

Emotional abuse- A deterrent in child's development

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ABSTRACT

The present research was an attempt to find out the prevalence of emotional abuse among children and prevalence of gender disparities in abuse across three socio-economic groups in Allahabad district. A total sample of 180 children in the age group of 9-18 years from three socio-economic status families were selected using stratified random sampling technique. Sixty respondents and their parents from each socio-economic group (30 boys and 30 girls) were selected for the study. Socio-economic status scale was used to assess the socio-economic status of the respondents. Self-made interview schedule for parents and children was used to assess the prevalence of abuse. Results indicated that emotional abuse was more prevalent in lower socio-economic group among boys and girls followed by middle and upper socio-economic group. Socio-economic status had a significant effect ($P \leq .01$) and gender had a non-significant effect on the prevalence of emotional abuse. The study indicated that parents were mostly responsible for inflicting emotional abuse on children. Hence, the study revealed that the emotional abuse was prevalent among children in all three socio-economic groups and it was suggested that awareness campaigns, role of mass media, law and policies for protection of children's rights can prove to be helpful in combating child abuse.

KEY WORDS : Abuse, Maltreatment, Deterrent, Prevalence, Combat, Campaigns

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INTRODUCTION

Emotional abuse indicates 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, or mental trauma. This can include parents/caretakers using extreme and/or bizarre forms of punishment, such as confinement in a closet or dark room or being tied to a chair for long periods of time or threatening to terrorizing a child. Less severe acts, but no less damaging, are belittling or rejecting treatment, using derogatory terms to describe the child, habitual tendency to blame the child or make him/her a scapegoat.

The problem of child abuse and human rights violation is one of the critical matters on the international human rights agenda as abused children suffer long term physical and psychological damage that impairs their ability to learn and socialize making it difficult for them to perform well in school and develop close and lasting friendship.

METHODOLOGY

Allahabad district was purposively selected for the study as the researchers are familiar with the place. Allahabad district is divided into 21 blocks, out of which 6 blocks were selected for the present study using random sampling technique. Families belonging to the three socio-economic status *i.e.* lower, middle and upper from each block were selected using stratified random sampling technique. From each socio-economic group, a total of 10 families from each block were selected, among which 5 families having an index child as a boy and 5 families having an index child as a girl were selected using purposive sampling technique.

Children in the age group of 9-18 years and their parents belonging to the lower, middle and upper socio-economic status families were selected to study the prevalence of emotional abuse. A total sample of 180 children comprising of 60 children each (30 boys and 30 girls) and their parents from lower, middle and upper socio-

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