

## PROTECTION AND AWARENESS AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

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In Pakistan, child abuse has risen alarmingly, i.e., 30% of cases from 2020-2021 statistics.<sup>1</sup> WHO comprehensively drafts the definition as, "Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship or responsibilities, trust or power." There is an urgent need to address these issues in the prevention, psychotherapeutic treatment and rehabilitation of such victims and suffering. On the contrary, there will be a scary consequence. According to WHO, about 1 billion old children (2-17 years) across the globe are subjected to physical, sexual, or emotional harm by their caregivers or strangers. Violence or abuse does not have boundaries of country, religion, class, or gender.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the related stigma keeps it underreported. Every year, around 500 million children suffer from abuse. In the USA, more than 3 million cases are reported, causing 2000 deaths and 18000 permanent disabilities, the victim results every year. The count for sexually molested girls is 1 in 4, and for boys, it is 1 in 7.<sup>3</sup> In New Delhi, Child abuse is 8 in 10 kids, whereas boys (7 in 10 kids) are more vulnerable than girls (6.5 in 10 kids).<sup>4</sup> The percentage of sexual abuse in India is 52% only admitted patients annually, whereas statistics for unreported and other molestation are unknown.<sup>5</sup> In Sri Lanka, more than 40000 children were involved in prostitution, where children are used by paedophile sex tourists.<sup>6</sup>

In an unofficial report, every year, somewhat 15-20% of children are sexually abused in Pakistan. According to an NGO, there is a rise of 2 to 10 reported cases of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) per day in the upcoming year, whereas the actual numbers would be much higher because CSA is culturally veiled. They documented that both genders were equally victimized, although 0-5 years of CSA victims were mostly boys. The perpetrators included close family ties and acquaintances, marking an increase in per year cases reported. Out of a total 3852 number of CSA cases, 2211 (51%) were from Punjab. A total number of 92 cases were reported murder after the assault.<sup>7</sup>

According to the latest study, the amygdala in the brain shrinks with repeated trauma, resulting in delayed learning abilities and deficient memory.<sup>8</sup> Depression, isolation, and delinquency are a few more to enumerate. There are physical, behavioural and emotional indicators of abuse that a physician must be able to identify, address and refer to a psychologist for professional treatment. The prevention measures of awareness, training for parenting, character building of parents and psychological treatment can prevent and decrease a victim's suffering. The only way to prevent CSA is to educate and spread awareness against this act on two levels. One is educating parents and teachers, and the other is making the child aware of the good and bad touch. In this regard, the PAAC group has worked. They have prepared useful brochures to protect the child from encountering the issue. The whole structure of society needs renovation, and the best renovation is building attributes based on the psychological training present in the seerah of the Prophet (SAW) and his companions.

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