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Parental Separation and its Toll on Children

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effects of parental separation and divorce on children in the context of psychology and education, while centering the discussion around India. The traditional societal expectations alongside the increasing divorce rates in India tends to heighten the emotional suffering of children, fueling anxiety, guilt, social withdrawal, and diminished academic performance. The analysis portrays the effects of family disintegration through review of relevant literature and detailed case studies of two adolescents. The conclusions highlight the urgency of employing secondary preventative measures using therapy for the child, counseling for parents, and mental health services in schools. Primary and secondary preventative measures are framed with the goal of culturally sensitive short-term and long-term outcome mitigation.

Key words- parental divorce, child mental health, academic performance, emotional distress and indian culture context

INTRODUCTION

Separation and divorce are important life events that have a big influence on family dynamics. Even though these situations mostly impact the parents, children frequently suffer from complex and long-lasting effects. Divorce rates have been steadily rising worldwide, and while India has historically had lower divorce rates, this has changed due to shifting gender roles, growing urbanization, and societal norms. Children of separated or divorced parents frequently experience psychological turmoil, which can show up as behavioral problems, anxiety, and despair. These mental health issues frequently manifest in the classroom, where kids may show signs of deteriorating performance, decreased motivation, and trouble focusing.

EMOTIONAL EFFECTS ON CHILDREN OF DIVORCES BETWEEN PARENTS

- Young children frequently find it difficult to comprehend the necessity of traveling between two homes. They can fear that their parents would cease loving them in the future if they are able to stop loving each other.
- Children in elementary school could fear that they are to blame for the divorce. They might think they did something incorrectly or fear they misbehaved.
- Divorce and the shifts that it brings about can make teenagers quite furious. They might hold both parents responsible for the family's turmoil, or they might blame one of the parents for the marriage's breakdown.

These difficulties are made worse in the Indian setting by the stigma associated with divorce, which makes kids feel ashamed or alone. In addition, many kids do not get the help they require to get through these changes since there are few mental health resources available in the community and in schools.

WHEN TO GET YOUR CHILD SUPPORT?

Even though divorce is difficult for families, it might not be the best course of action to remain together just for the benefit of the kids. Children who grow up in families where there is a lot of conflict, hostility, and dissatisfaction may be more likely to experience behavioral and mental health problems. Therefore, it's common for children to experience emotional and behavioral difficulties just after parental separation. However, get professional assistance if your child continues to have behavioral or emotional problems. Your child may benefit from individual treatment to help him process his feelings. Changes in family dynamics may also be addressed with family therapy. Children's support groups are also available in some regions.

With a focus on the Indian setting, this research attempts to investigate both the effects on children's mental health and academic performance. It offers insights into the difficulties children encounter and the necessity of systemic actions to lessen these impacts by examining appropriate research and examining a case study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bhaswat P. (2024)

No matter their age or gender, children of separated parents are more likely to have psychological problems like anxiety and sadness, according to the research. The study highlights how these issues can be made worse by Indian family and social dynamics, which makes it harder for kids to adapt to the changes that come with parental separation.

Yadav, K. & Narayan, S. (2024)

The results imply that children of divorced parents are more vulnerable to mental health conditions including despair and anxiety. Additionally, because children's minds are frequently consumed with family changes, which impairs their focus and participation in the classroom, the disturbance in family structure might result in difficulties with academic achievement.

Xie, N. (2024).

Children of parents that divorce are more likely to experience depressed symptoms, according to the study. The child's mental suffering is caused by a number of underlying factors, such as decreased parental support, decreasing financial resources, and increasing exposure to parental conflict.

CASE STUDY

1. Demographic details

Name - Ary

Age- 14

Gender- male

Standard- 9th

Location- Delhi

Reason of referral- decline in academic performance and increased absenteeism

Presenting complaint

Over the previous six months, the teacher observed a sharp drop in his academic achievement as well as frequent absences. He avoided taking part in group activities, was aloof in class, and had mood swings frequently. When asked to participate in conversations, he frequently appeared preoccupied and irritable.

History of present Illness

Eight months ago, Ary's parents got separated due to a protracted marital dispute that frequently turned into verbal fights in front of Aarav. Ary's father transferred to another city after the divorce, so they only spoke on the phone sometimes. At the moment, He stays with his mom, who is having a hard time juggling job and parenting while dealing with financial difficulties.

Ary talked about how he felt abandoned and guilty since he thought he had played a part in his parents' divorce. He frequently feels ashamed when he compares oneself to his peers.

Family history

Father - 42 years old, employed in Faridabad as a software engineer. minimal post-divorce role in Ary's life.

Mother- 40 years old, works as a teacher. often overburdened with caregiving and financial obligations

Sibling-0

Personal history

Birth and development history - normal birth, achieved all the milestones

Academic history- Earlier a gifted student who participated actively in extracurricular activities and earned above-average marks.

Social history-once had a close-knit circle of friends, but he has since cut ties with them

MENTAL HEALTH EXAMINATION

Appearance - poor grooming and untidy clothes

Mood- feeling of sadness and hopelessness

Speech- soft with long pauses

Thought- logical but preoccupied with themes of guilt and self blame

Cognition- difficulty concentrating on tasks

Insight- partial insight about his condition

Intervention plan

- Initiated cognitive behavioural therapy to address negative pattern
- Introduced mindfulness techniques
- Develop a flexible study schedule to help him regain confidence in academics
- Initiated parental counselling

2.DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

Name - Mira

Age- 12years old

Gender- female

Standard-7th

Location-delhi

Reason of referral- sudden change in behaviour, reduced participation in class and frequent emotional outburst

Presenting complaints

Her general involvement in class debates and group projects has decreased, according to the teacher. During class, she frequently seemed preoccupied, agitated, and occasionally started crying. According to Mira's classmates, she has become less willing and has avoided social interaction.

History of present illness

After years of fighting, Mira's parents got divorced six months ago. Significant animosity, including custody disputes in court, accompanied the sudden breakup. Her father has relocated to a different city and only seldom comes, so Mira now lives with her mother.

Mira has shown symptoms of mental discomfort since the divorce, such as periods of sobbing, social disengagement, and trouble concentrating on her studies. In addition to being overcome by feelings of bewilderment and rage, she regularly reports feeling "unloved" and "discarded" by her father. Family history

Father- 38yrs old, businessman, living in north delhi

Mother-36yrs old, homemaker

Sibling- 0

Personal history

Birth and development history- No developmental delays and normal birth history

Academic history

Consistently achieved above average grades before the divorce

Social history

Previously had close friendships but now prefers solitude

MENTAL HEALTH EXAMINATION

Appearance - Neat but avoided eye contact

Mood- sad and irritable

Speech- soft spoken with long pauses

Thought- logical

Cognition- difficulty maintaining attention during conversation

Insight- partial insight into her emotions

Intervention plan

- Initiated Cognitive behavioural therapy
- Provide counselling to the mother, how to secure home environment
- Encouraging mira to participate in arts and sports

RESULT AND CONCLUSION

Particularly in culturally appropriate societies like India, the effects of separated or divorced parents on children's mental health and scholastic achievement are a serious worry. Children experience emotional and psychological suffering as a result of the disruption of the family structure caused by divorce. The research analysis identifies a number of negative consequences, such as notable drops in academic achievement and elevated rates of symptoms of depression, anxiety, and behavioral problems. Case studies also show how children's overall development can be hampered by feelings that are not resolved of resentment, abandonment, and confused state. Children who experience parental separation frequently exhibit higher levels of emotional discomfort and cognitive distractions, according to psychological evaluations.

These difficulties are made worse by the cultural stigmas associated with divorce in India, where children frequently experience diminished emotional support and social condemnation.

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