



FACT SHEET - CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND IMPACT ON MEN’S USE OF VIOLENCE

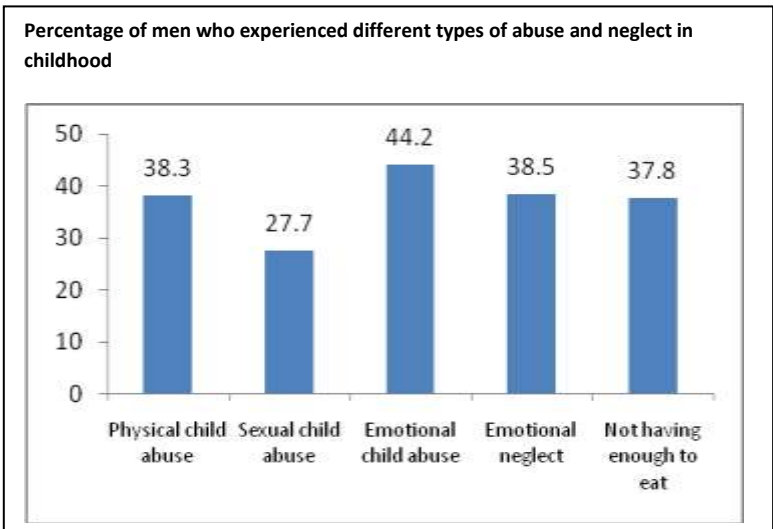
There has been little work done on masculinities, both as a field of inquiry and site of advocacy, in Sri Lanka. To address the gap in evidence-based studies of masculinities, CARE Sri Lanka undertook a study on men’s knowledge, practices and attitudes toward gender and gender-based violence (GBV) in Colombo, Hambantota, Nuwara Eliya and Batticaloa districts. The study is part of the UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence, coordinated by Partners for Prevention, a UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV regional joint programme for gender-based violence prevention in Asia and the Pacific, which explores gender-based violence and masculinities to inform evidence-based violence prevention interventions.

The study reveals a significant relationship between childhood experiences and adult behaviors. In the context of violence against women, the findings suggest that men who have experienced childhood trauma are very likely to perpetrate violence against their partners. The study also suggests the negative impact of experiencing child abuse (both emotional and physical) on men’s physical and mental health. Thus it is important to strengthen existing mechanisms on prevention, protection and response to child abuse.

KEY FINDINGS

EXTENT AND PATTERNS OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA IN SRI LANKA

- ❖ One third of men and 3% of women in the study had been sexually abused as children.
- ❖ Ragging is still a critical issue in Sri Lanka, as 4% of men reported that they had ever ragged someone, including sexual ragging.
- ❖ Prevalence of child sexual abuse was highest in the Colombo district (47%). Nuwara Eliya district was second (30%), Hambantota third (18%) and Batticaloa fourth (16%).
- ❖ Thirty-eight percent of men experienced physical abuse during childhood and 44% were emotionally abused. The highest rates of childhood physical abuse were reported in Colombo, where 57% of men reported experiencing physical violence before the age of 18. In all other districts, physical child abuse was reported by around a third of men.





BROADENING GENDER: WHY MASCULINITIES MATTER – Attitudes, practices and gender based violence in four districts in Sri Lanka

- ❖ Thirty-eight percent of male respondents reported that before they were 18 years of age there were times when they did not have enough to eat. Reports of experiencing hunger before the age of 18 was highest in Batticaloa (37%), followed by Nuwara Eliya (34%) and Colombo (31%), reflecting local economies under stress because of war, the dynamics of the plantation sector and urbanization, respectively.
- ❖ During childhood, almost a third of men witnessed their mother being beaten by her partner.

IMPACT OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA ON MEN'S USE OF VIOLENCE

- ❖ Men who experienced emotional, sexual or physical abuse during childhood were 1.7 to 2 times more likely to use violence against a female intimate partner than men who did not experience abuse.
- ❖ Men who were emotionally or sexually abused as children were more than twice as likely to use sexual violence, including rape, against a non-partner.

PARENTING PRACTICES AND THEIR IMPACT

- ❖ Fathers were often absent from childcare, potentially part of a continuing pattern of lack of male bonding and positive male mentoring of children that can result in feelings of emotional neglect in children, affecting yet another generation.
- ❖ Men whose fathers highly participated in housework were much more likely to share housework in their own homes, pointing to the importance of parenting role models in transmitting practices of and attitudes toward gender equity in the household.