

An Understanding of Child Sexual Abuse in South Africa: Case Study of Eastern Cape Province

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Abstract : The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996 section 28(1) (d)) states, 'Every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse, and degradation'. Qualitative research studied perceptions of the selected sample. Objectives of the research were to determine factors that influence perpetrators of sexual violence to target children, the risk factors of child sexual abuse, the effects of child sexual abuse on the development of the child, and the community prevention measures to minimize the risks of child sexual abuse. The research aimed to understand perspective and experiences of the Ngangelizwe community members on the problem of sexual violence against children and the perpetrator's perceived motive for sexually abusing children. Convenience non-probability sampling technique was adopted to select 20 participants within the Ngangelizwe Township at Mthatha. Thematic analyses were used to analyse data. It was found that sexual abuse of children affects severely child and parents, while the community reported to be trivially affected by the sexual abuse of a child. The research revealed ignorance of some forms of sexual violence, as the commonly known form of sexual violence was rape. Therefore, ignorance of community members regarding various forms of sexual abuse means that such acts are either ignored, tolerated, or even regarded as acceptable. It thus means that community members cannot reject any actions or behaviour if they themselves are ignorant of what constitutes sexual violence. This study recommends that communities should be educated about different sexual offenses.

Keywords : child sexual abuse, community, childhood attachment, adult attachment

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