

**Wounded childhood:
Impacts of war on children in Sri Lanka**

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Key words: childhood, war victims, child soldiers

Children are affected by armed conflicts in ways that are different and some times worse, than adults. In Sri Lanka children have been affected by war, particularly in the North and East. They have lost their families, forced to leave their homes, they have been subjected to worse forms of violence and they were forcibly recruited as child soldiers. As a result they have suffered from disabilities and psychosocial trauma. Hence it is very urgent to recognize the new issues and challenges that the war in Sri Lanka had created for children. While many children in Sri Lanka are affected and victimized by the war they are also being forced to adopt roles and responsibilities that challenge common assumptions about childhood and the place of children in the Sri Lankan society.

The purpose of this research is, first to draw attention to the effects of war and illustrate the complexities it has brought to the lives of children. Second, the research aims to highlight children as actors in shaping societies in which they live and the need recognize their potentials and agency in reconstruction rather than treating them as victims of war.

A qualitative format of information gathering was used, based on in depth interviews and informal discussions with children and other key informants. The study reveals the complexities of war in children's lives and concludes how some of them are capable of tremendous resilience and can adjust to and act upon in difficult circumstances.