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**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN THE FAMILY**

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**Abstract**

In this paper, I wanted to do an analysis of the phenomenon of child abuse and neglect in the family, focusing on the form of physical abuse. I highlighted the effects, impact and negative consequences it has on the physical and mental abuse of the child. I presented the process and the factors conditioning the child's development, emphasising the importance and role of the family in the primary socialization and social integration of the child. I also highlighted the effects of family failure and how this influences the behaviours of parents and disorganization default backup. The practical part includes five case studies conducted at the Centre for advise for abused, neglected and trafficked, organized by Save the Children Foundation Centre in Arges County. The studies we conducted by analysing social documents and through a semi - structured interview with the director of the centre. Follow conclusions on research conducted, personal considerations related to the occurrence of appropriate abuse prevention and treatment. The work was intended to be a presentation of the fundamental aspects that influence child development and how to prevent abuse and stop this development. I focused on the negative consequences of physical abuse that the child supports within the family, serious parties. I wanted to highlight fundamental aspects of abuse: definition and forms of abuse, theories that underlie child abuse in the family, the impact, and the negative effects of the intervention in such cases.

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**Keywords:** Child abuse; neglect; intervention; family.

**1. Introduction**

The work comprises two parts: a theoretical and practical, is divided into 8 chapters. The theoretical part contains a description of the phenomenon of abuse, types of abuse, the main theories that have helped define and detect the main causes that favor its occurrence. The last chapter of the theoretical part of child protection legislation aimed at abused and neglected and institutions that have the task of protecting children's rights and ways to intervene when such cases of abuse are detected.

The second part of the work includes five case studies conducted at the Centre for advise for abused, neglected and trafficked , organized by Save the Children Foundation center in Arges County . The term child abuse was first used to describe “beaten child “. The concept has been expanded so that it is now used for all forms of maltreatment, physical abuse from all forms of neglect and emotional abuse and sexual abuse. Definition of Abuse accepted by the World Health Organization is: "child abuse or ill-treatment means all forms of physical ill-treatment and / or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, commercially exploit or otherwise, whose consequences are damage actual or potential to the child's health, survival, development or dignity of, in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power".

## **2. Child Abuse and Neglect in the Family**

From a legislative Romanian perspective, under the Romanian Criminal Code, child abuse occurs defined as the “maltreatment of a minor “representing "...use by the parent or the person to whom the child was entrusted measures or treatments of any kind, endangering serious physical, intellectual or moral development of the child". Gil (1970) proposed the following definition: “Child abuse is the intentional use, non- accidental force or intentional acts and non- accidental omission (neglect) of their parents or persons who have care of the child, for the purpose of injury or damage thereof.

From the perspective of socialization, child abuse can be seen in terms of the negative control strategies parents use, inadequate physical or mental their children. Many different types of abuse usually have a major thing in common: they signify the extremes to which some parents can get in trying to “discipline“ the child and the parent's lack of sensitivity to the capabilities and needs of the child. The abuse involves the lack of suitable role models, stimulation, and awareness and targeting child In conclusion, the concept of abuse encompasses the notions of child abuse and neglect. Neglect is a passive form of child maltreatment, determined by deliberate or accidental omissions of parents. (Popescu, 2002, p.93). Also, neglect is the failure or refusal of the parent to communicate appropriately with the child, to provide for basic needs and the needs of biological, emotional, physical and mental development, as well as limiting access to education. Neglect endangers normal child development - the development of bio-psycho- socio- culture (Cozărescu, 2004, p.65).

If health or physical development of the child are endangered by the exercise of parental rights through abusive behavior or gross negligence in duties of parenthood or whether educating, teaching or training of the child is not in the spirit of respect for social norms moral the company may be subject to termination of parental rights. (Popescu, 2002, p.92). Physical abuse (maltreatment) the child is defined by acts of aggression committed against children, which results in physical injury to the child or exposing them to a greater risk of physical injury. Child physical abuse is defined as: "Any harm or risk of physical injury to the child or the failure to prevent physical suffering produced a child including deliberate poisoning, intentional suffocation and Munchausen syndrome by proxy. Forms of physical abuse are: beating, kicking, burning with cigarettes, scalding with hot water, jamming, physical torture, murder (Popescu, 2002, p. 93).

Worldwide, violence against children is a major problem. Every year 40 million children under 15 are victims of violence. In family, child abuse is committed frequently by people the child trusts or by

family members or those entrusted with oversight through a legal act of power (judgment, or order organisms, ability with temporary custody of minors)...Beating can generate pathological effects, deeply hurts the dignity makes him lose confidence in themselves and others, reduces communication and sociability, shyness born or rather, lack of measurement, trend isolation or group. Thus, it has been scientifically proven that beating is inefficient, with the intention to change the child's behavior. Educational beating is not as estimated, because most teaches the child what not to do, but in any case what you should do, only attitude with educational value. In contrast to the discipline, which seeks to educate child, abuse shows outbursts interior of parents. However, it is very difficult to make a difference in practice. What begins as a disciplinary relationship may end as an abuse, because decisive since then is how will possess inner tensions. Maltreatment affects both children and parents. It generates feelings of anxiety, despair, confusion and aggression against children. Meanwhile, adults live their own shortcomings, frustrations and hopes dashed as parents.

Worldwide, the child who has trouble, begin to be viewed as a potential, not as a burden. This opinion has immediate reflection, both in law and in attitudinal plan, the children being accepted into society and encouraged to participate in society as current and future citizens with full rights (Zamfir, 2005, p.63). In this context, child protection experts (psychologists, sociologists, teachers, social workers, lawyers) agreed on the main lines of action in favor of children in difficulty. Thus, it was found that the first step in addressing domain is consensus regarding conceptual system able to comprehensively define the categories of persons, namely children who require special assistance from the state and the community. Regarding "child in need", the term is appropriate considering the global trend, which tends to place the child in the center of society. Thus, any category favored by children is not deemed to need social protection more or less than another (Zamfir, 1995, p.120). A child in difficulty is understood: the child an orphan, abandoned, deficient child who committed crimes but not criminally responsible, the child who abandoned schools and children living in poverty, children from minority communities marginalized, child victims of disasters natural, wars or other disasters, child subjected to ill treatment-abused or neglected.

### 3. Research Methodology

**Research theme** The research topic is a social problem, a deficiency, any fact or social phenomenon whose causes or consequences, can learn only through scientific knowledge.

There are four elements that define a social problem (Mărginean, 2000, p.103):

- 1) it is a condition that affects a large number of people;
- 2) impairment is undesirable;
- 3) feels the need to intervene somehow;
- 4) it requires a collective social action.

A social problem is "that social phenomenon affecting a particular community is in its sphere of interests and on which it wishes to intervene, to influence developments him" (Mărginean, 2000, p.104). In conducting this research project, the chosen theme is child abuse and child neglect in the family, an analysis of physical abuse on the child in the family. Lack of training, information and education in their role as parent, is leading to inadequate child approaches and certain mistakes that can have serious consequences for child development and training. By abuse occurs a manifestation of violence against

children, taking advantage of the difference in power between adults and children, intentionally causing physical and psychological damage to the child.

Studying child abuse starts from the idea that this phenomenon has negative implications both for the child in the process of development and for subsequent fate of the child. While the consequences of abuse manifests as difficulty in adjusting to adult behavior, social integration and the creation or transfer aggressive or abusive behavior.

#### **Research objectives**

- a) Identify the types of abuse;
- b) Identification profile families that show different types of abuse and child neglect;
- c) Evaluating relationships between parent and child;
- d) Evaluating the consequences of child abuse.

**Documentation prior** Documentation of specialized literature; Documentation on field (discussions with the director of the Counseling Center for Abused, Neglected and Trafficked Arges County);

## **4. Case Studies**

**Research universe** The research universe may be defined as “the delimitation of the population that is specific to studied phenomenon at a time “(I.Mărginean, 2000, p.111). In conducting this research project, the research universe consists of abused children in the family category who reaches record Counselling Centre for Abused, Neglected and Trafficked, Pitesti.

**The units of analysis and recording** Analysis and recording units used for studying the negative effects of child abuse are individual: abused children in the family, focusing on child physical abuse; domestic violence is higher, the higher the risk of child abuse; If the abuse occurs at a younger age and persist longer, the consequences are more serious and victim rehabilitation is more difficult.

**Type of research** The methods used in this research were literature review and case study. The case study is " exhaustive research method of social units, the events considered to form a structured whole. There is theorizing the case analysis which emphasizes its empirical character as field research strategy non-experimental type, which uses different sources of information “(L.Vlăsceanu, Zamfir, 1998, p.25). This method is suitable in research focused on understanding some aspects of social life over which control is exercised not. The case studies are not suitable for the purposes of purely statistical, because this choice subjected to intervention is based on the selection of the samples of the population (Gotman, & Kaufmann, 1998, p.146).The case study is a qualitative method of exhaustive research for a social entity. The case study as research strategy of land, non-experimental type, comprising: (Mărginean, 2000, p.122 ):first it starts from a theoretical framework, formulating a hypothesis that it will direct future research ;then there is a selection of cases, taking into account their representativeness to the subject of study ;following an analysis of each case. Case studies were selected to fill, underline, highlight the theme of the implications that violence and child abuse can exercise. Constant involvement of children in violence in the family, affective and emotional climate damage , the lack of social communication, lack of childcare, are factors that adversely affect child development and behaviour. They will highlight the relationship between risk factors and consequences of domestic violence on the child victim. The cases presented are from the archive D.G.A.S.P.C. Arges, Counselling Centre for Abused, Neglected and Trafficked.

#### 4.1. Case I

**Case presentation** P. family consists of three members: P.M. husband, wife P. G. and their daughter aged 1 year and 8 months, P.A. P. spouses have been married for 6 years. Until the birth daughter, had no visible problems that affect their lives as a couple. With the enlargement of family financial problems arose. The couple has no relatives living nearby or that they may offer their help. The two work until late afternoon, the girl remained at home with a sitter.

**Report case** Social workers went to the family home after a complaint made by a neighbor. The neighbor made the notification seeing bruised child, one of his visits he made, in the family home P. She had never seen before signs of violence on the girl's body and acted reporting the incident.

**Forms of abuse** The investigation of social workers, it has been noticed that the girl was not physically abused on a regular basis, this is a singular event. Passing through a stressful period (financial issues), parents were nervous downloaded per child. The marks on the child's body showed that he had been the victim of mild physical abuse.

**Measures** After the medical examination found no traces of internal injuries. It ordered the removal of the child from the family, and his placement in foster care. Parents were advised to counseling, to develop specific skills for solving problems and reintegrate child in the family. Parents have achieved good results after counseling sessions. 7 months that the girl was in foster care, but was met with parents daily. It was decided reintegration of the child in the family. Social workers monitor the case and so far no problems. The girl had no injuries.

#### 4.2. Case II

**Case presentation** S. family, has three children. S. wives are known to social services as unemployed, living on welfare and children's allowances. Show no interest in getting or keeping a job. B. 8 years old, A. aged 12 years old G. 14 years old are the three children of the family S. Currently they are in placement in foster care, being removed from the family home after it was discovered that they had been abused for years to come.

**Report case** Local authorities were notified after an anonymous phone call. Knowing the family history, social workers were immediately mobilized and managed in a very short term, removing children from the family.

**Forms of abuse** Denouncement subsequent medical examinations have revealed numerous physical scars but also emotional, psychological. Children have told how their father twisted arms until cracking if he were not what he was saying. A. limp from the fracture healed without medical assistance. G. has scars on his face, resulting from burns and knife wounds. B. winces every time someone wants to touch it, is hyperactive and distrustful of adults.

**Measures** The children were enrolled in counseling programs. The court decided to limit as much as possible, contacts between the family home and children. Parents struggle with the authorities to obtain custody of the children. Father was two years in prison, and his mother never recognized how her husband behaves with children. Following therapy sessions, supervised children have accepted appointments with the family. So far authorities do not believe that reintegration of children in the family is a good idea, children have only periodic contact with parents, under the supervision of authorities.

#### 4.3. Case III

**Case presentation** M. family has two children: a girl of 8 years and a boy of 4 years. M. husband is unemployed, and to support his family, wife M. working in double shifts and goes home very late evening. In these circumstances, M. husband should deal with children and housework. He was seen very often putting the girl to help him around the house, making her late for school. The teacher called the girl's mother to school because the girl's grades were getting worse, the girl always late to class, always agitated and nervous.

**Report case** Teachers have noticed social workers, seeing that the best solution because the girl's behavior has not changed even after the mother visited the school.

**Form of abuse** Following the complaint, it was decided to send the girl with her mother to a counselor. During one meeting in a huff, the girl told how her father put her to help in the household, to "caress" and kiss him, "because Mom has no time ". The girl told in detail how her father abused almost daily. Finally he said that "the fault of the mother, because it is never home" and "Daddy loves him and does not want to go to jail" (father taught her to keep the secret; otherwise he will go to jail). Girl's story was confirmed by the younger brother, who was told that he could not understand why the father closes the room, and the D was late for school. M. mother filed for divorce and moved to his parents with children.

**Measures** M. father was arrested and convicted of sexual abuse and incest. The little girl with her mother and brother, are continuing therapy sessions. Mother daughter relationship has improved considerably; her behavior did not seem changed by what happened.

#### 4.4. Case IV

**Case presentation** O. family is composed of parents and children two boys, P. M. three years and five years. Parents are unemployed, spend most of their time searching and working day and when finding work, are staying away from home every 24 hours. Mother taught him P., do not play the stove, not to give way when a knock at the door and not answer the phone when they are alone at home. M. was near the stove, not knowing what, it gave way and was burned at hand. Screams scared of his brother, P. led him to a neighbor who brought him to the hospital. Arrived at the hospital, the little M. was diagnosed with 3rd degree burns.

**Report case** Neighbor who took the child to the hospital rang and Child Protection. A referral came from the nurses in the hospital after they heard the story of children. Social workers went to the hospital; they knew what the situation of the family, being taken out due to lack of a job for parents.

**Forms of abuse** Following investigations, it was established that it is a clear case of neglect.

**Measures** Following investigations, M. was recovered from burns. The children were placed in foster care and enrolled in a counseling program. Social workers follow the evolution of the family. The children were referred to a counselor specializing, and their progress is remarkable. Parents receive assistance in finding a stable job. Also, they were shown their day centers as an alternative to leaving her children home alone. Children go to daycare center after school. Parents were able to find jobs and looking forward to take their children home.

#### 4.5. Case V

**Case presentation** N. S. is a 4 year old girl. Her parents divorced six months ago. Shortly after their parents' divorce, mother disappeared, and the girl was entrusted to her father. He suffered depression

after losing their jobs, which resulted in problems with alcohol. The girl spent more time with her aunt, who lived nearby.

**Report case** The case came to the attention of social services as a result of a complaint made by his aunt. Close relationship with the child made her aunt to suspect that something is wrong. Following repeated insistence aunt, the girl told how her father came into the room one evening and began to caress her. The girl told her without too many details, not remembered. There were instances where the father, drunk, reached his nasty talk and to inflict blows for unfounded reasons, he remembered the girl's past facts, reproached things and act pounding it.

**Form of abuse** Aunt suspects that the girl had been physically and sexually abused by his father. Although not known as a violent man, one night S. sexually assaulted the girl .She managed to tell her aunt what happened. Father says he does not remember anything, refuses to believe that he could do that.

**Measures** The girl was removed from the family and placed in the care of Aunt. Medical tests have confirmed only attempted sexual abuse. The girl was enrolled in a counseling program. Father was deprived of parental rights and condemned. The court ruled that the father is not a danger to the child, and his work had its origins at a time of disorder. After completing the sentence, the father followed by individual counseling sessions, and together with the girl. Their meetings are closely monitored by the authorities.

**Discussions** From the social perspective, child abuse has been seen as a symptom of extreme disorder in child rearing and not necessarily the individual mental disorders. Violent families have been redefined as those where the normal balance of positive and negative interactions and emotional relationship between discipline and has not been achieved. This perspective has defined abuse in the context of family, community and society and outlined the importance of individual factors that play a role in the expression of abusive behavior. Thus, the relationship parent - child became the main target of research and intervention. This approach was influenced by clinical trials on humans disrupted, studies on the development of parent - child relationship, about early attachment and the body of knowledge on the reciprocal impact of parents and children.

Following analysis of these case studies, we concluded that increasing violence directed against children is one of the most dramatic problems facing contemporary societies. Most parents, who resort to such aggression, consider physical punishment as the primary means of disciplining the child to comply with rules of conduct imposed by the family. These penalties often exceed the permitted boundaries; causing serious injury is going to fractures and traumas. Parents are the key to altering their outbursts of child wellbeing, preventing their harmonious development.

## **5. Conclusion**

In our country , physical abuse directed against children , grew due legitimizing cultural norms , but mostly because of a mentality specific Romanian , according to which " a beating does not hurt," " beating is torn from heaven" or " which gives mom grow". As a result of this mentality, Romania considers that the child has the right to beat or even worse, consider that the abuse is normal and necessary to educate the child. Violence against children is so present in our country and because the law is not known very well, is not given due importance. Most of the community members, although they were informed or aware of an abuse situation, refuse to be involved, considering it an internal problem of the family. Very often, violence and abuse are not publicly recognized, because stigmatizing the person involved and thus the child is ashamed to admit that she was beaten .Another reason why abuse is present

in our country is low living standards and lack of insufficient financial resources. Parents bursting and download their nerves on children, following these frustrations caused by shortcomings. That the existence of centers dealing with Domestic Abuse is little known, is another contributing factor in the development of abuse in our country. Violence in Romania reflects the serious situation in which contemporary family is in our country, and violence against children reflects the low education level of parents applying this treatment to their children. I believe that the problem of child abuse is a serious one, with a strong social impact and cannot be ignored. I wanted to highlight fundamental aspects of abuse: definition and forms of abuse, theories that underlie child abuse in the family, the impact, and the negative effects of the intervention in such cases. I focused specifically on physical abuse of children in the family. The implications of this are most often noticed by future generations, where adults abusing raised in a family, develop serious behavioral problems, relational, social or psychological. The last time, child abuse began to be criminalized, initially through legal acts adopted in the field as far to show a process of influencing or shaping mentality. A challenge for those studying the problem of child abuse is developing programs of prevention and treatment. Prevention targeting several areas of operation: the attitude of society towards violence, poverty, education through the media, pornography and education programs on the prevention of abuse, the behavior of protective appropriated child, treatment victim treatment abuser, developing networks Help familiar and Community educational programs for parents on child development and parental personalities treating harmony. Social worker's role is to develop a coherent system of programs, measures, professionalized activities and services aimed at protecting the child when it is subjected to some form of domestic violence prevention and intervention in cases of abuse and neglect. Social worker support needed to raise awareness of abuse, vulnerable children by providing support through psychological counseling to victims and their families, with family and individual therapy to rebuild the relationship between parent and child. Social workers are the ones who must provide psycho-therapeutic rehabilitation, social reintegration assistance to child victims of domestic violence, abuse prevention programs and campaigns to educate and inform the schools, children and parents. Also it is important and necessary to provide material support indefinite time, families whose offspring are at risk of abuse and neglect; Temporary support material may be insufficient to limit the risk of exposure to abusive behavior in the home of belonging. When cases of abuse are found and tampered with, they should be evaluated and monitored after their settlement, so there is no risk of repeating the abuse. It requires informing and educating the public regarding child maltreatment problem, which in the long run lead to significant qualitative changes in rendering social phenomenon in attitudes and collective attitudes. This work was intended to be a presentation of the fundamental aspects that influence child development and how to prevent abuse and stop this development. I focused on the negative consequences of physical abuse that the child support it within the family, serious parties, which everyone knows. The main aim of the present work it was providing information on child abuse and neglect in order to configure an adequate and effective prevention, intervention and combat this phenomenon.

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