

## Socio Economic Status: A Determinant of emotional and neglect abuse among children

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**Abstract:** Child abuse is when a parent or caregiver, whether through action or failing to act, causes injury, death, emotional harm or risk of serious harm to child ( child help.org). The present study aims at assessing the impact of socioeconomic status on emotional abuse and among children of Allahabad city.. A total of sample of 300 children comprising of 100 children each (50 boys and 50 girls) from lower, middle and upper socio economic group were selected using stratified random sampling technique for the study. Socio Economic Status scale by Kuppuswamy (1962) revised by Gururaj and Maheshwaran (2014) was used to ascertain the socioeconomic status of the selected respondents. To assess the emotional abuse and neglect abuse a self made questionnaire was administered on the selected children in the age group of 7-12 years. The study revealed that respondents from lower socio economic group face higher level of emotional abuse and neglect abuse as compare their counterparts from middle and upper socio economic group. The study also revealed that socioeconomic status has a significant influence on the emotional abuse and neglect abuse of the respondents.

**Key Words:** Child abuse, emotional abuse, neglect abuse and socioeconomic status.

### 1. INTRODUCTION :

Child abuse is globally relative issue as this issue can be witnessed in families across the world. According to childhelp.org 'Child abuse is when a parent or caregiver, whether through action or failing to act, causes injury, death, emotional harm or risk of serious harm to child'. Child abuse is more than bruises and broken. While physical abuse might be the most visible, other types of abuse, such as emotional and neglect, also leave deep, lasting scars.

Child neglect is a very common type of child abuse in which there is a pattern of failing to provide the child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, or supervision. Child neglect is not always easy to spot. Sometimes, a parent might become physically or mentally unable to care for a child, such as with a serious injury, untreated depression, or anxiety. Other times, alcohol or drug abuse may seriously impair judgment and the ability to keep a child safe. Older children might not show outward signs of neglect, becoming used to presenting a competent face to the outside world, and even taking on the role of the parent. But at the end of the day, neglected children are not getting their physical and emotional needs met.

Emotional abuse is known as verbal abuse, mental abuse, and psychological maltreatment. It includes a series of isolated incidents in child's life as well as failure parts played by caregivers and parents in child's life. These are such emotional moments that hurt a child mentally and psychologically and its effect can be seen in child's activities and behaviors. This type includes the blaming, threatening, mocking, frightening, discriminating or ridiculing and other non-physical ill treatment like rejection and hostile treatment against child.

### 2. METHODOLOGY:

Exploratory research design was adopted for the present study and cross sectional survey method was used for collecting the data. A total of 300 children in the age group of 7-12 years, comprising of 100 children each (50 boys and 50 girls) from lower, middle and upper socio economic groups respectively were selected using stratified random sampling technique from different schools of Allahabad city. **Kuppuswamy (1962)** Socio Economic Status Scale

revised by Gururaj and Maheshwaran (2014) was used to ascertain the socioeconomic status of the sample and a Self made questionnaire on child abuse was used to assess the emotional abuse and neglect abuse among children.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

**Table 1: Percentage distribution in reference to emotional abuse of children from different socio economic status.**

| Category of emotional abuse | Lower.SES<br>N=100 |      |      |      | Middle.SES<br>N=100 |      |      |      | Upper.SES<br>N=100 |      |      |      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------|------|------|---------------------|------|------|------|--------------------|------|------|------|
|                             | Girls              |      | Boys |      | Girls               |      | Boys |      | Girls              |      | Boys |      |
|                             | F                  | %    | F    | %    | F                   | %    | F    | %    | F                  | %    | F    | %    |
| High (19-24)                | 15                 | 30%  | 17   | 34%  | 12                  | 24%  | 12   | 24%  | 10                 | 20%  | 9    | 18%  |
| Moderate (13-18)            | 10                 | 20%  | 12   | 24%  | 9                   | 18%  | 9    | 18%  | 8                  | 16%  | 10   | 20%  |
| Low (7-12)                  | 8                  | 16%  | 6    | 12%  | 7                   | 14%  | 7    | 14%  | 9                  | 18%  | 7    | 14%  |
| No abuse (0-6)              | 17                 | 34%  | 15   | 30%  | 22                  | 44%  | 22   | 44%  | 23                 | 46%  | 24   | 48%  |
| Total                       | 50                 | 100% | 50   | 100% | 50                  | 100% | 50   | 100% | 50                 | 100% | 50   | 100% |

The above table furnishes information regarding emotional abuse among children belonging to different socio economic status. The data represented in the above table indicates that 30 percent girls and 34 percent belonging to lower socio economic status experienced high level of emotional abuse closely followed by 24 percent girls and the same 14 percent boys from middle socio economic status and 20 percent from upper socio economic status experienced high level of emotional abuse.

The data represented in the above table also indicates that 20 percent girls 24 percent belonging to lower socio economic status experienced moderate level of emotional abuse followed by 18 percent girls and the same 18 percent of boys from middle socio economic status and 16 percent girls and 20 percent from upper socio economic status experienced moderate level of emotional abuse.

In case of low level of emotional abuse it was seen that 16 percent of girls and 12 percent boys belonging to lower socio economic status experienced low level of emotional abuse followed by 14 percent girls and and the same 14 percent boys from middle socio economic status and 18 percent girls and 14 percent boys from upper socio economic status experienced low level of emotional abuse. The data clearly reflects that girls and boys from lower socio economic group face higher level of emotional abuse as compared their counterparts from middle and upper socio economic group. The observation that the children from poor families suffer more from abuse may also be due to the fact that the parents in the middle and upper classes are more capable of concealing the abuse because of availability of resources. Also the fact that some researchers have taken into consideration only the physical abuse with respect to socio-economic status rather than the total (physical and emotional) abuse, which may also be responsible to show more abuse in poor families.

It is also observed from the table 34 percent of girls and 30 percent boys belonging to lower socio economic status experienced no abuse of emotional abuse followed by 44 percent girls and 44 percent boys from middle socio economic status and 46 percent girl and 48 percent boys from upper socio economic status did not experience any type of emotional abuse .

The results can be supported by the study carried out by **The Ministry of Woman And Child development (2007)** who examined the emotional abuse and neglect among girl child .The study examined two forms of emotional abuse: humiliation and comparison. Half the children reported facing humiliation and comparison with 83 percent of girls reporting that the abuse begins to be inflicted by the parents.

**Reidy (1990)** compared abused and non abused children and found that the abused group were more aggressive in play and on psychology testing.

**Table 2 : Percentage distribution in reference to neglect of children from different socio economic status.**

| Category of neglect abuse | Lower.SES<br>N=100 |    |      |    | Middle.SES<br>N=100 |    |      |    | Upper.SES<br>N=100 |    |      |    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----|------|----|---------------------|----|------|----|--------------------|----|------|----|
|                           | Girls              |    | Boys |    | Girls               |    | Boys |    | Girls              |    | Boys |    |
|                           | F                  | %  | F    | %  | F                   | %  | F    | %  | F                  | %  | F    | %  |
| High                      | 16                 | 32 | 16   | 32 | 11                  | 22 | 12   | 24 | 10                 | 20 | 10   | 20 |

|                  |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |
|------------------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|
| (22-28)          |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |
| Moderate (16-21) | 12 | 24   | 10 | 20   | 8  | 16   | 7  | 14   | 9  | 18   | 8  | 16   |
| Low (7-15)       | 6  | 12   | 8  | 16   | 9  | 18   | 8  | 16   | 9  | 18   | 9  | 18   |
| No abuse (0-6)   | 16 | 32   | 16 | 32   | 22 | 44   | 23 | 46   | 22 | 44   | 23 | 46   |
| Total            | 50 | 100% | 50 | 100% | 50 | 100% | 50 | 100% | 50 | 100% | 50 | 100% |

The above table furnishes information regarding neglect among children belonging to different socioeconomic status. The table clearly indicates that in the case of girls belonging to lower socio economic group maximum girls i.e. 32 percent and the same 32 percent boys experienced high level of neglect followed by 22 percent girls and 24 percent boys from middle socio economic group and 20 percent girls and 20 percent boys from upper socio economic group experienced high level of neglect.

Table also highlights that 24 percent girls and 20 percent boys from lower socio economic group reported to have experienced moderate form of neglect followed by 16 percent girls and 18 percent boys from middle socio economic group and also 18 percent girls and 16 percent boys from upper socio economic group also reported to be subjected to moderate level of neglect.

Low level of neglect was reported by 12 percent girls and 18 percent boys belonging to lower socio economic status followed by 18 percent girls and 16 percent boys from middle socio economic group and 18 percent girls and 18 percent boys upper socio economic group experienced also reported to have experienced also reported to have experienced low level of neglect.

No form of neglect was reported by 32 percent girls and 30 percent boys belonging to lower socio economic status followed by 44 percent girls and 44 percent boys from middle socio economic group and 44 percent girls and 48 percent boys from upper socio economic group which shows that as the socio economic status of families improve the incidence of neglect is also reduced. Education, employment status and income play a significant role in understanding the developmental needs and other requisites of the children, making the parents more responsible care givers.

According to **Nalinadevi and Shweta (2000)** 88 percent of the street girls were neglected by parents due to low socio-economic status of the families which forced them to migrate to the city in search of livelihood. In addition to neglect by the parents, being forced to work, alcoholic parents, violence in the home, presence of step parents were other reasons for neglect and being on the street.

**Table 3: ANOVA for Emotional Abuse on the basis of gender and socioeconomic status.**

| Source of variation          | D.F | S.S    | Mean S.S | F- Calculated | F (5%) Tabulated  | Result          |
|------------------------------|-----|--------|----------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Due to Gender                | 1   | 1.32   | 1.32     | 5.28          | $F_{1,2} = 18.51$ | Non significant |
| Due to Socio economic status | 1   | 110.7  | 55.35    | 221.4         | $F_{2,2} = 19.00$ | Significant     |
| Due to error                 | 2   | 0.51   | 0.25     | -             | -                 | -               |
| Total                        | 5   | 112.53 | -        | -             | -                 | -               |

Table 3 illustrates the variance in emotional abuse keeping in view the gender and socio economic variations. On the basis of gender, the table clearly shows a non significant variance between boys and girls with regard to emotional abuse as the F calculated value is 5.28 which is less than its tabulated value i.e. 18.51 at 5 percent level of significance. Furthermore on the basis of socioeconomic status the F calculated value is 221.4 which is greater than the F tabulated value ( $F_{2,2}$  i.e. 19.00) at 5 percent probability level. Therefore, it can be concluded that socioeconomic status has a significant influence on the emotional abuse of the respondents.

The results are in accordance with the study conducted by **Günnur and Kristin (2013)** who investigated the moderating roles of gender and age on emotional abuse. The study revealed that emotional abuse was more common in younger participants. Younger women experienced higher rates of isolation as a result of emotional abuse than that of men and this isolation increased with age.

**Table 3.1: Comparison table for socio economic status against critical value**

|               |              |               |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|               | $S_3 = 9.86$ | $S_2 = 16.48$ |
| $S_1 = 20.27$ | 10.41*       | 3.79*         |
| $S_2 = 17.40$ | 6.62*        | -             |

$S_1 =$  LSES       $S_2 =$  MSES       $S_3 =$  USES

After comparing the difference between the mean values of socio economic status, significant difference was observed  $S_1, S_2, S_1, S_3$  and between  $S_2, S_3$ . The average value of socio economic status,  $S_1$  is highest (20.27) so the lower group of socio economic status can be regarded as the one suffering from greater emotional abuse than from those belonging to middle and upper socio economic strata.

**Table 4: ANOVA for Neglect Abuse on the basis of gender and socioeconomic status.**

| Source of variation          | D.F | S.S    | Mean S.S | F- Calculated | F (5%) Tabulated  | Result          |
|------------------------------|-----|--------|----------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Due to Gender                | 1   | 1.65   | 1.65     | 4.4           | $F_{1,2} = 18.51$ | Non significant |
| Due to Socio economic status | 1   | 113.02 | 56.51    | 150.69        | $F_{2,2} = 19.00$ | Significant     |
| Due to error                 | 2   | 0.75   | 0.375    | -             | -                 | -               |
| Total                        | 5   | 115.42 | -        | -             | -                 | -               |

Table 4 depicts the gender and socio economic variance in neglect experience by the respondents. On the basis of gender, the table clearly shows a non significant variance between boys and girls with regard to neglect as the F calculated value is 4.4 which is less than its tabulated value i.e. 18.51 at 5 percent level of significance. Furthermore on the basis of socioeconomic status the F calculated value is 150.69 which is greater than the F tabulated value ( $F_{2,2}$  i.e. 19.00) at 5 percent probability level. Therefore, it can be concluded that socioeconomic status has a significant influence on the neglect abuse of the respondents.

**Jaya and Suryalatha (1996)** found that more number of boys were neglected than girls by their parents. However, boys in the age of 13-15 years were neglected more followed by younger children of 10-12 years old.

**Table 4.1: Comparison table for socio economic status against critical value**

|               |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|               | $S_3 = 10.77$ | $S_2 = 17.64$ |
| $S_1 = 21.23$ | 10.46*        | 3.79*         |
| $S_2 = 17.64$ | 6.87*         | -             |

$S_1 =$  LSES       $S_2 =$  MSES       $S_3 =$  USES

After comparing the difference between the mean values of socio economic status, significant difference was observed between  $S_1, S_2, S_1, S_3$  and between  $S_2, S_3$ . The average value of socio economic status,  $S_1$  is highest (21.23) revealing that neglect is highest in the respondents belonging to lower socio economic group. **National Research Council (1993)** revealed that children whose fathers are either unemployed or are in part time occupations are more likely to be subjected to abuse and neglect as compared to children of fathers well established in their occupation and with full time jobs.

#### 4. CONCLUSION :

It can be concluded from the present study that respondents from lower socio economic group face higher level of physical abuse as compare their counterparts from middle and upper socio economic groups. The study also revealed that socio economic status has a significant influence on emotional a abuse and neglect and gender not influence on emotional abuse and neglect on the respondents. It is apparent that abuse is prevalent in all the social classes but the respondents from the low socio economic status families experience the maximum abuse as compared to those the middle and upper socio economic families.

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