

Child Abuse and its Consequences: A Sociological Study of Deoria District of Uttar Pradesh

Abstract of the Dissertation

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Introduction

The condition and behaviour of the children are influenced by a variety of physical, social, psychological and economic reasons. Therefore, for the full development of the personality of the child, the environment of love, happiness, and mutual understanding between child and caregiver is essential. Children should be prepared to live with their specific personality in the society, but in the present time, the rapid change and dissolution in society are happening. It has made the condition of children very pathetic. Child abuse is a stigma in a civilised society. Child abuse causes problems in the society, resulting in neither a healthy society nor a healthy nation. Although various measures have been taken to eradicate child abuse, due to social, economic reasons, it has not yet been prevented. Therefore eradication of child abuse is very continuous, because, most of the children in India are living in grief and suffering even after the welfare programs, legal protection, and administrative work. The parents continue to ignore children in most families and beat them. Further, caregivers commit emotional, physical, and sexual abuse to children. This problem is being overlooked in Deoria and India in general.

The public and the government still have not considered this problem as a severe problem, although thousands of children suffer from this kind of abuse every day. Therefore, the condition of children is pathetic in practical form. Apathy towards child rights protection has made the condition of children more pathetic by not getting protection or justice by the state. So there is an urgent need to improve the situation of children.

Some Important Definitions Used

Child abuse: Child abuse is defined as ill-treatment of a child, causing damage to child's health or personal development. Child abuse can be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or negligence.

Further, for this study different form of child abuse is defined as follows:

Physical abuse: Physical abuse is the inflicting of bodily injury upon a child. It may include burning, hitting, punching, shaking, kicking, beating or otherwise harming a child.

Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse is inappropriate sexual behaviour with a child that she/he does not understand. This abuse includes using a child for pornography, sexual materials, prostitution and unlawful sexual practices.

Emotional abuse: Emotional abuse can be of different forms of 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 severe behavioural, cognitive, emotional, cognitive, or mental sufferings.

Neglect: It refers to the failure to give the child the primary needs of daily life. 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. It may include abandonment. Education neglect includes failure to provide necessary schooling or special educational needs.

Objectives

The objectives of the present study are:

- (1) To identify the magnitude and forms of child abuse.
- (2) To assess behavioural and health consequence of child abuse.
- (3) To give suggestions to curb child abuse.

Hypothesis

- (1) The various forms of child abuse are present in a society like physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.
- (2) The degree of child abuses varies from mild to severe.
- (3) Child abuse leads to deterioration of child health.
- (4) Various policies and programmers have failed to tackle child abuse.

To test these hypothesis the methodology developed is described below.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive and analytic research design. Both quantitative and qualitative data were used.

Sampling strategy

The sample for this study is 100 child respondents in the age group of five to 14 years in Rampur Karkhana block of Deoria district.

Respondents include following three categories of children:

1. Children in five selected schools
2. Children in a family environment not attending school
3. Working children

All three categories of children were identified, and the list was prepared. After that 100 child respondents were selected through systematic sampling from the list thus prepared. The selection of child respondents was made as follows:

1. 50 children, ten from each school, were selected from the first category, i.e. children in five selected schools.
2. 25 children were selected from the second category, i.e. children in the family environment were not attending school.
3. Finally, 25 children were selected from the third category, i.e. working children.

100 children thus selected constitute the sample for this study. Further, ten stakeholders who hold positions in government departments, private services, urban and rural local bodies were also subjected to an in-depth qualitative interview.

Techniques of data collection and data analysis

Relevant data for the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data for the study was collected with the help of an Interview Schedule. Further, the in-depth qualitative interview was also conducted to enrich the analysis. Secondary sources include previous literature, government reports and other sources.

SPSS was used for data analysis and construction of tables.

The Significance of the Study

Although there is emerging literature from developing countries, there is considerable less literature in an Indian setting. Only a few works have been done in this area in India. The nature of Indian culture further makes such study difficult. So little is known about child abuse which exists in Indian setting without much efforts to curb it.

Further, this research is very significant in the sense that it tries to capture the consequences of child abuse. The study will provide us with an understanding of the effect of child abuse on the physical health and behaviour of children.

The researcher is keen to understand the issue of child abuse and its consequences on children. This study is a serious attempt to increase our understanding of child abuse and its effect in an Indian setting.

Major Findings

Socio-demographic findings indicate that vast majority (69.0 %) of the children were from Hindu religion. More than half (53.0%) of children were female. Less than half (43.0%) of children were from SC category. Less than half (43.0%) of the fathers of children were doing private jobs. A vast majority (74.0%) of the mothers of children were a housewife.

Physical abuse

The researcher found that about 77.0 percent of children suffered physical injury. Bodily injury to children was given by different peoples. About 30 children were injured on the body by neighbour and friend. About 16 children were hit on the body by brother or sister, 5 children were hit on the body by mother or father, 8 children were hit on the body by school's teacher, and 6 children were hit on the body by neighbour and relatives. Further, some children are always beaten, some are severely beaten with sticks and more than half of the

physically abuse children get bodily injury but they are never given treatment by a doctor.

Emotional abuse

Two major types of emotional abuse is witnessed in Deoria: name-calling and caste based derogatory remarks. The researcher has found that majority (84.0%) of the children were emotionally abused by name-calling. They are often called as crazy and stupid. Out of 84 cases of name-calling 54 children were name-called by neighbour or friends. More than half (54.0%) of the children were humiliated by the name of their caste.

Sexual abuse

It is found that various ways of child sexual abuse exists. Less than half (45.0%) of the children were shown vulgar pictures by the abusers. The majority (71.0%) of the children were forced to show or touch their private parts. Neighbours, friends and relatives are the main persons who commit child sexual abuse in this way. Out of 71 children who were forced to show or touch their private parts, 40 children were forced to show or touch private parts by neighbor or friends, 26 children by relatives, 5.0 children were forced to show or touch private parts by any other persons.

Neglect

It is observed that only 44 percent of parents do not give sufficient time to their children. As such, these children don not get sufficient time from their parents. Further, there exists gender discrimination in giving attention to children. It seems that sons are given more attention in comparison to daughters. About 75.0 percent of the parents give less attention to daughters in comparison to sons. Further, daughters not only share larger burden of household work but also they are given less food than sons.

Thus four different kinds of child abuse are prevalent in Rampur Karkhana of Deoria district of Uttar Pradesh. These are – physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Their prevalence varies from 44 percent for neglect to 84 percent for emotional abuse. Further, the intensity of child abuse varies from mild to severe.

Consequences of child abuse

The prevalence of child abuse and neglect have many fatal short and long-term health and behavioural consequences such as poor self-esteem, feeling of isolation, depression, substance abuse, suicidal tendencies, low academic achievement, sexual dysfunctions. Further, many measures have been taken to curb child abuse but mainly policies and programmes to tackle child abuse have failed to make any significant improvement.

In conclusion, it can be said that different kinds of child abuse are prevalent in Deoria district of Uttar Pradesh. Further, the intensity of child abuse varies from mild to severe. Also, child abuse has severe health and related behavioural consequences. In fact, poverty, caste-based discrimination, gender-based discrimination, inadequate health system, reduced social security in schools, violent neighbourhood and community disorganisation leads to the menace of child abuse.

Conceptually, it is the accumulation of risk factors that are responsible for child abuse. These risk factors are present at different levels of the social environment. Child risk factors, parental and family risk factors, and social, environmental risk factors combine to give rise to child abuse and its serious consequences.

Suggestions

Our lack of understanding about child abuse and its consequences calls for revisiting planning safety in the home and school resources. Based on the major findings of the present study and researcher's observation the following recommendations are significant.

1. It is necessary for the better development of children that they get a safe environment with love and affection.
2. Parents and guardians do not compare their children to others. Every child is unique. Parents and caretakers must understand child's requirement and act accordingly to enable the child to move forward.
3. Schools should conduct training seminars for teachers focusing on child abuse related issues.
4. Communities need to have a plan for backup support to care for the children in emergencies or when the family members are unable to provide proper care and support to children.
5. Children should be prepared to live with their specific personality in the society, but in the present time, the rapid change and dissolution in society are happening.
6. Child rights include their right to associate with their parents, caretakers, as well as meeting the basic needs for food, clothes, shelter, education and healthcare. The state must act to ensure all these to every child.
7. The abused child must be provided with all assistance and must be given medical treatment at the earliest to avoid harmful consequences on their development.
8. Legal protection must be given to children and perpetrators of abuse on children must be held accountable and punished for wrongdoing.
9. To address national child rights commitments, several policies, laws, and programs have been introduced. A National Policy for Children (2012) has replaced the 1974 policy. The new policy also expresses a strong commitment to the rights of children but gives priority to its interests rather than 'paramount' status. In the past decade, some positive official statements of commitment have

been produced. The challenge is that in the future, the programs are run in translation to the programs and then in practice. Development in this direction also requires proper direct monitoring and regular reporting. Most of the facts given in official national reports are outdated, and some of them do not represent current realities as a result of it. It needs to be improved.