

A Study on Child Neglect and Preventive Measures: A Review

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ABSTRACT

India is domicile to the largest child population in the world so the security of the country's children is integral for its progress and development because children are priceless to the society. Parent's/caregiver's behaviors plays a significant role in the involvement of child neglect like failure to provide sufficient food, shelter, clothing and medical care. Child Neglect is an important societal problem affecting over a million children and their families each year compared to other child maltreatment like physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse (National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect). The present study is aimed to examine the form of child maltreatment, and strive to know the different forms of child maltreatment across the country. The primary goal of study is to eradicate the rate of maltreatment like failure to provide child care and lack of attention to a child by the child's parent, guardian under various situations that indicate the child's health or welfare is at substantial risk of harm. The study discusses various risk factors associated with Child Neglect and also ends with the preventive measures to minimize the effects of child maltreatment. This study seeks to improve protective measures; increase the eradication rate of maltreatment will lead a peaceful life or even save child's life.

Keywords: Child Maltreatment, Neglect, Preventive Measures, Risk Factors.

I.INTRODUCTION

The current population of India in 2016 is 1.324 billion while children represent 39% of total population of the country. The population in India during 1975 to 2010 is doubled to 1.2 billion, according to the 2017 revision of the World Population Prospects. The number of cases registered for child maltreatment raised from 8,904 to 14,913 in the year 2014 to 2015, under the POSCO Act. National statistics state that 53% of children are victims of abuse, $\frac{2}{3}$ children are physically abused and 8 abuse cases are reported every day. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) statistics state that a total of 94,172 cases of crimes against children were registered in the country during 2015 as compared to 89,423 cases during 2014, showing an increase of 5.3% [2]. This large percentage of child's population is vulnerable to abuse like physical, sexual, emotional and Neglect.

Child maltreatment is a behavior toward a child that is beyond the norms of conduct and entails significant risk of harm. Child maltreatment is the abuse that occurs to children under the age 18 years which results in actual or

potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity. There are four basic types of maltreatment which is sometimes referred as Child Abuse and Neglect.

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Physical, Educational, Medical and Lack of Supervision

A Focus on Neglect: From these types the study focuses on child maltreatment like child neglect because this is the root cause for all other types which is shown below in Fig 1.1. In 2012, according to the Children's Bureau report Child Maltreatment, 78.3 percent of victims suffered by neglect, as compared to 18.3% who suffered by physical abuse and 9.3% who suffered by sexual abuse. It can be incredibly dangerous. Hence this study focuses on Child maltreatment especially in the context of Neglect.

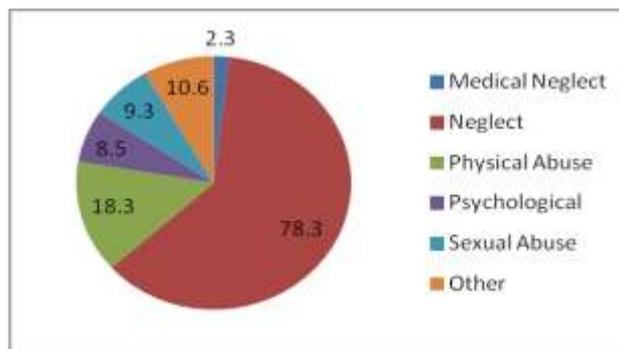


Fig 1.1 Ratio of Child Maltreatment

Neglected children may endure from specific behavioral problems during the whole time of life. Research depicts that children who are from poor family management are at a greater risk of developing conduct disorders and of participating in delinquent behavior. Neglected children also may be at risk for repeating the neglectful behavior with their own children. One study estimates that approximately one-third of neglected children will maltreat their own children. Hence it is a major concern to the society to have an effective concentration on this type of behavioral acts.

II.LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 International status

The concept of preventing child abuse could be dealt with many research centers and public health and awareness agencies. The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2008 (CIS-2008) is the third nation-wide study which examines, investigates and report the incidence of child maltreatment and the characteristics of the children and families by child welfare. This research involves nearly 40 researchers, initiated and funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) as a central component of their child health surveillance programs.

World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that almost the child deaths in 2002 are 53,000 due to child maltreatment. The survey carried out by the Global School-Based Student Health from a wide range of developing countries, between 20% and 65% of school going children reported having been verbally or physically bullied in school even in industrialized countries. Estimates from 2014 International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that almost 218 million children were involved in child labour, from which 126 million were engaged in dangerous work. In 2000 estimation states that 5.7 million were in forced/bonded labour and 1.2 million were victims of trafficking. Limit amount of the world's children are legally protected from corporal punishment is 2.4%. In 2015, an estimated 1,670 children died from abuse and neglect in the United States [17] and nearly 700,000 children are abused in the U.S annually.

2.2 National Status

In 2002, 5972 cases were registered against and in 2005, 14975 cases were registered. Incidence of kidnapping and abduction of children were around 2322 in 2002 and 2571 in 2003, which rose to 3196 and 3518 in 2004 and 2005 respectively. Although the reported number of cases of procurement of minor girls has decreased by 29.3% in 2005 compared to 2004, media and other reports indicate that the unofficial number is much higher. Reported cases of child rape, one of the worst forms of sexual abuse, have increased in number between 2004 and 2005, from 3542 cases to 4026 cases respectively, indicating an increase of 13.7%. In India the problem of child abuse has not received enough attention. There have been few and sporadic efforts to understand and address the problem. However, child abuse is prevalent in India as in many other countries and there is a need to understand its dimensions and complexities. Various key concepts needed to be considered to identify the potential pathway for abuse and neglect of the child. There is a great need for identifying and protecting the child maltreatment rate that can be concluded with various survey samples. The Mothers who are main victims of family-bounded violence and who are responsible for a 'failure to protect' their children from maltreatment [4][5][6][7][8].

"The longer the maltreatment, the smaller the brain and corpus callosum and the lower the child's IQ" [3]. This study extract the level of human brain development is compared when maturity level in terms of weight at the age of birth, 12.5 and 20 years, which shows the lower IQ level of the maltreated children than normal and happy children.

Recently, under the POSCO Act in Sep 2016 statistics reports the number of cases registered for child abuse raised from 8,904 in the year 2014 to 14,913 in the year 2015. According to the state-wise abuse cases by POSCO is Uttar Pradesh has the highest cases followed by Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu (1,544 cases), Karnataka and Gujarat.

III.IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

In India, every year population is increased more than any other nation whereas the large child population of 39% percentage which is harmful to abuse and neglect. There is also inadequate information about the extent of child abuse in the country and also with limited scope and studies about neglect. The attempt to know the different forms and magnitude of child abuse across the country has been also inadequate. The only possibility

to view the information is available on the NCRB data [1] which shows about the crime data that is maintained and updated annually. The problem of child maltreatment is a serious and bigger problem but the availability of information is poor in nature. This study will give guidance to the public to prevent and control and also take some proactive measures to eradicate this type of brutality.

IV.RISK FACTORS

From the above study and its interpretation results gives knowledge about child neglect as well as for identifying risk factors.

Poverty: Indian economy has achieved a significant growth of 8 % annually in last four years, but there is still large number of people led their life below the poverty line. All the studies reviewed by Connell-Carrick [9] shows Socio-economic status emerged as the major correlate of neglect. The poverty results low education, unemployment or low status jobs. Poverty interacts more on maternal age factor which also leads major concern about child neglect.

Number of Children: Mothers who neglected their children had more children than others [10].

Parenthood and Maternal age:Single parenthood was significantly associated with neglect. Sedlack and Broadhurst [14] found single parent status increased all types of neglect by 87% in all settings.

Maternal age is to increase the chances of child neglect where as in poor family background children born to mothers 17 years of age or younger were 17 times more than children born to mothers who were 22 years of age or more. This young age of marriage is likely to have a substantiation of neglect than others [11]. Even without the influence of poverty, young maternal age was consistently found to be a factor for child neglect [13].

Family Interaction:Dubowitz [12] has researched and published on the subject of neglect. Bonding between child and Parental relationship interacts with child neglect, as well as the type of family also a key factor for creating bonding between grandparents and great grandparents. The closely coupled nature is less in number in nuclear family than joint family even though the parents are employed.

Lack of Support: The parents who have lack of family and social support are also the main victims of child neglect and less practical support which leads babysitting due to social idleness and more [15] [16].

V.IMPLICATIONS

Questions that need further analysis are mainly integrated with factors of child neglect. Herewith, the factors are subdivided under various sections. Sections are given below

General: The general factors may impact more on child neglect which may include Parent's Age, Gender, Type of Marriage, Maternal Age, Child's Age and stage, Family Type, Employment, Annual Income, Qualification, Place of Residence and Number of Children in the family.

Bonding & Relationships (Child Care): This section plays an important role with children, in which the absence of factor reflects the more on child's behavior and conduct. This section includes evident factors like "bond" establishment with the child since birth, attention or supervision to the child, support to your child when



he/she upset, time should spend with child, plan for outing/ excursion with children and awareness about child's daily activities, companions and friends.

Child's Life (Physical Neglect): This section describes the basic needs of the child while parent or caregiver is failure to provide the mandatory needs. The basic physical needs are very much crucial for child's potential growth, self-development and plan for their career. The physical factors affected more about child's life such as food, shelter, clothing, educational support, irresponsibility of parents/caregivers or alcohol use, absent to know about child's thought about life.

Education & Sexual Education (Educational Neglect): This section is fully about child's education for moral development, self-growth, and awareness about their body. This neglect includes various factors like providing support to child to do best in schools/Colleges, providing education and it needs, teaching the child about sexual matters in a gentle manner, teaching the child to be open, curious, and not be embarrassed about sexual matters, teaching the child that his/her body is his/her own and child must know whether parents/caregivers will listen if something has made physically or sexually uncomfortable.

Health and Medical (Medical Neglect): Medical neglect is the omission to provide medical or dental or psychiatric care. This medical care is significant to prevent or treat physical or emotional injury or illness. The medical neglect concentrates about the following risk factors:

- Pay regular attention to child's attitude/behavior, sleeping/eating habits, and personal care habits, in order to note any significant behavioral changes
- Pay regular attention to child's overall medical conditions in order to note any unusual symptoms or concerns like headaches or stomachaches, listlessness, depression and hyperactivity.

Awareness about Child Maltreatment: Awareness can be part of an overall approach for preventing child abuse and neglect. Public must know the risk factors which increase the rate of maltreatment such as high levels of unemployment, poor parenting skills, being aware about the steps that should be taken to report a case of child abuse or neglect, if they were aware of one and should find ways to spread awareness. Those awareness factors leads bad life to children and the society, so public must find resources and information on sharing a message, making an economic case for prevention, and creating community support and partnerships to prevent child abuse and neglect.

VI. PREVENTIVE MEASURES

According to the journal of child abuse and neglect, it is a category of all the facts. This abuse act is not considered as knowledge lacking of the society but it is completely depends upon barbarity of human nature. Due to the seriousness of abuse act, everyone must come forward to remove this type of brutality from our society. To remove this inhumanity nature, there have been lot of preventive measures are there which could at least assist people to know the aggressiveness of the problem and may take initial steps to overcome this cause. Child neglect is a sin and those who do it are sinners. Hence, all the parents would not spend most of their free time but they must spend all their free time with the kids at least until they come to know what is what. Parents/caregivers may get some of the useful keys to create a bond with their children due to child-parent bonding.

Protective Factors: Some of the protective factors are high quality child care, home visiting and family preservation programs, parent vs child programs, implications for social workers, self-confidence programs, robust academic and social skills and support and effective support by parents /caregivers.

VII.REPORTING

Before reporting, one should identify or observe the child's behavior aspects like begging, stealing food, constant fatigue, unsuitable clothing for the weather, untreated injury, excessive sunburn and any other related symptoms. Once suspected child is identified reporting is essential, which is a courage act that may protect child from being harmed or even save a child's life. Hence, to report the information to child protective services or law enforcement with complete written/ oral information or even send a mail copy too. This report includes the details such as child identifying information, current location of the child, parent/guardian identifying information, nature and extent of maltreatment. The problem of child abuse and human rights violations is one of the most serious matters in now days 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.

VIII.CONCLUSION

From the study results it can be concluded that child neglect is still a neglected area which is strongly connected with parameters like poverty, maternal age of mother, literacy, single parenthood, social and family support, bonding with the child, attention or supervision to the child, economical support, knowledge about child development and residential place whether urban or rural. So the neglected children should have proper care or overlooked by parents/caregivers or peer teams like government/ non-government organization in a proper way. In general, everyone is responsible for this act and more effort is needed to understand and provide support for them.

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