

**Prevalence of Gender Based Domestic Violence (A Case Study) with the  
Special Reference to Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division,  
Batticaloa District, Sri Lanka**

**Abstract**

Despite numerous violence emerged and recognised in most part of the world, gender based violence causes severe impact on both mentally and physically to the both genders which ultimately threatens the future of younger generation. As whole, it is evidenced by various Government and Non-Governmental activities in order to minimize the impacts towards the evolution to a peaceful nature from the household level. Violence against women is a widespread problem in Sri Lanka where cultural values and norms serve to highlight the abusive practices against women. The present study was conducted in Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division (Chenkalady), Sri Lanka in order to evaluate the current situation with the clinical based signs of the affected ones.

Primary and secondary data were collected from the Primary Health Care Centres which is widely distributed in the study location of the Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division, Sri Lanka. According to the statistical responses derived from the records, more than 70% of the total women were victimized in broad terms of physical, sexual and psychological abuses. It was relatively higher (90%) in the villages named as Marapalam (78%), Karadiyanaru (75%), Sinnapullumalai (83%), and Periapullumalai (80%). Moreover, physical abuses (81.5%) including slapping, pinching, kicking, burning etc were slightly higher while comparing with the sexual abuse (unwanted sexual contact- 48%) and emotional abuse (verbally humiliated/ illegal- 67%) at the identified locations. However, the present study indicates that there is a significant reduction while comparing with the yester years which might be due to the proper awareness on the basis of compromising and facing problems supported by the services carried out by the local organizations in Sri Lanka.

**Key words: Abuses, awareness, domestic violence, gender, SGBV.**

---

**Introduction**

Increasing population in the world is one of the significant issues that causes severe impacts on both gender based social and economical activities. According to the records, the current

world population is around 7,632,819,325 with the growth rate of 1.09% which is comparatively higher than the past records (Department of Census, 2018). Also, the population of Sri Lanka has reached around 20,950,041 where the total of male and female percentage is 49.3% and 50.7%, respectively. Like most species, the ratio between male and female in humans is approximately 1:1 where the sex ratio at birth is commonly thought to be 94 boys to 100 girls, all over the world. It is genetically proven that the gender determination has the probability with an equal chance to be in nature with the ratio of 1:1. Therefore, the governments from all over the world have pledged to ensure women a full and equal role in every aspect of the economy and society, as men. This is further endorsed by the UN in its Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women on the Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993 Para 3 clearly says “Recognizing that effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women would contribute to the elimination of violence against women and that the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.”

Further, Sri Lankan women continue to face extraordinarily high levels of violence which can be victimized in broad terms of physical, sexual and psychological abuses. Though the adult literacy rate (92.6%) of the country is higher in both genders, the conditions are worse in nature (Department of Census and Statistics, 2017). In general, while women in both mixed- and single-sex groups acknowledged the social normalization of such violence, they argue that violence was neither an appropriate nor a justifiable response for dealing with conflict. However, many simultaneously expressed the belief that there were certain behaviors which might place women at “increased risk”. A husband’s use of alcohol, a wife’s “disrespectful attitude”, and a wife’s sexual infidelity were identified as potential “triggers” for physical abuse (Kim and Motsei, 2002).

While Sri Lanka is a fairly low crime society, the crime rate for sexual abuse has increased from 11 (for every 100,000 population) in 2009 to 17 in 2016, with many such crimes going unreported for various reasons. Sexual abuse is the highest in the following districts out of 25 districts in Sri Lanka; Mullaitivu, Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura, Monaragala, Nikaweratiya (Kurunegala District), Jaffna, Tangalle, and Mannar, which includes three from the Northern Province and five from North Western, Southern and Uva, which are typically poorer districts with higher levels of marginalization and exclusion (Manual Report, UN, 2017). A recent

UNHCR study found that 40 percent of women in return areas, after the 30 years of civil war, in the North do not feel safety staying at home alone. This is a direct indication of serious safety concerns at the village level for females and is backed up by continuous reports on gender-based violence.

Article 1 of the UN declaration on Violence Against Women resolved in the UN General Assembly on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1993 clearly indicates “*any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life*” (quoted Madurawala, Sunimalee; <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2013/03/08/broken-promises-the-plight-of-women-in-sri-lanka-and-its-economic-costs/>)

However, the situation is relatively critical in the Eastern Provinces where the internal conflicts and ethnic war influenced a lot in such backward areas of the Batticaloa District while comparing with the Trincomalee District and Ampara District. Among the 14 Divisional Secretariat Divisions in the Batticaloa District, Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division has been recognized as one of the most victimized areas where the gender based issues are relatively higher. This particular DS Division consists of 39 GN Divisions and 203 villages with the extent of 634.16 Square Kilometre, as whole. And also, Eralakkulam (39), Koduvamadu (3), Pankudavely (6), Karadiyanaru (9), Marappalam (12), Kiththul (13), Koppavely (10), Periyapullumalai (18) are with the large number of villages in Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division, Batticaloa District, Sri Lanka. However, the total population in each village is above 1000 as recorded in the headcount of the country (Department of Census and Statistics, 2018).

Currently, at the end of the civil war led the people move on towards their livelihood activities for their increased living standards by reaching other places of the Batticaloa District. Women, especially married ones, moved to the overseas, mainly to the Gulf countries as housemaids, and look after their family for the better enhancement in the future. It is the base now to develop the situations with violence which is ultimately known as Gender Based Violence (GBV) of the particular location. It is common after the ethnical conflicts where some of the cases were severely criticized among the society with clinical

based signs. It was proven by the visit of such Non-Governmental Organizations to the victimized places where most of the violence were hidden within the people in order to eliminate or to minimize the problems that would occur afterwards. In other words, they do not want even to exhibit the scars of such problems.

With those backgrounds, the present study was formulated to identify the locations in Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division regarding the gender based violence and to state the current occurrence of violence with the clinical based signs.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The current study was developed to focus more on:

- to identify the locations where the Gender Based Violence are significantly higher in Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division,
- to study the cause and impacts of violence in the Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division, and
- to compare the statistical values related with the gender violence within the period of January to July, 2018.

### **Materials and Methods**

#### **Study Location**

The present study was conducted in Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division which has the boundary of Koralai Pattu South Divisional Secretariat Division, Manmunai North Divisional Secretariat Division, Maha Oya as North, South and West, respectively. Also, the total population of the said Divisional Secretariat Division and the total family are 76,433 and 21,778, respectively. As a whole, it has been depicted with 39 Grama Niladari Divisions and 203 families with the main economic of farming and fishing.

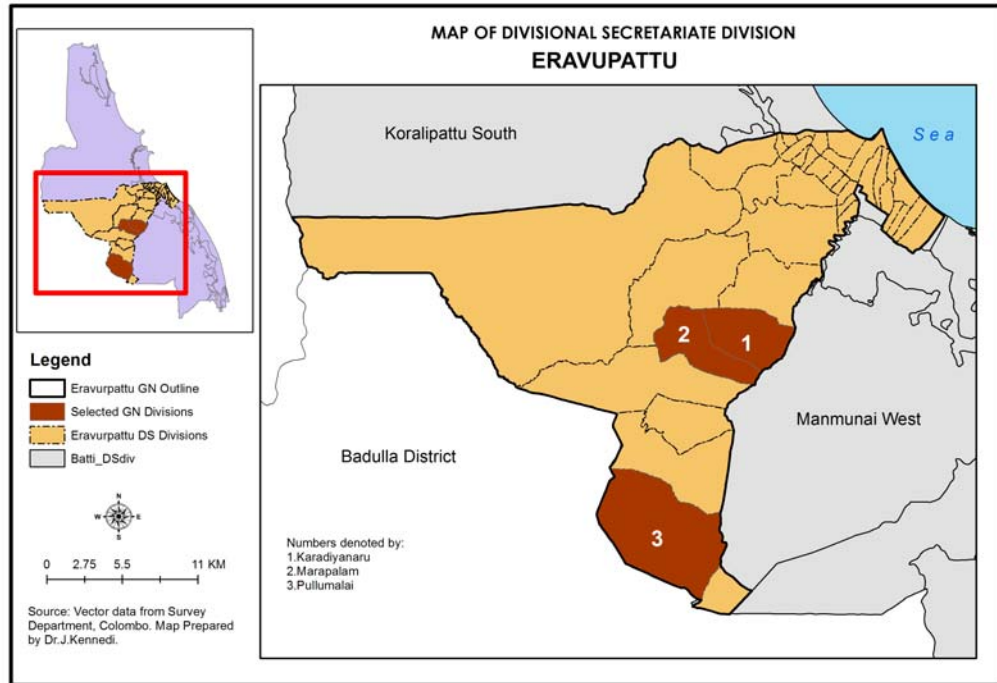


Figure 1: profile of the Eravur Pattu DS Division

### Data collection

Primary and secondary data were collected on the basis of gender based violence in the selected study location of the Batticaloa District.

According to the primary data, clinical based signs from the victimized women were observed and the casual factors were collected from those affected women, Grama Niladari (Grama Servaga) who is responsible for the particular Grama Niladari Division and Non-Governmental Organizations that monitor those resettled areas. Direct observation was done by identifying problems faced by the people due to the domestic violence, impacts on children, nature of living, etc. Moreover, face to face interview included many supportive statements from randomly selected the relations of the victimized women who work in abroad, children and youngsters, etc. As the secondary documents; books, magazines, records, statistical reports, newspaper, government leaflets, internet, etc. were used to collect linked documents as the secondary data at the present study during the period of 2018. Further, the data were collected from the local Ministry of Health office and Non-Governmental Organizations who are dealing with the said related issues.

## **Data Analysis**

Collected data were tabulated in the Microsoft Excel Sheet and suitable figures and tables were used as the output of the present study in Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division, Batticaloa District, Sri Lanka.

## **Limitations**

Some of the victims do not want to discuss about their victimization since they had married for the second time or do not want to tell their past life and experiences in front of their children.

## **Result and Discussions**

At the current study, domestic violence (intimate partner violence), incest, child abuse, harassment and exploitation of women, adolescent girls and children were fundamentally reviewed. Not only that, clinical based signs from the sexual based harassments at their working places, public places, educational and other public and private institutions, entertainment events, etc. were considered for this study. Also, the economic and social impacts were gathered to support the study in a unique way.

Records from the clinical office were collected for six months in order to understand the trend fixed with the violence against women in the Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division, Batticaloa District, Sri Lanka.

## **Violence Against Women**

As shown in the Figure 2, among the randomly selected population of the study location (100 sampling population) more than half (>50%) of the women migrated overseas due to their lack of income gained by their spouses. Also, the average family size is five with the peak value of 43% and it is followed by six people in a family (28%).

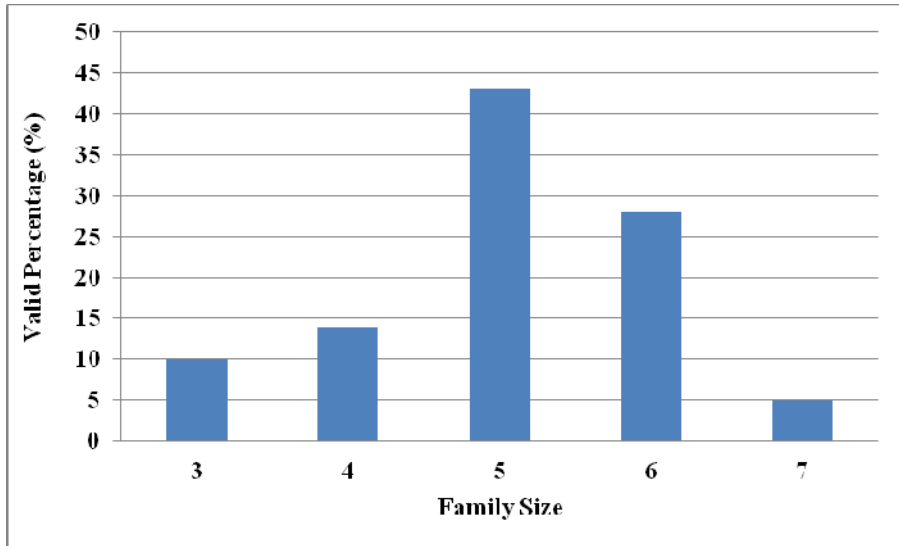


Figure 2: Family size of the study location

As the study location falls under the mostly affected area due to the war, the infrastructure and the renovation of the developmental process are still in stagnation (or in progress). People who are from those areas expect more on the improvement on the standard of living which ultimately leads them to move on more towards their better life, mainly on the income generated areas.

Further, the study showed a significant impact whilst the family size increasing, migration of the women towards the other countries increased rapidly. It was common in most of the resettled areas for their successful survival at their native places after the conflict. When the women move away from their home for works, conflicts begin at their household level which ultimately lead men to behave harshly and violently. Therefore, the violent activity gets transfiguration into social issues.

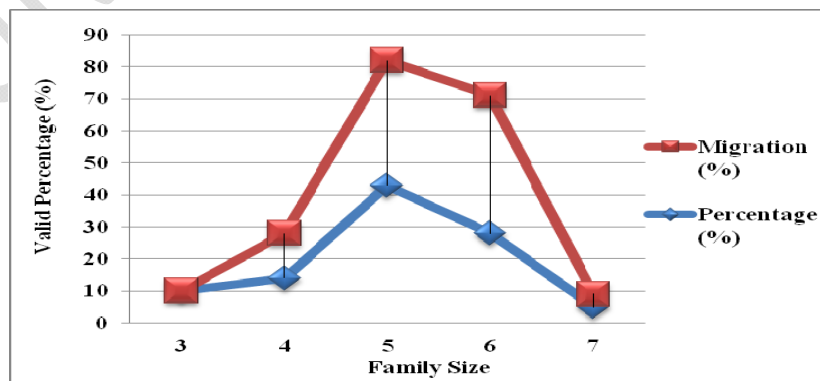


Figure 3: Trend of migration with Family size

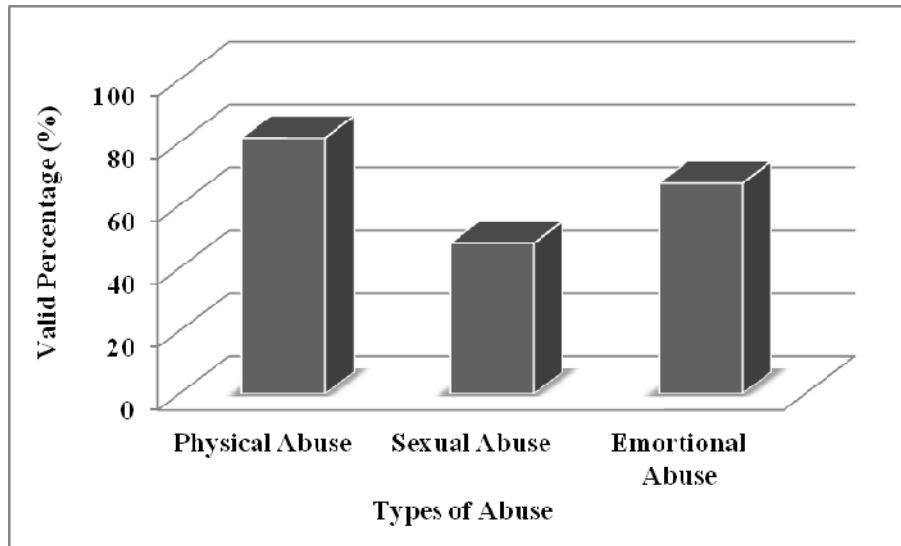


Figure 4: Types of Abuses

The study reveals that more than 70% of the total women were highly affected physically in Marapalam, Karadiyanaru, Sinnapullumalai, and Periapullumalai (Figure 4). Physical abuses (81.5%) including slapping, pinching, kicking, burning, etc. were slightly higher while comparing with the sexual abuse (unwanted sexual contact- 48%) and emotional abuse (verbally humiliated/ use of abusive languages, etc. – 67%) at the identified locations. It was due to the exposure of the women to the outside and creates the irregular verbal communication between both the genders.

### **Prevalence of Abuses**

At the present study, prevalence of abuses in various categories of physical, sexual and emotional were collected from the records during the period of January 2018 to July 2018 where there was a significant reduction observed as an average.

### **Physical Abuse**

As shown in the Figure 5, there was a significant reduction in the physical abuses in the particular study location where the range was between 90% and 50% during the period of January to July, 2018. Physical abuse includes beating, throwing hot water, pinching, kicking, slapping, etc. It was common during last two decades while this situation is vice versa at present. In both the genders, formal words which were picked to choose for verbal



communication is rare which might be the fact for non smooth relationship between themselves.

According to the Figure 5, peak value was observed in the early part of the year (January, 86%) and the month of April (78%). While focusing more on January and April, those months are filled with celebrations for the Hindus and Christians. It is because; December and January are the festive seasons for the Christians' Christmas and New Year and for the Hindus' January is the Thai Pongal festival, and further, from February to August becomes the local Hindu temple celebrations as their feasts. During those periods, people especially men are culturally engaged with celebrations including consumption of alcohol and other narcotics, competitions, fun activities, etc. It might be the reason for the sudden increase of physical abuses in those particular months.

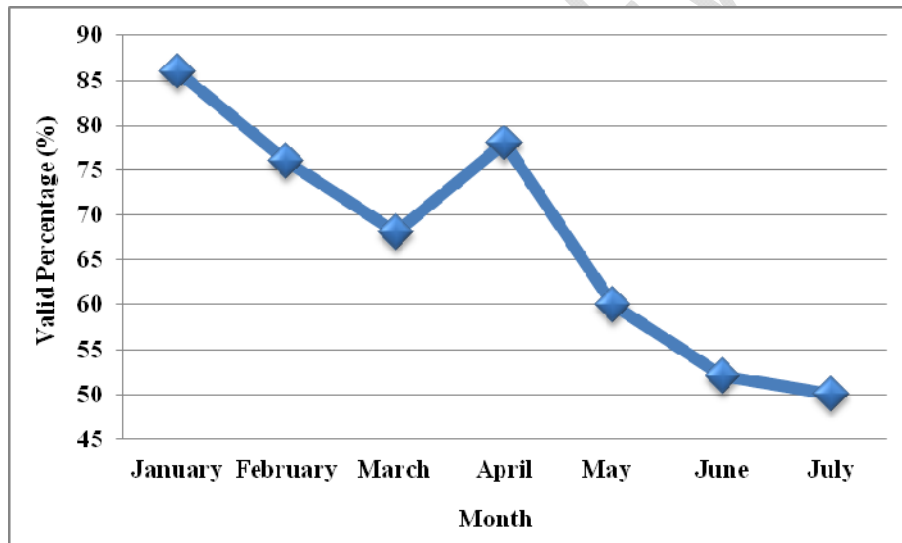


Figure 5: Prevalence of Physical Abuse

### Sexual Abuse

Results reveal that the sexual abuses are tremendously lower (48%) due to the awareness program conducted by the Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations. However, sexual abuse on adult is fairly lower while comparing with the child abuse. It is clear that the women migrate abroad to fulfill their household needs and leave their children with the relative or in some hostels. It gives opportunities to the adult (men) to abuse the children who especially do have much awareness on these issues. The current study location, this situation

is increasing rapidly. However, few cases only emerge up to the peak and most of them are hidden due to the dominance of the males.

Figure 6 shows that the rapid reduction of the sexual abuses of the study location and the probability for the adult abuse is considerably lower (<50%). The pattern shows the rapid reduction in the month of January (48%) to February (25%) thereafter it is gradually decreased with the time frame.

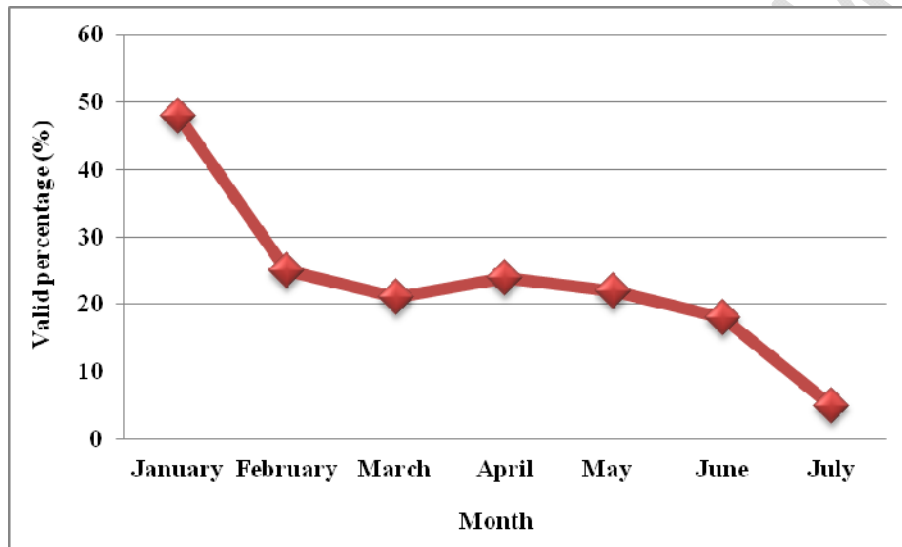


Figure 6: Prevalence of Sexual Abuse

### Emotional Abuse

This depicts that the verbal humiliation and inappropriate words usage at common places was common in public places such as temple, church, educational centre, institutions, etc. It was higher (67%) while comparing with the sexual abuses. Further, when the women come from overseas for their long or short vacations, people start using those abusive words towards them. This kind of verbal abusive terms is a usual issue which occurred directly and indirectly.

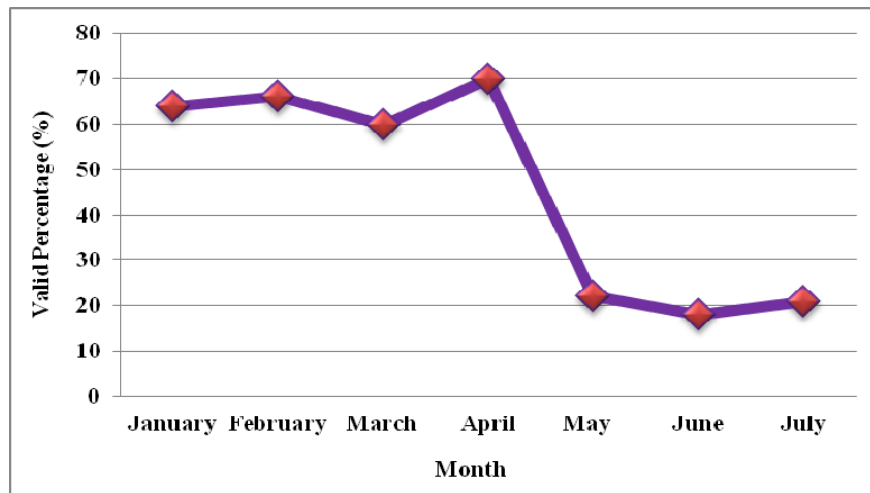


Figure 7: Prevalence of Emotional Abuse

According to Figure 7, emotional abuse was significantly higher on April while comparing with the other months. However, this situation is not recorded at the peak level as an issue at the outside of the location and this value was recorded from the record of the local people who just settled here and the family and relative of the women who went overseas.

### **Current Status of Future Generation**

During the study period, it was well noticed that the future generation is totally disturbed due to the domestic violence between intimate partners. Inefficient child protection was the root issue at the Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division, Batticaloa District, Sri Lanka. Violence can be eliminated with the support of proper awareness education from the primary level. However, this study location shows the poor quality preschools where the number of drop outs is higher. Since it is far from the urban areas, well qualified teachers show less interest in teaching. And, 48 Provincial Schools and 39 Pre-Schools are assisted for the students' education.

Further, the malnutrition is another issue among the children where the access to the food and beverage with nutritious conditions are very much lower. Poor feeding pattern, poor hygienic practices and poor access to health services are the common issues. In the Eravur Pattu Divisional Secretariat Division, only three Health Care Centers (Chenkalady, Karadiyanaru

and Mavadivembu) are available. However, Chenkalady Hospital is the only one accessed for the immediate needs for the people than the other twos.

Because of the lack of health conditions; lack of personal interest on education at the schools (lack of positive discipline), negligence and lack of care (mother's migration, child discrimination), low education performance (lack of access to quality education), child laboring, early marriages and early pregnancies are observed which are relatively higher.

### **Conclusion**

According to the statistical responses derived from the records, more than half of the total women are victimized in broad terms of physical, sexual and psychological abuses. It is relatively higher in the villages named as Marapalam, Karadiyanaru, Sinnapullumalai, and Periapullumalai. Moreover, physical abuses including slapping, pinching, kicking, burning etc are slightly higher while comparing with the sexual abuse (such as unwanted sexual contact) and emotional abuse (verbally humiliated/ illegal) at the identified locations. Because of those issues, the main victims are the children who are highly affected and their education level is very poor than the average which cause them to find employment at their early age which leads to child labour and the quality of the life is also discriminated. As a result, children are highly affected by malnutrition, poor feeding pattern, poor hygienic practices and poor access to health services towards their best in future. Further dropouts and child labour are becoming higher year after year which is a severe problem which has to be focused immediately.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the above research, it is very clear that the Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) has been reduced considerably, except certain months due to various religious reasons. But the research indicates one thing is that the violence against children has been increased which may not come to light, by both the parents and the people living around. Therefore, the researchers recommend the followings for the immediate implementation, both by policy and implementation levels:

- the sale of alcohol must be controlled, not only in the research area, but in the whole district, because Batticaloa District becomes the first place in the sale of alcohol,
- the police must take extra care in the rural areas on the usage of illegal business of alcohol and narcotics throughout the year,
- more awareness must be given to the public, especially to the women and children, not only on the impacts on alcohol but also to inform the police when there are any illegal business of the alcohol,
- there is a lack of participation by the governmental and non-governmental institutions to go deep into the rural areas and to observe the reality, thus this participation must be increased,
- provide legal, counselling, medical, and other needed support to the women and children,
- give more attention on the children who are ignorant on their rights,
- get into further study on the dropouts and the reasons for it by the government agencies immediately,
- instigate more on the children side for further deep investigations where the child rights are being looked after in the rural level , and
- give importance more on practical solutions, could be economics or legal, than on the policy level.

## Reference

1. Basic population information on Batticaloa District, (2017). Preliminary Report. ISBN 978-955-577-614-1.
2. "CIA Fact Book". The Central Intelligence Agency of the United States. Archived from *the original* on November 30, 2013.
3. Department of Census and Statistics. Population Statistics. (2017). Ministry of Finance and Planning; Colombo Sri Lanka.
4. Julia Kima and Mmatshilo Motseib, (2002). “Women enjoy punishment’’: attitudes and experiences of gender-based violence among PHC nurses in rural South Africa. *Social Science a Medicine* 54 (2002) 1243–1254.

5. Manual on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence presented to Sri Lanka Police) (<http://lk.one.un.org/news/manual-on-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-presented-to-srilanka-police/>).
6. Madurawala, Sunimalee. “Broken Promises: The Plight of Women in Sri Lanka and its Economic Costs”. <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2013/03/08/broken-promises-the-plight-of-women-in-sri-lanka-and-its-economic-costs/>
7. UN, Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017).
8. [http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.21\\_declaration%20elimination%20vaw.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.21_declaration%20elimination%20vaw.pdf)

UNDER PEER REVIEW