



The Ankahee Project

Study of Child Sexual Abuse Landscape in North and Western India

Prevalence across genders | Age of Occurrence | Perpetrator Profile | CSA Type | Disclosure | Punishment

Authored by: Bachpan India, February 15, 2026

Founder's Note

*“**Project Ankahee** was born out of a simple but critical question: **how can we address Child Sexual Abuse by relying only on reported cases, when more than 90% never enter official records?** Most policies and studies are shaped by documented data, but they reflect only a fraction of lived reality.*

*We therefore designed Project Ankahee to **study both reported and unreported experiences**, with a strong focus on the large majority that remains unheard, and to examine patterns across North India. By analysing factors such as age of occurrence, relationship with the accused, disclosure timelines, and institutional response, we sought to build a broader, region-specific understanding of CSA.*

*Project Ankahee was **not merely a survey; it was an effort to give voice to stories** that rarely reach formal systems and convert them into actionable insight. I am proud that we were able to bring those silenced realities into the light.”*

-Rahul Singla, Founder Bachpan India





BSTI undertook a survey on Child Sexual Abuse to understand it's prevalence, taxonomy & patterns to help prevent it over time

Objectives

- To assess the prevalence of CSA among urban young adults of North-Western India
- To understand the patterns of unreported CSA, with specific focus on age, gender, perpetrator profile, type of abuse and other variables
- To study the outcome of disclosure in terms of reporting and legal action.

Survey Methodology

- Design included a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions, custom designed to meet the objective of the study
- Quantitative questions included multiple and single choice-based questions
- Online surveys through Google Forms was predominantly used. Survey timeline : April 14 to April 28, 2025
- The total sample consisted of 6,886 respondents with 1,651 who were CSA Survivors.
- Locations : Delhi/NCR | Tricity | Punjab & Haryana | UP

Areas of Investigation

- Profile of CSA Survivors
- CSA Taxonomy : Age of Incident | Type | Perpetrator Profile | Number
- CSA Disclosure : Ability to speak out| Time taken to speak out | Who was spoken to
- Legal Action and Punishment
- Personal Stories of Courage



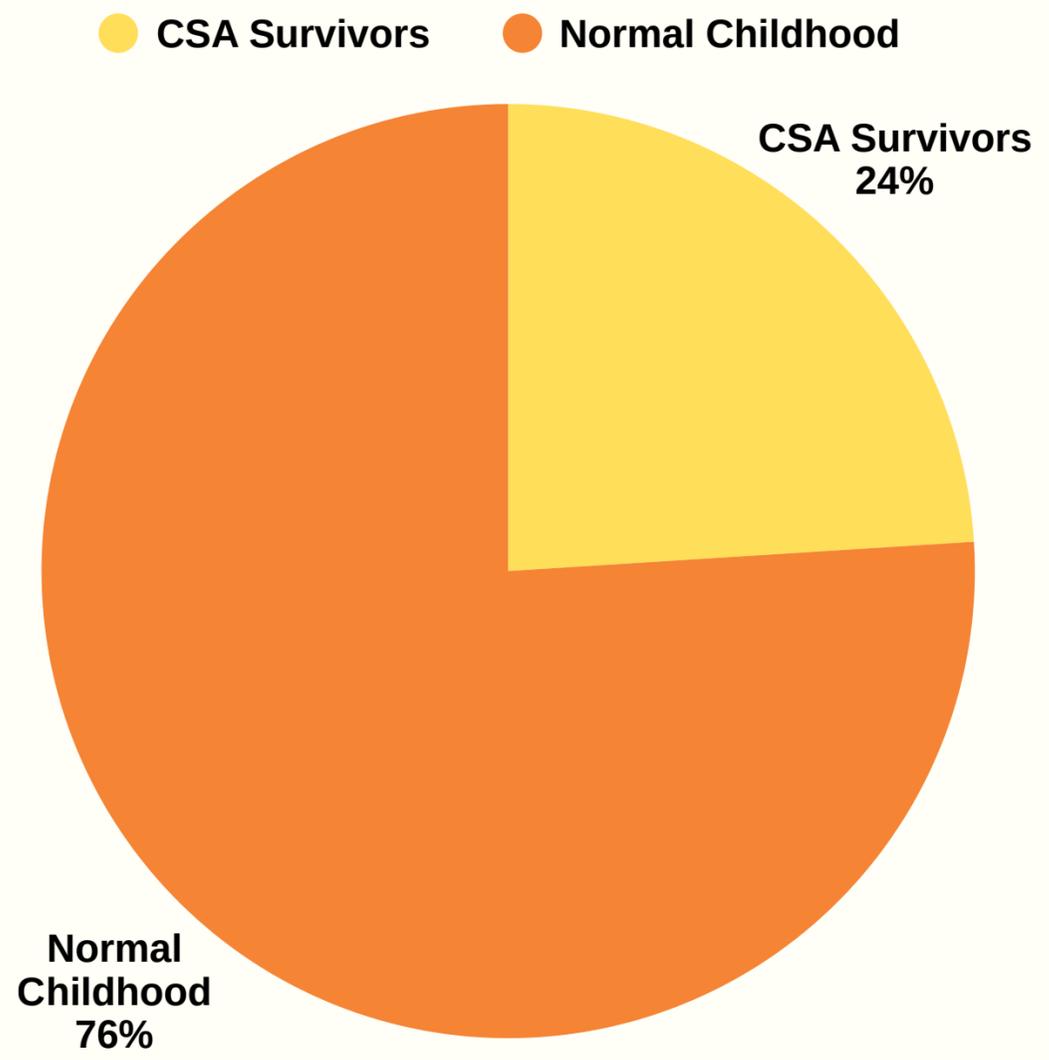
Survey Sample Demographics

The upcoming section provides details regarding the overall sample with respect to age, gender and location

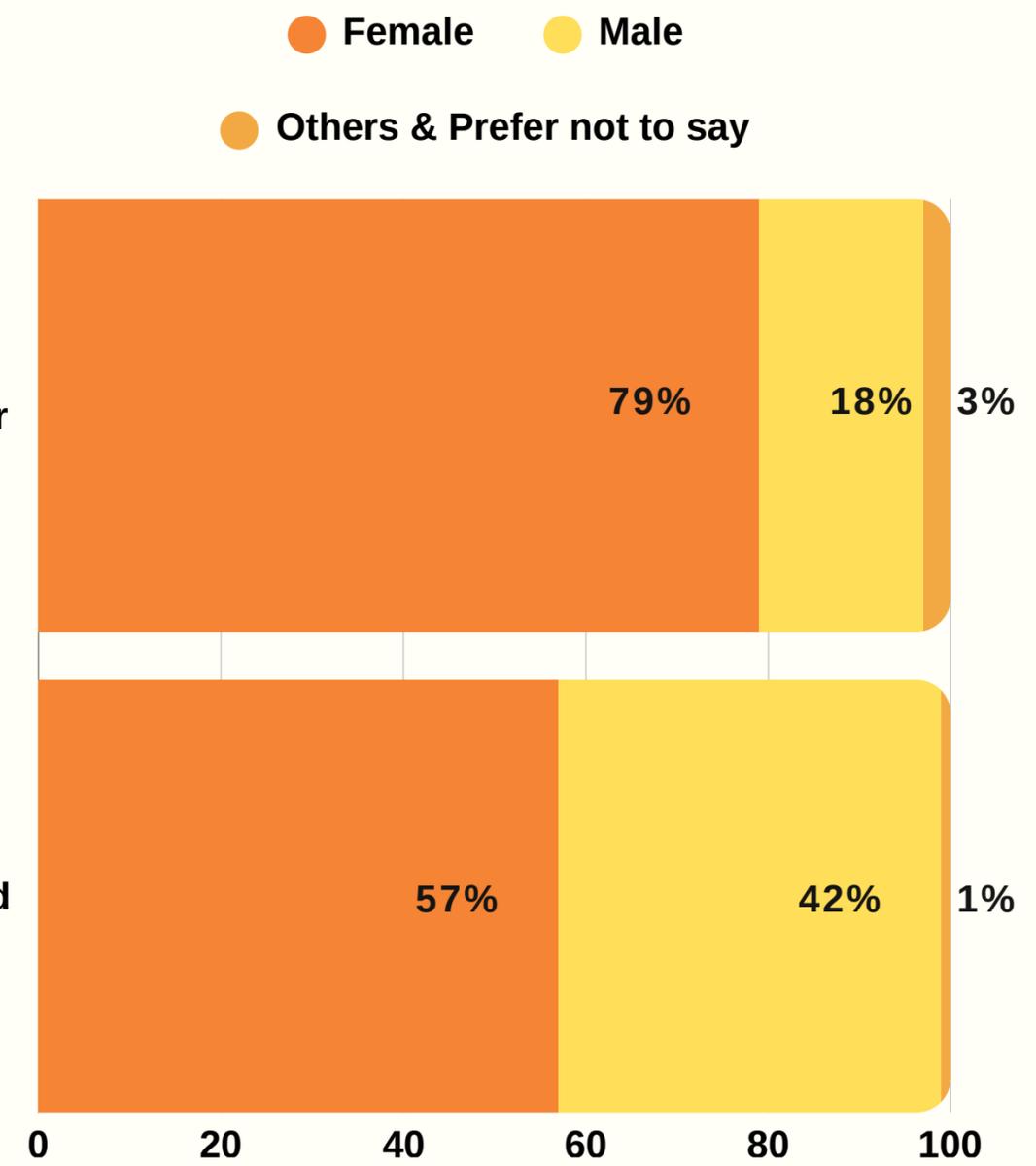


1 in 4 respondent is a CSA survivor, females form 80% of the CSA pool

Overall Split amongst Normal Childhood and Victims of Abuse



Gender wise participation ratios



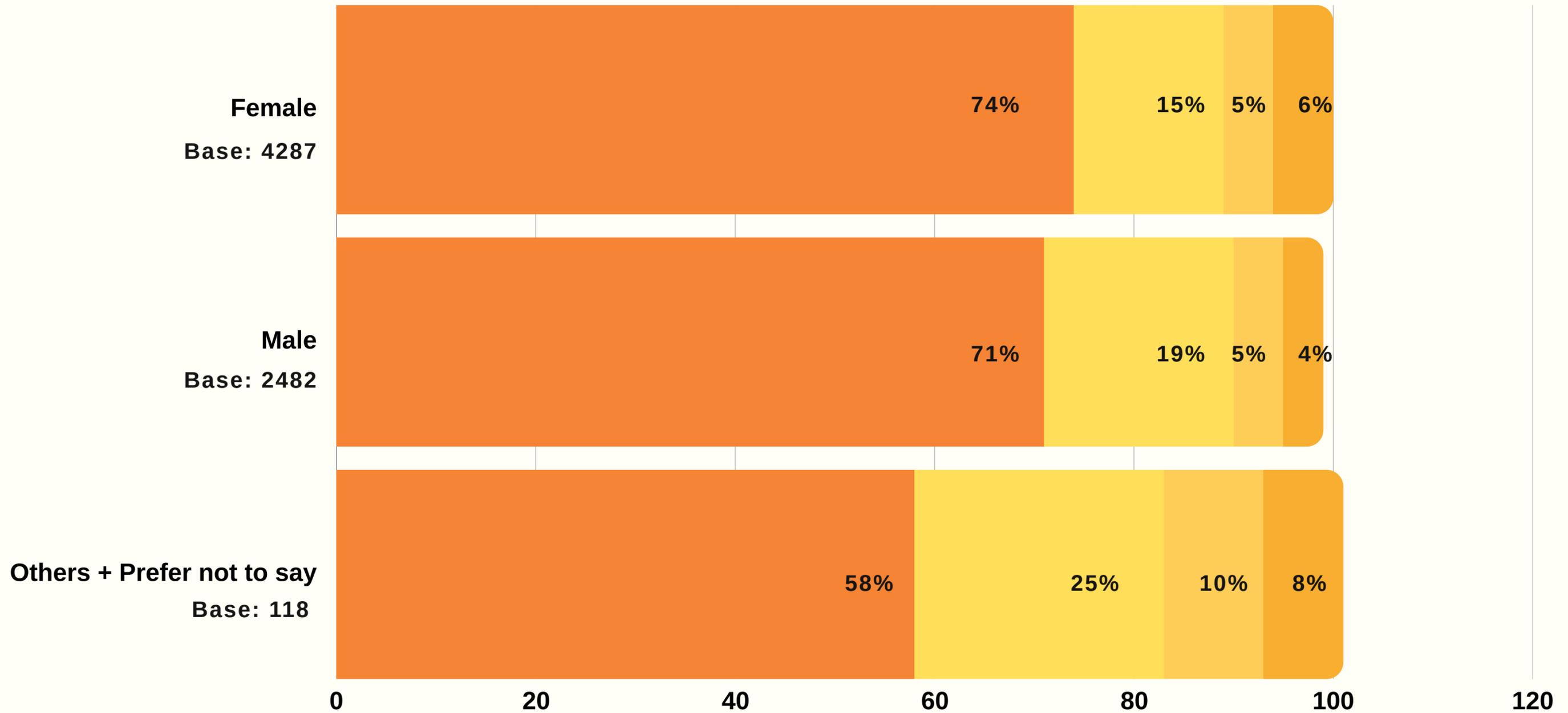
Overall base : 6886



8 out of 10 respondents of the survey were under 30

Overall age distribution across genders

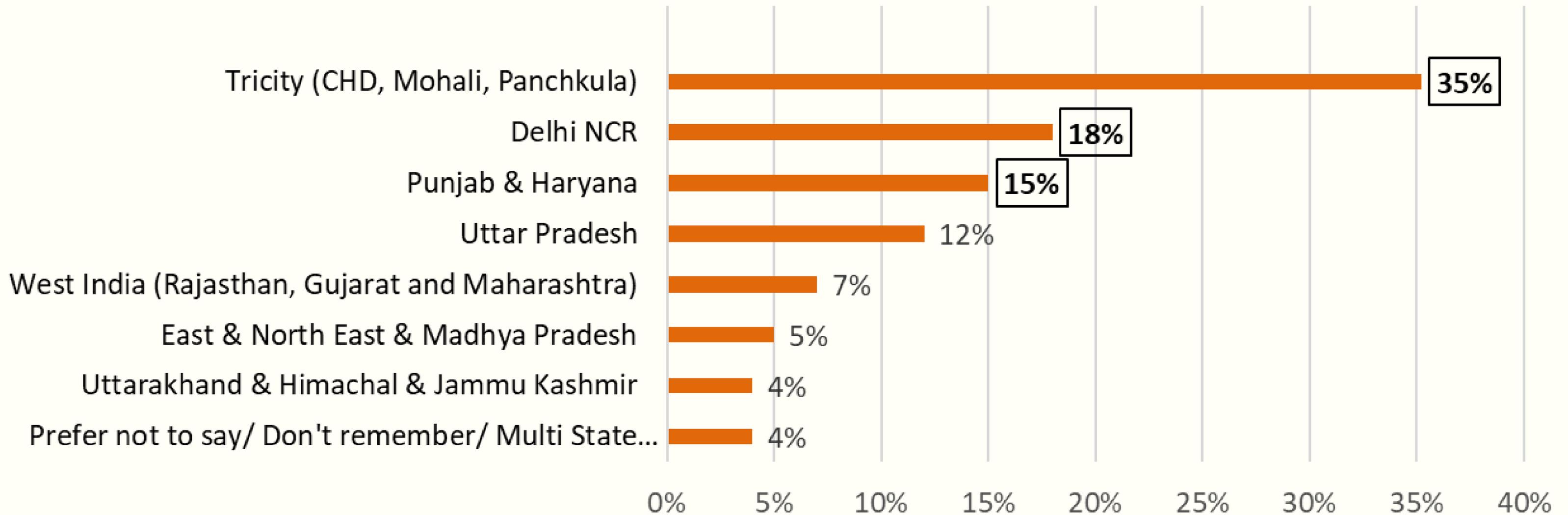
18-23 24-30 30-40 40+



Overall base : 6886



>50% of the respondents hail from Tricity, Delhi NCR, Punjab and Haryana



Overall base : 6886



The DNA of Unreported Child Sexual Abuse

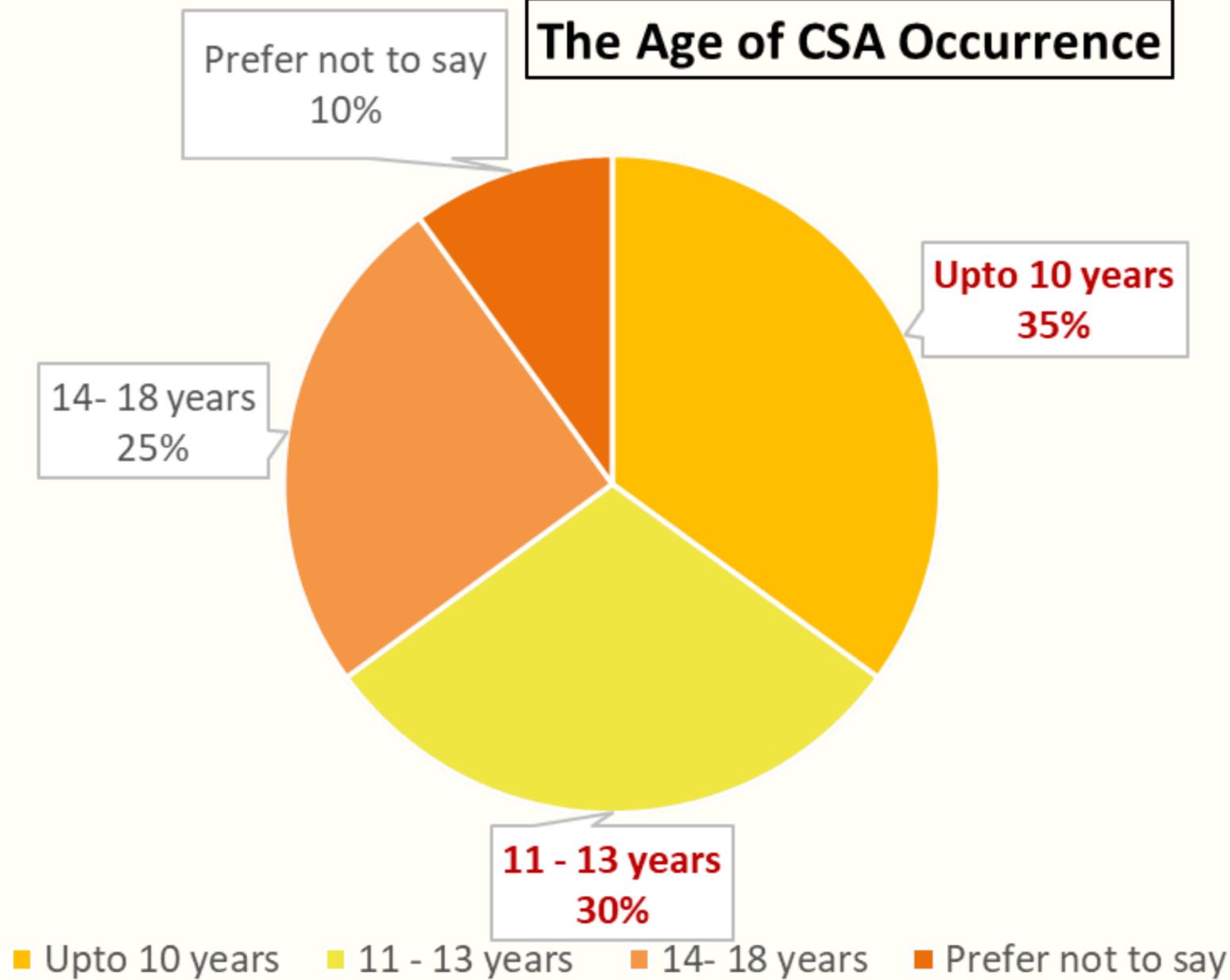
The upcoming section provides insights into the following aspects of a CSA

- What was the age of the Victim
- Who is the Abuser?
- Typical types of Abuse faced
- What was the frequency of abuse
- Location based insights



~ 6 out of 10 Child Sexual Abuse Survivors are under 13 years of age

The Age of CSA Occurrence



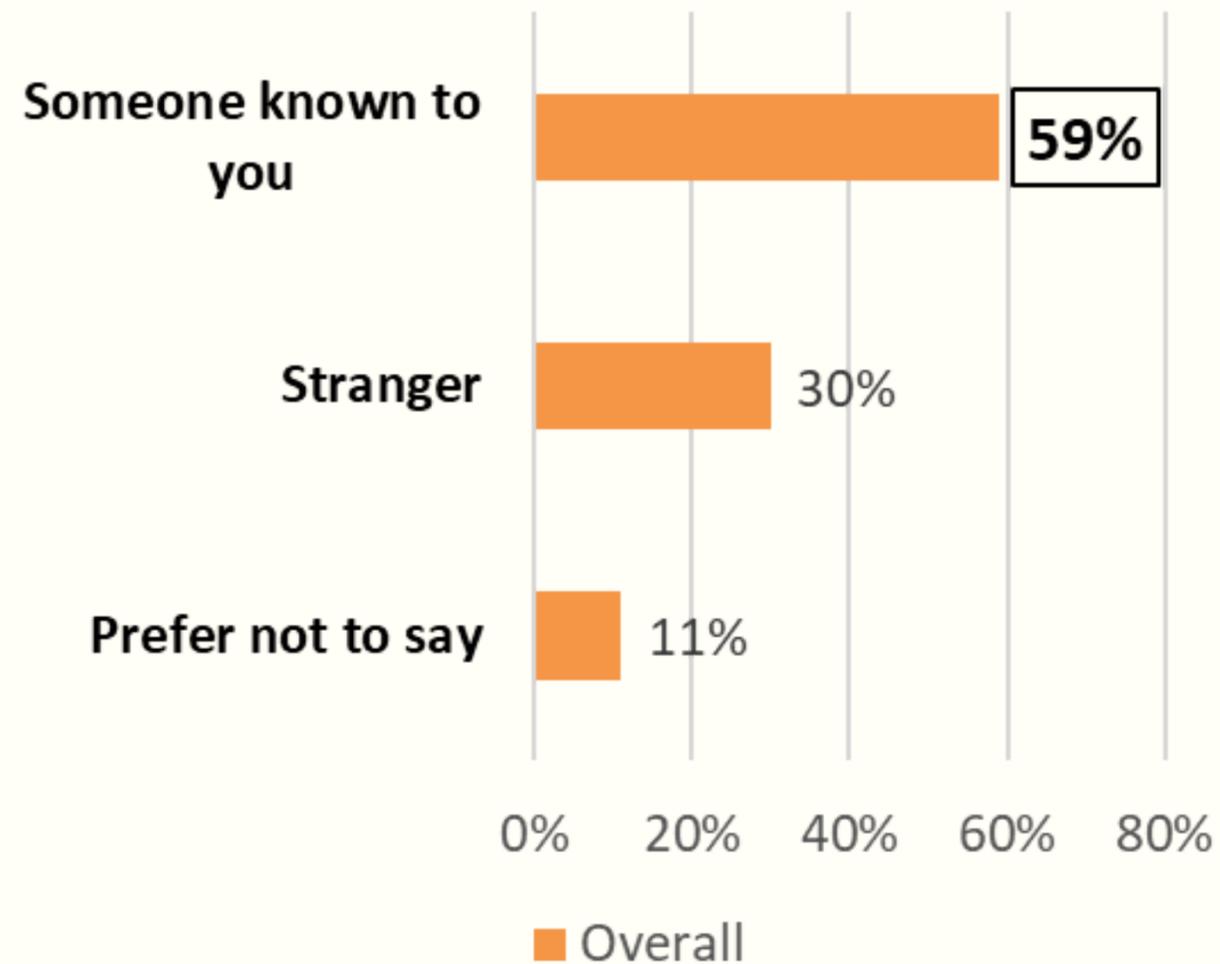
Age of CSA Occurrence	Male	Female
Up to 10 years	37%	35%
11- 13 years	26%	30%
14 – 18 years	25%	25%
Prefer not to say	12%	9%
Base	290	1305

Overall base : 1651



**> 6 out of 10 abuse is perpetrated by someone known the child;
Higher when the Survivor is under 10 years of age across genders**

Overall Abuser Profile in %



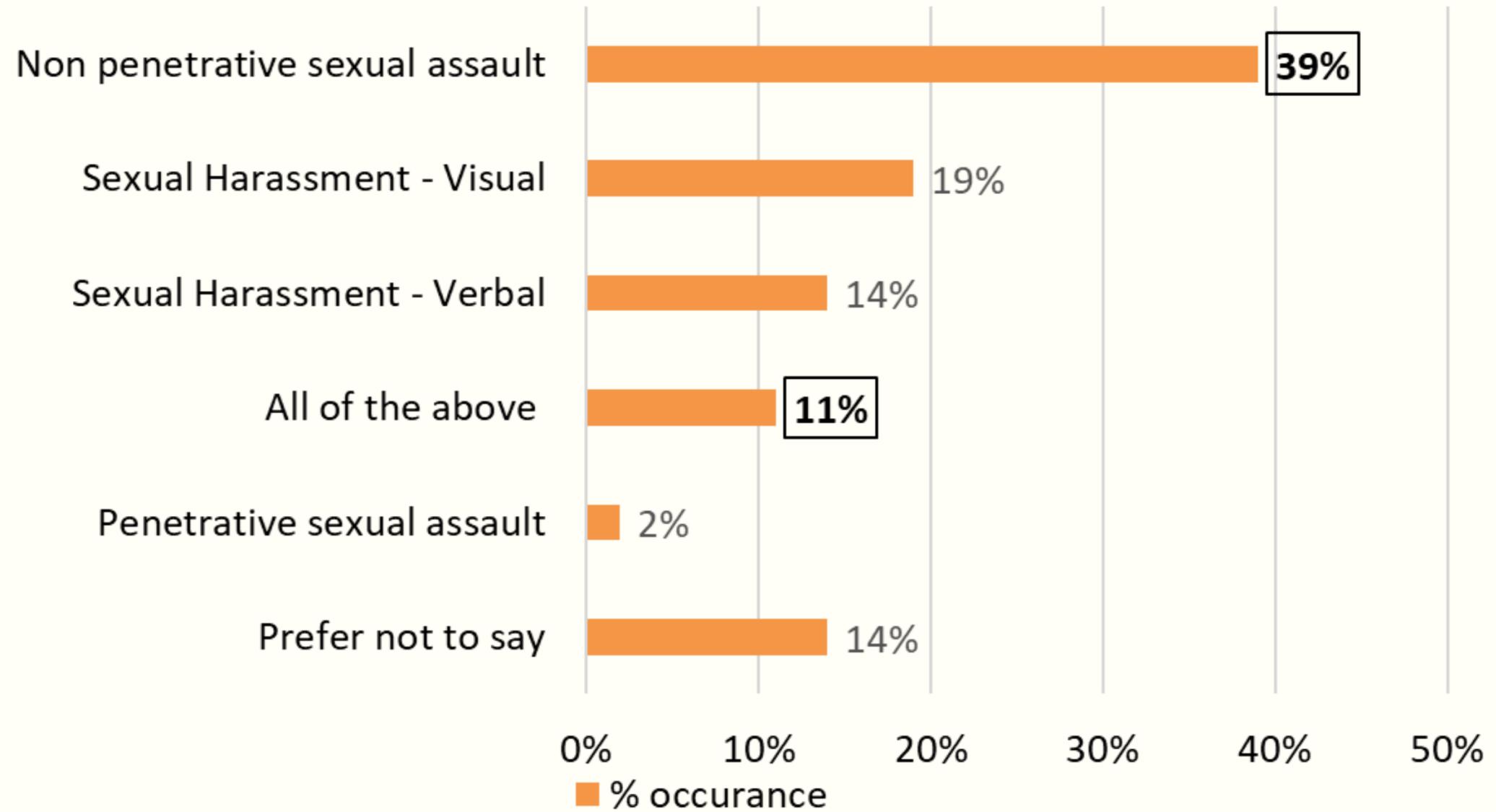
Who is the Abuser?	Male	Female	Others	Pre-Puberty (uupto 10)	Puberty (11– 13)	Post Puberty (14 – 18)	Prefer not to say
Someone known to you	63%	58%	64%	75%	62%	48%	36%
Stranger	25%	31%	23%	19%	30%	44%	24%
Prefer not to say	12%	11%	13%	6%	8%	8%	40%
Base	290	1305	56	706	595	428	197

Overall base : 1651



Non penetrative sexual assault describes 2 out of 5 occurrences, 1 in 10 face the complete range of assaults

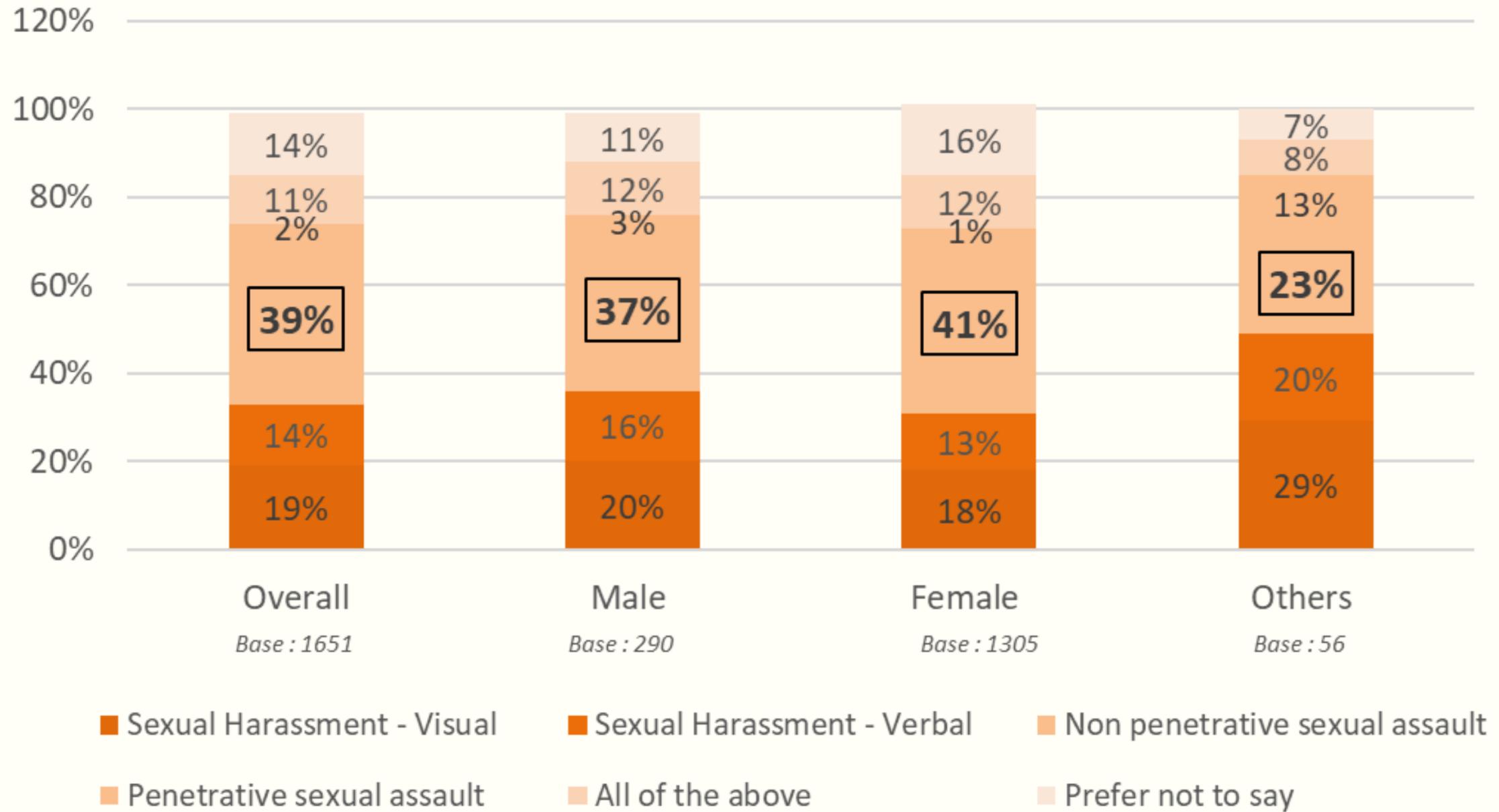
Overall Type of Sexual Assault Faced



Overall base : 1651

Non Penetrative Sexual Assault, highest at 2 out of 5 occurrences across genders

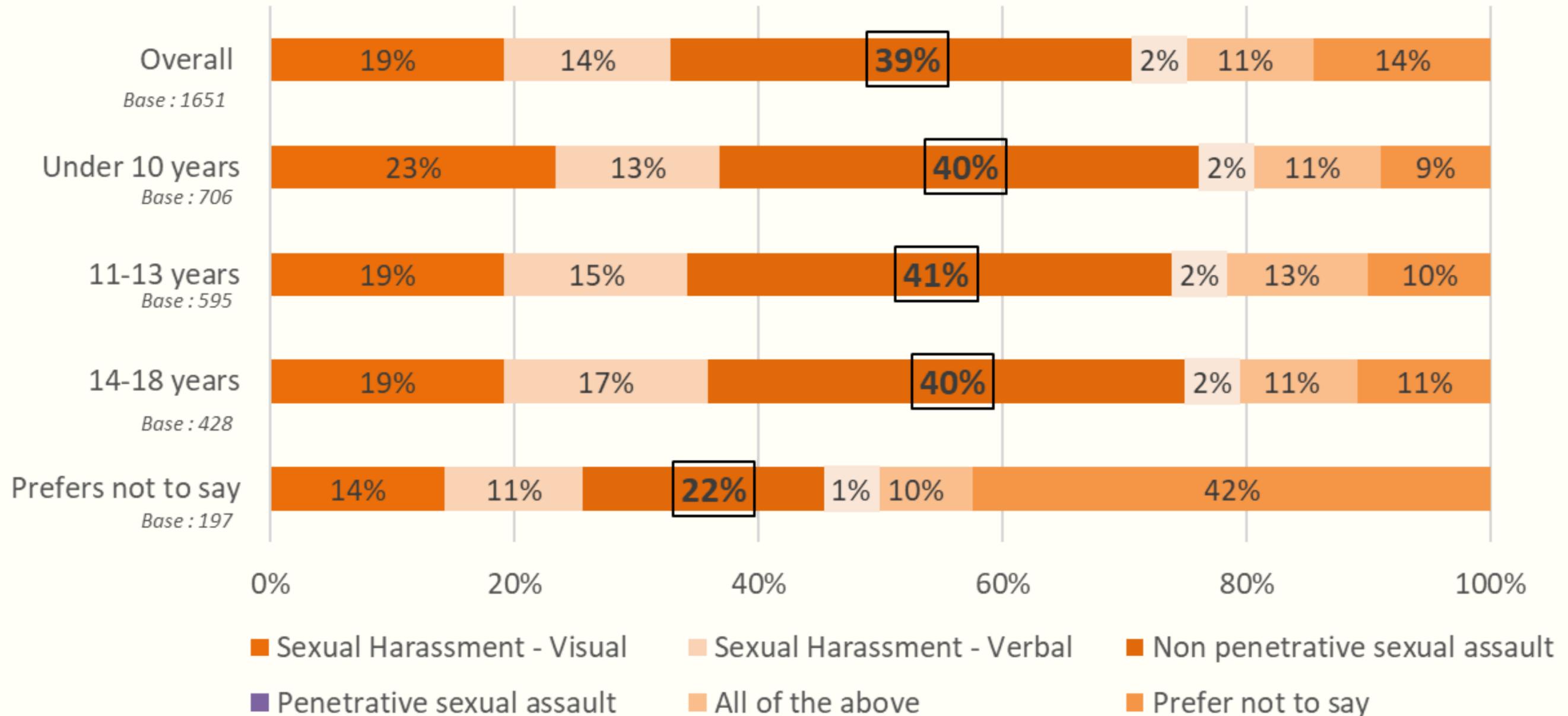
Type of Sexual Abuse, based on gender





Molestation or Non-Penetrative Sexual Assault most common across ages of victim

Type of Assault based on Age of Assault





Tricity, Delhi NCR and Punjab/Haryana emerge as the top locations for CSA across genders and age group.

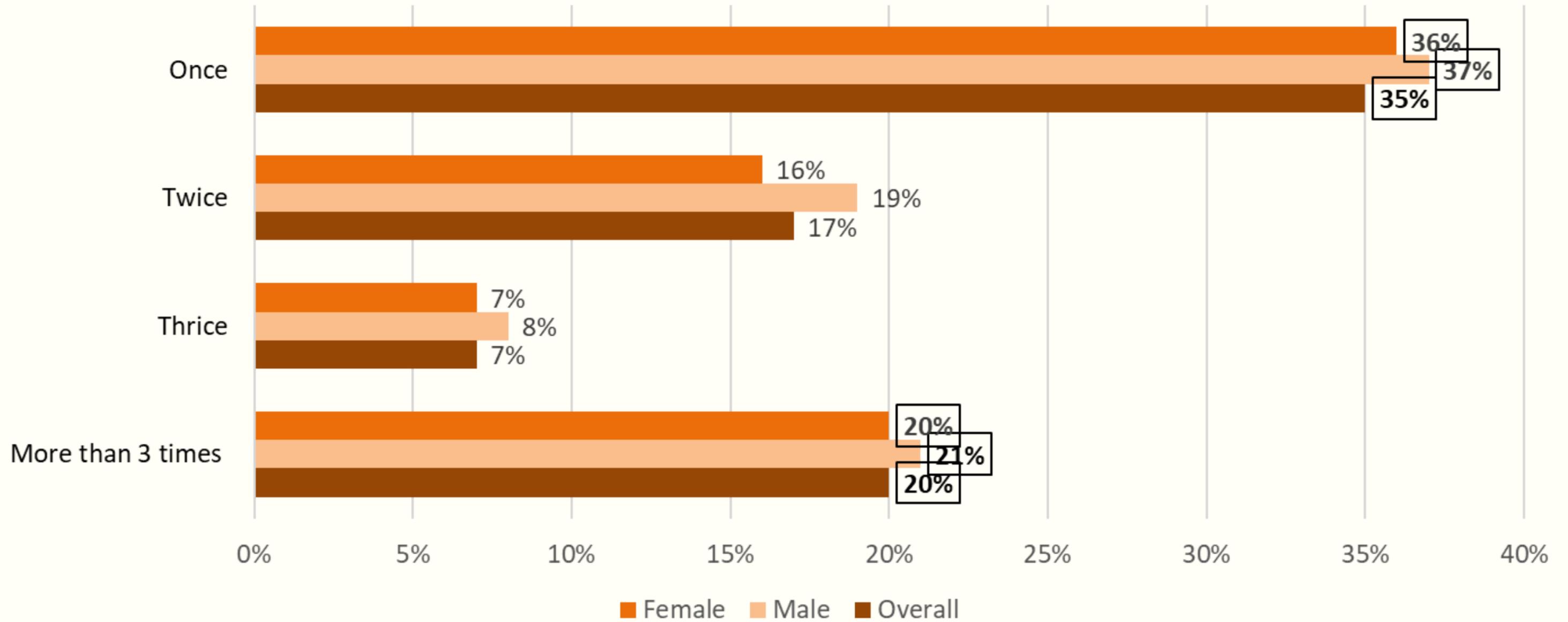
	Male	Female	Pre- Puberty (under 10)	Puberty (10 – 13)	Post Puberty (14 – 18)
Tricity (Chandigarh, Mohali, Panchkula)	15%	21%	17%	17%	26%
Delhi NCR	14%	20%	18%	18%	25%
PB and HR	11%	17%	15%	16%	0%
UP	18%	10%	12%	11%	11%
HP, UK, JK	12%	10%	12%	13%	11%
RJ, GJ, MH	7%	9%	8%	9%	10%
East, North East, MP	8%	8%	8%	8%	10%
Prefer not to say	14%	6%	9%	8%	8%
	290	1305	706	595	428

Overall base : 1651



1 in 3 respondents, across genders have been abused once, while 1 in 5 have faced abused more than three times

Frequency of Sexual Abuse



Overall base : 1651



Survivor Stories

Majority of survivors highlight abuse by people they trusted. They were groomed and their boundaries violated, without them understanding the gravity of the abusers' actions.

Abuse by known and trusted | Multiple abuses | Shame and fear of disclosure

"I have been sexually abused many many times I used to live in joint family for a long period of time. I had many cousins living in the same house they abused me and when all this was happening, I was very small, so I didn't understand in that moment. Later I realized what happened and for a long time I blamed myself for what happened..."

Besides family members I was also molested by my rickshaw uncle who used to drop me to school and also by the watchman of the building I lived in....it happened so many times that I got desensitized and didn't feel any sympathy towards myself."

Abuse by known and trusted | Groomed

"My first cousin, freshly 13 at the time my maamus son, came for a sleepover like cousins usually do. At night I woke up with my clothes off"

Abuse by known and trusted | Limited Adult Protection

"He was my cousin (mama k ladka) who had come to my house during summer vacation. We three – my sibling, me and him – were sleeping on the same bed. He was lying just beside me. On the night when the lights were off, he tried to touch my breasts; in fact, he did touch them.

I was so shocked and numbed at that time that I didn't know what to do or how to respond. The only thing I did was go to my mother, wake her up and tell her everything secretly, but she told me to keep quiet and sleep with her. She assured me that she would talk to him in the morning, and she did talk to him, but he blamed it upon me, saying that I was the one who went close to him, and the only thing my mother did was send him back to his house.

But the trauma remains still. I held grudges against her for a very long time, but now that I see it, I understand that it was difficult for her also, as he is the son of her brother."

60% abuse occurs when the child is **below 13**, likely before puberty or at the onset of puberty.
1 in 3 is **under 10** years old

>6 out of 10 abusers are **known** to the child, higher at **3 out of 4** abusers when the child is **below 10**

2 out of 5 is **non penetrative**
1 in 3 is **verbal or visual**
1 in 10 is the whole gamut including rape

1 in 5 have been abused **more than 3 times**

The northern parts of the country specifically, **Tricity, Delhi NCR** emerge as a **hot bed for CSA**

Key Takeaways



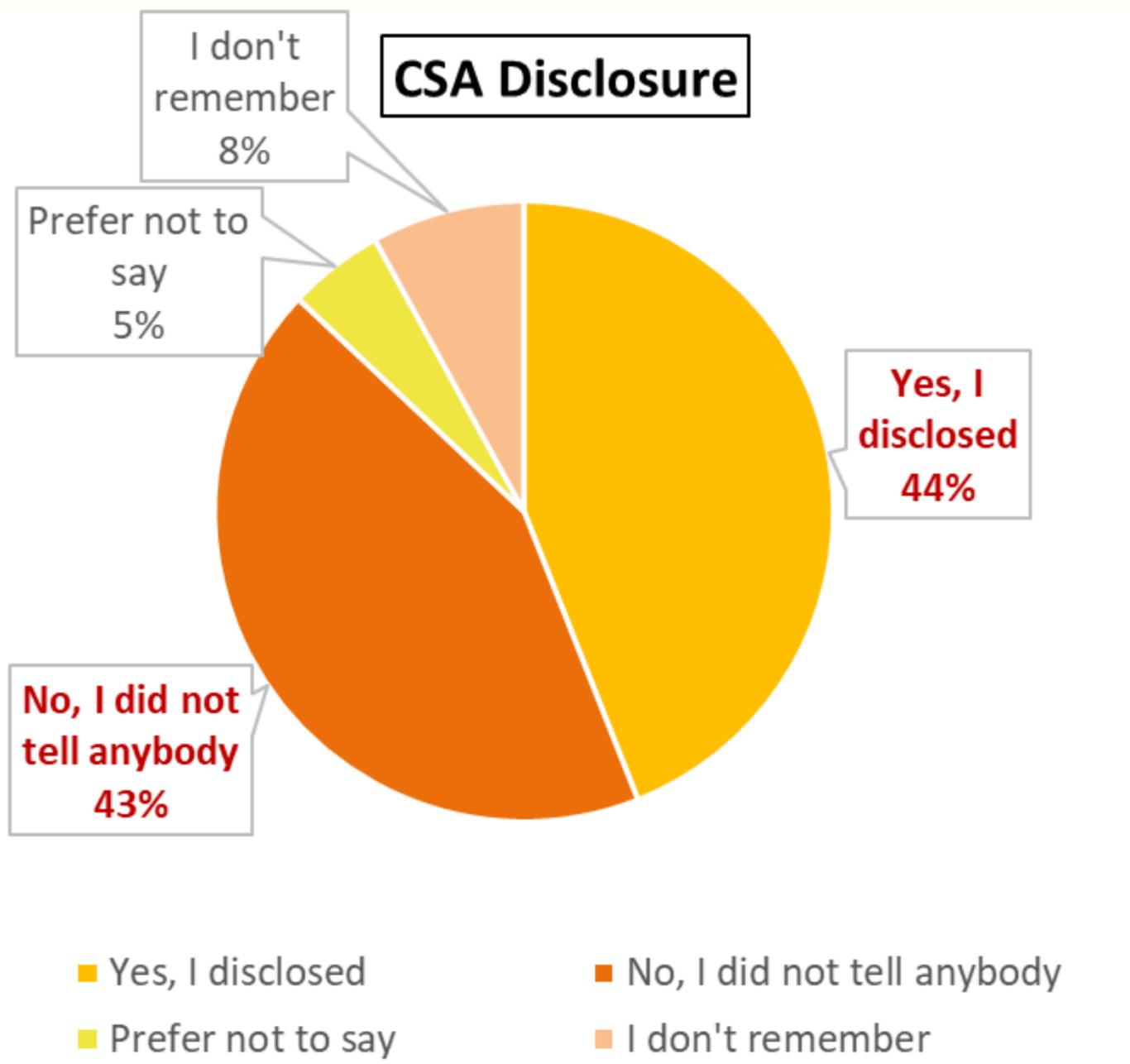
Disclosure of CSA

The upcoming section provides insights into the following aspects of a CSA

- Was the incident disclosed?
- Who was spoken to?
- How long did it take to talk about the Abuse?



**2 out of 5 respondents disclosed their abuse.
Higher amongst females and post puberty; lower among males**



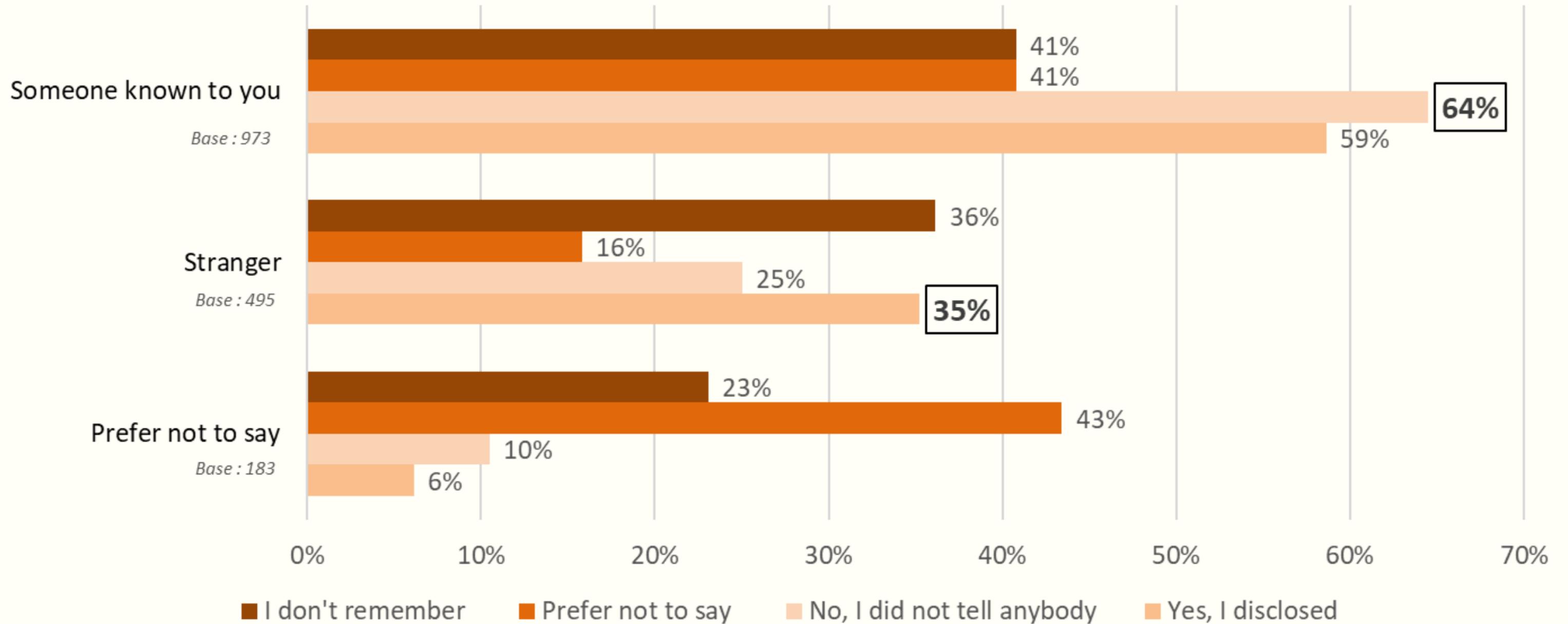
Overall base : 1651

Disclosure	Male	Female	Others	Pre-Puberty (under 10)	Puberty (10 – 13)	Post Puberty (14 – 18)	Prefer not to say
Yes, Disclosed	27%	48%	38%	45%	45%	58%	23%
No	57%	40%	43%	46%	46%	32%	39%
Prefer not to say	5%	5%	5%	3%	3%	4%	19%
Don't remember	12%	7%	14%	6%	6%	6%	20%
Base	290	1305	56	706	595	428	197



> 3 out 5, do not disclose when the abuser is known to them

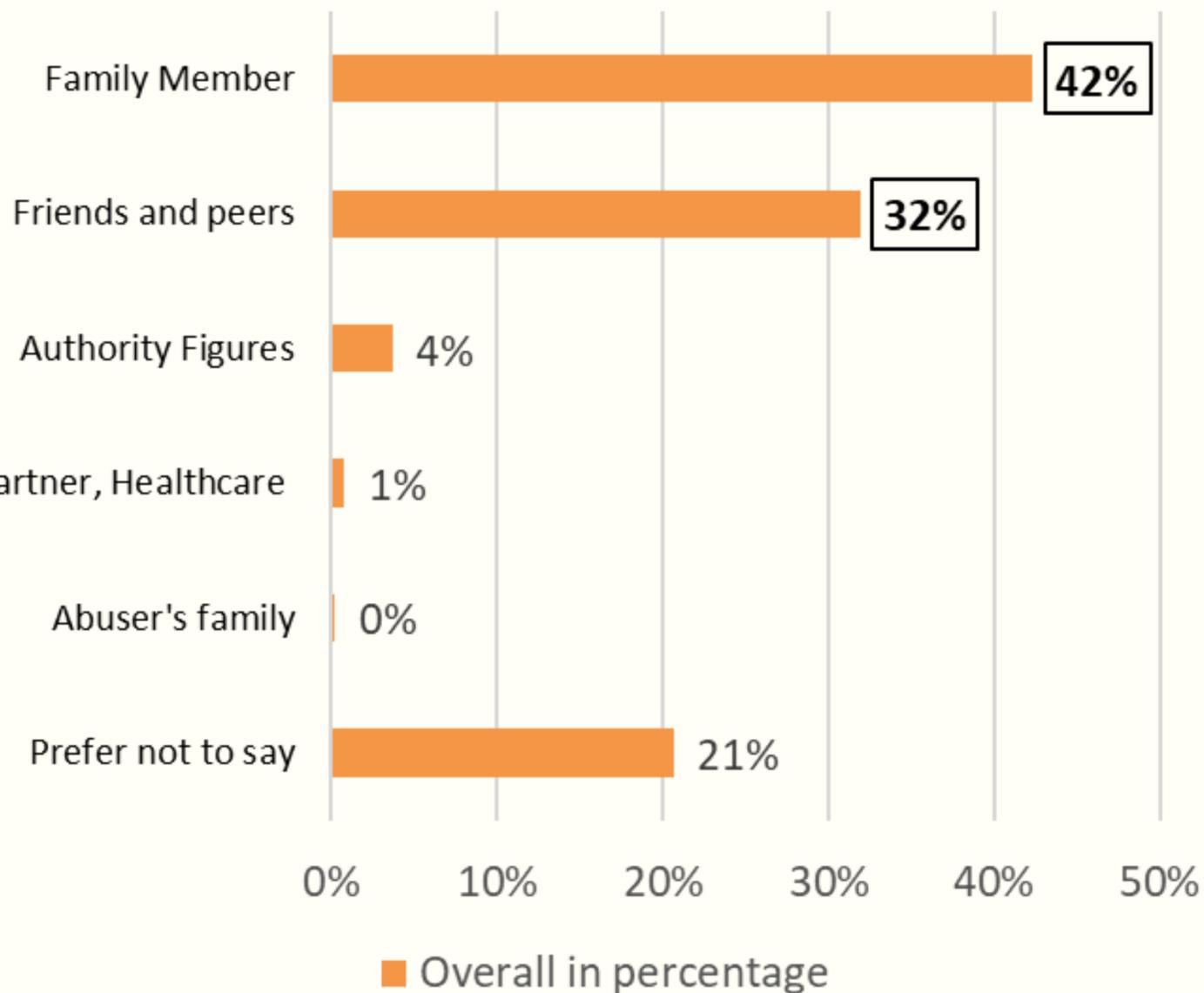
Disclosure versus Abuser profile





Family and Friends were 'Go To' persons for disclosure. Females preferred to talk to family members, males their peers.

Overall, Who was spoken to about the abuse



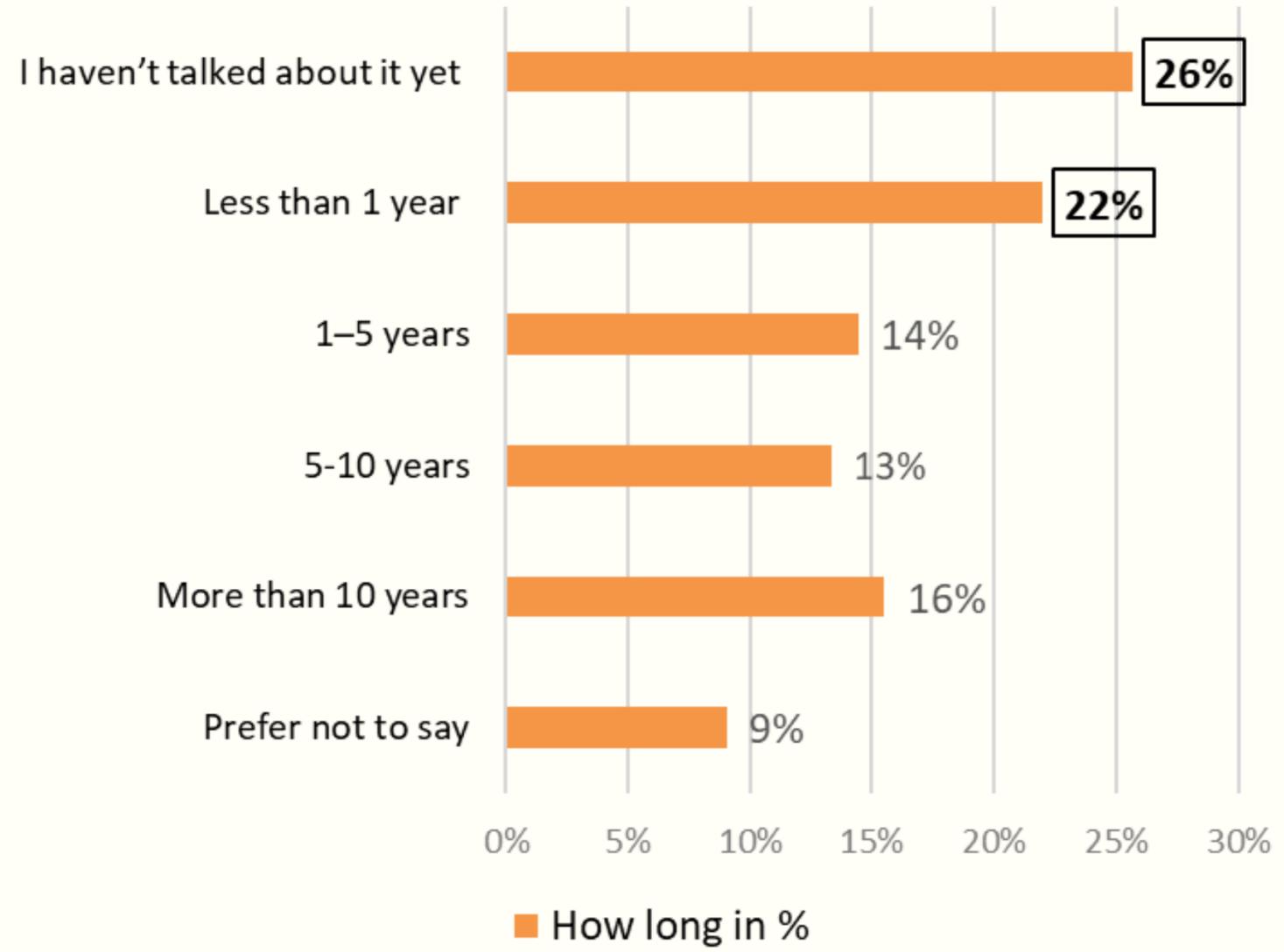
Overall base : 1238

Who was spoken to	Male	Female	Others	Pre-Puberty (< 10)	Puberty (10 – 13)	Post Puberty (14 – 18)	Prefer not to say
Family Member	24%	45%	46%	46%	48%	42%	22%
Friends and Family	37%	31%	31%	33%	29%	40%	25%
Authority Figures	4%	4%	5%	2%	4%	6%	3%
Partner, Health Care Professional	1%	1%	0%	3%	1%	0%	0%
Abuser's family	0%	0%	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	34%	19%	15%	18%	18%	12%	49%
Base	161	1038	39	512	445	452	153



1 in 4 abused below 13 years, have never talked, higher amongst males. 1 in 4 females have talked within a year

How long did it take for you to disclose : Overall



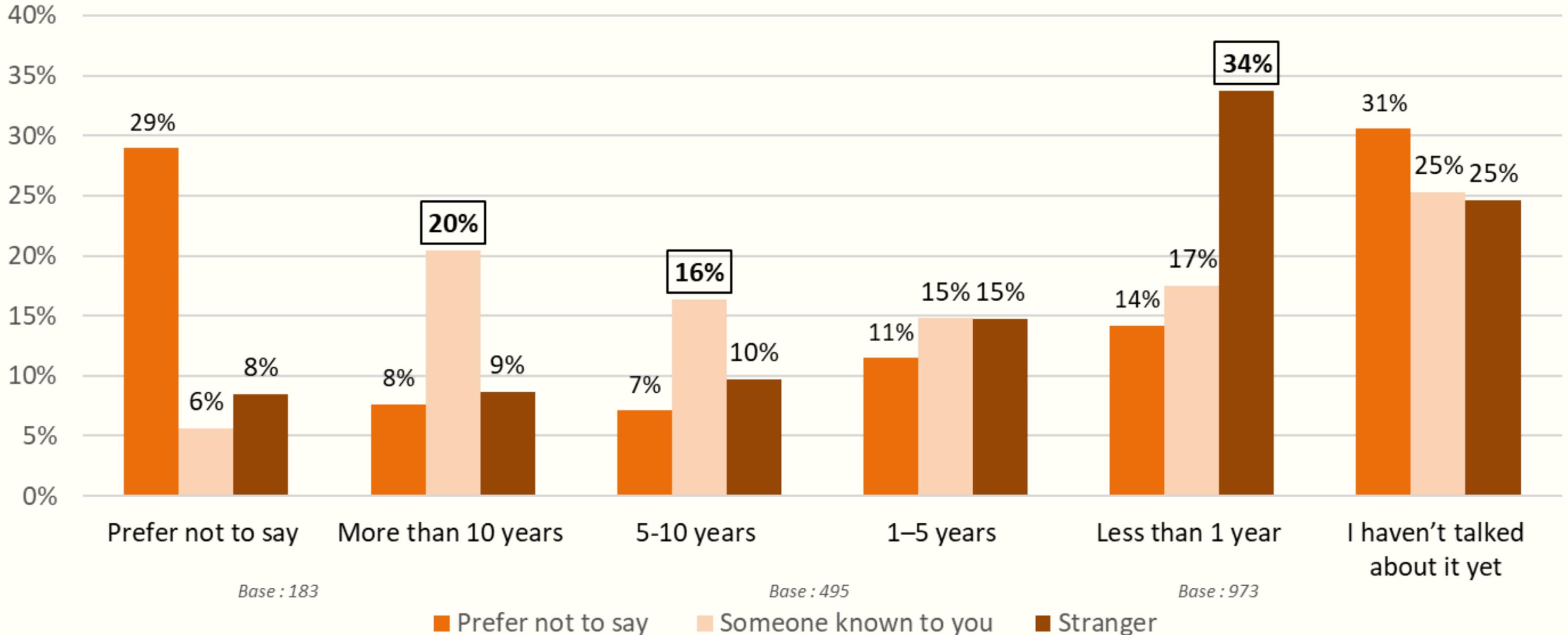
Overall base : 1651

How long did it take to disclose	Male	Female	Others	Pre-Puberty (under 10)	Puberty (10 – 13)	Post Puberty (14 – 18)	Prefer not to say
I haven't talked about it yet	38%	23%	16%	25%	25%	20%	27%
Less than 1 year	14%	24%	20%	13%	20%	34%	18%
1-5 years	9%	15%	18%	10%	17%	22%	8%
5-10 years	11%	14%	16%	17%	18%	9%	8%
More than 10 years	16%	15%	18%	29%	14%	8%	10%
Prefer not to say	10%	9%	13%	5%	6%	7%	30%
Base	290	1305	56	706	595	428	197



**1 in 3 disclose within a year when the abuser is a stranger.
1 in 3 are unable to talk for 5 years at least, when the abuser is known**

Time taken to disclose versus Abuser profile





Survivor Stories

Silence, Shame and Fear of Disclosure, common across all the Survivors. Mostly, it takes years for them to understand and process what has happened to them.

Abuse by known and trusted | Silence, Shame and fear of disclosure

“I was 7-8 years old when this incident happened, my cousin was visiting our house, and it was summers . He was quite young(must be in his 20’s) at that time and must be completely aware what he was doing then , he made me touch his private parts repeatedly.”

Abuse by known and trusted | Silence, Shame and fear of disclosure

“I have been abused sexually, throughout my childhood by different people. My uncle, my older cousins and even stranger, to the point i thought that was normal. But as I grew older i started to actually understand my pain myself, that's the reason I thought maybe the 10-yr old me was okay but i didn't scream or tell anyone at that point, but now I know it was never her fault, not even the 15-yr old self's fault”

Abuse in Public and Semi-Public Spaces | Silence, Shame and fear of disclosure

I went to this one family function that evening. I was in 2nd class I entered I sat like everyone usually does. There was this one guy who was calling me in the back from a distance .

At first, I thought he must be calling someone standing behind me. He kept doing this the entire time THEN I was in the waiting in the queue he came near my ear he said “piche aaja Buche” and he started touching my ass he inserted his fingers between my bum-cheeks and moved his hand forward and was trying to touch my private parts . I froze.

After coming home, I tried touching myself the same way I felt like I had worms on my entire body. I couldn't touch myself for days I didn't speak about it to anyone. After 10ish years an incident happened with one of my very close people. That was the first time I spoke about it to someone

- **Half the females** disclose the incident, while only **1 in 4 males talk about it**
- Highest, at **60%** when the child is **over 14** years old.

~ **6 out of 10** CSA survivors do not disclose when the abuser is known to them

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **8 out of 10**, CSA survivors prefer to speak to **family or friends** about the incident.
- **Half** of the survivors, whose abuse happened below the age of 13, prefer to talk to **family**

- **1 in 4** have **never** disclosed
- **1 in 3** are unable to talk for **5 years at least, when the abuser is known**
- **1 in 3**, who have been abused under 10 years of age, took **10 years to talk of the incident**
- **1 in 5** have disclosed the incident within a year



Action Taken on CSA

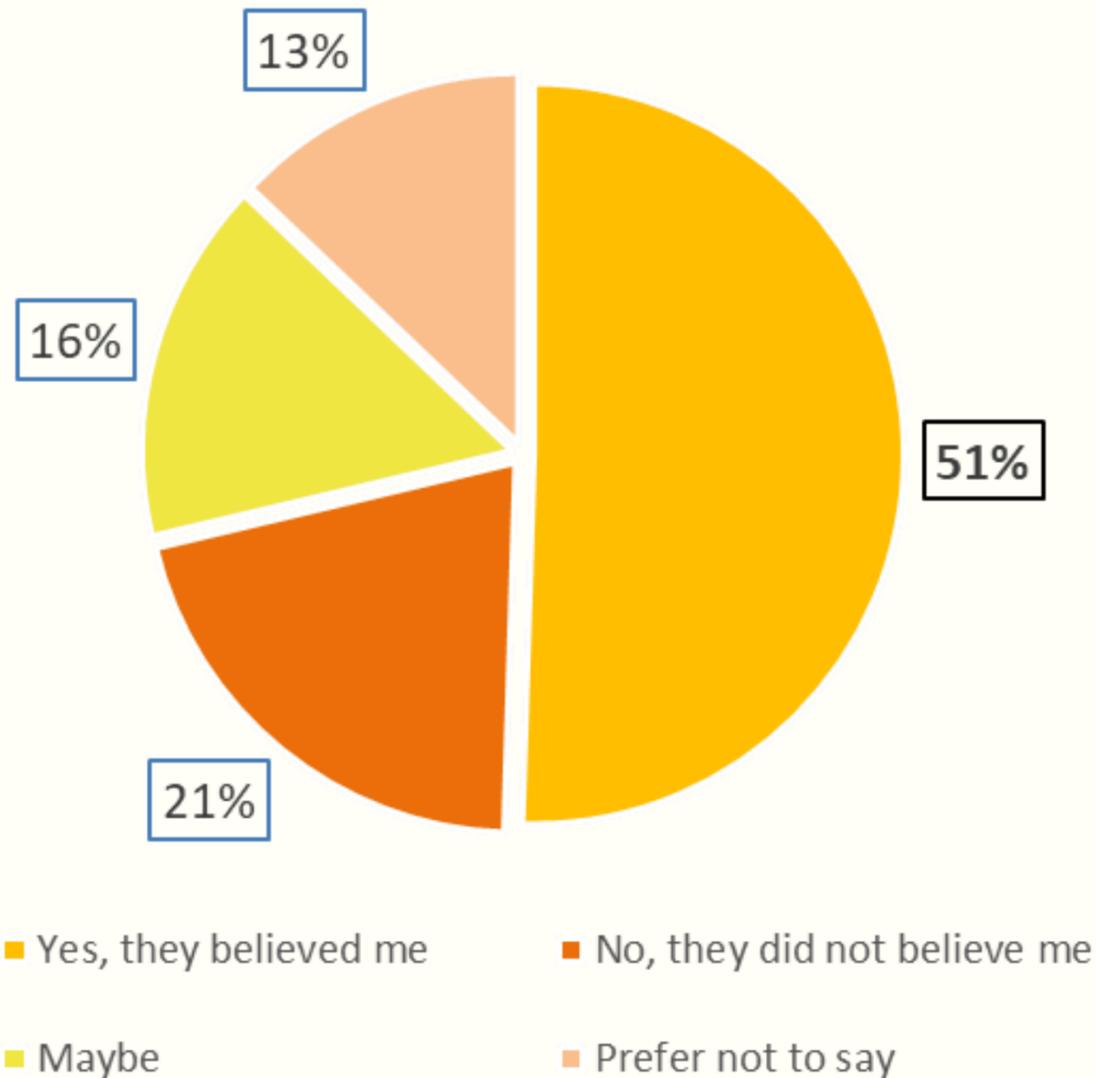
The upcoming section provides insights into the following aspects of a CSA

- Was the CSA survivor believed?
- Was Action taken?
- Was the perpetrator punished?



> half of those who disclosed the incident were believed. Children over 14 years of age, were most readily believed.

Overall, Believability in %



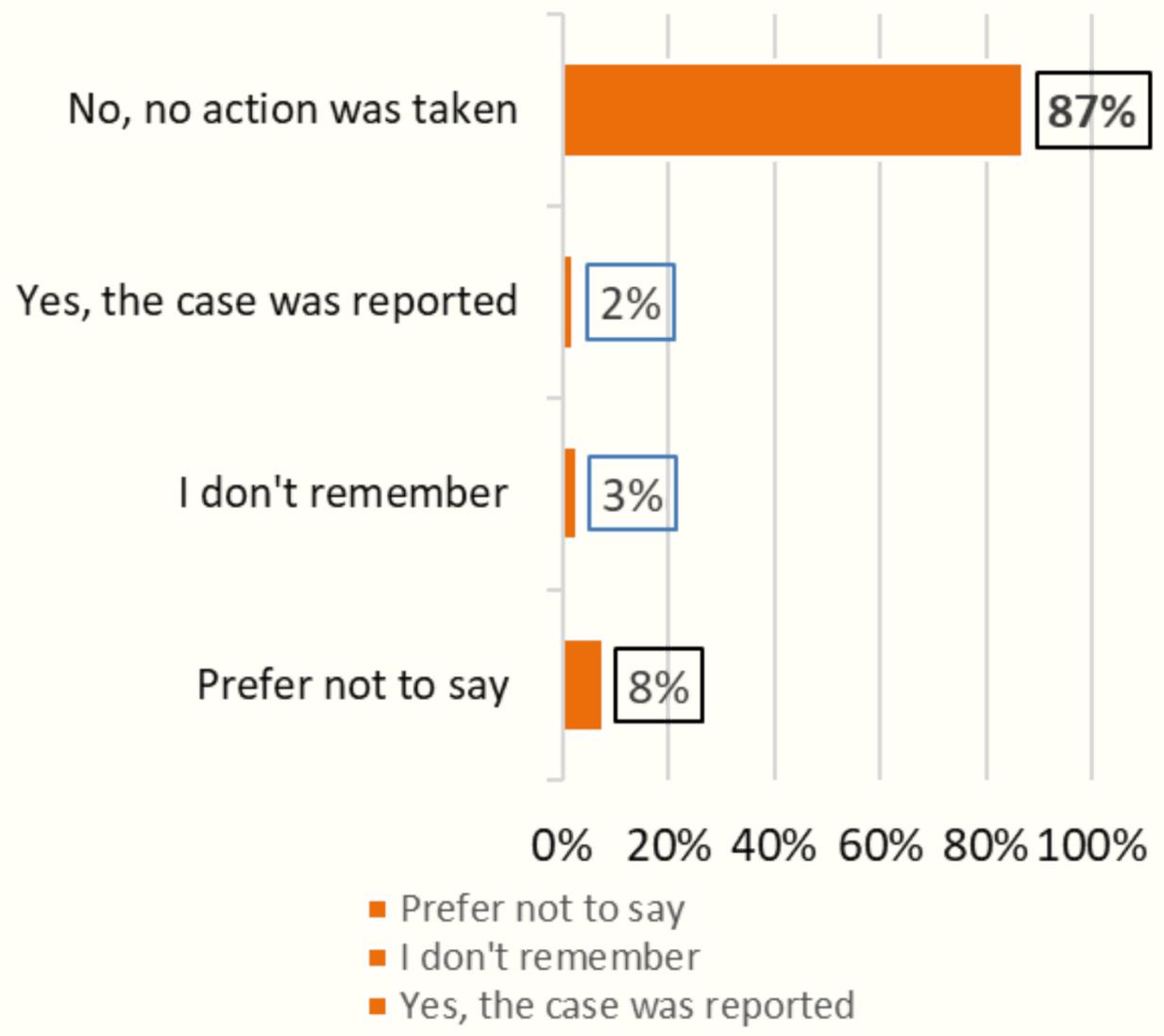
Overall base : 1433

Believability	Male	Female	Others	Pre-Puberty (under 10)	Puberty (10 – 13)	Post Puberty (14 – 18)	Prefer not to say
Yes, they believed me	45%	61%	48%	56%	51%	62%	26%
No, they did not believe me	12%	8%	18%	18%	21%	14%	33%
Maybe	18%	18%	20%	17%	17%	16%	16%
Prefer not to say	25%	13%	14%	10%	11%	8%	25%
Base	228	1155	50	609	517	321	183



~ 9 out of 10 incidents had no action taken across gender and age

Overall, Action Taken in %



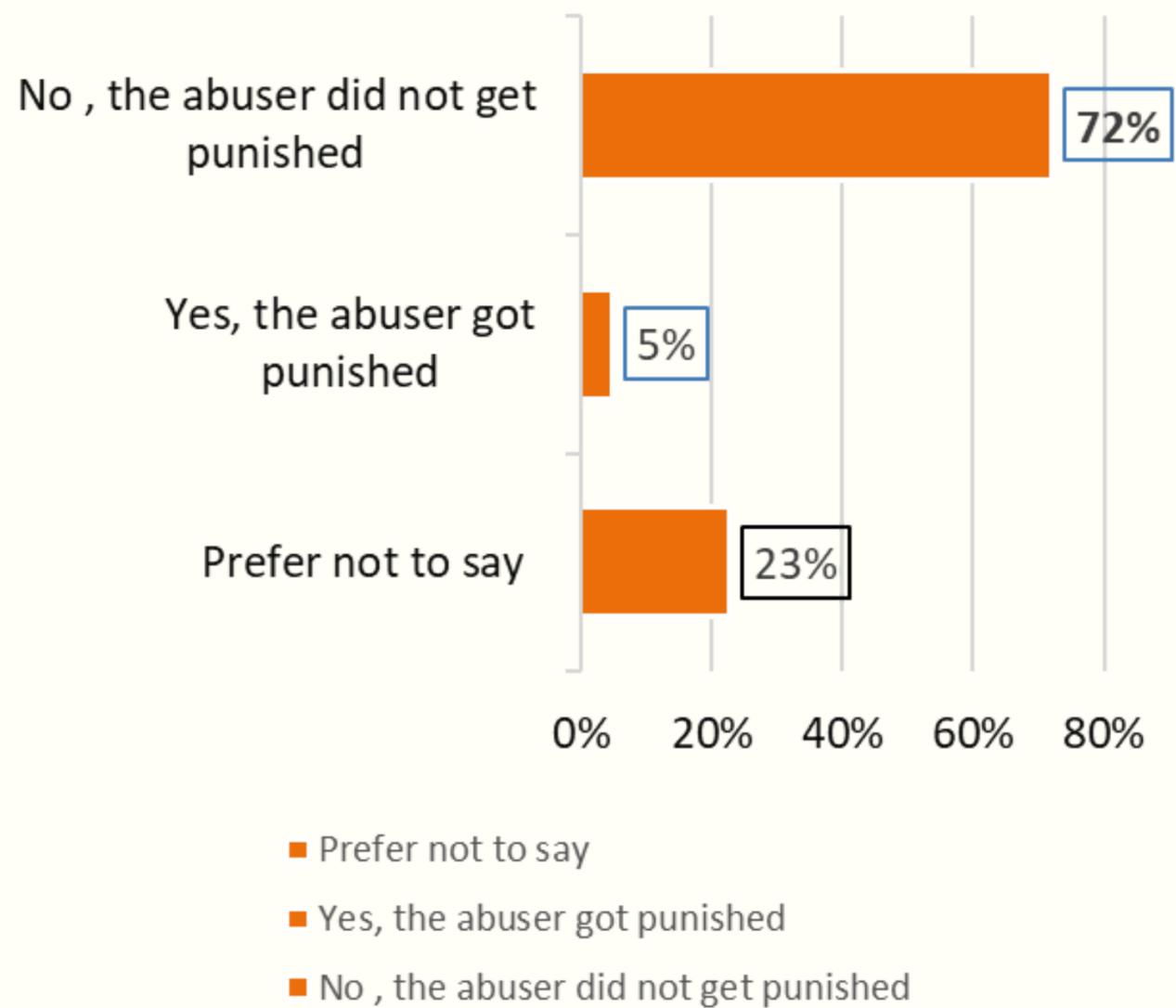
Overall base : 1433

Action Taken	Male	Female	Others	Pre-Puberty (under 10)	Puberty (10 – 13)	Post Puberty (14 – 18)	Prefer not to say
No, no action was taken	85%	88%	86%	91%	91%	93%	66%
Yes, the case was reported	1%	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%
I don't remember	4%	3%	0%	3%	2%	0%	7%
Prefer not to say	10%	7%	11%	4%	6%	4%	25%
Base	228	1155	50	609	517	321	183



7 out of 10 Child Sexual Abusers get away with it. Higher at 8 out of 10, when the CSA survivor is under 10 years

Overall, Abuser Punishment* in %



Abuser Punishment	Male	Female	Others	Pre-Puberty (under 10)	Puberty (10 – 13)	Post Puberty (14 – 18)	Prefer not to say
No, the abuser did not get punished	69%	72%	82%	82%	76%	73%	49%
Yes, the abuser got punished	6%	5%	3%	3%	5%	6%	4%
Prefer not to say	25%	23%	15%	15%	19%	21%	47%
Base	181	843	34	433	364	321	155

Overall base : 1058

*: Punishment here does not refer to legal recourse.



Survivor Stories

Abuse by known and trusted | Late Disclosure, Believed & Supported

It was a friend's father. He was local govt official. They lived in a farm in the village. Whenever we (a few girls) went to play with his son, he used to sit on a chair and watch us. I remember standing with the girls in a circle and he will ask one of us to come near him and he will hold that person on his lap. He once asked me (when I happened to be alone) to my lift skirt up, touched my private part still covered in my underwear. Made me feel very uncomfortable. He offered candies. I never went back near him.. his family moved in a year or two.

I never reported it to my parents... I spoke about this incident to my mom just a few years back when she narrated how his family infamously left the village because of his bad conduct. I told her this and she was shocked.

Abuse by known and trusted | Disclosure and Supported by Parent and Institution

"The bus conductor touched me inappropriately, and I was so small to understand this, and I was so upset and uncomfortable with it.

So one day I looked sad and my parents asked about it I told them and they came to my school to report that driver to the teacher and he got punished like as (pushed out of the job)

Heartening to see stories, where the survivors not only disclosed, but were believed and the abuser was called out and the abuse stopped. With increased awareness, this is bound to increase!

Abuse by known and trusted | Disclosure and Supported by one Parent

" The abuser was my maternal mother's son. I believed him considering he was my brother and would do nothing wrong to me. But when the incident happened, we were at my Nani's home and he touched my private parts, talked to me about inappropriate topics.

I started distancing myself from him but couldn't as my mother would scold me . It is when I went to my Dadi's home that I told my dad about all this as I have very friendly relations with him.

He instantly called my mom and nani and warned them that he would take legal actions against the boy."

Key Takeaways

6 out of 10 among those who disclosed were believed.
Less than half for males

No action was taken for
9 out of 10 incidents

7 out of 10 Child Sexual Abusers get away with it.
Higher at 8 out of 10, when the CSA survivor is under 10 years



Recommendations

The upcoming section provides recommendations that highlight the need for large community involvement to increase awareness and stop CSA from happening



Institutionalize Early & Structured Prevention

- Introduce age-appropriate CSA prevention curriculum in schools & among adult stakeholders

Strengthen Parent and Caregiving Preparedness

- Conduct parent sensitisation programs to handle disclosures calmly and without victim-blaming.



Create Safe & Responsive Disclosure Method

- Establish clear, visible, and confidential reporting channels within institutions.



Recommendations

Improve Legal Literacy & Accountability

Conduct POCSO awareness and compliance training for educators, police, and administrators.



Build Community Based Child Safety Eco - Systems

- Engage Anganwadi networks and local stakeholders in prevention efforts.



Commit to Ongoing Data & Impact Monitoring

Use baseline and endline assessments in institutions.





Thank you for your Time and Patience



— BSTI —

Bachpan Save The Innocence

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