

The Impact of Urban Youth Ganging on Anti-Social Behavior:

A Criminological Study in Colombo City of Sri Lanka

B.V. N. Wijewardhana



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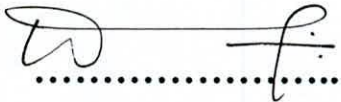
B.V. N. Wijewardhana

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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

The work described in this thesis was carried out by under the supervision of Dr. Rev. Pinnawala sangasumana, Senior Lecturer in Geography, Department of Geography, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Prof. B.A.Tennyson Perera, Professor in Sociology & Anthropology, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura and Dr. Sunil Rajaneththi, Senior Lecturer in Criminology, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka and a report on this has not been submitted in whole or in part to any university for the award of any Degree or Diploma.



Signature

BVN Wijewardhana,
Department of Sociology and Anthropology,
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences,
University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

2015/06/16

Date

DECLARATION BY THE SUPERVISORS

We certify that the Candidate has incorporated all corrections, amendments and editions recommended by the examiners.



Signature

16/06/2015

Date

1. Dr. Rev. Pinnawala sangasumana,
Senior Lecturer in Geography,
Department of Geography,
University of Sri Jayewardenepura.



Signature

20/7/16

Date

2. Prof. B.A. Tennyson Perera,
Professor in Sociology & Anthropology,
Department of Sociology & Anthropology,
University of Sri Jayewardenepura.



Signature

16/08/2015

Date

3. Dr. Sunil Rajaneththi,
Senior Lecturer in Criminology,
Department of Sociology & Anthropology,
University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

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BVN Wijewardhana

ABSTRACT

Youth ganging and related delinquent behavior have become a deviant fashion in the modern urban societies. It is a social phenomenon that has turned into a critical social issue in the world today irrespective of developed or under developed regions and countries. This serious global issue of gang culture has put the main societies in a high risk by challenging the safety, security, well-being, ethics, rights and law and order of those societies and their individuals. While these youth ganging are causing negative impacts on the societies they inhabited, the gang youth itself have become criminal on one hand and victims of the same vulnerable societies on the other hand. Youth gangs may originate with desires of association of same aged youths, income generation and enjoyment but can lead to transferring into underworld criminal gangs in some cases.

Although the youth ganging and their delinquent behavior have become a critical social issue in Sri Lanka, even contributing to formation of anti-social environments in the urban and rural societies in the community, a detailed study or research had not being conducted in the country. The general believes and observations on gangs and the gang culture available on in the country are basically built up on assumptions and rumors, as there are systematic research or proper findings related to the subject. Thus the findings of this research could reveal clear patterns, revealing reasons and social conditions prevailing in Sri Lanka which attract, force, pushes and drag Sri Lankan youth to the gang culture.

Therefore it is likely that policy makers, legal institutions and procedures will find this research useful for establishing, empowering and implementation of proper remedial measures to mitigate the associated issues and impacts.

This research was conducted with the participation of 493 Gang members of identified 75 gangs operational in 14 GN Divisions in the Colombo city. The information were gathered through a questionnaire survey, In-depth interviews, focus group discussions observation, case studies and information collected from Police and other institutions. The data and information have being carefully analyzed in numerous ways to derive important findings, arrive at conclusions and make recommendations for remedial actions.

The research could derive and provide foundation for several important findings such as a database on youth gangs in Colombo city with its membership, activities engaged and linkages with drug dealings, prostitutions and links to political arena etc. It revealed that the real-‘core’ factors such as freedom, friendship, protection income generation substance usage and sexual needs etc. are causing youths to get attracted to gangs. Nearly all the gang members are found to be addicted to substances and involved in crimes of different scales. Gang members have freedom, protection from legal authorities and opportunities for delinquencies, substances use, enjoyment, prostitutions, and access to sexual activity, income generation and heroic states by being members of youth gangs. Thus all the anti-social behaviors are strongly linked with gang culture; for its origination, attract members, stability and development.

Key Words: Anti-Social Behavior, Colombo City, Criminology, Ganging, Male Youth, Urban