

# ROLE OF PARENTS ON CHILD ABUSE: AN OVERVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

In our society many working parents are too busy in their personal and social life that they do not care their children's as they required. A child can be abused physically, sexually or mentally. It can be in the form of injury, neglect or negligent treatment, blaming, forced sexual stimulation and activity, incest exploitation and sexual abuse. Child abuse can take place in homes, schools, orphanages, residential care facilities, on the streets, in the workplace, in prisons and in places of detention. Violence in any form has a very deep impact on the overall development of the child. Child abuse results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development and dignity. Child abuse and neglect is one of the foremost growing public health problems in India. In the current scenario, there is an increasing frequency of both the father and mother of a child to go to work which leads to a decrease in the quality time spent with their children. This unsupervised or unmonitored time plays a vital role in the child's growth and development as any form of abuse or neglect during this period may it be physical, emotional, or mental will cause a significant and far reaching consequence in the child. Thus, proper knowledge and awareness is required for early identification and intervention by the parents to prevent such untoward consequences.

Keywords: - Child abuse, Incest exploitation, child's development and dignity

## INTRODUCTION

Child abuse and neglect is one of the most prevalent and significant social problems in the world. In general, abuse refers to (usually deliberate) acts of commission while neglect refers to the acts of omission. According to the World Health Organization, child abuse and child maltreatment can be referred to as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power."

53% of children in India face some form of child sexual abuse. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, the cases of rape and murder of children increase every year. The growing complexities of life and the changed social economic conditions have exposed the children to new and different forms of abuse. But the sad state of the affairs is that such heinous acts are reported less. It has such a psychological impact on the mind of the child that he seldom gathers the courage to speak about the act being committed against him. If even if he confides the fact with someone, the social factors let the fact being dumped under the fear of family reputation and other related issues. In fact child abuse is a violation of the basic human rights of a child.

There are four subtypes of child abuse which can be distinguished as physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, emotional abuse, and exploitation.

Physical abuse of a child can be defined as an action that results in actual or potential physical harm. It is in the form of an interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. It may be of single or repeated incidents

1. Child sexual abuse is the sexual activity which involves a child in which the child does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or that violates the

laws of the society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power; the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of other person.

2. Emotional abuse can be defined as the failure of a caregiver to provide an appropriate and supportive environment and includes acts that have an adverse effect on the emotional health and development

3. Neglect refers to the inattention or omission to provide for the proper development of the child by the parent or caregiver including all aspects such as health, education, emotional development, proper nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, which in the context of the family or caretakers are reasonably available resources and causes, or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible

4. Exploitation refers to commercial or other exploitation of child in work (child labour), or other activities for the benefit of others, such as child trafficking.

## Child safety measures

1. A parent is the best person to teach a child about personal safety.
2. Inculcate in your child effective personal safety skills Smart Thinking and strong character.
3. Age and maturity matter. There is no perfect age when parents should begin teaching children about personal safety. A child's ability to comprehend and practice safety skills is affected by age, educational, and developmental levels.
4. Listen to your children. Know your children's daily activities and habits. Listen to what they like and what they don't like. Encourage open communication. Let your children know they can talk to you about any situation. Reassure your children that their safety is your #1 concern.
5. Teach your children. Set boundaries about places they may go, people they may see, things they may do. Reinforce the importance of the "buddy system." It's OK to say NO – tell your children to trust their instincts.
6. Get involved Know where your children are at times. Your children should check in with you if there is a change in plans.
7. There is no substitute for your attention and supervision practice safety skills with your child. Rehearse safety skills so that they become second nature.

## Parent's awareness for safety of children's

### Safety at Home

- \* Children should know their full name, home address, home phone number and how to use the telephone. Post your contact information where your children will see it: office phone number, cell phone etc.
- \* Children should have a trusted adult to call if they're scared or have an emergency.
- \* Choose caregiver/nanny with care. Obtain references from family, friends, and neighbours. Once you have chosen the caregiver, drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing. Ask your children how the experience with the caregiver was, and listen carefully to their responses.

## Safety in the Neighbourhood

- \* Make a list with your children of their neighbourhood boundaries, choosing significant landmarks.
- \* Interact regularly with your neighbours. Tell your children whose homes they are allowed to visit.
- \* Don't drop your children off alone at fair, market places, railway stations, bus stands or parks.
- \* Teach your children that adults should not approach children for help or directions. Tell your children that if they are approached by an adult, they should stay alert because this may be a "trick."
- \* Never leave children unattended in an automobile. Children should never hitchhike or approach a car when they don't know and trust the driver.
- \* Children should never go anywhere with anyone without getting your permission first.
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## Safety at School

- \* Be careful when you put your child's name on clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes or bicycle license plates. If a child's name is visible, it may put them on a "first name" basis with an abductor.
- \* Walk the route to and from school with your children, pointing out landmarks and safe places to go if they're being followed or need help. Make a map with your children showing acceptable routes to school, using main roads and avoiding shortcuts or isolated areas. If your children take a bus, visit the bus stop with them and make sure they know which bus to take.

## Precautionary Measures: Necessary Materials

Keep a complete description of your child.

Take colour photographs of your child every six months.

Keep copies of your child's fingerprints.

Keep a sample of your child's DNA.

Know where your child's medical records are located.

Have your dentist prepare and maintain dental charts for your child.

## What You Should Do In Case Your Child Is Missing

Immediately report your child missing to your local law enforcement agency. Dial 100 to contact Police.

Limit access to your home until law enforcement arrives and has the opportunity to collect possible evidence.

Give law enforcement investigators all information you have on your child including fingerprints, photographs, complete description and the facts and circumstances related to the disappearance.

## What you should do if your child is lost

DO NOT PANIC!!!

Get Help, Contact Friends and Relatives.

Look in places where child hides. Think, where can he/she go.

Dial 100 for Police Emergency line and Dial 1098 - 24 hour for Child Help line.

Phone Panchayat/Ward Representative

## Prevention

Preventing child maltreatment requires a multisectoral approach. Support to parents and teaching positive parenting skills are most important parts of prevention. These include:

Programmes to prevent child sexual abuse-These are usually delivered in schools and media and teach children about body ownership, the difference between good and bad touch. Children are taught to recognize abusive situations, to say "no" when suspicion and to disclose abuse to a trusted adult.

To maximize the effects of prevention and care, WHO recommends that interventions are delivered as part of a four-step public health approach:

Defining the problem;

Identifying causes and risk factors;

Designing and testing interventions aimed at minimizing the risk factors;

Disseminating information about the effectiveness of interventions and increasing the scale of proven effective interventions.

## Summary

It is our responsibility, as parents and responsible citizens, to safeguard children and to teach them the skills to be safe. Every home and school should teach children about safety and protection measures. As a parent, you should take an active interest in your children and listen to them. Majority of the working parents were aware of the consequences of child abuse and neglect and were willing to take necessary steps to prevent such incidence in their family. Moreover, it should be a joint effort by the parents, society, and the government to safeguard the children against all forms of abuse and neglect. A multidisciplinary approach is required to provide early intervention, educate children and parents against such forms of abuse, heed ear to the children's voice, monitor the Government's activities and laws against child abuse, and make sure they reach the affected. Awareness should be given to children by their parents regarding personal safety and self-defence which will go a long way in the development of protective behaviours, to voice their opinions and increasing their confidence and moulding them to be better future citizens of the nation.

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