

## A B S T R A C T

Violence, resulting in death and injury, is a worldwide problem and its impact on countries like Jamaica, struggling with economic problems, contributes considerably to the use of already limited resources.

Jamaican juveniles factor significantly in crimes of violence, committing acts of homicide, shooting, robbery and rape. This is cause for concern, since many of these juveniles will perpetuate this violent behaviour into adulthood.

Police reports have shown that the juveniles who commit these acts of violence tend to live within impoverished inner city communities. The Statistics Division on Crime of the Jamaican Constabulary Force has identified specific 'pockets' of crime to be centred in communities in downtown Kingston and have cited such areas as Greenwich Town, Rae Town, Rose Town and Craig Town as having the highest levels of violent crimes. Adjacent communities such as Jones' Town, Matthews Lane, Denham Town and Waterhouse are also seriously affected by violent crimes (Appendix I).

There is need to determine to what extent experiences of violent activity in this context contribute to the shaping

of juvenile views towards accepting violence as a way of life and a means of conflict resolution. This concern has influenced the direction of this study. Data was compiled from two all age schools, an urban and a rural centre, to examine knowledge of, attitudes towards and practices of violence among the students. It is of note that many of the students who participated in the study lived in the downtown inner city communities referred to in the previous paragraph.

Data revealed that violence is present in both schools, although levels and type of violent activity vary, the urban centre showing higher and more intense violence. Data also revealed that the students in the urban centre were exposed to more acts of violent crimes in their daily lives than were their rural counterparts. The study further showed that the urban all age school students to be far more aggressive and intent on inflicting harm and injury when in conflict than those from the rural all age school.

Once young minds are shaped into accepting violence and practicing it, the problem intensifies. If, even through the school system, students can be positively influenced to abandon violent thinking and behaviour then this may serve as a cornerstone in helping to reduce violence in Jamaica.