

# Resources available in India today to address and reverse issues of Violence against Children

Shanti Ashram

Coimbatore

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# Universality

- Every year, roughly 6 in 10 children between the ages of 2 and 14, or nearly a billion children worldwide, are regularly subjected to physical punishment by their caregivers.(3)
- No child is immune. Those at risk cut across all boundaries of age, gender, religion, ethnic origin, disability, socio-economic status, sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression.

# Gender bias

- Gender discrimination is not only a cause of many forms of violence against girls, but also contributes to the broad neglect and acceptance of violence against girls as a social norm. Perpetrators are often not held to account and girls are discouraged from speaking out and seeking care, support and protection.
- Unreported due to issues of social stigma
- Violence is NOT inevitable – can and must break the cycle

# Consequences of Violence

- Exposure to violence at an early age can impair brain development and is associated with a range of mental health problems
- “Violence begets violence. We know that a child experiencing abuse is more likely to see violence as normal, even acceptable... and more likely to perpetuate violence against his or her own children in the future. If the trauma for children of societal violence is not addressed, we open the door to problems that can last a lifetime... and spawn negative attitudes that can reverberate across a generation.
  - UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake (February 2014).

# Statistical analysis of violence

- In 2012 - 95,000 under 20 faced violence
- Almost a billion (in 2 to 14) subject to violence by caregivers
- 1 in 3 students (ages 13 to 15) face bullying in school or admit to having bullied someone in school (Europe and N.America)
- 84 million girls of same age group faced physical, sexual or emotional violence from husbands or partners
- 3 in 10 adults believe in physical violence to raise children
- 126 million women world wide believe husbands are justified in sometimes hitting or beating wives

# Street Children India

- Of 50,000 children leaving home reported officially, 45,000 are 6 to 12 (real figures closer 4 to 8 lakh children majority boys, of which one lakh in Kolkata and Mumbai)
- Form groups to protect themselves and take care of each other (leader sometimes tends to bully younger kids)
- Reason – urban families, aberrant families, problems/fights, poverty
- Most come from slums or low cost housing
- Sell snacks and drinks at road signals to survive
- Lack of access to nutritious food, sanitation and medical care results in poor health
- Abuse by Police / mental, physical & sexual abuse
- UNICEF recommends main responsibility of assistance should be given to NGOs, which should be backed financially by the government

# Human Rights Approach

- (1) grounding development objectives in human rights standards; (post 2015 Development Agenda)
- (2) seeking to empower individuals and communities;
- (3) ensuring genuine participation and non-discrimination in programme design and implementation;
- (4) building the capacity of duty-bearers to fulfil their human rights obligations;
- (5) establishing effective systems of accountability.

What evidence is there, from academic or other sources, about effective and ineffective interventions to provide support for victims of **modern slavery**?

This review found few evaluations of interventions to support victims of modern slavery, even though there is recognition of the need for support services.

There is little evidence on effectiveness of interventions, but literature highlights the importance of victim-centred, holistic (multi-disciplinary) approaches to supporting victims.

Mental health issues are particularly significant, especially in children. 'Even if the physical wounds have been healed, it is still a long process to help the victims regain their dignity and the confidence to make choices and move forward with their lives. It is therefore crucial ...to ensure that the rights, needs and requests of the victims are recognised' (Sun-Suon, nd: 26). In the absence of suitable support, victims are at heightened risk of becoming slaves again/being re-trafficked (University of Liverpool, 2017).



# Economic costs

- A recent UNICEF study developed a model to estimate the direct and indirect costs of child maltreatment in East Asia and the Pacific. **The study found that the economic burden of child maltreatment in one year (2004) may have totalled \$150 billion to \$160 billion, or about two per cent of the region's GDP.**
- Compared to other social and health problems, the burden of child maltreatment is thus very significant: there is a strong 'business case' for prevention.

# Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

“The more adverse the experiences in childhood, the greater the likelihood of developmental delays and later health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, substance abuse, and depression. Research also indicates that supportive, responsive relationships with caring adults as early in life as possible can prevent or reverse the damaging effects of toxic stress response.”

# Effectiveness of child protection depends on

- Laws, policies and standards;
- Services and service delivery mechanisms (comprising promotion, prevention and response actions);
- Human and fiscal resources and management (or capacities);
- Communication and advocacy;
- Collaboration and coordination; and
- Evidence and data for decision-making

# Six Strategies to prevent violence

- Supporting parents, caregivers and families
- Helping children and adolescents manage risks and challenges
- Changing attitudes and social norms that encourage violence and discrimination
- Promoting and providing support services for children
- Implementing laws and policies that protect children
- Carrying out data collection and research

# Baha'i Perspective

- **“Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.”** Baha'u'llah
- Bahá'u'lláh says: "Let not a man glory in that he loves his country, but that he loves his kind." All are of one family, one race; all are human beings.  
(Abdu'l-Baha in London, p. 55)

# World Religions

Judaism  
Zoroastrianism  
Hinduism  
Christianity  
Buddhism  
Islam  
Jainism  
Sikhism  
Baha'i



# Equality

- By 1973, for example, Iranian Bahá'ís had achieved a 100 percent literacy rate among women followers under the age of 40, in contrast to a national literacy rate among women of less than 20 percent at that time
- The hallmark of the age of maturity will be the unification of the human race, based on principles of justice

# Social & Economic Development

- Commitment to social and economic development is rooted in its sacred scriptures, which state that all human beings “have been created to carry forward an ever advancing civilization.”
- A number of interacting processes in the Baha’i community focuses on the spiritual enrichment of the individual, the development of local and national communities, and the maturation of administrative institutions
- “How excellent, how honorable is man if he arises to fulfil his responsibilities; how wretched and contemptible, if he shuts his eyes to the welfare of society and wastes his precious life in pursuing his own selfish interests and personal advantages. Supreme happiness is man’s, and he beholds the signs of God in the world and in the human soul, if he urges on the steed of high endeavor in the arena of civilization and justice.”



# Individual transformation

- Leads to transformation in the community
- For the individual, this implies developing a number of interrelated capabilities—scientific, artistic, technical, social, moral, and spiritual.
- Possible through spiritual education

# The Individual & the Institution

- Institutions are needed at every level of society that can act as channels through which the talents and energies of individuals and groups can be expressed in service to humanity
- It also requires a vast increase in their access to relevant knowledge.; and involves the ongoing generation, application, and dissemination of new knowledge at all levels of society and within every field of human endeavour

# Harmony of Science & Religion

- The harmony of science and religion is one of the fundamental principles of the Bahá'í Faith, which teaches that religion, without science, soon degenerates into superstition and fanaticism, while science without religion becomes merely the instrument of crude materialism. “Religion,” according to the Faith’s writings, “is the outer expression of the divine reality. Therefore, it must be living, vitalized, moving and progressive.” “Science is the first emanation from God toward man. All created beings embody the potentiality of material perfection, but the power of intellectual investigation and scientific acquisition is a higher virtue specialized to man alone.”

# Concept of Community Schools

## Developing a program through Action - Reflection

In its work with these schools, the organization gained several insights into areas such as raising consciousness in a community about the nature of education, training new teachers, adding new grade levels each year, and building capacity in a community to sustain the livelihood of teachers and to manage and administer a growing school. That the schools were locally operated and relied on financial resources from within the community allowed the organization to increase the scale of its efforts in an organic manner.

# Other educational efforts

- Hundreds of Bahá'í-inspired academic schools have been established worldwide. Regardless of the form they take, all educational initiatives have as their primary objective the development of capacity in generation after generation to contribute to the betterment of society in meaningful ways.
- Olinga Foundation for Human Development, Ghana 1990: Teachers are trained through study materials that are aimed at building their moral capabilities and improving attitudes toward teaching
- Parent University, USA, 2000: Train parents and help families in low-income neighborhoods of Savannah to take greater ownership of the education of their children and to assist them to overcome certain social issues facing the local population,

# Other (continued)

- Nur University, Bolivia, 1990: Offers integrated program of academic knowledge with both practical experience and the teaching of basic moral principles in the areas of management, administration, auditing, law, teaching, marketing, consulting and coaching, social and economic development, and public health
- Mongolian Development Center, 1993: Training is provided to assist teachers of kindergarten classes in using moral curriculum emphasizing service to humanity, as a supplement to the existing preschool curriculum produced by the government
- Baha'i Academy, India, 1982: Research & Action in the field of Value & Moral Education providing courses to university students, faculty & staff

# Baha'i Classes for Children

- The family unit is the nucleus of human society. It provides a vital setting for the development of [praiseworthy qualities and capacities](#). Through its harmonious functioning and the development and maintenance of the bonds of love that join together its members, it gives constant expression to the truth that the well-being of the individual is inextricably bound to the progress and well-being of others.
- But the education of children is not only the responsibility of the parents. [The community](#) also has an important role to play and the Bahá'í community gives considerable attention to the subject. Indeed, classes, open to all, for the spiritual and moral education of children are typically among the first activities to be pursued by Bahá'ís in a locality.

# The crucial role of a teacher

- If we envision education as a process characterized by rectitude of conduct, trustworthiness, and freedom from prejudice, it would require creating relationships of reciprocity and genuine affection between the teachers, parents, students and the wider community.\* And spiritual education is important in this process.
- “Blessed is that teacher who shall arise to instruct the children....” in morals and virtues.  
“Among the greatest of all services that can possibly be rendered by man to Almighty God is the education and training of children.”









# Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program

- *“Although your realities are shaped by a broad diversity of circumstances, yet a desire to bring about constructive change and a capacity for meaningful service, both characteristic of your stage of life, are neither limited to any race or nationality, nor dependent upon material means. This bright period of youth you share is experienced by all—but it is brief, and buffeted by numerous social forces. How important it is, then, to strive to be among those who, in the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘plucked the fruit of life’.”*
- Community Building & Fostering mutual support
- Contributing to the advancement of civilization

# Material for JYSEP

- Breezes of Confirmation
- Glimmerings of Hope
- Walking a Straight Path
- Thinking About Numbers
- Drawing on the Power of the Word
- Learning about Excellence
- Power of the Holy Spirit
- Spirit of Faith

The Human Temple

# Programs for Children & Youth

- Youth in service activities such as: local park and road clean-ups, raising awareness about illness prevention, providing dust-bins with the aid of local agencies, teaching younger children moral classes
- Improving provisions for girls: “The world of humanity has two wings—one is women and the other men,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote. “Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly.”



Kampala, Uganda  
Samoa



Apia,



Frankfurt, Germany



Santiago, Chile





Panama, S.America



Sydney, Australia









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