Introduction- Background
Alarming revelations of a survey report by Ministry of Women and Child Development in association with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and a few Indian NGOs working for Child’s rights found that more than 53% of children in India are subjected to sexual abuse. Additionally, most cases of child sexual abuse remained unreported. The survey was conducted in 2007 and covered 13 states across the country with a sample size of 12,447. The key findings also indicated that more than 50% of the participants were sexually abused in ways that ranged from severe forms such as rape or fondling to milder forms such as molestation, forcible kissing etc. In 50% of such cases, the abusers were known to the child or were holding a position of trust and responsibility. Most victims were forced to remain silent and hence the abuse remained unreported.

The above mentioned survey reports have again kindled the minds and hearts of millions of people to raise and stand up for this sensitive, growing and inhumane truth of the progressive modern society. Parents, teachers, social workers, media, policy makers and the community at large are working towards alleviating this gruesome crime of bruising childhood. Relevance and inclusion of sex education in schools is emerging as a crucial topic among the academic community. Social awareness is at full pace through online networks. The growing number of child sexual abuse has initiated amendments at the policy level with the recently amended Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) passed by the Indian Parliament in June 2012. The Act envisages a variety of offences under which an accused can be punished.

One of the prime issue in the war against the butchers of innocence is to sensitize the target group viz. the children to be aware, understand, defend and speak up against the injustice done to them. Parents and school has a critical role in empowering the kids against sexual abuse. The present paper is an attempt to highlight a few theories and etiology of sexual abuse. The author is trying to focus on the psychological basis of child sexual abuse and highlight the need to understand this psychological knowledge.

Why to understand?
Basically, the theories and etiology of child sexual abuse offers psychological explanations built on empirically tested psychological principles to the act of sexually abusing a child by an individual. These explanations and facts serve as a reference for the policy makers to innovate and implement appropriate and stringent policy measures to curb the crime. Understanding the various theories and reasons of why an adult maintains a sexual relationship with a child is nevertheless never a justification or relief for the victim or the immediate ones of the victims. In spite of its heterogeneous nature and the inherent complexity of the deviant behaviour, the individual trauma and pain remains crucially significant. Hence, understanding the why of child sexual abuse possess a significantly higher social/administrative perspective. Also, these explanations have a therapeutic value in the rehabilitation of the offenders to curtail further propagation of the crime.

Biological Theory
Biological theory focused on organic explanations of human behavior. The theory emphasized the role of physiological factors, such as hormone levels and chromosomal makeup on the behavior (Berlin, 1983; Marshall & Barbaree, 1990). Androgen, which are male sex hormones, promote sexual arousal, orgasm and ejaculation as well as regulate sexuality, aggression, cognition, emotion and personality (Rösler & Wit- ztum, 2000; Marques et al., 2002). The theory asserted the role of androgen and androgen-releasing hormones, which are known to be related to physical changes in the male. From a chromosomal perspective, Berlin (1983) discussed the possibility of a biological condition, such as Klinefelter’s Syndrome predisposing a male towards sexually abusive behavior. A review of the literature suggested the prevalence of sexual deviation among individuals who are diagnosed with Klinefelter’s Syndrome.

Psychodynamic theory
Psychodynamic theory is built on Freud’s four states of childhood development viz. oral, anal, phallic and genital. The theory explained sexual deviance as an expression of the un-
resolved conflicts experienced during the stages of development. These unresolved problems brought about fixations or hindrances during stages of development, with consequent distortion of a sexual object or a sexual aim (Schwartz, 1995). Psychodynamic theory also asserted the structure of human psyche as composed of three primary elements: the id, the ego and the superego. Freudian theory portrayed the human psyche as being in a constant struggle to fulfill the primal desires of the id and the moral authority of the superego. According to Freud, sexual aggressiveness results from strong superego and have become overwhelmed by their primary id. The theory lacked empirical evidences and hence less accepted by contemporary psychologists.

Behavioral Theory

Behavioural theory explained deviant sexual behavior as a learned condition. Laws and Marshall (1990) presented a theoretical model of sexually deviant behavior that described how sexually deviant interests may be learned through the same mechanisms by which conventional sexuality is learned. The model is divided into two parts: the acquisition processes and the maintenance processes. There are six basic conditioning principles (Pavlovian Conditioning, Operant Conditioning, Extinction, Punishment, Differential Consequences and the Chaining of Behavior); two social learning influences (Gener Social Learning Influences and Self-Labeling Influences); and three maintenance processes (Specific Influences, Specific Social Learning Influences and Intermittent Reinforcement). The model adopted the position that maladaptive behavior can result from quantitative and qualitative combinations of processes that were intrinsically orderly, strictly determined and normal in origin. Thus, deviant sexual preferences and cognition were acquired by the same mechanisms by which other individuals learned more conventionally accepted modes of sexual expression.

Attachment Theory

According to attachment theory, humans have an innate tendency to establish strong emotional bonds with others, and when individuals have some loss or emotional distress, they act out as result of their loneliness and isolation. The theory asserted the belief that adequate parenting style fostered appropriate social skills in children and facilitated balanced development. Research indicated that poor quality of attachment and sexual offending were related. Marshall (1989) found that men who sexually abused children often had not developed the social skills and self confidence necessary for them to form effective intimate relations with peers. This failure caused frustration in these men that may cause them to continue to seek intimacy with underaged partners.

Seidman et al. (1994) conducted two studies aimed at examining intimacy problems and the experience of loneliness among sex offenders. According to these studies, sex offenders had deficiencies in social skills (i.e., problems in accurate perception of social cues, problems in deciding on appropriate behavior and deficiencies in the skills essential to enact effective behavior) that seriously restricted the possibility of attaining intimacy. The evidence suggested that deficiencies in intimacy were a distinctive and important feature of sex offenders. The rapists and non-familial child molesters in the sample appeared to be the most deficient in intimacy. Loneliness was also a significantly distinguishable variable in differentiating the sex offenders from controls and wife batterers.

Mulloy and Marshall (1999) proposed the concept of attachment style in influencing sexual behaviour. Marshall and Mar- shall (2002) presented the proposition that sexual offenders who have a preoccupied insecure attachment style will characterizeistically “court” the child and treats him or her as a lover.

Cognitive -Behavioral Theory

The theory addressed the way in which offenders’ thoughts affected their behavior; focused on the way in which sex offenders diminished their feelings of guilt and shame by ration-
so that he allowed himself to molest a child. The framework precisely described the high risk group of individuals who were more vulnerable to indulge in a sexual offence. According to this framework, a combination of coping problems and the stress exerted by these problems on the coping system of the individual contributed towards development of an attitude favourable to sexual abuse. This high risk or vulnerable nature in turn increased the probability that the individual often engaged in sexually deviant behaviour because his belief system has filtered out the normal inhibitions that prevent him to sexually offend a child.

Discussion

Psychological theories of child sexual abuse primarily offer divergent explanations or perspectives of the factors that carry an adult self to indulge in sexual relationship with a child. These factors range from abnormal genetic and physiological configuration to overactive id of human psyche, learned behaviour pattern, insecure attachment style, cognitive distortions to diminished internal barriers of human self. The theories indicate towards an etiology of child sexual abuse which is fundamentally an ill-organization of the human psyche, caused by various inherent and environmental factors. A critical analysis of these theories can serve towards innovating therapeutic measures for adequate rehabilitation of these sexual offenders. Nevertheless, a bigger challenge is to sensitize and empower the target group viz. children to accurately read the psychological and behavioural cues of offenders in advance to prevent the crime. Adequate and critical thoughts has to be laid on how to teach our children the common symptoms exhibited by offenders.

Conclusion

Child sexual abuse is a growing, but horrible inhumane menace of the modern world. Research evidences in social science, psychology and allied disciplines have emerged with findings that repeatedly rekindle the gravity of the sensitive issue of child sexual abuse. Growing incidents of children being sexually molested by the deviant adults have paved way for programmes and actions at the policy level, in schools and at home. The whys of such sexually deviant behaviour needs to be critically analyzed to formulate appropriate measures for such offenders. The present paper has attempted to highlight and summarize a few significant theories underlying the etiology of child sexual abuse. Every individual offender is different and many variables and thinking styles are attributed to the offenses made. Hence, understanding the theories could extend our scope of teaching our children to be safe and empower them to distinguish the lines between good and bad care.

REFERENCES