

AN ANALYSIS OF CHILD ABUSE: ITS TYPES AND CONSEQUENCES

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Abstract:

Child abuse is a global problem that is deeply rooted in cultural, economic and social practices. It is a state of emotional, physical, economic and sexual maltreatment meted out to a person below the age of eighteen and is a globally prevalent phenomenon. However, in India, as in many other countries, there has been no understanding of the extent, magnitude and trends of the problem. The growing complexities of life and the dramatic changes brought about by socio-economic transitions in India have played a major role in increasing the vulnerability of children to various and newer forms of abuse. Child abuse has serious physical and psycho-social consequences which adversely affect the health and overall well-being of a child.

Key words: *abuse, child, global, health, psycho-social, vulnerability*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Child abuse, physical, sexual, or emotional maltreatment or neglect of children by parents, guardians, or others responsible for a child's welfare. Physical abuse is characterized by physical injury, usually inflicted as a result of a beating or inappropriately harsh discipline. Sexual abuse includes molestation, incest, rape, prostitution, or use of a child for pornographic purposes. Neglect can be physical in nature (abandonment, failure to seek needed health care), educational (failure to see that a child is attending school), or emotional (abuse of a spouse or another child in the child's presence, allowing a child to witness adult substance abuse). Inappropriate punishment, verbal abuse, and scapegoating are also forms of emotional or psychological child abuse. Some authorities consider parental actions abusive if they have negative future consequences, e.g., exposure of a child to violence or harmful substances, extending in some views to the passive inhalation of cigarette smoke.

In practice, there are borderline areas where what constitutes child abuse is not clear. For example, the

U.S. Supreme Court has ruled (1944) that parents do not have an absolute right to deny life-saving medical treatment to their children, but devout members of the Church of Christ, Scientist, and other churches believe in the healing power of prayer and do not always seek medical help. Most

U.S. states, however, permit parents to use religious beliefs as a defense against prosecution for the withholding of medical treatment from their sick children, even in cases where the lack of treatment results in a child's death.

India is home to almost 19 percent of the world's children. More than one third of the country's population, around 440 million, is below 18 years. According to one assumption 40 percent of these children are in need of care and protection, which indicates the extent of the problem. In a country like India with its multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious population, the problems of socially marginalized and economically backward groups are immense. Within such groups the most vulnerable section is always the children.

1. I: Basic Definitions of Child Abuse:

Child abuse is broadly defined in many states as any type of cruelty inflicted upon a child, including mental abuse, physical harm, neglect, and sexual abuse or exploitation. Federal legislation lays the groundwork for states by identifying a minimum set of acts or behaviors that define child abuse and neglect. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), (42 U.S.C.A. §5106g), as amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003 defines child abuse and neglect as, at minimum:

“Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm” (CAPTA 2010).

“Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power”. (*World Health Organization*)

“Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm” (*The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act – CAPTA*)

“Child abuse is a very complex and dangerous set of problems that include child neglect and the physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of children.” (MedicineNet.com)

“Child abuse is the physical and/or psychological/emotional mistreatment of children”. (Wikipedia)

“Institutional Abuse or Neglect is that which occurs in any facility for children, including, but not limited to, group homes, residential or public or private schools, hospitals, detention and treatment facilities, family foster care homes, group day care centers and family day care homes.” (Office of Health and Human Services, US)

2. OBJECTIVES:

The main objectives of this paper spelt out as like bellow:

1. To assess the level of knowledge of teenagers regarding child abuse.
2. To develop the attitude of teenagers regarding consumption of abuse.
3. To assess the effectiveness regarding child abuse.

3. METHODOLOGY:

A methodology is a set of ideas or guidelines about how to proceed in gathering and validating knowledge of a subject matter. It also provides a guide for carrying out investigation relating the topic. The research of this paper is purely an analytical, basically based on collecting from Secondary Sources of data like; different books, research journals, periodicals, newspapers etc.

4. TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE:

Child abuse happens in many different ways, but the result is the same- serious physical or emotional harm. Physical or sexual abuse may be the most striking types of abuse, since they often unfortunately leave physical evidence behind. However, emotional abuse and neglect are serious types of child abuse that are often more subtle and difficult to spot. Child neglect is the most common type of child abuse.

4. I: Physical Abuse:

Physical Abuse includes any non-accidental physical injury caused by the child’s parent, caretaker, or other person who has responsibility for the child. It may include injuries sustained from beating, kicking, shaking, punching, choking, throwing, burning, stabbing, or otherwise harming a child. The injury is always considered abuse. Although the injury may not be an accident per se, it is also not necessarily intended by the child’s caretaker. Physical abuse may result from extreme discipline, from punishment inappropriate to the child’s age or condition, or from a parent’s recurrent lapses in self-control brought on by immaturity, stress, or alcohol or illicit drug use. It is important to note that non-accidental injury inflicted by someone other than a parent, guardian, relative, or other caregiver, is considered a criminal act and is addressed by law enforcement and not child protective services. There

may be single or repeated incidents. Physical abuse includes but is not limited to the following:

- Punishing a child excessively
- Smacking, punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, burning, shoving, choking, throwing, stabbing, grabbing
- Hitting a child (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object)
- Leaving a child in an uncomfortable and/or undignified posture for an extended period of time or in a poor environment
- Forcing a child to work in poor working conditions, or in work that is inappropriate for a child's age, over a long period of time
- Gang violence
- Harmful initiation ceremonies
- Bullying
- Threatening to harm someone

Signs of Physical Child abuse:

✧ **Physical Signs:** Sometimes physical abuse has clear warning signs, such as unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts. While all children will take a tumble now and then, look for age-inappropriate injuries, injuries that appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt, or a pattern of severe injuries.

✧ **Behavioral Signs:** Other times, signs of physical abuse may be more subtle. The child may be fearful, shy away from touch or appear to be afraid to go home. A child's clothing may be inappropriate for the weather, such as heavy, long sleeved pants and shirts on hot days.

✧ **Caregiver Signs.** Physically abusive caregivers may display anger management issues and excessive need for control. Their explanation of the injury might not ring true, or may be different from an older child's description of the injury.

4. II: Emotional Abuse:

Emotional Abuse is a pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. Emotional abuse is often difficult to prove and, therefore, Child Protection System (CPS) may not be able to intervene without evidence of harm to the child. Emotional abuse is almost always present when other

forms are identified. Physical abuse includes but is not limited to the following:

- Isolating or excluding a child
- Stigmatizing a child
- Withholding love, support, or guidance
- Treating a child who is a victim as a suspect (repeated questioning and investigation)
- Failing to provide a supportive environment
- Failing to give a child an appropriate sense of self (for example, criticizing weight)
- Main caregiver(s) does not respond to a child's emotional needs
- Treating or looking at a child with disdain, disrespect, denigration
- Patterns of belittling, denigrating, blaming, scaring, discriminating or ridiculing
- Blackmailing a child
- Institutionalizing a child without exploring other options
- Cyber bullying and sexual Solicitation
- Exploiting a child

Signs of Emotional Child abuse:

✧ **Behavioral Signs.** Since emotional child abuse does not leave concrete marks, the effects may be harder to detect. Is the child excessively shy, fearful or afraid of doing something wrong? Behavioral extremes may also be a clue. A child may be constantly trying to parent other children for example, or on the opposite side exhibit antisocial behavior such as uncontrolled aggression.

Look for inappropriate age behaviors as well, such as an older child exhibiting behaviors more commonly found in younger children.

✧ **Caregiver Signs.** A caregiver may seem strangely unconcerned with a child's welfare or performance. Keep in mind that there might not be immediate caregiver signs. Tragically, many emotionally abusive caregivers can present a kind outside face to the world, making the abuse of the child all the more confusing and scary.

4. III: Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse is defined as inappropriate adolescent or adult sexual behavior with a child. It includes fondling a

child's genitals, making the child fondle an adult's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, sexual exploitation, or exposure to pornography. Sexual abuse may be committed by a person under age 18 when that person is either significantly older than the victim or is in a position of power or control over the child. It may take place within the family, by a parent's boyfriend or girlfriend, or at the hands of adult caretak-

ers outside the family-*for example*, a family friend or babysitter. Contrary to the myth that most abuse is committed by strangers, the adults who sexually abuse children most often know and have a relationship with the child. It is an involvement of a child in a sexual activity that he/she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or is not developmentally prepared for, such as:

Contact	Non-contact
➤ Kissing or holding in a sexual manner ➤ Touching and fondling genital areas ➤ Forcing a child to touch another person's genital areas ➤ Forcing a child to perform oral sex ➤ Vaginal or anal intercourse and other sexual activity ➤ Biting a child's genital area ➤ Incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure ➤ Sex with animals ➤ Sexual exploitation, where sexual abuse of a child involves some kind of commercial transaction ➤ Child sex tourism, where abusers travel to a place other than their home and there have sex with a child	➤ Obscene calls or obscene remarks on a computer or a phone or in written notes ➤ Virtual sex ➤ Online sexual solicitation and grooming ➤ Voyeurism ➤ Exhibitionism ➤ Exposed to pornography or used to make pornography ➤ Sexually intrusive questions or comments ➤ Forced to self-masturbate or watch others masturbate ➤ Sexual exploitation and child sex tourism also may be abusive without physical contact.

Signs of Sexual abuse might include:

- ❖ **Behavioral Signs.** A child might appear to avoid another person, or display unusual behavior- either being very aggressive or very passive. Older children might resort to destructive behaviors to take away the pain, such as alcohol or drug abuse, self- mutilation, or suicide attempts.
- ❖ **Physical Signs.** A child may have trouble sitting or standing, or have stained, bloody or torn underclothes. Swelling bruises or bleeding in the genital area is a red flag. An STD or pregnancy,

especially under the age of 14, is a strong cause of concern.

- ❖ **Caregiver Signs.** The caregiver may seem to be unusually controlling and protective of the child, limiting contact with other children and adults. Again, as with other types of abuse, sometimes the caregiver does not give outward signs of concern. This does not mean the child is lying or exaggerating.
- ❖ **The Online risk.** Warning signs of online sexual child abuse are these:

- ✧ Your child spends large amounts of time online, especially at night, and may turn the computer monitor off or quickly change the screen on the monitor when you come into the room.
- ✧ You find pornography on your child's computer.
- ✧ Your child receives phone calls or mail from people you don't know, or makes calls to numbers that you don't recognize.
- ✧ Your child becomes withdrawn from the family.

4. IV: Neglect:

Neglect involves the caregiver's inattention to the child's basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, and education. Neglectful families are often multi-problem families, although families with numerous problems are not always neglectful. Unlike physical abuse, which tends to be episodic, neglect tends to be chronic, and neglected children may grow up believing that this is a normal way of life and will not seek assistance or confide this information to anyone. Neglect also harms children although it is more about being inactive and not doing something than the previous forms of abuse, which are more active. Neglect may include:

- Inattention/omission of care
- Failing to supervise and protect from harm
- Leaving a child at home for a long period without supervision
- Sending a child away without ensuring they will be safe and happy at the place to which they are sent.
- Failing to ensure suitable nutrition for a child
- Failing to ensure a child attends school or to follow up or report repeated bruising or burns.
- Giving in to a child's every wish because it is an easy option—despite knowing this choice is not in the best interest of the child's development
- Failing to take time to reasonably monitor children's activities and thus potentially exposing them to risks
- Failing to ensure a safe environment.

Signs of Neglect might include is:

- ✧ **Physical Signs.** A child may consistently be

dressed inappropriately for the weather, or have ill-fitting, dirty clothes and shoes. They might appear to have consistently bad hygiene, like appearing very dirty, matted and unwashed hair, or noticeable body odor. Another warning sign is untreated illnesses and physical injuries.

- ✧ **Behavioral Signs.** Does the child seem to be unsupervised? Schoolchildren may be frequently late or tardy. The child might show troublesome, disruptive behavior or be withdrawn and passive.

- ✧ **Caregiver Signs.** Does the caregiver have problems with drugs or alcohol? While most of us have a little clutter in the home, is the caregiver's home filthy and unsanitary? Is there adequate food in the house? A caregiver might also show reckless disregard for the child's safety, letting older children play unsupervised or leaving a baby unattended. A caregiver might refuse or delay necessary health care for the child.

Although people usually think of child abuse as someone physically harming a child, it is important to keep in mind that about 60 percent of child abuse cases actually involve neglect. It is sometimes easier to see the signs of physical abuse when a child is hit, kicked, or burned, but looking for signs of neglect is important too, as the consequences can be just as tragic.

4. V: Social (Poverty):

Social Abuse is not strictly a form of abuse but it is included here to help differentiate between abuse and neglect and social circumstances, all of which can result in harm to a child. Social abuse may include:

- Homeless/stateless
- Displaced by war/natural disaster
- Forced into being a child soldier
- Political uncertainty
- Lack of economic options
- No or limited access to basic social services
- Being denied basic rights through the law.
- Political campaigns that encourage round-ups of children living on the street
- Practices such as early marriage, male and female genital mutilation, prenatal sex selection and female infanticide

- Attitudes that promote ideas of children as the property of adults and beliefs that girls are property and inferior to boys
- The view of children as half an adult with half of adult rights
- High prevalence of violence in mainstream mass media

5. CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD ABUSE:

There is no broadly accepted framework on the effects of child sexual abuse. However, Finkelhor and Browne have developed a list of areas that are affected by the sexual interaction of adults with children. It is a fairly comprehensive framework and seems to be gaining wide acceptance in the professional community. All the effects are listed in terms of the molested child, but they are feelings, misconceptions, and thought patterns the molested child may carry into adulthood.

- Traumatic Sexualization - the child's sexuality is distorted by age-inappropriate sexualization.
- The perpetrator rewards inappropriate sexual behavior, by trading gifts, affection, privileges, or attention for sex. He is overly attendant to or distorts the meaning and importance of bodily parts. He also conveys misconceptions and confusions about sexual behavior and accepted morality. The abusive behavior may associate in the child fearful memories and events with sex.
- The child may develop distorted views of sexual norms, become confused over sexual identity, become sexual aggressive, or tend to extremes, with either a heightened sensitivity or attraction to sexual behavior or highly negative feelings to all sexual activity.
- Betrayal-the child's expectations of how or what others will provide for care and protection can be severely warped.
- Grief reactions, depression, hostility and anger are all common expressions towards the sense of betrayal.
- The child may display an impaired ability to judge the trustworthiness of others.
- All or nothing extremes in behavior or thinking may

be expressed. The child may be delinquent, aggressive, and show discomfort in close relations, or he or she may become overly attached and be indiscriminate in relations with all adults.

- Powerlessness - continued invasion gives rise to feelings of vulnerability, and may damage self-efficacy if the child cannot convince others of the abuse or sees no one stopping the abuse.
- The child may become fearful and anxious, suffer nightmares, become depressed, run away, or show truancy. Eating and sleeping disorders may occur.
- Stigmatization - the child's sense of being is denigrated and the child is isolated from a larger society.
- The child's sense of self-esteem is lowered.
- The child has a feeling of being different from everyone around him or her.
- The child will isolate himself or her from peers, may participate in criminal or delinquent behavior, may abuse drugs and alcohol, may practice self-mutilation and may become suicidal.
- Boys suffer confusion over sexual identity and fear of homosexuality. They display increased aggressive behavior after the abuse.

6. SIMPLE MEASURES FOR PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE:

- ➔ Understand that 'child abuse' means any kind of harm done to a child and does not just mean sexual abuse.
- ➔ Teach and explain the children that there is a difference between good and bad touches.
- ➔ Explain that no one has the right to hurt any child or touch him or her in private areas or touch in any way that makes him or her feel uncomfortable.
- ➔ Go away from the person or situation as quickly as possible.
- ➔ Use their danger voice to yell. A danger voice is a very loud, low-pitched yell that gets attention immediately. It is not a high-pitched screech. It should never be used in any other situation.
- ➔ Tell a parent, teacher or caregiver immediately about what happened.

- ➔ Help the children to understand that they need to be wary not just of the traditional idea of 'strangers' but of anyone who makes them feel uncomfortable, even if it is someone they know - like the next-door neighbor.
- ➔ Talk to the children about situations they must avoid, like taking any food or medicine from a person who is not a parent, teacher, caregiver or close friend. Help them understand how to identify a police officer. Take them to the local police station and let them see what a uniform looks like and what a badge looks like.
- ➔ Show the children how to make a collect call to home and how to call Child Protection Services.
- ➔ Learn what the signs of abuse are so that anyone will notice if something is going on with the child. Look for bruises, burns, bloody or missing underwear, and difficulty with bowel movement or urination, problems with walking or sitting, behavior problems, inappropriate sexual behavior, sore genitals or anything that just makes to feel there is something amiss.
- ➔ Get help from the police, social services department or through a child abuse hotline if suspect there is a problem.
- ➔ Life skills training for children and young adults to equip children, adolescents, and young adults with interpersonal skills and knowledge that are valuable in adulthood, especially in the parenting role; and second, to provide children with skills to help them protect themselves from abuse.
- ➔ Effective 'Child Protection Policy' be placed in an organizational context to ensure a well- trained workforce, to develop responses using a range of disciplines, to provide alternative care placements for children, to ensure access to health resources, to provide resource for families and to report the suspected abuse at the earliest in an appropriate manner.
- ➔ Promote Child Abuse preventive programmes in schools, child-care-centers and communities.

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