

# Implementation of Child Protection Policies and Programs on the Selected Schools in First District of Camarines Sur

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## **Abstract**

Children is one of the most valuable assets of the state, every effort should be exerted to promote their welfare and enhance children's opportunities for a useful life. By this, it is also essential for the different schools to formulate and implement the policies for child protection to enhance the child's capability in the different learning institutions. The main objective of the study is to determine the extent of implementation of child protection policies and programs in the selected schools of the First District of Camarines Sur. This also aims to identify a) the status of child abuse in the selected schools of the first district, along with sexual harassment, discrimination, exploitation, bullying, and physical violence, b) activities/intervention programs initiated by the school on child protection, and c) problems encountered in the implementation of child protection. The descriptive-evaluative-comparative research method was used to determine the programs for the prevention of violence against children in selected schools in 1st District of Camarines Sur. The findings revealed that there were reported cases of child abuse both in grade school and secondary school. Cases of bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, and exploitation are the forms of child abuse reported in the First District of Camarines Sur. The level of implementation of child protection policies and programs in selected schools of the First District in Camarines Sur is highly implemented in policies on physical violence, sexual violence, and psychological violence. However, the child protection policy on bullying is only implemented. The main problem that is being encountered in the implementation of child protection policy is financial incapacity to support the policies and programs. To address the following issues, it is recommended that every school must improve and strictly implement its child protection policies, most especially in bullying. The guidance counselor must also take records of bullying that is happening among the four corners of the rooms in order to address the abuses that are being settled by respective advisers and to take measures and give necessary counseling to the victims of such abuse.

**Keywords:** Child Protection, Policies and Programs, Prevention of Child Abuse

## **1. Introduction**

Children is one of the most valuable assets of the state, every effort should be exerted to promote their welfare and enhance children's opportunities for a useful life. By this it is also essential for the different schools to formulate and implement the policies for child protection to enhance the child's capability in the different learning institutions.

The Department of Education (DepEd) recognizes the vulnerability of every children in different forms of abuse, these resulted in formulation of various guidelines and procedure for the purpose of child protection. The issuance of these guidelines and procedures supports the DepEd Child Protection Policy also known as DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 and the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA No.10627 also known as Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 as well as the prohibition of the practice of hazing and the operation of fraternities and sororities in elementary and secondary schools which is stipulated in DepEd Order No.7, s. 2006.

Statistically speaking according to the study of McCloskey & Raphael (2005) 95 percent of sexually abused children will be abused by someone they know, and trust and males made up 90 percent of adult child sexual assault perpetrators, while 3.9 percent of perpetrators were female, with a further 6 percent classified as 'unknown gender'. As many of 40 percent of children who are sexually abused are abused by older, or more powerful children.

Based on the report of Department of Education (DepEd) a total of 6,363 cases of bullying in public as well as private elementary and high schools were recorded in 2014, up nearly 21 percent versus the 5,236 documented in 2013, based on a cycle of 201 school days, this translates to at least 31 incidents of bullying every day. There was a total of 228 cases of "child abuse" in schools in 2014, down from the 999 incidents listed in 2013. A total of 1,165 incidents of bullying plus 291 cases of child abuse were

Based on the resource guide of the UNICEF in their manual "Policy and Programming Resource Guide for Child Protection Systems Strengthening in Sub-Saharan Africa" which declares that protecting children against abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation is an obligation shared by many different actors, involving different elements of government as well as a broad array of civil society agencies and communities. A "child protection system", then, can be defined as a comprehensive and sustainable approach to preventing and responding to child protection issues, comprising the set of laws, policies, regulations and services required across all social sectors – especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice – to respond to and prevent protection-related risks.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

Descriptive method was used to determine the status of child abuse in selected schools and the activities/ intervention programs initiated by the school on child protection. Evaluative method was used to determine the extent of implementation of child protection policies and problems encountered in the implementation of child protection policy.

### **2.1 Respondents of the Study**

This study was conducted in different schools in the 1st District of Camarines Sur. This study covers the different school levels, grade school, high school. This study used purposive sampling method in order to arrive in the number of respondents. The respondents of this study comprise of 10 school heads, 100 teachers and 70 parents with a total of 280 respondents in the selected schools in First District of Camarines Sur.

## 2.2 Research Instrument

This study used survey questionnaires for the purpose of determining the implementation of Child Protection Policy in different Schools of 1st of Camarines Sur. The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part is about the personal information of the respondents which include questions on the name and type of respondents and the second part is questions on the indications under the level of implementation of child protection policies being implemented by the schools for the prevention of violence against children.

## 2.3 Statistical Tool

The researcher used the following tools for the analysis and interpretation of data. Weighted mean, frequency count, and percentage technique was used to describe the level of implementation of child protection policy being implemented in the different schools of 1<sup>st</sup> District of Camarines Sur.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Status of Child Abuse

The status of child abuse in selected schools in First District were determined by means of the rampant cases of child abuse or those recorded cases along sexual harassment, discrimination, exploitation, bullying and physical violence. These are the cases that has been recorded in both primary and secondary schools.

**Table 1. Status of Child Abuse in the Selected Schools of the First District**

School	Sexual Har- assment	Discrimination	Exploitation	Bullying and Physi- cal Violence	TOTAL	%
A	0	2	0	8	<b>10</b>	<b>8.2</b>
B	0	0	0	11	<b>11</b>	<b>9.0</b>
C	1	1	0	10	<b>12</b>	<b>9.8</b>
D	1	1	0	3	<b>5</b>	<b>4.1</b>
E	1	2	0	8	<b>11</b>	<b>9.0</b>
F	0	1	0	5	<b>6</b>	<b>5.0</b>
G	3	6	0	23	<b>32</b>	<b>26.2</b>
H	0	1	0	15	<b>16</b>	<b>13.1</b>
I	1	0	1	12	<b>14</b>	<b>11.5</b>
J	0	0	0	5	<b>5</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 presents the status of child abuse in selected Schools in First District of Camarines Sur. The School G has recorded the most cases of child abuse with 32 cases or 26.2 percent. This includes the highest number of abuses in the forms of sexual harassment with 3 cases, discrimination with 6, bullying and physical violence with 23 recorded cases. It was followed by School H with 16 recorded cases or 13.1 percent. The School I have 14 cases of child abuse or 11.5 percent, this is only the school which recorded a case of exploitation among their students. School B and the School E has both recorded 11 cases of child abuse or 9.0 percent. School A has 10 cases or 8.2 percent. School F with only 6 cases of

child abuse or 5.0 percent, and both School D and School J has the least cases of child abuse which is only 5 cases or 4.1 percent.

This implies that child abuse cases are present both in primary and secondary schools. Bullying cases has been recorded as one of the most form of child abuse in different schools of First District followed by discrimination and sexual harassment and exploitation as the least form of child abuse case recorded. Some of the schools failed to record the cases of child abuse because it is being settled and contained in the four corners of the classroom before it will be endorsed to the proper forum.

The result further implies that the cases of child abuse is considered as rampant depending on the type of municipality both schools who is under the 1st class municipality has recorded the most number of cases of child abuse while those who are in 3rd and 2nd class of municipality has recorded the least cases of child abuse.

### 3.2 Level of Implementation of Child Protection Policies

The level of implementation of child protection policies in the selected Schools of First District of Camarines Sur were assessed in the aspects of physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence and bullying. These were shown and discussed on tables 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, and 2E. There are four groups of respondents including teachers, parents school heads and students had appraised the level of implementation of aforesaid aspects.

Table 2a presents the Level of Implementation of Child Protection Policies on Physical Violence as evaluated by the school heads, teachers, students and parents of selected schools of first district. The Parents have the highest rate with an overall mean of 3.48, followed by the teachers with an overall mean of 3.45 interpreted, and the school heads with an overall mean of 3.43, and by the students with an overall mean of 3.26. With total overall mean of 3.40 interpreted as highly implemented.

**Table 2A. Level of Implementation of Child Protection Policies along Physical Violence**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>OM</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>R</b>
Establishes a child protection committee	3.50	3.42	3.50	3.48	<b>3.47</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>1</b>
Applies positive and non-violent discipline	3.38	3.63	3.21	3.52	<b>3.43</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>2</b>
Integrates education sessions on corporal positive discipline	3.38	3.33	3.43	3.50	<b>3.41</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>3</b>
Develops strategies to address the risk factors that contribute to the commission of acts of abuse and violence	3.38	3.54	3.06	3.48	<b>3.36</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>4</b>
Encourages and supports student-led initiatives to raise awareness on children’s rights	3.50	3.34	3.11	3.42	<b>3.34</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Overall Mean (OM)</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>3.26</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>HI</b>	
<b>Interpretation (I)</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>		
<b>Rank (R)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>			

\*Highly Implemented (HI) \*(A) School Head, (B) Teacher, (C) Student, (D) Parent

The table reveals that child protection policies concerning physical violence are highly implemented in terms of establishing a child protection committee, promoting positive and non-violent discipline, integrating education sessions, developing strategies to address risk factors of abuse, and supporting student-led initiatives on children's rights awareness. Thus, schools are encouraged to sustain and strengthen these implementations. This implies that schools are fulfilling their responsibility in minimizing child abuse cases. Teachers and school heads are further encouraged to support student-led activities that promote awareness of children's rights. This is supported by Maximo et al. (2014), who emphasized that effective parenting and strong parent-child emotional bonds serve as protective factors against bullying, highlighting the need for authoritative parenting styles, consistent emotional support, and assertiveness training for victims.

Table 2b presents the Level of Implementation of Child Protection Policies on Sexual Violence as evaluated by school head, teachers, parents and students in selected schools of first district. The school head have the highest overall mean of 3.40, teacher and parent both with an over all mean of 3.34, and student with an over all mean of 3.31. With the overall mean of 3.35 interpreted as highly implemented.

**Table 2B. Level of Implementation of Child Protection Policies along Sexual Violence**

Indicators	A	B	C	D	OM	I	R
Prevents students to watch obscene publications and indecent shows	3.50	3.45	3.57	3.39	<b>3.48</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>1</b>
Reviews the instructional materials and methods of instruction that must not contain any forms obscene language or suggestive remarks	3.38	3.45	3.45	3.33	<b>3.40</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>2</b>
Conducts awareness campaign in using modes of instructions that is free from using obscene language	3.38	3.47	3.25	3.42	<b>3.38</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>3</b>
Prevents sexually suggestive remarks	3.38	3.26	3.24	3.27	<b>3.29</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>4</b>
Handles cases of rape, sexual harassment and acts of lasciviousness properly	3.38	3.07	3.02	3.26	<b>3.18</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Overall Mean (OM)</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>3.34</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>3.34</b>	<b>3.35</b>	<b>HI</b>	
<b>Interpretation (I)</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>		
<b>Rank (R)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.5</b>			

\*Highly Implemented (HI) \*(A) School Head, (B) Teacher, (C) Student, (D) Parent

The findings show that child protection policies on sexual violence in selected schools in the first district are highly implemented in areas such as preventing students from accessing obscene materials, reviewing instructional materials for inappropriate content, and conducting awareness campaigns promoting respectful language. However, handling cases of rape, sexual harassment, and acts of lasciviousness obtained an overall mean of 3.18, interpreted as implemented.

This implies that school-level cases are being addressed appropriately, while more serious cases such as rape are referred to proper authorities, including the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Philippine National Police (PNP). This is supported by Rafferty (2013), who noted that

child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) are among the fastest growing criminal activities globally, further underscoring the importance of strong child protection policies in schools.

**Table 2C. Level of Implementation of Child Protection Policies along Psychological Violence**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>OM</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>R</b>
Conducts seminars or symposium on the children’s rights	3.38	3.25	3.55	3.21	<b>3.35</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>1</b>
Prevents child humiliation during classroom discussions	3.38	3.48	3.19	3.33	<b>3.34</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>2.5</b>
Introduces specific parenting orientation sessions with parents and caregivers	3.31	3.31	3.44	3.30	<b>3.34</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>2.5</b>
Prevents teachers or instructors not to use their authority to threat children on their grades as a form of punishment	3.38	3.37	3.18	3.35	<b>3.32</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>4</b>
Prevents children from public ridicule or repeated verbal abuse	3.38	3.47	3.05	3.29	<b>3.30</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Overall Mean (OM)</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>3.28</b>	<b>3.30</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>HI</b>	
<b>Interpretation (I)</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>		
<b>Rank (R)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>			

\*Highly Implemented (HI) \*(A) School Head, (B) Teacher, (C) Student, (D) Parent

Table 2c presents the Level of Implementation of Child Protection Policies on Psychological Violence as evaluated by school head, teachers, parents and students in selected schools of first district. The teacher has the highest overall mean of 3.38, the school head with overall mean of 3.36, parent with an overall mean of 3.30, and students with overall mean of 3.28. With the total over all mean of 3.33, interpreted as highly implemented. The findings show that child protection policies on psychological violence in the selected schools of the First District of Camarines Sur are highly implemented across all indicators, including conducting seminars on children's rights, preventing child humiliation during classroom discussions, providing parenting orientation sessions, prohibiting the use of grades as a threat, and protecting children from public ridicule and repeated verbal abuse. Therefore, schools are encouraged to maintain and sustain the implementation of child protection policies on psychological violence.

This implies that schools are actively conducting awareness campaigns against child abuse. However, verbal reprimands remain a commonly accepted form of correction, provided they are used minimally and do not constitute abuse. This is supported by Hart (2011), who emphasized that children worldwide continue to experience high levels of physical and psychological violence, and that international concern over violence against children has grown considerably in recent years.

Table 2d presents the Level of Implementation of Child Protection Policies on Bullying as evaluated by school head, teachers, parents and students in selected schools of first district. The parents have the highest overall mean of 3.43 interpreted as highly implemented. The school heads have an overall mean of 3.30 interpreted as highly implemented. Teachers have an overall mean of 3.27 which is interpreted as

highly implemented, however results fall in the part of students with overall mean of 2.97 interpreted only as implemented.

**Table 2D. Level of Implementation of Child Protection Policies along Bullying**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>OM</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>R</b>
Prevents threats that would inflict a wrong upon the person's, honor or property of the person or family	3.31	3.37	3.55	3.45	<b>3.42</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>1</b>
Establishes an anti-bullying program in school	3.25	3.42	3.42	3.52	<b>3.40</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>2</b>
Organizes stakeholder assembly for a campaign against anti- bullying and for child protection policy	3.38	3.26	2.96	3.42	<b>3.26</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>3</b>
Creates a committee that will look unto cases of bullying	3.31	3.38	2.64	3.41	<b>3.19</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>4</b>
Provides bully box	3.25	2.94	2.29	3.33	<b>2.95</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Overall Mean (OM)</b>	<b>3.30</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>I</b>	
<b>Interpretation (I)</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>I</b>		
<b>Rank (R)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>			

\*Highly Implemented (HI), Implemented (I)

\*(A) School Head, (B) Teacher, (C) Student, (D) Parent

The findings show that child protection policies on bullying in the selected schools of the First District of Camarines Sur are highly implemented in terms of preventing threats against a person's honor or property, establishing an anti-bullying program, and organizing stakeholder assemblies for child protection advocacy. However, the creation of a bullying committee and the provision of a bully box were only interpreted as implemented.

This implies that schools are actively employing various measures to prevent bullying. Nevertheless, schools are encouraged to explore additional approaches in addressing bullying cases and to motivate students to report incidents to authorized individuals without hesitation. This is supported by Brito et al. (2012), who emphasized that bullying is a frequent and serious problem in schools, distinguishable from ordinary student conflicts by its combination of aggression and power imbalance. Common forms include name-calling, offensive jokes, theft of personal belongings, and physical harm.

**Table 2E. Summary Table on the Level of Implementation of Child Protection Policies**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>AWM</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>R</b>
Physical Violence	3.43	3.45	3.26	3.48	<b>3.40</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>1</b>
Sexual Violence	3.40	3.34	3.31	3.34	<b>3.35</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>2</b>
Psychological Violence	3.36	3.38	3.28	3.30	<b>3.33</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>3</b>
Bullying	3.30	3.27	2.97	3.43	<b>3.24</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Overall Mean (OM)</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>3.39</b>	<b>3.33</b>		
<b>Interpretation (I)</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>HI</b>		
<b>Rank (R)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>			

\*Highly Implemented (HI), Implemented (I)

\*(A) School Head, (B) Teacher, (C) Student, (D) Parent

Table 2e presents the summary table of the level of implementation of child protection policies in selected schools of first district. The parents have the highest overall mean of 3.39 interpreted as highly implemented. The school heads with an overall mean of 3.37 interpreted as highly implemented. Teacher with 3.36 interpreted as highly implemented. Students with 3.21 interpreted only as implemented. The findings reveal that the level of implementation of child protection policies in the selected schools of the First District of Camarines Sur is highly implemented along physical violence, sexual violence, and psychological violence. However, child protection policies concerning bullying were determined as only implemented.

This implies that schools are effectively addressing physical, sexual, and psychological violence. In the case of bullying, however, students often fail to report incidents to proper authorities due to fear of retaliation, making it an area that schools must prioritize and address more proactively. This is supported by Liard (2013), who noted that child protection workers worldwide face increasing levels of hostility and aggression from parents, and that failures to exercise professional authority in challenging at-risk situations have been linked to serious harm to children. This is further reinforced by UNICEF (2012), which stressed the importance of partnerships in assessing and strengthening child protection systems. Such collaborative efforts help build consensus among governments and civil society, leading to improved laws, policies, and services that better protect all children.

### **3.3 School's Activities/ Programs on Child Protection**

These are the existing programs and activities initiated in the different schools of First District of Camarines Sur. As mandated by the Department of Education, the different schools must formulate a child protection policies, programs and activities to prevent the cases of child abuse. Policies and programs are formulated with the help of school heads, school officials, stakeholders and other concerned agencies.

#### **3.3.1 Activities/ Intervention Programs Initiated by the School on Child Protection**

1. *Integration of education sessions on corporal punishment and positive discipline in the initiative of Parent-Teachers Association (PTA's)* - A session that gives the parents and teachers association an idea on how to protect the rights of the children inside the school.
2. *Encouraging and supporting the formation in initiatives of support groups among teaching and non-teaching staff and parent caregivers* - Programs that encourage the teachers, non-teaching staff parents and caregivers to conduct and undergo seminars about child protection program.
3. *Implementing specific parenting orientation sessions with parents and caregivers and other activities* - A session that orient the parents and the caregivers in order to get knowledge about child protection policy.
4. *Fostering active involvement and providing and providing venues for bringing together parents, families and children-* A program that gives time to the parents, students, and teachers to bond and be open to each other.
5. *Setting up child-friendly mechanism for obtaining children's views and participation in the formulation, monitoring and assessment of school rules and policies related to student discipline*

- Program that make children be friendlier and share their feelings and emotions with the help of the teachers.
- 6. *Symposium for fight the bully: Establishing an anti- bullying programs inside the school* - Activities that will orient children against bullying inside and outside the school.
- 7. *Providing a bully box* - A means of giving students a privacy to make notes if they are being bullied or being abused.
- 8. *Seminar on children development*- Session that gives knowledge on parents, teachers and students about children development.
- 9. *Student Handbook* - A manual that sights the rights and obligation of a student inside the school.
- 10. *Organizing stakeholder assembly for child protection policy* - Establishing a committee which will serve as the representative consultation in crafting the child protection policy

### 3.4 Problems Encountered in Implementation of Child Protection Policies

The problems encountered in the implementation of child protection policies in the First District of Camarines Sur was identified and assessed by the school heads, students, teachers and parents of the selected schools of first District of Camarines Sur.

Table 3. **Problems Encountered in the Implementation of Child Protection Policies and Programs**

INDICATORS	A	B	C	D	AWM	I	R
Financial incapacity to support the policies and programs of the school	2.06	2.70	2.48	2.62	<b>2.47</b>	LS	1
Fear of students to bring up the issue of child abuse to the proper authorities	1.63	2.36	2.89	2.26	<b>2.28</b>	LS	2
Fear of being retaliated by the abuser	1.75	2.35	2.44	2.14	<b>2.17</b>	LS	3
Lack of awareness of students with the existing programs and policies of the school against child abuse	1.75	2.36	2.19	2.30	<b>2.15</b>	LS	4
Lack of information dissemination of child protection policy	1.75	2.27	2.10	2.23	<b>2.09</b>	LS	5
Lack of efforts on the part of implementers	1.75	2.20	1.98	2.21	<b>2.04</b>	LS	6
Lack of appreciation on child protection policy implemented by the school	1.75	2.20	1.89	2.20	<b>2.01</b>	LS	7
Lack of support from the parents	1.75	2.33	1.68	2.02	<b>1.94</b>	LS	8.5
Lack of support from the administration	1.75	2.22	1.65	2.12	<b>1.94</b>	LS	8.5
Lack of support from the teachers	1.75	2.19	1.67	2.11	<b>1.93</b>	LS	10
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>1.77</b>	<b>2.32</b>	<b>2.10</b>	<b>2.22</b>	<b>2.10</b>	LS	
<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>LS</b>	<b>LS</b>	<b>LS</b>	<b>LS</b>	<b>LS</b>		
<b>Rank</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>			

\*Less Serious (LS) \*(A) School Head, (B) Teacher, (C) Student, (D) Parent

Table 3 presents the problems encountered in the implementation of child protection policies and programs. The main problem encountered in the implementation of child protection policies and programs is the financial incapacity to support the policies and programs of the school with an average weighted mean of 2.47 interpreted as less serious, followed by fear of students to bring up the issue of child abuse to the proper authorities with an average weighted mean of 2.28 interpreted as less serious, and fear of being retaliated by the abuser with an average weighted mean of 2.17 interpreted as less serious.

The least problems encountered were the lack of support from parents and the lack of support from the administration, both with an average weighted mean of 1.94, interpreted as less serious. The least problematic factor overall was the lack of support from teachers, with an average weighted mean of 1.95, also interpreted as less serious. This implies that teachers, administrators, and parents are collectively contributing to the effective implementation of child protection policies. However, students remain hesitant to report incidents to proper authorities due to fear of retaliation, which continues to be a concern that schools must address. This is supported by Liard (2013), who highlighted that child protection workers worldwide face growing hostility and aggression from some parents, and that failures to exercise professional authority have been linked to inadequate protection of children at risk. In light of this, school administrators are encouraged to allocate sufficient funds for child protection programs, while teachers, parents, and guidance counselors should actively encourage students to report concerns without fear.

### **3.5 Proposed Intervention Program to Enhance the Policies and Programs for Child Protection in the 1st District of Camarines Sur**

Based on the results of the study, the level of implementation and the problems encountered in the implementation of child protection policies and programs were identified. A detailed plan of activities to enhance the policies and programs for child protection were prepared. The intervention program will be titled as: “Child Protection Awareness Campaign.”

## **4. Conclusion and Recommendation**

Parents and teachers have rated the implementation of child protection policies as highly implemented, indicating that schools are properly addressing child abuse. Specifically, policies on sexual violence were rated as highly implemented; however, the handling of cases involving rape, sexual harassment, and acts of lasciviousness was only rated as implemented. This is largely because such cases are referred to proper authorities, which may cause students to perceive them as unaddressed at the school level.

Child protection policies on psychological violence were likewise rated as highly implemented across all indicators, including the conduct of seminars on children's rights, prevention of humiliation in classrooms, parenting orientation sessions, prohibition of grade-based threats, and protection from public ridicule and verbal abuse. Schools are therefore encouraged to sustain these practices.

In contrast, bullying policies were rated only as implemented, as many cases are resolved within the classroom by advisers rather than being endorsed to proper authorities for appropriate counseling. This

may also explain why bullied students hesitate to report incidents, believing that no proper action will be taken.

The primary problem identified is the lack of sufficient funds to support child protection policies. Additionally, students remain reluctant to report abuse due to fear of retaliation. The least problematic factors were the lack of support from parents and administration, both considered less serious.

To address these concerns, the following recommendations are offered:

- Schools must strengthen and strictly implement child protection policies, particularly those concerning bullying.
- Guidance counselors should maintain records of bullying cases handled at the classroom level to ensure victims receive proper counseling and intervention.
- Schools should coordinate with relevant agencies to conduct child protection seminars at minimal cost.
- All schools should establish a bully box to allow students to report abuse confidentially.
- Administrators, school heads, and teachers should continue conducting orientations, seminars, and awareness campaigns on child protection.

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