

**Explaining the Psychological impact on children caught in  
crossfire between parents at legal wars : The Case of Baby love  
Oonagh whose mother is victim of physical violence, abuse and  
internet full of videos of her mother being humiliated, mocked by  
the world . What will be its consequences on the mental,  
psychological health of that baby love when she views back those  
revengeful acts perpetrated against her sweetheart mother ?**

<sup>1</sup>Yudhistir S.M.F. Jugessur, Researcher

---

**ABSTRACT:** *The paper examines the psychological impact on children such as in this case, Baby Love Oonagh caught in crossfire between parents at legal wars. Her mother is victim of physical violence, abused and criminals fill the internet social medias with videos of her mother being subject to humiliation and mockery by the world. What will be the consequences of such act on the mental and psychological health of baby love Oonagh as she grows up. These videos stay online for decades. This can impede on the child's development and education. Health issues can rise up such as anxiety, lack of interest in studies , stress up to suicide. Dysfunctional families and whereby there is coercive control, can cause serious depression and impact on the studies of the children. Children such as baby love Oonagh are collateral damage, an innocent caught between parents at wars and harassers playing with videos. The other issue is that social medias , internet also can be very negative on children. The innocent baby does not deserve this but rather a home where she will grow in love and affection.*

**KEYWORDS:** *psychological impact, children, dysfunctional families. Social medias*

---

Date of Submission: 01-03-2024

Date of acceptance: 08-03-2024

---

## I. INTRODUCTION

For the proper development of a child, a positive environment is needed. A loving and caring father and mother is needed. A home without violence and full of love is what children need to grow. When adults are at war, children like baby love Oonagh , cannot develop I such hostile environment. In the case of that baby, her mother is victim of all sort of violence , abuse and the internet is full of videos of her mother being humiliated, mocked by the world. The psychological and mental health impact on the baby can be very damaging. These videos stay online for decades and what will be the consequences when baby love Oonagh will watch these videos. Children caught in between parents at wars are at high risk of developing serious psychological and mental health issues such as depression, lack of interest in studies, hyperactivity, and even fall into scourges such as drug. This can even end up top suicide. A healthy and nurturing family environment is necessary for the development of mental health in children<sup>1</sup>. A positive atmosphere within the family, such as open communication, strong interpersonal relationships between parents and children, harmony and cohesion, contributes to a conducive and a safe space for children to develop healthy habits. Children who grow up in dysfunctional families are at risk of developing mental illness, which, if not treated, can result in long-term mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. Children who are exposed to constant conflict, aggression, abuse, neglect, domestic violence and separation because of divorce or parents who work long hours away from home are likely to present with behavioural and emotional problems. Parents, whether single, married or divorced, have got the responsibility to protect their children's mental health.

## II. DISCUSSION

In a family where coercive control is utilised children are not simply witness to acts of physical violence directed at their mother. They experience the rules, threats, control and fear and are victimised<sup>2,3,4</sup> . Children are effected by many forms of coercive control such as control of time and movement within the home, deprivation of resources and isolation from the outside world which prevent them from engaging with wider family, peers and extra-curricular activities. They can also be encouraged or coerced into taking part in the

abuse of their mothers. All these methods of abuse cause harm to children. Research has also shown however that children and their mothers often resist the coercive regime imposed by the perpetrator<sup>4</sup>. Resistance often takes the form of finding ways to maintain elements of 'normal life' and close mother-child relationships whenever possible. While the harmful effects of coercive control on children must be taken seriously it should be noted that studies also reveal that some children living with domestic abuse are 'doing as well' as children who are not living with domestic abuse. Why some children cope better than others is often explained by the concept of 'resilience'. Resilience is the idea that children have different capacities that allow someone to overcome the negative effects of an adversity like domestic abuse<sup>5</sup>. 'Protective factors' can help build children's resilience, while 'risk factors' can reduce it. Protective factors that have been found to support children's resilience include the mother's ability to maintain parenting, support provided by their family, friend, and being in a safe and secure environment<sup>6</sup>.

### III. FINDINGS

Mental health of children<sup>1</sup> is a global and persistent concern. It is a multifaceted problem with some of the leading causes being depression, anxiety and behavioural disorders. According to the World Health Organisation<sup>7</sup>, one in six people are of ages 10–19, and within this age group, one in seven experience mental health challenges. Children of this age group are at a critical period of developing healthy habits that are necessary for their mental wellness. Being exposed to difficult circumstances at this tender age can compromise their ability to develop healthy mental wellness. Domestic violence is one of the environmental factors that may not be physically directed at children within the family but have a direct impact on them. Children who witness violence at home experience mental, emotional and social challenges that predispose them to mental illness. They are likely to be victims of child abuse and or perpetrators of violence later in their adulthood. The impact of domestic violence on children is likely to manifest in behavioural challenges, low school grades, criminal behaviour and antisocial behaviour<sup>8</sup>.

Child mental health is the ability to grow psychologically, socially, intellectually and spiritually, reaching emotional and developmental milestones without a struggle<sup>9</sup>. Children with mental health challenges are at risk of experiencing a delay in age-appropriate development that can affect their normal functioning and the quality of life. Mental health in children is important for their present and future quality of life because childhood experiences have a profound effect on adulthood. Mental illness in children<sup>1</sup> can be caused by a variety of issues such as stresses relating to domestic violence, being bullied, losing a loved one to death, separation from friends because of moving homes or schools. It can also be caused by separation from parents because of divorce or parents who work long hours away from home as well as child abuse and suffering from a long illness. Mental illness can also be hereditary meaning there is a likelihood that parents can pass the illness to their children. Some of the symptoms in children are, but not limited to, persistent unhappiness and sadness, emotional outbursts and extreme mood swings, difficulties in academic achievement, loss of appetite or overeating, difficulty falling asleep and fear and sudden loss of interest in previously loved activities such as sport<sup>10</sup>. Healthy functioning families, on the other hand, exhibit harmony, love, care and support for each other; the home is the safest environment where they are able to express themselves, and members have a sense of emotional, mental and physical wellness. In healthy functioning families, conflict, disagreements and differences are resolved in a healthy manner that is beneficial to all concerned.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Experience from childhood defines what we become in adulthood. A child exposed to violence, hatred, harm against her mother is at risk of developing serious psychological and mental issues in her development.

### REFERENCES

- [1]. Mphaphuli K.L (2023). The Impact of Dysfunctional Families on the Mental Health of Children
- [2]. Buckley et al (2007) 'Listen to Me! Children's experiences of domestic violence', *Child Abuse Review*, Volume 16, Issue 5, September/October 2007, Pages 296–310.
- [3]. Bancroft L, Silverman JG, Ritchie D. 2012. *The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence on Family Dynamics*. (2nd ed.) Sage: London.
- [4]. Katz, E (2016) 'Beyond the Physical Incident Model: How Children Living with Domestic Violence are Harmed by and Resist Regimes of Coercive Control', *Child Abuse Review*, 25 (1): 46-59.
- [5]. Masten, A. (2015) *Ordinary Magic: Resilience in Development* (New York: Guilford Press)
- [6]. Humphries, C, Houghton, C & Ellis, J. (2008) *Review of literature on domestic abuse and its effects on children and young people*. (Edinburgh: The Scottish Government).
- [7]. World Health Organisation. *Adolescent Mental Health*. Switzerland: World Health Organization Library Cataloguing-in-Publication; 2021. Available from: Adolescent mental health (who.int)
- [8]. Holt S, Buckley H, Whelan S. The impact of exposure to domestic violence on children and young people: A review of the literature. *Child Abuse and Neglect*. 2008;32(8):797-810. DOI: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.02.004S.

- [9]. Edwards D, Burnard P. A systematic review of stress and stress management interventions for mental health nurses. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 2003;42(1):169-200. DOI: 10.1046/j.1365-2648.2003.02600.x
- [10]. Zubrick SR, Silburn SR, Burton P, Blair E. Mental health disorders in children and young people: Scope, cause and prevention. *Journal of Psychiatry*. 2000;34(1):570-578. DOI: 10.1080/J.1140-1614.2000.00703.X.