

UNIT – 2

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Various forms of Violence Against Children (VAC) and trends in Tamil Nadu – Physical, psychological, emotional, sexual exploitation and abuse, discrimination, neglect, denial and online abuse – Intersectionality - Factors leading to vulnerability of children in Tamil Nadu and root causes.

Violence Against Children (VAC): Various forms and trends in Tamil Nadu

Physical violence

Physical violence on children refers to the intentional use of physical force that causes harm or injury to a child. Unfortunately, physical violence against children remains a serious issue in many parts of the world, including Tamil Nadu. Here are some key aspects related to physical violence on children

- 1. Forms of physical violence:**² Physical violence can manifest in various forms, including hitting, slapping, kicking, punching, shaking, whipping, or any other act that inflicts bodily harm on a child. It can also involve the use of objects to cause physical harm.
- 2. Settings of physical violence:** Physical violence against children can occur within various settings, including the home, school, institutions, or in the community. It can be perpetrated by family members, caregivers, teachers, peers, or other individuals in positions of authority or trust.
- 3. Consequences and impact:** Physical violence can have severe consequences for children. It can cause physical injuries, pain, and suffering, as well as emotional and psychological trauma. It can adversely affect a child's overall well-being, mental health, self-esteem, and social development. In some cases, physical violence can lead to long-term physical and mental health problems.
- 4. Factors contributing to physical violence:** Several factors can contribute to physical violence against children. These may include intergenerational patterns of violence, cultural beliefs that condone corporal punishment, inadequate parenting skills, stressors within the family, substance abuse, and societal tolerance of violence.³
- 5. Legal and protective measures:** In many countries, including India, laws and regulations exist to protect children from physical violence. For example, in India, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, prohibits corporal punishment and physical abuse of children. However, enforcement and awareness of these laws may vary, and there is a need for continuous efforts to strengthen child protection systems and ensure accountability for perpetrators.

Did you know?

3 in 4 children aged **2-4 years**, experience violent discipline by their caregivers on a regular basis; and around **6 in 10** are punished by physical means.

Did you know?

1 out of 2 children aged **2-17 years** suffer some form of violence each year

² <https://data.unicef.org/resources/a-familiar-face/>

³ Global status report on preventing violence against children 2020: executive summary. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020. <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/violence-prevention/global-status-report-on-violence-against-children-2020>

Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse on children refers to the emotional or mental mistreatment that can have severe and long-lasting effects on a child's well-being. It involves behaviours or actions by adults or caregivers that undermine a child's self-worth, confidence, and psychological development. Here are some examples of psychological abuse:

1. **Verbal or emotional degradation:** This includes consistently belittling, insulting, or humiliating a child, using derogatory language, or making negative comments about their abilities, appearance, or worth.
2. **Rejection and neglect:** When caregivers consistently ignore or dismiss a child's needs, emotions, or presence, it can lead to feelings of abandonment, worthlessness, and isolation.
3. **Constant criticism:** Frequent and unjust criticism, regardless of the child's efforts or achievements, can erode their self-esteem and make them feel inadequate or unworthy.
4. **Isolation and confinement:** Deliberately isolating a child from social interactions, friendships, or activities that are appropriate for their age can lead to feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and stunted social development.
5. **Manipulation and exploitation:** Manipulating a child's emotions or thoughts for personal gain, such as using them as a pawn in conflicts or exploiting their vulnerabilities, can cause significant psychological harm.
6. **Terrorizing or threatening:** Subjecting a child to constant fear, intimidation, or threats of harm can create an atmosphere of anxiety and make them feel unsafe and helpless.
7. **Withholding love and affection:** Denying a child love, affection, or emotional support can impede their ability to form healthy relationships, trust others, and develop a positive sense of self-worth.

Psychological abuse can have severe consequences on a child's mental health, emotional well-being, and overall development. It can lead to low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, difficulty forming relationships, Behavioral problems, academic difficulties, and even long-term psychological disorders.

If you suspect a child is experiencing psychological abuse, it is crucial to report your concerns to the appropriate child protection authorities or seek professional help from a counselor, therapist, or social worker.

Emotional abuse on children

Emotional abuse on children is a form of mistreatment that affects their emotional and psychological well-being. It involves behaviours or actions by adults or caregivers that undermine a child's sense of self-worth, emotional security, and overall development. Here are some examples of emotional abuse:

1. **Constant criticism and humiliation:** Regularly criticizing, ridiculing, or demeaning a child, either privately or in front of others, can lead to feelings of shame, guilt, and worthlessness.

2. **Blaming and scapegoating:** Assigning blame to a child for things beyond their control, making them feel responsible for the problems or conflicts within the family, can cause a significant amount of emotional distress.
3. **Rejection and neglect:** Ignoring a child's emotional needs, dismissing their feelings, or withholding love and affection can lead to feelings of abandonment, loneliness, and a deep sense of unworthiness.
4. **Gaslighting:** Manipulating a child's perception of reality, distorting the truth, or denying their experiences and emotions can make them doubt their own sanity and erode their sense of self-trust.
5. **Emotional withholding:** Withholding love, affection, or emotional support as a means of punishment or control can leave a child feeling unloved, unwanted, and emotionally starved.
6. **Threats and intimidation:** Using threats, intimidation, or fear-inducing tactics to control or manipulate a child's behaviour can create an atmosphere of constant anxiety, undermining their sense of safety and security.

Isolation and social deprivation: Preventing a child from forming or maintaining social connections, isolating them from friends, or restricting their social interactions can lead to feelings of loneliness, social anxiety, and impaired social development.

Emotional abuse can have severe and long-lasting effects on a child's mental health and well-being. It can contribute to low self-esteem, depression, anxiety disorders, self-harming behaviours, difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships, and a higher risk of developing psychological problems in adulthood.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Sexual exploitation and abuse of children is a deeply concerning and illegal act that involves using children for sexual purposes, which can cause significant harm to their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. It encompasses various forms of abuse, including but not limited to:

1. **Child pornography:** The production, distribution, or possession of explicit images or videos involving children.
2. **Child sex trafficking:** The recruitment, transportation, or receipt of children for the purpose of sexual exploitation.
3. **Child prostitution:** Involving children in commercial sex acts in exchange for money, goods, or services.
4. **Online exploitation:** Coercing, grooming, or manipulating children online for sexual purposes, including sextortion, live-streamed abuse, or engaging in sexually explicit conversations.

Did you know?

In **94.6 per cent** of cases of child sexual abuse, the **perpetrators were known** to child victims in one way or the other. In **53.7 per cent** of cases they were **close family members or relatives/friends**.

5. **Child sexual abuse:** Engaging in any sexual activity with a child, including molestation, fondling, penetration, or any other form of sexual contact. Involvement of a child in a sexual activity that s/he does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or is not developmentally prepared for both touching (contact) and non-touching (non-contact)
6. **Child sexual grooming:** Building an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust and manipulate them into engaging in sexual activities.
7. **Child sexual exploitation materials:** Creating, possessing, distributing, or accessing materials that depict or document the sexual abuse or exploitation of children.

It is important to understand that child sexual exploitation and abuse are crimes and violations of human rights. The consequences for victims can be severe and long-lasting, including physical injuries, psychological trauma, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, social stigma, and difficulties in forming healthy relationships.

Spiritual abuse

Spiritual abuse occurs when a spiritual leader or someone in a position of spiritual power or authority (whether organisation, institution, temple, mosque, church or family) misuses their power or authority, and the trust placed in them, with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating or dominating a child. Spiritual abuse is always about the misuse of power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice, in order to meet the needs of the abuser (or enhance his or her position) at the expense of the needs of the child. Spiritual abuse results in spiritual harm to a child and can be linked to other abuse such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Abuse of trust

A relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. An abuse of trust could be committed by, for example, a teacher, humanitarian or development worker, sports coach, scout leader, faith leader. It is important those in a position of trust have a clear understanding of the responsibilities carries and clear guidance to ensure they do not abuse their position or put themselves in a position where allegations of abuse, whether justified or unfounded, could be made. The relationship may be distorted by fear or favour. It is vital for all those in such positions of trust to understand the power this gives them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence.

Bullying is now recognised as increasingly harmful to children and young people. This could take the form of physical intimidation, verbal intimidation – including caste, gender and sexist remarks – or emotional intimidation – for example isolating or excluding someone. It is difficult to define but always involves a less powerful person experiencing deliberate hostility.

Discrimination

Discrimination against children occurs when they are treated unfairly or unequally based on certain characteristics such as their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, or other protected attributes. Discrimination can manifest in various forms and settings, including

education, healthcare, social interactions, and within the family unit. Here are some examples of discrimination that children may experience:

1. **Caste based discrimination:** Children may face prejudice, bias, or differential treatment based on their caste background, leading to exclusion, stereotypes, or unequal access to opportunities.
2. **Gender discrimination:** Children may encounter discrimination based on their gender, limiting their access to education, healthcare, or participation in certain activities due to societal norms or stereotypes.
3. **Discrimination based on religion or belief:** Children may face prejudice or marginalization due to their religious affiliation or beliefs, leading to exclusion, stigmatization, or restricted access to resources and services.
4. **Discrimination against children with disabilities:** Children with disabilities may experience discrimination in terms of access to education, healthcare, social participation, and employment opportunities, due to physical, attitudinal, or systemic barriers.
5. **Socioeconomic discrimination:** Children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may face discrimination, such as limited access to quality education, healthcare, or opportunities for upward mobility, based on their economic status.
6. **Discrimination within the family:** Children can experience discrimination or differential treatment within their own families, such as favouritism based on gender, birth order, or other factors, which can negatively impact their self-esteem and emotional well-being.

Discrimination can have detrimental effects on children's self-esteem, educational attainment, mental health, and overall development. It is important to promote equality, inclusivity, and respect for diversity to create a safe and nurturing environment for all children. Addressing discrimination requires efforts at both individual and systemic levels, including raising awareness, promoting education, enforcing anti-discrimination laws and policies, and fostering a culture of tolerance and acceptance.

Child Neglect

Child neglect refers to a failure by caregivers to meet a child's basic needs for physical, emotional, educational, or medical care, resulting in harm or potential harm to the child's well-being. It can occur in various forms and can have serious consequences for a child's health and development. Here are some examples of child neglect:

1. **Physical neglect:** This involves a caregiver's failure to provide the necessary food, clothing, shelter, or supervision to ensure a child's physical well-being. It may include inadequate nutrition, lack of appropriate clothing, unsafe living conditions, or leaving a child unsupervised for extended periods.
2. **Emotional neglect:** Emotional neglect occurs when caregivers fail to provide the emotional support, attention, and affection that a child needs for healthy development. It can involve ignoring a child's emotional needs, dismissing their feelings, or consistently withholding love and nurturing.

3. **Medical neglect:** Medical neglect refers to a caregiver's failure to provide necessary medical care or treatment for a child's physical or mental health conditions. This can include delaying or avoiding necessary medical appointments, medication, therapies, or interventions.
4. **Educational neglect:** educational neglect occurs when caregivers fail to provide a child with access to appropriate education or educational support. This can include chronic absenteeism, not enrolling a child in school, or not addressing a child's special educational needs.
5. **Supervisory neglect:** Supervisory neglect involves a caregiver's failure to provide adequate supervision and protection for a child, putting their safety and well-being at risk. This can include leaving a child alone at an inappropriate age or leaving them in the care of someone who is not capable or responsible.

Child neglect can have significant and long-lasting effects on a child's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. It can lead to malnutrition, physical injuries, poor hygiene, impaired brain development, academic difficulties, low self-esteem, attachment disorders, mental health problems, and a higher risk of engaging in risky behaviours.

Drug Dependency among Children

Drug dependency among children in India is a serious issue that has gained attention in recent years. Children in India are vulnerable to drug abuse and dependency due to various socio-economic factors. Several factors contribute to drug dependency among children in India. These include poverty, lack of education, unemployment, peer pressure, family dysfunction, exposure to violence and trauma, and easy availability of drugs in certain areas. Children may turn to drugs as a means of escape, coping with stress or emotional difficulties, or due to curiosity.

The commonly abused substances among children in India include alcohol, tobacco, inhalants (glue, paint thinners, etc.), cannabis, and sometimes harder drugs like opioids. Substance abuse poses significant health risks and can lead to long-term physical, psychological, and social consequences for children.

1. **Alcohol:** Alcohol abuse among children is a significant concern. Underage drinking can lead to dependency, impaired judgment, physical health issues, and increased risk-taking behavior.
2. **Tobacco:** Smoking cigarettes or using other tobacco products is another form of drug dependency among children. Nicotine addiction can have severe health consequences and increase the risk of respiratory problems, cancer, and other tobacco-related diseases.
3. **Inhalants:** Inhalants are substances that are sniffed or inhaled to produce intoxication. They include volatile solvents like glue, paint thinners, gasoline, aerosol sprays, and household cleaning agents. Inhalant abuse can cause serious health problems, including damage to the brain, liver, kidneys, and other organs.
4. **Cannabis:** Cannabis, commonly known as marijuana or weed, is another drug that children may abuse. It can lead to dependency, cognitive impairments, and mental health issues.
5. **Prescription Medications:** Some children may misuse prescription medications, such as opioids (painkillers), benzodiazepines (sedatives), or stimulants (used for attention-deficit

hyperactivity disorder). Prescription drug dependency can have severe health risks and potential for overdose.

6. **Stimulants:** Stimulant drugs, such as cocaine or amphetamines, can be abused by children. These drugs can have harmful effects on physical and mental health, including cardiovascular problems and addiction.
7. **Opioids:** Opioid abuse among children is a growing concern. Children may misuse prescription opioids or turn to illicit substances like heroin. Opioid dependency can have devastating consequences and pose a high risk of overdose.

It's important to note that drug dependency among children is a complex issue influenced by various factors, including personal circumstances, peer pressure, family dynamics, and socio-economic conditions. Early intervention, prevention programs, education, counseling, and access to appropriate healthcare services are crucial in addressing drug dependency among children and providing them with support and rehabilitation.

Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency (Child in Conflict with Law) in India refers to the involvement of individuals under the age of 18 in criminal activities or behaviours that are considered antisocial or illegal. The legal framework for dealing with juvenile delinquency in India is outlined in the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

Juvenile delinquency can be influenced by a variety of factors, including social, economic, family, and individual circumstances. While the causes of juvenile delinquency can be complex and multifaceted, here are some common factors that contribute to its occurrence:

1. **Family Factors:** The family environment plays a crucial role in shaping a child's behavior. Issues such as parental neglect, abuse, substance abuse within the family, parental criminal behaviour, lack of parental supervision, and inconsistent discipline can increase the risk of delinquency.
2. **Socioeconomic Factors:** Socioeconomic factors, including poverty, lack of access to quality education, unemployment, and social inequality, can contribute to delinquency. Limited opportunities, economic hardships, and a sense of hopelessness can lead some children to engage in criminal behaviour.
3. **Peer Influence:** Peer pressure and association with delinquent peers can significantly impact a child's behaviour. When children are surrounded by peers who engage in antisocial activities, they may be more likely to participate in delinquent behaviour themselves.
4. **School Environment:** Problems within the school environment, such as academic difficulties, bullying, low school attachment, and inadequate support from teachers and staff, can contribute to delinquency. Academic failure and truancy may increase the likelihood of involvement in criminal activities.
5. **Substance Abuse:** Substance abuse, including alcohol and drug use, is a significant risk factor for juvenile delinquency. Substance abuse can impair judgment, increase aggression, and lead to criminal behaviour to support addiction or obtain drugs.

6. **Media Influence:** Exposure to violence, aggression, and inappropriate content in media, including television, movies, video games, and the internet, can impact a child's behaviour and desensitize them to violence.
7. **Individual Factors:** Certain individual characteristics can contribute to delinquency, such as low self-esteem, poor impulse control, sensation-seeking behaviour, psychological disorders, and a history of prior delinquent behaviour.

It's important to note that these factors do not guarantee that a child will engage in delinquent behaviour, and many children facing these challenges do not become delinquent. Protective factors such as a strong support system, positive role models, access to education and opportunities, and pro-social activities can help mitigate the risk of delinquency.

Addressing juvenile delinquency requires a comprehensive approach that focuses on prevention, early intervention, rehabilitation, and support services. Efforts should be made to strengthen families, provide access to quality education and employment opportunities, promote positive peer relationships, and ensure a supportive community environment for children at risk of delinquency.

Online Abuse

Online abuse of children, also known as online child exploitation, refers to the harmful and illegal activities that target children through digital platforms and the internet. It encompasses a range of behaviours aimed at exploiting, manipulating, or harming children online. Here are some examples of online abuse of children:

1. **Grooming:** Online grooming involves an adult building an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust, with the intention of exploiting them sexually or for other harmful purposes.
2. **Sextortion:** Sextortion occurs when someone coerces a child into sharing explicit images, videos, or personal information and then uses it to blackmail or manipulate the child for further exploitation or financial gain.
3. **Online harassment and bullying:** Children can be subjected to various forms of harassment, cyberbullying, or online intimidation, including spreading rumors, making derogatory comments, or sending threatening messages.
4. **Distribution of child sexual abuse material:** The production, distribution, or possession of explicit images or videos of children, commonly known as child pornography, is a serious form of online abuse that perpetuates the victimization of children.
5. **Online child trafficking:** The internet can be used as a platform for facilitating child trafficking, including recruitment, advertisement, and illegal transactions involving the exploitation of children.
6. **Online enticement:** Adults may attempt to lure children into offline meetings or engage them in inappropriate activities through online platforms, exploiting their vulnerability and trust.
7. **Exposure to inappropriate content:** Children may be exposed to age-inappropriate or harmful content online, including explicit material, violent content, or content promoting self-harm or dangerous behaviours.

It is crucial to protect children from online abuse and create a safe digital environment for them. Parents, caregivers, and educators should educate children about online safety, promote responsible internet use, and encourage open communication. Internet service providers, social media platforms, and law enforcement agencies play a vital role in monitoring and reporting instances of online abuse. Reporting any suspicious or abusive activities involving children to the appropriate authorities is essential to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

Suicidal tendency among children

Suicide among children in India is a distressing issue that requires attention and intervention. India has seen a concerning rise in suicide rates among children and adolescents in recent years. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the age group of 15-29 years, with a significant number of cases involving children. Suicide is a complex phenomenon influenced by a combination of factors. Children may face various challenges and stressors, including academic pressure, parental expectations, bullying, relationship problems, substance abuse, mental health issues, family conflicts, poverty, and societal factors.

Mental Health Issues: Undiagnosed or untreated mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, or substance abuse disorders, can increase the risk of suicidal ideation and behaviour among children. Limited awareness, stigma, and lack of access to mental health services exacerbate this issue.

Academic Pressure: The intense academic pressure faced by children in India, driven by a highly competitive education system and societal expectations, can contribute to stress, anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy. Academic performance-related stress, fear of failure, and excessive parental expectations can be overwhelming for some children.

Bullying and Peer Pressure: Bullying, both offline and online, is a significant risk factor for suicide among children. Being subjected to constant harassment, humiliation, or cyberbullying can severely impact a child's mental well-being. Peer pressure to conform, fit in, or engage in risky behaviours can also contribute to their vulnerability.

Relationship Issues: Children may experience relationship difficulties, such as conflicts with peers, romantic partners, or family members, which can contribute to emotional distress and a sense of isolation. Breakups, family conflicts, or a lack of supportive relationships can significantly impact their mental health.

Family Issues: Family conflicts, dysfunction, or unstable home environments can contribute to a child's emotional turmoil. Factors such as parental divorce, domestic violence, substance abuse within the family, neglect, or a lack of emotional support can increase the risk of suicide.

Socioeconomic Factors: Socioeconomic factors, such as poverty, financial stress, lack of access to quality education or healthcare, and limited opportunities, can contribute to the risk of suicide among children. Economic hardships and a sense of hopelessness about the future can further exacerbate their vulnerability.

Cultural and Social Factors: Cultural and social factors, including societal expectations, gender discrimination, early marriage, and restrictive norms, can play a role in increasing the risk of

suicide among children in India. Pressure to conform to societal norms and restrictions on autonomy can contribute to their distress.

Media Influence: Exposure to media, including social media, television, movies, or news, that depicts self-harm, suicide, or glamorizes risky behaviours can influence vulnerable children and contribute to suicidal ideation.

It's important to address these factors through a comprehensive approach that includes mental health awareness, accessible mental health services, education, early intervention, anti-bullying measures, strengthening support systems, and promoting a positive and inclusive environment for children. Suicide prevention requires collaboration between families, schools, communities, and mental health professionals to identify and support at-risk children.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a concept that was coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. It refers to the interconnected nature of social categories such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and other forms of identity, and how they overlap and intersect to shape an individual's experiences and social position. Intersectionality recognizes that individuals can simultaneously experience multiple forms of oppression and discrimination based on these intersecting identities.

Rather than treating various social categories as separate and distinct, intersectionality acknowledges that people's experiences are shaped by the interactions and intersections of multiple aspects of their identity. For example, a woman of colour may face unique challenges and forms of discrimination that are distinct from those experienced by a white woman or a man of colour. Intersectionality highlights the ways in which different forms of privilege and oppression interact and compound to shape a person's social, economic, and political realities.

The concept of intersectionality is commonly used within the fields of critical race theory, feminist theory, and social justice activism. It emphasizes the need to consider the complex and interconnected nature of individuals' identities and experiences to address systemic inequalities and work towards social justice. Intersectionality encourages a more inclusive and comprehensive analysis of power dynamics and social structures, recognizing that multiple systems of oppression can operate simultaneously and in mutually reinforcing ways.

Consequences or impact of violence on children

Violence can have profound and long-lasting consequences on children, affecting their physical, emotional, cognitive, and social well-being. The impact of violence on children can vary depending on factors such as the severity, frequency, and duration of the violence, as well as the child's age, resilience, and support network. Here are some common consequences:

1. **Physical health:** Children who experience violence may sustain physical injuries, ranging from bruises and cuts to more severe forms of trauma. The immediate physical harm can have lasting effects on their health and development.
2. **Emotional and psychological effects:** Violence can lead to a range of emotional and psychological difficulties, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder

(PTSD), low self-esteem, and feelings of guilt or shame. Children may experience nightmares, sleep disturbances, and have difficulties concentrating or regulating their emotions.

3. **Behavioral problems:** Children exposed to violence may exhibit Behavioral issues such as aggression, impulsivity, disobedience, or withdrawal. They may have difficulty managing their emotions and may resort to unhealthy coping mechanisms or engage in self-destructive behaviours.
4. **Cognitive and academic impact:** Violence can interfere with a child's cognitive development and academic performance. They may have difficulties with attention, memory, and problem-solving skills. This can result in lower academic achievement and educational attainment.
5. **Social difficulties:** Children who have experienced violence may struggle with forming healthy relationships and trust. They may have difficulties with social interactions, struggle with empathy, and exhibit difficulties in peer relationships. These challenges can persist into adulthood, affecting their ability to form healthy relationships and maintain social connections.
6. **Long-term consequences:** The impact of violence on children can extend into adulthood, leading to a higher risk of mental health disorders, substance abuse, involvement in criminal behaviour, and revictimization.

It is important to note that not all children who experience violence will necessarily experience all these consequences, as individual factors, and protective factors such as a supportive environment, access to mental health services, and resilience can play a role in mitigating the effects. Early intervention, trauma-informed care, and providing safe and nurturing environments are crucial in helping children recover from the impact of violence and promoting their overall well-being.

Factors leading to vulnerability of children in Tamil Nadu and root causes

Children in Tamil Nadu, like children elsewhere, can face various vulnerabilities due to a range of factors. Here are some factors that can contribute to the vulnerability of children in Tamil Nadu, along with their root causes:

1. **Poverty:** Economic deprivation and lack of access to basic necessities such as food, healthcare, and education can make children more vulnerable. Root causes include unequal distribution of resources, limited job opportunities, and social inequalities.
2. **Child labour:** Many children in Tamil Nadu are engaged in child labour, particularly in industries such as textiles, agriculture, and domestic work. Poverty, lack of education, and weak enforcement of child labour laws contribute to this issue.
3. **Lack of education:** Limited access to quality education, especially in rural areas, can leave children vulnerable to exploitation and limit their opportunities. Factors such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and social norms that prioritize child labor or early marriage can hinder access to education.
4. **Child marriage:** Child marriage remains a concern in Tamil Nadu, particularly in certain communities and rural areas. Factors contributing to child marriage include poverty, lack of

education, traditional and cultural practices, and limited awareness about child rights and the negative consequences of early marriage.

5. **Gender inequality and discrimination:** Gender-based discrimination and societal norms can put girls at a higher risk of vulnerability. Discrimination, limited opportunities for girls, and harmful practices such as female foeticide, child marriage, and gender-based violence contribute to their vulnerability.
6. **Trafficking and exploitation:** Tamil Nadu has been identified as a source, transit, and destination for human trafficking. Factors such as poverty, lack of education, social instability, and weak law enforcement contribute to the vulnerability of children to trafficking and exploitation.
7. **Child abuse and neglect:** Children in Tamil Nadu can be subjected to various forms of abuse, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, as well as neglect. Factors such as poverty, lack of awareness, social stigma, and weak child protection systems can contribute to these issues.

Addressing the root causes of these vulnerabilities requires a multi-faceted approach that includes poverty alleviation, improving access to education, empowering girls and women, raising awareness about child rights, strengthening child protection mechanisms, and enforcing laws related to child labour, child marriage, and trafficking. It also involves creating a supportive environment that values and prioritizes the well-being and rights of children.

Reference and Suggested Readings

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Unit End Questions

1. What are the different types of violence against children occur in India?
2. What is psychological abuse? Explain in detail.
3. What is child abuse? Discuss the types of child abuse.
4. What are the types of discrimination faced by children in India?
5. What is online abuse?
6. Discuss the different types of online abuse.
7. Explain the impact of violence on children.
8. What is intersectionality?
9. Explain the factors leading to vulnerability of children in Tamil Nadu.
10. What is suicide? Explain the factors leading to suicide among children.