



Economic Factors Influencing Sexual Violence against Children (SVAC) in Primary Schools of Urban District, Zanzibar, Tanzania

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find out the economic factors influencing sexual violence against children (SVAC) in primary schools of Urban District, Zanzibar. The study used cross sectional research design based on single research approach that is qualitative approach. The study used both primary and secondary source of data collection. Primary data were collected using interviews with semi-structure checklist guide to elicit information from the sample population while secondary data were obtained through documentary reviews from books, journals, magazines, from published and un-published paper, internet sources, University of Iringa (Uoi) and Zanzibar National Libraries and from other institutions and organizations dealt with sexual violence against children nationally and internationally. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 20 respondents and 22 key informants for this study. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis technique where by data were organized and summarized into different themes based on conceptual description of ideas. Finally, the results were presented in the form of word text narration. The study found that poverty and shortage of basic needs to the children were the economic factors

Influencing Sexual Violence to the children in primary schools. Children who came from poor family failed to meet their necessity needs in right time; hence perpetrators of sexual violence used the same opportunity to perpetrate their sexual incidents to children. The study recommended that the government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBO) and community members should establish various training programs to the medias including radios and television related to good child care practicing, child rights and child protections, and monitored their child behaviour, giving them time to express their problems and needs and sharing their ideas with promotion of gender equality at all level.

Keywords: Economic factor; sexual violence against children; primary school.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual Violence against Children (SVAC) is a serious problem around the planet and need special attention to deal with it. Globally, it is estimated that one out of two children aged 2–17 years experience some form of violence each year. A third of students aged 11–15 years worldwide have been bullied by their peers in the past month, and 120 million girls are estimated to have suffered some form of forced sexual contact before the age of 20 years. Emotional violence affects one in three children, and worldwide one in four children lives with a mother who is the victim of intimate partner violence. Violence can result in death, injuries and disabilities. Over the course of their lifetime, children exposed to violence are at increased risk of mental illness and anxiety disorders; high-risk behaviours like alcohol and drug abuse, smoking and unsafe sex; chronic diseases such as cancers, diabetes and heart disease; infectious diseases like HIV; and social problems including educational under-attainment, further involvement in violence, and crime. The economic costs of these consequences are enormous [1]. Different studies have been conducted to show the existence of problem in different parts around the world, its extent and impacts to the children and society at large both in developed and developing countries.

In Europe, 5,500 SVAC were recorded in United Kingdom (UK) schools over a three-year period, including 600 rapes where 59% of girls and young women aged 13–21 reported some form of sexual harassment at schools or colleges in the past year [2]. In London, sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools is a significant issue which affects many children and young people, particularly girls, across the country. Evidence shows that, majority of perpetrators of this abuse are boys, and most victims are girls. However, it is essential that the negative impact on both boys and girls recognized and addressed

(House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee [3]. Research by Public Health Bristol City Council [4] revealed that young people from school years 9–11 (aged between 13 and 16) faced sexual bullying; sexism and harassment are normalized, everyday occurrences, often positioned as “a joke” and therefore not reported.

In Asia particularly India, several studies report students experiencing sexual harassment at school, where in much of the harassment girls are exposed on the way to and from school, [5]. Toilets have been identified repeatedly as particularly dangerous areas for girls and for female teachers, in such cases schools may become sites of risk rather than sites of learning even the experience of commuting to and from school [5]. In India, SVAC was experienced by students from all the classes, it was found, 60% of rural and 52% of urban girls faced harassment in school at any given time and school gate was the most common places of harassment [6]. Research conducted by Anonymous [7] also found that, 90% of girls reported experiencing sexual harassment at least once in school settings or in community surroundings.

In Africa, reports of the sexual abuse of girls by their teachers have increased with the help of social media and new recording technologies [8]. Study conducted by Save the Children in Ethiopia [9] on violence against girls in primary schools and its impacts on girls' education in Ethiopia as reported by Amira [10] revealed that, rape was the worst form of sexual violence committed against school girls in Ethiopia and 2.5% of school girls reported having experienced rape in schools. The 2010 national survey on Violence Against Children in Kenya reported that 23% of the girls and 12% of the boys aged between 13 and 17 had experienced some form of sexual abuse (unwanted sexual touching, unwanted attempted sex, pressured or physically forced sex) [11].

In Tanzania, violence against children is a serious human right, social and public health issue in many parts of the world and its consequences can be devastating, no country is safe, whether rich or poor [12]. Violence in the school context is increasing and is even fostered by teachers. Teachers' bullying acts to students include dehumanization, sexual harassment by male teachers and corporal punishment [13]. The survey conducted by Stein [12], revealed a high number of children reported bullying, violence and sexual harassment among children and within their families, peer groups and neighbourhoods.

In Zanzibar, particularly Urban District of Unguja, SVAC is serious problem. Study conducted by Mbarouk [14] revealed that, there are many kinds of child abuse existing in the Zanzibar Urban District whereby sexual abuse was about 30%, physical abuse which includes some burn cases is about 3%, among children less than 10 years old and below, three of them have been abused by their family members or in school environment where by perpetrators are founded there [14]. Study conducted by Ali [15] found that, rapes are common to children and young people where the children abused by their uncle, family members or teachers by touching the genital areas. However, the case is either solved within a family or brought to police by their parents. Based on researchers experience on a particular study area, many primary school children seemed to face sexual violence either in school environment, domestic environment or within their community surroundings while the perpetrators of sexual violence to the primary school children can be their parents, community members or school teachers. This means that, the problem of SVAC persist while the reasons for the existing problem are unclear, therefore, researchers intended to determine factors influencing sexual violence against children in schools of Urban District, Zanzibar in order to kept clear factors for the existing problem.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Economic factor is one of the major factors which influencing sexual violence against pupils learning in public primary school which contained several sub factors associated with the existing problem, study conducted by Magwa and Ngara (2015) identified poverty as one of the economic factors responsible for and contributing to the immorality of child sexual abuse in schools. Through existence of poverty in many African

families, learners are targeted by teachers, their fellow students or community members to engage in sexual relations to alleviate poverty (Magwa & Ngara, 2015).

Additional to Magwa and Ngara (2015) other factors such as poor family income and shortage of basic needs as economic factors which influencing child sexual violence in school, they found that, girls especially from a poor background engage in sexual relationships with teachers so that they will have money to afford such things like cosmetics, and pocket money. At this stage compared to boys and due to peer pressure girls especially would also like to be like those who can afford. Thus, students not only engage in transactional sex to obtain better grades but also due to economic hardships. It was also noted that teachers utilize the poor situation of some learners and sexually abuse them in the process of taking care of their needs.

Report by Population Council [16] on Sexual and gender-based violence in Africa also identified poverty and economic hardship as among the contributing factors for sexual and gender-based violence to girls and women. Teachers take advantage of poor vulnerable girl learners and ask for sexual favors in return for economic benefits, in some instances girls were given stationery and favor in class, therefore, due to economic hardships some teenagers initiate contacts with teachers for material gain [17]. Shortage of basic needs is also an additional factor which revealed by scholars as one among the major factors contributing to children sexual violence at schools. Many children desire for things beyond the ability of their parents particularly children who are come from orphanage centers, orphans usually lack school fees and have an overwhelming responsibility of looking after other siblings, some teachers as revealed by the study find these orphan learners easy prey to satisfy their sexual drives (Magwa & Ngara, 2015). Therefore, the variables of economic factors were adopted in this study.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Description of the Study Area

The study was conducted in Urban District of Zanzibar, Tanzania in four public private primary schools found within the district whereby the problem of sexual violence among public and private primary school is seemed to take place at large and impacted majority of students both girls

and boys physically, psychological and to their learning performance (Suleiman, 2015). Geographically, it covers 230 square kilometers and it has a total population of 593,678 people; whereby male is 283,590 and female 310,088 [18]. Its geographical location coordinates are 6°13'47.33" south, 39°15'29.984" east.

3.2 Research Design

The study used cross sectional research design to investigate economic factors influencing sexual violence against children (SVAC) in primary schools of Urban District, Zanzibar Tanzania. The selection of this design was because cross sectional design allows the researchers to study different groups of respondents at one point at a time, it simple to use and easy to collect various information from respondents based on a particular study that you conduct with great degree of accuracy and quick results. Also, the study used single research approach that is qualitative approach. Qualitative approach enabled researchers to collect direct explanation and opinion from study respondents. The selection of this design was because cross sectional design allows the researcher to study different groups of respondents at one point at a time, it simple to use and easy to collect various information from respondents based on a particular study that you conduct with great degree of accuracy and quick results.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size as per this qualitative study was depended based on capacity factor by the number of interviews, the main data collection method that was conducted to each category of respondents with similar characteristics [19]. It implies of bringing new participants continually into the study until the expected information is complete [20]. Basing on the research design and sampling technique, the sample size was accounted of 20 respondents who faced numerous forms of SVAC like rape, sodomy, abusive words, forced kissing and touching and obtained from two (2) private primary schools and two (2) public primary schools of urban district Zanzibar.

However, the study selected twenty two (22) key informants where by eight (8) key informants were school teachers from four (4) selected school of Urban District, Zanzibar, another eight (8) key informants were student's parents from

four (4) selected school of Urban District, Zanzibar and one (1) respondents from each of Madema Gender Desk Office, Tanzania Medias Women Association (TAMWA), Zanzibar Child Rights Forum (ZCHRF), Office of the Chief Government Statistician (OCGS) Zanzibar, from Zanzibar Social Worker Association (ZASWA) and from Zanzibar Female Lawyer Association (ZAFELA) with a total number of six (6) respondents from the selected institutions. Table 1 below shows the categories of the key informants of the study.

The study adopted non-probabilistic methods to cover the sample size of the study. Researchers applied purposive sampling and snow ball sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was applied to the respondents who meet specific criteria specified by the researcher basing on the research topic, this including key informants of the study who were knowledgeable of the study topic, they included pupil's parents, primary school teachers, social workers from Madema Gender Desk Office, Tanzania Medias Women Association (TAMWA), Zanzibar Child Rights Forum (ZCHRF), Office of the Chief Government Statistician (OCGS) Zanzibar, Zanzibar Social Worker Association (ZASWA) and Zanzibar Female Lawyer Association (ZAFELA) in urban district of Unguja Zanzibar while snow ball sampling was applied to the respondents who were perceived to be knowledgeable who then suggested other people whom they know to be relevant to the topic until the required size is attained.

3.4 Data Types and Collection

The study used both primary and secondary source of data collection. Primary data were collected from 42 respondents using interviews while secondary data were obtained through documentary reviews from books, journals, magazines, from published and un-published paper, internet sources, University of Iringa (Uol) and Zanzibar National Libraries and from other institutions and organizations dealt with sexual violence against children nationally and internationally.

3.5 Data Processing and Analysis

The collected data were recorded, cleaned, processed and analyzed using content analysis technique where by data were organized and summarized into different themes based on conceptual description of ideas.

Table 1. Categories of key informants

Categories	Sub-categories	Sub-sample	Total
School teachers	Mluka binti Alwy Islamic school	2	8
	Glorious International school	2	
	Kisiwandui primary school	2	
	Mwembemakumbi primary school	2	
Student parents	Mluka binti Alwy Islamic school	2	8
	Glorious International school	2	
	Kisiwandui primary school	2	
	Mwembemakumbi primary school	2	
Government and Private Institutions	Tanzania Medias Women Association	1	6
	Madema Gender Desk Office	1	
	Office of the Chief Government Statistician	1	
	Zanzibar Social Worker Association	1	
	Zanzibar Female Lawyer Association	1	
	Zanzibar Child Rights Forum	1	
	Total		

Source: Field Study, 2021.

Finally, the results were presented in the form of word text narration.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Economic Factors Influencing SVAC in Primary Schools

The study conducted to find out economic factors influencing SVAC in primary schools. Researchers collected in depth information from respondents and key informants using interviews with semi structure questionnaires by thematically focus into two major variables which were poverty with poor family income as well as shortage of basic needs to the children as drawn from the conceptual framework of the study. However, some themes emerged during the interview sessions whereby each factor that was mentioned had different responses from respondents and key informants as illustrated below.

4.2 Poverty

In this variable, researchers wanted to know if poverty influencing SVAC in primary schools. Based on study findings illustrated that, 10 respondents from public primary school supported this notion contrary to other 10 respondents from private primary schools who disagreed the notion. Researchers found that many children who study at public primary schools were poor; they come from poor families where their parents have poor family income due

to the absence of employment opportunities or low income generating from economic activities they perform. These groups of children were targeted by their teachers, their fellow students or community members to engage in sexual relations to get money for their survival.

The most group of children who experience these incidents are those who are coming from orphanage centres whereby most of time they do not have any other sources of getting money unless otherwise depend from where they live and survive. Teachers used to ask for sexual favours in return for economic benefits like stationery services, meal and some time they were given favour in class. These views evidenced by various respondents of the study during interviews with them.

One among the respondent of the study from public primary school who faced sexual violence when he/she replied on question which stated, "Why do you face sexual violence and what kind of economic activities do your parents perform?" she said that:

...I come from a poor family where I live with my mother. My father died since when my mother give birth to me. My mother performs handcraft activities for domestic use like (mkeka, vipepeo, kawa, msala and mikoba ya ukili). However, what she earned was too little compared with what she was performing. More ever, this business in go with season something which increase the hardness of generating our daily income, one

day my mother was sick, and I needed some money to pay for something, I don't know where I will get such money, then I went to our neighbour and asked for help, he call me later on and give me everything that I needed, but he requested me to exchange for sexual favour, it was difficult to accept it in first time, however, it become also too tough to reject his offer because I was in need of that things by the way, than he feel shame and let me go... (5 respondent from public primary school).

Another respondent from public primary school said that:

...Sometimes we faced sexual violence because of economic hardship of our family. We learned with other children who came from rich families. We loved to get what they got, live the way they lived with us, but we were poor. Our family income was not enough for us to get what we requested from our parents, then perpetrators of sexual violence used this opportunity to attract us with their money and variety of things in order to engaged in sexual violence, hence the problem occurred... (3 respondent from public primary school).

In line with above argument and evidences, sometime children may demand something in school settings but because of economic hardship to their family level, they failed to get it, hence teachers and their fellow children become their perpetrators since they help them to get what they need in return with sexual favour, this was evidenced with one respondent from public primary school, she said that:

...Sometime we need to purchase food or other beverages in recess time, but we do not have money to purchase those things due to poor income of our parents, some boys used the same opportunities to purchase those things on behalf of ours while at the same time they try to kiss us or touch us as returned favour for what they purchased to us, hence sexual violence started from there... (9 respondent from public primary school).

In line with above discussion, another respondent from public primary school added that:

...I heard from my young sister who study from other public primary schools that, within

their school there are some children and teachers who used to attract them with variety of things in exchanging of sexual favour while the most targeted groups were girl's children who are come from poor family, some of them were already reported to the responsible organs and action were already taken... (2 respondent from public primary school).

Unlike private school whereby children who faced sexual violence by their teachers are likely to exchange for grade favour since many children come from middle income family where by most for their family members have suitable income which meet their needs; however, some children desired to get things beyond their family ability which influencing some other perpetrators of sexual violence to meet their goal. This evidenced by number of key informants of the study including pupil's teachers and responsible government and non-governmental organizations of SVAC.

This argument also agreed by all interviewees from key informants', they considered that, many children who are study in public primary schools were coming from poor family whereby perpetrators of SVAC convincing them to engage in sexual activities in return of economic favour and sometime in return for grades and meet their needs, unlike children who studied in private primary schools where most of them come from middle income family, hence for them poverty it is not necessary for poverty to influenced them to face SVAC in primary schools.

This approved during an interview with one interviewee from pupil's teachers in private primary school who responded that:

...Many children who study in private primary schools were come from middle income or rich families, hence poverty is not among factors influencing SVAC in private schools, may be, they faced sexual violence especially verbal and touching by exchanging to grade favour by their teachers, and this also is very rare to happen... (2 pupil's teacher from private primary school).

This was similar to other key informants from selected non-governmental organization, who added that:

...Children who study in public primary schools were more targeted groups of sexual violence by perpetrators, teachers, community members and their fellow children take advantage of poor vulnerable girls and boys by asking for sexual favour in return for economic benefits They were given stationery services and some favours in class, unlike children in private primary schools who are either attracted by grades or sometime they have desired to get more things beyond their families abilities in order to resemble their fellow children... (3 key informant from non-governmental organization).

According to Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2007) on Sexual violence: Overview revealed that, poverty is among the root causes of sexual violence and has a daily presence in the lives of many victims and survivors. Poverty can make the daily lives of women and children more dangerous and make them more dependent on others for survival and, therefore, less able to control their own sexuality, to consent to sex, to recognize their own victimization or to seek help when victimized; poverty can necessitate high-risk survival activities [21]. For instance, according to the WHO (2002) on Violence and Health found that, poverty increases one's vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation in the workplace, schools, and in prostitution, sex trafficking, and the drug trade.

To recap the above discussion, poverty influenced to SVAC in primary schools in different perspectives, firstly, if children family is poor and parents failed to teach their children the spirit of satisfaction and tolerance for whatever they never meet, hence children engaged in sexual violence, secondly, if children themselves were aware with sexual violence how they occurred, but they are willingly by themselves to do sexual violence in exchanging of something else, but thirdly, if there is no awareness creation to the public primary schools on how perpetrators used to perpetrates their sexual violence to poor children who are studies mostly in public primary schools and how to deal with their convenience.

To add more, researcher considered socialization and desire of things beyond family ability associated with poverty by children who are mostly studies in private primary schools as interconnect factors influencing SVAC, whereby those children who are faced sexual violence due to demand something beyond their family

abilities, they learnt from their fellow children and friends who have different socio-economic status in the society, hence SVAC take place.

4.3 Shortage of Basic Needs to the Children

Within this study, the researcher wanted to find out if shortage of basic needs to the children influencing SVAC in primary schools of Urban District, Zanzibar. Based on study findings found that, almost all 10 respondents from public primary school agreed with notion that, shortage of basic needs to the children influencing SVAC in primary schools contrary to other 10 respondents from private primary school who disagreed. Researchers found that, children have many needs that require to be attained in order to meet their goal of acquiring education, this including stationery services, school fees, foods, transport fees and so many others, their parents and guardians are responsible to meet those needs in a right time, failure to meet children needs motivate them to find other ways of obtaining their needs, at the same time, the perpetrators of child sexual violence take an opportunity to do sexual violence to them in return with children needs. Hence sexual violence takes place.

This happen mostly to the children in public primary schools and those who are belongs from orphanage centre where by background of their family is poor. However, children who study in private primary schools attained their all-basic needs including their school needs; hence they are influenced by other factors to face SVAC but not their basic needs.

This evidenced during an interview with study respondents from public primary school, one among them said that:

...I come from orphanage Centre where I receive many services from the Centre, however, sometime I fail to meet my needs in the right time especially when I face some challenges outside the Centre. Some needs are personal which differ from other children' needs in my centre. Sometime it encourages me to find a person that he will be ready to meet my needs at the right time in return with something else... (10 respondent from public primary school).

This differs from children from private sector whereby many of them they meet their basic

needs in a right time from their parents and guardians, hence shortage of basic needs is not really factor which influencing sexual violence to them. This evidenced by one respondent from private primary school, who said that:

...No, many of us get all basic needs in our families. What we most of time lack is enough time to be with our parents, or sometime rights of socializing with other children and community members. These may contribute to SVAC but not the first notion... (9 respondent from private primary school).

To add more, all 24 key informants agreed that shortage of basic needs to the children influenced SVAC in primary schools. Based on their arguments they revealed that, parents usually play their roles of offering basic needs to children both domestic, individual and school needs, however, since they meet with their friends who come from various socio-economic status, it becomes easier for them to demand something which is no affordable by their parents, hence perpetrators of SVAC used the same opportunities to meet their needs in return with sexy. Moreover, children were always dependent to their parents and guardians, therefore, if parents and guardians failed to meet children needs in right time, it become easier for them to meet with perpetrators of SVAC in order to meet their needs, hence they become the victims of SVAC.

This manifested during an interview with children' teachers on how shortage of basic needs to the children influencing them to face SVAC, one among the interviewee replied that:

...No, children always obtained their basic needs within their family level, parents play tooth and nail to meet their children needs, because no one wants to see his/her children suffering, but what they influence them to face sexual violence is their desire to have something as others... (4 pupil's teacher from public primary school).

During interview with another key informant from selected non-governmental organizations she revealed that:

...Children are dependent in nature on their parents, if parents fail to meet children needs its necessary for them to find another alternative to meet their needs, similar time,

perpetrators of SVAC were there for meeting children needs in exchange of sexual favour, hence SVAC take place in that way... (1 key informant from non-governmental organization).

In line with above responds, another key informant from selected non-governmental organization adds that:

...Children who are coming from orphanage Centre were more in risk of facing SVAC especially those who are at adolescence age, this is because, they have extra needs which are needed to be met at the right time, failure to meet their needs influencing them to be too close with perpetrators of sexual violence, therefore, SVAC occurred... (2 key informant from non-governmental organization).

In support the above arguments, study conducted by Donna and Sarah [22] on poverty and sexual violence building prevention and intervention responses revealed that, living without one's basic needs met can increase a person's risk for sexual victimization. Perpetrators of sexual violence target individuals who seem vulnerable whether due to gender, age, race, disability, sexual orientation, immigration status, income. Individuals who lack sufficient economic resources to meet their basic needs, specifically women, may resort to bartering for essential goods with sex [23]. This also supported by Chinyoka [17] considered shortage of basic needs to the children including foods, learning materials and school fees as one among the associated factors influencing SVAC in all level of learning. Similar to by Population Council [16] which found that, each person has his/her needs that needed to be attained in any cost to survive, failure to attain basic needs may contribute to engage in other activities that caused harm to him/her or to the family members and community that he/she lives within including sexual activities [24-25].

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Basing on the study findings the study concluded that shortage of basic needs to children especially in public primary schools may influence SVAC because; children have no job to perform in order to meet their needs. They always depend on their parents to offer their services and needs, failure of parents to meet

their needs may influence the high risk of facing sexual violence, since perpetrators of sexual violence used to attract them with number of things particularly meeting their needs in order to perform sexual violence to them. This is contrary to private primary schools where many children come from middle income or rich families, whereby all of them meet their needs in right time by their parents. The study recommended that the government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBO) and community members should establish various training programs to the medias including radios and television related to good child care practicing, child rights and child protections, and monitored their child behaviour, giving them time to express their problems and needs and sharing their ideas with promotion of gender equality at all level.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

As per international standard or university standard written ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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