

## **Social Work and Issues of Children in Modern Society**

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### **Abstract**

Childhood is one of the most beautiful span of life of every human being. It is an influential and relevant stage which could create an extended impact to forthcoming adulthood. Social worker performs different roles and has greater responsibility while working with children. A social worker work along with other professionals, to ensure that child gets proper care education, health and other services. In the modern society children face wide variety issues, but these issues are very much different from that of problems identified and studied and analyzed by researchers ten years back. With the advent of modern technology, modern electronic gadgets like mobiles, tablets videogames and other equipments are very common and are available in every home. So it ceased the recreational activities and play time of modern children thus resulting in physically unfit childhood and also to obese conditions. Broken families divorced and separated parents ,single parent rearing, unhealthy junk food consumption, peer group influences, attension seeking behaviours, news making tendencies, media influences, modern lifestyle all these issues could create physical, mental ,cultural, social psychological issues among children in modern society. Secondary sources were referred in the study.

**Keywords:** Children, Issues, Social Worker, Gadgets, Modern lifestyle

### **Introduction**

The role of a child in the society should be first and foremost, a gatherer

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of knowledge. Of course there are many roles a child can play. From entertainer to family and friends; as a helper to parents, family and society. Children should not bear hard or even semi hard labor, as they are not mentally equipped to endure hardships of life at this age. Children are important because they are the future leaders. Some may become nation leaders while others may become leaders in the sense that they will be the ones who will nurture the next generation.

Child development contains the biological, psychological and emotional changes that occur in human beings between birth and the conclusion of adolescence, as the individual progresses from dependency to increasing autonomy. It is a continuous process with a predictable sequence, yet having a unique course for every child. It does not progress at the same rate and each stage is affected by the preceding developmental experiences. Because these developmental changes may be strongly influenced by genetic factors and events during prenatal life, genetics and prenatal development are usually included as part of the study of child development. Related terms are developmental psychology, referring to development throughout the lifespan, and pediatrics, the branch of medicine relating to the care of children. Developmental change may occur as a result of genetically-controlled processes known as maturation, or as a result of environmental factors and learning, but most commonly involves an interaction between the two. It may also occur as a result of human nature and our ability to learn from our environment. There are various definitions of periods in a child's development, since each period is a continuum with individual differences regarding start and ending. Some age-related development periods and examples of defined intervals are: newborn (ages 0–4 weeks); infant (ages 4 weeks – 1 year); toddler (ages 1–3 years); preschooler (ages 4–6 years); school-aged child (ages 6–11 years); adolescent (ages 12–19).

### **Social work and role of social worker in child welfare**

Social work is an academic discipline and profession that concerns itself with individuals, families, groups and communities in an effort to enhance social functioning and overall well-being. Social work is a profession concerned

with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being. It aims to help people develop their skills and their ability to use their own resources and those of the community to resolve problems.

Social worker performs different roles among children and child welfare settings like Early Intervention Specialist, Adoption worker, Adoption Coordinator, Case worker, Case Planner, Adult protective case worker, Certified children youth family social worker, Child abuse worker, case supervisor, child advocate, child care counselor, Child development consultant, child protection specialist, Child protective service social worker, Child welfare case worker, child welfare consultant, Community worker, Foster care worker, elementary school social worker, family service case worker, family support specialist, Group worker, Juvenile counselor, Juvenile officer, Licensed social worker, Human service specialist, medical social worker, Post adoption coordinator, Child welfare worker, Delinquency prevention social worker.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To study the opinion of parents about their child and their usage of modern electronic gadgets
2. To learn about changing family styles in giving fast food to children
3. To understand the influence of media on children

### **Review of literature**

Robertson and Rossiter (1974) to ascertain the extent to which children were capable of understanding the purpose of television commercials and the effect of such understanding on their attitude and purchase request. For the purpose, they interviewed the first, third and the fifth grade boys from five Catholic schools using the open-ended questions. The study revealed that children developed increasingly sophisticated recognition about TV commercials, including attribution of persuasive intent with age. They revealed that by the age of 10 or 11, practically all children are able to attribute persuasive

intent of commercials, their positive attitude to advertising declines steadily, skepticism grows. Further, children of parents with higher educational level tended to attribute persuasive intent at an earlier age than children of parents with lower educational level. The study indicated that children in this age placed less trust in commercials, disliked them and demonstrated a diminished desire for advertised product and made few purchase requests. Older children in this age voice criticism independently and distrusted the persuasive and commercial intent of advertising.

Wulfsohn et al. (2000) studied American children's adjustment to first grade; Contributions of children's temperament, positive mothering, and positive fathering. The current study examined the extent to which early temperament (inhibition, fearlessness, anger, pleasure) and early parenting were related to children's adjustment to first grade.

### **Research methodology**

Descriptive research design is used in the study. Descriptive research studies are those studies which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or a group. Those studies concerned with specific predictions with narration of fact that characteristics concerning individual groups or situations are part of descriptive study.

Universe of the study is parents of children between the age of three to eleven years. Snowball sampling or chain sampling method is used in the study. It is a non-probability sampling method where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. The data was collected from twenty five parents who had children between the age group of three to eleven years in the Valliyad area. Out of the 25 samples, 12 were male and 13 were females.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretations**

The researchers conducted the study to analyze the opinion of parents about their children on usage of modern electronic gadgets and also to find

out media influences, changes in parents' attitude in dealing with children. The data analysis was done using descriptive statistics. The collected data was coded and analysed using SPSS Version 20. The findings was then interpreted and results or inferences were then drawn.

### **Findings of the study**

- 28 % of the respondents have children between age group of 3-5 years. 40% of the respondents have children between age group of 6-8 years. 24% of the respondents have children between age group of 9-11 years. 8% of the respondents have children between age group of 12-14 years.

- 20 % of the respondents have three family members at home, 56% of the respondents have four members at home, 12% of the respondents have five members at home and 12% of the respondents have more than six family members at home.

- 12% of the respondents have family monthly income between 5000-10000.4% of the respondents have family monthly income between 10000-15000.84% of the respondents have family income above 15000.

- 24% of the respondents' spouse were employed in private sector. 20% of them were self employed and 56% of them were working abroad.

- 84% of the respondents were married, 8% of the respondents were divorced, 8% of the respondents were separated.

- 24% of the respondents' spouse were employed in private sector. 20% of them were self employed and 56% of them were working abroad.

- 32% of the respondents opined that their child use mobiles than other gadgets, 12% of the respondents opined that their children use tablets than other gadgets, 24% of the respondents opined that their children use videogames than other gadgets. 32% of the respondents opined that their child uses all the gadgets.

- 20% of the respondents opined that their child uses electronic gadgets

for 30 minutes, 40% of the respondents opined that their child uses electronic gadgets for one hour. 28% of the respondents opined that their child uses electronic gadgets for two hours. 12% of the respondents opined that their child uses electronic gadgets for more than three hours.

- 16% of the respondents opined that their child goes out and engage in outdoor activities with friends for 30 minutes, 44% of the respondents opined that their child goes out and engage in outdoor activities with friends for one hour, 40 % of the respondents opined that their child goes out and engage in outdoor activities with friends for less than ten minutes.

- 12% of the respondents opined that their child likes homely food, 32% of the respondents opined that their child likes hotel food, 12% of the respondents opined that their child likes fast food at home, 44% of the respondents opined that their child likes fast food from outside.

- 20 % of the respondents opined that they never buy food from hotel for their child, 36 % of the respondents opined that they buy fast food from hotel once in a month for their child. 20 % of the respondents opined that they buy fast food from hotel once in a week for their child, 4% of the respondents opined that they buy fast food from hotel twice in a week for their child. 20 % of the respondents opined that they buy fast food from hotel twice in a month for their child.

- 20% of the respondents opined that they never buy fast food from outside for their children, 24% of the respondents opined that they buy fast food from outside for their children once in a month. 28% of the respondents opined that they buy fast food from outside for their once in a week, 8% of the respondents opined that they buy fast food from outside for their children always. 20% of the respondents opined that they buy fast food from outside for their children twice in a month.

- 80% of the respondents believed that their children have addiction towards modern electronic gadgets.

- 88% of the respondents believe they have to help the child to overcome from excessive use of electronic gadgets.

- 72% of the respondents opined that if electronic and other gadget excessive usage persist longer the children have to be given counseling or other help.
- 75% of the respondents opined that their child is influenced easily by media and advertisements and demands always for such products and as a result also have unhealthy food preferences.
- 70% of the parents opined that they try to fulfill the demands because of extreme love for children or due to slog activities of their children though they are aware that those demands could be harmful to children.
- The cross tabulation test between parent's job and child gadget addiction shows that 55% of the children have addiction in mobiles and other gadgets whose parents.

### **Suggestions**

Promoting child development through parental training is necessary. Parents play a large role in a child's life, socialization, and development, hence they must be sensitized properly. Having multiple caregivers that is parents, grand parents and elders at home can add stability to the child's life and therefore encourage healthy development, hence encourage joint family systems.

Early intervention programs and treatments in developed countries include individual counseling, family, group counseling and social support services, behavioural skills training programs to eliminate problematic behaviour and teach parents "appropriate" parenting behaviour.

Parenting programs like-Video interaction guidance is a video feedback intervention through which a guide helps a client to enhance communication within relationships. The client is guided to analyse and reflect on video clips of their own interactions. Video Interaction Guidance has been used where concerns have been expressed over possible parental neglect in cases where the focus child is aged 2-12, and where the child is not the subject of a child protection plan.

The Safe Care programme is a preventative programme working with parents of children under 6 years old who are at risk of experiencing significant harm through neglect. The programme is delivered in the home by trained practitioners, over 18 to 20 sessions and focuses on 3 key areas: parent-infant/child interaction; home safety and child health.

Triple P (Parenting Program) is a positive parenting program. It is a multilevel, parenting and family support strategy. The idea behind it is that if parents are educated on “proper” parenting and given the appropriate resources, it could help decrease the amount of child neglect cases. When deciding whether to leave a child home alone, caregivers need to consider the child’s physical, mental, and emotional well-being, as well as state laws and policies regarding this issue.

### **Conclusion**

Social workers support people with issues like mental health, trauma experiences, family relationships, family violence, grief and loss, homelessness, and misuse of alcohol and other drugs. They work with individuals, families, groups, communities and organisations. Social workers can offer counselling, casework and social support to adults, child and family. A social worker can help if one have special or complex needs or are having difficulties that they are struggling to manage on your own.

Social workers can also help client to identify and connect with appropriate services that they might not have known about. Other reasons to see a social worker might include: current or past experience of abuse or family violence, problems with a relationship in life , divorce or separation, problems with alcohol and other drugs or gambling, difficulties with parenting, difficulty coping with significant changes in life, like loss of employment, difficulty coping with the loss of a significant person in your life, including pregnancy loss.



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