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Child Abuse & its Management: Child Abuse Casts a Shadow that Lasts a Lifetime – Be the Voice for Those Who Have None



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ABSTRACT

Childhood is a precious time for children to grow with love and care, to play, to learn, be safe and encouraged by their family and extended community. They should live free from fear, nurture in safe hands and protected from abuse and exploitation. Abuse is a corrupt practice, which includes physical or verbal maltreatment, injury, assault, violation, rape, crimes, or any other types of aggression. Child abuse can be in the form of physical abuse, when one deliberately hurt to a child, or give severe physical punishment, which is inappropriate to the child's age. It can be sexual abuse resulting from inappropriate exposure to sexual acts or emotional abuse, which involves constant belittling and humiliating a child, making negative comparisons with others, threatening or ignoring the child as punishment, having limited physical contact with him or her like no hugs, kisses, or any other signs of affection. All these factors can interfere in child's social and psychological development by leaving lifelong emotional scars within him or her. Child abuse can be in the form of neglect when a capable caregiver fails to provide basic requirements like adequate food, clothing, hygiene, shelter, supervision, medical care and emotional support to the child. We should raise voice against that and build a safe and healthy society for our future citizen.

INTRODUCTION

“Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man.”

— Rabindranath Tagore

Childhood is a very precise period for a child to have fun, be cheerful, to enjoy an elegant worry-free life, to be beloved, getting care, and to be safe. A blissful, healthy and secure childhood will help a child to grow adequately and be a good citizen in future.

Well said, it is easier to build up a child rather than to repair an adult and children learn from what they see and what they experience. Therefore, we need to set an example of truth and action. Now a day's child abuse is a burning problem in our society. It causes by any intentional act or failure in taking care of a child by parents or any primary caregiver result in severe harm or abuse may be physical, emotional or sexual, the source of exploitation or even death.

“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”

---WHO

“I cannot with any honesty write about feminism, call myself a feminist, or talk about the need to lift the veil of silence and the conspiracy of silence around sexual violence and abuse, if I'm not ready to break the silence in my own life”.

--- Barkha Dutt (Indian journalist)

She spoke out as she was a survivor of sexual abuse and wish to write her experience in her latest book, *This Unquiet Land*, as she felt that she became quite long enough.

FACTS OF CHILD ABUSE:

- India is the home to almost 19% of the children of the world. 40% Indian children are in danger of threats like trafficking, being homeless, forced labor, crime and drug abuse. Young age group, children of 5-12 years, is at high risk of being abused and exploited.

Ministry of women and child development. Child abuse in India.2007

- Co-workers along with employers committed 25% rape cases among children in 2015.

-The fact has been extracted from the data of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in 2015

The number of registered cases of child abuse had increased from 8,904 in 2014 to 14,913 in the year 2015, under the (POCSO) Protection of Children against Sexual Offences Act.

POCSO: In state wise cases of child abuse, Uttar Pradesh led the highest number (3,078) which was followed by Madhya Pradesh (1,687 cases), Tamil Nadu (1,544 cases), Karnataka (1,480 cases) and Gujarat (1,416 cases) in the year 2015.

As per recent statistical data, 53% children are victims of abuse, both boys, and girls; 2/3 children are physically abused; 8 cases of abuse are reported every day and 88% perpetrators are parents of the reported physical abuse cases.

- A recent study reported that in Mumbai, 91% of cases caught up parents as the perpetrator of long-term sex abuse
- In a police-led inquiry in Bengaluru in the year 2014, 10% of schoolchildren were badly treated by their teachers.

“We should raise our voice and Community can play an integral role in responding to suspected child abuse and neglect”

People of India should know about child rights. Parents, teacher, and children should be aware regarding child rights and capable to protect children.

Child Rights are minimum entitlements and freedoms that should be afforded to all persons below the age of 18 years regardless of race, color, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability and therefore apply to all people everywhere. --

UNCRC

United Nations convention on child rights is Right to survive, Right to be protected, Right to be developed and Right to participate. Those are basic needs of a child to raise themselves

and be a good civilian for our society in future. They have the rights to get a protective secure healthy environment to be grown up with a blissful cherish childhood experience.

“Child abuse and neglect offend the basic values of life. We have the responsibility to provide a safe setting for at-risk children and facilitate permanent placement for children who cannot return home.”

--- Matt Blunt

Risk factors of child abuse: A bigger understanding related to threat factors of child abuse can facilitate professionals working with young children along with families to recognize high-risk situations or abuse so that they can be able to intervene properly. Like male child gets more physical abuse and in the case of the girl child, they are more prone to sexual abuse, infanticide, forced prostitution, neglect in their nutrition and education.

Findings from a number of international studies were evident for rates of sexual abuse among girls (1.5–3) times advanced than boy child. Globally, above 130 million children within age group of (6 to 11) years are not taking education in school or any educational establishment, 60% of them are girls. ----WHO

Vulnerable children: Orphaned, street children, lower caste children, children of sex workers, children with caretakers are at risk to be abused for getting less or no attention from family.

Parental factors: Personal history of sexual and physical abuse, single parent, teenage parents, emotional immaturity, poor coping skills, substance abuse, domestic violence, low self-esteem, lack of parenting skills, mental illness in parents, unwanted pregnancy is most definite reasons for child abuse from parental side as that child do not have any protective environment during their upbringing.

Association between Parental Addiction and Types of Child Abuse in High-School Students of Kerman, Iran

The rate of incidence of child abuse found strongly associated with parental addiction to a substance, alcohol along with its related stress. It reflects the correlation between addicted parents and in the secured child being abused may be by their parents or by others. Addicted parents can't be good quality parents to nurture their child with excellent parenting skills.

Shahrbabaki AE, Shahrbabaki ME, Kalantari M. Addict Health. 2013

The impact of exposure to domestic violence on children and young people: A review of the literature

This review found that children living with domestic violence were at higher risk of suffering from physical, sexual and emotional abuse and could grow cognitive, emotional or behavioral problem. Because that grown-up children don't have any healthy fear-free environment to cherish intellectually, fruitfully but they have to see bitter happening in their home.

Holt S, Buckley H, Whelan S. Child Abuse & Neglect.2008

Family factors: Multiple children, overcrowding, poverty, loss of income or job, health problem in the family are the major family issue which causes barriers in the careful rearing of children.

Societal factors: Unemployment, child labor, poverty are the factors which force parents to forget that children must have a cherish childhood with the rights of getting food, shelter, protection, care, and education.

A study to assess the prevalence and pattern of child abuse and neglect among children in a low socio-economic community at Chandigarh.

Results showed that prevalence of abuse was highest in the lower socio-economic status among the alcoholic fathers and illiterate mothers.

Bhardwaj UD.NINE.1998

Types of child abuse:

There is a number of factors which cause child abuse but only caring parents can save their child from that harm. That's why it is well said by Orlando Aloysius Battista: ***“The best inheritance a parent can give his children is a few minutes of his time each day.”*** There various types of child abuse like-

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse

- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Physical abuse: It is a non-accidental injury on body surface due to any physical harm like kicking, biting, shaking, punching, choking, hitting, burning, throwing, stabbing, beating that is inflicted by a primary caregiver like parents, grandparents, family members or any other person.

Facts:

1. 54.68% out of 69% physically abused children were boys
2. Children, physically abused by their parents were 88.6%
3. A reported case of corporal punishment faced by school going children were 65%

Ministry of women and child development. Child abuse in India.2007

Signs of physical abuse: It includes bruises, trauma, cigarette burn, bites, shaken baby syndrome, unexplained absence from school, terrified by the parents or other family members, protests or cries at the time of going home, abuses animals or pets, sudden illness etc.

Emotional abuse: Emotional abuse includes the malfunction or failure of a caregiver to provide a proper, caring, fear-free atmosphere to a child as well as doing some acts with unfavorable outcome cause poor emotional health and poor cognitive development within a child.

Facts: 83% of cases were reported where parents were the abusers

Ministry of women and child development. Child abuse in India.2007

Signs of emotional abuse: It includes threats and intimidation, restricted child's movements, bed wetting or frequent diarrhea, frequent psychosomatic complaints, unsuitably violent, antisocial or destructive to anyone, suffering from a disturbance in sleep, difficulty in speech, restricted activities or play, overly compliant or demanding behavior etc.

Sexual abuse: The involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend and is unable to give informed consent or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violate the laws or social taboos of society
-WHO

Facts:

- Children faced forms of sexual abuse (53.22%).
- The highest percentage of sexual abuse was reported in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, and Assam,
- 50% of abusers were known personnel to the child or hold a trusting position of responsibility along with liability.

Ministry of women and child development. Child abuse in India.2007

Findings of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in 2015:

- 8,800 rape cases were registered throughout country, 2015
- Neighbors were biggest abusers in such cases — 3,149 (35.8%)
- In over 10% of cases, children were subjected to be raped by their own family unit or relatives.
- 94.8% of cases, children were subjected to be raped by someone known to them.

Signs of sexual abuse: Swelling or bruising of the genital area, difficulty in walking, refusal to participate in physical activities, becomes pregnant, suffers from the venereal disease, interested in sex with other children, unusually seductive actions and fear of getting in touch.

Neglect: Neglect is disappointment, ignorance or poor attention from a parent, family members or caregiver in providing basic needs and cares to a child.

Signs of neglect in children: Absence from school, steals or begs for food or money, looks dirty, has a bad odor from the body, lacks sufficient clothing as per weather, various drug or alcohol abuses.

Other forms of child abuse:

- Abandonment
- Substance abuse
- Child trafficking
- Bullying and cyberbullying

Post traumatic effects of child abuse:

1. Physical effects of child abuse: Impaired development in the brain, abusive trauma on the head or another body part, the poor physical condition of health can be the worst outcome of physical abuse.

Does Childhood Misfortune Increase Cancer Risk in Adulthood?

Frequent child abuse by a parent can raise the risk of cancer in later life, the significant consequences were found; especially when daughters were abused by their mothers and sons were abused by their fathers.

Morton PM, Schafer MH, Ferraro KF. J Aging Health.2012

2. Psychological effects of child abuse: Poor mental and emotional health, social difficulties, cognitive difficulties, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, emotional instability, eating disorders, suicide attempts, panic disorder, hypersexuality are the psychological effects of child abuse.

3. Social difficulties: It includes antisocial traits, attachment issues or unaffectionate behavior, Juvenile delinquency, alcohol and other drug abuse, adult criminality, abusive behavior.

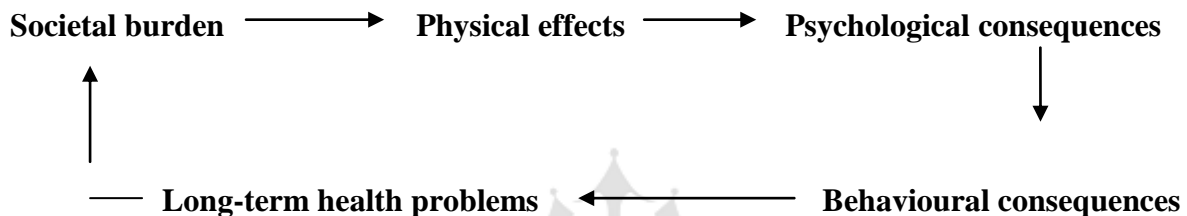
4. Cognitive difficulties: Low academic achievement, poor memory, poor language development may be cognitive impairment after child abuse.

Child neglect: developmental issues and outcomes:

The result showed that neglecting a child had severe effects on child's cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural development may be short-term or long-term. This review was structured according to three developmental periods like infancy/preschool, school-aged and younger adolescents, and older adolescents. Neglected children had more severe cognitive and academic deficits, social withdrawal, limited peer interactions, and internalizing problems. The current review offered that child neglect poses a significant challenge towards children's development.

Kathryn HL, David AW. Child Abuse Negl. 2002.

Inter-relationship of post-traumatic effects of child abuse:



The effects of physical abuse such as hitting, burning, throwing, stabbing can cause brain damage, damage to a body organ, hearing and vision loss, resulting in disability of the child. Even less severe injuries can lead to severe emotional, behavioral, or learning problems. Kids who develop depression and anxiety because of their abusive past often turn to smoking, alcoholism, illicit drug use and other unhealthy, dangerous behaviors to cope with their emotional and psychological scars.

Injuries to a child's growing brain can result in cognitive delays and severe emotional issues that could badly affect the quality of life forever. Long-term effects of smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and promiscuity can lead to cancer, liver damage, and infection from sexually transmitted diseases. Long-term health problems increase the societal burden.

Strategies to prevent neglect and child abuse:

The task of parents:

- Know the child's friends; never leave a child unattended
- Teach children to use their voice

- Spend time with the baby; nurturing and attachment
- Listen and believe the child; intervene if any harms and prevent future risk.
- Teach names of private body parts
- Observe and respond to early warning signs; provide early education

Role of Teachers:

- Receive training on signs of maltreatment
- Know every child
- Document incident of every maltreatment happened to any child; report to higher authorities
- Provide education for personal body safety to students
- Identification of victims suffering from repeated somatic complaints that can be indicators of ill-treatment or any abuse
- Support the abused victims
- The link between victims with their families
- Work in a partnership with neighbourhood organizations to raise alertness and to reduce incidence.



Month April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Protection from child abuse: It's the duty of each and every person of our society to protect our civilian from that worst experience and give a contented life with safety. There are so many organization, NGOs, government and legal authorities, mass media who stands against that cruel act and have come forward to provide a healthy upbringing to that God's creation.

ChildLine India:

- In 1996, Childline India Foundation (CIF) launched the country's first toll-free Telehelpline CHILDLINE for road or street children in case of suffering or distress.

Seeing that on March 2015, total 36 million calls since inauguration had been serviced by CHILDLINE and had operated in total 366 cities or districts of 34 States along with UTs throughout its network with over 700 partner organizations across India.

Chandigarh Commission for Protection of Child Rights:

- Snehalaya, VTC, Maloya Colony, Chandigarh, Contact Number: 9815125784

Online Help: I M NIRBHAYA: www.imnirbhaya.me

Care of child after being abused:

(a) Assessment: A detailed, thorough history and interview combined with a careful physical examination are the diagnostic tools to identify any maltreatment or abuse. Rape, sexual assault, the life-threatening injury will be highlighted for special care. Vitals, hemodynamic monitoring, check for serious injuries and bleeding from blunt trauma will be done by medical personnel.

(b) Investigation and vaccination: Vaccination if incomplete (DPT/ TT/ Hep B), ART prophylaxis should be provided immediately, Sample collection (vaginal swab, cervical swab), Forensic investigation (nail clippings, hair, clothes), Blood investigation (HBs Ag, HIV serology, VDRL) should be done.

(c) Treatment: Medical / surgical management of injuries

(d) Various psychotherapies

- Trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy – It is an evidenced-based treatment on post-traumatic effect which will help children to recover from the impact of the traumatic experience.
- Child-parent psychotherapy- It will help to improve interaction between the child and their parents, develop a parental skill which indirectly gives a novel environment to a child to grow up, share anything with parents without fear.
- Body-oriented therapy- it is a therapy based on the theory of trauma and memory. Traumatic experiences can generate energy or blockages. The body and mind represent the embodied integration of thoughts, bodily experiences, feelings, and sensations.

(e) Provision of physical and emotional care

(f) Follow proceedings for justice

(g) Support child along with their family

CONCLUSION

“Children are like buds in a garden and should be carefully and lovingly nurtured, as they are the future of the nation and the citizens of tomorrow”

--- Jawaharlal Nehru

Dia Mirza has tied hands for saving children on December 9 in her birthday as an Artist Ambassador. She has committed to help in raising wakefulness against malnutrition, child trafficking and for quality education and equality in gender. Children deserve to be healthy, happy and safe; every child is innocent and put them away from the fear: So, **STOP CHILD ABUSE.**

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