



Domestic Violence during COVID-19 Lockdown and Its Impact on Children

Janaki Mudaliar Cheluvvaraju*, Anil Kumar Sosle

Department of Forensic Psychology, Kailasalingam University, Tamil Nadu, India

ABSTRACT

Children are like beautiful flowers if they were brought up in good environment. When children were brought up in an environment which is filled with violence and filthy things they will learn and grow in accordance to the environment and will adapt the same in their behavior, emotions, intelligence and personality which will affect their mental health and which will be a great loss to society. The children are speed learners and execute what they have learned, obviously they will display the same violence to which they are exposed and the reason why we can see the children who are in conflict with law are being reported 29768 cases in 2020 alone. The current paper will try to analyses the impact of domestic violence on children during the COVID-19 lockdown on their mental health. The present study is an explorative study which is qualitative in nature, which was conducted in Mysore city with the sample of 50 who were selected from the purposively who were exposed to domestic violence. Major findings of the study reveals that the impact of violence on children is relatively high.

Keywords: Children; Mental health; Domestic violence; COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is one such cruel act by and against an intimate partner in the family life which has drastic effect in marital life in India 371503 cases were registered against women in which 7045 cases were dowry death, 112292 cases were cruelty by husband and in-laws and 446 cases under Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act respectively. Research works also stated that there was an increase in physical violence during the COVID-19 lockdown [1,2]. It is estimated that roughly 1 in 3 women worldwide are subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. The Council of Europe on 20th April (2020) noted "emerging data are indicating an alarming growth in the number of reported cases of certain types like domestic violence worldwide" [3].

The above numbers clearly states that no of incidences occurred in home which projects that the issue of domestic violence is very serious one that to the impact of such viciousness on children is enormous.

Hester claims that the use of the term exposed describes only half of the story, suggesting that the child is simply present in domestic violence occurs and this places anticipation, often mothers are the most common victim of domestic violence and to remove the child from the situation. The outcome of such exposure is like loss of

control of behavior, anxiety, depression and indulging in criminal activities.

Child experience to domestic violence has progressively developed a concern for both experts and researchers. Research on child welfare systems has exposed that large proportions of children are exposed to domestic violence and screening and investigation of such children is often insufficient [4,5]. Juvenile Justice Board struggles to understand and evaluate the consequence of child exposure to domestic violence during custody and visitation.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the exposure of children to domestic violence during COVID-19 Lockdown.
2. To analyze the mental health of children witnessed domestic violence.
3. To study the outcome of impact of domestic violence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is conducted after the COVID lockdown period which can be called as post-covid study which is a qualitative in nature and an Explorative study, which was conducted in Mysore district of Karnataka state in India with the sample size of 50

Correspondence to: Janaki Mudaliar Cheluvvaraju, Department of Forensic Psychology, Kailasalingam University, Tamil Nadu, India, E-mail: drjanakimc@gmail.com

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who were selected applying the purposive sampling technique. The samples were chosen purposively who were come across the domestic violence exposure at their home, which was identified with the help of cases registered at police station. The following research tools were utilized for the purpose of study they are: 1. Children's Exposure to Domestic Violence (CEDV) Scale constructed by Jeffrey L. Edleson, Katy K. Johnson and Narae Shin, Minnesota Center against Domestic Violence (MINCAVA), University of Minnesota. 2. Mental Health Inventory (MHI-38) Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra. The raw scores were indexed coded, decoded and analyzed using SPSS and scores were presented as analysis [6-8].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the data

The above table reveals that the ordinary place of domicile of the sample selected for the study where a greater number of cases have been found in the town which is near the metro or major city and due to the lockdown, their financial constraints were increased and also other problems which resulted in domestic violence and children were witnessing the violence as the lockdown as curtailed their movement and they were confined in the house (Table 1) [9-12].

Table 1: Socio demographic details of the children.

Sl. No	Place of domicile	Male	Female	Total
1	Village	4	3	7
2	Town		10	27
3	City	11	5	16
Total		25	25	50

The above table indicates the family as well as economical background of the subjects, where it has been found that the maximum number of samples belong to middle income with a single child family, which is most important finding which reveals that the people from middle class families were highly affected during the COVID period (Table 2) [13].

Table 2: Family and economic background.

Sl. No	Economic background	With siblings	Without siblings	Total
1	Lower income	5	9	16
2	Middle income	10	15	25
3	High income	2	7	9
Total		17	33	50

The above table clearly speaks about the severity and score of children who are exposed to violence. The CEDV scale reveals a high score of 24 for exposure to domestic violence, the samples scoring near to the highest score are the worst case scenarios and they are the children who need immediate attention [14,15]. Research shows that even when children are not direct targets of violence in the home, they can be harmed by witnessing its occurrence. While the research has established associations between exposure to domestic violence and adverse outcomes for children, there is now a growing

body of convergent evidence that suggests that the association is a causal one (Table 3) [16].

Table 3: Score of children exposed to violence.

Sl. No	Score	Number of children
1	17.00	7
2	18.00	8
3	19.00	7
4	20.00	7
5	21.00	8
6	22.00	9
7	23.00	4
Total		50

The above table speaks about the no of children exposed to violence at home where the highest score is 50. Among the samples almost all the samples are severely exposed to the violence at home. Research continues to indicate that children affected by violence are more likely to experience higher rates of depression and anxiety, trauma symptoms and behavioral and cognitive problems (Table 4) [17,18].

Table 4: Score of children exposed to violence at home.

Sl. No	Score	Number of children
1	31.00	3
2	32.00	4
3	34.00	4
4	35.00	4
5	36.00	4
6	37.00	4
7	38.00	5
8	39.00	4
9	40.00	5
10	41.00	5
11	42.00	4
12	43.00	4
Total		50

From the above table it is clear that the severity of involvement of children in violence is significantly high as the highest score for this sub scale is 21. Children are more likely to show the effects of the disruption in their lives through self-harm, running away and engagement in anti-social behaviour [19]. Social learning theory explains that children exposed to parental violence are more likely to experience violence themselves, and go on to violent acts towards others (Table 5) [20].

Table 5: Score of children involved in violence.

Sl. No	Score	Number of children
1	10.00	6
2	12.00	8
3	13.00	7
4	14.00	8

5	15.00	6
6	16.00	7
7	17.00	8
Total		50

The above table provides that the value of chi-square is 42.960 and the p-Value that is Asymptomatic Significance is 0.000. Generally, the result is significant if this p-value is equal to or less than the designated alpha level normally 0.05. The p-value is lesser than the standard alpha value, so we'd reject that assertion or research question. To put it simply, the result is significant the data suggests that the variables that is the gender and the impact of domestic violence is been traced among the sample without any imparity (Table 6).

Table 6: Result of gender and domestic violence impact.

Sl. No	Test statistics	Result
1	Chi-Square	42.960
2	df	13
3	Asymp. Sig.	.000

This table shows the result of the ANOVA analysis and whether there is a statistically significant difference between our group means. We can see that the significance value is 0.238 (i.e., $p=.238$), which is above 0.05 and, therefore, statistically no significant difference between groups as demonstrated by one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 47)=1.4$, $p=.23$) which infers that there is no difference in the impact of domestic violence among the children irrespective of place of domicile (Table 7).

Table 7: One way ANOVA result for place of domicile and impact of domestic violence.

ANOVA						
Sl. No		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Between groups	24.839	2	12.419	1.479	.238
2	Within groups	394.681	47	8.397		
Total		419.520	49			

The above table speaks about the violent crimes involved by the children, where it has found that there is a steady increase in violent act of children which creates a despondent situation that ruins the future of children. It is supported by the research studies finding that children who witnessed the violence in their childhood have long-lasting effects into adulthood. The adverse childhood experience can be a source of long-term psychological distress as well as having longitudinal effects on physical health, substance abuse, interpersonal violence and self-harm (Table 8) [21].

Table 8: Children involved in violent case.

Sl. No	Year	Hurting case	Rioting cases	Offence against public tranquillity	Drugs and liquor cases
1	2018	5640	1051	130	691
2	2019	6055	1053	104	743
3	2020	5867	875	153	771

The above table reveals the impact of domestic violence on children mental health. The scores present in the above table clearly indicate that the children are suffering from impact of the exposure to the violence at home. It is understood from the research that children exposed to domestic violence significantly show frequent behavioral and emotional problems than their peers who are not exposed to domestic violence [22]. Research indicates the impact of domestic violence on both boys and girls is similar with regard to suppressing behaviors, but in some case of boys it is more likely to display than that of suppression of behaviors [23]. Behaviorally, the impact might be changes in conduct, unpredictable behavior, aggression, anger, and hyperactivity. Being the perpetrator or victim of bullying can also ensue (Table 9) [24].

Table 9: Explains the mental health score of children.

Sl. No	Particulars	Total score for 50 children	
		Actual mean score	Score range
1	Anxiety	42	9-54
2	Depression	17	4-23
3	Loss of Behavior	49	9-53
4	Psychological Distress	125	24-142

CONCLUSION

Children are very delicate and easily get affected by what they witness and experience. A child is an innocent victim of violence knowingly or unknowingly a bystander. Children's experiences of violence are complex and tangled with their relationship to the victimized parent i.e. their mother. It is evident from the study that the witnessing violence has resulted on the mental health and psychosocial behavior of child which can be observed well. When parents are unable to behave properly, it causes distress in the relationship of parent-child and develops strain among them and thus results in many problems and finally ends with violent behavior.

SUGGESTIONS

- Parents should be given proper education regarding the impact of violence on children
- There is need of early screening of children with problems and the best pace to access the children is school.
- There is a need of intervention of social worker, psychologists etc, to overcome the problems.

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