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Child Abuse and Child Labour

Despite hectic planning, welfare programmes, legislation and administrative action in the past four decades, a majority of the Indian children continue to remain in distress and turmoil. In most families, the parents neglect them, caretakers batter them and employers sexually abuse them. Though this problem of emotional, physical and sexual abuse of children in India is increasing, it has failed to capture the attention of sociologists and psychiatrists in our country. The public and the government also are yet to recognise it as a serious problem. Public indignation and professional concern is yet to be translated into positive and realistic action

Child Population and the Working Children

Of the total population of 685 million in India (1981 census), 38 4% or 263 million were children below the age of 15 years Those in the age-group of 5-15 years were 26 2% or 179 million (*The Hindustan Times*, June 25, 1986). Since the country's population has increased from 685 million in 1981 to 843.93 million in 1991, the child population in the country (0-14 years) at present should be about 310 million. The break-up of children in different age-groups and the projections for 1991 to 2001 are estimated in Table 8.1 (Sharda, 1988: 101).

Millions of children from poor families are compelled by economic considerations to join the labour force. India has the dubious distinction of having the largest number of the world's working children (one-fourth of the world's child labour-force). According to the 1971 census, 4.66% of the total child population in India was a working population

The number of employed children below 14 years of age in various economic activities increased from 10.8 million in 1971 to 14.5 million in 1981 (*The Hindustan Times*, June, 25, 1986). One estimate puts the number of working children in our country at 44 million—5.5% of the total population (*The Hindustan Times*, April 24, 1989). An estimate made in 1983 indicted that there are 17.4 million working children in India while a survey conducted by the Operations Research Group (ORG), Baroda (Vadodara) in 1985 had put the figure at a staggering 44.5 million. One writer pointed out four years ago that out of 310 million population of children by the end of 1986, the number of working children would easily be around 110 million (Joshi, Uma, 1986). The Planning Commission's recent assessment is that in the ten years between 1981 and 1990, there is at least an 800% increase in the number of child workers, which has gone up from 13.5 million to 116 million. However, the ORG findings have gained credibility as they are based on a nationwide survey. A survey conducted by a research group sponsored by the Ministry of Labour, Government of India, has reported, (Joshi, 1986) that of the estimated 102.3 million households in the country, 34.7% had working children. Seventy-nine per cent working children are in the rural areas. Two-thirds of the working children belong to the 12-15 years age-group and the rest are below 12 years.

Table 8.1 : Break-up of Children in Different Age-groups

							(in millions)
Year	Age-groups						Total Child
	0–4		5–9		10–14		Population
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage	No	Percentage	
1981	83	31.6	94	35 7	86	32 7	263
1991	110	35.7	103	34 3	95	30 0	308
2001	114	34 2	111	33 3	108	32 5	333

The first Act to regulate the employment of children and their hours of work was the Factory Act of 1881 A commission was appointed in 1929 to fix the minimum age of child employment. On its recommendation, the Child Labour Act, 1933 was passed prohibiting employment of children below 14 years of age. The Factory Act of 1948 provided some safeguards to child labourers. In 1986, the parliament enacted the Child Labour Act (Regulation and Prohibition),

planning the employment of children in certain jobs and regulating the
conditions of work in hazardous occupations. The Juvenile Justice Act,
1986 which superceded the existing 25 Children's Acts in different
states and union territories and came into force from October 2, 1987,
provides for the creation of Advisory Boards and the establishment of
State Children Funds for preventing the abuse of children, for the
protection and care of children, for the mobilization of resources and
for the provision of facilities for education, training and rehabilitation
of the neglected children. But in spite of all these measures, children
continue to be employed, harassed and abused.

Concept and Types of Child Abuse

Some studies limit the term 'child abuse' to "children who have
received serious physical injury caused wilfully rather than by
accident" (Garden & Gray, 1982: 5). This definition has not been
accepted by the social scientists because of the ambiguities in the word
'serious' and diversities in physical injury. Kempe and his colleagues
(1978) have defined child abuse as "a condition having to do with those
who have been deliberately injured by physical assault". This definition
is limited in scope as it restricts abuse only to those acts of physical
violence which produce a diagnostic injury. Thus, acts of neglect and
maltreatment of children which do not produce an injury but are
equally harmful cannot be included in this definition. No definition of
child abuse can be considered as valid unless it includes non-physical
acts like mental injury and neglect and ill-treatment of a child. Burgess
(1979 : 143) has given a wider definition of child abuse. According to
him, child abuse refers to "any child who receives non-accidental
physical and psychological injury as a result of acts and omissions on
the part of his parents or guardians or employers...". Verbal abuse,
threats of physical violence, and excessive physical punishment which
do not require medical attention are also included in the definition of
child abuse

Child abuse is usually divided into three major types: physical,
sexual and emotional. Each have recognisable characteristics The
indicators of *physical abuse* in the school-age child described by Irving
Sloan (1983 · 2-3) are: bruises, burns, fractures, lacerations and
abrasions, abdominal injuries, and human-bite marks. The behavioural
indicators of physical abuse are: the abused child is wary of contact
with adults, he/she becomes apprehensive when other children cry, he/
she shows aggressiveness in behaviour, he/she seems frightened of the

parents/caretakers, and he/she is afraid to go home or cries when it is time to go home.

Child *sexual abuse* has been defined as "the involvement of dependent and immature children in sexual activities they do not fully comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent" (Henry Kempe, 1978: 127). The Juvenile Justice Act, 1986, defines child sexual abuse as "interaction between a child (under the age of 18 for girls and 16 for boys) and an adult (who is significantly older than the victim and is in a position of power or control over the child, or may even be an acquaintance or an unknown person) in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person". Sexual abuse is not often identified through physical indicators alone. Frequently, a child confides in a trusted person (mother, friend, neighbour, kin or sister) that she/he has been sexually assaulted. There are, however, some physical signs of sexual abuse. These are (Sloan Irving, 1983: 6) : difficulty in walking or sitting, torn, stained or bloody underclothes, complaints of pain or itching, bruises or bleeding, venereal disease, and pregnancy (in early adolescence). There are some behavioural indicators too of sexual abuse. The sexually abused child may appear withdrawn or retarded, may have poor peer relationships, may be unwilling to participate in activities, may indulge in delinquent behaviour, may run away, or may display bizarre or unusual sexual knowledge.

Emotional abuse is the neglect or maltreatment of children. 'Neglect' is difficult to define exactly since it may involve a disregard of the physical, emotional, moral or social needs of the children. *Physical neglect* has been defined as "the failure to provide the essentials for normal life, such as food, clothing, shelter, care and supervision, and protection from assault." *Emotional neglect* includes both the lack of expressed love and affection and the deliberate withholding of contact and approval. *Moral neglect* includes exposure to situations (alcoholism, obscenity, illicit sex relations) that present a pattern of moral conduct at variance with the norms of society. *Social neglect* includes failure to train or discipline a child (Kratcoski, 1979: 120). Thus, emotional neglect or 'maltreatment' may be described as "negligent treatment of a child under the specific age prescribed for the children by the given society (18 for girls and 16 for boys in India) by a person who is responsible for the child's upbringing, care and welfare under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened thereby". This definition characterizes 'omission'

and not 'commission' as abuse. Emotional maltreatment of the child includes blaming, belittling, rejecting, constantly treating siblings unequally, and persistent lack of concern by the parent/caretaker for the child's welfare. Emotional maltreatment is rarely manifest in physical signs. A few physical indicators of emotional maltreatment are speech disorders, lag in physical development and failure-to-thrive syndrome (Irving Sloan, 1983: 7). The behavioural characteristics of emotional maltreatment are (Maxwild Denver, 1961: 6-7): habit disorders (biting, thumb-sucking), conduct disorders (destructiveness, cruelty, stealing), neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play), psycho-neurotic reaction (hysteria, phobias, obsession), behaviour extremes (appearing overly complainant, extremely passive or aggressive, very demanding or undemanding), lag in emotional and intellectual development, and attempted suicide.

Incidence of Child Abuse

In the absence of public and government interest in the problem of child abuse, no statistics has been compiled in India to indicate the incidence of abuse. In the United States, Gil (1970) estimated that there were between 2.5 and 4.1 million cases of child abuse per year. In 1977, Scott reported that between one and 12 children per 1,000 were abused by their parents or guardians. Considering the poverty, illiteracy, and large size of families in India, it could be said that five to 15 children per 1,000 children are abused by parents and employers in our country

Theoretical Explanations of Child Abuse

A number of explanations have been given by scholars to explain the motivational factors in child abuse. Of these, the important are: (i) psychiatric explanation; (ii) socio-cultural explanation which includes (a) social-situational explanation, (b) social habitability explanation, and (c) social control explanation; (iii) resource explanation; (iv) social-interactional explanation; and (v) social learning explanation.

The *pshychiatric* explanation was propounded by scholars like Kempe (1972), Steele and Pollock (1968), Gelles (1973), and Parke and Collmer (1975) It links with child abuse factors such as mental illness and personality defects or intra-individual abnormalities. It also links abusive parents' own childhood experiences to the individuals' weak personality development and poor self-control (Wolfe, 1987: 45). The

thesis that personality disorder is responsible for child abuse was further advanced by reports that abusers often had a propensity for impulsive and/or antisocial acts that extended beyond the preventing role. A parent, according to this explanation, may abuse his/her child due to unmet emotional needs (that signify discontentment, anger or irritability), an inability to balance the child's needs and capabilities with own (parental) expectations, or emotional scars from their own abusive or deprived family background affecting their ability to care for their own offspring (Wolfe, 1987: 45).

This explanation initially drew support from many fields, including law-makers and public-interest groups because it directed most of the responsibility for abusive behaviour squarely at the individual involved, and absolved society from blame in contributing to the risk of child abuse through lack of education, adequate housing, family support programmes, employment opportunities, and so on. However, recent researches have disproved the role of psychopathology in child abuse.

The *socio-cultural* explanation, given in the 1970s, maintained that external forces or socio-demographic variables within the society caused child abuse. This explanation includes three sub-explanations: social situational, social habitability and social control.

The *social-situational* explanation proposes that abuse and violence arise out of two factors: structural stress and cultural norms. As the social structure in which a parent lives becomes more stress ridden (or is perceived as more stressful), the greater becomes the possibility that family violence will surface as an attempt to gain control over irritating, tense events. Cultural sanctioning of violence as an appropriate conflict resolution technique further provides a foundation for the use of corporal punishment in child rearing. If a parent was frequently exposed to harsh physical punishment as a child, he/she may have greater propensity toward viewing such behaviour as normative and inhibition against physical force may be lessened (Bandura, 1973). Steinmetz and Straus (1974) have maintained that factors such as low income, unemployment, isolation, unwanted pregnancy and conflict with spouse/in-laws, cause structural stresses which, combined with the cultural acceptance for violence to resolve conflict, lead to the use of force and violence against children at home. Talking of social factors which cause stress, Gil (1970) has referred to social class and family size. Light (1973 · 556-598) has referred to unemployment, and Garbarino (1977 : 721-735) has referred to social isolation.

The major problem in this explanation according to Fieldman (1982) is that it is unable to account for the finding that given the same set of deprivation or adverse conditions, many parents do and others do not abuse their children.

The *social habitability* explanation was proposed by James Garbarino in 1977. According to him, the nature of child maltreatment depends upon the quality of the environment in which the person and family live, or the level of family support in the environment. The lesser the family support, the greater the risk of maltreatment of children.

The *social control* explanation was propounded by Gelles in 1973. According to him, parents use violence against their children because they have no fear of being hit back, nor of being arrested (unless some neighbour lodges a complaint with the police). Thus, violence is used when (i) the cost of being violent is to be less than the rewards, (ii) the absence of effective social control over family relations decreases the cost (of one member being violent towards another), and (iii) family structures reduce social control in family relations and, therefore, reduce the costs and increase the rewards of being violent (Gelles and Cornell, 1985. 121). Laslett (1978 : 480) has also said that: (a) inequality in home reduces both social control and the costs of being violent, and (b) the privacy in the family serves to reduce the degree of social control exercised over family relations. Gelles (1973) has maintained that certain types of children—like the handicapped, ugly, demanding, premature—are at a greater risk of being abused by their parents This is because either they make great demands (economically, socially or psychologically) on their parents or they are perceived as not providing sufficient gratification in return for the parents' investment of time and energy. Thus, when a parent perceives the costs of parenthood to outweigh the rewards, he uses violence against his children. Ivan Nye (1979) had also earlier accepted the application of Peter Blau's theory, like Gelles, in explaining child abuse. He has proposed that child beating is less common in families that have relatives and/or friends nearby. Recasting Nye's proposition, Gelles and Cornell (1985) have proposed that child-beating is more common when relatives, friends and neighbours (that is, non-family members) are unavailable, unable or unwilling to be part of the daily system of family interaction, and thus unable to serve as agents of formal and informal social control. Gelles has further maintained that the greater the disparity between perceived investment in a family relationship

(that is, parenting) and the perceived returns on the investment, the greater the likelihood that there will be violence. This also explains why children of five to seven years of age are more likely victims of child abuse than children of 14 to 16 years of age. Parents of younger children perceive a rather large investment in their children and feel that they get little in the way of actual return than parents of older children.

This explanation has been criticised on the grounds that: (1) It is preposterous to assume that relations between parents and children are based on reciprocity and that parents' treatment of children is determined in terms of calculations of rewards and costs. (2) Assuming it is so, why do all the parents not make such calculations and only a few do it, that is, why do all the parents not beat their children and only some parents indulge in child-beating? Does this not ignore the personality factor in the use of violence? (3) Why are children who work and earn also beaten by their parents (like non-working children) when there is some 'return' of 'parenting' ?

The *resource* explanation was given by William Goode in 1971. According to it, the use of force by an individual depends upon the extent to which he can command or master the resources—social, personal and economic. The more resources a person has, the less he/she will use force in an open manner. Thus, a father who wants to be a dominant person in the family but has little education, low prestige job, low income and lacks inter-personal skills, may choose to use violence against his children to maintain the dominant position.

The *social-interactional* explanation was given by Burgess in 1979. It approaches the etiology of child abuse in terms of the interplay between individual family and social factors in relation to both past (for example, exposure to abuse as a child) and present (for example, a demanding child) events. The parents' learning history, inter-personal experiences, and intrinsic capabilities are regarded as predisposing characteristics presumed to be important contributors to an abusive pattern. In this explanation, the potential role of the child in provoking abuse is also acknowledged. The conditions under which the child is reared and the methods used by the parents, particularly their punitive methods, may help to explain why some adults are predisposed to abusive behaviour, given certain setting conditions.

Although this explanation is primarily concerned with the current behaviour of the abusive parent in the context of the family or community, psychological mechanisms such as perceptions and

interpretations of events, are also recognised as important factors in
influencing the parent-child interactions (Wolfe, 1987 : 49). The
interactional explanation, thus, is not necessarily limited to observable
behaviour alone (like parental criticisms or displays of anger...) but
includes cognitive and effective processes too (like intelligence,
attitudes) that may mediate behavioural changes.

The *social learning* theory lays emphasis on the learned nature of
parenting and the fact that many parents have insufficient knowledge
and skill to equip them to carry out the highly complex task of child-
rearing They not only lack fundamental skills (of rearing children) but
there may also be an absence of coping strategies to deal with stress,
giving rise to a spiralling effect of increased stress and less effective
coping

The Victims of Abuse

One empirical study was conducted in Rajasthan in 1990 on child abuse
by G S Kewalramani to assess the nature, extent, patterns and causes
of abuse, to delineate the characteristics of perpetrators and victims of
abuse, and to analyse the effect of abuse on a child's role performance
and his development The study was focussed on 167 children in the
age-group of 10-16 years Of the 167 cases studied, 124 were cases of
physical abuse, 23 of sexual abuse and 103 of emotional abuse. Further,
of the total cases studied, 61 7% were boys and 38.3% were girls
Amongst boys, 42 7% were working and 57.3% were non-working;
while amongst girls, 46 9% were working and 53.1% were non-
working The age groups of the interviewed children were · 10-11
years—20 4%, 12-13 years—25 7%, 14-15 years—24.6%, and 16
years—29 3%

The important findings of this study on the three types of child
abuse, namely, physical, sexual and emotional, were as follows

Physical Abuse

(1) Boys are more battered than girls (ratio being 1.3 : 1). (2) School-
going children run greater risk of being physically abused than those
who do not go to school (3) Older children (14-16 years) are more
abused physically than younger children (10 13 years). (4) Non-
working children are beaten more than the working children. (5) The
ratio of children who are occasionally abused (twice or thrice a month)
to those who are frequently abused (once or twice a week), or very

frequently abused (three or four times a week) is 1 : 5.5. (6) A large number of the abused children (about 60.0%) belong to poor families with a monthly income of less than Rs. 500 per month. Only a small number (about 2.0%) belong to well-to-do families, that is, with an income of Rs. 1,500 or more per month. This shows that there is a significant relationship between poverty and physical abuse. (7) In a very large number of cases (93.0%), the perpetrators of physical abuse are members of the family (father, mother, sibling). (8) Perpetrators of either sex abuse children of their own sex more than of the opposite sex. (9) Mothers abuse children physically more (60.0%) than the fathers (40.0%). However, males abuse children more severely than females. (10) The great majority of the abuser parents are in their thirties and forties, while the siblings are mostly in their twenties. (11) The main modes of battering children are slapping and beating with fists (40.0%), hitting with different objects (35.0%), kicking (19.0%), choking and /or strangulating (10.0%), binding with rope (3.0%), and tearing hair (2.0%). (12) In most of the cases (85 0%), the beating does not cause an injury to the child. (13) The physical violence against children is of various types. *Routine* beating is different from the *non-routine* beating. The former is one which the parents believe their children 'deserve', and the children also believe that they 'asked for it'. The latter is one which is instigated by the child. *Secondary* violence is one which one parent believes is just and legitimate but the other parent believes is unjust.

Non-routine violence has been sub-categorised as: volcanic violence, alcohol-related violence, sex-related or jealousy-oriented violence, expressive violence, power-oriented or instrumental violence, and victim-precipitated violence. *Volcanic* violence is one which is used neither for achieving a desired end nor for legitimizing the act It occurs when the victimiser (parent, employer .) has run out of patience as the result of externally caused stress, such as losing the job or being insulted by somebody or incurring a loss. *Alcohol-related* violence is one where violence is the result of alcohol-consumption. Alcohol releases aggression as well as makes a person irrational and serves as a disinhibitory agent that releases violence impulses. This type of violence is exclusively male violence. *Jealousy-oriented* or *sex-related* violence is one in which the parent of one sex beats the child of the other sex out of jealousy. Step-father beating his daughter, or step-mother beating her son are examples of this type of violence.

Expressive violence is one in which the use of physical force is an end in itself. *Instrumental* or *power-oriented* violence is one in which violence is intended not only as a means of inducing the child to alter his behaviour but also to establish parental authority. *Child precipitated* violence is one in which the victims of violence contribute to their own victimization either through actions defined as deviant by the aggressor parent or through provoking their (parents) antagonism.

Sexual Abuse

(1) Girls are more victims of sexual abuse than boys (the ratio being 2·3 : 1). (2) A high proportion of children become victims of sexual abuse when they are 14 or above 14 years of age. The ratio of victims below 14 years to victims above 14 years is about 1 : 5. (3) There is a strong association between sex and the number of abusers. Males are usually abused sexually by one person while girls are generally assaulted by more than one person. (4) There is rarely an application of force or bodily harm. Victims are usually psychologically enticed by the assaultors by loyalty to, affection for, and the dependence upon them (abusers). (5) The victims of sexual abuse are generally from the lower socio-economic families. (6) Sexual abuse of children does not demonstrate a relationship with religion and caste membership. There is some evidence that the lower caste women are more frequent victims of sexual assault than the higher caste women but this refers more to rape cases than childhood sexual abuse. (7) Whereas the victims' age distribution is more homogeneous, the assaultors' age distribution is more heterogeneous (very young, young, early middle-age, late middle-age). (8) In about two-third cases (66.7%), the perpetrators have secondary relationship with the victims (employers, coworkers, teachers, tenants, and acquaintances). Persons having blood relationships constitute a small category of perpetrators. In other words, a significant percentage of child sexual abuse (93.0%) occurs outside the family. (9) Boys are generally the victims of 'employment-related' abuse while girls are generally the victims of 'acquaintance-related' abuse. (10) Of the 'employment-related' sexual abuse, two-thirds is by the coworkers and one-third is by the employers.

Emotional Abuse

(1) Boys are more emotionally maltreated than girls, the ratio being 1.3 : 1. (2) Working children are as much neglected as non-working

children. (3) School-going children are a little more maltreated than non-school-going children. (4) Of the various forms of emotional abuse, constant lack of supervision is as high as 62.0% belittling is to be found in 50.0%, false blaming among 33.0%, lack of concern for studies and welfare in 28.0%, rejection among 18.0% and unequal treatment with siblings in 17 0% cases. (5) The ratio of parents taking 'no' interest, 'less' interest and 'average' interest in children is about 5 : 3 : 1. (6) In a large number of cases 76.0%, the parents who neglect the child are those whose income is low and liabilities are many; who are middle-aged, illiterate or less educated; and who are engaged in low-status jobs. (7) A large number of parents who ill-treat their children are those who are aggressive, irritable and domineering in their behavioural characteristics; fickle-minded, inflexible and less tolerant in their emotional characteristics; and have low-esteem, feeling of alienation, and lack of ability to empathise in social characteristics.

Causes of Child Abuse

The major cause of child abuse is adaptational failure or maladjustment in environment (both in family and work-place) mostly on the part of the adult perpetrators (parents, employers...) but to some extent on the part of adults responsible for family socialization as well. (Kewalramani, 1990: 199) Before discussing this thesis, let us first analyse the causes of the three different types of child abuse separately.

Causes of Physical Abuse

Different scholars have suggested different causes of physical abuse. Some consider the *psycho-pathology of the individual perpetrators* as the primary cause factor, others view the *psycho-social pathology of* family interaction as the main cause, and still others put major emphasis on *situations of acute stress* The empirical study of Kewalramani conducted in Rajasthan, however, revealed that "stress factors associated with families" give a sufficient causal explanation for child abuse. The situational stresses pointed out four models of dominant causes of a child's physical abuse (*a*) relations between spouses, (*b*) relations between parents and children, (*c*) structural stresses, and (*d*) child-produced stress.

The dominant causes of battering children were found as: Children constantly disobeying parents (35.0%), quarrels between the parents and the child beaten as scapegoat (19.0%), child not taking interest in

studies (9.0%), child spending most of his time outside the home (8.0%), child refusing to go to earn a livelihood (7.0%), child frequently fighting with siblings (5.0%), child frequently playing truant from school (5.0%), child refusing to hand over his total earnings to his parents/guardians (5.0%), receiving complaints of misbehaviour from outsiders (4.0%), and child indulging in deviant behaviour like theft, smoking... (3.0%) All these factors (disobeying parents, quarrels between parents, spending most of the time outside the home, child not taking interest in studies or work) do not point so much to the personality defects in the individual perpetrators as to the major factors leading child abuse It may, therefore, be said that though the role of the personality traits of the abusers cannot be ignored but family environment and stress ridden family situations are more crucial factors in child battering.

Causes of Sexual Abuse

The four causes of sexual abuse mostly given are adjustment problems of the perpetrators, family disorganisation, victim's characteristics, and the psychological disorders of the abusers Kewalramani's study on child abuse, however, approached the problem of sexual abuse with a 'System Model' and perceived it as behaviour influenced by factors at several different levels, that is, a behaviour which is the result of cumulative influence of a set of factors In fact, this study used the system approach not to study sexual abuse but also physical and emotional abuse. The four variables related to sexual abuse were: family environment, family structure, individual predispositions and situational factors.

The analysis of *family environment* revealed that congestion in family was not related to sexual abuse but conflict between parents and weakening of inhibitions leading to neglect of the children, absence of affectionate parent-child relationship within the family that fails to give support and protection to child, alcoholism of the earning male member, his lack of accountability, lack of adequate control on the children, illicit relations of the mother with some man and paramour's hold on his mistress, dominance of stepfather, and social isolation of the family (that is, family not participating in social networks or community activities) were factors which were more important in sexual abuse.

The environment in the work-place also contribute to sexual molestation. Several cases of assault by employers and molestation by

coworkers of the young victims when they were all alone in the house/ work-place/school were found in Kewalramani's study. The loneliness of young girls make them more susceptible to the overtures of the perpetrators.

Causes of Emotional Abuse

Four important causes of emotional abuse can be identified: poverty, 'deficient' parental control and non-cordial relations within family, maltreatment faced by parents in their own childhood or inter-generational transmission of child maltreatment, and alcoholism of parents. Kewalramani also found these factors important in emotional abuse. More than half of the abuser parents (55.0%) had low income (less than Rs. 1,000 per month) and 5-12 family members to support. Strauss (1979) and Deschner (1984) have also pointed out the effect of poverty on child abuse. However, it has now come to be believed that child abuse is not exclusively a lower SES (socio-economic status) situation, though it is predominantly a lower SES problem. 'Deficient' parental control was found by Kewalramani in 52.0% cases and inter-generational transmission of maltreatment was discovered in 79.0% cases. Pagelow (1984) has also referred to the role of inter-generational transmission in child maltreatment. However, Burgess and Youngblade (1985) have questioned this belief. Lastly, Kewalramani did not find alcohol as an important factor in child abuse. He found only 26.0% parents (fathers) as alcohol-abusers, of whom 44.0% took alcohol every day, that is, were addicts. Matlins (1981) has, however, described the alcoholic parent as having an important role in child abuse.

Integrated Model of the Causes of Child Abuse

The major premise of this model is the interdependence between parent, child and situation. This model focuses on four factors in child abuse: (i) family environment, (ii) structural stresses, (iii) individual characteristics of parents, and (iv) sub-cultural learning. The model requires knowledge in five different areas: (i) child development, (ii) socialisation processes, (iii) family interactions, (iv) learning principles, and (v) sources of arousing anger, aggression, hatred, and so forth.

These areas point out that:

(a) Child abuse can be viewed in terms of the degree to which a parent uses negative or inappropriate control strategies with his/her child. Using of 'normal' methods (meeting all the child's needs,

adequate control, positive disciplining, and clear communication) contributes to a child's (social, emotional and intellectual) development, whereas using of 'abnormal' methods (neglecting child's needs, inadequate control, negative disciplining, unclear communication, and over-reliance on coercion) in child rearing *inhibits a child's development and causes child abuse*.

Authoritative parenting (the commanding type of parents), *athoritarian* parenting (requiring complete obedience to their authority), *indulgent* parenting (gratifying all desires/fancies), and *negligent* parenting (being indifferent and unresponsive and not paying due attention) influence a child's characteristics and behaviour. The *authoritarian* parental style is most harmful and is conducive to child abuse

(b) *Stresses* also give rise to maladaptive coping responses, since abusive parents are clearly not violent under all circumstances. Factors like unemployment and dissatisfaction with job affect an individual's behaviour which lead to child abuse.

(c) Individual characteristics of parents like inherent traits (irritable nature, self-centeredness, rigidness ..), lack of parenting skill, and lack of resources (low prestige, little education and low income) also cause child abuse

(d) The sub-cultural learning, that is, socialisation in a violent home, or experiencing violence in childhood, is yet another cause of child abuse.

All these factors together explain how they affect the behaviour of the perpetrators which ultimately leads to child abuse.

Effects of Abuse on Children

What are the effects of abuse—physical, sexual and emotional—on children. Bolton and Bolton (1987 : 93-113) have identified eight possible effects of abuse on children, namely, self-devaluation, dependency, mistrust, revictimization, withdrawal from people, emotional trauma, deviant behaviour, and inter-personal problems. Kewalramani's study of child abuse lays down the effect of abuse on children in five significant areas

The first is the loss of *self-esteem*. Abused children develop a negative view of themselves. Elmer (1987) has called it 'self-devaluation' while Egeland, Sroufe and Erickson (1983 : 460) have called it 'low self-esteem'. Kinard (1980 : 686-696) has mentioned it as 'poor self-concept' and Hjorth and Ostrow (1982 : 71-72) as 'poor self-

image'. Children have no choice but to accept the perpetrators' abuse. The parent who maltreats them is their own parent so they cannot run away. Similarly, they have to tolerate their caretakers' and employers' hostility because of their poverty and their dependence on them.

Kewalramani used three indicators to test his hypothesis that child's self-esteem is devalued by his abuse. These indicators were: child's own evaluation of his/her performance at school (in the case of the school-going children), evaluation as worker (in the case of the working children), and evaluation as a helper at home. He framed five questions pertaining to these indicators and found that: (i) A high percentage of children (75.0%) who were physically/emotionally abused felt that they were weak at studies and/or had to make more than one attempt to pass the examination. (ii) A high per cent (84.0%) considered themselves to be indifferent towards their work and/or felt dissatisfied with the work they were engaged in. (iii) A high percentage (86.0%) thought of themselves as shirkers than as helpers to their parents/care-takers in the routine household chores. From these, it may be inferred that abuse always devalues a child's self-esteem.

The second effect is on *dependency*. It was found that a child's dependency is shifted from parents/caretakers to teachers for the gratification of all his/her needs. The three indicators to operationalise dependency were: gratification of physical needs (food, clothes and medicare), emotional and social support, and need of working somewhere to earn money. It was found that: (i) a good number of child victims (50.0%) had a feeling that their physical needs were not being met to their satisfaction; (ii) a high percentage of victims (55.0%) found themselves dependent on others for their emotional and social support; and (iii) a high percentage (63.0%) of abused children were forced to take up a job to meet their needs. However, significantly, despite the abuse, a good number of victimized children continued to depend on their parents/caretakers than on others

The third effect is on *deviant behaviour*. It was found that abuse had a great effect on a child's conformity to socio-cultural expectations and a large number of the victimized children were compelled to indulge in activities that violated the social norms or which are labelled as 'deviance'. The five indicators used by Kewalramani to study the effect of child abuse on deviance were: absence from school, absence from work, drug addiction, stealing money, and hostile reactions towards perpetrators. The study revealed that: (i) A high percentage of emotionally and sexually abused victims (58.0% to 80.0%) missed their

school frequently. (ii) About three-fourths of the victims (74.0% to 77.0%) frequently remained absent from work. (iii) About one-tenth of the victims (8.0% to 10 0%) had either become drug addicts or had started smoking or taking tobacco or consuming alcohol. (iv) About one-fifth of the victims (18.0%) had started stealing money. (v) A large number of the victims (48.0% to 78.0%) had developed hostility and aggressiveness towards the perpetrators. From all this, it may be inferred that child abuse causes deviance amongst the victims which varies with regard to its magnitude and type.

The fourth effect is on *social and interpersonal problems*. Kewalramani's study revealed that child abuse results in poor communication and coping ability, failure in developing intimacy and social relationships, mistrust, isolation and withdrawal from interactional settings. For verifying these effects, the questions asked from the victims related to their free time activities, relations with parents and siblings, what constitutes embarrassing situations, their confiding in friends in times of stress and their desire to abandon their families. It was found that: (i) Most of the victims (68.0% to 83.0%) avoided situations in which interaction would have been expected, that is, they preferred to live in solitude and passed their leisure time all alone. (ii) Only a low percentage of the victims wanted to dissociate themselves from or abandon the family. (iii) A high percentage of the victims (76.0%) had indifferent or antagonistic relations with their parents/caretakers and/or siblings. (iv) Only a small number of the victims (24.0%) had a friend/relative whom they could trust and share their sorrows with. (v) Abuse caused embarrassment but its range differed in relation to the type of abuse. All these observations point out that victims of child abuse always develop certain types of social and interpersonal problems.

The last effect (of child abuse) is on *revictimization*, that is, the child once abused will essentially be abused time and again. The three indicators used by Kewalramani in this context in his study were: frequency of abuse, number of abusing perpetrators, and number of ways or forms of child abuse. The three questions related to these three indicators were how frequently were the victim abused, whether he was abused by one or more persons, and whether he was abused in one way or in more than one way.

The study revealed that: (i) a high percent of children (65.0% to 84.0%) were abused regularly or frequently, (ii) a high percentage of victims (53.0% to 58.0%) of physical and emotional abuse (but not

sexual) were abused by more than on person, and (iii) a high percentage of victims of physical and emotional abuse (66.0% to 80.0%) were victimized in more than one way. From all this, it may be inferred that a child who is a victim of abuse once is not only abused frequently and by more than one person but is also at a greater risk of being victimized in more than one way, that is, physically, emotionally and sexually.

The Problem of Child Labour

Child labourers are exploited, exposed to hazardous work conditions and paid a pittance for their long hours of work. Forced to forego education, shouldering responsibilities far beyond their years, becoming worldly-wise when their peers have yet to leave the concoons of parental protection, these children never know what childhood is. The Constitution enshrines that:

- No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or in any hazardous employment (Article 24).
- Childhood and youth are to be protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment (Article 39(f)).
- The state shall endeavour to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years (Article 45).

Nature of Child Work

A majority of the working children are concentrated in the rural areas. About 60.0% of them are below the age of 10. Business and trade absorb 23.0% while work in households covers 36.0%. The number of children in urban areas who work in canteens and restaurants, or those engaged in picking rags and hawking goods, is vast but unrecorded. Among the more unfortunate ones are those who are employed in hazardous industries. For instance, the fireworks and match box units in Sivakasi in Ramanathpuram district in Tamil Nadu employ 45,000 children. The glass factories of Ferozabad in Uttar Pradesh have more than 45,000 children on the rolls. A large number of children work in the stone polishing units in Jaipur, the brassware industry in Moradabad, the lock-making units in Aligarh, the slate industry in Markapur (Andhra Pradesh) and Mandsaur (Madhya Pradesh) and the carpet-making in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a study on the impact of development on the rural women in Western Uttar Pradesh, as many as 83 out of 245 girls in 6-11 age-group (about 33.5%) were found to be engaged in some economic activity. Over 52.0% of the girls in the age group 11-18 were similarly engaged. It was estimated that around Bhadohi in Uttar Pradesh, 25.0% of the 50,000 workers engaged in carpet-weaving were children, while in Mirzapur 8,000 of the 20,000 workers were children. In Kashmir, the carpet weaving industry employs small girls in back-breaking work. In another flourishing craft of this region—the fine hand embroidery—children are required to maintain the same posture for long hours and strain their eyes on intricate designs This often leads to permanent physical deformities and eye damage. In and around Surat (Gujarat), boys in their early teens are engaged in large numbers in diamond-cutting operations which can have very harmful effects on the eyes.

The surveys of the metropolitan cities make shocking revelations. Bombay has the largest number of child labourers. In Saharanpur, 10,000 child workers are engaged in the wood carving industry, working for 14 hours a day and getting just a rupee a day. In Varanasi, 5,000 children work in the silk weaving industry. Even in Delhi, 60,000 children work in *dhabas*, tea stalls and restaurants on a daily wage of Rs 2 or Rs. 3. In the mining sector, 56% of workers are children below 15. In most cases children are favoured as they are docile and hence can be exploited.

Child labour is inextricably linked to bonded labour. In Andhra Pradesh, 21 0% of the bonded labourers are under 16. In Karnataka, 10 3% and in Tamil Nadu 8 7% belong to this age-group. A study shows that at the time of entering bondage, many labourers are as young as five years old In Orissa, one common way of clearing debt is to sell daughters, eight to 10 years old, as maid servants to the creditor. In several parts of the country, bonded fathers, over 40 years old, free themselves by deputing their sons into bondage.

In the tea gardens of Assam where employment of children below 12 years is prohibited, girls who bring food to their working mothers are encouraged to stay back and help with the work. Children, mostly boys, have an important role to play in mining operations While men do the digging inside the pits, boys carry coal to the surface. Children below 12 are preferred because their height allows them to walk without bending in the tunnels. Preference for child workers is most common in the unorganised sector because here it is relatively easy for employers to circumvent laws Children are concealed from factory

inspectors during inspection, their ages are raised arbitrarily to make them eligible for employment, or those eligible for adult wages are denied their legitimate share because the employers adroitly lower their age in the forms.

Causes of Child Labour

In a country like India where well over 40.0% of the population is living in conditions of extreme poverty, child labour is a complex issue. Children work out of necessity and without their earnings (however meagre they may be), the standard of living of their families would decline further. A large number of them do not even have families or cannot count on them for support. In these circumstances, the alternative to work may be idleness, destitution, or worse, crime.

Employers give interesting justifications for employing children to suppress their guilt feelings. They say that the work keeps children away from starvation. They are prevented from committing crimes which they would have indulged in if they had no jobs. The bureaucrats hold that the total eradication of child labour is impractical because the government cannot provide substantial alternative employment to them. The social scientist say that the main cause of child labour is poverty. The children either supplement their parents' income or are the only wage earners in the family. Another reason is that child labour is deliberately created by vested interests to get cheap labour. The third reason forwarded for the existence of child labour is that they benefit industries. For example, the carpet industry of Uttar Pradesh which employs 75,000 children earns about Rs. 150 crore a year in foreign exchange. In 1990, the export earnings were estimated to be about Rs. 300 crore.

Working Conditions of Child Labourers

Children work in dangerously polluted factories whose brick walls are scarred with soot and there is an oppressive smell in the air. They work near furnaces which burn at a temperature of 1400° centigrade. They handle dangerous chemicals like arsenic and potassium. They work in glass blowing units where the work exerts their lungs and creates diseases like tuberculosis.

Among the working children, many are the main or major wage-earners in the family who always remain worried about feeding their dependents. The migrant child workers whose parents live in some far

off city or village are generally in despair. Some work for 12 hours including night shifts. When the factories are fully functional, they are paid upto Rs. 500 per month, all of which they hand over to their 'guardians' who do not give them even a rupee a day for tea during the night shift. There are times when their bodies ache, minds fog, hearts cry, spirits bleed, but on orders of the employer they work for 15 hours at a stretch.

A visit to several factories in Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, reveals that a large number of child workers have sunken chests and thin bone frames which give them a fragile look. They look like rag dolls, limp, unwashed and scraggy. They wear coarse and badly tailored clothes. Many of them have scabies on hands, arms and legs. The heads of a few are shorn probably because the skin on their skull has developed severe infections.

A large number of the child workers are virtually confined in small rooms under inhuman conditions and in the most unhygienic surroundings. Most of these children come from extremely poor households. They are either school drop-outs or have not seen any school at all. They earn a very meagre wage and work in most unsafe conditions. The hazardous conditions take their toll. Children suffer from lung diseases, tuberculosis, eye diseases, asthma, bronchitis and backaches. Some are injured in fire accidents. Many become unemployable even at the age of 20. If injured or incapacitated, they are discarded mercilessly by their employers.

Government Measures and National Policy of Amelioration

The government believes that it is not easy to completely wipe out child labour It, therefore, has only tried to improve their working conditions—reduce working hours, ensure minimum wages and provide facilities for health and education. It could be said that the national policy has three main ingredients—legal action focusing on general welfare, development programmes for the child workers and their families, and a project-based action plan. Initially ten projects were proposed to cover the areas where child labour is prevalent. They included factories in Surat, Jaipur, Ferozabad and the brassware industry of Moradabad. It was also contemplated in the policy to utilise the ongoing projects for the child workers and their families in order to cover their education, health, job prospects and a study of the socio-economic conditions which compelled these children to work at such an early age.

The unfortunate part is that the children in the unorganised sector are unprotected. And it is in the unorganised sector (like domestic servants, hawkers, rag-pickers, paper venders, agricultural labourers, and even industrial concerns like the lock-making industry) where the children are most shamelessly exploited.

An Evaluation

Despite the hope aroused of some improvement in the lot of the child workers, the enactment of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, has not goaded either the state governments or the Centre to any sort of purposive action even on a limited front. Nothing illustrates this apathy as the fate of the plan of action announced by the Labour Ministry in August, 1987 as an essential component of the national policy on child labour. Of the ten projects drawn up under the plan to enforce the Act and provide welfare inputs in such vulnerable areas as the glass industry in Ferozabad, carpet-weaving industry in Mirzapur, diamond polishing industry in Surat and match-box making in Sivakasi, only one has been taken up on an experimental basis. Considering that this lone project in the match industry is an on-going one that has since been dovetailed into the action plan, the enunciation of the policy as such has achieved nothing beyond delineating the responsibility of the states and the Centre. If this is the fate of a pilot scheme devised to benefit just 30,000 of the 18-million child labour force, the lot of the rest covered by the Act will be no better than that of the vastly greater numbers slogging for a pittance in the unorganised sector, who are outside the purview of the Act. The idea in formulating the action plan apparently was to make a beginning with the implementation of the new law and related provisions of other legislations affecting children in such sectors where the incidence of child labour is quite endemic. The failure of the projects to get off the ground does not inspire much hope about the success of the plan to shift the thrust of the anti-poverty programmes to those segments of society that contribute the bulk of child workers.

To this extent, the enactment of the legislation may have proved ineffective in affording a measure of protection to children forced to earn a living because of the rising rural impoverishment and the struggle for existence in urban areas. The legislation was drafted on the sound premise that since the root cause of poverty cannot be eliminated overnight, the pragmatic approach was to regulate the practice of child labour. Accordingly, the employment of children below 12 years has

been allowed in selected areas of the organised sector, with suitable safeguards against their exploitation and provision for educational and recreational facilities. But a serious omission in the legislation relates to the enforcement machinery, the laxity of which has enabled employers to circumvent the provisions of the law with impunity. Even if punishment for the violation of the new law has been made stiffer, the cheap, flexible and non-complaining labour provided by children creates a vested interest in perpetuating the practice. In the absence of an efficient and rigorous inspection machinery, nothing prevents the employers from flouting the legal provisions in the full knowledge that the child workers themselves will become willing accomplices in covering it up. Another lacuna in the Act is the failure to define what constitutes hazardous jobs, while the committee set up to identify permissible jobs has not made much progress.

The only way to ensure compliance with the Act is to make punishment for violations more stringent and incorporate a provision for surprise checks and establish a separate vigilance cell. With regard to the workers' interest, it should be made mandatory for all employers to take steps for the intellectual, vocational and educational well-being and upliftment of a child worker, whether one is employed as a factory hand, a domestic servant or a shop assistant.

In this context, the impact of policies which may not be specifically addressed to children but which try to alleviate poverty and inequality can have a significant and even decisive impact. Such policies may include agrarian reforms, employment-creation schemes, dissemination of improved technology among the poor, promotion of the informal sector and creation of cooperatives and social security programmes Laws and regulations must be backed by effective enforcement machinery This calls for the strengthening of labour-inspection and related services. In order to facilitate the verification of ages, an effective system of birth registration should be maintained by the public authorities. It should be made mandatory for employers to maintain registers and documents indicating the names and ages of all the employed children.

That children have to work is sad, but that they should work in conditions dangerous to their health and safety is totally unacceptable Nor can the problem of child labour be left untackeld until economic conditions and social structures are fundamentally improved.

Toiling long hours for a pittance, these little breadwinners accept exploitation as a way of life. They only know their sorrows. Silent

acceptance is writ large on their faces. Each day adds more to their growing numbers. Though it is true that labour helps children in their survival, but should the children be made to pay for the government's inability to provide alternative employment or inability to curb poverty? Should they be forced to inhabit an adult world, bear adult responsibilities, and suffer abysmal exploitation ?

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