

ABSTRACT

Violence against Children: A Rights-Based Approach to Violence Tolerance

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This thesis explores the situation of violence against children (VAC) in the Trinidad and Tobago context against an international backdrop. It examines the different dimensions of violence (direct, cultural and structural) and involves a sociological exploration of the factors that contribute to the high tolerance of violence that exists in T&T and in the Caribbean region. A deconstruction of the violence concept and its epistemological implications allows for a defining, refining and re-defining of the phenomenon. The research examines the spheres of domestic violence, gender violence, violence against street children, and corporal punishment in great detail.

The multi-design approach uses qualitative and quantitative data analysis to assess the nation's knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs (KAPBs) on the issue of VAC. The purposive sample includes stakeholders/respondents selected from eight categories: policy makers, teachers, teenagers, parents, police-officers, NGOs, children under twelve, and ECD student teachers. Field research from Bangladesh, Canada, Nicaragua, and the Netherlands context is also imported to inform the study. The paper adopts a rights-based analysis of the issue of VAC, incorporates an evaluation of the country's standing with respect to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and puts forward sound recommendations for change. The ultimate aim of the research is for its utilisation by state policy makers to promote a 'lowering' of the threshold of violence-tolerance, thereby fostering a more child-friendly society.

Keywords: Rona Jualla van Oudenhoven; children's rights; violence - tolerance.