

Reviews

Review of Abuse and Violence against Women and Children in Psycho-social rehabilitation centres

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The growth and development process of the child is influenced by reciprocal environmental, psychological and social factors, and the family's role is very crucial in all of this. It is obvious that although it's important to start a family, but what's further important is its survival in a healthy and intimate atmosphere. It has been estimated that between 2 and 12 million American families are subjected to wife abuse. Child abuse takes place in different forms. According to a World Bank report one third of children in the first few years of the new millennium are deprived of their fundamental rights. The present research indicates that those that reported abuse through public information were low in number only at 4.5 percent, which is indicative of poor education and people participation. In the services that were provided to the victims, counselling and psychotherapy were the highest number, and it is necessary to raise the number of legal services provided for the victims (3%), in order to realise the rights of the individual.

Key words: Abuse; Violence; Women abuse; Children abuse

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Introduction

The family is the smallest unit of society, and its health and illness directly or indirectly affects the health and illness of society. It is obvious that although it's important to start a family, but what's further important is its survival in a healthy and intimate atmosphere. It has been observed that good relationships with the spouse and children are the main element for the survival and health of a family.

Contrary to the belief of most researchers, wife abuse is a global issue, and in most countries it appears as a social problem. Child abuse has become an inseparable part of domestic violence. It's very rare to see wife abuse in a home and be

no sign of child abuse. It is possible for the victim of the abuse to turn into an abuser, and thus the child in the family is subjected to abuse by both parents. When born, the infant is a defenceless creature who needs urgent care and support of the family until adulthood. The growth and development process of the child is influenced by reciprocal environmental, psychological and social factors, and the family's role is very crucial in all of this. The future adult life of a child is, self reliance, independence, self-confidence, hope for the future, trusting others, and other identity structures are all dependent on the approach of the parents with the child; and it is quite obvious that child abuse is a bullet in the temple of all the

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aforementioned prerequisites. By studying the statistics on the subject, this research attempts to present practical solutions in the fight against violence against women and children.

Review of Subjects

Wife abuse: Different studies have been done on wife abuse around the world. A study in Sweden revealed that a quarter of abused individuals have grown up in broken up families and mostly without a father. In half of the cases the father is an alcoholic (1). It was also observed that 30% of battered women and 12% of men that battered women, themselves were subjected to sexual abuse during childhood, and 94% of women and 76% of the aforementioned women and men (respectively) were subjected to child abuse. Also 76% of abusive men had records of violence with other individuals. Sixty-two percent of women victims and 44% of men abusers use tranquilisers.

In a thesis study it was revealed that women that got re-married for a second time were subjected to abuse more than others, and this syndrome was not particularly influenced by economic factors (2).

In some studies conducted in Iran on prostitution, it was observed that the factors that were influential in turning women to prostitution were (3): violent parents; being treated by parents badly; broken homes; inability to make a normal living; and sexual abuse during childhood.

It has been estimated that between 2 and 12 million American families are subjected to wife abuse. And it occurs in families with different racial and religious backgrounds across all social and economic levels (4).

These people often alcohol and cocaine addicts, and violent husbands often come from violent families and witnessed the female members of their families getting beaten up during childhood, or they were subjected to beatings themselves (4).

Child abuse: This is one of the worst kinds of social damages, and sadly the statistics are on the rise. The results of surveys conducted in the

nineties in the UK, USA, Canada and Australia on child abuse indicated that most children murdered below one year old were murdered by their parents. In 1997 child abuse had doubled in the United Kingdom (5). Child abuse takes place in different forms. According to a World Bank report one third of children in the first few years of the new millennium are deprived of their fundamental rights; five million children live below the poverty line; 100 million are homeless, and 80 million are malnourished (6). Annually three million children (4% of all children below 17) are severely assaulted and battered (7). The rate of children that are murdered from the mid eighties to the present has increased by 48% (7). In Iran the statistics for the years between 96 and 98 indicate that 70% of violent and abusive acts have been conducted in the home, and in 66.5 percent of these cases the men of the families (fathers or husbands or stepfathers) (8). In a study conducted in 1993 on 2240 high school students in Tehran, it was revealed that 71% of those that were surveyed were experiencing different forms of abuse at the same time (8).

Instruments and method: Efforts have been made over the years to use different instruments to gather information about social damages in Iran. Naturally one of the best ways is to go to the people and ask them questions directly. But due to the sensitivity of the subjects at hand, correct answers are not given. Another method is to refer to existing archives of different institutions and bodies such as the police authority, the Judiciary, the coroner, the welfare organization and other supportive organizations. But again, due to lack of coordination between these institutions and bodies, and a general lack of a single definition and because of the diversity of the target population, the statistics that are available have no consistency with each other. There are other methods such as the Delphi method, collecting information from the press, the internet etc.

In this research a questionnaire on the type of violence and how reports were referred to welfare centres was compiled and sent out to several social damages centres across the country. After

a year (2003) all the data and information about those that had referred to welfare organization centres were collected and were sent to the social damages bureau of the Welfare Organization for analysis.

Results:

In the aforementioned questionnaire, abuse was broken down to four types of physical, psychological, neglect and sexual, and also how they were referred such as through the police authority, the Judiciary, and other governmental and public information centres. The final part of the questionnaire is about the services that are provided for the victims such as: counselling; psychotherapy; medical; psychiatric; legal; and centres that put the victims up. Also the release method, i.e. back to the family or referral to other welfare centres and organizations, rehabilitation and deaths were also reviewed. The classification of the abuse victims was conducted on boy and girl children up to 18, and men and women over the age of 18.

All this information and data can be seen in the following two tables.

Table 1: Statistics of violence against women and children (those that were referred to the bureau of social damages of the Welfare Organization in 2003)

Indicators	Society	Children (Under 18)		Girls (Over 18)	Women	Total
		Girls	Boys			
Type of Violence	Physical	402	984	392	550	2328
	Psychological	491	634	358	495	1978
	Neglect	615	808	774	884	3081
	Sexual	214	202	293	236	945
	Total	1722	2628	1817	2165	8332
Type of Referral	Self	182	440	415	1025	2062
	Police Authority	420	541	299	233	1493
	Judiciary	235	451	300	453	1439
	Other Governmental Centres	496	1409	514	188	2580
	Public Information	53	223	23	41	340
Total	1359	3064	1551	1940	7914	
Services provided	Counselling	13182	21412	12926	19243	66763
	Psychotherapy	10635	18580	12225	14000	55440
	Medical	4008	2724	22732	1752	31216
	Psychiatry	1347	496	1319	1679	4841
	Legal	1630	750	1275	1500	5155
Putting the victims up in centres	1669	1338	1043	1434	5484	
Total	32471	45300	51520	39608	168899	
Type of release	Return home	930	1858	847	706	4314
	Referral to other welfare centres	289	504	510	186	1489
	Referral to other centres	49	68	98	410	625
	End of service	46	17	103	81	247
	Leaving service	27	66	29	14	136
	Rehabilitation	48	69	39	104	290
	Death	1	0	0	2	3

Table 2: Violence against Women (those that were referred to the bureau of the social damages of the Welfare Organization)

Indicators		Society		Women	Total
		Below 18	Over 18		
Type of Violence	Physical	402	392	550	1344
	Psychological	491	358	495	1344
	Neglect	615	774	884	2273
	Sexual	214	293	236	743
Total		1722	1817	2165	5704
Type of Referral	Self	182	415	1025	1622
	Police Authority	420	299	233	952
	Judiciary	235	300	453	988
	Other Governmental Centres	496	514	188	1171
	Public Information	53	23	41	117
Total		1359	1551	1940	4850
Services provided	Counselling	13182	12926	19243	45351
	Psychotherapy	10635	12225	14000	36860
	Medical	4008	22732	1752	28492
	Psychiatry	1347	1319	1679	4345
	Legal	1630	1275	1500	4405
	Putting the victims up in centres	1669	1043	1434	4146
Total		32471	51520	39608	123599
Type of release	Return home	930	847	706	2483
	Referral to other welfare centres	289	510	186	985
	Referral to other centres	49	98	410	557
	End of service	46	103	81	230
	Leaving service	27	29	14	70
	Rehabilitation	48	39	104	191
	Death	1	0	2	3

Discussion :

Suffice to say wife abuse and child abuse are of the worst kinds of social damages, and directly influence on the individual and society's function. Aside from the economic and financial damages, the physical and mental health of the individual and society are also threatened by these abuses. On these bases this research dealt with this important subject. The statistics and figures revealed that the number of people below and above 18 that are subjected to abuse is almost equal – 4350 compared to 3982. This indicates that the objective for the abuser is to hurt and abuse irrelevant of who is being abused.

Contrary to beliefs the number of boys below 18 that were more than girls of the same age group (2638 compared to 1722).

In view of the fact that this research was conducted in the home environment, the extent

of child abuse by the parents is revealed, a clear example is 84% of child abuse victims in the United States have been abused by their parents (9). The most common form of child abuse in Iran is neglect (32%). The figure of the United States for this was at approximately 21.3% in 1999 (9), and the figure for Europe was 28 percent (8). The least common form of abuse in Iran is sexual abuse (9.5%), in comparison to the United States (12%). The closeness of the figures indicates that unfortunately child abuse is common to different countries, and scientific and cultural advancements of society do not really have any effects on the prevention of this phenomenon. The only thing that affects child abuse is certain conditions in society such as religion, etc.

In this research the 3982 girls and women over 18 were subjected to abuse, girls at 45.5 percent and women at 54.5 percent. The most common abuse was neglect and the least common abuse was sexual abuse (41.5% and 13% respectively). Wife abuse levels are very high in today's world. Figures to prove this fact are: 2 to 4 million women are violently abused by their husbands (10); in New Guinea the figures reach 60% (11); in some parts of Ecuador up to 80% of women are abused by their husbands (12). In another research in Iran indicated that 60/6% women were abused from which physical-somatic abuse 39/4% and psychological abuse 60/6% was reported.(13).

In Austria each year 300 thousand women and children are subjected to violence by family members (14). And in another research that was conducted in one of Tehran's doctor's surgery it was revealed that 71 women had gone to the surgery with torn eardrum complaints. A total of 48 cases involved the husbands slapping them in the ear (59%).

All the aforementioned and dozens of other studies indicate the daily rise in the wife and child abuse phenomenon in Iran and the world. And in view of the numerous effects of abuse that include: being subjected to abuse during childhood, brings about the risk of violent behaviour by the victim during adulthood (increased by 20 times) (8).

It is highly important for preventative measures to take place in these instances. One such important preventative measure is to increase people participation and strengthen NGOs, and education in different aspects. The present research indicates that those that reported abuse through public information were low in number only at 4.5 percent, which is indicative of poor education and people participation.

Governmental agencies and bodies were the most used way of reporting abuse at 69.5 percent.

In the services that were provided to the victims, counselling and psychotherapy were the highest number, and it is necessary to raise the number of legal services provided for the victims (3%), in order to realise the rights of the individual and establish enough security to prevent further abuse from occurring.

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