

The Impact of Robberies on the Victims in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: As a developing country, Sri Lanka faces many problems, and presently they show an increasing trend. Among them, social disparities, terrorism, traffic in illegal narcotics, and crime are predominant. Most researchers feel that crime has increased since the 1970s. Criminologists believe that property crimes are increasing when a country develops. But, in Sri Lanka, robbery as a grave crime has decreased in the course of time though its clarification has changed from time to time. This study draws on the robbery rates prevalent in Sri Lanka during the period of 2003 to 2019, which records a considerable decrease in the number of robberies from 40.64 in 2003 to 13.46 in 2019. The research problem is primarily concerned with the impacts of robbery both as a property crime and a violent crime, and how far it has affected the normal life of the citizens of the country as it stands at 11% of the total number of grave crimes of the country.

Therefore, this study was aimed at finding the nature and the impacts of robbery on victims. Further, the study has taken into consideration the causes of robbery as well as the characteristics of perpetrators. Forty-six victims of the robbery were selected to achieve the targets of the study from a convenient sample, adding 4-7 robbers from a police station chosen of selected eight districts. The data were collected by using a semi-structured interview schedule administered to the victims of robbery. The findings revealed that the main targets of 82.6% of robbers were to snatch gold necklaces, ornaments, and purses, mainly from the women who travelled lonely along the roads both in cities and suburbs. The rest of the robbers targeted gems, three-wheelers and mobile phones etc. Of the robbers, 67% were unknown to the victims, while 33% of robbers were known to the victims. As a result of the robbery, 56.5% have suffered from mental pain, 47.8% had physical injuries, and 10.9% of victims have undergone severe economic hardships owing to the loss of their valuables. The traumatic experience of the robbery victims has paved the way to change their regular behaviour patterns so as to prevent them from revictimization. The study proposes that non-violent resistance of the victims and proper and speedy involvement of the police in target hardening of the robbers would minimize robberies in the country.

I. INTRODUCTION

Robberies had occurred since people started to demarcate and protect their personal properties themselves. People consider robbery an act of taking some valuable property or money from a victim by force and violence or by the threat of violence (Adler et al. 1995). Punishment is carried out for the perpetrators of robberies with respect to the nature and the gravity of the crime.

Robbery has a long history of humankind as found in Hammurapi's Code, Roman law, and other laws of the Anglo-Saxon kings. Accordingly, robbery was distinct from mere

theft. After the 13th century, robbery was treated in common law as aggravated theft (Barlow, 1978:149). Unlike the thief, the robber was considered open and explicit in his purpose because robbery is committed through direct confrontation which allows the victim to fight in defence of his possessions. Offenders normally use weapons such as knives and other sharp instruments to threaten and frighten their victims and thus avoid resistance against the robbery.

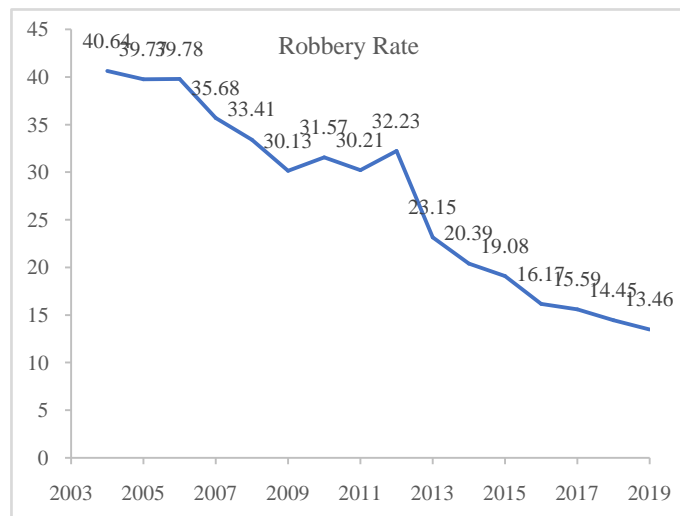
During the reigns of the ancient kings, punishments meted out to robbers were harsh and extremely heavy. According to the ancient inscription known as Wewelketiya Inscription, a robber must be caught and inflicted with penalties such as death, expulsion from the country, or giving any other physical punishment (Wimalwansa, 1959:67). However, some kings had tried to prevent robberies by offering wealth to robbers (Harischandra). During the Kandyan period in Sri Lanka, judicial officials viz. *Mohottala*, *Korala*, *Arachchi* had imprisoned robbers in their houses or *Kadavat* or stocks until they restored the stolen goods with the damages (Davy, 1881: 180-2; D'Oyly, 1835:88; Pieris, 1956: 52-6).

According to criminologists, there are several types of robbers, and they exhibit different characteristics. As John Conklin has detected, there are four types of robbers. The first is the professional robber who commits robberies to obtain money so as to maintain their hedonistic lifestyles. Professional robbers engage in robberies with deep commitment and after careful planning and they rob large sums of money or valuables with the assistance of some accomplices. The second is the most common robbers, the opportunistic robbers, who are young and inexperienced and they commit robberies for a small amount of money against those who are in no position to resist, such as older women, drunkards, and other vulnerable people. The third type is the addict robbers who are addicted to drugs and have a low level of commitment to robbery than to theft and they expect money for drug use. These addicts do not plan to rob as professional robbers but they desire to acquire money from theft than robbery. Sometimes, they use a weapon to threaten people and loot them. The fourth is the Alcoholic Robbers who often rob their victims after assaulting them but take fewer precautions; more often, they are apprehended than other robbers. They do not show much commitment to robberies and carry out them with no precise plans. As robberies are committed with a violent nature for the purpose of economic gain, they are considered as grave crimes in many countries, including Sri Lanka.

Robbers commit robberies to acquire money and valuables illegally to meet their daily monetary requirements. The violent nature of robbing creates an immeasurable impact of psychological and physical trauma on the victims. Further, robbery would create pervasive fear and anxiety in victims.

The loopholes in security, the environmental arrangements, and the vulnerability of individual behaviour often provide opportunities for potential robbers to achieve their targets. In the event of the commission of a robbery, if the victim strongly resists the act, it would reduce the commission of robbery to some extent, but such an event increases the opportunity for robbers to make physical injuries upon victims. However, non-forceful resistance of the victim may decrease the risk of losing his/her possessions and reduce the risk of harm to some extent. Figure 1 indicates a sharp decline in the rates of robberies in Sri Lanka after 2012.

Figure 1: Robbery Rates in Sri Lanka 2003-2019



Source: Report of Inspector General of Police 2003-2019

As a grave crime, robbery accounts for over 11% of the total number of grave crimes annually reported by the police department. Higher incidents of robberies are shown during the first decade of the 21st century from 2004 to 2011 in Figure 1. Accordingly, a gradual decrease in the robbery rate for the 100,000 population from 32.23 in 2012 to 13.46 in 2019 can be observed. It is interesting to record that there had been some relative stability in the robbery rate in the period from 2009 to 2012. Afterward, Sri Lanka has experienced a significant decline in the rate of robbery. It is also essential to focus attention on the high incidence of robberies between 2006 to 2008 but at a decreasing rate. Affected by the military conflicts and social instability, the people of Sri Lanka seem to have experienced this increased rate of robbery along with the ascending order of other types of grave crimes. After 2012 it appears that the expansion of employment opportunities and income-generating activities internally as well as externally of the country has contributed to the gradual decrease of the robbery rate.

Research Problem

The incidence of robbery cannot be perceived as a minor social problem. Such incidents manifest a direct violation of vital social norms and laws of protecting people's property. The laws alone are not sufficient to protect people's property. The social structure together with its organization plays a vital role in the maintenance of peace, law, and order in the society, including the protection of victims.

Sri Lankan society has undergone a dramatic change, adversely affecting its social control through cultural and social structural arrangements. The property of people is highly targeted by individual robbers as well as by robber gangs. Many valuable items have been grabbed, causing physical and psychological damages to property owners. Although the police have succeeded in controlling robberies to some extent, the unknown robbers still keep inflicting injuries upon the law-abiding people and causing loss to their property. This research study mainly concerns this social phenomenon and attempts to explore and explain the incidence of robbery and its impacts on victims of robberies.

Objectives

- To identify the effects of robbery on the victims
- To determine the causes of robbery in Sri Lanka
- To determine the nature of robbers and the incidence of robbery

Significance of the study

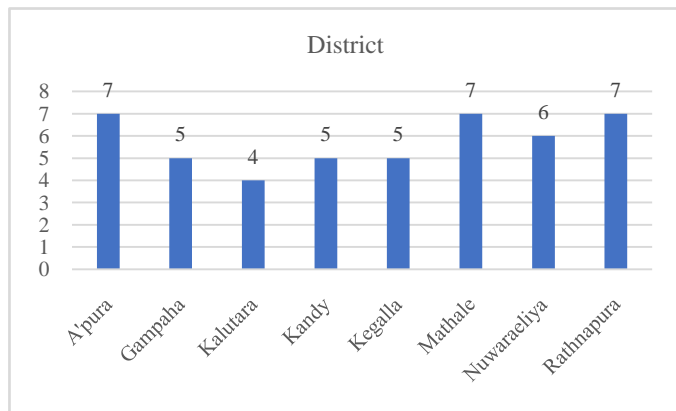
Although there had been very few research conducted to determine the nature of the victimization of robbery, both the impact of robbery on victims and the nature of criminal behaviour of the robbers have not yet been examined adequately in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this research will undoubtedly be significant for both academics and policymakers to work towards an extensive program to prevent robbery incidents and advance policy planning. The study will also generate new knowledge regarding the criminal behaviour of robbers and the causes and motives that lead to committing such crimes. Further, the effects of robbery on the victims and the understanding of the extent of their suffering would help victims to be protected and rehabilitated.

II. METHODS

This study was carried out concerning the robbery victims selected from eight districts in Sri Lanka. Figure 2 as indicated below the number of cases selected from each district. From each district, a number of victims from 4 to 7 were chosen from a convenient sample drawn from the data available in selected police stations. Selected victims were met at their houses and the data were collected by interviewing them using an interview schedule. Interviews were designed primarily to gather data on the impacts of robbery on the victims, the nature of the incidents, and the criminals' motives that drive them to rob people. This semi-structured open-ended procedure took approximately forty

minutes per victim. However, the length of the interview was subject to a considerable individual variation. An assurance of confidentiality and voluntary nature of participation was established with those who participated in the interviews.

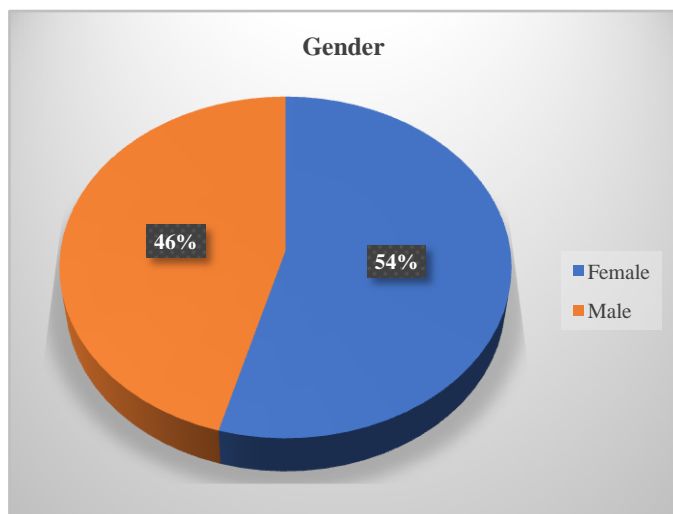
Figure 2: Sample units selected from each selected district



Source: Field Research 2019

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected regarding the impacts of robbery on victims and the behaviour of the robbers. In analyzing data, standard data analysis methods were utilized to achieve the objectives of the study.

Figure 3: Gender of the Robbery Victims

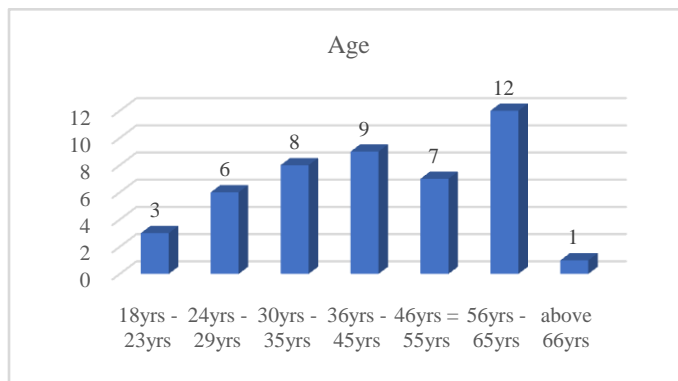


Source: Field Research 2019

Although male dominance is well evident in the commission of robberies, robbery victimization indicates that it is predominantly a female target-oriented crime. According to Figure 3, over 54% of robbery victims are females. This figure suggests a critical point in selecting their targets for the perpetration of robbery considering the low risk of resistance. However, 46 males have also been the victims of robbery in the study.

II. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

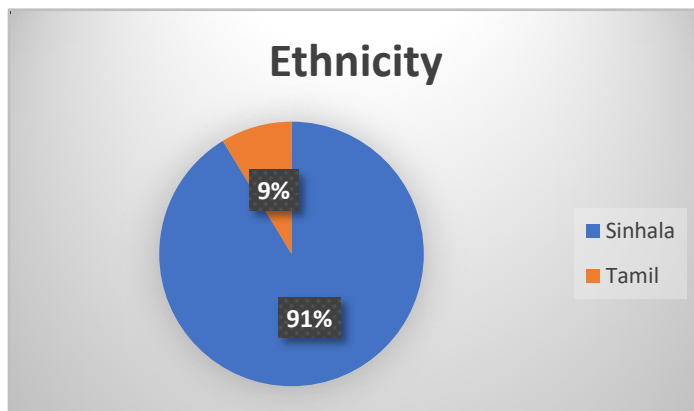
Figure 4. Age distribution of robbery victims



Source: Field Research 2019

The present study was conducted on 46 victims of robbery selected from several police stations in different districts of Sri Lanka. Their age distribution indicates an extensive age range in Figure 4. Accordingly, the highest number of victims i.e., 12 (26.1%), belongs to the age group of 56 to 65 years. The second highest group numbering 9 (19.6%) victims represents the age group between 36 to 45 years. However, the youngers belong to the age group of 18 to 23 years and they stand numerically 3 (11.7%). The rest of the victims and the range of their ages are between 24-29, 46-55, 30-35, and 36-45 and they amount to 6 to 9 respectively, in ascending order. Further, one individual (2.2%) of the victims in the age group above 66 years has also been victimized by the robbers and it is indeed a pathetic situation as people of such age remain dependent on others for their protection and survival. Targeting the elderly indicates that the crime of robbery has assumed brutal proportions.

Figure 5. Race of the Robbery Victims

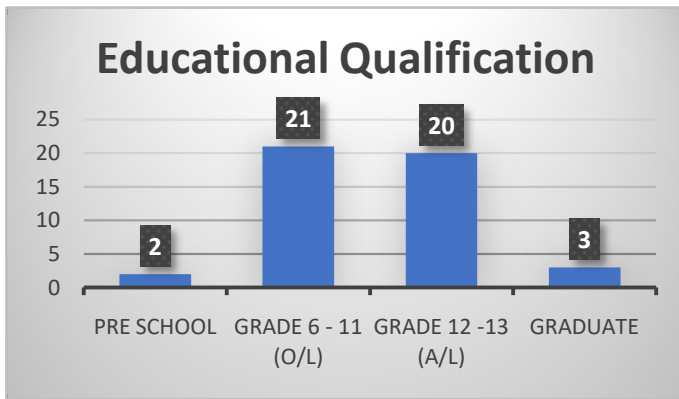


Source: Field Research 2019

Among the individualistic factors that affect robbery, the race of the victims seemed significant for it indicates that the majority (91%) of the victims selected in the sample were the Sinhalese. The reason for this was that the sample was chosen mainly from the areas where the population was predominantly Sinhalese. As Figure 5 indicates, the second-

highest group (9%) comprised the Tamils, and no one from any other ethnic group represented the selected sample of robbery victims.

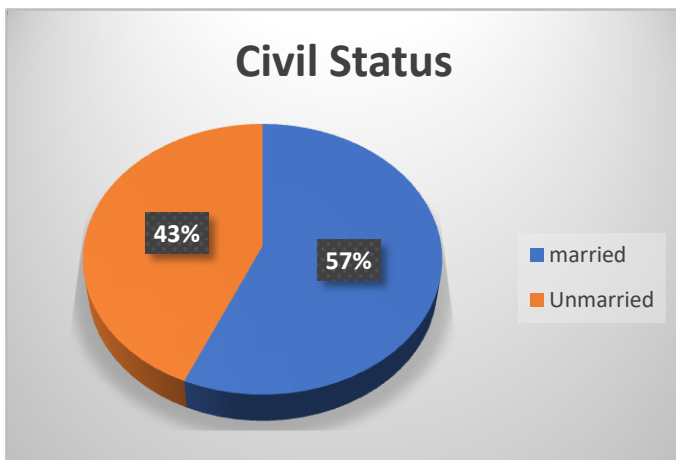
Figure 6: Educational Standard of the Robbery Victims



Source: Field Research 2019

Figure 6 shows the standard of education of robbery victims. The educational level of victims is a vital factor in understanding the social phenomenon of robbery victimization. Compared to the victims of other crime categories as murder and rape, the education of robbery victims remains at a higher standard. Accordingly, 50% (n=23) of the victims have obtained the General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) or higher qualification. In comparison, the same number of victims have studied up to General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) or less, and only 4.35% (n=2) of them had only preschool education. It was revealed that the victims had mostly faced the robbery incident unexpectedly with threat and violence.

Figure 7: Civil Status of the Robbery Victims



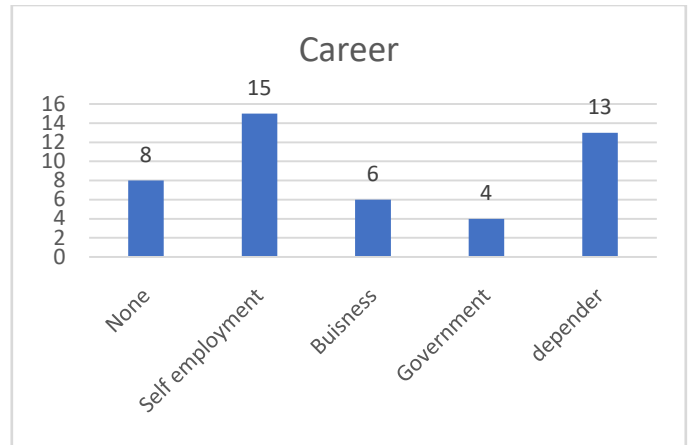
Source: Field Research 2019

Civil Status of the Victims

According to Figure 7, the marital status of the victims can be interpreted as follows. 57% (n=26) of the victims were married while 43% (n=20) were unmarried. It is worth noting that many married women wear valuables to enhance their

beauty when they go out without considering their protection and thus fall easy prey to shrewd robbers.

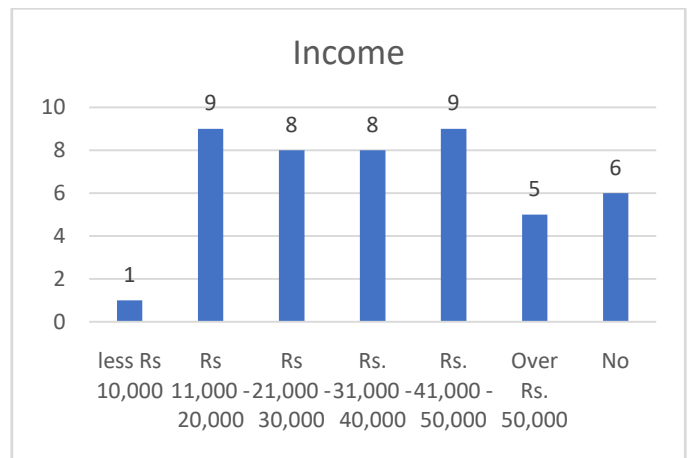
Figure 8: Career of the Robbery Victims



Source: Field Research 2019

A particular pattern of selecting targets for the commission of robbery is well evident from the employment information of robbery victims. According to Figure 6, only 8.7% (n=4) victims were government sector employees at the time the crime was committed. Over 32.6% (n=15) were self-employed and 13% (n=4) victims were engaged in their own businesses. Accordingly, 54.3% (n=25) of robbery victims were people having some sort of income. It is also noteworthy that nearly 17.4% (n=8) of victims were without employment, and the rest 28.3% (n=13) of victims, were dependent on their families.

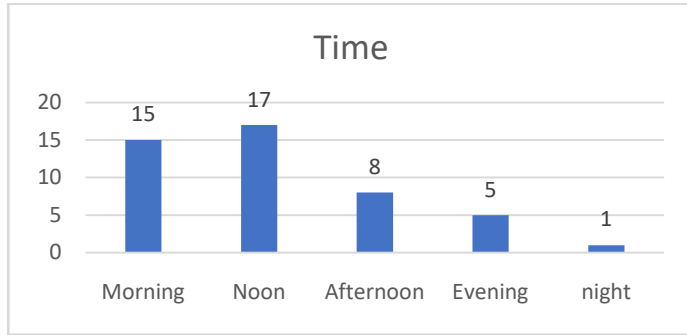
Figure 9: Income of the Robbery Victims



Source: Field Research 2019

Even though eight robbery victims (17.4%) stated that they were unemployed, only 6 (13%) indicated that they did not have any income. Only one victim had received less than 10,000 rupees as her monthly income, and the rest of the robbery victims had received a monthly income of Rs. 11,000 to 50,000 while 5 (10.9%) victims had received over 50,000 rupees of monthly income.

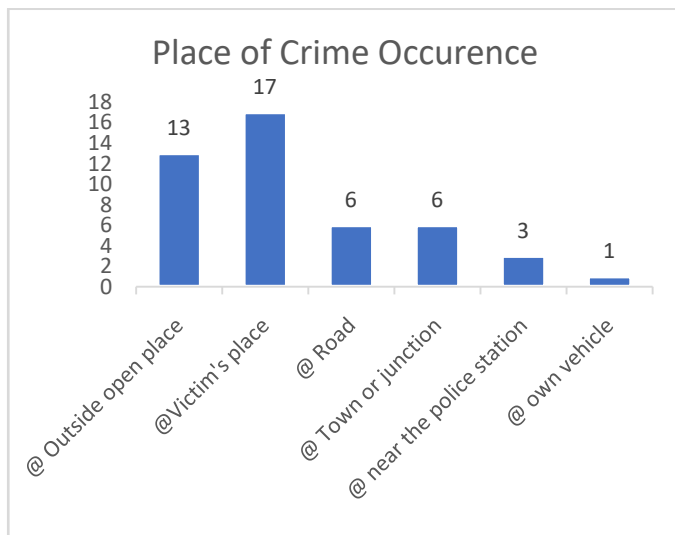
Figure 10: Time of the robbery



Source: Field Research 2019

The time of the occurrence of robbery was a concern of the present study. Figure 8 shows that most of the incidents (37%, n=17) have taken place at noon. The number of robberies committed on roads in the morning has increased up to 32.6% (n=15) as people go to their workplaces mostly alone and sometimes they walk hurriedly along solitary streets to arrive there in time. At this time, robbers plan to grab the valuables from the passers-by. Further, only a few people stay at home during the morning and robbers take this opportunity to rob those who are at home. Further, as the time of the occurrence of the robberies is concerned 17.4% of the robberies had occurred in the afternoon while 10.9% of the incidents had occurred in the evening when people were getting back from their work. Only 2.2% of robberies had occurred during the night when fewer people moved out of their homes.

Figure 11: Place of the Robbery Occurred



Source: Field Research 2019

The causation of crime against humans takes place due to multiple reasons. As a social being, an individual who interacts with the other members of the society may experience criminal activities, especially with the people in his/her own community and outside. When people have unfulfilled requirements and economic hardships and fail to satisfy them in socially and culturally accepted ways, some

follow illegal methods to fulfill their needs. Consequently, some criminals use different methods to grab valuables from the individuals who show less resistance and they also make use of the places where they can rob others without much threat. As Figure 11 shows, 17 victims (37%) had been robbed when they were at home. The rest of the incidents (63%) had occurred in outside places such as at solitary places, on shady roads where opportunity permitted the robbers to grab the valuable ornaments and purses from the victims. Only one victim (2.2%) had been robbed while he was in his three-wheeler.

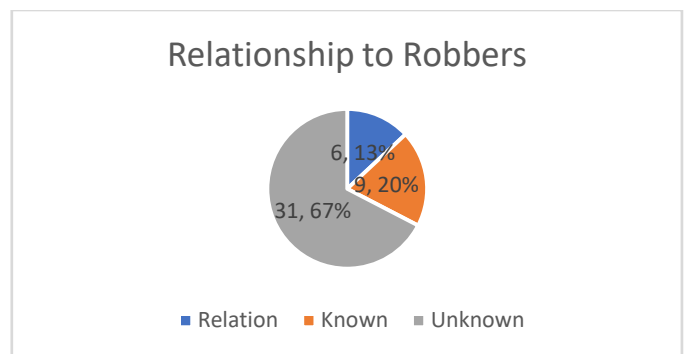
Table 1. Nature of the Robbery

Nature	Frequency	%
Grabbing Golden Chains	31	67.4
Grabbing Golden Ornaments	02	4.3
Assaulting and robbing money	03	6.5
Robbing gems	01	2.2
Robbing a three-wheeler	01	2.2
Grabbing Golden ornaments and money	02	4.3
Robbing mobile phone	03	6.5
Grabbing a chain and money	03	6.5
Total	46	100

Source: Field research 2019

The nature of the robbery was a primary concern in the study. It was revealed that 37 (80.4%) incidents were connected with snatching golden chains and ornaments. In Sri Lankan society, gold is considered an asset of wealth and people wear valuable golden ornaments not only as a passion but also to display their social status. The females often wear golden jewelry to enhance their beauty and also to exhibit their wealth. Therefore, the grabbing of golden chains and ornaments has become the main targets of many robbers and it is met with less resistance of the victims and bystanders. Apart from that, some robbers were keen on grabbing cash and other possessions such as gems, three-wheelers, and mobile phones which could be converted into money quickly and easily.

Figure 12: Victim's Relationship to Robbers



Source: Field Research 2019

As the relationship between offender and victim is concerned the majority of offenders (67%) were not known to the victims and this can be considered as a typical characteristic of robbery. However, the study reveals that about 20% of the offenders had been known to the victims while 13% of the offenders were their relations. This particular relationship should be understood in relation to the social context of the victims and the offenders. As the study reveals, robbery is not a crime confined to unknown and strange offenders. There are also known offenders who have strategically perpetrated robberies against their own communities and families. According to Figure 12, 13% of the offenders are relatives who have robbed their close relatives. This factor appears as a controversial pattern of criminal behaviour. When such cases are studied, these relationships can be understood in detail. For example, in cases where relatives have refused to offer their close relatives financial assistance, in retaliation, they have organized a robbery against the relatives who refused them money in a very tricky and subtle manner.

Table 3: Addictive behavior of the Robbers

Nature of the Addictive behavior	Frequency	%
Alcohol use	04	8.7
Drugs and Alcohol use	07	15.2
Heroin Addicts	13	28.3
Uncertain	22	47.8
Total	46	100

Source: Field Research 2019

The findings of the study reveal that the robbers have frequently taken to alcohol and drugs, and at the time that they committed the robbery, they were under the influence of alcohol and drugs or either of them. In general, the consumption of alcohol and drugs is deemed to stimulate or facilitate the criminal behaviour of the perpetrators and influence them to lower their inhibitions, impair judgments, and increase their recklessness and risk-taking behaviour. Substance abuse and its relationship to crime may vary according to the factors such as the amount and the type of substance consumed, the background and the personality of the user, and the social situation in which the substance is used. Table 3 indicates that 52.2% of the robbers used to take either alcohol or drugs or both, while 47.8% of robbers were uncertain whether they had taken drugs or alcohol at the time of the commission of the robbery. Among the criminals, there were 28.3% of robbers who had taken to heroin. It is noteworthy here that the heroin addicts often used black money illegally to purchase their daily consumption of drugs at street prices. According to the research conducted on alcohol and drug use, they had different effects on different people and even on the same person. It is acknowledged that after taking a small amount of alcohol, most people will experience cheerful feelings while taking moderate or large amounts of alcohol, they tend to develop aggressive and violent behavior patterns as alcohol consumption impairs

judgments, lowers frustration tolerance, and induces disinhibition (Curran and Renzetti, 1994:122). Within this scenario, it can be assumed that some carry out robberies so as to find the money for drugs and alcohol. Especially, heroin addicts need over three thousand rupees for their daily consumption of heroin, and they often earn this amount by robbing others.

Table 4: The impacts of the incidence of robbery on victims

The impacts on victims	Frequency	%
Mental pain	26	56.5
Physical pain	22	47.8
Economic impact	5	10.9
Stopped walking alone on roads in the morning	3	6.5
Gave up wearing golden ornaments	6	13.0
Not keeping much money in possession	4	8.7
Stopped business activities at night	2	4.3

Source: Field Research 2019

The present study was concerned about the impact of the incidence of robbery on the victims. As Table 4 indicates, 22 victims (47.8%) said that they suffered from physical pain because they tried to resist the robbers in grabbing their valuables. In consequence, robbers had used their physical force violently to snatch the jewelry and cash from the victims while knocking them down to the ground or assaulting them severely without considering the status of the victims. As one woman stated, she was pregnant when she became a victim of the robbery. The robber had grabbed her golden chain by falling her to the ground; as a consequence, she had to undergo medical treatment for several days at a hospital for her physical injuries. Out of 22 victims, seven victims declared that they were hospitalized for treatment for their physical injuries after the incidence of the robbery. Twenty-two (47.8%) victims proclaimed that they experienced severe mental pain due to the robbery. Another five victims (10.9%) had lost their property, which had caused severe economic hardships on their livelihood.

Some robbery victims said that they had to give up their habits and routine activities to escape from falling prey to robberies in the future. For example, three victims (6.5%) declared that they had already stopped walking along solitary roads, mainly because of the incidents of robberies. Another six (13.04%) victims stated that they gave up the habit of wearing jewelry when they went out of their houses. Another four (8.7%) have stopped carrying quite a lot of money with them when they go out on the streets and do shopping. Two (4.3%) businessmen who had become the robbery victims declared that they did not keep their business open after 8.00 p.m. as they were robbed at the night. Further, the research findings revealed that many victims of robbery had changed their lifestyles after their gruesome experiences. They have brought about some effective changes in their behavioural patterns so as to prevent their getting revictimized. The following case studies show

some incidents of robberies have occurred. They also bring about the impacts of those unfortunate incidents upon the victims.

Case Study 1

The incident has occurred in Peradeniya, near Kandy city. When a teacher was returning home after school at about 2.30 p.m., a robber had grabbed her golden necklace at a lonely place closer to her residence. The venue is noted for robbery, and 5-6 similar incidents had taken place previously. At that particular robbery, the victim had screamed out for help when her necklace was being grabbed. Consequently, her sister had arrived at the scene and then the robber had started to flee. However, the people in the area had rushed in and they had chased the robber and caught him. They had assaulted the robber, and he had returned the golden necklace. The chain had become broken when it was returned. Upon the call given to the police, and after 30 minutes, they had arrived at the scene and arrested the robber. The police have filed a case against the robber, and it is still being heard at the court.

Case 2.

Cyril is a 65-year-old male who lives in Talawakele, Nuwara-Eliya. On the day of this incident, he was in Talawakele town, and he had been called into a van by a few individuals. Thus, he had got into the van, and those who were in the van had forcefully offered him an alcoholic beverage to drink. Next, he had been taken to an isolated area and assaulted severely. His golden chain and money valued at One hundred fifty thousand rupees had been grabbed by the gang. After a day, he was found dropped at a lonely place in a remote area. After that incident, the victim has not gained his proper consciousness. He still suffers from a serious lack of consciousness. So far, no robbers have been arrested by the police in this regard.

Case 3

Saman is a 52-year-old gem merchant in Eheliyagoda. One day he was at the bus stop to go to a distant place for his business activities. The time was about 3.30 in the morning, and no other person was at the bus stop. Then, a person had come on a motorbike and threatened him to obtain his money. When he refused to obey, the person grabbed his purse by force. In the purse, he had kept gems to the value of 630,000 rupees and Rs. 4000 in cash. After the robber had grabbed the purse and pushed him aside violently, he flew away in his motorbike. Later, the victim had gone to the police station and made a complaint about the robbery. He managed to guess the perpetrator and inform the suspect to the police who were able to arrest the robber without delay and produce him at the court. The case was being heard in court at the time this study was carried out. The victim said that both parties are willing to settle as the perpetrator is ready to make restitution for the losses.

Case 4

This incident has occurred to a 35-year woman living in Dambulla. Her golden necklace valued at 20,000 rupees was robbed by two men riding on a motorbike at the primary school in Dambulla. Those two robbers were clad in jackets and wearing full-face helmets to prevent them from being identified. Upon the complaint made by the victim at the police station, the police had arrested robbers within several days. Consequently, they had informed the victim to come to the police in order to identify the culprits. The robbers had been identified by the victim, and they confessed to the police admitting the incident. But so far the victim has not received either her golden necklace or any compensation for it. The victim believes the police have acted in favour of the robbers.

The above four case studies expose the causes of robbery and the nature of the victims and robbers. Correspondently, all the victims have faced a sudden attack, and they had no opportunities to escape from the robbers. Some incidents of robberies seem to have been premeditated, while some were not. The victims were unable to face the situation because the robbery was carried out by several criminals and besides two victims were women who had to confront the robbers alone. Therefore, victims had become easy prey for the robbers who seemed to have been primarily motivated by their desire to meet their daily financial requirements through robberies.

III. CONCLUSIONS

This study was aimed at researching the “impacts of robberies on victims and their attitudes after victimization”. The nature of the victim of robberies was a concern in the study. Accordingly, data were gathered and analyzed in line with the objectives of the study, and the following conclusions were drawn.

The present study reveals that the highest number of victims (n=12; 26.1%) belongs to the age group of 56-65 years. The second highest group (n=9; 19.6%) represents the age group of 36-45 years. Further, the youngsters belonging to the age group of 18-23 years and elders over 65 years were also victimized by robbers. As older people cannot resist the commission of the robbery, they seem to have fallen easy prey to robbers. The causes for victimization were also considered in the study, and it was revealed that a low standard of education was not an essential contributory factor to becoming a robbery victim. Correspondently, half of the victim population had studied up to Advanced Level or above while the other 50% of the victims had obtained a standard of education between grade 6 and grade 11. From the total 4.3% of the victims had only the pre-school education. The majority of victims (91%) represented the Sinhalese, while the rest (9%) were Tamils. The highest number of the victims (57%) in the sample were married, and 43% were unmarried.

It was a common characteristic that women had become easy prey to robbers as robbers could achieve their target with the least resistance of women. The range of violence used by

criminals to commit robberies had extended from threat to severe assault. The assault had been used by gang robbers to keep male victims under control, whereas women victims had been pushed off or felled so as to seize their purses or golden ornaments quickly. Consequently, seven (15.2%) women victims had been hospitalized with injuries due to their resistance at the time of the commission of the robberies.

As the gender is concerned, robbery is predominantly carried out by males accounting for 100% of the incidence of robberies compared to the other male-dominant grave crimes. Robbery victimization shows that it is a preponderantly female-targeted crime and 54% of robbery victims were females in the study. This figure indicates an important point in target selection for the perpetration of robbery considering the low risk of counter-attack. However, 44% were male victims according to the statistics of the study. The age of the perpetrators of robbery was another main concern of the study, but the exact age limit of the perpetrators could not be established by the victims as they were shocked by the violence unleashed upon them. However, the victims perceived that all the robbers should be within the age range of 20 to 40 years.

The relationship between the victims and the robbers indicates that most of the robbers (67%) were unknown to the victims whereas the rest 33% of the robbers, were known to the victims and of them, 13% (n=6) were relatives of the victims. It was revealed that those known robbers have strategically carried out the robberies against their relatives and the members of their own community.

A particular pattern in selecting their targets for the commission of robbery is quite evident from the employment information of the robbery victims. Accordingly, 54.1% of the victims were self-employed whereas only 8.7% of victims worked in the State sector. These categories of employees had some income while the rest were 37.2% unemployed and depended upon their family members.

As the nature of the robbery was concerned, the study found that 38 incidents (82.6%) involved robbing golden chains and ornaments, and in a few cases, the robbers had targeted valuables as well as cash. The rest (17.4%) of the robbers had been carried out mainly for grabbing money, jewelry, three-wheelers, and mobile phones.

Even though crime causation remains a complex phenomenon, the study inquired into the general perception of the victims about the causes that led offenders to commit robberies. Accordingly, 24 offenders (52.2%) had committed robberies to finance their habit of taking alcohol and drugs when other avenues for finding money appeared very remote.

The rest of the incidence of robberies were believed to have been committed due to their poverty and as an easy way of earning money.

The impact of the incidence of robbery on victims was also a primary concern in the study. It was revealed that 56.5% of the victims suffered from mental pain and 47.8% declared that they had physical pain caused by the robbery as they fought for their valuables. Some victims (10.9%) expressed that they had to undergo severe economic hardships as criminals robbed their valuables. The rest of the victims (19.6%) stated that they had to change their normal behavior patterns in their lives. Accordingly, three (6.5%) victims had stopped walking along on secluded roads, for fear of being victimized by robbers. Another six victims stated that they had given up the habit of wearing golden ornaments to escape from further robberies. Still, the other two victims involved in the business activities said they closed their shops early at night and did not keep their shops open for long.

The study proposes that the robbery rate can be reduced in Sri Lanka by persuading people to protect themselves and offering robbers non-forceful resistance for the commission of robberies. From the perspective of law enforcement, the police can help the people by providing more security to them, especially at the places where crimes have frequently occurred. Further, women should be precluded from making solitary walks on the secluded roads when they carry cash and other valuables. Further, they must be enlightened on the serious repercussions of carrying valuables with them when they travel along deserted roads.

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