

Children's vulnerability to Domestic Violence

Family as an institution in the ancient India laid down certain principles, which regulate the relationship between husband, wife and their children in a nuclear family. The domestic violence causes a breach especially in the husband and wife relationship due to many reasons. The inmates, especially the children who are innocent in nature are greatly affected as they are in the formative & or developing stage of the life. Children who witness violence at home display emotional & behavioral disturbances as diverse as withdrawal, low self-esteem, nightmares and aggression against peers & family members. Those who have witnessed their parents' domestic violence are more likely to abuse their own wives than children of non-violent parents. The sons of the most violent parents are 1000 times more likely to become wife beaters. Adolescents, who have been exposed domestic violence, get so entrenched that they find it difficult to engage themselves in more positive ways of social interaction. It has been found that the level of inter parental conflict, parental domestic and gender of the adolescent were predictive of severe adolescent problems. Conflict between parents in combination with a dominant opposite sex parent was significantly predictive of major adolescent psychopathology.

In the light of above an attempt has been made to study the impact of domestic violence on 126 children aged 8 to 17 years living in a lower middle class family in a suburban of Mumbai. The median age of the children was found to 12 years. Majority of them had studied up to STD IX. Parents were educated up to middle school level. The children opined that in most of the cases violence takes place when father is drunk and or mother does something not liked by the father. During the course of violence mother /children get beating and sometimes meals are not prepared or prepared meals are thrown out. Due to such incidents children drop out from the school, lag behind lose concentration in studies. The children desire to have a violence free atmosphere in the family & wish not to indulge in such cases as & when they would acquire their families. The study indicates that the domestic violence acts as a hindrance in over all development of the children.