

Child Abuse and Protection

BUDDHIST ATTITUDE ON PREVENTION CHILD ABUSE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Many kinds of researchers have been published relating Buddhist perspective but it is rare and difficult to find the Buddhist perspective on prevention of child abuse. Some scholars who research academic areas of Buddhism cite that there is not a perspective in Buddhism about child abuse. They mention above fact referring some part of Buddhist Literature such as *Vessantara Jataka*, *Tilamutti Jātaka*, and *Kēsi Sutta*. When study Buddhism deeply, many examples can be found focusing child protection in Buddhism. Next fact is ordering children under eighteen years old consider as a child abuse. The main aim of Buddhism is attaining the bliss of Nibbāna. Children are practiced from childhood to attain Nibbāna. Hence, ordering child cannot be considered as a child abuse.

Anyhow, it is difficult to find the fix answer for preventing child abuse because any kind of *Sutta* has not been directly focused on this manner directly. But many *Sutta* in the canonical text has been concerned regarding this topic as attitudinal manner. Buddha mentions in *Piya Sutta* that children are the wealthy of human but

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the tragedy is children are abused by own parents. In *Vasala sutta* mentions not to marry a child but child marriage exists in some part of the world. *Mahāvagga pāli* and *Siṅgālōvāda sutta* mention about the compassion of parents towards child but child is abuse by own family. *Vattakkhandhaka* of *Vinaya Pitak* advices how the teacher treats his pupils but children are abused in the school by the teacher in various ways. These facts show that theories consist in the Buddhist philosophy but the problem is those theories are not practiced correctly. Next, the philosophical approach can be applied for preventing the child abuse as *Virmanaya* and *Samādānaya*. Every person has an ethical responsibility to prevent from any kind of abuse or sexual harassment of child (*viramanaya*). There is a social responsibility to safeguard children as a part of social compassion (*samādānaya*).

This research has been done using the Primary sources, secondary and tertiary sources. In addition to that getting subjective facts form lecturers who study this field academically. At the end, this research will point out how prevent the child abuse through Buddhist teaching.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children are the guiders and leader in the future who should have consisted of mental wellbeing and physical wellbeing. Personality and confidence are developed on so called two facts. Hence, children should grow up in the perfect environment but tragedy is children are abused day by day in the world. “Children have the right to be protected forms all forms of violence. They must be kept safe from harm. They must be given proper care by those looking after them” (article 19, UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, 1990) All forms of cruelty to children are damaging. Of all cases of child abuse, only a small number involve total strangers. Children are far more likely to be abused by someone they know and trust, such as a parent, carer, other family members or family friend. Children from all walks of life suffer abuse; however some children are more at risk than others. These include children who are living away from home with other family members or strangers, children with disability as well as orphans who are living on the

streets The main aim of this paper is to giving Buddhist approach to control and eradicate the child abuse throw Buddhist Philosophy for the sustainable development.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research based on quantitative and qualitative research methodology. And with referring early Buddhist sources and approaches have been adopted with here; and furthermore personal experiences which are received by the writer as Social Case Worker in the field practice. The Social Case Works quoted here are closed by present time and where based on Ingiriya Division of Sri Lanka.

3. DISCUSSION

First and foremost, it is better to clarify that who is the child, what is the abuse and Sustainable Development. Accordingly, the word Child has defined in various ways; “everyone under the 18 years old consider as a child” (UN convention on the right of child). The Convention defines a ‘child’ as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the monitoring body for the Convention, has encouraged States to review the age of majority if it is set below 18 and to increase the level of protection for all children under 18. “A young human being who is not yet an adult; an unborn child, not suitable for young children is consider as a child” (Oxford Dictionary, 203 p) within these two definitions give an overview on the clarification and definition that who is the child. Commonly, can cite that child is under 18 years old.

Next, “what is child abuse”; “Child abuse is when a parent or caregiver, whether through action or failing to act, causes injury, death, emotional harm or risk of serious harm to a child”. There are many forms of child maltreatment, including neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation and emotional abuse. (<https://www.childhelp.org/child-abuse/>)

How child abuse effects to sustainable development is the next fact should be clarified. The word sustainable development was introduced in September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the “universal, integrated and

transformative” 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals are to be implemented and achieved in every country from the year 2016 to 2030 (sustainabledevelopment.un.org). When studying 17 goals of Sustainable Development, it is clear that there is not a goal linking directly toward children, but it must be emphasized without perfect wellbeing of child nobody can discuss the sustainable development which is going to be achieved by 2030.

A report of child abuse is made every ten seconds, more than five children die every day as a result of child abuse. Approximately 80% of children that die from abuse are under the age of 4. It is estimated that between 50-60% of child fatalities due to maltreatment are not recorded as such on death certificates (<http://www.childhelp.org/pages/statistics2>). The statics show the how child abuse occur in the world with high rate. Child abuse is effect on victim child for future lifetime giving huge bad characteristics.

4. THE EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE

Children can be abused in physically, sexually, mentally, and neglect. Whatever way abused it gives more affects him or her in the lifetime. Physical abuse can have long term effects on child’s health and development. It can cause physical injury, brain damage or disability. And may lead to children developing emotional, behavioral or educational problems. For some children, these difficulties can continue to adulthood. For example, people who were physically abused as children may have problems with personal relationships, and are more likely to abuse their own children.

Emotional abuse leads to serious behavioral problems. All children need acceptance, love, encouragement, consistency and positive attention from their parents or carers. Children who are denied these often grow up thinking they are deficient in some way and that they somehow deserved to be treated badly. A child who is constantly shouted at, threatened, humiliated or insulted will feel worthless and develop a poor self-image and self - esteem.

Sexual abuse leads to adverse psychological problem in victims – in many cases in to adulthood. These can include depression, insomnia, low self - esteem, sexual dysfunction as an adult, regressive

behaviors like bed wetting or thumb sucking. Depending on these verity, victims may develop fear, and anxiety which can lead to self - destructive behavior including drug and alcohol abuse, problems with relationships, fear (or hatred) of the opposite sex as well as anxiety over sexual issues.

Neglect can have a serious effect on a child's long term physical, mental and emotional development. For babies and very young children, these effects can be threatening. Children deprived of access to medical care might end up with severe disability or physical impairment. Children provided with inappropriate nutrition can become obese as adults or end up with eating disorders. Children who are deprived of access to education might end up with poor outcomes and quality of life as adults. (Safeguarding African Children in the UK Series, 7 page).

5. BEHAVIOR PATTERNS OF ABUSER

- Different mentality and behaviors not like past
- Different mentality towards children
- Lack of relationship with house or place after the abuse
- More relationship with house or place where abuse performed
- More effort for investigate about crime or abuse
- Escape from place after the abuse
- More kindness towards abused child and giving rewards and gifts
- Afraid to face abused child
- Run away from abused child

The process to protect child's rights and reduce child abuse

Rehabilitating mentally and physically for not to be an abuser when grow up.

Paying more attention and responding for the abused child not to be abused again mentally or physically in the setting of police, probation center, orphanage house or social welfare sector.

Giving awareness into governmental sector and grassroots level to inform every child abuse.

Appointing special agents who have qualified for investigating child abuse in grassroots level.

Appointing caregivers who have not guilty with crime in the sectors of child care sectors, probation centers, orphanage homes and the relevant sectors.

Counseling process for awareness to protect from abuse. (like family counselling)

Buddhist Attitudes on Prevention Child abuse and protect the Child Rights

Many kinds of researchers have been published relating Buddhist perspective relating various topics but it is rare and difficult to find the Buddhist perspective on prevention of child abuse. Some scholars whose researches in academic area of Buddhism say that there is not a perspective in Buddhism about child abuse. They mention that referring some part of Buddhist literature such as *Vessantara Jataka*, *Tilamutti Jataka*, and *Kēsi Sutta*. Anyhow, it must be emphasized that literature is changed the time to time, therefore it should not be said that Buddhism has not a perspective on child abuse. When study Buddhism deeply, can be found many examples that there are so many teaching focusing on the child protection in Buddhism. Next fact is ordering children under eighteen years old consider as a child abuse. The main aim of Buddhism is attaining the bliss of *Nibbāna*. Children are practiced from childhood to attain *Nibbāna*. Hence ordering child cannot be considered as a child abuse.

Anyhow, it is difficult to find the fix answer for preventing child abuse because any kind of *Suttas* has not been focused on this manner directly. But *Suttas* in the canonical text has been concerned regarding this topic as attitudinal manner. Buddha mentions in *Piya Sutta* (sanyutta Nikaya, 450 p) that children are the wealthy of human but the tragedy is children are abused by own parents. *Vasala sutta* mentions that not to marry a child but child marriage exists in some part of the world. *Mahāvagga pāli* and *Siṅgālōvāda sutta*

mention about the compassion of parents towards child but child are abused by own family. *Vattakkhandhaka* of *Vinaya Pitaka* advice how the teacher should treat his pupils “*Putta cittan upat̥ṭha pessati*” (Mahavagga pali 01, 95 p) which means head abbot and teacher should concern their pupils as own son. And, on the other hand pupils should treat their teacher as own father “*Pitu cittan upat̥ṭha pessati*” (Mahavagga pali 01, 95 p). Anyhow, tragedy is; children are abused in the school by the teacher in various ways. These facts show that theories are consisted of the Buddhist philosophy but, the problem is; those theories are not practiced correctly.

Next, the philosophical approach can be applied for preventing the child abuse as *Virmanaya* and *Samādānaya*. Every person has an ethical responsibility to prevent from any kind of abuse or sexual harassment of child (*viramanaya*). There is a social responsibility to safeguard children as a part of social compassion (*samādānaya*). It is clear that the Buddhist philosophy is consists of the methods of protecting children but those kind of methods are not adapted by present time. This is the high and suitable time for getting awareness and rethinking about Buddhist attitude for preventing child abuse for the sustainable development.

6. CASE WORKS ON CHILD ABUSE DONE BY THE WRITER

Three case works of child abuse (which are closed by present time) mention here done by the writer. Ingiriya division, Sri Lanka is the place where child abuses occurred. Names, age, and places are not true because it is ethically ban mentioning true information.

Case 01.

Village No. 01

Pity girl raped by own father

Shani, 14 years old, her mother migrated to Middle East due to economical instability in the family. She has two siblings younger sister age of 6, and younger brother age of 10; father is addicted to alcohol and not caring the family. When mother migrated to Middle East, children of this family faced to very hardship in their life. Grandmother (by the side of mother) looking after three children but she works in tea plantation. School teacher of Shani

could identified recently that there is something happening her life because her of behavior patterns, mentality and emotions are not familiar as usual. Teacher talked to Shani and asked that, “what is the wrong with her?”, and “something happening in her life?” But Shani didn’t tell anything and next, she referred to the writer. He could discuss and reveal that Shani is raped by her own father brutally, for few months. This case (abuse) was the main reason for changing her behaviors. Necessary actions were taken as soon as possible, writer informed the all government agents, such as police, women and child protection sector, and human right sectors of the Agent of Government Office (AG Office) where relevant place.

This tragic incident led to sentence 5 years her father in prison. Mother was informed and she came to Sri Lanka. Shani referred to counselling process performed by AG office for forgetting brutal memories. Her mother started a self – occupation which can be done in the house. Grandmother, mother, Shani, and two siblings are live happily by the present time.

Reflection of the Case No. 01

Relevant this case, Shani was raped by her own father due to many reasons; such as,

- Parent are not educate
- Economic instability of the family
- Children were not protected
- Rape was not done by stranger
- Unawareness of Child abuse of Shani.

Case 02.

Village No 02

Baby girl rap by cheating

There is a baby girl at the age of 6, whose parent was died due to motor bike accident. She known as Kumudu, who grows up with her grandparents. Grandparents are poor working as labors in the others estates. Her abnormal behaviors could be investigate by Dhamma School teacher in the temple. The Dhamma school teacher tried to

ask her the reason for abnormal behavior because she is not clever education than earlier, and all the time miss home-works. The first and second efforts were not success but next her teacher asked promising give the rewards. That effort was success and Kumudu revealed that her grandfather at the age of 70, is used to abuse her sexually giving gifts, sweets and other things what she wants, and when grandmother was not at home. And giving these things she was promised not to say others what grandfather did her. Kumudu was referred to the writer by teacher and writer could revealed she was raped at the age of 5 year, when parents were died.

Government sectors were informed and they got the necessary actions. Grandfather was punished by law and the court decided that grandparents' home is not secure place for her. Next, she sent into probation center for her further development. Kumudu is attached to counselling process by the probation center for mental development. Additionally she is going school.

Reflection of the Case 02

Relevant this case, Kumudu was raped by her own grandfather due to many reasons; such as:

- Kumudu was raped by a her family member
- Rap is done by cheating not forcing
- Without parents most of children are not secure
- Economic instability of the family.

Case 03.

Village No 03

Girl is raped by of mother's boyfriend

Disna was 16 years old girl whose father has died; and grow up with her mother. She was very clever her education; furthermore, she engaged with group works in the classroom and worked as a member of student association in school. But recently she behaved without aim, not concerning education, not like to engage with colleagues, sleepy in the classroom, and mental and physical behavior were abnormal. Sudden changes of her of behaviors could have arose a doubt in the mind of her class room teacher. Disna

was questioned by teacher after the school time where nobody there in the classroom. When inquired teacher, Disna began to cry loudly and uttered what was happening in the house after the death of her father. She revealed to her school teacher that her mother started a love affair with a man after the pass away of father. Her mother and boyfriend having sex in the same house where Disna lives. But she was helpless and she unable to say mother not to do that because mother is very cruel to her. Recently, mother and boyfriend consume liquor in the house; the tragic story is, one mid - night mother allowed to boyfriend rap Disna. From that day, she was raped few time in the month.

For two months up to that time, she was sexually abused by mother's boyfriend. Class teacher informed suddenly principle of the school and he informed this case into necessary sectors. Investigation was conducted by police and mother and boyfriend was punished by court. At last she referred to girls care center. The writer could meet her at that center for giving counselling process.

Reflection of Case 03

Relevant this case, Disna was raped due to many reasons; such as,

- The great loss of her father.
- Miss- behave of mother.
- Domestic violence
- Sexually abused by mother's boyfriend.
- Abused by force.

Summary of the case works

When considering the case works and reflection, it is clear how child abuse occur in the society. Children are helpless and pity by nature. They need care and protection of parents, elders, or caregivers. Child abuse is performed where the economic instability, lack of education level of children regarding abuse and also parents. When parent lost, majority of children are under risk of victimization. Above all three girls had raped by well-known persons of the family; father, grandfather, and mother's boyfriend; not the strangers. It is noticed that every child is under the risk of

where she or he lives. Child abuse are happening by force and as well as cheating.

7. BUDDHIST SOCIAL WORKS INTERVENTION FOR REDUCING CHILD ABUSE

Engaging Buddhist approaches, intervention programs are conducted to the children and parents. Practical sides of the Buddhism are taught in various way by using facts of canonical text. The writer has established the numbers of children society including parents in the grassroots level of many villages of Ingiriya are. More attentions are given towards children those who have not mother or father or both. Awareness program are conducted joining authorized government agents, and programs are encouraged children to protect from child abuse; and if they face to even a minor abuse by others are to report. As the results of establishing children societies in the grassroots level, it is seems to be reporting of child abuse is decreasing by present time.

8. CONCLUSION

Achieving seventeen goals of sustainable development of UN, the mental and physical wellbeing of children should be more concerned. Above facts clarify that there are many effects influence to children when they faced to any kind of child abuse. Without mental and physical wellbeing of the children, achieving seventeen goals of sustainable development is a daydream because child is the person who ready to lead the society in the future. For achieving such goals, all members of the society has a duty and response to protect children. This paper has discussed the Buddhist attitudes and teaching which can be adopted and used for prevention child abuse. The important fact is such Buddhist teaching of the canonical text should be practiced and taught by religious leaders, otherwise those teachings are meaningless and limit into the texts. Buddhism is a philosophy which can be applied for any moment in the life and can be found the answers for all human problem; and it is an eternal truth.

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