

Hurried child syndrome: Are we creating an advanced generation or destroying it?

ABSTRACT:

Parents who overschedule their children, put a lot of pressure on them to succeed academically, and want them to act and behave like tiny adults beyond their mental, social, or emotional capabilities are considered to be suffering from the disease known as "hurried child syndrome." Due to this, there has been a 50% rise in childhood obesity, a tripling in suicide and murder rates, 15-20% of young children are "flunking" kindergarden and millions of children are medicated in order to make them more 'controllable' at home and in school over the last 20 years. notably typical symptoms are headaches, diarrhoea, hyperactivity, cramping in the muscles, insomnia, digestive issues, and bedwetting. Drug and alcohol dependency is currently the most prevalent cause of death among adolescents, moreover, suicide incidents are also rising. About 70% of teenage girls will not be virgins by the time they reach adulthood, and 40% of those who are sexually active will become pregnant. The most significant aspect is to pay close attention to the adolescents and attempt to comprehend their unique needs and abilities. It's wonderful if a child loves education and engaging in extracurricular activities, but if they are having difficulty or are resistant, it's best to step back and give them space to learn as much as they can at their own pace.

Key Words: Hurried child syndrome, advanced generation, destruction.

INTRODUCTION:

This generation is all about speed, instant results, fast services, and fast regulation and orientation of all things. Nowadays, not only for youngsters but also for adults, it is very difficult to lead a slow-paced life in relevance to the current rapid and faster growth of the generation.²“Nowadayseveryone is in haste, either with their work or with their development of carriers. As a result, most people are following the faster current; this faster lifestyle is growing rapidly in parentsmindsets, leading to a problem globally, mainly for children’s, known as “the hurried child.” The concept of this hurried child was first proposed by a child psychologist and a teacher by profession named Professor David Elkind (1981), who used to work at Tufts University (Medford, United States)”.³“Elkinds research suggests that the activities of the students and the relationships they bind with their parents are a greater indicator of academic success than hurrying children in the early period of childhood by neglecting their choice of enjoying childhood and overexposing them to academic experience.Elkind suggests that parents let children be children”.⁴“Nowadays, there are too many caretakers for the children’s performing as parents. During this situation, children’s ages 2–8 feel rejected because they are left with others. If the goal that is set for the child is unattainable for him, he may feel frustrated, and fear may arise in him for being rejected by his parents and not being able to fulfil his parents dreams. Some indications or warning signs can include headaches, stomach aches, anxiety, depression, learning difficulties, and other symptoms of stress. Dr. Hamden explains that kids may be aggressive, defiant, agitated, or irritable, lack concentration or have memory problems, lack interest in socializing, cry easily, experience sleep disturbances, or change eating habits”.⁴

“Hurried child syndrome” is a stress-related behavioralIn this condition, parents mainly put pressure on their children by overbooking their children’s schedule and expecting them to act and react like miniature adults. Hurrying children’s has become a trend globally. Now a days, all the parents are exposing their children to extreme pressure and are pressurizing them to upgrade academically, which in turn leads to low self-esteem in the children, teenage

pregnancy, and also teenage suicide. Nowadays, because of peer pressure from the parents side, children's are not getting time for themselves, which in turn is demotivating them from academics. Not only demotivation, but also the children's not being able to do other extracurricular activities according to their hobbies. If we look back at the children's who were born in the 80s or 90s, life was kind of carefree for them, as I feel technological advancement was not as present at those times, so children's used to give much preference to outdoor activities. Comparisons between children's grades on the basis of academics and marks were also very low. Nowadays, because of parental peer pressure and overbooked schedules, children's hobbies are not able to be pursued because of the less time they get due to their academics.^{2,3}

“According to recent studies, the current effect of hurried child syndrome has drastically increased in the context of childhood obesity, which has elevated by 50% over the last 20 years. The suicide and homicide rates have tripled over the last 20 years. Medicines are given to millions of children so that they can be controlled in schools and at home. Antidepressants are routinely prescribed to millions of stressed-out and anxiety children. Some data suggests that by the time children reach adulthood, 70% of the young girls will not remain virgins, and 40% of those who are sexually active will become pregnant. Substance abuse is increasing among teenagers, becoming the greatest cause of death among teenagers. Even suicidal cases among teenagers are on the rise. Every year, almost 5,000 teenagers take their own lives”.⁴

WHAT IS HURRIED CHILD SYNDROME?

Hurried child syndrome is a stress-related behavioural syndrome in which the child's life is overscheduled in the aspect of academic success and is expected to perform beyond his or her mental, social, or emotional abilities.



Fig:1& Fig:2 Artistic representation of Hurried child syndrome

Source: Brittany Wilson (2013), Hurried child syndrome

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EMERGENCE OF HURRIED CHILD SYNDROME:

Individual Parents and Working Families :

The single parents or working families leave their child in the nursery, kindergarten, or with the caretakers, which mainly develops a feeling of rejection and unworthiness in the child's mindset. The individual parents mainly apply too much peer pressure to their child and expect him to work hard, being pressurized as they are in their daily lives.

Making kid's superkid is a goal:

The parents pressurize their children to become miniature or premature adults in order to make them overly competitive. In their eagerness to create an academic prodigy, overzealous parents often create an underachiever, and when these children fail to live up to their parents expectations, they become so depressed and anxiety-ridden that they cannot perform.

The super baby phenomenon:

In the recent era, every parent wants their child to be a super baby in every context. The parents want their child to be the best of all, forgetting about their capabilities for taking things. Nowadays, in order to make the children's super babies, they are sent for early learning, early math, early computers, and early sports. The parents develop much more hope in their child, forgetting about their capabilities, which leads their child to anxiety, depression, and mainly stress. This stress on children can affect their school education.

Societies influence on raising a hasty child:

Media plays a very important role in perceiving life nowadays. This parent wants their child to be the same as what is being portrayed on social media. TV shows, movies, reality shows, advertisements, and industry create a huge impact on the development of children.

The Pseudo-sophistication:

This kid may have nice verbal command and many other talents like acting as models, mature adults, and film stars, but they do not have that much maturity to face the real conflicts of the world. Though parents raise their kids as super babies, they lack the ability to face the real world, of course, due to their age and maturity, which these parents do not understand. Due to this, the children's feelings of panic when they are told to face the real world with uncomfortable and undesirable situations.

Stress from anxiety loneliness and insecurity:

In today's generation, growing stress levels among parents have also been linked to hurried child behaviour. Stress related to divorce and single parenting, as well as the pressures of living in a period of swift change and transience, all contribute to the depletion of energy needed for healthy and active child development.^{4,5}

CONSEQUENCES OF HURRYING UP THE CHILD:

When parents rush their children, there are several issues that arise. Here is an overview of a few of the elements.

Neurobiological changes after birth:

“The life we have experienced earlier has a lot of impact on how children develop neurologically, behaviourally, and psychologically. During infancy, the brain undergoes a good rate of synaptic remodelling and regrowth. Early childhood experiences of chronic or extreme stress, often known as early life stress, childhood adversity, child maltreatment, or childhood trauma, have a long-lasting or widespread effect on a child's development. After birth, when the child experiences chronic stress, it affects the child's developing stress neurobiology”. [10]

Physical effects:

The physical changes that the hurried child might experience are headaches, insomnia, ulcers, stomach aches, stammering, muscular twitching, hyperactivity, and a shortened attention span. According to a report published in 2018, out of 300 children, about 71% complained of headaches, 73% of them of fatigue, 74% of them of back pain and twitching muscles, 79% of them of insomnia, 68% of them of anxiety issues, 70% of them of irritability, 64% of them of frustration, 82% of them of binge eating, 73% of them of constipation, and 74% of them of experiencing restlessness.

Psychological effects:

Stress will be the main factor in these children's. They will mainly show anger; they will go through anxiety; they will have difficulty making friends; they will also have stress for fulfilling their parents expectations, which, if not fulfilled, may go through rejection. They will have the fear of rejection from their parents in the context of not succeeding in accordance with their parents dreams. In addition, they will experience sadness, suicidal thoughts, and other symptoms.^{3,4,5}

Behavioural and cognitive changes:

“After birth, when a child goes through chronic stress, it starts affecting the child's neurobiology. The hypothalamic adrenocortical axis, a very important component of the neuroendocrine system, has been the point of discussion in recent research in both humans and animals. The prenatal and antenatal stages are very important for HPA axis development. When the brain senses the stress, it engages the HPA system, and several important aspects of the stress response are also affected. However, over time, chronic stress alters HPA functioning by changing the activity of the nervous system. Thought process, logic, and emotional control are influenced by the cortical mechanisms, while motivation and memory are primarily controlled by the limbic system. Stressful situations can have profound effects on behaviour and cognition because they have an impact on the systems that control HPA activity”.^{7,8}

Effects on the immune system:

“The prolonged release of glucocorticoids and pro-inflammatory cytokines can promote systemic inflammation, which can lead to immune system dysregulation as a result of the release of the stressors. Therefore, a variety of secondary consequences related to inflammation and the immune system may result from the interaction of these basic mediators over time”.⁹

Metabolic effects:

“In a hurried child who is under stress, chronic glucocorticoid and catecholamine production occur. This results in hyperinsulinemia and hyposecretion of growth and sex hormones due to persistent HPA axis activation. This combination eventually supports the development of central obesity and metabolic changes by causing muscle loss and the build-up of fat in

visceral adipose tissue. Changes in glucose, leptin, alpha-amylase, and cholesterol levels are additional secondary outcomes associated with these metabolic processes, in addition to changes in insulin levels".^{8,9}

PREVENTION OF HURRIED CHILD SYNDROME:

- Allowing kids to play freely, mainly outdoor games, will help them socialize properly and learn to communicate with the community.
- Encouraging their participation in group activities.
- Stop comparing your children with others, as each and every child has different assets for growth and development.
- By determining your kids capability, responsibilities need to be given.
- Try to know about the specific demands and talents of your child.
- Technologies should be kept out of the reach of children.
- Children's problem-solving abilities must be strengthened by parents or caretakers, showing them that once their issue is identified, it should be resolved. Children must be monitored without causing any trouble, while for the younger kids, it should be made sure that they do not run anywhere dangerous and hurt themselves. On the other hand, older kids may require some alone time.
- Parents should let their children do things according to their own capabilities, whether they are learning or not.
- Parents should let their children socialize and make friends on their own in order to develop interpersonal skills and problem-solving abilities.^{3,6}

CONCLUSION:

Hurried Child Syndrome is a growing but preventable issue. It is essential that teachers, parents, and other caregivers are aware of this syndrome. To allow the child to experience normal growth and development, it is equally crucial that societal pressures and excessive media exposure be avoided. Parents should be conscious of their children's needs and raise them accordingly, allowing them to play and enjoy outdoor activities, which is a favorable way of learning during the childhood years. Future studies should prioritize verifying and investigating whether and why Hurried Child Syndrome is linked to increased stress and

worry, as well as understanding further important pathways of Hurried Child Syndrome in causing stress and stress-related mental health problems. It's time to back off and let him or her do as much as they can on their own schedule.

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