

## **Ideal community relations with abused children and their parents**

### 1. Motivation behind Research Paper

We researched the relationship between children and the community. The motivation for my research interest in this subject came from a movie I happened to see on YouTube when I was in junior high school called *Sinking in the Womb*. This film is based on an actual incident. This case refers to an incident that occurred on July 30, 2010, when a three-year-old girl and one-year--and-nine-month-old boy starved to death in an apartment in Osaka West Ward due to their mother's neglect. The dead bodies were found after fifty days. Until the discovery of the body, there had been several reports to the Child Guidance Center of suspected abuse, such as the sound of a child crying, but it was never discovered. This case brought the word "neglect" to the public's attention.

The story is about a mother, father, and two children living in a family of four. She was a loving and caring mother to her three-year-old daughter and one-year-old son, but when her husband divorced her, she became a single mother. She started a new life and tried to be a good mother, but raising two young children by herself was difficult both emotionally and financially. With no one around to rely on, she was overwhelmed with childcare, housework, and work, and her neglect of her children escalated. The film vividly depicts the children's desperate attempts to survive as they are left alone in their apartment in the middle of summer. The film was also

recognized as a recommended film for the Orange Ribbon Campaign run by the National Network for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

The Orange Ribbon Campaign is a citizen's movement, run by the NPO National Network for the Prevention of Child Abuse, that calls for the elimination of child abuse by promoting the orange ribbon as a symbol of child abuse prevention. This movement to eliminate misery is growing with each passing year. I found this film to be a painful film to watch because I felt like I was seeing neglect in a very real way. The incident is tragic enough to be made into a film and this is a real problem in today's society in Japan, where abuse is becoming more and more serious every year.

## 2. Introduction

The aim of this research paper is to identify what impact the dilution of the community will have.

According to the statistics on the crime situation in 2021 released by the National Police Agency on February 3, 2022, 108,050 children under the age of 18 were notified to child guidance centers nationwide on suspicion of child abuse, the highest number ever recorded. Psychological abuse involving verbal abuse and violence accounted for the largest number of cases at 80,000, accounting for 70% of the total.

In the number of consultations on abuse received by Child Guidance Centers in 2021, psychological abuse also accounted for the largest percentage, followed by

physical abuse in second place. The overall increase in the number of abuse consultations also indicates that the number of children being abused by those around them is increasing rather than decreasing.

According to Miraikko Hiroba at the Child Rearing Support Information, one of the causes of abuse is the increased burden of child-rearing on a single adult. Why is the burden of child-rearing on a single adult so great? Why is abuse so difficult to detect? My hypothesis is as follows. The weakening of community ties and the lack of social activities reaching children may lead to the burden on parents and the cause of not being able to detect child abuse.

Information will be gathered on how community relations are currently changing by looking at credible websites and articles, and what society is doing to protect children from abuse, and I will also verify whether my hypothesis is correct by actually interacting with children.

### 3. Results and Analysis

The shift to nuclear families and the weakening of local communities means that people tend to complete child-rearing at home alone. These days, many people do not greet their neighbours or do not know what kind of people live around them. There are three factors that contribute to abuse caused by the weakening of the community: parental factors, child factors, and environmental factors. Parental factors include childcare anxiety, life stress, illness, and mental instability. Child factors are mainly developmental delays and disabilities. Environmental factors

include unstable marital relationships, economic insecurity, and isolation from the community.

In society, various activities are being undertaken to protect children and relieve some of their stress. For example, there is the "Children's SOS Dial," a 24-hour telephone consultation service. All prefectural and City Boards of Education are implementing this service to make it easier for children to report bullying and other emergencies anytime, anywhere in Japan, including at night and on holidays.

Children's cafeterias, established in 2011, provide free or inexpensive nutritious meals and warm gatherings to children, their parents, and community members who are unable to eat. They have a variety of benefits, such as a solution to orphaned and malnourished children, a safe place for children to feel secure, a chance to talk to others, and a place to release stress.

However, despite these activities, the number of child abuse cases in Japan today is not decreasing, but rather increasing every year. In addition, I often see news reports of children losing their lives because the adults around them fail to recognize their abuse. In my opinion, although it appears on the surface that all children are being saved, in fact, only a small percentage of children are receiving this kind of support from society.

Children's cafeterias have become famous and have been widely reported on TV and in the mass media, and some children may feel uncomfortable going to such cafeterias because they do not want to be pitied because of the image that a

children's cafeteria is a poverty alleviation measure. According to a survey conducted in 2005 by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, to ascertain the status of local communities in urban and rural areas, 40% of respondents in 15 cities were not involved with their local communities, and 40% of respondents in towns and villages were involved but not close to them. What is the reason for the increasing dilution of communities in the first place?

According to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism, until now, local residents have helped each other in their daily lives and played an important role in ensuring the safety and security of the community in the event of a disaster. However, with social changes such as a declining population, an ageing society with fewer children, and population mobility, local ties are becoming weaker and local communities are declining.

To reduce the factors, it is important to have a close relationship with neighbours. It is about fostering a relationship where people can support each other in raising their children. People who are anxious about child rearing or who are abusive may feel relieved if they have even one person around them who will listen to them, and something may change. There are a variety of activities in the community, such as daycare centres, children's centres, community child-rearing support centres, child-rearing support groups, and public services.

Opportunities for parents and children to have fun together in peace, as well as services that allow parents to leave their children temporarily in case of emergency, will help reduce the burden on parents. It will be necessary for the entire

community to look after children in order to create an environment in which they can spend time comfortably and feel comfortable to confide in others about their problems. As an example, I would like to introduce a candy shop started by a friend of mine. The name "Colere", comes from the Latin words for culture and cultivation. Unlike a regular candy shop, children of all ages can buy candy, but they can also bring their homework from school, play their favourite songs on instruments, have people from overseas come to visit and teach them English, eat dinner with them when they eat alone, etc. The children are encouraged to be independent. When we asked him what the purpose of the program was, he said that he started it because he wanted to communicate with the children and also create a place where children, adults, and local people can all be equally involved regardless of age. He said he would be happy if the children could go there to play, talk about what happened that day, and have a fun place to stay.

When I went to visit, I also helped children with their homework, played with them, and talked with them. When I talked to the parents who came with their children, they told me that they appreciated having a place like this when they couldn't take care of their children, and that they felt safe knowing that their children went to this place to play.

#### 4. Conclusion and Future Problems

As a result of the survey, it was found that the further dilution of the community has the effect of not noticing the voice of the child and the isolation of the parents. It is necessary to exchange greetings with neighbours and actively interact with local people by participating in activities to notice small changes in children. The

entire community should watch over and train children, which will reduce the load on parents and prevent them from having to raise their children alone, thereby helping to prevent abuse.

Although the Corona Disaster prevents contact with people, it will be necessary to create a society in which children and their parents can easily voice their need for help

## 5. Reflection

I had not paid much attention to news of abuse before, but this research has made me look at news of abuse that has happened so far. I began to look into and think again about why it happened and the role of child guidance centres. There are few opportunities to notice child abuse in our daily lives, but with a little community involvement, we may be able to notice small changes. It is impossible for me alone to eliminate abuse, but small actions such as helping parents and children in need when I see them in my daily life may provide emotional support for parents and children. From now on, I will try to live my life by paying attention to my surroundings and exchanging greetings with my neighbours.

## 6. Work Cited

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