

**An Analysis of the effect of working mothers in increasing child abuse in Polonnaruwa  
District**

P.S. Warnathunga

Department of Law, University of Peradeniya.

suvimaliw8@gmail.com

K. N. Liyanapathirana.

Lecturer, Department of Law, University of Peradeniya.

kanchanaliyanapathirana@yahoo.com

Child abuse is a crime which can be considered a tragedy in Sri Lankan society. This is revealed by adequate statistics based on police reports around the island daily. The focus of this study is its prevalence in the Polonnaruwa district, in the Dry Zone, where agriculture is the livelihood of the majority of its population which also lags behind other more developed districts in Sri Lanka in terms of education. The district is also characterised by an unstable economy. An understanding of the social and economic situation of this area is essential in order to present this research study. The main objective of this paper is to investigate the circumstances of the reported child abuse cases and to analyse the effect of working mothers in relation to the increase in the incidence of child abuse. This research is also concerned with the steps that have been taken by relevant authorities to address its increase. Five of the nine police divisions in the Polonnaruwa districts form the sample of this study. The investigation employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. They included discussions with working mothers and fathers and interviews with lawyers, police officers and non-governmental organizations. The final section of this paper is devoted to suggestions and recommendations to reduce the effect of working mothers on the incidence of child abuse in the Polonnaruwa district.

**Keywords:** Child abuse, crime, working mothers, Social background, Polonnaruwa district.