WWW.IJRPR.COM

International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

Beyond Protection: Examining the Rising Violence Against Children in Contemporary India

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ABSTRACT :

In modern India, violence against children has become a grave psychological, social, and legal issue. Happenings relating child abuse, sexual assault, homicide, neglect, and mistreatment are on the rise contempt the existence of child protection lawmaking and welfare actions. This study aspects into explicit occurrences of child abuse that were stated in numerous parts of India in 2025 and 2026. By means of a qualitative descriptive practice, the study inspects these incidences from a social and psychological standpoint. The outcomes display that a number of significant variables donate to strength against children, including family fight, psychiatric problems, unstable marriages, social isolation, parental neglect, economic hardship, and violent behavioural traits. Numerous instances show how youngsters fall prey to adult disputes, emotional upheavals, and fiscal problems in family situations. The study also highlights how violent behaviour toward children is formed by mental illness, prevention, expressive disinterest, and social disfunction. Although present child protection laws offer legal guards, their effectiveness is nonetheless forced by practical matters. The results designate that in order to reduction ferocity against children, more severe legal implementation, psychiatric interference, family counselling, community participation, and instructive consciousness campaigns are required. The study originates to the conclusion that in order to assurance children's safety and welfare, a multidisciplinary strategy surrounding legal organizations, mental health experts, families, instructive institutions, and society is vital.

Keywords: Psychology, Sociology, Child protection, Legal intervention, Child violence and Child abuse.

Introduction

India has brought many laws to safeguard kids from abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence. Through kid-friendly legal procedures and severe consequences for violators, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offence (POCSO) Act, 2012 guards' children under the age of eighteen against sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and exploitation. Children who are victimized by this abuse, can get legal care, protection, rehabilitation, and social reintegration under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2009 prohibits corporeal punishment and mental harassment in schools and promises free education for children between the ages of six and fourteen. By banning child labour and limiting teenagers from unsafe jobs, the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016 safeguards juveniles from economic exploitation. The goal of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act of 2006 is to protect children from the negative emotional, social, and physical belongings of early marriage. Additionally, children's rights to protection, education, from exploitation, and opportunity for well growth are guaranteed by legal provisions such Articles 21A, 24, 39(e), and 39(f). Organizations like the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and Child Welfare Committees, which supervise the application of child protection events and advance the rights, welfare, and care of children throughout India, provision these laws.

Human behavior is learn by modeling, imitation, and observation, according to Bandura (1977). He underlined that children may absorb and imitate violent actions if they witness them in their homes, schools, or communities, implying that violence may be passed down through social learning processes across generations. (3)

As one of society's most defenceless groups, children trust on adults for emotional sustenance, care, and security. Children's physical, emotive, reasoning, and social progress are all harmfully obstructed by violence against them, which has appeared as a major public health and social concern. Physical abuse, sexual violence, sensitive abuse, abandonment, misuse, and unfavourable behaviours that endanger a child's welfare are all careful methods of fierceness against children, conferring to the World Health Organization (1).

There has been a troubling upsurge in child abuse, sexual assault, murder, and neglect, rendering to fresh reports from many Indian states. In addition to outsiders, parents, caretakers, relations, and other reliable people often commit these crimes. Significant psychological and sociological glitches about family dynamics, social institutions, mental health issues, and the competence of child protection laws are carried up by such occurrences.

The present study aspects at specific incidences that were specified in 2025 and 2026 and pays sociological and psychological examination to control the root reasons of vehemence against children. Furthermore, the study measures the requirement of more robust lawmaking interventions and precautionary actions.

Methodology

Based on secondary data, the study practices a qualitative descriptive research approach. Newspaper articles, openly accessible case files, analytical reports, and recorded examples of ferocity against children were the sources of the information. Recurring themes, behavioural patterns, and societal elements associated to child mistreatment were found through content analysis. Many types of violence against children, severe physical abuse, such as homicide, sexual neglect, assault, and family-related victimization, are signified by the chosen occurrences. To assess the results and understand the wider consequences of these episodes, sociological and psychological theories were applied.

Observation

The study observed a number of occurrences that were documented in India in 2025 and 2026. On December 1, 2025, one of the most unsettling occurrences was reported from Haryana, when a mother was charged for drowning four children, including her own son. According to police inquiries, the suspects thought that no kid in her family should be more beautiful than her, which led to the murders being driven by pathological jealousy (13). The case established traits of psychopathy, such as lack of regret, manipulation, and emotional disinterest.

Another notable case took place in May 2026 in Jharsuguda, Odisha, when a mother is accused of killing her two children as a result of determined arguments with her husband and doubts of an extramarital affair (14). The event carried to light the awful effects that unstable marriages and emotional chaos have on kids.

A similar occurrence was reported from Bengaluru in March 2025, when a five-year-old daughter died under doubtful conditions as her mother and her demanded lover were aggressive at home (15). Detectives linked the event to association collapse and family strife.

Due to prolonged family fights and claims of adulterous activities, a previous army personnel member in Gurugram, Haryana, is suspected of killing four people, including a kid (16). The event presented how serious violence in contradiction of children might result from relational arguments.

On June 2, 2026, one of the most surprising events our research observed at took place in Nedumangad, Kerala. After being bodily abused for a long time by his mother's live-in boyfriend, Arshid, a 1.5-year-old child, passed away. Ninety-one injuries, seven crushed ribs, internal injuries, severe head trauma, and burn marks all revealing of lengthy abuse and neglect were originate during medical exams (17). One of the worst cases of caregiver violence against children is this one.

The investigation also observed into a 2026 case of child kidnapping and sexual assault that was reported from Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. While returning from a neighbouring store, a ten-year-old girl was abducted, sexually abused, and killed (18). The event brought to light determined worries about sexual attack against kids and child protection.

Another significant issue that textured in a number of events was financial strain. In 2025, a domestic in the Banka region of Bihar allegedly swallowed poison due to extreme poverty and debt. Two children survived the tragedy in serious condition, while the parents and one kid perished (19). Lender pressure and financial difficulties were shown to be important causes. In a similar vein, a couple who allegedly killed their two children before taking their own lives was the subject of a Hyderabad case that was stated on March 12, 2025. According to detectives, the tragedy was mostly caused by family-related stress and financial hardships (20).

The investigation showed that a number of unified factors have an impact on violence in contradiction of children. One of the most significant reasons was found to be family conflict, particularly in situations including marital arguments, suspicions about adulterous affairs, and protracted household difficulties. Many of the offenders had psychological disorders such psychopathy, unhappiness, emotional instability, and violent behavioural tendencies. Poverty, debt, unemployment, and financial instability are examples of economic distress that have been linked to domestic dissolution and elevated stress levels in families. Opportunities for interference and defence were reduced by social isolation and inadequate community support networks. Children were additionally vulnerable to long-term mistreatment and oppression when parents and other concierges neglected them. When taken as a whole, these results show that violence against children is a complex phenomenon prejudiced by social, family, economic, and psychological factors.

Discussion

The study's assumptions show that family relations, psychological issues, monetary strains, and larger social organizations all influence strength against children, making it a complex social issue. Numerous social and psychological theories can be used to understand the examined illustrations. Sociologically speaking, Émile Durkheim's Structural Functionalist Theory struggles that the domestic is the main social structure in custody of socialization, security, and emotional support. Children are more vulnerable when family constructions fail to transmit out these crucial tasks as a importance of marital discord, neglect, domestic abuse, or financial strain (2). The instances from Gurugram, Bengaluru, and Odisha demonstration how unbalanced relations and muddled families directly led to child mistreatment. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which struggles that aggressive behaviour is chosen up through simulated and comment, is likewise reinforced by the results (3). People who grow up in violent, abusive, or

hostile familial situations may internalize these behaviours and duplicate them later in life. In a number of examples, violent reactions seemed to result from deep-seated conflict and aggression in family contexts.

According to Krug et al. (2002), violence is a serious human rights and public health concern that impacts people of all ages, but especially children. They underlined the need for comprehensive preventive and intervention methods since physical, sexual, and psychological violence can have serious and long-lasting effects on children's development, health, and social well-being. (9)

Robert K. Merton's Strain Theory can be used to clarify the monetary crisis episodes. When people are unable to achieve informally satisfactory goals by legal methods, Merton claims that social and economic weights lead to strain (7). The Bihar and Hyderabad instances show how economic unpredictability, poverty, and debt caused dangerous psychological stress, which in turn led to family breakdown and endangered children.

John Bowlby's Attachment Theory, which highlights the significance of steady expressive ties between caregivers and children, explains the psychological features of the instances (4). Children are more vulnerable to abuse, abandonment, and long-term psychological injury when caregivers do not offer emotional constancy and safety. The Kerala toddler abuse case is a faultless example of how caring errands and attachment bonds totally collapse.

Moreover, Dollard and Miller's Dissatisfaction-Aggression Theory define how violent behaviour can come from long-term displeasure brought on by marital problems, monetary problems, jealously, and social stress (5). A number of family homicide examples like the Odisha filicide case show how expressive unpredictability and pent-up resentment may be absorbed against children and other susceptible family members.

Psychological viewpoints on psychopathy, particularly those of Hervey Cleckley and Robert Hare, can also be used to understand the Haryana serial child murder case. Lack of understanding, shallow charm, manipulation, emotional detachment, and a lack of regret or disgrace are traits of psychopathy. Many of these traits, such as thoughtful planning, expressive apathy, and recurrent fierce crimes against children without any remorse, were supposedly established by the accused.

Furthermore, the idea of Power and Control Theory which is regularly associated to research on family ferocity helps elucidate how children end up as victims of unfair relations. Children are particularly susceptible when caregivers abuse their authority or act cruelly because they have incomplete social, financial, and physical power. This power difference is shown in the extreme abuse stated in the Kerala case and other incidences.

When taken as a whole, these hypothetical stances show that there is no one source of violence against children. Instead, it results from the interplay of taught behaviour, economic restraints, psychiatric disorders, social confusion, and inadequacies in family and public support networks. A thorough framework for comprehending why children still encounter ferocity in spite of current legal defences is provided by the synthesis of sociological and psychological viewpoints.

According to UNICEF (2014), violence against children is a pervasive worldwide problem that is frequently overlooked and underreported. Millions of children are victims of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse in their homes, schools, and communities, according to the research, underscoring the critical need for more robust child protection laws and helpful interventions to protect children's rights and welfare(8).

The consequences of this education show that strength against children is a complicated societal and mental phenomena rather than just an individual or criminal problem. Children are regularly victims of circumstances brought about by dysfunctional domestic ties, mental instability, societal pressures, and monetary trouble, according to the inspected examples. According to sociological viewpoints, the family is the main entity in charge of raising and protection children. Children are more susceptible to persecution when family constructions become unbalanced as a result of marital discord, substance misuse, domestic violence, neglect, or financial strain (2).

Life-threatening violence against children can result from noteworthy psychological illnesses and psychopathic feelings, as recognized by the Haryana serial murder case. According to reports, the criminal displayed traits including manipulation, lack of empathy, emotional detachment, and lack of regret. In a similar vein, the circumstances of Bengaluru and Odisha show how unsettled marital problems and doubts about adulterous affairs can lead to children accidentally becoming victims of adult conflicts (14,15).

According to Gelles (2017), family violence is a serious social issue that stems from intricate relationships between societal, familial, and individual causes. He underlined that children who see violence in the home are more likely to suffer physical, psychological, and emotional injury, which may have long-term consequences for their growth and wellbeing. (6)

The dreadful belongings of long-term abandonment and caregiver violence are transported to light by the Kerala toddler abuse case. The child's recurring ill-treatment is an indication of both domestic and social support system insufficiencies that may have noticed warning indicators sooner (17). Likewise, the Coimbatore sexual assault and murder case highlights children's ongoing vulnerability in public areas and the necessity of more robust preventative measures and public awareness (18).

Another important aspect that textured was economic strain. The cases from Hyderabad and Bihar show how financial indecision, debt, and poverty may lead to expressive breakdown, frustration, and pessimism, which eventually affects family well-being and child safety (19,20). The idea that tenacious stress and an incapability to handle difficult circumstances might lead to violent behaviour toward susceptible family members is reinforced by the Frustration-Aggression Theory (5).

Results

The results suggest that legal consequences by themselves are inadequate to end child abuse. For deterrence to be effective, family support networks must be supported, mental health services must be prolonged, parenting education must be improved, community involvement must be augmented, and child protection lawmaking must be applied on time. Therefore, addressing the causes and effects of child persecution requires a multidisciplinary approach.

The study disclosed that a number of combined issues have an influence on violence in paradox of children. One of the most important reasons was originate to be domestic conflict, chiefly in circumstances including marital arguments, doubts about extramarital affairs, and long-drawn-out family problems. Many of the criminals had mental disorders such mental illness, unhappiness, emotional unsteadiness, and ferocious behavioural tendencies.

Poverty, joblessness, debt, and financial variability are examples of economic suffering that have been related to domestic dissolution and raised stress levels in families. Chances for interference and defence were abridged by social isolation and insufficient communal provision networks. Children were moreover vulnerable to long-term abuse and domination when parents and other caretakers mistreated them. When taken as a whole, these results show that violence against children is a complex phenomenon biased by social, economic, family, and psychological factors.

According to Pinheiro (2006), violence against children happens everywhere in the globe and in all social contexts, including families, businesses, institutions, schools, and communities. He underlined the need for concerted international and national efforts to prevent and eradicate all types of violence against children, emphasizing that such abuse violates children's fundamental rights and can have serious physical, psychological, and social repercussions. (10)

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act (2012) stated that every child has the right to protection from sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and exploitation. The Act provides a comprehensive legal framework for safeguarding children below the age of eighteen years, ensuring child-friendly procedures for reporting, investigation, and trial while prescribing stringent punishments for offenders. (11)

According to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act (2015), children who require care and protection are entitled to growth, safety, and rehabilitation within a framework that is kid-friendly. The Act highlights the State's obligation to safeguard the welfare, education, and social reintegration of vulnerable children while preventing abuse, neglect, exploitation, and abandonment. (12)

The laws by themselves are not sufficient to end child abuse. The extension of intensely deep-seated societal and cultural norms that tolerate bodily punishment and severe corrective events as suitable ways to raise children is one of the main reasons. Rather of admitting the negative physical and psychological effects of violence, educators, many parents, and caregivers still see it as a way to apply obedience. Furthermore, conditions that make children more vulnerable to abuse and misuse include deficiency, illiteracy, gender insight, and socioeconomic dissimilarity. Many often, victims and their families are ignorant of their legal rights or are scared to reveal violent acts for fear of social disgrace, retaliations, and family disruption. The effectiveness of legislative defences is further reduced by poor law enforcement, prolonged legal records, inadequate oversight events, and limited access to child protection services. Social Learning Theory, which resists that people regularly repeat actions seen in their families and societies, can also be used to elucidate violence against children from a sociological position. As a consequence, violent cycles are approved on through the peers. Therefore, speaking child violence requires broader social change through education, campaigns, awareness community involvement, monetary support for vulnerable families, and the well-organized implementation of child protection laws, even though legal outlines like the POCSO Act and the Juvenile Justice Act offer vital defence.

Conclusion

One of the main issues facing Indian civilization now is violence against children. The cases inspected in this study show that a variety of conditions, such as family conflict, psychiatric problems, parental neglect, financial difficulties, social isolation, and sexual exploitation, have an impact on child victimization. In settings that are supposed to offer safety and defence, children are regularly unprotected to violence. The study demonstrations how mental elements like aggressiveness, emotional unpredictability, unhappiness, and psychopathy mix with sociological elements like family breakdown and social disintegration to produce environments that are favourable to strength against children.

Even though India has approved a number of laws to protection children, the sustained incidence of serious abuse and homicide examples suggests that more robust application and oversight events are required. To assurance justice and defence, stricter laws, accelerated court events, obligatory reporting mechanisms, and improved child welfare facilities are required. But more than just legal action is needed for continued deterrence. Similarly crucial are family therapy, mental health support, parenting classes, communal awareness campaigns, and well-organized child protection systems. According to the study's findings, protection children have to be seen as a communal duty amongst families, instructive institutions, medical specialists, social workers, representatives, and the general public. A secure and confident environment for every kid can only be recognized by concentrated efforts.

Acknowledgement

The author expresses sincere thankfulness to all scholars, investigators, presses, and organizations whose studies, reports, and publications donated to the completion of this research. The author also admits the valuable academic leadership and support provided by the research supervisor.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, writing, or publication of this article.

Conflict of Interest

The author states that there is no conflict of interest concerning the publication of this manuscript.

Declaration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Assistance Process

Artificial Intelligence tools were used exclusively for language refinement, format support, and manuscript organization. All clarifications, analysis, critical deliberations, and deductions presented in this study were independently reviewed, verified, and accepted by the author.

Author Contributions

1.R. Govindan-Conceptualization, data collection and literature review.
2. Mr. Mullai Arasan A- analysis, interpretation of findings,

This study is based totally on subordinate data got from openly available reports, published articles, and documented case records. Therefore, ethical support was not required.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from openly accessible newspaper reports, published documents, and sources cited in the orientation section

Abbreviations

WHO – World Health Organization

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

POCSO – Protection of Children from Sexual Offences

AI – Artificial Intelligence

JJ Act – Juvenile Justice Act

NCPCR – National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

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