

An Examination of Post Media Depiction Psychological States Experienced by Chunian Child Abuse Victims' Families

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ABSTRACT

Chunian Child abuse incidents were reported on large scale both mainstream national and international news media. The series of brutal incidents started with Zainab Ansari's case remained on the news desks of national & international news media for two years. Detailed unstructured interviews were conducted of three families of the victims of child abuse incidents to analyze the psychological effects of media coverage of these incidents. The findings revealed that the media coverage didn't effected the psychological health and social life of the victims' families. In addition, effected families found media coverage helpful in order to get the attention of higher authorities to treat these incidents more serious manner.

Keywords: child abuse, psychological effects, media coverage, Pakistan, Chunian, Post media depiction effect.

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INTRODUCTION

Child abuse is the crime that hurts a child not only physically but also destroy his or her personality and mental health. In most of the child abuse cases the perpetrator use to be the family member, relative or any close friend. Pedophilia is the severe crime not only against the child instead of that it is the crime against the whole society. According to the "Child Help Organization" more than three million cases of child abuse incidents use to report in United State of America every year.

Conceptualization the meaning of Child Abuse

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development defined the term child abuse as behaviour of a person either male or female towards a child which is outside the norms of the conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical, emotional or sexual harm. Each category mentioned above has its own dimension Physical abuse includes scalding, beatings with an object, severe physical punishment, and a rare form of the abuse called Munchhausen by proxy, wherein an adult will feign or induce illness in a child in order to attract medical attention and support.

History of Child Abuse Incidents

Child abuse incidents is not the monument of this modern world but it has its roots in the human societies almost from the beginning of time. In the primitive age children use to have no rights, they were considered the property of their parents and tribal leaders. Parents, land lords and tribal leaders use to have all the rights to do whatever they want to do, they use to sell children for the sake of money, sexually exploit children.

According to English common law children are considered the property of their parents till late 18th century (Find Law Organization, 2018).

The situation of child abuse is not very different in United State of America, the super power of modern age. Children and women is considered as properties of parents and husbands. They have all the rights to whatever they want to do. There was no laws or organization to protect children and women. In USA white people use negro people especially the children and women as their slaves and as source to get entertainment sexual pleasure.

Child abuse incident came into the notice for the first time in the when a case of a girl got hype who was regularly use to tortured by her foster mother in 1870s.

Child Abuse In Pakistan

Child abuse is a global problem, no culture or socioeconomic strata is completely untouched from this crime. Unfortunately Pakistan is one of those countries in which child abuse evil is deep rooted. Most of the time in child abuse cases the perpetrator use to be family member, relative or family friend and it make the condition worse for the child. According to report published by Dawn more than ten children are sexually abused every day in 2018 This report further revealed a increase 33% in child abuse cases in 2018 as compared to the previous year. This report states that number of child abuse incidents in Pakistan in year 2007 was 2321, 1838 in 2008, in 2009 the number of cases were 2052 and in 2010 these numbers increase to 2303 (NGO Sahil's Report, 2019).

Pakistan is witnessed a new wave of child abuse incidents from the past three years when a series of child sexual abuse cases reported in Chunian. Chunian is a small tehsil of district Kasur of the Punjab province. A huge wave of agitation and anger aroused among the masses when Zainab Ansari a seven-year-old girl who got raped and then murdered got hype in the national as well as International media. The murderer Imran Ali a 24-year-old landloper was Zainab's neighbor and serial rapist and killer who killed seven other children before targeting Zainab Ansari. The perpetrator got caught through DNA test. He admitted his crimes and he was hanged by the Court till death.

After the gap of few months cases of three other children named as Muhammad Faizan, a nine year old child who got abducted in September 2019, Sulman Akram, a seven year old boy who got abducted on 08 August 2019 from Chunian and later found dead and sexually abused and twelve year old Ali Husnain got wide range of coverage from both national and international media. The culprit of all three incidents was a single person namely Muhammad Shehzad who later got arrested and now facing the trial of these three cases. Police and the press gave the coverage to these incidents with the name “Chunian Child Abuse Incidents”

Objective of the Study

- To analyze the Post Media Depiction Psychological States Experienced by Chunian Child Abuse Victims’ Families.

Literature Review

Zantsi (2014) conducted a research study in order to find out about the thoughts and beliefs of the isiXhosa speaking people of South Africa about child sexual abuse phenomena. This study keeps crucial importance in the studies conducted about child sexual abuse so far because, this study analyzed the people belonged to a specific geographic location and tried to figure out the thoughts, beliefs and level of knowledge that people of that area had about child sexual abuse incidents and phenomena. Researcher also analyzed the cultural traditional aspects of the people of specific area and analyzed if there is any factor present in their culture which supported the child abuse either it is physical, emotional or sexual. The researcher used to work in as employ in Child Protection Unit of Eastern Cape. A Significant increase in child sexual abuse incident in a particular rural area of Eastern Cape was noticed by the researcher which led the conduction of this research study so that the thoughts, beliefs and knowledge of the people of that specific area can be accessed on the child protection and safety as well as child sexual abuse incidents. The second major objective of this research project is to prepare and suggest an effective and useful strategy to the higher official that can improve the knowledge of the local people about child sexual abuse and helps the authorities in order to overcome the problem of child sexual abuse in the specific area which is under studied. Purposive sampling technique was used by the researcher in this research project in order to obtain the data. Researcher took the help of some social worker for the sake of data collection who already had experience of working in that particular area. Findings of this research study showed that the people living in the backwards areas of Eastern Cape did not have any proper information about the child sexual abuse phenomena. They bounded themselves in rigid old customs and beliefs of their own and even people of the area which was under study in this research project didn’t consider child sexual abuse a crime. Researchers also mentioned in the findings of this research study that the people working in these areas did not have proper training to coup with the incidents of child sexual abuse. Researchers suggested the conduction of training workshops for them in order to make the situation of child sexual abuse incidents better in the area.

Lonne & Parton (2014) conducted a a study to analyze the portrayal of child abuse scandal in Australian and British media its impacts on practice, policy and system. This study focused on the role of media in presenting the child abuse and child protection problems as issue as key issues of the society. It also shed light on the role of media in influencing government policies and strategies of tackling child abuse

incidents. This research work revolved around critical analysis of coverage of child abuse incidents of Australian and British media and its potential impacts on public opinion, government strategies and policies regarding child abuse scandals. It also be-girded the stance and interest of different stakeholders in child abuse issues. The major stakeholders in child abuse incidents are law enforcement agencies, government, media organization and the journalists themselves. This research work also put the conflict of interest of different stakeholders and its impacts on the media coverage of this issue into consideration. Findings of this study showed that the Australian media showed keen interest in highlighting the child abuse issues as major social problem. Australian media also played praise worthy role garbing the attention of authorities about this issue. The practice of British media regarding the coverage of child abuse incidents was slightly different than that of Australian media as the British media did not give any extra ordinary coverage too child abuse incidents. Until 2008 in Britain the child abuse issue is only limited to the inquiries where the failure was felt on the side of officials. In their conclusive remarks researchers said that portrayal of child abuse incidents in Australian and the British media is majorly on positive side and the coverage played an important role in making the issue on the top of priority list as well as to aware the masses about this evil crime but sometimes coverage might fall in negative poll because of the interests and pressure of different stakeholders.

Mocke (2013) investigated child on child sexual abuse in a children's home and the reasons of child on child sexual abuse and its consequences. The researcher also tried to make a profile of a child on child sexual abuser in a children's home. Child on child abuse is a critical and undeniable social as well as psychological problem that need to be observed. The victim of child on child abuse use to face severe mental and personality destruction. The main objectives of this study was to prepare a profile of those children who expose other children to sexual abuse in children homes. Secondly this study tried to identify the reasons of children sexually abusing other children. The final objective of this study was to access the effects of child on child abuse. Qualitative research approach is used by the researcher in this study with four children who are involved in child on child sexual abuse and six social workers who were working in children's homes. Collective case study research design is used in this study by the researcher. The researcher categorized the sample of the study into two groups, one group consisted of four children who have been perpetrators of child on child sexual abuse living in the children's home. The age group of the children who were selected as a sample by the researcher for this study was 8 to 12 years old. The second group of sample that is studied in this research work consisted of six social workers from the Jacaranda and Louis Botha Children's homes who all were expert in dealing child on child sexual abuse incidents. Individual thorough interviews were conducted of social experts in order to gain maximum information about child on child sexual abuse phenomena. The researcher also used pre-forensic screening techniques in assessment procedure. The findings of this research study elaborated that most of children were removed from their parental care because of physical, mental, social or sexual abuse by the parents or because of poverty, unable to give proper life standard to the children and drug addiction of parents. The results indicated that the children who were involved in child on child sexual abuse wanted to keep their act secret. The interviews of social workers showed that child on child sexual abuse use to start from curiosity of exploration and then it leads to sexual abuse. Findings of this study also revealed that all 4 children who were interviewed in this

research work were socially awkward and portrayed continuum unhealthy and problematic activities such as gathering pornographic material, masturbating making sexual comments and jokes.

Cheit, Shavit & Davis (2010) conducted a research study on the coverage pattern of magazines about child sexual abuse from the time period between 1992 to 2004. This study had crucial importance because the most of the studies that were conducted about child sexual abuse and the treatment given by the media to these incidents focused on the Newspapers and on later stage, the focus of researchers shifted towards the Television and Radio. There are little studies that focused on the coverage of Magazines given to the child sexual abuse incidents. In this particular study, the researchers analyzed the coverage of magazines about child sexual abuse incidents. Systematic analysis technique is used to analyze the selected articles of four popular magazines that were selected as a sample in this research study. The researchers analyzed the articles of the sample magazines on the basis of subject, length and publication. The results of this research study affirmed the already existed theories of newsworthiness and the pattern of coverage given to any incident. The findings revealed that there was difference between the coverage pattern of the child sexual abuse stories and incidents among the selected sample of four magazines. Findings of this research study also indicated that there is a decrease witnessed in the coverage of the stories regarding child sexual abuse incidents in the last ten years of selected time frame. Last but not the least, the findings of this research study suggested the coverage experts of child sexual abuse incidents to connect the news stories with the interviews about child sexual abuse. The researchers mentioned the limitation of this study that it focused on the articles published in the four magazines that were selected as a sample for this research study. Secondly this research also limited to the time period of twelve years from 1992 to 2004.

Method

The researcher employed conducted detailed semi structured interviews of four families of child abuse victims in this research study in order to achieve the objectives of the research project.

Semi Structured Interviews

Flower (2014) defined semi structured interviews as a technique of obtaining data from the participants in which outline and main theme of the topic used to be predefined but relevant question can be drawn from the answers of respondents. Semi structured interviews allow the researchers to to obtain the information from the population under studied in a more comprehensive and detailed manner. In current study, the researcher conducted semi structured interviews of the families of Churian child sexual abuse victims. The purpose of conducting interviews of the victim's families was to get detailed information about post media depiction psychological effects faced by those families. A semi structured questionnaire was prepared by the researcher by keeping the standards of scientific research in mind. All the interviews were conducted in natural setting.

The questionnaire used by the researcher in conducting the interviews is given below:

- Do you really think that the media coverage of this tragic incident remained helpful for you in finding your children?

- Do you feel any kind of change in the behaviour of relatives and neighbors after the media coverage of this incident ?
- Does media coverage of your tragedy instigate you to think about it when you do not mean it?
- Does media coverage of your tragedy make you upset or effects your pleasures?
- Does media coverage is creating hurdle in your effort of getting rid of the trauma you have gone through?
- Does media coverage of the incident create trouble in falling you asleep?
- Is media coverage of the tragedy cause nightmares?
- Does media coverage pattern of the incident make you feel that it was not really happened to you?
- Does media coverage force you to talk about your trauma but you don't want to talk about it?
- Do the pictures shown in media about your incident popped into your mind repeatedly?
- Does media coverage of the incident effected your social life in any manner, either positive or negative?
- Tell us about your feelings after watching the coverage of your incident in mainstream media of Pakistan.
- Do you want to allow the coverage of your incident on mainstream media?
- Does off the record behavior of reporters is acceptable to you and to your family?
- Are You feel Satisfied from the Coverage given by the Mainstream Pakistani Media to your incident?
- Do you think that the role of Government is satisfactory enough in pursuing this incident ?
- Do you feel any difference between the coverage pattern of government owned and private owned media of your incident ?
- At any of Stage of the Coverage of this incident did you feel that there should be no more coverage ?
- Did any Reporter or media organization ask you to give specific type of answer?
- Does any Reporter or media channel offered any type of financial benefits in return of your interview or time ?
- Do you intentionally try to stay at home or avoid gathering after this incident and its coverage on mainstream media?
- Are you satisfied about the way media portrayed the murderer of your child?

Population

The second part of this research work focused psychological effects of post media depiction of child sexual abuse incidents on the victim's families. In order to fulfil the second objectives researcher selected the families of all four children who were abused in the Chunian sexual abuse scandal. The researcher selected the families of abused children so that comprehensive understanding can be developed about the post media depiction effects of child sexual abuse incidents on the families can be accessed with the help of semi structured interviews of the victim's families.

Interviews

Interview with Qari Ramzan

Qari Ramzan, father of Muhammad Faizan, a nine year old child who got abducted in September 2019 and later found dead after sexual abuse. Father of the child who is a religious scholar in a Mosque in Chunian city, while narrating the story of his missing son, he said that Muhammad Faizan to whom he used to call with the nickname "Mitho" came back from his academy at 5 pm on the day of abduction and then he went to play along with one of his brothers and friends but he didn't come back home. He further said that initially he tried to find his son at nearby locations, relatives and friend's houses but after the failure he filed a complain about his missing son. In an answer of question about the finding the dead body of the child, he said that the city police launched a search operation soon after the registration of missing complain and on next day in the evening police found the dead body of Faizan from an arid land near by the city. Talking about the perpetrator of this child sexual abuse incident Qari Ramzan said that he didn't knew that person before this incident and he neither have any family relation with him. To add on further, he said that the perpetrator was completely unknown for him and his family before this tragic incident.

Answering the question about the effectiveness and importance of media coverage in the process of finding his son, he said that media helped him in order to find his son and it also played important role in order to raise the voice against not only the perpetrator but also against the child sexual abuse as crime against society. He said that media helped him and other families to raise their voices in front of authorities. Discussing about the change in the behaviour of society and relatives after the tragic incident of Faizan's brutal rape and murder Qari Ramzan said that there is no significant difference which he noticed in the behaviour of relatives, friends and society members after this particular incident. He explained further that people usually talk about him and his family but most of the times it used to be in their favour. Talking about the relationship between the mass media coverage of the sexual abuse and murder of his son and the healing process, he said with teary eyes that media coverage didn't matter for him and his family in this regard because he always thinks about his son even after the months of this incidents, the sorrow is as same for him as it was at first day. He further said that when he looks at his other children then he missed "Mitho" a lot. Answering a question about the life routine after this tragic incident, Qari Ramzan said that life changed completely for him and his family after this incident. He further added that there is no value of happiness for him as it use to be before this incident. He talked about the wedding of his brother which held two days

before the conducting of this interview and said that he missed his son in these event of happiness and joy.

Talking about the sleeping anxiety after the sexual abuse and murder of his son, he said that any thing which disturbed a person mentally has its effects on all aspects of life including sleeping pattern but he denied the role of media coverage in effecting his sleeping pattern. While narrating the condition of Mitho's mother, Qari Ramzan said that she is disturbed both mentally and emotionally. She always used to remember our son.

Answering a question about the fictitious pattern of coverage of these child sexual abuse incidents by the mainstream Pakistani media, he said that he did not noticed these things much as these things have no value for him. He further added that the only thing he knew is this that his son is no more in this world and it is the most painful thing for him. In an answer of a question that researcher asked about any potential change in his social life, he said that there is no change in his social life and routine after this incident. Qari Ramzan further said that behaviour of society and people always remained helpful for him and his family.

Discussing about any pressure laid by the media organizations to give interviews or to give any specific kind of answers he said that the first few days after this incidents was very hectic as lot of media organization asked for interviews and response which sometimes increased his mental and emotional disturbance but he denied of receiving any kind of instruction by the media organizations or their representative to give any specific kind of answers. Talking about giving the permission to the media to cover this type of incidents, Qari Ramzan said that media coverage helped a lot in order to raise their voice in front of authorities and government officials. Media should be allowed to cover these incidents so that masses can access the actual intensity of these incidents.

While comparing the coverage pattern of government owned media organization and private owned media organization, he said that he did not noticed any difference between the coverage pattern of government and private media organizations. Talking about the role played by the government about these tragic incidents Qari Ramzan said that the role of government in regarding these incidents was limited to clicking pictures and making false promises. He added that although Chief Minister, Law Minister and other government official visited them but they did provide any help in any manner. Talking about the murderer of son, he said that he wanted to see him hanged in public so that people with these criminal intentions can learn a lesson and society can get rid of this evil thing.

Interview with Muhammad Akram

Muhammad Akram, father of seven year old Sulman Akram who got abducted on 08 August 2019 from Chunian and later found dead and sexually abused. He said, while narrating the story of his child that he belonged to a poor family and they use to live common Streets. It is normal for them if their children went out for playing for hours because it was their daily routine. He further added that at the day of abduction Sulman went to bazaar with him to buy clothes for Eid and after that he went to play with his other age fellows in the street. He continued that when Sulman didn't came back home till the evening of that day then they started looking for him but failed to

find any clue about him. Muhammad Akram filed a complain about his missing child in Chunian Police Station on the very next day of his abduction.

Talking about the finding of dead body of his Son, Muhammad Akram said that after more then one month of abduction of his son, Police found the remains of dead body of his son from an arid land while probing another case of child abduction in the same city. He continued that in the meantime they tried all possible means to find out his son but nothing proved fruitful.

Discussing about the role of media coverage in the process of finding his child, Muhammad Akram said that media coverage of this incident helped him a lot in order to raise his voice in front authorities. He continued that he is poor and uneducated person, it was impossible for him to reach the authorities without the help of media. Answering the question about change in behaviour of relatives, neighbour or society, he said that he did not find any change in people's attitude and behaviors in negative sense after this incident. People considered Salman as their own child and they raised voice to punish the perpetrator of this incident collectively. Talking about the role of media coverage as hurdle in getting rid of the trauma of this incident, he said that this incident is unforgettable for him and his family. He added that there is no single day when didn't remember his son so media coverage is not have particular role in this regard. He said that this sorrow will go on with rest of his life.

Talking about the change in life pattern after this incident, Muhammad Akram said that his all the happiness and charm of the life was related to his son and after his death everything lost its value in front of his eyes. He continued that happiness and any eve of pleasure is not as attracting for him as it use to before. Discussing about the condition of Salman's mother, he said that she is still in this trauma. It is very difficult for her to accept that her son is no more in this world.

In an answer of a question, Muhammad Akram said that in start he and his wife use to have dreams about their sons but now they both didn't saw any dream about thei son for a while. Talking about the behavior of media personals and organizations, he said that the first few days was very hectic. Media organization and reporters continually asked them to give interview and responses about this tragic incident. Muhammad Akram agreed with the statement of the researcher's question that some times media organizations forced them to give interview or response when the don't want to talk with them.

Discussing the role of government and police officials in this tragic incident, Muhammad Akram said that government and police officials helped them a lot and they are still working on this incident. He further added that he is satisfied with actions that government has taken so far regarding this incident. Talking about the pictorial coverage and its effects, he said that the continues display of Salman's picture on the mainstream media sometime create hurdle in order to get rid of this trauma. In an answer of a question about the difference between the coverage in government owned and private owned media organization, he said that he did not know about any difference between these organization as he is a uneducated person. Muhammad Akram disclosed in an answer of a question that some of media personal asked him to give specific type of answer but he denied the assumption that media channel offered financial benefits for giving interviews or any specific kind of answers. He continued that the behaviour of the reporters and other media personals was fine with him and his family while conducting the interviews.

Talking about the difference in their social activities, Muhammad Akram said that when he use go at any gathering, people asked questions about the incidents and sometimes it hurts and then he used to request people for not talking about that tragic incident. Talking about the murderer of Salman , he said that there are lots of roomers spread about him and his trial procedure in this city. He added that people claimed that the perpetrator bribed the officials and will get rid of this case soon. Muhammad Akram hoped that government would proceed a free and fair trial of this incident and will punish the perpetrator.

Interview with Mr and Mrs Afzal

Mr and Mrs Afzal, parents of twelve year old Ali Husnain who got abducted and later found dead and sexually abused. While recalling the incident, Mrs Afzal said that her son Ali Husnain used to sell stationary related stuff in order to earn the bread and butter for the family. On 17 August 2019 after coming back from work, he went to his relatives place but never came back. She continued that they started looking for Ali Husnain but failed to find him. A complain was filed in the police station in the evening of that day by Mr Afzal.

Mrs Afzal claimed that at initial stage police did not helped them in order to find their child. She further said that she struggled alone with her family for twenty six days in order to find her child and she also distribute the pamphlets about her missing child and announced an prize for the person who will give any information about Ali Husnain but all proved fruitless.

Talking about the role of media coverage in this tragic incident, she said that media helped them a lot in order to raise their voice in front of government and higher officials. She added that before media coverage of this incident, the behaviour of police and other officials was not cooperative. Discussing about post incident societal relations and behaviour of relatives, Mr and Mrs Afzal said that people especially their neighbour and relatives helped them in all possible manners in both finding Ali Husnain and later on in consoling the wound. Mrs Afzal added that police officials used to lay stress on the local journalist for not to publish news about this incident but situation changed when this incident got hype on national and international media.

In an Answer of a question about the relationship of pictorial coverage of this incident and healing process, she said that the pictures used to display on the mainstream media related to this incident forced them to think about this issue even when they don't want to think about it. Answering the question about the dreams related to their child, Mr and Mrs Afzal said that they use to have dreams about their son and usually the saw him in happy mood. Talking about the behaviour of media organizations and reporters, they said that media helped them a lot during all this period. They further said that they did not noticed any wearied thing in media person's behaviour and attitudes.

In an answer of a question Mrs Afzal said that neither any media person or organization asked them to give a specific answer about any question nor any financial benefit was offered by the media organization or any reporter for giving interviews or any type of specific answers. Talking about the murderer of Ali Husnain, Mr and Mrz Afzal said that the did not heard the name of that person before this incident happened and neither that person is related to them.

Talking about the role played the government in this regard, Mr Afzal said that government helped them financially as a compensation amount of ten lacks was given to the family. Furthermore Mr and Mrz Afzal requested the government officials to proceed this case as fast as possible and give punishment to the perpetrator in public.

Conclusion

Discussion about the effects of media content on the masses started soon after the Invention mass media. Researchers always tried to explore the possible effects of the media content on the masses. A number of studies also conducted in order to find out the difference of impact of messages on the public given through mass media and any other medium. The present research study tried to explore post media depiction psychological effects of child sexual abuse incidents on the families of victims. In order to get answer of this research question, researcher conducted detailed semi structured interviews with the families of the victims of Qasor child sexual abuse incidents. These incidents took place between the year 2018 to 2019. Researchers prepared a semi structured interviews by keeping the psychological perspective in mind. The interviews were conducted in natural setting and while recording the answers of the families, researcher also noted non verbal cues in order to get accurate answers. If we analyze the answers of the families of the victims of Qasor child sexual abuse incidents then it is evident that these incidents of child sexual abuse effects the families of victims in multiple ways. Researcher asked the question from the families of Qasor child sexual abuse incidents about the media coverage of these incident and its effects on their lives. Answers of the interviewees indicates that media coverage of sexual abuse incidents of their children effected them and their life pattern in multiple ways. Talking about the effectiveness of media coverage of child sexual abuse incidents almost all the interviewees agreed that media coverage helped them a lot in order get the attention of higher authorities and government officials. Many interviewees claimed that before the media coverage of the child sexual abuse incidents, police and other government officials were not cooperative with them but situation changed after the issue got hype on the national as well as international media. In an answer of a question about relationship between the coverage of child sexual abuse incidents and their sleeping pattern, interviewees answered that there are no particular relationship they noticed in the sleeping pattern and media coverage of these sexual abuse incidents. But Mrs Afzal, mother of twelve year old child who got abducted and later found dead and sexually abused said that she used to have dreams about the pictures portrayed in the media about her son. Talking about the relationship between the media coverage of child sexual abuse incidents and social life of the families of victims, the interviewees answered that they did not noticed any specific difference between the life of pre and post media depiction of child sexual abuse incidents. Although parents of the children who were sexually abused claimed that sometimes people used to force them to talk about the incident when they don't want to talk about this incidents. Researcher asked the interviewees about the behaviour of news organizations and their representatives with them. All the interviewees answered positively that media organizations and their representatives behaved very well with them and they are satisfied with their behaviour and the representation they gave to the child sexual abuse incidents.

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