



PARENTAL ALCOHOLISM – A BARRIER FOR THE CHILDREN IN CHARACTER FORMATION – A DEPICTION BASED ON SECONDARY DATA

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Abstract:

The consequential effects of the alcoholism in the family setting don't simply end up with the individual himself. The spouse and the children are the primary victims for the extended consequences of the alcoholism. The growing social pressure over the families has paved way for the extinction of the joint families. As a result the transformation of the values from one generation to the next is limit. During the developmental process, the children need increased nurturance and support. Though they may not openly show the reflections of values, there is strong influence by the attitudes, values, and behaviors of the parents. The children of alcoholics are at a higher risk in character formation, since lack of proper role modeling in character formation, so they carry the difficulties to their adulthood also. There the extended effect will again become a problem to those who around him and to the society in which he is in. In countries like India, this concept is not yet considered a matter for serious concern.

Key Words: Alcoholism, Children of Alcoholics & Parenting

Introduction:

According to Jacinta Bronte *et al* (2006), children who experience higher levels of parental involvement and a closer relationship with their parents are less likely to exhibit behavioral problems and to engage in risky behaviors. They tend to achieve better grades and higher levels of education and to experience better emotional health. But in the case of children having alcoholic fathers, the possibility of getting the parent's attention in molding their life is very less. Since father usually thinks towards alcohol and the poor mother worries about father's habit of drinking. The children are left directionless. Alcoholism is a major threat to children physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing —and can cause long-term difficulties with behaviour and mental health development

Objective:

The main aim of this report is to break the proverb that "there is no land like the land of childhood, it is the most beautiful of all life's seasons" and to bring in to light that this is not true in the lives of children of alcoholics, since they are the poor little growing buds who have really lost their childhood.

Literature Reviewed:

A child's behaviour/character is an outward manifestation of inner stability and security. It is a key through which one can observe the development of the child throughout his or her life. Children of alcoholics find it difficult to cultivate the inner strength and individuality, and their actual being has been identified through the following observational studies.

Studies have found out that Children of alcoholics often have poor health records then the normals, for there are two reasons behind, i) lack of balanced diet, so nutritional deficiency, due to insufficiency in meeting the needs or distracted mood of the responsible individual and ii) Eating disorder or over eating is also identified common, particularly among the daughters. The child might also develop stress-related health problems like gastrointestinal disorders, headaches, migraines, or asthma. The

poor physical health is the first sign that pulls back their confidence and personality identity.

Alcoholism affects the entire family; each member may be affected differently. So there is a rare possibility for the Children to see even the members of own blood as closed, supportive and communicative. They get fewer chances to experience the family cohesion, intellectual-cultural orientation, active-recreational orientation, and independence. They also usually experience higher levels of conflict within the family. Thus, this ends up with complete mental agony.

Self esteem and emotional stability seem always co -exist. Love, responsiveness, and involvement of the parents tend to have higher levels of self-esteem and self control. But it is very rare to see in the alcoholic's family setting. So those who experience low self-esteem are more likely to experience emotional distress and acts as a major risk factor for problem behavior (Michael D. Resnick et al, (1997)). Anxiety, depression, and externalizing behavior disorders are more common among children of alcoholics. As a result they experience difficulty in developing and maintaining friendship, afraid to go to school, and often have disturbed sleep. At the same time adolescent children may show depressive symptoms by being perfectionistic in their endeavors, staying by themselves, and being excessively self-conscious and suffer by phobias.

Alcoholism is more strongly related to child abuse than are other disorders related with parents. 90% of child abuse cases involved alcoholism or alcohol abuse in the home. Children who have suffered early abuse may later present with significant behavior problems including emotional instability, depression, and a tendency to be aggressive or violent with others. This may persist even long after the abusive or neglectful environment has changed. Neurobiological research has shown that early abuse results in an altered physiological response to stressful stimuli, a response that affects the child's subsequent socialization.(John Stirling *et al*(2008))

As far as their Academic performance is considered they are more likely to be absentee, drop out of school, repeat grades and have difficulty bonding with teachers and other students. Though their academic ability and intellectualism are strong enough to achieve they view themselves as unsuccessful. Punishment, Aggressive and illtreatments, this will again be a problem to the innocent buds.

Scientists and others do agree that children of alcoholics themselves are at high risk for developing alcoholism (Heath 1995; McGue 1993). Children of alcoholics are somewhat between 2 and 10 times more likely to develop alcoholism than children of non -alcoholics. Generally alcoholic fathers tend to increase the risk for alcoholism in both their sons and their daughters.(HEATH, A.C.1995.).70 % of those children with alcoholism in their homes later develop compulsive behavioural problems themselves, including alcohol, gambling, food ,sex and drugs- and something like 50% went on to marry or live with alcoholics or alcohol abusers when they grew up.

According to Wright and Wright (1991) the most popular notion is a "personality Syndrome", which is composed of denial, constriction of emotions, depression, hyper vigilance, compulsions, and a number of other characteristics are seen very common among children of alcoholics. (Kenneth J. Sher, Ph.d.1997) because absence of strong and secure attachment bond with a primary caregiver, which is the core of developing resilience and a healthy personality.(Bretherton I. 1997). Children of alcoholics experience and witness the poor problem solving ability by their role models at home and they develop a sense of adoption to the problem existing environment. Since Abstraction and conceptual reasoning play an important role in problem solving,

irrespective of whether the problems are academic or are situation related to the problems of life, they feel difficult to cultivate such things simultaneously because they never had been stimulated by their parents in such a way. Moreover, Children of alcoholics might require very concrete explanations and instructions.

Several reports have been filed on the influence of alcohol among the parents, who had involved in sexual abuse and incest. According to Berger almost 30 percent of father –daughter incest cases were identified with influence of alcohol. Incest victims often blame themselves for what has happened, and they feel so guilty, ashamed and helpless (Berger .G.1993)

If the householder's income is the only economic resource for the family, then there would certainly be a financial crisis in the family, this would make the children psychologically depressed because of their unmet basic needs and expectations.

Warning:

A significant number of children in this country are being raised by addicted parents. It is confirmed through the statistics that around 47% of the male population in Tamil Nadu are alcohol dependents. Knowingly or unknowingly they are becoming a cause for the maladaptive behavioral development with their children. The poor Children of alcoholics have little or no choice but to adapt to the environment and the family in which they are raised. So, affected children who go untreated may bring their troubles in relationships, families and to the society in the near future. (NACOA))

Conclusion:

The above observations by the persons of varied specialties have shown the direct relation of the adverse childhood experience of paternal alcoholism. As a result of parental alcoholism at the very tender age, the children miss the opportunities for a healthy, all-rounded and stable future. Their experience with the alcoholic parent (in Indian context, almost all the cases include the father alone). Will have problem with self confidence, social skills, personality development, faith towards God, coping with difficult emotional events and general, and in their optimistic feel about the life.

Recommendations:

It exists that professionals, who are connected with rehabilitation and treatment, are extending their services also to the spouses, what is recommended here is a further extension of service towards the children is also needed. And it is extremely important to impart the knowledge with parents to open clear lines of communication and be mindful of the values and behaviors, in all those they are demonstrating to youth”.

Until they enter the age of adult, ample amount of their time is being spent with their educators and in the school/ college environment, so the teachers and school counselors should at least be given a minimum knowledge of the complications linked with the children of alcoholics, which will help them in identification and to redirect sufferers towards the help lines.

The timely intervention to help reduce feelings of shame, guilt, and isolation, should be recommended and offered, once they are identified with the symptoms of children of alcoholics, in the general and educational settings.

Children may be reluctant to talk openly about the problem. To share experiences and hope, discuss difficulties, learn effective ways to cope with problems, and to encourage one another, a programme called Alateen is available. So the member children can come together in a free and confidential setting, to bring down the intensity of the problem without any hesitation. All the students / children should be made aware of the availability of such services. And finally more number of studies should be carried out, in order to bring out the real condition of the children of

alcoholics and also to work out on the remedial measures to help and protect them out from the danger.

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