

A sociological study of children's awareness of child abuse

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Abstract

It is the aspiration of every parent to endow the child, the future lifeblood of a country, as a good citizen. The task of creating such a good citizen is not an easy task in a complex social system. Child abuse can be seen in even family unit today. It is common thing. The family unit has also become an unsafe environment for children owing to it. Child abuse affect to the future of them. This research has a timely importance. The main objective of the study was to identify children's awareness of child abuse. Other objectives may include raising awareness about child abuse and protecting children from abuse. Thirty students from two selected schools in the *Kalutara* district were selected as samples. Many of those data contributors do not have a formal understanding of child abuse. Awareness of children is one of the strongest reasons for the reduction of child abuse. In order to develop the existing awareness in the children, a number of suggestions can be made such as establishing a relationship between parents and children. Accordingly, it can be pointed out that this is an issue of timely importance.

Keywords: abuse, rights, family, awareness

Introduction

Child abuse can be identified as one of the most remarkable topic of the time that has come to the attention of many. Because of child abuse cases have increased today. This is unique in discussing this for a number of reasons. On the one hand, this is a criminal act against the future generation of children in a country or a society as well as it will affect to the future life of them in a very bad way.

In general, in a criminal case, the focus of society as well as the criminal justice system is focused solely on the perpetrator, and the focus on crime victim protection and crime victim protection is minimal. Even in criminology in particular, the focus on the victim of crime has been as recent as the 20th century. That is, with the beginning and evolution of the subdivision of the criminology of torture. In a crime such as child abuse, the focus on the victim is relatively important compared to the victim of other crimes, as the child may not even have the understanding to explain to the perpetrator the experience of the child who became the victim. It is also essential to pay more attention to the protection of the victim of the crime as the adverse effects of child abuse can have a detrimental effect on the future life of the child. In this independent study, the awareness of children about child abuse was explored by clarifying the issues of child and child abuse through definitions.

Research problem

The research problem is "Is there awareness among school children about child abuse?" To go the importance of this study can be discussed in two main areas. They are timely and practical value.

Research Methodology

Thirty children from two selected schools in the *Kalutara* District were selected as samples in this research and the data obtained from the secondary sources were analytically analyzed.

Discussion

It can be pointed out that the focus on children is more special when focusing on different age groups living in the world. It is clear that there is no definite agreement on who the child is and on what basis the definitions of the child are subjected to interpretation. It seems that there are many different definitions of the child from different thematic perspectives. These interpretations are based primarily on "the relationship between age limits and roles" (Gunasekara, 1995, p. 13) [5]. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children are generally referred to as children under the age of 18. The child can be identified through definition on child.

"One of the meanings used for the term child is youth." (Sri Sumangala Dictionary, 1999, p. 1182) [1] According to the views of various thinkers, philosophers and scholars regarding the child, it is clear that children are the future lifeblood of a country. Although the term child is defined in this sense, there are now accepted legal definitions of who the child is. Section 40 of the National Child Protection Authority Act No. 50 of 1998 defines a child as "a child means a person under 18 years of age" (National Child Protection Authority Act, 1998, 16). That he is under 18 years of age. Another Act that has been introduced in this regard is the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act No. 34 of 2005. Article 23 states: "Child" means a person under 18 years of age. (Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, 2005 p.11). According to both the above Acts, even if the child is identified as a person below 18 years of age, there are instances where this age level changes within the legal field itself. Section 75 of Chapter VI of the Penal Code is as follows.

"Nothing appointed by a child under the age of 8 is wrong." (Penal Code, 2006, p. 15). According to the above clause, a person under the age of 8 years is defined as a child in the Penal Code. In this way, even in the legal field, there are various opinions on the definition of "child" and the relevant age limit. For this reason it is important to pay attention to a generally accepted opinion about the child.

The sociological focus on the child is a recent phenomenon. Social and criminologists' attention has grown steadily as it has become increasingly important for the protection and well-being of children, especially as it has become a special need of society to protect them from certain minor abuses. In the early days, there was an attitude that young children had nothing to speak about because they were treated as a dependent group living in the care of inexperienced adults and as people living in the traditional socialization process. But now that parents' independence and freedom to adopt and care for their children has been limited and taken over by other institutions, it has become more important to focus on the child. There are various interpretations in some of the institutions mentioned. (Kankanamge, S., 2004, p. 22) ^[6] According to Sri Sumangala's dictionary, abuse means misconduct, separation, destruction, and disrespect. By this definition we can understand the different forms of child abuse and its impact as well as the nature of the relationship between the abused child and the abuser. (Kankanamge, S., 2004, p. 23) ^[6] Child abuse can be identified as an illegal and immoral activity and social phenomenon that threatens the very existence of the child as a whole from the academic disciplinary and institutional interpretations presented above regarding child abuse. There are many causes that led to origin of child abuse. Social and criminologists are of the opinion that there are a number of social, economic and cultural factors that contribute to child abuse, which is considered a criminal offense designated by law. Children of all walks of life are more likely to be abused or abused in any way, regardless of their family status or status. The following are some of the common causes of child abuse, as they are a family affair. The following are the factors that can be pointed out.

1. Decreased parental care.
2. Lack of facilities required for 2nd children.
3. Isolation of children.
4. Lack of proper parental love.
5. Unlimited freedom
6. Broken Family Background

Due to these weak conditions in the family corporation, children with such family backgrounds can easily fall prey to abuse. There, the perpetrators monitor the behavior of such children for a long period of time and tactfully use the child to abuse the child. They explore what these children want, fulfill their needs, show great love and kindness to their children, pretend to be the guardians of children, help children with sports and hobbies, and satisfy their drug needs if they are children. Working to win and then being abused. There are four major types of child abuse. (Cooray, 2010, p. 35) ^[8]

1. Physical abuse of children
2. Sexual abuse of children.
3. Emotionally abusing children.
4. Verbal abuse of children

Among the abuses mentioned above, physical abuse is the most common. Children can be subjected to physical abuse by dissatisfied and depressed parents, guardians or any adult. Physical abuse includes torture, burns, trauma, improper touch, and overwork. According to forensic science, such injuries to children under the age of three are also known as Battered Baby Syndrome and injuries to children between the ages of 3 and 10 are referred to as Battered Child Syndrome. Children who are abused in this way can also die or commit suicide. It can be said that children who are abused in this way are subjected to various oppressive physical and mental disorders. The nature of child abuse in Sri Lanka can be identified from the crimes committed in the Western Province.

Table 1: Child abduction crimes and juvenile delinquency in 2018

Year	Month	Crime	Amount
2018	January	Ablation	01
		Rape	08
		Other error	01
	February	Ablation	01
		Rape	02
		Serious sex	01
		Abuse	
	March	Abduction	01
		Ablation	01
		Rape	05
		Unnatural mistakes	01
		Serious sex	02
		Abuse	
	April	Abduction	01
		Ablation	05
		Rape	16
		Serious sex	04
		Abuse	01
		Other error	
	May	sexual harassment	04
		Assault and Injury	01
		Servant services	03
	June	Murder	01
		Ablation	03
		Rape	02
	July	Ablation	02
		Rape	03
		Cruelty	03
	August	Ablation	01
		Rape	03
	September	Abduction	01
		Ablation	02
		Rape	08
		Serious sex	01
		Abuse	
	October	Ablation	02
		Rape	02
		Unnatural mistakes	01
		Serious sex	01
		Abuse	01
		Cruelty	

Table 2: Information on child abuse in Sri Lanka (in the Western Province) in 2016 and 2017

Crime	From January to December in 2016	From January to December in 2017
Unnatural Mistakes	16	34
Trading persons	06	02
Serious sexual abuse	604	723
Adultery	199	18
Severe indecent acts among persons	11	06
Other Mistakes	01	12
Addiction of children to drugs	04	06
Collection	752	898

Two government schools in the Kalutara District of the Western Province had been used for this study. Kannangara Central College and Athulathmudali Kanishta Vidyalaya were selected as the field of study. From the information provided by the students of the two schools based on the study, it was clear that all the students who were used to

obtain information for the study when asked if they were aware of the incident of child abuse were aware of it through any medium. The information provided by the children in relation to the media coverage of child abuse incidents can be given as following ways.

Table 3

Media which used for awareness of child abuse	Girls					
	4	2	1	2	3	2
From Parents		√		√	√	√
From teachers				√	√	√
From friends			√		√	√
From media	√	√	√	√	√	√
Other						√
Percentage	28.57%	14.29%	7.14%	14.28%	21.42%	14.29%

Field Survey Data - 2019

In this study, which sought to raise awareness of child abuse, all of the children used in the study for randomized structured interviews were aware of the occurrence of child abuse in any medium. Out of the total group of 30 children used as samples, 14 were girls and the means by which they became aware of child abuse are described in the table above. Four students had learned about this from the media, two from parents and the media, one from friends and media, two from parents, teachers and the media, and three from parents, teachers, friends and the media and has become aware of this through other methods. Accordingly, 28.57% were aware of the media, 14.29% were aware of the number of parents and media, 7.14% were aware of child abuse through friends and the media, and 14.28% were aware of parents, teachers and the media. It can be pointed out that the number of parents, teachers, friends and the media who are aware of this is 21.42% and the number of parents, teachers, friends who are aware of this through the media. Accordingly, a large percentage of children are made aware of child abuse through the media, where the media has a significant role to play in preventing and minimizing child abuse, and there is an urgent need to expand it.

Children were asked about the potential areas for child abuse when defining child abuse as physical or emotional harm caused to children by intentional or intentional acts against them. The group of 30 students who participated in the study said that children could be abused at home, at school, in tuition classes, in isolated places, in school vans and on buses. There is a clear difference between child abuse and child offense. Child abuse can be defined as "intentional or intentional acts that cause physical or emotional harm to children" and child offense is referred to as "criminal acts committed by children".

This will help in differentiating between child abuse and child offense. Data provided by children in both schools who received information in the study showed that there was awareness among children that there was a difference between child abuse and offense. Awareness of child enforcement agencies about child abuse awareness, child support hotline numbers for child abuse, awareness of the legal status of child abuse, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Focusing on the existing understanding and the existing understanding among the children about the institutions in Sri Lanka to safeguard the rights of the child, it is clear that there is some

awareness among the children about that. Many ideas and suggestions were also received from children to prevent further child abuse.

Conclusion

The study was conducted primarily to explore child awareness of child abuse, with the use of data collection methods such as questionnaires and interviews as samples from the two schools that participated in the study of various issues related to the phenomenon of child abuse referred to students. There, including a specific age limit for what is called a child, what the data contributors mean by child abuse, whether there is a difference between child abuse and child offense, the types of child abuse, and who the potential perpetrators of child abuse are. What do the data contributors consider as the factors that have contributed to the recent increase in child abuse in Sri Lanka? Data contributors were asked about existing legal provisions regarding child abuse and the institutions that enforce those legal conditions, and finally their proposals for the elimination of child abuse. As mentioned above, the main purpose of this inquiry was to find out whether children have a formal understanding of child abuse and other important issues related to it. This is because as victims of the crime of child abuse, it is important for children to have an accurate understanding of child abuse and who the potential perpetrators are, so that it is easier for children to avoid becoming victims of crime. When in-depth inquiries were made from the data contributors who participated in the study, the main conclusion that could be drawn from the answers they provided was that, with the exception of a few data collectors, most of the participants did not have an optimal understanding of child abuse and other issues related to it. That. When they were asked about child abuse, they were deeply aware of what they said they were aware of and realized that they had a misunderstanding of the issue. For example, when asked about the difference between child abuse and child offense, the database providers who said they were aware of the child abuse agencies or the telephone numbers of such institutions did not have an accurate understanding and the existing understanding was insufficient. That could be concluded.

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