
A Sociological Study on Child Abuse in District Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad: A Qualitative Perspective**Feroze Ali Junejo¹, Dr. Passand Ali Khoso²**

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Abstract

This research investigates child abuse in District Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad in a qualitative research framework. Through 12 interviews with the doctors and 12 interviews with the family members from each of the two districts, the research aims at mapping out the sociological aspect of the child abuse as well as have an understanding of the victim's experiences and perceptions. In line with Maxwell (2012), the data is analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes of the kinship, cultural, and systemic concerns. The results underscore the necessity of multi-proposal solution and legislative amendments to prevent child abuse in these areas.

Keywords: Child Abuse, Sanghar, Shaheed Benazirabad, Smart PLS

Introduction

Child abuse is still a significant social problem all over the world these days, when it has dangerous effects on the child's physical, psychosocial, and mental well-being. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, especially at Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad districts, the amount of child abuse is high and tradition bound from socio-economic and cultural perspectives (Channa, Zahid, & Bhutto, 2021; Siddiqi et al., 2023). Owing to the high prevalence of child abuse, measured efforts have been made by different governmental and non-governmental organizations to attend to this problem, and there is a requirement of large-scale sociological research that may help in exploring the causes and effects of child abuse and establish suitable preventive measures (Afshan et al., 2022; Kazmi, 2022). The sociological analysis of child abuse is aimed at describing the patterns of particular spheres of social reality and exploring the factors that may contribute to people's child abuse. Socio-economic situation in Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad reveals poverty, unemployment and illiteracy heightens the rates of child abuse (Board, P. A.; Malik & Jamil, 2023). More so, cultural practices and dominance of male chauvinism also hinder possible assistance to the victim, or proper action from the society (Anjum et al., 2023). Child abuse outcomes are not simply short term but may be significant psychological and social effects that have a continuity to the effects. They will likely develop depression, anxiety, or PTSD which hinders their capacity to enjoy normal healthy lives (Roth & Cohen, 1986; Anjum et al., 2023). Moreover, the scape of child abuse means that children are thrown out of their society, they are isolated and placed on the periphery, and there is no way that they can recover from this situation (Akram et al., 2020; Shaikh, 2024).

In order to understand the sociological factors in child abuse in Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad it essential to consider the economic, cultural, and familial contributions to the problem. The findings of the current studies have emphasized on the necessity to advance community approaches including awareness creation campaign and developing protective child-friendly environments (Jamali et al.; Magsi et al., 2021). Furthermore, related policy measures to enhance socioeconomic characteristics, as well as to advance legal systems to prevent child abuse are also needed (Fatima

& Zeeshan, 2024, Mustafa, 2022). The rationale for this study is to consider the qualitative analysis of child abuse in Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad and listen to the victims and understand the various socio-cultural factors surrounding the problem. Participatory interviews and thematic analysis were used in this study to establish the dynamic factors and to guide the identification of potential interventions and policy measures that may assist in preventing child abuse in these areas.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the sociological factors contributing to child abuse in District Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad.
2. To understand the perceptions and experiences of child abuse victims in these regions.

Literature Review

Child abuse is one of the most grievous issues, which are affected by multiple factors and conditions at the socio-economic and cultural levels. The factors have been described as poverty, unemployment, and lack of education for the respective development of child abuse in Pakistan (Kibria & Siddiqui, 2022; Ul Mustafa et al., 2021). Jamil also supported the argument by saying that vulnerability of children to abuses is compounded by multidimensional poverty as well as inadequate housing conditions. These socio-economic conditions deepen stress existing in families and cause the use of violence against children (Channa, Zahid, & Bhutto, 2021; Malik & Jamil, 2023). Patriarchal culture and practices define a major part of socio-cultural aspects of Pakistan therefore making the case of child abuse worse in this country. Social culture and norms stabilize abusive behaviors and do not allow addressing the issue efficiently (Kazmi, 2022; Kibria et al., 2020). Male dominance is hobbled in many cultures and children are viewed as belong to their parents and hence, they have little or no protection under the law (Shaikh, 2024). This cultural background of the society hinders the chances of a victim to report a case and comeness of other members to interfere and put an end to the cycle (Afshan et al., 2022; Akram et al., 2020).

Child abuse in particular takes a toll on the psychological development of the child in every possible way. The victims tend to develop different forms of psychological dysfunction, such as depression, anxiety, PTSD (Roth & Cohen, 1986; Anjum et al., 2023). These psychological effects can impede the victims from having healthy, productive, successful and effectively educated and employed lives (Fatima & Zeeshan, 2024; Mustafa, 2022). Moreover, lack of social acceptance of cases of child abuse also socially excludes the victims and even enhances their suffering (Jamali et al.; Shaikh, Memon, & Shaikh, 2020). Such forms of interventions have been considered suitable for the management of child abuse since time immemorial. Such interventions frequently include raising the awareness of the dangerous consequences of child abuse and ensuring and supporting appropriate child protection (Magsi et al., 2021; Pal et al., 2023). As a result of community-based programs, people can learn ways how to prevent child abuse and these prevention measures increase the available resources for abused children (Anjum et al., 2023).

It also implies the need for policy reforms in a fight against child abuse. 'Eradication of poverty and provision of accommodation and employment lessen the pressure on families and hence lessen the likely hood of abuse (Fatima & Zeeshan, 2024; Board, P. A.). The following is a simple summary of a study by Afshan et al. (2022) and Mustafa (2022) the essential need for strengthening legal and enforcement measures to protecting the children and penalizing offenders. Also, related services such as counseling for the victims and shelters that can help reintegrate them back into the society can also be helpful (Akram et al., 2020; Shaikh, 2024).

Research suggests that no single broad method is adequate and should be in itself to eradicate child abuse. This should comprise socio economic development and cultural shift as well as credibility and stability of legal systems in societies (Ul Mustafa, Abro, & Awan, 2021). This means that, the probability of child abuse reduction, and the general welfare of kids can be enhanced by addressing the cause of child abuse and enhancing the support to the victims (Channa, Zahid, & Bhutto, 2021; Malik & Jamil, 2023). The reviews of studies made here serve to support the assertion that child abuse is a complicated phenomenon and requires one – several new and more effective approaches

to implementation. In Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad to address the issue of child abuse it calls for policy changes but also change in attitude and culture and most importantly, adequate protection for survivors (Kibria & Siddiqui, 2022; Jamali et al. 2023). This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing a detailed sociological analysis of child abuse in these districts and offering insights into potential solutions (Afshan et al., 2022; Magsi et al., 2021).

Hypotheses

1. Socio-economic challenges significantly contribute to the incidence of child abuse in District Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad.
2. Cultural and familial dynamics play a crucial role in the perpetuation of child abuse in these regions.

Methodology

This research employs an explorative design with structured interview administered to elicit detailed responses. In all 24 interview were completed, 12 from District Sanghar and 12 from Shaheed Benazirabad purpose of interview were Doctor, Teacher, Family/Parents. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to recruit participants to increase the variation in experience of the participants. The interviews were developed to elicit the participants' experiences, attitudes, and the socio-cultural setting of child abuse. Each program was transcribed, then, in accordance with Maxwell's (2012) techniques, thematic analysis was conducted.

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis table helps to divide the covert issue of the child abuse in District Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad into the variables, themes and theme codes, providing methodological approaches to categorize the manifold nature of the social issue. Every element like socio-economic characteristics, cultural attitudes, psychological effects, community involvement, policy changes, victim assistance, and information and training—encompasses a large category of effectors that can either prevent or promote child abuse. In these variables, specific issues like poverty (SE1), power relations particularly those of males over females (CN1), symptoms of mental disorder (PI1), education (CI1), legal frameworks (PR1), counseling service (VS1) and awareness (EA1). These themes are then given names and clear descriptions to show how they relate to the Phenomenon of Child abuse.

Serial Number	Variable	Themes	Theme Code	Description of Theme
1	Socio-economic Factors	Poverty	SE1	The economic hardship faced by families that contributes to the stress and conditions leading to child abuse.
2	Socio-economic Factors	Unemployment	SE2	The lack of job opportunities which increases financial strain on families, potentially leading to frustration and abusive behavior.
3	Socio-economic Factors	Lack of Education	SE3	The absence of educational opportunities that leads to ignorance about children's rights and appropriate child-rearing practices.
4	Cultural Norms	Patriarchal Authority	CN1	The dominant role of men in families that often leads to the justification of child abuse as a form of discipline or control.

5	Cultural Norms	Traditional Practices	CN2	Cultural rituals and norms that perpetuate abusive behaviors and hinder effective intervention.
6	Psychological Impact	Mental Health Issues	PI1	The emotional and psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD that result from experiencing abuse.
7	Psychological Impact	Social Stigma	PI2	The negative social perceptions that lead to isolation and marginalization of abuse victims, complicating their recovery and reintegration.
8	Community Intervention	Public Education	CI1	Efforts to educate the community about the harmful effects of child abuse and to promote supportive environments for children.
9	Community Intervention	Supportive Environments	CI2	Creating safe and nurturing spaces within the community where children can feel protected and valued.
10	Policy Reforms	Legal Frameworks	PR1	The establishment and enforcement of laws and regulations aimed at protecting children and penalizing abusers.
11	Policy Reforms	Socio-economic Development	PR2	Initiatives to improve the economic conditions of families, thereby reducing the stress that can lead to child abuse.
12	Victim Support	Counseling Services	VS1	Providing psychological counseling and support services to help abuse victims recover from their experiences.
13	Victim Support	Safe Spaces	VS2	Establishing secure locations where victims can find refuge and protection from their abusers.
14	Education and Awareness	Awareness Campaigns	EA1	Programs designed to increase public awareness about the rights of children and the signs and effects of child abuse.
15	Education and Awareness	Training Programs	EA2	Training for parents, teachers, and community leaders on how to recognize, prevent, and respond to child abuse effectively.

For example, socio-economic mechanisms include ideas such as poverty and decreased job opportunities the two concepts are explained as causing pressure and irritability to turn into mistreatment. Consequently, cultural beliefs such as the perceived right of male authority and the culture of tradition are used to give alibi to bullying. The psychological aspect is centered on diseases and prejudice, and the consequences mentioned affect victims. Community directed interventions and policy changes to address child abuse also emphasize the roles of education, environment, laws and policy, and socio-economic factors. Last, Education and awareness for the victim support, emphasize the need of counseling services, defined out of abuse safe places and supportive topper training programs to help the victims. This structured approach gives a detailed

description of the causes of child abuse and the measure that could be taken to help and protect the abused kids.

Findings

The embedded socio-economic cultural, psychological and the policy factors realized through thematic analysis of child abuse scenario of District Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad offer a complex picture of the issue. Here is a detailed explanation of the findings for each variable:

Socio-economic Factors

1. Poverty (SE1): This is because when families are financially more stretched they end up abusing their children. The parents living in poverty are under so much pressure and since they get frustrated easily, they end up being abusive on the children. Lack of financial capital also means protection of basic necessities which makes children vulnerable.
2. Unemployment (SE2): The absence of jobs in these districts leads to families experiencing increased financial pressures which leads to more cases of pressure within the home and child beatings. Unemployment also works hand in hand with low socio-economic status and this is in most cases contributes to abuse.
3. Lack of Education (SE3): These families are mostly illiterate, and thus they have no idea of children rights and what is right for them as well as how to raise children. This lack of knowledge leads to the use of pro- spanking and other violent actions as method of correction.

Cultural Norms

4. Patriarchal Authority (CN1): Patriarchal culture dominates these districts and which allows the use of physical conduct such as corporal punishment and so on. Gender assigned roles especially in different homes exposes male partners to indulge in abusive conduct as a sign of authority.
5. Traditional Practices (CN2): There are various cultural practices and traditions that support abusive practices as well as allow ineffective interference. These practices are normally part of the community culture and therefore taking time before actual change can be observed.

Psychological Impact

6. Mental Health Issues (PI1): Specifically, abused children develop several emotions and psychological disorders including; depression, anxiety and PTSD. If the above mental health issues are left undiagnosed or untreated they are likely to cause lifelong impact on their health.
7. Social Stigma (PI2): Abuse produces social exclusion since the society discriminates against those who are viewed as victims. This prejudice creates a lot of challenges in the process of healing and ASVR of the victims in question.

Community Intervention

8. Public Education (CI1): An ongoing sensitization of the community and advocacy for children require steps to reduce child abuse and advocate for a positive environment should be taken. Awareness creation is an important way of changing perceptions as to how child abuse should be that is why there is active promotion for public education campaign.
9. Supportive Environments (CI2): Culturally appropriate safety promotions of homes, schools, and other places in the community must be developed and or maintained. Such environments can afford protection and stability for children at risk of or suffering abuse.

Policy Reforms

10. Legal Frameworks (PR1): That means the passage of the laws and codes on the protection of children and stigmatization of the culprits is important. Appropriate laws prescribe consequences for offenders and give the children the protection they need from the law.

11. Socio-economic Development (PR2): Measures intended to enhance the economic status of families lowers of strain that can cause child abuse. Benefits derived from socio-economic development programs can help families to obtain what is required to make homes healthier.

Victim Support

12. Counseling Services (VS1): One of the relevant fields should pin pointed in helping victims of abuse would be to offer psychological counseling and support services. Counseling can treat issues to do with the emotional and mental well-being that accompanies abuse.

13. Safe Spaces (VS2): Secure places, where the victims can seek some shelter and protection from their perpetrators is crucial. Safe spaces afford the first level of protection and, at the same time, sustainably offer sheltering healing.

Education and Awareness

14. Awareness Campaigns (EA1): About raising awareness of the authorities and the population to the rights of children and the symptoms and consequences of child abuse, the following programs should be mentioned. Educational fairs, social awareness programs or posters hold a lot of potential of preventing abuse and promoting reporting and possible intercession.

15. Training Programs (EA2): Training to parents, teachers, and other leaders in the community on ways to identify, discourage and handle cases of child abuse appropriately is important. These programs ensure that main stakeholders in a given community have enough information and knowledge on the safety of children.

In sum, the thematic qualitative analysis of the study drawn from the participants' narratives supports the call for an integrated model for the prevention of child abuse; calling for socio-economic development, change in culture, psychological support, community interdiction, effective and enforceable laws, as well as enhanced and compulsory education and awareness.

Discussion

The results show that socio-economic difficulties of the family lead to child abuse with strong emphasis put on poverty (SE1) and unemployment (SE2). These factors put pressure and annoyance in families and cause them to act abusively to children. This is in agreement with other studies which point out that economic unfavourability is likely associated with increased incidence of male to female battery and child molestations (Fatima & Zeeshan, 2024). Furthermore, there is a lack of education of (SE3) parents to raise their children right, and regarding children's rights, they are deprived, therefore applying vices disciplinary measures. Kibria et al. (2020) confirm this, having indicated that education gaps explain maladaptive behaviors in parenting.

Organizational culture in the form of cultural norms include: Patriarchal authority (CN1) and traditional practices (CN2) that facilitate abuse. In the culture of District Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad, men believe physical punishment is appropriate as a form of discipline. This accords with the study carried out by Kazmi (2022) showing how the Pakistani culture nurtures highly authoritarian attitudes toward children, which are rooted in male-dominant values. Issues already worsened by traditional practices as tradition resistant to change without large scale alterations (Channa et al., 2021). Child abuse has severe consequences for the psychological well-being of a child especially because victims who suffer from depression, anxiety or post traumatic stress disorder (PI1). This statement is backed up by Afshan, S. et al., (2022), according to whom stress such as COVID-19 affects the mental health of people, thereby supporting the same for child abuse. Also, social labeling/ridicule (PI2) followed a child makes them withdraw from society and this hinders their healing and reintegration processes. The study by Roth and Cohen (1986) on coping strategies give rather a negative picture of the impacts of social rejection on subjective well-being and social functioning. Two types of CI are involved here, public education (CI1) and creating supportive environments (CI2) to help in the fight against child abuse. Demarketing can involve modifying the beliefs and practices that plague child abuse encouraging community protection over the young ones. This is supported by Jamali et al., (2021) who suggest that

environmental and social problems should be handled through comprehensive community-based learning. Safe environments which are also needed for children's protection and emotional development include supportive ones (Mangan et al., 2021).

Major policy recommendations include: Policy Recommendation 1: Adequate implementation of Policy Reforms that involve the formulation of laws to address legal systematic requirements (PR1); Policy Recommendation 2: Implementation of variations of policies to support socio-economic development to reduce child abuse (PR2). Laws guarantee responsibility and responsiveness in children's issues, which was well pointed by Mustafa (2022) in addressing social advancement in Pakistan. Through socio economic development, poverty which leads to child abuse can be reduced since according to Malik and Jamil (2023) there is need for socio-economic reforms which can foster economic status to enhance on the wellbeing of every citizen. Health management for abused children entails counseling services (VS1) and shelters for victims (VS2). Counseling takes its-Shows that the effects of abuse on mental health are handled to enable healing (Afshan et al., 2022). The same way vehicle has its instant and inherent defense mechanisms so does safe space offers them short term and long term security and welfare (Siddiqi et al., 2023).

Three legal measures are focused on education about child abuse and the occurrence of training programs: Education and awareness through campaigns (EA1) and Education and awareness through training programs (EA2). The awareness campaigns help disseminate the information to the rest of the population on the child rights and the possible signs of abuse this makes the community more vigilant or take appropriate action (Narijo et al., 2024). Special attention should be paid to increase an awareness activity when training parents, teachers, community leaders and others; bringing them to a level where they can identify abuse and act appropriately was described by Kibria et al. (2021) in the analysis of the impact of training and development on employee performance and job satisfaction.

Endorsement of these findings from the literature point to complexity of socio-economic, cultural, psychological, community, and policies in addressing child abuse. Altogether, the references implicit particular support for the idea that child abuse is a complex phenomenon which necessitates complex and diverse strategies. By synthesizing the findings of this study, the following existing articles by scholars of Pakistani origin corroborate and substantiate the themes identified in the present analysis: Fatima and Zeeshan (2024), Kazmi (2022), Afshan et al. (2022), Jamali et al. (2021), Mustafa (2022), Siddiqi et al. (2023), and Narijo et al. (2024)

Implications

The study's findings have several implications for policy and practice:

1. Policy Interventions: In order to combat child abuse it is important to have polices that control the factors in the socio-economic status of a person as poverty reduction policies and employment.
2. Community Education: Both adult and child see child abuse as being wrong, although levels of agreement with statements were high and above the midpoint, indicating that raising awareness of the negative consequences of child abuse is important as is questioning cultural norms that endorse it.
3. Support Systems: It also requires creating structures for survivors to go to after abuse, especially psychological and shelter.

Limitations and Future Research

The main sources of the study's weakness lie in its use of qualitative data collection techniques and its sample, confined to Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad districts. Future research should employ both quantitative research methodology and cut across different geographical regions. Further, more longitudinal designs could produce even more profound long-term consequences of the child abuse and the efficacy of the developed interventions.

Conclusion

The research done on child abuse in District Sanghar and Shaheed Benazirabad shows that the existing problem has socio-economic roots and is influenced by culture, mental health of the abusers, and lack of effective social and governmental responses. Poor family, social and parental factors that contribute to child abuse according to the thematic analysis include; poverty Joblessness and illiteracy among parents. Besides, power and domination show men to perform abusive actions, whereas traditional culture prolongs it, and mental disorders combined with stigma among victims affect a subject's healing process. Education and support of communities coupled by proven and efficient policy change and support for the victims of abuse is important in prevention of child abuse.

It is therefore clear from this study that there is need for further study on the causes of child abuse and subsequent development of appropriate current and long-term national remedial measures. Therefore socio-economic intervention strategies, policing of the rules of the land, and advocacy for change in peoples' perception should be undertaken. Supporting and empowering victims with counseling and advocates are the necessities that the latter need for reconstruction and shield. There should be future studies on providing specific interventions suggesting that were the causes that indicated in the present paper and guaranteeing the improvement of the conditions for children, safe from abuse. The collective effort of government bodies, community leaders, and non-governmental organizations is essential in eradicating child abuse and fostering a society where every child can thrive.

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