

**Research Article**

## **THE SOCIAL WORKER ROLE IN PREVENTING OF CHILD ABUSE IN IRAN AND SOME PSYCHO- SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF CHILDREN WHO ABUSED**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Child abuse is caused by various factors that creates uncompensable problem for children and youth. Children are more vulnerable than others. Every things and every action jeopardize child's psycho-physical health is called child abuse. Any neglect or any action that put them at risk physically and psychological or lose it, is called child abuse. In this study we would like to investigate psycho- social problems of abused children in the family to recognize the role of social workers in preventing this phenomenon and also some obstacles they are facing with. The method of study is case study about children and youth have been hurt by their parents. The sample is chosen of some children are kept in rehabilitation centers or have been visited in clinic, there are 65, tools of study are MMPI test, RAVAN test, WECHSLER test, inquiries of family's statues and psycho statues. The result represents, the children are more vulnerable than youth. The rate of physical, emotional, and sexual damages are higher. They live in a hard social, economical and familial situation. They suffer from emotional, behavioral, learning, social and personal problems. Social worker activities with social approach play a drastic role in preventing to occur child abuse in Iran, but, in this rout there are a lot of challenges concerns to cultural and protective problems.

**Keywords:** *Child Abuse, Social Work, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Children are most injured to abuse within their own home or society (Poornajy, 2000). Child abuse is the crime of harming a child physically, sexually or emotionally (Khoshaby, 2003). Any failure and negligence to take enough care over children that their parents are responsible for the physical, mental health is called child abuse (Khazravay, 2004). Today child abuse is considered as one of the social health and healing problem around the world. In many countries it is an illegal, criminal action, which can be punished by law (Doorostkar, 2009). According to W H O statistics in 1999, 4000000 Newborn infants until 4 years old children were at risk, 14% to 17% of them has injured seriously and died, but more than half of child abuse is not reported. African and Asian countries have the highest rate of child abuse and then American and European countries face with child abuse. The type of child abuse in Asian and African countries have been mostly for wage less job, child exploiting, sexual abuse and murder, but in European it is mostly sexual and mental abuse (Raheb, 2008). Child abuse is growing up in the world so this phenomena is growing up in Iran, According to protection of child rights assembly in Iran is annually reported, 44% abused children are boys and 56% are girls. Average age is 10- 12 years old ([www.aftab.ir](http://www.aftab.ir)). It is required to take an action to prevent growing of this phenomenon in the society because child abuse incidence continue to climb, social workers, disciplinary powers or organization can play an important role in prevention of child abuse. They can identify who are at risk, and their families. They should be kept under the police close and constant surveillance to access desirable result, needs to a fully recognition of various types of child abuse.

Child abusers hurt them in different ways. If children are hurt intentionally, physical abuse has accrued. Sever physical punishment such as deliberately and conscious attacks are burn, bite, cut, push twist. Torture, wounds, fractures (Nelson *et al.*, 2000).

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If a child involve in sex before legal ages in a way to make feel some body sexual excited, it is considered sexual abuse. Mouth- genital, genital- hand, hand- breath, hand- anal, forcibly touching and looking genital and pornography, are different types of child abuse. When the children are neglected by whom are responsible for them, behave in a way that make them upset and that is a kind of child abuse, if parents don't provide children's basic needs, don't look after them properly, don't pay proper attention to their health, nutrition, education, clothes, medical care and to pay too little attention, punishment abounded, having irrelevant expectation, creating deep relationship to make them dependant, behave discriminatory, don't give them their affection and care, giving them cold shoulder, not being sympathetic, they do a type of mentally and physically child abuse (Kaplan and Sadock, 1995).

Prevention interventions of social workers about child abuse cases are not merely based on how to face to annoyer or abuser but social workers try to understand the reasons of such behaviors and to prevent of that, for understanding the reasons of that phenomenon most be focus on some theories. Child abuse is a domestic violence, there are many theories there are some theories related to this phenomenon and biological theoreticians believe that biological disorders effects on domestic violence. He people who behave violently show sever positive and negative physiological reaction and that is hard for them to control their violent behavior (Barnett *et al.*, 1997).

Studies have shown that increasing of some chemical substances like that Norepinephrine, Dopamine and Serotonin help to violence behavior appear (Cooky and Fontain, 1991).

According to psychological approaches, violence is one of the features of personality; violent images are a defining characteristic of their action that is formed by their violent experiences in their childhood. Aggressors suffer from mental disease (Barnett *et al.*, 1997). They tend to impose their problem on closest person and to everybody is Sean every day. Domestic violence is accompanied by depression; schizophrenia and some other characterize disorders (Buzzawa and Buzawa, 1996) and Drug addiction is another factor to cause of domestic violence. Good believed that family like other issues has a power source and the most powerful members are allowed to organize the family structure. In poor family in which money cant indicate the higher position, so the only source of imposing the authority pass through physical strength, they use violence to keep family bounds strong and stable (5). Research show that child abuse is seen most in poor families which live in poor situation and lake of education or low education. Violent behavior is educable, behaviors that are thought by observation. There are hidden patterns of violence in society which shows that how violent behavior is thought by family, they learn if they can't solve these problems from another ways, and there is no prohibition, so they are allowed to show a certain amount of violence toward their own family.

Cooki (1991) based on systematic theory, the abused child is supposed to be cushioned for other family member, to prevent violent behavior against other members of family. When there is known as a deviant in family most of violent behavior are pointed to that hallmarked child, some one who play an unwanted protective role against rest of the family members.

It seems that social workers are aware of these impressive factors, so, they are able to contact to abused child's family, trying to fade and remove these factors. Some damaged individuals who suffer from mental disorder, in turn, jeopardize. The social securities on different ages, the social workers are well aware that punishment is not a good solution in order to have right reaction, recognition of behavioral disorder, leads to social security improvement, it is require being well aware behavior disorders of child abuse, here we are going to discus about psycho- social disorder of child abuse.

The victims not only, in growth periods, face to harmful physical and mental effects, which lead to late growth process, quit school, behave aggressive, risk taking behavior and committing social crime (Horton ad Crues, 2002).

Child abuses problems are often followed by recognition disorders, low self confidence, depression, characterize disorders, fright, PTSD disease, suicide thought, phobias (13). When child occurred the first signs appear but some one delayed until adolescence and adult age, which is called hidden symptom (Horton and Crues, 2002). Physical child abuse often appear as wounds on skin, injuries of internal organs or skeleton structure, or may change in brain synapses and growth patterns dysfunction hormones

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and other kind of physical pains (14), also it often leaves some wounds on anal, vaginal or injuries on sexual organs. According to studies problem, such as headache, stomach, the ache of intestine, suffering from loss of appetite and sleeping.

Other children that suffer from negligence, face with various problem, light weight, late growth, malnutrition and feel sick very often (Poornajy, 2000).

The aim of in this research is to recognize psycho- social problems of child who abused with their families and answering to these questions:

- 1- How many types of child abuse are there in the Iran?
- 2- Which kind of child abuse is more than of that another one in Iran?
- 3- What are the psycho- social problems of children who abused with their families in Iran?
- 4- How is the child abuse families' situation in Iran?

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Methods**

Case study is the method which used for this research. The statically population in this study are children and adolescence who abused with their families and they have referred to social work clinics, hospital and medical center or they are kept in rehabilitation centers. Statistically sample, in this survey, consists of 30 children ranging from 3-15years old, and 35 adolescence girls who are in 14-18 years old.

In order to collect information, clinical interview methods, observation and diagnosis test has been used. Researcher after first interview with client and reading record files of client, distinguish the child abuse cases and the researcher during 3 years observing closely their behavior, interview their parents and nurses, collected the information.

Tools of measurement in this research are use below:

- 1- Diagnosis test about behavioral characteristics children 7- 12 years old:

This test has organized base on test indices (BASC, measurement of child behavior)it involve 24 questions a according to these inquiries, each behavioral signs is examined by tester, respond to choices is formed based on 4 degrees scale and validity of this test is 0/78. This questioner is a diagnosis tool which researcher inquiry based on interviewing with children, their parents, and their teachers.

- 2- Minnesota multiphase personality inventory (MMPI):

It involve 71 questions and 13 standard scale, 3 scales measure accuracy inquiry and other ten scales measure clinical or personality invoices. Researches shows that all of scales of MMPI are valid and the validity of these scales are between 0/71- 0/84.

- 3-Intelligence test;

To measure intelligence of children ranging from 7- 9 Wechsler Intelligence Test is used, and Ravan test is used for teenagers in 9-18 years old.

- 4- Social – economic questioner:

The choices of these inquiries are planned to measure specification of abused children's families.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

Results shows that 7% of abused children are abused at the first time when they are in 2-4 years old, 23% are abused in 4-6, 23% in 6-8, 20% in 8-10, 20% in 8-10 and 15% are abused in 10- 12 years old in the other category 38% of these children were in physical abuse 27% were in sexual abuse and 35% were in emotional abuse.

Most children under 4 years old, who abused, were experienced types of harm such as physical and emotional abuse, punishment in type of physical abuse, leaving alone and deprivation of basic needs. In the range of 4-6 tree type of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional) have been seen but physical and emotional abuses are more than sexual abuse. In the range of 6-10 the most of abused were emotional and physical abuse. Attending to school in these age followed with some problems like inability to learn which led to increase the rate of physical harm, inform of physical punishment, emotional hurt, keep

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forcibly in a place and abandoned and leave them alone with no help. In the range of 10-12 and above of that the rate of sexual abuse was increase because they are nearly sexually mature.

**Table 1: Kind and age of abuse**

Age	Emotional	Sexual	Physical	Total
0-2	3	0	2	5
2-4	2	1	4	7
4-6	4	4	7	15
6-8	7	3	5	15
8-10	4	5	4	13
10-12	3	5	2	10
total	23	18	24	65

**Table 2: Kind of abuse**

Kind of abuse	F	F%
sexual abuse	10	15%
punishment	24	38%
abandoned	8	12%
leaving alone	12	16%
to imprison	6	9%
deprivation of basic needs	5	7%
Total	65	100

The research results about the situation of abused children's family shows that 56% of them living in busy families which more than 5 people living together in a small place 83% of abused children live in poor families.85% of abused children's parents are drug addicted,30% suffer from psychological disorder, 26% are last prisoners. 43% of their parents have divorced, 38% have passed away, 18% live only with mother, 15% with father, 9% with stepfather 22% live in rehabilitation, 33% live with one parent ( mother or father), 15% of them living with their relative without their parents, 63% of fathers have no education or low education, 71% of mothers are in a same situation, 43% of fathers are jobless, 33% are workers and 1% employer,12% are involved in freelance jobs.

The result of BASC test shows that, 84% of abused children often or always are under adjustment disorder and fail to adjustment themselves with their surrounding, resist against changes, fail to follow education instruction well and feel being ignored.97% of abused children show behavior disorders, pessimistic ideas and negative feeling, their behavior some times are with strong dependency, aggression and some times they have compulsive behavior and frighten.

16% of abused children some times under emotional disorder and 10% of them are always in this situation. They show tears with no reason and easily get unhappy.23%

Has often education problems, 50%are usually involved and 17% involve in for ever.

Education problems mean that they resist strongly to do their assignment, escape from school, give up school, they have destructive behavior, because they can't tolerate their surrounding, they can't concentrate on subject, often they linger on daily home work, these children can't tolerate unsuccessfully and doing desolate behavior and sudden movement of muscle which is not under control.

Abused children suffer from panic, they easily startle, suffer from insomnia, make them worry, fail to be accept by others. fear of being despicable and loose others, some physical sign like, sweater, trembling, they night fright, and have fits.23% of them feel depress and 17% always suffer from headache, fatigue, loss of appetite and tiredness .they have very strong feeling of despair and refusal behavior is very common. 20% of abused child always have problem in contact other well, they are not able fully express. The exited emotions are not good at starting and following up the chat, their activities and their interest is poor. In 43% of abused child signs of hyperactivity are seen. The signs are notable such as playing with

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their fingers encounter with objects around them repeatedly, they always fell down, crying with no reason and some times they have authoritarian behavior, it is not easy for them to control their rage and treat aggressively.

The result of MMPI2 test shows that abuse children in adolescence are in neuroses phase in hypochondria disease and they show depression in neurotic level. MMPI2 test scores in HY level show hysteric signs in adolescence that has experienced child abuse. Scores in PA and PT are above of 60 which shows that anxiety and compulsive disorder in abuse adolescence. Scores of MMPI2 in PA, PT, SC is above 60 which show that strongly tension, they react more quickly to stimulus.

The average score in intelligence test is 95 which show that the children and adolescence which abused have normal inelegance.

### **Conclusion**

Results demonstrate that children ranging from 4 to 8 are most at risk of the child abuse, children and youth based on the type of harms, are categorized in which the physical, emotional and sexual assault. In this study physical punishment was allocated the most frequency of amplexness, then forcing out of their own home, sexual abuse, rape, keep in a place forcibly, selling or get ride of them and behave inattentively.

Noroozy (1993) Taghikhany (2002) claimed that physical assault are in highest level, relative to this issues, ages factor of abused children depends on type of child abuse as physical harms, accure in early child hood, in the middle of child hood, from 6 to 10, emotional abuse, but in adolescence sexual abuse are in highest rank. Half of abused children live in populous family. One third 1/3 with only one parent (mother or father). The parents are poor educated, uneducated worker. 1/3 of fathers are out of work and 1/3 is workers (Rahimi, 1375). Rashidi (1375) rate of death and divorce is high, family bound is very weak. They often live with one parent within their home or live with their relatives. Poor economic status which they live in doesn't provide their primitive needs. Another problem such as addiction, mental diseases, emotional disorder, past prisoner, tension educational problem, non adjustive behavior, linger on daily routines, aggressive behavior, panic, anxiety, in concentration depression, over activate. Authoritarian behavior, education problems and sever appetite problem are significant. They fail to apply social skills. They can't control excitement, showing negative passion, some signs of self obsess and hysteric is Sean. This adolescence is neurotics, and their IQ is normal. Ebrahimi's research represent similar results in which abused children suffer from acute panic and psychosomatics. These children are as susceptible to psychosomatic signs as adults. They are even more sensitive (15). As researches show biological, mental and social abuse creates severe injuries, damages, can't be easily component, it produce some serious failure in process of life, based on children rights agreement. It is required all supportive, disciplinary powers emphasize on social programs, include intervention, identification, report, survey, cure and following up children's maltreatment (5). In order to prevent happening of child abuse interventions most be applied on three levels.

At first, all parts are addressed. Focus of programs is on law, social and cultural activities. Parent's awareness of child abuse and it's undesirable effects is necessary.

Unfortunately some people are not aware about sexual assault, punishments, inattentive behavior are still used by parents as an educational instrument, and therefore, it seems necessary, social workers take a serious action to give. Information about educational and cultural issues, it is the first step. They should identify the rules and laws which are barrier to prevent child abuse, and modify them. For example, the areas of punitive law are not clear. It is hard to decide what punishment is right to impose on. So the annoyers can easily escape because of the lake of clear and bright lines of punishment law. In regard to mentioned laws, social workers have been limited by law. These limitations decrease authority of their position on child abuse. It remains the biggest barrier for social work to succeed at work. These limits are difficult to get beyond. The legal limitations make it difficult for social workers to achieve their purposes, their aims, secondly the suspects, (child mulestors), last prisoners, charging of molestation, psychotics, children and young boys and girls at risk should be under police surveillance (16). Find the children at risk giving some instruction, learning some methods by social workers to prevent the crime better. In

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some much, criminal districts and places are known by social workers. They are under surveillance, in these places various types of abusing is seen such as Hidden or covert physical abuse, pan hand ling, selling children and so on. Police is able to play an efficient rule in prevent of child abusing. On third level prevention, social work intervention is significant by giving more clinical services to abused children and families.

Finally I wish to give below suggestions in regard to survey:

1. Identify the children who are at risk and support them.
2. To support families, involved in some problems such as cultural and economical poverty, psychopathic illness, drug addiction and imprisonment.
3. Cultural activities with families to get familiar educational methods and instructions and trying to raise their awareness about child abuse.
4. Mental-social support to who are under maltreatment biologically, socially and mentally.
5. To establish centers for keeping and caring of abused children.
6. To modify or making some modification in the system of supportive and care-taker laws in order to prevent child abused.
7. Modified interventions and educational intervention in families are charged in child abuse.
8. Following up and supervising on abused children situation.
9. To raise awareness of society on child abuse and ask them to find out and report to police.

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