

Effect of domestic violence on children (A study from Kashmir district Kulgam)

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ABSTRACT

Thousands of children reside in domestic abuse with their mothers per year. This study examined the effect of domestic violence on the children's self-perception with a broad sample of three hundred respondents. The respondents were the mothers, who participated in this field work. This paper inspects the effect of domestic violence on children's health, behaviour, education, their social life etc. Our study is from District Kulgam (J&k). The study was compared with their parents.

Children learn to smile from their parents

-(Shinichi Suzuki)

The fate of a child is in the hands of his parents

-(Shinichi Suzuki)

1. Introduction

In relationships where there is domestic violence and abuse, children witness about three-quarters of the abusive incidents. Sexual and emotional abuses are also more likely to happen in these families. About half the children in such families have themselves been badly hit or beaten.

Obviously, it is very offensive for children to see one of their parents (or partners) abusing, attacking or controlling the other. Younger children may become nervous. They may complain of tummy-aches or start to wet their bed. They cannot sleep properly, they may also find it difficult to separate from their abused parent when they start nursery or school i.e. this also effects their study they would not be interested in their studies. Older children react differently. Boys seem to express their distress much more outwardly, for example by becoming disobedient and aggressive. Older boys may play truant and start to use drugs or alcohol (both of which are a common way of trying to block out disturbing experiences and memories). Sometimes, they start to use violence to try and solve problems, and may copy the behaviour they see within the family.

Girls are more likely to keep their distress inside. They may become anxious or depressed and withdrawn from other people. They are more likely to have an eating disorder, or to harm themselves by taking overdoses or cutting themselves. They complain of vague physical symptoms and may think badly of themselves. They are also more likely to choose an offensive partner themselves.

Children of any age can develop symptoms of 'Post-traumatic Stress Disorder'. They may get flashbacks, nightmares, become very scared, and have headaches and physical pains.

The children in these homes not only witnessed violence directed at their mothers but some children were also victims of

violence, both physically and sexually (Layzer, Goodson & Delange, 1986). Alessi and Hearn (1984) discussed that most of the children who come to a domestic abuse shelter have witnessed violence and other abusive behavior in their homes, which had persisted over a number of years. Parents' poor self-image and stereotyped role expectations placed further burdens on children to be supportive of their parents and to help their parents feel better. Parents were also unlikely to fully comprehend the extent of anxiety the children might have been experiencing (Webbersinn., *et al.*, 1991). Furthermore, the child may be used by the assailant as a means to force reconciliation with the woman. These threats are especially true in cases which the assailant has legal claim on the child. The assailant may use threats of a custody battle or kidnapping to retain the woman in the home or to have her return to the home (Elbow, 1982). Witnessing domestic violence can have many detrimental effects on children. (Walker. 1979) observed that children who live in a battering relationship learn to become part of a dishonest conspiracy of silence. They learn to lie about violence, and they learn to suspend fulfillment of their needs rather than risk another confrontation. They live in a world of "make-believe". Children suffer emotional trauma, which includes shock, fear, and guilt from witnessing abuse. These children are experiencing extreme feelings of separation and loss, they have a difficult time coping with these feelings in a healthy fashion and they are confused about their feelings for their father since they love him and hate him at the same time (Alessi.& Hearn., 1984). They try to be extra good to prevent the violence. They fear growing up, "because I'll be mean like Daddy". The needs of these children are often overlooked and misunderstood as the focus is on the parents' struggle for physical and emotional survival (Elbow. 1982). The children are terrified of being abused themselves or starting an abusive interaction since they feel responsible for the violence (Rosenbaum & O'Leary. 1981). Often times, they have conflicting feelings of happiness that they and their mother are safe, with sadness that they had to leave their homes, friends and possibly an important male figure. In addition, the person the children often turn to for

support, their mother, is in a crisis herself. The child's behavior may elicit anger, negative or withdrawing responses from an already overburdened mother (Davies. 1991). The mother may also be reacting to the male child as she did the abuser when that child displays violent acts.

2. Methodology

The research study is based on the primary as wells as secondary sources of data, which includes direct interviews and reports of Crime Records Bureau, journals, newspapers and research papers.

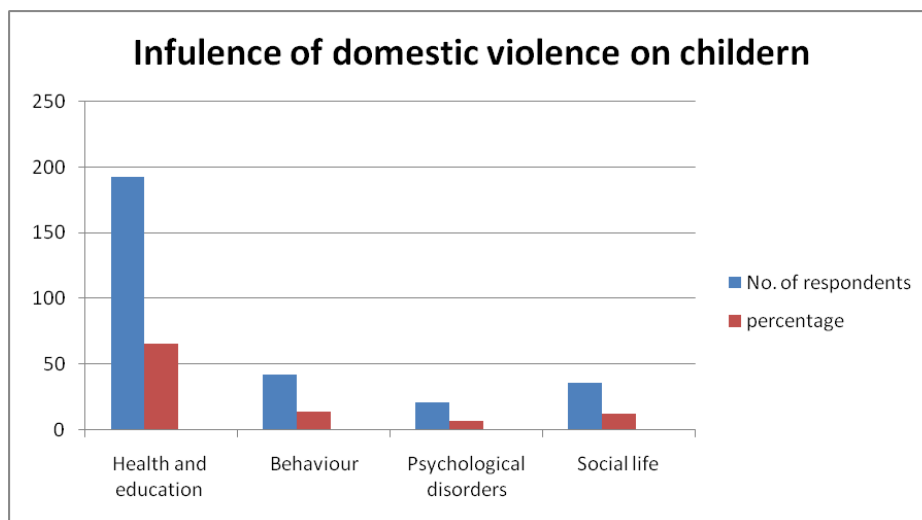
3. Study area

The present study was conducted in Kulgam District (a newly formed district land by villages approximately around 265 villages, the district is at 9th position in the state by number of villages. District Kulgam is a newly created district that came into existence after being carved out from district Anantnag and made functional administratively with effect from 2nd April, 2007.

During our field work, our sample size was 300 out of 300 respondents 8 respondents bear no children. While interviewing, 292 respondents narrated that the impact of domestic violence affects their children's health, education, behaviour etc. Below table mentions the influence of domestic violence on children as narrated by our respondents:

Types of influence	No. of respondents	Percentage
Health and education	193	66.09
Behaviour	42	14.38
Psychological disorders	21	7.19
Social life	36	12.32
Total	292	100

Table 1



It is clear from the above table(1) and fig. that out of 292 respondents 193 i.e.66.09 percent were of the view that domestic violence effects their children's health and education, The respondents narrated that their children have no interest in their studies and did not eat food properly that in turn effects their health, 42/292 i.e. 14.38 percent respondents revealed that domestic violence effects their children's behaviour, as they behave rudely and starts abusing, quarreling etc. while 21/292 i.e. 7.19 percent respondents reported that their children were having psychological disorders i.e. cannot sleep properly, nightmares, flashbacks etc. And 36/292 i.e. 12.32 percent of our respondents were of the view that domestic violence disturbed the social life of their children. As they did not play with friends, did not like to share their situation to any one and like isolation.

4. Conclusion

There has been an increase in acknowledgment that a child who is exposed to domestic abuse during their upbringing

will suffer developmental and psychological damage. During the mid-1990, the Adverse Childhood Experiences study (ACE) found that children who were exposed to domestic violence and other forms of abuse had a higher risk of developing mental and physical health problems. Because of the awareness of domestic violence that some children have to face, it also generally impacts how the child develops emotionally, socially, behaviorally as well as cognitively. To conclude we may like to say that government as well as NGO's and public also should have to take strong steps to eradicate these violence, so that children as well as women (who are the builders of nation) can breathe freely.

*Live so that when your children
Think of fairness, caring and integrity,
They think of you.*

(H. Jackson Brown, Jr)

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