level of Awareness of POCSO Act

Level of Awareness of POCSO Act	Private schools	Government schools
Yes	58	64
No	27	18
Not Sure	15	17
No Response	0	1

Level of Awareness of POCSO Act

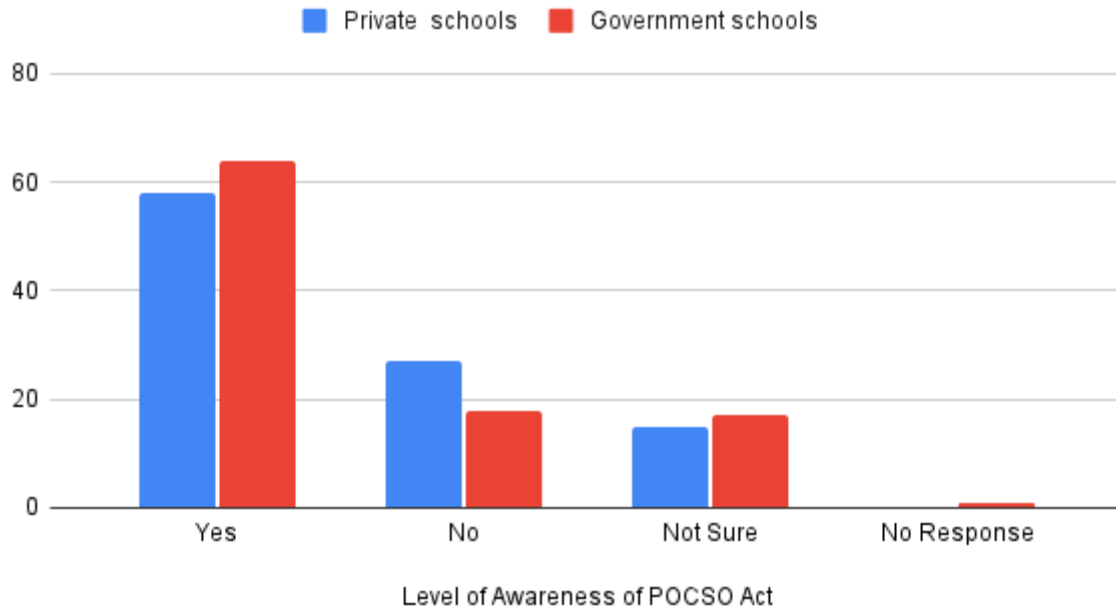


Fig. 4.3.6. Level of Awareness of POCSO Act

Level of awareness: As per the charts and tables, government school teachers responded 64% ‘Yes’, 18% responded ‘Yes’ while 17% of teachers and 1% teachers responded ‘Not sure’ and ‘No Response’ respectively. Whereas private school teachers reported that 58% of teachers were aware of POCSO act, 27% of teacher were not aware of it while 15% of teachers responded ‘Not sure’.

1.4. Awareness of Mandatory reporting of CSA under POCSO

Table. 4.3.7 Awareness of Mandatory reporting of CSA under POCSO

Awareness of Mandatory reporting of CSA under POCSO	Private School	Government School
Yes	60	19
No	27	53
Not Sure	13	28

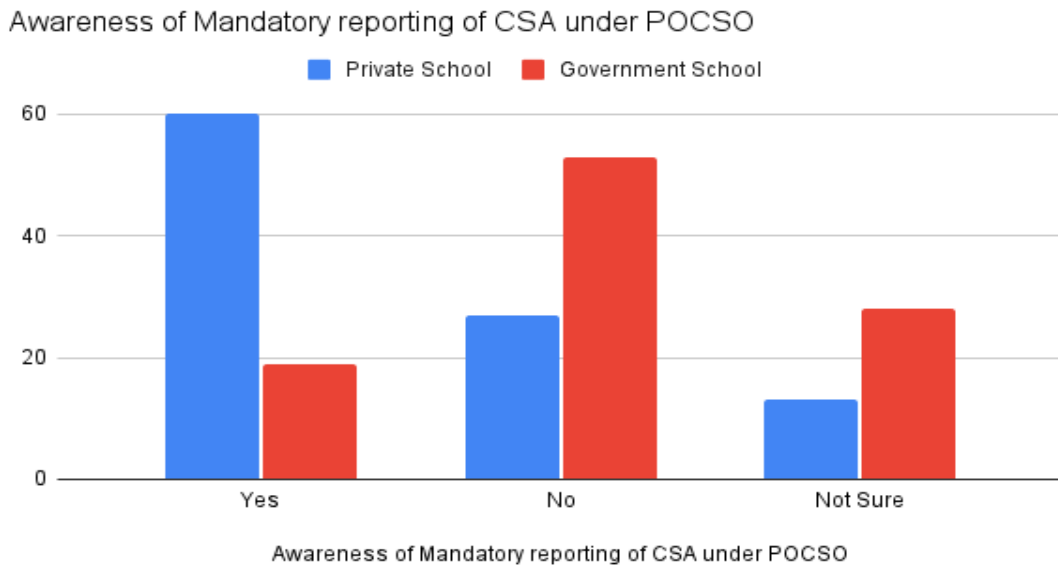


Fig. 4.3.7. Awareness of Mandatory Reporting of CSA under POCSO

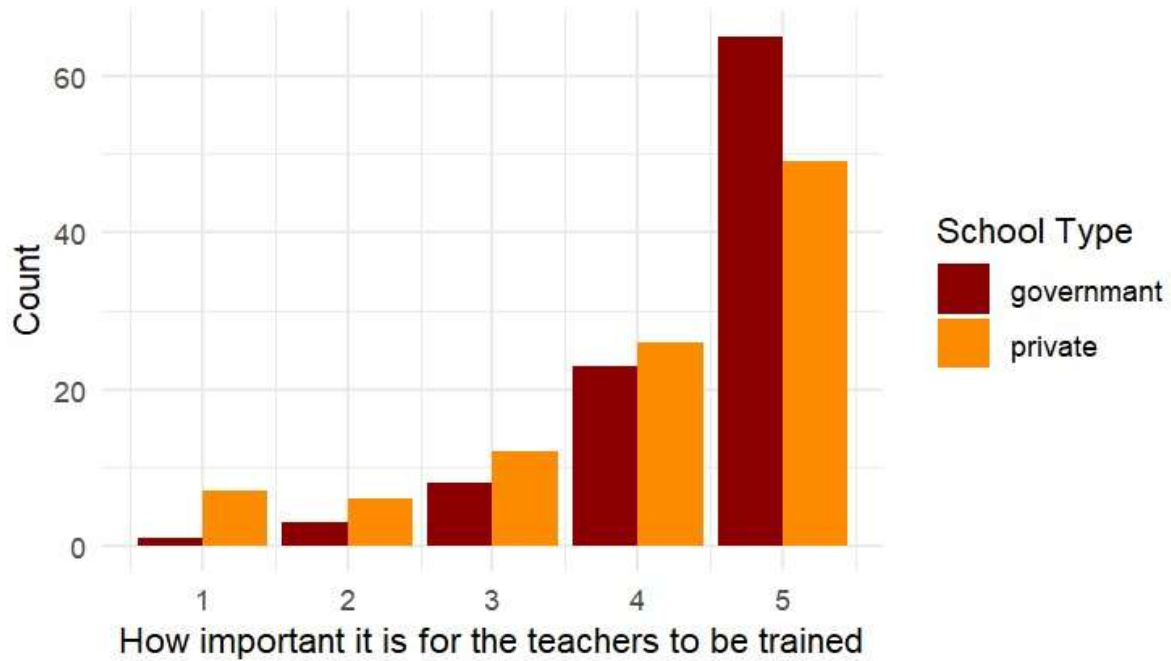
The above data and chart represent the awareness on the provision of mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse incident under POCSO act.

Government schools teachers: Only 19% of teachers reported that they were aware of mandatory reporting under POCSO while 53% reported that they had no awareness regarding it and 28% of teachers reported that they were not sure if the reporting was mandatory or not.

Private school teachers: Majority of private school teachers with 60% of high response reported about being aware of mandatory reporting under POCSO act while 27% of teachers were not aware and 13% of teachers were not sure.

1.5 Importance of teacher training on CSA prevention

Importance of teacher training for CSA prevention	Private School	Government School
Not important at all	7	1
Slightly Important	6	3
Neutral	12	8
Important	26	23
Very Important	49	65



The above table and chart represent the perception of private and government schools on the importance of teacher training programmes. This data was collected through a Likert rating scale. The responses from **private schools** were as follows: Not important at all – 7%, slightly important – 6%, neutral – 12%, important – 26% and very important- 49%. Whereas the responses from **government schools** are as follows: Not important at all – 1%, slightly important – 3%, neutral – 8%, important – 23% and very important- 65%.

The ‘t-test’ results showed the following: **Government School Mean (4.48) > Private School Mean (4.04)**: Teachers in government schools perceive teacher training as **more important** than those in private schools.

Conclusion:

As per the above findings, the term CSA was known to the teachers in both private and government schools, as there is no significant difference in the awareness level. The government school teachers were significantly more aware of the existence of POCSO Act as compared to private schools. However, despite having more regular programmes in the government schools, the teachers were not much aware of the mandatory reporting of CSA incidents, whereas the private school teachers knew about the mandatory reporting even if the awareness about its existence was comparatively low. Thus, indicating a uniform reinforcement in private schools despite having low attendance in teacher training programmes. On the other hand, the perception on the importance of teacher training programmes related to the same, private school teachers were shown to be less perceptive as compared to government schools. Conclusively, the teachers’ school type and attitude showed a very important role in relation to power-knowledge nexus of Michel Foucault. All over, the teachers from both the private and government schools need to receive more training on the legal provision of POCSO Act. The same can be done with the help of providing incentives to participate in such programs. The attitudinal change should be the key to further enhancing teachers’ knowledge and awareness level on child sexual abuse prevention.

References

1. Central Board of Secondary Education. (2015, March 23). *Circular No. 22: Prevention of child sexual abuse in schools*. https://www.cbse.gov.in/cbsenew/Examination_Circular/2015/22_CIRCULAR.pdf
2. Childline India Foundation. (2014). *Komal: A film on child sexual abuse awareness* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cBQtZRbRJU>
3. Childline India Foundation. (n.d.). *Childline 1098: Emergency helpline for children in distress*. <https://www.childlineindia.org>
4. Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (C. Gordon, Ed.). Pantheon Books.
5. Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (30th anniversary ed.). Continuum. (Original work published 1970)
6. Meena, Mr. R., & Jaiswal, D. S. (2024). To Assess Knowledge of the Parents and Teachers Regarding Sexual Offences among School Children. *April-May 2024*. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/3451501e55f865351bc7970acc8268c308d538e9>
7. Nath, B., & Kaur, G. (2023). Child Sexual Abuse in Schools in India: A Critical Analysis. *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development*. <https://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v11i7.466>
8. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights. (n.d.). *POCSO resources and implementation guidelines*. Government of India. <https://www.ncpcr.gov.in/public/POCSO>
9. Ramakrishna, S. K., Sharma, E., Jangam, K., & M, R. K. (2025). Gender and personal safety sensitization in schools: A qualitative inquiry into response practices to children's disclosures of sexual abuse. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*. https://journals.lww.com/10.4103/indianjpsychiatry.indianjpsychiatry_543_24
10. Shivappa, V., Ramakrishnan, K., Peter, J., Satheesh, A., & Khalid, R. (2023). Assessment of knowledge, attitude, and practice among teachers toward child abuse and neglect in Malappuram, Kerala, India. *International Journal of Oral Care and Research*. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/80384d9d7b6ca6afb328bb63a0923f994823940a>

Copyright & License:



© Authors retain the copyright of this article. This work is published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), permitting unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.