

Child Abuse in India: A Sociological Study of Kashi Vidyapeeth Block in Varanasi District



Priyanka Singh
Assistant Professor,
Deptt. of Sociology,
Dayalbagh Educational Institute,
Agra

Abstract

Child abuse is a serious problem which has physical, psycho and social consequences with adversely affect the health and overall well being of children. Child abuse is considered all forms of mistreatment and exploitation of children which potentially harmful to the child's health, survival, developmental and their dignity of life. It is not the problem which happened outside of the house but now a days it also happened in the house and that should be covered in the context of responsibility, trust and power. Child abuse is not the problem of one country it is a global problem and should be seen at broader level. In this paper author has tried to explain status of child rights, consequences of child abuse and impact on society as well as child abuse scenario in India and the world.

Keywords: Child Abuse, Society, Child Rights.

Introduction

Child abuse could be seen in the broad trajectory of social, economic and educational deprivation, resulting in children living and growing up in unsafe, unhealthy, unsuitable conditions, detrimental to their holistic development. It creates the situation of staggered childhood. There are a fraction of children who are burdened by double vulnerability as children and as those who are abused and exploited.

No Era in world history has been untouched by child abuse. Tablets describing the challenges that the misbehaving and abusing young pose for Society have been found that date from before 2000 BC Millennia later in his annual reports to the common wealth of Massachusetts, nineteenth century education reformer Horace Mann pointed to the Criminal behavior of young people to support his argument for a "common school" Indeed a twenty first century India who traveled back two centuries would find the child abuse of the day quit familiar.

In our time both the public and the government have felt in recent years a heightened sense of urgency and frustration about child abuse. Child (youth) and violence, the words seen inextricably linked that is certainly the impression one gets when reading the headlines, listening to the news or watching prime time television in world today. And the pictures that pear witnesses to the words are indeed frightening and dramatic, regardless of the whether the youth that are captured on film are the victims or perpetrators of violence. But psychology message with regard to child abuse is one of hope. We know that child abuse is not random, uncontrollable or inevitable. Child abuse is state of emotional physical sexual maltreatment meted out a person below the age of 18 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 complexity of life and the dramatic changes brought about by socio economic transitions in society has played a major role in increasing the vulnerability of children to various and newer forms of abuse. Child abuse is violation of the basic human rights of a child and an outcome of a set of interest related familial, social, psychological and economic factors. The problem of child abuse and human rights violations is one of the most critical matters on the international human rights agenda. In the Indian context, acceptance of child rights as primary inviolable rights is fairly recent, as is the universal understanding of it and universally acceptable agenda.

National study on a child abuse undertaken by the Ministry of women and child development government of India in 2005, attempts to understand the extent of the problem, its dimensions as well as intensity. In addition, it examines two aspects.

1. Strategic to address the problem of child abuse.
2. Identification of area of further research based on the finding of the study

The Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Shella Barse and another vs. Union of India* has declared that a child is national asset. In Indian scenario a child requires proper care, love, affections and nourishment but experience shows that the children are subjected to maltreatment in same situation. A child is treated with cruelty when a rejected rather abandoned child by the parents takes a job in a factory, hotel small scale industry and other roadside commercial establishment only for his own maintenance. In many compelling circumstances and having no shelter for his protection, a child gets associated with crime and criminals. The child exploitation in India is a result of the macabre family circumstances, social environment, poverty, ignorance of family planning and unchecked, population control, lack of proper care and attention, and lack of love and affection from parents. According to Dr. Perri, "in case of weak children due to neglect of parents the growth of cortex region in the brain is seriously affected, resulting in violent action by the child," He further said that due to bad social mismanagement nobody wants to know about the rejected or abandoned child. Luke woodham (Juvenile murder) while deploring remarked—"I would rather be wanted for murder than not at all," It reflects that when a Juvenile commits murder or any heinous crime that everybody will be curious to know maintains himself. This deplorable situation clearly shows the pathetic condition of the neglected children world.

Aim of the Study

1. To critically evaluate the status of child rights in India
2. To explain child abuse and its impact on society

Definition of Child Abuse

The terms "child abuse" may have different connotation in different cultural milieu. There is no any universally accepted definition of child abuse. India has accepted the definition which is given by WHO. According to *World Health Organization* (i) Physical Abuse- Physical abuse is physical injury upon a child like burning, hitting, punching, shaking, kicking, beating or otherwise harming a child. The parent or caretaker may not have intended to hurt the child. It may; however be the result of over discipline or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age. (ii) Sexual abuse - Sexual abuse is inappropriate sexual behaviors with a child. It includes fondling a child's genitals, making the child fondle the adult's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy exhibitionism and sexual exploitation. To be considered, child abuse, these acts have to be committed by a person responsible for the care of a child. (For example a baby sitter, a parent or a daycare provider) or related to the child. If a stranger commits these acts, it would be considered sexual

assault handled solely by the police and criminal courts. (iii) Emotional Abuse - Emotional abuse is also known as verbal abuse, mental abuse and psychological maltreatment. It includes acts or the failures to act by parents or caretakers that have caused or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, mental trauma. This can include parents, Caretaker using extreme and/or bizarre form punishment, such as confinement in a closet or dark room or being tied to a chair for long periods of time or threatening or terrorizing a child. Less severe act, but no less damaging are belittling or rejecting treatment, using derogatory terms describe the child habitual tendency to blame the child or make him / her a scapegoat.

Neglect

It is a failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Neglect can be physical, educational or emotional. Physical neglect can include not providing adequate food or clothing, appropriate medical care, supervision or proper weather protection (heat or cold). It may include abandonment. Educational neglect includes failure to provide appropriate schooling or special education needs, allowing excessive truancies. Psychological neglect includes the lack of any emotional support and love, never attending to child, substance abuse including allowing the child to participate in drug and alcohol. (Definition is based on World Health Organization report on child abuse)

Literature on Child Abuse

1. The sexual abuse of children within religious settings is an issue that has gained increased popular and professional attention over the past two decades. In this article various reports of child abuse highlighted psychology that underpins variable reporting practices. This article argued that by gaining a deeper understanding of the psychology will be more effective to communicate about child sexual abuse within religious institutions. (Reporting child sexual abuse within religious settings: Challenges and future directions, Craig A Harper, Colin Perkins, Child Abuse Review 27(1), 2018
2. The child is usually diagnosed with child abuse based on criteria of the Academy of Pediatrics Committee on child abuse and neglect. When an infant presents with X-rays showing multiple unexplained fractures in various stages of healing. (Multiple unexplained fractures in infants and child physical abuse, John Jacob cannell, Michael F Holick, The Journal of Steroid Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, 175, 2018
3. Child abuse can cause injury to any part of the eye. The most common manifestation is retinal hemorrhages in infants and young children with abusive head trauma. An eye examination is helpful in detecting abnormalities that can help identify a medical or traumatic etiology for previously well young children who experience unexpected and unexplained mental status changes with no obvious cause. (The Eye Examination in the Evaluation of Child Abuse,

- Cindy W Christian, Alex V Levin, Council on Child Abuse Pediatrics 142(2), 2018.
4. Emerging developmental perspectives suggest that adverse rearing environments promote neurocognitive adaptations that heighten impulsivity and increase vulnerability to risky behavior. This study investigated the role of impulsivity in linking child abuse and neglect with adult substance use. (Impulsivity as a mechanism linking child abuse and neglect with substance use in adolescence and adulthood, Assaf Oshri, Steve M kogan, Josephine A Kwon, KAS Wickrama, Lauren Vanderbroek, Development and Psychology 3092), 2018.
 5. The article is the explanation of the child protection system in England. It analyses how policy and practice has developed and articulates the need for an alternative approach regarding child development. It draws from the social model to handle the disability and mental health, to sketch and find out more hopeful and progressive possibilities for children families and communities. This area has paid limited attention to the barriers to ensuring children and young people are cared for safely within families and communities and the social determinants of much of the harms. Their experiences have not been recognized because of the focus on individualized risk factors. (Let's Stop Feeding the Risk Monster: Towards a social Model of Child protection, Brid Featherstone, Anna gupta, Kate Morris, Joanne Warner, Families, Relationships and Societies 7(1), 2018.
 6. Intentional burns represent a serious form of physical abuse that must be identified to protect children from further harm. The objective of this study to describe the characteristics of burns injuries in children referred to child abuse pediatrician in relation to perceived likelihood of abuse. Furthermore compare the extent of diagnostic investigations undertaken in children referred to CAPs for burn injuries with those referred for other reasons. (Children with burns referred for child abuse evaluation: Burn characteristics and co existent injuries, Marie Christin Pawlik, Child Abuse and Neglect, Vol 55, 2016.

Child Abuse Scenario

The UN Secretary General study on violence against Children has given the following data and overview of the situation of abuse and violence against children across the globe.

1. Estimation by WHO that almost 53000 child deaths in 2002 were due to child homicide.
2. In the Global School Based Students Health Survey carried out in a developing and developed countries, and results are as 20% to 65% of school going children reported having been verbally or physically bullied in school in the previous 30 days. Similar rates and data of bullying have been found in industrialized and developed countries also.
3. It is the estimation that 150 million girls and 73 millions boys under 18 have experienced forced

sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact.

4. UNICEF estimates that in sub-saharan Africa, Egypt, and Sudan, 3 million girls and women are subjected to FGM every year.
5. ILO estimates that 218 million children were involved in child labor in 2004, of which 126 million were engaged in hazardous work. 5.7 million Were in forced or bonded labor, 1.8 million in prostitution and pornography 1.2 million were victims of trafficking.
6. Only 2.4% of the world's children are legally protected from corporal punishment in all settings. (Data is based on world's agency's report on child protection).

The criticality of this problem is that the understanding the scope of the subject of 'child abuse'. It is extremely difficult to get any response from children on such a sensitive subject because of their inability to fully understand the different dimensions of child abuse and to talk about their experiences. Multidimensionality of the problem it is therefore difficult to gather most approachable data on abused children. Further, definitions of child abuse are not yet consistent and same in all countries; there is variation of definition of child abuse from country to country. Yet governments give attention to the alarming number of child abuse and neglect as well governments are trying to act and work together and respond to the situation by way of both prevention and treatment.

Child Abuse in Asia

Certain issues of child abuse and neglect are common in almost all countries at the global level such as physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse, problems of street children, there are also many issues of child abuse which are prevalent only in certain regions of the world. For example, Asia has high population density because of it the issues of child labor and child sexual exploitation is also high. Due to Internal problems such as political instability, lack of political will power, internal disturbances, insurgency etc also increasing the number of child soldiers, refugee children, trafficked children and so on.

The largest population of children in the world live in South Asia and majority of these children lack access to proper health care, nutrition and education. There is no any serious preventive measures has taken by Asian countries. This reflects the socio economic reality of these regions. Poverty, illiteracy, caste system, and landlessness, lack of economic opportunities, lack of political will, rural urban migration, population growth, political instability and weak implements of legal provisions are main factors that contribute to the magnitude of the problem of child abuse

Problem of child abuse could not be addressed properly because of non seriousness of the governments. The approaches for prevention and methods of treatment of child abuse do not cover the entire gamut of abuse. There is lack of reliable data on the incidence of child abuse. Now the seriousness of the problem of child abuse and knowledge of

methods of prevention and treatment has been recognized and is being addressed by sovereign, governments' national and international organizations e.g. UNICEF, Save the children, Plan International, ISPCAN etc.

Child Abuse in India

India has the nineteen percent of world's children. This is an enormous numbers of children that the country has to take care of while articulating and planning its vision of progress, development and equity. India as a country has expressed its recognition of the fact that children must be educated, healthy, and happy and have access to opportunities for better future of their selves and country also, because they are the country's greatest human resource. Some of the following data which indicates the status of children in India:

1. Every fifth child in the world lives in India.
2. Every third malnourished child in the world lives in India.
3. Every second Indian child is underweight.
4. Three out of four children in India are anemic
5. Every second new born has reduced learning capacity due to iodine deficiency.
6. Decline in female/male ratio is maximum in 0-6 years; 927 females per 1000 males. -
7. Birth registration is Just 62% (RGI -2004
8. Retention rate at Primary level is 71.01% Elementary Education in India progress towards UEE NUEPA Flash Statistics DISE 2005-2006.
9. Girl's enrolment in schools at primary level is 47.79% (Elementary Education in India Progress towards UEE NUEPA Flash Statistics DSIE 2005-2006.
10. 1104 lakh child labour in the country (SRO -2000)
11. IMR is as high as 58 per 1000 live births (SRS 2005).

12. Children born with low birth weight are 46% (NFHS —III)
13. Children under 3 with anemia are 79% (NFHS— III)
14. Immunization coverage is very low (polio 78.2% measles 58.8%, DPI -55.3% BCG-78% (NFHS — III). (These data is based on national agency's report on children status).

The National Policy for Children has considered children to be a 'Supreme National Asset'. It pledged measures to secure and safeguard all their basic, social, physical and emotional needs and this could be done by wise use of available national resources and strong administrative will power. In India Unfortunately, ten successive Five Year Plans and lots of schemes and programmes have not been sufficient for betterment of the child as well as allocation of resources and funds is not adequate to meet the needs of children. Available resources have also not been utilized effectively for well being of the children. The status and condition of children have remained far from secure and safe life and need to be readdressed.

There are many traditions and practices which also exploits the children like child marriage, caste system, discrimination against the girl child, and Devadasi as well as prevalence of child labor. These all are have negative impact on child's development. Lack of adequate nutrition, poor access to medical and educational facilities, migration from rural to urban areas leading to rise in urban poverty, children on the streets and child beggars all result in breakdown of families. These situations increase the vulnerabilities of children for exploitation and expose them to situation of abuse and exploitation.

The Following table is summary of the types of child abuses and there implications

Physical Indicators in the child	Behavioral indicators in the child	Parental / familial Indicators in abusive child
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bite marks • Unusual bruises • Lacerations • Bums • High incidence of accidents or frequent injuries • Fractures in unusual places • Injuries, swellings to face and extremities • Discoloration of skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids physical contact with others. • Apprehensive when other children cry • Whether clothing to purposely conceal injury, i.e. long sleeves. • Refuses to undress for gym or for required physical exams at school. • Gives inconsistent version about occurrence of injuries burns etc. • Seems frightened by parents • Often late or absent from school • Comes early to school, seems reluctant to go afterwards. • Has difficulty getting along with offers • Little respect for others. • Overly complaint, withdrawn gives in readily and allows others to do for him/her without protest. • Plays aggressively often hurting peers. • Complains of pain upon movement or contract. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many personal marital problems • Economic stress • Parent(s) were abused as children themselves, were raised in homes where excessive punishment was the norm, and use harsh discipline on own children. • Highly moralistic • History of alcohol or drug abuse • Are easily upset, have a low tolerance for frustration. • Are antagonistic, suspicious fearful of people. • Social isolation no supporting network of relatives or friends • See child as bad or • Little or no interest in child's well being • Do not respond appropriately to child's pain • Explanation of injuries to child are evasive and inconsistent • Blame child for injuries

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a history of running away from home. • Reports abuse by parents/care takers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly criticize and have inappropriate expectations of child • Take child to different physicians or hospital for each injury.
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Theoretical Perspective

The review of the existing literature enables us to conclude that there are two major theoretical perspectives on child abuse. One focuses on the point that the reason of the child abuse may be attributed to the dominant nature of the social structure, rampant poverty and the semi feudal nature of the mode of production. (ii) Whereas the other revolves around the idea that the children fall prey to the different forms of the abuses mainly due to state's apathy, lack of awareness and low level of literacy. The present thesis spotlights the children belonging to both vulnerable and other groups and also searches for the alternatives strategy in order to contain or minimize the child abuse in our system. The studies in Bitter chocolate (Virani, 2000) and the information gathered from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1992, Human Right Watch, 1995, The Asian Age 1997. The Pioneer, 1997. And the study on child abuse in India 2007 as well as article based on various study by Patricia D. McClendon 1991 provide us the pointer to develop a rightful perspective for building hypothetical assumptions.

Objective

We have the following objectives of the study :-

1. To assess the magnitude and forms of child abuse.
2. To assess carefully the basic reason behind the present horrible or intending to be horrible in present society, most undesirable will – child abuse.
3. To facilitate analysis of the existing legal framework to deal with the problem of child abuse.
4. Study of family environment relating to their responsibilities for child growth and their present abuse.
5. To recommend strategies and programmes interventions for preventing and addressing issues of child abuse.
6. To study the profile of the abused children and the social and economic circumstances leading to their abuse.

Hypothesis

1. Child abuse in India is attributed to economic situation prevalent through out the system.
2. The state has not been much serious empirically so far as the child position in the social structure is concerned.
3. Because of the inconsistencies experienced in the Indian social formation children are subjected to a lot forms of exploitation.
4. Because of the democracy without civil cultural in the Indian society children are not given due position in the social system.

Universe of the Study and Research Methodology

The study is mainly confined to the Varanasi district of the present study the block Kashi Vidyapeeth is selected for the purposes. From this block I have selected two villages namely. Naipurkalan and Phulwaria. The selection of the village is based on the maxim that the closer is the block to the dist headquarter, the higher is the awareness and educational level in the area Therefore I have chosen one village much nearer to the dist. headquarter and the other far from the dist. headquarter.

In the second stage the households are regarded to be unit of analysis. The total sample of the households is 200 drawn from the 2063 household of the two villages. Thereby that the composition of household (selected) reflects on the different attributes of our complex society representing caste, gender religion, language, class etc. Respondents are both children and their family heads. Children here are from 6 to 16. The sample was decided by calculating 10% of the total households in each village under study the first village naipurkalan having the population 1010 and out of this population I have selected the sample size of 10% that is approximately 100 for the other village number of total household is 1053 and 10% of this population is taken the sample size. For collection of data tools will be in-depth interview, Focus Group Discussion, observation, case study and interview schedule will be used.

Findings

The thesis in order to know the status of child abuse in the villages under study we have focused broadly on four variables namely education, women empowerment social protection schemes as well as the protection structure. In the case of first variable I have studied the existence and functionalities of village education committee and parent teacher association. More than 60% of the respondents were completely ignorant of such body. This ignorance was of around 67% of the first villages Naipurkalan and in other village Phulwaria it was around 53%. Further parent teacher association was considered an instrument for child right protection. More than 80% of the respondents expressed ignorance regarding P.T.A. in the area. As a matter of fact gives an idea of unequal participation of members of different segments of the society.

A significant obstacle in realization of universal education to the children is high drop out. Around 4% of the respondents spoke about the different reason of the drop out of the children from the school. They held economic situation, illness of child, indifference to education responsible for the drop out etc. More than 50% were unable to speak any substantive reason.

Another variable to judge the status of child abuse is the child protection structures in these villages. It was found most of them are established or in the process of being established. Juvenile police unit is present since 2010 in the block under study. Similarly Dist. protection committee in varanasi dist. has only been formed recently in the year 2011.

One of the serious problems faced by those children is child labour rampant among both boys and the girls. Home cleaning, washing utensils, cooking and siblings care is seen in the case of the girl child which consumes a lot of time and energy of the growing children. Quiet good number of boys go outside their homes in order to work in different places even at times outside of dist. Around 20% of the family reported that their children because of their working outside in different establishments learn and support their family members at the cost of their individual growth. It is really ironical that sizable number of respondents agreed that the child labor is as a matter of fact child abuse and harmful yet they either don't intervene into process or promote it.

The population belonging to SCs and STs and other vulnerable groups were also assessed in order to know about functionality of social protection schemes and their results mainly six key schemes were assessed namely JSY, JAY, MAY, ICDS, SJRY, MNERGA and we have found the implementation of these schemes in the block under study displayed not much positive approach.

We have also studied the status of women empowerment. We have found that women participation in Gram Sabha is not much satisfactory. It is only around 12% and the reason for this low level of participation is 'no time', 'unawareness', 'no meeting'. Women are found to be still dependent on their husbands and male members of the family.

The data reflect upon the state formation and civil society formation. On the basis of the study, we can safely conclude that the child abuse is mainly in the form of child labor. The present study provides a lot of insightful ideas both for the civil society and state. It also discusses the attitudes

and knowledge of the vulnerable families in regards to the child labor and child abuse as well as access of the families to the service providers, Social protection schemes. Of late the improvement is clearly seen but it is not satisfactory. We have also observed in the area under study, the mobilization is around marginalized communities cultural identity and the economic issues. This offered a perspective for resolving various contradictions faced both by state and working agency. Such mobilization in reality is much healthy for creating a climate of critical social awareness and political action which will generate need for functionality on the part of social protection structures.

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