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Culture and Context of Child Sexual Abuse

Child Sexual Abuse and Situational Context: Children's Experiences in Post-Conflict Northern Uganda

Anicent Nyangoma , Florence Ebila & Julius Omona

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ABSTRACT

Although substantial literature exists on child sexual abuse (CSA), little is known about abuses children encounter in northern Uganda, a post-conflict area. Media reports have indicated a high incidence for CSA. The study, firstly, explored boys' and girls' experiences of sexual abuse by adults in this post-conflict region and secondly, interventions directed at improving the current situation of children at risk of child abuse and the survivors were investigated as well. The study was guided by radical feminism and nested ecological framework theories. Semi-structured interviews were conducted involving 43 sexually abused children. Narrative responses were audio recorded and transcribed. Content qualitative analysis was used to understand sexual offenses from children's perspectives. Participants mentioned the following as the most perilous situations; laxity in parental roles, cultural norms, and practices, patriarchal attitudes, child sexual desires and attitudes, family breakdown and alcoholism. The study found many reported cases of CSA in the region. The results imply the exigent need of separate units specifically for reporting and handling child sexual offenses, need for personnel training on gender issues and filing system in child protection agencies and family programs for both fathers and mothers on child protection strategies for prevention and mitigation of CSA.

KEYWORDS: Children, gender issues, sexual abuse, intervention

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