

# Consequences of Child Abuse in India and Around the World

Dr. Rama Kant Dawar<sup>1\*</sup> Dr. Pawan Jot<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. Psychology, A-Substance Abuse Professional & Nurturing Parenting & Domestic Violence Prevention Specialist, Child Abuse Prevention Professional & Consultant

<sup>2</sup> Ph. D. Epidemiology

**Abstract – Child Abuse in India and around the world is common with traumatic post child abuse consequences. Some of the consequences post child abuse includes issues with the following growth stages: developmental, psychological, mental, anti-social behaviors and many more. It is necessary to educate the Parents and Guardians of the effects of Child Abuse so it is no longer a norm in many countries around the world.**

-----X-----

One of the biggest social stigmas attached to a society is that of child abuse. A child can be abused physically, sexually, emotionally, financially or mentally. It can be in the form of injury, neglect or negligent treatment, blaming, incest exploitation and sexual abuse. Child abuse can take place in homes, schools, orphanages, residential care facilities, on the streets, in the workplaces, in prisons and in places of detention. Violence in any form has a very deep impact on the overall development of the child. Child abuse results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development and dignity.

The consequences of abuse depend both on its type and a variety of other factors according to the Children's Bureau, 2013. Thus, a child's age and developmental level can affect health outcomes. For example, a baby will probably not remember acts of abuse, whereas a three-year-old child is extremely vulnerable to parental neglect and aggressiveness creating trauma. The duration, regularity, and brutality of abuse and neglect also determine a child's response, just as the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (Children's Bureau, 2013). Moreover, a child's emotional well-being and personality may also determine the impact of abuse.

53% of children in India face some form of child sexual abuse. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, the cases of rape and murder of children increase every year. The growing complexities of life and the changed social economic conditions have exposed the children to new and different forms of abuse. But the sad state of the affairs is that such heinous acts are reported less. It has such a psychological impact on the mind of the child that he/she seldom gathers the courage to

speak about the act being committed against him/her. If even he/she confides with someone, the social factors let the fact being dumped under the fear of family reputation and other related issues. In fact, child abuse is a violation of the basic human rights of a child.

India is a country of strong cultural beliefs where care of children is considered the purview of the family predominantly and child abuse, especially sexual abuse, is an issue surrounded by a conspiracy of muteness. It is not until recently that the government has intervened and child's rights and protection are being given importance. However, lack of substantial information and evidence on child abuse makes it difficult to approach the issue in a comprehensive manner. Further, the definition of child abuse is not constant among countries, and therefore, data cannot be generalized to all.

In general, abuse refers to (usually deliberate) acts of commission while neglect refers to acts of omission. Child maltreatment includes both acts of commission and acts of omission on the part of parents or caregivers that cause actual or threatened harm to a child. Some health professionals and authors consider neglect as part of the definition of abuse, while others do not; this is because the harm may have been unintentional, or because the caregivers did not understand the severity of the problem, which may have been the result of cultural beliefs about how to raise a child. Delayed effects of child abuse and neglect, especially emotional neglect, and the diversity of

acts that qualify as child abuse, are also factors in commission of child abuse.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines child abuse and child maltreatment as “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 should be considered as child abuse.”

According to the 2002 UN Secretary General’s Study on Violence against Children, almost 53,000 child deaths occurred across the globe due to child homicide. Approximately 20% of women and 5-10% of men report being sexually abused in childhood. Also, 23% of people report being physically abused as children.

As of 2006, the World Health Organization distinguishes four types of child maltreatment: physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional (or psychological) abuse, and neglect. Financial and spiritual child abuse are a rising form of child maltreatment. Financial child abuse is when a child is victim of identity fraud combined with financial fraud it is also, when a child is left with a wealth and care takers or foster parents are taking advantage of the wealth in those circumstances the child is abused financially. Financial abuse occurs when someone intentionally commits identity theft using a child’s Social Security information (in the United States). In other countries if a child is the owner of land, money, bank accounts or fixed deposits and step parents or adopted parents or care takers abuse that child emotionally, physically or mentally to collect the benefits of the child’s current or future trust, wealth or deeds etc. Spiritual abuse is when a parent forces the child to have blind obedience, submission, and legalistic views that only pertain to the parent’s belief of who is holy or impure.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE:

Among professionals and the general public, there is disagreement as to what behaviors constitute physical abuse of a child. Physical abuse often does not occur in isolation, but as part of a constellation of behaviors including authoritarian control, anxiety-provoking behavior, and a lack of parental warmth. The WHO defines physical abuse as: Intentional use of physical force against the child that results in – or has a high likelihood of resulting in – harm for the child’s health, survival, development or dignity. This includes hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning and suffocating. Much physical violence against children in the home is inflicted with the object of punishing.

“TEN4” is a useful mnemonic device used to recall which bruising locations are of concern in cases involving physical abuse: Torso, Ear, Neck, and 4

(less than four years of age or any bruising in a child less than four months of age). A few injuries that are highly suggestive of abuse include retinal hemorrhages, posterior rib fractures, and classic metaphyseal lesions.

Bruising is the most common sign of physical abuse but is missed as a sentinel injury in ambulatory children. The most common areas of bruising in non-abused children are the knees and shins as well the forehead. The most common area of bruising for abused children includes the head and face. Burns are common form of a childhood injury that is usually not associated with abuse. Immersion burns have characteristics sharp lines of demarcation that often involves the genitals and lower extremities in a symmetric pattern, and is highly suspicious of abuse.

Physical abuse as a child can lead to physical and mental difficulties in the future, including re-victimization, personality disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, dissociative disorders, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, substance abuse, and aggression. Physical abuse in childhood has also been linked to homelessness in adulthood.

India is home to almost 19% of the world’s children, and children and adolescents together form approximately 40% of India’s total population. In India, two out of every three children are physically abused, and every second a child is reported to be facing emotional abuse. Abuse and maltreatment during childhood adversely affect the physical and psychosocial development of children. In most of the cases the physical abuse is caused by the own parents, siblings, uncles, aunts and including the grandparents of the child. Children can also be punished and physically abused by teachers and school officials. There have been many deaths and suicides of children abused by school officials and teachers in recent years.

### SEXUAL ABUSE:

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a form of child abuse in which an adult or older adolescent abuses a child for sexual stimulation. Sexual abuse refers to the participation of a child in a sexual act aimed towards the physical gratification or the financial profit of the person committing the act. Forms of CSA includes asking or pressuring a child to engage in sexual activities (regardless of the outcome), indecent exposure of the genitals to a child, displaying pornography to a child, actual sexual contact with a child, physical contact with the child’s genitals, viewing of the child’s genitalia without physical contact, or using a child to produce child pornography, all of these acts fall under child abuse. Selling the sexual services of children

may be viewed and treated as child abuse rather than simple incarceration.

Effects of child sexual abuse on the victim include guilt and self-blame, flashbacks, nightmares, insomnia, fear of things associated with the abuse (including objects, smells, places, doctor's visits, etc.), self-esteem difficulties, sexual dysfunction, chronic pain, addiction, self-injury, suicidal ideation, somatic complaints, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, other mental illnesses including borderline personality disorder and dissociative identity disorder, propensity to re-victimization in adulthood, bulimia nervosa, and physical injury to the child, among other problems. Children who are the victims; are also at an increased risk of sexually transmitted infections due to their immature immune systems and a high potential for mucosal tears during forced sexual contact. Sexual victimization at a young age has been correlated with several risk factors for contracting HIV, decreased knowledge of sexual topics, increased prevalence of HIV, engagement in risky sexual practices, can be the cause of future STDs and can be the cause of other behavioral problems including, but not limited to promiscuous behavior. These kinds of abuse and sexual abuse can also cause many other Venereal Disease or STDs, which can end the life of an individual as well.

According to the CDC and its data collected the females exposed to child sexual abuse are 2-13 times at an increased risk of sexual victimization in adulthood. Individuals who experience child sexual abuse are at twice the risk for non-sexual intimate partner violence. The odds of attempting suicide are six times higher for men and nine times higher for woman with a history of child sexual abuse than those without a history of child sexual abuse.

Around 53% of children reported having faced one or more forms of sexual abuse, and almost 50% of abusers are persons known to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility. Child sexual abuse accounts for approximately 6% of cases of depression, 6% of alcohol and drug abuse, 8% of suicide attempts, 10% of panic disorders and 27% of post-traumatic stress disorders (CDC data).

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE:**

There are multiple definitions of child psychological abuse, some have defined it as the production of psychological and social defects in the growth of a child as a result of behavior such as loud yelling, coarse and rude attitude, inattention, harsh criticism, and denigration of the child's personality. Other examples include name-calling, ridicule, degradation, destruction of personal belongings, torture or killing of a pet, excessive criticism, inappropriate or excessive demands, withholding communication, and routine labeling or humiliation

In 2014, the APA stated that:

- Childhood psychological abuse [is] as harmful as sexual or physical abuse;
- Psychological maltreatment is "the most challenging and prevalent form of child abuse and neglect;

In 2015, additional research confirmed these 2014 statements of the APA {American Psychological Association}.

### **NEGLECT:**

Child neglect is the failure of a parent or other person with parental duty and responsibility for the child, to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision to the degree that the child's health, safety or well-being may be threatened with a degree of harm of the child's current and future well-being. Neglect is also a lack of attention from the people surrounding a child, and the non-provision of the relevant and adequate necessities for the child's survival, which would be a lack of attention, love, and nurturing.

Some observable signs of child neglect include: the child is frequently absent from school, begs or steals food or money, lacks needed medical and dental care, is consistently dirty, or lacks appropriate clothing for the weather and not finishing up homework assigned by the teachers and lacking in grades, not paying attention in classroom, fighting with the class mates and coming late in the class or missing the classes etc.

### **NEGLECTFUL ACTS CAN BE DIVIDED INTO SIX SUB-CATEGORIES:**

- Supervisory neglect: characterized by the absence of a parent or guardian which can lead to physical harm, sexual abuse, or criminal behavior;
- Physical neglect: characterized by the failure to provide the basic physical necessities, such as a safe and clean home;
- Medical neglect: characterized by the lack of providing medical care;
- Emotional neglect: characterized by a lack of nurturance, encouragement, and support;
- Educational neglect: characterized by the caregivers lack to provide an education and additional resources to actively participate in the school system; and

- Abandonment: when the parent or guardian leaves a child alone for a long period of time without a babysitter or a caretaker.

Child abuse can result in immediate adverse physical effects, but it is also strongly associated with developmental problems and with many chronic physical and psychological effects, including subsequent ill-health, including higher rates of chronic conditions, high-risk health behaviors and shortened lifespan.

Maltreated children may grow up to be maltreating adults. A 1991 source reported that studies indicate that 90 percent of maltreating adults were maltreated as children. Almost 7 million American infants receive child care services, such as day care, and much of that care is poor.

Recently according to the news reports a Delhi Police officer Seema Dhaka, was recognized as an officer, as she traced 76 abused children and found them with her investigative skills and brought those abused children to the main stream. For this recognizable work this officer has been promoted without her promotion turn (Zee News 11/20/2020). These children were not only physically, mentally, psychologically abused, but were also maltreated by their care takers or abductors.

The family structure, particularly when unstable, is associated with increased child maltreatment risk. Single parent homes have double the risk of Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement, and one study found it to be the second largest predictor of child maltreatment, only after income. Single parenthood contributes to financial stress, social isolation, and lack of social support, all increasing the likelihood of child maltreatment. Other significant family predictors of child maltreatment include reorganized families, family conflict and cohesion and marital satisfaction. Further, poverty, unemployment, and the number of dependents in the household place additional strain on families which increases child abuse.

Although abuse and neglect may have a different impact, one cannot deny the fact that they are all extremely harmful to a victim's health and well-being. Long-term physical consequences include lung and liver disease, cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, asthma, chronic pain syndromes, chronic fatigue syndromes, irritable bowel syndrome, and many others (Children's Bureau, 2013). Non-sexual abuse is associated with substance use, suicide attempts, risky sexual behavior, and as a result, increased levels of sexual transmitted infections.

Psychological symptoms are also widespread among victims of child abuse. Adults who suffered abuse in childhood had increased risks of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). Child Abuse and neglect may make victims

aggressive, hostile, and anxious and may cause severe anxiety and personality disorders in adulthood (Springer et al., 2007). Anxiety and depression are the most common psychological effect of abuse. Victims of abuse feel guilt, shame and worthlessness and it's hard to recover from.

The emotional development of a child, who has been abused is negatively affected. Researchers recognize that children of abusive parents did not receive the adequate amount of love and support, creating limited effective communication among their peers. More specifically, individuals who were abused in childhood cannot recognize and process emotional information, which in turns leads to social delays. Emotional problems are linked to antisocial behavior and psychopathy because people who have suffered from abuse often experience deficits in empathy.

The children in India, who are suffering from child abuse are in need of care and protection are huge and increasing. Extreme poverty, insecurity of daily living, and lack of education result in very little care to the child during early formative years. The government services provided that is in operation nationwide and are mandated to offer free services are poorly ran and inefficiently utilized. Child abuse in urban areas is under-privileged, large migrating populations and neglected rural communities in India are particularly affected. Absence of monetary investment and lack of economic capacity are important concerns, but child abuse knows no class or livelihood barriers. It threatens and afflicts children up and down the economic ladder which is extremely telling us the horrible stories of child abuse.

Available research suggests that the rates for many other countries are no lower, and may be indeed higher than the estimates of physical abuse in the United States. In a cross-sectional survey of children in Egypt, 37% reported being beaten up or tied up by their parents and 26% reported physical injuries such as fractures, loss of consciousness or permanent disability as a result of being beaten or tied up. (Youssef RM, Attia MS, Kamel MI. Children experiencing violence: parental use of corporal punishment. Child Abuse & Neglect, 1998) Two-thirds of parents in the Republic of Korea were reported whipping their children and 45% confirmed that they had been hit, kicked, or beaten them. (Hahn H Guterman N. The emerging problem of physical child abuse in South Korea. Child Maltreatment, 2001). A survey of households in Romania found that 4.6% of children reported suffering severe and frequent physical abuse, including being hit with an object, being burned or being deprived of food. Nearly half of Romanian parents admitted to beating their children "regularly" and 16% to beating their children with objects. (Browne K et al. Child



<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S014521349290090E>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/21668238\\_Child\\_Abuse\\_in\\_India\\_An\\_empirical\\_report\\_on\\_perceptions](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/21668238_Child_Abuse_in_India_An_empirical_report_on_perceptions)

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/1486517/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31803646/>

<https://www.quora.com/Why-do-parents-in-India-physically-abuse-their-children>

<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/columnist/shireen-vakil-miller>

[https://www.med.or.jp/english/journal/pdf/2013\\_05/302\\_309.pdf](https://www.med.or.jp/english/journal/pdf/2013_05/302_309.pdf)

[https://www.med.or.jp/english/journal/pdf/2013\\_05/302\\_309.pdf](https://www.med.or.jp/english/journal/pdf/2013_05/302_309.pdf)

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/parenting/toddler-year-and-beyond/shouting-slapping-to-denying-food-indian-parents-use-30-different-ways-of-abuse-according-to-a-unicef-report/photostory/76243993.cms>

[https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/global\\_campaign/en/chap3.pdf](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/chap3.pdf)

<https://biblioteca.sagrado.edu/eds/detail?db=asn&an=118221779&isbn=09595236>

<https://svri.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2016-04-12/SituationAnalysis.pdf>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2020/10/stolen-lives-harrowing-story-of-two-girls-sold-into-sexual-slavery-feature/>

<https://familyresourcesinc.org/2020/01/teen-financial-abuse-psychology-series/>

[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/long\\_term\\_consequences.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/long_term_consequences.pdf)

<file:///F:/Research%20paper-1/Child%20Abuse%20Research%20Paper/Resources/Child%20maltreatment.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/SV-Prevention-Technical-Package.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/can-prevention-technical-package.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/childsexualabuse.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/can/factsheetCSA508.pdf>

[file:///F:/Research%20paper-1/Child%20Abuse%20Research%20Paper/Resources/What%20Is%20Financial%20Child%20Abuse\\_%20-%20ToughNickel%20-%20Money.html](file:///F:/Research%20paper-1/Child%20Abuse%20Research%20Paper/Resources/What%20Is%20Financial%20Child%20Abuse_%20-%20ToughNickel%20-%20Money.html)

---

## Corresponding Author

### Dr. Rama Kant Dawar\*

Ph.D. Psychology, A-Substance Abuse Professional & Nurturing Parenting & Domestic Violence Prevention Specialist, Child Abuse Prevention Professional & Consultant