

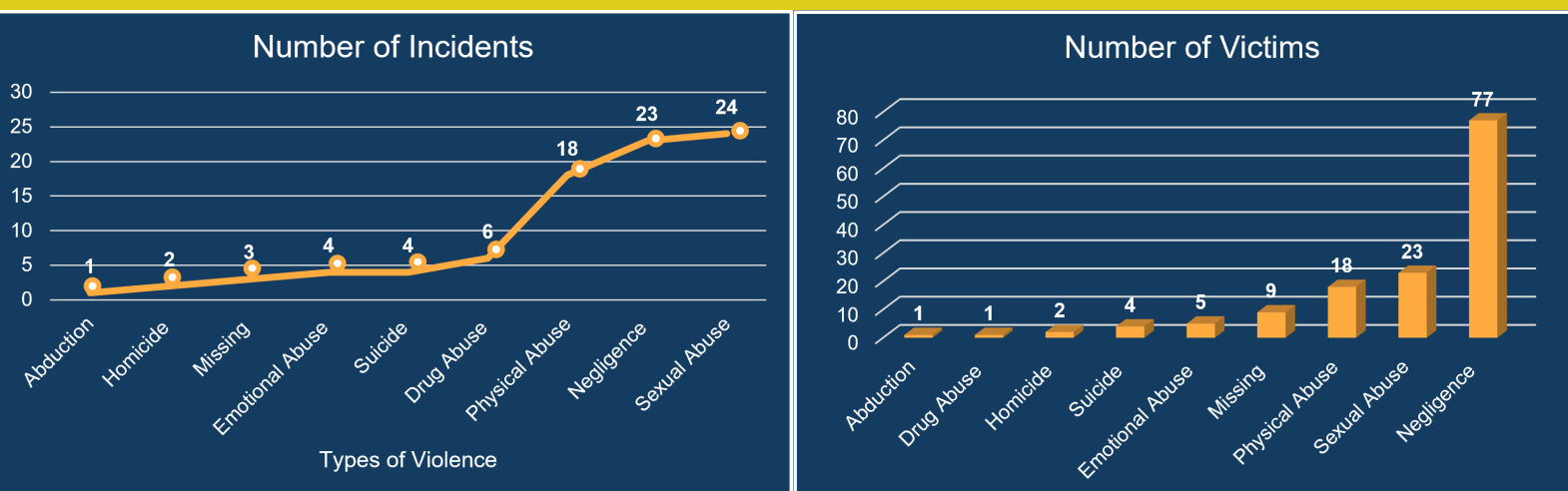
Violence Against Children

Reported in the Media for July 2024

As we move through yet another month, we're here to keep you updated on our ongoing efforts. PEACE/ECPAT Sri Lanka remains committed to raising awareness about child abuse and neglect, and our monthly newsletters are a key part of that mission. Our Media Monitoring team has thoroughly documented incidents reported across various media platforms for July 2024. This report reflects our continued dedication to aligning with UNICEF's International Classification of Violence against Children (ICVAC) standards, offering a comprehensive analysis of the troubling trends observed throughout the month.

Types of Child Abuse Incidents

In July 2024, a total of 85 incidents of child abuse were reported by mainstream media, affecting 140 victims across the country. The data for this month reveals that sexual abuse was one of the most prevalent forms, with 24 incidents involving 23 victims. However, the highest number of victimised children resulted from negligence-related cases, where 23 incidents led to a staggering 77 victims out of the total 140. Other serious cases included physical abuse, drug abuse, and emotional abuse, with 18, 6, and 4 incidents reported, respectively. Additionally, the media covered other forms of abuse such as abductions, suicides, homicides, trafficking, and missing children's cases, showcasing the wide array of threats that children continue to face in Sri Lanka.



Gender Distribution of the Victims

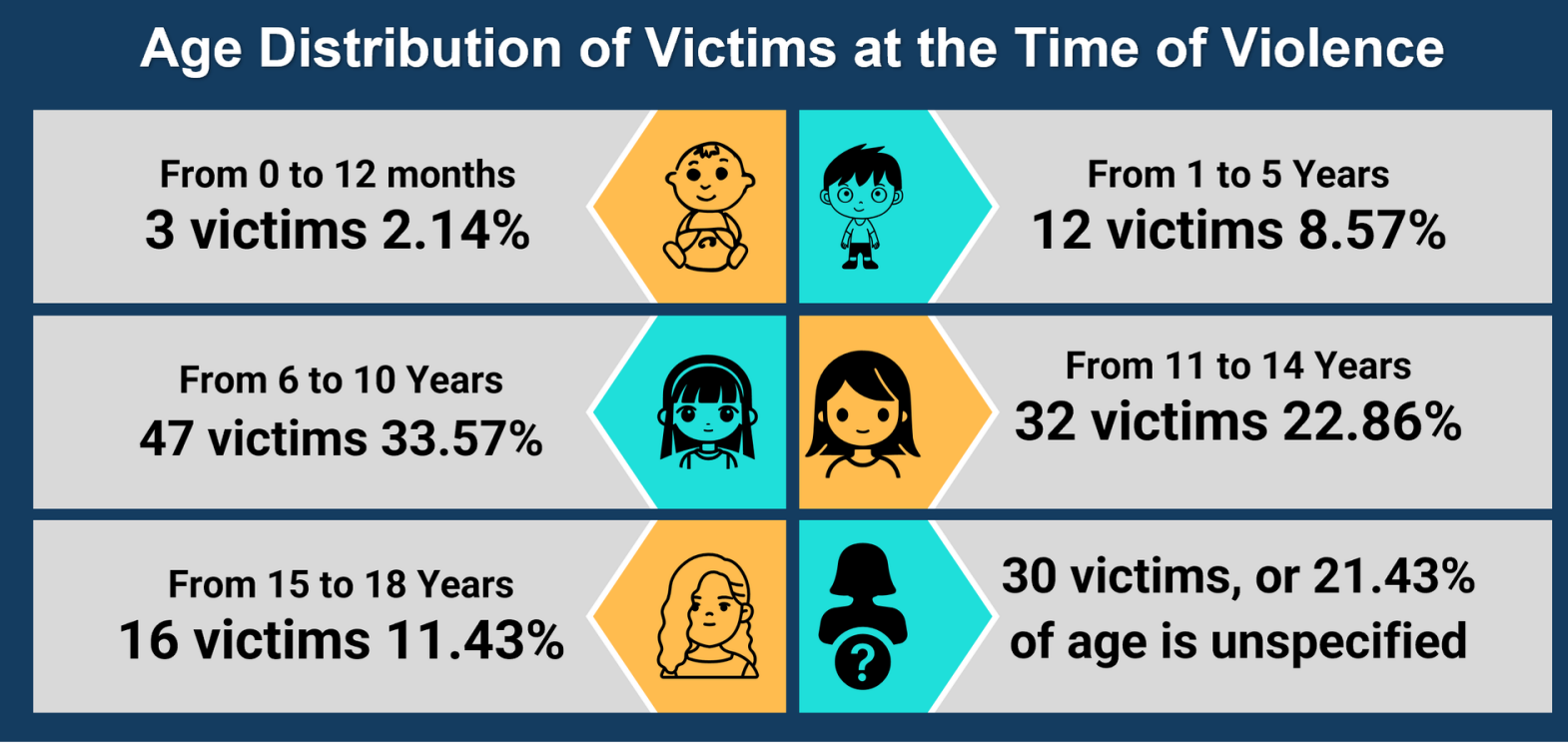
Gender of the Victims

- 30% of victims are female, totalling 42 individuals.
- 22% of victims are male, totalling 31 individuals.
- 48% (67) of victims have unspecified gender.

The gender distribution of the victims reported in July 2024 paints a concerning picture. Female victims accounted for 42 cases, representing 30% of the total, highlighting the continued vulnerability of girls to abuse and exploitation. Male victims made up 31 cases, equalling 22% of the total, demonstrating that boys, too, remain at risk. However, an alarming 67 victims, or 48%, were categorised as having an 'unspecified' gender, significantly impeding a clearer understanding of the gender dynamics involved. The large proportion of unspecified genders suggests gaps in the reporting process, which hinders efforts to address the full scope of abuse and provide gender-sensitive interventions.

Age Distribution of Victims

The age distribution of victims reported in July 2024 reveals the widespread vulnerability of children across various age groups. Alarmingly, the highest proportion of victims, 47 children or 33.57%, fell within the 6-10 age range, highlighting the susceptibility of young children to abuse during their formative years. This was followed by 32 victims (22.86%) aged 11-14, and 16 victims (11.43%) aged 15-18, indicating that pre-teens and teenagers are also frequently targeted. In the younger age brackets, 12 victims (8.57%) were identified as being between 1-5 years old, and sadly, 3 victims (2.14%) were infants aged 0-12 months, underscoring that even the youngest children are not spared. Notably, 30 victims (21.43%) had their ages listed as 'unspecified,' which once again points to critical gaps in reporting accuracy, hampering a full understanding of the age-specific risks that children face.



Perpetrator's Trends

The perpetrator trends in the reported incidents for July 2024 provide insight into the patterns of abuse and the types of offenders involved. A significant number of cases were linked to groups, with 32 incidents (37.65%) accounting for 75 victims, representing 53.57% of the total. This suggests that group-perpetrated abuse often results in multiple victims, intensifying the impact on children. Individual perpetrators were responsible for 46 incidents (54.12%), involving 52 victims (37.14%), indicating that while individual abuse incidents are more frequent, they tend to affect fewer victims per case compared to group-related offenses. Additionally, 4 cases (4.71%) were classified as self-inflicted incidents involving 4 victims (2.86%), which may point to troubling cases such as self-harm or suicide linked to abuse and trauma. Lastly, 3 incidents involved unknown perpetrators, affecting 9 victims (6.43%), highlighting another gap in the data where the identity of the abuser was not recorded.

Perpetrators Trends

Group	Individual	Self	Unknown
32 Incident	46 Incident	04 Incident	03 Incident
75 Victims	52 Victims	04 Victims	09 Victims
Family members, peers, schoolmates, strangers, vendors selling cigarettes or drugs to school children, group of seniors assaulting new students, and other unfamiliar individuals.	Family Member, Non-family Household Member, Peer or Schoolmate, Person with Formal Authority e.g. teacher, Intimate Partner, Stranger and other	Children missing from residential care and committing suicide. Children being admitted to the hospital due to fights between them.	Perpetrators are not known to the victims, such as soldiers, drug dealers targeting school children, abducting children and missing children.

Perpetrator's Specific Classifications

The breakdown of perpetrators involved in reported child abuse incidents showed that the "Persons with Formal Authority" category accounted for 59 victims, representing 42.14% of the total. This points to a disturbing trend of abuse by individuals in positions of power, such as teachers, and law enforcement. Family members were also responsible for a significant portion of the abuse, with 40 victims (28.57%) affected by individuals within their homes. Intimate partners and peers or schoolmates were responsible for fewer cases, affecting 4 victims (2.86%) and 2 victims (1.43%), respectively. There were also 3 victims (2.14%) who suffered abuse at the hands of clergy, and another 3 victims harmed by strangers. A notable 14 victims (10%) were affected by unknown perpetrators, and 10 victims (7.14%) fell under the "Other" category, indicating further complexities in the nature of the relationships between victims and abusers.

Perpetrator specific

Clergy No of Incident: 02 No of victims: 03	Family Member No of Incident: 35 No of victims: 40	Non-family members No of Incident: 01 No of victims: 01	Intimate Partner No of Incident: 04 No of victims: 04	Peer or Schoolmate No of Incident: 02 No of victims: 02
Person with Authority No of Incident: 17 No of victims: 59	Self No of Incident: 04 No of victims: 04	Stranger No of Incident: 07 No of victims: 03	Other No of Incident: 04 No of victims: 10	Unknown No of Incident: 09 No of victims: 14

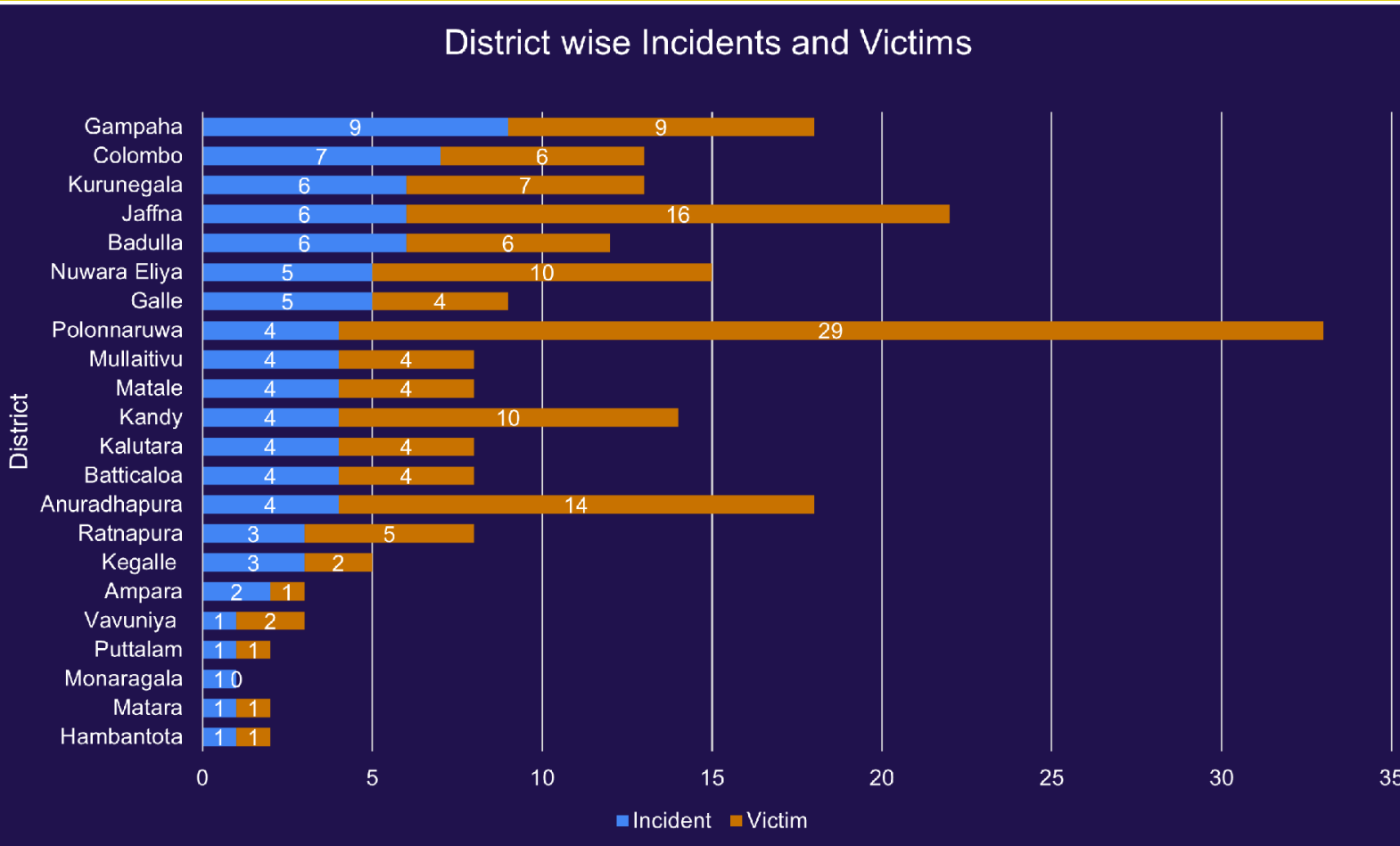
Settings Where the Violence Occurred

The settings in which child abuse incidents occurred reflect the varied environments where children are most at risk. The largest proportion of incidents, 26 (30.59%), took place in the victim's own home, involving 34 victims (24.29%). Similarly, incidents in the community accounted for 21 cases (24.71%), affecting 27 victims (19.29%). Educational and vocational training facilities were the setting for 8 incidents (9.41%), but these involved a disproportionately high number of victims—32 in total (22.86%)—demonstrating the broad impact abuse can have in institutions meant to nurture children's growth. Medical, rehabilitation, and care facilities were also notable, with 6 incidents (7.06%) resulting in 24 victims (17.14%). In other home settings, 5 incidents affected 5 victims, while incidents in the perpetrator's home and digital platforms were rarer, with only 2 cases each and 1 victim associated with digital abuse.

Settings	Incident	Percentage	Victims	Percentage
Community	21	24.71%	27	19.29%
Education or Vocational Training Facility	8	9.41%	32	22.86%
Home of Perpetrator	2	2.35%	2	1.43%
Home of Victim	26	30.59%	34	24.29%
Other home settings	5	5.88%	5	3.57%
Medical, Rehabilitation and Care Facility	6	7.06%	24	17.14%
Digital space and platforms	2	2.35%	1	0.71%
Other	2	2.35%	2	1.43%
Unknown	13	15.29%	13	9.29%
Total	85	100.00%	140	100.00%

District-wise Incidents and Victims

In July 2024, several districts stood out due to the high number of child abuse incidents and victims. Polonnaruwa disclosed the highest number of victims, with 4 incidents affecting 29 children, representing 20.71% of the total victims for the month. Gampaha followed with 9 reported incidents, each affecting one victim. Anuradhapura, though reporting only 4 incidents, saw a disproportionate impact with 14 victims, indicating severe cases or multiple children involved in individual incidents. Jaffna recorded 6 incidents affecting 16 victims, while Kandy reported 4 incidents involving 10 victims. In Colombo, 7 incidents were reported, affecting 6 victims, underscoring the ongoing risks even in the nation's capital.



Overview of Accident-Related Figures Children Have Faced

The month of July saw a troubling total of 23 accidents, which resulted in 81 victims. Out of these incidents, 11 were categorised as injuries, affecting 67 victims, while 12 incidents resulted in fatalities, claiming 14 lives. Among the 81 victims of the accidents, female victims accounted for 15 cases, while male victims numbered 21. Notably, a significant portion of the victims—45 individuals—were categorised as having an unspecified gender. Some of the types of accidents that have affected these victims involved wasp attacks, which reported the highest number of victims, which was 52. This was followed by road accidents which spanned 9 victims. Other types of accidents included drowning, self-inflicted situations, train accidents, and food poisoning.