

Domestic Violence and Child Abuse

Dr. Mrs. B. Bala Parameswari M.A., M.Phil, Ph.D.,
Assistant Professor of History, S.F.R. College for women, Sivakasi.

Abstract: *Human rights are the basic and absolute rights that every person has because he or she is a human being. Every human being has these rights although the extent to which they can be enforced in practice varies from country to country. At the international level most of these basic human rights have been described in the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948. While there is considerable variation in national legislation between countries, most constitutions worldwide state that everyone is equal before the law, and that each person is entitled to equal protection under the law without any discrimination. A growing body of clinical experience and research reveals that domestic violence and child abuse occur in the same families and are highly associated with similar social and economic risk factors; Data also show that children growing up in violent families are more likely to engage in youth violence. Furthermore, the social and economic risk factors for youth violence correspond to the risk factors for domestic violence and child abuse. Given these findings, an effective strategy to combat child abuse, domestic violence and youth violence would be a collaborative, community-based prevention/early intervention effort that aims to reduce the social and economic risk factors for at-risk families. This paper outlines proposed components of such a program and presents a strong argument for the development of national and local collaborative prevention efforts between the three fields.*

Keywords: *Domestic Violence, Child Abuse, Youth Violence, Child Trafficking.*

I. Introduction

Domestic violence is a devastating social problem that impacts every segment of the population. While system responses are primarily targeted toward adult victims of abuse, increased attention is now being focused on the children who witness domestic violence. Studies estimate that 10 to 20 percent of children are at risk for exposure to domestic violence. Research also indicates children exposed to domestic violence are at an increased risk of being abused or neglected.

II. Overlap And Consequences Of Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, And Youth Violence

Child abuse and domestic violence often occur in the same family and are linked in a number of important ways that have serious consequences for the safety of all family members as well as for members of the larger community. First, where one form of family violence exists, there is a strong like hood that the other one does too. Second, research shows that the impact on children of witnessing parental domestic violence is strikingly similar to the consequences of being directly abused by a parent, and both experiences are significant contributors to youth violence. Third, many of the factors highly associated with the occurrence of child abuse are also associated with domestic violence, and many of these are the same factors that put children at risk for youth violence and adult violent crime.

The concurrent incidence of domestic violence and child abuse within the same families is well documented. In a national survey of over 6,000 families, researchers found that 50% of the men who frequently assaulted their wives also frequently assaulted their children. Domestic violence and child abuse take a devastating toll on children and society at large. Early childhood victimization, either through direct abuse, neglect, or witnessing parental domestic violence, has been shown to have demonstrable long-term consequences for youth violence, adult violent behaviors, and other forms of criminality. Children can be killed, physically injured, psychologically harmed, or neglected as a result of either domestic violence or child abuse. From 1990 to 1994, 5,400 children are known to have died from abuse or neglect.

Domestic violence perpetrators sometimes intentionally injure children in an effort to intimidate and control their adult partners. These assaults can include physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of the children. Children may also be injured-either intentionally or accidentally – during attacks on their mothers. Even when domestic violence does both result in direct physical injury to the child, it can interfere with both the mother's and the father's parenting to such a degree that the children may be neglected or abused. The impact of domestic violence and child abuse may continue through adolescence and adulthood. The overlap between child abuse and domestic violence is not limited to their consequences or prevalence. Similarly, research on domestic violence risk factors shows that women in low-income households experience a higher rate of violence by an

intimate partner than women in households with higher incomes. Finally, a significant portion of child abusers, domestic violence perpetrators, and violent juvenile offenders grew up being abused themselves and/or witnessing their parents' domestic violence.

III. Elements Of Successful Family And Youth Violence Prevention/ Early Intervention Efforts

Both the domestic violence and child abuse fields are relatively new to prevention. Child abuse prevention programming has included public education campaigns aimed at changing the social norms that ignore and support child abuse, and mobilizing individuals to take actions that protect children. More recent prevention efforts have involved providing support to new families, such as home visitation or family support programs. Domestic violence prevention efforts are even more recent than those aimed at child abuse, and have primarily focused on changing the social norms that turn away from and/or tacitly support violence against intimate partners, either through public education campaigns or through education aimed at youth through the schools. In contrast, more substantial efforts have been made to prevent juvenile violence. In terms of outcomes, very little research has been done to evaluate the success of domestic violence or child abuse prevention programs over time. The effort should target low-income young parents. Low-income youth who are not yet parents would not be as responsive as young parents to discussions regarding parenting strategies and issues of raising a family. On the other hand, waiting to approach low-income parents after the cycle of violence within the family has already begun renders the prevention/early intervention strategies less effective. By focusing on young parents a successful program would also reach their children at a young age, thus preventing the risk factors for juvenile violence in the child's life, as well as the risk factors associated with the child growing up to be a child abuser or a domestic violence perpetrator or victim.

IV. Impact Of Domestic Violence On Children

Children who live with domestic violence face increased risks: the risk of exposure to traumatic events, the risk of neglect, the risk of being directly abused, and the risk of losing one or both of their parents. All of these may lead to negative outcomes for children and may affect their well-being, safety, and stability (Carlson, 2000; Edleson, 1999; Rossman, 2001). Childhood problems associated with exposure to domestic violence fall into three primary categories:

- **Behavioral, social, and emotional problems** Higher levels of aggression, anger, hostility, oppositional behavior, and disobedience; fear, anxiety, withdrawal, and depression; poor peer, sibling, and social relationships; and low self-esteem.
- **Cognitive and attitudinal problems** Lower cognitive functioning, poor school performance, lack of conflict resolution skills, limited problem solving skills, pro-violence attitudes, and belief in rigid gender stereotypes and male privilege.
- **Long-term problems** Higher levels of adult depression and trauma symptoms and increased tolerance for and use of violence in adult relationships.

Children who witness frequent and severe forms of violence or fail to observe their caretakers resolving conflict may undergo more distress than children who witness fewer incidences of physical violence. Children with poor coping skills are more likely to experience problems than children with strong coping skills and supportive social networks. Younger children appear to exhibit higher levels of emotional and psychological distress than older children. In general, boys exhibit more "externalized behaviors" while girls exhibit more "internalized" behaviors". Children who witness domestic violence and are physically abused are at risk for increased levels of emotional and psychological maladjustment than children who only witness violence and are not abused.

Increased awareness regarding the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse compelled child welfare and domestic violence programs to re-evaluate their services and interventions with families experiencing both forms of violence. Although adult and child victims often are found in the same families, child welfare and domestic violence programs historically responded separately to victims. Some child welfare advocates have charged domestic violence service providers with discounting the safety needs of children by focusing solely on the adult victim. Conversely, some domestic violence advocates accuse child protective services caseworkers of "revictimizing" adult victims by blaming them for the violence, removing their children and charging them with "failure to protect". Despite these differences, child welfare advocates and service providers share areas of common ground that can bridge the gap between them, including:

- Ending violence against adults and children.
- Ensuring children's safety.
- Protecting adult victims so their children are not harmed by the violence.

- Promoting parents' strengths.
- Deferring child protection services intervention, if possible, and referring adult victims and children to community based services.

V. Domestic Violence Act 2005

The incidents of domestic violence are higher among the lower socio-economic classes. Domestic violence is also seen in the form of physical abuse. The protection of women from domestic violence act 2005 came into force on October 26, 2006. The Act was passed by the parliament in August 2005 and assented to by the President on 13 September in 2005. As of November 2007, it has been ratified by four of twenty-eight state government in India.

VI. Role Of United Nation To Protect Women

In Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed in 1948 by the General Assembly of the UN and the foundation of the UN human rights system states that everyone should enjoy human rights without discrimination and affirms the equal right of women and men. The women rights divisions of human rights watch fights against the dehumanization and marginalization of women. We promote women equal rights and human dignity.

VII. Role Of Indian Government To Protect Women Rights

The Constitution of India guarantees to all Indian women equality (Article 14), No discrimination by the stall (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunity (Article 16) Equal pay for equal work (Article 39). In addition, it allows special provisions to be made by the state in favour of women and children (Article 15) renounces practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51) and also allows for provisions to be made by the state for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief (Article 42).

VIII. Role Of Education In Women Development

In 1992-93, only 9.2% of the households in India were female headed. However, approximately 35% of the households below the poverty line were found to be female headed. The national sample survey data of 1997, only the state of Kerala, and Mizoram have approached universal female literacy rates. In 1998 report by U.S department of commerce, the chief barriers to female education in India are inadequate school facilities, shortage of female teachers and gender bias in curriculum.

IX. Domestic Violence Against Children/Teens

Domestic violence is perhaps the most rampant yet under recognized form of abuse in the society. It encompasses physical abuse to pets and property. Sexual abuse includes molestation, rape, exposure of sexually explicit material etc. The children get affected in the worst way. A daily trashing may become habitual, people under the influence of alcohol or drugs seldom understand the situation and a regular act of violence soon becomes a routine activity. There is definitely a pressing need of concrete actions from the governments to abolish this practice. Growth and development matters only when all the basic problems are eradicated.

X. Social Exclusion, Child Abuse And Neglect

Indigenous communities of India are generally known as tribes or Adivasi, which means aboriginal or native. The community should have primitive traits, distinctive culture, isolated habitations, reluctance for interaction with other communities and poverty. India is a home to 573 different tribal communities and tribal constitutes more than eight percent of India present population. They speak as many as 270 languages. Their livelihood pattern can easily be group in three distinct types: hunting, gathering, agriculture and wage labour. The paper brings into focus,

1. The specter of educational backwardness of the tribal communities focusing on children,
2. Reasons for this backwardness.
3. Reasons for providing quality and meaningful education for them, and
4. Policy overhauling and conclusion 'street children' is a distinct category of deprived children. The majority of street children consist of children on the street.

XI. Child Trafficking

Trafficking in children threatens the social stability and development of many rural families and communities, and damages the lives of many people who are its direct or indirect victims. Trafficking of children can involve a great deal of violence and cruelty many victims are virtual prisoners for several years, are raped, beaten and tortured, sometimes driving them to suicide. In many cases children trafficked are sold into sexual exploitation. Whereas in the past traffickers generally found enough parents willing to sell their own

infants, now they are resorting to kidnapping. In many parts of rural areas, human right awareness is low and few people perceive purchasing a women or child as criminal or immoral.

XII. Child Protection: Role Of UNICEF

UNICEF uses the term 'Child Protection' to refer to protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, conversely, successful protection increases a child chances of growing up physically and mentally health, confident and self-respecting, and less likely to abuses or exploit others, including his or her own children. Child protection is closely linked to other aspects of a child well-being. An immunized child who is constantly beaten is not a healthy child; a school going child taunted and abused for his or her ethnicity does not enjoy a good learning environment and an adolescent sold into prostitution will not be empowered to participate in and contribute to society. Child protection is an integral part of the business of development.

XIII. Legislative Measures In India-Legal Rights Of Women

To uphold the constitutional mandate the state has enacted various legislative measures intended to ensure equal rights, to counter social discrimination and various forms of violence and atrocities and to provide support service especially to working women. The police have been given a constitutional and a legal role to play in case of violence, laws, rules, and procedures have been devised for this purpose.

XIV. Changing Male Behaviour

Several members in the working group highlighted the importance of initiative aimed at changing social and cultural norms about the gender roles of men and societal attitudes towards violence in general. In this connection they focused on solidarity campaigns by men opposed to violence against women, educational initiatives aimed at raising awareness among boys and men, and treatment programmes for men who have perpetrated violence against women.

XV. Conclusion

The global campaign for elimination of violence against women, in the recent years indicates the enormity as well as the seriousness of the atrocities committed against women that are being witnessed the world over. Development long with its progressive changes in personal life style, living standards, varied economic growth caused by urbanization and changes in social ethos contributes to a violent attitude and tendencies towards women which has resulted in an increase in crimes against women. Such incidents are a matter of serious concern and its containment is a necessity so that the women of India attain their rightful share and live in dignity, freedom, peace and free from crimes and aspersions. The battle against women has to be waged by the various sections of society through campaigns and various programmes with social support along with legal protection, safeguards and reforms in the Criminal Justice System.

References

- [1]. Jyotsna Tiwari, Child Abuse and Human Rights, Isha Books, Delhi, 2004.
- [2]. Sudip chakraborty, Child Abuse and Exploitation, Regal publications, New Delhi.
- [3]. Neha Arora, Human Rights and Gender Violence, RBSA publishers, Jaipur, 2012.
- [4]. Straus, M.A., Gelles, R.J., & Smith, C. (1990). Physical violence in American families: Risk factors and adaptations to violence in 8,145 families. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- [5]. McCurdy, K., & Daro, D. (1994). Child maltreatment: A national survey of reports and Fatalities, Journal of Interpersonal violence.
- [6]. Appel, A.E. and Holden, G.W. (1998). The co-occurrence of spouse and physical child abuses: A review and appraisal. Journal of Family Psychology.
- [7]. Beeman, S.K., Hagemester, A.K., and Edleson, J.L.(1999),Child protection and battered women services: From conflict to collaboration,Child Maltreatment.
- [8]. Chatterjee, M., Violence Against Women, Aavishkar Publishers, Jaipur, 2006.
- [9]. Gurappa Naidu Y., Violence Against Women in India, Serials Publications, New Delhi, 2011.
- [10]. Aadesh K.Devgan, Crime Against Women and Child- An Emerging Social Problems, Cyber Tech Publications, New Delhi, 2008.