

Extent and Forms of Violence against Children in Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The present paper examines the status of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh with regard to its extent and forms. Data on FIR registered for incidences of violence against children during the years from 2016 to 2020 in the state were collected from the offices of the Superintendent of Police located in all twenty-five (25) districts of the state. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study revealed that the registered incidences of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh showed a fluctuating trend during the study period. Although children experienced different forms of violence, sexual violence accounted for the highest number of registered cases during the period under study. Gender, age, and indigenous status emerged as noticeable factors in the occurrence of violence against children in the state.

Keywords: Violence, Children, Arunachal Pradesh.

1. Introduction

Violence against children is a global crisis (United Nations, 2024). It encompasses all forms of violence against individuals less than eighteen years of age (WHO, 2026). It may take the form of physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal violence, as well as neglect. Children may face violence by anyone, including other children, and can occur anywhere, including homes, schools, and communities, both offline and online. However, regardless of the form or source of violence, its consequences can have negative impacts on children, which may be immediate or lifelong.

As noted by the United Nations (n.d.), “globally, homicide kills a child every five minutes. More than two hundred and forty million children experience violence in and around their schools. Thirty-five percent of trafficking victims are children. About fifteen per cent of children have experienced some form of cyberbullying. Some one hundred and sixty million children have been exposed to child labor.” According to UNICEF (2014), violence against children can have serious physical, psychological, developmental, and behavioral consequences, including physical injury, sexually transmitted infections, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, unplanned

pregnancy, and even death. It can also impair brain development and damage the nervous system, while increasing the likelihood of aggressive and antisocial behavior, substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, and criminal behavior. Children exposed to violence may also be more likely to engage in violence behavior as adults.

A study conducted by Hills et al. (2017) reported that the consequences of violence against children include increased risks of injury, HIV infection, sexually transmitted infections, mental health problems, reproductive health problems, and non-communicable diseases, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, and diabetes. Furthermore, violence-associated toxic stress may cause damage to the nervous, endocrine, circulatory, musculoskeletal, reproductive, respiratory, and immune systems.

Today's children are the citizens of tomorrow. Healthy and well-adjusted children contribute to a healthy and harmonious society. Therefore, present paper intends to answer the following question: -

2. Research Question

1. What is the status of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh with regard to its extent and forms?

3. Objectives

Against the given research question, following are the objectives of the present study:

1. To study the extent of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh.
2. To examine the extent of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh with respect to gender, age, and social category.
3. To study the various forms of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh.

4. Method

Data on FIR registered for incidences of violence against children during past five consecutive years from 2016 to 2020 in Arunachal Pradesh were collected from the offices of the Superintendent of Police located in all twenty-five (25) districts of the state. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to fulfill the objectives of the present study. A summary of results, along with its interpretation, is presented in the following section on results and interpretation.

5. Results and Interpretation

This section is divided into three sub-sections; (i) analysis of the extent of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh; (ii) analysis of the extent of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh with respect to gender, age, and social category; and (iii) analysis of the forms of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh. The details of each sub section are presented below:

5.1 Analysis of the Extent of Violence against Children in Arunachal Pradesh

A summary of the results related to the extent of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh is presented in Table 1, followed by an interpretation of the findings.

Table 1

Number of FIRs Registered for Incidences of Violence Against Children in Arunachal Pradesh From 2016 to 2020

State	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Arunachal Pradesh	117	118	133	134	100

Note. The data were collected between April 2021 and March 2022.

Table 1 indicates the number of FIRs registered for incidences of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh. The data show that the number of registered incidences of violence against children in the study area increased from 117 in 2016 to 134 in 2019 but declined to 100 in 2020. These figures indicate that, the incidences of violence against children in the state showed a fluctuating trend during the period from 2016 to 2020.

5.2 Analysis of the Extent of Violence Against Children in Arunachal Pradesh with respect to Gender, Age and Social Category

It is important to mention that, to analyze the extent of violence against children in the study area with respect to gender, age, and social category, the analysis was based on the total number of alleged child victims for whom FIRs were registered during the study period (2016-2020). It is also important to note that, in some of the FIRs data received, the gender of the alleged child victim was not mentioned; in some cases, the age was missing; and in others, the social category was not specified. Therefore, for each variable, the analysis was conducted based on the total number of alleged child victims for whom complete information was available regarding the respective variable. A summary of the results related to the extent of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh with respect to gender, age, and social category is presented in Table 2 to 4, followed by an interpretation of the findings.

Table 2

Number of Alleged Child Victims of Violence in Arunachal Pradesh Disaggregated by Gender

Year	Total Victim	Female Victim	%	Male Victim	%
2016	119	112	94.12	7	5.88
2017	190	185	97.37	5	2.63
2018	141	136	96.16	5	3.54
2019	143	133	93.00	10	7.00
2020	103	92	89.33	11	10.67

Note. The data were collected between April 2021 and March 2022. % = Percent.

Table 2 reflects that the percentage of alleged male and female victim children in Arunachal Pradesh during years from 2016-2019. The percentage of alleged female victim children was 94.12%, 97.37%, 96.16%, 93.00%, and 89.33%, while that of alleged male victim children was 5.88%, 2.63%, 3.54%, 7.00%, and 10.67% for the year 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively. These figures indicate that the percentage of alleged female victim children remained higher than their alleged male counterparts throughout the study period. Further, the data show a fluctuating trend: the percentage of alleged female victim children increased from 94.12% in 2016 to 97.37% in 2017, but then decreased to 96.16% in 2018, 93.00% in 2019, and 89.33% in 2020. Similarly, the percentage of alleged male victims decreased from 5.88% in 2016 to 2.63% in 2017, but subsequently increased to 3.54% in 2018, 7.00% in 2019, and 10.67% in 2020.

Table 3

Number of Alleged Child Victims of Violence in Arunachal Pradesh Disaggregated by Age

Age	Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	Infancy(0-1)	0	0	0	0	0
	Percentage (%)	0	0	0	0	0
	Early childhood(2-6)	8	6	10	4	6
	Percentage (%)	7.01	5.26	7.09	2.73	6.18
	Late childhood(7-12)	27	32	47	36	18
	Percentage (%)	23.68	28.07	33.33	24.67	18.56
	Adolescence(13-18)	79	76	84	106	73
	Percentage (%)	69.29	66.66	59.57	72.60	75.26
Total victim		114	114	141	146	97

Note. The data were collected between April 2021 and March 2022.

Table 3 indicates the following:

- No incidences of violence against children in the infancy stage (0-1 year) were registered during the years from 2016 to 2020 in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The rates of registered incidences of violence against children in the early childhood stage (2-6 years) were 7.01%, 5.26%, 7.09%, 2.73%, and 6.18% in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The rates of registered incidences of violence against children in the late childhood stage (7-12 years) were 23.68%, 28.07%, 33.33%, 24.67%, and 18.56% in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively, in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The rates of registered incidences of violence against adolescents were 69.29%, 66.66%, 59.57%, 72.60%, and 75.26% in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively.

These figures indicate that, during the study period, the percentage of alleged adolescent victims was higher than that of alleged child victims in the other age groups, namely early childhood and late childhood.

Further, the data show a fluctuating trend. The percentage of alleged victim children in the early childhood stage declined from 7.01% in 2016 to 5.26% in 2017, increased to 7.09% in 2018, decreased to 2.73% in 2019, and increased to 6.18% in 2020. The percentage of alleged victim children in the late childhood stage increased from 23.68% in 2016 to 33.33% in 2018, decreased to 24.67% in 2019, and further decreased to 18.56% in 2020. Similarly, the percentage of alleged adolescent victims decreased from 69.29% in 2016 to 59.57% in 2018, increased to 72.60% in 2019, and further increased to 75.26% in 2020.

Table 4

Number of Alleged Child Victims of Violence in Arunachal Pradesh Disaggregated by Social Categories

Social categories	Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	APST	68	150	78	80	75
	%	57.16	79.80	59.09	59.27	75.76
	ST (other states)	13	6	14	15	6
	%	10.92	3.19	10.60	11.11	6.06
	GEN.	16	16	12	16	7
	%	13.44	8.51	9.09	11.85	7.07
	OBC	13	13	26	19	10
	%	10.92	6.91	19.70	14.07	10.10
	SC	9	3	2	5	1
	%	7.56	1.59	1.52	3.70	1.01
Total victim		119	188	132	135	99

Note. APST =Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe; ST= Scheduled Tribe; GEN = General Category; OBC = Other Backward Class; SC = Scheduled Caste; % = Percent.

Table 4 reflects the following:

- The rates of registered incidences of violence against Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe (APST) category children were 57.16%, 79.80%, 59.09%, 59.27%, and 75.76% for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively, in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The rates of registered incidences of violence against the scheduled tribe (other state) children were 10.92%, 3.19%, 10.60%, 11.11%, and 6.06% for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively, in Arunachal Pradesh.

- The rates of registered incidences of violence against the general category children were 13.44%, 8.51%, 9.09%, 11.85%, and 7.07% for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively, in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The rates of registered cases of violence against Other Backward Caste (OBC) category children were 10.92%, 6.91%, 19.70%, 14.07%, and 10.10% for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively, in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The rates of registered cases of violence against Scheduled Caste (SC) children were 7.56%, 1.59%, 1.52%, 3.70%, and 1.01% for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively, in Arunachal Pradesh.

These figures indicate that, during the study period from 2016 to 2020, the highest percentage of registered cases of violence involved children belonging to the Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe (APST) category compared with children belonging to other social categories.

Further, the data show a fluctuating trend. The percentage of alleged APST victim children increased from 57.16% in 2016 to 79.80% in 2017, decreased to 59.09% in 2018, increased slightly to 59.27% in 2019, and further increased to 75.76% in 2020. The percentage of alleged victim children belonging to the ST (other states) category decreased substantially from 10.92% in 2016 to 3.19% in 2017, increased to 10.60% in 2018, further increased to 11.11% in 2019, and decreased to 6.06% in 2020. The percentage of alleged victim children belonging to the general category decreased from 13.44% in 2016 to 8.51% in 2017, increased to 9.09% in 2018, further increased to 11.85% in 2019, and declined to 7.07% in 2020. The percentage of alleged victim children belonging to the OBC category declined from 10.92% in 2016 to 6.91% in 2017, substantially increased to 19.70% in 2018, declined to 14.07% in 2019, and further declined to 10.10% in 2020. The percentage of alleged victim children belonging to SC category declined from 7.56% in 2016 to 1.59% in 2017, further declined to 1.52% in 2018, slightly increased to 3.70% in 2019, and declined to 1.01% in 2020.

5.3 Analysis of the Forms of Violence Against Children in Arunachal Pradesh

A summary of the results related to the forms of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh is presented in Table 5, followed by an interpretation of the findings.

Table 5

Showing the Forms of Violence Against Children in Arunachal Pradesh

Forms of Violence against Children	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Abetment to suicide	4	1	0	0	2	7
Bonded labour	0	0	0	1	0	1
Child labour	2	0	1	2	0	4
Human Trafficking	1	0	1	1	0	3
House Trespass and threaten	0	0	1	0	0	1
Kidnap	20	21	15	15	11	82
Missing	22	18	31	39	27	137
Murder	2	2	2	3	2	11
Physical Assault	1	3	0	5	3	12
Robbery	0	0	0	1	0	1

Sexual Violence	Penetrative Sexual Assault (PSA)	23	20	22	21	21	107
	Aggravated Penetrative Sexual Assault (APSA)	28	26	42	25	22	143
	Sexual Assault (SA)	5	19	15	13	9	61
	Aggravated Sexual Assault(ASA)	0	2	1	5	1	9
	Sexual Harassment (SH)	5	3	5	1	0	14
	Attempt to rape/Sexual Assault	3	2	0	0	1	6
	Procurement of minor girl for illicit intercourse with other man through enticing	0	1	0	1	0	2
	Storage of pornographic material involving child	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Use of child for pornographic purposes	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Wrongful confinement	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total		117	118	136	134	100	605

Note. The data were collected between April 2021 and March 2022.

Table 5 shows the following:

- Abetment to suicide, bonded labour, child labour, human trafficking, house trespass and threaten, kidnap, missing, murder, physical assault, robbery, sexual violence, and wrongful confinement were the eleven forms of violence against children for which cases were registered during the period from 2016-2020 in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The highest number of incidences of sexual violence against children (344) was registered during the period from 2016-2020 in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The least number of incidences, one each, of bonded labor, house trespass and threaten, robbery, and wrongful confinement were registered against children during the period from 2016 to 2020 in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Out of the nine sub-forms of sexual violence registered against children, the highest number of incidences involved aggravated penetrative sexual assault (143) during the period from 2016 to 2020 in Arunachal Pradesh.

6. Findings and Discussion

1. With regard to the extent of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh, the study found that the registered incidences of violence against children showed a fluctuating trend during the period from 2016 to 2020. In Arunachal Pradesh, in addition to the formal criminal justice system, many cases are often settled through customary laws, even when the offences are serious or grave. Consequently, many cases may go unreported to the formal authorities. This could be one of the reasons for the fluctuating trend in the number of registered incidences of violence against children in the state during the study period.
2. Concerning the extent of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh with respect to gender, age, and social category, the study found that the percentage of alleged female child victims was consistently higher than their male counterparts throughout the study period. The majority of the registered cases of violence against children from 2016 to 2020 involved aggravated penetrative sexual assault. This could be one of the

reasons why the number of registered cases of violence against female children was higher than male children.

Adolescence is a period of rapid physical, social, and emotional development. During this period, adolescents may experience difficulties in regulating their emotions and may be more susceptible to influence or enticement by others. They may also develop an increased attraction towards peers of the opposite sex. These factors may be among the reasons why the percentage of alleged adolescent victims was higher than that of victims in the other age groups, namely, early childhood and late childhood, during the study period in the state.

According to the 2011 Census, 68.79% of the total population of Arunachal Pradesh belonged to the Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe (ST) category. This may be one of the reasons why the highest percentage of registered cases of violence against children during the study period involved children belonging to the Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe (APST) category, compared with children belonging to other social categories, namely, General, OBC, and SC, in Arunachal Pradesh.

3. Concerning to the forms of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh, it is found that abetment to suicide, bonded labor, child labor, human trafficking, house trespass and threaten, kidnap, missing, murder, physical assault, robbery, sexual violence, and wrongful confinement were the eleven forms of violence against children for which cases were registered during the period from 2016-2020 in Arunachal Pradesh. With the passage of time, society has become increasingly complex. In addition to technological advancement, factors such as poverty and unemployment may further contribute to this complexity. On the other hand, the glamorous lifestyle associated with rapid technological development may create a desire among people for a modern lifestyle and material possessions beyond their financial means. Thus, the desire for a glamorous lifestyle, poverty, and unemployment may compel some individuals to resort to unlawful means of earning. These factors could be among the possible reasons for the occurrence of various types of registered cases of violence against children in the study area. Furthermore, increased awareness and the availability of accessible mechanisms for promptly reporting incidences of violence against children, such as helpline numbers, Child Welfare Committees, women police stations, One Stop Centers, and regular police stations, may also contribute to the higher reporting of the incidences of violence against children in the study area.

Further sexual violence includes penetrative sexual assault (PSA), aggravated penetrative sexual assault (APSA), sexual assault (SA), aggravated sexual assault (ASA), sexual harassment (SA), attempt to rape/sexual assault, procurement of minor girl for illicit intercourse with other man through enticing, storage of pornographic material involving child, and use of child for pornographic purposes. Since the implementation of the POCSO Act, 2012, various government agencies have extensively conducted awareness programmes on sexual violence against children in schools, colleges, and villages. This increased awareness may be one of the reasons why sexual violence accounted for the highest number of registered cases of violence against children during the period from 2016 to 2020 in the state.

7. Conclusion

Against the backdrop, it can be concluded that the registered incidences of violence against children in Arunachal Pradesh showed a fluctuating trend during the study period. The findings indicate that, like other states in the country, Arunachal Pradesh is also confronted with the issue of violence against children. Although children experienced different forms of violence, sexual violence accounted for the highest number of registered cases during the period under study. Among the nine forms of sexual violence, aggravated penetrative sexual assault

accounted for the highest number of registered sexual violence cases during the study period. This finding indicates that, rather than strangers, people known to children and those responsible for their care and protection may also pose a risk to their safety. Furthermore, gender, age, and indigenous status emerged as notable factors in the occurrence of violence against children in the state.

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