



## CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY ON BEHAVIORAL AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS OF ORPHANS STAYING IN INSTITUTIONAL HOMES OF JAIPUR CITY

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Orphans are the special group of children who are generally deprived and prone to develop behavioral and emotional problems even reared in well run institution. **Aim:** To study the prevalence and types of emotional and behavioral problems of orphans living in institutional homes in Jaipur city. **Materials and methods:** This is a cross-sectional, descriptive type of observational study conducted using Strength and Difficulty questionnaire on children and adolescents aged between 4 and 17 years living in various in Governmental, non-governmental Institutional homes (orphanages) of Jaipur city under the supervision of Preventive and Social Medicine Department, SMS medical college, Jaipur, Rajasthan from March 2021 to November 2022. **Results:** In our study Emotional and behavioural Problems Prevalence was 10.6%. Higher risk of emotional and behavioural problems found in Boys of age group 4-11, Abandoned by family with admission age of more than 10 years and more than 1 year stay in institutional home. Conduct problem is most prevalent among orphans followed by peer and emotional problems, least common problem was abnormal prosocial behaviour and hyperactivity.

**KEYWORDS :** Orphans, Emotional problems, Behavioral problems, Strength and difficulty Questionnaire

### INTRODUCTION

UNICEF and global partners define an orphan is a child below 18 years of age who has lost one or both parents to any cause of death.<sup>1</sup>

Diseases, poverty, natural disasters, accidents, wars, AIDS related cause and abandonment are among some of the leading causes of making a child orphan. At present an estimated 153 million children worldwide are orphans (UNICEF).<sup>2</sup>

A healthy child contributes to a healthy and prosperous society. Since birth, a child passes through phases of physical, mental, and social development until he achieves adulthood. All these aspects of growth and development are equally significant for the sound health of the child. Any interference in mental or emotional development can cause behavioral disorders in a child.<sup>3</sup>

When a child loses either of their parents or both, they face so many economic and mental issues down the line. Behavioral problems are more among children out of parental care because they are exposed to abuse, exploitation, neglect, and lack of love and care from parents. They are also more likely to be emotionally needy, insecure, and poor. In addition to these factors, most of them are brought up in institutional homes, where individual care is inadequate.<sup>3</sup>

There is a concept 'Parens patriae' which means that the state is your parent if you don't have any. When there is no parent or guardian, orphans are the children of the government which work like a parent who save, spend on and motivate their children in their education, business and other aspects of life. A child friendly approach still remain an untouched dream until care providers could understand the psychological and social needs and coping strategies of orphan children.<sup>4</sup> India, particularly, needs to take urgent action in this regard as the official figures put the number of orphans at 31 million. (INSAMER 2021 ORPHAN REPORT).<sup>5-6</sup>

Orphans and the other vulnerable children and adolescents (OVCA) living in institutional homes are more prone to behavioral & emotional problems and psychiatric disorders than others as they are deprived of a family's love and care<sup>7</sup> who are barely able to maintain a decent standard of living, making them more likely to be exposed to risks and dangers.

Many studies have found high prevalence of behavioral and emotional disorders among orphan children and adolescents in institutional care clearly indicating that there is a need of more work to be done in this field to make the better future of children living in orphanages.

Hence there is need to assess and identify behavioral problems in these institutionalized children so that needful intervention measures can be designed for them at the right time.

### Aim of the study :

To study the prevalence and types of emotional and behavioral problems along with its impact on the day to day life of orphans living in institutional homes using Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### Study location and duration:

The proposed study was conducted in Governmental, non-governmental Institutional homes (orphanages) of Jaipur city under the supervision of Preventive and Social Medicine Department, SMS medical college, Jaipur, Rajasthan from March 2021 to November 2022.

#### Study design:

This is a cross-sectional, descriptive type of observational study conducted using Strength and Difficulty questionnaire on children and adolescents aged between 4 and 17 years living in various orphanages located in Jaipur city. Children still in contact with parental family, suffering from intellectual disability and severe chronic medical illness and those whose duration of stay in the home was <1 month were

excluded from the study. A semi- structured, pre-tested and pre-validated 'Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire' was used.

As per information from ICDS department there are 11 orphanages in Jaipur city and approximately 500 children are there. Sample size of 160 was calculated at 95 % confidence level, alpha error of 0.05, 6 % absolute allowable error, expecting 16.78 % prevalence of behavioral and emotional problems in children and adolescents living in various institutional homes (Orphanages) as per the reference article<sup>1</sup>. Ethics Committee approval from SMS Medical College, Jaipur and official approval was sought and obtained from the Child Welfare Committee, Rajasthan for 5 institutional homes in Jaipur. The names of the subjects as well as the institutional homes were kept confidential. To cover sample size of 160, about 32 children were selected at random from each Institutionalized homes after applying exclusion and inclusion criteria.

**RESULTS:**

In the current study, the total sample consisted of 160 orphans . Out of these, 28 (17.5%) belonged to the age group 4–11 years and 132 ( 82.5%) belonged to the age group 12–17 years. The number of boys (n = 136) in the sample was more than the girls (n = 24). The reason for being in the institute for majority of the children was that they were abandoned by family (33.75%), followed by orphans (57.5%) and runaways (8.75%). Most of the children in institutional homes had been staying there for <1 year (48.1%) followed by children living for 1 to 5 years (30%), and >5 yrs (21.9%). The age of admission to the institutional home for majority of the children (44.37%) was between 5 and 10 years; and the academic performance was reported "average" for 70% of the children. [Table 1]

In the present study, the percentage of orphan children and adolescents in institutional homes having conduct problems was 6.8%, peer problems

**Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of the study sample**

Variables		Female	Male	Total	
		No	No	No	%
Age Group	4-11 year	1	27	28	17.5
	12-17 year	23	109	132	82.5
Admission Age in Orphanage	<5 year	14	18	32	20
	6-10 year	9	62	71	44.4
	>10 year	1	56	57	35.6
Years of stay in Orphanage	<1 year	0	77	77	48.1
	1-5year	2	46	48	30
	>5 year	22	13	35	21.9
Reason for being in Orphanage	Death of Parents	14	78	92	57.5
	Abandoned by family	10	44	54	33.8
	Runaway	0	14	14	8.8
Religion	Hindu	24	90	114	71.3
	Muslim	0	44	44	27.5
	Others	0	2	2	1.3
Caste	General	24	95	119	74.4
	OBC	0	31	31	19.4
	SC	0	3	3	1.9
	ST	0	7	7	4.4
Academic Performance	Poor	0	13	13	8.1
	Average	17	95	112	70
	Good	7	28	35	21.8
Total (Gender)	N <sub>e</sub>	24	136	160	100
	%	15	85	100	100

12.5%, emotional problems 14.70%, hyperactivity 3.10%, and 4.3% had low prosocial behavior.

In this study, the sub-scales of the SDQ were also scored separately and studied for association with socio demographic factors by using the Chi.squared test.

Emotional problems were found to be significantly associated with reason for being in the home (P < 0.05), and age at the time of admission into the home (P < 0.05).

Conduct problems were found to be significantly associated with academic performance (P < 0.05) while hyperactivity, peer problems and prosocial behavior problems were not associated significantly with any of the factor.[Table 2]

Total difficulty score: out of 160 study participants, 17 (10.6%) scored more than 16 points which was abnormal (Had emotional and behaviour problems), 9.4% participants scored 12-15 points which was borderline. It was also found that 80% orphans scored less than 11 points on total difficulty scale which was normal, hence they did not have any type of emotional and behavioural problems.

Among the orphans reared in institutional homes only academic performance is seen to be significantly associated (P < 0.05), with emotional and behavioral problems.[Table3]

Total difficulty score was generated by summing-up the scores from all the scales (Emotional problems, Conduct problems, Hyperactivity, Peer problems) except the Pro-social scale. The resultant score ranges from 0 to 40.

**Impact score :**

Out of 160 Participants of the study, 11 participants was found to have abnormal (Score 2-6) impact on their life because of emotional and behavioural problems, 13 were found on borderline (Score 1) and rest 136 participants (Score 0) were not have any impact on their life.

Out of 11 participants those who have Impact on their life because of emotional and behavioural problems, 91% candidates had learning problems in classroom, 72.8% showed problems in leisure activities, 45.5% study samples had problems in friendships and 27.3% had problems with home life.

**DISCUSSION**

It is generally considered that the children raised in orphanages did not succeed in life because of harsh environment they are exposed in institutional homes and lack of the personal care, support and motivation which they could get from their own parents is lacking in the orphanages.

So this cross-sectional study was conducted to look at a glance and find out the prevalence of the real emotional and behavioural problem, other contributory factors to emotional and behavioural problems and their impact on daily life of these children by using Strength and Difficulty questionnaire done in 5 institutional homes in Jaipur city.

In the present study it was found that out of 160 study participants 17(10.6%) scored more than 16 points which was abnormal (Had emotional and behaviour problems) which was similar to the study done by Kaur et. al. (2018)<sup>8</sup>, where 16.78% children were found to have behavioral and emotional problems. This study showed that the major reason for being in orphanage was Death of either or both parents 57.5%, the second important reason was due to abandonment of children 33.8% and the

**Table 2: Subscales of strength and difficulty questionnaire and sociodemographic**

Socio-demographics variables	Emotional problems		Conduct problems		Hyperactivity		Peer problems		Pro-social	
	Present (%)	p-value	Present (%)	p-value	Present (%)	p-value	Present (%)	p-value	Present (%)	p-value
Total	11 (6.87)		20 (12.50)		10 (6.2)		11 (6.9)		7 (4.5)	
<b>Age (Years)</b>										
4-11	2 (1.25)	0.727	4 (2.50)	1.000	1 (3.6)	0.830	2 (7.2)	0.727	2 (7.2)	0.780
12-17	9 (5.63)		16 (10.00)		9 (6.8)		9 (6.8)		5 (3.8)	
<b>Sex</b>										
Male	7 (4.38)	0.105	16 (10.00)	0.738	8 (5.9)	1.000	8 (5.9)	0.457	6 (4.5)	0.626
Female	4 (2.50)		4 (2.50)		2 (8.3)		3 (12.5)		1 (4.1)	
<b>Reason for being in orphanage</b>										
Death of Parents	2 (1.25)	0.014*	9 (5.63)	0.386	6 (6.5)	0.963	4 (4.3)	0.079	5 (5.5)	0.516
Abandoned	8 (5.00)		8 (5.00)		3 (5.6)		7 (13)		1 (2)	
Runaways	1 (0.63)		3 (1.88)		1 (7.2)		0 (0)		1 (7.1)	
<b>Years of stay in Orphanage</b>										
<1	3 (1.88)	0.129	9 (5.63)	0.629	3 (3.9)	0.338	6 (7.8)	0.903	4 (5.2)	0.852
2-5	3 (1.88)		5 (3.13)		5 (10.5)		3 (6.2)		2 (4.2)	
>5	5 (3.13)		6 (3.75)		2 (5.7)		3 (6.2)		1 (3)	
<b>Admission age in Orphanage</b>										
<5	6 (3.75)	0.006*	3 (1.88)	0.798	2 (6.2)	0.573	2 (6.3)	0.775	1 (3.2)	0.782
6-10	1 (0.63)		10 (6.26)		3 (4.2)		4 (5.6)		4 (5.7)	
>10	4 (2.50)		7 (4.38)		5 (8.8)		5 (8.8)		1 (7.7)	
<b>Academic Performance</b>										
Poor	1 (0.63)	0.568	5 (3.13)	0.012*	0 (0)	0.596	2 (15.4)	0.362	1 (7.7)	0.765
Average	9 (5.63)		11 (6.87)		8 (7.1)		6 (5.4)		5 (4.5)	
Good	1 (0.63)		4 (2.50)		2 (5.7)		3 (8.6)		1 (2.9)	

\*(P < 0.05)

**Table 3: Emotional and behavioral problems and sociodemographics**

Socio-demographic factors	Emotional and behavioural Problems				P-value
	Absent		Present		
	No.	%	No.	%	
Total sample	143	89.4	17	10.6	
<b>Age (years)</b>					
4-11	24	15	4	2.5	0.723
12-17	119	74.37	13	8.12	
<b>Sex</b>					
Boys	121	75.625	15	9.375	0.971
Girls	22	13.75	2	1.25	
<b>Reason for being in orphanage</b>					
Death of the parents	84	52.5	8	5	0.464
Abandoned by family	46	28.75	8	5	
Runaways	13	8.125	1	0.625	
<b>Years of stay in orphanage</b>					
<1	71	44.375	6	3.75	0.266
01-May	40	25	8	5	
>5	32	20	3	1.875	
<b>Admission age (years)</b>					
Below 5	28	17.5	4	2.5	0.411
05-Oct	66	41.25	5	3.125	
>10	49	30.625	8	5	
<b>Academic Performance</b>					
Poor	8	5	5	3.125	0.002*
Average	103	64.375	9	5.625	
Good	32	20	3	1.875	

\*(P < 0.05)

least was due to Runaways from home (8.75%). A similar study is in agreement with our study was conducted by Asmaa Mohammed Ali Alabd et. al. (2019)<sup>9</sup> using a descriptive research method at orphanages of Benha city of Egypt

on 80 Participants also show the similar results that 47.5% were in orphanage due to death of either or both Parents, 24% were abandoned by their families and 5% were runaways from family home. Fawzy and Fouad, (2010)<sup>10</sup> conducted a study to Determine the emotional and developmental disorders among orphanages children in Sharkia governorate, Egypt consists of 294 samples and found that the major reason for children to get admitted in orphanage was death of both parents (83.5%) and the other were abandoned by their families (16.5%); Disease et. al. (2021)<sup>11</sup> conducted a qualitative exploratory study in Wolisso town of Ethiopia on Orphans found the main reason for being in orphanages was death of either or Both parents (78%) and the second reason was due to abandonment by their families (22%). Following studies results were inconsistent with prest study : Kaur et. al. (2018)<sup>8</sup> shows the main reason for being in orphanage was Abandonment (54.8%) Followed by death of parents (29.4%) and the least was similar to this study runaways from family home (15.8%).

The academic performance out of 160 institutionalised children in this study as reported by caregivers was Average (70%) for majority of children, good for 22% children and Poor for about 8% children. Earlier conducted studies with similar results: Asmaa Mohammed Ali Alabd et al. (2019)<sup>9</sup> were also showed the similar results, Academic performance of 57.5% samples was Average, 22.5% participants was Good in academic performance and the rest 20% performance was Poor. Kaur, et al. (2018)<sup>8</sup> conducted a cross-sectional study in Visakhapatnam city of Andhra Pradesh, India which shows that the children having average and good academic performance were more than the poor performing children (average-46.2%, Good-40.8, Poor-13%). while there are studies showing that Poor academic Performing children were more in numbers as found in Hoda Elebiary, et al (2010)<sup>12</sup> study, 57.9%.

Present study found that 17 (10.6 %) children out of 160 having the Emotional and Behavioural problems. Some earlier conducted studies shows finding of Emotional and Behavioural problems prevalence rate in between 16.7%

to 65.5%. Kaur et. al. (2018) also found 16.7% prevalence of emotional and behavioural problems among orphans in institutional homes. Doku, P.N. et al.(2016)<sup>13</sup> conducted a cross-sectional survey in Ghana, they interviewed 291 children and their caregivers and found that the prevalence of emotional and behavioural problems were 49%.

The present study found the most prevalent problem among all participants was conduct problem (12.5%), the second most prevalent problem in study samples was Peer problems (6.8%) and Emotional problems was found in 6.8% of orphans living in institutional homes of Jaipur city followed by Pro-social behavior (4.4%) and Hyperactivity (3.1%) which were agreement with studies like Kaur et. al. (2018)<sup>8</sup> which also found that conduct problems were the most common problem among study participants followed by peer problems and emotional problems. Hyperactivity and low prosocial behaviours were less common. The percentage of orphan children and adolescents in institutional homes having conduct problems were 34.90%, peer problems 15.80%, emotional problems 14.70%, hyperactivity 8.60%, and 3.40% had low prosocial behaviour. P. Datta et. al. (2018)<sup>14</sup> did a similar study found that the most common behavioural problem was conduct problem, which was found in 84.30% children followed by emotional problem (55.60%), peer problem (48.30%), and hyperactivity (32.30%). Mellins et. al. (2018)<sup>15</sup> conducted a similar study in South Africa and found that conduct problem (27.3%) was the most prevalent followed by Peer problem (23.5%), emotional problem (23.3%), Hyperactivity (21.7%) and Abnormal Prosocial behaviour (2.2%). While Asmaa Mohammed Ali Alabd et. al. (2019)<sup>9</sup> conducted a descriptive research study in Benha city of Egypt and found Peer problem (73.7%) and emotional problem (53.7%) prevalence was higher than conduct problems (36.3%), Hyperactivity (26.3%) and prosocial behaviour (17.5%).

## CONCLUSION

Out of 160 participants 11 (6.87%) scored more than 6 points on emotional problem scale hence had Emotional problems, prevalence of conduct problem came out in 12.5% participants who scored more than 4 points on conduct problem scale, 10 participants scored more than 7 points on hyperactivity scale hence were Hyperactive, Peer problem came out in 6.8% participants who scored more than 5 points on Peer problem scale and 7 scored less than 4 points on prosocial behaviour scale hence found to be abnormal.

Out of 160 study participants 10.6% score more than 16 points in Total difficulty score which was abnormal (Had emotional and behaviour problems) and 11 participants were found to have abnormal (Score 2-6) impact on their life because of emotional and behavioural problems.

Out of these 11 participants those who have Impact on their life because of emotional and behavioural problems, 91% candidates had learning problems in classroom, 72.8% showed problems in leisure activities, 45.5% study samples had problems in friendships and 27.3% had problems with home life.

## Limitations

The study was done only among orphans in urban area of one city therefore; the findings of the study could not be generalized to whole population of orphans.

All the data reported in the study were reported by their Primary caregivers or teachers so the shortcomings were related to self-selection, recall bias and the social desirability effect.

Interventional measures were not planned for the children identified with emotional and behavioral problems except giving advice for psychologist consultation.

The population of females participants in this study was too less, which was mainly because the authorities did not give permission to conduct the study in the female orphanages.

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