

**ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND
DISCRIMINATION: THE STARK REALITY***
(A Policy and Action Research on Filipino Female
Children in Specially Difficult Circumstances)

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This study put together existing information on the plight of Filipino female children in specially difficult circumstances.

Its specific objectives are:

1. To describe and analyze the current situation of Filipino children, particularly those in specially difficult circumstances.
2. To determine their immediate and long-term needs, problems, and concerns; and
3. To assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs and services related to the promotion of children's welfare and rights.

RESEARCH DATA

Three sets of data formed the basis of this report. The first data set consisted of quantitative information from local govern-

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ment units, particularly the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Municipal Social Work and Development (MSWD) and other agencies dealing with girl-children. Data from a total of 173 agencies from all over the country were encoded, including their programs, target beneficiaries, budget, duration, and facilitating and hindering factors to the programs' success. This data set was provided by the Council for the Welfare of Children.

Different agencies and institutions dealing with children were approached for sex- and age-desegregated data sets. Out of the seven agencies the researchers went to, only one — the Department of Social Welfare and Development, — provided sex - and age-desegregated data for physically and sexually abused children for 1996, and partial data for streetchildren, also for 1996. This comprised the second data set of this research. The rest of the agencies approached provided either aggregate data sets, categorized neither for sex nor age groups, thus rendering them insufficient for pinpointing specific girl-child concerns.

The data provided by DSWD consisted of 2,187 female and 665 male abuse cases, including streetchildren, reported for 1996. Although the focus of this research is primarily on girlchildren, data for the males were likewise included in the analysis to provide some basis of comparison between the treatment and the needs of both sexes.

Table 1.1. Type of Data Analyzed

Phase 1:	
I.	173 protocols on agencies/institutions with child-related programs
II.	2,187 raw data from masterlist file on girl-child abuse cases from DSWD including 655 male child-abuse cases.
Phase 2:	
Qualitative focus group discussion data based on 8 nationwide sites with 82 girl children victim-survivors of child abuse and exploitation, and 80 caregivers.	

The third data set came from nine focus-group discussions. These were the candid accounts of 89 girl-children, 82 of whom had gone through some form of abuse while the remaining 7 were unwitting victims of out-of-wedlock unions, and 80 caregivers distributed across 8 nationwide sites. Table 1.2 provides the tabular distribution of the FGD participants across the different regions. For the FGD data, themes across the topics discussed were qualitatively culled from the verbatim transcriptions of the discussions. The themes were divided into those provided by the girl-children and those provided by the caregivers. For the abused girl-children, the focus group discussions centered around life in the Lingap centers, their evaluation of the program of the center, and their prospects for the future. For the children out of wedlock, the discussion tackled their awareness of their situation, family composition and dynamics and awareness of current attempts to make existing laws more beneficial to them.

Table 1.2. FGD Participants Across the Different Region

Lingap Center	Number of Female Children	Number of Caregivers
Naga	7	8
Sorsogon	10	9
Dagupan	10	10
Olongapo	20	18
Cebu	7	10
Davao	10	7
Manila	8	6
Batangas	10	12
Manila	7	—
TOTAL	89	80

MAJOR FINDINGS

A. The Situation of Filipino Girl Children in Specially Difficult Circumstances

- **Out of 2,852 cases of child abuse reported nation-wide in 1996, 76.7 percent were committed against girl children.**

Table 1.3: Reported Cases of Children in Specially Difficult Circumstances

FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
2,187 (76.7%)	665 (23.3%)	2,852 (100%)

- **Region 5 or the Bicol Region had the highest incidence of cases of child abuse with 899 cases reported or (31%) in 1996. 571 or (63%) of the cases were committed against girl children, of which majority were sexual abuses.**

*Table 1.4a
Regionwide Distribution of Children in Specially Difficult Circumstances*

REGION	Number	%
1	121	4.2
2	11	0.4
3	191	6.7
4	180	6.3
5	899	31.5
6	265	9.3
7	286	7.7
8	218	5.2
9	147	5.2
10	33	1.2
11	283	9.9
12	51	1.8
ARMM	15	0.5
NCR	98	3.4
CAR	22	0.8
Unknown Region	32	1.1
TOTAL	2,852	100.0

Table 1.4b: Regionwide Distribution of CSDC by Gender

REGION	GENDER				TOTAL
	Female		Male		
	N		N		
1	106	(4.8%)	15	(12.4%)	121 (100%)
2	6	(54.5%)	5	(45.4%)	11 (100%)
3	164	(85.9%)	27	(14.1%)	191 (100%)
4	165	(91.7%)	15	(8.3%)	180 (100%)
5	571	(63.5%)	328	(36.5%)	899 (100%)
6	229	(86.4%)	36	(13.6%)	265 (100%)
7	166	(58.0%)	120	(42.0%)	286 (100%)
8	180	(82.6%)	38	(17.4%)	218 (100%)
9	114	(77.6%)	33	(22.2%)	147 (100%)
10	32	(97.0%)	1	(3.0%)	33 (100%)
11	280	(98.9%)	3	(1.1%)	283 (100%)
12	36	(70.6%)	15	(29.4%)	51 (100%)
ARMM	9	(60.0%)	6	(40.0%)	15 (100%)
NCR	98	(100.0%)	0	0	98 (100%)
CAR	22	(100.0%)	0	0	22 (100%)
Unknown Region	9	(28.1%)	23	(71.9%)	32 (100%)
TOTAL	2187	(76.7%)	665	(23.3%)	2852 (100%)

- The most common form of abuse committed against girl children in all regions nationwide is sexual abuse (69.6%) followed by neglect and abandonment (9%) and child labor (8.3%). On the other hand, the most common form of abuse for boy children is neglect and/or abandonment (39.4%), followed by youth offenders (28.1%) and physical abuse (15.3%).

Table 1.5: Type of Abuse/Nature of Problem by Gender

TYPE OF ABUSE	GENDER				SUBTOTALS	
	Females		Males			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sexual Abuse/Incest/ Acts of Lasciviousness	1,523	69.6	35	5.3	1,558	54.6
Neglected/Abandoned	197	9.0	262	39.4	459	16.1
Child Labour/Exploited or Prostituted	182	8.3	57	8.6	239	8.4
Physical Abuse/Maltreatment	139	6.4	102	15.3	241	8.4
Others (custody problem, transnational, youth offenders)	74	3.4	187	28.1	261	9.2
Streetchildren	72	3.3	0		72	2.5
Not stated	0		22	3.3	22	0.8
TOTAL	2,187	100.0	665	100.0	2,852	100.0

- The average age of abused girl children is 12.09, while those of boy children is 9.95.

Table 1.6: Age Distribution by Gender

AGE	GENDER				TOTAL	
	Females		Males			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 year and below	30	1.4	51	8.1	81	(3.0%)
1.1 to 5 years old	173	8.3	92	14.6	265	(9.8%)
5.1 to 10 years old	423	20.3	175	27.8	598	(22.1%)
10.1 to 15 years old	992	47.7	216	34.3	1,208	(44.5%)
15.1 to 17 years old	463	22.2	96	15.2	559	(20.6%)
TOTAL	2,081	100.0	630	100.0	2,711	(100%)

Data not available: F-106; M-35

- Majority of the children were in their elementary grades when the abuse was committed or reported.

Table 1.7: Educational Attainment by Gender

Educational Level	GENDER				TOTAL	
	Female		Male			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Elementary Level/Graduate	837	61.4	134	60.9	1071	61.4
High School Level/Graduate	406	26.6	23	10.4	429	24.6
No. Formal Education	177	11.6	62	28.2	239	13.7
College Level	5	0.4	0		5	0.3
Out of School Youth	0		1	0.5	1	0.0
TOTAL	1,525	100.0	220	100.0	1,745	100.0

Data not available: F-662; M-445

- Almost all of the abused children came from very poor families. The fathers either engaged in agriculture/fishing and/ or were seasonally or irregularly employed as manual laborers. Almost half of the mothers were not gainfully employed. Among those parents who were gainfully employed, the fathers earned lower with an average income of P1,000.00.

Table 1.8:
Average Monthly Income of the Family by Gender

INCOME	GENDER				TOTAL	
	Female		Male		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
0-1,000	123	19.6	576	91.1	699	55.5
1,002-2,000	161	25.7	12	1.9	173	13.8
2,001-3,000	171	27.3	12	3.5	193	15.3
3,001-4,000	57	9.1	9	1.4	66	5.2
4,001-5,000	61	9.7	2	0.3	63	5.0
5,001-6,000	24	3.8	6	1.0	30	2.4
Above 6,000	30	4.8	5	0.8	35	2.8
TOTAL	627	100.0	632	100.0	1259	100.0

Data not available: F-1560; M-33

Table 1.9:
Father's Occupation by Gender

OCCUPATION	GENDER				TOTAL	
	Female		Male		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Agricultural/Marine Worker	436	34.9	55	32.7	491	34.6
Manual Laborer	374	29.9	60	35.7	434	30.6
None/Not gainfully employed	237	19.0	33	19.6	270	19.1
Military/Security Guard	54	4.3	2	1.2	56	4.0
Professional/Technical	42	3.4	8	4.8	50	3.5
Services/Production	27	2.2	1	0.6	28	2.0
Vendor/Salesperson	36	2.9	5	3.0	41	2.9
Others	43	3.4	4	2.4	47	3.3
TOTAL	1,249	100.0	168	100.0	1,417	100.0

Data not available: F-938; M-497

Table 2.0: Mother's Occupation by Gender

OCCUPATION	GENDER				TOTAL	
	Female		Male		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Agricultural/Marine Worker	103	8.5	9	5.5	112	8.2
Manual Laborer	345	28.5	46	27.9	391	28.4
None/Not gainfully employed	568	46.9	87	52.7	655	47.6
Military/Security Guard	54	4.4	2	1.2	56	4.1
Professional/Technical	42	3.5	8	4.9	50	3.6
Services/Production	27	2.2	1	0.6	28	2.0
Vendor/Salesperson	36	3.0	5	3.3	41	3.0
Others	36	3.0	7	4.2	43	3.1
TOTAL	1,211	100.0	165	100.0	1,376	100.0

Data not available: F-976; M-500

- 55.6% of the reported perpetrators were family members and/or known to the children, i.e. father, stepfather, grandfather, stepbrother.

Table 2.1: Children's Perpetrators by Gender

PERPETRATOR	GENDER				SUBTOTALS	
	Females		Males		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Family Member	1,010	54.1	138	69.3	1,148	55.6
Aquaintance	732	39.2	56	28.1	788	38.5
Identity Unknown	103	5.5	5	2.5	108	5.2
Not Applicable	21	1.1	0		21	1.0
TOTAL	1,866	100.0	199	100.0	2,065	100.0

Data not available: F-321; M-466

- While there was no uniform mode of recording, data shows that at least 32.8% of the abuses were not one-shot incidents, but rather repeated abuses that went on for a year or more.
- The primary reason cited in the reports for the abuses was parental neglect. Parents, especially the mothers who had to work or do something else were often not around when the abuse happened. Other reasons cited were proximity of the victim to the perpetrator both physical as well as psychological, and the perpetrator being under the influence of pornographic films, drugs and alcohol.

Table 2.2: Start/Duration of Abuse by Gender

START/DURATION	GENDER				SUBTOTALS	
	Female		Male		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Exact date given (no. of times not indicated)	514	32.7	19	15.5	533	31.4
Year given (no. of times not indicated)	404	25.7	24	19.5	428	25.3
Less than a month	19	1.2	1	0.8	20	1.2
Once	147	9.4	11	8.9	158	9.3
More than once	487	31.0	68	55.3	555	32.8
TOTAL	1,571	100.0	123	100.0	1,694	100.0

Data not available: F-616; M-542

Perpetrator, both physical as well as psychological, and the perpetrator being under the influence of pornographic films, drugs and alcohol.

Table 2.3: Causes of Abuse

PERCEIVED CAUSES	GENDER				SUBTOTALS	
	Female		Male		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Proximity	349	25.8	16	10.7	365	24.3
Parental Neglect	591	43.8	112	75.2	703	46.9
Abuser/Abused Influenced by	105	7.8	5	3.4	110	7.3
Porno films, drugs, alcohol						
Trusted Abuser	75	5.5	7	4.7	82	5.5
Circumstantial factors	190	14.1	9	6.0	199	13.3
Others	40	3.0	0		40	2.7
TOTAL	1,350	100.0	149	100.0	1,499	100.0

Data not available: F-837; M-516

- In terms of manifestations of above, behavioural and motor responses (e.g., responsiveness or the lack of it, restlessness, slowness of movement, lethargy, untidiness, boyish manners, crying, attention-seeking, addiction to drugs or cigarettes) had the highest incidence (38.3%). Males seemed to have more physiological responses than females who had more problems with volitional control manifestations and affective/attitudinal responses.

Table 2.4: Symptoms of Abuse by Gender*

SYMPTOMS	GENDER				SUBTOTALS	
	Female		Male			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Behavioural/Motor Response	895	36.8	57	38.3	952	36.8
Emotional Responses	753	30.9	2	1.3	755	29.2
Problems in Perception/Cognition	523	21.5	23	15.4	546	21.1
Interpersonal Outcomes	111	4.5	14	9.4	125	4.8
Physiological Responses	71	2.9	52	34.9	123	4.8
Volitional Control	28	1.2	0		28	1.1
Others	28	1.2	0		28	1.1
Affective/Attitudinal Disorders	25	1.0	1	0.7	26	1.0
TOTAL	2,434	100.0	149	100.0	2,583	100.0

* Multiple Responses

No data available: M-516

- Most of the cases were first brought to the attention of local service agencies such as the MSWD, DSWD (39.7%), the police (32.6%), and the barangay council (32.1%). Aside from these agencies, concerned private individuals, family members, and non-governmental organizations have also spearheaded the referral of cases to the appropriate authorities. Some of the children reported the abuse themselves.

Table 2.5: Cases Reported to by Gender*

AGENCY	GENDER				SUBTOTALS	
	Female		Male			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
DSWD/MSWD	1,201	38.4	152	54.6	1,353	39.7
Police	1,068	34.1	42	15.1	1,110	32.6
Barangay	725	23.2	62	22.3	787	23.1
NBI	95	3.0	20	7.2	115	3.4
DOH/Mun. Health Worker	30	1.0	1	0.4	31	0.9
Fiscal's Office/Court	10	0.3	0		10	0.3
DOLE	0		1	0.4	1	0.0
TOTAL	3,129	100.0	278	100.0	3,407	100.0

* Multiple Responses

No data available: F-792; M-498

- Services offered by the DSWD to the victims came in the form of counseling and moral support aside from the provi-

sion of basic necessities like food, medication, clothing and shelter for the victim survivors as well as their families. They were also given spiritual guidance and therapy as well as skills training in livelihood and other income-generating activities.

Table 2.6a: Services Provided to the Child*

TYPE/KIND OF SERVICE	GENDER				SUBTOTALS	
	Female		Male			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Psychological and Moral Support	1,390	44.9	345	55.4	1,735	46.7
Provision of Basic Necessities	876	28.3	90	14.5	966	26.0
Legal Assistance	257	8.3	20	3.2	277	7.4
Referral Services	233	7.5	113	18.1	346	9.3
Police Assistance	163	5.3	12	1.9	175	4.7
Placement of the Child	122	4.0	0		122	3.3
Others	53	1.7	43	6.9	96	2.6
TOTAL	3,094	100.0	623	100.0	3,717	100.0

* Multiple Responses

Data not available: F-302; M-172

Table 2.6b: Services Provided to the Family*

TYPE/KIND OF SERVICE	GENDER				SUBTOTALS	
	Female		Male			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Psychological and Moral Support	1,064	55.5	323	78.2	1,387	59.5
Provision of Basic Necessities	435	22.7	13	3.1	448	19.2
Legal Assistance	111	5.8	7	1.7	118	5.1
Referral Services	182	9.5	32	7.8	214	9.2
Placement of the Child	65	3.4	0	0	65	2.8
Others	46	2.4	38	9.2	84	3.6
Police Assistance	14	0.7	0	0	14	0.6
TOTAL	1,917	100.0	413	100.0	2,330	100.0

* Multiple Responses

No data available: F-403; M-245

- Most of the cases turned over to DSWD in 1996 were still on-going at the time of research. However 73.2% (n=1037) of the cases committed against girl children have already been filed in court. A little less than a half (44.2%) were still going-on/being tried.

Table 2.7: Status of Cases Filed in Court

STATUS	GENDER				SUBTOTALS	
	Females		Males		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
On-going/being tried	619	44.2	46	39.3	665	43.8
Accused in jail	136	9.7	0		136	9.0
Accused at large	106	7.6	2	1.7	108	7.1
Settled	61	4.4	3	2.6	64	4.2
Desistance	38	2.7	0		38	2.5
No development	38	2.7	0		38	2.5
Awaiting trial	15	1.1	7	6.0	22	1.4
Dismissed	10	0.7	0		10	0.6
Accused is minor	3	0.2	0		3	0.2
Not applicable	375	26.8	59	50.4	434	28.6
TOTAL	1,401	100.0	117	100.0	1,518	100.0

No data available: F-403; M-245

Focus group discussion with girl children in shelters revealed the following:

- Girl children suffer multiple forms of abuse, from neglect and abandonment to verbal to physical and sexual abuse. Some also become victims of recruiters who promise a better quality of life by working in the cities as domestic helpers.
- Girl children because they are more prone to sexual abuse, also suffer the brunt of early and unwanted pregnancies.
- Mothers who are themselves victims of domestic abuse tend to become abusive to their children as a form of transference.
- While most of the children feel that the shelters have done a lot for them in terms of giving them protection and a reprieve from their abusive homes, they also feel that they, too, would like to be with their family — not necessarily their parents, but more with their siblings, and those relatives or concerned people who have been kind to them.
- As shared by most of the girl children, the saddest part of being both a victim survivor of abuse and having to stay in the

shelter is where to go afterwards, when they have to leave the Center. Most of the children who have come from abusive homes no longer want to go back home. Most of them are young and come from very poor families.

Children out of wedlock

- The children who participated in the discussion said however that most of their friends and classmates do not know about their situation, thus they are not spared from discriminatory treatment. Some relatives who know about their situation tend to “belittle them”. The legal wives of the father also tend to treat them harshly.
- The children out of wedlock had fathers who left them with their mothers without financial/material support. They do not expect their fathers to be with them, they have been used to his absence. All they want is for their father to give them at least financial/material support. A mother has filed for support for her children, but she could not pursue the case because she has no money for litigation fees.

B. Assessment of Programs and Services

- Many agencies, both at the local and national levels, government and private, are involved in various welfare, capability and advocacy programs for children. However, certain areas of concern were noted: the continuing emphasis on the welfare approach to development and the short duration of many programs that may not augur well for their sustainability and viability.
- Very few agencies have programs specifically for girl children. Most likely, many are not yet aware of the need for gender sensitivity in program development and implementation.

- Facilitating factors include: (a) the presence of highly dedicated and motivated personnel; (b) active and sustained cooperation from the community and family of the victims; (c) a wide range of interventions and support services not only for the victims but their families as well; and (d) availability of funds, no matter how small or meager they are sometimes.
- Hindering factors include (a) insufficient funds to sustain the programs; (b) lack of facilities, trained personnel, and other resources to ensure efficient and effective service delivery; (c) resistance and lack of cooperation from the victim's family, collaborating agencies and sometimes, even the victims themselves; (d) inadequate professional preparation of some of the caregivers; and (e) inadequate interventions for long-term and sustained support for victims to ensure total and complete healing/recovery and/or rehabilitation.

C. Recommendations for Enhancing Quality of Service

The seriousness of the problems that affect many Filipino girl-children today requires no less than comprehensive, integrated and multidisciplinary forms of interventions. Both government and various private sectors must coordinate their efforts to ensure that positive results are achieved fast and soon. The research team offers several recommendations along the following areas: enhancing quality of service delivery, program review and development, policy reforms, research, and advocacy.

- *Improvement of facilities and other resource needs of the shelters.* The increasing number of children brought to the DSWD centers necessitates corresponding increase of funds for their efficient operation. A cramped or overcrowded shelter will not be able to carry out its most important task of ensuring the immediate and complete recovery/healing of abused and emo-

tionally scarred children. The shelters must have adequate space for children to carry out varied, wholesome physical and social activities. Tending a garden, engaging in sports, occasional group dances are beneficial to their emotional and intellectual growth.

- ***Continuous capability building initiatives for caregivers.*** It is extremely important for the caregivers, especially for the houseparents and administrative personnel to be given in-house education and training on the psychology of abuse, counseling theories and techniques, and other relevant topics inasmuch as they are already performing para-counseling tasks. Participation in gender sensitivity workshops and seminars on children's rights and needs may also help enhance their appreciation of the importance of being sensitive to the plight of the girl children. The social workers want greater specialization in specific areas of work. Their staff development program may be adjusted to accommodate customized courses or training programs. The social workers strongly feel the need to hone their skills to be able to respond better to difficult cases.
- ***Establishment of separate centers for boys and girls and for children with different problems.*** It is worthwhile to examine closely the recommendation of the caregivers to establish separate centers for boys and girls and for children with different problems. While this may be costly at the onset, such suggestion may go a long way in ensuring an environment where the children can overcome their problems faster. There seems to be an urgent call to have separate centers for street children and sexually abused girls.
- ***Sustained and continuous psychological and/or psychiatric services for victims of abuse.*** Girl-children who are victims of abuse need to be provided with psychological and/psychiatric ser-

vices like cognitive restructuring to come to grips with their experiences. Often the girls in the FGDs felt that their self-esteem has sunk so low because of what happened (“hindi na ako makakabangon” “I can no longer recuperate,”; “my future is destroyed” “nasira na ang aking kinabukasan”). The girls should be taught that their experience in no way diminishes their worth as a person and they should be given the hope and courage to face the community again. The caregivers noted the tendency of sexually abused girls to be sexually active afterwards. Long-term therapy is needed in these cases, thereby, necessitating closer coordination with institutions which can provide such service.

- *Improvement of case documentation.* The research team recommends the revision of protocols to include standardized responses for each question. Instead of leaving most items open-ended, it would be better for record-keeping purposes, data encoding and analysis later on, to provide the categories of responses per item. This way, the caregivers will not be left to their own interpretations of the questions. Thus, the data will lead to better generalizations and hypotheses-testing. Also, overlaps in data encoding will be avoided to shorten the length of the questionnaires or protocols. Most importantly, the data should reflect sex and age of children.

D. Recommendations for Program Review and Development

- *Existing programs must be reviewed to assess their readiness and capability to integrate the development agenda for the girl-child, as provided for in the Beijing Platform for Action and other international conventions.* This initially requires the sex and age disaggregation of data and identification of critical girl-child issues in all spheres or areas of life.

- *While existing programs are able to respond to many welfare needs of many poor, abused and neglected children, it is important that they are reconceptualized to include empowerment approaches.* This requires the integration of such strategies as consciousness raising, participatory program planning and implementation, and policy reforms.
- *Additional programs and new strategies for solving old programs are also necessary.* For example, there is a need to strengthen support for the family of the victims and perhaps provide some kind of rehabilitation program for certain types of abusers.
- *Policy and legal reforms.* There are a number of policy and legal reforms that have already been recommended to address the pernicious problem of violence against women (See UCWS-UP and UNICEF 1997). Some of the recommendations are: (a) adoption of an omnibus family violence legislation; (b) establishment in every community of a family violence coordinating council; (c) mandatory incident-based reporting of family violence cases; (d) availability of protection orders, of sufficient duration, e.g. up to three years, for child victims as well as adults; and (e) removal of requirements which impede prosecution of family violence when victim is unable, unavailable or unwilling to testify. For neglected and abandoned children, a legal reform proposal calls for the imposition of sanctions against neglectful parents. The research team recommends the convening of a multisectoral group to study and propose measures that will help strengthen the status of girl children before the law and judicial system.

E. Recommendations for Research and Advocacy Initiatives

- *Sex and Age Desegregation of Data.* This study shows that many agencies have yet to generate data that is sex and age desegre-

gated. The Interagency Committee on the Girl Child can take the lead in advocating for more girl-friendly and gender-sensitive data base. This will allow the speedy monitoring of program outcomes and emergent issues and concerns.

- Strengthen advocacy for Girl Child Rights and Welfare at the Regional/Local Level.