

Technical Session (Oral) B2: Social Studies II

Causes of Child Sexual Abuses in Matara District of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Child sexual abuses have become a contemporary social issue in the present Sri Lankan society. The effects of child sexual abuse can include physical injury to the child, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and the propensity to further victimization in adulthood. With the escalated numbers of child abuses, it is necessary to understand the socio-cultural and psychological reasons for this situation and its impacts on the society. The Matara district has identified as one of the districts where highest number of child abuses have been reported during the recent past. This study was conducted to explore the research problem of what are the causes for increased number of child sexual abuses in Matara district. In order to study the phenomena, three specific research questions were formulated as (a) what are the actual causes for child sexual abuses? (b) what are the prevalent types of child sexual abuses? (c) what factors contribute to the recent increase of child sexual abuses in the study location?. The study included both a literature review and primary data collection process. Secondary information on the prevalence of child sexual abuses, their types; main causes and impacts of such abuses were reviewed as the first step of the research. Primary data were collected from a sample study incorporating research techniques such as focused group discussions, key informant discussions and interviews in Matara, Dondra and Akuressa police divisions where the incidents of child abuses are relatively high. Six case studies were conducted to understand the phenomena more deeply. These case studies were carried out on the respective abused-children remained under rehabilitation in sample locations. The causes revealed from the study for child sexual abuses include poverty, lack of law enforcements, changes of the traditional roles of the family, broken families, bad cultural influences, lack of awareness on the sexual abuses, neglect and lack of care and protection from the families.

Keywords: *Children, Sexual abuses, Social issues.*