

A CRIMINOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING GROWTH IN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN RURAL SOCIAL CONTEXTS OF SRI LANKA

H. P. K. N. Hewawasam

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura
kaushalyahewawasam@gmail.com

This research is concerned with the factors affecting the rise in child sexual abuse in rural social contexts of Sri Lanka. The rapid growth of such abuse and other forms of deviant behavior is a recent phenomenon, which also harms individuals living in urban areas of the country. The research objective is to identify the causal factors associated with the rise in child sexual abuse in rural societies. Statistically, 147 child abuses have been reported in the Kaluthara District since 2005. Out of these cases, 50 were reported in the Meegahatenna Police area, prompting the researcher to select this particular area as the sample for the study. Data were gathered using in-depth interviews and questionnaires. In analyzing the data, one can identify different socio-environmental factors giving rise to deviant behavior against children. In addition, the findings reveal that there were many enduring effects of child abuse, such as physical and emotional harm. Most of the individuals were abused by their relatives and neighbours, and girls were disproportionately victimized. The main factor causing crimes proved to be the carelessness of parents. In order to resolve this problem, the Sri Lankan government needs to enforce laws and regulations regarding child abuse. Furthermore, educating children about sex and the risks of abuse is also essential.

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