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Orphans: Psychological Condition and Prevention

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Abstract

This research paper is a basically review research paper focused on psychological condition and prevention of orphan child. The future of a country depends on the mental health and strength of young people. Study shows that at least one in five children and adolescents have a mental health disorder and at least one in ten have serious emotional disturbance. Orphans exist in every age and in all civilizations. According to the joint report of UNICEF, Development (2002), about 1.7 billion children are orphans worldwide. Out of this number, Asia contributes 6.5% orphans and Africa leads with 11.9% orphans. China have about 573,000 orphans below 28 years old (Orphan report), and an estimated 650,000 children are in Russian orphanages. A child who is below 18 years of age and who has lost one or both parents may be defined as an orphan. Maternal orphan is referred to a child who has lost their mother and paternal orphan is referred to a child who has lost their father. Social orphans are children who are living without parents because of abandonment or because their parents gave them up as a result of poverty, alcoholism or imprisonment.

Keywords: orphans, psychological conditions, prevention

Introduction

The number of orphans in India stands at approximately 55 million children of age 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 this number of children live or work on the streets of India, and 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 fully filled with children, and more 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 has resulted in an alarming increase in the number of orphans. 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 in which most of these children 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. In the society, orphan children can be considered to be at more risk than average children.

A new study by an international charity for orphaned and abandoned children found that India is home to 20 million orphans, a figure projected to increase by 2021. Another study by an International children's charity has found that 4 per cent of India's child population of 20 million are orphans. Most of these children have been abandoned by their parents. In fact, the charity estimates that only 0.3 per cent of these orphans are children whose parents have actually died. The data analyzed in the study came from India's National Family Health

Survey-3 (2005-2006), as well as from the national census. Under the terms of the study, "orphan" was defined as a child who has been abandoned or has lost *both* parents. The high proportion of abandoned children among orphans highlights the fact that poverty is a major reason behind the situation. Indeed, the study found that states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal had more orphans than India's richer states. Generally, the country's central and eastern regions were found

to be worse affected than the north and the south. Combined, the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are home to 6 million orphaned children under the age of 18. The eastern region, encompassing Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal, now houses 5.2 million orphans, but will likely have 6 million by 2021. Each of these regions is home to more than double the number of orphans living in either the north or west regions.

A study conducted by Musisi & Kinyanda, (2009) in which he studied a comparison of the behavioural and emotional disorders among primary school-going orphans and non-orphans in Uganda. They found that emotional, behavioural as well as psychiatric disorders occur in these orphan children. In their study, they recommended that counselling and psychology should be taught to the caretakers and teachers of children living in orphanages, and they clearly pointed out the psycho-socio problems with children who have lost their parents. A study conducted by: ("Rural Development Research", 2009) shows that children who are orphans face many psychological disorders. At the age when they need much support from their parents and siblings to cope up with physical and emotional development, the loss of their parents make them more prone to psychological disorders. The attachment with the siblings and their impact is necessary for a growing child, and missing this link because of orphanages will also add up to their psychological problems where a research by Suri (2014) highlighted the problems faced by children who migrated to Kashmir. The basic objective of the study was to understand the socio economic implications of armed conflict on misplaced migrant children and how they got affected under such conditions, to include their experience and understanding. The sample size comprised 230 children below the age of 18 with 160 males and 70 females. They observed that the marriage of the young women took place early. Lack of educational facilities, peer relations, and psychosocial problems and threats of sexual violence from the local community as well as migrants made these young women vulnerable, while Aliganyira et al., (2014) reported in their study that adopting parents and schools have not provided the emotional support often needed to these children. Most adopting parents lack information on the problems faced by these children and are therefore unable to offer emotional support; and school teachers do not know how to identify psychological and social problems and thus fail to offer individual and group attention. The idea was to show the relation between the environment and the individuals' assessment of their ability to deal with it and to adjust their behaviour. Most children without parental support risk powerful cumulative and often negative effects because of their parents' death, basic cause of becoming vulnerable and predisposed to physical and psychological risks. Aliganyira et al, (2014) evaluated that parental loss and orphanage placement can be stressful and

can negatively affect the psychological well-being of children. However, studies on the psychological well-being of orphanage-placed children impact of parental loss and orphanage placement is minimally understood. The aim of this study was to explore stress (symptoms of depression and anxiety), coping and the overall quality of life of orphaned children in comparison to non-orphans who resided with their parents.

Those children who choose not to move or who may not have any other relative to go to may be forced to live on their own, constituting child-headed families. All these changes can easily affect not only the physical, but also the psychological well-being of vulnerable adolescents. They can be very stressful as they pose new demands and constraints to children's life. It is feared that many children may find it difficult to adapt to the new changes. Minde (1988) said that makes it clear that it is not the social change itself that may cause psychological problems; rather it is the failure of the individual to adapt to social change. Like bereavement, social change and the resultant need to adapt to it create stress. According to Minde (1988), this stress may be shown in symptoms of confusion, anxiety, depression, and behavioural disorders such as disobedience. The same symptoms may cause learning problems. Children who are frustrated, fearful, and depressed may fail to concentrate in class and therefore perform badly. Failure by the school and the home systems to recognize these symptoms and address them will aggravate the child's psychological problems. However, in spite of these efforts, many of the orphaned children continue to experience emotional problems and little is being done in this area of emotional support. There are several reasons. First, there is a lack of adequate information on the nature and magnitude of the problem; secondly, there is a cultural belief that children do not have emotional problems and therefore there is a lack of attention from adults. Thirdly, since psychological problems are not always obvious, many adults in charge of orphans are not able to identify them. However, even where the problem may have been identified, there is a lack of knowledge of how to handle it appropriately. In many cases children are punished for showing their negative emotions, thereby adding to their pain. Loss of loved ones, particularly during childhood, brings with it depressive thoughts and feelings among which are sadness, anger and guilt. These are normal feelings at the time of bereavement. However, with the passage of time, and as the individual accepts the loss, the negative emotions are expected to disappear. Social services emphasis only on educational and economic development and clinical psychologist could highlight only different areas of their psychological problem. But all are fail to recognize main root cause of different psychological problem as well as to give appropriate therapy for their problems. So after reviewing many researches and the aim of the present study is to construct a psycho-yogic therapy package for the psychological and cognitive development of orphans. There is a crying need for orphan adolescence in India. Today one of the most important issues is to discover the conditions of orphans. The orphanages environment plays an important role on the child as stimulus and influences his response to very great extent. There is an obvious lack of appropriate training of identifying psychological and social problems and therefore offering individual or group attention. In recognition of

these problems this study to investigate the nature and extent of psychological and emotional problems among orphan adolescents is needed. Children need various types of psychological emotional and social support ranging from those things necessary for survival, such as food and health care, to those interventions that will provide a better quality of life in the future such as education, psychosocial support and self-efficacy. Bussing et al., (2012) found that in their study effects of yoga interventions on various components of mental and physical health, by focusing on the evidence described in review articles. Collectively, these reviews suggest a number of areas where yoga may well be beneficial, but more research is required for virtually all of them to firmly establish such benefits. The heterogeneity among interventions and conditions studied has hampered the use of meta-analysis as an appropriate tool for summarizing the current literature. Nevertheless, there are some meta-analyses which indicate beneficial effects of yoga interventions, and there are several randomized clinical trials (RCT's) of relatively high quality indicating beneficial effects of yoga for pain-associated disability and mental health. Yoga may well be effective as a supportive adjunct to mitigate some medical conditions, but not yet a proven stand-alone, curative treatment. Yoga may have potential to be implemented as a beneficial supportive/adjunct treatment that is relatively cost-effective, may be practiced at least in part as a self-care behavioural treatment, provides a life-long behavioural skill, enhances self-efficacy and self-confidence and is often associated with additional positive effect.

According to Tejvani et al., (2016) it takes a parent, family, and community to bring up a healthy child through love, nurturance, and gentle guidance. When children are neglected and abandoned or even abused, it may lead to a severe effect on them lasting till lifetime. Several studies have shown such effects of child abuse and neglect although the outcome may vary as a function of the interaction between specific genes and environmental conditions. Children living in orphanages not only have to face challenges such as malnutrition, crowded living spaces, and lack of parental care which have been shown having a deleterious effect on development but they may also have psychological difficulties such as loneliness, sense of abandonment, and difficulties in identity formation. One study from South Asia found behavioural problems in around 33% orphanage children. In another comparative study between 52 adolescents living in an orphanage and 55 non-orphanage residents, it was reported that participants living in the orphanage had significantly higher anxiety, depression, negative self-concept, hostility, and Global Severity Index points than the control group. Further, children living in orphanages often have low self-esteem. Yoga is one of the alternatives and complementary medicine interventions, which is non-invasive, safe, as well as cost-effective. It has found to be effective in many clinical health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, Parkinson's disease, as well as psychological problems such as anxiety and depression. In a study with school children, it was found that 10 days of residential Yoga program improved short-term and working memory. In another study, 8 weeks of mindfulness awareness practice 30 min/session, 3 sessions/ week showed a significant improvement in cognitive functions. In another research conducted by Purohit et al., (2016) said that in

their study executive function (EF) is important for physical and mental health of children. Studies have shown that children with poverty and early life stress have reduced EF. The aim of the study was to evaluate the effect of Yoga program on the EF of orphan adolescents. Seventy two apparently healthy orphan adolescents randomized and allocated into two groups as Yoga group ($n = 40$; 14 girls, age = 12.69 ± 1.35 yrs) and Wait List Control (WLC) group ($n = 32$, 13 girls, age = 12.58 ± 1.52 yrs). Yoga group underwent three months of Yoga program in a schedule of 90 min per day, four days per week whereas the WLC group followed the routine activities. They were assessed by Stroop Color-Word Task, Digit Symbol Substitution Test (DSST), Digits Span Test and Trial Making Test (TMT) at the beginning and end of the program. The repeated measures ANOVA showed significant difference in time and group interactions ($p < 0.05$) for all subtests of Stroop Color-Word Task and Digit Span Test and part-A of TMT whereas there were no significant difference found in DSST and TMT (part-B). The post-hoc test with Bonferroni adjustment also showed significant improvements ($p < 0.001$) within the Yoga group in all test scores while in wrong score of DSST did not exhibit significant reduction. Whereas the WLC group, showed significant improvement ($p < 0.05$) in Stroop Color, Color-Word score, net score of DSST, Digit Span forward and Digit Span Total. Three months Yoga program was found useful for the young orphan adolescents in improving their executive functions.

Further study conducted by Verma et al., (2016) reveal that the regular practice of Pranakarshan Pranayam helps to cope up the Stress level of college Students/ adults. All these aspects affect the interpersonal and social behavior as well as psychological Health of an individual. Healthy citizen makes mentally healthy society then this will lead to the society for the development. In other way different yogis stat the principle of yoga that the blockage in the pranic passage is known as disease so during the practice of yoga, actually we are trying to clear the blockage which exist in the way of vital energy/Prana. Once a person clears the blockage he definitely gets rid of disease. "Pranayama induces calmness and tranquility in several ways. It clears all the pranic passages of any blockages, due to the presence of toxins-It equalizes the flow of prana in the ida and pingala network of nadis. It purifies the blood systems of all toxins. The purifying action of Nadi-shodhan Pranayama on the brain cells enhances the efficiency of the brain centers, allowing them to function at their optimum capacity.

So we can concluded that traditional medical practitioners "Pranayama have proved to be the best for removal of Stress and Tension, Deep breathing has proved to be the best for removal of Frustration. According to some researchers Pranayama act as a Tranquilizer and can reduces the stress phenomena of mentally stressed adults. Here is the only way to cope up the stress, as we all are familiar with the remedy in the traditional medicines. "The effect of stressor can be reduced / avoided by strengthening will power or by changing life style or one may opt for taking medicines. Pranayama helps the people to keep the mind relaxed as many medical practitioner beliefs that alternative medicines has more stable efficacy on the stress, they said that "There are many treatment alternatives to medication, including cognitive behavioral therapy, which

is widely accepted to be more effective for anxiety than drugs. To overcome anxiety for good, one may need to change life style; it includes regular exercise, breathing practices adequate sleep, and a healthy diet. Other effective treatments for stress include talk therapy and meditation.” On the behalf of these studies we must stat that the Pranakarshan Pranayam tranquilizes the mind and body, to get the mind relax and stress free.

So the Practice of Pranayama is calming down the mind and body as well as enhancing work ability. In today’s haphazard life, stress has become an evitable part of life. Yogic practices not only reduce the stress among individuals but also strengthen the positive aspects of human personality, enhance the hidden quality of human being and also help in developing the country. This practice will be very beneficial for the psychological wellbeing of orphan child.

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