Research Paper

Does Child Abuse Obstruct the Level of Self-Esteem in Adolescents?

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ABSTRACT

This piece of research intended to study the relationship between different types of child abuse and various domains of self-esteem among adolescents. Sample consisted of 120 students selected by stratified random sampling technique. Child Abuse Checklist (S. Pandey, 2012) was applied to identify the level and various forms of abuse. Further to assess self-esteem, modified version of Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (1981) was used. Analysis was done using Bivariate and Multivariate analysis. Correlation results indicated a strong negative relationship among different forms of abuse and neglect i.e. physical abuse, psychological abuse and sexual abuse and emotional neglect, educational neglect and various domains of self-esteem i.e. general self-esteem, social self-esteem, home and parents' self-esteem, school and academic self-esteem. Further, Regression results have also proved the differential predicting roles of different forms of abuse on self-esteem (total) and its domains. Findings indicated that different forms of abuse have a detrimental impact on proper development of self-esteem.

Throughout adolescence adolescents go through puberty, where they increase their gender, sexual and ethnic individualities. The teenage years have distinctive stresses and pressures and therefore parents should perform a vital role in providing care, support, and helping them to achieve their greatest. Over the last span, increased interest in self-esteem has been run by research that report the influence of self-esteem on human behavior that link high self-esteem and strong academic and social functioning in children. In opposition, low self-esteem were accompanying with many personal and societal distresses, such as school failure, despair, social unease, violence, substance abuse, and chronic self (Coopersmith 1967). The existing study cares to study how the self-esteem of adolescent students changes all through their growing years. Undoubtedly self-esteem is a developmental phenomenon in which growth occurs by time with certain ups and downs. Researchers suggest that the expansion of self-

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esteem changes in definite stages. Erikson (1968) theorized that children develop in a predetermined order and was concerned in children's socialization and the how it affects their sense of self. The theory of his Psychosocial Development has eight discrete stages of distinctive developmental tasks or crisis. His theory hypothesized that a healthy personality and prosperous interactions with others requires successful completion of every single stage. Unsuccessful completion of a stage can result in a reduced ability to complete further developing stages and so a more unhealthy personality and sense of self. For instance Maslow (1987), He suggested that self-esteem is a basic human need. He included self-esteem in his hierarchy of needs in last where it comes after physical, safety and belonging needs. According to him, people will only develop and attain self-actualization if they first accomplish their self-esteem. Therefore it is essential to track the process of development of self-esteem in the initial stages of the individual's life and about those issues which impedes the growth of self-esteem.

There are numbers of personal and socio-cultural aspects, which hinders a smooth and incremental development of self-esteem because some of them supposed to play a significant role in the growth of self-esteem. Because of such those undesirable damaging factors, self-esteem cannot be developed in a healthy way. In the present study child abuse is one of those process variables which is responsible for diminishing a proper development of self-esteem in adolescents. Therefore, in this study child abuse is taken as one of the independent factor (process variable) to study its impact on the development of self-esteem.

There is plentiful body of researches signifying the deleterious consequences of maltreatment on child's overall development (Thornberry et al. 2013). In particular, abuse experiences early in life are likely to have a diminishing impact during the rest of the lives of the child. Child maltreatment can include emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, physical abuse, or any combination thereof. Child abuse is a major social problem in the world; lots of children are being involuntary to tremendously difficult conditions of mistreatment which affect their physical as well as mental growths. Child abuse usually is human created acts of commission or omission and human generated conditions to obstruct the development of innate potentials of children. International Labour Organization (2012) estimated that about 250 million children are abused, mostly in developing countries, whereby the survival, safety, self-esteem, growth and development of the child are threatened. According to Wikipedia (2013), maximum child abuse occurs in a child's own home, with a lesser amount occurring in the organizations, schools and communities the child relates with. In developing country like India even a eviler condition of abuse can be seen because there is no proper law or acts followed for abusers that's why children are targeted here easily. Parents leave their children at home un-catered for and run after making, there are also cases of child pounding, grueling by some parents but unreported, in Indian context and some socio-economic problems also weigh beside the survival, development and protection of child. There is lack of basic emotive need largely due to absence of parents from home in quest of economic survival. Poverty could lead to behavior or rejection, intolerance, discrimination, deprivation, marginalization, cruelty and abuse toward children.

The present study is concerned with the social and psychological problems that Indian adolescents encounter at key transition points in their developmental stage. The research is concerned with how the adolescents' development of self-esteem relates to the way in which they experience abuse and how self-esteem of both genders is affected by different types of abuse i.e. physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse and neglect i.e. physical, emotional and educational neglect. That's why the major focus of the present research is on the direct influence of child abuse on self-esteem. Therefore, in the present study child abuse is taken as an independent factor to know the effect of child abuse in the growth of adolescent self-esteem because child abuses affect many children of all ages. Thus, ill consequences of child abuse on child's self-esteem are proved on the basis of findings of different researches and studies. Physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse and neglect affect self-esteem among schools students, all these call for immediate intervention of all stakeholders, government, parents or guardians, teachers, nongovernmental organization researchers are poised to stem this ugly tide.

A critical view of researches conducted on self-esteem and its correlates indicate the pervasive role of personal and contextual factors. However a number of issues are still un-explored.
Present study was conducted with following specific objectives and hypotheses:

Hypotheses:
On the basis of above objectives, following hypotheses were created for investigation-

- Self-esteem of adolescents would be significantly influenced by level of abuse. More specifically, high abused adolescents would exhibit very low on self-esteem scores than that of low abused adolescents.
- The pattern and development of self-esteem of adolescents would vary in accordance with age and gender.
- There would be an inverse relationship between different types of abuse and various domains of self-esteem. Moreover, the higher the level of abuse, the lower the level self-esteem.
- Various types of abuse and age and would be found strong predictors of self-esteem and its domains.

METHOD

Design
In this research to assess the relationship between types of child abuse and various domains of self-esteem correlations have been computed. Despite this, to determine the role of child abuse in different domains of self-esteem multiple regression analysis (SMRA) has also been computed.

Sample
A total sample of 120 children, age ranged from 12-20 years studying in arts and science discipline will be selected for the present study. The age range was divided in to three stages

i.e., Neo adolescents (12-14 years; Mean age= 13 yrs), Middle adolescents (15-17; Mean age=16 yrs) and Late adolescence (18-20; Mean age=19 yrs). Every age range comprised of public and private schools. It was fairly representative sample of the kind of students who came from different social as well as educational strata of Gorkhpur. Sample selection was done by using stratified random sampling technique.

Instruments
A set of measuring tools were used in the present study,

1. Personal Data Sheet: In order to determine the personal and familial backgrounds of adolescents, Personal Data Sheet was prepared. This sheet measures familial, educational, social, and economic background of children.

2. Child Abuse Checklist (CAC): The CAC developed and standardized by S.Pandey (2012) was used to assess the level and forms of abuse and neglect. This checklist contains 110 items related to physical abuse (23 items), psychological abuse (24 items), and sexual abuse (22 items) and neglect i.e.., physical neglect (13 items), emotional neglect (13 items) and educational neglect (15 items). The CAC has 4- point scale ranging from 1 to 4. Its re-test reliability was also found to be high (r=.79). The reliability alpha was also calculated which was also found to be high and significant.

3. Self-Esteem Scale: To determine the level and form of self-esteem in abused and non-abused children, adapted and modified form of Coopersmith self-esteem inventory was used. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) was developed by *Coopersmith (1981)* for the purpose of assessing attitude towards oneself in general (global), and in specific (situational) contexts, namely peers, parents, school and personal interests. This attitude toward self-had been referred to as self-esteem. The SEI is a 58-item instrument designed to measure the evaluations that a person makes and generally maintains about him or herself. This measure of attitudes towards the self in social, academic, family and personal areas of experiences which indicate the extent to which a person believes himself/herself competent, successful, significant and worthy. These items are in the form of generally favourable (positive) or unfavourable (negative) statements about the "self."

Procedure
This study was conducted in multiple phases. First of all, administrators of the schools and colleges were approached and introduced about the aim of the study and took permission for collecting the data from their students. After getting the permission, a brief orientation session was planned to introduce the nature and purpose of the study and detailed instructions for the administration of measuring tools was done. After the completion of instruction, the experimenter should make sure that the participants could have understood everything. Participants then asked to open the booklet and give responses carefully. After the completion of the test, experimenter collected data and thanked them for their co-operation.

Data Analysis
After completion of data collection, scoring was done according to the defined rules given in manual and data were subjected to the statistical analyses. Further, correlations were

computed for determining the relationships between different domains of self-esteem and with types of child abuse and dimensions of self-esteem. Finally, for determining the contributing role of child abuse and age in self-esteem, step wise multiple regression analysis (SMRA) was done. These analyses have been subjected to computer analysis. Results obtained from computerization of raw scores are reported in next section.

Results

This section includes the obtained results from the statistical analysis of responses. The scores for the analysis were found on the basis of the responses given by the adolescents both male and female from different government and private schools and colleges of Gorakhpur region. Data were collected on two standardized measuring devices viz. Child abuse checklist and Self-esteem inventory. Further, two types of statistical analysis of data were done i.e. correlational analysis and step-wise multiple regression analysis (SMRA). All the analyses with their graphs and figures are reported in different sections separately.

CORRELATIONAL ANALYSIS

In order to get insight into the relationship among studied variables i.e. dimension of self-esteem and domains of child abuse, correlational analysis was done to examine the:

• Relationship between different dimensions of child abuse i.e. physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect i.e. emotional neglect and educational neglect and various domains of self-esteem i.e. general self-esteem, social self-esteem, home & parents' self-esteem, school & academic self-esteem. Correlations between above mentioned factors were calculated and obtained results are displayed in Tables (1.1) and reported in preceding section.

Relationship between different forms of child abuse and various domains of self-esteem

Correlations were computed between child abuse and self-esteem. It is apparent from Table 1.1 that different types of child abuse are inversely correlated with various dimension of self-esteem (except sexual abuse & school and academic self-esteem, educational neglect and school & academic self-esteem and psychological abuse & social self-esteem).

Table 1.1 Relationship between Child abuse and Self-esteem

Dimensions of Child Abuse	General Self-esteem	Social Self-esteem	Home & Parents' Self-esteem	School & Academic Self-esteem	Self-esteem Total
Physical Abuse	-.436**	-.173**	-.377**	-.225**	-.460**
Psychological Abuse	-.416**	-.117	-.306**	-.132*	-.402**
Sexual Abuse	-.259**	-.207**	-.204**	-.111	-.286**
Physical Neglect	-.381**	-.259**	-.334**	-.168**	-.421**
Emotional Neglect	-.327**	-.139*	-.259**	-.151*	-.341**
Educational Neglect	-.249**	-.175**	-.248**	-.121	-.287**
Child Abuse Total	-.434**	-.210**	-.361**	-.186**	-.457**

N= 120,   ** P<0.01   *P<0.05

It is clear from the Table 1.1 Physical abuse, dimension of child abuse was found to be negatively correlated with general self-esteem (r=-.436, P<.01), social self-esteem (r=-.173, P<.01), home & parents' self-esteem (r=-.377, P<.01), school & academic self-esteem (r=-.225, P<.01) and self-esteem as a whole (r=-.460, P<.01). Similarly, Psychological abuse was found to be inversely related with general self-esteem (r=-.416, P<.01), home & parents' self-esteem (r=-.306, P<.01), school & academic self-esteem (r=-.132, P<.05) and self-esteem as a whole (r=-.402, P<.01). Whereas, Sexual abuse another dimension of abuse was found to be negatively correlated with general self-esteem (r=-.259, P<.01), social self-esteem (r=-.207, P<.01), home & parents' self-esteem (r=-.204, P<.01), and self-esteem as a whole (r=-.286, P<.01). Again, fostering the Physical neglect was found inversely correlated with all the four dimensions of self-esteem i.e. general self-esteem (r=-.381, P<.01), social self-esteem (r=-.259, P<.01), home & parents' self-esteem (r=-.334, P<.01), school & academic self-esteem (r=-.168, P<.01) and self-esteem as a whole (r=-.421, P<.01). Likewise, Emotional neglect was also found to be negatively correlated with general self-esteem (r=-.327, P<.01), social self-esteem (r=-.139, P<.05), home & parents' self-esteem (r=-.259, P<.01), school & academic self-esteem (r=-.151, P<.05) and self-esteem as a whole (r=-.341, P<.01). The last dimension of child abuse i.e. Educational neglect was all found to be inversely related with the general self-esteem (r=-.249, P<.01), social self-esteem (r=-.175, P<.01), home & parents' self-esteem (r=-.248, P<.01 and self-esteem as a whole (r=-.287, P<.01). Moreover, child abuse total was found negatively correlated with each domains of self-esteem viz. general self-esteem (r=-.434, P<.01), social self-esteem (r=-.210, P<.01), home & parents' self-esteem (r=-.361, P<.01), school & academic self-esteem (r=-.186, P<.01) and self-esteem as a whole (r=-.457, P<.01). Correlation results thus, suggest that the extent of self-esteem in adolescents towards abuse has decreased with increasing level of abuse in adolescents.

STEP-WISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS (SMRA)

Based on the perusal of correlation results, it was considered appropriate to go for step-wise multiple regression analysis (SMRA) to examine the relative contribution of antecedent factors in the criterion variables. Results are in order:

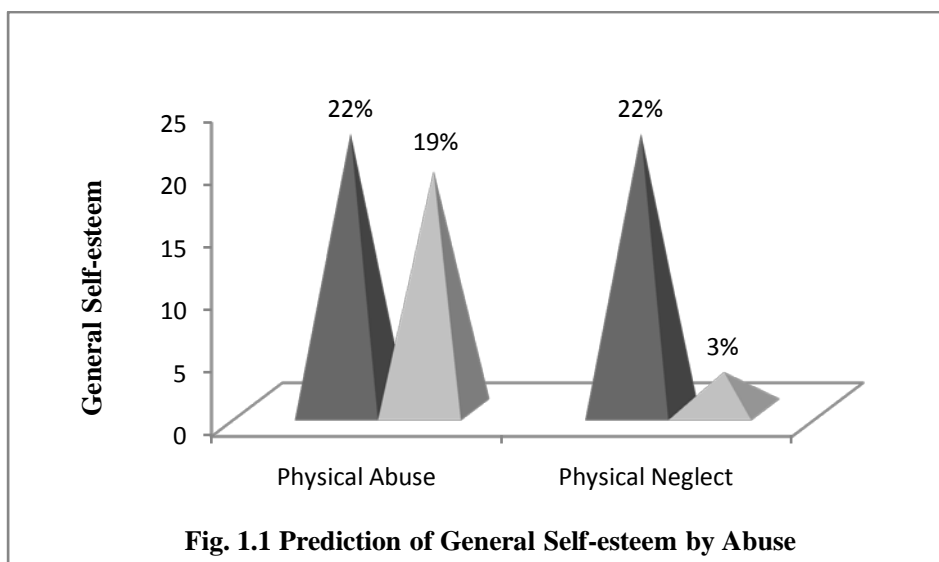- **Prediction of Self-esteem from Child Abuse**

In order to determine the role of various dimensions of child abuse in each domains of self-esteem, step-wise multiple regression analysis was done. Obtained results are displayed in the Table 1.2 and presented in following section.

(i). Table 1.2 Step-Wise Multiple Regression Analysis for General Self-esteem on to the Abuse and Age

Predictor variables	Criterion Variable (General Self-esteem)				
	R	R^2	R^2 change	Beta (β)	F Value
Physical Abuse	.19	.18	.19	-.43	55.76***
Physical Neglect	.22	.22	.03	-.20	33.42***

*** P <0.001   N=120

Fig. 1.1 Prediction of General Self-esteem by Abuse

Regression results (Table 1.2) indicate that General Self-esteem domain of self-esteem was predicted by physical abuse (β=-.43, R^2=.19) and physical neglect (β=-.20, R^2=.03). Independently the contribution of physical abuse was found 19% followed by physical neglect i.e. 3% variance in criterion variables. But composite contribution of both factors was found 22% variance in general self-esteem.

(ii). Table 1.3 Step-Wise Multiple Regression Analysis for Social Self-esteem on to the Abuse and Age

Predictor variables	Criterion Variable (Social Self-esteem)				
	R	R^2	R^2 change	Beta (β)	F Value
Physical Neglect	.26	.07	.07	-.25	17.04***

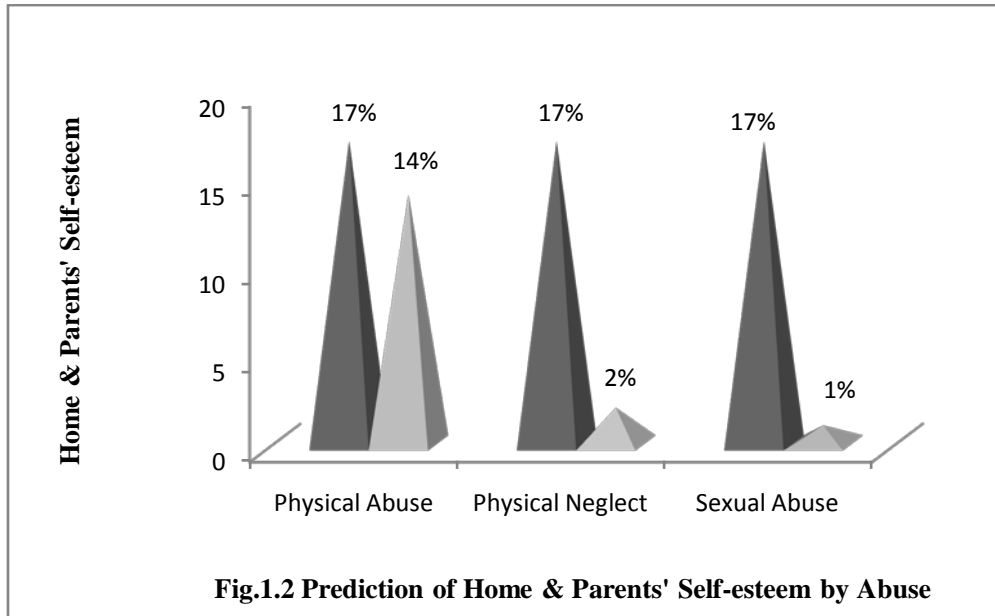***** P<0.001   N=120**

Table 1.3 evinced that social self-esteem was negatively explained by physical neglect (β=-.25, R^2= .07) and its total contribution was found to be 7% variance in criterion variables.

(iii). Table 1.4 Step-Wise Multiple Regression Analysis for Home & Parents' Self-esteem on to the Abuse and Age

Predictor variables	Criterion Variable (Home & Parents' Self-esteem)				
	R	R^2	R^2 change	Beta (β)	F Value
Physical Abuse	.37	.14	.14	-.37	39.44***
Physical Neglect	.40	.16	.02	-.18	23.64**
Sexual Abuse	.42	.17	.01	.17	17.36*

*** P <0.001   ** P<0.01   *P<0.05   N= 120

Fig.1.2 Prediction of Home & Parents' Self-esteem by Abuse

Results indicated that home and parents' self-esteem was predicted by Physical abuse, Physical neglect and Sexual abuse. Contribution of the first factor i.e. physical abuse was contributed maximum negatively (β=-.37, R^2= .14), 14% variance in the criterion variable followed by physical neglect (β=-.18, R^2= .02) and its contribution was 2% variance, followed by another factor i.e. sexual abuse (β=.17, R^2= .01), independently its contribution was 1% variance in criterion variable. But the composite contributions of all the three factors were found 17% variance in criterion variable i.e. home & parents' self-esteem.

(iv). Table 1.4 Step-Wise Multiple Regression Analysis for School & Academic Self-esteem on to the Abuse and Age

Predictor variables	Criterion Variable (School & Academic Self-esteem)				
	R	R^2	R^2 change	Beta (β)	F Value
Physical Abuse	.22	.05	.05	-.22	12.72***

*** P <0.001   N= 120

It is apparent from table (1.4) that school and academic self-esteem was significantly predicted by one factor. Physical abuse explained negatively (β=-.22, R^2= .05) and physical abuse explained 5% variance in criterion variable i.e. school and academic self-esteem.

Results thus evinced the contributing roles of different types of child abuse in exhibition of adolescent's self-esteem. Present results have been interpreted and discussed in the next section.

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Findings of the present research have been interpreted and discussed under two major sections. First section of discussion focuses on major findings of the present investigation. The magnitude and direction of relationship between different types of child abuse and

various domains of self-esteem have been interpreted. Secondly, the results of step-wise multiple regression analysis (SMRA) have been discussed to interpret the contributing roles of child abuse and its various forms and age. Second section of the section focuses on the empirical validation of findings of the present investigation.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

1). Interpretation of Correlational Results

In order to get further insight into the linkage between perceived types of abuse and various domains of self-esteem correlation analysis was done. Correlation results are interpreted below:

Results depicted that there is strong negative relation between different types of abuse i.e. physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse and neglect i.e. physical neglect, emotional neglect, educational neglect & abuse (total) and various domains of i.e. general self-esteem, social self-esteem, home & parents' self-esteem, school & academic self-esteem and self-esteem (whole). With some of the self-esteem domains there was not found either positive or negative significant relation i.e. social self-esteem and school & academic self-esteem. Further, it suggests that with increasing level of abuse of adolescents, the level of self-esteem and its various domains decreased. This confirms the role of different types of abuses in exhibition of various domains of self-esteem and self-esteem (whole).

2). Interpretation of Step Wise Multiple Regression Results (SMRA)

A close perusal of correlation results suggested that is appropriate to go for regression analysis for determining the contributing role of predictors in criterion variables.

Prediction of Self-esteem from Child Abuse and Age

Regression results indicated that general self-esteem, a dimension of self-esteem was predicted by physical abuse and physical neglect. Both the factors contributed negatively. Likewise, social self-esteem was predicted by physical neglect too. Furthermore, home & parents' self-esteem was also significantly predicted by three factors i.e. physical abuse, physical neglect and sexual abuse. Similarly, for school & academic self-esteem again physical abuse contributed negatively. In brief, regression results have proved the unfavourable impact of abuse in the development of self-esteem.

Empirical Validation of Present Findings: Results of the present investigation evinced strong influence of perceived abuse, gender and age on adolescents' self-esteem (whole) and its domains. Results have also proved the contributing role of predictor variables in criterion variables. These findings have been interpreted in relation to other empirical evidences in following sections:

Effect of Child Abuse on Self-Esteem and its Various Domains

As a result of this study, correlation and regression results have proved their relationship and contribution in self-esteem. Moreover, from present results it is determined that there is a significant negative correlation between different forms of abuse and self-esteem (as a whole) and its various domains. As a result of regression analyses conducted, it is revealed that child

abuse and age significantly determine self-esteem but in all of the determinants just abuse is an important determinant of self-esteem.

Further, whatever the child upbringing strategies may be, it is known that sometimes children are subject to various types of mistreatment i.e. physical, psychological, emotional, or sexual. During the upbringing of a child, parents or care givers, family members etc. deliberately or not, exhibit violence or neglect behaviors which negatively affect child's overall development. In addition, the fact that abused children experience low self-esteem is well documented; Childhood maltreatment is associated with impairment in self-esteem (Herrenkohl et al., 2012 Leeson & Nixon, 2011; Soler et al., 2012). It is also depicted that unhealthy parent-child relationship influenced child's self-esteem in a negative way and that abused children have lower self-esteem levels than children who are not abused (Tyler et al., 2006). Compared with other types of abuse, emotional abuse considered long run crisis to be potent of creating more serious results and developmental, psychological, social and behavioral problems (Iwaniec, et al., 2006) playing an important role in emotional development of a child. It is accepted that affection, acceptance and sensibility received from their parents or any family members are important contributing factors for the proper growth and overall development of self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1967). Abuse and neglect experienced by individuals during development period may significantly affect self. In a different study, it was found that abused children have measurably lower levels of self-esteem as compared to non-abused adolescents (Sturkie & Flanzer 1987). Moreover, there is considerable evidence that lowered self-esteem is one of the results of child sexual abuse, particularly as a long-term effect.

If the literature is reviewed, it is determined that physical, psychological, emotional and sexual abuse as well as neglect all of these has detrimental impact on self-esteem. In another study focusing on childhood mistreatment's long-term psychological results, it is depicted that psychological abuse lowers self-esteem levels and creates tendency towards developing depression (Gross & Keller, 1992).

Further, numerous studies suggest that being sexually abused can have a long term negative effect on self-esteem. In a study, a group of sexually abused victims was compared to a group of individuals without a history of sexual abuse. Their results showed that female college students who had been sexually abused had lower self-esteem, had more negative attitude towards life, were less assertive, and had higher depression and anxiety scores than women in the comparison group. However, boys who had been sexually abused only had higher anxiety levels compared to boys in the comparison group. Likewise, according to Lam (2015) childhood sexual abuse significantly predicted lower self-esteem and more internalizing behavior among adolescents. Based on behavioural observations, Green (1978) reports that abused children exhibit a depressed affect with low self-esteem as the result of chronic physical and emotional abuse.

In a recent study, Pandey (2007) identified that child maltreatment was found positively related with lower level of motivation and aspiration among adolescents and abuse contributed favorably to heightened level of depression in children. From the literature review and theoretical explanation above, it is considered that childhood abuse is very important in determining the overall development of self-esteem. Therefore, findings of the present research evinced abuse as a strong predictor of self-esteem (whole) and its various domains and proved the hypothesis of the present research. Results are also empirically supported by a sizeable number.

CONCLUSION

The present study was done with the aim of studying the impact of child abuse in relation to self-esteem. From Correlation analysis, it is clearly revealed that there is an inverse relationship between different types of abuses and neglectful behavior and various domains of self-esteem. Moreover, abusive treatments by their parents or care givers experienced by children exerted diminishing self-esteem. In contrary to this, non-abused or low abused adolescents have shown greater extent of self-esteem. Furthermore, SMRA results denoted that child abuse and its different types contributed negatively in the development of self-esteem.

Overall, results of this investigation might deliver a base for certain preventive actions to be carried out. In addition, directing such kind of study will be of worth from a psychosocial and developmental perspective. There are so many variables associated with the self-esteem of an individual such as personal factors, contextual factors, social factors and cultural factors. Thus, further study is quiet essential in contributing to the knowledge base concerning self-esteem and its correlates. As everyone know that culture shapes the approach people feel, think, reflect and behave. For that reason, it is very significant to look at the Indian context in creating the picture of several impacts that might affect the relationship between the variables of the study.

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