



YOUTH GANGING: WHO ARE THEY AND THE AFFILIATION MODE OF YOUTH GANGS TO THE CITY OF COLOMBO IN SRI LANKA

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Colombo is considered as a city that provides great opportunities for Gangs. Some of the gang members are born in Colombo while others have become residents owing to their marriage, employment or being unauthorized dwellers. Thereby they could become either founders in forming gangs or co-partners of existing groups. Most of them were unauthorized dwellers, yet, they believe that they are owners of their settlements ignoring the status of illegal occupancy. With such a grievous mentality those youth who were born in streets and grew up as street children without legal ownership of any land tend to find a permanent place for settling, eventually building a mentality to behave like heroic bandits. The geographical ownership inherited from their ancestors also considered whereas, some youth get opportunity to join gangs through senior gangsters, friends, or relatives. Other than the residential qualifications, there were other supportive elements for youth to join gangs in urban context. The Research focused on 493 identified youth gang members belonging to 75 gangs within 14 GN divisions in Colombo city, belonging to the age group of 18 – 32 years. All the said gangs and the gang members were identified within the study area through a snowball technique using available contacts and via the data gathered using formal research methods. In addressing the above, this paper has been developed to understand the concept of, Youth Ganging: Who are they and the factors that play a pivotal part in sustaining them on the streets, giving specific emphasis to youth gangs operating in Colombo and suburbs. In supplementing, the research focused on areas to ascertain the expansion way through their conflicts and negative impact youth gangs have on the lives of general public in the specified area.

Keywords: *affiliation mode, Ganging, Urban context, Youth*