



An Analysis of COVID-19 Pandemic

Abhishek Jain

Research Scholar

Lloyd Law College, Greater Noida

Abstract

During the lockdown period of Covid-19, there was an increase in domestic violence against women and children in India. This article briefly describes the reason for an increase in violence, cases of violence, and its impact. The report shows that alcohol intake and unemployment were the causes of encouragement in committers of domestic violence. All the committers took undue advantage of their wives and hurt them. By the way, it becomes more difficult for women to protect themselves during the lockdown period. We can say that the lockdown period increases the chances of domestic violence.

The condition of Covid-19 poses numerous challenges to all societies over the world. A significant increase is noticed in violence against children during Covid-19, despite several efforts made by the government. The lockdown imposed to prevent the virus resulted in losing jobs, lack of support, economic instability. The fear of the virus has increased the stress level in the most vulnerable families. The significant steps of lockdown and isolation from the people have imprisoned children in their homes. Both these steps are essential to prevent the spreading of disease. The data took from several reports, newspapers, and ministries. This article is contains two parts. Part one includes domestic violence against women and the second part involves violence against children during Covid-19.

Keywords: - Children; violence; women; Covid-19; lockdown; isolation

1. Introduction

According to the Domestic Violence Act 2005, domestic violence¹ means any abuse such as mentally, sexually, bodily, and emotionally against the woman by her spouse or relative² and involved the demand of dowry³. In India, dowry is one of the leading causes of domestic violence. Domestic violence is a public concern. India is one of the countries with the largest share of crime against women. Crimes include rape, murder, violence, trafficking, and many more. As per the latest survey of National Family Health 2019-20, women in India of age between 15 and 49 years experienced 31.1% violence by her husband and 4% by violence during pregnancy⁴. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report, violence against women is high compared to other crimes. In 2019, there was a 7.3% increase in crime against women as compared to 2018. Around 4, 05, 861 cases of domestic violence were registered in India by police. The causes are the cruelty of the husband or by relatives⁵. The data show the domestic violence increasing day by day.

In India, domestic violence is directly linked with employment, education, liquor intake by the spouse, status, religion⁶, dowry⁷, and an affair of the husband. The evidence reveals that violence against women increases during and post disasters. Rao study⁸ is one of the pieces evidence that show the connection between power violence and the women condition before and after the Tsunami of The Indian Ocean of 2004. The data show that an increase in violence against women from 2005 to 2015 by about 48%. It shows that how the disaster becomes a hazard issue for women. The Sri Lankan study reveals that women in tsunami-

¹ The Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (Act 43 of 2005), s. 3.

² Ameeta Kalokhe, Carlos del Rio, et. al., "Domestic violence against women in India: a systematic review of a decade of quantitative studies" 12(4) *Global Public Health -An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice* 498 (2016).

³ Ananth Ram, Catherine Priscilla Victor, et. al., "Domestic violence and its determinants among 15–49-year-old women in a rural block in South India" 44 *Indian Journal of Community Medicine* 362 (2019).

⁴ Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, "National Family Health Survey" 83 (December, 2017).

⁵ Outlook, "Domestic Violence tops crime against women in 2018: NCRB, *Outlook*, 09 January, 2020, available at <https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/domestic-violence-tops-crime-against-women-in-2018-ncrb/1704114> (last visited on 14th September, 2021).

⁶ Suneela Garg, M M Singh, Ruchir Rustagi, Kajok Engtipi, Indu Bala, "Magnitude of domestic violence and its socio-demographic correlates among pregnant women in Delhi" 8(11) *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care* 3634-3639 (2018).

⁷ Saseendran Pallikadavath and Tamsin Bradley, "Dowry, 'Dowry Autonomy' and Domestic Violence among young married women in India" 51(3) *Journal of Biosocial Science* 353 (2018).

⁸ Smitha Rao, "A natural disaster and intimate partner violence: Evidence over time", 247 *Social Science & Medicine* 112804 (2020).

affected areas are most susceptible to bodily or sexual abuse⁹. Both the studies show that domestic violence at the time of disaster increases or continues. In India, there is a lack of research about domestic violence at the time of pandemics.

2. Worldwide Rise in Domestic Violence Cases During COVID-19

During the Covid-19, domestic violence increases worldwide. The lockdown was imposed by the government to protect the people and to control the spread of disease. Domestic violence is not a problem in India but a global issue. In a lockdown, there were many instances of Domestic violence. For example, In Australia, there was an increase in violence against women during the lockdown. As per the report, 42% of the specialists noted increases in domestic violence¹⁰. In Europe, there was a 60% increase in emergency calls related to violence by Mahase report¹¹. Likewise, according to Agüero, the number of helpline calls increases by 48% in Peru¹². All the above incidents show that Covid- 19 increases domestic violence in many countries. Also, there were many tweets and messages from the Government authorities on women's safety and health instruction during the epidemic.

Limited studies and researches are available about domestic violence during the Covid-19. The Study of Women of Ethiopia is one of the most essential. The study reveals that out of four women, one facing domestic violence during the Covid-19 period. It means that 25% of women in Ethiopia experienced violence. Women with an arranged marriage and below age 30 years are at greater risk of domestic violence. The Data of the Dallas Police Department¹³ shows that after the two weeks of imposition of lockdown, domestic violence increases, and after some relaxation, it starts decreasing. During the lockdown, the violence has been increased against women of Tunisian as reported by Sediri et al¹⁴. Domestic violence creates

⁹ Sarah Fisher, "Violence against Women and Natural Disasters: Findings from Post-Tsunami Sri Lanka" 16(8) *Violence against Women* 902 (2010).

¹⁰ Fitz-Gibbon, Kate; Pfitzner, Naomi; True, Jacqui; Walklate, Sandra; Meyer, Silke; Segrave, Marie; et al. "Current research projects on domestic violence against women and the COVID-19 pandemic" *COVID-19 and the increase of domestic violence against women* 4 (Monash University, 2020).

¹¹ Mahase E, "Covid-19: EU states report 60% rise in emergency calls about domestic violence" *BMJ: British Medical Journal (Online)* 369, PMID: 32393463 (2020).

¹² Jorge M. Agüero, "COVID-19 and the rise of intimate partner violence" *World Development* 137, 105217 (2020).

¹³ Piquero, A. R., Riddell, J. R., Bishopp, S. A., Narvey, C., Reid, J. A., & Piquero, N. L. "Staying home, staying safe? A short-term analysis of COVID-19 on Dallas domestic violence" 45 *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 601-635 (2020).

¹⁴ Sediri, Zgueb et al. "Women's mental health: Acute impact of COVID-19 pandemic on domestic violence" 23 *Archives of Women's Mental Health* 749-756 (2020).

various problems for women such as physical or mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and tiredness.

3. Domestic Violence Cases in India During COVID-19

The Prime Minister of India declared a nationwide lockdown to stop the spreading of Covid-19. The government has taken many steps to protect people and to prevent the spreading of disease. For instance, isolated people, supply of basic needs, and distributing of masks and sanitizers. As per the Disaster Management Act 2005¹⁵, the government declared Covid-19; as an epidemic disease (Section 2). The government steps such as extending of lockdown create various problems for children and women in India. Women are facing crimes like domestic violence, marital rape by their husband or spouse. Likewise, children are the victims of trafficking, pornography, rape of child girls and many more. The effect of lockdown was particularly severe on certain sections of the society like migrant labourers, poor groups, daily wage workers, small farmers, unskilled people and the children and women facing domestic violence.

As per the National Commission for Women's (NCW) report¹⁶, the number of complaints against domestic violence was increased in India after the imposition of lockdown. There was an increase in complaints of domestic violence in Tamil Nadu. The Tamil Nadu Police submitted that they received 25 helpline calls and 40 domestic violence complaints every day. Likewise, the number of calls increases in the Bangalore Police Department from 10 to 25 calls at the time of lockdown¹⁷. The data shows that cases of domestic violence increased during the lockdown in India.

As per the National Commission for Women (NCW) report, domestic violence incidents in India increased from 2960 in 2019 to 5297 in 2020. According to the official data of NCW, 19,730 total offence complaints against women in 2019 as related to 23,722 in 2020. Rekha

¹⁵ Gangan Deep Sharma, Gaurav Talan, and Mansi Jain, "Policy response to the economic challenge from COVID-19 in India: A qualitative enquiry" 20(4) *Journal of Public Affairs*, 1-16 (2020).

¹⁶ Mansi Vora, Barikar C Malathesh, Soumitra Das, Seshadri Sekhar Chatterjee, "COVID-19 and domestic violence against women" 53 *Asian Journal of Psychiatry* 102227 (2020).

¹⁷ Petlee Peter, "Domestic violence calls up from 10 to 25 a day during lockdown", *The Times of India*, April 10, 2020, available at http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/75073669.cms?from=mdr&utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst (last visited on 14th Sept, 2020).

Sharma, Chairman of NCW, said that the chief causes for domestic violence during the lockdown period were depression, low financial help, lack of support, and anxiety. Also, the home has become the workplace for both husband and wife and school or college for their children. In such conditions, women engaged in various tasks of professional and household at the same time. The biggest challenge for women is not only to adjust but to succeed in this unstable situation.

Yogita Bhayana, Head of People Against Rape in India (PARI), said that the high rate of complaints against domestic violence is due to the alertness amongst women to talk and report it. The women are motivating other women to report the violence against them. Earlier, they suppressed and were not aware of report it.

According to the reports of several associations such as AKS, Jagori, and Shakti Shalini¹⁸, the number of helpline calls concerning domestic violence decreased during the lockdown. The rate of domestic violence also decreases due to isolation, lack of support, and self- decision making.

The condition of lockdown is different compared to other kinds of disasters. Nearly all the states are affected by the virus. The Hines¹⁹ and Rao²⁰ are studies on domestic violence at the time of disaster or after that.

4. In 2020 the surge of domestic violence gripped women of India²¹

After the announcement of lockdown in India due to the Covid disease, the home saw as a refuge. The increasing number of domestic violence cases raises questions on this International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Now the question arises whether the home is a safe place for women? According to the report of UN, nearly 243

¹⁸ Rakhi Ghoshal, "Twin public health emergencies: Covid-19 and domestic violence", 5(3) *Indian journal of medical ethics* 1-5 (2020).

¹⁹ Hines Revathi I, "Natural Disasters and Gender Inequalities: The 2004 Tsunami and the Case of India" 14 *Race, Gender & Class* 60–68 (2007).

²⁰ Smitha Rao, "A natural disaster and intimate partner violence: Evidence over time" 247 (1) *Social Science & Medicine* 112804 (2020).

²¹ Mitali Nikore, "With Covid-19, comes the "Shadow Pandemic": How the surge of domestic violence gripped India's women in 2020", *The Times of India*, November 24, 2020, available at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/irrational-economics/with-covid-19-comes-the-shadow-pandemic-how-the-surge-of-domestic-violence-gripped-indias-women-in-2020/> (last visited on September 14, 2020).

million women and girls between the age of 15 and 49 years were victims of sexual or physical abuse by their spouses²².

The data analysis of 144 associations reveals that 85% of them reported a rapid increase in violence against women and girls between March and September 2020²³. This highest rate of increasing violence against women even received a name as “the shadow pandemic”. In May 2020, there was an increase in domestic violence complaints in red zone areas which were 131%²⁴ higher than the green zone areas. Red Zone areas also show an increase in cyber-crimes. Shockingly, only 14% of women were getting help who were experience violence. The Ebola outbreaks (2014-20)²⁵ determine that various types of violence causes during crises such as trafficking, exploitation, sexual abuse, child marriage and many more. Violence against women and girls are caused several problems such as mental and physical problems, child health, earnings, and impact female participation in household activities with ranging from 1-4% of total GDP.

Out of 206 countries, only 48 comprising²⁶ India has treated violence against women and girls related services as a vital portion of Covid-19 response strategies and policies. Countries like Spain, Singapore, and South Africa declared facilities to protect and support victims of gender-based violence and their children. This type of protection is mandatory in this Covid-19 time. Technological advancement showed an effective tool that helped the victims of domestic violence to complain about the case without any family support.

Social media handles such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter and other apps campaigns to tackle the problem like domestic violence and many countries especially developed apps to stop the violence. The Republic of Czech adopted the app of Bright Sky and trained the delivery workers on how to respond and identify signs of domestic violence. France started a

²² UN Secretary-General Policy brief, *The impact of COVID-19 on women*, UN Women, UN Doc, 21 (April 9, 2020).

²³ G. Wood and S. Majumdar, *COVID-19 and the impact on civil society organizations working to end violence against women and girls: through the lens of CSOs funded by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women – six months after the global pandemic was declared*, UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (September 2020).

²⁴ Saravana Ravindran & Manisha Shah, “Unintended Consequences of Lockdowns: COVID-19 and the Shadow Pandemic” 27562 *NBER Working Papers* 27562, National Bureau of Economic Research (2020).

²⁵ Clara Menéndez, Anna Lucas, Khátia Mungambe, Ana Langer “Ebola crisis: the unequal impact on women and children’s health” 3(3) *The Lancet Global Health* e130 (2015).

²⁶ UNDP and UN Women launch COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker, available at: <https://www.undp.org/press-releases/undp-and-un-women-launch-covid-19-global-gender-response-tracker>

new system where women could report the Chemists, about the violence, by using the code word “mask19”. New Zealand declared a NZ\$200 million fund for the prevention of domestic violence and initiatives a \$1 million fund for policies to combat domestic violence. When we talk about India, many efforts taken by the ruling government to check schemes such as One Stop Centres, Ujjawala Homes, and Emergency Response Support System are effective at the time of the Covid-19. The NCW’s What Sapp based helpline registered 33% of cases of domestic violence. Indian government launched NCW’s What Sapp helpline in April 2020. The main motive behind this is to protect women during the lockdown with the help of modern technology.

The State government must provide health, education and other facilities to the people under the State list. At the time of the lockdown, the State government started various new policies and schemes. For example, Uttar Pradesh Police initiated the campaign entitled “Suppress corona, not your voice”, Odisha Police began the “Phone-Up programme”, Kerala State Commission for Women’s Safety counselling facilities, The Government of Maharashtra set up Akshara Centres and special cells for women and children.

There is a requirement for a long term approach in the Country, where every third woman facing some or other form of violence by her spouse. It is false that hit the wife by the husband is justified.

5. Some of the pillars to combat domestic violence

- 1) Establishing women’s agency and financial independence** – According to the study of Rutgers University 2013, it is evident that any of the survivors taking financial training show some rise in economic self-sufficiency and improved financial management also. To build financial freedom - skill development programs, campaigns, economic programs, and investing are essential.
- 2) Community Support System** – Family and community are fundamental support systems for any woman or girl. There should be a complaint system at every institution like educational, health, different public authorities and other places. It is mandatory to provide facilities of ease of reporting and access to services of legal aid.

3) Advocacy and Awareness - This is the last and third pillar to combat domestic violence. Due to shame and fear, domestic violence is shrouded in silence either at home or inner four walls. Sometimes domestic violence is intergenerational. There is a great need to break the cycle of violence from mother to girl child. However, apart from various campaigns, an important step is youth engagement in the solution making process. For example, the New Delhi based Hub Global Shapers interacted with young people to motivate them to speak, share their stories and take some steps to combat domestic violence.

6. Violence against children during Covid-19

Children and adolescents were most susceptible to the disturbances during Covid-19. Many of them are at the risk of being left behind in education, employment, and health during the vital stage of their life development. Due to the closure of schools or colleges in Covid-19, one billion or 60% of children and adolescents²⁷ were affected. And, the rates of poverty and unemployment also increase.

The factors of poverty and unemployment are also called risk factors. These are related to crime, violence, drug use and other illegal activities. These unlawful activities were mainly associated with the children who have limited access to education, poor- family background, lack of education support, poor mental health, and loss of network with society. During the Covid time, many areas witnessed a decrease in the crime rate. But in many regions, mafia and gangs of youth operated.

The realities of young people differ from country to country. There are many impacts of the lockdown on children like increases in school drop-outs, mental health problems including depression and stress, fear of the virus, lack of opportunities and many more. Experts suggested that community-based programs can solve the various problem of lockdown. For example, For example, during the lockdown, The Republic of Dominican conducted virtual training programs for parents and caretakers. Central Asia stressed parental care and family skill programs to prevent violence and other illegal activities.

²⁷ The challenges of protecting youth from crime and violence in a pandemic, available at: <https://www.unodc.org/dohadeclaration/en/news/2020/11/the-challenges-of-protecting-youth-from-crime-and-violence-in-a-pandemic.html> (last visited on September 15, 2021).

7. Children's experience of violence during Covid-19

The study and research on the impact of Covid-19 on violence against Children are at the early phase. A USA-based Study²⁸ shows that physical punishments like slapping, beating and spanking by parents increased after two weeks of imposition of lockdown. The sample of the study comprises 288 parents of children of age 12 years or young.

A mixed result founded in several studies concerning the connection between Covid-19 and intimate partner violence that can hurt Children who witnessed this in the home. Out of 12 studies, ten studies including some domestic violence measures, three studies reveals an increase in domestic violence, three states no variation, and one reported a reduction while the other three had varied outcomes. The data for all these studies took from the police or offence reports of high-income nations. Two of the studies were from the locations such as Dhaka, Bangladesh (data from interviews) and Mexico City (taken the data from call centre). These studies also considered the availability or access to the services related to violence-related during Covid-19. During the lockdown, the government of different nations had taken many preventive steps to stop the spread of disease like isolation, lockdown, curfew and many other initiatives.

All these steps resulted in disturbance to the services related to child protection by imposing suspensions or changes in the method of providing services to children and families²⁹. Family and child well-being services were affected by the disruptions caused due to the lockdown restrictions. Services of child protection and specific service for the child sufferers of violence and exploitation were affected. According to the report of UNICEF, 1.8 billion children³⁰ reside in countries where there has been a disturbance (Covid-19) in services related to child well-being and safety. All over the world, 50% of countries found a fall in the service of case management and home visits for children and women. The reason behind this fall is the disruptions due to Covid time.

²⁸ S.J. Lee and K.P. Ward, "Stress and parenting during the coronavirus pandemic" *World Pandemic Research Network* WPRN-517152 (January 25, 2021).

²⁹ UNICEF, "Protecting children from violence in the time of COVID-19- Disruptions in prevention and response services" (August 2020).

³⁰ *Supra*

The data from service providers to children reveals that as a result of Covid-19 lockdown, many children were abuse and harm. The reason behind the maltreatment is the suspension of children well-being services. In March 2020, the California Department of Social Services reported an 18% fall in child maltreatment referrals compared to previous years³¹. After the closure of schools in Georgia, the report of child abuse and negligence was reduced by 50% in March 2019 (Division of Family and Children Services). The Texas Branch of Family and Protective Services showed a 48% declined in the report of child abuse³². It was analysis while comparing with the last and first week of March 2020. In the USA, a 50% reduction showed in reports of child welfare services in several areas such as Maryland, Iowa, Rhode, Ohio, Kansas and Wisconsin. The reports were also from other countries like Jamaica and New Zealand.

The hotlines of Child abuse in Florida indicate a 27% drop in the number of child maltreatment during March and April 2020³³. During the closure of schools or colleges, many activities came to a pause like sports activities, leisure, and recreational. Due to less regularity and imposition of restrictions (lockdown), Children lost their connection with others. Evidence reveals that school plays an essential role in reporting cases of child abuse and neglect³⁴.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, there were disruptions in children well-being services as well as the report mechanisms. Also, the child helplines are one of the least affected child protective services. Evidence reveals that during the lockdown period, helplines were not much affected. Only 10% of countries reported disruptions and hold that most of them were due to mitigation measures. Helplines services are primarily telephone-based online services that

³¹ Y. Amaro, "Fresno-area officials fear child abuse going unreported amid coronavirus quarantine", *The Fresno Bee*, April 7, 2020, available at: <https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article241754056.html> (last visited on 15 September, 2021).

³² B. Streicher, "Texas child abuse reports are down amid stay-at-home orders, but the threat is still there", *KVUE ABC*, April 7, 2020, available at: <https://www.kvue.com/article/news/investigations/defenders/texas-child-abuse-reports-down-amid-stay-at-home-orders/269-fe078db6-7c98-499c-a95a-c3b694b6e5fe> (last visited on 15 September, 2021).

³³ Baron, E. Jason and Goldstein, Ezra G. and Wallace, Cullen, "Suffering in Silence: How COVID-19 School Closures Inhibit the Reporting of Child Maltreatment" *Journal of Public Economics, Forthcoming* 32 (July 29, 2020).

³⁴ Maria D. Fitzpatrick & Cassandra Benson & Samuel R. Bondurant, "Beyond Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic: The Role of Teachers and Schools in Reporting Child Maltreatment," 27033 *NBER Working Papers* (2020).

include texts, chats, and mails. Telephone-based services excel during the pandemic due to restrictions over offline services. The features of the telephone-based services are free of cost; 24 hr. available, privacy, directly communicate to experts, offer advice, counselling and providing necessary information to the people. Such forms of services are targeted or operated as per the region or population. They also delivered the support services like shelter, food, health care, legal aid, etc. Both the terms ‘helplines’ and ‘hotlines’ are used vice-versa. But the meanings of hotline and helpline differ from each other. The Hotlines is primarily used to report incidents and are managed by the authorities³⁵.

For child protection services, child helplines play a vital role. The reports show that from 2003 to 2013, child helplines received over 126 million calls (Child Helpline International) around the globe³⁶. These services are a type of entry gate for children and adults to speak and have their voice through counselling, activities, aid management system and many more. Between 2017 and 2018, child helplines received 3 million contacts from 84 countries. Abuse and neglect against children are the main reasons for Africa, America and the Caribbean³⁷. And it was the second most- important reason in North Africa and the Middle East and third reason in Europe and the area of Asia-Pacific. The large sections of contact received by counselling were physical abuse (25%), emotional abuse (23%) and sexual abuse (17%).

8. Data from service providers

The study review of whether violence against children increases during Covid-19 requires the data of figures and quantitative studies with the motive to understand the changing patterns of exposure. However, many countries were unable to identify the key indicators of violence against children³⁸. The actual data on the violence against children may not be possible to collect due to disruptions in data collection efforts and mechanisms. Various data are

³⁵ The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, Child Helpline International, Child Protection Area of Responsibility and UNICEF, “Technical note: Child helplines and the protection of children during the COVID-19 pandemic”, version 1 (2020).

³⁶ Child Helpline International, (2003–2013) “RWD- the voices of children and young people”, available at: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/chi_global_web_final1.pdf

³⁷ Voices of children and young people, Global Child Helpline Data for 2017 & 2018, available at: <https://www.childhelplineinternational.org/data-overview/publications/voices-2019data/> (last visited on 15 September, 2021).

³⁸ Claudia Cappa and Nicole Petrowski, “Thirty years after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Progress and challenges in building statistical evidence on violence against children”, 110 *Child Abuse & Neglect* 104460 (2020).

available on the records of the service providers to identify the instance and forms of violence in the time of Covid-19³⁹.

The Data took from several authorities such as police officials, courts, legal aid reports, health, education and several welfare schemes to conduct the study. In the developed countries such as the USA and UK, data are the fundamental instruments to operate the welfare services and prevention of violence. The Government uses this type of data to frame schemes, policies and other initiatives. Child helplines are one of the examples of welfare services for the protection of children. The administrative data used by the child protection authorities to make them more effective and severe steps to prevent violence.

Administrative data does not provide the actual and proportionate statistics of violence against children. So, to avoid this quantitative representative assessment on actual experiences were required. Administrative data only identified a small portion of children's violence. The report of agencies and service providers states that children never reported incidents of violence with them. According to the data of 30 countries, only one girl child who faced sexual or physical abuse reached for expert assistance. It means that children are unable to get help from the experts.

The Modern study

Many countries have ensured to operate the child helpline during the pandemic time to prevent children from violence. Access to a child helpline depends on the availability of communication and technology. Vulnerable children were unable to get help from service providers. The poor children are more susceptible to abuse and crimes such as child trafficking, physical or sexual abuse, labour and many more. The poor children have less access to technology and devices.

Survey of child helplines

The child helplines survey was led by Child Helpline International (CHI). In May 2020, CHI concluded the surveys of 139 countries consists of 168 members associations. The member organisations are helplines instead of hotlines. These types of associations included full members and associate members. Full members are fully operative where associate members

³⁹ Berman Gabriell, 18 “*Ethical Considerations for Evidence Generation Involving Children on the COVID-19 Pandemic*” (Innocenti Discussion, UNICEF Office of Research, 2020).

are the start-up child helplines or those operating for less than one year. CHI found that about 20 million children and adolescents were accessed child helplines every year within the network.

The survey wanted the child helplines to prepare a report of contact received directly from children or adolescents related to children violence. These include all the data from online telephone-based helpline services like mail, call, internet, and SMS etc.

There were two series of the survey. The first series took place between April and June 2020. Child Helpline International called all the full members to make data on the contacts received in the quarter first of 2020. From 63 countries around the globe, only 71 child helpline associations submitted data with 53% of the responding rate. The 63 countries are from Europe, Africa, Asia, the Pacific, America and the Caribbean. Around 958 million children (41% of the world children population) under 18 years belongs to these countries.

The survey consists of two questions related to the number and reason for the contact received by child helplines. The first question is on the calls received by child helplines in January, February and March 2019 and year 2020. The report for the year 2020 also comprises the number of calls received during Covid time. The term 'Covid-19-related contact' is well-defined as contact that received during the Covid period. The survey asked the helplines to provide the data about the causes of contact during the pandemic period and arrange them according to the CHI's 13 category context comprises violence. Out of 71 helplines, only 26 helplines provides data on violence-related contacts.

The second series of the survey was conducted in July. The survey requested the CHI members to provide the total monthly number of contacts is received in the second quarter of April and June 2019 and 2020. Likewise, as in the first survey, helplines were requested to provide the data on contacts received for the second quarter of 2020. Similarly, the report on the contacts received is related to Covid-19. These calls are divided into various groups such as violence, mental health, relation with family and colleagues and education etc. From 46 countries, only 49 child helplines provide data during the second wave of the virus. Around 920 million children (39% of the world children population) below 18 years of age belong to these countries.

In the first and second quarters of 2019 and 2020, only 48 child helplines submitted data. These 48 child helplines were from 45 countries. Approx. 905 million children (38% of the world children population) under 18 years belong to these 45 countries. These countries (45) took different steps from other countries to prevent the Covid-19.

The reports of media

There are several media reports and articles on the violence against children during Covid-19. In the world, much fake news was spreading about the Covid-19 diseases. Research and statistics show that children facing violence whose mother is a victim of domestic violence. As we previously discussed the condition of women during Covid-19. The Woman faced domestic violence by her spouse. Domestic violence also makes the children victim of family violence⁴⁰. Violence against women and children is bad for mental and physical health.

In the world, only 70 articles of media report identified that met the present conditions. These articles are from 26 countries. In USA, the media articles covered 21 States. More than half of the articles comprise data on reports of helplines and cases of child violence. Cases of domestic violence became the part of remaining articles. The media report covered 26 countries. The countries covered by the media are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, China, India, and Italy etc. The Child helpline survey also covered ten countries.

The result of the survey of child helplines

In the first six months of 2020, there has been an increase in the figure of counselling contacts by 31% (820,076 to 1083148). It is higher than the first six months of 2019 among the 40 child helplines that submitted data of both years. The data (fig. 1) also reveals that the number of contacts received by helplines increased by 35% in both quarters of 2020. In 2019, there was a 2% decrease in the number of calls received in both quarters.

⁴⁰ A.A. Levendosky and S.A. Graham Bermann, "Parenting in battered women: The effects of domestic violence on women and their children" 16 (2) *Journal of Family Violence* 171-192 (2001).

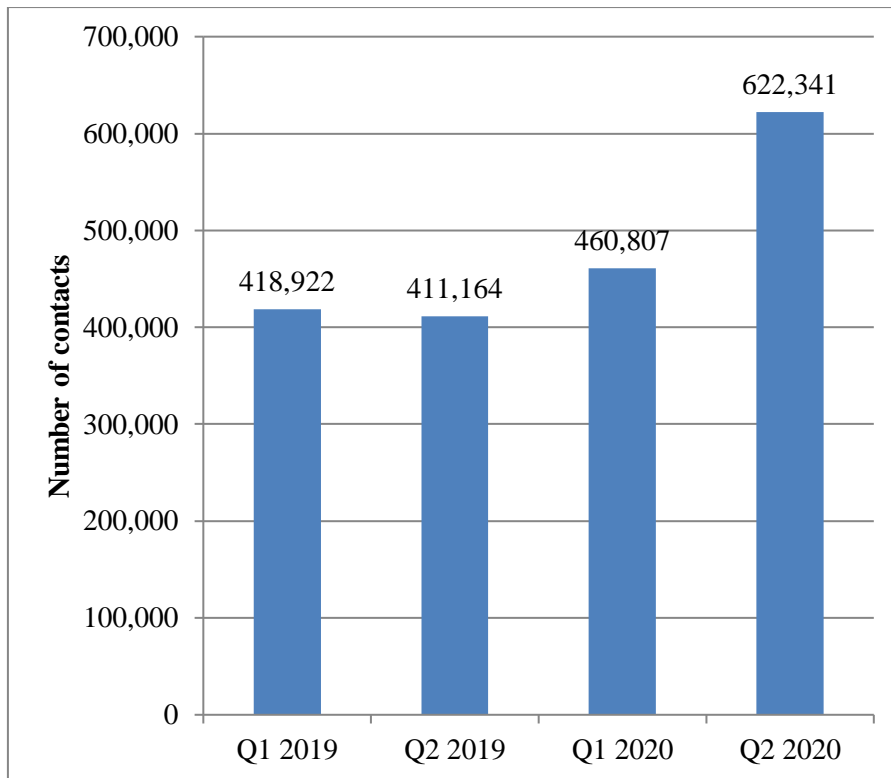


Fig. 1⁴¹

Total 38 child helplines received contacts related to Covid-19 from January to June 2020. The numbers of calls received by these child helplines were increased in 2020 until April and reduced in May and June.

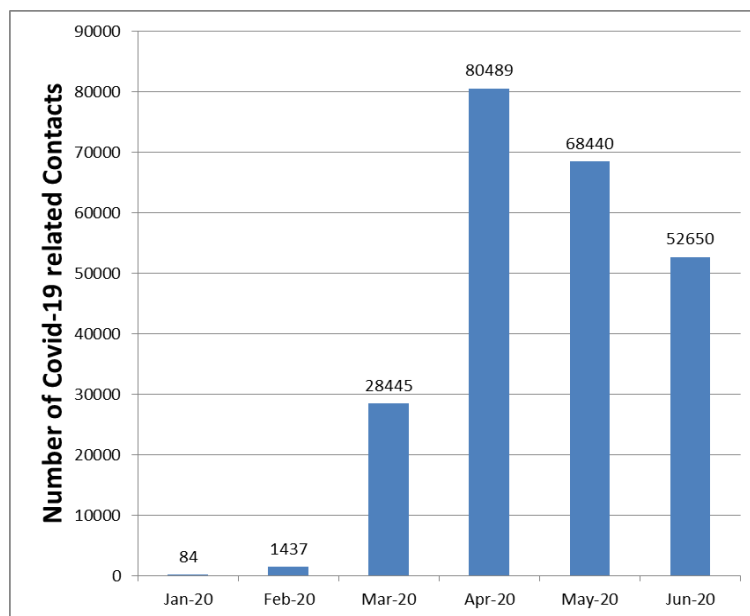


Fig. 2

⁴¹ Nicole Petrowski, Claudia Cappa, Andrea Pereira, Helen Mason, and Rocio Aznar Daban, “Violence against children during COVID-19: Assessing and understanding change in use of helplines” 116 *Child Abuse & Neglect* 104757 (2021).

The reason for increasing contacts (Fig. 2)⁴² during the first quarter of 2020 was to look for the Covid-19 related information and guidelines. The children seek information about the epidemic like lockdown and guidelines. The reason for the second quarter of 2020 was access to essential services and problems.

From 38 child helplines, only 13 were reports that they received several contacts due to violence. While comparing to the first quarter of 2020, violence contact is higher than in the second quarter of 2020. In the first three months of 2020 (Jan, Feb and Mar), only 617 contacts of violence were received whereas in the second quarter of 2020 (Apr, May and June), 6,815 contacts of violence were received. It means that about 16% of contacts were related to Covid-19.

9. Conclusion

From both the parts of the paper (violence against women and children), we conclude that Covid-19 increases the cases of violence against women and children. After the nine months of the rise of Covid-19, global shareholders promote rising funding and action to combat the risk of increasing violence and support vulnerable people of the society.

With the increasing cases of Covid-19, reports of violence also increased. Because of this, more limitations are put by the government. The number of cases of violence increased at the beginning of the lockdown. As per the reports of violence, a mixed picture emerges. The increase in the calls received by child helplines shows that child-welfare services are essential during epidemic for both women and children. Also, they provide support services such as shelter, health, and food etc.

⁴² Nicole Petrowski, Claudia Cappa, Andrea Pereira, Helen Mason, and Rocio Aznar Daban, "Violence against children during COVID-19: Assessing and understanding change in use of helplines" 116 Child Abuse & Neglect 104757 (2021).