

# Correlates Of Abuse Among Indian Adolescents In Rural Punjab

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**Abstract-**The present study comprising a sample of 310 adolescents from rural locations of Ludhiana district of Punjab state, was conducted to determine the correlates of abuse using a Personal Information Sheet, Self-concept Inventory and school records relating to academic achievement of the adolescents. Abuse among adolescents has been found to be associated with their birth-order, family income and family type. Significant differences are noted in the abuse among adolescents from joint and nuclear families. Mothers' education and occupation have also been found to be associated with abuse. A high degree of negative correlation has been observed between abuse and academic achievement of adolescents. Various preventive and remedial measures to check the menace of abuse among adolescents are suggested.

**Keywords:** Abuse, Adolescents, Correlates, Rural.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Child abuse is a complex, cosmopolitan and longstanding problem. It exists in a variety of settings: at home, in school, society, workplaces and even religious places. It is more prevalent within the family (Anuradha and Rehman 1991); while family is expected to provide love, protection and nurturance to the child, still for some children family can be a source of violence, fear and pain because of various parental, familial and cultural practices. Predictive family background factors such as living in an apartment sharing with a stranger, constant fights and quarrels between family members, overcrowding, an income insufficient to meet family basic needs or others, unemployment, marital conflicts, frequent moves and extreme household disorganization lead to adoption of corporal punishment by parents (Pianta et al. 1989; Youssef et al. 1998). Moreover authoritarian and patriarchal style of parenting, cultural beliefs among various societies/communities where physical punishment is an acceptable means of controlling children may also indirectly set the stage for child abuse. Child abuse in the Indian context was defined by a committee formed at the National Seminar on Child Abuse in India, held under the aegis of National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, New Delhi (NIPCCD 1988:10) as "Child Abuse and Neglect is the intentional, non-accidental injury, maltreatment of children by parents, caretakers, employers or others including those individuals representing governmental/non-governmental bodies, which may lead to temporary or permanent impairment of their

physical, mental and psychosocial development, disability or death" The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act 1974 of United States (PL 93-247) defines child abuse as "the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened thereby" (cited in Maurya 1996: 2). According to Parke and Collmer (1975) child abuse refers to any child who receives non-accidental physical injury as a result of acts and omissions on the part of his parents or guardians that violate the community standards concerning the treatment of children. Burgess and Conger (1978) also highlight child abuse as non-accidental physical and psychological injury. Burgess (1979:143) has, however, given a modified and wider definition of child abuse as "any child who receives physical and psychological injury as a result of acts and omissions on the part of his parents or guardians or employers". Kempe and Kempe (1978) have defined child abuse as a condition having to do with those who have been deliberately injured by physical assault. But this definition is limited in scope, for it restricts abuse to those acts which provide a diagnostic injury. The above definitions reflect the opinions of different authors regarding child abuse and there seems to be no standard definition of child abuse appropriate at cross-cultural levels. However, comparing commonalities among definitions of child abuse from 58 countries (cited in Krug et al. 2002: 59), the WHO Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention in the year 1999 drafted 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 of responsibility, trust or power".

Estimates of prevalence of child abuse, are available for developed world; in the United States an estimated rate of physical abuse of 49 per thousand children has been obtained (Straus et al. 1998), at least one million children and young people are harmed each year in the United Kingdom (National Commission of Inquiry into the Prevention of Child Abuse 1996), 4.6 per cent children suffered from severe and frequent physical abuse, including being hit with an object, being burnt or being deprived of food in households in Romania (cited in Krug et al. 2002). In a cross-sectional survey of children in Egypt, 37 per cent reported being beaten or tied up by their parents; 26 per cent suffered physical injuries such as fractures, loss of consciousness or permanent disability (Youssef et al. 1998).

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In Ethiopia, 21 per cent of urban school children and 64 per cent rural school children reported bruises or swelling on their bodies resulting from parental punishment (Ketsela and Kedebe 1997) and in the Republic of Korea, two-thirds of the parents reported whipping their children and 45 per cent confirmed that they were hit, kicked or beaten (Hahm and Guterman 2001). Risk of physical punishment is greatest among parents from lower socio-economic status family background and whose own parents were controlling, restrictive and overprotective and use of harsh discipline by both parents has been found to be related to greatest adolescent depression and externalization behaviour (Bender et al. 2007; Sharma and Sandhu, 2006). Children who have been exposed to physical aggression during childhood have been reported to generate high risk of verbal and physical aggression towards their mothers in adolescence ( Tremblay et al. 2004) and aggression from youth to parent is significantly occurs in families where parents are aggressive towards their children (Mahoney et al. 2009).

Researches have highlighted the existing problem of child abuse in Indian society also; however, due to the sensitivity of the issue and the paucity of adequate surveys, scientific studies and related statistics on the subject, the magnitude of the problem has not been assessed systematically and comprehensively. There is, thus, a need to plan detailed research studies that would help document the prevalence of abuse among children and adolescents in different settings. Moreover, research work in the area of child abuse has primarily confined itself to urban settings (Kewalramani 1996) and institutions/remand homes, that too in the area of child labour. In a country like India where more than 72 per cent people live in villages with a literacy rate of 59.4 per cent (Census of India 2001), any research study which does not include village as its unit, is not a true representation of the existing situation. Punjab has a rural population of 66.05 per cent (Census of India 2001). It was, therefore, considered worthwhile to conduct the study in the rural areas of the state where no prior work in this area exists.

Moreover, it is highly relevant to study abuse during the adolescent years which is the most sensitive period and the experiences during adolescence are likely to have indelible effects on later life as adults. Apart from physical development, adolescent years are also characterized by significant psychosocial development which has long lasting effects on the attitude and behaviour of adolescents. Hence, this study attempts to document the prevalence and correlates of abuse among adolescents since there is practically no information recorded as regards their abuse though the adolescents form a substantial part of Punjab population (18.93 %) with 53.35 per cent males and 46.65 per cent females (Census of India 1991).

These days, the media is playing a very significant role in highlighting the prevalence of abuse among children at home, in schools and at workplaces. Such information needs to be substantiated with empirical data on the issue and the documentation of correlates of abuse will provide greater insights into the life experiences of rural youth. In the light of the facts that little comprehensive work has been done in

the area of abuse among rural adolescents, the present study aims to (1) To determine the correlates of abuse among adolescents such as age, gender, birth order, type and size of family, education, occupation and income of parents (2) To study the impact of abuse on certain individual factors such as academic achievement and self-concept (3) to suggest preventive/remedial measures to deal with adolescent abuse in family setting.

## I. METHOD

The study was conducted in rural areas of Ludhiana district of Punjab state. Punjab, in the north-western corners of the country, is bound on the west by Pakistan, on the north by Jammu and Kashmir, on north-east by Himachal Pradesh and on south by Haryana and Rajasthan. The name Punjab is derived from two Persian words that is, 'Punj' meaning 'five' and 'ab' meaning 'water' since the erstwhile Punjab was the land of five rivers: Beas, Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi and Sutlej. Following partition of the country in 1947, Punjab was deprived of Chenab and Jhelum but the old name still continues and the language, culture and the typical Punjabi spirit persist and flourish.

## II. SAMPLING PROCEDURE

One block (Ludhiana-1) out of 11 blocks of the district was selected by using simple random sampling technique. The Ludhiana-1 block forms the central part of the district with 63 villages spread over an area of 24889 hectares. Ten per cent of the villages were randomly selected for the study.

Following selection of the villages, visits were made to each village to contact the Sarpanch (village head), President Mahila Mandal (a women's organization), Incharge Anganwari (a village-level preschool), Headmaster/Headmistress of the village school (wherever applicable) to establish rapport with the villagers since it was not possible to collect information on such a sensitive issue without having prior contacts with the villagers and taking them into confidence. After comprehensive discussions with important persons of each selected village and educating them about the significance of conducting such a study, the households with the adolescents (both boys and girls) in the age group of 10 to 16 years were listed. A total of 2044 adolescents were identified belonging to different social strata (upper, middle and lower).

Systematic sampling technique was employed to obtain respondents as 1000 out of total of 2044 to assess the incidence of physical and emotional abuse among them using a Personal Information Sheet and a self-structured Assessment Proforma (Kaur 2004). The selected adolescents were personally interviewed and scored for physical and emotional abuse as per the scores given in the proforma. Among the selected subjects (with abuse score ranging from 20 to 195), 449 were females and the rest 551 were males. Mean of the total scores on physical and emotional abuse was calculated to be 97.36 with standard deviation at 37.13. Correlation Coefficient for physical and emotional abuse was computed out to be 0.78 there by showing the positive correlation. For segregation of the abused adolescents, the

total sample was divided into three categories that is lower, middle and upper range of abuse by using the formula  $\bar{x} \pm SD$  (mean  $\pm$  standard deviation). Finally, a total of 310 adolescents falling in the upper range of abuse (score 116 to 155 and above) were segregated based on the formula  $\bar{x} \pm .50 SD$  (mean  $\pm$  half standard deviation). After segregating the abused adolescents, correlates of abuse viz selected demographic variables, individual traits such as academic achievement and self-concept were studied.

### III. EVOLVING A CULTURALLY RELEVANT DEFINITION OF CHILD/ADOLESCENT ABUSE

The meaning of child abuse differs in various cultures and societies and hence there is no accepted universal definition of the abuse which fits in every situation. It was therefore, imperative to evolve a definition which better describe child/adolescent abuse in the context of present study relating to rural area of the state. For this purpose, a pilot study was undertaken in the selected villages to assess the awareness, perception and understanding of parents and adolescents with respect to abuse. Thirty families (5 from each selected village) representing different socio-economic strata and having adolescents falling in the age groups of 10-16 years of both sexes (boys and girls), were randomly selected and their opinions and that of their parents and grandparents regarding the use and relevance/irrelevance of various disciplinary techniques were sought. Based on the facts and opinions of adolescents and their parents, the abuse was defined as,

*Acts committed by parents/caretakers with respect to the child which leave physical marks/scars on his/her body as well as the acts which do not leave any physical scars but are equally or more harmful to the child and keep him/her perturbed. Behaviours such as depriving the child of privileges (withdrawal of love, restrictions to play with friends etc.), scolding, verbal abuse, use of physical violence (leading to injuries such as bruises, wounds, bleeding, burns and fracture), attitude of parents towards problems of adolescents, lack of parental interest in child's activities; criticizing, rejecting, authoritarian, reluctant, blaming, discouraging and belittling attitude of parents were included under the domain of abuse.*

#### Tools

##### *Personal Information Sheet*

Information relating to various demographic factors such as age, gender, birth order, type and size of family and number of siblings, education, occupation and income of parents was listed in a Personal Information Sheet.

##### *School records for assessing academic achievement*

Information relating to academic achievement of the abused adolescents was obtained from the school records of the last final examination taken.

##### *Self-concept inventory*

Self-concept inventory developed by Saraswat (1992) was administered to determine the self-concept of the rural adolescents after getting it translated into Punjabi from the original Hindi version. The inventory provides six separate dimensions of self-concept viz. physical, social, intellectual,

moral, educational and temperamental and a total self-concept score. It comprises of 48 items. Each dimension contains 8 items and further each item has 5 options which are arranged in such a way that the scoring system for all the items will remain the same that is 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 whether the items are positive or negative. The summated score of all the 48 items provides the total self-concept score of an individual. A higher score indicates a high self-concept while a lower score hints at drlow self-concept. Reliability of the inventory is 0.91 for the total self-concept measure whereas it varies from 0.67 to 0.88 for its various dimensions.

### IV. DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected in two phases through personal interviews and focus group discussions with the adolescents in primary and high schools of the selected villages. In the first phase, personal interviews of 1000 adolescents were conducted to determine the incidence of abuse among them. In the second phase, after segregating the final sample of 310 abused adolescents, information relating to correlates of abuse, academic achievement and self-concept, was collected in small groups. Information relating to academic achievement of the abused adolescents was obtained from the school records maintained by respective Heads/Principals. To collect required information, a strong rapport had to be established with the respondents which was really a challenging job. It was very tough to convince school Principals/villagers about the significance of the study and to make them to agree for interviewing their students since the issue was too sensitive and personal. The interviews had to be conducted as per the convenience of the students and school authorities due to which number of visits required swelled to 3 to 4 times than that was thought of while planning the study.

### V. DATA ANALYSES

Chi-square test was applied to find out the association of the abuse with selected demographic factors such as age, gender, birth-order, family type and size, education and occupation of parents and income of the family. Percentage of marks obtained by the adolescents were calculated to assess their academic achievement. Correlation analysis was performed to study the impact of abuse on certain individual traits of the adolescents that is academic achievement and self-concept.

### VI. RESULTS

Results pertaining to correlates of abuse have been discussed in this section under the following heads:

#### VII. PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Data contained in Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents. The sample comprised of adolescents in the age group of 10 to 14 years (62.26 %) and 14 to 16 years (37.74 %). The percentage of the male and female adolescents were 53.87 and 46.13, respectively. Majority of the adolescents were third born and above and relatively

higher proportion (64.52%) of them belonged to nuclear families. Nearly sixty five per cent adolescents were from large size families with members six and above. Also, majority of the adolescents had three or more siblings. Approximately eighty per cent fathers and seventy per cent mothers were educated up to Matriculation and above. More than eighty per cent of the mothers were non-working. Fathers of the adolescents were engaged in different occupations such as farming, business, service and labour. Families of abused adolescents had monthly income ranging from < Rs. 1500 to > Rs. 7000; however, the maximum number of families had a monthly income not exceeding Rs. 3000.

#### VIII. ABUSE AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Association of abuse with select demographic factors such as age, gender, birth order, family type, size, education and occupation of parents and family income, is presented in Table 2. The analysis of chi-square does not reveal association of abuse with age and gender of the adolescents; the values of chi-square being non-significant. However, It is also obvious from the data that abuse among the adolescents is associated with their birth-order (ordinal position); the value of chi-square has been calculated to be significant  $\{\chi^2 (4) = 9.75; p < .05\}$ . Significant differences are noted in abuse among adolescents having different ordinal position.

Family type is also found to be associated with abuse among adolescents (Table 2). The value of chi-square has been computed to be highly significant  $\{\chi^2 (2) = 9.37; p < .01\}$ . Hence, significant differences are noted as regards abuse among adolescents from joint and nuclear families. However, family size is not found to be associated with abuse among adolescents as is evident from a perusal of chi-square values.

Mothers' education has been found to be associated with abuse whereas no association emerged with respect to fathers' education (Table 2). The values of chi-square are computed to be significant for mothers' education  $\{\chi^2 (4) = 12.77; p < .05\}$  and non-significant with respect to fathers' education. Magnitude of abuse among adolescents varies significantly with educational level of the mothers, whereas no significant differences are registered with respect to the fathers' educational level.

Data contained in the Table 2 also highlight the association between abuse and occupation of parents. Chi-square analysis reveals an association between mothers' occupation and abuse among adolescents whereas no association emerged between fathers' occupation and the abuse. The values of chi-square are found to be highly significant  $\{\chi^2 (2) = 10.01; p < .01\}$  for mothers' occupation and non-significant with respect to fathers' occupation. There are significant differences in the prevalence of abuse among adolescents with working and non-working mothers. Occupation of fathers, however, does not have any significant relationship with the abuse among adolescents. Income of the family has also been found to be associated

with abuse among adolescents. The value of chi-square has been worked out to be highly significant  $\{\chi^2 (8) = 49.79; p < .001\}$ . There are significant differences in the magnitude of abuse among adolescents from families with varying income levels.

#### IX. CORRELATION OF ABUSE WITH ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND SELF-CONCEPT OF ADOLESCENTS

Correlation of abuse with individual traits of the adolescents viz academic achievement and self-concept is highlighted in this section:

##### A. Academic achievement

Correlation analysis was computed to determine relation between abuse and academic achievement of the adolescents. A significant negative correlation between scores of academic achievement and cumulative abuse (physical and emotional) among adolescents is evident from Table 3 ( $r = -.96; p < .001$ ). Similarly an analysis of correlation coefficient for physical and emotional abuse separately, reveals a negative correlation between scores on the academic achievement and physical and emotional abuse among adolescents. The values of correlation coefficient were calculated to be highly significant (physical,  $r = -.89, p < .001$ ; emotional,  $r = -.44, p < .01$ ). Academic achievement of the abused adolescents has been found to be negatively affected with the increase in the level of abuse. A similar trend of negative correlation between abuse and academic achievement was observed among male and female adolescents separately (Table 3); the academic achievement of both male and female adolescents was negatively affected with increased level of abuse.

##### B. Self-concept

A negative correlation was recorded between scores on self-concept and cumulative abuse among female adolescents (Table 4). The value of correlation coefficient was found to be significant ( $r = -.20; p < .05$ ). The scores on the physical abuse also indicate a significantly negative correlation with self-concept among female adolescents ( $r = -.17; p < .05$ ). However, scores on the emotional abuse among female adolescents do not reveal any significant correlation with self-concept. But the differences emerge in various dimensions of self-concept; physical dimension of self-concept is determined to be negatively correlated with the emotional abuse among female adolescents; the value of correlation coefficient being significant ( $r = -.19; p < .05$ ). There is also significantly negative correlation of physical and cumulative abuse with the third dimension of self-concept relating to temperament among female adolescents (physical abuse,  $r = -.27; p < .01$  and cumulative abuse,  $r = -.24; p < .01$ ). Another dimension of self-concept which is found to be negatively correlated with emotional and cumulative abuse among female adolescents relates to education. The values of correlation are found to be significant for emotional abuse ( $r = -.17; p < .05$ ) and cumulative abuse ( $r = -.18; p < .05$ ). The self-

concept of male adolescents has, however, not been found to be correlated with abuse (Table 4).

## X. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### A. Demographic Factors

Inferences drawn from the present study indicate that abuse among adolescents is associated with the type of family. It is however, prevalent in both joint and nuclear families but more pronounced in the nuclear families (Table 2). Over the years, the family structure has changed; nuclear families are replacing the joint families which is also evident from the sample of present study where out of 310 families, 200 were the nuclear families and rest 110 being joint families. In a nuclear family, the child is more in parents' contact and hence there are more of conflicting situations resulting in his/her abuse. However, in a joint family, parents' problems are shared by other family members and hence the child is likely to escape the outlet of parental stress in the form of abuse.

Khanna (1987), however, opines that both nucleated and extended families exhibit high rate of battering and number of children in the family may not be associated with the battering. It is very difficult to conclude that small families in comparison to larger families are free from child battering. Results of the present study also do not show any significant differences as regards the abuse among adolescents from small and large families. As per the record of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (1981), the only child in the family is likely to suffer more from emotional abuse whereas four or more children in a family experience more of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Findings of several other studies point out that children in the larger families are more subjected to physical abuse/violence (Gil 1970; Park and Collmer 1975; Straus et al. 1980; Jaya and Narasimhan 1999). However, overall rate of violence towards children is somewhat higher for one-child families.

An association between abuse and mothers' education and occupation has also been revealed in the present study. Mothers educated up to Matriculation or below/illiterate, exercised more of punishment against the adolescents as compared to those with educational qualification above Matriculation. This may be attributed to the fact that mothers having education above Matriculation, are more aware and conscious about better child rearing practices and hence the least abusive. Maurya (1996) also records that illiterate and less educated parents believe more in physical punishment of their children. Observations of Gil (1971) that education of the child abusers are lower than those of general public, are also in line with the results of this study. Mothers' occupation has also been found to be associated with abuse. Non-working mothers are determined to be more punitive than the working ones. This may probably be due to the fact that being at home they are more in contact with their wards. Moreover, in our culture, it is the mother's responsibility to care for children compared to fathers and hence more likelihood of conflicting situations between mothers and children.. Some other researchers also agree

that non-working mothers are more likely to be abusive (Chapa et al. 1978; Korbin cited in Mahajan and Madhurima 1995). Prasad (2001) also reports that non-working mothers are more punitive than working mothers. Contrary to this, a few other researchers opine that physical abuse is more among the working mothers because of the irritation resulting from day long stress (Galstone 1965; Mahmood 1978). Working mothers are more prone to use overall violence towards children whereas non-working mothers are more abusive and more likely to use severe form of violence (Prasad 2001). Further, working mothers are more punitive towards teenage group (15-18 years) as compared to non-working mothers. However, Gelles and Hargreaves (1981) state that whether a mother works or not, it has no direct impact on her chances of abusing her child.

The current study also shows association of abuse with the family income and abuse has been found to be more prevalent among adolescents from the poor families (low family income) due to more of financial stress. Garbarino (1976) also notes that economic stress and inadequate resources, undermine the functioning of parents, particularly mother and out of such stress emerges child abuse. Moreover young mothers from low socio-economic status families are more likely to use harsh parenting measures with their children ( Lee 2007).

### B. Academic achievement

Academic achievement of the adolescents is influenced by both the family and school environment. In the present sample, the academic achievement of abused adolescents was found to be negatively correlated with abuse (both physical and emotional); the primary reasons being non-comprehension of the lessons taught at school and failure to complete the school work required to be done at home. Some adolescents confessed that they feared going to school when their parents could not make them available the required text books and fee in time or they could not be provided with proper school uniforms due to financial constraints. Uncongenial home environment due to various family related factors is also likely to disturb the adolescents emotionally leading to their poor academic performance. Apart from this, various household jobs may also overburden the adolescents which ultimately affect their academic performance at school. All this generates frustration among adolescents and sometimes they would not reach school even after leaving their homes in time and would rather sit on the way the whole day long and then return to their homes after the school timings are over; this practice adversely affect their academic achievement. Kewalramani (1992) also analyzed a child's own evaluation of his/her performance at school and found that a high percentage of children (75 %) who are physically and emotionally abused, feel that they are weak at studies and/or have to make more than one attempt to pass the examination. Earlier research has also pointed that the abused school children suffer from learning disabilities, retarded intellectual development and academic failure (Sandgrund *et al.* 1975). In another study by (Prabhakar 2003) also, a negative correlation between academic

performance and abuse among adolescents has been established.

### C. *Self-concept*

Self-concept may be defined as conscious, cognitive perception and evaluation by individuals of themselves; it is their thoughts and opinion about themselves (Rice 1984). Adolescents' self-concept and self-esteem are important for their optimum mental and social development. Adolescents with low or inadequate self-concept manifest internal conflicts and anxiety which consequently affect their interpersonal relationships. Therefore, development of adequate self-concept is of paramount significance.

The abuse is known to result in poor self-concept among the children and they develop a negative view of themselves (Kinard 1980). The present study has also highlighted a negative correlation between the scores on self-concept and abuse among female adolescents. Female adolescents exhibit a negative self-concept with respect to the physical abuse. A negative correlation between scores on emotional abuse and a physical dimension (individual's view of their body, health, physical appearance and strength) of self-concept among the abused female adolescents, was also noted. An inherent higher sensitivity and vulnerability of the girls coupled with low parental affection may be the cause of low self-concept among them. So is the case with the temperamental state and moral dimension of the self-concept. Kewalramani (1996) also reveals that child's self-esteem is devalued by his/her abuse. Moreover, family matters are considered to be internal affairs and sorted out within the family. Parents/caretakers never like to disclose the occurrence of child abuse to the outsiders to avoid interference. Therefore the child is traumatized and in number of cases lives with low esteem.

### XI. PREVENTIVE AND REMEDIAL MEASURES TO CHECK ADOLESCENT ABUSE

- As a measure to check abuse, the abusive parents/caretakers need to be acquainted with effective child rearing techniques to improve upon their parenting skills and disciplinary strategies and to enrich their overall ability to cope with the stressful life events in a non-damaging way so as to ensure congenial abuse-free family environment for their children.
- Village level functionaries should be trained in this respect, because being in constant touch with the parents, they can help them handle the abusive situations effectively.
- Child guidance and counseling facilities should be made accessible to parents and would-be-parents so as to enable them to discuss their children's problems.
- Preventive and remedial measures relating to the abuse should be highlighted through mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, documentary films, training programmes, seminars etc.) to promote greater understanding of child

abuse and its impact on mental and physical health of children.

- Parents/caretakers, social workers and concerned functionaries of government and non-government organizations must also be made aware of child's rights and various measures to protect them from cruelty, abuse and exploitation. Children are also required to be acquainted with their own rights and self-worth so that they can avoid abuse or seek assistance if they are at risk of abuse. They should be equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills to tackle the abusive situations appropriately.

Research in the area of adolescent abuse is deficient as regards its documentation throughout the length and breadth of the country. Scant studies made here and there, do not give a comprehensive picture of the actual situation. There is a dire need to conduct longitudinal study in the area of abuse right from the birth of the baby till the end of adolescence/attainment of adulthood in a particular setting, for better comprehension of the developmental effects of the abuse.

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Table 1 Background characteristics of adolescents from the selected villages in Ludhiana district of Punjab state (N = 310)

Characteristics	Frequency	Per cent
<b>Age (Years)</b>		
10-14	193	62.26
14-16	117	37.74
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	167	53.87
Female	143	46.13
<b>Birth order</b>		
First	81	26.13
Second	99	31.94
Third and above	130	41.94
<b>Family type</b>		
Joint	110	35.48
Nuclear	200	64.52
<b>Family size</b>		
Small(5 and below)	109	35.16
Large(6 and above)	201	64.84
<b>Number of siblings</b>		
One	55	17.74
Two	119	38.39
Three and above	136	43.87
<b>Education of parents</b>		
<i>Mother</i>		
Illiterate	99	31.94
Up to Matric	165	53.23
Above Matric	46	14.84
<i>Father</i>		
Illiterate	56	18.06
Up to Matric	236	76.13
Above Matric	18	5.81
<b>Occupation of parents</b>		
<i>Mother</i>		
Working	58	18.71
Non-working	252	81.29
<i>Father</i>		
Business	92	29.68
Service	96	30.97
Farming	58	18.71
Labour	64	20.65
<b>Family Income / month</b>		
<1500	46	14.84
1501-3000	104	33.55
3001-5000	62	20.00
5001-7000	42	13.55
>7000	56	18.06



Table 2  
Association of abuse among adolescents with demographic variables (N = 310)

Variable	Abuse level				Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ )
	Moderate	High	Severe	Total	
<b>Age (years)</b>					
10-14	93 (30.00)	58 (18.71)	42 (13.55)	193	1.24
14-16	64 (20.65)	31 (10.00)	22 (7.10)	117	
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	82 (26.45)	54 (17.42)	31 (10.00)	167	2.59
Female	75 (24.19)	35 (11.29)	33 (10.65)	143	
<b>Birth-order</b>					
First	40 (12.90)	24 (7.74)	17 (5.48)	81	9.75*
Second	51 (16.45)	20 (6.45)	28 (9.03)	99	
Third and above	66 (21.29)	45 (14.52)	19 (6.13)	130	
<b>Family type</b>					
Joint	59 (19.03)	21 (6.77)	30 (9.68)	110	9.37*
Nuclear	98 (31.61)	68 (21.94)	34 (10.97)	200	
<b>Family size</b>					
5 and below	58 (18.71)	30 (9.68)	21 (6.77)	109	0.45
6 and above	99 (31.94)	59 (19.03)	43 (13.87)	201	
<b>Mother's Education</b>					
Illiterate	40 (12.90)	32 (10.32)	27 (8.71)	99	12.77*
Up to Matric	97 (31.29)	38 (12.26)	30 (9.68)	165	
> Matric	20 (6.45)	19 (6.130)	7 (2.26)	46	
<b>Father's Education</b>					
Illiterate	26 (8.39)	17 (5.48)	13 (4.19)	56	5.08
Up to Matric	126 (40.65)	65 (20.97)	45 (14.52)	236	
> Matric	5 (1.61)	7 (2.26)	6 (1.94)	18	
<b>Mother's Occupation</b>					
Working	40 (12.90)	12 (3.87)	6 (1.94)	58	10.01**
Non-working	117 (37.74)	77 (24.84)	58 (18.71)	252	
<b>Father's Occupation</b>					
Business	50 (16.13)	27 (8.71)	15 (4.84)	92	7.49
Service	39 (12.58)	33 (10.65)	24 (7.74)	96	
Farming	35 (11.29)	12 (3.87)	11 (3.55)	58	
Labour	33 (10.65)	17 (5.48)	14 (4.52)	64	
<b>Family Income (Rs.)</b>					
<1500	10 (3.23)	30 (9.68)	6 (1.94)	46	49.79***
1501-3000	52 (16.77)	21 (6.77)	31 (10.00)	104	
3001-5000	36 (11.61)	13 (4.19)	13 (4.19)	62	
5001-7000	29 (9.35)	5 (1.61)	8 (2.58)	42	
> 7000	30 (9.68)	20 (6.45)	6 (1.94)	56	

Note: Figures in parentheses are the respective per cent values

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 3  
Correlation of abuse with academic achievement of the adolescents (N = 310)

Abuse	Academic achievement		
	Overall	Female	Male
Physical (P)	-.89***	-.90***	-.89***
Emotional (E)	-.44**	-.40**	-.51**
Cumulative (P + E)	-.96***	-.96***	-.95***

\*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

Table 4  
Correlation of abuse with self-concept of male and female adolescents

Abuse	Total Self-concept	Dimensions of self-concept					
		Female adolescents (N = 143)					
		Physical	Social	Temperamental	Educational	Moral	Intellectual
Physical (P)	-.17*	-.078	-.12	-.27**	-.13	-.15	.05
Emotional (E)	-.14	-.19*	-.11	-.03	-.17*	.02	-.01
Cumulative (P + E)	-.20*	-.14	-.14	-.24**	-.18*	-.12	.04
Male adolescents (N = 167)							
Physical (P)	.05	.12	.09	-.08	.08	-.07	.00
Emotional (E)	.02	-.07	-.04	.11	.06	-.11	.13
Cumulative (P + E)	.05	.08	.06	-.02	.09	-.10	.05

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01