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Psychological Well-Being Of Orphan Adolescents: A Review Of Their Mental Health Status

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Abstract

Childhood is one of the most important and blissful stages in every human life, but it is never so with every child. Some children, especially orphans, have to face lots of problems in their lives, and there is no one to think about them, to console them, to help them exist in their lives. India is home to the largest population of orphan children (31 million) in South Asia. These children are at increased risk of psychosocial distress. After reviewing many studies were undertaken to assess the mental health among orphans placed in institutions, showed that in negative emotions like: depression, distress, anxiety, behavioral and emotional disorders, hyperactivity, abnormal pro -social behavior, peer problem, phobias, post traumatic disorder and aggressiveness orphans children and adolescents ranked high, even much higher compared to their normal counterparts in a society. The majority of research indicated that Orphans proved to be highly at risk of psychological disorders as compared to their non-orphan brethren. Some other studies showed that maternal death hurts the psychosocial well-being of the participants; their strong feelings for their mothers negatively affected their ability to develop coping strategies, which led to isolation, sadness, hopelessness, lack of peace, and fear of an uncertain future. This review article will highlight an immediate need for a supporting framework in the form of an intervention programme to meet the needs of such vulnerable groups so that they may avail themselves of the suitable services and advantages overall.

Keywords: Psychological Well-being, Orphan, Childhood, Mental Health, Intervention program.

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the W.H.O, Mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can make a contribution to his or her society or community. The number of orphans in India stands at approximately 55 million children aged 0 to 12 years, which is about 47% of the overall population of 150 million orphans in the world (UNICEF, 2005).

India is the world's largest democracy with a population of over a billion people, of which 400 million are children. Approximately 18 million of these children live or work on the streets of India, and the majority of them are involved in crime, prostitution, gang-related violence, and drug trafficking; however, a large number of these children are orphans (Shrivastava, 2007). Orphanages are filled with children, and millions of children are wandering the streets, doing everything they can to survive. In India, 158.8 million children are in the age group of 0 to 6 years, though the current overall population of India is 1.21 billion. In Jammu and Kashmir, the past 21 years of conflict have resulted in an alarming increase in the number of orphans. Some studies have focused on emotional and behavioral problems such as depression, anxiety, stress, aggression, difficulties in social interaction, feelings of rejection, peer-relationship problems, low self-esteem, pro-social behavior, hyperactivity, conduct problems, and academic problems.

A higher risk of emotional and behavioral problems is most common among orphans and other vulnerable children because they are exposed to neglect, abuse, exploitation, lack of love, nutrition, education, and care from their parents. They have feelings of insecurity, emotional needs, and poor (Kaur, Vinnakota, & Panigrahi, 2018). All these factors can socially and emotionally disable these children. So, orphans are brought up in institutional homes where individual care is insufficient. A study done by Rahman et al. (2012) found a high prevalence of 40.35% of behavioral and emotional disorders among orphan children in institutional homes.

A survey conducted by Jammu and Kashmir Yateem Foundation in 1996 puts the figure at 15,000. In the report of the United Nations General Assembly (2010), it was mentioned that UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) estimates that there are about 1 million orphans in Kashmir. A study conducted by Save the Children in December 2006 mentioned that about 120,000 children are orphans in Jammu and Kashmir, of whom most are institutionalized. According to a report, titled "Ignored Orphans of Jammu and Kashmir", published in Kashmir Watch under the Human Rights section in its December 2011 issue, the number of orphans in the state is around 600,000 children. The children who have lost their parents are most vulnerable, because they do not have the emotional and physical maturity to address their psychological trauma associated with parental loss..According to one UNICEF report (2012) as the population is increasing day by day in India, the number of orphans and abandoned children

is also growing. Orphans are deprived of their primary caregivers; therefore, they are more prone to develop physical health and emotional and behavioral problems. They suffer physical, emotional, social, and economic development issues than non-orphan children, as there is a lack of concern and basic needs, facilities, and adequate care, which further deteriorates every aspect of health of orphans. Orphan children seem to be socially deprived and more prone to hopelessness.

METHODS

Many different computerized databases and published research papers, such as dissertations and abstracts. The keywords used to look through the databases were significant psychological well-being of orphans. The Ryff's measuring scale measures six dimensions of psychological well-being of orphans, such as Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Positive Relations with Others, and Purpose in life. Personal Growth and Self-Acceptance are also low in the case of orphans, as revealed by the results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Nagy Fawzy and Amira Fourad (2010)studied emotional and developmental disorders among children in Sharkia governorate. The sample comprised 294 children from 4 orphanages in Sharkia. Students were subjected to psychiatric assessment for depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and paediatric development disorders. The findings showed that the rate of depression was 21%, anxiety was 45%, low self-esteem was 23% and developmental disorder was 61%. It further included that there was a high rate of emotional and developmental disorders among children and that they were strongly interrelated with socio-demographic characteristics.

Susan N. Ngunu (2011) investigated the psychosocial problems of orphans and their impact on academic achievement. The sample consisted of 265 children aged 6-12 years living in three different orphanage care systems. Results revealed that the prevalence of behavioural disturbances was 64.53% among those in institutional care, and the most prominent psychiatric disorders were nocturnal enuresis, 23.3% attention deficit hyperkinetic disorder (ADHD), 19.62%, and oppositional defiant disorder, 17.36%.

WasimaRahman et al (2012) conducted a study on the prevalence of behaviour and emotional disorders among children living in an orphanage in Dhaka city. Also, he assessed the possible factors associated with the presence of disorders among the studied population. He collected the data from 342 cases, and findings revealed that the overall prevalence of behavioural and emotional disorders was 40.35% with behavioural disorders being 26.9%, and emotional disorders being 10.2%. Both behavioural and emotional disorders were 3.2%. Higher length of stay in the orphanage and low level of education of the foster mother were significantly associated with the psychiatric morbidity of the respondents.

M.MudasirNaqshbandi et al (2012) examined "the effect of institutionalization on orphans and aimed to find out the psychological impact on orphans. Results showed that conflict is the major reason for the increase in the number of orphans in Kashmir. It also pointed out the fact that most of the orphans faced psychological problems and almost all agreed that their adjustment in conventional society would be difficult once they are out of institutions."

Afework Tsegaye (2013) conducted a comparative study on the psychological well-being of orphan and non-orphan children in Ethiopia to explore the conditions or situations that could promote the psychological well-being of orphans. The total sample included 120 non-orphans and three representatives of charity clubs in the selected schools. The results revealed that orphans had lower psychological well-being as compared to non-orphans. Grade level was significant and positively correlated with psychological well-being. Gender and age were not significantly related to psychological well-being.

Sujata R and SubinMariza Jacob (2014) viewed "the psychosocial well-being of orphan adolescents. A study was conducted among 40 adolescent children aged 12-17 years selected from two orphanages in Mangalore. Results showed 7.5% at risk for internalizing problems compared with non-orphans, and 34% reported they had contemplated suicide in the past year. Multiple regression analysis indicated that the independent predictors of internalizing problem scores were sex (females higher than males), going to bed hungry, no reward for good behavior, not currently attending school, and being an orphan.

SebsibeTadesse et al (2014) explored "the psychosocial problems and coping strategies of orphan and vulnerable children living in two orphanages in North West Ethiopia. Findings revealed that orphan and vulnerable children in the orphanages accessed all the basic services necessary to sustain their lives. Besides this, it also showed that children suffered from a set of multi-dimensional and intertwined psychosocial problems that were least addressed in the orphanages."

Aijaz Ahmed Bhatt et al (2015)determined the nature and extent of mental health issues in institutionalized adolescent orphans of the district Kupwara. The sample consisted of 11-17-year-olds from four orphanages. Results showed that 6.5% reported suicidal tendencies, 11.25% dysthymic symptoms, 10% panic disorders, 20% agoraphobia, 7.5% separation anxiety disorder, 16.25% social phobia, 15% specific phobia, 6.25 PTSD symptoms, 1.25% substance dependence, 3.75% ADHD, 1.25 % conduct disorders, 3.75% ODD, 8.75% GAD and 23.75 co morbid conditions and 13.75% met DSM 1V criteria for MDE.

Danesh Karunanayake et al (2020)viewed Exploring the Psychosocial Wellbeing of Adolescents at Children's Homes in Sri Lanka. The purpose of this study was to find out their psychosocial well-being. The sample of six participants was selected through the convenience sampling method from two children's homes. They were between the ages of 12 and 18 years. Semistructured interviews were used

to collect data, and the data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Research findings indicated that living in children's homes has been entirely different from living in a family. They have sufficient basic facilities such as food, clothing, medical care, educational facilities, and other sanitation facilities. Although children were meeting their physical needs at the children's homes, their psychosocial requirements remained more or less unaddressed. Most of the children reported that their lives in the children's homes were not happy. Accordingly, they experienced one or more psychosocial problems that influenced their psychological well-being.

CONCLUSION

After delving deep into the review of several studies, it is concluded that Psychological well-being is a crucial aspect of an individual's overall health and happiness. It refers to the subjective experience of positive psychological states such as happiness, life satisfaction, and a sense of purpose. The concept of psychological well-being is multifaceted and encompasses different aspects of an individual's mental and emotional health.

Such incidents or events are not only stress factors in one's overall development, but they also expose a child to the risk of neglect and the possibility of poor mental health. Placement of a child in an institution like an orphanage, away from parental love and affection, is a threat to his personality and makes him prone to vivid psychological disorders and distress. Some studies concluded that Individuals can promote their psychological well-being by engaging in activities that promote personal growth, maintain positive relationships, and provide a sense of purpose and meaning in life. Additionally, individuals can seek support from mental health professionals if they experience difficulties with their psychological well-being. By taking a holistic approach to promoting mental and emotional health, individuals can enhance their overall well-being and lead a fulfilling life.

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