

A STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING CHILD ABUSE IN ELPITIYA AREA, GALLE DISTRICT

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According to the statistics almost three million cases of child abuse are reported and investigated in the United States on an annual basis; approximately 700,000 are substantiated. Child abuse or the child maltreatment becomes one of the major issues in many countries including Sri Lanka. Though Sri Lanka signed United Nation Convention on the child rights and establishes legal mechanism through National Child Protection Authority Act no 50 of 1998, approximately 30 complains are reported to NCPA daily. Child abuse diverse different categories such as physical child abuse, emotional child abuse, sexual child abuse, and negligence. The main objective of this research was to identify the leading child abuse types and factors affecting child abuse in Elpitiya police division. The data were collected through the statistics available on police record books as well as books and internet. Qualitative data from five police officers collected through semi structured interview method. Statistics revealed, 102 cases were reported related to child abuse and cases were varied as 22 rape cases, 23 abduction cases, 23 sexual abuse cases 28 statutory rape, 5 cruelty and 1 kidnapping cases during the period of 06 years(2013 - 2018). Most of the school children, age of 14 - 16 were victimized due to personal relationships. Statutory rapes (with consent), abduction and sexual abuse incidents were highly reported cases. Lack of sexual education, disorganization of the family, routine activities of the parents, tuition culture could be recognized as the major factors for child abuse. Conducting awareness programs in schools and within grama niladhari divisions, including sex education to the school syllabus, make aware of the legal background of child abuse, community police, establishing counselling could be recommended as the child abuse controlling and preventing methods.

Keywords: *Child abuse, National child protection authority, Sex education, Statutory rape*