

**An anthropological glance
at
Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
and
Child Sexual Abuse
among a gypsy community of Pindora**

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A study by Sahil

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Introduction

Choice of the subject

Islamabad's inhabitants enjoy a level of life of a higher standard and quality than elsewhere in Pakistan. Nevertheless, Islamabad – Rawalpindi have their rural pouches with its impoverished communities. These environments make their inhabitants more vulnerable than others to CSEC because their insertion in the mainstream society is more problematic for various reasons. The main reason resides in their social isolation that can be understood as well as an auto-segregation behavior. Displaced populations (like the Afghani community) or marginalized minorities are easy victims because of their limited rights and their level of awareness. In the past very little has been done to study this sensitive issue among one of the most unknown populations in the academic circle, and in the common man's mind, the gypsy communities.

Sahil initiative to conduct a micro study among a gypsy community of this district will be a contribution to the assessment of CSEC in Pakistan. The information collected through the current field research will be beneficial for the Pakistan National policy and plan of action against CSEC and child sexual abuse.

Initially the subject proposed by Sahil was to make research on Garwi wali communities, which are known to be nomadic population as well. In the red light area of Lahore they are well known as sex workers and as music providers but in Islamabad district so far they have not been studied. For security reasons related to the area where they live, the study has been restricted to the gypsies of Pindora, which is in an open and easily accessible place.

Research has been conducted for approximately two months in a settlement of gypsies chosen almost arbitrarily. Before starting we did not know about their culture nor the fact that their members could be involved in prostitution, especially the children. The research was not founded on a basis that prostitution is known to be practiced openly like it is the case of Pir Wadhai, a previous research on male child prostitution conducted by Sahil. So, the findings of this research is not exempt of subjectivity but has tried to keep a certain distance from any precocious conclusions.

Methodology

Research objectives:

- Living standards and social organization of the gypsies
- Study the gypsy culture with its system of traditions and rituals and its possible relationship with prostitution. Assess if it embodies cultural practices and is embedded in their family and kinship systems.
- To find out if there are any indicators related to possible child prostitution activity among the gypsy children of both gender.
- Information from the insiders or outsiders for assessment of Child Sexual Abuse cases.
- To provide information about the risks these populations can face. The information collected during fieldwork may be used as a reference for Pakistan's National Plan of Action against CSEC

Significance of the study:

Anthropologists try to find methods to understand a specific culture and accepting straight away people's perception and society in a comprehensive way without prejudices. They try to give an integrative approach while studying the culture of a community. Every detail is linked in traditional communities. All the indicators must then be taken in consideration in order to understand the social organization in its globality.

First of all this study may be explained by the fact that there is very little interest in these gypsies of Punjab in the academic circle as well as in the common person's mind. No reference could be found on their culture in English or in Urdu while consulting the existing literature. When information was shared about my subject, the worst comments were made about them, as if they were less than even secondary citizens. Besides assessing if their children are involved in prostitution it is important that their culture should be highlighted; with the help of such studies proper measures can be taken in future to remedy the ignorance existing on both side.

Secondly, there are orthodox beliefs about gypsies. Most of the time when I shared my field of interest around me the same comments came out of the

discussion: “These people are all thieves and criminals...They will kill you, they are all corrupt.” This shows how these people are stigmatized with a bad reputation.

We will analyze the role of the children in this very specific culture and the parent’s perception about it. It will help us to approach them in a more global environment.

As we know child sexual abuse occurs everywhere and in every society. Yet, some disadvantaged people do not enjoy their elementary rights in the same way as other citizens. They do not have the proper tools to defend themselves in case they are abused in various manners. Our hypothesis was that they are more exposed to sell their bodies than other portion of the population who are more privileged.

Locale of study:

Geographical Location

The locale of the study is situated in Pindora, which is in between the cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Pindora is located on Pir Wadhai road, which is a busy road used by trucks and buses that go to Pir Wadhai bus station. The gypsy settlement are found in open places, strategically placed nearby the entrance of a bazaar and water facilities. We have chosen the settlement of Pindora because it was the largest one we could locate and its strategic position nearby Pir Wadhai, which is a well-known place for child prostitution. The number of tents (70 tents) compelled us to think that we could limit our field research to one place and not spread ourselves. The majority of the settlement is occupied by *changars*¹ of the *jogi* biradari while people of the Musali biradari occupy 10 percent.

Physically we can talk about Pindora settlement as a place defined by identity and history. It is a place as well as a non-place because in the eyes of the authorities they are not registered by Capital Development Authority. They are not itemized on any map.



The Researchers on the field in front of the gypsies' tent

¹ See further in profile of the target population
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Instrument of research:

Rapport Building

The first interactions are critical moments for an anthropologist; the self-presentation and the image reflected towards the target population are crucial. Our team consisted of two people 'a male and female researcher'. For 3 visits another female member assisted us in interviews with women.

The duration of the field research lasted approximately two month out of which 3 weeks were spent for rapport building in order to institute a trustworthy atmosphere. During the first contacts, the people were reluctant to talk. A mistake on our side delayed the research by using a note pad at the beginning of the rapport, which was clearly interpreted suspiciously by the people of the settlement. Most of them suspected us to be secret agents of the government, intending to report them and have them expelled from the settlement. This showed their fear of the outside world.

The fact that I was from abroad and therefore not likely to have any local probably helped to calm their fears. However, their curiosity increased as I was the first foreigner visiting their settlement.

The first interactions were mainly founded on a question-answer about my country and my self. This method is fully part of the ethnographic approach which is not simply based on an "observed and observer" relation but a reciprocal relationship. Another aspect that was an advantage was the two member team

which facilitated our access to the full sample of the settlement, both the male and the female sphere, avoiding any gender discrimination. They perceived us as “lovers” which opened a discussion, and a door to various comments, which contributed to jokes which relaxed the atmosphere by laughing together.

Non Participant Observation And Participant Observation

In the beginning of the research, we mainly focused on observation of these people in their environment. We spent a lot of time going from one tent to another observing that there are a large number of households in the settlement. It helped to gather information about their schedule and activities and profession of all the family members.

We were in direct contact with the physical aspects of the gypsy culture. These aspects include their *Jogi's* dresses, their living space, and interactions within the community....

The participant observation is a basic technique in anthropological research. On field, I found myself quite quickly wearing make up after receiving insistent advice that I should wear it as well as adjusting my eyebrows and nose and ear piercing. I also found my self in a tent one day watching the woman performing dances on a wedding day inspired by Bollywood, Punjabi and Pakistani movies. The observation was fully participatory as I had to perform a dance in my “own way” after which I felt signs of acceptance. Meanwhile the male member of the team was talking to the men in another tent.

Key Informants

Finding proper key informant was a difficult task because of the subject we were dealing with. In order not to hurt the targeted groups, we could not afford to talk about the subject openly but limited our work to collecting information through different indicators and on the basis of other people's indicators. We came across some difficulties with outsiders from Pindora, who had shared information previously with us about child prostitution activities of the gypsies. Their first enthusiastic commitment to help us turned into long hours of waiting for contact.

In order to locate the target area, first we had a key informant from Peshawar Morh who was a driver and helped us to find the targeted communities. Secondly we also established contacts with a few respondents among the children who were willing to provide us information on the subject.

Informal In-Depth Interview And Qualitative Method

We have chosen to work with informal interviews. The questionnaire used for the informal interviews were also semi-structured that helped us getting all the information the informant could provide under subject areas.

The method was qualitative. We worked on a small sample with individual depth interviews and observations that gave us the opportunity to experience the target group and know about their culture. Family structure, kinship, socializers, marital pattern and family structure and source of income are all part of the key cultural values.

The first pilot questionnaire about their daily routine helped us to refine the questionnaire in order to collect more data related to our subject.

Sampling

Twelve mothers: Four from Musali and eight from the Jogi biradari

Thirteen girls: Ten from Jogi and two from Musali

Ten boys were interviewed: five from Jogi and five from Musali

Two Clients from the community

Case Studies

For the sake of indepth study, four case studies have been done. Two of them are related to the story of a Musali girl and boy caught by the police, the other two concern clients living and working in Pindora.

Problems encountered in the field:

Resistance

As mentioned before, the first interactions were not easy. It exhibited how strong was their sense of protecting their limited 'identity' and living space. But once we were accepted, we discovered the most interesting and warm human beings. The simplicity of their lifestyle and their detachment from the institutionalized world charmed us. Maybe the gypsies have triumphed on earth by their concern of not being attached to it.

Communication Obstacle

As I speak French and English and the gypsies speak Punjabi, the communication obstacle was obvious. So we communicated through the male member of the team who is fluent in Punjabi, English and translated everything for me. This fact used to break the speed of the discussion, unfortunately. In the beginning his adjustment to their 'slang words' also took time. Sometimes frustration was felt when interacting with the women along with men, which, maybe, limited information.

Cultural difference

A cultural difference is always enriching. But we sometimes felt embarrassed because they thought we were from a "better society" even though we were comfortable with them and sat in their tents. We sometimes caught them

looking at our clothes with envy and they would even ask for them. Apart from this, we felt perfectly at ease during our stay in Pindora.

Time Constraints

Time constraints affected the quality of the research. Ideally, two month more would have been required in order to collect more detailed and go on with the interviews the girls and boys identified by the clients.

At first it was not possible to talk about CSEC in a direct way because the respondents would have reacted really badly which is expected. The interview could not be structured too much in order to keep maximum neutrality otherwise the answers would have been influenced by the type of questions we would have asked them. These questions had to stay quite general. A comparative study with another settlement located in an area known for prostitution in G -9 would have been most interesting. There was a reference by our respondents about the prostitution activity of girls from a settlement located in I -10 sector.

The Emotional Aspect

Preventing ourselves against an emotional upheaval was impossible; during the rapport building I was sometimes submerged by feelings of guilt.

The reason for this guilt feeling was that while the parents were starting to trust us, I was trying to discover if their children were involved into child prostitution. It felt if I was as intruding into their private life and betraying their trust.

Subjectivity

Subjectivity cannot be denied even if one follows a scientific method by trying to keep maximum objectivity. Nobody can be free of pre-conceived ideas, which is part of our cultural system during the process of socialization. During the interviews, very often, the people started to turn the conversation from its initial subject which made us lose our attention. We had to keep constantly in mind that one should always strengthen attentive listening and be aware of each and every saying of the respondent because it is his entire world with its system of values and his particularities. Another fact is that we first perceived their lifestyle as exotic because it is in every sense different from ours. This attitude displays an ethnocentric attitude because we were judging it from an outside point of view. When we started interviews about their lifestyle and their choice of living in tents, we realized that the same attitude towards people living in houses was arising in their comments which prove that everyone cultivates the same ignorance of others.

Profile of the target population:

“The Changar community of Pindora”

Taxonomy Clarification

Gypsy groups in Europe and elsewhere in the world are known to have forged an obscure collective identity known or unknown to the main stream community. By a singular distinction, one identifies the name of settled gypsy groups or societies. However this designation is less an autonym (created by them) than an heteronym (invented by us)². This situation of complex interaction has hardly changed during six centuries all over the world.

Even though, they have been very few investigations on the functioning of gypsy societies, an anthropological outlook can be useful to bring some information on a little known population. It will restore dignity to these “marginalized”, underprivileged and degraded communities by valorizing the particularities of their lifestyle. Studying a gypsy community raises the question of the relationship with other’s especially in Pakistan where the rapport building to another is strongly regulated through different social codes and patterns in term of an “inside and outside” relation. The construction of ones identity can only be possible through the rapport with another. The implicit codes are transmitted during the socialization process through various ways starting by the

² Affergan Francis, *La pluralité des mondes*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1997.

nature of the lineage and the cast system to which ones belongs, known as *biradari*. This biradari helps the people to identify each other and provides each one a defined place inside the larger community.

The gypsy community world is built on a dual reality strengthened by the rapport to each other. They perpetuate their culture through recomposing their forms of organization on the basis of being in permanent contact with the including society. They can be compared to an “ethnie without a land” who does not claim a land but nevertheless are attached to their city and district. The gypsy’s territory is the family and the community.

The images that rises in people’s mind is one of a wandering person carrying his bears, snakes and moving from one place to another. According to Sir Denzil Ibbetson (1988), historically their occupations included magic, fortune telling, copper-smithing, tinkering, mechanics, horse dealing and music³. Centuries have failed to change them. Their migration from one place to another has been subject of fiction and folklore, depicting their caravans and circuses and magical feats.

Gypsies in Punjab

The Punjabi gypsies are the original ones, because their history starts from these regions of Punjab before they migrated to Europe centuries ago. They are the indigenous people of the sub continent. On a collective level we distinguish

between various social and cultural groups, the gypsies of Pakistan being one of these groups. But most of the time, these designations are pure external products of the mainstream group. They live apart from the main stream and are easily recognized wherever they go and dwell; they are instantly identified by their looks, language, behavior and their down to earth life style. They live in tents at the outskirts of urban housing societies and in rural areas. Their culture is a combination of different customs they have picked up while roaming all over Punjab.

A research showed that:

“They are engaged into professions including labor, bangles and mud toy sellers, acrobatics, cane making, garbage collection, snake charming and begging near the vicinities of metropolitan cities. Among the gypsies of

Punjab, ethnically fifteen different designations related to their cast, professions have been located. We can find various groups



belonging to different origins and castes such as Qalandhar,

Jogi boys playing in front of the

³ Op cit. in Child rearing practices among the gypsies of Lahore district, Nazir Ahmad Ghazi, August 2004. An anthropological glance at Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and CSA..... 17

Changhar, Oudh, Musali, Chourigarh, Bathu, Jogi, Nut, Kanghar, Bazigar, Marasi, Lali-marasi, Koray, and Girjimar. The settlement we have studied is inhabited by Jogis where we could find members belonging to two biradari, the changars and the musalis.”⁴

The *changar* community of Pindora settlement belongs to the Shia sect of Islam. Even though there is no biradari system in Islam, some communities still present themselves as belonging to these biradari. It is part of the Pakistani cultural heritage of the sub-continent. Their forefathers were Hindus with a social organization based on class and caste system. Their interaction with the larger community is limited, except for their source of income.

❖ *The Jogi biradari*

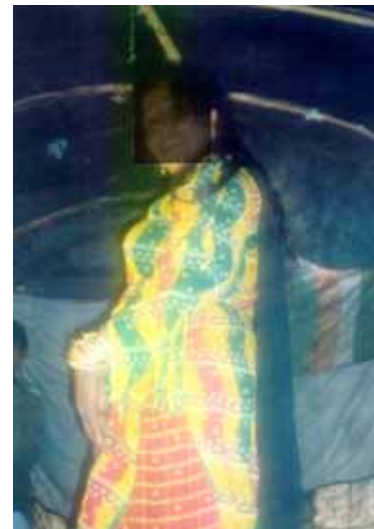
Jogi is the name of a caste as well as a profession. The profession is transmitted in a patrilinear mean from father to son.

There is a pronounced believe in the invisible world

among the Jogi which can be linked with their profession that besides being jogi



Jogi father displaying the snake



Jogi woman dancing

⁴ Child rearing practices among the gypsies of Lahore district, Nazir Ahmad Ghazi, August 2004. An anthropological glance at Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and CSA..... 18

are *neemhakim* (self-proclaimed doctors) who heal the evil eye with indigenous methods. The children collect snakes in jungles as well as the raw material for the treatments. The fathers are very proud of their profession and never miss an occasion to display their snakes. They work outside in markets most of the day while the women stay at home. Concerning the organization of the household, we first supposed the Jogis were living in a nuclear family system as the tents only contained a couple with children. But then we noticed we omitted to see their *chollah* (stove), which is the space where they cook. Actually all the family members including the married couple sleeping in a separate tent were using the same *chollah* for common meals which makes them function in a joint family system. The women and young girls of this biradari wear very colorful dresses and heavy make-up. They enjoy total freedom in the sense that they roam easily inside and outside the settlement without asking permission.

❖ *The Musali biradari*



The musali boys enjoying themselves with the family members inside the tent

The Musali literally means “untouchable”. They are associated to a low caste dealing with garbage collection reminding us of the unclean activity by low castes in the Hindu caste system that still has its influence here. Both female and male are working as scavengers. They segregate paper from glass and supply their raw material to the factories for recycling. They are very useful part of the society. This new role in the streamline has made them settle down for most of the time. The children start working at the age of 8 or 10 years old as garbage collectors and balloon sellers.

Both biradaris have very less relationship with the people of the communities. When we asked both groups about their relation with outsiders they told us that the people of the community are not willing to see them because they are rich and educated unlike them. This shows that they think themselves as inferior and having a lower status.

Kinship, family organization and marriage customs

Although this group is separated from the main community of Pindora, it is situated next to the main road. These people all belong to different regions of Punjab and Pakistan so we cannot talk about an homogeneous culture, some of their customs are similar while others are different. And they try to save these differences. But the difference of their kinship and family organization are evident.

The nature of their *kinship* is patriachal and patrilineal. Male members always lead the family and the tribe. When we entered the settlement for the first time we

met the chief of the settlement and we saw the influence he could have on the rest of the settlement. There is 'panchayat'⁵ system where there is no place for female members. A bride has to migrate towards groom's parent's house. But they don't mind the liberation and freedom of their female members. Female members are free to go at any place at any time. They can put their suggestions easily at any time. 'Panchayat' has a strong control on the tribe, but male members don't enjoy this power in their families. The male members allow freedom to their female members.

Concerning the marriage pattern, the people tie themselves in this bond to increase their lineage. Changar community has its own customs and they perform their ceremonies according to their community rituals. The marital age is different from one biradari to another. Jogi marry their children earlier as compared to Musali. Jogi arrange the marriage ceremony at the age of 15 or 16 years and for boys at the age of 19 or 20.

On the other hand, Musali arrange at the age of 19-20 and 22-24 for girls and boys respectively. During the marriage ceremonies boys and girls of Jogi community dance together, on the other hand Musali's girls do not dance in front of males.

Concerning the *biradari*, in both groups, endogamy is preferred. The members marry their children, in the biradari. They also prefer to marry cousins on *vata-satta* exchange. Outside marriages cultivate into problems like social boycott.

⁵ Panchayat t is similar to shoura. It is a male council composed of the eldest of the community.
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Early childhood and engagements make up their cognition to develop affectionate feelings towards each other, thus these arranged marriages have an element of love in the background.

Mangni (Engagement) is the ritual that binds a girl to a boy to marry to each other. From that moment, the boy of Jogi has to live in his wife's parent's house and he has to fulfill the needs of his wife's parents for a few months. This custom does not occur in the Musali community. After the engagement ceremony they proceed to a *gundi*, the parents of both side start dialogues about the ceremony and present gifts to the couple. This is called *Vartan Bhaji*.

During the ritual of *vattna*, the body of bride and groom are massaged from a mixture of oil, *haldi* (*turmeric*) and flour. They put oil seven times in one or seven days. After *vattna*, both male and female take a bath separately. It is called *khara*, the uncles of the bride and groom perform this ritual with a pot called *gharoli*.

Then follows *mehndi* they put henna on the hands of both the girl and the boy. The parents rub oil on the head and donate five rupees to poor people as "*Sadqa*" (alms giving to avoid any forth-coming danger or problem).

After this the *nikkah* can take place. The rituals include verses uttered by, Muslim clergy-man or a respected elder. The gathering prays for the happiness and safe life of the newly wed couple. Then all the members of the community and

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biradari offer gifts and money to the new couple. In fact they are returning the things which had been given to their children at the time of their marriage. This is called *Vihar*. After this *Vihar*, the sister of the bride presents milk to drink and demands money in return. This ceremony is called *dodh palai*.

During *munh dakhai*, the groom takes the bride to his house and she has to sit in front of gathering. Every woman comes to see her and presents money to the bride and pray for their happy future. After this *chaba* takes place. It is performed at the time of the *Valima*(celebration from the groom side) Every head from the biradri throws money on them when the groom comes for lunch. After marriage they make another *pakkhi* (tent) for the newly wed couple.

Data analysis and results

First assessment:

Our first impressions about the children belonging to these two biradari's were slightly different.

First, the physical appearance of the girls in both groups drew our attention because they were very varied. The girls are dressed differently. The Jogi girls wear colorful dresses with lots of beads and glitter while the Musalis girls wear colorless, simple, and patched dresses. The general behavior of the Jogi's is much more extrovert than the Musali's. Their body language exudes confidence. They are expressive in their conversations and they never miss an occasion to abuse each other.

Secondly, after interview about the daily routine of the children, we noticed that the Musali boys are involved in child labor as scavengers and balloon sellers, while very few Jogi boys go to work and presents themselves as having a carefree childhood. The boys seem to be more privileged than the girls among the Jogi's. None of these children had ever been to school; this fact increases their social isolation. They do not mix with any other children than those of the settlement.

Third, the general atmosphere of the settlement, which is not separated by a visible frontier, is of a completely different nature. We noticed that the two biradari's do not enjoy friendly relations. When we were on one side or the other, they were passing comments on each other. What really surprised us was the facility with which the Musalis talked about the bad behavior and prostitution activity of the Jogi girls. There was no proof from them of this activity. However, there was something strange about the Jogi girl's. Soon different signs and indicators made us suspect that they might well be involved in prostitution. Inconsistencies appeared between the statements of the children and the mother about the family budget and pocket money that was being spent by the children. Some of the mother's comments mentioned the bad environment of the settlement, she indirectly accepted that prostitution prevailed.

Indicators collected on field

- **Movie Viewing Practice:**

During their spare time the boys of both groups go and watch movies in hotels, Net clubs or movie halls. Among the Jogis, the girls also go to watch movies. We designed a special questionnaire to receive details about that leisure they seemed to enjoy daily. The public going to watches those movies is mainly masculine. The children told us that they are students or laborers. When they go to Netcafe, they sit two or three in a cabin. Two of the Jogi boys mentioned they watch pornographic movies besides and the Punjabi movies. After asking them what they felt about the seeing of these movies, they told us they could practice it on any girl of the settlement to satisfy their desire. The children of both genders among the Jogis mentioned they identified themselves with the actresses and actors, and told us that contrary to people's thinking, the Bollywood and Punjabi movies are not vulgar.

- **The Visitors To The Community Comments Outside The Settlement:**

While we were spending time in the settlement, the Jogi's were receiving visitors from time to time. Mostly men made those visits, and we noticed the embarrassment of the girls when the outsiders were there. We had a meeting with one of the visitors in order to have another source of information that would conform or invalidate the previous information collected from the Musali's about the Jogi girl's involvement in prostitution. We asked them if they had anything to

tell us. One of them, working in the main bazaar told us the names of a few girls he used to meet. We could not get more evidence as we did not see him again. Another interview was held with another client that we saw picking up one of the girls. A study case has been written on this client.

- **The Daily Ritual Of Make- Up And Visit To The Bazaar:**

The Jogi girls wear heavy make up and used it at specific times of the day. Usually they were getting prepared at the time when we were to leave the settlement around Maghreb. The girls would close their tents to start preparing them selves carefully. At that time, we felt we would intrude if we entered their tents. When we tried to accompany them to the bazaar they made excuses and avoided it. So the only way we could try to know about their activities was from a third source.

- **The Attitude Of The Mothers Towards Their Girls**

What we could see was that the mothers were pimping their daughters. The girls were much more silent in the presence of the mothers which showed that the mother had control over them. We witnessed that mothers did not stop their daughters from going away with men. The girls of these mothers were the ones we suspected to be prostitutes. We received confirmation though the names we received in the interview with a client.

Some girls showed us razor wounds on their arms. They said that they had conflicted these wounds on themselves during fight with their mothers. We were never able to discover the reason of these fights. This could have meant two

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things: They were unhappy about being sexually exploited or they were doing this to avoid being arrested by the police. This is a common phenomena used by street children (drug abuse).

- **Problems Faced By The Children**

When we asked the children if they were facing any dangers in their daily routine, the Musali boys faced the worst dangers. They are forced to work outside the settlement to support the expenditures of all the family. First of all, they faced the danger of being caught by the police, when they work in the evening selling balloons. The boys and girls of the Musali families shared their bitter experience with the police. Their balloons are confiscated, their money taken in the worst cases they bring them to the police station where the children have no way to escape. Their language was deconstructed yet we could understand that the police were using every form of abuse on them. They spontaneously told us spontaneously the police sexually abused girls in front of them.

On the Jogi's side, boys did not mention any danger except their fear of ghosts and witches that can be linked to their parent profession as *neemhakim (magicians)*. Only one of the Jogi girls told us that she was having fear of being raped by males inside the settlements

Possible causes of CSEC:

The gypsies carry stigmas through their identity whatever their caste Group may be. These facts make them marginalized from the rest of the populations. We noticed that they have limited access to health services and education, which increases the vulnerability of these children. Being shelved on the sidelines of society, they suffer from the cumulative effects of poverty, social isolation, violence and abuse.

- Beside the economic aspects, in various parts of the world the *cultural forms* of prostitution remain. Poverty is not the single factor. Girls can be involved into sex work in a socially accepted means of survival. In Thailand, for example, we can talk about cultural phenomena adding to this that it is the consequence of the globalization process. Prostitution in the capital cities empowers the social position of villagers and brings prestige and honor to the families.

- The “ethnic” discrimination plays a role as well. The low self esteem of these nomadic populations, and the bad image reflected by the outsiders as well as the insiders, makes them victims of sexual abuse.

- The lack of birth registration also plays a role because it fails to provide a clear identity that could legalize them and develop awareness of their rights.

- The begging activity by the children in the streets at an early age leads to the consequence that they often get caught by the police and suffer all kind of abuse.

- Child rearing practices show a high level of neglect towards the children.

The director of an NGO in Lahore called GODH has done field research on “Childrearing practices among the gypsies of Lahore” (Nazir Ghazi, 2004), this research was conducted in various settlements. The findings of that research show that the family being the basic social institution, the gypsies fail to cope with the demands of parenthood and fails to provide the basic needs of children. Our observation supports this statement.

We saw the mothers neglecting their children. The young babies were often crying without receiving any consolation. The mothers did not think that their children were capable of answering any questions saying that they know nothing and they were abusing the children all the time.

➤ Due to inadequate schooling facilities and the socio-economic conditions in Pakistan, these children are invariably deprived of educational opportunities. There is poor quality of education available premises in government schools and shortage of teachers. On the other hand, the fact that the children have to find means of subsistence for the family does not give them the proper time to follow the lessons.

Case studies:

Children dealing with the police

✧ **A Girl Study Case:**

S. is 13 years old. She belongs to a Musali family and lives in the nomadic settlement of Pindora. One day she went to a shop in Karachi Company to buy clothes. After 4 hours a woman's purse was stolen in that shop. Unfortunately she and six other girls of her family were held accused of stealing that purse. The shopkeeper called the police instantly. First of all the policeman took them to the Chowki, then later they were sent to the women police station.

She and six other girls who were older than her were severely corporally punished by the policemen as well as verbally abused. The police forced them to remove their duppattas, which is considered as an attack on their honor. She was kept for two days in the prison. After two days her family arranged a lawyer and paid 15,000 rupees so that she could be released. While she was sharing about her time in jail, she was recalling the hurt and pain.

✧ **A Boy Study Case**

F. is 7 years old. Sometimes he sells balloon and sometimes he begs when the business is down. He belongs to the Musali family. His daily income is from 100 to 150 rupees. F. fears the police. The reason is that he has been caught several

times by the police in charge of committing vagancy and theft. The most surprising thing is that after taking his whole day's income, police easily withdraw all the accusations. This is a routine thing for him and for the other small children of that settlement.

Once the police kept him in prison for two days and released him after taking 3,000 rupees from his family. During this time the police beat him so badly that his clothes were torn. The scars of wounds of that time can be easily seen on his body and face.

They beat him with sticks, whips and shoes.

He even acted out a policeman and beat the stock of wood with a shoe to show us that how the police abuse. However the child could not talk of child sexual abuse but he told us the policeman asked him to remove his shirt of.

He told us he has seen girls being abused by the police during their stay in prison but he did not narrate it in details.

F. tries to forget these episodes as a bad dream and prays not to become a prey of police again.

In spite he is a very lively boy and knows how to be happy with small things. He goes everyday to the mini cinema house or to a Net café to listen to Indian songs.

At the mini cinema by paying 5 rupees he also gets a cup of tea while watching the movie. He enjoys it a lot. He likes Akshay Kumar and male Indian Actors .

Case Study Of A Client Belonging To Pindora Community

We interviewed this person with his consent, after seeing him picking up a girl from the settlement several times.

A.A is a thirty year old man, who works in a furniture shop. He is one of the clients of the Jogi girls of Pindora settlement. He is the resident of Pindora chongi, but his work place is on the double road, which is next to Pindora from the Pirwadhai side. Pindora settlement is between his house and his work place. He earns approximately 15000 rupees per month. He is uneducated and unmarried person living with parents. He started interacting with the gypsies when he started working in this area. He spends round about twelve to fifteen thousand annually on these girls. He is well renowned in the settlement and goes there quite often. He told us that the access of these service providers is very easy in the settlement.

“These people are very simple and don’t have a notion of gender discrimination. And they give freedom to their female members to go to any place they want. There is no concept of pardah...Male members of the community go to work and stay away all day. So any one can access the girls easily”

Services providers start at a very early ages, they mostly start to do it this at the age of twelve but they are being exposed at early ages. The elders take them in the bazaar and train them into the profession through observation.

“In my love affair, the only pay is some gifts after long intervals. But when I visit her house, her brother asks for some pocket money. Then I throw five to ten rupees there.”

It is different if he visits the prostitutes of the Pindora community (the non-gypsies), then he has to pay hundreds or thousands of rupees. There are pimps between the clients and the girls. But in the *Changar* settlement he has to pay only small amounts. There is no specific time to access them. It depends upon him when he has time, they do not have any type of restrictions.

“Mostly I access to them during day but sometimes at night. They come out at night with their mothers by saying to their father that they are going to meet their relatives. To access them is not difficult, any one can access them in tents and also in the bazaar easily. Some times clients can have intercourse with them in their tents.”

When we asked if he wanted to marry his beloved from the Changar community he replied negatively and said *“Behti Ganga main haath dho lo aur chaltay bano”* (Wash your hands in the flowing river and move on!). He said that these girls are very beautiful and full of sexual expression unlike others girls of the community.

He was enchanted by these girls and their wonderful figures with large hips, large breasts but small waists.

He doesn't care about his health or sexual disease and does not use condoms. He says it would interrupt his sexual enjoyment. The girls cannot force them to use condoms as they need to have the income in order to survive. According to him, the girls of this settlement work as sex providers in order to improve their economic condition and fulfill their desires for a better life.

Conclusion:

The study shows that both Jogi and Musali groups of the changars community have limited interactions with the mainstream community and are marginalized.

Both have their own distinctive culture and customs.

They are stigmatized due to their profession.

Their elementary rights are not respected by the enforcing agencies.

The Musalis live in even poorer setting than the Jogis.

The facts raised during the field research showed that:

- The Jogi girls are involved in CSEC (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of children)
- The girls are being initiated into this profession by their mother at an early age.
- The mothers facilitate the girls availability and the meetings with the clients.
- It is not an organized profession with the usual panel of actors like pimps.
- The children, especially the boys, are involved in child labor at evening time that makes them easy targets.
- They are often picked by the police and are exposed to degrading treatment involving sexual abuse and violence.

This is a small pilot study,

A longer research which will require the anthropological approach of a full immersion among the community is only possible over a longer term period. The extension of the stay would have enabled us to differentiate that which part of their culture from exploitation. To understand the entire dynamics of child prostitution and sexual abuse in the Changar community, a follow up research would be needed.