



**Violence  
Against Children  
in the  
Republic of Armenia**



unicef 



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## **Executive Summary**

The objective of the survey is to study violence against children and prepare concrete suggestion package the appliance of which may contribute to their prevention and extenuation.

On the whole the number of people interviewed is 2147. As survey objects two types of families and institutions were included:

- First – vulnerable families of unilateral and bilateral orphans;
- Second – two/three – generation families consisting of a husband, a wife, children, husband's (wife's) parents and other relatives;
- Boarding and Secondary Schools.

Taking into consideration the fact that the problem of violence against children concerns the family closed system, and it is more than difficult to obtain precise information from local people, during the survey several methods were applied thus giving an opportunity to synthesize the information obtained.

Microsoft Access was used to create and develop database for the survey. Data in questionnaires were checked and logged in; correction of possible errors was carried out not excelling sociological boundaries. Data were developed on the basis of survey respondents' sex, age, education, family structure, place of living and marzes.

The sociologist Mihran Galstyan /Candidate of Historical Sciences/, lawyer Irina Urumova and psychologist Anahit Tevosyan participated in the problem discussions, development of sociological questionnaires and provision of analytical materials, while Lilit Hovhannisian carried out computer operations. 23 volunteer women from ARS were selected to conduct interviews. The interviewers were mainly highly educated, married and had their own children. Trainings were conducted to the interviewers for three times, where the sociologist, psychologist and lawyer made clear the objectives and problems of the program, international and local criteria of children's rights and peculiarities of the skills required, when interacting with children all this being necessary to provide proper techniques for the interviews.

“Armenian Relief Society” non-governmental organization realized the program (sociological interviews and analytical works) from June/2002 till March/2003.

Family is considered to be the important environment, which integrates the main processes of child socialization. That is why family atmosphere and parental relationships are more than important for children's further upbringing. A child even at an early age should feel the existence of stable family relations. The lack of such relations may cause children extreme emotional strain, feeling of fear and fault of family conflicts. Moreover, they acquire norms of conduct and manners, which are mainly conditioned by the contact with parents.

The sociological survey made it possible to figure out the main reasons of committing violence against children. These reasons first of all are closely connected with a member of factors. To group the reasons committing violence against children in unilateral/bilateral and two/three-generation families, we are firstly to single out the economic factor, standards of living and unemployment, which form a higher percent in the above mentioned families. These factors have a direct effect on the interfamilial relations promoting tension, and children are the first to be the “scapegoat”.

Clash of interests is considered to be an important factor promoting conflicts in family, and because of this children often become a target of psychological abuse. According to the survey results affection especially to alcohol by parents, as well as affection to drugs, play a decisive role. The survey shows that physical abuse of children is especially connected with the factors mentioned. Generally physical and psychological violence against children committed by their parents is accounted for by the fact that they themselves have been punished (abused) in the early years with the same punitive measures, and that's why they find it quite natural to take the same measures against their own children.

As an important family value, the child in Armenian reality is believed to be the “cornerstone” of kindred and



is constantly paid a special attention to. In Armenian families, taking into consideration sexual peculiarities, as “upbringing methods” various punitive measures are applied to children, something that has become evident after the sociological survey. Here we must concentrate on the following questions: where do children feel more secure... in family or out of it?, what forms of violence are mostly applied to?, how frequently are they applied?. To gain a real -life knowledge and materials for confrontation, in the course of the sociological survey opinions of parents, children, their neighbors, teachers and experts have been taken into consideration as well. It should be noted that there is no common methodology of registering data about child violence in Armenia: so that is why there are not concrete statistical data about the matter. The imperfection of the adequate legislative environment, the existing obscure policy and the absence of statistical data have negative effect on child protection in Armenia.

Sociological survey results give an opportunity to state that there are different forms of violence basically applied to children. Here we distinguish between:

1. Neglect
2. Psychological violence
3. Physical violence
4. Sexual violence

**Neglect** exposes itself when a child is abandoned and neglected by adults the latter being especially dangerous for him/her. We can state that at present neglect as psychological abuse is used against children and on the whole is conditioned by poor standards of living, which, according to the survey results, retains a comparatively higher rate in vulnerable families.

**Psychological abuse** constantly has a negative impact on a child’s mental and physical development. Psychological abuses expose themselves in insults, criticism, rebukes, refusals, constant charges, restrictions, isolation and other ways. According to the survey results, in Armenian families the most frequent form of violence committed upon children is the psychological one, the several forms of which retain a comparatively higher rate in vulnerable families.

**Physical abuse** is the real or possible injury of children or teenagers, this exposing itself mainly in slapping, beating, traumas of different degrees, scratches, oedemas, burns, wounds and fractures. The experts and teachers taking part in the interviews affirm the existence of slapping and beating in Armenian families.

**Sexual abuse** is characterized by a child’s or teenager’s real or possible abuse and sexual self-display, by sexual caress, oral and anal sexual actions, incest, rape and sexual abuse. Two types of sexual abuse are distinguished-external and internal. There are no statistical data about sexual abuse of children because they are the subject matter of the “closed system” of family relations. But the survey shows that this form of abuse carries somewhat an occasional character, i.e. it is not a life-style of Armenian families, just vice versa, and it is criticized and rejected by people.

Besides family, contacts with children of the same age institutions children and teenagers are mainly dealing with also play an important part in children’s socialization. Here kinder-gardens and schools are especially due of mention these being important institution which retain control over norms of upbringing or teaching a child manners of behavior. In children’s opinion, physical abuse retains especially a higher rate at schools. Different forms of abuse and violence are committed against children outside families, at secondary schools and especially at boarding and special schools, and among these forms psychological and physical abuse are predominating. Because of lack of official statistical data it is difficult to have a clear idea about measures of sexual violence against children.

Thus abuse, both in families and outside of it, cause serious psychological and social consequences. The international norms recognize violence against children as a violation of fundamental human rights of the child. Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) guarantees protection from violence and exploitation. It is therefore the government’s responsibility to extend all possible protection to children in the nation and to ensure that they enjoy their basic human rights such as the rights to personal security and bodily integrity.

# 1. Methodology

## 1.1 Survey objectives and problems

The objective of the survey is to study violence against children and prepare concrete suggestion package the appliance of which may contribute to their prevention and extenuation.

The aim of the survey is to focus on the following problems:

1. What are the reasons of violence against children?
2. What forms of violence against children are mostly widespread?
3. Which environment is considered to be the most insecure for children?
4. Who mainly commits violence against children?
5. What consequences do these abuses have for children?
6. How do children usually react to violence?
7. What social perceptions, approaches and opinions about violence against children exist among the population?
8. What knowledge do the survey-respondents have about family and child rights, and what are the sources of this knowledge?
9. What legislative environment is there in Armenia today is it supposed to be sufficient?
10. What ways preventing violence do the survey-respondents suggest?

## 1.2 Survey object

As survey objects two types of families were included:

**First** – vulnerable families of unilateral and bilateral orphans;

**Second** – two/three – generation families consisting of a husband, a wife, children, husband's (wife's) parents and other relatives.

In the first case a child apart from his/her family, of he/she doesn't have one of his/her parents, such families can be described as risk groups with their presupposed consequences for children. In the second case there are parents, and a normal family atmosphere is guaranteed for children. The study of violence and abuses of children from the above mentioned families would surely give an opportunity to single out certain generalities and peculiarities on the matter.

## 1.3 Survey hypothesis

The following points influencing the survey results were accepted as survey hypothesis:

1. financial conditions that may influence interfamilial relations and raise the rate of conflicts in families, thus creating real opportunities for violence against children;
2. family structure may have an influence on the violence against children in families;
3. violence against children, as an integral part of family closed system, conditions the information provided by the survey-respondents;
4. national and cultural peculiarities, the child being the most important value of a family, and the punitive measures, being a traditional way of bringing up children;
5. the imperfection of the present legislative environment;
6. the absence of a precise methodology of registering child abuse cases, and, as a consequence, the absence of precise statistical data.

## 1.4 Survey methods

To solve the problems mentioned above, concrete sociological surveys were conducted among the population with the method of questionnaires. Taking into consideration the fact that the problem of violence against children concerns the family closed system, and it is more than difficult to obtain precise information from

local people, during the survey several methods were applied thus giving an opportunity to synthesize the information obtained and provide a higher rate of authenticity of survey results. The sociological survey included two stages. On the first stage, the survey was held with unilateral and bilateral orphans' families and with the children themselves. To acquire a real-life material about them, a sufficient number of families representing the whole area of the Republic were selected to be interviewed. The geographical distribution of the survey area was carried out within acceptable sociological boundaries in order to reduce expenses and retain control over the interview quality. Here was used the method of two-stage accidental selection (territorial type). On the first stage the selection of unilateral and bilateral orphans' families and children was based on the data provided by the RA National Statistical Service (2002) and Armenian Relief Society (ARS). According to ARS data, it includes 4577 families. According to the regional data in chance principle, 550 parents and 550 children were proportionally selected and interviewed. The latter is only the 12% of the families mentioned above.

On the second stage two/three – generation families were selected in the above-mentioned principle, but only in bigger towns of the Republic, condominium associations, district committees were viewed as territorial units. Then, as it has been planned beforehand, 308 parents and 425 children (corresponding to the number of households) were selected to be interviewed.

On the whole 28 urban and 83 rural habitats were selected for the interviews. About 100 neighbors of unilateral and bilateral orphans' families, selected again in accidental principle, took part in the interviews, too. In the course of the survey key-informants were selected from the abused children, as well as cases were registered and analyzed.

The main factors, influencing the selection process, were:

1. populated area type (city/town, village);
2. extremely poor conditions of life (earthquake zone, frontier villages);
3. problems connected with information availability (center, suburb);
4. children's family structure;
5. children's place of living (family, boarding school, special school, guardian's family, etc.);
6. demographic and ethnographic factors.

53 experts took part in the interviews whose knowledge and skills gained by direct interaction with children, were more than necessary for the survey. They were representatives from educational, social, health and judicial spheres, as well as from NGOs dealing with problems mentioned above. 161 teachers from general, boarding and special schools participated in the interviews too.

RA Statistical data about violence against children, various publications were subjected to content analysis as well. On the whole the number of people interviewed is 2147.

## **1.5 Questionnaire description**

To conduct sociological interviews special questionnaires for parents, children, neighbors, teachers and experts were developed including the following key-questions:

1. Family description (family composition and structure, number of children, relationships).
2. Assessment of family financial conditions, interfamilial relationships.
3. Description of the forms of violence mainly committed against children.
4. Main subjects committing violence against children.
5. Measures and frequency of committing violence upon children at home, in colleges and special schools.
6. Reasons and consequences of violence.
7. Children's usual reaction to violence.



8. Figuring out the level of knowledge about family and child rights.
9. Positions, approaches and opinions about violence committed by local people
10. Children's opinion about violence.
11. Suggestions preventing children from violence and abuse.

## 1.6 Social – demographic composition of survey – respondents

On the whole the number of people participating in the interviews is 2147. First a general description of unilateral and bilateral orphans' families should be given /550 parents or guardians and 550 children participated in the interviews/.

According to the Republic marzes, this has the following picture: Aragatsotn (3.6%), Ararat (8.7%), Armavir (6.2%), Gegharkunik (4.5%), Lori (6.9%), Kotayk (9.3%), Shirak (13.6%), Syunik (9.8%), Vayots Dzor (1.1%), Tavoush (5.5%), Yerevan (30.8%).

### Diagram 1.6.1

Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families involved in the interviews according to RA marzes

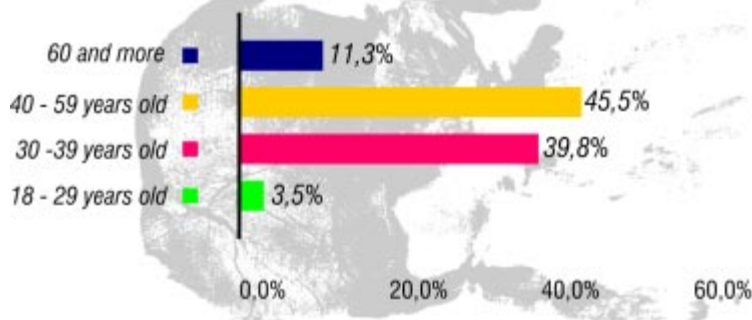


The 93.3% of the survey-respondents are women, and the 6.3% are men. The 1.8% of them have elementary, the 5.5% - incomplete secondary and the 43.5% - secondary education. The 4.5% has incomplete higher and the 13.1% - higher education.

It should be mentioned that the educational level of parents or guardians usually has a significant impact on children's upbringing and on manners they are usually treated with. The 3.5% of the survey-respondents are 18-29 years old, the 39.8% - 30-39 years old, the 45.5% - 40-49 years old, and the 11.3% - 60 years old and even older. (See Diagram 1.6.2)

### Diagram 1.6.2

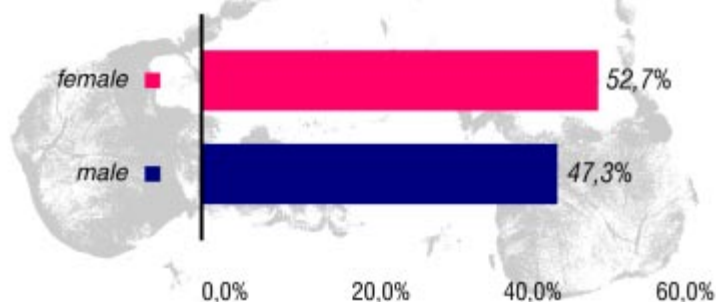
#### Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families according to age



According to age, as it can be seen, they mainly represent middle and elder generation. This is very important to develop certain systems of values, as well as norms of behaviour towards children. Here are the sexual, age and educational references of 550 children participating in the interviews. The 52.7% of children participating in the interviews are female, and the 47.3% are male. (See Diagram 1.6.3).

### Diagram 1.6.3

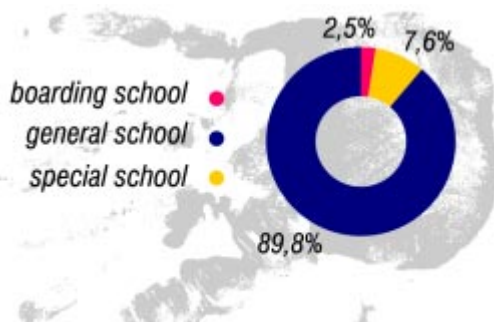
#### Sexual reference of orphans



Most of them study at secondary schools, the rest – at boarding schools and at schools with special status.

### Diagram 1.6.4

#### Types of schools where orphans study



Interview results of 308 two/three generation families and 425 children and their social-demographic reference should be analyzed as well for the sake of comparison. In these families the conditions providing normal physical and mental development are not usually endangered.

Unlike the areas mentioned above, here were included 6 marzes: Yerevan (26.6%), Shirak (20.5%), Syunik (14.6%), Kotayk (14.6%), Gegharkunik (13.6%), Tavoush (10.1%).

**Diagram 1.6.5**

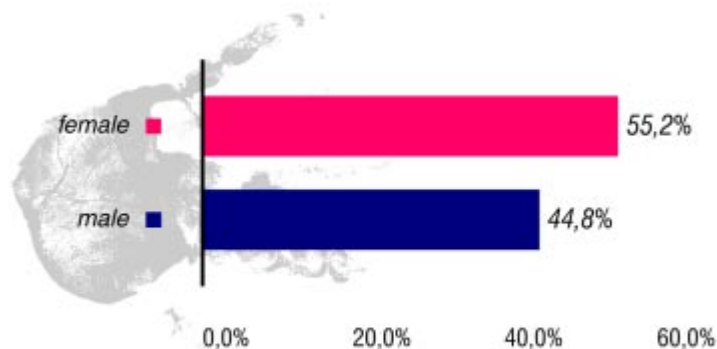
**Two/three generation families involved in the interviews /according to the marzes/**



Number correspondence of men and women generally coincides with the official statistical data of RA in the sense that among the population in Armenia women make up a higher rate than men. The 55.2% of the survey-respondents are women, and the 44.8% - men. (See Diagram 1.6.6)

**Diagram 1.6.6**

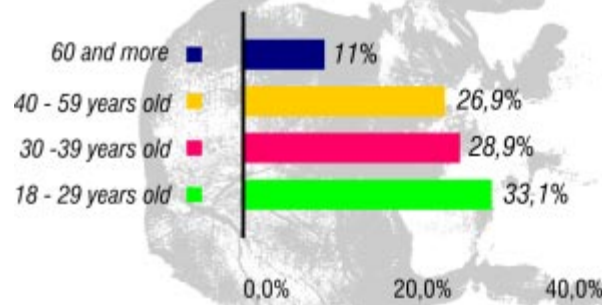
**Two/three generation families according to sexual reference.**



Certain peculiarities were observed in the survey-respondents, educational and age references as well. For instance, as compared with unilateral and bilateral orphans' families, here families of younger generation make up a higher rate, and representatives of middle and elder generation - a lower rate (See Diagram 1.6.7).

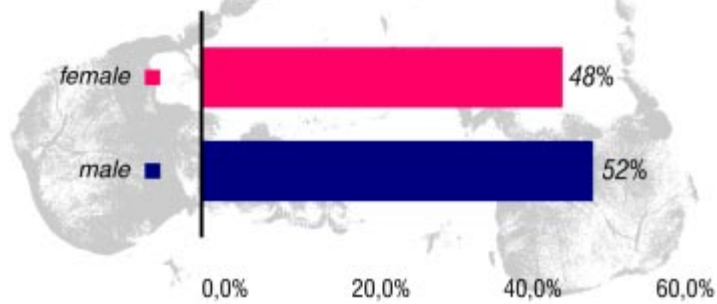
**Diagram 1.6.7**

**Two/three generation families according to age**



Besides, in the above mentioned families a comparatively higher education level is observed. As to the sexual and age reference of 425 children participating in the interviews, the 52% of them are male and the 48% are female.

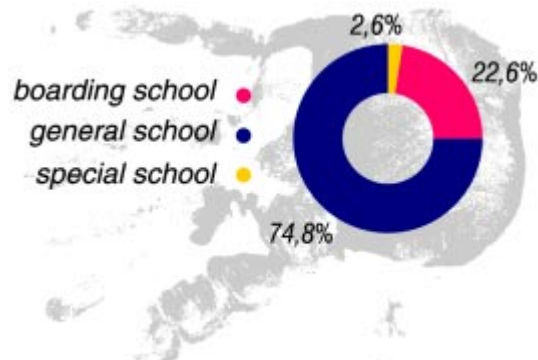
**Diagram 1.6.8**



Most of them study at secondary schools, a quarter - at boarding schools and at special schools.

**Diagram 1.6.9**

**The types of schools where children from two/three generation families study**



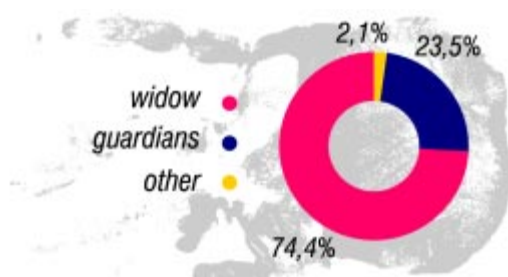
## 2. Family and intra familial relations

Family is considered to be the important environment, which integrates the main processes of child socialization. That is why family atmosphere and parental relationships are more than important for children's further upbringing. A child even at an early age should feel the existence of stable family relations. The lack of such relations may cause children extreme emotional strain, feeling of fear and fault of family conflicts. Moreover, they acquire norms of conduct and manners, which are mainly conditioned by the contact with parents. It is obvious that family atmosphere and especially family status and structure are very important for children's normal upbringing.

According to family status, 74.4% of survey-respondents from unilateral and bilateral orphans' families are widows who have become so mainly because of Nagorno Karabakh war and earthquake. This means that the young have only one parent: the 23.5% are guardians (i.e. children are bilateral orphans) and the 2.1% have other status.

**Diagram 2.1**

### **Family status**



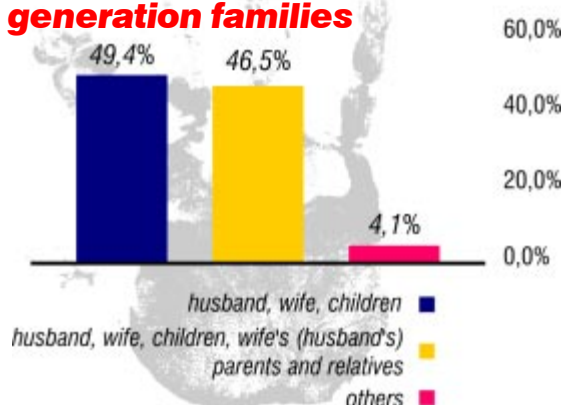
The absence of one of the parents or living without family surely influences on a child's mental state and character causing serious mental and conduct disorders. As to the family structure the 56.7% of family members are mothers and children, the 18.4% - mothers, their or their husband's parents and children, the 9.6% - grandfathers (grandmothers) and grandsons, the 11.1% - bilateral orphans who live with their relatives (mainly uncles, aunts), 2.2% - other. Most of survey-respondents' families consist of 1-3, the rest four and more members. These families are mainly characterized as vulnerable, and exist some serious social problems as well. Children's contact with each other (of the same age) also plays an important role in children's socialization.

From the answers to the question "How many teenagers are there in the family (from 0- to18)", it can be concluded, that these families mainly consist of 1-3 children.

Children's problems are quite different in two/three generation families. As to family status, the 97.4% of them are married. The 49.4% of their families consist of a husband, a wife and children, the 46.5% - of a husband, a wife, children, husband's (wife's) parents and other relatives, the 4.1% have other family structures. (See Diagram 2.2)

**Diagram 2.2**

### **Structure of two/three generation families**

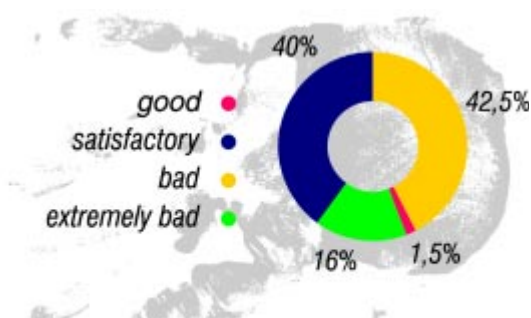




However children's natural family atmosphere does not change. Although in the questionnaires the financial condition of families is revealed by the method of self-appraisal, which surely gives subjective opinions and is deprived of any criteria, it gives somewhat a realistic picture of the standards of life of the whole population in the Republic. Thus, for instance, only the 1.5% of unilateral and bilateral orphans' families finds their financial conditions to be good, the 40% - satisfactory, the 42.5% - bad and the 16% - extremely bad. (See Diagram 2.3)

### Diagram 2.3

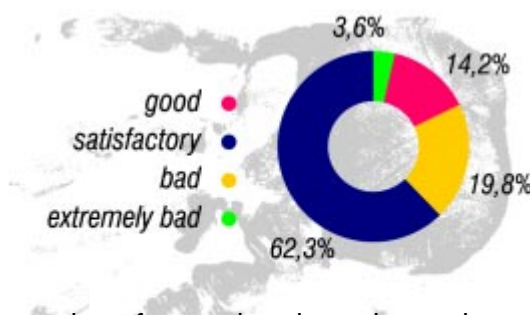
#### **Financial conditions in unilateral and bilateral orphans' families**



It can be concluded from the survey results that the 59.2% of those families live in poverty, and these data do not considerably differ from the official one provided by the RA National Statistical Service. While the things are quite different in two/three generation families. The 14.2% of the survey-respondents find their financial conditions to be good, the 62.3% - satisfactory, the 19.8% - bad, and the 3.6% - extremely bad. (See Diagram 2.4)

### Diagram 2.4

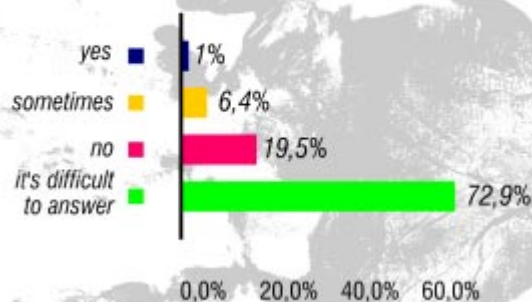
#### **Financial conditions in two/three generation families**



In the first type of families the number of unemployed people pensioners and housewives retain a higher rate than in the second type. Poverty and low standards of living are certain to cause conflicts in family; children may become the "scapegoat" because of that. Thus various punitive measures may be taken against them, and children may experience such a mental depression as ignorance is. Social vulnerability of a family has a direct impact on primary factors meeting needs of children. The survey-respondents' answers to the question "Do you have any problems in taking care for children?" have been distributed in the following way.

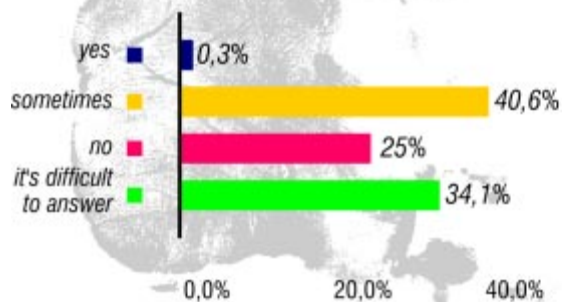
**Diagram 2.5**

**Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families**



**Diagram 2.6**

**Two/three generation families**



According to the survey results, almost the 92.4% of vulnerable families have got considerable problems concerning child-care, while in the other type of families it has a lower rate – 59.1%. Meeting needs of children is especially endangered in vulnerable families. Particularly, the first “cluster” of problems in percentage is said to be connected with children’s food and clothes, the second – with school expenses including payment for extra classes, writing materials acquisition of text books, and the third – is connected with upbringing, educational progress and contact with people (See Table 2.7, page 46).

As concluded from the tables given above, in socially vulnerable families the problem of meeting needs of children has been paid twice more attention to than in other types of families.

Thus the answers given by children from vulnerable families are of much importance, and, on the whole do not differ considerably from the ones given by parents. Thus, for instance, to the question “ Do you have the following problems in your everyday life?” the 64.9% of children mentioned the problem of clothes, the 46.9% - the problem of food, the 53.1% - the payment for extra classes, the 40.9% - the problem concerning expenses of school parties and others. (See Table 2.8)

**Table 2.8**

**Children’s appraisal of everyday difficulties**

	Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families		Two/three - generation families	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
1. food	258	46,9 %	113	26,6 %
2. clothes	357	64,9%	200	47,1 %
3. acquisition of text-books	126	22,9%	120	28,2 %
4. acquisition of writing materials	171	31,1%	103	24,2 %
5. expenses for school parties	225	40,9 %	150	35,3 %
6. payment for extra classes	292	53,1	189	44,5 %

It can be concluded from these data that children from these families live in unfavorable conditions. Such situation may cause children incomplete nutrition and under-development as well as some psychological conflicts. More than that, such situations cause depression and irritation among family members as in their turn promoting family conflicts.

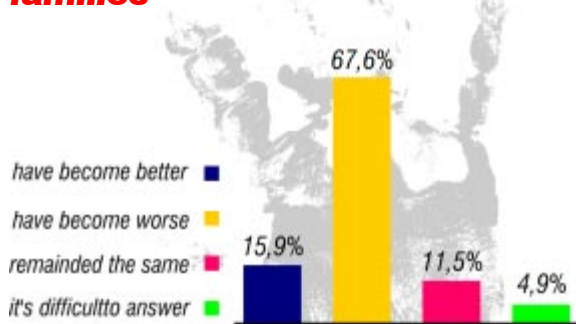
*The mother is not able to provide her children with food and clothes, and that's why she wants to remove them from school against their will*

*(Shirak marz, Giumry)*

Teachers' and experts' opinion about the problem of dissatisfaction of children's primary needs are almost the same. As to family relations, although in the opinion of the majority of survey-respondents from both unilateral and bilateral orphan's families and two/three generation families (accordingly 67.6% and 57.5%) stable family relations have been kept lately, nevertheless, according to some of the survey-respondents these relations have become worse (accordingly 11.5% and 12.3%).

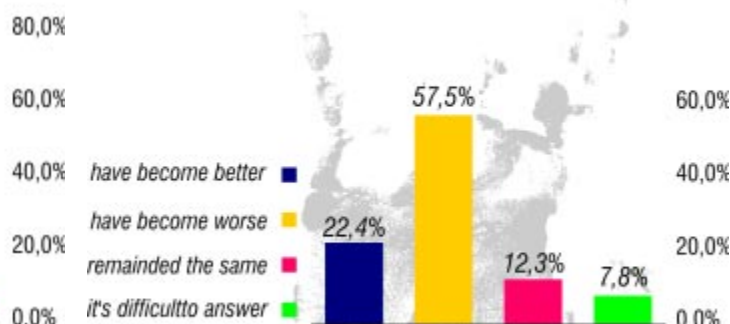
**Diagram 2.9**

**Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families**



**Diagram 2.10**

**Two/three generation families**



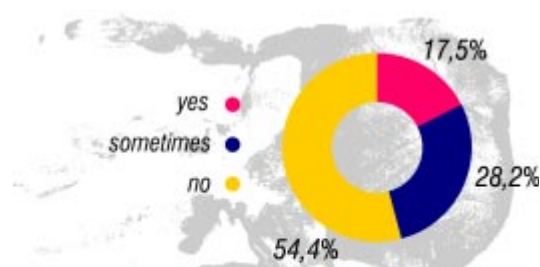
The experts have a special approach to interfamilial relations. Thus they do not agree on the matter, and according to them family relations have recently become worse in of the families. This is an “outside” opinion which may differ from the “inside” one.

One of the important problems of the survey was also to find out in what types of families basically mentioned family conflicts were more common. Thus to the question “Have you had any conflicts in the family?” nearly the 45.7% of survey-respondents have answered “Yes” and the 54.4% - “No”. (See Diagram 2.11)

**Diagram 2.11**

**Conflicts in unilateral and bilateral orphans' families**

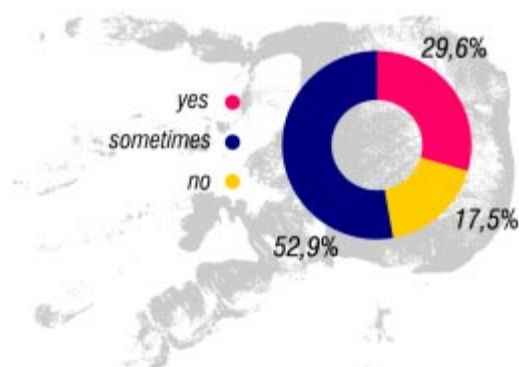
Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families



It should be mentioned that in two/three generation families the survey-respondents' conflicts retain a higher rate, and only the quarter answered negatively.

## Diagram 2.12

Two/three generation families



It goes without saying that the delicacy of the problem, carefulness for answers, as well as the psychological stereotype of “not washing dirty linen in public” have a direct effect on the answers given by unilateral and bilateral orphans’ families.

It should be noted, however, that after the interview, when talking over the problem, “No” respondents admitted, “there are no families without conflicts.”

*While I was filling in the questionnaires, at first the majority of parents stated that they had no problems either in family relations or children’s upbringing. But the interview gave a contradictory picture...for one of the mothers admitted that being angry she turned her child out and locked the door. The child kept on knocking the door for more than an hour but the mother didn’t seem to unlock the door. The child himself didn’t tell us anything about it.*

*Or, for instance, one of the mothers spoke out forgetting about her statement; “I gave him a good hiding when learnt he had again run away from the army just to see the girl he was in love with...”*

*(Yerevan)*

It should also be noted that conflicts in family are conditioned by family composition and structure. For instance, in unilateral and bilateral orphans’ families conflicts are mainly between children and their mothers (67.3%), grandchildren and their grandmothers (grandfathers) (10.8%), between relatives (8.8%), and children themselves as well (8.4%) (See table 2.13, page 46).

Things are quite different in two/three generation families. Conflicts here are mainly between a husband and a wife (81.1%). Conflicts between children and their parents retain a lower level, between fathers and children – 17.3%, between mothers and children – 28.7% and between children themselves – 17.7% (See table 2.14, page 46).

Conflicts between different generations are surely conditioned by various systems of values. The higher rate of conflicts in mother-child relations is accounted for by the fact that first of all she (mother) is to bring up her children and she is responsible for everything children do. On the whole it should be noted that the essence (character) of conflicts differ in respect of survey-respondents’ sex, educational level and place of living. For instance, in rural areas conflicts with children are mainly connected with agricultural work, which is usually to be done by children. In respect of educational level, a comparatively higher rate of conflicts is observed in families with a lower educational level. To figure out the essence of family conflicts is also important in order to focus on who is mainly certain to promote conflicts in family and what part children play in this process. According to the survey results, the following groups promoting conflicts are distinguished in both types of families.

**Table 2.15**

**Subjects promoting conflicts**

	Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families	Two/three - generation families
1. mother	47,8 %	47.6 %
2. father	-	43.3 %
3. children	30,7 %	29.1 %
4. grandfather(mother)	15,9 %	24 %
5. friends, acquaintances	13,1 %	9.8 %
6. relatives	8,8 %	6.3 %

Thus it can be concluded that conflicts are in both vulnerable and other families, and these conflicts are mainly promoted by one of family members, while children are constantly becoming to be the subject for those conflicts.

It can be presumed from the answers to the question “Who of them punishes you in your family?” that, in percentage, first of all children from vulnerable families are mainly punished by their mothers (64%), grandfathers (grandmothers) –12%, the other children in the family (8.9%) and other relatives (6.4%).

*Sometimes we quarrel, and I think it's because of me. I know that my aunt's wife does not like me, and even slapped me... I was offended... and left them. Now I live at my uncle's house that is already dead. I feel good here. It's already three months I've been living with Nazik and her sons.*

*(Gegharkunik marz, Martuni)*

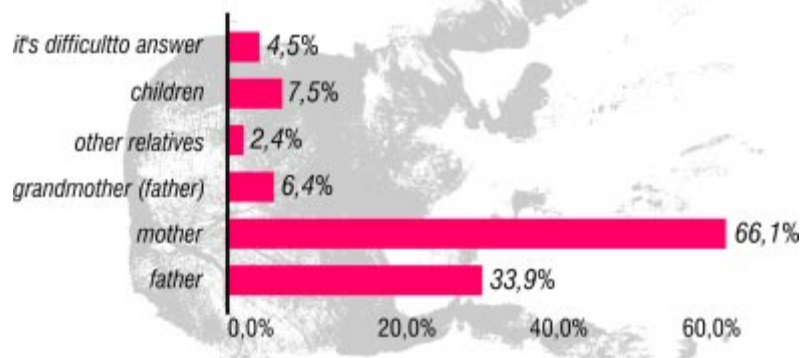
**Diagram 2.16**

**Punitive measures taken by members of unilateral and bilateral orphans' families**



In two/three- generation families: the 66.1% of children are punished by mother, the 33.9% - by father, the 7.5% - by other children living with them, the 6.4% - by grandmother (grandfather), the 2.4% - by other relatives and the 4.5% finds it difficult to answer. (See Diagram 2.17)

**Diagram 2.17**





### 3. Reasons of committing violence against children

The sociological survey made it possible to figure out the main reasons of committing violence against children. These reasons first of all are closely connected with a number of factors. To group the reasons committing violence against children in unilateral/bilateral and two/three-generation families, we are firstly to single out the economic factor, standards of living and unemployment, which form a higher percent in the above mentioned families. These factors have a direct effect on the interfamilial relations promoting tension, and children are the first to be the "scapegoat". According to the survey results, this group of reasons retains especially a higher rate among middle-aged and older groups. The rest of the reasons are mainly connected with the psychophysical state, jealousy, preferences, world outlook and other factors. Here rude behaviour, as well as obstinacy and egoism should also be singled out. The next group of reasons is connected with roles and accepted values in families. Here we particularly observe differences in world outlook and disagreement in home works retaining a higher rate in both types of families (See table 3.1, page 47).

Clash of interests is considered to be an important factor promoting conflicts in family, and because of this children often become a target of psychological abuse. According to the survey results affection to alcohol by parents, as well as affection to drugs, play a decisive role. The survey shows that physical abuse of children is especially connected with the factors mentioned. Generally physical and psychological violence against children committed by their parents is accounted for by the fact that they themselves have been punished (abused) in the early years with the same punitive measures, and that's why they find it quite natural to take the same measures against their own children.

It should also be noted that the experts mainly agree with the parents (interviewed) expecting only affection to alcohol and drugs. The letters, according to the experts, are serious reasons promoting family conflicts. Thus the 62.3% of child-abused cases are said to be conditioned by affection to alcohol, while the 28.3% - affection to drugs.

**Table 3.2**

#### **Main reasons of family conflicts (according to the experts)**

1. difficult financial conditions	53	100 %
2. housing conditions	27	50,9 %
3. unemployment	48	90,6 %
4. rude behaviour, obstinacy and egoism	19	35,8 %
5. disagreement in children's upbringing	11	20,8 %
6. differences of worldview, including religion	13	24,5 %
7. cosmopolitism	9	17 %
8. disrespectfulness to parents and relatives	20	37,7 %
9. jealousy	27	50,9 %
10. unequal sharing of house work	10	18,9 %
11. negative attitude of other relatives to wife/husband	7	13,2 %
12. affection to alcohol	33	62,3 %
13. affection to drugs	15	28,3 %



## 4. Forms of violence committed against children

In Armenian families children are considered to be a matter of special care. As an important family value, the child in Armenian reality is believed to be the “cornerstone” of kindred and is constantly paid a special attention to. Even, if the family lives in extreme poverty, on account of the other members of the family the “economized resources” are direct to meet needs of children. That is why, in Armenian families, taking into consideration sexual peculiarities, as “upbringing methods” various punitive measures are applied to children, something that has become evident after the sociological survey. From this point of view, in order to focus on practical problems later on, it is necessary to subject to analysis forms of violence committed upon children. Here we must concentrate on the following questions: where do children feel more secure... in family or out of it? what forms of violence are mostly applied to?, how frequently are they applied?. To gain a real -life knowledge and materials for confrontation, in the course of the sociological survey opinions of parents, children, their neighbors, teachers and experts have been taken into consideration as well.

It should be noted that there is no common methodology of registering data about child violence in Armenia: so that is why there are not concrete statistical data about the matter. The imperfection of the adequate legislative environment, the existing obscure policy and the absence of statistical data have negative effect on child protection in Armenia. In families parents or guardians are the first to abuse children; other members of the family and elder children occupy a second place.

*There were bruises on the kid's body... It's all because of her mother's nervousness. After a short talk with the child it become clear that even innocent or even beating with a stick. Nevertheless the kid appreciated her mother... She didn't blame her...*

*(Tavoush marz, Berd)*

When discussing this problem the fact whether a parent has been abused in his childhood or youth should be paid a special attention to, in other words to discover the close circulation of abusing behaviour from generation to generation. Parents to whom this refers are considered to be potential “abusers”, and they have developed a bent for abuse or violence against their own children. Sometimes this (abuse) is applied by parents quite unconsciously and is considered “ a way of upbringing”. Thus parents’ convictions about upbringing are transferred from generation to generation and are perceived as right ways of bringing a child up.

In display of violence it is necessary to take into consideration the existence of super active children who in everyday speech are called “naughty” and promote conflicts in family. These children are to be “ the scapegoat” after every childish action and are usually strictly punished. Children’s active behaviour often causes stresses among parents and is often responded by their different punitive measures. In such situation the degree of parents’ knowledge of legal rules, as well as their parental skills are surely of great importance. The survey shows that the parents, who commit violence upon their children, have somewhat obscure ideas about child’s behaviour and wrong expectations from his/her abilities. They very often compare their child’s behaviour and character with that of another’s and qualify them as extremely bad thus giving way to child’s disobedience and unacceptable manners not adequate of his/her age. Violence is also conditioned by the nature of parent-child relationship, attachment and mutual trust. The next group of factors, which directly promote violence against children, is connected with family crisis during which parents find themselves in extremely stressful situations, and here children become to be the “target” of violence.

Sociological survey results give an opportunity to state that there are different forms of violence basically applied to children. Here we distinguish between:

1. Neglect
2. Psychological violence
3. Physical violence
4. Sexual violence



## 4.1 Neglect

Neglecting children in Armenian reality has some peculiarities in the sense that a child in every family is considered to be a matter of special care. One of important prerequisites of neglecting children are today's poor social-economic conditions as a result of which half of the population lives now in extreme poverty. Thus hunger, frost, lack of clothes and shelter, unavailability of health, educational and other services and disability to meet primary needs of family cause children physical and mental underdevelopment.

Neglecting children can expose itself in socially provided families as well. In such situation it is surely necessary first of all to focus on existing conditions and subjective attitude of parents, guardians or institutions. However neglect has more tendencies to expose itself in socially vulnerable families and among children who live in boarding schools and special institutions.

Neglect exposes itself when a child is abandoned and neglected by adults the latter being especially dangerous for him/her. Emotional neglect of children is more dangerous, this including lack of tenderness by parents, indifference and coldness. The interviews show that the majority of parents apply this form of violence (neglect) giving reasons for " setting children on the right road". According to the table 4 (see page 47), neglect in the vulnerable families is seen in the restrictions to periodical contacts with friends, relatives, as well as restriction to hobbies, applied by parents: (correspondingly 4.4% and 7.6%). It can be seen in the same table that neglect contains comparatively a lower rate in the other type of families: restrictions to contacts with relatives, friends – 3.1%, restrictions to the hobbies – 5.9%. According to the teachers who are constantly having contacts with children, as well as their parents, neglect of children in families retains a higher rate. For instance, according to teachers the 18% of parents consider restrictions to hobbies as necessary means to punish children. Taking children to boarding schools is considered to be a more strict way of neglecting children (according to teachers this makes up 8.5% in vulnerable families). Children's opinion on the matter should also be taken into consideration. Answers to the question " If you have done something bad in what ways will your parents punish you?" have been distributed in the following way.

In children's opinion in case of doing something bad at home, the 19.8% of boys and the 15.5% of girls are not allowed to go out, and the 12.2% of boys and the 9.8% of girls are not allowed to meet their friends. Restrictions to watching TV retain 13.8% among boys, and 18.5% among girls, not giving money – correspondingly 17.8% and 14.2%. Isolation of children and restrictions to favorite food retain comparatively a lower rate. As it can be seen, in Armenia families, taking into consideration still existing stereotype of sexes, boys and girls are punished in different ways (See table 4.1.1, page 48). Thus we can state that at present neglect as psychological abuse is used against children and on the whole is conditioned by poor standards of living, which, according to the survey results, retains a comparatively higher rate in vulnerable families.

## 4.2 Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse constantly has a negative impact on a child's mental and physical development. Psychological abuses expose themselves in insults, criticism, rebukes, refusals, constant charges, restrictions, isolation and other ways. Emotional or psychological abuse carries verbal character and can be expressed by parents' or guardians' face expression or behaviour.

When a child does something bad outdoors or does not listen to his/her parent, the expression as " Wait till we get home... see what I'll do with you, you are the worst child I've ever met, keep quiet if not I'll call him" can be surely heard, or parents threaten them by just saying they will leave them. All these forms mentioned above are said to be the most unnoticeable ones. They do have an effect on a child's mental state, and as a result of this he/she becomes more timid and passive. It should also be noted that people perceive all this as an important means of " setting children and the youth on the right road". The frequency of its appliance (psychological abuse) depends on the moral and psychological atmosphere, sexual and age references, educational level and composition of the given family.

Several forms of psychological abuse, mostly applied to children, have been included in the sociological

questionnaires. Among them the elder's habit of rebuking children is particularly due of mention. This form of abuse, according to the survey-respondents, retains the highest rate both in unilateral and bilateral orphans' and two/three-generation families (correspondingly – 57.4% and 43.3%). Family members' wrangling with orphans makes up 25.9%, and with children from two/three-generation families – 24.8%. Rude way of speaking, as a psychological abuse, has been applied to the 14.3% of unilateral and bilateral orphans', and to the 15% of children from two/three-generation families. As a form of psychological abuse, constant rebuking or threatening children also have a negative impact on their mental state and development. For instance, constant rebuking in the two types of families mentioned above retains correspondingly 15.5% and 11.8%, and threatening children – 8.0% and 5.5%. If the above-mentioned forms of abuse, in percentage, retain a comparatively higher rate in vulnerable families, the same cannot be said about bad language (swearing). This, depending on family composition, retains a lower rate in vulnerable families (2.8%), while in two/three – generation families – 6.7%. According to the survey results, beating with fists or objects of everyday usage makes up correspondingly 3.6% and 4%.

Teachers' as well as children's, opinion should also be taken into consideration in order to gain a real-life knowledge and comparative conclusions about psychological abuse used by parents or guardians. In teachers' opinion the most frequently used forms of abuses are getting angry (applied to the 94.4% of children) and threatening (applied to the 28.2% of children). As the 92.7% of children from vulnerable families say: if they do something bad at home, their parent or guardian first of all get angry and then (as the 11.7% of children say) rebuke them in the presence of other people. The same results (in percentage) are observed in the opinions expressed by children from two/three-generation families (See table 4, page 47). Thus, according to the survey results, in Armenian families the most frequent form of violence committed upon children is the psychological one, the several forms of which retain a comparatively higher rate in vulnerable families. (Here the terms violence and abuse are taken in as equivalents). For instance, according to the family composition, the mentioned forms of psychological abuse of children retain a comparatively higher rate among 30-39 year old and 40-59 year old widows, this being accounted for by their strained psychological state.

### 4.3 Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the real or possible injury of children or teenagers, this exposing itself mainly in slapping, beating, traumas of different degrees, scratches, oedemata, burns, wounds and fractures. Three forms of physical abuse were included in the questionnaires: particularly – slapping, beating (hurting) and beating with a knife or other objects. According to the survey results, slapping is applied to the 27.9% of children from vulnerable families and to the 22.4% from two/three-generation families. For instance, slapping children makes up 23.9% among widows. As to beating children in the two types of families, it makes up comparatively 4.4% and 1.2% in the above-mentioned types of families (See table 4, page 47).

*The teacher told us how her pupil's toper uncle, getting home, every time beat her wife in the children's presence. That time again getting home, he attacked his wife and children with a knife and ran away leaving them at that state. All that happened in her pupil's presence that tried to help her mother by squeezing her bleeding wounds. This certainly caused the child a serious psychological disorder for which she underwent treatment. But the child has not recovered yet and needs extra cure.*

*(Shirak marz, Giumry)*

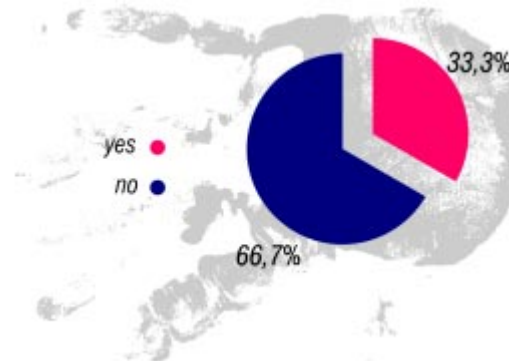
Beating children with a knife or other objects is not observed in the two types of families. In Armenian families parents perceive slapping and why not beating children as a “means of upbringing”, they don't take into consideration the fact that they may a negative impact on children's further development. In public opinion these forms of abuse of children are still perceived positively. This can be proved once again by the



answers to the question “Do you consider slapping as a means of upbringing?” According to the answers in two/three-generation families the number of people answering positively retains a higher rate – 40.6%, than in vulnerable families – 33.3%. (See Diagram 4.3.1 and 4.3.2)

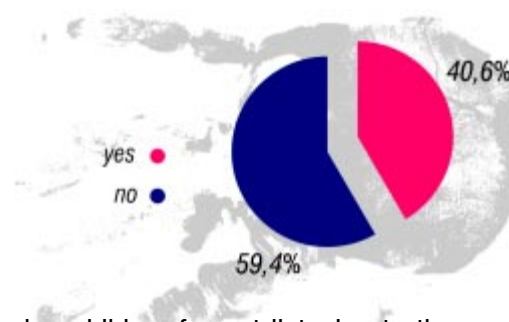
**Diagram 4.3.1**

**Slapping, as a means of upbringing, in unilateral and bilateral families**



**Diagram 4.3.2**

**Slapping, as a means of upbringing, in two/three generation families**



Parent’s or guardians mainly slop children for not listening to them, misbehaving, not doing the lessons, wearing clothes, especially in rural areas for escaping from house works and for other reasons. Besides giving a general idea of what slapping or beating are, it is important for the sake of practice to figure out how frequently and by whom they are used in families. Answers to the question “ Has anyone in your family slapped or beaten a child?” give an opportunity to come to the conclusion that children in families are mainly punished by their mothers. It makes up 45.5% in vulnerable families, and 55.8% in two/three-generation families. In families girls are less punished than boys, this, certainly, being conditioned by boy’s role peculiarities.

*During interviews one of the guardians fully rejected our question “Have you ever slapped or beaten a child?” But when we were filling in the child’s questionnaire, he answered: “ I’ve done something bad I am slapped and beaten both at school and at home”. And only after this the guardian (his aunt) told us about how she had once slapped the child in the face, so that he fell under the bed and hurt his head. The aunt also told that the teachers, taking the chance of her working at the same school, in case of the child’s misbehaviour applied to her, and she punished the child rebuking him in the presence of others.*

*(Shirak marz, Giumry)*

According to family status the 26.4% of widow consider slapping a “means of upbringing”. According to age reference slapping is correspondingly 15.1% among middle and elder generations in vulnerable families, while according to educational level, slapping retains a higher level among people of secondary education. According to the marzes, in the above-mentioned types of families, slapping makes up 13.1% in Syunik, 6%



- Yerevan, 3.6% in Tavoush, 3.2% - Lori. In the rest of marzes this record does not exceed one percent. As to the two/three –generation families, here slapping, as a punitive measure, makes up 9.8% - in Syunik, 8.8% - in Shirak, 2.9% - Yerevan and 1.6% - in Tavoush.

The experts and teachers taking part in the interviews also affirm the existence of slapping and beating in Armenian families. However, according to the teachers, slapping children makes up 47.9%, and beating – 19.7%. Thus, in Armenian families forms of physical abuse of children are widespread both in unilateral and bilateral orphans' families and in two/three-generation families.

#### 4.4 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is characterized by a child's or teenager's real or possible abuse and sexual self-display, by sexual caress, oral and anal sexual actions, incest, rape and sexual abuse. Two types of sexual abuse are distinguished-external and internal.

A child's family members, relatives and family acquaintances do internal type of sexual abuse. Surely taking into consideration the delicacy of the problem and the circumstance of criminal liability the interview-respondents fully rejected the existence of such kind of abuse in families.

There are no official statistical data on the matter as well, for this phenomenon is considered to be a matter of "closed system" and some parents, in order "not to wash dirty linen in public" in such situation do not apply to legal institutions. Thus it is difficult to speak about the scale of prevalence of this phenomenon but from several proceedings instituted and publications it can be concluded that there are cases of sexual abuse of children but they, in fact, retain a low rate. These cases are mainly father-daughter incest where an abusing father has been a toper or a prior convict, has been in prison or has had some mental disorder. However, for instance, to the question "Do you know any cases of sexual abuse of children?" the 19 or the 35.8% of 53 experts participating in the interviews have answered positively. They, dealing with such problems, seem to be well aware of vulnerable families have given "Yes" answers.

*As this parent says, four days ago in the basement of their kinder-garden three teenagers violated a six-year old girl who had been living in a rented apartment, in a numerous family...*

*(Yerevan)*

In order to find out why children are sexually abused it is necessary to take into consideration two important factors, first – why do adults prefer having sex with children? and second – why do men mainly do it? The availability of children, power over children and children's dependence on their parents seem to play a decisive role. Children are very perceptive to their parents' demands and oppressions, and to avoid family conflicts, as well as because of fright, they usually hide everything. Surely this depends on their age, level of emotional and intellectual development, as well as family atmosphere.

*There has been a case when, after the family conflict, the girl run away from home. She returned home late in the evening very irritated and nervous. Later it turned out that she had cohabited with her father's friend that day. After this mother-daughter relationships become extremely strained. The girl "look up" prostitution. But as there were found kind-hearted people who helped her, she gave it up very soon .*

*(Syunik marz, Khajaran)*

Thus, there is no statistical data about sexual abuse of children because they are the subject matter of the "closed system" of family relations. But the survey shows that this form of abuse carries somewhat an occasional character, i.e. it is not a life-style of Armenian families, just vice versa, and it is criticized and rejected by people. That is why such every case should be thoroughly subjected to analysis in order to reveal its reasons and find ways to prevent children from it.

## 5. Forms of violence against children outside of family

Besides family, contacts with children of the same age institutions children and teenagers are mainly dealing with also play an important part in children's socialization. Here kinder-gardens and schools are especially due of mention these being important institution which retain control over norms of upbringing or teaching a child manners of behavior. Naturally questions rise here: "What are the guarantees of a child's security in these institutions? What forms of violence are mainly committed against children in such institutions? Where is a child more safe... at home or outdoors?" Children, as well as teachers, from general, boarding and special schools took part in the interviews. According to the survey results especially psychological and physical violence is applied to children at schools, while at boarding schools and special institutions cases of sexual abuse have been observed.

Teachers' opinions are summed up and reflected in the answers to the question "What punitive measures do you take against children at school for actions given below?" (See table 5.1, page 48-49).

According to answers, teachers in case of children's misbehavior take different punitive measures. From the punitive measures mentioned above slight forms of psychological abuse retain a higher rate. For instance, in such cases as disobeying teachers, spoiling school furniture, quarreling at school, slipping away from the lessons, uncarefulness for text books and notebooks, teachers usually punish children by rebuking, getting angry, and threatening (all the three measures retain a comparatively higher rate). The next group of punitive measures carries comparatively strict character and includes concrete actions as making the child stand in the corner, turning out from classes, taking him/her to the headmaster, sending for a parent, expelling from school, which retain a comparatively lower rate (See table 5.1, page 48-49). The other group of punitive measures taken by teachers includes pulling children's ears, slapping, beating, and hurting with some object, which, according to the answers, is not widely spread at schools.

In order to check the truthfulness of the answers to this question, the teachers' answers should be confronted with those given by children. After doing it will become clear that there are deviations. In children's opinion, physical abuse retains especially a higher rate at schools. For instance, among children from two/three generation families in the above mentioned cases, beating children by teachers makes up 17,1%, slapping – 10,9%, pulling ears – 24,5%, hurting with objects – 1,6%. Quite a different picture is expected among children from unilateral and bilateral orphans' families. Taking into consideration the status of these families teachers have a milder attitude towards them. This can be proved by their answers to the question "Do you have a more yielding attitude towards these children?" being distributed in the following way.

**Table 5.2**

### **Teachers attitude towards unilateral and bilateral orphans**

1. Yes	46	75,4 %
2. Sometimes	9	14,8 %
3. No	4	6,6 %
4. It's difficult to answer	2	3,3 %

As it can be seen, most of the teachers has a milder attitude towards unilateral and bilateral orphans. This surely influences physical violence from which, according to the survey results, beating makes up 3%, slapping – 6,1%, pulling ears – 5,6%, hurting with objects – 2%. Besides physical and psychological abuse especially at boarding schools there are also cases of sexual abuse that there are no official statistical data. Only some articles or published issues give obscure information about them. Even some teenagers, because of being sexually abused have given birth to babies.

*“At school the teacher was very kind to the girl, and was even having extra classes with her. So one day he wanted to violate the girl. The girl hardly managed to run away from him. After that the girl did not go to school for about a week. In a week, when she came to school, the teacher was very rude to her. This went on for about a month. Then the girl made her mother to change the school”.*

*(Syunik marz, Kapan)*

Cases of external sexual abuse are hardly ever discovered, for parents, again “not wash dirty linen in public” or just not to have troubles, sometimes do not apply to legal institutions. Thus, different forms of abuse and violence are committed against children outside families, at secondary schools and especially at boarding and special schools, and among these forms psychological and physical abuse are predominating. Because of lack of official statistical data it is difficult to have a clear idea about measures of sexual violence against children.

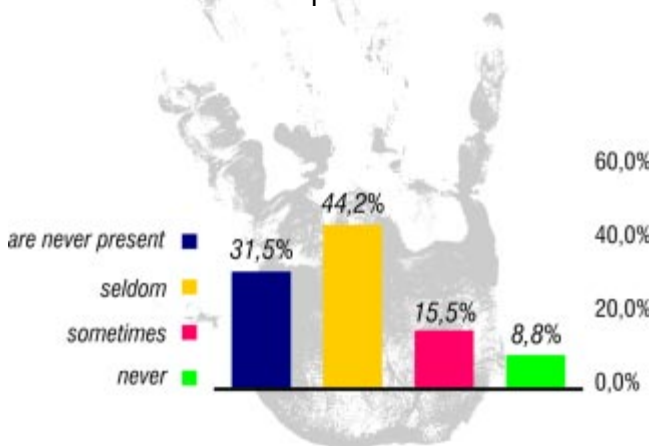
## 6. Consequences of violence committed against children

From practical point of view one of important objectives of the survey is also to figure out what consequences violence and abuse have for children, and what steps should be taken to prevent them from later abuse. The interviewers with parents, children, teachers and experts give an opportunity to have a clear idea on the matter. According to the survey results, the 91,2% of children from vulnerable families and the 81,9% of children from two / three generation families are present at family conflicts.

**Diagram 6.1**

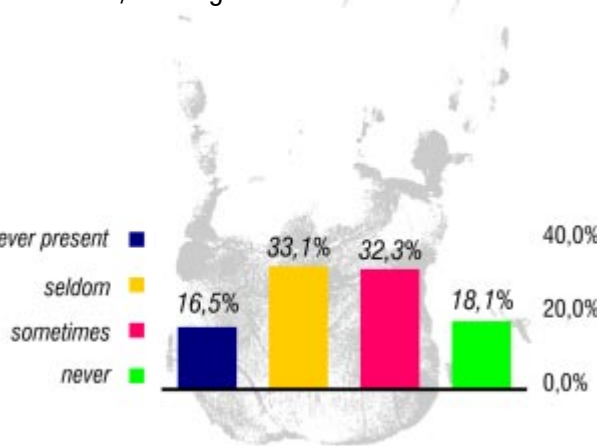
### Children’s participation in family conflicts

Unilateral and bilateral orphans’ families



**Diagram 6.2**

Two / three generation families



In parents’ opinion family conflicts have serious psychological effects on children. Particularly these negative effects are more noticeable among socially vulnerable children. According to the percentage and their degree of influence, family conflicts are certain to cause children bad mood, depression, constraint, headaches, sleeplessness, fear, decrease in educational progress, aggression, loss of reputation among friends, absences from school, willingness to leave school, to run away from home or commit a suicide (See table 6.3).

**Table 6.3****Consequences of violence for children from parents'/guardians' point of view.**

	Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families		Two/three - generation families	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
1. bad mood	182	79.5 %	165	65 %
2. depression	125	54.6 %	105	41,3 %
3. constraint	142	62.0 %	109	42,9 %
4. decrease in education progress	28	12.2 %	25	9,8 %
5. loss of reputation among classmates	14	6.1 %	8	3,1 %
6. absence from lessons	20	8.7 %	5	2 %
7. headaches, sleeplessness	45	19.7 %	22	8,7 %
8. fear	45	19.7 %	33	13 %
9. injuries	2	0.9 %	0	0 %
10. aggression	21	9.2 %	16	6,3 %
11. willingness to leave school	11	4.8 %	0	0 %
12. willingness to run away from home	10	4.4 %	8	3,1 %
13. affection to drugs	0	0.0 %	0	0 %
14. attempt to commit a suicide	1	0.4 %	0	0 %

The survey has made it clear that negative effects of punishments are first of all conditioned by their strength, frequency, degree of prevalence, by the person applies them, environment and other factors. Children too, have expressed their opinion about consequences of punishments. While answering to the question “What effects do these punishments have on you?” (besides the consequences that are mentioned above) the children also added headaches and stomachaches which are acute among the 8,8% of unilateral and bilateral orphans, and weak - among the 13,8%. These punishments seem to have strong effects on the 8% of children from two / three generation families, and slight effects on the 17,6% of them. Besides, the children have also added that these punishments very often cause them bruises and injuries. According to the survey results, consequences of violence are strong among the 3,5% of children from unilateral and bilateral families, and weak – among the 5,6% of them. This retains a lower rate among children from the other types of families. The survey among teachers also gives an opportunity to acquire some extra information about the consequences of violence against children. In teachers' opinion violence cause children bad mood, depression, and has a negative effect on their educational progress. As teachers say, punished (abused) children are usually depressed and constrained, have no friends and are not self-confident, they do not like to contact with people.

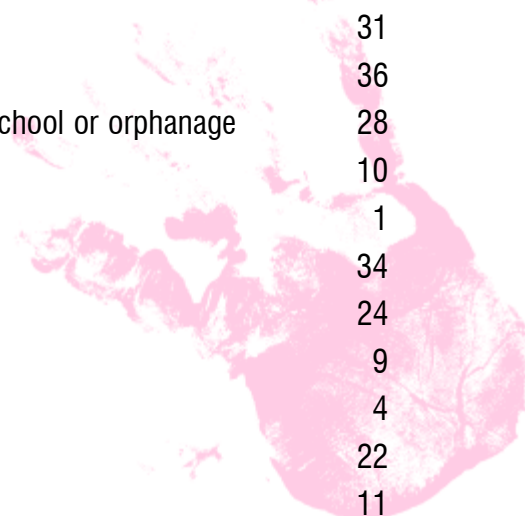
*“I have no friends at school. My classmates often make fun of me ... they call me “brown-headed”. I am not doing very much well on physics, and that is why the teacher gets angry with me and hits me with a ruler”.*

*(Kotayk marz, Hrazdan)*

The experts' opinions on the matter are much more troubling. Dealing more frequently with such problems, they also touch upon the public consequences of violence committed upon unilateral and bilateral orphans.

**Table 6.4**

**Consequences of family violence**



1. leave home	31	58,5 %
2. leave school	36	67,9 %
3. send to a boarding school or orphanage	28	52,8 %
4. hurt	10	18,9 %
5. become an invalid	1	1,9 %
6. beg money	34	64,2 %
7. become a prostitute	24	45,3 %
8. be arrested	9	17 %
9. commit a suicide	4	7,5 %
10. become a toper	22	41,5 %
11. use drugs	11	20,8 %

According to the experts, violence displays itself in leaving school by the 67,9%, in leaving home – by the 58,5%, in sending them to an orphanage or boarding school – by the 52,8% of children. All these force the 64,2% of children to beg money, the 45,3% - to become prostitutes, the 41,5% - to become a toper, the 20,5% - to use drugs, and the 7,5% - to commit a suicide.

*“The atmosphere is extremely strained in this family. Her own children abuse the mother. Every time they make her get money for them. If she does not obey they beat her and smash everything to smithereens at home”.*

*(Yerevan)*

Besides this, violence causes children injuries of different degrees. Not having any control over them, they are sometimes arrested for robberies or other crimes. At present, one of the important problems of society is trafficking in human beings (mainly for the purpose of making them become prostitutes). To the question given to 53 experts “Are there any children in your surroundings who have become prostitutes?” the 22,6% of them have answered positively. The 7 from 100 neighbors interviewed have mentioned cases when children from vulnerable families have become prostitutes.

As we see, children sometimes react adequately towards domestic violence, which in its turn causes serious problems. Generally it should be mentioned that violence and abuse of different types, be it neglect, physical, psychological or sexual, cause children mental and physical underdevelopment. Children become depressed, they come to believe that they are neither wanted nor loved in their families. This makes them develop certain constrained features of character.

*“At school classmates very often make fun of orphans... It happened in October. At break, a number of children gathered at school campus and started mocking an orphan (whose father was victim of Artsakh war)... All because his shoes were split. After that the child did not come to classes for two days.*

*(Syunik Marz, Meghri)*

Children become depressed and passive and usually have problems while contacting with children of the same age. If physical and psychological abuse is considered civil crime, sexual abuse of children, according to the criminal code, is considered criminal offence. Consequences of sexual abuse are conditioned by age and intellectual level of a child, as well as by the duration of the violation. A harder case is when a child





because a victim of incest. Sexually abused children become extremely concentrated, and their physical development becomes abnormal. Thus abuse, both in families and outside of it, cause serious psychological and social consequences.

## 7. Violence and “self-protecting” actions of children

In order to overcome violence and take the necessary steps it is important to focus on the following questions: How do children usually react to violence? How do they protect themselves? What are the social resources helping children to overcome crises? First of all let's turn to family members' opinions and children's natural reactions. To the question “ If there is a conflict in your family what do you usually do?” the conflicting sides from both unilateral and bilateral orphans' and two/three generation families first of all try to explain the problem and come to a compromise. Such a solution is accepted by both types of families (correspondingly 92,4% and 85,8%)(See table 7.1, page 49). The one third of the survey-respondents have given rude answers or displayed aggression.

The relatives (husband's or wife's parents), other members of family, as well as neighbors of conflicting sides are considered important social resources for smoothing away conflicts, all these retaining a higher rate especially in unilateral and bilateral orphans' families. Some tendencies of cooperating with doctors, psychologists, NGOs and competent government bodies are observed only among unilateral and bilateral orphans' families. The survey allows to come to a conclusion that at present in case violence against children the 78,1% of unilateral and bilateral families and the 87,8% of two-three generation families do not apply to competent government bodies.

**Table 7.2**

### **Cooperation with competent government bodies in case of conflicts**

	Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families		Two/three - generation families	
1. it is necessary	10	4.0 %	9	3,5 %
2. it is necessary only in serious cases	25	10.0 %	15	5,9 %
3. it is not necessary	196	78.1 %	223	87,8 %
4. it is difficult to answer	20	8.0 %	7	2,8 %

They consider it to be an interfamilial problem and do not find it necessary “to wash dirty linen in public”. This means that, before taking any steps, this problem should be paid a special attention to. Besides, it is necessary to develop special programs contributing to the improvement of people's knowledge on the matter.

**Table 7.3**

### **Reasons not cooperating with competent government bodies**

	Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families		Two/three - generation families	
1. I consider it an interfamilial problem	161	82.1 %	220	86,6 %
2. because of family member's negative attitude	2	1.0 %	7	2,8 %
3. because of people's negative attitude	17	8.7 %	18	7,1 %
4. doing this will turn things worse	12	6.1 %	22	8,7 %

Here let us turn to children's actions. To the question “Who do you usually rely on in case of family conflicts?” children from unilateral/bilateral orphans' families and two/three generation families have answered in the

following way.

**Table 7.4**

**Who do you usually rely on in case of family conflicts?**

	Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families		Two/three - generation families	
1. father	-	-	79	18,6 %
2. mother	243	44,2 %	201	47,3 %
3. grandmother(father)	69	12,5 %	47	11,1 %
4. sister, brother	169	30,7 %	96	22,6 %
5. other relatives	34	6,2 %	12	2,8 %
6. teacher	12	2,2 %	12	2,8 %
7. friends	133	24,2 %	106	24,9 %
8. acquaintances, neighbors	12	2,2 %	3	0,7 %

The majority of children rely on their mother in case of conflicts, this retaining a higher rate among the mentioned types of families. The 30,7% of children from unilateral and bilateral orphans' families, and the 22,6% of children from two/three generation families rely on their sisters and brothers. In case of conflicts children sometimes consult with their grandmothers (grandfathers) or friends. Interesting is the thing that children, when having conflicts, are less certain to rely on their teachers. Nevertheless, it is children who are to take further steps and overcome conflicts.

Thus, in case of conflicts children are more certain to rely on family members, children of the same age, who are considered here to be important social resources helping them in their crises.

Almost the same picture is observed in the survey results of children's reaction to violence. Representatives from institutions, dealing with family problems, are mainly applied by the suffering side (84,9%). For instance, according to the experts, they are mainly applied for making the conflicting sides come to a compromise, to consult the suffering sides or just support them with medicine.

**Table 7.5**

**Operations carried out by the experts in case of conflicts in orphans' families**

	very often	%	often	%	some-times	%	sel-dom	%	do not apply	%
1. to consult	10	18.9	14	26.4	16	30.2	4	7.5	3	5.7
2. to make the conflicting sides come to a compromise	3	5.7	9	17.0	15	28.3	3	5.7	6	11.3
3. to menace the guilty side	0	0.0	2	3.8	5	9.4	2	3.8	10	18.9
4. to treat the suffering person	1	1.9	3	5.7	5	9.4	3	5.7	8	15.1
5. to apply competent government bodies	1	1.9	5	9.4	7	13.2	7	13.2	6	11.3
6. to deprive of parental rights	0	0.0	2	3.8	6	11.3	5	9.4	9	17.0

The 7 from 53 experts interviewed have mentioned that they have come across such cases in their practice when proceedings were taken against for committing family violence, and the four of these proceedings resulted in calling for administrative, and the three – for criminal liability.

*“ When quarreling with the friends, he has told; “ You have no parents that is why everyone feels sorry for you. It shocked the child... he left the school and went home. The teacher learnt about it, after this everything was smoothed away”.*

*( Syunik Marz )*

Although children, as it was already mentioned, are not certain to rely on their teachers, the fathers, nothing any violence against a child, together with parents try to make it out, support children psychologically, try to figure out the reasons of violence committed upon children and so on. Because of everyday contact of teachers and children, teachers have come to be an important link to prevent children from violence.

## **8. Peculiarities of the apprehension of child violence among the population**

The survey of the population's positions and attitudes towards child violence is also of great importance for both practical and cognitive purposes. Children's rights are mainly regulated by on the basis of the "Convention of Children's Rights" accepted by UN. But in everyday life people not only disagree with existing laws but very often disobey them. From this point of view it is more than important to find out how child violence is perceived by different classes of the society, what is people's opinion about each form of violence? Are they considered crimes or not? Let us turn to the population's attitude towards concrete cases of child violence. Thus, while answering to the question "If a child does something bad which of the punitive measures mentioned below do you consider acceptable?", the survey-respondents were suggested to mention the punitive measures which are permitted to use against children when the fathers do something bad. Getting angry is accepted both in unilateral / bilateral orphans' families and in two/three generation families, and this makes no difference whether it refers to either a boy or a girl, while punitive measures as guardians' (parents') threatening children or rebuking them in the presence of others return a higher rate for boys than for girls (according to the Table 8.1, page 50).

As to the picture of such forms of more serious physical violence as beating or slapping, the 24,4% of survey-respondents from unilateral and bilateral families consider the fathers an acceptable form of violence towards boys, and the 13,5% - towards girls. Beating is considered an acceptable form of violence. Towards boys by the 11,1% of survey-respondents, towards girls – 4%. The same results are observed in two-three generation families. On the whole strict forms of violence are more acceptable for boys than for girls.

If the above mentioned directly concerns the problem of "permitted" forms of child violence, the problem of perception of domestic violence should also be focused on. Thus, the survey-respondents were given the following question; "Lately the problem of domestic violence has been very much spoken about, more than that, it has become the subject matter of mass media. Say, please, which of the following mentioned below do you consider violence?"

It can be concluded from the given Tables that the attitude towards physical and sexual abuse of children is negative both in unilateral / bilateral orphans' and two / three generation families.

More than the 90% of the survey – respondents consider beating injuring with knife or some other objects, as well as violation to be violence. But, for instance, slapping is not considered violence by the 24,7% of vulnerable families, and it is considered partly violence by the 21,3% of such families. This index is 25,6% in two / three generation families. Here people's endurance of child violence surely plays an essential role (See tables 8.2, page 50 and 8.3, page 51).

People's attitude towards psychological violence varies depending on concrete forms of violence. People have an especially negative attitude towards menacing children (with fist, knife and objects of everyday use). Restrictions applied to children should also be touched up, these being considered a "permitted" punitive measure. For instance, the 19,5 % of the survey-respondents from vulnerable families does not consider restrictions violence, and the 20,7% of them consider them to be partly violence. The survey-respondents' opinions are the same about restrictions to children's hobbies (See tables 8.2, page 50 and 8.3, page 51).

A more positive attitude of the survey-respondents is observed towards "verbal" violence against children. Constant rebuking and scolding children are widely used by parents in everyday life. Thus, only the 3,9% of the survey-respondents consider rebuking to be violence, and wrangling is considered violence by the 5,9% of them. It should be mentioned for the sake of comparison that these indices are correspondingly 3,9% and 5,8% among two/three generation families.

Opinions are different about the other forms of psychological violence. Constant rebuke of children is considered mere violence only by the 23,8% of unilateral and bilateral families, and rude way of speaking –





by the 24,2% of them. In two/three generation families constant rebuke of children is considered mere violence by the 30,5% of the survey-respondents, and rude way of speaking – by the 26,6% of them. People's attitude towards using a bad language (sneering) should be paid a special attention to. In vulnerable families sneering is considered violence by more than half of the survey respondents, is considered partly violence by the 22% of them, and is not considered violence by the 17,1%. In unilateral and bilateral orphans' families the attitude towards sneering is quite different. Here, too sneering is considered mere violence by more than half of the survey-respondents, and it is considered partly violence by the 16,9% of them (See tables 8.2, page 50 and 8.3, page 51).

Nevertheless, the one-third of the survey-respondents have a positive attitude towards sneering and do not consider it violence this being 12% higher than the index of vulnerable families. The attitude towards sneering is conditioned by various factors and is sometimes perceived by people to be a regulator of norms of behavior.

According to age reference positive attitude towards child violence is mostly observed among elder generation and among people who have lower level of education and live in rural areas. While discussing the problem of violence perception and apprehension, the experts' opinion should be paid a special attention to because it is they that deal more with such problems are much more competent.

It can be concluded from the Table 8.4 (page 51) that some of the experts, too, have somewhat an enduring attitude towards certain forms of violence. However their attitude towards the other forms is negative. Thus, as a conclusion it should be mentioned that depending on national-traditional peculiarities, the population thus stimulating more the use of abuse against children does not consider some forms of child violence violence.

## 9. Ways of preventing children from violence

The sociological survey questionnaires also include questions that allow the survey-respondents to express their opinion about ways of preventing children from violence. The answers to the question "What ways of preventing domestic violence would you suggest?" have been distributed in the following way.

**Table 9.1**

### **Way of preventing children from violence**

	Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families		Two/three - generation families	
1. improvement of financial conditions	444	80,7 %	262	85,1 %
2. distribution of literature about family life	267	48,5 %	149	48,4 %
3. TV and radio programs	288	52,4 %	151	49 %
4. publications	217	39,5 %	88	28,6 %
5. creation of hot lines	168	30,5 %	55	17,9 %
6. activation of psychological services	362	65,8 %	194	63 %
7. activation of NGO's dealing with problems of women and children	298	54,2 %	157	51 %
8. availability of legal consultation offices	234	42,5 %	119	38,6 %
9. improvement of juridical organs' activities	180	32,7 %	96	31,2 %
10. improvement of legislative environment	234	42,5 %	146	47,4 %
11. legal protection of abused women and children	232	42,2 %	156	50,6 %

According to both unilateral / bilateral orphans' and two/three generation families, one of the most important ways of preventing children from violence is the improvement of financial conditions (correspondingly 80,7% and 85,1%).

However, that the standards of life of the population, put forward as hypothesis, is considered an important factor promoting violence against children has also been proved by the survey final results. It goes without saying that low standards of life do promote family conflicts and have a negative effect on interfamilial relations. More than that they come to be a basis for spreading of child violence. The next group of opinions expressed by the survey-respondents focuses on the improvement of people's knowledge about child violence considering this an important factor promoting prevention of child violence. As seen in the Table above, the survey –respondents have singled out among them the distribution of literature about family life, publications, TV and radio programs all retailing a considerably higher rate.

The third group of opinions focuses on improvement of concrete services and strengthening of NGOs. Here the 65,8% of survey-respondents from unilateral/bilateral families, and the 63% of them from two/three generation families have particularly attached importance to the improvement of psychological services. The 54,2% of the first type of families and the 51% of the second type of families consider important the activation of NGOs dealing with the problems of violence against women and children.

In their opinion, NGOs stand closer to people and are more certain to be trusted by them. The fourth group of opinions focuses on the creation of legal consultation offices protecting abused women's and children's rights (nearly half of the survey-respondents gave "for" answers). The fifth group of opinions concentrates on the improvement of legislative environment, this providing legal protection for abused children.

The sixth group of opinions attaches importance to the availability of legal consultation offices, as well as to the improvement of juridical organs' activities.

The seventh group of opinions, expressed by the survey-respondents making up one-fifth of people interviewed, lays stress on the creation of hot-line services.

Surely, these data, depending on survey-respondents' sex, age, education and place of living, have certain peculiarities. For instance, in unilateral and bilateral orphans' families, unlike younger generation (18-29), middle and elder generations, besides improvement of family financial conditions, have attached special importance to the development of psychological services for reducing child violence. 30-39 year old supporters of this opinion make up 27,1% and 40-49 year old supporters – 29,6%. The development of NGOs has been attached importance to by correspondingly the 21,5% and 24,4% of people mentioned. The 20,5 % and 23,8% of the survey-respondents (correspondingly 30-39 and 40-49 years old) have been for the creation of TV and radio programmed preventing child violence. The survey-respondents consider 3-5% less important the publication of literature about family life, the activities of legal consultation offices, and the improvement of legislative environment.

According to educational level, the survey-respondents having secondary education consider important the above-mentioned activities that are to promote prevention of child violence. From practical point of view, it is also important to discuss steps taken to promote such activities in marzes. For instance, in yerevan the creation of psychological services has been approved by the 20,9% of the survey-respondents, in Shirak marz – by the 10,7%, in Kotaik – by the 7,1%, in Syunik and Ararat marzes - by 6,5% and in the rest of the marzes the supporters of this idea do not excel the 5%.

The role of TV and radio programs has been attached importance to mainly by people living in urban areas. This retains a lower rate among people from rural areas or villages for TV and radio programs still remain unavailable for them. In this respect the creation of hot lines is also more than problematic.

It should be mentioned for the sake of comparison that the experts' opinions about preventing children from violence do not vary much from the above-mentioned ones. Besides the improvement of financial conditions, the experts have also attached much importance to the role of psychological services and TV/radio programs, and especially to the improvement of the existing legislative environment. Thus, the survey-respondents in their suggestions lay a special stress to the realization of various supportive programs, which will give an opportunity to reduce cases of child violence in the Republic.

## 10. Legal, Regulatory and Institutional Framework For Child Protection in Armenia

This part of the report assesses the adequacy of Armenia's national legislation and implementation mechanisms in relation to protecting children against violence. It describes and analyzes current legislation available in the Republic of Armenia as well as the relevant draft laws. It looks into the existing criminal and preventive approaches, compares them with the international experience, and provides recommendations for a more comprehensive framework for child protection. While child protection is a broad notion and detailed consideration of all its aspects is clearly outside of the scope of this report, its analysis goes beyond the culture-bound definitions of "abuse" and "maltreatment" and covers various forms of violence from physical, sexual and psychological abuse to neglect and maltreatment.

The horror story of violence against children often goes untold. Scandalous cases of organized child abuse and the spread of child prostitution and child pornography often distract attention from less visible instances of child abuse, neglect or psychological violence in the home or in the community. In Armenia, the situation is aggravated by the closed nature of the family unit. Lack of social security and high rates of outward labor migration, resulting in unstable marriages, also add to the problem.

The international norms recognize violence against children as a violation of fundamental human rights of the child. Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) guarantees protection from violence and exploitation.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore the government's responsibility to extend all possible protection to children in the nation and to ensure that they enjoy their basic human rights such as the rights to personal security and bodily integrity. When these rights are violated, the government must respond accordingly. Thus, in accordance with CRC Article 19, para 2, the State Party is obligated to go further than prevention and prosecution and should establish comprehensive social programs to provide, *inter alia*, treatment for child victims.<sup>2</sup>

Armenia ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, international treaties with the participation of Armenia are incorporated into the domestic law. When there is a contradiction between domestic and international norms, the norms of the treaty shall supersede.<sup>3</sup> In 1996, a national Law on the Rights of the Child was passed in Armenia as a follow-up to the ratification of the Convention. However, gaps still remain that need to be addressed in order to ensure adequate protection of children from violence in Armenia. Here follows an analysis of the Republic of Armenia's legal framework for child protection from violence.

### 10.1 Criminal Law

**A General Overview.** The Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia does not include a specific provision prohibiting all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, exploitation or deliberate humiliation. However, it includes prohibitions of related offences such as rape (Article 112), forced sexual contact (Article 113), beatings and torture (Article 110), child sexual abuse (Article 114, 115), willful failure to pay alimony or provide child support (Art. 124), abuse of guardian's rights (Art. 126), and humiliation of dignity and honor (Article 132).

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<sup>1</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19, para 1. "States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child."

<sup>2</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19, para 2. "Such protective measures should as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programs to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement."

<sup>3</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, Article 6. "International treaties that have been ratified are a constituent part of the legal system of the Republic. If norms are provided in these treaties other than those provided by laws of the Republic, then the norms provided in the treaty shall prevail."

The draft Criminal Code of Armenia places more emphasis on creating proper safeguards for child protection. Thus, it includes a whole chapter (Chapter 21) on “Crimes against the interests of family and child,” criminalizing failure to fulfill the duty of rearing the child (Article 172), failure to fulfill or improper fulfillment of one’s duties to provide for the child’s safety or health (Article 173), abuse of the custodian’s or guardian’s rights (Article 174), willful failure to support one’s child by the parent (Article 175).

Despite these positive developments, Armenia’s criminal law system continues to address violence against children in a fragmented manner, focusing on individual exposures of the phenomenon rather than on the “bigger picture.” Neither the Criminal Code currently in force nor the draft code contain definitions of child abuse and neglect. A legislative review is needed to ensure “zero tolerance” towards all forms of violence against children and to set up adequate protection mechanisms. So far the Armenian legislator has not seriously considered the issue of corporal punishment as a violation of the child’s right to physical integrity and a practice incompatible with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Additional efforts are also needed to efficiently address the matter of domestic violence, which has been consistently pointed out by international treaty monitoring bodies.<sup>4</sup> In its concluding observations<sup>5</sup> the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that “the State party ensure that all forms of physical and mental violence, including corporal punishment and sexual abuse against children in the family, schools and care institutions are prohibited.”

## 10.2 The Law on the Rights of the Child

The 1996 Law on the Rights of Child, passed as a follow-up to the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by Armenia, stipulates that all children are entitled to protection against all forms of violence. The Law expressly prohibits physical or mental abuse, torture or degrading treatment or punishment of child, including that by parents or legal guardians. Pursuant to the Law, the state is obligated to take all necessary steps to protect children from violence and exploitation. However, adequate procedures and mechanisms to receive complaints, monitor, investigate and prosecute instances of ill-treatment need to be established to ensure effective protection under the Law on the Rights of the Child – otherwise its provisions will remain mere declarations.

## 10.3 Reporting Procedures

The Armenian law does not establish a mandatory procedure for reporting cases of child abuse by designated professionals. The only exception from the general rule is the obligation for medical doctors to report to the police cases of injury that appear suspicious.<sup>6</sup> Violation of the duty to report entails criminal liability. However, no other categories of professionals having frequent contact with children have similar obligations.

Although failure to report crime is criminalized under the existing law, it does not serve as an effective deterrent in child maltreatment cases, especially when the offence committed does not amount to a particularly grave crime and takes place within a family home.

Moreover, the law requires reporting of surely known crimes, while mandatory procedures for designated professional categories typically use “known or suspected abuse or neglect” as the standard for reporting. Often, especially in the cases of violence against children in the home or at institutions, reporting by designated individuals remains the only effective mechanism for child protection.

It should be noted that in the case of Armenia, the establishment of mandatory reporting procedures is further necessitated by the virtual nonexistence of voluntary reporting. The explanation of why cases of

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<sup>4</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/15/Add.119), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/52/38/Rev.1) and the Human Rights Committee (CCPR/C/79/Add.100) express concerns that the State party has failed to acknowledge and address the matter of domestic violence.

<sup>5</sup> CRC/C/15/Add.119

<sup>6</sup> Decree C-240570 of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Interior.



voluntary reporting are extremely rare and are actually limited to surely known grave crimes may be rooted not only in the closed nature of the Armenian family unit, but in the criminalization of libel as well. The draft Criminal Code has not taken any steps forward in this regard and still contains provisions on libel (Art. 137), defining it as “dissemination of false information humiliating the person’s good reputation, dignity and honor.” Note that it is not required that the false information be disseminated in bad faith. In the context of reporting child abuse, it is not excepted that the libel provisions may eventually lead to the victimization of voluntary reporters who, in the absence of clear evidence of a committed crime, will most likely be contacting municipal child welfare workers or NGOs rather than the law enforcement, and may ultimately be incriminated as “disseminating false information.”

Introduction of mandatory reporting would require identification of the categories of “designated individuals” as the first step. Normally the category of mandatory reporters would include professionals who have frequent contact with children. Report must be made when designated individual has reasonable cause to believe or suspect child maltreatment, or has observed conditions which would reasonably result in child maltreatment.

It is noteworthy that mandatory reporting laws typically provide for “privileged communication” exemption, recognizing the right to maintain the confidentiality of communications between certain categories of professionals and their clients or patients. The Armenian legislator and professional associations such as the bar may want to consider the experiences of countries that have mandatory reporting procedures when deciding how to tackle the issue of reporting child abuse.

#### **10.4 The Institutional Framework for Child Protection**

The institutional framework of child protection in Armenia is rather fragmented and largely unregulated. On the national level, there exists no government agency specifically mandated to comprehensively address child abuse and neglect and to ensure coordination at all levels of government and with non-governmental organizations and private agencies.

The lack of synergetic effort on the part of the various social, legal, health, mental health, education and other services renders their work to prevent and treat child abuse largely inefficient.

On the local government level, there exist three types of municipal commissions mandated to deal with child welfare and protection. Namely, these are the Commissions on Minors (COMs), the Commissions on Adoption and Guardianship, and the multidisciplinary Medico-Pedagogical Commissions. Out of the three, only the Commissions on Adoption and Guardianship are full-functioning structures regulated by a relevant regulatory act.

Multidisciplinary Medico-Pedagogical Commissions are in the process of formation and cannot yet be considered as full-fledged child protection actors, while the COMs, despite their important actual role and active involvement in tackling child protection and juvenile justice issues at the local level, function without any legal basis in an uncoordinated manner.

The development of a consistent legal and regulatory framework to govern the status and activities of relevant child welfare and protection commissions on the local level should become the first step in creating an effective and efficient child protection system in Armenia. It is also recommendable that a single child protection agency represented at both central and local levels be formed instead of the currently functioning three commissions to ensure better coordination of activities and prevent the duplication of efforts. Moreover, establishing a national child protection agency would also facilitate the envisaged development of an integrated child abuse data system. International best practices are available to assist the Armenian government with the creation of such a system (e.g., the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) has been successfully used in the U.S. for years now as the main national system that measures and tracks child maltreatment).

There is no doubt that the law enforcement plays a vital role in creating a truly efficient child protection

system. While Armenia's law enforcement has been consistent in investigating and prosecuting reported cases of child abuse, the lack of effective reporting mechanisms results in the police intervention only when the crime has been already committed and very little, if anything at all, can be done to help the victim. While introduction of mandatory reporting with making the police one of the responsible authorities for reporting purposes is a viable solution to improve the efficiency of prevention work, it is also necessary to consider expanding the scope of police response to child abuse in terms of protecting the victim. At present, the law enforcement's role is almost exclusively limited to investigation. In the reform of the system, the objective of ensuring the victim's physical safety should be given clear priority over other objectives. Thus, emergency removal is one of the models the Armenian legislator may wish to consider. It goes without saying that the law enforcement reform should go in line with the reform of the social welfare system, including introduction of foster care and other community-based services for child victims.

The other problem with the law enforcement successfully addressing instances of child abuse and neglect is the lack of appropriately trained human resources, most importantly, investigators specialized in dealing with cases of child abuse, which ultimately results in (re) traumatization of child victims and witnesses. In informal conversations with child protection workers the author has also been told that often during the course of investigation any contact between the child and psychologists and/or social workers is precluded, the justification being "not harming the interests of investigation." In this respect, it is noteworthy that child abuse must be treated in the context of child protection as well as criminal justice, and here the international experience is indispensable as a source of best practices to address the issue. Thus, in some U.S. jurisdictions the responsibility for investigating child abuse lies with the law enforcement as well as child welfare agencies. Speaking about comprehensive treatment of child abuse not limited to investigation and prosecution, we inevitably face the issue of the absence of juvenile courts in Armenia's judiciary system as a major obstacle to ensuring the best interest of the child in each particular case of maltreatment. It should be remembered, however, that establishing juvenile courts requires a comprehensive reform at all levels of the legal system and therefore should be considered rather as a long-term solution.

However, even in the absence of juvenile courts it is possible to successfully tackle many child abuse related issues through increased judicial involvement. An example may be child placement in institutions. At present, decisions on child placement are taken by the Commissions on Minors and are not subject to mandatory review. As a result, children often stay at institutions over prolonged periods of time despite any objective changes in circumstances allowing for their return in the family or transfer to a more suitable institution. Introduction of judicial review of placement decisions is recommendable as a procedural safeguard to ensure that the child's best interest is met. Most importantly, this will serve as an important monitoring and prevention tool for child abuse and maltreatment in institutional settings.

## 11. Conclusions and Suggestions

Results of the sociological survey give an opportunity to make several concrete suggestions for the reduction of punitive measures used against children. As children in Armenia really are considered important values, the ethnic-psychological factors should be paid a special attention to for reducing punitive measures used against children. In this respect prevalence is surely to be given to the problem of protection of child rights. The model of protection of children from violence should be based on two important principles – on the realization of supportive programs and preventing measures.

- Development of official stake policy on child protection, where a special stress should be laid on the problems of child violence. There are no complex systems for child protection and no supremacy of violence reduction in the Republic of Armenia. In summary, it may be recommended that definitions of violence against children, child abuse and neglect be elaborated and included in the domestic law. Mandatory reporting procedures for reporting cases of child abuse should be introduced.
- The improvement of the existing legislative environment and passing legal amendments, which will contribute, to children's juridical protection.
- A national child protection agency should be formed to ensure coordinated effort to prevent and treat child abuse. The priorities are training courses for the law enforcement and the judiciary to sensitize them to child abuse and maltreatment issues. In particular, this should involve training for investigators working with children.
- Mandatory judicial review of institutional placement decisions should be introduced.
- In the long run, a possibility of establishing juvenile courts is an issue to be considered.
- In the Republic of Armenia there is no stake policy and methodology of registering cases of violence against children, and as well as a result of this at present it is really impossible to obtain any statistical data.
- The creation of an interdepartmental net and passing amendments in social security systems for preventing children from violence. In this net the important links should be psychological and health services, social activities and legal consultation offices. They can carry out combined activities and meet needs of families and children, as well as find ways of supporting them.
- The responsibility of preventing children from violence fully falls on the family members and relatives only. It is because of this that, when abused, children mainly rely on their parents and children of their age who are considered the most important resources in this case. From this point of view, the interference should be based upon the model of "not excluding the child from his/her family". In order to reduce cases of child violence in the Republic of Armenia the method of "home visits" should be developed. This presupposes creation of supportive services and workgroups that may include doctors, psychologists and sociologists. Among the risk groups of the population they may give preliminary appraisals and prevent children from violation in families, as well as outside of it. In families they may conduct some kind of "seminars" on care of health, on norms of children's behavior and their manners, all these providing psychological protection. The risk groups of the population, this including vulnerable and unilateral and bilateral orphans' families, for whom the availability of alike services is endangered, are sure to gain more from such activities. Besides, according to the survey results, the financial conditions in such families are sure to promote family conflicts there by laying bases for child violence. This model of interference may include the following institutions and subjects: family – parent(s)-guardian – children, child, kindergartens-child-teacher, and different types of schools-child - teacher.



- Professional trainings for doctors, psychologist, sociologist and representatives from juridical sphere i.e. lawyers, which will give an opportunity to increase their level of knowledge about violence and abuse of children and ways of supporting them. Special trainings will especially have an influence on juridical bodies, and this, in its turn, will make it easier for the abused to apply to these bodies.
- The survey has shown that different forms of violence are sometimes committed against children by teachers at secondary and especially special schools. Thus, teachers should also be trained in order to gain more knowledge on the matter. Besides, different programs are to be initiated in which children will take part, too. Particularly these programs are to include such activities as children's self-appraisal, increase of legal knowledge, improvement of parent(s)-school interrelations.
- Results of the survey have shown that especially in unilateral and bilateral families, neglect, psychological and physical abuse retains a comparatively higher level. In order to overcome these forms of violence, it is necessary carry out activities making people become more competent and well informed about the matter. Particularly, it is important to raise awareness on parental duties and realize educational programs about child rights in communities.
- According to the survey results, certain forms of abuse of children retain a comparatively higher rate especially in rural areas of the Republic of Armenia and in some small towns. They are also widely spread among rural people of middle generation having a lower education level. This mainly refers to risk-families. In order to prevent violence people need to become well informed.

Thus, it is necessary to activate the role of mass media, to publish articles touching the problem, develop TV and radio programs and to manage constant distribution of the information among wider circles of the society. It is necessary to provide available information for people living in rural areas.

- The survey-respondents have attached importance to the creation of hot-line service that will give an opportunity to receive safe consultation and support about prevention of violence against children. Technical problems that may arise in managing these services in rural areas should be paid a special attention to.
- As an important means of preventing children from violence, the survey-respondents have suggested to develop consultation services via which parents and children will receive free psychological and legal consultations about violence and ways of overcoming it.
- Activization of NGOs dealing with such problems, increase of information among the population, evaluation of NGOs – population mutual trust.
- The survey results have shown that both in unilateral / bilateral orphans' and two / three generation families some forms of violence, particularly slapping, beating, swearing restrictions, are accepted and perceived as means of upbringing. Thus it is necessary to take adequate steps to make people change their opinion.
- The survey has made it clear that children are mainly punished by mothers of younger and middle generation. It is necessary to take their knowledge about upbringing to a new level. Thus, it is important to hold trainings on the matter among these circles of the population.
- According to the survey results, parent(s) or guardians, abusing children, are mostly under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- The improvement of the legal knowledge of the population, this promoting legal protection of children.
- Realization of medical and rehabilitation programs to liquidate consequences of physical and sexual abuse.

**Table 2.7****Children's problems are mainly concerned with**

	Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families		Two/three - generation families	
1. food	378	74.4 %	59	19,2 %
2. clothes	417	82.1 %	112	36,4 %
3. acquisition of text-books	155	30.5 %	89	28,9 %
4. writing materials	215	42.3 %	68	22,1 %
5. expenses for school parties	270	53.1 %	102	33,1 %
6. payment for extra classes	314	61.8 %	142	46,1 %
7. upbringing	56	11.0 %	16	5,2 %
8. conduct	13	2.6 %	6	1,9 %
9. educational progress	53	10.4 %	22	7,1 %
10. contact with teachers	25	4.9 %	12	3,9 %
11. contact with other children	28	5.5 %	15	4,9 %
12. contact with other members of family	16	3.1 %	5	1,6 %

**Table 2.13****Family conflict subjects in unilateral and bilateral orphans' families**

1. mother and children	169	67.3 %
2. mother and her parents	5	2.0 %
3. mother and her husband's parents	33	13.1 %
4. grandmother(father) and grandchildren	27	10.8 %
5. a bilateral orphan and his/her sister(brother)	12	4.8 %
6. a bilateral orphan and his/her mother's relatives	8	3.2 %
7. a bilateral orphan and his/her father's relatives	14	5.6 %
8. children themselves	21	8.4 %
9. other members of family	18	7.2 %

**Table 2.14****Family conflict subjects in two/three generation families**

1. husband and wife	206	81,1 %
2. husband and his parents	26	10,2 %
3. son-in-law and daughter-in-law's parents	7	2,8 %
4. daughter-in-law and son-in-law's parents	37	14,6 %
5. wife (daughter-in-law) and her parents	2	0,8 %
6. father and children	44	17,3 %
7. mother and children	73	28,7 %
8. grandmother (father) and grandchildren	15	5,9 %
9. children	45	17,7 %
10. other members of the family	9	3,5 %



**Table 3.1****Reasons of committing violence against children**

	Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families		Two/three - generation families	
1. difficult financial conditions	216	86.1%	151	59,4 %
2. housing conditions	118	47.0 %	104	40,9 %
3. unemployment	111	44.2 %	84	33,1 %
4. tense atmosphere of family	41	16.3 %	25	9,8 %
5. loutish character, pertinacity, selfishness	55	21.9 %	64	25,2 %
6. disagreement in upbringing of children	38	15.1 %	76	29,9 %
7. difference of worldview, including religion	19	7.6 %	16	6,3 %
8. cosmopolitism	3	1.2 %	8	3,1 %
9. disrespectfulness to parents and relatives	15	6.0 %	15	5,9 %
10. jealousy	19	7.6 %	39	15,4 %
11. unequal sharing of house work	33	13.1 %	38	15 %
12. negative attitude of other relatives to wife/husband	19	7.6 %	17	6,7 %
13. affection to alcohol	3	1.2 %	20	7,9 %
14. affection to drugs	0	0.0 %	3	1,2 %

**Table 4****Forms of violence committed upon children**

	Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families		Two/three - generation families	
1. remark	144	57,4 %	110	43.3 %
2. wrangling	65	25,9 %	63	24.8 %
3. constant scolding	39	15,5 %	30	11.8 %
4. rude way of speaking	36	14,3 %	38	15.0 %
5. bad language (swearing)	7	2,8 %	17	6.7 %
6. frightening	20	8,0 %	14	5.5 %
7. threatening with fist	6	2,4 %	6	2.4 %
8. threatening with objects of everyday usage	3	1,2 %	4	1.6 %
9. threatening with knife	0	0,0 %	2	0.8 %
10. restrictions to contact with relatives, friends	11	4,4 %	8	3.1%
11. restrictions to hobbies	19	7,6 %	15	5.9 %
12. slapping	70	27,9 %	57	22.4 %
13. beating up to injures	11	4,4 %	3	1.2 %
14. hitting by knife or other subjects	1	0,4 %	0	0.0 %
15. sexual abuse	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %

**Table 4.1.1****Opinions of children from vulnerable families**

	1. male		2. female	
1. getting angry	247	47 %	263	47,9 %
2. rebuking in the presence of others	31	5,8 %	32	5,9 %
3. not letting go out	100	19,8 %	74	15.5 %
4. not letting meet with friends	67	12,2 %	53	9,6 %
5. not letting watch TV	65	13.8 %	47	16.5 %
6. restrictions to favorite food/things (toys)	14	2.7 %	10	1.7 %
7. not giving money	86	17.8%	80	14.2 %
8. isolation	12	2.2 %	8	1.5 %
9. pushing ears	45	8.2 %	34	4.7 %
10. using bad language (swearing)	1.0	1.9 %	9	1.6 %
11. slapping	82	15 %	57	13.6 %
12. beating (with hand, stick, belt)	49	10.9 %	36	6.5 %
13. removing from house	5	0.9 %	4	0.8 %
14. threatening that they will leave you	2	0.4 %	2	04 %

**Table 5.1**

	1.rebuke		2.get angry		3.threaten		4.make the child stand in the corner		5. hurt with an object.		6.pull ears	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
1. in case of disobeying teachers	38	62.3	34	55.7	3	4.9	5	8.2	0	0.0	4	6.6
2. in case of spoiling school furniture	23	37.7	29	47.5	1	1.6	3	4.9	0	0.0	1	1.6
3. uncarefulness towards text-books and notebooks	32	52.5	26	42.6	1	1.6	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
4. in case of quarreling at school	21	34.4	30	49.2	1	1.6	5	8.2	0	0.0	2	3.3
5. in case of disturbing classes	27	44.3	25	41.0	2	3.3	6	9.8	0	0.0	3	4.9
6. slipping away from the lessons	12	19.7	12	19.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	3.3
7. being late for classes	31	50.8	12	19.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
8. lying	27	44.3	24	39.3	1	1.6	3	4.9	2	3.3	6	9.8
9. not doing the lessons	24	39.3	16	26.2	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.6
10. not doing well on classes	23	37.7	13	21.3	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
11. using a bad language (swearing)	16	26.2	19	31.1	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	4.9
12. smoking	8	13.1	6	9.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.6
13. use of alcohol	3	4.9	5	8.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
14. use of drugs	1	1.6	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.6

	7.slapping	%	8.beating	%	9.turning out from classes	%	10.taking to the school headmaster	%	11.sending for a parent	%	12.expelling from school	%	13.not punishing	%
1. in case of disobeying teachers	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	8.2	8	13.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
2. in case of spoiling school furniture	0	0.0	1	1.6	0	0.0	5	8.2	24	39.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
3. uncarefulness towards texts-books and notebooks	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.6	6	9.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
4. in case of quarreling at school	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	16	26.2	14	23.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
5. in case of disturbing classes	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	3.3	3	4.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
6. in case of slipping away from the lessons	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	13	21.3	26	42.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
7. in case of being late for classes	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	3.3	0	0.0	1	1.6
8. in case of lying	2	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	9.8	4	6.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
9. in case of not doing the lessons	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.6	3	4.9	0	0.0	1	1.6
10. in case of not doing well on classes	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	19.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
11. in case of using a bad language	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	3.3	6	9.8	0	0.0	1	1.6
12. in case of smoking	2	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	9.8	13	21.3	1	1.6	0	0.0
13. in case of using alcohol	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	6.6	8	13.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
14. in case of using drugs	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	3.3	4	6.6	1	1.6	0	0.0

**Table 7.1**

**Children's reaction to conflicts**

	Unilateral and bilateral orphans' families		Two/three - generation families	
1. I try to explain everything and come to a compromise	232	92.4 %	218	85,8 %
2. I answer in a rude manner	63	25.1 %	72	28,3 %
3. I turn to husband's parents	23	9.2 %	16	6,3 %
4. I turn to wife's parents	8	3.2 %	10	3,9 %
5. I turn to other members of family	16	6.4 %	4	1,6 %
6. I turn to neighbors	33	13.1 %	10	3,9 %
7. I turn to doctors	5	2.0 %	0	0 %
8. I turn to psychologists	5	2.0 %	0	0 %
9. I apply to an institution protecting human rights	2	0.8 %	0	0 %
10. I apply to competent government bodies	6	2.4 %	0	0 %



**Table 8.1.**

“Permitted” punitive measures for boys and for girls from both unilateral / bilateral orphans’ and two/three generation families.

	for girls		for boys		for girls		for boys	
1. getting angry	411	74.7%	415	75.5%	249	80.8%	259	84.1%
2. threatening	49	8.9 %	94	17.7 %	36	11.7 %	50	16.2 %
3. rebuking in the presence of others	9	1.6 %	14	2.5 %	9	2.9 %	21	6.8 %
4. frightening	23	4.2 %	49	8.9 %	18	5.8 %	26	8.4 %
5. not allowing to go out	138	25.1 %	190	34.5 %	101	32.8 %	126	40.9 %
6. not allowing to meet friends	109	19.8 %	157	28.5 %	52	16.9 %	79	25.6 %
7. not allowing to watch TV	108	19.6 %	113	20.5 %	75	24.4 %	81	26.3 %
8. depriving of favourite food and things	13	2.4 %	18	3.3 %	12	3.9 %	11	3.6 %
9. not giving money	104	18.9 %	138	25.1 %	65	21.1 %	80	26.0 %
10. isolation	18	3.3 %	26	4.7 %	26	8.4 %	32	10.4 %
11. pulling ears	26	4.7 %	65	11.8 %	33	10.7 %	53	17.2 %
12. restrictions to hobbies	36	6.5 %	42	7.6 %	22	7.1 %	31	10.1 %
13. using a bad language (swearing)	7	1.3 %	11	2.0 %	5	1.6 %	16	5.2 %
14. slapping	74	13.5 %	134	24.4 %	71	23.1 %	94	30.5 %
15. beating	22	4.0 %	61	11.1 %	24	7.8 %	40	13.0 %
16. sending to a boarding school	5	0.9 %	6	1.1%	3	1.0 %	3	1.0 %
17. turning out of the house	2	0.4 %	5	0.9 %	2	0.6 %	2	0.6 %
18. menacing by saying you will leave him/her	5	0.9 %	9	1.6 %	10	3.2 %	13	4.2 %

**Table 8.2**

**Perception of violence in unilateral and bilateral orphans’ families**

	1.it is violence		2. it is partly violence		3.it is not violence		5. it is difficult to answer	
1. rebuke	9	1.6 %	29	5.3 %	472	85.8 %	36	6.5%
2. wrangling	32	5.8 %	95	17.3 %	364	66.2 %	53	9.6%
3. constant scolding	131	23.8 %	122	22.2 %	211	38.4 %	83	15.1 %
4. rude way of speaking	133	24.2 %	168	30.5 %	200	36.4 %	46	8.4 %
5. bad language	285	51.8 %	121	22.0 %	94	17.1 %	50	9.1 %
6. frightening	283	51.5 %	136	24.7 %	72	13.1 %	52	9.5 %
7. menacing with fist	373	67.8 %	82	14.9 %	45	8.2 %	48	8.7 %
8. menacing with objects of everyday use	394	71.6 %	76	13.8 %	29	5.3 %	45	8.2%
9. menacing with knife	443	80.5 %	55	10.0 %	13	2.4 %	35	6.4 %
10. restrictions to contacts with relatives, friends	241	43.8 %	114	20.7 %	107	19.5%	77	14.0 %
11. restrictions to hobbies	213	38.7 %	114	20.7 %	127	23.1 %	86	15.6%
12. slapping	241	43.8 %	117	21.3 %	136	24.7 %	45	8.2 %
13. beating (injuring)	496	90.2 %	17	3.1 %	9	1.6 %	26	4.7 %
14. injuring with a knife	524	95.3 %	6	1.1 %	4	0.7 %	15	2.7 %
15. sexual abuse	530	96.4 %	7	1.3 %	2	0.4 %	4	0.7 %

**Table 8.3****Perception of violence in two-three generation families**

	1.it is violence		2. it is partly violence		3.it is not violence		5. it is difficult to answer	
1. rebuke	12	3.9%	24	7.8 %	261	84.7%	18	5.8%
2. wrangling	18	5.8 %	56	18.2 %	217	70.5 %	26	8.4 %
3. constant scolding	94	30.5 %	86	27.9 %	118	38.3 %	14	4.5 %
4. rude way of speaking	82	26.6%	84	27.3 %	124	40.3 %	22	7.1 %
5. bad language	154	50.0 %	52	16.9 %	91	29.5 %	12	3. %9
6. frightening	195	63.3%	58	18.8 %	47	15.3 %	11	3.6 %
7. menacing with fist	252	81.8 %	35	11.4 %	21	6.8 %	4	1.3%
8. menacing with objects of everyday use	265	86.0 %	27	8.8 %	16	5.2 %	3	1.0 %
9. menacing with knife	284	92.2 %	8	2.6 %	13	4.2%	4	1.3 %
10. restrictions to contacts with relatives, friends	193	62.7 %	63	20.5%	49	15.9%	8	2.6 %
11. restrictions to hobbies	179	58.1 %	71	23.1 %	55	17.9 %	9	2.9%
12. slapping	145	47.1 %	79	25.6%	79	25.6 %	10	3.2%
13. beating (injuring)	301	97.7%	0	0.0 %	6	1.9 %	1	0.3 %
14. injuring with a knife	305	99.0 %	0	0.0 %	2	0.6 %	0	0.0 %
15. sexual abuse	303	98.4 %	0	0.0 %	2	0.6 %	1	0.3 %

**Table 8.4****Perception of violence among experts**

	1.it is violence		2. it is partly violence		3.it is not violence		5. it is difficult to answer	
1. wrangling	5	9.4 %	10	18.9 %	35	66.0 %	0	0.0 %
2. rebuke	12	22.6 %	19	35.8 %	21	39.6 %	0	0.0 %
3. a rude way of speaking	15	28.3 %	18	34.0 %	20	37.7 %	0	0.0 %
4. a bad language (swearing)	32	60.4 %	3	5.7 %	15	28.3 %	1	1.9 %
5. menacing with fist	47	88.7 %	5	9.4 %	1	1.9 %	0	0.0 %
6. frightening	38	71.7 %	10	18.9 %	3	5.7 %	0	0.0 %
7. menacing with objects of everyday use	47	88.7 %	5	9.4 %	1	1.9 %	0	0.0 %
8. menacing with knife	50	94.3 %	1	1.9 %	1	1.9 %	0	0.0 %
9. restrictions to contact with relatives, friends	33	62.3 %	15	28.3 %	1	1.9 %	2	3.8 %
10. restrictions to hobbies	20	37.7 %	25	47.2 %	6	11.3 %	1	1.9 %
11 slapping	39	73.6 %	13	24.5 %	2	3.8 %	0	0.0 %
12. beating (injuring)	52	98.1 %	1	1.9 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
13. hitting with a knife	52	98.1 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
14. sexual abuse	52	98.1 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %





