



Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

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“THE sign of great parenting is not the child’s behaviour.
The sign of truly great parenting is the parent’s behaviour.”- **Andy Smithson**

ABSTRACT:-

An outline of how domestic violence impacts children is given in this study. It has been demonstrated that children who witness domestic violence-which is defined as physical, psychological, or mental assault between intimate partners have profound and lifelong effects. The effects of domestic violence on children are discussed in the paper, including the emotional, psychological, behavioral, and cognitive consequences, amongst others. It also looks at the long-term effects of abuse at home on education and educational institutions. The study also addresses intervention and support for kids exposed to domestic abuse, highlighting the value of early detection and broad services for kids and their families.

KEYWORDS:- Children, domestic abuse, intervention, and mitigation.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Understanding the impact of domestic violence exposure throughout childhood and adolescence is the purpose of this study. Families from every sphere of life are affected by the widespread issue of domestic violence. Although there is universal rejection of physical violence against children, many kids are victims of domestic violence committed by their parents or other household member. The growth and wellbeing of children can be severely and permanently influenced by this kind of environmental trauma. This study focuses on adolescents and children who have endured domestic violence in their own households in an attempt to:-

1. Assess the psychological and emotional impacts, including risks for conditions like PTSD, anxiety, depression, and attachment disorders.
2. Evaluate effects on cognitive development, academic performance, and social-behavioral functioning.
3. Identify potential mediating factors that may exacerbate or mitigate negative effects, such as severity/chronicity of exposure, family dynamics, and access to support services.
4. Explore the relationship between childhood exposure and future victimization or perpetration of domestic violence.

In the end, this research will provide insight into the multifaceted trauma that kids from abusive families have experienced. In order to better help those who are at risk, preventative measures, services for early intervention, trauma-focused therapies, and policy reforms must take into consideration the wide-ranging implications. The results will be extremely useful to those who work in mental health, educators, social workers, law enforcement professionals, and anybody else involved in eliminating the cycle of domestic abuse.

INTRODUCTION

Intimate partner violence is another name for domestic violence. It is a widespread social problem that affects millions of people and families worldwide. It includes a broad spectrum of actions taken by one intimate partner against another, such as controlling behaviors, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and physical assault. Domestic violence has an immediate impact on the children who are witnessing and experiencing it personally, but its consequences extend far beyond the adults who are involved. Children who are raised in violent homes are more likely to either witness violence firsthand or transform violent acts into crimes in the future. Another factor that results in domestic violence against children is witnessing emotional and physical abuse targeted against a parent or caregiver. Youngsters who see violence may grow up feeling guilty, frightened, and helpless, it could end up in permanent emotional and mental health issues. Children who are neglected may experience malnutrition, poor personal hygiene, and a lack of medical treatment, all of which

can have a permanent adverse effect on their mental and physical well-being. Physical health issues like headaches, stomachaches, and insomnia are more common in them. In addition, they might suffer from mental and behavioral issues including drug misuse, anxiety, sadness, and hatred. The academic performance and psychological growth of a child might be adversely affected by domestic abuse. Children who witness violence may find it difficult to focus in class and to acquire and retain knowledge. The following paper will explore the history, consequences, and interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of intimate partner violence on children.

PREVALANCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is a crucial issue in India, affecting large number of individuals across various demographic groups. Due to underreporting and cultural factors it is very challenging to obtain accurate prevalence rates, studies and surveys conducted in India provides insights into the extent of problem. Here are some reports conducted by authorities regarding the prevalence of domestic violence in India:-

1. **National Family Health Survey (NFHS):-** The NFHS is a large-scale survey conducted by the government of India to collect demographic and health-related data. The NFHS-5 (2020-2021) revealed that-
 - Approximately 29.3% Indian married women aged 18-49 years have experienced domestic violence/sexual violence at the hands of their husbands at some point of their lives.
 - 3.1% pregnant women between the ages of 18-49 have faced physical violence during the phase of pregnancy.
 - Domestic violence is highest in Karnataka 44%, Bihar 40%, Manipur 39%, Telangana 36%, and Tamil Nadu 38%.
2. **International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES):-** The IMAGES survey conducted in India in 2019 found that:
 - Around 30% of surveyed men reported perpetrating physical violence
 - Perpetration of psychological violence against men was reported at the rate of 60%.
3. **Crime Statistics:-** The National Crime Record Bureau(NCRB) collects the data on the basis of reported cases of domestic violence. However it's very important to note that it represents only the fraction of reported cases only and not the underreported one. According to NCRB:-
 - In 2022 over 1,40,000 that is approx (31.4%) cases were categorized under 'Cruelty by Husband and his Relatives (section 498 A of IPC).
 - Additionally, country has registered 13,479 cases under 'The Dowry Prohibition Act.
4. **Regional variations:-** The prevalence of domestic violence can vary across different regions of India due to so many factors such as socio-economic status, cultural and traditional norms, lack of education and awareness. The reports, surveys and studies clearly suggest that rates of domestic violence may be higher in rural areas if it is compared to urban areas.

All-embracing, domestic violence remains significant issues in India, efforts are needed to raise awareness, a support system for survivors, and address cardinal socio-cultural factors that contribute to its prevalence.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS

Children who have been subjected to or frequently see domestic violence may have severe and long-lasting effects. There are numerous methods to observe these impacts, that include:

1. **Anxiety and fear:-** Children who witness domestic abuse often deal with fear and anxiety all the time. They could never stop anticipating an upcoming violent incident.
2. **Low Self-Esteem:-** A child's confidence and sense of self-worth might be affected by seeing violence amongst caregivers.
3. **Depression:-** Children who experience domestic abuse have a greater probability to experience depression. Their ongoing trauma and stress might make them feel abandoned, depressed, and hopeless.
4. **Behavioral Issues:-** A lot of kids who witness domestic violence exhibit rude, rebellious, and impulsive conduct. They may occasionally find challenging to manage their emotions and actions, which can cause problems in the classroom and in their interactions with friends, family, and other people.
5. **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** Individuals who witness extreme domestic abuse personally might suffer from obtrusive recollections, flashbacks, nightmares, hyper vigilance, and other symptoms of PTSD
6. **The Formation of a good Connection:** Children who grow up in a domestic violence-ridden environment may never learn what makes a relationship successful. They might find it hard to create attachments and may have possibilities to develop issues with trust.
7. **Social Separation:** In general, children experiencing domestic problems might isolate themselves from friends and family and withdraw from social gatherings because they feel embarrassed or frightened of being criticized.

8. Physical Health Disorders: Staying in such a stressful environment can cause children to be exposed to chronic stress, which may give rise to physical health problems like stomachaches, headaches, and other psychosomatic signs and symptoms.

9. Substance Abuse: Children who observe such types of abuse could use alcohol or drugs as a way to compensate for their hurt and trauma.

10. Educational Challenges: Due to low self-esteem and a sense of inferiority, children exposed to domestic abuse may experience academic challenges, such as poor grades.

LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Children who experience domestic violence might experience serious as well as diverse long-term effects which influence their social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth. The following are a few possible long-term effects:

1. Impact on Emotions and Psychology:- Children who grow up with exposure to domestic violence might develop anxiety, depression, PTSD, and other mental health problems in adulthood. Furthermore, they might experience an inferiority complex, low self-esteem, sorrow, or embarrassment

2. Behavioural Problems:- Children who experience domestic violence may exhibit aggressive behaviour, they may even face difficulty in controlling their emotions, and have trouble in controlling their impulses. This can lead to problems in school, with their teacher, and in their relationships with peers.

3. Social Dysfunction:- A child's future potential to establish positive relationships could be hampered by growing up in an abusive home. They may experience difficulty in expressing their feelings, struggle with trust, and as a result of their lack of confidence they might withdraw from social interactions.

4. Physical Health Problems:- Living in an abusive household may lead to long-term physical problems like headaches, stomachaches, and sleep disruptions due to prolonged stress. Furthermore, it may damage their immune system, putting them more vulnerable to disease.

5. Cycle of Violence:- Children who grow up experiencing domestic violence are more likely to develop out to be either violent perpetrators or sufferers. They might take on the traits they witnessed personally and continue the abusive cycle in their own relationships.

6. Academic Challenges:- A child's ability to focus and study in school may be hindered by the stress and trauma by witnessing domestic abuse. This may result in inadequate performance in the classroom and challenges in attaining one's fullest potential.

7. Substance Abuse:- To deal with the stress of domestic violence, some kids may abuse drugs or alcohol. Dependency issues during childhood and adulthood can arise from this.

8. Interpersonal Difficulties:- Children who are victims of domestic violence may find it difficult to establish boundaries, resolve conflicts, and communicate with others. Their capacity to establish and preserve wholesome connections with others may be adversely affected by this.

9. Legal Issues:- Occasionally, children who experience domestic abuse can end up in court as adults, either as offenders or survivors of offenses.

10. Prolonged Trauma:- The trauma of observing cruelty at home can affect a child's perception of security, safety, and overall wellbeing for a long time. They may continue to suffer nightmares, flashbacks, and other symptoms associated with trauma as adults.

To minimize these long-term effects, it's critical that children who experience domestic abuse receive adequate assistance and intervention. Support groups, therapy, counseling, and other services can all be very helpful in assisting the children in their healing process.

MEDIATING AND MODERATING FACTORS

Numerous mediating and moderating factors may influence the effects of domestic abuse on children when evaluating those consequences. Here are some essential elements:-

1. Severity and Frequency of Violence:- The frequency and intensity of domestic abuse incidents can have significant consequences on children. Violence that is more severe or occurs more frequently typically results in greater negative impacts.

2. Relationship with the Abuser and Victim:- The child's relationship with the victim and abuser can influence their experience. For example, witnessing violence against a parent with whom they are close and have strong bond can be distressing to them.

3. Age and Developmental Stage of the Child:- Due to their insufficient understanding of the events, younger children may be more susceptible to the negative effects of domestic violence. Adolescents' reactions can vary depending on their emotional and cognitive growth.

4. Duration of Exposure:- Children exposed to domestic violence for a longer period of time may be more affected than those exposed for shorter periods of time. Extended exposure can result in long-term stress and mental health issues.

5. Gender:- According to some research, boys and girls may react to domestic abuse differently; boys are more vulnerable to externalize difficulties (such as conduct problems or aggression), while girls are more likely to internalize problems (such as anxiety or sadness).

6. Parental Mental Health:- Problems with parents' mental health, especially anxiety or depression in mothers, may mitigate the negative effects of domestic abuse on the development of children.

7. External Support System:- A child's capacity to deal with and recover from the impacts of domestic abuse can be greatly impacted by the accessibility of outside assistance systems, such as social welfare agencies, mental health specialists, and educational institutions.

8. Trauma Symptomatology:- The relationship among experience to domestic violence and its consequences on children can be mediated by the existence and intensity of trauma symptoms, such as anxiety, sadness, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

It is significant to keep in mind that all of these factors can relate in diverse ways, and the effect they have on a kid can change based on their circumstances and level of resilience. Comprehending these intermediary and modifying elements can aid in customizing interventions and assistance programs to more effectively cater to the distinct requirements of kids subjected to such acts of violence.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERVENTION

The impact of domestic violence on children can be devastating and persist throughout their lives. The following represent some of the many consequences and considerations for intervention:

1. Early Intervention:- To lessen the harmful effects that domestic abuse have on children, early intervention is necessary. This could involve providing children access to assistance and services as soon as there is a suspicion of domestic violence.

2. Safety Planning:- Ensuring the safety of children is of utmost importance. Rehabilitation programs must involve safety planning for both the non-abusive parent and the kid. This might entail providing short-term accommodation, psychological services, legal guidance, and financial assistance.

3. Trauma-Informed Care:- It's important to realize that children who witness domestic abuse endure trauma. Intervention programs have to be trauma-informed, focusing on understanding and addressing the emotional, behavioral, and psychological impacts of trauma on children.

4. Therapeutic Support:- Children exposed to domestic violence may require therapeutic support to address the trauma they have experienced. Counselling and therapy sessions can help children to process their feelings, develop coping mechanisms, and rebuild a sense of safety and security.

5. Education and Awareness:- Educational initiatives to increase awareness of domestic abuse and its adverse impact on children should be a part of intervention efforts. In addition to reducing stigma and encouraging early reporting and intervention, this can assist eliminate misleading information.

6. Supportive Services:- Giving kids and families access to resources like child care, financial aid, and housing support helps ease some of the burdens caused by domestic abuse and opens them up to concentrate on their own healing.

7. Legal Protection and Advocacy:- It is crucial to guarantee legal protection for minors and to punish offenders responsible. Advocating for laws and regulations that put children's safety and wellbeing first in cases of domestic abuse should be a part of intervention efforts.

8. Collaboration and coordination:- A range of participants, such as community organizations, trainers, social workers, police officers, and healthcare professionals, are needed for an intervention to be effective. Children who have experienced domestic violence receive complete treatment targeted to their individual requirements because of this multidisciplinary approach.

9. Long-term assistance:- In order to give children and families continuous support, intervention activities need go beyond quick crisis intervention. Access to resources for additional rehabilitation and resilience-building, participation in mentoring programs, and follow-up services are examples of long-term assistance.

10. Cultural Sensitivity:- Families affected by domestic abuse come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, which must be acknowledged. Intervention programs must to be attentive to cultural variances as well as the unique requirements and values of every family. By addressing these factors, intervention initiatives can reduce the negative impacts.

By addressing these implications, intervention efforts can help to mitigate the negative impact of domestic violence on children and support their resilience and recovery.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion about how domestic violence affects children stresses the fact that it seriously and extensively affects the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of such minors. In numerous instances, research shows that children who are exposed to violence in their homes suffer diverse adverse consequences which may continue into adult life. These can take form of behavioural problems, learning difficulties, social troubles or lasting mental health diseases like worry, grief or even posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In addition to this, witnessing domestic abuse may sever bonds between parents and their children making them feel insecure and impotent. It may also pass on a legacy of violence thereby increasing chances that children from violent families would either commit crimes or become perpetrators themselves.

There is need for a comprehensive plan involving immediate protection and support, therapeutic interventions and long term prevention strategies so as to deal with the effects of domestic violence on children. To minimize its negative impact on kids and help them heal from their experiences; therefore, early intervention as well as access to services likes counselling, support groups and secure housing facilities are crucial for quick recovery.

Also important is calling for legislations on child welfare policies.