

Impact of Maltreatment: Psychosocial Experience of Parentless School Going Adolescents

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The present study examines the impact of maltreatment among the Parentless School Going Adolescents (PSGAs) and their psychosocial experiences in Northern Province in Sri Lanka. Prevalence of PSGAs' exposure to maltreatment can be understood by considering the size of PSGAs exposed and their experiences, how exposure impacts PSGAs psychosocial development, factors that increase risk or provide protection against the negative effects of exposure, and the types of interventions that can be implemented to mitigate harmful effects. Participants (PSGAs) were recruited from two districts; namely Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu. Participants with recent experiences and had psychosocial distress were included in the present study. 30 cases {[Female=18 (60%), Male=12 (40%)] and [Mean Age=14.7, SD=1.9]}, were recruited using purposive sampling techniques. An exploratory was adopted and the semi structured interview was conducted as the present study aims to have an in-depth understanding on various elements of maltreatment experiences. The questions were mostly open-ended and were intended to be used as a guide to explore or capture as much as possible the PSGAs' thoughts and feelings about his/her experiences. Content analysis was used to identify common themes related to the objective of the present study. Twenty-two cases (73.3%) were maltreated by Care takers and their family members. The three most frequent types of relationships to the PSGAs were grand parents (9 cases), uncle (6 cases), and aunty (2 cases). Others included cousin (3), and brother-in-law (2). Maltreated by other people occurred in 21 cases (70 %). This included neighbour (7 cases), total stranger (4), friend's parents (4), friend (2), teacher (2), priest (1) and servant (1). Many PSGAs were maltreated by more than one abuser. Maltreatment occurs on the background of caretaker's dysfunction and sociocultural factors. The findings underscore the need to support caretakers so they can take better care of PSGAs. Psychosocial intervention should be individualized to meet the needs of each PSGA. Further research is needed to clarify the issues of risk and protective factors in the post-war context in Northern Province.

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