

Preschool children and violence: Psychological profile

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20 years of ethnic conflict has left an indelible mark in the minds of Sri Lankan children as well as adults. Not only children who have been directly exposed to it but also a critical mass of children living in other parts of Sri Lanka have been severely affected by it. Hence, nonviolent ways have been somewhat alien to Sri Lankans, which is depicted by the increasing number of large-scale violent incidents occurring in the present society. Therefore, reaching out to very young children with effective ways of addressing nonviolent problem solving strategies has become an urgent need, which need to be researched in order to promote sustainable peace.

In order to identify the effective ways of preventing potential violence one has to accurately recognize the factors contributing to violence and its impact in the minds of young children. The researcher plans to take sample of preschool teachers, parents and preschool children in order to draw an accurate profile of violence and preschool children in Sri Lanka. The data is being collected through interviews of professionals in the field of preschool education, parents and teachers, survey of preschool teachers and direct observation of the children. Increasing number of violent acts to and from the young children cries out for a suitable solution urgently. However, no systematic research is so far been done in this country in order to identify the existing situation.

The research will open up an un-researched area in Sri Lanka, and make a very timely contribution at a critical juncture in the history of this country, ravaged by conflict and violence of every description, for almost 20 years. It would immensely contribute to the peace building 3R initiatives that the government of Sri Lanka is presently undertaking with collaboration of other peace friendly agents.

Key words: Social conflict; Violence; Pre-school children; Peace building