

## **Child Abuse Scale-Revised: Modification, Revision and Cultural Validation of Child Abuse Scale**

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### **Abstract**

Children become victims of atrocities in different cultures which affects their mental and physical health. Child Abuse Scale (CAS; Malik & Shah, 2007) was devised to measure child abuse inflicted by parents for 8-12 years old children. Based on the researcher's experience, children got confused in responding to the same scale for both mother and father at a time. Moreover, sexual abuse-related items couldn't be retained originally. The present study was carried out to modify, standardize and develop norms for the CAS for the Pakistani population. Participants of the study included 700 children of 8-12 years (both boys & girls) drawn from mainstream schools (non-clinical sample;  $n = 600$ ) and the child protection and welfare bureau (clinical sample;  $n = 100$ ). Participants, after taking formal permission from authorities, were administered with CAS-R and a detailed demographic information sheet. To ensure construct validity, Principle component factor analysis was run which bare three factors for CAS-R, labeled as Physical & Emotional Abuse, Physical & Emotional Neglect, and Sexual Abuse. Both mother and father forms revealed high reliability for overall and subscale scores. Item analysis revealed good internal validity. The CAS-R is a psychometrically sound measure for the assessment of abuse inflicted by parents.

Keywords: Child Abuse Scale, physical & emotional abuse, neglect, Sexual Abuse

### **INTRODUCTION**

Defining child abuse is stranded in the parenting styles and child nurture considered appropriate in a culture. However, the presence of harm as a consequence of abuse and

neglect is an important legal consideration. Physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and sexual abuse are the universal types of abuse (Scannapieco & Connell-Carrick, 2005).

The collectively reported type of abuse is physical which is quite direct but still ambiguous based on cultural and societal factors (Child welfare information Gateway, 2009). Emotional abuse is an unfitting act or failure to provide a child with adequate emotional availability and non-physical nurture. Physical neglect is an intentional or unintentional omission by a caregiver accountable for the child, which results in psychological harm (Gustavsson & Segal, 1994; Erickson & Egeland, 2002). Emotional neglect is regarded as a lack of caregiver support and encouragement, mostly seen as emotional deprivation. Another complex, rarely reported type of abuse is sexual abuse which involves any sexual activity with a child without taking his / her consent (Berliner & Elliott, 2002). Behind the scene ratio of sexual abuse is very high.

Child abuse is a sensitive social issue that remains unreported and especially when a parent is an abuser. Only devising relevant measurement tools can help prevent and treat such cases which have highlighted a need for developing the assessment tools for child abuse (Slack et al, 2003). Most available tools were developed to measure the abuse potential among the adults or were retrospective in nature to measure abuse experienced in childhood. However, the presently suffering children and their perceptions were badly ignored for decades.

Some people accept abusive behavior of parents as an abuse while others consider it essential part of training and keep a control on their children. This scenario of abuse inflicted by parents is quite prevalent in Pakistan. Moreover, the cases of sexual abuse are raising at an alarming strength. Looking at the circumstances, it was essential to develop an indigenous scale to measure child abuse focusing on the suffering children. Child Abuse Scale (CAS; Malik & Shah, 2007), based on the model of Giovannoni (1971) is an indigenous self-report tool to for the assessment of child abuse and neglect (inflicted by parents) in children. There are thirty four items relating to four major categories of child abuse and neglect i.e. physical abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect (Malik & Shah, 2007). In the original version, sexual abuse category was dropped due to poor factor loadings of all the relevant items. The scale has been productively used in different researches in Pakistan (Fatima, 2006; Malik & Rizvi, 2009; Malik, Gul & Humphreys, 2010, 2011); however, the researchers noticed an issue that the respondents had difficulty responding to both parents at one form which was referring to “my parents”. There was a different perception for mother and father which was hard to express in this format. Hence, the main idea for revising the Child Abuse Scale was to split the scale into father and mother forms to remove the ambiguity of respondents and get a clear picture. Further, it was decided to take an account of

sexual abuse that remained unsuccessful for the original version (Malik & Shah, 2007). This objective was developed while analyzing the changing soio-cultural ideas on sexual abuse in Pakistan.

## **METHOD**

### **Step I: Construct Identification of Child Sexual Abuse Scale**

A comprehensive survey of present literature and development of scales was done to establish the construct and take a picture of the phenomenon. The common behaviors identified during this practice were touching sexual organs, communicating the sexual content and knowledge that is inappropriate to the child's age, showing sexually stimulating content to the child.

Moving ahead, an initial questionnaire revealing the objectives of the study was given to the two subject experts, requested to detect the particular parenting behaviors that can be identified as sexual while keeping the child's age in view. Preexisting scales developed in other cultures (e.g. NorVoldAQ; Swahnberg & Wijma, 2003; Sexual and Physical Abuse Questionnaire; Kooiman et al., 2002; Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ); Bernstein & Fink, 1998 & Abuse Screening Inventory; Swahnberg & Wijma, 2007) to measure sexual abuse in a retrospective manner were also analyzed to refine the item content. Two of the items were added from the NorVold Abuse Questionnaire (Swahnberg & Wijma, 2007) and two items from Abuse Screening Inventory (Swahnaberg & Wijma, 2007) in indigenous content.

### **Step II: Item Generation and Formulation**

Items were generated covering the identified constructs which were given for review to subject specialists. This exercise ended up with twenty-five items which were prudently reviewed by researchers to retain more precise items. Finally, 16 items were retained excluding Vague, general, and age-wise inappropriate items from the item pool. These statements were reviewed by two bilingual experts who evaluated the language and comprehension level for the children. The major concern was to use less threatening language for the children. They phrased the statements in culturally appropriate words.

Few chosen items were included in the CAS and administered (as a part of tryout) on a sample of ten children who were confirm abuse cases as identified by a Non-Govt Organization working with abused children. This was done to accomplish cognitive debriefing for the newly added subscale. The scale was verbally administered to check whether children could understand the language as their opinion was more important to

proceed with revision. The alternate words for misunderstood words were noted during this practice. They faced difficulty in comprehending the words related to sexual abuse.

*Scrutiny of Child Abuse Scale.* The original scale comprised of four subscales to measure major dimensions of abuse previously mentioned. The subscale of physical abuse and physical neglect contained four items in each category. There were fourteen items in the category of emotional abuse and twelve items in the category of emotional neglect. The scale is comprised of both positive and negative statements. All the CAS items were revised while looking at the relevant scale previously developed to measure child abuse even if they were based on retrospective memories. Only one pertinent item was added to the scale i.e. “My parents wished I had never been born (Bernstein et al, 2003), after translation in Urdu. All the items were shuffled and rearranged by placing more direct statements in the middle of the content. It ended with 51 items relevant to different manifestations of abuse.

### **Step III: Empirical Evaluation**

#### **Participants**

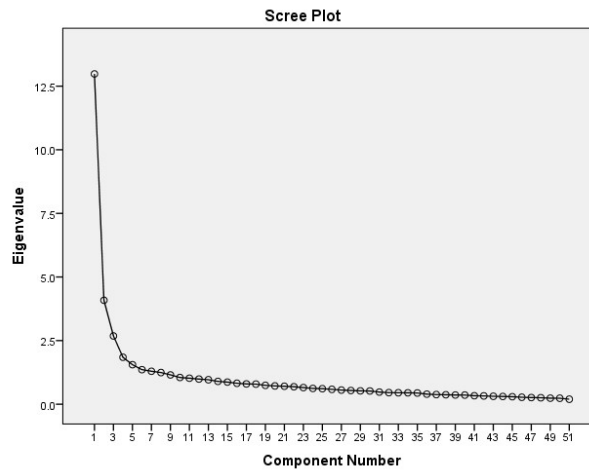
To empirically evaluate the CAS-R, a sample ( $N=700$ , as a general rule of thumb, 10 observations per item to avoid any computation difficulties) was conveniently drawn from different schools and colleges of Punjab. The sample comprised of 356 (51%) boys and 344 (49%) girls of age 12-18 years ( $M = 16.07$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ) from different schools. The participants belonged to both joint ( $n = 506$ , 72%) and nuclear ( $n=194$ , 27%) family systems.

#### **Procedure**

The study sample was derived from mainstream schools and organizations working with abused children. After taking approval from AS&RB, schools were approached to get permission. Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) and NGOs were contacted to get permission to approach referred abused children. The sample was accessed with the help of their class teachers (from schools) and psychologists (at NGOs and CPWB). The CAS-R mother and father forms were administered along with a detailed demographic information sheet. The informed consent was taken from the research participants.

## RESULTS

Statistical Procedure for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .92, above the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1974), and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $\chi^2(1275) = 15651.61, p = .000$ ) supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix (Bartlett, 1954). All the components showed commonality above .3, that's why all of them were, retained which further confirmed that each component shared some common variance with other components. Given these overall indicators, factor analysis was deemed to be suitable with this data.



**Table 1**

*Factor Loadings of the Items Selected for Child Abuse Scale-R Obtained from Principal Component Factor Analysis (N=700, Items=38)*

Item #	Item in Scale	F1	F2	F3
		P&EA	P&EN	SA
2	Physical work .....	.61	-	-
3	Beat me in the .....	.74	-	-
4	Slap .....	.59	-	-
5	Suspect .....	.79	-	-
6	No parental care .....	.69	-	-
7	Use abusive.....	.66	-	-
8	Ridicule me .....	.75	-	-
9	Scold me in the .....	.68	-	-
10	Criticize my .....	.66	-	-
11	I have to look .....	.55	-	-
23	Express their .....	.68	-	-
24	Discuss my .....	.68	-	-
26	Insult me.....	.65	-	-
27	Hate me.....	.65	-	-
38	Ridicule my.....	.48	-	-
40	Physically torture.....	.47	-	-
43	Make me feel .....	.51	-	-
36	My parents say .....	.50	-	-
1	Care for .....	-	.49	-
13	Food on .....	-	.47	-
15	Importance of .....	-	.61	-
17	Parent's friendly .....	-	.56	-
18	Spend time .....	-	.69	-
19	Care for likes.....	-	.66	-
22	Help to solve .....	-	.68	-
29	Attend school .....	-	.65	-
30	Ready for .....	-	.68	-
32	Care for .....	-	.76	-
42	Excursion trips .....	-	.67	-
51	Parents interest .....	-	.69	-
49	Accompanying .....	-	.49	-
46	Parental interest in .....	-	.35	-
28	Touching .....	-	-	.64
31	Touching private .....	-	-	.35
35	Show his/her own .....	-	-	.70
41	Force to touch .....	-	-	.69
44	Do bad things .....	-	-	.64
45	Touch private body .....	-	-	.59
	Eigen Value	12.98	4.08	2.68
	% Variance	25.45	8.01	5.26
	Cum %	25.45	33.45	38.71

The principle component method was used to extract factors because the primary objective was to identify common variance into orthogonal factors and recognize measurement error and true factor variance. The analysis revealed the presence of 3 factors initially with Eigenvalues above 1 and explaining 38.7% variance in the data. Three components were decided to retain while following Cattell's (1966) scree test. Initial Eigenvalues indicated that the three factors explained 25.45%, 8.01%, and 5.26% of the variance respectively. To aid in the interpretation of these components, varimax rotation was performed as all three factors were found unrelated. The rotated solution revealed the presence of a simple structure with three components showing several strong loadings and all variables loading substantially on all three factors. Items were cross-loaded on all factors but the criteria to retain in one factor were items highly loaded on that factor.

**Table 2***Item Analysis of the Selected Items for Child Abuse Scale-R (N=700, Items = 38)*

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>r</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math> if item deleted</b>	<b>Item No.</b>	<b>r</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math> if item deleted</b>
2	.52	.90	13	.52	.90
3	.58	.90	15	.44	.90
4	.45	.90	17	.46	.90
5	.67	.90	18	.63	.90
6	.65	.90	19	.61	.90
7	.60	.90	22	.68	.90
8	.63	.90	29	.52	.90
9	.65	.90	30	.60	.90
10	.56	.90	32	.61	.90
11	.34	.91	42	.54	.90
23	.59	.90	46	-.29	.92
24	.68	.90	49	-.57	.92
26	.62	.90	51	.39	.90
27	.66	.90	28	.20	.91
36	.52	.90	31	.15	.91
38	.61	.90	35	.20	.91
40	.56	.90	41	.31	.90
43	.54	.90	44	.20	.91
1	.52	.90	45	.20	.91

Item analysis revealed moderate to high levels of inter-item correlations for the items of the revised version and this is the reason to retain the items in the scale.

Scaled scores were computed for CAS-R subscales for further analysis of the data. The formula (McKinlay et.al., 1981) used for this purpose was:

$$\text{Scaled Scores} = ((X/I) / \text{Option}) \times 10$$

**Table 3**

*Descriptive of Child Abuse Scale-R for both Mother and Father Form (N=700)*

<b>Scales</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>M(SD)</b>	<b>Scoring range</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
<b>CAS-R Mother</b>				
P&EA	18	26.61(9.81)	18-72	.93
P&EN	14	31.65(8.84)	14-56	.81
SA	6	6.60(1.63)	6-24	.71
CAS-RTotal	38	64.86(16.94)	38-152	.91
<b>CAS-R Father</b>				
P&EA	18	26.50(9.99)	18-72	.93
P&EN	14	34.44(9.18)	14-56	.81
SA	6	6.75(1.68)	6-24	.64
CAS-R Total	38	67.71(17.17)	38-152	.91

Child Abuse Scale-Revised comprise of thirty eight items clustered under three subscales related to physical & emotional abuse (P&EA; 18 items), physical & emotional neglect (P&EN; 14 items), and sexual abuse (SA; 6 items) with high-reliability scores for both mother and father versions. The mean scores of the participants fall within the given ranges.

#### *Discriminant validity*

Discriminant validity was tested in two ways. First, the correlation between the factors was computed, and second the group differences were explored for abused and non-abused children

**Table 4**



*Correlation Matrix and Reliability of Child Abuse Scale-R (N = 700)*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
1 P&EA	.62**	.02	.90**
2 P&EN	-	.10*	.89**
3 SA	-	-	.15*
4 CAS-R Total	-	-	-

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .0001$

The correlation between factors was below the threshold value of 0.80 (Clark & Watson 1995; Kline 2011) which established discriminant validity of the scale.

**Table 5**

*Mean, Standard Deviation and t-values of Clinical and Non-Clinical Sample on Subscales and CAS-R Scores (N = 700)*

<i>Scales</i>	<i>Clinical (n = 100) M (SD)</i>	<i>Non-Clinical (n = 600) M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
Physical & Emotional Abuse	45.02 (10.00)	23.55 (5.46)	31.52*	.3
Physical & Emotional Neglect	45.18 (3.33)	29.41 (7.32)	21.18*	.3
Sexual Abuse	6.05 (.26)	6.69 (1.74)	3.69*	.5
Total CAS-R	96.25 (11.97)	59.63 (10.97)	30.62*	.3

\* $p < .001$ .

The results revealed a significant difference between clinical and non-clinical samples with higher mean scores of the clinical samples. The Cohen's d effect size reflects large mean differences between the groups on P&EA, P&EN and overall abuse scores where the difference is larger than 3 standard deviations while medium effect size was shown for the difference on sexual abuse subscale.

## DISCUSSION

The research was conducted to modify and revise the previously developed indigenous scale name Child Abuse Scale (Malik & Shah, 2007); and to validate the revised version in Pakistani culture. The scale was originally developed for eight to twelve years old children for the assessment of the form and extent of abuse inflicted by their parents. CAS was a 34 item Likert type scale with 4-point scoring categorized as "Never", "Sometimes", "Frequently" and "Always". The scale comprised of thirty four statements referring to "My parents.....", taking account for both parents at the same form. One of the key objectives of the study was to revise the CAS (Malik & Shah, 2007) in terms of splitting the forms for mother and father. There is empirical evidence that mothers and fathers are equally capable

to impact the lives of their children (Laflamme et al., 2002). They perform different roles in the family so children expect from them differently.

Exploratory factor Analysis (EFA) was run to check the factor structure of the revised scale. The principal component analysis with varimax rotation clustered thirty eight items into three factors with a different number of items in each factor instead of clustering items into four categories as clustered in the original CAS (Malik & Shah, 2007). The new factor structure emerged for CAS-R was found similar for father and mother data when compared however, the mother form was used for further analyses due to the clearer picture. The items selection criterion to retain items in a factor was value  $>.35$  and items with high loadings were retained in a particular factor.

Factor 1 comprised of eighteen items merging all abuse related items where three were related to physical and fifteen were related to emotional abuse, therefore the factor was labeled as “Physical and Emotional Abuse”. These items were clustered under two different categories in the Child Abuse Scale (Malik & Shah, 2007). This pattern shows that children feel the emotional pain of physical abuse. The unmet physical needs of children cause emotional pain in them as well. In this view, emotional significance of physical abuse is not negligible. This factor structure is aligned with that of Ney et al., (2002) who claimed that physical abuse is experienced beyond the physical symptoms and spreads in psychological domain causing diverse disturbance. Childs subjective experience is affected differently from diverse type and extent of the abuse. Herrenkohl (1990) has also argued that emotional abuse co-occurs with other forms of maltreatment. Similarly, as the children reach two years of age, approximately, 90% of the families use one or more types of abuse to train them. This may include verbal aggression or physical abuse. So the abuse types coexist and overlap in a family (Straus & field, 2000).

There are at least six manifestations of emotional abuse where rejection is the most prominent and searched and menace type (Baumeister, 2002). Victims reports show that the most damaging statement of parents for them is “I wish you were never born” (i.e. item no 33 in the CAS-R) which is clustered with other items related to emotional abuse in the current study findings. To ignore is a vital dimension of emotional abuse showing failure of parent to respond or interact with the child. The negligence or denial of the child’s health needs means presence of emotional abuse (Straus & Field, 2000). Item no. 6 in CAS-R “my mother doesn’t take care of me when I get sick” is clustered under the factor of emotional abuse which was clustered under physical abuse in CAS-original. Exploiting and isolating a child from his family and friends negatively influence the child’s emotional health (Kairys et al., 2002). However, exploitation is when the child is given age inappropriate responsibilities and he/she is not able to handle it. This is usually practiced to use a child for ones’ own benefit or help. Two of the items in CAS-R i.e. “I’ve to look after siblings” (item no. 11) and “Physical

work at home” (item no. 2) are clustered under the relevant factor endorsing the literature findings. such responsibilities also restricts them from engaging in normal social activities which are essential for them.

Second factor consisted of fourteen items related to both physical and emotional neglect which was the reason to label this factor as “Physical and psychological Neglect”. These two lie on the same continuum of omission where physical or emotional needs and relevant required behaviors are ignored (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2008). In the current study, For example, the item “my mother/father gives me food on time” has been merged with other items of emotional abuse which shows the feelings and perceptions of children. Parents desire for a newborn to be boy and not the girl also cause emotional neglect in them. This is more disturbing for the child if they express that she may not born. In Pakistani culture, a common practice is to discriminate the children even for providing food and other basic necessities. Negligence of physical needs is not limited to the physical deficiencies but the associated emotional pain is more important for the Childs’ development. they compare the parents behavior towards other siblings and other parents behavior with their children and this comparison cause emotional pain in them if the behavior is negatively different. The neglectful behavior due to poor socioeconomic status, where parents are unable fulfil the Childs’ demands is even disturbing for the child.

Third factor comprised of six negative statements relevant to sexually abusive behaviors inflicted by parents. Sexual abuse exists in our society as well but these cases remain under reported. And sometimes parents unknowingly behave in a certain way that is sexual in nature and abusive. No items could be retained in this factor in the original version. For the present study, a sample of reported and identified abused cases was also reported. They were approached through relevant organizations. Only few (aprx. 5%) of cases are being reported due to the media influence and organizations who are working for the child rights. A father abused his daughter sexually twice at different times (UNICEF, 2011). The risk of sexual abuse increases when children live with non-biological father and there are poor family bindings (Claxton-Oldfield & Whitt, 2004). In 70 - 80% of cases of child sexual abuse, the perpetrator has a ‘familial relationship’ with the abused child (Sammut, 2014). Such cases exist in Pakistani society as well but the reporting is difficult because of social pressure and local restrictions.

Three physical abuse-related items i.e. “forced for physical labor”, “inflicting physical injuries”, and “parents’ burn body parts” are cast off from the scale due to poor loadings on the respective factors and poor reliability. one reason for a poor response on these items may be their direct question on harsh parenting which made them reluctant to respond. Moreover, during parenting, there may be rare cases of such extreme behaviors.

Moving ahead, sexual abuse was not found significantly correlated with physical & emotional abuse. The items related to sexual abuse were although physical content but was entirely separable from other ordinary physical acts. Another reason for this might be the addition of a phrase i.e. “without my consent” for only sexual abuse-related items. This has made the content psychologically dominant. In the majority of the cases, neglect from the caregiver and particularly physical neglect is thought to be the precursor of sexual abuse in many families (Ney et al., 1994). There was a significant difference of abused children from non-abused children with a higher mean score of the abused group on CAS-R total and subscales. This helps to establish the discriminant validity of the scale. Conclusively, Child Abuse Scale-Revised is a psychometrically sound measure for the assessment of child abuse (inflicted by their parents) in 8-12 years old children. Gender-wise, group-wise, and age-wise norms are available in the technical manual of CAS.

### **Limitations and suggestions**

The clinical sample was small in number, however, this was due to limited availability of the sample but future researchers should recruit large samples from other provinces as well. To establish construct validity, more theoretical correlates should be explored in the future.

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