Indian Journal of
School Health & Wellbeing

● Health Services ● Life Skills Education ● Healthy School Environment

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The National Life Skills, Values Education & School Wellness Program

Healthy Schools ...... Healthy India

Education is not preparation for life... Education is life itself

- John Dewey

Submission Guidelines

- All submissions should follow the APA 7th Edition style

- All submissions should have an abstract summarizing the main points.

- The submission should have a clear and informative title

- The submission should be original and should not be in the process of consideration by any other publication at the same time.

- The submission should have rigorous and reliable information and provide a deeper level of understanding.

- Submissions should be engaging and accessible to non-expert readers as well.

- Submission emails must contain an inline declaration stating that the research work is the author's original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for publication.

- Initial acceptance of any submission does not guarantee publication. The editorial board shall do the final selection.

- If necessary, the editors may edit the manuscript in order to maintain uniformity of presentation and to enhance readability.

Types of Manuscripts and Word Limits

1. Original Research Papers: These should only include original findings from high-quality research studies. The word limit is 5000 excluding references and an abstract (structured format) of not more than 250 words.

2. Brief Research Communication: These manuscripts should contain short reports of original studies or evaluations and service-oriented research which points towards a potential area of scientific research or unique first-time reports. The word limit is 1500 words and an abstract (structured format) of not more than 150 words.

3. Case Reports: These should contain reports of new/interesting/rare cases of clinical significance or with implications for management. The word limit is 1500 words and an abstract of not more than 150 words.

4. Review Articles: These are systemic and critical assessments of the literature which will be invited. Review articles should include an abstract of not more than 250 words describing the purpose of the review, collection and analysis of data, with the main conclusions. The word limit is 5000 words excluding references and abstract.

5. Grand Rounds in child psychiatry or psychopathology (Case Conference): This should highlight one or more of the following: diagnostic processes and discussion, therapeutic difficulties, learning process or content/technique of training. This may be authored by an individual or a team, and may be an actual case conference from an academic department or a simulated one. The word limit is 1500 words.

6. Viewpoint: These should be experience-based views and opinions on debatable or controversial issues that affect the profession. The author should have sufficient, credible experience on the subject. The word limit is 3000 words.

7. Commentaries: These papers should address important topics, which may be either multiple or linked to a specific article. The word limit is 3000 words with 1 table/figure.

8. Literary child Psychology/ Developmental studies/ Psychiatry/ Disability studies/ Education for mental health: Original Contributions are welcome which cover both literature as well as mental health. These can be in the field of poetry, drama, fiction, reviews or any other suitable material. The word limit is 2000 words.

9. My Voice: In this section multiple perspectives are provided by patients, caregivers and paraprofessionals. It should encompass how it feels to face a difficult diagnosis and what this does to relationships and the quality of life. Personal narratives, if used in this section, should have relevance to general applications or policies. The word limit is 1000 words.

10. Book/ Movie reviews: Reviews of books or movies relevant to school mental health and

wellbeing may also be submitted. The word limit is 1000 words.

11. Announcements: Information regarding conferences, meetings, courses, awards and other items likely to be of interest to readers should be submitted with the name and address of the person from whom additional information can be obtained (up to 100 words).

Faculty members are invited to be the guest editors of the journal on a theme relevant to school health and wellbeing.

The Manuscripts for publication in the peer-reviewed and refereed Indian Journal of School Health and Wellbeing (IJSHW) are to be submitted via e-mail to journal@expressionsindia.org along with a copy of the email to the editor.

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Message from the Editors

Violence against children in all its forms, from the slap of a parent to the unwanted sexual advances of a peer, is harmful, morally indefensible and a violation of every child's rights. Research in neurosciences shows that violence and abuse faced for prolonged durations in early years is 'toxic stress' that can impede brain development and learning, along with long term emotional consequences. In this context, it becomes important to understand how violence in childhood is being perceived and managed and what is being done to provide safe spaces for a safe childhood.

Though there is growing awareness of violence against children, yet there is also a belief that it is rare and doesn't happen with 'our children'. One doesn't need to look far to find violence in the lives of children. The different types of violence children face are violent discipline, corporal punishment, domestic violence, sexual abuse and violence at school. Whatever the context or underlying cause, the mere trivialization of violence leaves scars. Children grow up to be adults, but continue to hide behind the shame of those experiences or fear of reprisal. But, it keeps affecting their lives forever.

Children face violence and abuse in multiple contexts. Home is supposed to be the safest place for the child. So are schools considered safe haven where parents send their child with a free mind, but not anymore. Studies indicate that violence and abuse at home and school is quite common, perpetrated often by known persons and in many instances culturally sanctioned and believed as 'best for the child'. In many instances, violence against children, specially by parents and teachers, gets rationalized as necessary and inevitable or is tacitly condoned and ignored. The fact that mostly those who inflict violence on children are people they trust, this makes it very hard for them to complain and stand against the perpetrators without feeling guilt or rejection of other adults. This results in under reporting of violence against the youngest members of our society.

Whereas the Millennium Development Goals did not address violence directly, three targets in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015) speak to the issue of violence against children. Many additional targets integrated throughout the framework address related risk factors. Protecting children against violence is a path towards more peaceful and inclusive societies, as called for by SDG 16.

It is important the issue of violence and abuse against children is taken up in India. India has enacted the POCSO act, which focuses on sexual violence, but it is silent on other forms of violence like physical, verbal and psychological violence. There is no special protection for children against violence. The act of violence would come to fore only if violence is severe, else it is likely to remain in wraps. It will take individual and collective action to right this global wrong. It is hoped that the hidden oppression which children face in form of violence, will get some attention through this issue.

This issue of **Indian Journal of School Health and Well Being** attempts to address Violence, Abuse and Child Rights issues in the context of school, home and society. The issue would explore instances of violence ranging from corporal punishment, violent disciplining, bullying, physical, emotional, sexual abuse, violations of right to education, and preventive measures too. The purpose is to bring to the fore child rights infringements in school, child rights awareness of teachers and sensitization of educators on child rights. It is important to break the silence around violence and abuse of all forms which children face, and teachers and educators can play a vital role in this.

Dr. Geeta Chopra

Message from the Patrons

It is a matter of great happiness to note that the latest issue of the Indian Journal of School Health & Wellbeing published by the Expressions India is being released. It is a well known fact that Research publications and Journals in particular are the most authentic sources of verified knowledge and experiences. The sharing of such knowledge and experiences not only amongst the Researchers, Scientists, Policy Planners and Implementers, but also the Activists working in the concerned area and persons having special interest in that area benefits all. It is our privilege to reiterate that the Expressions India has been doing pioneering work since long, in the field of Health Education under its banner of "Holistic Health and School Wellness Programme" to enable the school education and teachers holistic facilitation in realizing the goal of Health Education in Schools. The present publication is a momentous indicator of this initiative.

The major bottleneck in the way of achieving the objective of Health Education has been the particularistic conceptualization of its transaction process. The goal of development of holistic health and wellbeing of young learners cannot be attained by making them gather certain information and rote-learn those. It can be attained only by a transaction process focused on experiential co-scholastic methodology that ensures active participation of learners and substantially contribute to the development of life skills enabling young children to manage their lives more competently and grow as truly empowered human resource of the nation and human society at large. To facilitate this process it is very critical to encourage and empower the teachers, so that they act like facilitators and mentors.

The formal school education system need to look towards interacting and taking the support from the initiatives like the one taken by Expressions India under its National Life Sills Education & School Wellness Programme aimed at realizing the Goal of "HEALTHY SCHOOL......HEALTHY INDIA". It is pertinent to state that the Schools and other educational institutions that have been associated with such endeavours have strongly felt the need for such programs to be a adopted by all schools including Higher Education System.

It is this context the Journal of School Health has potential to reinforce the process of realizing the vision of Health Promoting Schools getting integrated into the education system in India. We are more than confident that the present issue of the Journal will strengthen this grand endeavour and empower all who are creatively engaged in the promotion of Health Education in Schools. With immense pleasure we would like to express our gratitude for Advisory group, Editorial Board and Members of the Executive Editorial Committee for their valuable contribution, ungrudging cooperation and keen interest and also for making available the benefits of their rich experiences and knowledge.

"If there is will, there is way, and if the will is reinforced by enlightened path-breakers, the way would lead to the destination at the earliest ".

Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, M.D., D.N.B.

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Realizing Children's Right to Play through Everyday Contexts of Childhood

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Abstract

Play is the basis of everyday rhythms for very young children. Their relationship with the world is grounded in elements of play such as pushing, pulling, throwing, touching as it helps children to shape their thoughts and feelings. The gamut of experiences and opportunities allows for use of skills in different domains with possibilities of constructing inter domain developmental connections. Winnicot a Child Psychoanalyst in Playing and Reality (p.52) stated, "playing itself is therapy". In the modern vocabulary guided by International Conventions (UNCRC,1989) it could well read as every child has a right to play. As children enter the middle childhood phase the exploring, experimenting in play transforms to a deep search for imagined or real search for meaning. There are several profound reflections on the value of play thus this paper intends to go beyond only reiterating the accepted value of play. Descriptions of children's activities and actions often convey childhood perception with nuances of their social world. Child's analytical competence is often heartwarming as they infer from their limited expanse of their physical world. The objective in sharing anecdotal data is to savour the many developmental processes in childhood communication through verbal and non-verbal body movements. The underlying intention is to hope for educators and parents to respond to the developing meaning making skills of children. It is in the ordinary conversations and narratives that children search for connections that facilitates both further exploration that challenge action and imagination.

Keywords: *Playful, adult child dyad, child oriented, child spaces, Right to Play, meaning and everyday contexts of childhood*

Background Note

This paper is based on over three decades of association with an Early Childhood Centre with multiple facilities, organizing several workshops for parents, experience as a Trainer of teachers from a pan Indian contexts. One of my favourite exercise that brings out the strengths of the teachers while inspiring some others is " My success and failures". One of the abiding features in this sharing has been teachers skill in reaching children's inner self through playful stances, humour and engaging as sort of friends. The theoretical premise of play as children's reality resonates with Winnicot's writing in a book with a similar title Playing and reality (1989)

Introduction

Any activity that is self-chosen pursued with exploration or experimentation is play. Children from the time they are born engage with objects, visuals or sounds in their physical environment. Play allows children to build an understanding of themselves and their surroundings and this engagement provides self-amusement, behavioural social and psychomotor rewards, Play is child directed, enjoyable and spontaneous. Mostly environments are naturally organized in ways that is appealing for children's engagement and comprehension through play.

Babies respond with body movements to caring adults, gaze at pictures; kick a mobile repeatedly to hear musical notes. Hit and trial or repeated actions slowly build simple cause and effect connections transforming to intent in actions. Parents watch every grimace to respond to their baby's discomfort with warm soothing play of sound and touch. The environment contributes and facilitates children's need for play.

Infants gain mobility to experience space, surfaces spotting new features to jump, push, pull and throw. At times infants drop an object, which is retrieved by a caring adult. The infant

replays the actions of drop the object and pick the object, creating a rhythm of playful interaction. The adult rebukes the child for being controlled for compliance while the child gains a sense of self worth and social competence. The adult child play dyad soon shifts to peer play as children acquire social mobility besides physical independence. From playing with pots and pans in the kitchen children move to play yards or community parks running, climbing the jungle gym to team games. This world of play becomes a microcosm of the society that comprises the adult world. The group dynamics in play simply fosters in children team spirit, conflict resolution, seeking solutions to problems with a strong sense for achieving set targets.

Children's propensity for play

Children thrive in play that is supported in environments rich in things to do, spaces to explore, spirit to experiment with opportunity to experience. Families and communities largely recognize children's curiosity and need for adventure, however as a society we need to ensure and sustain child oriented approach and attitudes of freedom and regulation in services organized for the care and education of children.The Child Rights discourse emphasizes what most communities were organizing in their local wisdom. It is the emerging of institutional settings with scaling up of teaching learning materials that diffused the individual in producing for a collective. In play, children manage to find their specific niche within the collective. Disseminating what children are entitled to with appreciation of age related needs will be creating supportive spaces for inter domain development. Children's own desire for meaning making is evident in their movements and actions.

From the time children are born there is a compelling inner drive to establish a relationship with the world around them. They respond to sounds, touch, visuals, smell and taste and diligently follow the cues provided in their immediate environment. Human infancy is embedded in dependency thus the course of growth, development, curiosity, motivation or aspirations is an outcome of how the environment is organized. If children are in a bare room bereft of colour, sound, interactions the denial of stimulation leaves little scope for the evolution of the brain. An unresponsive environment is a gross neglect of children's

basic needs of stimulation to engage and comprehend. Dialogues on play become important in the context of changed family configuration, dual income homes, non familial caregiving systems or even societal pressure on print expertise and academic performance.

Children in the family

When Children get playful time

Remember their growth to be fine

Family rhythms are absorbed by children quite rapidly as noted in parent teacher interactions in school. In fact discussions have been animated about how schedules become oppressive in the absence of humour and some elements of game like frames. Mothers often share imitation of being rebuked," Mrs Malhotra, Tiya is again late?". This act is followed by stating, "Do you like it if Mamma is scolded?" The playfulness ensures a conviviality, shared responsibility with a proactive stance. Parents have also cited examples of children sorting vegetables after shopping while keeping alive school or office based natter. Engaging children in household chores in shared time and space helps to smoothen both parental as well as children's transitions. As children grow board games as part of family frames are positive memories. Play with adults need not only be part of therapy or a prerogative of counselors. Everyday play can foster rich bonds that inculcate confident and compassion among children.

Older children will need outdoor play with friends a deeply essential part of everyday routines. Children may be enrolled in horse riding or music or dance lessons. However much they are part of 'extra activities' it is not play. The self-chosen cricket session with friends is real play. Similarly creating your own band is different from practicing for the school choir. It is not always that tasks and enjoyment are mutually exclusive, as children do get passionate about performances. The emphasis is only to highlight the significance of play as a significant element of the culture of childhood.

Play and educational settings

Khel khel mein duniya jaani

Suni sunayi maan ne na maani

Translation: Play opened world of many kind

Listening unacceptable to my mind

The moment children are sent to a formal setting the expectation is disciplined learning, a well-behaved obedient child who has self control and social regulatory skills. The question of play may get dismissed. The questioning of "why children cry on the first day at school? is taken as a " normal pattern" rather than why? My contention is more provocative than as a mere societal lament. We have devised strategies to ease this transition from home to school at the Child Study Centre at the Lady Irwin College. First three days the child is accompanied with the parents and we encourage parents to be animated about the different opportunities the school will provide slipping in that they will miss it all as they will only be there for a short while. From full day to half day to being present but not visible the move from security of the home to this strange new premise loses its trauma-ridden introduction in the lives of children. One mother child dyad was mutually in fear of separation.

The teacher in charge walked to the adult and gently asked, " You are serious about the admission?" The mother nodded to affirm. The teacher then took the tearful child, body-stiffening assuring the Mother that she could take a peep after 10 minutes to note the emotional status of her child. To her surprise she came back to find her little one trying to fix a puzzle in between sobs. At the time of pick up she was keen to know what worked? Well I spotted a parakeet feeding her children and then flying away. I engaged your baby in a conversation about the baby parakeets being alone and waiting for their Mother. I focused on the fact that they were having fun with each other and perhaps we should also try if we can find something new and exciting.

In this illustration the calming influence was the playful distraction with the playful modulation of voice. The school environment for the young learners is appealing with optimal colourful visuals, accessible arranged toys, crayons, puzzles, books creating in young minds a desire to engage. Teachers who describe the classroom architecture in a child like narrative and interesting in the eyes of children.

Hello children, you all like to see picture or listen to stories. Well I have a book corner and we go there when you want to know about what different people do. OH OH, do you see the small drums, the flute, and the xylophone, what do we do there? You see some some words on the wall and some numbers. We sit and match words so that as we become big we can also read like big people. She can also insert, Sometimes when we want alone time or we are angry we could go to this "peace corner". We could paint or do a puzzle or just sit quietly to think or hear new sounds. There is one more corner with a basket of lots of old stuff and we could play becoming a doctor, or being grandfather or Mummy.....

A teacher who shares her classroom space organization prepares children for various experiences that could be possible. The stoking of the imagination which in due course will be energized and nourished with the experience of the promise of action, participation with the adult as a leader of the team of discoverers. Many teachers have reported that calling children by their names is magical and if you ensure some kind of gentle touch it adds to the child's self worth. Moments of problem behaviours have posed challenges but resorting to forms of art, sit down conversations in contexts of play help children to reflect. For example a child would bang his head against a wall or on the desk. It created a fear among children as well as teacher. She devised a game of wearing a helmet made from thermacole. Four five helmets were shared while fortunately the child with head banging leanings preferred to wear it for long periods. The therapeutic element of play is well defined by Axline (1967).

Generating playfulness in teachers

Children thrive with love play and care

Freedom and structure needed there

Teachers are the pivots of the classroom especially for young learners. Seeing them as friendly, approachable and fun loving is most crucial for the well being of the young explorers. One of the most significant critical facets is the voice of the teacher. Children are intuitively lively and prone to action, which initiates child-generated sounds. We forget that children are engaging in peer play and dialogue is an indication of their feeling emotionally safe and protected. That recall of childhood emotion does not surface with ease. As adults the tendency is for order and silence that tends for the teacher to be sharp and loud. However playful acts like " lets be stars" (raise your arms and move your hands)…… Lets be laughing stars or now lets be angry stars o ohoh " lets be quiet stars". Some

structures and predetermined codes can add to the classroom becoming an exciting, energetic space with many stories and acts to perform.

Dominant use of music, movement and art and craft activity with imagination can add to the children's need to understand the mysterious of the world they inhabit. The arts led classroom strategies are also effective and emotionally gratifying when the interactions are process rich and not led by transferring of competence. Education gets a firm start with experience and opportunity not stress on expertise or scorn at children's errors. Teachers do realize childhood perceptions have their own definition yet academic pressures and dominance of print proficiency diffuses teacher beliefs.

Conclusion

In conclusion all children should have time for play. It provides foundation for establishing confidence, coping abilities, flexibility and positive orientation towards self and others. Through play, children will be able to apply these skills as they grow into a young adult in a manner that is their entitlement. Children's need to play or in the discourse of child rights, Right to play can only be realised if the different child minders are aware of how play shapes children's minds. In the course of their developmental stages, children come in contact with several adults who will benefit children if they understand play as a resource and reservoir for learning, a promise by the state as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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Children's Right to Quality Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

ASER study,'2018 and 2019 of India reported the non school readiness of children for formal schooling. Data from studies brings attention on missed, non compensable critical periods and loss of learning opportunities during early years of life. Due to this loss, children even miss out on their right to development and participation. Hence, to ensure this, it becomes necessary and facilitative to have children's Right to quality early childhood education. Children during early years are more receptive towards learning with rapid brain development. Quality early childhood education adds on to their learning capacities by providing conducive, developmentally appropriate and play based learning opportunities. United Nation Convention on the Rights of Child in General comment No. 7 attempts to ensure implementation of child rights in early childhood. Article 28; 6.2; 29.1; 18.2; 29.1 of UNCRC calls attention on children's right for free and compulsory education from birth onwards, leading to holistic development of children and inclusion of human rights education in early childhood education. Directive principle of Indian constitution in Article 45 delineates to provide early childhood care and education for children of less than 6 years of age. Indian government policies like Draft National education policy' 2019 stated to integrate quality early childhood education as part of RTE; National ECCE policy,'2013aims for free, universal, inclusive, equitable, joyful and contextualized opportunities during early years; Quality standards for early childhood care and education, '2013 (b) specify some non negotiable quality standards indicators for ECCE service providers and National ECCE Curriculum Framework,'2013 (a) aims for quality and excellence in early childhood education by providing guidelines for practice in ECCE programmes.

Keywords: *children's right to quality early childhood education, fundamental right, curriculum framework, UNCRC, quality early childhood education*

Tracing the place of right to quality early childhood education: A Legal framework

"General comment" No. 7 (2005) Implementing Child Rights in early childhood was added in United Nation on Rights of Child. Comment aims to encourage rights of children during early childhood years due to the importance of critical periods this life stage caries. The need for this comment was realized from reports about early childhood received by UNCRC , focusing mainly on child mortality, birth registration and health care. Article 28 of UNCRC states children's right to free and compulsory education, in Article 6.2, committee recognizes this right from birth onwards. Article 29.1 of UNCRC links education to development of children in personality, talents, mental and physical abilities. General comment No. 1, elaborates on aims of education that is to empower children's skills, capacities, dignity, self esteem, self confidence through child centred and child friendly manner. Article 18.2 states that appropriate assistance for parents should be given for child rearing and enhance their knowledge in their role in early childhood education. Article 29.1 (a) states to aim for programmes which work in partnership with parents for child's development. General comment No. 1 (2001) recommends including human rights education within early childhood education (UNICEF, 2005). Garg and Singla (2012) state relevance of right to education, lack of which leads to deprived freedom of speech and expression enshrined in Article 19 (1) (a). Right to education is directly linked to right to life, and it is the states responsibility to provide educational facilities to all states members. Realizing importance of education, in 2002 Right to Education Act under Article 21 A was declared as fundamental right. According to the Right to Education act children of age group six to fourteen years should be provided with free

and compulsory education. However, the RTE act did not cover age group below six years old children. Further, in Eighty sixth Amendment Act in 2002 of the Indian constitution, Article 45 stated that "*The state shall Endeavour to provide early childhood care and education, for all children until they complete the age of six years*" as one of it's Directive Principle.

Realizing need for children's right to quality early childhood education: Current status in India

ASER' 2019 conducted surveys in 26 districts across 24 states of India, examining 36,930 children of age group 4 to 8, findings reported enrolment rates to be 44.2% in Anganwadi Centres AWCs and 36.7% in private preschools at age 4 years; 26.2% in AWCs and 40.6% in private preschools at age 5 years; 5.8% in AWCs and 23.2% in private preschools at age 6 years; 1% in AWCs and 8.3% in private preschools at age 7 years and 0.4% in AWCs and 2.8% in private preschools at age 8 years. Same sample of children were examined on cognitive, early language, early numeracy, social and emotional tasks and it was found that 44.2% of 4 years old and 26.3% of 5 years old performed much lower in cognitive skills and foundational abilities (ASER,2019). National Achievement Survey,2017, stated that 1 in 3 students in standard 3 could not read small text with comprehensions and 1 in 2 could not use maths to solve daily problems. ASER, 2018 stated that 50% of children in standard 5 in rural India could not read grade 2 text and 35.7% of grade 1 children could not recognize numbers from 1 to 9.. The India Early Childhood Education Impact study and ASER study stated that origin of these crisis lie even before children enter grade 1st ("Dhawan & S," n.d). Lack of exposure to enriching environment, developmentally appropriate opportunities, learning experiences during early childhood years makes children unprepared for formal learning. Further, children miss out on their basic right to development and participation.

Early childhood education that is care and education of children from birth till eight years provides "*sound foundation upon which all learning depends, making every stage of education that follows more efficient Amend more productive*" (UNICEF). During early years, children are most receptive towards growth and development, if exposed to quality care and education opportunities. The area of brain responsible for intelligence and higher level of cognition develops maximum synapses during 3.5 years of age. Brain development during early years follows a balance between proliferation of neurons and controlled cell deaths, which are nurtured by environmental factors. Enriched environmental factor can develop portions of brain which enhances cognitive capacity, learning, memory and resilience in children. These factors also refine neural circuitry which can help to recover genetic disorders, trauma, brain impairments, maternal separation, early neglect or abuse (Centre on Developing Child Harvard University, 2007).

In a study 900 kindergarten children were studied to examine impact of Judy Centre program (a quality early childhood education provider) on school readiness components. Results stated benefits to the children at high risk category after attending the program. Children who came from economically disadvantaged group, special needs, less proficient English skills, were able to reduce the achievement gap (Fontaine et al., 2004).

India early childhood education Impact study, assessed 2767 children, after attending one year of preschool ,found that children going to private preschools gained an average of 6 point percentage more as compared to their counterpart going to government preschools (Anganwadis) on school readiness score,. Gain in school readiness score was highest amongst children who attended "know practices" category preschools, a category which included preschools with best quality amongst the sampled preschools. Hence, concluding that quality of early childhood education is significantly associated with school readiness level of children (Kaul, Chaudhary & Sharma, 2014).

Investing in early childhood education increases the possibility of children completing their primary schooling. Early childhood education through various centres or programmes aims at holistic development of children in social, emotional, cognitive and physical domains by providing stimulating environment, culturally & developmentally appropriate activities, interactive sessions, play opportunities and a trained teacher for secure attachment. It also fosters in children the skills and concepts related

to readiness for learning of 3Rs, before entering in primary schooling (Kaul et al,. n.d).

Stepping towards quality early childhood education: A policy framework

Draft National Education Policy 2019: Realizing the importance of critical periods, developmentally appropriate opportunities and future returns of investing in early childhood education, Draft National Education Policy 2019 lays down policy initiatives that have to be achieved by 2025. It mandates the expansion of curricular and pedagogical framework of early childhood education. The first part of this framework will be for children of 0-3 years of age group, focusing on cognitive stimulation during infancy. Second part will be for children of 3-8 years old elaborating of flexible, multilevel, play based, activity based, discovery based learning aiming to teach alphabets, numbers, basic communications in mother tongue. Expansion and strengthening of early childhood education facilities will be done through training Anganwadi workers in cognitive stimulation, play based learning and multilevel education for children up to six years and by providing Anganwadi centres with excellent educational materials. Wherever possible, Anganwadi centres will be co-located with existing primary schools to provide better educational environment. New primary schools or existing ones will be added with quality preschool for 3-6 years old children with primary focus on health, nutrition and growth monitoring services. High quality stand alone preschools will be constructed where Anganwadi cannot take on educational responsibility of 3-6 years old. Child friendly and learning friendly infrastructure will be developed with basic facilities. State government will train professionally qualified early childhood educators. An effective regulation on the quality of early childhood education will be done. Lastly, it highlights on the inclusion of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education for 3-6 years olds will form an integral part of Right to Education Act (Draft National Education Policy, 2019).

National early childhood care and education policy 2013: The policy aims to provide quality early childhood education by promoting developmentally appropriate practices through quality standards, curriculum frameworks, provision of appropriate play materials and ECE programme and child assessment. Basic quality standards and specification will be implemented by public, private and non-governmental service providers that are: 3-4 hours of daily ECCE programme; classroom measuring 35 square meter for 30 children; trained staff; developmentally appropriate and child centric curriculum in mother tongue; developmentally appropriate toys; safe and cleaned approachable buildings; adequate and safe drinking water; adequate and separate toilets for girls and boys; separate space for cooking and nap time; availability of first aid box/medical kits; and teacher child ratio to be 1:20 for 3-6 years old and 1:10 under 3 years (Ministry of women and child development, 2013).

National Policy for Children 2013: The policy mentions to *"provide universal and equitable access to quality early childhood care and education for optimal development and active learning capacity"* for children below six years of age (Ministry of women and child development, 2013).

Quality Standards for Early Childhood care and education, 2013 (b): The document provides a framework for early childhood care and education service providers/programmes to assess and assist implementation of non negotiable quality standards as mentioned in National ECCE policy'2013. Along with this, policy also proposes eight quality standard in the framework that are:- interaction; health nutrition, personal care and routine; protective care and safety; having infrastructure/physical environment; organization and management; children experiences and learning opportunities; assessment and outcome measures; and management to support quality system (Ministry of women and child development, n.d).

National early childhood care and education curriculum framework,' 2013(a): The framework lays down guiding principles for ECCE programmes to develop its own curriculums based on this framework to promote quality and excellence in early childhood education. It mentions objectives of early childhood care and education programmes as to value and respect children along with making them feel safe and secure. Enable sound foundation for physical and motor development, good nutrition, healthy habits, hygienic practices and self help skills, effective communication, development and integration of senses. It should

stimulate intellectual curiosity and conceptual development of world along with smooth transition from home to ECCE centre and to formal schooling. The curriculum of programme should have three components that are context, content and process. The classroom should have flexible arrangement, display of child's material, periodic change of display, learning/activity corners and involvement of parents or community. Teachers should have short term and long term planning, choosing theme with child's self/relationships/people/world, varieties of activities, with activities being developmentally appropriate and contextual. The programme should be of 4 hours with 20 minutes activities. There must be some routine on daily basis with a balance of structured, unstructured, indoor, outdoor, group, individual, self directed and adult directed activities. Introduction of second language should be done after child becomes comfortable in mother tongue with continuous parental support and involvement in child's learning (Ministry of Women and Child development, n.d).

Early childhood education in India: Participatory trends and current status

According to Census 2011, India the total population of children in age group of 0-6 years is 16.45 Cr, while 74% of this figure belonging to rural area (as cited in Children in India 2018-A statistical appraisal, n.d). When, 36930 children of age group 4 to 8, were surveyed from 1514 villages of India the enrolment trends were found to be 44.2% in AWCs and 36.7% in private preschools at age 4 years; 26.2% in AWCs and 40.6% in private preschools at age 5 years; 5.8% in AWCs and 23.2% in private preschools at age 6 years; 1% in AWCs and 8.3% in private preschools at age 7 years and 0.4% in AWCs and 2.8% in private preschools at age 8 years (ASER, '2019). Rajiv Gandhi Creche Scheme has 22038 sanctioned crèches for children of working mothers with 0.55 million children of age group 0-5 years availing the facility (as cited in Chopra, 2015). Indian Early Childhood Education Impact study – 1, surveyed participation trends in 69 villages and six urban sites covering 298 ECE centres in three states that are Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Rajasthan, including 2767 children between ages of 3.5 to 4.5 years. 83% of sampled children were found to be attending some form of early childhood education programme, out of which

45% were found to be attending Anganwadi centres and 43% attending private preschools. Remaining 12% distributed amongst "known practices" and government pre primary school in state of Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. The physical facilities available in these 298 sampled ECE centres were better in Andhra Pradesh with the mean score of 5.9 on the scale of 10, while Rajasthan and Assam scoring 5.3 and 4.5 respectively. ECE centres in Rajasthan had better outdoor and indoor materials as compared to Assam and Andhra Pradesh with mean score of 3.8; 3.1 and 2.7 on scale of 10 respectively (Kaul, Chaudhary & Sharma, 2014). Studies on ICDS report struggle of Anganwadi centres for building spaces as most them were running on rented buildings or at panchayat ghars/religious places. Also, availability of materials like blackboards, flannel boards, whiteboards, coloured chalks, scissors, paper, sketch pens etc was inadequate. Policy Brief: Indian Early Childhood Education Impact study, (n.d) stated Anganwadi centre and private preschool to be majorly accessed ECE centres of India. While, Anganwadi centres focus majorly on nutrition while private preschools are downward extension of primary classes. None of them reported to offer planned play opportunity for children and collapse to provide appropriate environment for children.

Conclusion/Discussion

United Nation Convention on Rights of Child provide four sets of rights that are survival, development, protection and participation, while being interdependent on each other and none of them cannot be dealt in isolation. Children's right to early childhood care and education is one such right which can contribute to all four sets of child's right under one domain (Chopra, 2015). The question arises how can these rights be dealt together under one domain? Quality in early childhood care and education through various programmes/ECCE centres can lead to this objective. Enriched environment provided through quality care and education develops portion of brain which enhances cognitive capacity, learning, memory and resilience in children. These factors also helps in refinement of neural circuit which can recover genetic disorders, trauma, brain impairments, maternal separation, early neglect or abuse (Centre on Developing Child Harvard University, 2007). Burchinal & Cryer, 2003 stated enhancement in

cognitive development, socialization, and performance on school readiness while providing high quality child care to children (as cited in Fontaine et al., 2004). Investment in quality early childhood care and education has crucial relevance as it lay strong foundations for life time. Despite of these proven benefits of quality early childhood care and education, UNICEF reported non enrolment of more than 175 million children globally in early childhood education. Therefore, to ensure full participation of children in quality early childhood education some legal frameworks were proposed and implemented, nationally and internationally.

United Nation on Rights of Child added "General comment" No. 7 (2005) that is Implementing Child Rights in early childhood. Indian Constitution, eighty sixth amendment act in 2002, Article 45 stated that "*The state shall Endeavour to provide early childhood care and education, for all children until they complete the age of six years*" as one of it's Directive Principle. Certain policies were framed nationally like Draft National education policy' 2019; National ECCE policy' 2013; National Policy for Children' 2013; Quality standards for early childhood care and education'2013 (b) and National ECCE Curriculum Framework'2013 (a) to ensure delivery of quality early childhood education to children this age group.

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Exploring beliefs, values and practices on disciplining of young children in the context of Right to Education Act

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Abstract

In 2009, the enactment of Right to Education (RtE) Act enforced a ban on corporal punishment and gave the children of the country a fundamental right to free and compulsory education without any fear and pain of physical punishment. This paper aims to explore the processes and challenges involved in implementation of RtE. The paper examines the views of different stakeholders such as management of schools, teachers, students and their parents on disciplining practices used in schools using empirical data from a two studies conducted by Centre for Early Childhood Education and Development (CECED), Ambedkar University Delhi— a rapid qualitative assessment in 2013 among private schools in East Delhi and India Early Childhood Education Impact Study where quantitative and qualitative data was collected on corporal punishment between 2013 to 2015 in rural Rajasthan. This paper looks at the classroom practices related to discipline in primary schools. The findings of the research show significant attitudinal differences across different stakeholders and variation in interpretation of RtE Act. The findings indicate that the experiences of children in the schools are dependent on policy formulated by the schools to enact the act, attitudes of the policy implementers and the traditional understanding of punishment.

Keywords: *Corporal punishment, Physical punishment, Right to Education (RtE) Act*

Introduction

"When a child hits a child, we call it aggression.

When a child hits an adult, we call it hostility.

When an adult hits an adult, we call it assault.

When an adult hits a child, we call it discipline."

— Haim G. Ginott (Teacher, Child Psychologist and psychotherapist)

The term "corporal punishment" has been articulated in different ways in diverse settings. The above-mentioned quote reflects the traditional approach to corporal punishment which has been used interchangeably with an intention of disciplining a child for maintaining behaviour and instilling right values in the child for many years (Gershoff, 2010). The idea of disciplining children is derived from deep rooted notions about childhood. It is related to clichéd popular conceptions to children such as 'spare the rod and spoil the child', 'children need to be moulded', and so on, which still persists in the thinking of adults to a great extent.

In India, various research studies have been done to look at adult's attitude towards use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline. In one of the studies, it was found that adults perceive corporal punishment as a form of discipline to put an end to inappropriate or undesirable behaviour and to promote positive and acceptable behaviour in the both short and long terms (Gershoff, 2010). Another study shows the high prevalence of corporal punishment by throwing light into the fact that it is frequently used in both homes and in schools (Ghosh & Pasupathi, 2016). Thus, it is a universal problem and a lot of people are unaware of serious consequences of corporal punishment which often leaves long lasting impact on the personality of the individual. Adults generally use various methods of disciplining a child which often employs harsh measures such as physical punishment, verbal punishment and other forms of punishment (Dehadray, 2019).

In India, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RtE) Act, 2009, which

came into force from 1st April 2010, prohibits 'physical punishment' and 'mental harassment' under Section 17(1) making it a punishable offence under Section 17(2). The Act explicitly enforced a ban on corporal punishment and provided the children of the country a fundamental right to free and compulsory education without any fear and pain of physical punishment in schools.

Despite this ban, evidence reveals that corporal punishment is still prevalent in schools as well as at home which has various short as well as long term impact on children's wellbeing. Numerous cases have been reported. Recently, a student's family complained against a teacher for forcibly cutting their child's hair (Hindustan Times, 2017). Another significant evidence highlighted in the report by Agrasar NGO which revealed that 80% of marginalised children report being punished by teachers, while an average of 43% said they were regularly beaten, up to three times a week (India Spend, 2018).

The harmful impact of corporal punishment on children is well researched with its association to developmental outcomes. The consequence of corporal punishment can be a post-traumatic stress syndrome that creates deep, lifelong psychological problems such as depression (Hyman, 1990). Furthermore, the effects can reach beyond school going years and well into adulthood with more severe psychiatric conditions (Pate & Gould, 2012; Evinç et al., 2018). It decreases a child's motivation and increases anxiety. As a consequence, the ability to concentrate is inhibited and learning is poor (UNICEF Asian Report, 2001).

These startling incidents and impact of corporal punishment on children reflect a large gap between the current RtE Act that bans corporal punishment and its actual implementation. Thus, this paper aims to explore views and practices on disciplining of young children in the context of the Act in the schools of Delhi and rural Rajasthan.

The specific objectives were:

1. To explore traditional ideas and current practices of disciplining young children in the context of RtE, both in home and school;

2. To understand the practical implications of translating the corporal punishment section of the RtE in classroom;

3. To investigate children's perception of punishment; and

4. To explore perceptions of different stakeholders on ban of corporal punishment.

Method

The study was primarily a survey of adult's and children's experiences of corporal punishment in the home as well as in the school setting. The emphasis was on real practices, their magnitude and prevalence. Schools were contacted personally to request permission for their staffs' participation. As part of the IECEI study, a longitudinal study to estimate the impact of early childhood education on school readiness levels and subsequent learning levels in primary grades, the preschool and schools attended by the children were observed through the day. One of the indicators to assess the quality of classroom interaction was on disciplining technique used by the teacher. As part of the study, qualitative survey was done in selected villages to understand what different stakeholders, mainly teachers and parents understand of RtE where ban on corporal punishment was one the issues covered.

Sampling

In the study, purposive sampling was done. The sample of the study comprised of two low budget private schools and one public school. Within each institute their management, teachers, primary school students and their respective parents were selected and interviewed. The total sample of the study which included three schools were three headmistress of the primary school, 13 primary grade teachers, 17 primary grade students and their parents.

20 villages across two districts, Alwar and Ajmer were part of the IECEI Study and81, 95 and 108 schools were observed in 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively. As part of the qualitative survey two villages were selected in Ajmer and two FGDs with teachers and parents were conducted in each of the two villages.

Tools

The study used closed ended interview schedule with adults. An interaction guide was used for the students.

For the classroom observation a tool developed by CECED, AUD, Early Childhood Education Quality Assessment Scale Plus (ECEQAS+) was used and for the FGD with teachers and the parents a FGD guide was developed.

Procedure

As stated above this paper is based on two research studies, a rapid assessment carried out in private schools in Delhi in 2013 and longitudinal study, IECEI study carried out in Rajasthan from 2012 to 2014. This mixed method approach was used in this paper where both qualitative and quantitative data from the two researches has been collected from different stakeholders.

Analysis of data

The data were coded and analysed in order to find emergent themes. Common themes were identified from various data sources and links between them were established.

Ethical considerations

To ensure the ethical standards of conducting a research study are upheld, following key points were considered:

a) Sample briefed about the purpose of the study and are not placed at undue risk.

b) Participation was kept voluntary and confidential.

c) Sample are provided and agree to informed consent prior to their participation

d) Data collection and analysis does not result in the violation of privacy or discrimination.

Results and discussion

Traditional notions of disciplining young children

This section focuses on the challenges faced by parents at the home as well as by teachers at the school setting to discipline their children.

Need for disciplining young children

Teacher's cited disobedience among children as one of the primary concerns which require disciplining. Disobedience involves episodes when children do not follow given instructions or complete homework. 85 percent of teachers reported that the need of disciplining occurs, when children do not follow their instructions

and 40 percent mentioned that conflict among children which could be physical or verbal fights amongst children also requires disciplining. Besides, other reasons include disrespectful behaviour, which often incorporates disrespect towards teachers, counter-replies and aggression mentioned by 15 percent of the teachers and about 10 percent reported, mischievous behaviour of children for instance, playing pranks on other children or on teachers, at times becomes very difficult to manage and need to be controlled and thus punishment being used for the same.

On the other hand, parents of the children were also interviewed to explore if they get complaint about their children from the school and if they do, what are the complaints for. The data showed that complaints received by 80 percent of the parents against their children by teachers are generally on the issues related to disobedience, which involves talking and disturbing the whole class and not completing class work or homework on time. Besides, about 20 percent of parents received complaints on mischievous acts of children and annoying other children and teachers with their mischief. Furthermore, to explore the occurrence of punishment at home, the parents were interviewed, to investigate about the activities where parents face difficulty to indulge in with their children and areas where children need disciplining. 65 percent of the parents reported to face difficulty in dealing with the routine activities of the children. About 35 percent face difficulty with their children in academic activities such as dealing with their homework, schoolwork, marks, and studies etc.

Overall, the responses cited by teachers and parents primarily highlighted disobedience among children as the most governing reason for disciplining children.

Strategies for maintaining discipline among children

67 percent of the teachers reported of using discussion method with children for maintaining discipline in the classroom. In the beginning, teachers preferred to talk to children and discuss with them the problem related to their behaviour. Teacher's also reported to use guilt inflicting strategies, where they made the child feel guilty for their behaviour. This was the most commonly used method to discipline children as reported by 28 percent of respondents. Besides, 15 percent of

the teachers mentioned leaving it up to the principal, counsellor or the parent to take care of the child behaviour. While, 10 percent of the teachers reported about using punishment which includes both verbal and physical punishment.

73 percent of parents reported scolding and refraining the child from his/her favourite activity as the most commonly used ways to maintain discipline among children. Besides, 27 percent of the parents reported to use shaming and not talking to the child as a strategy. On the other hand, 5 percent of the parents reported spanking as well. Parents reported to be using a mix of the disciplining techniques, depending on the children's behaviour.

As there was data on classroom observation on use of corporal punishment by teacher on young children in different schools in rural Rajasthan, we see that corporal punishment is very common across government and private schools. The figures below represent the use of corporal punishment by teachers with children in presence of a researcher who the teachers knew was recording the proceedings of the class.

The data from the IECEI study shows that being punished, hit, slapped by the teachers was a part of the normal routine for the children and higher proportion of teachers were observed to be using abusive language with children. But the data also shows difference between different type of schools. Private schools had more incidences of corporal punishment as compared to government school, but difference is smaller for use of abusive language. Even though in comparison, the government schools seem better than how children are disciplined in private, quite a significant proportion of teachers in government school use banned strategies to discipline children.

Disciplining in classroom setting

Many teachers reported to seek help or advice on disciplining related issues from school counsellors, principals and parents as well. Around 45 percent of the teachers mentioned of talking to parents and school counsellors about disciplining children and 40 percent reported to consult school principal on disciplining related issues.

On the other hand, parents reported that they themselves can be better advisors to the teachers as they know their children well. 75 percent of the parents mentioned that teachers should seek help from parents. Only about 1/4th of the parents thought counsellors can be a good advisors and even fewer regarded principal as a help for the teacher.

Overall, parents and teachers emphasized on the need to take help of a counsellor to deal with disciplining related issues among children. Teachers prefer to take advice from their colleagues in the school, counsellor or the principal but according to parents they can guide the teacher's best. Better communication and interaction among teachers and parents can give a better and more non-violent environment to the children.

In the rural setup, the things were a little different.In the FGDs conducted, the government schoolteachers indicated that they felt bound by the 'new' law which doesn't allow the children to be punished. They said that they do not know what to do with the children when they show behavioural problems in the classroom. The teachers talked about not being trained on how to manage the situation with the children when faced with behavioural issues. The teachers of the government schools stated that without the fear of punishment, it is hard to teach the children. The teachers said they only know of punishment as a solution which has been taken away from themselves by the law.

Parents also agreed to the perspective shared by the teachers, parents of the children didn't mind their children to be beaten in order to discipline to make them learn but only in case it was done by the private school teachers. Parents were of the opinion that Government school teachers do not want to invest in their children so they shouldn't use any harsh disciplining methods whereas private schools were allowed to punish the children, hold exams and fail the children as they were more inclined to a more strict system which was viewed as for the betterment of their children.

Corporal Punishment as a disciplining technique and its impact

This section of the paper explores the perspective of different stakeholders about the implication and impact of the punishment on children.

Influence of punishment

Around 85 percent of parents and teachers believed that children do comply with the rule

after getting punished for some time but, later they get back to their usual behaviour. Though, highest proportion of parents and teachers felt that punishment lead to compliance for some time still, a percentage difference between parents and teachers could be observed. 55 percent of the teachers and 35 percent of parents reported that it is just one-time compliance. Additionally, 40 percent of the parents and 10 percent of the teachers stated that children do commit the same mistakes again after getting punished but if so, then it happens unconsciously. Rest of the 15 percent of the parents and 20 percent of the teachers reported that children commit the mistake consciously.

The difference in the perspective of both parents and teachers reflect that parents see punishment which helps in disciplining children and comply with the rule after getting punished and even if, the child repeats the problematic behaviour, it is done unconsciously. Whereas, teachers believe that punishment makes the child comply for that time period and after being punished, children tend to consciously make the same mistakes.

Emotion felt after punishing a child

The feelings of parents and teachers were explored, after punishing the child. It was important to understand emotions of the adults who use punishments for young children to rectify their inappropriate behaviour and to understand the prevalence of corporal punishment at school and at home.10 percent of the parents and almost 1/4th of the teachers did not respond to the question and further analysis for this item was done by keeping these respondents out.

Many parents (63%) and teachers (80%) mentioned the feeling of guilt after punishing children. On the other hand, 1/4th parents reported feeling contented after punishing children as they stated that punishment would have a positive impact on the children, and they would not get involved in the similar improper behaviours again. None of the teachers mentioned that one feels contented after punishing children. However, 15 percent of the parents and 30 percent of the teachers reported that they feel neutral after punishing as it is something required for disciplining children behaviour.

Impact of corporal punishment as disciplining strategy

It was interesting to see the awareness of parents and teachers on negative impacts of corporal punishment. Around 70 percent of the teachers and 60 percent of the parents accepted that the exposure to corporal punishment can lead to psycho-social effects in the later life whereas a small proportion disagreed with same. In addition, 3/4th of the teachers and 45 percent of the parents revealed that exposure to corporal punishment can lead to developing psychosomatic effects which involve irregular school attendance and withdrawal behaviour among children. While, few of the teachers and 35 percent of the parents, disagreed with any kind of psycho-somatic impact of corporal punishment on children.Besides, 85 percent of the teachers and 70 percent of the parents reported that punishment leads to high level of anxiety and depression among children. Punishment can also impact mental abilities of children was reported by 60 percent of parents and teachers.

Teachers expressed differing views on the relationship between academics and punishment. The views reported by teachers included the negative impact of punishment on academic performance of the children, punishment help children to be more attentive towards studies, light punishment is needed for average or below average students and punishment and academics are related with average or below average students. On the other hand, few teachers reported that punishment can work for children with behavioural problems but, it can also adversely impact the performance of children with low or average academic background and increases their disinterest in studies.

Children's perception on mischief and punishment

Children were asked about the situations when teacher gets aggravated in the classroom. They mentioned that when they do not follow the rules of the classroom such as, playing and running inside the class, making noise during prayer session and inside the classroom, often lead to punishment of some kind. One of the most commonly mentioned response by students was '*shetani karte hai toh dadti hai, pareshan karte hai ya marte hai toh gussa karti hai teacher*'(when we do mischief teacher scolds, when we trouble her or we fight then she gets angry).

Largely, the data reveals that the situations mentioned by children are relatively coinciding with the responses given by teachers. For instance, children also cited similar reasons of teacher's annoyance which included children not completing their homework, asking silly questions, forgetting to bring notebook in the class, paying less attention while teachers were teaching etc. In addition, children mentioned another very interesting yet significant reason of getting punished by the teachers, was speaking in Hindi in the class. Probably, the English medium schools do not allow their children to talk in Hindi with the intention of promoting English among the children. Besides, children reported that sometimes even bad handwriting could lead to punishment by the teacher.

Furthermore, the teacher's views on inappropriate behaviour seemed to have an impact on children's perception on punishment in classroom. For instance, the data reveals that children consider that behaviours such as talking in the classroom, not paying attention to the teacher while studying and playing pranks are mischievous acts which annoy teachers in the class.Children considered the above-mentioned acts as mischievous because, they are not allowed to do such things in the class and they generally get punished for the same. Interestingly, one of the students mentioned, '*shaitani karta hun jab games period hota hai tab khelta hun*' (I misbehave during games period), for him playing during games session is equivalent to getting involved in misbehaviour. All children revealed the incidence of getting scolded by teachers while talking to their peers in the class or play in the class.

Scolding is found very common as reported by children. Scolding of children include events such as 'made to sit on a different bench with a child who is not a friend', 'stand outside the classroom', 'stand facing the wall', 'sit on the floor', 'stand on the bench', and 'stand with hands raised up in the air'. Interestingly, children perceived the above-mentioned acts as warning to not repeat the behaviour again while punishment meant getting physically hurting through slaps or ear pulled. However, children seem to be habitual to scolding used by teachers. One of the students, who was made to change his seat everyday by every subject teacher as he talked a lot, mentioned that '*aab toh aadat si ho gayi hai. Teacher seat change karti hai toh kisi*

aur ke saath bethati hai. Toh main use bhi dosti kar leta hun. Aab sab mere dost hai class mein. Sab se baat karta hun' (I am used to it now. Teacher changes my seat and makes me sit with someone else. I become friend that person as well. Now everyone is my friend. I talk with every one).

On the contrary, the response of children about other children getting punished in the class and the type of their punishment shows noteworthy findings. A significant number of children mentioned the use of physical punishment by the teacher on other children in their classroom. Around 50 percent of the children reported events of physical punishment which includes hitting/slapping by the teachers in their classroom. The other forms of punishment reported by children were, '*murga banana*'(a way of physical punishment where a child is made to squat and pinch their ears), 'stand and holding the ears and walk in the classroom', 'stand outside the classroom', 'walk through the class with raised hands', 'ears pulled by the teacher', 'made to sit on the floor', and 'made to do sit ups'. Additionally, children cited to get scolded, at first and then, if they repeat the behaviour, which teacher considers inappropriate, then they would get these punishments. To know more intensely about their feelings while getting punishment, the presence of other classmates while punishment was explored. About 80 percent of children were reported to be punished by their teachers in front of the whole class. Many children expressed the feeling of embarrassment in front of the whole class while getting punishment by the teacher.

Though, punishment is always seen as an effective way of disciplining children and to modify the behaviour of children for years yet, it does not seem to fulfil the objective of disciplining children, which has been reflected in the data of children's interview. 60 percent of the children reported to repeat the same mistake repeatedly, even after getting punished for the same behaviour.

Furthermore, children were also given a hypothetical situation in which they had to act like a teacher and discipline children who are making noise in the class. This question lead to very interesting responses, as the children who did not like being punished and who felt upset for being punished, were reported to perform precisely similar as their teachers, when given

the power. They reported to scold the children and try to stop them from being noisy. 44 percent of children mentioned that they would make them stand outside in case of making noise. On the other hand, 37 percent reported that they would scold first and if, they continue to repeat then, they would hit them, and 13 percent and 6 percent reported that they would hit and scold the children. One of the students said, 'I would ask the children to keep quiet, otherwise hit them with scale' and so on. The data shows that children perceived punishment as the only way to control the misbehaviour among the others. Probably, this attitude is very much influenced by the teacher's attitude towards children when they make noise. Despite the fact that, children don't like being punished by their teachers yet, they had chosen to act similar the way their teachers behave as, children tend to imitate their teachers and also, they have seen punishment ranges from mild to severe as an only way to deal with children.

Finally, to know about their parent's reaction towards their children getting punished in schools, children were asked whether they share about getting punished by their teachers with parents or not. The data shows that 80 percent of children reported to share the events of punishment with their parents whereas, 20 percent of children do not share it. Out of these 80 percent children, 67 percent shared the reaction of their parents whereas rest of them did not say anything. Out of these 67 percent, 50 percent reported that their parents told them to not repeat it again, 38 percent of parents did not say anything after hearing it and 12 percent of parents scolded their children for their misbehaviour. On the other hand, out of 20 percent of children who did not share about their punishment, only one child mentioned the reason that, "*Apne papa se daant padegi iss darr se mein nahi batata hun apne ghar pe jab bhi punishment milta hai*" (I did not share about punishment at home from the fear of being persecuted by the father).

Perceptions of different stakeholders on ban on corporal punishment

Awareness about the ban on corporal punishment under Right to Education Act

In 2009, the enactment of the RtE Act had put a ban on the corporal punishment in schools. Under this section, different stakeholders were interviewed to explore their awareness and views about the ban on corporal punishment under the Act.

The data shows that school management and teachers were well informed about the act and its ban on corporal punishment. Across the urban and the rural sample, most of the management personnel and teachers were reported to support the government's decision to ban corporal punishments in schools. Teachers and school management believed that corporal punishment have negative impact on children but some also felt that they are at loss because they do not want other strategy to use to discipline so they have to let the children be.

On the other hand, parents of the sampled children were interviewed to investigate their awareness about the ban. The data shows that two third of the parents were aware of the ban under the act. However, out of these two third parents, one third showed disagreement towards the government's decision of banning punishment in schools. As parents are of opinion that punishment is at times required for inculcating good habits among children. The interaction with the rural parents showed that there was good advocacy for the RtE Act, but the parents had mixed feelings about ban and no detention. They felt that punishment is required for disciplining and it is for the child's good.

Impact of ban on corporal punishment

Corporal punishment is the most commonly used traditional strategy to maintain discipline among children. This strategy has been used to control children from engaging in mischief and disobedience for ages. The RtE has brought a ban on the age-old strategy and also given voice to the children of the country where they can say no to punishment and demand for a punishment free school environment. Due to the ban, the teachers are unable to use corporal punishment in the classroom setting to discipline children and may be led to difficulty for the teacher to manage the situation. In order to understand the impact of the ban, the school management, teacher and the parents of the children were interviewed about whether the ban has made the disciplining difficult for the teacher and parents and whether they think that the ban has given voice to the children or not.

Around 8 percent of the teachers expressed their dissatisfaction over the ban as it has become

difficult to control children without punishment. Whereas, around the same number of teachers did not give any opinion on the issue. On the other hand, a large proportion of teachers did not believe that ban on corporal punishment has changed anything in their classroom processes.

A different opinion was shared by parents about the ban of corporal punishment. For many parents i.e. 60 percent, the ban on corporal punishment has made difficult for the teachers to discipline children whereas, 40 percent of the parents, the ban has changed nothing for the teachers.

Teachers, headmistress and parents, who do not think that ban has led to any change in the disciplining of children but agreed that punishment shouldn't be used as a strategy to maintain discipline. On the other hand, parents who accepted the change due to the ban believed that managing a classroom has become difficult without punishment. The data shows that both parents and teachers are aware about the ban of corporal punishment which has given voice to the children as well. All the headmistresses, about 2/3rd of parents and more than half of the teachers mentioned that the ban has given voice to the children.

Implementation of the ban on corporal punishment in the schools

To know about the school policies or guidelines on dealing with issues related to disciplining of children, school managements were asked about their school guidelines.

Out of 13 teachers, 12 reported to have a policy in school for managing discipline, whereas one of the teachers reported to have no such policy to deal with disciplining issues among children. Out of these 12 teachers, 8 teachers explained about their policy. The explanation about the school policy revealed various strategies to deal with issues related to disciplining such as, discussion with psychiatrist, parents, teachers, a polite talk with children, a systematic analysis of situation and arrangement of workshop for teachers on issues related to children. One of the teachers said, "Our management believes in love and affection. With this policy of love and affection, we can do wonders in any field i.e. academics, discipline etc." Another one said "our policy is strict vigilance and monitoring along with good interaction with child's parents on periodic basis". Furthermore, the teachers were

asked on getting any training for implementing these policies, 46 percent of the teachers agreed upon it whereas 54 percent denied of getting any training.

Moreover, the teachers were asked about the challenges faced by them while implementing the ban on corporal punishment. 31 percent of the teachers reported about lack of training to implement new policies, 23 percent claimed to faulty policies and guidelines are developed as one of the teacher believed punishment is important and said, "children don't understand without punishment". Besides, rest 38 percent stated various other reasons, which includes use of policy is a daunting task, children are quite young to understand these policies, and experiences teaches a lot on these issues.

Largely, the teachers reported to have some kind of policy in their school to deal with disciplining related issues among children. Though, many teachers talked about various challenges while implementing these policies yet, a few of them mentioned about the significance of having these policies and importance of dealing with children with love and affection.

Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to explore the beliefs, values and practices regarding disciplining of young children. With regard to managing the disobedient behaviour among children, parents and teachers showed varied techniques. Especially parents who mentioned scolding and refraining the children from their favourite activity as the most commonly used ways to maintain discipline among children. This shows the need to support parents and teachers to understand children's needs and behaviour and introduce new techniques to manage their behaviour at home as well as at school without using verbal and physical punishment.

Although the majority of teachers reported to not administering corporal punishment, it seems that the concept and use of corporal punishment is still prevalent and viewed as a viable option for teachers when children asked about the use of corporal punishment on other classmates. A significant number of children mentioned the use of verbal as well as physical punishment by the teacher on other children in their classroom. On probing further, children cited to get scolded, at first and then, if they repeat the behaviour, which teacher considers inappropriate, then they would

get physical punishments. On the other hand, many teachers completely denied of using any punishment in the classroom. Nevertheless, teachers have been able to use a variety of alternatives to maintain order although they feel that these are not always suitable.Regarding the school, it is recommended that policies must be enforced. The counsellor should be more involved in dealing with disciplining related issues and teachers need more training on disciplinary techniques. Schools should involve parents more in reforming their children's behaviour.

With regard to awareness and understanding of the legislative context, lack of clarity in terms of the current status of physical punishment in the law was evident among parents, with well over one-third showed disagreement towards the government's decision of banning punishment in schools.

In conclusion, there is a need to supportparents and school personnel so that the guidelines at the school level can be properly developed and implemented to support children's behaviour without using punishment.

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Online Campaigning on Social Media to Improve the Status of Girls: Some Revelations

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Abstract

The new media technologies have shown rapid technological advancements over the years, in the creation and exchange of information in different spheres of interpersonal communication. These technologies have become an essential in the lives of a vast majority of people popularizing the new age trends on the internet such as emails, blogs, social networking, e-news, e-commerce and many others. Social media is an application of internet and new media technologies that has bought people closer to one another transgressing geographical and time barriers; transforming the interpersonal communication value-added with features like cost-effectiveness, time-saving, user friendly, faster communication, accessible and far reaching. Social media enables non-profits, civil society organizations and independent activists and campaigners to form communities and networks, bringing in a conductive environment for targeted social communication widely. Non-profits and independent activists and campaigners acknowledge social media for its broad spectral utilities with its affordability and accessibility features making it an enabling medium for effective communication. This paper displays an understanding of the application of social media and its various types, and their potential use by civil society organizations and individuals for bringing about social change to address the existing gender inequalities and discriminatory practices. It examines its effectiveness as a tool for online campaigning, and deliberates on the role of social media to engage in online campaigning towards efforts to change social institutions to improve the status of girls and women.

Keywords: *Social media; online campaigning; gender equality*

Introduction

An Introduction to social media and online campaigning: Technology molds the communication media, shaping the world of communications today and in the future (Cambié & Ooi, 2009). New media technologies have illustrated rapid technological advancements over the years, playing a conspicuous role in the creation and exchange of information. These technologies have progressively established themselves to evidently influence many facets of public and private life including culture, media, entertainment, politics and activism. The internet and the mobile phones are ubiquitous and essential in our modern urban lives (Allison, 2013), leading to the increasing popularity of new age trends on the internet such as emails, blogs, social networking, e-news, e-commerce and many others. Non-profits, civil society organizations and independent activists and campaigners, too, have stated to acknowledge social media as a tool for campaigning. The online campaigning is also known as digital activism/campaigning.

Internet has been extensively used for disseminating information, knowledge, ideas and messages; transcending geographic, cultural, and social barriers (Allison, 2013). It supports a broad array of opportunities to communicate information ranging from: one-to-one a-synchronic; many-to-many asynchronous; one-to-one or one-to-few synchronous; to one-to-many a-synchronous, providing a platform for online engagement and interpersonal communication enabling its users in huge numbers to create and share thoughts and stories; information and multimedia content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The term 'social media' refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue in the form of e-magazines, internet forums, blogs and social networking sites; bought people closer to one another transgressing geographical and

time barriers. It is transforming the way groups communicate the many social tools that are available today are very cost-effective compared to traditional approaches such as email and online advertising (Brussee & Hekman, 2009). Social media enables individuals and groups form communities and networks, bringing in a conductive environment for targeted social communication.

A digital activism campaign is "an organized public effort, making collective claims on a target authority, in which civic initiators or supporters use digital media."[1] Research has started to address specifically how activist/advocacy groups in the U.S.[2] and Canada[3] are using social media to achieve digital activism objectives.

Status of girls in Indian society: The term 'status' encompasses in itself the notions, rights and obligations of superiority and inferiority in terms of power, authority and grading. In the context of status of girls in India, it implies her position in particular subsystem in society. Her rights, privileges and their determination, her access to power and authority, the state of her position when compared to that of boys, manifests her status of in that particular society.

The status of girls and women is the yardstick for assessing the standard of culture of any age of any nation. One way to judge the state of a nation is to study the status of its girls and women. The term, status has now come to be a synonym for any 'position in the social system'. Girls face discrimination with deep rooted causes and grave consequences. Deeply revered social institutions – societal norms, codes of conduct, laws and tradition – cause gender discrimination. Examples include harmful socio-cultural practices, unequal inheritance rights, obstacles to free movement and early, family-imposed marriages of teenagers.

On comparison to boys' position, Indian girls and women have always occupied a status inferior to them because Indian society has always been dominated by males, placing the girls in subordinate position. She has always been looked down and has been treated as inferior to man in matters of rights and privileges.

Online campaigning involves strong actions in support of or in opposition to an issue of interest to girls and women. It specifically involves

vigorous engagement directed towards bringing about a targeted political, social or economic change in the society from the face-to-face conversations to massive protests, from principled behavior to the unscrupulous, from polite requests to objectionable interference, and from peaceful protests to violent attacks (Svirsky, 2010).In most developing countries like India, cultural practices, traditions, customs and social norms hold the keys to understanding the roots of gender discrimination. The knowledge of the sources and the depth of discrimination is needed to address the inequalities issues.

For activists of women's issues and concerns, social media offers much more than traditional media; is virtually free of cost, has wider reach that allows activists to target more people giving voice to those who otherwise might not have had one. It provides a platform for online sharing of knowledge and information among the different groups of women activists to improve interpersonal communication among heterogeneous groups.

This paper displays an understanding of the application of social media and its various types, and their potential use by civil society organizations and individuals for bringing about social change to address the existing gender inequalities and discriminatory practices. It examines its effectiveness as a tool for online campaigning, and deliberates on the role of social media to engage in online campaigning towards efforts to change social institutions to improve the status of girls and women.

Methodology

The study, exploratory in nature, looks at the phenomenon of online campaigning using social media; and focuses on its application different forms of social media including social networking websites and blogs for online activism on a issues and concerns related to gender - political, economic and social aspects. The information has been acquired through the document review and analysis of secondary sources of information including websites, government reports and other existing scholarly work done in the area of the study.

The literature review on social media has shown that the social media has six distinct types - collaborative projects, blogs and micro-blogs, content communities, social networking sites,

virtual game worlds, and virtual communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). For the purpose of this study, only social networking sites were considered for the study of the above campaigns as these are then most popular online tools with more than 74% online adult users' (Pew Research Center, 2014). The leading social networking websites - Facebook and Twitter have more than 1.32 billion (Facebook Inc., 2014) and 271 million monthly active users worldwide (Twitter Inc., 2014) respectively.

Findings And Discussions

I. Understanding of social media in the context of campaigning

We are living in the midst of a social media revolution and it is more than obvious that social media is being used extensively for the purpose of interpersonal and group communication (Nielsen, 2011).

Social media is a relatively recent phenomenon of mass-communication intended for individuals' interaction and conversations (Svirsky, 2010). It is a media for social interaction, a superset beyond social communication; where the term Social refers to the instinctual needs humans to connect with other humans since the beginning of the history. Media on the other hand, is a form of one-to-many communication (Brussee & Hekman 2009), which refers to the technologies used to connect humans; they can be in the form of drums, bells, written words, the telegraph, the telephone, radio, television, the new media technologies such as e-mail, web sites, images, audio, video, mobile phones, or text messaging.

Boyd (2008) described social media as an umbrella term, referring to a set of tools, services, and applications that allowed people to interact with one another using networked technologies encompassing groups, online communities, peer-to-peer and media-sharing, and online gaming along with instant messaging, blogging, micro-blogging, forums, email, virtual worlds, texting, and social network sites that support one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many interactions. These technologies initiate sociological change where the users contribute to blog posts and twitter messages, updating their profiles on Facebook and MySpace, asking and answering questions on online forums (Brussee & Hekman 2009).

Characteristics of social media: Mayfield (2007) defined social media as a collection of new forms of online media, which share most or all of the following characteristics: participation, openness, conversationalist, commonality, and connectedness. The term openness used by Mayfield, referring to social openness, the public nature of social media as a mass medium is observed. Openness, in terms of the economic costs, social media is relatively free of charge for the participants. The high accessibility as a prerequisite for participation is the precise description of the openness of social media.

Social media actively engages with communities or group with a centered ideology affiliation; which could be an outcome of commonness in social attributes such as age, sex region, caste, culture, traditions, and values; or like-mindedness by means of ideas, interests, attitudes, knowledge and practices. The desire to be affiliated to a group is an instinctual characteristics of human beings, and communication inclines at strengthening the adherence to a group, the use of social media for creating and nourishing a community is common occurrence. An important characteristic of social media is that it is a communication medium playing an important role in the existence of conversations. (Boyd, 2008). Its use requires minimal effort by the audience making it a near hassle free and non-technical for users to engage aiding to a favorable inter-personal communication environment. From the point of view of this paper, social media is simply well suited for communication with and within all social groups. A group can be a formally organized number of people or simply people who identify with similar values or who have a common interest or experience.

Types of social media: Social media can take many different forms, including internet forums, blogs, podcasts, audio-video content sharing interface and social networking. By applying a set of theories in the field of media research (social presence, media richness) and social processes (self-presentation, self-disclosure) Kaplan and Heinlein (2010) created a classification scheme for different social media types according to which there are six different types of social media as described below under collaborative projects, blogs and micro-blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual communities.

Social media can be classified on the basis of two key elements- social presence / media

richness and self-presentation / self-disclosure (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Social media tools used these days include blogs, picture-sharing, wall-postings, email, instant messaging, music-sharing, crowd-sourcing, and voice over IP have been integrated via social network aggregation platforms to improve inter-service user activities and enrich user experiences.

II. Online campaigning through social media

Campaigning through social media, is associated with the application of communication tools, by people. Social media may make the task of communicating information easier, but an important aspect of motivating social change is organizing and convincing people through mass appeal, that their participation is what really makes a difference (Papic & Noonan, 2011). It is much more penetrative compared to any other communication media due to its worldwide reach, enormous popularity and mass-acceptance, innovation and resourcefulness, easy access, user-friendliness and cost effectiveness, encouraging not just the businesses but also non-profits and activist, who have acknowledge the potential of social media to bring about change in the society(Svirsky, 2010). As a result, anything that trends through social media cannot go unnoticed by Internet users. It is these benefits of social media that have encouraged the adoption of social media by not just the business enterprises for profits but also by non-profits and activist who have acknowledge the potential of social media to bring about change in the society (Brussee & Hekman,2009).

Social media can be used to influence change in a variety of different ways, from shifting individual behavior to increasing an individual's commitment to voting. Studies have shown that activists who use social media for social change can form online group for people to join, keep group members informed about events and news, plan online and off-line meetings; easily, effectively at very low costs compared to conventional methods of recruiting, training and organizing groups (Papic & Noonan, 2011; Svirsky, 2010).

The role of social media in forming online groups and organizing off-line movements by individual activists and civil society organizations has been observed in various social movements all over the world, and the same has been detailed in the study to reflect how some of the campaigns and movements from around the world have evolved using internet and social media, and what has been the role of online tool and social media in encouraging the activities of these campaigns and movements directed towards a specific outcome of social change.

Cases of online campaigning on social media for social change: Social movements and campaigns are not a recent phenomenon and have been happening worldwide much before the penetration of technology specifically internet and mobile phones. When internet diffused into the world, social movements and campaigns began utilizing technology and internet for gathering support and initiating offline activities.

The history of online campaigning can be traced down to late 1990s, during the WTO Ministerial Conference 1999, some NGOs interest groups and individuals organized protests in Seattle against globalization using internet and mobile phones for organizing and coordinating the protest. This was an early incident of how online movements can mobilize people towards the cause and bring about the required change. The *WTO Protests in Seattle* is thus an example of how protests could be organized and coordinated through the use of technologies. As the technological advancements accelerated and social media and social networking emerged out, a lot of campaigners and protesters started utilizing its advantages like speed, wider reach, mass audiences and low cost for organizing campaigns and movements.

Some campaigns and movements that have made use of social media for their movement on a variety of issues are mentioned here. In 2009, an attack on some women outside a pub in Mangalore by group members having different political ideology and calling the women pub goers as loose charactered, the *Pink Chaddi Campaign* took birth. It was organized by a group of women through Facebook; expressing their annoyance to the attack and subsequent threats of marrying off couples caught celebrating Valentine's Day (Cullum, 2010). *Post your bra color* is a breast cancer awareness campaign organized on Facebook by Susan G. Komen Foundation (James, 2010).

SlutWalk, an international movement consisting of protest marches and rallies, organized through social networks and groups; called for an end

to rape crime and referring to stop women's dressing and appearance as an excuse to the crime of rape (Carr, 2013). *The One Billion Rising* was a worldwide people's campaign on various social networks highlighting the issue of violence against women, rise for justice and promoting gender equality worldwide (Ensler, 2013). The brutal gang rape of a paramedic student in Delhi on the December 16, 2012 led to a series of mass protests collectively termed as the *Anti-rape Protests,* which were organized both online through social networking websites as well as offline in the form of marches, demonstrations and violent protests by NGOs, interest groups and students in India expressing their anger to the incident. *Ring the Bell*(also called *Bell Bajao!),* a campaign calling out to the boys and men in the society to ring the bell and stop domestic violence (Breakthrough, 2013). *Board the Bus*, a campaign on women safety targeted the issues of harassment and eve teasing faced by women while travelling through public transport (Breakthrough, 2013). Both *Ring the Bell* and *Board the Bus* have been active on the social networking websites and run through a dedicated website of Breakthrough, a non-profit working on the issues of violence against women, women rights and HIV/AIDS.

These campaigns have covered a wide spectrum of violence against women and girls related issues. The campaigns that used Facebook for organizing, coordinating and discussing their focus area resulting in movement have been *Pink Chaddi Campaign* 2009, *Post your bra Color Campaign* 2010, *Arab Spring Revolution* 2010, One Billion Rising 2011, *Anti-rape Protests* in India 2012, *Ring the Bell* Campaign 2013 and *Board the Bus* 2014. These campaigns have used Facebook to achieve their campaign goals, it has also been observed that Facebook has been a support tool strategically used to reach mass audiences and achieve the desired outcome.

The paper reflects that mobile phones have been an important tool in coordinating the offline activities for the campaigns and movements including protests, marches and demonstrations. The campaigners and protesters communicated with each other during on field activities as observed in the case of *WTO Protests in Seattle 1999, and Anti-rape Protests in India 2012*.

Blogging, an activity which uses social media, was used in some of the movements and online campaigns. *Anti-rape Protests in India 2012*

have been the movements that used blogs more for discussing the issue and the campaigns and not for organizing the movements.

The phenomenon of engaging in campaigning through the use of social media has evolved and has presented itself as a modern means to bring people together to support the activities that could bring in a progressive change in the lives of the people and lobby for issues and causes that people think can affect progress. Social media has evolved over the years to become a well-established world-wide communication media. It can, in aspects that provoke social, cultural, or political changes, bring in the desired change in the society and the world as a whole. The ability to disseminate and share information, knowledge, ideas and messages transcending geographic, cultural, and social barriers, can make social media an effective tool for campaigning triggering social change.

Conclusion

Social media, a continuously evolving medium of communication formed of internet-based applications, facilitates the creation and sharing of messages, pictures, and videos and information by its users. The features of social media such as its openness, its availability at low running costs, worldwide-reach, and dynamicity in accommodating everyday technological advancements, enable its use for campaigning for social causes and on gender related issues. The emergence of social media has changed how people engage with different forms of social media encouraging a conducive environment for social change and greater activism centered on online participation of Internet users.

The role of social media as a tool for social organization, focusing on the application of social media for campaigning with the intent of social change has been reviewed. The campaigns studied highlight the use of internet and social media, specifically Facebook and Twitter, in catalyzing social and public movements and campaigns on a wide array of gender related issues and concerns. Blogs have been used for discussions on various activities of ongoing campaigns and movements and not for organizing and/or coordinating the movements. The accessibility of social media through mobile phones has accelerated mass acceptance and adoption of campaign related causes amongst people all over the world.

Girls face discrimination credited to complex deep-rooted causes and grave consequences. Deeply revered social institutions – societal norms, codes of conduct, laws and tradition – cause gender discrimination.For activists of women's issues and concerns, social media and online campaigning offers much more than traditional media; primarily its potential to give voice to the voiceless, and wider reach that allows activists to target more people towards efforts to change social institutions to improve the status of girls and women.

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Violence against Adolescent Girls: Impact of Harmful Socio-Cultural Practices

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Abstract

Harmful traditional practices are the types of violence that have historically been committed against women in general and certain communities and societies for so long that these abuses are considered a part of accepted cultural practice. These may lead to death, disabilities, and physical and psychological dysfunction for millions of women annually. This paper focuses on the harmful socio-cultural practices impacting adolescent girl's wellbeing and mortality at the adolescent phase of her life. This phase of an Indian female child is marked with brutal violence.

It attempts to bring awareness of the selected harmful socio-cultural practices that impact adolescent girls such as FGM, early marriage, adolescent pregnancy, dress codes prescribed by the society, practices related to menstruation and related health and hygiene issues, marriage by abduction, and virginity testing.

This paper gives an informative overview of the harmful practices rooted in our socio-cultural milieu from secondary review of literature and articles published in leading English daily newspapers. It aims to fulfil a scholarly gap in research on this issue as well as to bring it in mainstream discussion among the different stakeholders so as to tackle the issue of the culturally sanctioned harmful practices impacting adolescents' girls.

Theoretical framework

The concept of harmful socio-cultural practices: The concept of harmful practices is rooted in our socio-cultural milieu and evils associated with the social and cultural fabric of the Indian society. It raises the concept of violence against women and its perpetuation and sanction through the lens of traditional and cultural practices.

Culture: It refers to the idealized system of norms and values that a society claims to believe. Culture is the patterns of behavior, beliefs, and values that are shared by a group of people. We are all shaped by our culture and are understood in that context. Cultural aspects include concepts of beauty, education, language, law and politics, religion, social organizations, technology and material culture, values and attitudes.

Socio-cultural factors: These are customs, lifestyles and values that characterize a society or group. Socio-cultural is the way of life in which an individual interacts with himself and the environment. The socio-cultural dimension is concerned with the society's attitudes and services and standards that society is likely to value. Socio-cultural approach is based on the assumption that our personalities, beliefs, attitudes and skills are learned from others. The socio-cultural approach goes further in stating that it is impossible to fully understand a person without understanding his or her culture, ethnic identity, gender identity, and other important socio-cultural factors.

An understanding of socio-cultural factors is crucial as it helps in understanding the root causes of the low status of women as well as in developing strategies for seeking action from particular groups.

Harmful traditional practices: All violations of women's and girls' rights may be described as harmful practices, but there are particular forms of violence against women and girls which are

defended on the basis of tradition, culture, religion or superstition by some community members. These are often known as 'harmful traditional practices.' Harmful traditional practices refer to the types of violence that have historically been committed against women in general and certain communities and societies for so long that these abuses are considered a part of accepted cultural practice. These harmful practices lead to death, disabilities, and physical and psychological dysfunction for millions of women annually. It is understood that many of these culturally sanctioned crimes are financially motivated, eliminating the wife as the inheritress of her husband's estate and having it being transferred instead to the couple's sons or the father's family (ActionAid Annual Report, 2014).

Harmful traditional practices affect girls more than boy: Every social grouping in the world has specific traditional cultural practices, some of which are beneficial to all members, who most girls and women in developing countries are unaware of their basic rights. This ensures the acceptance and the perpetuation of harmful traditional practices affecting their well-being and that of their children while others are harmful to a particular group

Has urbanisation dampened the Harmful traditional practices?: Due to the fast-paced process of urbanization in India, unprecedented growth in the communication sector across the globe and the resultant "information society" resulting in the world that's connected world today, radical changes are taking place in the life of the women in modern India. Now girls in increasing numbers have started attending educational institutions, social gatherings unrelated to family affairs and new religious ceremonies yet there is prevalence of high crime rate against women.

The purpose of the paper is to position the terms 'Social', Cultural'; 'Social Structure' and 'Socio-Cultural' for deeper understanding. It attempts to understand the concept of harmful practices rooted in our socio-cultural milieu and the related terms for deeper understanding. It throws light on the different kind of harmful practices faced by Indian women and how they are suffering from the different forms and evils associated with the social and cultural fabric of the Indian society. It raises the concept of violence against women and its perpetuation and sanction through the lens of traditional and cultural practices. That paper culminates in suggestions to bring awareness of the selected harmful socio-cultural practices that impact adolescent girls. It will be useful for exploring potential for creating awareness against the horrendous practices' adolescents' girls experience.

Methodology

An informative and descriptive overview of the concept of harmful practices has been provided from secondary review of literature and articles published in leading English daily newspapers. It aims to fulfil a scholarly gap in research on this issue as well as to bring it in mainstream discussion among the different stakeholders to tackle the culturally sanctioned harmful practices impacting adolescents' girls.

The paper focuses on the harmful socio-cultural practices impacting female child's wellbeing and mortality at the adolescent phase of her life. The study of this phase of an Indian adolescents' girls using the life cycle approach is seen to be marked with brutal violence, which could be fatal, faced by her at the hands of her immediate family members and the community she belongs to. All the harmful practices have roots in her sexuality and the fear of associated honour of the family. Some such practices an adolescent girl faces sickening practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting, early and forced child marriage and early or adolescent pregnancy, restrictive dress codes, practices related to menstruation, marriage by abduction, and inhuman ways of virginity testing have been discussed.

Based on the analysis of the issue of harmful socio-cultural practices in India, the following pertinent research questions were raised:

RQ1: To understand the concept of harmful practices rooted in our socio-cultural milieu and the related terms for deeper understanding.

RQ2: What are the different kind of harmful practices faced by adolescent girls in India and their perpetuation and sanction pathway through the lens of traditional and cultural practices?

RQ3: What is the impact of these selected harmful practices on adolescent girls through the lens of violence against women?

RD4: To provide suggestions to bring awareness about the selected harmful socio-cultural practices that impact adolescent girls.

The Context

All violations of women's and girls' rights may be described as harmful practices, but there are particular forms of violence against women and girls which are defended on the basis of tradition, culture, religion or superstition by some community members. These are often known as 'harmful traditional practices.'

Violation of girl child's rights:Harmful traditional practices are largely carried out without the consent of the girl or woman involved and thus constitutes a violation of human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As with all forms of violence against women and girls, harmful traditional practices are caused by gender inequality including unequal power relations between women and men, rigid gender roles, norms and hierarchies, and ascribing women lower status in society.

However, culture, tradition, religion and superstition can be used to justify harmful practices which constitute rights violations and violence. Countries should resist any pressure which asserts tradition, culture, religion or superstition above human rights. The Beijing Platform for Action recognised the role of culture and tradition, and countries agreed to "refrain from invoking any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination as set out in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women." (ActionAid Annual Report, 2014).

Violence against women through the lens of traditional and cultural practices:Violence against women still is universal, and while it has many roots, especially in cultural tradition and customs, it is gender inequality that lies at the cross-cultural heart of violent practices. Violence against women is deeply embedded in human history and its universal perpetration through social and cultural norms serves the main purpose of reinforcing male-dominated power structures.

Discussions

FGM/C- Female Genital Mutilation/ Cutting:Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is sometimes erroneously referred to as female circumcision.FGM is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. (UNICEF, 2016)

FGM is performed on girls of all ages, from infants to adults. It has been performed on infants as young as a few days old, on children from 7 to 10 years old, adolescents and adult women undergoing the operation at the time of marriage. More than 200 million girls and women alive today have been cut in 30 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia where FGM is concentrated (WHO, 2016)

Research has shown that the conditions under which these operations take place is often unhygienic and the instruments used are crude and unsterilized. Kitchen knives, a razor-blade, a piece of glass or even sharp fingernails are the tools of the trade. These instruments are used repeatedly on numerous girls, thus increasing the risk of blood-transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. The operation takes between 10 and 20 minutes, depending on its nature; in most cases, an aesthetic is not administered. The child is held down by three or four women while the operation is done. The wound is then treated by applying mixtures of local herbs, earth, cow-dung, ash or butter, depending on the skills of the excisor. If infibulation is performed, the child's legs are bound together to impair mobility for up to 40 days. If the child dies from complications, the excisor is not held responsible; rather, the death is attributed to evil spirits or fate.

The practice of FGM imposes on women and the girl child many health complications and untold psychological problems. These can be immediate complications such as excessive bleeding, genital tissue swelling, injury to surrounding genital tissue, and even death. Some of the long-term consequences are urinary tract infections; vaginal, menstrual, sexual problems, increased risk of childbirth complications; need for later surgeries and psychological problems.

FGM is erroneously believed to ensure virginity before marriage and is used as a means of controlling women's sexuality. It is considered to be a part of the coming of age ritual for women

in some cultures. Since it is performed on infants as well as adults, it can no longer be seen as marking the rites of passage into adulthood, or as ensuring virginity. What it reflects is deep-rooted inequality between the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination and violence against women. It violates a woman's rights to health, security and physical integrity, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the procedure results in death.

Some cases have emerged that reflect that when people migrate to modern and cosmopolitan cities and even with higher educational qualifications, the practice of FGM which is rooted in the culture is not given up by the people.Cases of FGM has been reported in modern Singapore where practices of ancient ritual of female genital mutilation have been reported. Its existence in Singapore, a wealthy island state that prides itself on being a modern, cosmopolitan city with high levels of education, shows the challenge of tackling a practice rooted in culture, tradition and a desire to belong.

Though there is no clue about when exactly the practice of FGM/C first began in Singapore, the procedure is prevalent amongst the Singaporean female Malays, who make up about 13% of the population. Out of these, there is an assumed prevalence of 60% of Malay women who have been cut.Medical clinics in Singapore are carrying out female genital cutting on babies, according to people with first-hand knowledge, despite growing global condemnation of the practice, which world leaders have pledged to eradicate. The ancient ritual is observed by most Muslim Malays in Singapore where it is legal but largely hidden.Singapore, is not included in the latest U.N. global report on FGM, and there are no studies on its prevalence. Although FGM is not mentioned in the Koran and predates Islam, some Muslims believe the prophet endorsed the ritual (Modern Singapore Practices Ancient Ritual of Female Genital Mutilation, October 12, 2016).

***Early And forced child marriage and early or adolescent pregnancy*:** Child marriage is marriage before the age of 18 applies to both boys and girls, but the practice is far more common among young girls. Early marriage is a serious problem which some girls, as opposed to boys, must face. The practice of giving away girls for marriage at the age of 11, 12 or 13, after

which they must start producing children, is prevalent among certain States in India. The principal reasons for this practice are the girls' virginity and the bride-price. Young girls are less likely to have had sexual contact and thus are believed to be virgins upon marriage; this condition raises the family status as well as the dowry to be paid by the groom. In some cases, virginity is verified by groom's female relatives before the marriage.

Children and teenagers married at ages well below the legal minimum become statistically invisible as 'children'. Child marriage robs a girl of her childhood-time necessary to develop physically, emotionally and psychologically. In fact, early marriage inflicts great emotional stress as the girl is removed from her parents' home to that of her husband and in-laws. Her husband is invariably many years her senior. She is obliged to have intercourse, although physically she might not be fully developed and produce children. Girls from communities where early marriages occur are also victims of son preferential treatment and will probably be malnourished, and consequently have stunted physical growth. Neglect of and discrimination against daughters, particularly in societies with strong son preference, contributes to early marriage of girls. Early marriage devalues women in some societies. In some cases, girls as young as a few months old are promised to male suitors for marriage. There is perpetuation of inequality in early marriage.

As well as threatening her right to life itself, early marriage almost inevitably marks the end of a girl's schooling. Her opportunity for individual development and growth is stifled, and her potential to become an autonomous, informed and empowered adult is compromised. Moreover, a girl may be exposed to oppression and violence (sexual and non-sexual) within marriage, but almost inevitably, she has no voice with which to protest.

The Indian Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 stemmed from a campaign that helped reposition women, family life, and childbearing within modern India. While the Act did not declare child marriages invalid, it helped pave the way for change. In 1978 it was strengthened to inhibit marriage of girls until the age of 18 and boys until age 21. However, the number of prosecutions under the Act did not exceed 89 in

any year between 1994 and 1998. (UNICEF, 2001).

Further, child marriages may remain unregistered. The use of law as a means of regulating early marriage is in no way sufficient. It is important to address the root causes of child marriage, which includes poverty, gender inequality and discrimination, the low value placed on girls and violence against girls.

Early or Adolescent/Teenage pregnancy: Pregnancies among girls less than 18 years of age have irreparable consequences. The phrase 'teenage pregnancy' is typically understood to mean pregnancy outside marriage. Yet far more adolescent or teenage pregnancies occur within marriage than outside it.Pregnancies that occur 'too early' – when a woman's body is not fully mature – constitute a major risk to the survival and future health of both mother and child. Babies of mothers younger than 18 tend to be born premature and have low body weight; such babies are more likely to die in the first year of life.

The risk to the young mother's own health is also greater. Early marriage extends a woman's reproductive span, thereby contributing to large family size, especially in the absence of contraception. Poor health is common among indigent pregnant and lactating women.

An additional health risk to young mothers is obstructed labour, which occurs when the baby's head is too big for the orifice of the mother. This provokes *vesicovaginal fistulas*, especially when an untrained traditional birth attendant forces the baby's head out unduly.Concern with the special health needs of adolescents has also recently been growing in a world where young people are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

Dress codes (Purdah or Ghoonghat): *Purdah* or *pardah* (from Persian meaning "curtain") is a religious and social practice of female seclusion prevalent among the northern states of India.A woman's withdrawal into *purdah* usually restricts her personal, social and economic activities outside her home. It takes two forms: physical segregation of the sexes and the requirement that women cover their bodies so as to cover their skin and conceal their form. Physical segregation within buildings is achieved with judicious use of walls, curtains, and screens.

Married Hindu women in parts of Northern India observe *Ghoonghat* in the presence of older male relations from their husbands' family. They do not veil themselves when visiting their mother's home or in a location far from the in-law's village. But women do face restrictions or dress codes imposed by their community members or religious leaders. In certain villages the *panchayats* impose rule on young girls of not wearing jeans!

But do Indian women want to be free from veil? A case reported in the leading English daily newspaper shows a positive development related to the issue. Razdan (2016) reports about Manju Yadav, an MSc Forensic Sciences and Law graduate, residing in a village in Haryana who come forward for freedom from the veil. She said, "It is women who are against women, not the men." She along with seven other ladies in her family made a bold statement when they pleaded before Faridabad deputy commissioner Chander Shekhar to help them become free them from *Ghunghat*, which they did in the presence of their Sarpanch Mahipal Arya and other male members of their family "When qualified ladies came forward and urged me to help them lift their ghunghat, that too, in the presence of their male family members, we invited sarpanchs of 116 villages. Woman and Child Development Project Officer, Faridabad (Rural), Meenakshi Chaudhary administered the oath to all the women sarpanches and ananganwdi workers to ensure their respective villagers were free of the *ghunghat.*

Practices related to menstruation and related health and hygiene issues: In India even mere mention of the menstruation has been a taboo in the past and even today the impact of the myths related to menstruation on women's life is tremendous. The cultural and social influences appear to be a hurdle for advancement of knowledge on the subject.

Menstruation is the natural part of the reproductive cycle in which blood from the uterus exits through the vagina. It is a natural process that first occurs in girls usually between the age of 11 and 14 years and is one of the indicators of the onset of puberty among them. It is the ovulation followed by missed chance of pregnancy that results in bleeding from the endometrial vessels and is followed by preparation of the next cycle.

Culturally in many parts of India, menstruation is still considered to be dirty and impure and the girls are subjected to restrictions in their daily lives. Menstruating girls and women are prohibited from participating in normal life while menstruating and must be 'purified' before she being allowed to chores of her life.They may not be allowed to enter the 'puja' room, kitchen and prepare food, room offering prayers and touching holy books. The cultural norms and religious taboos on menstruation are often compounded by traditional associations with evil spirits, shame and embarrassment surrounding sexual reproduction. Many adolescent girls do not indulge in exercise/physical activity during menses because it is erroneously believed that it will aggravate the dysmenorrheaal though scientifically exercise helps.

Such taboos about menstruation present in many societies impact on girls' and women's emotional state, mentality and lifestyle and most importantly, health. The onset of menstruation becomes one of the reasons for girls to drop out of school. Limited access to safe, functional toilets forces girls to drop out of schools.

Girls are typically absent for 20% of the school year due to menstruation. This includes over 23% of girls in India. In addition to this, the monthly menstruation period also creates obstacles for female teachers. Thus, the gender – unfriendly school culture and infrastructure and the lack of adequate menstrual protection alternatives and/or clean, safe and private sanitation facilities for female teachers and girls undermine the right of privacy.

There are health and hygiene issues also to consider relating to girls and menstruation. According to the 2011 census data, sanitation coverage is still around 30% in rural India and 80% in urban India.

Over 77% of menstruating girls and women in India use an old cloth, which is often washed and reused. Further, 88% of women in India sometimes resort to using ashes, newspapers, dried leaves and husk sand to aid absorption. Poor protection and inadequate washing facilities may increase susceptibility to infection, with the odour of menstrual blood putting girls at risk of being stigmatized. The latter may have significant implications for their mental health. The challenge, of addressing the socio-cultural taboos and beliefs in menstruation, is further compounded by the fact the girls' knowledge levels and understandings of puberty, menstruation, and reproductive health are very low (Garg and Anand, 2015).

Access to toilets remains a huge problem and it is worst of all for women and girls in India. Some 70 percent of households in India don't have access to toilets, whether in rural areas or urban slums. Roughly 60 percent of the country's 1.2 billion people still defecate in the open and the consequences for women are huge (Chatterjee, 2016). These range from polluted water leading to women and children dying from childbirth-related infections to the risk and reality of being attacked and raped.

Indian government has taken the challenge of meeting the demand for making more toilets. But evidence shows that vast majority are not being used, especially in rural areas. In some cases, it is because the toilets still are not connected to clean water and sewers. But more importantly, there's been no widespread education effort to change the country's culture of open defecation and lack of sanitation.

There's also the issue of people defecating in the open in India with its unique challenges especially faced by adolescent girls and impact on their health. Further, policy makers need to consider how to address this disparity in sanitation in towns and cities and rural areas

Swachh Bharat Mission, announced in 2014, has the objective to ensure every household has a toilet by 2019 and to educate people about the long-term health and economic benefits of using a toilet. What will be absolutely crucial is getting local, state and national government to make this a priority, and creating the cultural shift that will ensure that once the toilets are built they are used by everyone.

Bride kidnapping or marriage by abduction: Abduction of girls for marriage springs from decades of neglect of female infants and the growth of sex-selective abortions attributed to the competition for scarce women.

The business of bride kidnapping is not different than sex trafficking because it treats women as a commodity to be sold to unknown men and the purpose is not to find long time partners but to arrange a wife to be treated as sex object, domestic worker and slave. Trafficking of young girls for bride kidnapping is increasingly

becoming rampant contributing to child marriage statistics.

Young women are abducted mainly from the poorest states, where the sex ratio is more balanced (where male-female ratios are among the narrowest in the country, meaning a relatively greater supply of women), and transferred to richer regions. Most bride kidnappings occur in the impoverished parts of rural eastern India, in states such as West Bengal, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttrakhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Assam. The brides are purchased and trafficked to mainly northern heartland of Haryana and Punjab.

The abducted women are called '*paro*', a slang term for 'bought women'. There is widespread social acceptance of this practice. The women face sexual exploitation; the abducted woman may be obliged to have sexual relations with other male members of the family. Her husband and his relatives become agents/traffickers/brokers. Those who fail to bear sons are often resold to other unmarried men at a lower price and may eventually be abandoned (Khan, 2012).

Every bride trafficking survivor is a survivor of bonded slavery, child and forced marriage, series of mental and physical abuse, continuous rape and social stigma against their children (Singh, 2016).

***Virginity and its testing*:**Virginity plays a very important role in India. A virginity test is the practice and process of determining whether a person, usually a girl or woman is a virgin; i.e., whether she has never engaged in sexual intercourse. The test typically involves a check for the presence of an intact hymen, on the assumption that it can only be torn as a result of sexual intercourse. Virginity testing is widely considered controversial, both because of its implications for the tested girls and women and because it is viewed as unethical. There still exists, in a major part of villages in India which believes in virginity test. To know if a girl is a virgin or not after marriage is of utmost importance to these communities who have made their own set of rules which evades into a woman's privacy. All the tests are to check if the hymen is intact which is traumatising and humiliating for the women.

Nair (2016) reports about the traumatising and humiliating virginity tests on women. Apart from Two-finger test (TFT) other types of

traumatising 'Virginity tests on women' are still prevalent in many parts of India.

On May 2013, The Supreme Court of India held that the two-finger test on a rape victim violates her right to privacy, and asked the government to provide better medical procedures to confirm sexual assault.In 2003, the Supreme Court of India called TFT "hypothetical" and "opinionative". Most countries have scrapped it as archaic, unscientific and invasive of privacy and dignity *No two-finger test for rape: SC* (May 18, 2013).

On the basis of a news reported by PTI, Maharashtra Women Commission has sought a probe report from Nashik police over an alleged 'virginity test' of a woman in the district, failing which her husband divorced her last month. Last month, the woman from Ahmednagar district, preparing to join police force, married a 25year man from Nashik. This was his second marriage. Both belong to the '*Kanajarbhat*' community which has two sects ---*Dera Sachha* and *Khandpith*. The community has its own 'constitution' which is followed rigorously. The girlpleaded that her lack of bleeding could be due to the vigorous exercise she went through in preparation for the police force.The next day, she and her mother tried to file a police complaint. But her father intervened, locked them in the house and took away the girl's mobile phone because the father was afraid of the caste panchayat.Ironically, the girl has said that if her husband comes to take her back, she is ready to live with him. (Man divorces wife for failing 'virginity test', women's panel seeks probe, 2016)

Conclusion

An understanding of socio-cultural factors is crucial as it helps in understanding the root causes of the low status of women as well as in developing strategies for seeking action from particular groups.

The Universal declaration of Human Rights calls for "equal and inalienable rights" for all people, "without distinction of any kind." It requests the right to security of person, the right not to be held in slavery or subjected to inhuman treatment, the right to equal protection before the law, and the right to equality in marriage.

But the field reality is very different. It is due to the weak excuses such as that of cultural relativism coupled with discriminatory social

norms and practices, the under-representation of women in decision making structures and processes, a lack of resources to fight for women's rights and, above all, the absence of societal and/or political will to provide strong impediments to giving women the same Human Rights that men enjoy. There is need to build the capacity of local groups to combat harmful traditional practices and gender-based violence.

There is need to end the poverty and violence women often endure, to empower women and girls on their right to a life free from violence and to increase women's and girls' control over their bodies

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Normalisation of Violence among Adolescents

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Abstract

The present study explored adolescent life in a violent context with the objective to explore the prevalence of violence and the normalising effect it had in the development of adolescents exposed to violence. The field site for the study was an area in the northern part of the city of Chennai known as a site with a high prevalence of violence. Case study method was used to study the lives of six adolescents identified with the help of an organisation working in the area for the past eight years. Findings of the study revealed that the adolescents in the community had a high exposure to violence at school, home and the community. The degree of exposure and involvement with violence varied with age and gender for the adolescents in the community. Severity of violence was evident with the involvement of the local police in regulating adolescent violence on a regular basis. Violence is normalised in this context as it is not considered an atypical action, rather it is perceived as an immediate way of resolving problems. The study found that violence has been normalised as a result of immediate and systemic factors at play within the community. Education in its broadest forms, plays the role of a deterrent to the violent influences in the community.

Keywords: *Adolescence, violent contexts, normalization, community*

Introduction to the study

Adolescence is widely recognised as a social and cultural construct by researchers around the world. It has generally been agreed upon that universal definitions of adolescence should, at best, be restricted to describing adolescence as a 'period of transition', in which 'although no longer considered a child, the young person is not yet considered an adult' (McCauley et al, 1995).

Adolescence is a time of exploration and expansion of one's world. G Stanley Hall (1904)famously termed this phase as one of 'storm and stress'. This phrase is equally true of vulnerabilities and exposure to violence. The exposure to violence can be destructive to self as well as others. Adolescents are in many cases perpetrators, victims in others, and often bystanders and witnesses to violence. (Hagan & Foster, 2001). Violence leads to depression and a premature exit from adolescence and entry into adulthood.

This study was undertaken to study the relationship and response of adolescents to exposure to violence. It was part of a larger research project which sought to explore 'adolescence in a violent context' as well as adolescent morality and impact of popular culture in the context of violence. The objective that is addressed in this paper focuses primarily on adolescents' exposure to violence and its normalisation for adolescents living in violent settings.

Understanding violence in the context of the study

One of the simplest definitions of violence has been, "the use of physical force in such a way that it produces injury or death" (Fraser, 1996). Rivara (2002) defines it as 'the unjust or abusive exercise of power'. Non-physical forms such as threatening, stalking, harassment are also examples of violence. (Munni & Malhi, 2006). Violence has been categorised into two types- reactive and proactive. 'Reactive violence' is when a child employs violence as a means of self-defence while 'Proactive violence' is the non-defensive use of force and creates alienation from peers (Fraser, 1996). Both these types of violence were found to be relevant in the context of this study. Isolation denies the child social learning opportunities which causes further alienation as well as deprivation of skills and tools that would help manage the aggression. Failure at school as well as entry into sub and counter cultures, which are often illegitimate, encourage the use of violence by the adolescent.

Munni and Malhi (2006) point out that in adolescent health care, risk taking behaviour such as the consumption of alcohol, use of cigarettes and the use of drugs are closely connected with use of violence. Parents who fail to set limits, who use harsh punishments, who fail to reward prosocial behaviour and finally use a coercive style of parenting, all unintentionally, encourage the child to develop aggression to achieve social goals. (Fraser, 1996)

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was the 'Case Study' method. The location of North Chennai with its evident context of violence made this a 'revelatory case' as it had the potential to shed light on the research questions of this study. (Mathews&Ross, 2010). The northern part of the city of Chennai was once the site of the 'washermen'. Post-independence, the location was largely ignored in terms of development, as people struggled to find new ways of livelihood. Over the last few decades, the population in the region has increased considerably with many migrants coming to the city in search of blue collar jobs. Law and order has evolved differently in this part of the city that is known today for its violence with dominant gangs rising to the fore luring adolescent boys into violence with promises of wealth and status. The case study was a micro level study and predominantly qualitative in nature.The researcher approached the community through a small organization that runs a Centre that has been working with the adolescents in the region for the past eight years. The adolescents in the community attend the nearby government school.

Participants and Sampling

In this study, six adolescents studying in grade 10 (3M + 3F), between the ages of 14-16 years were individually interviewed over the course of six weeks. Two parents of the six student participants, were interviewed to understand their exposure and approach to violence. Three members of the organisation were interviewed at different stages of the research to provide guidance to the study as well as to corroborate responses of other participants. All participants were recruited using convenience sampling keeping in mind their daily routines as well as the sensitivity of the research topic. Identity of all the participants in the study has been kept

confidential. The research proposal was reviewed and approved by the Internal Review Board at Azim Premji University and all ethical considerations were fulfilled throughout the course of the study.

Findings and Discussion

Exposure to violence

The presence of violence and regular exposure to the same in the community was acknowledged by the different participants of the study with variations across age and gender. Violence for the adolescent age group was categorised into four types by the organisation's founder. The first category isthe 'student on student' violence which has in the past escalated to involvement of the local police. "O3: *A student removed a fan during class. It resulted in a gang fight and it became so that they went to hit the teacher herself.....*" The second category is the violence by 'community members and teachers on students'. Students who engage in violence are ostracised and teachers make examples of such students by using extreme violence (corporal punishment) on them. The third category is the violence by 'family members on the students' which is a regular occurrence in the community with parents using hot iron, sticks, belts, slippers etc. as tools of violence. The final category is the violence 'between community members' and includes forms of gang violence. O3: "*They cut someone's leg on the main road near Kasimedu. I was in the share auto.*"

Normalisation of violence.

The high exposure to violence validated by participant responses shows normalisation of violence for adolescents in this community. Normalisation in this context is understood as becoming the norm/normal condition with its accepted forms of violent attitudes and actions. Violence for adolescents in this context has become an accepted way of life and often the justified attitude and action. This normalisation is a gradual process and is distinct across age and gender. Participant responses attested that female violence was typically verbal in nature while in the case of male violence, physical forms were exhibited. Similarly, violence in the case of younger children was seen as a non-issue and did not require external intervention whereas with an increase in age, violence became more prominent in use and form and necessitated external intervention. *"S5: Yes it increases. My*

age students using tobacco items has become a trend. They then beat up others to prove their status or show off."

Students viewed violence as inclusive of both verbal and physical forms, with the former often leading to the latter. Tools of violence were in most cases gathered from the immediate environment. An example is the use of broken-down school furniture as weapons by students.

Violence is manifested in patriarchal and gender differences and seems to have a sense of continuity at home- school and community, and hence tends to be normalized. Systemic issues like the scramble for resources, domestic violence and the use of alcohol leads to prevalent use of violence. *"S1: Since the houses are very close to each other, people are used to the noises and are affected by it."* Violence is viewed as a legitimate means to *"finish off"* anger according to one student's response, while most agree that it is used to win arguments.

Perhaps the strongest support for normalisation of violence comes from the legitimisation of violence by students and organisation members. Most students agree that violence is a part of their life. They have been witness to violence from a young age and have been taught both explicitly and implicitly that 'violence is the way to show you are right'. Violence was justified by the students, provided it was necessitated by a legitimate reason. *"S3: ..... It is okay when police use violence to stop a fight, but it should not cause injury."* Parents too admitted to using physical violence in disciplining their children and using it as a form of punishment and sometimes to take out their frustrations.

Analysing the findings, one can see that the use of violence leads to rejection by others and to further use of violence. This cycle of violence

was detailed by Fraser (1996) who argued that such isolation would deny the children essential learning opportunities that would provide them with skills and tools to manage the aggression. From the literature reviewed for this study, one can draw on the phenomena of 'escape conditioning' where children use aggression to escape punishment and, in this context adolescents using violence towards older persons such as parents and school teachers serves as an example of the same. Student responses justified the use of violence as a reactive action. It is of interest to note that while verbal and non-physical forms of violence are most prevalent, much of it is limited to staging and physical violence is relatively limited. Parental use of violence as a form of discipline also legitimises the use of violence for children.

Reflections

There were several limitations to this study, some of which were beyond the control of the researcher. The number of participants was determined by the availability of time and willingness on the part of the participants. The interviews with the students and their parents also faced the limitations of language, especially of cultural references (limited familiarity of researcher with Tamil), as the essence of certain questions and responses may have been lost in translation.

A context which has normalised violence makes an outsider feel out of place during the first few visits. The newcomer is forced to either adopt the same language of violence or risk ostracism from the community. The language of violence dominates all others in such a setting. Educational and other forms of intervention face an uphill task in distancing violence and introducing a new normal for adolescents in such violent contexts.

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A Systematic Analysis of Causes and Consequences of School Bullying among Children

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Abstract

Bullying victimization is one of the most common psychological problems of children in school. It has an association with adjustment difficulties and psychological well being of bullied children. In recent years, the impact of childhood bullying on mental health is also receiving the attention of practitioners and educators. This paper intends to assess the extent of school bullying, identify causes of bullying behavior, and describes the consequences of bullying victimization in respect to child development. Findings: Around the world, more than 1 in 3 students aged between 13-15 experiences bullying (UNICEF 2019). Existing literature indicates a) certain factors that are responsible for bullying behavior are psychological, family-based, socio-economic and influence of media; b) short term or long term consequences of bullying, attributes like self-esteem, socio-emotional wellbeing, psychological distress, and academic achievement of children are reported to be impacted. **Conclusion**: Bullying amongst children highlights existing inefficiencies in the social system and the potential for incurring future social costs in the communities and schools in which children live their lives. Every child has the right to a safe nurturing school environment that must respect their dignity.

Keywords: *Children, bullying victimization, well being, attributes, initiatives, prevention*

Introduction

Bullying is an aggressive behaviour that takes place intentionally and frequently causes another child to feel hurt. It is a serious threat to children, as it is one of the most common expressions of violence in the peer context. Bullying prevails when there is an imbalance in the strength of power between the parties involved (Olweus 1993). Children who bully generally come from perceived higher social status or position of power, children who are bigger, stronger, or perceived to be popular. Bullying involvement is a collective prevalence of bullies, victims, and bully-victims (Malhi *et al* 2014) It engrosses activities like physical attack (hitting, kicking, destructing victim's belongings), assault, intimidation, verbal attack, social aggression, and in current time bullying also take place through internet known as cyber bullying (Smith 2014). The psychology behind the bullying behavior is that it is way of establishing social dominance. Bullying and victimization have higher linked with emotional problems, conduct problems, and hyperactivity which have an association with low prosocial behavior (Malhi *et al* 2014 & Ranjith *et al* 2019). Its prevalence can have distressing effects, not only to the person who experiences it but also to the wider community where it occurs. It is the responsibility of adults and students to stop an unacceptable behaviour of bullying. School must have lucid and comprehensive program and policies that can deal to all forms of bullying and emphasize prevention: timely, consistent intervention: social-emotional supports for victims and bullies; and clear, effective disciplinary policies.

Extent of school bullying:

Around the world, more than 1 in 3 students aged between 13-15 experiences bullying (UNICEF 2019). In the past few decades, incidents of school bullying have risen in India and have gained attention due to media focus on homicide and suicide in which bullying acts as a precipitating factor. Studies indicated that 20% to 54% of children are continually involved in school bullying as bullies or as victims (Kumpulainen & Rasanen 2000). Approximately 30 percent of 6-10 grade students were involved in bullying, as a perpetrator, victim, or both

(Fight Crime: Invest in Kids 2003). According to George (2018), it has been reported that 10 % of the students do not feel safe in their school because of bullying. Data obtained from the Health Behavior in School−Aged Children (HBSC) survey in 2005 portrayed that 53.6% of children were involved in verbal bullying, 51.4% in social bullying, and 20.8% in physical bullying (Wang *et al* 2009). Indian schools have reported prevalence of bullying involvement was around 53 % with prevalence of bullies and victims were 34% and 30–60% respectively (Kshirsagar *et al* 2007 & Mahi *et al* 2014).

Analysis of gender difference in the prevalence of school bullying showed that boys were more involved in bullying than girls (Oluyinka 2008 & Jaradat 2017), whereas, no significant gender differences in bullying have been reported by Kshirsagar *et al* (2007). Smith and Gross (2006) identify that boys exhibit higher levels of overt bullying behavior while girls exhibit covert psychological bullying. Boys were found to be engaged more in physical bullying (fight/ use of abusive language) and likely to receive physical victimization whereas, for girls, it took the form of teasing, name-calling or avoiding someone (Ranjith *et al* 2019).

Causes of school bullying:

Bullying behavior is a result of multiple factors that place children at risk of bullying includes:

- *Psychological*: Psychological traits refer to relatively stable disposition form of personality and it refers to individual's tendencies to think, feel and react in a certain way. Various socio-psychological factors like impulsivity, misconduct, aggression were found to be significantly associated with bullying behavior (Oluyinka 2008). Attachment and neuroticism act as risk factors for students in becoming victims of bullying (Hansen *et al* 2012). Students with a low sense of belonging tend to engage in bullying. Poor health behavior (substance abuse and lifestyle), poor social support of parents and peers and low self-esteem presented a strong relationship with bullying victimization (Gaspar *et al* 2014).

- *Family environment*: Family environment has direct effect on child behaviour as family is the first unit of social interaction and relationship providing context for development of social pattern. Family factors were inimitably associated with the behavior of children of all groups. Exposure to inter-parental conflict, the experience of child maltreatment, low maternal warmth, parental depression, harsh or uninvolved parenting styles, lack of parental bonding is known to be associated with a high risk of children's involvement in bullying behaviour (Papanikolaou *et al 2011* & Bowes *et al* 2009).

- *Socio-economic status*: It is an aggregated concept comprised of resources-based and prestige based indicators. Studies suggested bully-victims have been reported to be associated with poor parental education (Jansen *et al* 2012), low parental occupation (Lemstra *et al* 2012) and poverty (Glew *et al* 2005). Children from low SES families tend to experience lower levels of emotional well-being and have more behavior problems. Wang *et al* (2009) found that victims of physical and relational bullying belong to low affluence families in comparison to cyberbullying.

- *Influence of media*: Today's children grow up in a world saturated with media use. Children spent a considerable portion of their time in media usage. Media use is like a double-edged sword with merits and demerits. Through media, children and adolescents are exposed to violence through games, music, video, movies as well as daily news on television (Brown & Tierney 2011). Social media and other forms of communication are loaded with aggressive content and children are at risk of imitating them (Mehta & Pilania 2014). The increased utilization of the internet and social media platforms are leading to cyberbullying, especially among youth (Abaido 2020).

- *Peer pressure*: Bullying behaviors which can be seen as a group phenomenon (Oleus 1993), can be a response to peer pressure within the school. Children being members of social group occupy different roles to foster their feelings of belongingness and to establish themselves in social hierarchy. Peer pressure act as a powerful influencer, forcing children to engage in bullying behaviour. Ehindero (2016) found a significant influence of peer pressure on bullying behaviour indicating that students imitating the aggressive behaviour of his

peer will exhibit bullying behaviour because children in school-age often seek the attention and opinion of a peer than their parents.

- *Modeling*: Children learn behaviour through observation and role modeling. They reflect the values and behaviour observed in homes, television, games, along with the behaviours of famous personalities and world leaders. Social learning theories attributed bullying to modeling as well as operant conditioning. Bullying behaviour is frequently reported among those children whose parents teach to retaliate and hit back when they feel any kind of attack (Demaracy & Maleckl 2003). Children admit bullying or threat tactics as an acceptable form of problem-solving technique and when they found their role model is using the same, they start reflecting the learned observation (Bauman 2008).

Consequences of school bullying:

Bullying is a serious and widespread problem among school-aged-children and adolescents resulting in short and life-long negative consequences for both the bully and the victim. Common consequences are:

Self-esteem: Self-esteem is an aspect that is considered as a risk factor and a consequence of bullying (*Wang et al* 2018). Tsaousis (2016) found a significantly negative mutual relationship between the bullying behaviors of victims and bullies and their self-esteem. As bullying behavior escalates, the level of self-esteem decreases (Spade 2007). Repetitive bullying could lead them to suffer a serious and lasting decline in self-esteem (James 1998).

Social-emotional well being: Studies showed that that bullying victimization is linked significantly with higher levels of psychological issues and reduced levels of emotional wellbeing (Thomas *et al* 2016). It has been established that social isolation and loneliness have significant relation with bullying victimization (Steyn & Singh 2018).

Psychological distress: Being bullied at school is a source of stress for students and harms their well being (Olweus 1993). Students who are bullied experience poorer social, emotional as well as physical health which results in the signs of depression, suicidal ideation and loneliness (Owusu *et al* 2011).

Academic achievement: Bullying is considered as a severe problem in academics. Bullied students portrayed delinquent behavior with poor academic performance (Macmillan & Hagan 2004). It has been found that school bullying affects the academic performance of victims and bullies both (Raqqad *et al* 2017 and Chandran *et al* 2018).

Cross-national variation in the prevalence of school bullying:

The global variation is found in the prevalence of bullying among school- aged children. The proportion of school-aged children who were bullied was remarkably consistent across various countries: Australia (17 %), England (19 %), Japan (15 %), Norway (14 %), Spain (17 %) and the USA (16 %) (Nansel *et al* 2001) whereas, in UK and France, the prevalence of bulling was 50 % and 65% respectively. In contrast to these countries, around 77% of school children in India reported being a victim bullying (Mohan 2017).

In India, the escalating access of internet among Indians has given rise to cyber bullying, with adolescents being the most vulnerable victims. A report published in Comparitech.com revealed that Indian children were the most cyber-bullied in the world. Indian parents proved to be highest to express confidence that their children were cyber bullied at least some times. Since 2011 to 2018, the number of Parents reporting against cyber bullying has risen. It concluded that Indian school aged children face more offline and online bullying than in some western countries.

Initiatives taken to prevent bullying:

The right to feel safe at home, at school and in the community is the basic right of children as per UNCRC, 1990. Bullying is not a normal part of growing up. For successful holistic development of children, there is a need of a safe, supportive learning environment. Impeding and preventing bullying involves an obligation to create a secure environment where children can thrive, socially and academically, without being afraid. Considering the rising cases of school bullying, CBSE in 2015 issued guidelines stating mandatory setting up of anti-bullying committees in schools for creating awareness, along with developing and implementing bullying prevention programs. The provision of a trained counselor is also suggested by guidelines

for emotional support to bully-victims and helping in coping up.

It is the responsibility of the school to make safe spaces for their students by preventing the many forms of bullying. Malik (2016) emphasized on the need of comprehensive school-based intervention with integrated stakeholder's roles to address bullying behavior at a larger level and awareness about bullying behavior should be created through role-plays, workshops as well as sensitize the children about the consequences of bullying behavior. The involvement of parents in the prevention and management of bullying will help in synergizing the positive outcomes also facilitate the prevention and management of bullying victimization. Srisiva *et al* (2013) also suggested the establishment of anti-bullying policies, training of the teachers in anti-bullying activities, and incorporating the anti-bullying policies/ procedures in the curriculum.

Conclusion

The rate of bullying among children is major indicator of children's well being. Bullying amongst children has inevitably contributed to become a globally recognized challenge. Bullying at school can threaten students' safety and has negatively impacted the psychology of bullies and victims. The suicide statistics of bullying victims is staggering and alarming. Every child has the right to a safe nurturing school environment that must respect their dignity. Thus, there is a need to priorities this issue whether at home or in school. The efforts should focus on preventing bullying behaviors as well as providing support to children and youth from becoming the target of bullying.

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Personality Narrative of Victims of Child Abuse

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Abstract

The paper is an interdisciplinary approach towards understanding the personality structure of a victim of child abuse from the encounter with abuse until young adulthood when clinical-pathological manifestations start to occur. The hypothesis of this paper is constructed around the idea that the personality structure of a child abuse victim becomes way more important to understand while it is in the process of development in the here and now than just as a part of the patient's history after clinical manifestations. The movie, Taare Zameen Par is taken as an example. The author's viewpoint is shared to know about the physical and emotional abuse children face at home and school. The role of parents, teachers, and school administration is discussed along with the defenses that help in coping with the trauma/abuse. The paper also focuses on various preventive and support measures towards the end. The idea thus was to construct a personality structure by linking all the areas mentioned above. Contributions from the vast disciplines of early childhood education and psychotherapy would help in understanding this personality structure.

Keywords: *Child, Child Abuse, Personality, School, Parents*

Focus of the paper

The present paper focuses on the personality structure of child abuse victims. Following a traumatic event, it becomes very necessary that the victim of such an unfortunate experience be given the space necessary for the expression of the conflicting emotions. The period following the traumatic event is a very 'delicate' one. We say it is 'delicate' because these situations would shape the personality of the concerned child and would become the foundation of all future events; in adulthood.

In everyday life, we notice the varied attitudes towards cases of child abuse and the victims. The lack of space, attention, acknowledgment of the intense feelings the child is experiencing; may later lead to a manifestation of 'strange' symptoms in adulthood with the consequence of labelling all sorts of severe clinical psychopathology due to the 'repressed' event. It has been generally noticed that the aspect of child abuse is never openly discussed nor any attention towards the behaviour and personality structure of a child abuse victim is directed in the present phase of childhood. Therefore it is highly significant for us as part of the mental health field to highlight the importance and consequences of abuse on the child who encountered it not just from a clinical psychopathology lens but rather most importantly study and understand the personality structure of this child in the home-school space before a clinical diagnosis might be arrived at. Combining the two disciplines of Early Childhood Care & Education and

Clinical Psychology, the present paper is dedicated towards understanding the vicissitudes of a child abuse victim.

The attempt is to put on paper, the experiences, attitudes, behaviour, personality formulation of the child, and the attitudes of significant adults at home as well as at school. For this purpose, we wish to focus on the two forms of child abuse namely physical abuse and emotional/ psychological abuse. We believe that these two forms of child abuse are connected to each other and thus share an inter-dependent relationship. It is also the attempt of this paper to highlight the psycho-social aspects rather than to discuss the topic in the strict language of symptoms and pathology.

Introduction

From the time an infant can start absorbing the immediate environment, people, etc., until the later stages of childhood and adolescence, we can describe their personalities as constituting a curious element. They are intrinsically interested in everything noticeable such that they tend to ask loads of questions from adults. An infant can be observed putting various tangible objects in the mouth to know what they are. On the other hand, an adolescent can be observed to be curious about sexuality and various other aspects of life. In all these instances, we find a common link: Wanting to know the unknown. As a result, all our actions, attitudes, thought patterns, and behaviours are shaped around knowing this unknown. The purpose behind stating this curiosity is the fact that driven by this inquisitiveness, children are very attuned to the feelings, attitudes, behaviours, and facial expressions of significant elders especially the caregivers. Infants can intuitively differentiate 'safe' from 'unsafe' holdings, are sensitive to facial expressions and can sense any uncomfortable situation. Children are overly sensitive to these situations and thus can get easily affected. The same theory goes for the phase of adolescence wherein they are not just going through major physical transformations but these physical changes also have an effect on emotional and psychological levels. There are severe mood shifts, fantasies regarding their appearance and personality; in other words, there is huge consciousness about their body. In all these scenarios, it is the responsibility of the elders to be aware of the child, be tolerant of their outbursts, and most importantly face any difficult issues in the dyadic relation with care, love, sincerity, and positive strictness.

Child abuse, maltreatment, and neglect are known to be a global phenomenon. They are a violation of basic human rights that are granted to everyone to live a healthy life. If these rights are violated, they can have drastic effects on one's psychological and physical health. Child maltreatment is the 'abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence, and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health'. According to the reports of UNICEF (2007), an average of 86% of children aged 2–14 years have experienced some form of violent disciplinary practice at home. A study was conducted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (2007), which reported that two out of every three children were physically abused, almost half emotionally abused and seven out of every ten girl child respondents faced neglect of one form or the other by family members.

There are four types of child abuse namely, sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. In the present paper, we focus mainly on the physical and emotional forms of child abuse. The World Health Organization defines physical abuse of a child as an 'incident resulting in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust.' It is the use of force to harm a child's health, development, and dignity. While, emotional abuse refers to a relationship between a child and a caregiver, which includes a consistent pattern of harmful interactions with a child, other than physical or sexual abuse. It is the failure to provide a supportive environment by threatening/scolding the child which leads to low self-esteem and/or emotional quotient. Most of the child abuse cases go unreported because of the stigma attached to it and to protect the name of the family. While many studies report the prevalence of child abuse in India, only a few have tried to explore the social factors that may have a role in predisposing children to the various forms of abuse.

The nature of abuse at home

In 2007, a movie called Taare Zameen Par was released. In the movie, the character and life trajectory of Ishaan (the main protagonist) can be observed as the perfect example of a variant of child abuse. The movie beautifully depicts the complex relationship between the dynamics being played out at home and school with child abuse at the center.

Ishaan lives in a nuclear family with his parents and elder brother. He is interested in extra-curricular activities such as painting, playing, crafting, and 'hates' studies. The reason behind his hate is a serious issue of learning difficulty termed 'Dyslexia' wherein the child has issues in differentiating letters with a similar form; for instance, the two letters b and d. At home, Ishaan's inability to focus on his studies owing to his learning difficulty is not attended to by his

parents, especially his mother who is responsible for teaching Ishaan and helping him with his homework. We see huge expectations being placed on him by his father, failing which he has to bear the brunt daily. When in trouble, his version is never listened to, and instead, the whole blame is inevitably thrown on him. Hence, he is subjected to physical beatings and scolding. He is even sent off to a boarding school since complaints against him were increasing day by day. Such an attitude towards him has a visible emotional/psychological effect in the sense that he loses complete interest in studies. Even in the neighbourhood, he has no friends and is constantly bullied and beaten up for his slowness. Ishaan is repeatedly threatened with abandonment by his father because of which he is always scared. The emotional turmoil starts getting reflected even in his paintings wherein he depicts his pain through paintings of distance and unhappiness. A significant point to consider is the fact that not once does Ishaan share his difficulties with his parents which also point towards major trust issues. The ultimate blow to his turmoil was his sending off to the boarding school by his father, the pain of which was indicated in giving up on his skill of painting altogether. At the boarding school, his problem of learning difficulty got worse, he no longer participated in creative activities, he became even more distanced and aloof from the happenings of the society, and upon repeated failures on part of his parents to meet him at the school, he got completely cut off from them too and stopped answering their phone calls. Even when his parents visit him with gifts and chocolates, he is least interested and does not wish them goodbye when they leave.

A child abuse victim is affected when inappropriate behaviours, instead of being addressed, are constantly addressed negatively or attempted to be repressed by others for reasons well known to them. The kind of parenting the child is subjected to, most prominently of the authoritarian kind, can hamper the child's growth and development. In the movie, the kind of parenting style exposed to Ishaan was of the authoritarian kind especially on part of the father who placed larger than life expectations onto his children and not once attempted to understand the hurt and pain Ishaan was going through. It is possible that as parents, they unintentionally harmed the child emotionally.

If one was to describe what a family refers to; a recurring and significant theme would be a sense of security, warmth, and openness to the expression of one's innermost feelings and thoughts. But what if one was to encounter a situation in the home space which threatens this very sense of belongingness and love? And this situation might be encountered not just once or twice but repeatedly; on an everyday basis. The early stages of life until adolescence, is a period of growth, development, and transformation when the child can be moulded into a healthy personality. A child is considered to be innocent, inquisitive, and energetic unlike in any other stage of development and it is therefore the responsibility of the significant elders to help channel this energy in various productive ways. But as is destined, not all families are happy ones. Reasons for such unhappiness in families can be both personal and social and in this tension, it is the child who very often becomes the easy target of all abuse.

The nature of the family structure is a crucial factor in cases of child abuse. Child abuse of almost all kinds can be prevalent in joint families wherein either due to the large numbers or raging tensions with certain family members; children might often become the easy target. It is possible that in situations wherein such an experience is shared, it is generally ignored or told to move on in fear of increased tensions in the family, continue the goodwill, and for the fear of judgement from society. In families wherein women are subjected to domestic abuse daily, child abuse especially of physical and emotional nature can again be observed. Threatening to harm the child to cause more emotional hurt to the mother is fairly common.

Child abuse can also be vicarious in the sense that noticing someone go through a traumatic event can make a lasting impression on the child unintentionally. In families with a history of mental illness, child abuse is likely. In all these cases what the child goes through on a physical and emotional level becomes very important to understand and take notice of. It was noticed from an internship in a hospital that the very small signs of difficulty on part of the child get often ignored for various logical, situational factors, and these building up through the years resurface brutally in adulthood in the form of serious clinical disorders which have its effects both on a mental and physical level.

The nature of abuse at school

School is another place where a child is physically and emotionally abused. Teachers play a crucial role in the detection and prevention of child abuse. However, many teachers knowingly or unknowingly abuse the child themselves. In India, a teacher is respected and considered as a powerful person. The power to inflict physical or emotional abuse is often validated by other adults as long as the teacher is moulding the child into a 'disciplined being'. For the longest time known, the school has been the sole place to teach children discipline and self-regulation. When children do not adhere to the rules of the school or fail to do their homework, they are beaten, slapped, asked to kneel, or stand outside the classroom. Parents are also tolerant of corporal punishment and believe that mild punishment is necessary for disciplining their children [Douglas, 2006]. An old Marathi proverb, "*Chhadi lage chham chham, vidya yeyi gham gham*" (the harder the stick beats, the faster the flow of knowledge), refers to how punishment is given to children to make them learn their lessons faster [Paik, 2009, p. 176]. For adults, a little beating and scolding is just a part and parcel of excellence in academics. Many children have psychologically adjusted and accepted their punishment at schools due to a lack of communication with parents and their support. They feel that teachers are more powerful than their parents; therefore, children hide the violence that happens in the schools from their parents [Ghosh, 2016]. This has further consequences on the emotional development of the child.

In a classroom where there are more than twenty children under the care of a single teacher, it becomes a struggle to look after the needs of every child. When a teacher neglects or scolds a child multiple times, it results in a poor or unhealthy student-teacher relationship. Child abuse is also a major cause of high dropout rates and absenteeism as the victim of child abuse is not interested to attend school. They are often mocked, bullied, hit, and/or neglected by their peers. Emotional abuse can lead to lower motivation for school attendance, incompletion of academic assignments, and negative student-teacher interactions [Hyman & Snook, 1999]. Thus, it becomes crucial to have a supportive environment for children. Many times, a teacher has differential treatment towards children from diverse backgrounds, for instance, a child from a low socio-economic group. These children are scolded and beaten in front of the entire class. If the child is questioned and is unable to answer, they are called 'dumb'. The rest of the students also start to consider the child as 'dumb'. The children also complained more about them when they misbehaved and avoided sitting or playing with them. The known song, "Shame, shame, poppy shame, all the donkeys know your name" is often used in schools to humiliate or punish the child. While interning in a school in Delhi, I observed an interaction between the teacher and a child who was from a lower socio-economic group. The teacher left the child alone in the classroom when he could not solve a puzzle. He was crying and wanted the teacher to help him; however, the teacher did not help and took the rest of the class for assembly. The child was left on his own to figure out the puzzle. Instead of motivating or guiding the child, the teacher scolded him and left him to figure out the puzzle by himself.

Taking examples from Taare Zameen Par, when Ishaan couldn't read or write properly, the teachers kept punishing him and belittled him. His notebooks were filled with red marks and they would compare him to other children who were quick learners. He was often targeted and the whole class would mock him. He did not have many friends in school and none of the teachers took efforts to help him or to understand his situation. All of them believed that he was misbehaving and should be punished and was further sent out of the classroom. He had no support from teachers or his peers. Unable to get guidance from anyone, he internalized his in-capabilities and the fact that he was 'good-for-nothing'.

With such experiences, children avoid going to school and are afraid of being scolded by the teacher. Emotional abuse can affect a child's self-worth and self-perception and can also lead to impairment in their social-emotional development. These multiple layers of disadvantages make it hard for some children to adjust to school and are further abused and demotivated. When the child does not have a growth-promoting environment, they tend to question themselves and have low self-esteem. Though there are many laws and acts like UNCRC (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) and RTE (Right to

Education) Act, 2009 to protect children from physical and emotional abuse to children, however, the ground reality is completely different as most of these practices are common across homes and schools.

Defensive structure of a child abuse victim

Each person has a unique personality. Given the nature of child abuse we are currently discussing in the paper (physical abuse and emotional/ psychological abuse), it is important that we understand the general personality structure of a child and gradually attempt to focus on the changes which might be brought upon after the traumatic event.

Defenses are an intricate part of any person's personality structure. Indeed they play a huge role in how an individual thinks and acts upon. Freud (1937) as part of the school of psychoanalysis first introduced the term Ego Defense Mechanisms. According to him, human behaviour mostly always attempts at dealing with anxiety. In this scenario, it is the ego (works by the reality principle) that uses certain ways in dealing with these life anxieties. Sigmund Freud defined defense mechanisms as ways of reducing anxiety through reality distortion. We all use certain defense mechanisms from time to time to deal with and adapt to the challenges of reality. All forms of defensive formations occur as a healthy, adaptive use in adjusting to reality. Things take a serious turn only when people use these defense mechanisms to such an extent that they start living completely in a distorted reality not visible to the naked eye.

Defense mechanisms tend to work at two levels: primitive and secondary. The primitive processes are said to exist mostly in a preverbal stage of development; yet continue all our life. These forms of defenses are healthy in the sense that they make no major transformation to an individual's functionality and are responsible for actually helping this individual to deal with the everyday issues. The secondary processes of defense mechanisms are more mature, higher-order processes that have a significant effect on an individual's thought and functionality. When used excessively, it can push the person towards living in a distorted reality.

Notwithstanding the age at which a child may face abuse at the hands of significant elders, a very common way of facing a traumatic event is by the defense of 'denial'. The defense of denial is used consciously or unconsciously by all age groups, in that, an individual refuses the present occurring reality. From the viewpoint of a child who has faced abuse either by physical beatings or vicarious physical abuse (maybe of his/her mother), he/she becomes very scared, totally confused at the violent situation. There might come a point wherein the child ignores the negativity of the situation, reaches out to the abuser, and tries to pacify him/her by talking sweetly, agreeing to be a good child in a bid to lessen the abuse. Denial can be seen working unconsciously in the sense that the child might refuse to believe the situation he was placed in by continuing to be in awe of/ supporting the abuser till the time the child can see a pattern of uncomfortable behaviour. Having a supportive environment with at least one responsible person becomes of utmost importance in cases wherein the child is too small to understand anything and not in a state to even share the dilemma.

Parenting and the entire family structure in Indian soil has a collective identity. More than an individual's relation with self, it is the relation between the individual and society which is given much value. All human behaviour, thoughts, values, beliefs are thus driven by the invisible society present in one's mind. Trust is an important factor in any relationship and the trust between a child and his/her parent is very significant. If a child is discouraged to speak openly on the event or discuss it on a negative note, it can break the link of trust with the consequence of the child distancing oneself from the parents. The child might start withdrawing from all activities, and begin to keep secrets. In later years, the same child might constantly live in a state of fear and anxiety over being found out. Repeated exposure to abuse might lead the child to slowly disconnect from reality and live in a parallel world of bliss and happiness. If the

child's pain is neglected, they may slowly adopt a personality of rebellion in which the child faces more abuse and humiliation in order to feel real. Dissociation thus is not only present in relation to others but also with oneself. An extremely strong personality feature is that of intense rage towards significant elders for no reason in particular. There might be sudden outbursts in emotions. With children, who won't be able to express their intense feelings through words, often show it through play. It is through play that various tumultuous experiences of life

either concerning self or others are explored and thus the dynamics get highlighted in significant clarity. Playing, for children, is a medium through which reality is explored and processed and through play, they might want to come out of the space of feeling vulnerable [Winnicott, 1971].

Role of parents and elders

The parents are expected to exude warmth, love, a sense of safety and belongingness, and according to Erik Erikson, the first stage of psycho-social development between an infant and mother is Trust vs Mistrust. In accordance with this, it is important that parents as well as significant elders at home give the child space, attention, and love for him/her to feel secure. This sense of security helps in sharing the deepest problems of life and gives confidence for children to not judge oneself or self-doubt. This security is a token of the non-judgemental attitude parents have towards the child.

As mentioned earlier, there are significant changes, small yet significant which starts occurring in a trauma faced child. The child might show sudden rage over often unrelated things or cry at often the most unexpected times. Parents in their capacity might start spending some amount of time with their child; careful not to dislocate their space. Often silence helps in the sense that the parent might sit beside and not necessarily talk. Active listening is the most promising key to any conflict and much needed in today's times. Parents need to understand the need of the child to speak and express openly their conflicting thoughts without fear of judgement and punishment. Observing the child's nature of play also becomes essential. A very effective way of entering a child's inner world is to interact through play. The object relations school of psychoanalysis has time and again emphasized on the importance of role-playing in a child's life and described in detail how thoughts and feelings get reflected. It is most often the case that a child after facing a traumatic situation may unconsciously start encountering thoughts of suicide and these thoughts are nowhere better reflected than in the play. In various cases described and discussed by the psychologists belonging to object relations school; there have been mentions of children speaking of killing, attacking, destroying someone (the toy) which upon later analysis emerges to be a crucial part of themselves

[Winnicott, 1971]. In cases where the abuser is the parent of the child, the role of significant others becomes most important such as a caring relative or a teacher who can bring up the issue before concerned authorities. In the case of an adolescent, parents can lend a patient ear to the outbursts and authoritatively discuss the conflicting parts of adolescent life.

Role of teachers/ school

As children spend most of the time in school after home, the role of teachers and other school staff is equally important in raising strong children. The teachers are often expected to have warm and caring relationships with the students. It also becomes crucial for them to detect or report any signs of abuse the child might be facing. The major indicators are changes in academics and the child's social-emotional behaviour. The child who was good in academics before might not be interested in classroom activities and stay distracted. There is a possibility that the child might fight with other children or get socially withdrawn from peers. Also to include, these indicators could be present due to various other factors like divorce, financial issues, and loss of a family member. If teachers detect any signs of abuse, she should inform the higher authorities to further protect and support the child. For instance, in Taare Zameen Par, when a new teacher enters the scenario, he detects that Ishaan is a very quiet child and does not mingle with his classmates. He talks to school authorities, his peers, and his family to know more about him. He looks at his notebooks and his artwork to understand him better. The teacher does not look at Ishaan's weakness rather pushes him to engage in what he likes and enjoys doing. Ishaan is motivated for his art, for which he is even awarded a prize. With the empathy, patience, and support of the teacher, Ishaan also learned to read, write, and

solve basic mathematical calculations. This shows how positive, trusting, and warm relationships with the child can act as a motivator to overcome the abusive experiences and heal from it.

The victims of abuse often have issues with recognizing and expressing feelings as well as taking decisions. The abused child can be provided with various opportunities to make new friends and increase contact with them. The teacher, during circle time, can ask the children

to share their feelings and express what they feel. They can also include expression/mood signs. For older children, a thought and reflection journal can be used to express their feelings and talk about it to those they trust. In most schools, a counsellor is present for children and their wellbeing. The information shared during the sessions is also kept confidential. Problem-solving can be made as a part of the curriculum. The teachers can provide children with various hypothetical situations where the children are asked to come up with creative solutions. The school can conduct awareness workshops where children can learn about various types of abuse, how to report them, and have an open discussion about it in the classrooms. Other than that, major life-skills are being taught in schools these days, for example, socialization skills, coping skills, and self-protecting training. As all children cannot express themselves verbally, expressive therapies like art therapy and play therapy can be beneficial to assist the abused child.

If the abuser is from the school, strict action should be taken against them rather than taking the abuse lightly. There should also be instructional workshops for teachers as to how to detect and report possible child abuse. Along with the teachers, the staff should be trained to approach children with empathy and positivity and avoid any indifferent treatment or bias towards slow learners or those from different backgrounds. The school staff should treat

everyone equally and respectfully. Teachers and parents can attend anger management workshops to learn how to calm themselves and talk to the child peacefully. The school can also support and guide the parents of the abused with the skills and strategies that can be used at home. The parents can be given access to counselling programs to help their abused children. Parents, teachers and the community can all work together to provide support to the child and help them become resilient.

Conclusion

Both childhood and adolescence are perhaps the most precarious stages in any person's development. There are major personality changes and shifts in mood. Childhood is that phase of life that serves as the foundation of all later events in life. And therefore we must place special attention to care, attention, and love for children. Children have a lot of curiosity inbuilt in them as a result of which their observation capacities are par excellence. They are attuned to the smallest of the small happenings around them which when due to serious circumstances are repressed; create havoc in adulthood and relationships with others. With new child protection policies and stronger awareness about child abuse, it is now easier to report cases of child abuse. Emotional and physical maltreatment of children has also been outlawed in all the schools. It has become mandatory to hire a counsellor in every school who can look at the problem behaviour of the children. Parents on their part can allow open expression of emotions and spend mandatory time with children. Child abuse is an extremely sensitive issue that has serious consequences in a child's personal and social life. With timely intervention, one can access the origin of such abuse and help the child in re-engaging with life. In present times, we have come across cases that call out such practices but the authors believe that an active discussion on the psycho-social factors is the need of the hour.

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The Silence around Child Sexual Abuse: Review of Researches on Prevalence and Awareness among School Teachers

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Abstract

Child sexual abuse leads to lifelong grave consequences on child's holistic development. The present review paper is a deliberation on awareness of school teachers about child sexual abuse. For the preparation of this review article 3 reports and many research articles have been searched through Delhi University Library System, Google search, and Google scholar. Afterward selected articles and reports were carefully reviewed for the present paper. It was found that the present area is understudied and there is a great dearth of information on this issue in India, particularly. It seems that teachers across world and in India understand the term child sexual abuse, but they have very limited knowledge on laws related to child sexual abuse. In addition, teachers are not acquainted with the knowledge on what can be done to protect children from any form of sexual abuse. Talking about sex with children or sex education is considered a taboo in many parts of the world, hence it is clearly evident that people do not want to talk about child sexual abuse. Teachers can play significant role in protection of children, especially because children spend a major chunk of their waking hours in school. This paper presents the situation of awareness of teachers on child sexual abuse.

Keywords: Child Sexual abuse, Prevalence of CSA, Teachers

Introduction

"Prevention is always better then cure but sometimes there is no cure of certain incidences like Child Sexual Abuse"- Unknown

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a universal problem with grave life-long outcomes (WHO, 2014). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines CSA as "the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend and is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violates the laws or social taboos of society." The term CSA includes a range of activities like "intercourse, attempted intercourse, oral-genital contact, fondling of genitals directly or through clothing, exhibitionism or exposing children to adult sexual activity or pornography, and the use of the child for prostitution or pornography" (Krug et al., 2002).

Sexual abuse is inappropriate sexual behaviour with a child. It includes fondling a child's genitals, making the child fondle the adult's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism and sexual exploitation. To be considered 'child abuse', these acts have to be committed by a person responsible for the care of a child (for example a baby-sitter, a parent, or a daycare provider), or is related to the child. If a stranger commits these acts, it would be considered sexual assault and handled solely by the police and criminal courts (Chopra, 2015).

The issue of CSA is intricate and challenging to study as lot of silence surrounds this issue. The estimates vary widely depending on the country under study, the definitions used, the type of CSA studied, the extent of coverage, and the quality of data. However, sexual violence is seen to occur in all ages, in all socioeconomic classes, and nearly in all countries with differences in the magnitude (Singh, Pareshker & Nair, 2014). Child sexual abuse is a widespread problem in schools globally. Learners are at risk of sexual abuse by teachers (Simuforosa, 2015).

Children are our present and they are our future too. Though societies would like to believe that they give good status to children, this is far from true. In a traditional society like India, we worship goddess in the form of girl child still we seek boys over girls. In the name of culture, we ask our minors to remain unvoiced in front of their elders. We make them believe that elders

are always right and it's our duty to follow them without any questions. These traditional practices directly impact the mind of our children. They suffer and never have courage to say what they feel to their elders, or stand up if an adult is committing an atrocity. This makes them more and more vulnerable and easy targets to be a victim of child abuse.

Many studies have reported that child sexual abuse happens within families. Majority of abusers are known and trusted people to the child (Chopra, 2015). Thousands of child abuse cases are reported in newspaper every day. It is our responsibility to raise awareness of people about child sexual abuse and about the various preventive measures that can be taken to empower children as well as adults. Here teachers can play crucial role in empowering parents especially mother and children. If she is herself aware about the dimensions of CSA, she can play a critical role in protecting children.

The present study is to review the understanding among the teachers about child sexual abuse globally and child sexual abuse in India. The basic objective of the present paper is to understand teacher's level of awareness about CSA. This understanding can help to make them empowered so that they can directly contribute in this field to safeguard children from Child Sexual abuse.

Objectives

1. To review the literature to find out the understanding and attitude of teachers about child sexual abuse (CSA) in India and globally.

2. To review the various strategies that teachers follow to prevent CSA.

Methodology

The present paper is based on research review used to develop understanding of knowledge among the teachers about child sexual abuse globally and in India. In the preparation of this paper authors had used secondary source of data. For the collection of data, the electronic media was used. Many search engines have been used such as Google, Google scholar, Delhi University Library System, science direct, Taylor and Frances etc. The key words used to search data mainly were child sexual abuse, CSA in India, CSA globally/internationally, CSA and teachers, role of teachers in protection of children and many more. From the pool of

collected articles and reports on the issues related to child sexual abuse, only those articles were selected that were associated with the clear objectives of the present review. Data from each selected article were extracted, analysed and placed into the present research review paper.

Discussion

International status: A global perspective on CSA and awareness among teachers

Child sexual abuse is a global concern. The prevalence of CSA was found to be high in India as well as throughout the world. A major section of children globally attends school every day. Hence schools can play an important role in the prevention of sexual abuse. Teachers and other professionals working in schools and educational settings see the same group of children regularly. They are likely to be the professional in the community, outside of the family home, with whom the child has the closest relationship. Research suggests that teachers are the trusted adult, located outside of the family and peer networks, most likely to receive a disclosure of sexual abuse. Besides a disclosure of abuse, schools also have a unique role in the identification of safeguarding concerns and the initiation of an intervention (Children's Commissioner, 2017)

Goldman in 2007 conducted a study on Australian primary school student-teachers knowledge and understanding of child sexual abuse and its mandatory reporting, and reported that student-teachers have a significant knowledge of their roles as teachers, without gender or age differences. Goldman reported that teachers usually were not self-reliant in identifying the cues of CSA among children and were also unable to respond appropriately when they found or suspected CSA.

Prevalence of CSA

In a study conducted in Zimbabwe it was found that children faced child sexual abuse by teachers. This study was done on total 19 people through qualitative methods. The study indicated that child sexual abuse in schools is widespread and that teachers are among the perpetrators of this abuse. Findings from the study reveal that girls are more defenseless to sexual abuse than boys and male teachers sexually abuse learners more than female teachers (Simuforosa, 2015).

Ruto (2009) reported that children in Kenya are prone to abuse as according to the findings of study 58 of every 100 children have been sexually harassed while 29% boys and 24% girls are reported to have been forced into unwanted sex. The main perpetrators of the violence were mentioned as peers while the home featured as the most unsafe place.

In a similar study conducted by Gwirayi (2013) in Zimbabwe reported that child sexual abuse is a social and public health concern locally and worldwide because it is associated with numerous and serious short-and long-term devastating consequences. The study found an overall prevalence rate of 56.3%, with no significant gender differences. Both non-contact and contact forms of sexual abuse were prevalent. Both adults and peers were reported as perpetrators. Perpetrators were reported to be familiar people, which is consistent with the observation that the home was reported as the major place where abuse was perpetrated.

In a qualitative study of child sexual abuse in Kenya, it was found that "Teachers, who comprise the main adult population in schools, have a mandate to protect children. Yet 16.1% girls affirmed they had been propositioned by teachers. While the majority of these girls (66.7%) indicated they declined the "love proposals" and some 15.9% girls simply ignored, there was a disturbing 17.4% who yielded to the love proposal and entered into a relationship with the teacher." (Ruto, 2009).

Awareness on Child Sexual Abuse among teachers

Ping & Jing-qi (n.d.) in China conducted a qualitative research of awareness on child sexual abuse in elementary school teachers and reported that almost all the selected teachers have never communicated with their students on CSA. All the selected teachers stated that for the prevention of CSA in the school there should be CSA prevention education imparted in the school only. Authors concluded their research by stating that "the awareness of CSA among elementary school teachers is not good, therefore, we should enhance training for these teachers".

Similar study was conducted by Zhang, Chen & Liu (2015) in Beijing, China on 245 preschool teachers to examine their knowledge, attitude and training on CSA prevention. They found that Chinese preschool teachers had limited

knowledge on CSA prevention. Less than 5% of teachers ever attended CSA prevention training programs. Authors concluded that there is urgent need to develop appropriate prevention training programs for preschool teachers in China to protect children from CSA in schools.

Flåm, and Haugstvedt (2013) conducted a study in Norway and reported about caregivers' awareness of children's first signs of sexual abuse. Authors found that interaction is the key to find out about the clues of CSA. They also stated that "trusted caregivers scaffold opportunities for the child to disclose about the CSA".

A study conducted by Goldman and Girmbeek (2015) in Australia reported that Teachers in many countries are mandated by law, professional codes, or education authorities to report child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse. However, teachers may not receive adequate preparation for such sensitive interventions, as pre-service teacher education degrees provide very few or no compulsory courses on child protection and crucially related, lifelong health and well-being issues. The results suggest that most did not learn about mandatory reporting or child sexual abuse, and others cited sparse and sporadic public media as their primary information source. These findings, building on previous evidence about inadequate or nonexistent pre-service mandatory intervention courses in primary teacher education, may guide the design of appropriate training responses enhancing educational professionals' knowledge, competencies, skills, and efficacies as mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse.

Chen and Chen (2005) stated that "It is very important to understand and improve public awareness of CSA prevention". They found that more than 80% of parents approved of school CSA prevention education. However, at the same time, 47.3% of parents expressed some concern that this education may induce the children to learn too much about 'sex'.

Walsh and Farell (2008) reported that Child abuse and neglect are serious social problems that make extraordinary demands on teachers' knowledge and professionalism. Yet the field of education has been slow to develop a discipline-specific knowledge base about child abuse and neglect for teachers and teacher education

programs and there is a paucity of empirical research about teachers' knowledge in relation to child abuse and neglect."Parents and teachers need to be equipped with the knowledge about how to recognize early warning signs that can indicate the sexual abuse of a child" (Sanderson, 2004).

The above researches reflected that children are the most vulnerable section of the society and almost every second child has faced child sexual abuse. Hence to protect children from CSA, schools and teachers can play a significant role. But in some of the incidences even teachers themselves are the perpetrators. To avoid such incidences, it is important to impart knowledge among teachers on child sexual abuse and also about laws and punishments related to child sexual abuse.

National Status: An Indian perspective on CSA and awareness among teachers

CSA is an extensive problem, and for reasons not hard to understand, vastly underreported. It has adverse effects on the psychological, physical, behavioral, and interpersonal well-being of the victim. Hence, stringent measures should be taken for the prevention and control of this hidden public health issue (Singh, Parsekar and Nair, 2014). A review study revealed that "perpetration of CSA is a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in the interplay between individual, family, community, and societal factors. The results of review indicated poor physical, behavioural, social, and mental health outcomes for victims of CSA in India" (Choudhry, et.al; 2018).

Kacker and Mohsin (2007) conducted a study based on well-designed methodology, covering

13 states (two states from each of the six geographic zones in the country) including states with the highest and the lowest crime rates against children. The sample was purposive and included 12,447 children, 2324 young adults and 2449 stakeholders representing five different evidence groups: children in the family, at the workplace, in schools, on the streets and in institutions. The study reported widespread sexual abuse prevalent in all the states surveyed. 53 % (n = 12,447) reportedly experienced some form of sexual abuse. Half of sexual abuses reported were committed by "persons known to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility" (Kacker and Mohsin, 2007).

Child Sexual Abuse is present globally and in India CSA is rampant. In 2007 in a report by ministry of MOWCD it was reported that 53.22% children having faced some kind of sexual abuse in their life. It was found that the Child Sexual Abuse is understudied and there is a great dearth of information on this issue in India, particularly.

Carson, (2013) reported that the findings of several studies state that 18–20 % of CSA occurs in the family and around 50 % in institutional settings. Further, there is regional and rural–urban variation in the rates and extent of CSA in the country. Girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse, although boys too reported a high percentage of victimisation and are subject to greater social stigma. The study suggests that although sexual exploitation and abuse is strongly correlated to poverty, it occurs in families across the socioeconomic and religious spectrum. However, factors that facilitate CSA, such as poverty, overcrowding, extended family living arrangements, abundance of street children, and lack of recreational facilities in families are by no means exclusive to India (Belur and Singh 2015).

Belliappa and Ghosh (2015) reported that the high incidence of child sexual abuse tends to occur concurrently with high levels of physical and emotional abuse in India. Authors stated that in India there are progressive laws that address different forms of abuse, which children could face both within and outside schools. Educational interventions which address CSA must acknowledge the links between different types of abuse and view CSA as one of the many forms of gender oppression and violence.

One of the studies conducted on children in Tripura India reported that one fifth of children from small town of Agartala have experienced physical, psychological and sexual violence in some form. Study also stated that early intervention, specially awareness generation, is required in order to prevent children from being abused (Deb and Walsh, 2012)

Kumar et al. (2017) conducted study in Kerala (India) on abuse in a school environment. In their study they found that prevalence of sexual abuse during one year of study (21.0%, 23.8%).CSA was reported as occurring 'sometimes' rather than 'many times.' Various factors significantly increase the likelihood of

abuse - male gender, low SES, regular use of alcohol and drugs by family member at home, and having other difficulties at school. Children tended to report abuse less frequently if they liked attending school and if they always felt safe at school.

Mujawar (2018) conducted a study in Aurangabad, Maharashtra, India titled "A cross-sectional study to assess knowledge regarding child sexual abuse among teachers of selected schools of Aurangabad city". The data in the study was collected from 100 teachers using semi structured questionnaire on knowledge regarding child sexual abuse and found that 61% teachers were having good knowledge about CSA, 38% teachers were having average information about CSA and only 1% teachers were having poor knowledge about CSA in selected school of Aurangabad. In this study author stated that "high school teachers are aware of the sign and symptoms of the child sexual abuse, and thus this knowledge can be used to prevent the CSA" (Mujawar, 2018).

Indhumathi (2019) conducted an intervention study on teachers and primary school girls in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India and reported that all primary school going girls (sample 200) have improved in their understanding of CSA and 'good touch' and 'bad touch' after they received intervention. Similarly, teachers (sample 30) of primary grades also reported significant improvement in their knowledge related to CSA and about preventive measures for CSA after intervention.

Cynthia and Tower in 2003 stated that "there are many reasons why educators are so vital in identifying, treating, and preventing child maltreatment. First, they have close and consistent contact with children. Second, educators have a professional and legally mandated responsibility for reporting suspected maltreatment. While educators facilitate children's learning, children cannot learn effectively if their attention or energy is sapped by the conflicts inherent in being maltreated. Third, school personnel have a unique opportunity to advocate for children, as well as provide programs and services that can help children and strengthen families. It is important to realize that a positive relationship with a supporting adult may enhance the resilience of children who have been abused." Schools and teachers have a key role to play in the fight against abuse; we should not forget that the problem must be confronted on many levels. Ultimately, the greatest challenge may lie in attempting to alter social attitudes and conditions that foster or tolerate sexual abuse of children (CAPS, n.d.).

Effects of child sexual abuse on the victim(s) include guilt and self-blame, nightmares, insomnia, fear of the abuser or things associated with the abuse (including objects, smells, places etc.), lower self-esteem, sexually transmitted diseases, chronic pain, self-injurious or suicidal tendencies, depression, stress disorders, personality disorders or other psychiatric problems etc. Hence, it is very important that we prevent CSA (Chopra, 2015).

Conclusion

Almost every day, safety of millions of children is threatened in our nation and across the world. There is an urgent and immediate need to protect children from Child Sexual Abuse, which is the most heinous crime against children. As is being reflected by studies on victims of CSA, it has lifelong and grave consequences for the child. In order to protect children from CSA, we have the responsibility to enable and empower various stakeholders (especially teachers) as well as children.

It seems that teachers across the globe and in India comprehend the term child sexual abuse, but they have no or very less information on laws related to protect children from CSA. Also, the teachers' lack understanding about identifying indicators of CSA and how to help victim or how to report suspected maltreatment.

Many cases of CSA remain unreported due to cultural and social reasons, and it is clearly evident that people do not want to talk about child sexual abuse. Teachers can play significant role in protection of children, especially because children spend a major part of their waking hours in school. After the implementation of POCSO act (2012), teachers now have even more legally mandated responsibility for reporting suspected maltreatment.

It is reflected that even in some cases teachers themselves become the perpetrators of CSA. In such cases it is even more important to impart knowledge to teachers about the issues and laws related to CSA. Their understanding on this will lead to more safe and secure environment in the schools for children. It will also help to identify

cases of CSA and will enable a better childhood for school going children. There is a great need to have more research in this area.

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An Appraisal of Awareness Regarding the POCSO Act, (2012) among Primary School Teachers of Punjab

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Abstract

Recognizing the vulnerability of children in wake of the increasing trend of child sexual offences, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 was formulated for safety and security of children. Significance of this Act rests on the basic premise that children are innocent and do not understand the gravity of such heinous crimes. Policies around the world progressively call for teachers to become a focal agent to protect children from abuse. However, there is little clarity about the nature of training and education required for teachers' better practice in such areas. Hence, the present study is an attempt to assess the awareness regarding the POCSO Act among rural as well as urban primary school teachers (N=120) working in private schools of Ludhiana district of Punjab. A self-structured checklist to assess the awareness regarding POCSO Act (2012) and its provisions was used to collect the requisite information from the sample teachers. The analysis of the data revealed a poor awareness regarding the POCSO Act (2012) among all teachers irrespective of locale. However, it was found that rural teachers were significantly more knowledgeable than their urban counterparts regarding some of the provisions under the POCSO Act, 2012. Further, the correlation analysis revealed that cognizance of teachers regarding POCSO Act was independent of their socio-personal characteristics viz. age, educational qualifications and teaching experience. Implications of these findings for future research as well as suggestions for child protection and child support system form the core of this research endeavour.

Keywords: Child Protection, POCSO Act, Teachers' Awareness, Child Sexual Abuse

Introduction

India is home to nearly 19 per cent of the world's children who are a significant contributing factor to the Indian population. The period of childhood which is a foundational period ought to be very safe, secure and happy. But, the reality of childhood is altogether different for many children. Children, who depend on adults for their safety and care often are among the most innocent and vulnerable casualties of exploitation. They live with poverty, violence, discrimination and injustice. It appears that as soon as one problem diminishes, another emerges. They are facing various challenges from the day they are born and subjected to physical, psychological, emotional and sexual abuse. Child abuse is a violation of basic child rights which adversely affects the well-being of children. A woman who is sexually abused in childhood indicates significantly lower well-being than the woman who had a secure childhood (Hasnain & Kumar, 2006).

Although Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is still a taboo in India, it is a menace that is quite pervasive. The definition of child sexual abuse varies from country to country. The World Health Organization (WHO 1999) defines that child sexual abuse is the participation of a child in sexual activity that he or she is unable to understand and give informed consent to.

Child abuse report by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (2007) stated that there is a deep silence around the issue and majority still feels that this is a western issue and does not happen in India. One reason for this could be the conservative community structure that does not allow talking about these issues. As a result of this, the cases of child sexual abuse do not get reported. Although India, places high premium on chastity of women, yet it has the largest number of child sex workers in the world (Kumar *et al* 2012). As per the report on 'Trafficking of Women and Children in India' 2005, India reported cases of 44,476 missing

children and nearly 11,008 of them remained untraced. India, being a major source for trafficked children from inside India and neighboring countries has, by conservative estimations, three to five lakh girl children engaged in commercial sex and organized prostitution.

Furthermore, according to Ministry of Women and Child Development (2007) report, more than 53 per cent of children in India were exposed to sexual abuse. Among the victims, 47.06per cent were girls and 52.94per cent were boys. The report further revealed that 50 per cent of the abusers were trustworthy and someone known to the child and therefore most of the children did not report the abuse to anyone. The victims of child sexual abuse often know the perpetrator in some way (Karthiga & Ravikumar, 2014).The result of sexual abuse by a family member results in more severe and long-term psychological impacts, especially when the cases are of parental incest. Thus, the protection of children demands utmost importance in every civilized society to ensure healthy and happy nation of tomorrow.

Therefore, in order to successfully address the heinous crimes of child sexual abuse and exploitation through less ambiguous and more stringent legal provisions, the Ministry of Women and Child Development championed the introduction of the 'Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012'. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses (POCSO) Act, 2012 came into being to facilitate the implementation of legislation to protect children from sexual offences. POCSO Act is a gender-neutral Act and a one of its kind as it has recognized even the non-touch behaviour under the jurisdiction of sexual offenses for the first time in Indian legislation. People who traffic children for sexual purposes are also punishable under the provisions relating to abetment in this Act. This Act shields the child from offenses of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography and operates with the intention to watch the best interest of the child during every stage of the judicial process. All this is ensured through the adoption of a child-friendly method for reporting, documenting of evidence, investigation along with the speedy trial of offenses through designated special courts (POCSO Act, 2012). According to Chopra (2015), this act identifies six types of sexual

offences and prescribes appropriate punishment for the same:

1. Penetrative Sexual Assault (Sec.3)
2. Aggravated Penetrative Sexual Assault (Sec.5)
3. Sexual Assault (Sec. 7)
4. Aggravated Sexual Assault (Sec. 9)
5. Sexual Harassment (Sec. 11)
6. Using Child for Pornographic Purposes (Sec. 13)

Recent amendments in the POCSO Act, 2012 prescribe strict punishment and include the death penalty for aggravated penetrative sexual assault of children. Along with this, the amendments also propose to shield children from assault in times of disasters and natural calamities.

Child Sexual Abuse is an under-reported crime in India, which has now reached epidemic situation. In a report of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2018, rape cases have increased from 24206 in 2011 to 38947 in 2016 across India. A sudden spurt in such crimes is seen in the majority of states/UTs. The data collected by NCRB from states/UTs shows that total 36022 cases were registered in different sections of the POCSO Act in the year 2016. The registered cases could be more if people were aware about the progressive legislations and hope for justice. But it is yet to be known whether the implementation of the POCSO Act made by the country has started to have any impact.

In India, the education system deeply relies on teachers who are the center of teaching-learning process. The nation has large number of teaching professionals working at different levels of education. The increasing trend of sexual abuse of children by a family member places teachers in a more responsible post. Therefore, teachers are expected to play a vital role not only in education but also in protection of children. They can make a significant impact in children's lives because of their regular contact with them and consequently unspoken commitment towards child protection.

The ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979) also provides a context for parents as well as teachers to form effective relationships and provide a positive environment to the child. The theory also postulates the benefits of teachers' involvement that will allow

the child to grow to his or her fullest potential possible. Hence, for helping a child grow, the teacher needs to be very well aware about the risks and protective factors in their developmental process. Teachers' awareness regarding child related Acts and Policies can work as a protective factor for children whereas the lack of awareness and negligence could pose a major risk to the child's safety and security. Since teachers are holding a responsible position in child safety, the issue of CSA could be best handled by knowing whether the teachers are aware of the POCSO Act which is exclusively implemented for the protection of children from sexual abuse. Although various researchers have explored the knowledge and attitudes of teachers regarding children's legal rights (Sathiyaraj & Jayaraman (2013), Malik *et al* (2013), Thakur (2014), Krishnarao & Mangesh (2015), Kumar (2015) and Shah *et al* (2016)), very few researches have been found concerning the POCSO Act (Bhosale *et al* (2018) and Kulkarni & Kulkarni (2016)). Hardly any research has been conducted specifically to determine the awareness level of teachers regarding the POCSO Act. The lack of substantial information in this regard impedes the effectiveness of programs promoting child protection from abuse. Therefore, the researcher became interested to find out whether the teachers are well versed with the POCSO Act and provisions under the act. Further, the evidence concerning the state of teachers' awareness in this regard can illuminate whether there is any need for further awareness-raising, and can perhaps pave way for effective interventions. Thus this study was conducted with the following objectives:

I. To assess the awareness about the POCSO Act among primary school teachers.

II. To investigate the locale-wise differences regarding POCSO Act awareness among primary school teachers.

III. To explore the relationship between awareness level regarding the POCSO Act and socio-personal characteristics of primary school teachers.

Method

Sample

This study was undertaken in eleven private schools of urban and rural areas of Ludhiana district of Punjab. Zone-D and Block-1 were purposively selected for the selection of Urban and Rural sample, respectively. The total sample comprised 120 respondents, equally distributed over rural and urban teachers (60 each). Random sampling technique was followed to select teachers from primary section of the selected schools.

Measures

A self-structured checklist which included 24 statements was constructed to assess awareness regarding POCSO Act (2012). The checklist consisted statements concerning the POCSO Act and its provisions. The sample subjects were asked to tick mark (✓) adjacent to the statement. Each statement was followed by a two-point scale i.e. "Yes" and "No". Marking a tick (✓) was given a weightage of 1 point; similarly not marking was given a weightage of "0" point. Prior to the final application of the tool the research instrument was pre-tested on 10 non-sampled respondents from rural as well as urban area to find out the clarity of statements. The reliability and validity of the tool were also ascertained using the appropriate method which was found to be satisfactory.

To document the socio-personal characteristics of the selected teachers, a self-designed general information sheet was prepared. It included the information about to socio-personal characteristics of selected sample viz. age, educational qualifications and teaching experience.

Procedure

The current exploratory study was conducted on 120 participants who were primary school teachers. The teachers were contacted in the school premises only. Before administering the tool, the respondents were explained the aim and relevance of the present study. Instructions were given to the respondents before filling the checklist and they were explained about the confidentiality of the genuine information shared by them. Their level of awareness was ascertained using the self-structured checklist. To get the final score of a respondent's awareness level, the weightage assigned to all items were added. This sum formed the total score of the respondent. After scoring, the respondents were categorized into three levels of awareness regarding the POCSO Act viz. Low, Average and High. After collecting data, the data were encrypted, analyzed and tabulated using

appropriate statistical tools. The following tools were used:

***Frequency and-Percentages*:** Frequencies and percentages were calculated to find out the distribution of the respondents according to the profile characteristics and awareness level.

***Z-test*:** This was used for the comparison of two proportions in order to test the null hypothesis which stated there is no significant difference between two proportions.

***Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation (r)*:** To measure the degree and direction of the association between POCSO Act awareness and the socio-personal characteristics of respondents.

Results And Discussion

Data given in table 1 envisages the awareness about the POCSO Act, 2012 among teachers. The data presented brings to light that 19.17 per cent teachers were knowledgeable about the POCSO Act as well as that this Act was meant for any person below the age of 18 years. They also were aware that according to this Act a child cannot be detained in the police station at night. However, none of them were sentient about the passing date of the Act and very few teachers (2.50%) were aware that this act came into force on November 14, 2005. Following the data, 18.33 per cent were aware that there is a provision of no aggressive questioning or character assassination of the child under this act. 16.67 per cent aware that making a false complaint against any person is considered as an offense under this act and if the victim happens to be a girl, the medical examination ought to be conducted by a lady doctor in the presence of the child's parent or any trustworthy person. Further, 15.83 per cent were cognizant that this act clearly defines all types of sexual abuses and states that while recording the statement of the child a police officer cannot be in uniform. 13.33 per cent per cent teachers were conscious that this act is gender neutral and 12.50 per cent were alert that under this act the statement of the child ought to be recorded at the home of child or at a comfortable place of child's choice. Furthermore, 11.67 per cent were aware that it is mandatory to record the statement of child as spoken by the child, 10.83 per cent were alert that a child cannot be called repeatedly to testify and 8.33 per cent were conscious that this act ensures that the identity of the child is protected from the public media. 7.50 per cent teachers knew that this act advocates for a child friendly procedures for reporting and recording of evidence, investigation and trial of offences and also provides help of special educator or a person familiar with the communication process in case a child is differently abled.

Table 1: Per cent distribution of teachers as per their awareness regarding POCSO Act, 2012

POCSO Act, 2012 Awareness	Teachers	
	Total (n=120)	
	f	%
Are you aware of the POCSO Act 2012?	23	19.17
Came into force on November 14, 2005.	3	2.50
Meant for the person below the age of 18 years.	23	19.17
Enacted in May 2012.	0	0.00
Act is gender neutral.	16	13.33
Clearly defines all types of sexual abuses.	19	15.83
Dictates that if anyone conceals the information of the offence shall be punishable.	7	5.83
Advocates the child friendly procedures for investigation. & trial of offences.	9	7.50
Recognizes the intent to commit an offence, even if unsuccessful & be penalized.	3	2.50
Abetment of the offence is punishable under this Act.	5	4.17
Provision of interpreters, translators & special educators.	3	2.50
Cases under this Act are reported to Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU).	8	6.67
The staff in media, studios, photographic facilities, hotels or hospitals liable to report child sexual offences.	8	6.67

Making a false complaint against any person is considered offense under POCSO Act.	20	16.67
Recording the statement of the child at the residence of the child or at the place of his choice.	15	12.50
Overnight child detention not permissible under any circumstances.	23	19.17
Police officer not to be in uniform while recording the statement of the child.	19	15.83
Statement of the child to be recorded word by word.	14	11.67
Assistance of special educator or communicator for differently abled children.	9	7.50
Medical check-up of the child to be done in the presence of the parents or any trustworthy.	20	16.67
If the victim happens to be a girl child, the medical check-up to be done by a lady doctor.	20	16.67
Permission for frequent breaks for the child during trial.	6	5.00
Child not to be called repeatedly to testify.	13	10.83
No violent questioning or ruining character of the child.	22	18.33
To ensure that the identity of the child is protected from the public media.	10	8.33

Besides, only 6.67 per cent were aware that cases under this act are reported to Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU) and media personnel, photography studios, hotels or hospitals also have an obligation to report child sexual offences. 5.83 per cent were cognizant that this act dictates punishment if anyone conceals the information of the offence, 5 per cent were familiar with the provision of permission for frequent breaks for the child during trial. Only 2.50% were aware that the act offers translators, interpreters and special educators for the convenience of child.

Table 2: Level of POCSO Act awareness among primary school teachers   (n=120)

Variable	Level	% of Teachers
POCSO Act awareness	Low	84.17
	Average	10.83
	High	5.00

Table 2 represents the data concerning teachers' varying levels of POCSO Act awareness. Data presented indicates that the majority of (84.17%) the teachers possessed low awareness regarding the POCSO Act, followed by 10.83 per cent in medium level of awareness and barely 5 per cent being highly aware of the POCSO Act, 2012.

Table 3: Locale-wise differences in awareness among teachers regarding POCSO Act, 2012

Socio-personal Characteristics						
	Rural (n$_1$=60)			Urban (n$_2$=60)		
Variable	Age (r)	Educational qualifications (r)	Teaching experience (r)	Age (r)	Educational qualifications (r)	Teaching experience (r)
POCSO Act Awareness	0.063	-0.036	0.017	-0.112	0.021	-0.22

POCSO Act, 2012 Awareness	Teachers (n=120)				
	Rural (n1=60)		Urban (n2=60)		Z-value
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	
Are you aware of the POCSO Act 2012?	12	20.00	11	18.33	0.23
Came into force on November 14, 2005.	2	3.33	1	1.67	0.58
Meant for the person below the age of 18 years.	12	20.00	11	18.33	0.23
Enacted in May 2012.	0	0.00	0	0.00	NA
Act is gender neutral.	9	15.00	7	11.67	0.53
Clearly defines all types of sexual abuses.	9	15.00	10	16.67	0.25
Dictates that if anyone conceals the information of the offence shall be punishable.	5	8.33	2	3.33	1.16
Advocates the child friendly procedures for investigation. & trial of offences.	6	10.00	3	5.00	1.04
Recognizes the intent to commit an offence, even if unsuccessful & be penalized.	2	3.33	1	1.67	0.58
Abetment of the offence is punishable under this Act.	5	8.33	0	0.00	2.28*
Provision of interpreters, translators& special educators.	2	3.33	1	1.67	0.58
Cases under this Act are reported to Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU).	3	5.00	5	8.33	0.73
The staff in media, studios, photographic facilities, hotels or hospitals liable to report child sexual offences.	6	10.00	2	3.33	1.46
Making a false complaint against any person is considered offense under POCSO Act.	10	16.67	10	16.67	0.00
Recording the statement of the child at the residence of the child or at the place of his choice.	9	15.00	6	10.00	0.82
Overnight child detention not permissible under any circumstances.	11	18.33	12	20.00	0.23
Police officer not to be in uniform while recording the statement of the child.	9	15.00	10	16.67	0.25
Statement of the child to be recorded word by word.	11	18.33	3	5.00	2.27*
Assistance of special educator or communicator for differently abled children.	8	13.33	1	1.67	2.42*
Medical check-up of the child to be done in the presence of the parents or any trustworthy.	10	16.67	10	16.67	0.00
If the victim happens to be a girl child, the medical check-up to be done by a lady doctor.	10	16.67	10	16.67	0.00
Permission for frequent breaks for the child during trial.	5	8.33	1	1.67	1.67
Child not to be called repeatedly to testify.	9	15.00	4	6.67	1.46
No violent questioning or ruining character of the child.	11	18.33	11	18.33	0.00
To ensure that the identity of the child is protected from the public media.	5	8.33	5	8.33	0.00

* p<0.05

Table 3 accentuates the differences in awareness of rural and urban teachers regarding the POCSO Act. Statistically non- significant differences were found between the awareness of rural and urban teachers regarding the majority of statements under the POCSO Act. However, rural teachers were found to be significantly (Z-value=2.28; p≤0.05) more apprised of the provision that abetment of an offence is liable to be punished by under the POCSO Act. They

were also (Z-value=2.27; p≤0.05) more familiar with the provision that it is mandatory to record the statement of the child as spoken by the child as well as more alert that this act provides

assistance of special educator or any person familiar with the manner of communication of the child in case the child is disabled (Z-value=2.42; p≤0.05).

Table 4: Correlation between awareness level and socio-personal characteristics of the primary school teachers (n= 120)

The data put forth in table 4 presents coefficients of correlation (r) between POCSO Act awareness and socio-personal characteristics (age, educational qualifications & teaching experience) of teachers. Irrespective of locale (rural & urban) the analysis of data revealed statistically non-significant relationship between awareness level and varying components of socio-personal characteristics of rural teachers. Thus, it can be concluded that the socio-personal characteristics (age, educational qualifications & teaching experience) did not impact the awareness of level of teachers regarding the POCSO Act.

Conclusions

The Government of India has taken a necessary step by formulating the POCSO, Act and acknowledging the issue of CSA but there is need to ensure effective implementation. It is clear from the foregoing results of the study that majority of the respondents had not even heard about the POSCO Act and only about 19 per cent of teachers were aware about this Act. Findings of the study also presented a dismal picture regarding teachers' familiarity with the provisions outlined under POCSO Act as more than 80 per cent of the respondents showed poor awareness in this matter. Similar results were noted from the study done by Bhosle *et al* (2018) which also found lack of awareness among respondents about CSA in context of the POCSO Act. Thus, the results of the present study highlight the need for raising awareness regarding the POCSO Act. This lack of awareness exhibited by the primary school teachers certainly poses a serious threat to child safety calls for some urgent measures in the direction to enhance teachers' awareness for better practice in the welfare of children. Also, the inadequacies in the implementation of the Act have left the children exposed to abuse. Research suggests that children often approach teachers to confide about their sufferings and seek protection from sexual abuse (Tower, 2003) because they hesitate telling their family members but if teachers themselves lack

complete and authentic knowledge in this regard they are likely to fail in their duty to protect children and safeguard their rights. As mentioned in the report "Breaking the Silence: Abuse in India 2013", teachers and school staff hold positions of trust and authority. Yet, when the victims try to disclose the cases of sexual abuse, school sometimes denies or dishonors the victims. The report further highlights the inadequacy of teachers' practice in handling child sexual abuse which could primarily be attributed to their lack of awareness. However, the failure of teachers to respond appropriately to such cases can certainly increase the risk of child's exposure to violence. The foregoing facts and figures clearly pinpoint towards an urgent need for introducing and promoting child protection education in schools. The implications which could be derived from the results of the present investigation are discussed below:

- The findings of the study could be a useful resource for policy makers, stakeholders, social workers, government and non-government organizations, working in the field of child welfare to step forward in the direction of improving child safety and protection networks in the home and school environment.

- This study also suggests bringing the issue of Child Sexual Abuse into forefront and evolving diverse ways of creating awareness regarding Child Protection across varying sections of society.

- Also, free and compulsory training on Child Protection Acts ought to be made mandatory for teachers in every school and the emphasis of training should be on child safety measures, emergency phone number, safe shelters and reporting of cases in a child-friendly manner.

- Teachers need to be engaged through workshop mode and orientations on how the issues of sexual abuse can be handled by adopting better practices and techniques, rather than just consoling the child.

● In the present digital era, there is also a need of awareness-creation through electronic media with emphasis on teachers .

Limitations and recommendations for future research:

The study was confined to teachers of primary section of only the private schools of Ludhiana district of Punjab. Secondly, this being the preliminary study, it only focused on awareness level of teachers. Thirdly, due to practical constraints, this research could not provide a comprehensive review of the reasons behind the findings.

Therefore, to obtain a comprehensive insight into the issue, future research could look to include a larger and more demographically diverse sample. It would be beneficial to expand the sample on this research by including the Government schools also. In further investigations, there is abundant room in determining the cause of low awareness level among the respondents. Finally, this study did not explore the perception, knowledge and attitude of teachers concerning the child protection act. Therefore, it would be interesting to conduct another research to seek greater understanding in this matter of great concern as well as significance.

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