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Factors associated with child abuse incidents in Chilaw police enforce division: case study

L. W. M. S. Siriwardana* and J. H. D. S. P. Tissera

Department of Statistics, Faculty of Science, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
*mahesha.8881@gmail.com

Child abuse has become a major social issue across the world. Globally, millions of children suffer from maltreatment, exploitation and abuse. To avert children from such situations, it is important to identify respective causes. This research targeted Chilaw division, where a considerable fraction of child population suffers from numerous disciplines of abuses. The study was limited to sub areas of Chilaw police enforce division. The main objective of the study was to find out factors associated aforementioned categories. The response variable was taken as respective type of child abuse incident. Three categories of abuses were found as 159 rape cases, 77 cruelty and sexual abuses along with 60 kidnappings. Some of the explanatory variables were age of the victim, gender, whether the child was schooling, incident locations, relationship with abuser, age and occupation of abuser, guardianship of the child, occupation of parents and consent of the child. Data for the study was obtained through a questionnaire utilizing police records in respective areas. All recorded incidents (296) were included in the analysis. Initially the study majored on descriptive analysis to visualize the relationships between the variables. Then univariate analysis was carried out using Pearson's chi squared test and Kruskal Wallis test for categorical data to identify the association between response variable and explanatory variables and extended to obtain the variables that are statistically significant. Type of child abuse incidents were modelled using Multinomial Logistic Regression (MLR). Likelihood ratio statistic was used to differentiate between the significant variable or the model. Akaike Information Criterion was used for model comparison. In order to assess the goodness of fit of the final model, likelihood ratio statistic deviance was used. Majority of the victims were abused in their own homes. The most vulnerable age group for raping was 15-18. Out of 70% of rape cases, the abuser was the boyfriend of the victim. It is interesting to see that most of these females were abused with their consent. The children of other age groups were not victims of raping prominently. Using the MLR model, stated variables were found to be the significant factors associated with type of child abuse incidents; age of victim, place of the incident, area of the incident, age of abuser, relationship with abuser, occupation of parents and consent of the child.

Keywords: Child abuse, multinomial logistic regression