

ABSTRACT

'All praise is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds. Thee alone do we worship; and unto Thee alone do we turn for aid. Guide us the straight way the way of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings.'¹ 'May Allah bestow countless blessings on the Holy Prophet Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (upon whom be peace and greeting), his pure family and noble companions (God be pleased with them all) and those who follow them in righteousness till the day of judgement.'²

This thesis is a humble attempt to explore the concept of 'child abuse' and explore Islamic injunctions about it. This novice attempt in no way claims to be authority on the subject but a mere attempt to find a solution to the social problem in the religious light. Originally, the topic was chalked out with imbibing much broader perspective, however, it was restricted for inexplicable reasons but if ever this discourse opens up fruitful debate on the topic, it shall be welcomed.

This topic was selected in the backdrop of rising number of child abuse incidents of different kinds depicting the sufferings of the poor lot whose only fault may be their dependence on others for care, love and protection but they are mostly administered with torture, humiliation, deprivation, sexual violence and murder. The perspective of Islam on abuse, the injunctions by God Almighty in the Holy Qur'ān, the illustrations from the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greeting) and the injunctions and contribution of the pious men to transform the human character, as an example to be followed by others, all were an interest of this topic to find a solution to this menace of child abuse in the religious light.

This thesis begins by literature review on the concept of child abuse, chiefly in the western light, then the same topic is explored in the light of Islam and mystic guidance with a shift

¹ Muḥammad Asad, The Message of the Qur'ān, p.22-23

<https://archive.org/details/TheMessageOfTheQuran/page/n1323/mode/2up> (Accessed on 25-11-2022)

² Al-Arabee Ben Razzouq, A Concise Children's Encyclopedia of Islam, (Riyadh: Darussalam 2007) p.1.

to Pakistan highlighting the plight of children and national and social structure institutions working for the welfare of children culminating in research and analysis.

Western literature has been resorted to, mainly in the first chapter, to have an insight into the concept of child abuse and for this purpose a wide range of literature including books, articles and websites have been explored. Then the concept of child abuse has been searched in the Islamic Literature including Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, Sīrah literature and Islamic History. Exact text has been quoted from the Holy Qur'ān with the reference of sūrah and verse number in the footnotes. The translation of the Holy Qur'ān has been quoted from the "The Message of Qur'ān" by Muḥammad Asad. In the narration of Ḥadīth, the whole chain has been skipped and mostly relevant portion has been added with translation (from Sunnah.com) and references. Mystic traditions have been explored, chiefly, from three books on mysticism including **Tadhkirātul Awliyā'**, **Akhbārul Akhyār fī Asrārul Abrār** and **Nafhātul Uns min Ḥaḍrat al-Qudus**. Limited translation was available of **Tadhkirātul Awliyā'** while no English translation could be found or made available of two other books, therefore, this novice took up the task of translation of the relevant portion of all the three books and wherever it has been done, it is notified by sign (*) otherwise references are available in the footnotes for each cited work. Plight of children in Pakistan has been explored from various websites, statistics of institutions, newspapers, articles, websites and legal documents. Research has been conducted through survey to solicit public opinion regarding child abuse and role of religion, especially that of mosque to combat this menace with general and targeted questions. All the specimen and results with analysis have been mentioned and for the sake of authenticity and ready reference all the collected data has also been submitted alongwith thesis. Introduction to important books and personalities has also been added. All the references have been cited in the footnotes and a list of bibliography has been maintained at the end of the thesis with categorization into books, documents, journal articles, newspaper / magazines and websites. Each chapter is followed by chapter summary imbibing the major points discussed / raised in the very chapter.

Chapter 1 dilates on the concept of child abuse and its definition, history of child abuse, recognition of child abuse as problem, it's kinds and manifestations, its causes, impact and international legislation to save the child from abuse.

Chapter 2 has been divided into two halves: first deals with the Qur'ān and Sunnah while the other deals with mystic tinge on the same topic. The stories of the Prophets and their people have been narrated with the intension to bring to light the atrocities they went through during their childhood. The hard times through which they went / suffered, being humans, and emotional agony which was faced by them and their family and how the people committed abusive acts and the realization of sins made them repent afterwards and those who went along with stubbornness met with wrath of Allah and punishment is lying ahead for them even in the hereafter. Then the plight of children is discussed at the dawn of Islam, and intervention of Islam to rescue the children is described with an elaboration from the injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān and traditions from the life of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace and greeting) followed by an exploration from the conduct and preaching of saints and mystics, from the selected books on mysticism, alongwith a small argument on the importance and role of mosque.

Chapter 3 elaborates the alarming situation in Pakistan with statistics on child abuse and instances of different kinds of abuse meted out to children in the past 22 years. A detailed introduction has been given to Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations with an aim to highlight their agenda / programmes, specifically, with reference to their role in the face of all kinds of abuse to children and remedial measures taken by them. Besides this, the purpose of allotting a convenient space to this segment was to make aware the readers about the hilarious task of rescue and rehabilitation of the victims of child abuse of all forms so that services may be acquired in the time of need. Child abuse has been established as a crime and the national level legislation for the safety of children is explained.

In Chapter 4 the aim was to further explore the problem of child abuse and societal response towards it, with particular reference to overall argument which has been carried along in

this whole endeavor, a research based on survey was conducted. Population was identified and questionnaire was designed keeping in view the general discourse of this work and population characteristics. Questions were direct and subjective statements which were analyzed quantitatively and later on interpreted by cumulative analysis of all the responses, qualitatively, followed by recommendations and conclusion, separately.

إِن أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ³

“I desire no more than to set things to rights in so far as it lies within my power; but the achievement of my aim depends on God alone. In Him have I placed my trust, and unto Him do I always turn!”⁴

Key Words: Qur’ān, Hadith, Mysticism, Self – Nafs, Child Sexual Abuse - CSA, Non-Governmental Organization - NGO, Child Protection Unit – CPU, United Nations Commission on the Rights of Child - UNCRC, European Union – EU.

³ The Holy Qur’ān, Hūd 11:88

⁴ Asad, Message of the Qur’ān, p. 454.