

ICCP/SL/PP/139

Violence against mothers and children's behavior: Exploring intersections

Boyagoda K, Sumathipala WPN*

Department of Demography, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
[*neranjala@demo.cmb.ac.lk](mailto:neranjala@demo.cmb.ac.lk)

Background: Violence against women (VAW) and children's behaviors are most often researched and addressed separately because the two are seen as separate issues – women and children are demographic and socio-economically different, the consequences each face are different and addressing them needs separate mechanisms. However, a large portion of women facing violence are mothers; consequently, the possibility of an act of violence against a child is high. Looking at possible connections can lead to remedies that are undermined when issues of women and children are addressed separately. The objective of this study was to examine whether there is a connection between children's problematic behaviors and mothers' facing violence.

Method: The study was based on secondary data from the Women's Wellbeing Survey-2019 (Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka). From the total sample, 731 women faced physical, sexual or psychological violence separately or in combination. Among them, 292 had children aged 5-16, the most likely age to face behavioral issues. The study analyses these 292 women and their children's behaviors using SPSS. Uni-variate and bi-variate analyses are used for descriptive analyses and Chi-square tests are done to check relationships between a mother facing violence and children's behaviors.

Results: From the total sample, 731 women faced physical, sexual or psychological violence separately or in combination. Among them, 292 had children aged 5-16, the most likely age to face behavioral issues. The study analyses these 292 women and their children's behaviors using SPSS. Uni-variate and bi-variate analyses are used for descriptive analyses and Chi-square tests are done to check relationships between a mother facing violence and children's behaviors. The analysis indicates that 34.93% (n=102) of children whose mothers' faced violence suffer from concerning issues; 57.84% (n=59) suffer nightmares, 35.29% (n=36) bed-wet, 33.34% (n=34) are timid and 23.52% (n=24) are aggressive. When considering the association between VAW and the above behaviors in children, chi-square test results indicate a statistically significant association between the two ($P>0.001$). The mother being the closest to children, it is evident that impacts on her can be negatively connected to children's behaviors. Accepting the intersection between the two may lead to better remedies for children's protection and wellbeing.

Conclusion: The mother being the closest to children, it is evident that impacts on her can be negatively connected to children's behaviors. Accepting the intersection between violence against mothers and children's behavioral issues two can lead to better remedies for children's protection and wellbeing.

Keywords: Women, violence, children, problematic behaviors.