

Domestic Violence and Its Impact on Children's Mental Health and Well-Being

Mahmoud Sayed

Consultant Psychologist, MSc (Psy), Hypnotherapist & Mind Power Trainer American Psychology Association member, CPA - Kerala
Treasurer, Founder Director Jade Halo Counselling Centre, Ph. D Scholar at Department of Economics, VELS Institute of Science
Technology and Advanced Studies, Chennai - 117

Abstract: *This study explores the impact of Domestic violence (DV) on children's mental health and well-being and investigating the psychological, behavioral, and emotional effects. Deliberate existing literature and qualitative insights, the research identifies the key challenges such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that children exposed to DV face. Factors like age, gender, and the availability of supportive networks are analyzed to understand their role in moderating or worsening these outcomes. The paper concludes with recommendations for interventions involving school, and caregivers to promote resilience and improve outcomes for children affected by DV.*

Keywords: Domestic violence, Mental health, PTSD, Children, Intervention, Behavioral issues

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Domestic violence is not just affect only three intimate partner relationships and it also have direct or indirect effect on their children. In children's mental and emotional development have profound impact because they exposed to DV. Annually an estimated 15 million children worldwide are exposed to domestic violence reported by UNICEF in 2020. The psychological consequences of this exposure may exist into adulthood and its affecting long-term emotional well-being, relationships and functioning

1.2 Limitations of the Study

This research reviews the psychological impact of DV on children, it depends heavily on secondary data from existing studies. There is limited focus on specific areas such as cultural, contexts and the absence of longitudinal data constrains conclusions about long term outcomes. Additionally, the study doesn't account for variability in experiences across different socioeconomic and geographic regions

2. Study Objectives

The objectives of the study are

- 1) Identify the psychological, behavioral, and emotional consequences of DV on children
- 2) Explore the role of factors such as age, gender, and support networks in shaping children's responses to DV
- 3) Recommend effective intervention strategies for practitioners and policymakers to reduce the unhealthy impact of DV.

3. Statement of the Problem

The children those who exposed to domestic violence are vulnerable to range of psychological and behavioral issues. However, the extent of these impacts varies depending on factors such as the presence of supportive caregivers, access

on mental health resources and the children's developmental age. There was a proper awareness of these challenges, there remains a gap in implementing effective persistent interventions modifying the needs of children in various social and cultural contexts. This study aims to bridge that gap by combining insights from literature and case studies.

4. Methodology of the Study

4.1 Research Design

The study takes on a mixed-method approach, combining a systematic literature review with qualitative analysis of cases studies. This method enables a comprehensive understanding of both theoretical findings and practical experiences.

4.2 Data Collection

- 1) Literature Review: Peer-reviewed articles and reports from academic databases such as Google Scholar, and PubMed were analyzed to identify key themes related to the mental health impacts of DV on children.
- 2) Case Studies: Insights from child psychologists and social workers specializing in trauma were reviewed to complement the findings from the literature

5. Qualitative Insight into Mental Health Impacts

Children exposed to DV exhibit several common mental health challenges, including:

- 1) Anxiety and Depression: Chronic exposure to DV environments induces persistent stress, making children susceptible to anxiety disorders and depressive symptoms (Evans et al., 2008).
- 2) PTSD Symptoms: Many children experience flashbacks, nightmares and heightened vigilance indicative of post-traumatic stress (Rossman, 2001)
- 3) Behavioral Problems: Boys exposed to DV often display aggression and resistance while girl may exhibit withdrawal and social isolation (Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999)

6. Impact on Academic Performance

The children's academic performance was negatively affected by when they were exposed to domestic violence. The psychological burden of living in violent environments often leads to decreased concentration, absenteeism and poor school performance. That means, when they engage in a group activity, others may not give more importance to their ideas or feelings. Those exposed to the DV, they feel everybody avoiding them and it further interfering with their academic success.

7. Social and Environmental Determinants

- 1) Age and Developmental Stage: Younger children want to show their behaviors and feelings are more openly (aggression), In other hand, the elder children are opposite to this thing that means they are more like to internalize their distress that leading to anxiety and depression (Margolin.2005)
- 2) Gender Differences: In the case of gender difference boys are more likely to act with external aggression, although girls show attribute emotional struggles (Cummings& Davies, 1994)
- 3) Support Networks: Some supportive networks are significantly the impact the DV, that are supportive family members, teachers or mental health professional and it also promoting resilience (Gewirtz& Edleson, 2007).

8. Conclusion

Domestic violence has severe and lasting impacts on children's mental health. For example, when a child sees violence in their family they tend to imitate it, that makes them have more behavioral issues like aggression, anxiety, depression and PTSD. The extent of these impacts is influenced by factors such as age, gender and the availability of support systems. Effective interventions must adopt a trauma - informed approach, ensuring that children receive the necessary mental health support. To create a safe environment and provide proper resources that encourage the recovery and resilience of children who are exposed to DV by working collaboratively with the school, caregivers and policymakers.

References

- [1] Children's Witnessing of adult domestic violence, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (14 (8)), 839 - 870 by Edelson, J. L. (1999). <https://doi.org/10.1177/088626099014008003>
- [2] Exposure to domestic violence: A meta - analysis of child and adolescent outcomes. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, (13 (2)) 131 - 140 by Evans, S. E., Davies, C. & Dililo (2008) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2008.02.005>
- [3] Young children's exposure to adult domestic violence. Toward a developmental risk and resilience framework for research and intervention. *Journal of family Violence*, (22 (3)), 151 - 163 by Gewirtz, A. H & Edelson J. L (2007) <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-007-9065-3>
- [4] Child witnesses to domestic violence: A meta - analytic review. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* (71 (2)), 339 - 352 by Kitzmann, K. M, Gaylord, N. K, Holt, A. R & Kenny, E. D. (2003) <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.71.2.339>
- [5] Children's exposure to violence: Exploring developmental pathways to diverse outcomes. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, (20 (2)), 72 - 79 by Margolin., G (2005) <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260504268371>
- [6] Domestic violence in the lives of children: The future of research, intervention, and social policy. American Psychological Association by Rossman, B. B (2001).
- [7] Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children. By UNICEF (2020)