

Prevalence of Sexual Abuse in Children Aged 5-8 Years in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Rachel Kamau-Kang'ethe (Ph.D.)¹, Ruth W. Walioli (Ph.D.)²

^{1,2} *Early Childhood and Special Needs Education Kenyatta University, Nairobi Kenya*

Abstract: Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) as a problem has been in existence throughout the world history and has remained a major global concern (Tower, 2010). It is an abhorred evil in every generation and a significant public health problem in every country that has attempted to measure it. The goal of this research was to establish the prevalence of sexual abuse in children aged 5-8 years in Nairobi City County. A social demographic questionnaire and an interview schedule were used to collect significant data from parents/guardians. This study used a descriptive survey design and the sampling technique was purposive. It was located in Nairobi City County. The study site was the Gender Violence Recovery Centre GVRG of the Nairobi Women's Hospital. The target population comprised of sexually abused children and their parents/guardians. The independent variable for this study was CSA, while the dependent variable was parental perceptions of outcomes of CSA in early childhood education. The total sample size was ninety five (95) respondents. This included forty five children (45) who had experienced CSA and (45) of their parents/guardians. The research instruments were piloted on a randomly selected sample of five (5) sexually abused children aged 5-8 years, their parents/guardians and one key informant at Child line Kenya. Cross validity was determined through peer feedback and content validity through expert opinion. Reliability was established through pilot testing of the instruments to ensure clarity and adequacy of items. The study instruments included interview schedules for children and parents/guardians. The study yielded qualitative data which was analysed thematically guided by study objectives. Further, descriptive statistics were generated using percentages, frequencies and means. Results were presented in tables, figures and texts. Key findings showed that prevalence of sexual abuse among children aged 5-8 years in Nairobi City County, which was at 78% for girls and 22% for boys. The study recommended measures to protect children from the CSA vice. One of the key recommendations is life skills which should be included in school curriculums so as empower children to protect themselves from sexual encroachments.

I. BACKGROUND

According to WHO (2014), CSA refers to involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend or are unable to consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent. The vice involves physical or psychological power differences where by a child is used by an adult or an older or more knowledgeable child for sexual pleasure.

CSA is challenging and intricate to study (Singh, Shradha, Parsekar & Nair, 2014). This is because available data on

CSA prevalence is minimal and the process of acquiring it is complicated. According to Tower (2010), although the incidence occurrence of CSA is significant, the reported cases are a tip of the iceberg and represent a very small portion of the children who are actually abused. Only about 30% of child sexual abuse victims report the cases. Some of the affected children will not disclose the abuse until they are adults while others may never disclose it at all (GoK, 2010). Further, Goodyear-Brown (2011) posits that young children lack words to explain sexual abuse, hence are unable to report it since they cannot report what they cannot understand. This therefore leaves CSA prevalence studies very skewed. However, estimates of CSA magnitude vary widely depending on the country under review, the definitions used, the type of CSA variables under study, the data quality as well as the extent of coverage (Singh, Parsekar & Nair, 2014). Hence, due to this paucity, where empirical studies were not available, the current study explored alternative sources of data such as government sites.

Due to aforementioned complications in acquisition of CSA data, it is not possible to measure the actual prevalence rate of CSA globally (Odoro, 2016). However, Singh, Shradha, Parsekar and Nair (2014) report that CSA probably affects more than one in every five females and one in every 10 males globally. Mannarino (2009) notes that by the age of 18, one out of every three girls and one out of six boys experience some form of sexual abuse in America. These findings did not differentiate the age of the survivors; leaving a gap in knowledge regarding prevalence of CSA in children aged 5-8 years. The current study zeroed in this omitted cohort.

In the United Kingdom, Radford, Corral, Bradley and Fisher (2010), conducted research on the prevalence of child maltreatment and victimization in the UK. Findings showed that sexual assault was experienced by 0.5% of children under 11 years old and 4.5% for those aged 11-17 years old. In Japan, a national epidemiological survey was conducted to investigate the prevalence and demographic distribution of adult survivors of child abuse. Results showed sexual abuse to be at 0.6% (Tsuboi, Yoshida, Ae, Kojo, Nakamura & Kitamura, 2015). Also, in several Caribbean countries, 42.8% of girls below age 12 are subjected to rape according to Break the Silence (UNICEF, 2015). This study didn't include children in their early years leaving behind an evident gap that the current study sought to fill.

In India, records show that a total of 48,338 child rape cases were recorded from 2001 to 2011. There was a sharp increase of 2,113 to 7,112 cases during this period as indicated by the Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR, 2013). ACHR is quick to posit that this is just a tip of the iceberg as majority of the child rape cases are not reported to the police in Asia. Despite CSA being a vice that affects people regardless of age, its magnitude among young children below the age of 8 years is omitted in several studies. The current study captured this omission.

In South Africa, an Optimus Study (2015) was conducted first with the aim of estimating the annual incidence and lifetime prevalence of CSA. A nationally representative sample of respondents aged 15 to 17 years who had ever experienced violence including CSA was selected. Results showed that 12.8% of the 4 095 respondents who completed the school study reported having experienced some form of sexual abuse in their lifetime. Again, this study focused on older children, my study filled this gap by addressing the omitted cohort of children ages 5-8.

Both boys and girls can be targets of sexual abuse. A URT (2011) survey on violence against children in Tanzania showed that three (3) in every 10 females (27.9%) reported experiencing at least one incident of sexual violation before the age of 18. Among males, 13.4% reported experiencing the same prior to the age 18. Six percent of Zanzibar females aged 13 to 24 reported experiencing at least one incident of sexual violence before the age of 18. Among males, nearly 1 in 10 or 9.3% reported experiencing at least one incident of childhood sexual violence. In both South Africa and Tanzania, the research work was done several years after CSA. Possibilities of errors as a result of reporting fragmented memories which those affected can hardly remember can't be ruled out. My study focused on a sample of children who had experienced CSA in the context of one year; the ordeal was still fresh in their minds, hence the data yielded was dependable.

RoK (2010) reports of a national survey that was conducted by the Kenyan government in order to establish the prevalence of sexual, physical and emotional violence among children. Data were collected through interviews and analysed qualitatively to yield percentages of the various aspects of children violations. Results on sexual violation of children showed that three out of every ten females and nearly two out of every ten males aged 18 to 24 reported at least one experience of sexual violence prior to age 18. RoK (2010) study sample omitted young children aged 5-8 years from the sample. This study bridged this gap for purposes of attaining specific prevalence findings which can be used to plan for this cohort.

Odooro (2016) researched on sexual abuse among boys (Ages 10-17) in Public Primary Schools in Mukurukwa Njenga slum, Nairobi City County-Kenya. Findings showed that 40% of girls and 50% of boys were reported to have engaged in sexual activity before their 19th birthday. About 88% of cases

of sexual abuse go unreported states the Nairobi based Centre for the Study of Adolescents (CSA), in Nairobi. This study like many others omitted children aged 5-8.

The problem with such an omission is that authorities are left without references for evidence based prevalence which only empirical studies can yield. This may be interpreted to mean that the cohort of children who have experienced CSA aged 5-8 years does not exist hence, stakeholders will most likely not plan for them. Research on prevalence of CSA in Nairobi City County is required to provide empirical evidence needed by stakeholders needing to capture CSA survivors in their planning. Hence this research is quite significant.

II.METHOD

This study used a mixed research design whereby a correlational method was used. The total sample had ninety (90) respondents who included forty five (45) CSA survivors, (45) parents/guardians of CSA survivors. The sample was selected as follows: CSA survivors were 45. They were 10% of 455 morbid survivors of CSA according to RoK (2010). Mugenda (2003) states that 10% of the accessible population is enough sample for a study where samples are difficult to find. Also, the parent/guardian of every survivor was also interviewed bringing the figure to 90. Parents/ guardians of any gender were acceptable.

III. RESULTS

Demographic Information of Children affected by Sexual Abuse in Early Childhood in Nairobi City County

The afore mentioned information was explored in terms of gender, age, type of school, religion, person living with children, perpetrators of CSA, gender of abusers, place of abuse, father's level of education, mother's level of education, father's career and mother's career as follows;

Gender:

Gender was an important social demographic factor for the current study. Findings were as follows;

Table 1.1 Gender of CSA Survivors

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	35	77.8	77.8	77.8
Male	10	22.2	22.2	22.2
Total	45	100	100	100

Table 1.1 therefore means that in terms of gender, Thirty five 35 (78%) girls experienced CSA compared to ten 10(22%) boys. This means that both genders were abused. Research by Ruto (2009) also showed that CSA happens regardless of gender.

Age:

Age was yet another key significant social demographic characteristic

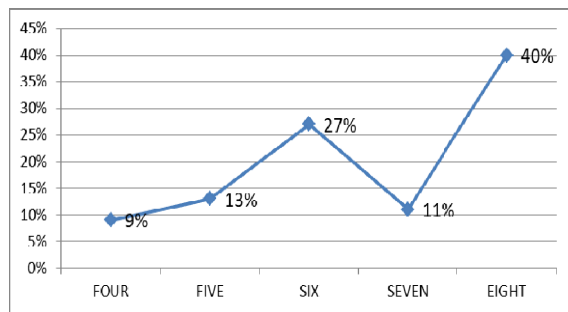


Figure 1.1: CSA Survivors Age

The sexually abused children in this study were between ages four and eight years. According to Figure 1.1, the highest recorded CSA percentage was that of 8 years olds which was 40%, among children aged 7 years, 11% were abused, among 6 year old children 27% and among 5 year olds 13%, among 4 year olds 9% were abused as presented in Figure 1.1. According to these findings, in early childhood, older children were abused more. The rationale behind this could be that younger children especially below 6 years, did not comprehend sexual abuse. Hence could not report it.

My two daughters age 4 and 7 were abused by our house boy. The 4 year old could not comprehend what had happened and kept asking what it was that was done to her, but the 7 year old understands that she was violated and doesn't inquire what it was that happened. Unfortunately in school she is withdrawn and doesn't participate in anything so long as there are boys involved. School must be a traumatizing environment to her' (Mother A)

This is in tandem with Hewit in Good year-Brown (2011) who points out that standard assessment and interviews with young children who are sexually abused can be a big problem since such children lack the language, concepts and ability to verbally describe CSA. Further, according to RoK (2010), respondents in the study were abused as children but only managed to report it as adults.

Type Of School Used By CSA Survivors

This study showed that children from both private and public schools were abused, 51% were from public and 49% from private schools.

Religion of the CSA Survivors

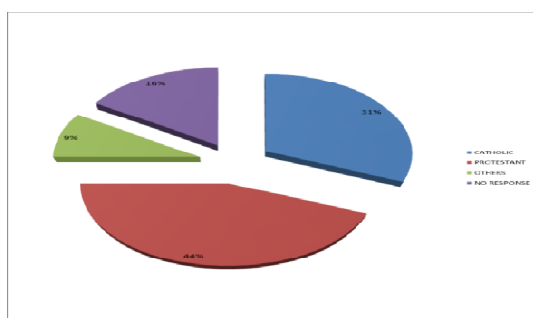


Figure 1.2: Religion of CSA Survivors

Figure 1.2 shows that in terms of religion, the highest percentage was of Protestants at 44%, followed by Catholics at 31%, 16% declined to answer this question while others had a small percentage of 9%. This means that CSA occurs regardless of a child's religious affiliation

Person Living with Children:

Parents were asked to state the person who was currently living with the child. Their responses were as follows;

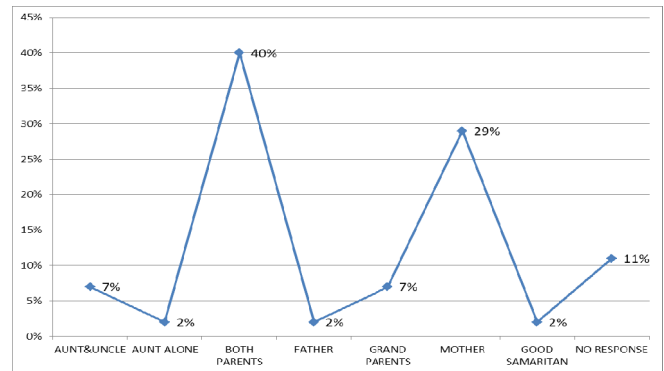


Figure 1.3: Person living with the child

Figure 1.3 shows that children living with both parents were the most abused and accounted for up to 40%, while those living with single mothers were 29%. Others accounted for smaller percentages as presented in Figure 1.3. This means that the family too is vulnerable and threatened by the CSA vice.

Perpetrators of CSA

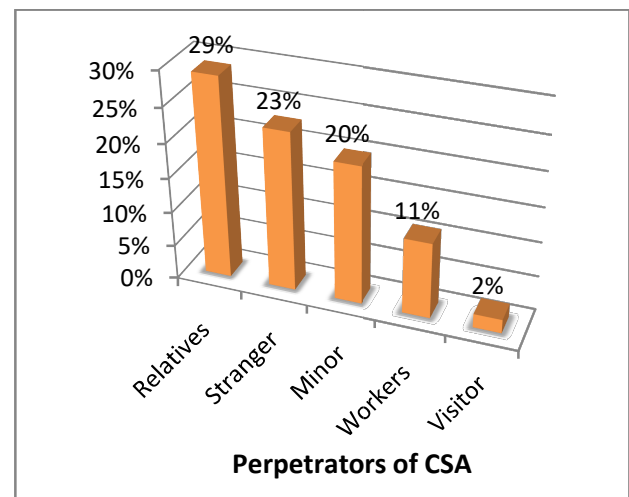


Figure 1.4 Perpetrators of CSA

Relatives of the children were the most perpetrators of CSA at 29%. They were followed by strangers at 23% and minors at 20%. Workers and visitors had smaller percentages. Relatives tend to sexually abuse more because children tend to trust them. The reason behind this is that family members and relatives unlike strangers are trusted by children. Such close relatives take advantage of such trust to engage in sex with

children. At the same time, they are familiar with the child's routine and therefore know when to engage.

This is in tandem with Pereda et al. (2009), who state that globally perpetrators are acquainted with their victims; approximately 30% are relatives of the abused child. Often, they are fathers, brothers, uncles or cousins. Usually, 60% are other acquaintances, such as "friends" of the family, school teachers, babysitters, neighbours and lodgers while strangers account for the remaining 10% of child sexual abuse cases.

Gender of Abusers:

Men accounted for 99% of sexual abusers while women accounted for the remaining 1%. This is in tandem with Raphael (2011) who associates cases such as those of men being the most abusers of children with abuse of power, where by men will use their physical strength to coerce and threaten children with harm making them to submit to CSA.

Place of Abuse:

Places where children were abused from are as follows;

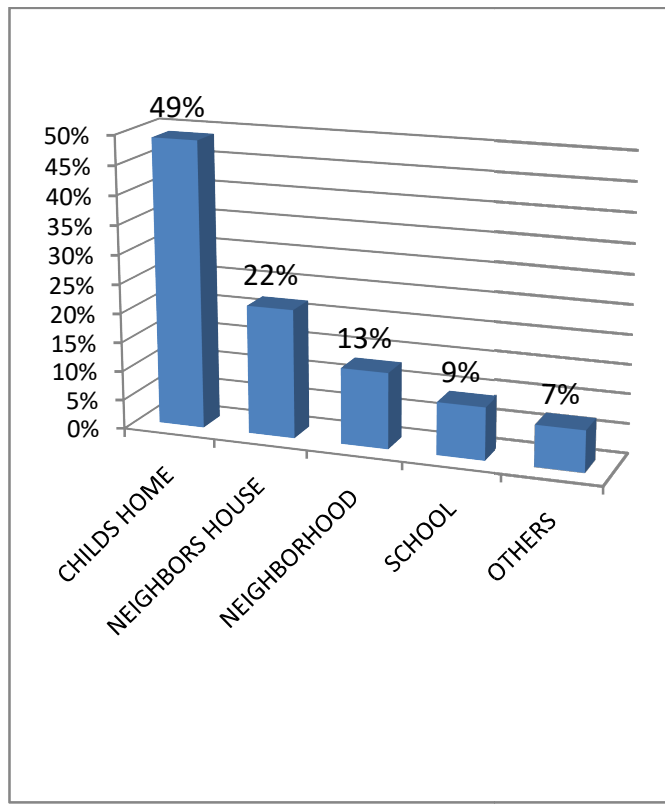


Figure 1.5

Findings show that most abuses 49% of them happened at the child's home. followed by the neighbour's house at 22%, the neighbourhood at 13%, and others accounted for 1% respectively as indicated in Figure 1.5. The child's home had the highest percentage mainly because most perpetrators are acquainted to the child; hence find it easy to abuse from the child's home. This finding concurs with Ruto (2009).

Fathers Education

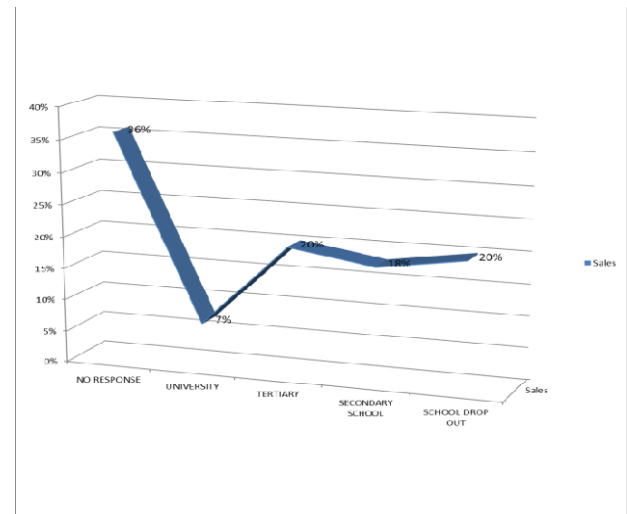


Figure 1.6 Fathers Education

Figure 1.6 shows that 20% fathers were school dropouts, 18% went up to secondary school, 20% to tertiary colleges 7% to university while 36% did not respond to this question.

Mothers Level of Education

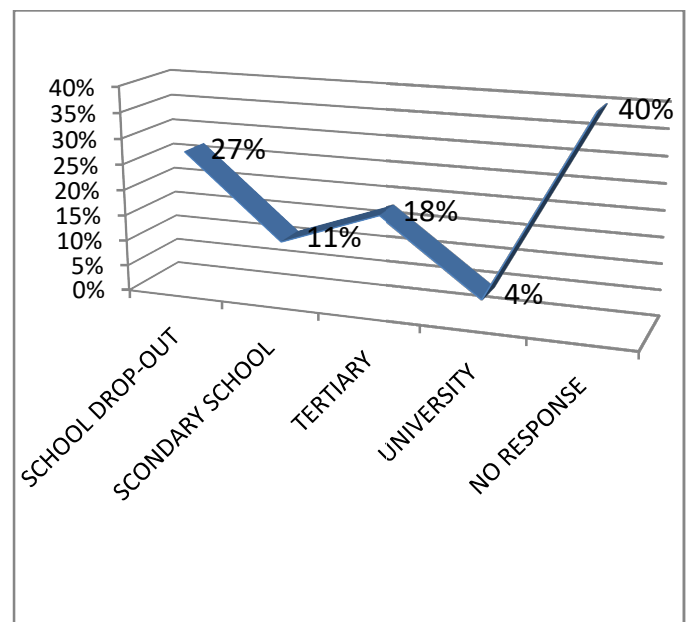


Figure 1.7 Mother's Level of Education

Findings of this study show that 27% of mother's were school dropouts, while 11% went up to secondary school level. 18% went up to tertiary level, 4% went to university level while 40% declined to answer this question

During data collection, it was noted that mothers who completed school were committed to strategies which could help their child cope with the CSA ordeal. One graduate mother said she had taught her sexually abused child life skills such as not accepting things from strangers. This mother also

noted that she ensures that her daughter who had been affected by CSA socializes in a healthy way with the male gender though it was the abusing gender. She does so by taking her daughter to places like Uhuru Park where the child gets a chance to play with children of different genders and this helps the child to stop fearing the offending gender. She also added that therapy sessions at GVRC Adams Arcade had been useful since they offered an opportunity to the children to play with others, consequently her child was doing well in school.

Fathers Career:

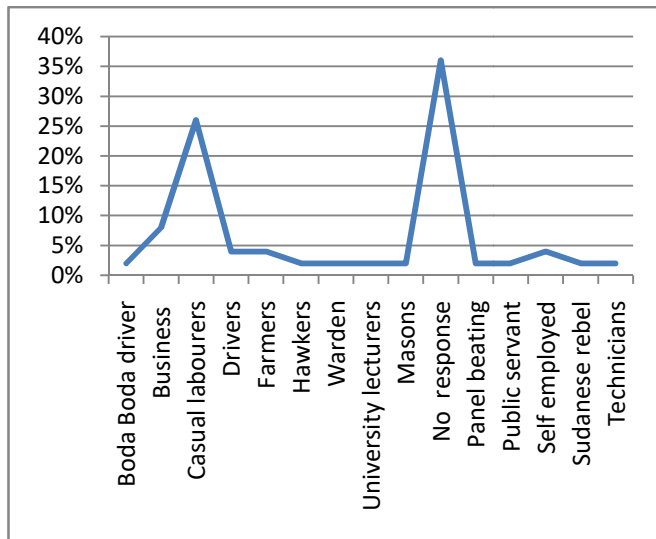


Figure 1.8 Fathers Career

Findings revealed that 20% of the fathers were casual labourers. Other careers constituted 7% with unclassified business. Others depended on unstable income through activities such as brewing while one was a Sudanese rebel. A whopping 33% fathers were unwilling to respond this questions.

The findings further show that fathers of most sexually abused children lacked good income generating careers to support their families. This therefore implies that most the children were from poor families and probably spent most of their resources in terms of time and energy trying to meet their financial obligations in the families and lapsed in protecting their children against CSA.

Further, whereas Figure 1.8 shows that about 20% fathers and step fathers abused children in early childhood, its only one who was imprisoned. During the data collection phases of this study, the researcher encountered cases where mothers under-reported cases whereby fathers defiled children, by covering the incident ensuring no arrests were made of abusing fathers who were sole bread winners. This was mainly because they wanted continued financial support for the child and sustainability of their troubled marriages. This is in tandem with Bolen (2001) who posits that family members usually

fail to report CSA because prosecution affects the family financial wellbeing.

Mothers Career:

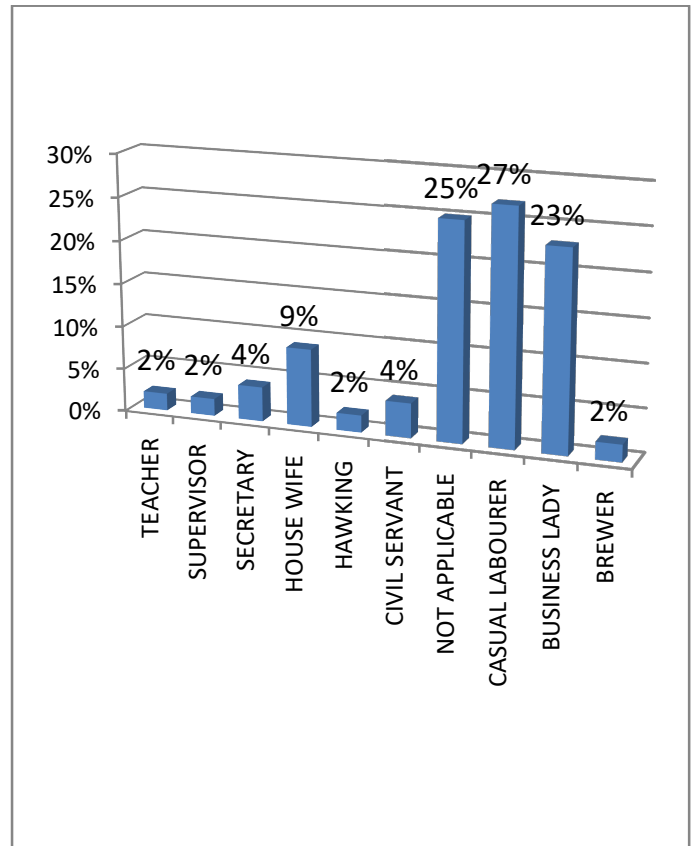


Figure 1.9 Mother's Career

Most mothers of CSA survivors (27%) of them were casual labourers, Twenty three (23%) of them did small businesses while twenty five percent (25%) did not disclose the kind of work they did. Hence most mothers struggled to sustain their families. Earning a living through casual jobs and small businesses, meant being away from home for many hours. It led to children being left on their own for too long with no guidance, this may have left them vulnerable to CSA.

Prevalence of CSA in Nairobi

According to the Nairobi Women's GVRC report, 230 cases of sexually violated children are treated on monthly basis. Out of this figure, the prevalence of those who were sexually abused was found to be 8 in every 10 girls (78%) and 2 in every 10 boys (22%).

This is in tandem with Singh, Shradha, Parsekar and Nair (2014) who state that CSA probably affects about one in every five females and one in every 10 males globally. Similar findings note that in America, by the age of 18, one out of every three girls and one out of six boys experience some form of CSA (Mannarino, 2009). In terms of regional findings, A URT (2011) survey on violence against children in Tanzania showed that 3 out of every 10 females (27.9%)

reported experiencing at least one incident of sexual violation before the age of 18. Among males, 13.4% reported experiencing the same prior the age 18. Six percent of Zanzibar females aged 13 to 24 reported experiencing at least one incident of sexual violence before the age of 18. Among males, nearly 1 in 10 or 9.3% reported experiencing at least one incident of CSA. These statistics notwithstanding, CSA is a vice that goes unreported and available prevalences are just a tip of the iceberg.

IV. CONCLUSION

The first objective of this study was to establish the prevalence of sexual abuse in children aged 5-8 years in Nairobi City County. The findings revealed that in Nairobi, the prevalence of CSA is 78% for girls and 22% for boys. Children were abused regardless of gender, age, type of school, religion, place of abuse, parent's educational, marital status and economic wellbeing. The highest numbers of CSA perpetrators were close relatives and men comprised the highest number of abusers.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

All stakeholders including parents and teachers need to be trained on child protection strategies, assessment of survivors of CSA, reporting of CSA and referral procedures of the same. Children too need to be trained on life skills in order to protect themselves against any sexual encroachments. These should be factored in teacher training as well as school curriculums.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Section A: Social Demographic Characteristics

1. Study No 2. What is your child's age.....
3. What is your child's gender a) Male: () b) Female () c) I don't know ()
4. Current residence: Informal settlement () Estate () Rural/urban () I don't know ()
6. What's your marital status?
 - a) Married () b) Single () c) Divorced () d) Separated () e) Widowed ()
 - f) Cohabiting () g) I don't know ()
7. Religion
 - a) Catholic () b) Protestant () c) Muslim () d) Others (specify).....
- 8 What is your level of education?
 - a) Never went school ()
 - b) Reached primary school but never completed ()
 - c) Completed primary school but never went to secondary school ()
 - d) Went to secondary school but never completed ()
 - e) Completed secondary school ()
 - f) Went to college but did not complete college ()
 - g) Completed college ()
 - h) Went to university but did not complete ()
 - i) Graduated from university ()
 - j) I do not know ()
9. Are you employed? Yes () No ()
10. If yes what type of work do you do?
11. If no, what do you do for a living?
12. Who sexually abused your child?
 - a) Stranger () b) Step-father () c) Uncle () d) Father () e) Family friend ()
 - f) Teacher () g) Elder sibling () h) Younger sibling ()
 - i) Others (specify).....
13. Where was your child sexually abused from?
 - a) Your home () b) Rapist's home () c) Other homes- specify.....
 - d) School () e) Bush () iv) Roadside () v) Toilet ()
 - vii) Others (specify).....

Section B: Outcomes and Recommendations

1. Do you think CSA has affected your child?
If yes how?

2. If no give reasons why you think CSA did not affect your child?
3. Do you have any other comments on how CSA has affected your child?
4. Are there measures that can cushion children against CSA? If yes which ones?
5. What measures do you think would eliminate CSA from the community?

Thank you for your participation

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN

1. Study No

Social Demographic Information of Sexually Abused Children

1. What is your gender a). Boy () b.) Girl()
2. What is your age Age..... (Years)
3. What is your ccurrent residence: Informal settlement () Estate () Rural/urban () I don't know ()
4. What is your religion?
 - a) Catholic () b) Protestant ()
 - c) Muslim () d) Other (specify)
- b) You are in which class in school?
5. Who do you live with? **(You can tick more than one choice)**
Both parents ()
Mother alone ()
Father alone ()
Grandparents ()
Grandfather ()
Grandmother ()
Brothers ()
Sisters ()
Others (specify)
6. Tick one statement that best describes your parent's status according to you
My parents are married ()
My parents are separated/divorced ()
My mother is single/never got married ()
My father is single, never got married ()
My mother is not alive ()
My father is not alive ()
7. Current residence: Informal settlement () Estate () Rural ()
8. What is your father's level of education?