

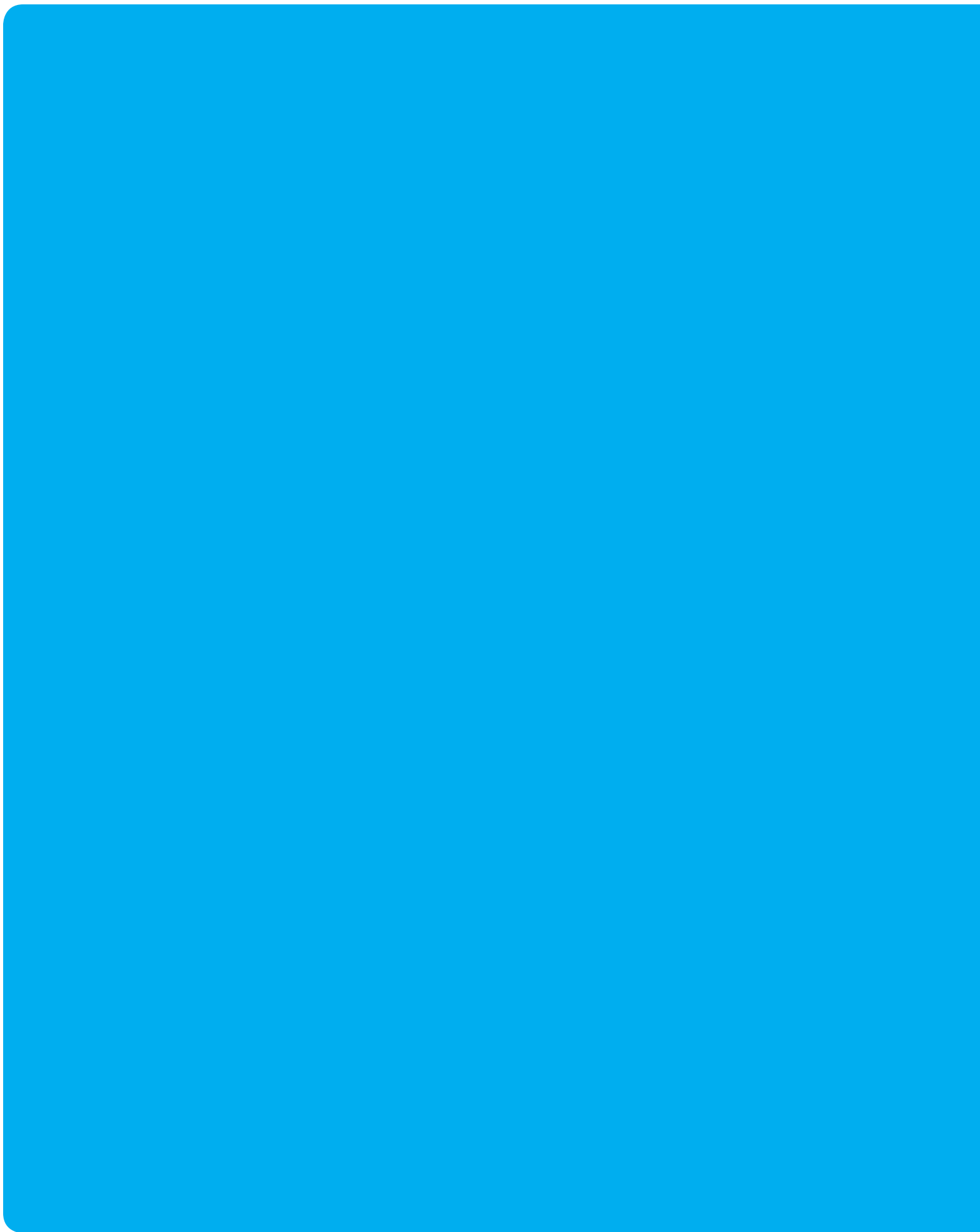
# VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN EDUCATION SETTINGS IN SOUTH ASIA

A Desk Review April 2016



UNICEF Regional Office  
for South Asia (ROSA)

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# Foreword

Schools are places where children gain knowledge and learn attitudes and behaviour that can shape their relationship with society. Children's experiences in educational settings have lasting impact on their physical, mental and emotional well-being. Safe and protected learning environments are thus essential for ensuring a healthy future for children.

The desk review commissioned by the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) has found that many children in South Asia are exposed to different forms of violence and threats in schools and other educational settings. Findings show that children face physical punishment, sexual abuse, harassment, bullying, and social stigma. Acts of violence are manifested differently for boys, girls and transgender children. Further, children's economic status, ethnic/caste identity, and other markers of vulnerability such as disability often shape the nature and degree of violence they experience.

The review suggests that most incidents of violence in schools go unreported. Given the authoritarian structure of schools in the region, children fear complaining about violence committed by teachers, staff and older peers. Sexual abuse in particular remains concealed due to cultural taboos surrounding sexuality and stigma attached to those who experience abuse. For children who face violence in educational settings, the promise and pleasure of learning and discovery can quickly turn into pain, trauma and fear. Such experiences not only ruin their present but also threaten their future, as those who experience violence in childhood are more likely to become perpetrators of violence as adults.

Although available evidence indicates that the problem is pervasive across the region, there is a lack of comprehensive data on the extent and impact of violence against children in educational settings. I believe this report will contribute in expanding the knowledge base for addressing violence against children and in narrowing the gap in evidence. This report will assist governments, international organizations, human rights bodies and civil society, UNICEF country offices and partners in their programming, policy dialogue and advocacy for ending all forms of violence against children in and around schools.

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We are grateful to the participants of the South Asia regional meeting of the country focal persons and key partners of the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) held in April 2015 in Kathmandu, Nepal, as well as to several partner agencies, including Plan International, UNESCO Bangkok, Save the Children Sweden, and World Vision International for sharing valuable data sources and information. We would also like to thank Clarice da Silva e Paula, Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF New York, and Kendra Gregson at UNICEF ROSA for their technical input. Finally, we extend our profound gratitude to young boys and girls in South Asia who are part of many school-based interventions and research efforts, and who continue to share with us stories of their daily lives.

## Disclaimer

This literature review contains descriptions and analyses of published and unpublished materials. Any opinions stated herein are those of the author and not necessarily representative of or endorsed by UNICEF ROSA. Any error or omission is attributed to the author.

# Acronyms

AIHRC	Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission
ASF	Acid Survivors Foundation
CBO	community-based organization
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CWIN	Child Workers in Nepal
DfID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DHS	Department of Health Services (Nepal)
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECCE	National Early Childhood Care and Education
GBV	gender-based violence
GCPEA	Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack
GEMS	Gender Equality Movement in Schools
GIEACPC	Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children
GNH	Gross National Happiness
GOI	Government of India
GSHS	Global School-based Health Survey
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDP	internally displaced persons
IMAGES	International Men and Gender Equality Survey
IPV	intimate partner violence
LGBT	lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
MASVAW	Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women
MOE Bhutan	Ministry of Education, Bhutan
MSMs	men who have sex with men
NCPCR	National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (India)
NGO	non-governmental organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PBEA	Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAIEVAC	South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children
SACG	South Asia Coordination Group on Action Against Violence Against Children
SRGBV	school-related gender-based violence
SRHR	sexual and reproductive health and rights
SRSB-VAC	Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNGEI	UN Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNICEF ROSA	United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office South Asia
UNiTE	Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO Bangkok	UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok
UNAMA	United Nations Mission to Afghanistan
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
VAC	violence against children
VAW	violence against women
VAWG	violence against women and girls
WDC	Women's Development Centre
WHO	World Health Organization





# Executive summary

Children in education settings in South Asia experience and witness various forms of violence. Corporal punishment is the most widely reported form of violence against children (VAC) in education settings. Physical violence, as well as sexual violence, abuse and harassment, are also prevalent in school settings across the region. At the psychological and emotional level, one of the most common forms of violence experienced by school children is bullying. With increased access to the Internet and mobile phone technologies, many children, especially young adolescents, have become vulnerable to a relatively new phenomenon called ‘cyber bullying’. Some sources indicate that children in religious schools are not always safe from violence either, though information on VAC in these settings is scarce. The scale of conflict-related VAC in education settings is high or very high in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, and has also been reported in Nepal and Sri Lanka. Children also experience violence in custody linked with military or armed activities in the region.

Available data reveal a gendered nature of VAC in education settings in South Asia. Boys seem to be more at risk for harsh corporal punishment and physical abuse than girls, while girls are typically more prone than boys to sexual abuse and psychological forms of bullying. The nature and extent of violence experienced by children is also determined by their caste/ethnic identity, economic status, and other markers of vulnerability such as physical disability.

The findings of this review highlight some of the key causes and impacts of school-related VAC in education settings in South Asia:

## Key findings

Our review found the following region-specific particularities in the causes of VAC in education settings:

- **Rapid socioeconomic changes:** Rapid social changes taking place in South Asia have led to some positive education outcomes, such as increased school enrollment for both girls and boys. However, for the majority of young people in the region, the uneven impacts of globalization have posed new and complex challenges such as unemployment, out migration, insecurity and increased vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.
- **Gender inequality and gender stereotypes:** Patterns of gender discrimination in broader society are reproduced and reinforced in learning environments, including in curricula and textbooks. Rigid notions of masculinity are linked to several forms of VAC in education settings, and such violence negates the common perception that boys can be perpetrators but not victims of violence. In many cases, children and adolescents (both girls and boys) face physical, sexual and psychological violence when they are perceived as deviating from prescribed gender roles.

**Acceptance of violence:** Certain forms of violence are widely accepted in the region as part of ‘normal’ life. In education settings, violence is often tolerated as a means to enforce disci-

pline or just another element of the rough and tumble of school life. Corporal punishment and other humiliating acts against children are a way for teachers and school staff, and even peers, to establish their authority and power. In some cases, teachers and staff, as well as senior students, have been found to abuse their authority over children in the form of sexual coercion. Accepting attitudes towards violence, combined with the authoritarian structure of schools, allow VAC in education settings to often go unreported.

- **Discrimination based on social markers:** South Asia is a deeply hierarchical society where children in many school settings face discrimination based on gender, caste, ethnicity, religion or socio-economic status. Evidence suggests that children from marginalized groups are often more vulnerable to school-based violence – both physical and psychological – than other children.
- **Cultural taboos and social stigma:** Cultural taboos surrounding sexuality and stigma attached to those who have experienced sexual abuse often prevent cases of sexual violence from coming to light. Children are reluctant to report acts of school-related violence because they fear reprisal, punishment, and ridicule.
- **Conflict, war and natural disaster:** Armed conflict, war, and natural disasters put children in education settings at greater risk for violence. Schools in South Asia have been attacked by armed groups as symbols of government authority, used by military forces as bases for counterinsurgency operations, and attacked by groups that oppose the education of girls. School children in conflict-affected areas have been abducted and recruited by armed groups. Students, teachers and staff have been killed and injured during armed attacks. School children also become more vulnerable to violence and abuse in the aftermath of natural disasters that cause loss of family members and assets, displacement, shock and trauma.

Violence in education settings is found to have the following impacts on young school-goers in South Asia; however, there could be other impacts that did not fall within the scope of this study:

- Experience of violence leads to poor academic performance, school absenteeism and dropout among children. Sexual and psychological violence instills fear and feelings of shame in children and reduces their motivation for learning, thus lowering their future life chances.
- Violence experienced or witnessed in education settings can have serious and life-long impact on children’s mental health and psychosocial well-being. It may lead to a wide range of emotional problems, including depression, loneliness, social anxiety, diminished self-esteem and increased risk of suicide.
- Armed conflicts in the region have put children in certain education settings at greater risk for violence, including sexual violence, serious injury or even death. Children in conflict-affected areas have had to suffer chronic disruption to classes, destruction of school infrastructure, closure of schools, abduction and recruitment in armed groups, as well as fear, anxiety and trauma as a result of violence.
- Experiencing or witnessing violence can have lasting consequences for children. Children exposed to violence are more likely to hold gender inequitable views in adulthood and to accept violence either as a victim or perpetrator in future relationships.

Based on available data, the review sheds light on the prevalence and manifestations of various types of VAC in education settings in the region:

### Physical violence and abuse

- **Prevalence:** High or very high throughout the region
- **Manifestations:** Inflicted by teachers – beat-

ing, slapping, kicking/pushing, hitting with an object, throwing things, pulling hair/ears, chasing after the child, caning on the shoulders and palms and squeezing children's fingers together with a pen, or making threats to kill or inflict injury; Inflicted by students – peer fights, bullying; Inflicted by others – acid violence.

### Corporal punishment and other disciplinary acts

- Prevalence: Extremely high, most widely reported (most commonly used against primary school students, and commonly used against lower secondary students)
- Manifestations: hitting with a cane or ruler, slapping, hitting in the back, boxing ears, applying electric shocks, making the child stand or assume stress positions for lengthy periods, threats of physical violence, enforced starvation, tying children to a chair/pole and beating them.

### Sexual violence, abuse and harassment

- Prevalence: Possibly widespread and faced by both girls and boys, though the extent is not fully revealed
- Manifestations: Non-consensual sexual experiences, including kissing/touching sensitive parts, oral sex and penetration, sexual harassment in form of text messages, por-

nographic pictures and videos; perpetrated mostly by male teachers but also by male students

### Bullying and cyber bullying

- Prevalence: On the rise though concrete evidence is lacking
- Manifestations: Sending unsolicited sexual messages, photos or video clips via the Internet or mobile phone; blackmailing

### Emotional and psychological violence

- Prevalence: High in general, though its prevalence in education settings in the region remains under-researched
- Manifestation: Verbal insults, yelling, abusive language, locking the child in a room or toilet; spreading rumours; perpetrated by teachers or peers

### Conflict-related violence

- Prevalence: High or very high (especially in Afghanistan and Pakistan)

Manifestations: Targeted attacks on education facilities, students or staff, or on education in general; killing, injuring students, teachers, staff; abduction and recruitment of children by armed groups; illegal arrests, detention and torture.





# INTRODUCTION

## Objective

The main objective of this desk study is to examine the causes and consequences, scale, nature and manifestations of VAC in education settings in South Asia, as well as to review regional and country-specific policy and programme responses. It is hoped that the findings of the review will contribute in broadening the knowledge base of all organizations and individuals working to eliminate VAC in the region. Apart from improving the understanding of VAC in education settings in South Asia, the review aims to highlight gaps in data and identify areas for further research.

## Methodology and data sources

The review encompassed published and unpublished literature relating to VAC in education settings in the region, including studies, assessments, surveys, evaluation reports, situation analyses, policies and legal documents. In addition to reviewing documents made available by UNICEF ROSA and partner agencies, literature was obtained via the Internet. This included peer-reviewed articles published in electronic databases and websites of relevant organizations and networks. In some cases, partners were contacted for additional information. Input was elicited from key informants, including participants of the 'South Asia Regional Meeting of the Country Focal Persons and Key Partners' of the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI), which was held from 7–8 April 2015 in Kathmandu, Nepal, and was organized by UNICEF ROSA.

## Audience

The target audience of this report includes UNICEF ROSA and concerned UNICEF country offices as well as other United Nations agencies; governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka; education policy makers and other stakeholders responsible for child pro-

tection and human rights protection in South Asia; donors and development agencies; non-governmental (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) working on the issue of VAC in education settings in the region and globally; teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, students and other individuals including media persons.

## Limitations

This review focuses on the eight countries in South Asia where UNICEF runs its programmes – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Literature reviewed covered documents produced in English that were shared by partners or widely disseminated, or those that could be accessed on the Internet. The review does not examine child labour/forced labour among children, violence faced by children in refugee/internally displaced persons' camp settings, or child marriage and its relation to learning outcomes. Thus the review may not provide a fully comprehensive picture of VAC in education settings in South Asia. The review, however, does mark an important step towards understanding and addressing the issue in the region.

## Definition of key terms

- **Child.** Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as "a person below the age of 18." While the review primarily focuses on the experiences of younger children, it also includes data on adolescents and youth, particularly where evidence base for younger children was not available.
- **Physical violence**<sup>1</sup> against children includes all types of corporal punishments and all other forms of torture, cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment as well as physical bullying and hazing by adults or by other children.

1 Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 13, The Right of the Child to Freedom from All Forms of Violence, paragraph 22, 2011.

- **Corporal punishment**<sup>2</sup> term refers to any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. It mostly involves hitting (“smacking,” “slapping,” “spanking”) children with the hand or with an implement – a whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, caning, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion.
- **Child sexual abuse**<sup>3</sup> involves engaging in sexual activities with a child who has not reached the national legal age for sexual activities. Such activities involve coercion, force or threat, abuse of a position of trust, authority or influence over the child, including within the family; or abuse of a child’s vulnerability, notably mental or physical disability or dependence. It also includes child prostitution and child pornography, participation of a child in pornographic performances, intentional causing, for sexual purposes, of a child who has not reached the legal age for sexual activities, to witness sexual abuse or sexual activities, and the solicitation of children for sexual purposes.<sup>4</sup>
- **Mental (psychological) violence**<sup>5</sup> is often described as psychological maltreatment, mental abuse, verbal abuse and emotional abuse or neglect. This can include all forms of persistent harmful interactions with a child; scaring, terrorizing and threatening; exploiting and corrupting; spurning and re-jecting; isolating, ignoring and favoritism; denying emotional responsiveness; neglecting mental health, medical and educational needs; insults, name-calling, humiliation, belittling, ridiculing and hurting a child’s feelings; exposure to domestic violence; placement in solitary confinement, isolation or humiliating or degrading conditions of detention; and psychological bullying and hazing by adults or other children, including via information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as mobile phones and the Internet (known as ‘cyber-bullying’).
- Education settings: Besides formal early childhood development centres and primary and secondary schools, education settings also include non-formal education sectors such as community-based learning centers, faith-based learning institutions such as madrasas and monastic and Koranic institutions, second-chance or catch-up education learning centers, skills/vocational learning centers, basic education learning centers, military/police-run schools and in some cases juvenile justice centers which may or may not provide education. The term ‘violence in education settings’ refers to violence in and around education settings as well as on the way to/from school.
- South Asia is a culturally and geographically diverse region comprising eight countries namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.<sup>6</sup>

2 The Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment of Children; The Committee on the Rights of the Child, The Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Treaty Body. Retrieved from: [http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/hrlaw/crc\\_session.html](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/hrlaw/crc_session.html).

3 Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, Article 18, adopted 2007, entered into force in 2010.

4 Retrieved from: [http://www.unicef.org/tokyo/jp/Internationally\\_Recognized\\_Child\\_Protection\\_Terminology\\_Final.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/tokyo/jp/Internationally_Recognized_Child_Protection_Terminology_Final.pdf).

5 Conclusions of the Regional Conference on Strengthening Child Protection Systems to Protect Children from Neglect, Abuse Exploitation and Violence. UNICEF, Retrieved from: <http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/DefiningViolence.pdf>.

6 For more information on UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, see: <http://www.unicef.org/rosa/about.html>







## CAUSES AND MANIFESTATIONS

While there are many commonalities between the causes of VAC in South Asia and in other parts of the world, several factors are specific to the socio-economic, political and religious context of the region. This chapter focuses on region-specific factors that shape the extent and nature of VAC in education settings.

## Changing socioeconomic reality

Young people in South Asia live in a world that is rapidly being transformed by globalization, urbanization, migration, and technological advancement. While these developments have brought new opportunities for some, the complexity and unpredictability of these changes have also created new challenges for a large proportion of children and young people in education settings. According to the National Youth Policy (2012) of Bhutan, “Young people in Bhutan today grow up in a different and complex world...With limited life experience, inadequate resources and decision making skills, they are exposed to the risk of neglect, abuse and exploitation.”<sup>7</sup> In the Maldives, “economic development, increasing consumerism and western influences, urbanization as well as internal migration, shifts in religious sentiments and democratization have shifted ideas and discourses surrounding gender, family and relationships.”<sup>8</sup> In Nepal, a study conducted among 81 young men and women aged 18–29 years revealed that many youth feel they must own expensive commodities such as a motorcycle and a mobile phone in order to maintain their status among their peers.<sup>9</sup> This need to define themselves by commodities is also prevalent among youth in other parts of South Asia.<sup>10</sup> The very idea of what it means to be young is thus being re-defined in the changing social and economic context. This adds a new layer of complexity as to why and how VAC plays out in education settings.

## Gender discrimination and gender stereotypes

**“THE PREVALENT VIEW IS THAT GBV IS MOSTLY ABOUT WHAT MEN DO TO WOMEN; SO, IN AN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT, PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE ARE ASSUMED TO BE MALE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AND THEIR VICTIMS TO BE FEMALE STUDENTS (AND SOMETIMES FEMALE TEACHERS). YET, IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IS COMPLEX AND VIOLENCE CAN BE PERPETRATED WITHIN AS WELL AS ACROSS GENDER LINES (I.E. BY BOTH MALES AND FEMALES ON BOTH MALES AND FEMALES).”<sup>11</sup>**

Several forms of violence against children are linked to entrenched notions about gender.<sup>12</sup> There is a common tendency to associate GBV primarily with what women experience at the hands of men. But as Leach and Dunne point out, “violence can be perpetrated within as well as across gender lines (i.e., by both males and females on both males and females).”<sup>13</sup> A recent multi-country study conducted among more than 9,000 students aged 12 to 17 years from Grades 6 to 8 found that gender stereotyping acts as a driver of school-related gender based violence. One third of student respondents in Nepal and nearly two-thirds in Pakistan claimed that girls and boys in their

- 7 Department of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan. 2011. ‘National Youth Policy.’ Thimphu: Author, cited in UNICEF. 2013. Literature Review Report. ‘Study on Violence Against Children in Bhutan.’ Hong Kong: Child Frontiers Ltd. and UNICEF.
- 8 Fulu, E. 2013. ‘Domestic Violence in Asia: Globalization, Gender and Islam in the Maldives.’ Abingdon and New York: Routledge, as cited in Correia, M., El-Horr, Ghosh, P., J., Pawlak, P. and Smith, D. 2014. ‘Youth in the Maldives: Shaping a New Future for Young Women and Men Through Engagement and Empowerment.’ Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.
- 9 Burrall, A. Chan, J., Greene, L., and Tymeson, K. May 2012. ‘Striving for Respect: Male Youth’s Transition to Manhood. Case Studies from Nepal and Sri Lanka.’ The World Bank South Asia Social Development Unit. DRAFT.
- 10 Ibid. Retrieved from: <https://elliott.gwu.edu/sites/elliott.gwu.edu/files/downloads/acad/laHS/male-youth-2012.pdf>
- 11 Leach, F., Dunne, M., and Salvi, F. 2014. ‘School-related Gender-based Violence’, p.3.
- 12 Barker, G. and Pawlak, P. 2012. ‘Hidden Violence Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Adolescent Boys.’ Briefing Paper. Washington D.C.: MenCare.
- 13 Leach, F., Dunne, M. and Salvi, F. 2014. ‘School-related Gender-based Violence: A Global Review of Current Issues and Approaches in Policy, Programming and Implementation Responses to School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) for the Education Sector.’ UNESCO, p. 3.

schools don't play together. The research concluded that, "different participation levels between girls and boys in sports and in the classroom reflects gender discriminatory practices as well as unequal gender roles wherein students are encouraged to behave 'in accordance' with their gender. Teachers are uncomfortable with girls and boys behaving like each other, and take it upon themselves to teach them 'the right way.'"<sup>14</sup> In many schools across the region, girls are encouraged (and expected) to do jobs that require 'lady-like' skills (e.g., to decorate), while boys are directed towards jobs that require physical strength or leadership (e.g., move furniture or lead classroom activities). In Pakistan, a study conducted among fifth and sixth grade students in four schools found that boys are heavily socialized in the norms, morals and values of rigid masculinity. They identify masculinity with "bravery, courage, independence, freedom of movement, being active, being knowledgeable, strength, power, aggression and authority."<sup>15</sup>

Any deviance from such values invites ridicule, disapproval or reprimand, and sometimes leads to violence.<sup>16</sup> This may include physical violence, such as "beatings, being locked up, sometimes even being burned," or "extreme psychological violence including being called bad names, being screamed at or otherwise humiliated."<sup>17</sup> In Bangladesh and India, kothis (feminine men) have faced harassment and sexual violence in schools.<sup>18</sup> This is consistent with the findings of a 2003 study conducted among girls and boys in South and Central Asia. The study revealed that "boys may be more vulnerable to certain types of violence as the prevailing context and social constructs of boyhood in the region imply they should be capable of protecting themselves."<sup>19</sup> Similarly, teachers may tolerate male students' domination of classroom space at the expense of girls' participation in lessons and may allocate more public and higher status tasks and responsibilities to male students.<sup>20</sup>

14 ICRW And PLAN. February 2015. 'Are Schools Safe and Equal Places for Girls and Boys in Asia? Research Findings on School-Related Gender-Based Violence.' p. 14.

15 Abid, S. 'Enculturating Masculinity: Young Boys Learning Gender Performativity.' Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. SANAM and Save the Children Pakistan.

16 Ibid.

17 Kane, J. 2006. United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children. 'Violence against Children in the Countries of South Asia: the Problem, Actions Taken and Challenges Outstanding.' Regional Consultation South Asia.

18 Bondyopadhyay, A., Khan, S., Mulji, K. 2005. 'From the Front line: A Report of a Study into the Impact of Social, Legal and Judicial Impediments to Sexual Health Promotion, Care and Support for Males Who Have Sex with Males in Bangladesh and India.' Naz Foundation International, p. 6.

19 Slugget, C. 2003. 'Mapping of Psychosocial Support for Girls and Boys Affected by Child Sexual Abuse in Four Countries in South and Central Asia.' Save the Children Sweden-Denmark.

20 Leach, F., Fiscian, V., Kadzamia, E., Lemani, E., and Machakanja, P. 2003. 'An Investigative Study into the Abuse of Girls in African Schools.' Education Research No. 56, London: DfID. Also see: Dunne, M., Humphreys, S. and Leach, F. 2006. 'Gender Violence in Schools in the Developing World.' Gender and Education, 18(1), 75–98, as cited in Leach, F. 2008. Commonwealth Education Partnerships.

## GENDER REPRESENTATIONS IN TEXTBOOKS

Curricula and textbooks shape the nature of education children receive in schools. However, they are not always free from gender discriminatory messages. In the Maldives, a 2010 review of textbooks found that the subject of gender was either absent in the textbooks, or discussed in ways that reinforced stereotypes. Men were represented as strong and courageous rulers, philosophers and thinkers, while women were shown as being occupied with cooking, raising well-behaved children, caring for the elderly, organizing the household, and in some instances, weak and defenseless.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, a 2008 review conducted in Pakistan found that textbooks under the national curriculum portrayed men as brave heroes and leading religious and military figures, while women were defined by their domesticity.<sup>22</sup> A more recent study revealed that the new textbooks remain steeped in gender stereotypes, and continue to naturalize masculinity and 'male knowledge.'<sup>23</sup> There are, however, ongoing efforts to improve quality of education in Pakistan. The Ministry of Capital Administration and Development, together with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), is executing the National Basic Education Policy Programme (2010–2015) that seeks to reform the education sector, especially the curriculum and textbooks.<sup>24</sup>

### Acceptance of violence

VAC in education settings cannot be seen in isolation from the discrimination and aggression that takes place in the family, community and broader society. A number of studies show that men and women in South Asia tend to accept violent attitudes and behaviour as part of normal life. In Bangladesh, a multi-country study on men and violence found that 95 percent of urban men who had committed rape (from a sample size of 1,712) had faced no legal consequences, a fact that can partly be attributed to accepting attitudes towards violence.<sup>25</sup> In 2007, the Demographic and

Health Survey showed that 31.4 percent of ever married females aged 15–24 years think wife beating is justified under certain circumstances.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, 47.3 percent of women in India and 23.6 percent of women in Nepal held this view.<sup>27</sup>

Against this background, certain acts of violence inflicted on school children are seen as acceptable.<sup>28</sup> Such acts may be perceived as a normal way to establish a hierarchy between teachers and students or to reinforce certain rules or behaviour in classrooms. Occasional slaps, spanking or exclusion from class activi-

21 Periodic State Report submitted by the Maldivian Government. 2010. Human Rights Commission of Maldives. July 2011. Shadow Report under ICERD in response to the Maldives government's report under the Convention. Retrieved from: <http://www.asiapacificforum.net/members/associate-members/republic-of-the-maldives/downloads/reports-to-un-committees/report-to-cerd-committee-august-2011>

22 Durrani, N. 2008. 'Schooling the "Other": the Representation of Gender and National Identities in Pakistani Curriculum Texts.' *A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 38 (5). pp. 595-610.

23 For more information, see Rae Lesser Blumberg. 2015. 'Eliminating Gender Bias in Textbooks: Pushing for Policy Reforms that Promote Gender Equity in Education.' Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report. Paris: UNESCO.

24 The National Basic Education Policy Programme. November 2014. For more information, see: <http://www.giz.de/expertise/downloads/giz2014-en-faltblatt-18-pakistan.pdf>

25 Fulu, E. et al. 2013. 'Why Do Some Men Use Violence against Women and How Can We Prevent It? Quantitative Findings from the UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific.' Bangkok, Thailand.

26 Population Council. 2009. 'The Adolescent Experience In Depth: Using Data to Identify and Reach the Most Vulnerable Young People.' Country Reports. New York.

27 Ibid.

28 ActionAid International. 2004. 'Stop Violence Against Girls in Schools.' Johannesburg. Retrieved from: [http://www.actionaid.org.uk/\\_content/documents/violenceagainstgirls.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org.uk/_content/documents/violenceagainstgirls.pdf). Also see: Leach, F., Dunne, M. and Salvi, F. 2013.

ties then become simply a method of controlling and disciplining ‘disruptive’ students. A 2014 study conducted among school children in four districts of Uttar Pradesh, India, found that both parents and teachers strongly accept punishments as a means of disciplining children. On the other hand, students expressed dislike, anguish and hate for punishments, yet they accept it as a way of life.<sup>29</sup> As students get exposed to frequent incidents of violence by peers and adults, they begin to see violence as a normal and ‘accepted way to resolve issues and conflicts.’<sup>30</sup> Another recent study in Nepal and Pakistan revealed similar attitudes towards school-based violence against children.<sup>31</sup> In Bhutan, corporal punishment is seen as a necessary element of education without which ‘the traditional unwavering loyalty of students to teachers would break down.’<sup>32</sup> A Human Rights Watch report from 2013 suggests that corporal punishment is perceived no differently in schools in Afghanistan.<sup>33</sup>

Some forms of violence in education settings are not considered abusive, while others may be tolerated or simply dismissed. Mirsky (2003) cites a study on sexual harassment in Delhi University, India, which showed that female students regarded ‘eve-teasing’ as a ‘milder form of sexual harassment but a violation all the same,’ whereas male students regarded it as ‘light in nature’, ‘flattering’ and ‘fun’. The so-called eve teasing was found to be so common that it could be ‘screened off with a cultivated sense of indifference.’<sup>34</sup> In fact the very term ‘eve teasing’ misleadingly conveys a spirit of playfulness and light-heart-

edness. As a 2004 report by ActionAid points out, ‘incidents other than rape are dismissed under the inappropriate term “eve-teasing.”’<sup>35</sup> Key informant interviews conducted as part of PLAN International and ODI’s review of literature on school violence found that, ‘at the community level, people don’t take school-based violence into account unless very extreme incidents occur: it’s only violence when a girl gets raped or killed.’<sup>36</sup>

### Authoritarian structure of schools

Hierarchical structures and practices dominate social life in South Asia. As Pinheiro writes, ‘These structures and practices have extended to schools and the relations between school staff and children.’<sup>37</sup> A 2008 review of literature on school-based violence in Asia notes that ‘the teacher’s authority is central to the learning process in schools throughout the Asian region.’<sup>38</sup> It is hence not surprising that teachers or other adults often resort to violent acts in order to establish their superiority, authority and power over students. In Uttar Pradesh, India, it was found that students are punished for a number of reasons, such as not keeping up with schedule and cleanliness regulations (e.g., late to school, not coming in uniform, etc.), academic related issues (e.g., incomplete home assignment, low academic performance, not taking a book to school, etc.), not meeting classroom expectations of school authorities (e.g. inattentive, talking in class, making noise in class, etc.), troublesome behaviour (e.g., disturbing other children in class, lying, stealing, etc.), and offensive or

29 WIZMIN. 2014. ‘Protective Environment in Schools: A Study in Jaunpur, Mirzapur, Moradabad and Sonbhadra Districts.’ A qualitative study with children in four districts of Uttar Pradesh.

30 ICRW and PLAN. February 2015, p. 10.

31 Ibid.

32 Gittins, C., Garner, P., Burnett, N. April 2012. ‘Reducing Violence against Children in Schools.’ Report and commentary on the analysis of a sample of UNICEF country programmes. Northampton, U.K: Northampton Centre for Learning Behaviour, University of Northampton.

33 Human Rights Watch. 2013. ‘Breaking the Silence: Child Sexual Abuse in India.’ Washington, DC: Author.

34 Mirsky, J. 2003. ‘Beyond Victims and Villains: Addressing Sexual Violence in the Education Sector.’ London: Panos, as cited in Leach, F. 2008, p. 18.

35 ActionAid International. 2004. ‘Stop Violence Against Girls in School.’

36 Interview with Madhuri Mukherjee. 2007, cited in Jones, N., Moore, K., Villar-Marquez; E., and Broadbent, E. 2008. ‘Painful Lessons: The Politics of Preventing Sexual Violence and Bullying at School.’ London: ODI, and Surrey: PLAN International, p. 323.

37 Pinheiro, P.S. 2006. ‘World Report on Violence Against Children.’ Secretary-General’s Study on Violence against Children. Geneva: UNICEF.

38 PLAN. 2008. ‘Learn Without Fear: The Global Campaign to End Violence in Schools.’ Woking, U.K.: Author.

hurtful behaviour (e.g., bullying and aggression towards peers).<sup>39</sup>

The hierarchical structure of education settings provides numerous opportunities for sexual and physical abuse.<sup>40</sup> A study by Population Council (2003) revealed that certain adults abuse their authority over children in school settings 'in the form of sexual coercion.'<sup>41</sup> The report cites the 2002 'World Report on Violence and Health' by the World Health Organization (WHO), which states that the school is the most common place where children and adolescents experience sexual coercion and harassment. In some cases, perpetrators of sexual coercion may be older students. A study conducted in 12 educational institutions in South Asia found that children considered physically stronger or dominant routinely had sex with weaker or passive children.<sup>42</sup> Such incidents of abuse often go unreported due to children's 'lack of trust and confidence in school structures and fear of being blamed.'<sup>43</sup> A UNICEF study from April 2010 on the sexual exploitation of boys in South Asia found that 'enticement of financial rewards', 'passing marks', 'the threat of punishment', the fear of not being believed, and the lack of access to service providers are factors that compel students to stay silent about their abusive experiences.<sup>44</sup>

### Discrimination based on social markers

Apart from gender, other social markers such as caste/ethnicity, class and religion serve

as a basis for discrimination and violence in schools. In South Asia, children and adolescents from 'lower' castes, indigenous groups and ethnic minorities continue to be targeted for violence.<sup>45</sup>

Caste status plays a significant role in increasing children's vulnerability to violence in school.<sup>46</sup> Findings from the regional consultation on 'Violence Against Children in South Asia' (UNICEF 2005) suggest that children from so-called lower castes and ethnic minority groups are more vulnerable to violence. According to the report, 'corporal punishment in schools is sometimes administered with greater severity or frequency to children from groups that are subject to stigma and discrimination in the whole of society.'<sup>47</sup> In India, it was found that 6,632 children of ages 3 to 17 faced caste-based violence in private and government-run schools in seven states.<sup>48</sup> UNICEF has found that Dalits are much more likely to be victims of corporal punishment,<sup>49</sup> while Dalit and Adivasi schoolgirls are more vulnerable than other schoolgirls to bullying and verbal abuse.<sup>50</sup> This point is reiterated by a number of researchers, including Balagopalan and Subramanian (2003), who found that Dalit and Adivasi children in primary schools suffer widespread verbal abuse at the hands of their upper-caste teachers. This has a critical impact on the way in which these first generation Dalit and Adivasi schoolgoers view themselves as learners.<sup>51</sup> High caste teachers are inclined to humiliate children from Dalit

39 WIZMIN. 2014. 'Protective Environment in Schools.'

40 Frederick, J. 2008. Independent observation of government and NGO shelters during consultancies for UNICEF and Terre des hommes (Lausanne), as cited in Frederick, J. 2010. 'Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Boys in South Asia: A Review of Research Findings, Legislation, Policy and Programme Responses.' Innocenti Working Paper No. 2010-02. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

41 Jejeebhoy, S. J. and Bott, S. 2003. 'Non-Consensual Sexual Experiences of Young People: A Review of the Evidence from Developing Countries.' Working Paper No. 16. New Delhi: Population Council, p. 15.

42 Frederick, J. 2010. 'Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Boys in South Asia'.

43 ICRW And PLAN. February 2015.

45 Jones, N. et al. 2008. 'Painful Lessons: The Politics of Preventing Sexual Violence and Bullying at School.'

46 Ibid.

47 UNICEF. May 2005. Regional Consultation on Violence Against Children in South Asia. Islamabad, Pakistan.

48 National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). 2011. 'Eliminating Corporal Punishment in Schools.' New Delhi: Author.

49 UNICEF. 2009. 'Education in Emergencies in South Asia: Reducing the Risks, Facing Vulnerable Children.' UNICEF ROSA and the Centre for International Education and Research, University of Birmingham.

50 UNICEF. May 2005. Regional Consultation on Violence Against Children in South Asia. Islamabad, Pakistan.

51 Balagopalan, S. and Subramanian, R. 2003. 'Dalit and Adivasi Children in Schools: Some Preliminary Research Themes and Findings.' IDS Bulletin, Vol. 34, No 1.

and other lower castes by labelling them as dull and incapable of learning.<sup>52</sup> In Nepal, particularly in western Nepal, schools maintain separate drinking wells for Dalit and non-Dalit children. Dalit children who are found to be drinking from non-Dalit taps face punishment. They are also more prone to being beaten and humiliated in the name of enforcing discipline.<sup>53</sup>

A student's socio-economic status may also determine the extent and type of violence he or she may experience in school. In Sri Lanka, a study conducted among 23 girls who had faced abuse in a residential school run by the Department of Probation and Child Care found that their vulnerability to sexual abuse was correlated to their low socio-economic status.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, in four selected districts of Uttar Pradesh, India, schoolteachers were found to discriminate against students or stereotype them based on their socio-economic status. Nearly 1 in 5 teachers interviewed believed that children from poor families are 'slow learners,' and almost 39 percent of all teachers interviewed assumed that children with illiterate parents had no intelligence. Meanwhile, more than 49 percent of teachers associated the intelligence of students with their gender.<sup>55</sup>

### Children with disabilities

According to UNICEF, children with disabilities in South Asia have little or no access to basic education. Even the few who gain entry into

schools are placed apart from other children, often in separate classrooms, because it is assumed that 'they need to be separated and treated differently.'<sup>56</sup> Further, a 2011 study by Save the Children concluded that 'children with disabilities are at disproportionate risk for physical and sexual violence, including in child-care institutions and schools.'<sup>57</sup> As the United Nations report 'Tackling Violence in Schools' (2011) states, 'Powerlessness, social isolation and stigma faced by children with disabilities make them highly vulnerable to violence and exploitation in a range of settings, including in schools.'<sup>58</sup> A number of studies have shown that children with learning difficulties and special needs are particularly prone to discrimination, bullying, corporal punishment and other forms of violence.<sup>59</sup> In India, 38 percent of children with disabilities of ages 6 to 13 were found to be out of school.<sup>60</sup> Thus, globally and in the South Asian region, children with disabilities are less likely to enroll and complete a full cycle of basic education. They struggle to remain in school, and are often excluded from and within the traditional classroom.

### Discrimination against sexual minorities

Discriminatory practices in schools reflect attitudes and behaviour prevalent in the wider community. Thus, socially condoned homophobia in South Asia serves as a basis for openly sanctioning violence against children who are actual or perceived as lesbian, gay, bi-

52 Jabeen, F. and Karkara, R. 2006. 'Mapping Save the Children's Response to Violence Against Children in South Asia.' Kathmandu, Nepal: Save the Children, citing findings from the 'Public Report on Basic Education' (PROBE) 1998. This study was undertaken by Delhi School of Economics to review and analyse the situation of basic and primary education in India. Also see: Dreze, J. and De, A. 1999. Public Report on Basic Education in India. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, as cited in UNICEF. N.D. 'Violence against Children in Schools and Educational Settings.' Retrieved from: [http://www.unicef.org/sciuhub.org/tfyr Macedonia/MK\\_World\\_Report\\_on\\_Violence\\_against\\_Children\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/sciuhub.org/tfyr Macedonia/MK_World_Report_on_Violence_against_Children(1).pdf)

53 UNICEF. 2009. 'Education in Emergencies in South Asia: Reducing the Risks, Facing Vulnerable Children.'

54 Ramakrishnan, P.G. 2002. 'How Sexual Abuse Impacts on Personality Adjustment and Integration into Society of a Cohort of Girls Subjected to Sexual Abuse (resident in an approved school run by the Department of Probation and Child Care).' Dissertation submitted to the University of Colombo in partial fulfillment of requirements for a Master's degree in Education.

55 WIZMIN. 2014. 'Protective Environment in Schools.'

56 UNICEF. 2005, 2003. 'Children with Disabilities: Towards Inclusive Education in South Asia' (2005); and Examples of Inclusive Education in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (2003). Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA.

57 Save the Children UK. 2011. 'Out from the Shadows: Sexual Violence against Children with Disabilities.' London: Author.

58 Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. June 2011. 'Tackling Violence in Schools: A Global Perspective.' Prepared for the expert meeting held in Oslo, Norway. For information on increased vulnerability of children with disabilities to corporal punishment, see PLAN 2008, p. 12.

59 For example, see: UNICEF. 2005. 'Summary Report: Violence against Disabled Children.' Nairobi: Author. Retrieved from [www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/UNICEF\\_Violence\\_Against\\_Disabled\\_Children\\_Report\\_Distributed\\_Version.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/UNICEF_Violence_Against_Disabled_Children_Report_Distributed_Version.pdf); Also see: United Nations. 2012. 'Tackling Violence in Schools: A Global Perspective.' New York Office of the Special Representative on Violence against Children.

60 UNICEF ROSA. 2014. 'All Children in School by 2015: Global Initiative on Out-Of-School Children.' South Asia regional study covering Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Kathmandu: Author.

sexual and transgender (LGBT). Such violence can range from verbal and physical abuse to expulsion from school.<sup>61</sup> Studies have shown that LGBT students across the region report experiences of violence, rejection, exclusion and discrimination.<sup>62</sup>

Even among sexual minorities, those who deviate from socially assigned gender roles and appearance are especially vulnerable.<sup>63</sup> A study found that 8 percent of hijra (transgender) had been unfairly removed from education settings, as compared to 3 percent of men who have sex with men (MSM). Transgender assigned female at birth complained that they suffered discrimination and exclusion among their peers, and that their teachers did not recognize their gender. However, unlike hijra assigned male at birth, they had rarely been removed from educational institutions and their educational outcomes were, in this study, found to be significantly better than that of other sexual minorities. In Nepal, a survey (2013) conducted by the United Nations Development Programme among more than 1,175 respondents across 32 districts found that third gender respondents (both those assigned male and those assigned female at birth) were more likely to report having experienced verbal harassment (roughly 20 percent for both) than gay/bisexual men (10 percent) or lesbian women (3 percent), and were more likely to report being denied access to education (6–8 percent) compared to gay, bisexual and lesbian youth (2–3 percent).<sup>64</sup> These relatively low levels may be linked to longstanding advocacy work by the Blue Diamond Society,

an NGO that works for sexual minorities and has made considerable impact on policy and curriculum in Nepal.

On the other hand, in Bangladesh and India, a study conducted among 240 men who have sex with men (MSMs) revealed that 50 percent of the respondents had suffered homophobic bullying at the hands of fellow students or teachers. Some had discontinued their education owing to harassment, which had ruined their future job prospects.<sup>65</sup> A recent World Bank study (2014) on the economic costs of discrimination in education and other settings found that exclusion, harassment and discrimination faced by LGBT people in education settings not only has a human cost, but can also have an economic cost for governments, as it erodes social and human capital and limits employment possibilities.<sup>66</sup>

### Cultural taboos and stigma

Stigma attached to children who experience sexual violence is a major factor behind the underreporting of child abuse in South Asia. Findings of the regional consultations conducted in South Asia as part of the United Nations Secretary General's study on violence against children corroborate this as well. Children fear speaking out because they know they will be stigmatized and because the social and penal systems often work in favour of the perpetrator.<sup>67</sup> A report by Human Rights Watch (2013) states that in India 'one of the most important reasons why children and their relatives choose not to come forward is a fear that they

61 USAID Technical Brief. 'Addressing School-related Gender-based Violence.' Retrieved from: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADM831.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADM831.pdf)

62 Badgett, M.V. Lee, 2014. 'The Economic Cost of Stigma and the Exclusion of LGBT People: A Case Study of India.' Washington, DC: World Bank Group. Retrieved from: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2014/10/23952131/economic-cost-stigma-exclusion-lgbt-people-case-study-india>

63 Singh, S., Krishan, A. and Mishra, S. 2015. 'Experienced Discrimination and Its Relationship with Life Chances and Socioeconomic Status of Sexual Minorities in India.' Delhi: Amaltas Consulting Private Limited. Also see: Nirantar. 2013. 'Policy Audit: A Heteronormativity Audit of RMSA – A Higher Education Programme in Indian Schools.' Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, as cited in Badgett, M.V. Lee. 2014.

64 UNDP and Williams Institute. 2014. 'Surveying Nepal's Sexual and Gender Minorities: An Inclusive Approach.' Bangkok, Thailand: UNDP.

65 Kothi is a self-identifying label for those males who feminize their behaviour. See: Bondyopadhyay, A. et al. 2005. Also see: UNESCO. 2012. 'Good Policy and Practice in HIV and Health Education, Booklet 8: Education Sector Responses to Homophobic Bullying.' Paris, France: Author.

66 Krishan, A., Rastogi, A., Singh, S. and L, Malik. 2014. 'Education Resilience Approaches Program: The Resilience of LGBTQIA Students on Delhi Campuses.' Washington DC: World Bank; Also see: The World Bank. 2013. 'Inclusion Matters: The Foundation for Shared Prosperity-Overview.' Washington D.C.: World Bank.

67 Kane, J. 2006. United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children.



will not be treated sympathetically,' and that 'many victims and the adults supporting them endure terrible experiences that add to their trauma including intimidating interviews by police officers, degrading and painful medical examinations, and intimidation by perpetrators to drop charges.'<sup>68</sup> Similarly, as mentioned earlier, children in school settings in Nepal and Pakistan fear reporting abuse by teachers, non-teaching staff or fellow students due to fear of being blamed, fear of reprisal and punishment, and fear of not being believed.<sup>69</sup>

Across South Asia, cultural taboos around sexual matters prevent cases of sexual violence from coming to light. In Afghanistan, child sexual abuse is known to occur including in schools, but remains largely hidden for this reason.<sup>70</sup> The problem is compounded by the society's extreme reluctance to give young people space to discuss sexuality, or recognize that young unmarried school-goers may be sexually active or may be exposed to coercive sexual activity. Further, in some countries in the region, sex before marriage is deemed a criminal offence under Sharia law and has serious legal and social consequences. This makes the problem even more complex. Adults – parents, school counsellors, medical staff, school principals, or teachers – lack confidence or believe that information on sexual matters will lead to increased sexual experimentation or promiscuity among children.<sup>71</sup> This leaves young women and men susceptible to misconceptions and peer pressure, and vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation.<sup>72</sup>

## Political, religious and social conflicts

Ongoing political, religious and social conflicts have put children in school settings at a greater risk for violence.<sup>73</sup> Such violence is manifested as direct attacks on schools, teachers and students, military use of schools as barracks or bases for military operations, damage or closure of schools, and abduction of school children for military service. According to the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (2014), in South Asia the level of attacks on students, teachers and education is high, and in some places, very high.<sup>74</sup> The highest numbers of attacks are reported from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Between 2009 and 2012, there were 1,000 or more attacks on schools, universities, staff and students in these countries.<sup>75</sup>

Militant groups in the region have attacked schools for various reasons – to destroy symbols of government authority; to wield control over an area; to block the education of girls; to disrupt an education that is perceived as imposing alien religious or cultural values (e.g., one that is seen as catering to the elite or the majority group); or to prevent schools from teaching a language, religion, culture or history alien to a particular identity group.<sup>76</sup> In Pakistan, Taliban militants have attacked schools and universities because they see them as symbols of government authority, and because they are opposed to the education of girls.<sup>77</sup> In Afghanistan, too, political opponents of the government have attacked girls' schools and campaigned against female education.<sup>78</sup> Armed groups may be op-

68 Human Rights Watch. 2013. 'Breaking the Silence: Child Sexual Abuse in India,' p. 31.

69 ICRW And PLAN. February 2015.

70 Sluggert, C. 2003. 'Mapping of Psychosocial Support for Girls and Boys Affected by Child Sexual Abuse in Four Countries in South and Central Asia.' Dhaka: Save the Children Sweden Denmark, Regional Office for South and Central Asia.

71 Ibid.

72 Abdulghafoor, H. 2012. 'Hope for Women: Maldives NGO Shadow Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.' Malé, as cited in Correia, M., et al. 2014. 'Youth in the Maldives: Shaping a New Future for Young Women and Men Through Engagement and Empowerment.' Washington D.C.: World Bank.

73 Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014. 'Education Under Attack.' New York: Author; and UNICEF. February 2012. 'State of the World's Children – Children in an Urban World.' New York: Author.

74 Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 UNODC. March 2007. 'Afghanistan: Female Prisoners and Their Social Reintegration.' UNODC Project: AFG/S47 - Developing Post-Release Opportunities for Women and Girl Prisoners.

posed to the education of girls in general, the education of girls from a certain age group, or the education of girls alongside boys.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, the Asian Center for Human Rights (2006) reported that during the civil war in Nepal, the Maoists systematically targeted educational institutions, which they saw as symbols of government authority. Both Maoists and government forces used schools in rural areas as battlegrounds.<sup>80</sup> In Sri Lanka, Amnesty International (2013) reported a series of violent attacks on student activists who demanded freedom of expression and on teachers who allegedly supported Tamil separatism.<sup>81</sup>

Military use of schools, colleges and universities in South Asia by armed groups, paramilitaries, police and armed forces has also been recorded as a cause of VAC in education settings. In 2010, the United Nations reported that in India, government troops and paramilitary police had used more than 129 schools as barracks or bases for their counter-insurgency operations, particularly in states most affected by the Maoist insurgency.<sup>82</sup> This had increased the risk of students being caught in the crossfire.<sup>83</sup> In Pakistan, media reports suggested that at least 40 schools were being used by the military during the period of 2009–2012, and that militants were using some schools as their base.<sup>84</sup>

Another problem that persists in conflict-affected areas in the region is abduction of

children who are in school or on their way to school. In Afghanistan, an oral history project conducted by UN Women (2013) involving over 700 women revealed that schoolgirls and young women were abducted as ‘brides’ by armed groups.<sup>85</sup> An article in *The Guardian* suggested that schoolchildren in Afghanistan were being recruited and sent to Pakistan to be trained as armed militants.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, there have been reports that children in Pakistan were abducted from schools, madrasas, and the routes to or from schools to be recruited by militants.<sup>87</sup> In July 2009, *The Australian* reported that the Taliban had kidnapped up to 1,500 boys, some as young as 11 years old, from schools and madrasas and trained them to carry out violent acts.<sup>88</sup>

Evidence suggests that natural disasters such as floods, tsunami and earthquakes leave children in education settings vulnerable to violence and abuse. Major disaster disrupts children’s education, sometimes indefinitely, on top of causing loss of family members and assets, displacement, shock and trauma. A few months after the 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal in April 2005, UNICEF reported that about 1 million quake-affected children were still living on risky terrain without proper access to water, sanitation, education and health services, which had increased their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse, including trafficking.<sup>89</sup>

79 UNESCO. 2010. ‘Education Under Attack.’ Paris: Author; United Nations Secretary Council. 2012. ‘Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General.’ S/2012/261. New York: Author; and Human Rights Watch. 2006. ‘Lessons in Terror: Attacks on Education in Afghanistan.’ New York: Author; Human Rights Watch. 2010. ‘Their Future is at Stake: Attacks on Teachers and Schools in Pakistan’s Balochistan Province.’ New York: Author; and UNESCO. 2011. ‘The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education.’ EFA Global Monitoring Report. Paris: Author.

80 Asian Centre for Human Rights. 2006. ‘SAARC Human Rights Report.’ New Delhi: Author.

81 Amnesty International Call for Action. 29 January 2013. ‘Urgent Action: Two Students Released from Detention.’

82 Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2012. ‘Lessons in War: Military Use of Schools and Other Education Institutions during Conflict.’ New York: Author, pp. 22, 30; Venkatesan, J. 9 January 2011. ‘Chhattisgarh Government Pulled Up for Misleading Supreme Court.’ *The Hindu*; ‘Schools Occupied by Security Personnel in Manipur.’ 22 April 2011. *The Hindu*; ‘SC asks Jharkhand, Tripura to Free Schools from Security Forces.’ 7 March 2011. *Times of India* – all cited in Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014. ‘Education Under Attack.’

83 Human Rights Watch. 2009. ‘Sabotaged Schooling: Naxalite Attacks and Police Occupation of Schools in India’s Bihar and Jharkhand States.’ New York: Author, pp. 6, 55, 70-72, 84-85.

84 For instance, *Huffington Post*. 28 February 2009. ‘Taliban Destroy Girls’ Education, Pakistan is Powerless.’; CNN. 7 July 2009. ‘Pakistan: Taliban Buying Children for Suicide Attacks.’; Associated Press. 17 November 2009. ‘Pakistan Army Shows Off Latest Advances by Afghan Border’; NBC News. 17 November 2009. ‘Pakistan Army Claims Gains near Afghan Border.’; Reuters. 26 March 2010. ‘Pakistan Troops Kill 24 Militants after Attack’; Reuters. 29 April 2012. ‘Drone Strike Kills Four Suspected Militants in North Waziristan’ – all cited in the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014. ‘Education Under Attack.’

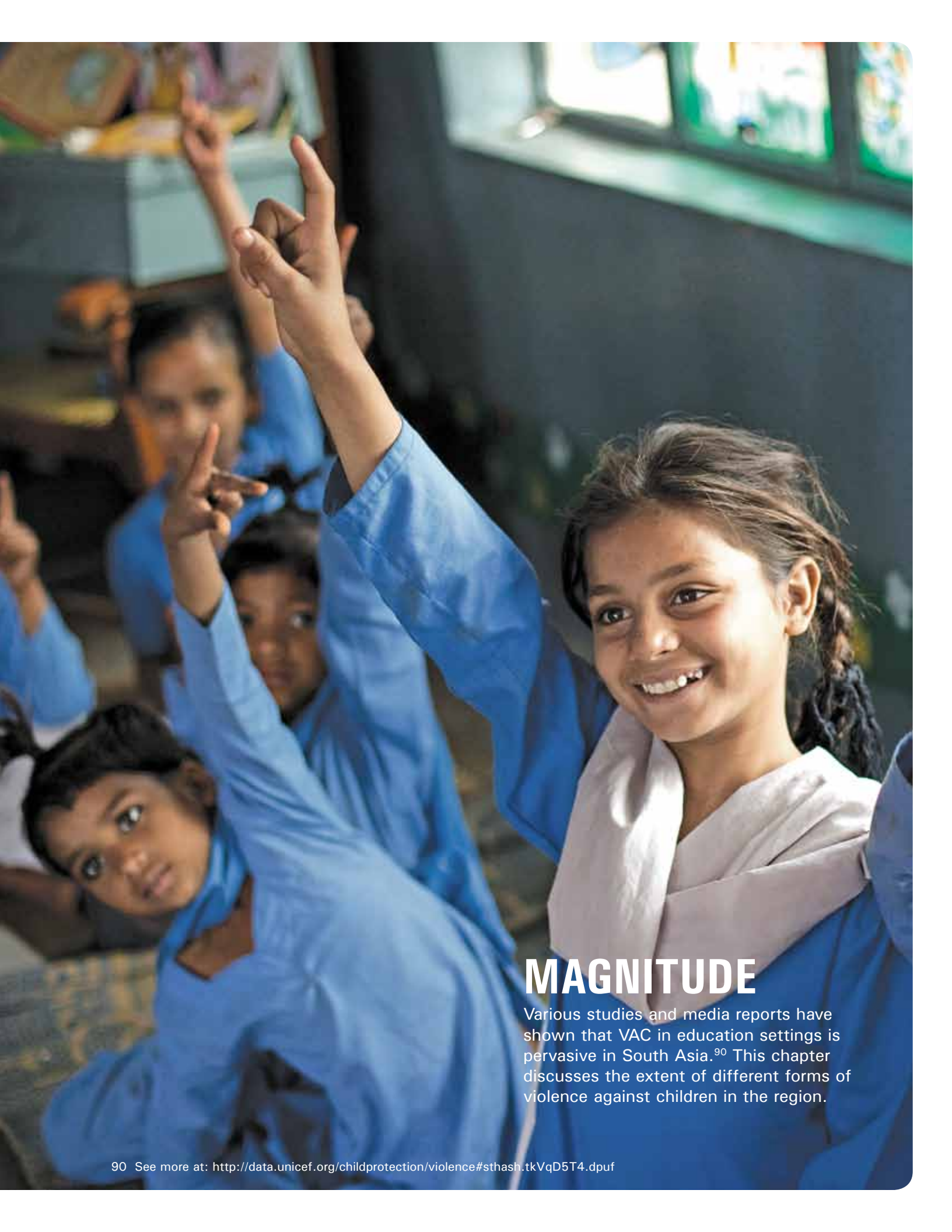
85 UN Women. 2013. ‘Like a Bird With Broken Wings: Afghan Women Oral History, 1978–2008.’

86 Kabul: UN Women Afghanistan.

87 O’Hagan, A. 3 August 2013. ‘From Classrooms to Suicide Bombs: Children’s Lives in Afghanistan.’ *The Guardian*, cited in Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014, p. 172.

88 For example, see Tarakzai, S. 8 April 2011. ‘Teen Says 400 Pakistan Suicide Bombers in Training.’ AFP; Hussain, Z. 27 July 2009. ‘Teenage Bombers are Rescued from Taleban Suicide Training Camps.’ *The Nation*; Tohid, O. 16 June 2011. ‘Pakistani Teen Tells of His Recruitment, Training as Suicide Bomber.’ *The Christian Science Monitor* – all cited in Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014.

89 Hussain, Z. 28 July 2009. ‘Short Future for Boys in Suicide Bomb Schools.’ *The Australian*, cited in Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014, p. 172.



## MAGNITUDE

Various studies and media reports have shown that VAC in education settings is pervasive in South Asia.<sup>90</sup> This chapter discusses the extent of different forms of violence against children in the region.

90 See more at: <http://data.unicef.org/childprotection/violence#sthash.tkVqD5T4.dpuf>

## GENDER-SPECIFIC RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES

Evidence suggests that certain risk factors for violence may manifest differently across gender. Girls in particular are at risk when they have to walk long distances to reach school or when school premises are not properly protected.<sup>91</sup> In schools and other education settings in the region, UNICEF (2014) found that boys seem to be more at risk than girls for harsh physical punishment and abuse.<sup>92</sup> In Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan, girls face more non-physical forms of abuse, such as teasing and use of sexual language, while boys in private settings, particularly in residential schools, report more physical sexual abuse.<sup>93</sup> Further, in the Maldives, a study found that male students were significantly more likely than female students to have been physically attacked.<sup>94</sup> There is also some evidence suggesting the gendered nature of perpetration of VAC in education settings. In India, a survey found that for boys, the main perpetrators of physical and emotional violence were male classmates, followed by older boys, male teachers, and female classmates, while for girls, the most common perpetrators were female classmates, male and female teachers, and male classmates. In a study among 811 adolescents in Grade 11 in Goa, a state in southern India, boys were more likely to report that someone had talked to them about sex or forced them to touch the perpetrator, while girls were more likely to report that the perpetrator had touched them or brushed his private parts against them.<sup>95</sup>

### Physical violence and abuse

Country-specific evidence from South Asia suggests that many school children are subjected to physical violence by teachers, school staff and peers. A recent study among more than 9,000 male and female students aged 12 to 17 years (Grades 6 to 8) in Nepal and Pakistan revealed that physical violence is the second most common form of violence students experience, after emotional violence. A significantly higher proportion of boys (47 percent in Nepal and 18 percent in Pakistan) reported facing physical violence in school

compared to girls.<sup>96</sup> There is ample evidence of physical VAC in education settings in other countries in the region as well. Specifically,

- In Afghanistan, data from UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (2012) show that a majority of girls (71 percent of 22,040 girls of ages 2–14 years) have experienced some form of violence.<sup>97</sup>
- In Bangladesh, a study in a Dhaka slum revealed that teachers in government schools routinely inflict physical punishment on their students. Common examples cited were hitting, throwing

91 Kane, J. 2006. United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children.

92 Krug, E. G. et al. (Eds.). 2002. 'World Report on Violence and Health.' Geneva: World Health Organization; UNICEF. May 2005. 'Report of the Regional Consultation on Violence against Children in South Asia.' Islamabad, Pakistan.

93 For example, see Sahil. 1998. 'Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in Pakistan'; Breaking the Silence Group Bangladesh. 1997. 'Non-Commercial Sexual Abuse of Children in Bangladesh: A Case Study Based Report'; Child Workers in Nepal and UNICEF. 2005. 'Violence against Children in Nepal: Child Sexual Abuse in Nepal: Children's Perspectives', as cited in Frederick, J. 2010.

94 Total percent of students who were physically attacked one or more times during the past 12 months was 38.4 percent. See: Global School-based Student Health Survey. 2009. Maldives GSHS Report. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Family, World Health Organization, and the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from: [http://www.moe.gov.mv/assets/upload/2009\\_Maldives\\_GSHS\\_report.pdf](http://www.moe.gov.mv/assets/upload/2009_Maldives_GSHS_report.pdf)

95 Patel, V. and Andrew, G. 2001. 'Gender, Sexual Abuse and Risk Behaviours in Adolescents: A Cross-sectional Survey in Schools in Goa.' National Medical Journal of India. 14(5): 263–267. Also see: Kane, J. 2006.

96 ICRW and PLAN. February 2015. 'Are Schools Safe and Equal Places for Girls and Boys in Asia? Research Findings on School-Related Gender-Based Violence.'

97 Central Statistics Organization and UNICEF. 2012. Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010–2011: Final Report. Kabul: Author.

things, pulling hair/ears, chasing after the child and sometimes resorting to extreme physical abuse, caning on the shoulders and palms, and squeezing children's fingers together with a pen in between.<sup>98</sup>

- In India, the Ministry of Women and Child Development reported in 2007 that two-thirds of school children faced physical abuse by peers in or near the school.<sup>99</sup> A 2010 study among 1,040 boys aged 10–16 years living in Mumbai found that more than 8 out of 10 boys had been victims of violence; two-thirds of boys aged 12–14 years in a cluster of low-income schools in India said they had experienced at least one form of violence in school over the past three months (including violence perpetrated by peers). As examples of physical violence, respondents cited being beaten, slapped, kicked, pushed, hit with an object, or threatened with a weapon, while emotional violence included being insulted, shouted at, derided in abusive language, and locked in a room or toilet.<sup>100</sup>
- In the Maldives, a large-scale study among 17,035 people in 2,500 households and 2,000 children in schools found that 47 percent of children had experienced physical or emotional punishment including in school. Thirty percent of children in secondary school had been hit by at least

one of their caregivers, 21 percent with an object, and 8 percent of students had been physically punished by their teachers.<sup>101</sup>

The 2009 Global School-based Health Survey among a total of 3,227 Maldivian students in Grades 8, 9, and 10 showed that 38.4 percent of students were physically attacked one or more times during the past 12 months. Nearly 42 percent of students from the atolls were prone to such attacks compared to 30.7 percent of students from the capital, Male.<sup>102</sup> Recent findings from a World Bank survey among 161 males and 241 females aged 15–24 years revealed that 8 percent of respondents had faced physical abuse from someone in their school.<sup>103</sup>

- In Pakistan, a study among 3,582 children aged 6–14 years from government and religious schools in eight districts revealed incidents in which children had been permanently injured or even beaten to death by teachers.<sup>104</sup>
- In Sri Lanka, the 2008 Global School-based Health Survey among a total of 2,611 students in Grades 8, 9, and 10 showed that 48 percent of students in the age range of 13–15 years were physically attacked one or more times during the past 12 months. Victims included 54.2 percent of male students and 41.5 percent of female students.<sup>105</sup>

98 Kabir, R. 2005. 'Children's Perspectives on Abuse: Preliminary Findings from Child Abuse Study.' Dhaka, Bangladesh.

99 Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. 2007. 'Study on Child Abuse: India 2007.' New Delhi: Author.

100 Das, M. et al. 2012. 'Gender Attitudes and Violence among Urban Adolescent Boys in India.' *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*. DOI: 10.1080/02673843.2012.716762; and Achyut, P., et al. 2011. 'Building Support for Gender Equality among Young Adolescents in School: Findings from Mumbai, India.' New Delhi: ICRW, as cited in Barker, G., and Pawlak, P. 2011. 'Men's Participation in Care Work, in Families, and in Gender Equality in the Contemporary World.' Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division of Social Policy and Development. New York: United Nations.

101 The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children. April 2013. The Maldives – Country Report. Available Retrieved from: <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/progress/reports/maldives.html>.

102 Global School-based Student Health Survey. 2009. Maldives GSHS Report. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Family, World Health Organization and Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from: [http://www.moe.gov.mv/assets/upload/2009\\_Maldives\\_GSHS\\_report.pdf](http://www.moe.gov.mv/assets/upload/2009_Maldives_GSHS_report.pdf)

103 Correia, M. et al. 2014. 'Youth in the Maldives: Shaping a New Future for Young Women and Men Through Engagement and Empowerment.' Washington D.C.: World Bank.

104 NCCR-NWFP 1998, cited in Jabeen, F. and Karkara, R. 2006. 'Mapping of Save the Children's Response to Violence against Children in South Asia.' Kathmandu, Nepal: Save the Children, p. 81.

105 GSHS. 2008. GSHS 2008 Sri Lanka Country Report. Retrieved from:

## ACID VIOLENCE IN EDUCATION SETTINGS IN SOUTH ASIA

Acid violence is a particularly damaging and shocking form of physical violence, often inflicted on women who are perceived as transgressing traditional gender roles.<sup>106</sup> There is a lack of data and information on the true scale and nature of the problem, making evidence-based action difficult.<sup>107</sup> However, reports indicate that children, especially girls, as well as teachers in South Asian countries have been victims of acid attacks.<sup>108</sup> In Afghanistan, acid attacks on schoolgirls by the Taliban have been well publicized.<sup>109</sup> The Acid Survivors Foundation (2014) estimates that 27 percent of acid attacks in Bangladesh are against children, and that some of these attacks have taken place in schools.<sup>110</sup> In India, acid attacks occur in both private and public places,<sup>111</sup> and there have been incidents in which teachers and students returning home from school suffered severe burn injuries after being attacked with acid.<sup>112</sup> Acid violence has also been reported in Nepal and Sri Lanka, though their connection to education and school settings remains unexamined.<sup>113</sup>

### Corporal punishment and other forms of disciplinary action

A number of studies have shed light on the scale of the problem of corporal punishment in South Asia. The South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (2012) reports that out of the 54.7 percent of children worldwide who live in countries that provide no legal protection against corporal punishment, 44.7 percent live in South Asia.<sup>114</sup> In fact, UNESCO

found that corporal punishment is the most widely reported form of VAC in education settings in South Asia.<sup>115</sup> This is corroborated by country-specific evidence:

- In Afghanistan, a survey by Save the Children Sweden-Norway (2003) revealed that 82 percent of the children interviewed faced corporal punishment. Over 50 percent of them reported that their teacher beat them when they were noisy or naughty; approximately 24 percent said they were beaten

106 The Virtue Foundation. 2011. 'Combating Acid Violence in Bangladesh, Cambodia and India.' A report by Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School, the Committee on International Human Rights of the New York City Bar Association, the Cornell Law School International Human Rights Clinic, and the Virtue Foundation. Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School and the New York City Bar Association. Retrieved from: [http://www.acidviolence.org/uploads/files/Virtue\\_Foundation\\_Combating-Acid-Violence-Report-2011.pdf](http://www.acidviolence.org/uploads/files/Virtue_Foundation_Combating-Acid-Violence-Report-2011.pdf)

107 Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. 2014. 'Violence against Women and Girls: Lessons from South Asia.' Washington D.C.: World Bank.

108 Welsh, J. 2009. 'It was like Burning in Hell: A Comparative Exploration of Acid Attack Violence.' A thesis submitted to the faculty of the Department of Anthropology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

109 MSNBC. 14 November 2008. 'Acid Attack Keeps Afghan Girls Away from School: Men on Motorcycles Splattered 15 Students, Teachers with Acid in Kandahar.' Retrieved from: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/27713077/>

110 Information obtained from the Acid Survivors Foundation in Bangladesh. Also available at: [www.acidsurvivors.org](http://www.acidsurvivors.org), cited in Pawlak, P. and Sass, J. 2014. 'School-related Gender-Based Violence in the Asia-Pacific Region.' Thailand, Bangkok: UNESCO.

111 Campaign and Struggle against Acid Attacks on Women (CSAAAW). 2007. 'Burnt Not Defeated: Women Fight against Acid Attacks in Karnataka.' Bangalore, India: CSAAAW, pp. 5, 22–23, 31.

112 International Business Times. 3 April 2013. 'India: Acid Attack on Four Sisters by Unidentified Men.'

113 The Acid Survivors Foundation in Pakistan recorded over 130 cases of acid attack in 2012 and 142 in 2013. However, school-based incidents, both in Pakistan and across the region, often go unreported. In Nepal, women's rights organizations reported dozens of attacks in the eastern part of the country between 2004 and 2007, and studies indicate that acid and burns violence remains common throughout the country. A recent study by the Department of Health Services (DHS 2009) found that 50 percent of suicides among women aged between 15 and 49 followed burns violence. For more information, see: Shrestha, M. 18–24 May 2007. 'Acid Attacks: Men are Waging Chemical Warfare on Women and Getting Away with It.' Nepali Times. Retrieved from: <http://www.nepalitimes.com/issue/349/Nation/13549>; Mas-sage, I. November 2011. 'Acid and Burns Violence in Nepal. A Situational Analysis.' Burns Violence Survivors-Nepal, and the Acid Survivors Trust International. Retrieved from: SAIEVAC. 2011. 'Prohibition of Corporal Punishment of Children in South Asia: A Progress Report.' Prepared in collaboration with the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children and Save the Children Sweden. Kathmandu, Nepal: Author. Also see: <http://www.saievac.org/cp>

114 SAIEVAC. 2011. 'Prohibition of Corporal Punishment of Children in South Asia: A Progress Report.' Prepared in collaboration with the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children and Save the Children Sweden. Kathmandu, Nepal: Author. Also see: <http://www.saievac.org/cp>

115 Pawlak, P. and Sass, J. 2014.

when they did not learn their lessons, and about 9 percent when they disobeyed adults.<sup>116</sup>

- In Bhutan, corporal punishment in schools is among the most prevalent forms of violence against children.<sup>117</sup> There is no legislation that explicitly prohibits corporal punishment. The Penal Code does not deem corporal punishment illegal, and therefore, it is still “quite commonly applied to discipline children in school.”<sup>118</sup> Although the Child Care and Protection Act treats “harsh and degrading correction or punishment” as an offence, it allows for “culturally appropriate” ways of enforcing discipline, a term that is open to interpretation and thus falls short of an outright ban. Further, despite insistent efforts, campaigns and debates in the national media on reducing corporal punishment, there is a lack of national consensus on what constitutes “acceptable and viable alternative means of discipline.”<sup>119</sup>
- In India, a study among 6,632 children of ages 3 to 17 years revealed that corporal punishment was a near-universal experience. Seventy-five percent of respondents said they had been caned, 69.9 percent slapped on the cheek, 57.5 percent hit in the back, and 57.4 percent had had their ears boxed. Most of these punishments involved infliction of pain by direct action of the teacher. Even the harsh practice of applying electric shocks has found a mention in the data collected.<sup>120</sup> A study among 350 children from public, private, and municipal schools found that over 75 percent had received punishment in school: nearly 60 percent said the most frequent form of punishment was caning or hitting with a ruler; and an astonishing 33 percent of all respondents reported severe injury due to punishment.<sup>121</sup> Similarly, a survey of 1,500 adolescents in 10 government schools in Chandigarh found that corporal punishment had a 22 percent prevalence rate.<sup>122</sup> The widespread nature of corporal punishment was further revealed by a 2007 national survey<sup>123</sup> and a large-scale study in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. Severe forms of corporal punishment were also reported, including being kicked very painfully, enforced starvation, and being tied to a chair/pole before being beaten.<sup>124</sup>
- In Nepal, a study conducted in four regions revealed that corporal punishment was common in most schools, more so in private than in public schools. Among those subjected to such punishment, primary school students made up the largest proportion, followed by lower secondary students.<sup>125</sup>
- In Pakistan, a study among 3,582 school children aged 6–14 years in eight districts showed that prevalence rates for corporal punishment were 40.7 percent in government schools and 35.4 percent in private schools. The types of physical punishment used included slapping, caning, pulling ears,

116 Save the Children Sweden, Afghanistan. 2003. ‘Mini Survey on Corporal Punishment in Afghanistan’, cited in Jabeen, F. and Karkara, R. 2006, and in Kane, J. 2006.

117 UNICEF. 2013. Literature Review Report. Study on Violence Against Children in Bhutan.

118 Ibid, citing Gross National Happiness Commission, National Commission for Women and Children and UNICEF. 2012. ‘A Situation Analysis, Children, Youth and Women in Bhutan.’

119 Ibid. Also see: Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, Bhutan Country Report, Retrieved from [www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/progress/reports/Bhutan.html/#Reform](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/progress/reports/Bhutan.html/#Reform)

120 NCPCR. 2011. ‘Eliminating Corporal Punishment in Schools.’ New Delhi: Author.

121 For more information, <[cities.expressindia.com](http://cities.expressindia.com)>. 7 April 2007, cited in Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (GIEACPC). March 2008. ‘The Nature And Extent Of Corporal Punishment – Prevalence And Attitudinal Research in South Asia.’

122 Chandigarh Newslines. 21 June 2007, cited in Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children. March 2008.

123 Kacker, L., Varadan, S. and Kumar, P. 2007. ‘Study on Child Abuse: India.’ New Delhi: Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.

124 Saath Charitable Trust/Plan International, India. 2006. ‘Impact of Corporal Punishment on School Children: A Research Study – Final Report’, cited in Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children. March 2008.

125 Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children. 2008, citing CVICT. June 2004. Monthly Update,.

punching, kicking, and making students assume the 'rooster position', in which the child squats with arms looped behind the knees and firmly holds the ears.<sup>126</sup>

- In Sri Lanka, an Oxfam International survey (2012) of 1,442 adult women in the Eastern province of the country found that 3 percent of respondents had experienced harsh corporal punishment in schools.<sup>127</sup>

### Sexual violence and abuse

There is evidence that children in South Asia face sexual violence and abuse in schools, including in religious schools.<sup>128</sup> Perpetrators of sexual harassment may include both educators and peers,<sup>129</sup> while victims may include both girls and boys. Country-specific evidence provides information on the scale of sexual violence.

- In Afghanistan, the extent of sexual abuse has not been investigated in detail, but there are indications that many girls and boys have faced sexual abuse in schools.<sup>130</sup> In a number of reported cases, boys were raped by male teachers and subjected to sexual harassment by older boys in schools. According to the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), boys in Afghanistan may be at a higher risk of sexual abuse than girls.<sup>131</sup>
- In India, Human Rights Watch (2013) has reported several cases of sexual abuse, sexual molestation and harassment of boys and girls in schools by teachers, school staff and school watchmen. These incidents took

place in private, government and religious schools.<sup>132</sup> A national survey of 6,460 boys and 5,987 girls aged 5–18 years found that at least 50 percent of the girls had experienced one or more forms of physical or sexual violence and emotional violence. Physical violence was particularly prevalent for girls in correctional institutions.<sup>133</sup> The United Nations Secretary General's study on violence against children revealed that 13.5 percent of the female students interviewed in India had experienced rape, molestation and verbal harassment from male students and 4.8 percent from university staff.<sup>134</sup> In Goa, a 2001 study found that one-third of Grade 11 students in a sample size of 811 had experienced at least one type of sexual abuse in the past 12 months, and 6 percent reported that they had suffered sexual coercion.<sup>135</sup>

- In the Maldives, the Global School-based Health Survey (2009) among 3,227 students in Grades 8, 9, and 10 found that both male students (17.8 percent) and female students (16.1 percent) had been victims of sexual violence, abuse or harassment.<sup>136</sup> Further, an unpublished national study from 2009 revealed that 1 in 7 children – twice as many girls as boys – in secondary school had been sexually abused.<sup>137</sup> An earlier study from 2007 showed that 14.5 percent of girls aged 15–17 years had experienced some form of sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. At the national level, 12.2 percent of women aged 15–49 years had

126 The NGOs Coalition on Child Rights 1998, cited in Jabeen, F. and Karkara, R. 2006, p. 81.

127 Oxfam. 2012. Survey Report on Gender Based Violence in the Conflict Affected Areas in the East of Sri Lanka. Colombo: Oxfam International Sri Lanka and Nawala: TNS Lanka (Pvt.) Ltd.

128 Save the Children Sweden. 2007. 'Voices and Actions of Boys and Girls to End Violence against Children in South and Central Asia.' Discussion Paper, p. 19.

129 Mirsky, J. 2003. 'Beyond Victims and Villains: Addressing Sexual Violence in the Education Sector', cited in Leach, F. 2008; Leach, F. et al. 2003. 'An Investigative Study into the Abuse of Girls in African Schools.' Education Research No. 56. London: DFID; Wellesley Centers for Research on Women and DTS. 2003. 'Unsafe Schools: A Literature Review of School-Related Gender-Based Violence in Developing Countries.' Washington D.C.: United States Agency for International Development. Retrieved from: [www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/crosscutting\\_programs/wid/pubs/unsafe\\_schools\\_literature\\_review.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/crosscutting_programs/wid/pubs/unsafe_schools_literature_review.pdf).

130 Jabeen, F. and Karkara, R. 2006.

131 UKAid. 5 November 2012. 'Helpdesk Report: Violence and Sexual Abuse in Schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan.' DFID Human Development Resource Center. (Data was collected from 2003 to 2010).

132 Human Rights Watch. 2013. 'Breaking the Silence: Child Sexual Abuse in India.'

133 Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. 2007. 'Study on Child Abuse: India.'

134 Kane, J. 2006.

135 Patel, V. and Andrew, G. 2001. 'Gender, Sexual Abuse and Risk Behaviours in Adolescents: A Cross-sectional Survey in Schools in Goa.'

136 The study did not ask where the incident of forced sexual intercourse took place. For more information, see: GSHS. 2009. Maldives Country Report.

137 Heiberg, T. and Thukral, E.G.(Eds.). 2013. 'The South Asian Report: On the Child-Friendliness of Governments.' Save the Children, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights, Plan International, CRY: Child Rights and You, Terre des Hommes Germany, as cited in Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.



been sexually abused before the age of 15, and in Malé, the rate was even higher (16.3 percent).<sup>138</sup>

- In Nepal, the United Nations Secretary General's study on violence against children (2005) found that 15 percent of children who had been fondled or kissed had experienced this at school; 9 percent had experienced severe sexual abuse (kissing on sensitive parts, oral sex and penetration); 17.5 percent of these cases took place in school, with 18 percent of them perpetrated by teachers.<sup>139</sup> In 2004, the Human Rights Commission of Nepal raised the case of two blind girls who were continuously raped by a hostel warden for several years.
- In Sri Lanka, UNICEF reported in 2010 that an estimated 10 percent of girls and 20 percent of boys are sexually abused at school.<sup>140</sup> The United Nations Secretary General's study on violence against children found that female students had experienced 'ragging' that took a sexual form.<sup>141</sup>
- In Bhutan, an assessment of vulnerable and at-risk adolescents aged 13–18 years found that 52 percent of the respondents had been bullied, mostly at school. Of them, 57 percent were male and 47 percent female. Boys were more likely to be hit (20 percent) than girls (9 percent), but girls were more likely to experience verbal bullying in the form of malicious gossip.<sup>143</sup> This corresponds with the findings of a study by Save the Children (2010), which found that children are not only victims but also perpetrators of violence, especially violence against other children.<sup>144</sup>
- In the Maldives, a survey conducted by the United Nations Population Fund (2005) with over 4,000 youth aged 15–24 years found that 64 percent of them thought bullying and discrimination based on gender, disability or material status was a major problem in schools (second only to the problem of lack of qualified teachers and low standard of education).<sup>145</sup> The 2009 Global School-based Health Survey (GSHS) of 3,227 students in Grades 8, 9, and 10 showed that 37.7 percent of students had been bullied one or more times during the past 30 days.<sup>146</sup> A recent World Bank survey (2014) among 402 young people revealed that 20 percent of the boys and 10 percent of the girls aged 13–15 years had been bullied in the past 30 days; examples cited included being hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around or locked indoors. The survey also involved 223 young people aged 15–19 years who

## Bullying

Globally, bullying is one of the most widely documented forms of school-related gender based violence.<sup>142</sup> However, only a few studies provide insights into the problem of bullying in education settings in South Asia. Most of these studies are smaller components of broader initiatives, and not studies that focus on bullying as such. Despite limited data, the following country-specific evidence provides some sense of the scale of the problem:

138 Fulu, E. 2007. 'The Maldives Study on Women's Health and Life Experiences. Initial Results on Prevalence, Health Outcomes and Women's Responses to Violence.' Government of Maldives, Ministry of Gender and Family.

139 Kane, J. 2006; United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children. 2005. Regional Desk Review: South Asia. Retrieved from: <http://www.violencestudy.org/r27> as cited in UNICEF. N.D. Violence Against Children in Schools and Educational Settings. Retrieved from: [http://www.unicef.org/sciuhub.org/tfyrmacedonia/MK\\_World\\_Report\\_on\\_Violence\\_against\\_Children\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/sciuhub.org/tfyrmacedonia/MK_World_Report_on_Violence_against_Children(1).pdf)

140 Frederick, J. 2010, citing National Child Protection Authority. 2003. 'Many Children Still Abused and Neglected in Sri Lanka.' Retrieved from: [www.childprotection.gov.lk/newsUpdate081020031.htm](http://www.childprotection.gov.lk/newsUpdate081020031.htm)

141 Kane, J. 2006.

142 UNICEF. 2014. 'Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence against Children.'

143 Department of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, Bhutan. 2009. 'An Assessment of Vulnerable and At-risk Adolescents (13–18 years) in Bhutan: Exploring Social and Health Risk Behaviors.' Thimphu, Bhutan: Department of Youth and Sports, MOE and the Nossal Institute for Global Health and Centre for Research Initiative.

144 Save the Children. 2010. 'Stepping Up Child Protection.' Kathmandu, Nepal: Save the Children Sweden, Regional Office for South and Central Asia.

145 UNFPA. 2005. 'Youth Voices – Facts, Figures and Opinions'. Male, Maldives: Author.

146 Global School-based Student Health Survey. 2009. Maldives Report.

were in school or recent graduates; 1 out of 5 of them said they had been bullied in schools. Six percent of all respondents indicated they had been bullied on most school days<sup>147</sup>.

- In Sri Lanka, the 2008 Global School-based Health Survey (GSHS) among 2,611 students in Grades 8, 9, and 10 showed that nationwide 37.9 percent of students in the age group 13–15 years had been bullied one or more times during the past 30 days. Male students (46.9 percent) were significantly more likely to have been bullied than female students (28.6 percent) during that period.<sup>148</sup>
- In Pakistan, evidence suggests that 45 percent of adolescent male students and 35 percent of adolescent female students aged 13–15 years had been bullied on one or more days during the past 30 days.<sup>149</sup>

Easy access to the Internet and the growing popularity of camera-equipped smartphones has given rise to a new phenomenon known as ‘cyber-bullying’ – harassment through e-mail, text messages and social media. Given the transitory nature of digital communication, cyber-bullying can take place both in and out of school. Sexual cyber-bullying, which may involve sending sexually suggestive or explicit photos, videos or other images, has become an increasing concern in the region.<sup>150</sup>

- In Pakistan, a 2014 report on technology-driven VAW includes a case in which some young men surreptitiously filmed an intimate act between a schoolgirl and a college student using a mobile phone camera. The men then used the recording to blackmail the girl and rape her repeatedly over several months.<sup>151</sup> In a recent study on cyber-bullying among 7,644 youth aged 8 to 17 years in 25 countries (representing approximately 300 respondents per country), 26 percent of students from Pakistan reported online bullying.<sup>152</sup>
- In the Maldives, a World Bank study on youth, which included interviews with 97 school-going young men and women aged 17–35 years, revealed a phenomenon referred to as ‘revenge porn’, where former boyfriends threatened to share explicit photos or videos online to shame and humiliate young women. Some boys would ask for sexual favours in return for them not exposing such material to others including family members and school principals.<sup>153</sup> Further, a survey conducted as part of the same study revealed that 15 percent of 402 respondents had received offensive, nasty, threatening or pornographic messages on their mobile phones.<sup>154</sup>

147 Correia, M. et al. 2014. ‘Youth in the Maldives: Shaping a New Future for Young Women and Men through Engagement and Empowerment.’

148 Global School-based Student Health Survey. 2008. Sri Lanka Country Report. Retrieved from: [http://www.who.int/chp/gshs/Sri\\_Lanka\\_GSHS\\_FS\\_2008.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/chp/gshs/Sri_Lanka_GSHS_FS_2008.pdf?ua=1)

149 UNICEF ROSA. ‘Violence Against Children in South Asia.’ Retrieved from: [http://www.unicef.org/rosa/protection\\_7735.htm](http://www.unicef.org/rosa/protection_7735.htm)

150 Donald S.H., Anderson, T.D. and Spry, D. (Eds.). 2010. *Youth, Society and Mobile Media in Asia*. Routledge.

151 Bytes for All. 2014. ‘Technology Driven Violence Against Women.’ Country Report Pakistan 2014. Bytes for All and Association for Progressive Communications.

152 Microsoft Corporation. Safety & Security Center, as reported in Bhat C.S., Chang, S.H. and Ragan, M.A. 2013. ‘Cyberbullying in Asia.’ *Education about Asia*. 18(2): 36-39.

153 Information obtained during focus group discussions held with youth in Mahibadhoo, the capital island of Alif Dhaal Atoll, Maldives. 11 January 2014. For more information, see: Correia, M. et al. 2014; World Bank and UNICEF. January 2014. ‘Youth in the Maldives: Challenges and Recommendations.’ Draft issue paper (unpublished).

154 Correia, M. et al. 2014.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE

What constitutes a violent act against a child? The answer to this question is not always straightforward. Leach and Dunne (2013) suggest that “the earlier narrow interpretation of violence as purely physical has given way to a wider and more nuanced understanding which includes psychological and emotional forms such as name-calling, humiliating punishments and threats.”<sup>155</sup> There is limited data on the true scale, nature and manifestations of psychological and emotional violence faced by children in education settings in South Asia. Yet, it is widely known that children face such violence at the hands of their teachers and peers. Country-specific evidence suggests that in Afghanistan, a large majority of girls have experienced psychological aggression. In 2012, a UNICEF study among 22,040 girls aged 2–14 years found that 71 percent of them had experienced psychological violence.<sup>156</sup> In India, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR 2011) reported that the practice of abusing children verbally is widespread. The conclusion was based on interviews with a total of 6,632 children aged 3 to 17 years across seven states. More than 81 percent of children in the study had been told outright that they were not capable of learning.<sup>157</sup> Recent research in Asia, which covered sites in Nepal and Pakistan and involved over 9,000 students (girls and boys aged 12–17 years, Grades 6–8), revealed that a large number of children (22 percent of all respondents in Nepal and 61 percent in Pakistan) had experienced emotional violence during the past six months.<sup>158</sup>

### Violence against children in religious schools

**‘DYNAMICS BETWEEN ADULTS AND CHILDREN IN PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS MADRASSAS AND MONASTERIES HAVE NOT BEEN WELL DOCUMENTED AND ARE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT TO INVESTIGATE.’<sup>159</sup>**

VAC in religious schools in South Asia is an area that remains under-researched. Reported cases of abuse of students in Koranic or monastic institutions are extremely rare. Evidence of violence in these institutions remains fragmental.

- In India, online reports indicate that young boys in certain monasteries have experienced abuse and beating at the hands of monks.<sup>160</sup>
- In Bhutan, an assessment by the Ministry of Education (2010) concluded that 11 out of the 126 monastic institutions in the study used physical punishment such as spanking, beating and whipping as a last resort when everything else had failed to correct the student’s behaviour.<sup>161</sup> The persistent use of corporal punishment in those institutions was cited as a cause for general concern.<sup>162</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Leach, F., Dunne, M. and Salvi, F. 2013, p. 4.

<sup>157</sup> NCPCR. 2011. ‘Eliminating Corporal Punishment in Schools.’ New Delhi: Author.

<sup>158</sup> ICRW And PLAN. February 2015.

<sup>159</sup> UNSG. 2006. Report on the South Asia Regional Consultation on Violence against Children, p. 6

<sup>160</sup> Elephant Journal. 7 June 2013. ‘What Lies beneath the Robes.’ Retrieved from : <http://www.elephantjournal.com/2013/06/what-lies-beneath-the-robos-are-buddhist-monasteries-suitable-places-for-children-adele-wilde-blavatsky/>

<sup>161</sup> UNICEF and National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC). (N.D.) Report of Assessment of Situation of Young Monks and Nuns in Monastic Institutions. By the Eleven Expert Committee Members.

<sup>162</sup> National Commission for Women and Children. 2011. Report of Assessment of Situation of Young Monks and Nuns in Monastic Institutions, Thimphu; and UNICEF, BMIS Thematic Analysis Series – Child Protection, Thimphu, 2012; Eleven Experts Committee, Assessment of Young Monks and Nuns in Monastic Institutions, NCWC, Thimphu, 2010.

- In Pakistan, reports indicate that there have been cases of sexual abuse by clerics in Koranic schools. In 2004 the Minister of State for Religious Affairs reported that although 500 such cases had been registered that year and 2,000 more filed the previous year, there had been no successful prosecutions.<sup>163</sup>
- In Bangladesh (and Pakistan), evidence suggests that children experience corporal punishment at the hands of private tutors in religious institutions such as madrasas.<sup>164</sup>
- In Nepal, UNICEF ROSA (2001) reported that children in religious schools received harsh and humiliating punishment, which involved instructors using bar fetters and iron chains to inflict pain.<sup>165</sup>

### Conflict-related violence in school settings

The scale of VAC in conflict-affected school settings in South Asia remains little known. This is partly understandable, because researching this topic in a conflict situation poses many ethical, logistical and technical challenges. However, available evidence suggests that among all countries in the region, Afghanistan and Pakistan have been most heavily affected by conflict in recent years.

- In Afghanistan, the United Nations Secretary General's report suggests that between 2009 and 2012, more than 1,110 attacks were made on schools, including arson, explosions and suicide bombings. Staff and

students were threatened, killed and kidnapped. In 2009 alone, at least 24 teachers and school staff and 23 students were killed, while 342 students and 41 teachers and school staff were injured.<sup>166</sup> Moreover, the United Nations Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) reports that in 2010, at least 21 students, teachers or education officials were killed,<sup>167</sup> whereas in the first half of 2012, there were six more instances of targeted killings of teachers, school guards and education officials by anti-government elements – an increase compared with the first half of 2011.<sup>168</sup> On 3 July 2011, a suspected militant on a motorbike threw a grenade at the main gate of a school in Faryab province, wounding 17 children, 2 critically.<sup>169</sup>

- In Pakistan, primary research conducted by the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reported that between 2012 and 2014, around 30 students and 20 teachers were killed; 97 students and 8 teachers were injured; and 138 students and staff were kidnapped during attacks made on at least 838 schools by armed groups, particularly the Pakistani Taliban. In 2009 alone, 505 schools were damaged or destroyed, most of them blown up.<sup>170</sup> Media reports published between 2009 and 2012 revealed that at least 30 children were killed in attacks on schools and school transport. At least 138 students and staff were reportedly kidnapped on their way to or from school; 122 of them were abduct-

163 For example, see: Raza, S. 9 December 2004. 'Minister Resolves to Expose Sexual Abuse by Clerics.' Daily Times. Retrieved from: [www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story\\_9-12-2004\\_pg1\\_6](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_9-12-2004_pg1_6); Murphy, B. 21 September 2005. 'Sex Abuse in Islamic Schools.' Frontpagemag. Available at: [www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=19530](http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=19530) as cited in Pinheiro, P.S. 'World Report on Violence against Children.' United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children. Geneva: United Nations; please also see: The Daily Times, Pakistan, available at: [www.dailytimes.co.pk/default.asp?page=story\\_9-12-04\\_pg1\\_6](http://www.dailytimes.co.pk/default.asp?page=story_9-12-04_pg1_6) as cited in Leach, F. 2008.

164 Kane, J. 2006.

165 Jabeen, F., and Karkara, R. 2006; citing UNICEF ROSA. 2001. 'Corporal Punishment in Schools in South Asia.'

166 UNSC. 13 April 2010. 'Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General.' para 50; UNSC. 2011. 'Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General.' 23 April 2011, para 57; UNSC. 2012. 'Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General.' 26 April 2012, para 16; and UNSC. 15 May 2013. 'Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General.' para 31; as cited in Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014.

167 UNAMA. March 2011. 'Afghanistan Annual Report 2010 on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.' Kabul, Afghanistan: Author, p. 12.

168 UNAMA. July 2012. 'Afghanistan Mid Year Bulletin on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.' Kabul, Afghanistan: UNAMA and UNHCR, p. 32.

169 Agence France-Presse. 3 July 2011. 'Grenade Wounds 17 Afghan Schoolchildren'; NDTV. 3 July 2011. 'Afghanistan: 17 Children Wounded in Grenade Attack on School.'

170 Please see: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. March 2013. 'State of Human Rights in 2012'; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. March 2012. 'State of Human Rights in 2011,' p. 178; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. April 2011. 'State of Human Rights in 2010,' p. 10; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. February 2010. 'State of Human Rights in 2009,' p. 12; as cited in Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014.

ed in a single incident when armed Taliban militants seized control of a convoy of 28 school buses with secondary school students in North Waziristan.<sup>171</sup>

- In India, in 2013 and 2014 several online news agencies as well as the Home Ministry reported instances of attacks on schools by suspected Maoist fighters.<sup>172</sup> Human rights

groups and several media outlets report that between 2009 and 2012, attacks on schools and other education settings left at least 13 teachers and 4 students dead and at least 73 teachers and 11 students injured. Seven teachers were abducted, 5 of whom were subsequently found dead, and at least 2 students were kidnapped.<sup>173</sup>

## CUSTODIAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Although in popular perception, custodial violence appears limited to police custody, it also refers to violence perpetrated by military personnel in times of armed conflict.<sup>174</sup> In South Asia, girls and boys in juvenile detention centres are at risk for violence.<sup>175</sup> In India, by one estimate, in 2006–2007, 70 percent of children in correctional (juvenile detention) facilities reported some abuse; three-quarters of them were girls. About 52 percent of children in shelters reported abuse; one-third of them were girls.<sup>176</sup> In Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, evidence suggests that girls face sexual and physical abuse in police custody, juvenile detention, and residential facilities.<sup>177</sup> In Sri Lanka, a study conducted among 1,322 juvenile victims revealed that 44 percent of them had experienced sexual abuse and 36 percent had faced physical maltreatment. More than half of the cases of physical abuse (51 percent) had taken place at school.<sup>178</sup>

171 Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014. Collection of news reports reviewed can be found on page 240 of the report.

172 The Home Ministry Naxal Management Division. Untitled factsheet on Maoist insurgency. Retrieved from: [http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload\\_files/mha/files/FAQs\\_NM\\_241013.pdf](http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/FAQs_NM_241013.pdf); Rediff. 15 June 2013 'Naxals Grow Bolder, Blow Up School in Bihar'; IANS. 15 June 2013. 'Maoists Blow Up School in Bihar.' The New Indian Express; and ANI. 16 March 2013. 'Fear Grips Students as Maoists Destroy School Wall in Jharkhand's Latehar District'; cited in Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014.

173 Numbers cited from various media and online news reports cited in Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014.

174 Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R.P. 2014.

175 Pinheiro, P.S. 2006; cited in UNICEF. 2009. 'Report on the International Girl Child Conference.' The Hague, the Netherlands. A joint publication of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre and the Government of the Netherlands.

176 Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. 2007. 'Study on Child Abuse: India.' 2007.

177 UNICEF. 19–21 May 2005. Regional Consultation on Violence Against Children in South Asia. Islamabad, Pakistan.

178 Fernando, A.D., Karunasekera, W. 2009. 'Juvenile Victimization in a Group of Young Sri Lankan Adults.' Ceylon Medical Journal, Vol. 54, No. 3, pp. 80-84.





## CONSEQUENCES

VAC in education settings can have serious and long-term effects on children's learning outcomes, physical well-being, and mental and psychological health. This chapter discusses how such impacts of violence are manifested in children's lives.

## Impact on learning outcomes

**'ADDRESSING VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS IS NOT ONLY ABOUT PROTECTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TO PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL INTEGRITY BUT ALSO ABOUT ACHIEVING GREATER LEARNING OUTCOMES AND WELL-BEING FOR THE CHILD.'**<sup>179</sup>

VAC in education settings has profound impacts on children's educational outcomes, participation and performance in school.<sup>180</sup> A survey in Afghanistan identified corporal punishment as one of the main reasons why children did not go to school.<sup>181</sup> In Bangladesh, physical and psychological punishments are a common occurrence in schools, which causes many children to drop out.<sup>182</sup> A study by Save the Children (2005) found that physical and cruel or degrading punishment affected children's school performance and that children valued kind and patient teachers who explained rather than drilled.<sup>183</sup> Children from traditionally excluded groups are particularly vulnerable to harsh treatment. In India, a study found that Dalit and Adivasi students in primary schools face verbal abuse at the hands of their upper-caste teachers, and this affects the way in which these first generation Dalit and Adivasi school-goers view themselves as learners.<sup>184</sup> In the Maldives, a World Bank study attrib-

uted low levels of participation and motivation among students to strict and conservative school management and teachers who are ill disposed towards students who held progressive ideas and displayed independent thinking. In Nepal, a study found that 14 percent of dropouts had left school due to fear of the teacher.<sup>185</sup> Save the Children (2005) reports that regular beatings make children lose interest in studies and perform poorly.<sup>186</sup> In Pakistan, a study among 3,582 children aged 6–14 years from government and religious schools in 8 districts found that 404 children had run away from home to escape torture by teachers.<sup>187</sup> In Sri Lanka, a study revealed that school absenteeism as well as deliberate self-harm, substance use and family conflict were associated with physical and emotional abuse children experienced in schools.<sup>188</sup>

There is also evidence that discriminatory environments may push same-sex attracted and gender diverse children and youth to cut short their education. In India, one study found that hijra were more vulnerable to discrimination and abuse and exclusion from education than same-sex attracted students, and were less likely to graduate from college than MSM respondents. They faced increasing mistreatment after puberty, which made school environment progressively more hostile as they reached higher grades.<sup>189</sup>

179 Asia-Pacific roundtable meeting on school-related gender-based violence, November 2013, Bangkok, Thailand

180 UNICEF. 2009. *State of the World's Children*.

181 Save the Children. 2009. 'Rewrite the Future: Global Evaluation, Afghanistan Midterm Country Report.' London, U.K.: Save the Children.

182 Jabeen, F., and Karkara, R. 2006, pp. 34 and 66.

183 International Save the Children Alliance. 2005. 'Voices of Girls and Boys to End Violence against Children in South and Central Asia.' Contribution to UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children. Kathmandu, Save the Children Sweden Regional Programme for South and Central Asia, as cited in UNICEF. N.D. *Violence against Children in Schools and Educational Settings*.

184 Balagopalan, S., and Subrahmanian, R. 2003. 'Dalit and Adivasi Children in Schools: Some Preliminary Research Themes and Findings.' *IDS Bulletin*. Vol. 34, No. 1.

185 United Nations. 2006. 'World Report on Violence against Children.' New York: Author.

186 International Save the Children Alliance. 2005. 'Ending Physical and Humiliating Punishment of Children – Making it Happen.' Submission to the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children. Stockholm: Save the Children Sweden.

187 NCCR-NWFP 1998, as cited in Jabeen, F., and Karkara, R. 2006, p. 81.

188 Perera, B., Ostbye, T., Ariyananda, P.L., Lelwala, E. March 2009. 'Prevalence and Correlates of Physical and Emotional Abuse among Late Adolescents.' *Ceylon Medical Journal*. 54(1):10-5.

189 Singh, S., Krishan, A. and Mishra, S. 2015. 'Experienced Discrimination and Its Relationship with Life Chances and Socioeconomic Status of Sexual Minorities in India.' Delhi: Amaltas Consulting Private Limited.



## ECONOMIC COSTS OF SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Globally, research shows that VAC in education settings has damaging consequences on a nation's health care, welfare and criminal justice system.<sup>190</sup> School-based violence can adversely affect children's employment options, earning potential, access to benefits and social protection, as well as their health and relationships. A study conducted by ChildFund Alliance (2014) estimated that the global economic impacts and costs resulting from the consequences of physical, psychological and sexual VAC can be as high as \$7 trillion. Estimated global costs related to such violence are 3–8 percent of global GDP.<sup>191</sup> In South Asia, a World Bank study (2014) found that students who complete their education are more likely to be productive members of society who achieve their economic potential, and that there is a clear correlation between per capita gross domestic product and legal rights and protection for LGBT people across countries.<sup>192</sup> In India, the economic cost of homophobia was estimated to be 0.1–1.7 percent of the national GDP.<sup>193</sup>

## CONSEQUENCES OF ACID VIOLENCE

Consequences of acid attacks can be devastating and lifelong. These may include death, severe disfigurement, loss of sight and maiming.<sup>194</sup> Acid has an evolving and prolonged effect on the human body. It often permanently blinds the victim and denies them the use of their hands. As a result, everyday tasks become extremely difficult if not impossible.<sup>195</sup> Acid violence rarely kills, but it causes, in addition to severe physical injuries, long-term psychological and social damage, leading to depression, fear, insomnia, nightmares, paranoia and/or fear of facing the outside world, headaches, weakness and tiredness, difficulty in concentrating, and in some cases, psychosis and suicide.<sup>196</sup> Acid burn victims face social stigma and discrimination, which makes them lonely and dependent on their immediate family.<sup>197</sup>

190 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2014. World Youth Report 2013. The Global Situation of Young People. New York: Author.

191 There were multiple data gaps and discrepancies in the types of data available regarding the economic cost of violence against children, which hindered the possibility of calculating accurate national and global estimates. For more information, please see: Perezniето, P., Montes, A., Langston, L. and Routier, S. 2014. 'The Costs and Economic Impact of Violence against Children.' September 2014. ChildFund Alliance. Available at: <http://childfundalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ODI-Policy-Brief.-The-cost-and-economic-impact-of-violence-against-children.pdf>

192 Badgett, M.V. Lee. 2014. 'The Economic Cost of Stigma and the Exclusion of LGBT People: A Case Study of India.' Washington D.C.: World Bank Group. Retrieved from: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2014/10/23952131/economic-cost-stigma-exclusion-lgbt-people-case-study-india>

193 Singh, S., Krishan, A. and Mishra, S. 2015.

194 Massage, I. 2011. 'Acid and Burns Violence in Nepal. A Situational Analysis.'

195 Personal communication with Valerie Khan, Executive Director, Acid Survivors Foundation in Pakistan. 29 January 2014. Also, please see: Acid Survivors Trust International. Online resources retrieved from: <http://www.acidviolence.org/index.php/acid-violence/>

196 Suicide attempts as well. For instance, see The Telegraph. 16 September 2012. The case of Fakhra Younus. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/9207608/Fakhra-Younus.html>. Also in Ahmad, N. 2011. 'Acid Attacks on Women: An Appraisal of the Indian Legal Response.' Asia-Pacific Journal on Human Rights and the Law: 2; 201; pp. 55-72 citing K. Chandrasekhar. 21 July 2009. 'What is 'Acid' Mark on Asia? An Opinion of Dr. K. Chandrasekhar, Eenadu'. Telugu News Daily.

197 Ahmad, N. 2011. 'Acid Attacks on Women: An Appraisal of the Indian Legal Response,' pp. 55-72; also Project SAAVE (Stand Against Acid Violence) – online resources retrieved from: <http://projectsaave.org/projects/livelihood-support-for-survivors/>

## Impact on mental and physical well-being

The impact of VAC in education settings goes beyond the risk of physical injury. Children who suffer physical and emotional violence experience long-term effects that can continue into adulthood, such as impaired brain development and mental and physical health problems, including heart disease, substance abuse and depression. Violence also affects children's learning and performance in school, creates difficulties in developing empathy, controlling aggression, and interacting with others, and damages parent-child relationships.<sup>198</sup>

Children who are victimized by their peers are at heightened risk for depression, loneliness, social anxiety, diminished self-esteem and suicide.<sup>199</sup> In Sri Lanka, a study among 1,226 school children aged 12 years found that even moderate corporal punishment was directly linked to psychological maladjustment in children.<sup>200</sup> Another study among a cohort of 23 girls who had faced sexual abuse revealed that the experience of abuse had adversely affected their physical, mental and social and emotional capacities.<sup>201</sup> Other forms of VAC in education settings, such as discrimination or exclusion, also make certain students especially vulnerable to emotional and psychological problems.<sup>202</sup>

## PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

Bullying and cyber-bullying deeply affect children in school settings.<sup>203</sup> Bullying may result in a loss of self-esteem, stress, depression, long-term emotional imbalance, or even suicide. In the Maldives, a World Bank study found that young women experienced 'emotional distress' as a result of bullying in school.<sup>204</sup> Consequences of cyber-bullying on children in South Asia have yet to be investigated in detail, but some studies suggest that it results in an overwhelming sense of guilt, shame and isolation, especially where young girls' 'innocence' is associated with family honour.<sup>205</sup> In Pakistan, a study revealed that victims of school-based cyber violence experience 'the entire spectrum of conceivable harms', including long-term insomnia and migraine, extreme stress, feelings of intense fear, isolation, inability to socialize and changes in personality.<sup>206</sup>

- 197 Ahmad, N. 2011. 'Acid Attacks on Women: An Appraisal of the Indian Legal Response,' pp. 55-72; also Project SAAVE (Stand Against Acid Violence) – online resources retrieved from: <http://projectsaave.org/projects/livelihood-support-for-survivors/>
- 198 UNICEF. 2014. 'Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence against Children'; Margolin, G., Vickerman, K.A. 2007. 'Post-traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents Exposed to Family Violence: I. Overview and Issues.' *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*. 38(6): 613-619; Holt, S., Buckley, H., Whelan, S. 2008. 'The Impact of Exposure to Domestic Violence on Children and Young People: A Review of the Literature.' *Child Abuse & Neglect*. 32(8): 797-810; Dyson, J.L. 1990. 'The Effect of Family Violence on Children's Academic Performance and Behavior.' *Journal of the National Medical Association*. 82(1):17-22; Brancalhone, P.G., Fogo, J.C., Williams, LC de A. 2004. 'Crianças expostas à violência conjugal: Avaliação do desempenho acadêmico.' *Psicologia: Teoria E Pesquisa*. 20(2):113-117; Joint Inter-agency Statement. April 2013. 'Strengthening Child Protection Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Call to Action.' African Child Policy Forum.
- 199 Goodman, M. R., E. A. Stormshak and T. J. Dishion. 2001. 'The Significance of Peer Victimization at Two Points in Development.' *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*. Vol. 22, No. 5, 2001, pp. 507-526; Kochenderfer-Ladd, B. and J. L. Wardrop. 2001. 'Chronicity and Instability of Children's Peer Victimization Experiences as Predictors of Loneliness and Social Satisfaction Trajectories.' 2001. *Child Development*, Vol. 72, No. 1, pp. 134-151; Craig, W. M. 1998. 'The Relationship among Bullying, Victimization, Depression, Anxiety, and Aggression in Elementary School Children', *Personality and Individual Differences*. Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 123-130, as cited in UNICEF. 2014. 'Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence against Children,' p. 112.
- 200 De Soyza, P, Newcombe, P.A, Rajapakse, L. 2010. 'Outcomes of Parental Use of Psychological Aggression on Children: A Structural Model from Sri Lanka,' *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 20, No. 10, pp. 1-19.
- 201 Ramakrishnan, P.G. 2002. 'How Sexual Abuse Impacts on Personality Adjustment and Integration into Society of a Cohort of Girls Subjected to Sexual Abuse (resident in an approved school run by the Department of Probation and Child Care).' Dissertation submitted to the University of Colombo in partial fulfillment of requirements for degree M.Ed.
- 202 UNICEF. May 2005. Regional Consultation on Violence Against Children in South Asia. Islamabad, Pakistan.
- 203 PLAN. 2008. 'Learn Without Fear: The Global Campaign to End violence in Schools,' citing Reid, K. 1989. 'Bullying and Persistent School Absenteeism,' in Tattum, D. and Lane, D. (Eds.). *Bullying in Schools*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.
- 204 For more details, see: Correia, M. et al. 2014. 'Youth in the Maldives: Shaping a New Future for Young Women and Men Through Engagement and Empowerment'; UNICEF. 2014. 'Youth in the Maldives: Challenges and Recommendations.' Draft issue paper.
- 205 Bukhari, G. 2014. 'Technology Driven Violence Against Women.' Country Report Pakistan 2014. Islamabad, Pakistan: Bytes for All and Association for Progressive Communications. p. 7.
- 206 Bukhari, G 2014. Technology Driven Violence Against Women. Country Report Pakistan 2014. Bytes for All and Association for Progressive Communications; Islamabad, Pakistan; page. 7.

## Impact of conflict-related violence in school settings

Armed conflict increases the risk of VAC in education settings.<sup>207</sup> Consequences may include chronic disruption to school attendance, dropout, destruction of educational infrastructure, death and injury, fear and trauma. In addition, war reduces the government's capacity to deliver education and may cause suspension or reduction of external assistance for education.<sup>208</sup>

In Pakistan, more than 838 attacks on schools were reported during 2009–2012, more than in any other country, leaving hundreds of schools destroyed.<sup>209</sup> Hundreds of thousands of children were thus deprived of education.<sup>210</sup> In Afghanistan, the Ministry of Education reported that more than 590 schools were closed in vulnerable areas as of May 2012.<sup>211</sup> More than 70 percent of schools in Helmand province and more than 80 percent in Zabul province were closed in 2009 as a result of attacks on schools.<sup>212</sup>

Data suggest that certain types of GBV in education settings may also escalate during the time of conflict.<sup>213</sup> The incidences, scope and magnitude of sexual and physical violence, including rape, gang rape and torture of women and girls, may increase in a conflict

situation.<sup>214</sup> In Afghanistan and Pakistan, it was found that the lower educational attainment of girls was linked to their increased vulnerability to abduction and sexual attacks during the conflict.<sup>215</sup> In 2009, the Taliban's attacks and violent threats against girls in schools, their families and teachers resulted in 120,000 female students and 8,000 women teachers ceasing to attend schools in the Swat district.<sup>216</sup> In 2011, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the Associated Press of Pakistan reported that proponents of female education had been killed during attacks on schools, and hundreds of thousands of children had been deprived of education as a result.<sup>217</sup>

The impact may be particularly severe on children from marginalized caste or ethnic groups. In Nepal, the impact of conflict on Dalit children included increased vulnerability to abuse by the military and Maoist groups, and problems in school attendance exacerbated by hostilities. Dalit students were also reportedly frightened of coming to school knowing they may be taken from school to serve in rebel forces.<sup>218</sup> In Sri Lanka, research by USAID among widowed mothers in the rural villages of Muthur and Trincomalee revealed that children's education was repeatedly interrupted in the North and East during the prolonged ethnic civil war. As a result of

207 UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences, A/HRC/26/38, 2014, para 66. The Special Rapporteur notes that violence against women and girls in situations of armed conflict should not be viewed as exceptional but rather as part of the "continuation of a pattern of discrimination and violence that is exacerbated in times of conflict."

208 Martinez, E. 2013. 'Attacks on Education. The Impact of Conflict and Grave Violations on Children's Futures.' Save the Children, p. 8.

209 Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014.

210 Please see: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. April 2011. 'State of Human Rights in 2010', p. 267; and Brown, G. 2 April 2013. 'Attacks on Schools Must Stop.' Huffpost Impact, United Kingdom.

211 Giustozzi, A. and Franco, C. 13 December 2011. 'The Battle for the Schools: The Taleban and State Education.' Afghanistan Analysts Network, as cited in Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014.

212 UNAMA. 2010. 'Afghanistan Annual Report 2009 on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.' Kabul, Afghanistan, p. 4.

213 Ward, J. and Marsh, M. 2006. 'Sexual Violence against Women and Girls in War and its Aftermath: Realities, Responses and Required Resources.' Briefing Paper, United Nations Population Fund, as cited in Haider, H. 2014. Conflict: Topic Guide. Revised edition with B. Rohwerder. Birmingham: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.

214 UNICEF. 2009. Education in Emergencies in South Asia: Reducing The Risks, Facing Vulnerable Children.

215 UKAid. 5 November 2012. Helpdesk Report: Violence and Sexual Abuse in Schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

216 For example, see: Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Discussion on Girls'/Women's Right to Education (article 10), 7 July 2014, 2, www.ohchr.org.

217 Associated Press of Pakistan/Business Recorder. 19 March 2011. 'War, Militancy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: 0.721 Million Students Affected'; and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. April 2011. 'State of Human Rights in 2010,' p. 267, as cited in Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014, p. 169.

218 Centre for Human Rights and Justice. 2005. 'The Missing Piece of the Puzzle: Caste Discrimination and the Conflict in Nepal.' The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ) at NYU School of Law. Retrieved from: [http://www.chrgj.org/docs/Missing percent20Piece percent20of percent20the percent20Puzzle.pdf](http://www.chrgj.org/docs/Missing%20piece%20of%20the%20puzzle.pdf), as cited in UNICEF. 2009. Education In Emergencies in South Asia'; Save the Children USA. 2004. 'Everyone Counts: Dalit Children and Their Right to Education in Nepal.' Westport CT: Save the Children USA.

multiple displacements, Tamil children missed many years of school, and many eventually dropped out.<sup>219</sup> Violence in the form of social discrimination may be intensified in the aftermath of a conflict or emergency. UNICEF (2009) reported that in Bhutan, when schools reopened after being closed during a period of unrest, 'real' Bhutanese students were prioritized over ethnic Nepali children for admission.<sup>220</sup>

### Intergenerational transmission of violence

**'SOMEONE HIT ME WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL AND I TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD HIT TOO WHEN I GET THE POWER... FOUR YEARS LATER, I MET THAT PERSON ... I HIT HIM WITH SO MUCH ANGER.'**

#### **– A YOUNG MALDIVIAN GANG MEMBER<sup>221</sup>**

Witnessing and experiencing violence is closely related to a person's tendency to perpetrate violence. A recent study among schoolchildren in five countries in Asia, including Nepal and Pakistan, revealed that children's exposure to parental violence and regressive gender attitudes can influence their outlook and behaviour. In Pakistan, students who were exposed to their father beating their mother at home were less likely to hold gender-equitable views. In both Nepal and Pakistan, students who had witnessed parental violence at home were more likely to perpetrate violence in school.<sup>222</sup> During a focus group discussion in Nepal, both teach-

ers and parents admitted that they beat children because they had also been beaten and humiliated as children.<sup>223</sup>

A child who has experienced violence could possibly develop accepting attitudes towards violence in adulthood, either as a victim or perpetrator. This association has not been explored specifically in relation to education settings. However, multiple studies in South Asia suggest that boys who witness violence or who are physically abused in childhood are more likely to use violence in their relationships as adults.<sup>224</sup> In Bangladesh, a United Nations multi-country study on men and violence, which surveyed 1,067 men in rural areas and 1,162 men in urban areas, found that the rape of women by men was strongly associated with the perpetrator's own victimization, particularly abuse in childhood, and participation in violence outside the home.<sup>225</sup> In India, the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) found that men who witnessed violence in childhood were more prone to use sexual violence later in their lives,<sup>226</sup> while another study found that boys who witness violence or suffer physical abuse are more likely to use violence in their relationships as adults.<sup>227</sup> In Sri Lanka, a study in four districts found that men who experienced emotional, sexual or physical abuse in childhood were 1.7 to 2 times more likely to use violence against a female partner than men who did not experience abuse.<sup>228</sup> In Nepal, a study among 1,000 rural and urban men aged 18–49 years found that men who were

119 USAID. July 2011. 'Sri Lanka Supporting Regional Governance Program (SuRG). Post-War Support For Widowed Mothers: A Gender Impact Assessment.' United States Agency for International Development.

220 UNICEF. 2009. 'Education in Emergencies in South Asia.'

221 The Asia Foundation. 2012. 'Rapid Situation Assessment of Gangs in Male.'

222 ICRW And PLAN. 2015. 'Are Schools Safe and Equal Places for Girls and Boys in Asia?'

223 UNICEF. 2004. 'Violence against Children in Nepal: A Study of the System of School Discipline in Nepal.' Centre for Victims of Torture, Nepal (CVICT) & UNICEF.

224 Fulu, E. et al. 2013. 'Why Do Some Men Use Violence Against Women and How Can We Prevent It?'; Martin, S.L., et al. 2002, and Kishor, S. and Johnson, K. 2004, as cited in Heise, L. 2011. 'What Works to Prevent Partner Violence? An Evidence Overview.' London: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; Barker, G., et.al. 2011. 'Evolving Men: Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES).' Washington D.C.: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Promundo.

225 Fulu, E. et al. 2013. 'Why Do Some Men Use Violence against Women and How Can We Prevent It?'

226 Barker, G. et.al. 2011. 'Evolving Men: Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES).'

227 Fulu, E. et al. 2013. 'Why Do Some Men Use Violence against Women and How Can We Prevent It?'

228 de Mel, N., Peiris, P., Gomez, S. 2013. 'Broadening Gender: Why Masculinities Matter. Attitudes, Practices and Gender-based Violence in Four Districts in Sri Lanka.' Colombo: Care International Sri Lanka and Bangkok: Partners for Prevention.

harshly abused as children are significantly more likely to be abusers as adults. The same study also found that childhood experiences of bullying played a strong role in perpetration of violence later in life, and these men were almost twice as likely to engage in intimate partner violence (IPV).<sup>229</sup>

Globally, research suggests that girls who are physically and sexually abused in childhood

are at increased risk of victimization in adulthood. Research on girls' victimization in education settings in South Asia is scarce. However, available data on South Asia suggest a link between sexual and physical abuse experienced by girls in childhood and their vulnerability to IPV in adulthood as well as the likelihood of them being involved, or exploited, in sex work.<sup>230</sup>

229 Priya, N. et al. 2012. 'Study on Gender, Masculinity and Son Preference in Nepal and Vietnam.' New Delhi: International Center for Research on Women.

230 For example, see PAHO. 2013. 'Summary Report: Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Comparative Analysis of Population-based Data from 12 countries.' Washington, D.C.: Author; UNICEF. 2014. 'A Statistical Snapshot of Violence against Adolescent Girls.' New York: Author, p. 9, citing Daigneaulta, I., et al. 2009. 'Men's and Women's Childhood Sexual Abuse and Victimization in Adult Partner Relationships: A Study of Risk Factors.' *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol. 33, No. 9, pp. 638-647; Wilson, H. and C. Widom. 2010. 'The Role of Youth Problem Behaviour on the Path from Child Abuse and Neglect to Prostitution: A Prospective Study.' *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2010, pp. 210-236; Heise, L. L. 2011. 'What Works to Prevent Partner Violence?' as cited in Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.

# REVIEW OF POLICY RESPONSE

## International legal commitments

Countries in South Asia have made notable progress in terms of making international legal commitments for addressing violence against children. All eight countries in the region have signed, ratified or accessioned the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC),<sup>231</sup> the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, as well as the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.<sup>232</sup> All countries in South Asia except Afghanistan have signed the 1996 Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Ac-

tion against commercial sexual exploitation of children. Several countries have signed or ratified instruments that directly or indirectly protect the rights of women, children and youth in education settings. These include the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women - Beijing Platform for Action, and the 2007 United Nations Resolution 61/143 that seeks to intensify efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women.<sup>233</sup>

## CHILD RIGHTS CONVENTION IN SOUTH ASIA

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) contains specific provisions for the protection of children against violence in education settings. Article 19 calls on States Parties to take all appropriate measures, including through education, to protect children from all forms of violence, while Article 28 calls the States Parties to take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity. The following South Asian countries have signed, ratified or accessioned the Convention: Afghanistan (signed on 27 September 1990 and ratified on 28 March 1994); Bangladesh (signed on 26 January 1990 and ratified on 3 August 1990); Bhutan (signed on 4 June 1990 and ratified on 1 August 1990); India (accessioned on 11 December 1992); Maldives (signed on 21 August 1990 and ratified on 11 February 1991); Nepal (signed on 26 January 1990 and ratified on 14 September 1990); Pakistan (signed on 6 January 1990 and ratified on 12 July 1991); and Sri Lanka (signed on 6 January 1990 and ratified on 12 July 1991).

231 Convention on the Rights of the Child. 20 November 1989. United Nations, Treaty Series, Vol. 1577, p. 3; depositary notifications C.N.147.1993.TREATIES-5 of 15 May 1993. Amendments to Article 43. Available at: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/mtdsg/volume%20i/chapter%20iv/iv-11.en.pdf>

232 For example, see: United Nations Treaties Collection online resources Retrieved from: [https://treaties.un.org/pages/viewdetails.aspx?src=ind&mtdsg\\_no=iv-11-b&chapter=4&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/pages/viewdetails.aspx?src=ind&mtdsg_no=iv-11-b&chapter=4&lang=en) and [https://treaties.un.org/pages/viewdetails.aspx?src=ind&mtdsg\\_no=iv-11-c&chapter=4&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/pages/viewdetails.aspx?src=ind&mtdsg_no=iv-11-c&chapter=4&lang=en)

233 The resolution calls upon the international community, including the United Nations system, to enhance national efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls including through 'the sharing of guidelines, methodologies and best practices'. Please see: United Nations General Assembly. 2007. Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (61/143). Available at: [http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/policy\\_and\\_research/un/61/A\\_RES\\_61\\_143\\_EN.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/policy_and_research/un/61/A_RES_61_143_EN.pdf)

## Reporting and complaint mechanism

At the national level, governments in South Asia have taken steps to combat VAC by developing national policy and complaint mechanisms. Five out of the eight countries in the region now have laws against sexual harassment. In India, the government's enactment of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act is a significant step in acknowledging and trying to address rampant sexual abuse and harassment of children.<sup>234</sup> In February 2014, the Supreme Court of India ruled that a sexually harassed person could also file complaints via post or email. In Nepal, the Supreme Court has issued a ruling against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>235</sup> In Pakistan, according to the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010, all organizations including schools are required to appoint an inquiry committee to look into complaints of sexual harassment in the organization.<sup>236</sup>

## National legislation and policies

In the past several years, many South Asian governments have developed specific laws related to VAC in education settings. Many focus on corporal punishment in schools and other education settings. In Bangladesh, the Supreme Court ordered in January 2011 that laws relating to disciplinary action should be amended to identify the imposition of corporal punishment as misconduct.<sup>237</sup> Bhutan adopted a resolution in 2008 to enforce a ban on corporal punishment in schools, and produced guidance on school discipline in 2011 to encourage positive non-violent forms of discipline. Corporal punishment that reaches a certain degree of severity is now prohibited under Article 214 of the Child Care and Protec-

tion Act 2011.<sup>238</sup> In India, in 2000, the Delhi High Court scrapped the provision for corporal punishment provided under the Delhi School Education Act. The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 prohibits corporal punishment in schools, while the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy, passed in 2013, is geared towards implementing the ban on corporal punishment in schools. In 2014, a bill supporting the rights of transgender people including access to education and jobs, financial aid and social inclusion was also enacted in the country.<sup>239</sup> In the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, the KPK Child Protection and Welfare Act 2010 is a landmark piece of legislation with several salient features relevant to VAC in education settings.<sup>240</sup> The Act abolishes corporal punishment, stipulates punishment for corporal punishment, and criminalizes all forms of violence against children as well as any kind of incitement of a child into any kind of activity harmful to his or her health. It also criminalizes any form of seduction of a child and expressly criminalizes sexual abuse.

## Inconsistent laws

In many countries in South Asia, VAC-related policies outlining specific steps for the ministries or local departments are inconsistent and inconclusive, and the quality of implementation varies across settings. There is a lack of contextual understanding of VAC in education settings. In India, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 was amended in 2012 to exclude madrasas, Vedic pathshalas and educational institutions that primarily impart religious instruction and unaided minority schools. Maldives has no policy that explicitly prohibits corporal punishment in schools, but

234 Human Rights Watch. 2013. 'Breaking the Silence: Child Sexual Abuse in India,' p. 75.

235 Babu Pant and others v Government of Nepal and others. Nepal Supreme Court, 2007.

236 Ali, K. 11-13 November 2013. Presentation on 'Policies Related to SRGBV in Pakistan.' The Asia-Pacific Roundtable Meeting on School-Related Gender-based Violence. Bangkok, Thailand.

237 Please see: Supreme Court judgment issued on 13 January 2011 (Writ Petition No. 5684 of 2010) as cited in Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment. 2014. Bangladesh Country Report. Retrieved from: <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/progress/reports/bangladesh.html>

238 Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment. 2014. 'Corporal Punishment of Children in Bhutan.' Report prepared by the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children. For more information, see: <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/progress/reports/bhutan.html>

239 Mahapatra, D. 2014. 'Supreme Court Recognizes Transgenders as "Third Gender."' The Times of India; Retrieved from: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Supreme-Court-recognizes-transgenders-as-third-gender/articleshow/33767900.cms>

240 Ali, K. 11-13 November 2013. Presentation on 'Policies Related to SRGBV in Pakistan.'

while the Ministry of Education has stated that corporal punishment should not be used, the draft Penal Code introduces a legal defense for the use of corporal punishment by teachers. In Pakistan, although a federal and ministerial directive in all provinces has instructed teachers not to use corporal punishment, the practice is not prohibited by legislation and thus lawful under Article 89 of the Penal Code.<sup>241</sup> In Sri Lanka, corporal punishment is illegal in schools, but Article 341 of the Penal Code states that, 'a schoolmaster who flogs a student is not using force illegally.' Response to VAC and especially corporal punishment appears to be even more inconsistent with respect to care centres and boarding schools. Overall, policy environment lacks innovation and concrete targets, and is not tailored to specific context in a gender sensitive way.

### Gaps in existing laws

Many children in South Asia have no legal protection against different forms of violence in education settings. In Pakistan, there is no comprehensive piece of legislation to deal with all facets of school-related GBV.<sup>242</sup> Sri Lanka is the only South Asian country that has legislation that prohibits bullying in schools.<sup>243</sup> There is lack of LGBT-specific anti-bullying policies for education settings. Further, a recent UNESCO review of policy response to SRGBV revealed that most South Asian countries have adopted 'legislative strategies and frameworks that address each form of violence in isolation, rather than in a holistic way.' For instance, laws may

address corporal punishment but not peer violence.<sup>244</sup> Finally, there are no policies in the region that recognize online technology as a risk factor for VAC. Despite sporadic developments (for instance, a new cyber-crimes bill has been drafted in Pakistan),<sup>245</sup> legal protection of children from online predators and cyber violence remains entirely non-existent.

### Limited awareness about VAC-related laws

There is a general lack of awareness regarding laws that prevent violence or promote gender equality. Perhaps part of the problem is the disconnection between international legal standards, national laws and policies, and their implementation at the local level. As a result, communities, school staff and students are not aware of their rights and obligations. In Bhutan, a study among young monks and nuns in monastic institutions found that the majority of teachers and authorities at those institutions were either not aware of or only had a basic understanding of children's rights and other legal provisions relating to children.<sup>246</sup> Further, in 2013, a needs assessment survey on the child justice system found that 77.4 percent of respondents (school goes aged 12–18 years) had not heard of the Child Care and Protection Act (2011). The same report also found that judges, registrars, bench clerks, police personnel and law enforcement agencies 'are ignorant of child protection laws, issues and policies.'<sup>247</sup> Moreover, legal developments on the national level may not always

241 Pawlak, P. and Sass, J. 2014. 'School-related Gender-Based Violence in the Asia-Pacific Region.'

242 Ali, K. November 2013. Presentation on 'Policies Related to SRGBV in Pakistan.'

243 Prohibition of Ragging and Other Forms of Violence in Educational Institutions Act, No. 20 of 1998 was enacted to 'eliminate ragging and other forms of violence and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment from educational institutions.' 'Ragging' is defined in Article 17 (k) as 'any act, which causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury of mental pain or fear.' As cited in Jones, N., Moore, K., Villar-Marquez, E. and Broadbent, E. 2008. 'Painful Lessons: the Politics of Preventing Sexual Violence and Bullying at School.' London: ODI.

244 Pawlak, P. and Sass, J. 2014. 'School-related Gender-Based Violence in the Asia-Pacific Region,' p. 35.

245 Bytes for All. March 2013. 'Cyberspace and Violence Against Women: A Review of Existing Legislations in Pakistan.' Bytes for All and Association for Progressive Communications (APC). Retrieved from: [http://www.genderit.org/sites/default/upload/pakistan\\_baseline\\_laws\\_0.pdf](http://www.genderit.org/sites/default/upload/pakistan_baseline_laws_0.pdf)

246 National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC). 2010. 'Assessment of Young Monks and Nuns in Monastic Institutions.' Eleven Experts Committee, Thimphu, as cited in UNICEF. 2013. Literature Review Report. Study on Violence Against Children in Bhutan.

247 Bhutan National Legal Institute (BNLI). 2013. 'Needs Assessment Survey on Child Justice System in Bhutan.' Thimphu: Author, as cited in UNICEF. 2013. Literature Review Report. Study on Violence Against Children in Bhutan.



be translated into local realities. For instance, in Pakistan, while there have been national level legal efforts to tackle some forms of VAC in education settings (e.g., corporal punishment), the Child Complaint Office in the Punjab Province has no jurisdiction to curb school-related gender based violence.<sup>248</sup>

### Gender insensitive laws

Prevalent gender stereotypes in South Asia are reflected in laws and their implementation in the region. Many child protection laws tend to see children as ‘genderless’ and ‘asexual’. A recent review of relevant policies in Nepal and Pakistan concluded that school-related violence is linked to curricula that do not integrate gender.<sup>249</sup> Further, laws and policies aimed at preventing violence against women are protectionist and paternalistic rather than rights based.<sup>250</sup> Many policies barely address the gendered nature of classrooms, or gender-related vulnerabilities of boys and girls in education settings. A study suggests that in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, boys do not have the same legal protection against sexual abuse as girls.<sup>251</sup> Majority of laws seem to be based on the assumption that boys can be perpetrators but not victims of sexual violence.<sup>252</sup>

In Afghanistan, Bhutan and India, people have limited awareness of legal provisions on gender equality.<sup>253</sup> In Pakistan, a survey found that out of the 300 respondents – all from

civil society organizations – only a minority was aware of laws or institutional mechanisms for dealing with complaints of abuse of women and girls.<sup>254</sup> Uneven understanding of laws sometimes leads to limited support for such protective legislations. In India, a study revealed that response to policies related to GBV is ‘often a mix of supportive, superficial, ambivalent, defensive and resistant.’<sup>255</sup>

### Personal laws

In some countries in South Asia, personal laws influence the nature of rights and legal protection granted to children. Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka directly inherited colonial legal mechanisms – systems of personal law that inherently afford varying rights to individuals based on religious or ethnic identity.<sup>256</sup> Solotaroff and Pande (2014) write that, “these personal laws reinforce understandings of community and identity, by combining the idea of ‘rights’ with one’s religion.” Thus, “those individuals who do not define themselves within one specific religious identity must identify themselves with one for legal purposes.” In Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives and Pakistan, these laws have historically been influenced by Sharia, or Islamic law, and are sometimes incompatible with the provisions of international agreements. This adds another layer of complexity to the challenge of implementing globally accepted standards.<sup>257</sup>

248 Ali, K. November 2013. ‘Policies Related to SRGBV in Pakistan.’

249 ICRW And PLAN. February 2015, p. 10.

250 Kapur, R. 2013. ‘Violence against Women in South Asia and the Limits of Law.’ Background paper for current report, as cited in Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.

251 Save the Children Sweden. 2007, p. 15.

252 Pawlak, P. and Sass, J. 2014, p. 32.

253 Munoz, B., Petesch, A. M., Turk, C. and Thumala, A. 2013. ‘On Norms and Agency: Conversations about Gender Equality with Women and Men in 20 Countries.’ Directions in Development. Washington DC: World Bank.

254 Blue Veins. 2013. ‘Breaking the Barriers: Going the Distance to Make Swara History.’ n.p. as cited in Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.

255 IMAGES study as cited in Peacock, D. and Barker, G. 2012. ‘Working with Men and Boys to Promote Gender Equality: A Review of the Field and Emerging Approaches.’ Paper on the expert meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand. UN Women.

256 Panditaratne, D. 2008. ‘Towards Gender Equality in Developing Asia: Reforming Personal Laws within a Pluralist Framework.’ New York University Review of Law and Social Change. 32 (83): 83–129, as cited in Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.

257 Choudhury, N. 2007. ‘Constrained Spaces for Islamic Feminism: Women’s Rights and the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan.’ Yale Journal of Law and Feminism 19: 155–99, as cited in Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.

# GOOD PRACTICES

## PROMISING APPROACHES

A number of promising approaches to preventing and responding to VAC have been identified both in the region and across the globe. For instance, a study has found that sexual violence against girls in schools could possibly be tackled through institutional reforms that involve educating staff about gender, human rights and nonviolence and developing sexual harassment policies that include clear reporting mechanisms and sanctions for staff who violate such policies. Other elements of reform would include improving school infrastructure (e.g., reducing the distance that girls have to travel to get to school, providing safe latrines for girls, hiring more female teachers, and establishing single sex schools for girls); school-based counselling and referrals; and school-based prevention programmes.<sup>258</sup> A study by PLAN (2008) found that the most effective strategies for addressing VAC in education settings were those that targeted the school environment. Support of teachers and parents, promoting children's awareness of their rights, ensuring their participation in school activities, and strong enforcement of laws were identified as critical components of efforts to address school violence.<sup>259</sup> Evidence suggests that awareness-raising campaigns that focus on the broader issue of acceptance of violence and help shift entrenched social norms,<sup>260</sup> and school programmes that involve male and female students in challenging harmful gender norms can also contribute in tackling the problem.<sup>261</sup> Finally, research shows that schools, teachers unions, teacher training colleges, and ministries of education can all play a role in addressing VAC in education settings. These organizations can establish and uphold an agreed-upon code of conduct for teachers and staff. The code of conduct should also be integrated into teacher training curricula.<sup>262</sup>

258 Bott, S., Morrison, A., and Ellsberg, M. June 2005. 'Preventing and Responding to Gender-based Violence in Middle and Low-income Countries: A Global Review and Analysis.' World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3618.

259 Plan International. 2008. 'Learn without Fear: the Global Campaign to End Violence in Schools.'

260 For instance, see: Fulu, E., Kerr-Wilson, A. and Lang, J. June 2014. 'What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls?' Evidence Review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls. Pretoria, South Africa: Medical Research Council; Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.

261 Achyut, P. et al. 2011. 'Building Support for Gender Equality among Young Adolescents in School: Findings from Mumbai, India.' New Delhi, India: International Center for Research on Women.

262 Fulu, E., Kerr-Lang, J. June 2014. 'What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls?'

In South Asia, efforts to address VAC in education settings have taken various forms. There are initiatives led by government, non-governmental and multilateral organizations, schools and universities, and communities including parents and community members, teachers and students. This chapter presents a broad overview of interventions and good practices in addressing VAC in education settings in South Asia.

### Developing key partnerships

In many parts of South Asia, developing key partnerships for a common agenda has been identified as a good practice to address VAC in education settings. In April 2000 the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) was launched in all eight countries in the region. It is a multi-stakeholder partnership of organizations working at the global, regional and country level to ensure that girls receive quality education that prepares them to become full and active participants in their societies. UNGEI has four strategic priorities for policy advocacy including the reduction/elimination of school-related gender-based violence. One of the initiatives geared towards this priority is the project 'Transformative Education for Gross National Happiness (GNH) in Bhutan', which carries out educational reforms across schools in Bhutan and seven GNH Seed schools run by the government of Bhutan. The Royal Education Council of Bhutan is implementing the project in close collaboration with a secondary school in Finland. The teachers received leadership training courses through which they developed action plans for promoting GNH. The plans are currently being implemented in schools. The training also enhanced the teachers' knowledge of transformative pedagogy, media literacy and ICT skills. A recent evaluation of the project concluded that the project has enabled teachers to reflect on current school practices, identify areas for im-

provement, and promote participatory teaching and learning methods.<sup>263</sup>

It has been ten years since the release of the United Nations' Study on Violence Against Children. The study has played a tremendous role in drawing attention to violence in a number of settings including schools. The 'Know Violence in Childhood' initiative was launched in New Delhi in November 2014. It is a concerted effort of multilateral institutions, non-governmental organizations and funding agencies to address the global impact of violence in childhood and develop effective violence prevention strategies. The initiative brings together leading experts from the fields of child protection, health, education, justice, international development, human rights and economics. Together they work to build evidence and showcase solutions, engage leadership, and carry out national, regional and global advocacy. After finalizing research findings, the initiative will carry out a range of activities for evidence-based advocacy.

Another significant collective response to violence against children is, a launch of new global partnership to end violence against children.<sup>264</sup> The initiative will be formally launched in July 2016. The partnership will support the efforts of stakeholders from across the world to prevent violence, protect childhood, and help make societies safe for children.<sup>265</sup> At the heart of the partnership strategy are seven building blocks that have been identified as crucial for preventing violence. These building blocks combine evidence-based strategies of WHO, UNICEF and other agencies and encompass some of the most important elements of violence prevention: teaching positive parenting skills; helping children develop life skills and stay in school; raising access to treatment and support services; enforcing laws to protect children; promoting social norms that protect

263 Bedford, T. and Cooper, R. June 2013. Project Report on 'Transformative Education for GNH: A Teacher Action Research Project.' Retrieved from: <http://education4gnh.webs.com/v3%20PreHapsentation%20Bhutan%202013.pdf>.

264 <http://www.end-violence.org/>

265 'to End Violence Against Children: Zero Draft Strategy'. September 2015. Retrieved from: <http://files7.webydo.com/92/9216880/UploadedFiles/B5289EE4-9676-2070-BA77-B9C3A9888601.pdf>

children; empowering families economically; and creating safe environments for children. The initiative is child-centered, rights-based, inclusive, and results-oriented. It seeks to make violence prevention a global policy priority and support countries to work together to tackle violence against children.<sup>266</sup>

### Collaboration with government agencies

Working with government agencies is crucial as they are in a position to stimulate and sustain efforts to reduce or eliminate VAC in education settings. In Bhutan, the government is working towards establishing a child protection system in the country. UNICEF's common country programme document (2014–2018) for Bhutan specifically mentions "gender equality and child protection" as one of the key outcomes.<sup>267</sup> Bhutan's Eleventh Five-Year Plan developed by the Gross National Happiness Commission serves as a significant milestone for two reasons.<sup>268</sup> First, it recognized protection of children as a national priority for the first time, and second, it incorporated the findings of the child protection system mapping and assessment. The Bhutanese Ministry of Education (MOE) has instituted counselling services in schools; provides training to school authorities on children's rights and alternative forms of discipline; and has developed a code of conduct for teachers and mechanisms for reporting and responding to allegations of violence against children in schools. Since 2009, the government and religious bodies have shown their commitment to protecting child rights by participating in events oriented to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including holding the first meeting of (Dratshang Lhengtshog) on

the issue of violence and abuse in religious institutions. To help build a protective environment for children in the monastic institutions, the Dratshang Lhengtshog, or the Commission for Monastic Affairs, has established a child protection office and has formed a 13-member expert committee to advise senior management on policy and programming. An emergency shelter has also been set up to support child victims of violence and abuse. UNICEF is working closely with the Dratshang Lhengtshog and the Bhutan Nuns Foundation to raise awareness about child rights and child protection issues.

### Engaging families, schools and communities

In South Asia, community-level interventions to address VAC involve students, teachers and school staff, parents and parents associations and other community members including community or religious leaders. In low-income, rural areas of India, school staff and students have worked together to decorate classrooms and build school gardens using the simplest of materials at hand, though they have found that this works best when schools are secure and protected from vandalism.<sup>269</sup> In Nepal, the UNiTE Orange Campaign of Y-PEER has carried out grassroots activities to end SRGBV by partnering with teachers and parents. In another intervention in Nepal, Save the Children worked with community-based clubs to implement the 'Choices' curriculum, which aimed to empower boys and girls aged 10–14 years to challenge gender norms. The curriculum was designed to encourage gender equity among girls and boys through fun activities. The in-

266 'Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children: Partnership Strategy'. 11 January 2016. Retrieved from: <http://files7.webydo.com/92/9216880/UploadedFiles/DC87576D-770B-E0E1-C6CE-8CEE122F5B37.pdf>

267 Bhutan: Common Country Programme Document 2014–2018'. UNICEF. Retrieved from: [http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2013-BTN1-Bhutan\\_CCPD-final\\_approved-English.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2013-BTN1-Bhutan_CCPD-final_approved-English.pdf)

268 Gross National Happiness Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan. 2013. 'Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018.' Retrieved from: <http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Eleventh-Five-Year-Plan.pdf>.

269 Black, M. and Talbot, R. 2005. *Water: A Matter of Life and Health*. Oxford University Press/UNICEF India.

tervention, which included an experimental control group, had positive outcomes on the attitudes and behaviour of participants. For example, prior to the intervention just over 40 percent of participants believed “it was okay for a man to hit his wife,” while this number

dropped to under 10 percent in a post-intervention survey. Further, children reported that they felt and behaved differently after participating in ‘Choices’, with boys becoming more involved in household chores and advocating on behalf of their sisters.<sup>270</sup>

## ENSURING THE RIGHTS OF LGBTQI STUDENTS

In 2014 the Nepali NGO Blue Diamond Society, with support from the World Bank, piloted a programme to develop a pool of teachers to train other teachers and school administrators on making schools safer for LGBTI students. The trained teachers went on to register themselves as the NGO Chetana (‘awareness’). They offer training on gender, sexuality and gender identity with the aim of developing a friendlier educational environment for LGBT people. So far over 600 teachers have been trained. This has coincided with improvements in the school curriculum with respect to sexuality and gender issues.<sup>271</sup>

In parts of South Asia affected by conflict or war, where governments may lack the capacity or will to fully protect education,<sup>272</sup> communities play an important role in preventing or responding to VAC in education settings.<sup>273</sup> These communities, however, often conceive or develop actions in informal ways and rarely with external support (e.g., human resources, skills, knowledge, advocacy, or funding). In Afghanistan, communities have protected schools in instances where they know and are able to negotiate with the potential perpetrators of attack. In several instances, school management committees were established to protect schools, students and teachers; set up school defense committees; provide night watchmen; and run community schools or offer classes in people’s homes, which are less likely to be attacked.<sup>274</sup>

Some interventions have created an opportunity for reflection by bringing teachers and children together to address the problem of

SRGBV. For instance, in one setting in Bhutan, teachers participated in a workshop on child rights with regard to corporal punishment in schools. They used active teaching methods such as ‘Circle Time’ to discuss ways of dealing with “discipline” problems; basically, adults and children would sit together and openly discuss issues of their concern. The method was promising in terms of preventing “behaviour and classroom management problems” as it provided children an opportunity “to develop speaking and listening skills” as well as to discuss issues that affect their lives “such as relationships, non-discrimination, fairness, rights, tolerance, respect, cooperation and non-violent conflict solving.”<sup>275</sup> In Sri Lanka, the Women’s Development Centre (WDC) runs a school-based awareness programme on abuse and VAWG, targeting both children and teachers. The organization provides counselling and training to teachers on identifying victims of abuse while also training young boys and girls from Grades 9, 10 and 11

270 For more information, see Interagency Youth Working Group. Retrieved from: <http://www.iywg.org/resources/transforming-gender-norms-among-very-young-adolescents-innovative-intervention-and-0#sthash.DSce7ebv.dpuf>

271 Blue Diamond Society. 2015. Final project report submitted to the World Bank. Kathmandu, Nepal: Author

272 Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014. Education Under Attack, p. 230.

273 Ibid, p. 229.

274 Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 2014, p. 232.

275 UNICEF. 2009. ‘Education in Emergencies in South Asia.’

as peer counsellors. Each year approximately 10 schools participate in the programme. The student counsellors' association established by WDC offers children safe spaces to confide in their friends and teachers.

### Peer educators and change makers

In many parts of South Asia, child peer educators are given a role in addressing school-based violence. In Bangladesh, the 'Breaking the Silence' initiative formed groups of adolescent girls and boys to impart messages about child sexual abuse. The intervention encourages open discussion among classmates and among children from different communities.<sup>276</sup> In Nepal, under an initiative called 'Girls Taking Action to End Sexual Harassment', girls educated boys and men on how to make their schools and communities safe. By examining places where girls regularly face harassment, young boys and men became aware of the dangers to which adolescent schoolgirls are exposed. The girls have also developed village-level networks that have links to relevant local bodies, such as the district child welfare committee, local police, and women's groups.<sup>277</sup> Peer educators use a toolkit for Ending Violence against Women and Girls to facilitate discussions on gender equality, healthy relationships and positive activism. The toolkit was developed collaboratively by the UNiTE Campaign Secretariat and regional members of the UNiTE Youth Network. It brings together good practices from around the world and adapts them to local contexts in an attractive,

youth-friendly format.<sup>278</sup>

Schools and other education settings in the South Asia region have employed the concept of 'change makers' – individuals who commit to fight all forms of discrimination and violence. In Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, the 'We Can' campaign aimed to reach 50 million change makers who would initiate a trend of rejecting VAWG in their own lives and in the lives of those around them. The campaign was led by a loosely formed group of 'allies', including universities and colleges, students, civil society groups, corporate bodies, and private enterprises committed to changing social attitudes on violence against women.<sup>279</sup> The campaign is playing an important role in reducing tolerance of VAW amongst change makers and those in their circle. In northern Bangladesh, Polli Sree worked with students and teachers in more than 60 schools and colleges to generate awareness about gender discrimination and VAW. The programme mobilized students as 'agents of change' to prevent and reject violence at home, in their families, at schools and in their communities. In India, the campaign has contributed in bringing positive changes in educational institutions and local administrations. Colleges have introduced VAW and women rights in their programmes and taken measures against sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination, e.g., by putting up 'gender complaints boxes'.<sup>281</sup>

276 Heissler, K. 2001. Background paper on 'Best Practices and Priorities to Combat Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children in Bangladesh.' Dhaka, Bangladesh: CSI, as cited in UNICEF. 2001. 'Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children in South Asia.' Kathmandu, Nepal: Author.

277 Save the Children. 2005. 'Voices of Girls and Boys to End Violence against Children in South and Central Asia', as cited in UNICEF. N.D. 'Violence against Children in Schools and Educational Settings.'

278 For more information, see: <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2015/1/working-with-young-people#sthash.NsTY-Orbc.dpuf>

279 Raab, M. 2011. 'The "We Can" Campaign in South Asia 2004–2011: External Evaluation Report.' Oxfam GB; Retrieved from: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/the-we-can-campaign-in-south-asia-2004-2011-external-evaluation-report-146189>; Rakib, M.A. and Razan, A. 2013. 'We Can – A Model of Behavioral Change Concerning Violence against Women: An Assessment Report of "We Can" Campaign.' Bangladesh Report (2010–2011). Dhaka, Bangladesh.

280 Oxfam International. August 2004. 'Towards Ending Violence against Women in South Asia.' Oxfam Briefing Paper 66.

281 Rakib, M.A. and A. Razan. 2013. 'We Can – A Model of Behavioral Change Concerning Violence against Women'; William, S. and Aldred, A. 2011. 'Change-making: How We Adopt New Attitudes, Beliefs and Practices. Insights from the "We Can" Campaign'; and Hjort, J. and Villanger, E. 2011. 'Backlash: Female Employment and Domestic Violence.' Preliminary working paper; Raab, M. 2011. 'The We Can Campaign in South Asia, 2004–2011.'; Oxfam GB. 2012. 'Enhancing Effectiveness through Evidence-Based Learning: The We Can Campaign, Bangladesh, 2011–12.' Project Effectiveness Review. <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/>. Additional information obtained during an interview held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 2 October 2013 and a Skype call on 7 January 2014, with Jinat Ara Haque, National Coordinator of the We Can Campaign Bangladesh, and Skype communication with Dr. Noreen Khali, Regional Adviser on Gender and Governance, Oxfam, and Hajera Pasha, National Coordinator, We Can Pakistan. Interview conducted on 28 January 2014.

## Placing students at the centre

Evidence from Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka suggests that teaching environments that put children at the centre of the learning experience are more likely to address violence effectively.<sup>282</sup> Involving students in efforts to prevent violence and promote gender equality can deepen their understanding of the problem and motivate them to act for change.<sup>283</sup> There are a number of initiatives in South Asia that are designed and led by children and young people. For instance, the UNiTE Global Youth Network, a youth-led network of the United Nations Secretary-General's 'UNiTE to End Violence against Women' campaign, brings together youth activists to end persistent gender equality and VAWG in schools, communities and broader society. In Nepal, child rights forums give children an opportunity to set codes of conduct for their schools.<sup>284</sup> Children design the activities of the forum and develop rules and regulations for school staff in order to hold them accountable.

## Linking school-related VAC with other sectors

A host of interventions address VAC in education settings through other sectors or topics. For instance, school-based sexuality education programmes may include information on gender violence. In Bangladesh, the Madrasah Students Initiative for Adolescents Health incorporated messages of gender equality and non-violence in its overall programmatic goal.

This has enabled male and female students to reflect on entrenched gender inequalities in their communities and schools.<sup>285</sup> In India, Yaari Dosti addressed gender inequality and harmful masculinities through a broader initiative for health promotion among students. Evaluation suggested that the intervention had successfully used innovative and interactive methods of sex education with young men to transform their notions of masculinity and attitudes toward violence.<sup>286</sup>

In settings where cultural norms do not allow space to discuss sensitive subjects (e.g., sexual violence and abuse of unmarried young girls), certain programmes have identified themes that serve as 'entry points' for addressing other forms of VAC. In Afghanistan, Save the Children Sweden works with partners Asianna and Social Volunteers Foundation to establish a team to train local NGOs on the Child Rights Convention, gender and corporal punishment in schools. The problem of corporal punishment in schools was then used as an entry point to raise issues of child sexual abuse.<sup>287</sup> Programmes have also taken advantage of spaces where young people, especially boys and young men, are "in their element" and feel safe and comfortable discussing sensitive topics.<sup>288</sup> Sports can play a vital role in efforts to eliminate and prevent violence, including violence in schools.<sup>289</sup> Under the Parivartan programme in Mumbai, India, cricket coaches and mentors who had received specialized training taught boys aged 10–16 years in schools and

282 Boyle, S. 2002. 'Reaching the Poor: The "Costs" of Sending Children to School.' London, United Kingdom: Department for International Development.

283 USAID. (N.D.) Equate Technical Brief: Addressing School-related Gender-based Violence. Available at: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADM831.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADM831.pdf)

284 UNICEF. 2009. 'Education in Emergencies in South Asia.'

285 Madrasah Students Initiative for Adolescents Health in Bangladesh was initiated in 2007 in five districts and 10 Madrasahs by the Family Planning Association of Bangladesh under Innovation Fund from IPPF. See: IPPF and Family Planning Association of Bangladesh. 2009. 'Islam and Masculinities in Bangladesh.' Dhaka: author, as cited in Pawlak, P. and Sass, J. 2014.

286 Verma, R. et al. 2008. 'Promoting Gender Equity as a Strategy to Reduce HIV Risk and Gender-based Violence among Young Men in India.' Horizons Final Report. Washington DC: Population Council; Instituto Promundo. 2012. 'Engaging Men to Prevent Gender-based Violence: A Multi-country Intervention and Impact Evaluation Study.' Report for the UN Trust Fund. Washington DC: Promundo, as cited in Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.

287 Sluggert, C. 2003. 'Mapping of Psychosocial Support for Girls and Boys affected by Child Sexual Abuse in Four Countries in South and Central Asia.'

288 For example, see: UN Women's Virtual Knowledge Center to End Violence against Women and Girls. Available at: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/222-developing-capacities-and-skills-of-key-institutions-and-professionals.html>

289 DeFrantz, A. Chairwoman of the International Olympic Committee's Women and Sport Commission and an IOC member.

communities about controlling aggression and raised their awareness about abusive behaviour.<sup>290</sup> An evaluation found that as a result of this intervention, community athletes became significantly less supportive of physical abuse of girls; however, a corresponding level of change was not found among the school athletes.<sup>291</sup>

### Promotion of child rights

Programmes in South Asia have focused on the promotion of child rights as a fundamental tool for ending VAC in education settings. These programmes involve educating children, teachers, parents or communities about child rights, monitoring teachers' behaviour, setting up codes of conduct, and integrating human and child rights principles in school curricula or codes of conduct. In India, the Human Rights Friendly Schools project aims to empower young people and promote active participation of all members of the school community in integrating human rights values and principles into all areas of school life.<sup>292</sup> In Nepal, the Biratnagar Working Children's Club is an example of a social support network run by children and young people who have completed a two-year supplementary educational programme for working children. The clubs raise awareness of child rights and campaign on issues such as exploitative labour, child marriage and trafficking, and advocate for more child participation in schools, in the community and in governance, including by working with municipal authorities to make Biratnagar a child-friendly city. In another project in Nepal, UNICEF ROSA trained child rights and child welfare officers from 30 districts on child rights and child protection issues.

### Use of technology and online communication

Given their enormous popularity among youth

in South Asia, technology and online communication can play a helpful role in addressing VAC in education settings. Some online campaigns in the region raise broader social issues while also conveying messages of non-violence. Many of them work directly with schools and school children and youth. In India, 'GotStared.At' is a counter culture movement that raises awareness of critical social issues including violence, gender inequality and discrimination in schools. 'Must Bol', a campaign led by a group of young people in New Delhi, runs a series of workshops that provide an opportunity for male and female students to reflect on different types of violence and their own experiences. This dialogue has improved their understanding of the subject and particularly enabled female students to bring regular experiences of violence, harassment or bullying to light. The 'Bell Bajao!' campaign employs pop culture, media, the arts, and technology to promote awareness of violence and engage men and boys by mobilizing a large array of community people. The campaign has reached millions of individuals thus far.<sup>293</sup> ECHOS is an online campaign that allows young people to voice (online and offline) their experiences of violence or their messages against harassment in schools.

### Focusing on a particular form of VAC

Most programmes in South Asia address multiple types of violence that children face in education settings. But a number of interventions focus on a particular form of violence (e.g., corporal punishment) or target group (e.g., adolescent girls). Regional initiatives such as 'Learn Without Fear: The Global Campaign to End Violence in Schools' and 'Campaign Against Corporal Punishment of Children' focus on eliminating corporal punishment in schools,<sup>294</sup> while PLAN's 'Because I Am a Girl' campaign aims to end gender-based violence against girls in schools or in the vicinity of

290 Blanc, A., Melnikas, A., Chau, M. and Stoner, M. February 2013. 'A Review of the Evidence on Multi-Sectoral Interventions to Reduce Violence against Adolescent Girls.' Paper commissioned by Girl Hub, a strategic partnership between Nike Foundation and the U.K. Department for International Development. Also see: Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.

291 Das, A et al. 2012. 'Reviewing Responsibilities and Renewing Relationships: An Intervention with Men on Violence against Women in India.' *Cult Health Sex.* 14(6): 659-75.

292 As cited in Amnesty International. 2012. 'Becoming a Human Rights Friendly School. A Guide for Schools around the World.' London: Amnesty International. Retrieved from: <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/6803.pdf>

293 Solotaroff, J. L., Pande, R. P. 2014.

294 The campaign was developed and implemented by PLAN International, South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) and South Asia Coordination Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG).



schools in the region. On the country level, the Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) in Bangladesh runs a nationwide campaign through a network of students to protect the rights of acid survivors. Through ASF's Survivors Network, the programme has been launched in 46 schools in Bogura, Comilla, Gazipur, Narsingdi and Sirajgonj, with the participation of 8,559 students and more than 100 teachers. The campaign has raised awareness of the causes and consequences of such attacks, immediate measures to be taken after an attack, and the services that victims are entitled to from the government and other NGOs.<sup>295</sup> In Nepal, Safer Environment for Girls (2001–2011) aimed to empower girls, train teachers, and make schools free of all forms of violence, particularly sexual abuse.<sup>296</sup> An evaluation suggested that the intervention helped girls (and boys) to recognize violence and that child club activities they led under the programme improved their confidence.<sup>297</sup> Some programmes in the region have also focused on supporting children with special educational needs. As part of a community-based education programme in India, young women with a high school education taught basic literacy and numeracy skills to children who have not mastered them by third grade. The programme reached

15,000 students and boosted their achievement scores by one quarter, with the most gains among poor children, at a low cost.<sup>298</sup>

### Deradicalization programmes

Deradicalization is a process through which individuals abandon extremist worldviews, disavow violence, and accept political pluralism. Pakistan runs six main deradicalization programmes. One of the promising initiatives is Sabaoon Center for Rehabilitation. The centre trains detainees in formal curricula as well as provides corrective religious education, vocational training, counseling and therapy. Detainees, usually in the age range of 18–45 years, are first separated into age groups. Students hold discussions on social issues, and some sessions also engage their families. Training may last anywhere from six months to a year. Although such programmes have yet to undergo external evaluation, Pakistani officials in charge report that the approach has successfully “reformed” more than 2,500 Taliban fighters. A number of civil society organizations also run deradicalization projects that include interfaith dialogues and establishing madrasas that counteract the views promoted by radical madrasas.<sup>299</sup>

295 For more information, see: <http://www.acidsurvivors.org/SAAV-SAAT>, cited in Pawlak, P. and Sass, J. 2014.

296 Gautam, I. P. 2012. ‘Final Evaluation of Safer Environment for Girls (TOLI) in Kaski and Tanahun District.’ Kathmandu: Save the Children Fund, Nepal Country Office, as cited in Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.

297 However, it is difficult to conclude from the report whether this ‘success’ went beyond the girls included in the evaluation’s focus group discussions – for more information, see Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.

298 Herz, B. 2006. ‘Educating Girls in South Asia: Promising Approaches.’ Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI, as cited in UNICEF ROSA. 2011. ‘Disparities in Education in South Asia. A Resource Tool Kit.’ Kathmandu, Nepal: Author.

299 Khan, S.A. 14 September 2015. ‘Deradicalization Programming in Pakistan’. The United States Institute of Peace. Retrieved from: <http://www.usip.org/publications/2015/09/14/deradicalization-programming-in-pakistan>

## BHUTAN'S EFFORTS TO ADDRESS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Bhutan has long tried to discourage the use of corporal punishment in schools. As far back as 1997, a notification from the Bhutanese Ministry of Education explicitly stated “that corporal punishment should not be used,” and led to changes in the code of conduct for teachers and students.<sup>300</sup> In 2008, participants of the annual teachers’ conference reiterated support for moving away from corporal punishment and encouraging the use of alternative forms of discipline. The 2011 guidelines on school discipline spelled out the need to continue encouraging teachers and school authorities to use non-violent forms of discipline.<sup>301</sup> To prevent corporal punishment in schools, the Ministry of Education is rolling out positive discipline training and a code of conduct for teachers. The MOE has instituted counselling services in schools and also through the Department of Youth and Sports,<sup>302</sup> provides training to principals and teachers on children’s rights and alternative forms of discipline; and has developed a code of conduct for teachers and mechanisms for reporting and responding to allegations of violence against children in schools. Teachers and other ministry staff working directly with children have an important role in identifying children who may have experienced violence. The Ministry also works closely with the Child Protection Unit of the Dratshang (the Commission for the Monastic Affairs of Bhutan) to improve the situation of children in monastic institutions. Given the number of young children in the monastic schools, the Dratshang has an important role in strengthening child protection in the monastic institutions.<sup>303</sup>

### Engaging boys and young men

School settings offer a valuable opportunity to work directly with young men and boys to tackle hegemonic and violent versions of masculinity.<sup>304</sup> In South Asia, several programmes have focused on encouraging boys and men to become gender equitable, non-violent caregivers, partners and agents of change. In India, ‘Men’s Action for Stopping Violence Against Women’ (MASVAW) campaign encourages men and boys to raise their voices against patriarchal values and stereotypical notions about ‘manliness’. MASVAW members include university and college students, rural

adolescents and teachers. Currently 19 institutions in 11 districts in India are members of the movement. An assessment has found that membership in the campaign is correlated with progressive gender attitudes and behaviour in men.<sup>305</sup> Another initiative ‘Mobilizing Men: A Transnational Effort to Challenge GBV in Local Institutions’, led by the Centre for Health and Social Justice,<sup>306</sup> worked with men in three contexts: universities, local governments, and the Dalit community. At the universities, male activists were trained in raising awareness of sexual and other forms of violence, appropriately documenting incidents of such violence,

300 Gross National Happiness Commission, National Commission for Women and Children (Bhutan) and UNICEF. 2012. ‘A Situation Analysis: Children, Youth and Women in Bhutan.’

301 Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, Bhutan Country Report.

302 UNICEF. 2013. ‘Literature Review Report: Study on Violence Against Children in Bhutan.’

303 Ibid.

304 Achyut, P. et al. 2011.

305 Das, A. et al. 2012. Reviewing Responsibilities and Renewing Relationships: An Intervention with Men on Violence against Women in India.’ Culture, Health & Sexuality. International Journal for Research, Intervention and Care. Vol. 14, Issue 6.

306 This programme was part of a three-year initiative by Instituto Promundo, supported by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women (UNTF). It developed and piloted a multi-country project to engage men and boys in preventing violence against women and promoting gender equality. For more information, see: <http://www.chsj.org/mobilising-men-against-sgbv.html>

and designing campaigns to change attitudes and practices around violence. The initiative established Anti-Sexual Harassment Committees on seven campuses of Pune University. It provides valuable lessons on how to simultaneously engage men in very different contexts to initiate and institutionalize the trend of dis-

cussing sexual harassment and other forms of violence in educational settings, governance institutions, and among minority communities.<sup>307</sup> In Pakistan, Shirakat Partnership for Development works with boys and young men of five universities in Islamabad and Rawalpindi to address the issue of rigid masculinities.<sup>308</sup>

## GEMS: A SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTION

The Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) is a school-based movement that seeks to bring gender-related attitudinal and behavioural changes in young adolescents. The project is carried out in three cities in India – Goa, Kota and Mumbai. By examining socially assigned gender roles and questioning VAWG including child marriage, the movement encourages equal relationship between men and women of all ages. Evaluation found that the intervention had brought about a positive shift in students' attitudes towards gender equality. Programme participants received higher scores on gender equality indicators, and more students reported they would take action against sexual harassment. In addition, the proportion of students who believed that girls should be at least 18 years old at marriage increased over time, reaching nearly 100 percent. The outcome of the intervention revealed that public education system is a key platform for promoting gender equitable attitudes and behaviour. A possible factor behind the programme's success was the eagerness of teachers and school administrators to address harassment and violence in schools.<sup>309</sup>

To sum up, there have been many commendable efforts to address VAC in education settings in South Asia. However, there is a need to evaluate such programmes rigorously, document their design and implementation, and scale up efforts that have had positive impact. As efforts to address VAC strike at deeply ingrained norms and attitudes, it is also important to discuss ways to tackle potential backlash against such ef-

forts.<sup>310</sup> Although in-depth evaluations are scarce, some programmes clearly stand out as examples of good practices. Policymakers and governments, multilateral organizations and donors, civil society organizations and individuals working to address VAC in education settings or in general should invest in evaluation of good practices in the region so that they can be replicated in other areas or countries of South Asia.

307 McAllister, F., Burgess, A., Kato, J. and Barker, G. 2012. 'Fatherhood: Parenting Programmes and Policy: A Critical Review of Best Practice.' London/Washington D.C.: Fatherhood Institute/ Promundo/MenCare, as cited in Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.

308 For more information, see the organization's website: [www.shirakat.org](http://www.shirakat.org)

309 Achyut, P. et al. 2011.

310 Solotaroff, J. L. and Pande, R. P. 2014.



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our review found that VAC in education settings in South Asia needs more attention at the policy and implementation level. The scale of physical violence in education settings in the region is high. Despite legal commitments by most of the governments in South Asia, corporal punishment and other disciplinary acts against children continue to be part of school life in the region. Data on sexual violence, abuse and harassment of children in education settings suggests that the problem is serious, but its extent might not be fully known due to cultural taboos surrounding sexuality and sexual abuse of children. High rates of emotional and psychological violence are also reported throughout the region. Studies suggest that children in schools experience discrimination and marginalization based on gender, caste, ethnicity and even economic status. Bullying and peer violence is seen to be on the rise. The rapid socio-cultural changes and technological advancement in the region have made children susceptible to new forms of violence including violence enabled by cyber and technology. Yet, our knowledge of the scale, nature and manifestations of such forms of VAC in the region remains limited. Evidence also suggests that military operations, conflicts and wars have increased the prevalence and intensity of various forms of VAC in education settings.

In April 2013, the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) highlighted the inadequacy of data and research on the scale, nature, manifestations, causes and conse-

quences of SRGBV, as well as the limited evidence on programme and policy approaches for addressing VAC in education settings. Our review found that there is no sufficient, sex-disaggregated and credible data on the nature and manifestations of VAC in education settings in South Asia. VAC in school settings based on perceived and real sexual orientation or gender expression/identity remains unexamined in all eight countries. The situation of children in Koranic, monastic and other religious schools including madrasas has not been explored properly, though available reports indicate that children in such schools witness and experience physical and emotional violence. Finally, evidence of VAC in education settings varies across countries. Available data on physical violence and corporal punishment in education settings comes mostly from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. Data on sexual violence is mostly from India, with some reports on Sri Lanka and Nepal. There is lack of solid evidence on bullying in education settings, but a few sources from the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka shed some light on the topic, while information on conflict-related VAC in schools comes mainly from Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. Our review found extremely limited data on the scale, nature and manifestations of VAC in education settings in Bhutan, although new research efforts are underway. On the whole, evidence on all types of VAC in education settings is limited for Afghanistan, the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

# EVIDENCE BASE FOR DIFFERENT COUNTRIES IN SOUTH ASIA

	Afghanistan	Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Nepal	Maldives	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Physical violence	-	✓	No data	✓	✓	-	✓	-
Corporal punishment	✓ Some reports	✓	✓ Some evidence	✓	✓	-	✓	-
Sexual abuse		✓ Reports	No data	✓	-	✓ Some reports	-	✓ some reports
Emotional violence	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓
Bullying/Cyber-bullying	-	-	No data	-	-	✓ Not solid	✓ Not solid (not school related)	✓ Not solid (not school related)
Violence against LGBTQ students	No data	Solid but limited	No data	Some (not particular to school)	No data	No data	No data	No data
VAC in conflict-affected education settings	✓	-	No data	✓	-	✓ Some evidence	-	✓ Some evidence
Majority of research	-	✓	No data	✓	✓	-	✓ Some	✓ Some
Limited research on the whole	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓

## CLASSROOM: A GENDERED SPACE

Many studies have examined the issue of VAC in education settings in the region, but only a few have analysed the problem from a gender perspective, or focused on the regional or country-specific particularities. However, available data reveal a gendered nature of VAC in education settings in South Asia. Boys seem to be more at risk for harsh corporal punishment and physical abuse than girls, and may experience bullying or bully others, while girls are typically more prone than boys to sexual abuse and psychological/relational forms of bullying.

### At the programme level:

There have been efforts to build strategic local, national and regional partnerships and alliances to programmatically tackle the problem of school-related violence in South Asia. A number of interventions work specifically with teachers or community members. In some interventions, children act as 'change makers' who challenge violence by designing and implementing codes of conduct and anti-violence activities such as awareness raising on child and human rights. Increasingly, interventions use social media and technology to directly or indirectly address VAC in education settings. These are mostly online campaigns and advocacy web portals. An increasing number of programmes focus on challenging rigid gender norms and associated attitudes and behaviour through the school system by working with younger students. A number of interventions focus on encouraging young men and boys to reject and prevent violence. Programmes addressing VAC in education settings have also been indirectly integrated in other initiatives such as girls' empowerment or reproductive and sexual health initiatives in schools. However, most programmes have yet to adopt a comprehensive, integrated, multi-sectoral and long-term approach. Majority of interventions focus on VAC in education settings in general, and only a few target a specific type of violence or

one particular target group: for instance, corporal punishment in schools, or vulnerability of girls to sexual violence. In general, many interventions do not carefully consider the circumstances under which certain types of violence in schools occur, and only few explicitly address gender-related vulnerabilities of children – most of them focus on girls' vulnerability to violence. Moreover, interventions in the region do not discuss how to effectively address potential backlash against efforts to challenge entrenched norms and practices. Not all of the programmatic efforts identified through this review pay attention to what goes on in the child's immediate surroundings – at home and in the community. Only a very few interventions involve parents in prevention and response to VAC in education settings in the region. Almost none address peer pressure or dating violence/sexual coercion that young adolescent girls may face from their partners. There is also a lack of programmatic efforts that directly address bullying or online, technology-based violence in the region. Overall, we found only a few school-based violence prevention or response programmes that had been properly evaluated. Only a limited number of interventions are government led; most are led by non-governmental organizations.

### At the policy level:

In most countries in South Asia, the government

has shown commitment to creating a legal environment where all children in schools are equally respected and protected. In recent years, school-related policies addressing corporal punishment, sexual abuse and harassment have been designed in several countries in the region. Legislation addressing school-based violence exists in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka. However, in Afghanistan, Bhutan, the Maldives and Nepal, there is no explicit mention of school-based violence in legal provisions, though legislation ensures protection of physical and mental health of minors. Pakistan has no legislation that addresses school-based violence. Further, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan have no specific laws addressing bullying in schools. Thus, the government's role in comprehensively addressing VAC in education settings remains inadequate in each of these countries.

Further, the majority of national laws and policies addressing violence are not consistent with sectoral policies and laws that seek to address specific issues, such as school-based violence or school related gender-based violence. There is limited awareness of legal provisions protecting children from violence in education settings. Although legislations and policies addressing VAC in education settings exist in South Asian countries, their implementation remains weak and rarely monitored and their effectiveness is hardly ever evaluated. Response mechanisms, reporting mechanisms and school-based referral frameworks also remain inadequate. In certain areas, social and cultural norms that influence the design and interpretation of laws and policies are incompatible with internationally recognized principles, and this hinders efforts to combat VAC in education settings.



Type of violence	Prevalence	Data collected	Nature	Perpetration	Manifestation
Physical violence and abuse	High or very high throughout the region	Mostly from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, reports from Bhutan and Sri Lanka	-	Teachers, peers	Inflicted by teachers/non-teaching staff and other adults in education settings: beating, slapping, kicking/pushing, hitting with an object, throwing things, pulling hair/ears, chasing after the child, caning on the shoulders and palms and squeezing children's fingers together with a pen, or threatened with a weapon, death; Inflicted by students: fights, bullying. Inflicted by others: incidents of acid violence against schoolgirls and on the way to/from school reported in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India; and acid attacks outside school reported in Nepal and Sri Lanka.
Corporal punishment and other forms of disciplinary action	Extremely high, most widely reported form of VAC in education settings	Mostly from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal; limited evidence from the Maldives and Sri Lanka; fragmental from Bhutan	Most commonly used against primary school students, and commonly used against lower secondary students; a common way to maintain discipline, reinforce authority, manage classrooms but also a random act of violence	Teachers and non-teaching staff	Hitting with a cane or a ruler; slapping and hitting in the back; boxing ears; applying electric shocks; making children stand or assume stress positions for lengthy periods; threats of physical violence; enforced starvation; tying children to a chair/pole and beating them.
Sexual violence, abuse and harassment	High but the context, intensity, frequency remain little known	Mostly from Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka; no evidence/data from Afghanistan and Bhutan	Non-consensual sexual experiences at school as one of the most common forms of violence against girls; reported in religious schools; sexual abuse of girls under 15 also relatively common but the scale is unclear; boys and young men are also affected (the issue remains under-researched)	Mostly male teachers but also male students	Kissing/touching sensitive parts; oral sex and penetration; sexual harassment in form of text messages, pornographic pictures and videos

Type of violence	Prevalence	Data collected	Nature	Perpetration	Manifestation
Bullying and cyber-bullying	Bullying: high, and reports suggest the problem is on the rise, but no independent research; evidence base fragmental or non-existent in several countries of the region; unclear context; Cyber-bullying: on the rise, but the phenomenon seems fluid as it happens on/off school premises; no solid evidence from education settings	Some evidence from Bhutan, Maldives, Pakistan (cyber-bullying); some reports from Sri Lanka	Boys experience physical bullying and bully others more frequently; girls are more frequently subjected to non-physical, psychological/relational forms of bullying	Mostly peers	Social exclusion; spreading rumour; gossiping; blackmailing with text messages and photos, leading to sexual violence; nasty messages on social media
Emotional and psychological violence	High in Nepal and Pakistan, but the problem is not mapped accurately in its complexity in education settings, and in majority of the countries in the region, the subject remains under-researched.	Mostly from Nepal and Pakistan; under-researched in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka; no data from Bhutan	-	Teachers and peers	Verbal insults, shouting and abusive language; locking in a room or toilet; spreading rumours (mostly girls against girls)

Type of violence	Prevalence	Data collected	Nature	Perpetration	Manifestation
VAC in religious schools	Some reports of sexual abuse by clerics in India; reports of corporal punishment and physical violence in madrasas in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal; the topic generally under-researched, with extremely rare credible evidence	Mostly from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan	Possible negative influence of radical teachings on the minds and learning outcomes of students (high degree of support for violence); increased vulnerability to abuse and exploitation of children in religious schools linked with dependency on schools for financial and social support	Clerics, monks, teachers in religious institutions	-
Conflict-related VAC in education settings	High or very high (but only in conflict-affected areas); constraints in verification of incidents, unclear scale	Mostly from Afghanistan, Pakistan and India; some reports from Nepal and Sri Lanka	Intensified and prolonged, but education settings not perceived by many as affected by armed conflict and community violence	Military	Targeted attacks on education facilities, students or staff, or on education in general; bombing or burning schools or other education facilities, killing, injuring, kidnapping and recruiting in armed groups, or illegally arresting, detaining or torturing children, older students, school staff, teachers and academics

Our review found the following gaps and challenges in addressing VAC in education settings in South Asia.

## Research gaps

- Levels of evidence of different types of VAC in education settings vary by country.
- Insufficient data on the nature and manifestations, causes and consequences of school-related GBV
- The exact scale of several types of VAC remains under-researched.
- Limited gender perspective in the existing analysis of available data, little focus on regional and country-specific particularities
- Most studies seem concerned with whether children face school-based violence rather than when, how, by whom, to what extent, etc.
- Experiences of children in Koranic, monastic and other religious schools including madrasas remain under-researched.
- Lack of solid evidence on bullying and cyber-bullying and other types of violence faced by sexual minorities or those who are perceived as deviating from prescribed gender roles
- General lack of data on VAC in education settings associated with the impact of natural disasters
- Lack of data on the socio-economic cost of VAC in education settings in South Asia
- Inadequate research on the impact of rapid socio-economic, political and cultural changes on young learners in South Asia

## Other challenges

- Limited awareness of laws and policies addressing VAC in education settings and other GBV and violence prevention laws
- VAC in education settings is often considered a small part of broader agendas such as women's rights or efforts to prevent or respond to GBV/VAWG, which overshadows the unique character of school-related VAC.
- Difficulty in collecting data on specific forms of VAC (e.g., sexual violence) in places where discussion of sexuality is taboo, as well as constraints in verification of data (e.g., in conflict-affected education settings)
- Lack of documentation and rigorous evalua-

tion of interventions addressing VAC in education settings

- No discussion on how to effectively address potential backlash against efforts to change entrenched gender and social norms in schools and communities

## Recommendations:

### Policy, Systems and Strategies

- Establish clear definitions of what constitutes VAC in education settings. These should also include non-physical forms of violence including harassment, bullying or technology-based violence.
- There is a need for comprehensive and holistic prevention and protection policies that address VAC in education settings. These policies need to have the following elements:
  - A strong focus on prevention
  - An integral part of national child protection system
  - Consistent across all diverse education settings including public and private schools, religious educational institutions, NFE centres and boarding schools
  - Gender sensitive and gender transformative – address the specific vulnerabilities of boys and girls as well as unequal power balance between men and women, boys and girls and different social markers among children in education settings
  - Include non-physical forms of violence including harassment, bullying or technology-based violence
  - Adopt a cross-sectoral or cross-disciplinary approach and identify how integrated approaches can be developed; e.g., social welfare/child protection, education, justice, health, and social protection
- Systems for measuring prevalence (including reporting mechanisms) and impact of violence, strengthening accountability structures and responsive mechanisms are crucial for holistically addressing VAC in schools.

- Scaling up of evidence-based interventions and multiple prevention strategies that influence the likelihood of violence in education settings (e.g., child friendly school / spaces, teachers sensitization/development initiatives, age-relevant sex education and gender-sensitivity/equality initiatives in school/communities)

### Evidence generation and use:

Conduct research on areas related to VAC in education settings with a particular focus on:

- Impact of protection interventions and psychosocial support programmes on children's educational attainment and learning
- VAC in private and religious schools
- Peer violence, bullying and cyber bullying
- Violence against children based on real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity/expression in education settings
- Violence against children with disabilities and special learning needs
- A comprehensive review of school curricula, textbooks and codes of conduct for teachers

### Education Sector/Schools

- Mainstreaming VAC in sector wide policy and planning discourse, monitoring and learning strategies is critical; e.g., gender sensitive national school curricula, teachers' code of conduct, capacity development programs and data collection and management system
- Recognize that schools and other education settings are integral parts of the community rather than individually functioning microcosms. Promote positive links between children, parents, teachers, school staff and the broader community.
- Adequate training and support to teachers with accountability measures can help prevent violence and enable teachers to serve as a first port of call for children who have experienced violence.
- Adequate support to teachers and school management can potentially:

- enforce codes of conduct for all staff and students
- incorporate alternative forms of discipline in teaching methodology
- develop/reinforce tools to help teachers move away from physical/psychological violence
- work with stakeholders outside the school including parents, guardians, local child protection bodies to address VAC
- support child clubs/youth clubs in promoting gender equitable and non-violent attitudes and behaviour

### Donors:

- Support studies that examine the costs and other financial and socio-economic implications and consequences of VAC.
- Promote greater collaboration and coordination with other funding agencies working to address VAC in education settings in South Asia, and promote cross-sectoral initiatives.
- Support monitoring and evaluation of programmes to identify effective approaches to ensuring children's safety and well-being in schools and prevention and response to VAC in education settings.
- Support the scaling up of effective interventions in VAC in education settings while ensuring that they are tailored to specific contexts.

### Media

- Increase coverage of region-specific causes and manifestations of VAC in education settings.
- Bring out stories that reveal how factors such as gender, caste/ethnicity, economic status and physical disability affect the nature and magnitude of VAC.
- Ensure victim safety and confidentiality while reporting cases of violence against children, especially sexual violence.
- Highlight best practices in curbing school-based violence so as to encourage others within and outside the country to adopt similar approaches.

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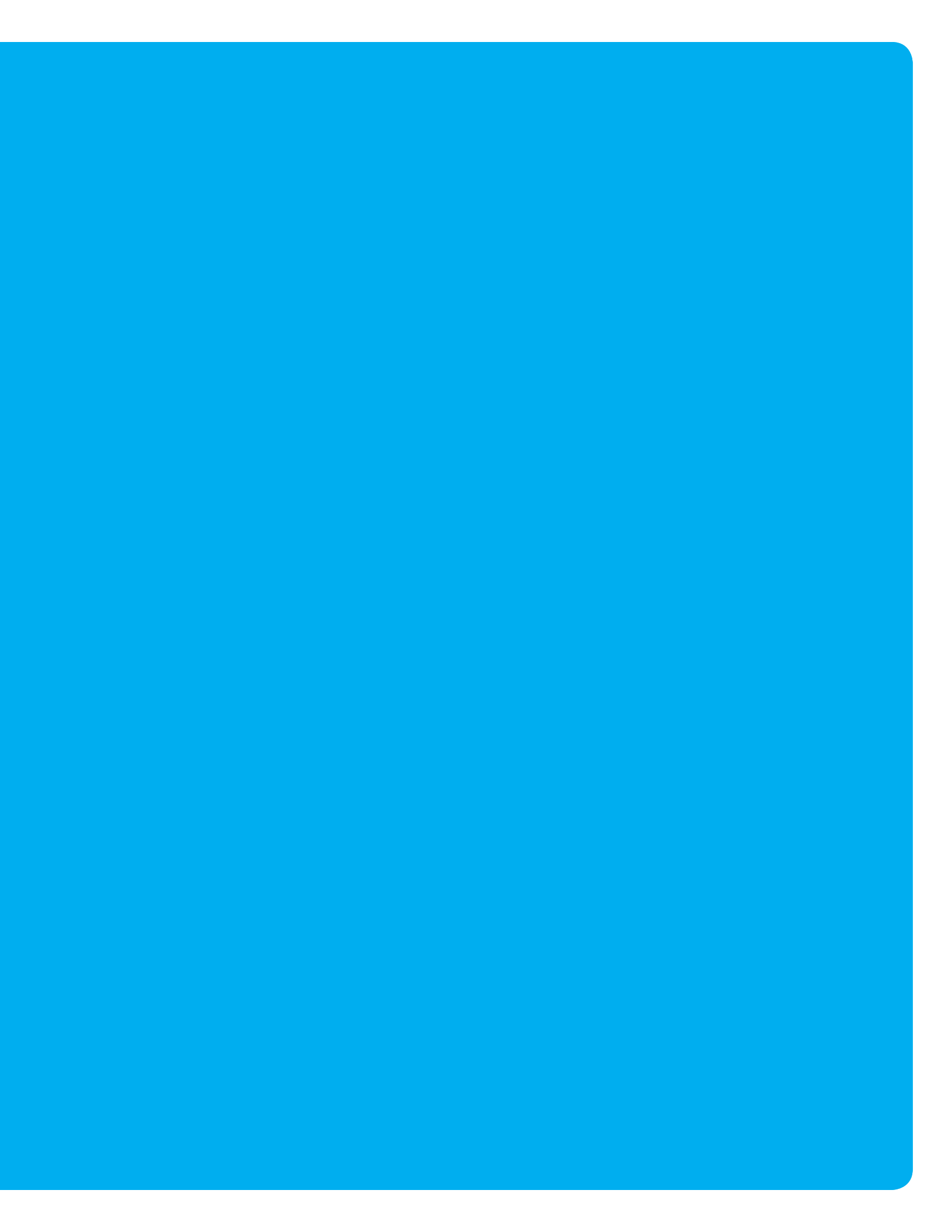
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