

Role of Parents in the Prevention of Child Abuse

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ABSTRACT

The prime objective of this study was the role of parents in the prevention of child abuse. Child abuse is a complex and multi-faceted problem that affects millions of children around the world. It can occur in any family, regardless of socio-economic status, race, or cultural background. Child abuse can take many forms, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Each of these types of abuse can have severe and long-lasting consequences on a child's physical, mental health, and can even result in death. According to a study conducted by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), nearly 55% of children in India experienced some kind of abuse. This number is incredibly high and points to a serious issue that needs to be addressed. In this study, the interview schedule method was used to collect the data from 60 respondents and a Purposive sampling method was used as a technique to select the study area and samples. The study revealed that child abuse can have long-term effects on a child's mental health and emotional health.

KEYWORDS: Parents, prevention, child abuse

INTRODUCTION

Child abuse is a complex and multi-faceted problem that affects millions of children around the world. It can occur in any family, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, or cultural background. Child abuse can take many forms, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Each of these types of abuse can have severe and long-lasting consequences for a child's physical and mental health, and can even result in death.

Physical abuse is a form of child maltreatment that involves intentionally causing physical harm to a child. It can take various forms, such as hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, or burning a child with a hot object. Physical abuse can result in bruises, broken bones, burns, and other injuries that require medical attention. In severe cases, physical abuse can even lead to permanent disabilities or death.

Emotional abuse is a type of child abuse that involves the deliberate use of words or actions to cause emotional pain or distress to a child. Emotional abuse can take many forms, including verbal abuse, such as name-calling, humiliation, belittling, and constant criticism. It can also include withholding love and affection, ignoring a child's emotional needs, or isolating a child from social interactions and activities.

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Sexual abuse is a type of child abuse that involves any sexual activity between an adult and a child. It can include touching, fondling, or penetration, and can involve physical force, coercion, or manipulation. Sexual abuse can cause physical injuries and long-term emotional and psychological damage to the child. The effects of sexual abuse can be severe and long-lasting, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, and suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

Neglect is another type of child abuse that involves failure to provide necessary care and supervision for a child's physical, emotional, and social needs. Neglect can include failing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or education.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, defines child abuse as any physical, sexual, emotional, or economic maltreatment of a child. This includes neglect, abandonment, exploitation, and any other form of harmful treatment.

Causes of child abuse

- Isolation and lack of support: no family members, friends, partners, or community support to help with the demands of parenting

- Stress: financial pressures, job worries, medical problems, or caring for a family member with a disability
- Unrealistic expectations: a lack of understanding about a child’s developmental stages and behavior
- Intellectual disability or mental illness: parents may be unable to adequately care for their child.
- Lack of parenting skills: parents may not know how to care for their child or may believe it is acceptable to use excessive physical force to discipline or punish a child.
- Drug, alcohol, or gambling problems: addiction or substance abuse may affect a parent’s ability to meet their child’s needs.
- Low self-confidence: parents may doubt their ability to meet their child’s needs and find it hard to ask for help.
- Past childhood experiences: parents may have experienced abuse in their own families, which could have caused them to develop an insecure attachment style.
- Mental health problems.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research approach used in this study was a quantitative approach using a descriptive research design. The geographical universe of the study was in Ernakulum district, Kerala. The unit of study, research has taken the parents of children under 18 years old in Ernakulum district. A Purposive sampling method is used as a technique to select the study area and samples. The interview schedule method was used as a tool to collect the data from respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Distribution of Respondents Based on Whether They Discussed About Child Abuse with Their Children

Sl. No	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	52	87%
2	No	8	13%
	Total	60	100%

Distribution of Respondents Based on Whether They Have Talked to Their Children About Appropriate Boundaries and Personal Space.

Sl. No	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	48	80%
2	No	12	20%
	Total	60	100%

Distribution of Respondents Based on Their View on the Importance of Educating Children about Child Abuse in School

Sl. No	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	59	98%
2	No	1	2%
	Total	60	100%

Distribution of Respondents Based on Their Awareness of Laws and Regulations Related to Child Abuse Prevention

Sl. No	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very aware	19	32%
2	Somewhat aware	35	58%
3	Not very aware	2	3%
4	Not at all aware	4	7%
	Total	60	100%

FINDINGS

1. This study indicates that 97% of respondents believe that child abuse can have long-term effects on a child's mental and emotional health.
2. This study shows that 87% of respondents discussed child abuse prevention with their children.
3. This study shows that 80% of respondents talked about appropriate boundaries and personal space for their children.
4. This study indicates that 98% of respondents think that schools should have a mandatory program that educates children about child abuse.
5. This study shows that 58% of respondents are somewhat aware of the laws and regulations related to child abuse.

SUGGESTIONS

Parents play a critical role in creating a safe and nurturing environment for their children, which is essential for preventing child abuse. Some of the suggestions are as follows:

- **Education and awareness:** We need to conduct community-wide campaigns to educate individuals about the different types of child abuse, its prevalence, and the importance of prevention.
- **Strengthen reporting systems:** Encourage and educate parents about the importance of reporting suspected cases of child abuse to the appropriate authorities.
- **Safe environment:** parents should ensure that their homes are safe and free from hazards.
- **Enhance training programs:** The government should expand the availability and accessibility of training programs on child abuse prevention. These programs should target not only parents

and caregivers but also professionals working with children, such as teachers, healthcare professionals, and social workers.

- **Integrate prevention education in schools:** Parents overwhelmingly expressed the need for child abuse prevention education in schools. Advocate for the inclusion of mandatory programs that educate children about child abuse, its prevention, and how to seek help.
- **Foster open communication:** encouraging parents to promote open and honest communication between parents, caregivers, and children about child abuse.
- **Personal Boundaries:** Parents should encourage discussions about appropriate boundaries, personal space, and recognizing and reporting abusive behavior. Empower children to speak up and confide in trusted adults if they experience any form of abuse.
- **Support parents and caregivers:** Provide resources and support to parents and caregivers to enhance their knowledge and skills in child abuse prevention. Offer workshops, counselling services, and online resources to address their concerns and increase their confidence in addressing the issue.
- **Strengthen community engagement:** emphasize the collective responsibility of parents, caregivers, and the wider community in preventing child abuse. Encourage community members to support each other and create a safe environment for children.
- **Expand professional support:** develop and promote helplines, counseling services, and online platforms where individuals can seek advice, report concerns, and access information about child abuse.
- **Advocacy and community involvement:** Parents can advocate for stronger laws and regulations related to child abuse prevention and ensure their effective implementation. Promote collaboration between government agencies, policymakers, and NGOs to prioritize child abuse prevention.

CONCLUSION

Children are the most precious resources in our Nation, but as children, they often lack the skills to protect themselves. It is our responsibility, as parents and responsible citizens, to safeguard children and to teach them the skills to be safe. To make a tangible difference in child abuse prevention, it is necessary to

increase education and awareness, improve reporting systems, enhance training programs, integrate prevention education in schools, foster open communication, engage communities, expand professional support services, and strengthen legal frameworks. By addressing these aspects comprehensively and working collaboratively, we can create a society that prioritizes child protection, effectively prevents child abuse, and safeguards the well-being of our children.

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