



**DETERMINANTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE AMONG CHILD HEADED FAMILIES. A CASE OF KAPTEMBWO LOCATION
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NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to understand the determinants of sexual abuse among child headed families in Kaptembwo Location of Nakuru County and how the local communities dealt with issues of child sexual abuse. The study utilized a descriptive research design. Primary data was collected from 25 respondents out of a sample of 30 through closed/structured questionnaires, administered by "drop and pick later" method by the researcher also key informant interviews were carried out on children in the child-headed households. Quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS V.24 and qualitative data analyzed using NVIVO software. Findings revealed that socio-cultural factors had an influence on sexual abuse within child-headed families in Kaptembwo. Most of such vices stemmed from stresses of poverty, financial problems and community violence, low self-esteem, a child was abused before and also maybe the child lived in seclusion and isolation. Results revealed that sexual abuse among CHH was likely determined by the immediate environment of the child namely; geographical location of the house, social places like bars, clubs and institutions like schools and churches. It was concluded that environmental factors had an influence on sexual abuse within child-headed families. Further it came out that adolescents who were in CHHs were in a very high risk of suffering economical distress and would do anything to earn money. It was concluded that economic factors have an influence on sexual abuse within child-headed families. It was further concluded that legal framework governing children's rights was less effective in Kaptembwo. This study recommended that there was need for community sensitization among households making them aware of adult risky behaviors that may lead to their death and leave their children orphans and vulnerable to not only sexual abuse but also other societal vices. The study also recommended that schools needed to be stricter in enforcing rules that encourage vulnerable children to remain in school. The study also recommended that the government should tighten the legal framework surrounding vulnerable children to prevent them from being taken advantage of by irresponsible adults in society. Stricter punishment should also be instilled to the culprits found taking advantage of the young children. Finally, laws should be enforced towards bar and restaurant owners who pre dispose young vulnerable children to sexual abuse and other vices.

Key terms- Child-headed house hold, Emotional abuse, Family violence, Physical abuse, Sexual abuse.

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, the HIV/Aids effects have become a major setback in most developing countries and this has affected the sustainability of people and even how they manage the poverty levels and ways of managing their living (Boyes & Cluver, 2015). Most orphaned children depended on relatives and this was mostly extended family members to support or assist them to be able to survive even after the death of their immediate parents and though this had been the belief and order of things the trends had changed over a decade and there had been a shift of children now being in charge of households and as between 2000 and 2015 there was a significance rise of orphaned children as a result deaths from HIV/Aids. New alternative care means had developed and even the government under programs like the Cash Transfer programs recognizes a CHH bring a type of family which a person below eighteen years is the head of the house (Women & UNICEF, 2018).

A survey in Nicaragua revealed that 19% of the men and 27% of the women reported to have had sexual abuse in their childhood (Heise, 2014). According to Singh, Parsekar & Nair, (2014), in India, 33% of the entire rape cases reported are children of below 16 years as the victims while the occurrence is even higher among children of age 10-16. In a survey conducted in Srilanka, 10% of the young men surveyed reported to have had sexual intimacy with older persons at 13 years of age and below (Sathiadas, Viswalingam, & Vijayaratnam, 2018).

In Africa, according to Lachman and Casale (2014) the cases of child-headed families have been on the increase over the last one decade and it has become a major global concern. The HIV/AIDS pandemic was central to its agenda as young people in particular suffer from the ongoing spread of the epidemic. It is reported that many adults who are infected may have contracted the virus at between 12 and 19 years. The general conclusion was that, in Eastern and Southern Africa, there is widespread sexual abuse of children

but it is not primarily commercial (UNICEF, 2015). Article 19 in the CRC states all children are subject to the protected against forms of Violence, sexually, physically & emotionally (UNICEF, 2015).

Studies carried out in the in slum areas in Kenya the risk levels of the children indulging in sexual activities is very high (Mumah & Gottschalk, 2014). The Most abused children are living in the streets. Reasons that lead them to be in the streets include high levels of poverty, lack of basic amenities. Some child domestic workers are victims of abuse within their place of residence (Kempadoo & Doezema, 2018). Most research findings show that majority of children are sexually abused at home. Possible explanation for this observation is coexistence of children, parents and relatives in the same home setting. Occurrence of incest in such situations cannot be expected to arise since human society generally considers incest as a taboo (Malchiodi, 2014). Poverty and unemployment levels amongst households have led to children being exploited for material gain (Eamon, 2015). Further, the aspect of modernization and the collapse or disintegration of some social structures children are now exposed to a lot of social vices that have made them elope very risky means of survival like engaging in sex trade and prostitution in order to have a means of survival (UNICEF, 2015).

In Nakuru County, Githinji (2015) reported that there was a significant relationship between child sexual abuse prevalence and parent's presence among the children. The highest cases of sexual abuse were reported among the children who had no parents. The survey further revealed that the sexually abused children were instilled with fear; some were impregnated while others obtained sexually transmitted diseases which negatively affected the lives of the affected children (Githinji, 2015).

Problem Statement

Child headed households are evidence of the collapsing and failing community support networks.

Hence Child headed households is an emerging problem in Kenya and just being documented unlike in other countries. The general conclusion on the world commercial sex forum in Stockholm was that, in Eastern and Southern Africa, there is widespread sexual abuse of children but it is not primarily commercial (UNICEF, 2015). Sexual violence remains a major problem in Kenya with yet so much to be done in order to curb the vice. Aura (2017) showed in his research that the figures of sexually abused children ranged between margins 6% to 62% for girls and for boys 3% and 37% that is minimum and maximum levels the girls were seen to be pre at risk when out comes to the aspects of sexual abuse. The children orphaned in Child Headed households become the adults in this kind of situation where they depend on one or two of them to be the adult figure. Kirby (2017) observed how these children took up parental roles like providing for their siblings. Child headed households has become a way of curbing the increased pressure and challenges on addressing orphaned children as an alternative care means.

According to the records obtained from the Nakuru Level Five hospital, National Police and Child Protection Center and the Children's office in Nakuru town and its environs, on average in a month, the number of defilement cases and other forms of sexual abuse and exploitation against children from child headed households reported are between 5-10 cases and while others go unreported at the children's department. According to medical records from the GBVRC wing, 10-15 cases of sexual violence on average were reported monthly by children who lived by themselves and were sexually abused with about 15-20 cases occurring over holidays or festive seasons. From the Gender and Children Protection Unit at Kaptembwo police post, it was noted that at least 2-5 cases of children from child headed households are reported at the police station. To formulate and establish the most suitable measures to curb sexual abuse among child-headed families,

the extent of the sexual abuse need to be determined. More so the determinants of the sexual abuse needed to be known especially the socio-economic factors and the environmental factors. No research had been done to investigate this extent and the determinants of sexual abuse among child-headed families and the measures to prevent the vice, hence the need for this study.

Objectives of the study

The goal of conducting this study was to investigate the determinants of sexual abuse among child-headed families in Kaptembwo Location, Nakuru County, Kenya. The specific objectives were:-

- To assess the extent of child sexual abuse among child-headed families in Kaptembwo
- To find out the influence of socio-economic factors on sexual abuse of children in child-headed families in Kaptembwo Location Nakuru County Kenya
- To analyze influence of Environmental factors on sexual abuse of children in child-headed families in Kaptembwo Location Nakuru County Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of justice: This theory is by John Rawls and it is based on a society on a particular kind of social contract. For there to be an abused there must be a violation of a right, therefore, the first attempt is to high-light a theory on Child Rights. The appropriate one is the theory of justice. A system of justice for Rawls (2009) requires that people understand the need for and they are prepared to affirm a characteristic set of principles for assigning basic rights and duties and for determining what they take for to be the proper distribution of the benefits and burdens of social co-operation. One shall consider their own personal interest but shall not use that to the undermining or under looking the interest of others and should not take that advantage. When formulating principals of one's life or how to relate and interact with members of a society one should be

open minded and consider everyone as equal and anything that is to be formulated is not to diminish anyone's best interest but be done in a more hypothetical manner(Buchanan, 2017).

Since people are inclined to be self-centered when it comes to making some decisions, they overlook their weaknesses and position in society and are able to make selfish decisions which in the end do not look at aspects like unfairness, injustices like discrimination but rather focus on how best their own interest is above the interest of others(Buchanan, 2017).Rawls (2009) classified these principles into two; that each person should have a form of liberty which is in line with the liberty of others and so all people should end up having equal freedom, and that the societal inequalities should be arranged such that everybody has equal and fair access to whether there is apposite or negative outcome as long as the fairness dominates equally. Thus according to Rawls, children are participants in the formation of the initial social contract to the extent that they are capable. This implies that as children's competences develop, their participation should increase, so that they receive the full protection of the principles of justice. Children are pre-eminently such beings and therefore qualify as members of the society with just claims to fair treatment (Rawls, 2009). It's worth noting that abuse is very unfair treatment of the child thus infringing on the children's rights and that there is dire need for justice to be done.

Bronfenbrenners ecological theory of human development: Brofenbrenner adapted ecological systems theory from the physical sciences to human behavior. Brofenbrenner analyses the system levels as: Macro system Level. At this level the social economic status (SES) being the dominant reason why children are sexually abused in Child headed households. Children from economically challenged child headed families are prone to early sexual activity which results to teenage pregnancy and STIs. Sexual traits and attitudes amongst teenagers and

also family traits like separation and divorce or death of a parent and the child lives in a permissive society leads to a lot of early pregnancies and irresponsible sexual behaviors (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). At this level, the other influential factor to sexual abuse on child headed family is education; with grade level been the most important aspect to be discussed (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009). Studies also indicate that poor academic performance and the relationship with the school setting, the greater the risk for sexual abuse. Applied to the family structure, the theory refers to the manner in which some circumstances that are beyond family and also home set up can really affect the functioning of an adolescent (Bronfenbrenner, 2007).

Empirical Review

The family institution has experienced changes over time. There is consensus that the family unit is very important in the contemporary society. The nuclear family is said to be the unit responsible for procreation and upbringing of children (Bass, 2018).From a global to local perspective child sexual abuse has been seen to take different dimensions. Sexual violence against children is a gross violation of children's rights. Yet it is a global reality across all countries and social groups. The internet and social media have played a major role in issues of child sexual abuse, the internet has images that depict how children in some foreign countries like south America are used as instruments of sexual exploitation and this has adversely affected the development of children especially the orphaned children or the children who live by themselves and this has led to the increase of sexual abuse cases and even the prevalence of HIV/Aids among children and more so child headed households(Gallen, 2016).

The report on UNICEF hidden plight of children 2014 indicates that there in every 1 out of 10 girls is abused and these has been as result of forceful sexual abuse ,others as a result of cultural issues like forced

marriage and thus this has led to an overwhelming number of an estimated 120 million girl under the age of 20 had experienced sexual abuse on its worst forms and despite the same even cases of boys being abused were recorded but these were not in high figures in comparison to what the statistics showed about the girls (Decker, Crago, Chu, Sherman, seshu, Buthelezi & Beyrer, 2015).

The UNAIDS fourth stocktaking report of 2015 on Children and AIDS, has highlighted that majority of the cases of children who have been orphaned is the effects of HIV/Aids and the elder siblings are seen as the ones left to take up the responsibilities of their parents by providing and caring for the younger ones left behind and this has made several risk factor be predominant in such Child headed households in African countries this is evident like UNICEF 2015 report look at 24 out of 25 households affected by HIV/aids have orphans in them (WHO & UNICEF, 2015). In contention with the above observation, in almost every country in the sub-Saharan region, extended families have assumed responsibility for more than 90 % of orphaned children. However, this traditional support system is under severe pressure. The responsibility of caring for orphaned children is pushing many extended families beyond their ability to cope (Khakshour, 2016).

Children especially adolescents who are in CHHs are in a very high risk of suffering economical distress as they are now aware of the importance of money so this will make them be at risk of doing anything to earn money to sustain them in their day to day living so a lot of anxiety is raised especially in desperate situations and this lead them to be very vulnerable to sexual abuse (Wamoyi & Remes, 2015). Children in CHH face a higher risk of not going to school or leaving school early. Those who go may spend less quality time in school. This is attributed to the lack of money to pay school fees, and time spent taking care of a sick parent and younger sibling. To them education may not be a priority since other basic

needs are given first priority. Girls in such households are even more vulnerable they may leave school earlier to take care of their siblings either through getting employment or engaging in sex work (Mathews & Benvenuti, 2014). According to Mathews and Benvenuti (2014), the disadvantage of having to fend for themselves puts these children at a higher risk of being sexually abused by neighbors and relatives with a promise of offering help and support. When the going gets tough at home, there is a likelihood of them pursuing life on the streets. As a result of this the children are exposed to the dangers of drug abuse which predisposes them to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS itself. In worst-case scenarios, orphaned children may be abducted and enrolled as child soldiers or driven to hard labor, sex work, or life on the streets.

Children living in child-headed households may struggle to get births registered. This is due to the fact that information about their birth dates and place is needed and they may not have it. Getting identification cards is also very difficult for them as they may be required to give their birth certificates which they may not have (Reyes & Lu, 2016). In Kenya, roles of inheritance in customary law make children vulnerable to being dispossessed of their property. 'Property grabbing' by families and communities who seize the land, cattle, and other assets when household heads die, is a very common occurrence. Focusing only on the practical issues can sometimes hide the less obvious deprivations and needs of children growing up in child-headed households (Harari, 2014). The children suffer stigma and depression from the illness of parents, the loss and death and they suffer psychologically the strains of how they will support and provide for themselves.

Teenage pregnancy is an outcome of sexual abuse of child headed families in line with in search of money to maintain the family is a problem with far reaching effects. Many sex education programs in the United State caution young people to not have sex until they

are married (Mustaine, Tewksbury, Huff-Corzine, Corzine & Marshall, 2014). However, most abstinence-only programs are not effective because they fail to delay the onset of intercourse and often provide information that is medically inaccurate and potentially misleading (Kirby, 2017).

Teenage pregnancy due to sexual abuse in Sub-Saharan Africa has important social and economic outcomes, the most highly publicized of which stem from lost educational opportunities when pregnancy forces young women to leave school. Ideally, an investigation of the consequences of adolescent childbearing and sexuality should cover a wide range of outcomes that affect not only the young mother and her child, but also other family members and society at large. Most unintended pregnancies experienced by adolescent women occur among those who are using no contraceptive method or a traditional one: 92% of those in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 2015). The 2003 South African Demographic and Health Survey (SADHS) survey indicated that 27% of women had had a child by the age of 19 years. In a nationally representative household survey, Pettifor, Lin & Flores (2015) found that 15.5% of 15–19 year-old women reported having ever been pregnant (including pregnancies resulting in abortion, miscarriage and birth). According to Pettifor et al (2015), among the sexually active youths aged 15–19, 90% of the females and 73% of the males have had sex in the past 12 (twelve) months.

With 25 percent of adolescent girls becoming pregnant before the age of 19, Uganda has one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in Sub-Saharan Africa. The country's high adolescent pregnancy rate has two distinct implications. First, the risk of maternal death is higher in adolescents than in older women. Second, the socio-economic impacts of adolescent motherhood are devastating. Adolescent girls who become pregnant are often unable to complete a secondary education, a fact that

diminishes their potential to find employment (Mbalinda & Kaye, 2015)

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey method was adopted by the study in use of both qualitative approaches. Descriptive information often provides a sound basis for the solution of business problems. This method was appropriate because it allowed generalizations of data to be made. The study involved collection of both qualitative and quantitative information from children, police, staff at children's department, parents, village elders, chief and their assistants at a point in time. Qualitative data was collected using Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The KIIs were administered to pupils from Kaptembwa and Heshima schools of Nakuru County. Quantitative data was collected using semi structured questionnaires to police, staff at children's department, village elders, chief and their assistants. Sampling Pupils from class 5 to 8 formed the target population of the study. Respondents were drawn from all the two sampled public primary schools. A simple random technique was used to select households to participate in the study.

FINDINGS

The main objective of this study was to investigate the determinants of sexual abuse among child-headed families in Kaptembwo Location, Nakuru County, Kenya. The study utilized a descriptive research design as its purpose was to observe, describe and document aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs. Descriptive design employed for this study allowed for quantitative data collection and was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The target population for this study comprised of children from child-headed families from Kaptembwo Location in Nakuru County, parents residing in the study locality and officers from the Provincial Administration and Children's Department, doctors and other medics. To come up with an appropriate study sample, the study

utilised both random sampling to select the households for interviews and purposive sampling making a sample size of 30 for both questionnaires and interviews. A response rate of 83% was noted whereby 25 out of 30 questionnaires and interview guides dully were returned duly filled.

A structured questionnaire adopting the Likert scale was used as the data collection method for this study alongside an interview guide for the children. The data collection instruments were utilized based on the three research objectives. Descriptive statistics were utilised in analysis. Descriptive statistics utilised was the mean and measures of spread (standard deviation). Tables, graphs and figures were employed to display the analysis of the data. This helped predict how a large group will behave based upon information taken from a part of the group.

The study established that all the respondents were from Kaptembwo and majority of the adult respondents lie between the ages 30-40 (56%). In terms of gender it came out that the male were the majority in the adult population at 64% (11) while the female were the majority among the children population at 57% (4). With regards to duration of living and working in Kaptembwo a majority of 33% (6) had lived and worked there 11-15 years closely followed by 22% (4) who had lived and worked there for 6-10 years. With regards to education, 48% (8) had a diploma and were the majority. 40% (7) had a degree and 12% (3) had a masters. As for the children it emerged that majority were in class 6 42% (3).

Influence of Socio cultural factors on sexual abuse within child-headed families

The first objective of the study was to find out the influence of Socio cultural factors on sexual abuse within child-headed families. Findings revealed that to very large extent young girls at Kaptembwo are more prone to abuse than the boys. To a great extent it came out that the age of the children determines their vulnerability to sexual abuse. It also was

revealed that to a great extent most of the children are married off to enable them get dowry/bride price to help cater for their siblings .Further it was revealed that to a great extent most of these married girls at Kaptembwo usually do not get back to school On average it also came out that young vulnerable girls of this area are culturally allowed to be married off early .The children interview also revealed that they were all orphans in child headed households. It further revealed that they seemed hopeless of their fate in future going by what their elder siblings have had to go through to fend for them they seemed disillusioned. They were open for the idea of quitting school once an income or marriage opportunity came up.

Influence of Environmental factors on sexual abuse within child-headed families

The second objective was to find out the influence of environmental factors on sexual abuse within child-headed families. Results revealed that to a great extent, the home environment for orphaned children exposed them to manipulation into sexual activities. It was also revealed that to a great extent there were bars and restaurants around the homesteads where vulnerable children were attracted to. Averagely, it came out that most of the orphaned children visited social places looking for work that could enable them feed themselves. Further to a lesser extent the school environment was so strict that orphaned children did not get time to engage in or be manipulated for sexual favors. The findings also revealed that respondents answered that to a lesser extent not many cases of rape had been witnessed among child-headed households.

It was also revealed in the children's interviews that the environment surrounding them predisposed them to sexual abuse and other vices. For instance they all agreed 100% (7) that they lived near bars and restaurants one of them responded that their older siblings worked in the bars and restaurants making them also vulnerable.

Influence of Economic factors on sexual abuse within child-headed families

The third objective was to establish the influence of economic factors on sexual abuse within child-headed families. Responses showed that to a very large extent the respondents agreed that poverty was the greatest cause of vulnerable/orphaned children getting involved in sexual activities. Also there was response to a very large extent that many children from the child headed households did not like going to school. To a great extent the respondents agreed that many children from the child headed households did look for employment opportunities in the neighborhood.

An almost similar response was got from the children interview where it was revealed that some had to do odd jobs just to get by and claimed to have been pushed to do the jobs by their older siblings or familiar adults. One of the female pupil admitted that on several occasions her elder sister had dragged her to go help her serve patrons at a nearby bar. Another male respondent mentioned that not once in the past he had accompanied his big brother to some security job overnight.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to investigate the influence of socio-economic factors on sexual abuse of children in child-headed families in Kaptembwo Location Nakuru County Kenya. Conclusions were made that indeed socio-economic factors have a huge influence on sexual abuse and act as predisposing factors. For instance it was concluded that being female and young of age makes one more vulnerable to sexual abuse. It was also deduced that early marriage was a contributing factor towards sexual abuse of young girls mostly as a means of getting money to get by everyday life. It was also deduced being an orphan, female and of young age created a high likelihood for sexual abuse and general vulnerability. Further the study concluded that in child headed households, children were at a high risk of sexual abuse as there

was lack of guidance and parenting. In trying to find out the influence of environmental factors on sexual abuse within child-headed families, it was concluded that the environment surrounding the children was a huge contributing factor towards sexual abuse.

The study concluded that the home environment for orphaned children exposed them to manipulation into sexual activities more so in families where elder siblings engaged in irresponsible menial ventures that end up stringing in the rest of the siblings. It was concluded that in an environment where bars and restaurants were many, children were more vulnerable to sexual abuse. Further it was deduced that the places the children visited seeking for job opportunities made them more vulnerable to sexual abuse. It was also concluded that schools where these children attend were not very strict on matters involving sexual abuse in the community. The study also concluded that in Kaptembwo there had been rampant cases of child defilement from child Headed Households.

This study also concluded that economic factors had a huge influence on sexual abuse within child-headed families. It deduced that poverty was the greatest cause of vulnerable/orphaned children getting involved in sexual activities. It was concluded that children can easily forego school for any income opportunity that may arise hence the reason why they look for employment opportunities in the neighborhood. It was further concluded that legal framework governing children's rights was less effective in Kaptembwo.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommended that there is need for community sensitization among households making them aware of adult risky behaviors that may lead to their death and leave their children orphans and vulnerable to not only sexual abuse but also other societal vices. The study recommended that schools need to be stricter in enforcing rules that encourage

vulnerable children to remain in school. The government could come up with incentive programs to encourage young girls to stay in school rather than being married off.

The study recommended that the government should tighten the legal framework surrounding vulnerable children to prevent them from being taken advantage of by irresponsible adults in society. Stricter punishment should also be instilled to the culprits found taking advantage of the young children. The study further recommended that the government should come up with programs that generate income for the less fortunate to be able to make them stay

away from vices or activities that may lead them to become more prone to sexual abuse.

Laws should be enforced towards those bar and restaurant owners who pre dispose young vulnerable children to sexual abuse and other vices. The study further recommended a monthly stipend to those child headed households that were languishing in poverty and were vulnerable to any vice presented to them. It was recommended that frequent counseling through local administration and health workers should be carried out to sensitize the child headed households on the shortcomings of engaging in irresponsible activities that end up making the whole family vulnerable.

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