

**EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS OF PARENTS AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS ON THE HEALTH AND EDUCATION OF THE
GIRL-CHILD IN PANKSHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF
PLATEAU STATE.**

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ABSTRACT

This paper is on the emotional problems of parents and its implications on the health and education of the girl-child in Pankshin. It was discovered that aggression and neurotism are mostly responsible for girl-child abuse. Due to hawking or trading, the girl-child may be malnourished and likely to contract sexually transmitted disease. Abuse of these children lead to absenteeism and dropping out of school. There was no significant difference in the implication of child abuse on the health and education of the girl-child between semi-urban and rural dwellers. It was recommended that, parent with emotional problems should seek counseling on how to manage their emotional problems as well as be educated on the importance of the health and education of the girl-child for her total development.

INTRODUCTION

An important aspect in the progress of educational research is the child who is said to be the center of education. An educational research is even more vital when it concerns the girl-child who is sometimes looked at as second to the male-child in some societies, such as those in Pankshin, where the present study was conducted. This is because the girl-child is still in an impressionable stage and her educational background is the foundation upon which her total development rests.

Child abuse is on the increase, reaching worldwide proportion. Girl-child abuse, which is found to be present in every society, only changing in contexts and occurrence, is an indication that the society is failing in its duty to the girl-child.

It is possible that the term girl-child has been described in different ways, but, Akinmade (1997) has it as, a female human being between the ages of 0-17 years. In this context, the term girl-child, is being looked at to mean a young unmarried girl below the age of 18 years.

Nature has it that there are two sexes and so the girl child abuse is a sub-set of child. Child abuse may take different forms when discussed, but in general, all will point to social derailment of the child. As explained by Network for the Promotion and

Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (1994), it is an intentional, unintentional or well intentional acts that put the physical health, emotional, moral and educational welfare of the child at risk. Ojo (1998) described it as any deliberate act by a person, group or society designed to inflict harm on a child or prevent him from moral, mental, physical and emotional development. In this context, the term child abuse is used to mean children whose mental-health, moral and educational development, and general welfare, which prevent the child from achieving her physical and psychological potentials.

Macmillan (1983) explained emotional disorders or mental illness as the culmination of unsuccessful reactions to the situation. Schifers (1963) also described it as the exaggeration of personal feelings and consequent behaviour, to the point where it strikes the other people to queer, odd, abnormal, annoying or dangerous actions. The term shall be used in this context to mean a reaction to external and internal stress, which alters ones mood, actions, perceptions, reasoning, relationship between judgment and behaviour.

Child abuse differs from rights of a child. The rights of a child as described by Meekmitchel and Heit (1986) are, to be wanted, born as healthy as possible, to be loved, experience success, assisted in reaching his/her maximum physical, emotional, and intellectual potentials. Unfortunately, some parents often trample upon these rights.

In areas where child-abuse is common, it always turn out to be that parents responsible were either maltreated as children or that they have financial problems or that they are unemployed, or that they are expressing aggressive impulses, anxiety, mood-disorders, and neuroticism, or that they are experiencing stress or other forms of frustrations. Parents under these conditions may transfer their aggression to innocent children thus exhibiting acts tantamount to child abuse, such as child neglect, emotional maltreatment, harming their children's bodies in some ways with signs like burns, bruises, cuts, missing teeth, broken bones, improper feeding, inadequate shelter, and inadequate medical care. Also poor academic performance, examination malpractice, absenteeism from school, are some of the implications on the health and education of the girl-child.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To give direction to the study, the following objectives were formulated.

- * To find out the emotional disorders of parents associated with girl-child abuse
- * To determine the implications of child abuse on the health education of the girl-child
- * To determine the implication of child abuse on the education of the girl-child
- * To determine the frequency at which emotional disorders of parent's influence the abuse of the girl-child between semi-urban and rural dwellers.

HYPOTHESES

In the present study, it is assumed that:

- * There is no significant difference in the frequency at which emotional disorders of parents' influence the abuse of girl-child between semi-urban and rural dwellers.

- * There is no significant difference in the extent of implication of child abuse on the health of girl-child between semi-urban and rural dwellers.
- * There is no significant difference in the extent of implications of child abuse on the education of girl-child between semi-urban and rural dwellers.

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

The study consists of married men and women. The multi-stage sampling method was used for the selection of subjects. First, was the selection of district, five out of eight districts were randomly selected. These are Pankshin, Kadung, Chip, Wokkos and Pai. The next stage consists of stratified random selection of the villages in each five districts, making a total of fifteen (15) villages. The third stage was the compilation of residential houses in each of the villages randomly selected. For semi-urban areas, a compilation of streets in each area was done and for rural areas, every fifth house was picked. In all, a systematic sample of four houses was selected. In the fifth stage, purposive random sampling technique was used so as to have equal representation of subjects in each of the houses selected.

In all, one hundred and seventy men and eighty-two married women were used, bringing the sample total to two hundred and fifty-two (252). A questionnaire was used for data collection. It was designed to gather information about the respondent's area of residence; sex, information on emotional disorder of parents on girl-child abuse, and the implications of girl-child on health and education. The respondents were expected to tick as many as applicable. Also respondents were expected to show the frequency at which the emotional disorders of parents, influence child abuse. They were expected to indicate their view ranging from: always, sometimes, occasionally, and rarely.

Four experts-two in health education and two from educational foundations validated the instrument. To establish the reality of the instrument, the test retest technique was used and a reliability of 0.84 was obtained.

Percentages and frequencies were used to answer the research objectives, while inferential chi-square statistics was used in testing the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

RESULTS

In presenting the major findings related to the study, the answer to the objectives are presented first using frequencies and percentages. Testing of the hypotheses posed followed this. The findings are hereby presented in the tables below.

TABLE 1: Presumed emotional Disorders of Parents Associated with Girl-Abuse. (N = 251)

EMOTIONAL DISORDERS	RESPONSES	
	F	%
Depression by parents	160	63.74
Aggressive ways by parents	196	78.08
Parental violence	180	71.71
Neurotism	154	77.29
Marital stress between spouses	163	64.94
Anxiety and mood disorders of parents	154	61.35

Table 1 above shows that aggressive ways of parents 196 (78.08 %) and neurotism 154 (77.29%) are the most emotional disorders of parents responsible for girl-child abuse. The table equally reveals that the least emotional disorder associated with child abuse was anxiety and mood disorders of parents as indicated by 154 (61.94%) respondents.

TABLE 2: Health Implication Associated with Girl-child Abuse (n-251.)

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS	RESPONSES	
	F	%
Injuries sustained due to physical maltreatment	172	68.52
Physical torture leading to murder or infanticide	128	50.92
Early marriage leading to complications of V.V.F	187	74.50
Vulnerability to pre-marital pregnancy	140	55.77
Female genital mutilation leading to infection	178	70.91
Lack of essential medical care	154	61.35
Vulnerability to drug addiction in defiance of society's hash treatment	121	48.20
Due to hawking/trading, becoming vulnerable to sexual assault leading to venereal disease	202	80.47

Table 2 shows that 202 (80.47%) respondents indicated that due to hawking/trading, those categories of girls become vulnerable to sexual assault leading to venereal diseases. Also, the table shows that lack of essential nutrition lead to malnutrition as indicated by (77.29%) respondents, The least health implications associated with girl-child abuse were lack of essential medical care, 154 (61.35%) as indicated by the respondents as well as vulnerability to premarital pregnancy as indicated by (55.77%) respondents.

TABLE 3: Education Implication Associated with Girl-child Abuse (N =251)

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS	RESPONSES	
	F	%
Pre-disposes the victim to emotional instability	154	61.35
Absenteeism in school	226	90.03
Delinquent acts exhibited by such children	198	78.88
Lack of concentration in school work	162	64.54
Poor performance in school work	199	79.28
Some become drop-out from school	208	82.86
Due to absenteeism, it may lead to examination malpractice	151	59.76

Table 3 above shows that absenteeism in school 226 (90.03%) and dropping- out from school (208 82.86 %) are some of the educational implications for girl-child abuse. The table revealed that poor performance in school works 199(79.28%) and delinquent acts exhibited by such children 198(78.88) accounted for child abuse. The least educational implication associated with child abuse was due to absenteeism, which may lead to examination malpractice as indicated by 15 (59.70%) respondents.

TABLE 4: Frequency of Which Emotional Disorders of Parents' Influence Girl-child Abuse Between Semi-Urban and Rural Dwellers. (N =251)

DEGREE OF-- INFLUENCE	LOCATION				TOTAL	
	URBAN		RURAL		F	%
	F	%	F	%		
Always	60	23.90	30	11.95	90	35.85
Sometimes	32	12.74	18	7.17	50	19.91
Occasionally	19	7.56	14	5.59	33	13.15
Rarely	14	5.57	7	2.28	21	8.35
Total	125	49.77	69	27.49	194	77.26

Table 4 shows that 60 (23.90%) respondents of the semi-urban dwellers indicated that emotional disorders always influence girl-child abuse by parents, while 30 (11.95%) respondents of the rural dwellers indicated that emotional disorders always influence girl-child abuse by parents.

TABLE 5: Chi-square for Frequency at Which Emotional Disorders of Parents Influence the Abuse of Girl-child Between Semi-Rural Dwellers

VARIABLE	CAL. X2	DF	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE	TABLE. X2	DECISION
Frequency of Influence	4.12	3	.05	7.815	Accepted

Table 5 above revealed that there is no significant difference in the frequency at which emotional disorders influence the abuse of girl-child between semi-urban and rural dwellers. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the frequency at which emotional disorders influence girl-child abuse between semi-urban and rural dwellers.

TABLE 6: *Chi-square for Difference in the Extent of Implication of Child Abuse on the Health of Girl-Child Between Semi- Urban and Rural Parents.*

VARIABLE	CAL. X2	DF	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE	TABLE. X2	DECISION
Extent of implication	4.01	4	.05	9.488	Accepted

Table 6 above shows that there is no significant difference in the extent of implication of child abuse on the education of girl –child between parents of different locations. Therefore, location has no influence on the implications of child abuse on the health of girl –child.

TABLE 7: *Chi-square for Difference in the Extent of Implications of Child Abuse on the Education of Girl Between Semi- Urban and Rural Dwellers*

VARIABLE	CAL. X2	DF	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE	TABLE. X2	DECISION
Extent of implication	3.98	4	.85	9.488	Accepted

Table 7 above shows that there is no significant difference in the extent of implication of child abuse on the education of the girl-child between parents of semi-urban and rural dwellers. Therefore, location has no influence on the implications of child abuse on the education of the girl-child.

DISCUSSION

Some evidence were produced to show that emotional disorders of parents are associated with child abuse. The study revealed in Table 1 that aggressive ways of parents and neurotism were the most emotional disorders of parents responsible for girl-child abuse. This finding agrees with what Smith, Hanaan and Noble [1973] who had 76 percent of the mothers and 64 percent of the fathers who were neurotic. This finding is in consonance to Jersild [1968] who stressed that neurotic couples often exhibit frequent criticism, threats to evict, locking the child up, or deliberately fighting the child.

The table also reveals that parental violence is an emotional disorder associated with girl-child abuse. This was not surprising because parents who are violent in nature are liable to beat up their children thereby encouraging child abuse. This is in line with

what Satan and Minnesinger (1960) stressed, when he affirmed that violence and primitive fantasy life leads to child abuse.

The finding on Table 2 showed that girls involved in hawking and trading gives rise to sexual assault predisposing them to sexually transmitted diseases. This was expected and not surprising due to the fact that many adolescent girls who are involved in trading or hawking are liable to be enticed into having sex by young or old men in exchange for money and materials, thereby, leading them to sexually transmitted diseases. These findings concurred with that of Kisseka and Ute Sanya (1988) who found that of the female hawking/trading, 16 percent who sought treatment for STDs were children between 6 and 15 years.

The table also revealed that lack of essential nutrition leads to malnutrition. This is obvious as balance diet leads to balance body. They stressed, that in cases where child neglect was pronounced, children were mal-nourished, without proper shelter, lacking essential medical care, denied normal experience that produce feelings of being loved and wanted and exposed to emotional disturbance due to problems in the home.

Table 3 showed that absenteeism in school 22(90.03%), and drop out in school 208 (82.86%) are some of the educational implications for girl-child abuse. These were expected because, observation seems to reveals that parents who abuse their children tend to show constant disapproval or neglect with harshness. Some parents often at times only see the child's fault and thereby use severe punishments. This is in line with what Jersild (1968) stressed, that children that suffer abuse by parents learn to expect nothing, or to expect the worst, and having learned that, his guard is up against every one he encounters. Furthermore, that he erects a wall between himself and those who might be friend him.

The findings on table 6 and 7 revealed that location has no influence on the implication of child abuse on health and education of girl-child. This supports Gales (1978) who affirmed that abuses come from all ethnic, religious, geographical, social, educational and economic backgrounds. On the other hand, it is in contrast with the finding of Ojo (1998) who explained that abuse rates in urban areas are greater than those of small cities or suburb's communities.

CONCLUSION

Due to the result of the study, the findings revealed that aggressiveness, neurotism were the most emotional disorders of parents responsible for girl-child abuse. Girls are becoming vulnerable to sexual assaults leading to venereal disease as a result of hawking/trading and lacking of essential nutrition leading to malnutrition were the health implications associated with girl-child abuse.

Absenteeism in school and some becoming drop out in schools were some of the educational implications associated with girl-child abuse. There was no significant difference in the frequency at which emotional disorders influence girl-child abuse between the two locations and there was no significant difference in the implications of child abuse on the health and education of the girl-child.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended.

- * Parents with emotional problems should seek the guidance of counselors so as to help them in managing their emotional disorder.
- * Government should as matter of urgency formulate legislations that would protect and promote the rights of the child.

Parents are educated on the importance of health and education of the girl-child for all development.

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