

Involvement of Selected Secondary Schools in Child Protection against Violence, Exploitation and Sexual Abuse in Lusaka, Zambia

Luckson Chembe Likumbo, Gistered Muleya & Francis Simui
Institute of Distance Education, University of Zambia

Abstract: No child should have to worry about his or her safety and welfare. Unfortunately, research shows that millions of children around the world are at risk for violence, abuse, and exploitation. There are several threats to the safety of children, most of which are interconnected. Therefore, this study focused on the practices of secondary schools in ensuring the protection of their children in Lusaka district of Lusaka province of Zambia. The study was guided by the following objectives: i). Describe the prevalence of cases of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse among children in secondary schools in Lusaka district. ii). Explore the measures taken to protect children from violence, exploitation and sexual abuse in selected secondary schools. iii). Explore gaps in the actions taken to deal with child protection concerns in selected secondary schools in Lusaka district. This study employed a qualitative methodology guided by a case study design in the light of learned helplessness theory. Additionally, the study adopted systematic and purposive sampling techniques to enrol four secondary schools and to enlist thirty-six (36) participants respectively. The findings of the study revealed that violence, exploitation and sexual abuse are very much prevalent in secondary schools. However, it is difficult to ascertain the prevalence because of under-reporting of these cases by the pupils. Cases of sexual abuse were found to be more prevalent among the girls and cases of physical abuse were more pronounced among the boys. The study also revealed that teachers are usually the perpetrators of these cases. Thus, the following were recommendations among others: i). the government through the Ministry of General Education should strengthen the child protection policies in schools, ii). the government through the Ministry of Higher Education should introduce a course in guidance and counselling.

Key Words: Child Protection, Violence, Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, School, Zambia

I. CONTEXT

This is an extract from the Dissertation of the Principal researcher on Involvement of Selected Secondary Schools in Child Protection against Violence, Exploitation and Sexual Abuse in Lusaka, Zambia. As a requirement for the award of a Master of Science in Peace Leadership and Conflict Resolution at the University of Zambia (UNZA) in partnership with the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), students are required to conduct a research study that culminates into a Dissertation (Simui, Kasonde-Ngandu, Cheyeka and Kakana, 2018). The UNZA-ZOU partnership has been running since 2014 via the distance learning mode.

The University of Zambia is configured in a dual mode (regular and distance education modes), (Simui, Thompson, Mwewa, Mundende, Kakana, Chishiba and Namangala, 2017 and Mundende, Simui, Chishiba, Mwewa and Namangala, 2016).

Child neglect, violence, exploitation and sexual abuse is one of the prevalent problems that the children of our society suffer today, with about 2,400 children being victimized on a daily basis (Whitaker, Reich & Reid, et al., 2004). Violence against children is a problem affecting over one billion children and youth annually worldwide. Violence and exploitation of children undermines the victims' social, economic and human rights, with significant negative health and social consequences that can affect them throughout their lifespans. Violence against children includes all forms of sexual, physical, emotional or psychological abuse, as well as other forms of injury, maltreatment, exploitation, neglect, or negligent treatment. Children experience physical and emotional abuse from both their families and the other people around them; neighbours, friends, or even strangers. High incidences of exploitation, neglect and abuse point to lack of civic awareness of the sexually abused children in Schools (Mupeta, Muleya, Kanyamuna & Simui, 2020; Mwanangombe, Mundende, Muzata, Muleya, Kanyamuna & Simui, 2020; and Mwase, Simuyaba, Mwewa, Muleya & Simui, 2020).

With the growing number of incidents of child abuse and neglect, it becomes even more important to determine ways to reduce its occurrence, if not to completely eradicate it. Besides direct physical injury resulting from violence, there is growing evidence that the health impacts of violence also include disabilities, depression, reproductive and physical health problems. Violence also increases the risk of engaging in behaviours that have a negative impact on health, such as smoking, high-risk sexual behaviour, and alcohol and drug misuse. Perpetrators of violence against children can be both adults and other children, including but not limited to parents, guardians, family members, friends, acquaintances, and other adults in the community. Violence occurs across different contexts and in many settings such as the home, schools, within care and justice systems, the workplace and public spaces in the community (Donovan & Jessor, 1985).

However, it is believed that children are reluctant to report incidents of violence that are committed against them, sometimes for fear of retribution, out of shame or guilt, or due to the belief that they merited such treatment or were, in some way, responsible. Findings from country-specific studies, documentation of various cases of violence, abuse and exploitation across the region, as well as the discussions which were held during the lead-up and follow-up to the United Nations Study, have all underscored the gravity of the problem, with some attempting to demonstrate its scale (Bradley & Wood, 1996).

Thus, Researchers have become increasingly concerned with the increasing cases of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse amongst children in schools. While there is increased knowledge today about the prevalence of abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect of children in different settings, more research is needed on prevention and intervention. Therefore, on the basis of the foregoing contextual background, this study attempts to explore the involvement of secondary schools in protecting children from violence, exploitation and sexual abuse.

Statement of the Problem

Ideally, in every society children are not supposed to be subjected to violence, exploitation and sexual abuse. Nonetheless, Zambia has recently reported high incidences of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse against women and children (Makasa, 2020). It is becoming a common occurrence, an everyday thing. Barely a day passes in Zambia without the report of a case of violence against women and children, whether in a rural or an urban setting (Zulu, 2020). Zulu (2020) further expounds that in some areas, the number of reported cases averages 50 a day. It is widely believed, however, that many cases go unreported. And the numbers keep going up. Up to now, children protection from violence, exploitation and sexual abuse in secondary schools still remains un-investigated. Generally, most studies carried out have focussed on gender based violence and sexual abuse amongst women. However, there has been little exploration done on children protection from violence, exploitation and sexual abuse in public secondary schools in Zambia. This has caused concern particularly in view of the point that there has been an increase in the number of children being exploited and violated. There is, therefore, a need to explore children protection from violence, exploitation and sexual abuse in public secondary schools, hence the need for this study. More specifically the study answers three questions:

Specific Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Describe the prevalence of cases of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse among children in secondary schools in Lusaka district.
- ii. Explore the measures taken to protect children from violence, exploitation and sexual abuse in selected secondary schools.

- iii. Explore gaps in the actions taken to deal with child protection concerns in selected secondary schools in Lusaka district.

Theoretical Framework

This study was supported and guided by the theory learned helplessness. The theory learned helplessness was conceptualized and developed by American psychologist Martin E.P. Seligman at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1960s and '70s. Learned helplessness is a state that occurs after a person has experienced a stressful situation repeatedly. They come to believe that they are unable to control or change the situation, so they do not try even when opportunities for change become available. Learned helplessness occurs when an individual continuously faces a negative, uncontrollable situation and stops trying to change their circumstances, even when they have the ability to do so. Thus, understanding how children have been subjected to violence and abuse for a long time, learned helplessness theory is well applied to this research. The theory of learned helplessness also has been applied to many conditions and behaviours, including clinical depression, aging, domestic violence, poverty, discrimination, parenting, academic achievement, drug abuse, and alcoholism (Nolen, 2020).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Developed Countries Contexts: Prevalence of and problems associated with child sexual abuses

Child sexual abuse (CSA) represents a serious challenge to all societies, increasing the risk of a wide range of mental and physical problems (Maniglio, 2009). It also has high economic costs at the societal level, including costs of health and child welfare services and educational and justice systems as well as productivity losses (Sethi et al., 2013). For these reasons, efforts to prevent CSA and reduce its consequences constitute a major societal concern. To intervene effectively, it is essential to document prevalence (Hobbs, 2005).

Police reports and child welfare statistics underestimate prevalence rates, and epidemiological surveys are recommended to identify unreported cases (Butchart et al., 2006; Sethi et al., 2013). Meta-analyses based on self-reported data have shown a prevalence of some form of CSA in the range of 15–25% for girls and 5–17% for boys (Andrews et al., 2004; Barth, et al, 2013; Pereda, et al, 2009; Stoltenborgh, et al, 2011). A decline in the prevalence of CSA over the past decades has been suggested in Australia, Ireland, and the United States (Dunne, et al 2003; Finkelhor, et al, 2014; McGee, et al, 2011).

A reduction in forced or coerced sexual acts has also been reported in the UK (Radford et al., 2011). Gender differences in victimization seem to be minor in the youngest age groups. At some point in pre-puberty, the disparity in prevalence rates increases, with a higher number of victims among girls than boys (Radford, et al, 2013; Trocmé et al., 2005). Adolescence represents a period of significantly increased risk of CSA for

both genders, most pronounced for girls (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005; Radford et al., 2013). However, the noted gender differences might be influenced by differences in the willingness to report abuse (Widom & Morris, 1997). Girls were on average three times more likely than boys to report contact or any abuse.

Additionally, most studies in Developed countries indicate that the risk of sexual abuse increases markedly from early adolescence for both genders. Cater, Andershed, and Andershed (2014) found a five times higher prevalence of CSA among 13–18 years old adolescents compared to younger children. The reported mean age at first victimization was nine years (for both genders) in one study (Edgarth & Ormstad, 2000) and between 12.5 and 14 years and 11.5 and 15 years for girls and boys, respectively, in four studies (Mossige & Abrahamsen, 2007; Priebe & Svedin, 2009; Steel & Herlitz, 2005; Svedin & Priebe, 2009). Gilbert et al., 2009; Radford et al., 2013; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011), markedly more females than males reported experiences of sexual abuse in childhood. The studies above were conducted in a western setting and findings showed a decline in the number of cases. This left a gap for this study to be conducted to gain a better understanding of child sexual abuse and violence in Zambia.

Sub-Saharan Contexts: Prevalence of and problems associated with child sexual abuses

Sexual violence against girls has been described in a number of studies, with the prevalence reported varying depending on the definition used. Research with women in 3 sites in Tanzania and Namibia has found between 9.5% and 21% of women reporting unwanted sexual contact before age 15 and a third of young women in Swaziland reported sexual abuse before 18 (Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Reza, et al., 2009). Schools are a particularly common context for sexual and physical abuse in Africa (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Jewkes, Levin, Bradshaw, & Mbananga, 2002). In South Africa corporal punishment in schools has been illegal since 1996 but the government has not managed to enforce the law (Morrell, 2001a; Morrell, 2001b). Research from Uganda and Zambia has also pointed to the ubiquity of the use of physical punishment in homes (Naker, 2005; Slonim-Nevo, & Mukuka, 2007).

Child sexual abuse is one of the social problems that call for urgent attention in South Africa (Collings, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997; Magwaza, 1994; Sonderling, 1993; Haffejee, 1991; Levett, 1989). The prevalence among a sample of university female students of contact forms of sexual abuse (i.e. actual or attempted intercourse, oral or manual genital contact, sexual kissing, hugging, or touching) has been reported to be 30.9% (Levett, 1989) and 34.8% (Collings, 1997). For both contact and noncontact forms of abuse (i.e. contact abuse plus exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual threats or invitations), the prevalence has been reported to be 43.6% in female university students in South Africa (Levett, 1989). For male university

students, Collings (1991) reported a rate of 28.9% for contact and noncontact forms.

Kibaru-Mbae (2011) asserts that child sexual abuse is a human rights issue with serious negative public health consequences including physical, psychological, emotional and social effects. Heiberg (2005:14) asserts that child sexual abuse crosses national borders and is a concern of the global community. Evidence of child sexual abuse by teachers has been gathered in many countries. Gaye (2012) reports that in Cape Town, South Africa, 38 teachers have been struck off the roll for sexually abusing and impregnating learners since 2010. Three teachers from Gauteng, South Africa at Phahama secondary school in Randfontein in 2012 were suspended for alleged sexual misconduct against learners, following complaints by 8 learners. Zimbabwean school children under 18 years continue to bear the brunt of sexual abuse from educators in the schools. Gwirai (2011) carried out a study on child sexual abuse in Gweru district schools of the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. Out of 268 respondents, 151 reported having been sexually abused giving an overall prevalence rate of 56, 3%. Learning institutions have gained notoriety as venues of sexual assault (Richter & Higson Smith 2004:23). Inappropriate sexual relations between staff members and learners are a growing worldwide concern in the education system which tarnishes the reputation of schools. Shumba (2009:19) asserts that abuse of learners by teachers in schools is a social problem locally in Zimbabwe and globally. Although in Sub-Saharan Africa, these studies above were conducted in contexts different from Zambia. And they did not explore the involvement of schools in protecting children from violence, exploitation and sexual abuse.

Zambian Context: Prevalence of and problems associated with child sexual abuses

The findings of Camfed (2011) in the study to ascertain the extent of child abuse in schools revealed that there were reports from high schools in particular which indicated that teachers still entice girls to have sex with them for better grades and small sums of money. However, the study noted that Sexual abuse, both school and family based, was found to be rarely reported. These findings are consistent with Kabwe (2017) whose research findings revealed that cases of child sexual abuse were common but only reported if the family regarded it as being a serious issue. The study by Kabwe focused on the perception of the community towards child sexual abuse. This therefore, left a gap to gain an understanding through the experiences of children.

The study which was done by Akani et al (2015) found that almost half of the study population consisted of teenagers with a median age of 13. This revelation is consistent with the findings of Chomba et al (2010), which state that child sexual abuse cases have been on the increase in Zambia, starting from the year 2006 when 800 cases were reported whereas 1000 cases were reported in 2010. The highest cases were in 2008 where about 1100 cases were reported, with the age

group 11-15 years being the most affected. Mukuka et al (2010) also revealed that child sexual abuse in Zambia is common and usually goes unreported because parents of the victims fear that young men would not make the sexually abused girls as their brides. This is consistent with the study by Kamuwanga (2008), which revealed that the government faced several problems in dealing with child sexual abuse. The study found that most families and the general public were reluctant to acknowledge the existence of the problem. This is why some experts believe that for every single case that is reported, there are ten more that go unreported (Agence France Press, 2003).

III. METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

As regards the methodological approach, this paper employed a qualitative approach to explore the involvement of secondary schools in protecting children from violence, exploitation and sexual abuse. A case study was used for this study. A case study was appropriate for this study because it was assumed that it would help the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the study. The target population of this study encompassed pupils and school administrators from four different schools. The sample size constituted four (4) school administrators and thirty-two (32) pupils. The study adopted purposive sampling techniques to enrol four secondary schools and to enlist thirty-six (36) participants respectively. Additionally, semi-structured interview guides and focus group discussion were employed for data collection to allow for triangulation as highlighted by Cohen & Manion (1994) when they state that triangulation is the use of two or more methods of data collection techniques in a study. This is important in research as it helps the researcher to interact well with data and arrive at meaningful conclusions.

Thematic Analysis was used to analyse the data. Thematic Analysis is a method used to identify, analyse and report patterns within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was favoured for its flexibility, as it could allow the researcher to approach data sets more easily by sorting them into themes. Furthermore, as regards ethical considerations, the researcher ensured that the participants were informed about the nature of the study and that they were free to withdraw as participating in the study was completely voluntary. The researcher also ensured that the data collected was purely for academic purposes and that the identities of the participants were withheld.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Prevalence of cases of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse among children in secondary schools

To explore the prevalence violence, exploitation and sexual abuse, the researcher put the question to all the participants and all of them affirmed the prevalence and shared their knowledge in details. It was clear from the pupils that these cases are experienced in schools. This was also affirmed by the schools' administrators who also gave their side of

experience regarding the subject. However, while pupils stated that these occurrences are highly prevalent in schools, the schools' administrators explained that, while they understand that these things happen in schools, they are very few cases in their schools. This revealed that school administrators are usually not aware of these happenings in their schools although they confirmed their prevalence. The following verbatim quotations from the boys confirm the above.

Participants FG 2: These things always happen and we just no longer report any violence unleashed upon us for obvious reasons. Every other time when we have tried to report, it backfired and we were the ones to be blamed. Teachers team-up against us and that is the last thing you want to experience as pupils (interviewed on 26th March, 2021).

While the boys reported cases of physical violence against them, the girls recounted cases of sexual abuse as revealed in the following verbatim.

Participants FG 3: We have had a number of cases of sexual abuse here at this school. Actually, yesterday two girls were fighting over a teacher. Most girls at this school refuse to date their fellow pupils. They say that these boys cannot give them anything. Thus, they like going out with male teachers. The school administration usually protects the teachers when these issues are reported. They just tell us that we shall investigate and mostly it dies out just like that. So sometimes reporting is just a sheer waste of time (interviewed on 29th March, 2021).

A Deputy Headteacher from one school stated that these cases are recorded in most schools although they were minimal at their school as shown in the following verbatim.

Participant DH 1: You know a school is a community of different people. And every community experiences its own challenges. For schools, the aforementioned are some of the challenges that we encounter once in a while (interviewed on 25th March, 2021).

The overarching theme which emerged from the findings is that there is underreporting of these cases in schools. According to the school administrators, in their experiences, the prevalence of these cases was very minimal. This was contrary to the report that the pupils gave. It was clear from the two conflicting findings above that what necessitated the seemingly low cases was under reporting by the pupils. For instance, participants in FG 2 stated that whenever they reported any case of violence perpetrated by the teachers it backfired and the pupils were blamed. This therefore, made the pupils to become reluctant to report any case as they had come to believe that the situation cannot change even if they report but it can rather deteriorate. These findings resonate with Leonard (2019), who argues that learned helplessness is a state that occurs after a person has experienced a stressful

situation repeatedly. They come to believe that they are unable to control or change the situation, so they do not try even when opportunities for change become available. Learned helplessness occurs when an individual continuously faces a negative, uncontrollable situation and stops trying to change their circumstances, even when they have the ability to do so.

The study conducted by Kelly (1986), on child sexual abuse explains that the theory of learned helplessness offers a framework from which to view the dynamics of violence, exploitation and child sexual abuse. Child victims experience feelings of helplessness. The child learns early on in the relationship that he or she is incapable of avoiding sexual advances of the offender. There is always an unequal relationship between a child and adult, which is exploited during sexual abuse. It is this unequal relationship that makes the children to become passive in the face of trauma necessitated by the offenders. They believe that they are helpless and they have convinced themselves that their situation cannot change even if they tried to change it. Therefore, they decide to stay quiet in the face of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse as shown in the following verbatim quotations.

Participants FG 1: These things do happen almost every time. But you see it is difficult to report. When you go to report, they will ask for evidence and if you cannot produce the evidence, then nobody can believe you. So we just forget about it (interviewed on 25th March, 2021).

Furthermore, other participants from FG 3 as shown above revealed that reason for not reporting any cases of abuse perpetrated by the teachers is that the school administration protects the teachers, and because the pupils do not feel protected, they resort to silence. Additionally, responses from participants in FG 1 indicated that it is very difficult for learners to report any case only in the presence of evidence. From the responses given by participants, it is clear that cases of violence and sexual abuse are very much prevalent in school and pupils do not feel protected, hence they do not report. The above findings are in line with the findings from the study conducted by Equality Now Zambia (2020) on sexual violence in schools which revealed that adolescent and school girls are on the receiving end of these violations, often in traditionally safe spaces such as schools and homes where guardians and caregivers are sometimes the perpetrators. Many girls are raped, sexually abused and harassed by their male teachers and male classmates whenever they go to school. Unfortunately, these incidents are largely unreported owing to the fear of retaliatory attacks, victim shaming as well as an unresponsive legal and education system.

Finkelhor et al (2014) also shows that the prevalence of child sexual abuse is difficult to determine because it is often not reported; experts agree that the incidence is far greater than what is reported to authorities.

From the evidence shown above, it is therefore clear that the cases of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse are prevalent in schools. However, it is difficult to determine the prevalence of the cases due to underreporting of the same by the victims.

Perpetrators of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse among children in secondary schools

While in a minority of cases, pupils are reported to be the perpetrators of violence to their fellow pupils and sometimes to teachers, this research found that mostly, the perpetrators of violence and sexual abuse in secondary schools are teachers and other people with authority in schools as evidenced by the following verbatim.

Participants FG 1: At this school, teachers are just like that. On one hand if they like you, usually because you have a nice structure, a beautiful face, they will start bringing you closer to them. It is easy for everyone to notice because every time they come to class, that person will be the first to be called out. They will be sending the same person carry books to and fro the staffroom among other things. Trouble comes in when the person rejects their proposals. They manifest perfect hatred towards the person; they make sure that the performance in their subject is also negatively affected. And on the other hand if they don't like you, perhaps because you are poor, they will hate you for no reason and mistreat you (interviewed on 25th March, 2021).

Further, the other participants also revealed the following.

Participants FG 3: Both teachers and pupils make these things to happen, but it is so much on the teachers which has consequently made pupils to start thinking that it is normal. But again, sometimes you cannot even blame the teachers. Some of these girls in our classes, when they just know that the forthcoming periods are for a particular teacher in whom they have interests, they unbutton their shirts to leave their breasts visible, they fold their skirts in the waist to make them shorter and leave the thighs exposed. And then during the lesson, they change their accent and seek too much attention. So sometimes it is just the pupils, who force the teachers to do some of these things (interviewed on 29th March, 2021).

These findings cohere with WHO (2018) which stated that, globally, levels of violence against children are frightfully high and it is estimated that up to 1 billion children aged 2–17 years, have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence. Murillo (2011) also argues that violence, in particular physical violence among learners, and physical violence perpetuated by teachers and other staff, do happen in sight of other learners for example, in playgrounds or classrooms or in the context of school sports. Additionally, UN (2014) on Violence against Children noted that Punishment by teachers may be more likely to target children and adolescents from stigmatised and marginalised

populations. Kakupa (2014) also highlights that most girls are enticed into sexual relationships by their male teachers. However, it is also true that students perpetrate these actions as Tierney (2013) argues that female students get more familiar with their male teachers especially those who are young.

Fear of being blamed to be careless and in the wrong

Fear to be blamed for cases of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse was one of the themes that emerged from this study. Most participants from FG 1-4 who indicated having been subjected to either physical or sexual abuse, majority of them did not report the abuse, not to the school authorities neither to their guardians or parents. The explanation for concealing the abuse was that, the first instincts of the school administrators is to shield and protect one of their own. And therefore, if a pupil will be strong enough to go and report any such issues, they should carry with them enough tangible evidence to prove their case, which in the majority of cases pupils do not have. Turning to parents and guardians (especially those that are not very much exposed or educated), participants stated that, they find it difficult to believe that teachers can sexually abuse the pupils. Therefore, they blame it on them. And to avoid being blamed and being thought of as careless, they resort to keeping quiet. The following verbatim from a participant who was raped confirm the findings.

Participant FG 1: When I was in tenth grade, there was this teacher who liked me. Every time he came to class, he had to check if I was present. He could send me to carry books for him and other things. One day he called me and asked me if we could be friends, I reluctantly agreed. He got my phone number and began to call frequently, I told my elder sister about it and she cautioned me against it. I tried to avoid him but it did not work. When schools were closing, he called me to meet him somewhere and emphasised that it was very important that I should meet him. When I found him, he asked to walk along and took me to his apartment, and there he raped me. I was afraid to tell my sister because she was going to blame me especially that she cautioned me earlier and there was no one I could tell at school. I would tell my mother about it a week later when visiting in Chipata for a holiday. After taking me to the hospital for pregnancy and HIV tests both of which were negative, my mother could not do anything about it (interviewed on 25th March, 2021).

Yet another participant also narrated her story and revealed similar fears.

Participants FG 3: One of the teachers had been asking me to collect some past papers from him to aid my studies. He would always compliment me in class and act nice towards me. I did not pay much attention to it because I thought he was just being a caring teacher. This went on for some time until one day he called me to his office and something strange happened. When I

entered, he locked the door and began to tell me how much he loved me. I did not know what to say but forced a Thank you out of my mouth. He then hugged me and began to touch me everywhere. I asked him to let go of me then he began to kiss me. I protested and I began to cry and told him I would scream. He stopped kissing me but still held me so tightly and told me not to tell anyone about it. I was very confused that day. I left his office and went back to class. I didn't tell anyone about it because I was afraid they would blame me, and I did not tell anyone at home either for the same reason. But at home they noticed I was not myself, they asked me what the problem was but I did not open up (interviewed on 29th March, 2021).

According to Fact for family guide (2014), children tend to be afraid to tell anyone what happened and the legal process of reporting may be difficult, hence contributing to the silence. Winters et al (2020), argue that the most commonly cited obstacles to disclosure included emotional distress and perceptions regarding the severity of the abuse. When asked to select reasons for not informally disclosing, participants cited emotional reasons such as shame, self-blame, fear, disbelief, emotional distress, avoidance and confusion as the reason they did not tell others. Child sexual abuse can cause a constellation of negative emotions and that these strong emotions understandably impede a victim's ability to share their experience with others (Arnow, 2004; Thompson et al., 2002; Townsend, 2016).

Measures taken to protect children from violence, exploitation and sexual abuse in secondary schools

As regards the measures to ensure the protection of children, all schools affirmed that they had put in place measures to ensure that the children are safe in school. These measures included a working Guidance and Counselling Department, a prefecture body, a pupil-teacher committee among others. However, the study revealed that these measures schools had put up in place were either dysfunctional if not inoperative. This was made clear from the following verbatim quotations.

Participant HT 1: We have a Guidance and Counselling Department which looks into issues to do with child protection. The teachers in charge are always working to ensure that all the children are safe in school. I should say that whenever we receive new teachers, we make sure that they are properly communicated to with respect to professional conduct in school. The same applies to pupils. We have the forms that learners sign to agree that they will be compliant to acceptable behaviour when they join the school. And this has been working for us (interviewed on 29th March, 2021).

While the Headteacher of one school confirmed the existence of the measures like all the other administrators did, the pupils stated the following.

Participants FG 1: We know that there is a Guidance and Counselling section but it is not active. This year we have not seen them come to make announcements. We see them at least once in a while. They come to encourage us that we should take care of ourselves. There have also been times when we have gone to report incidences where a teacher has proposed to us. When we told her the first time, she just said she was going to talk to the same teacher and assured us that it will be resolved (interviewed on 25th March, 2021).

Another participant stated the following.

Participant FG 1: When you report these issues to that office, these people do not do anything about it. They are not firm, it appears they like to protect their friends and if not, then they are just cowards. When I went there to tell her that this particular teacher squeezed my bum, she just told me to take it easy and give her some time to talk to him and that was the end of the story (interviewed on 25th March, 2021).

Other pupils revealed similar experiences.

Participants FG 4: There are no sensitizations from the school concerning child protection related issues. There was only one time when a certain club of young people visited our school to talk to us about child protection policies in school and how we have to respond to issues of abuse and harassment not only from school but even from home and wherever we are. Sometimes it is just individual teachers who talk to us about these issues and encourage us to protect ourselves and to behave well (interviewed on 30th March, 2021).

From the information provided by the participants, it is clear that the measures that these schools have put up in place to ensure the protection of pupils in schools are not very effective. The findings of this study are contrary to the findings and measures that have proved to be effective in ensuring the protection of children in schools. For instance, Wurtele (2008) argues that in order to be able to protect themselves from unwanted advances by adults, minors need to be able to recognize inappropriate behaviour as such and to respond to it accordingly. This therefore, entails that there is need to reform the guidance and counselling departments by schools in order to be able to work effectively. Akinade, et al (2005) posit that the guidance committee should include staff members who are committed or interested or have been trained in seminars or workshops on administration of guidance and counselling.

Gaps in the actions taken to deal with child protection concerns

Concerning the gaps in actions taken to deal with child protections related concerns, the study found that, administrators receive very few to no reports of abuse in their schools. This however, did not mean that there are no cases of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse taking place in these

schools, but that, the pupils have no confidence in their school administration to protect them. For instance, participants in FG 3 stated that the school always wants to protect its image and therefore, the administrators do nothing about the cases when they are reported.

Participants FG 3: We do not usually report any such cases because we know that they will not do anything about it. When we report, they always want to protect the name of the school and their colleagues. Hence, we find it pointless to report unless it is very serious (interviewed on 29th March, 2021).

Furthermore, participants in FG 4 revealed that they are usually afraid of reporting these cases owing to the fact that their identities are not protected; after the victims report these issues, the perpetrators will get back at them and make their lives in school a living hell. This showed that most children do not feel free to report and discuss cases of abuse with the responsible authorities in school.

Participants FG 4: We fear to report these issues sometimes because when we do the teachers we report to do not protect our identity. So when the perpetrators know that we reported them, they retaliate with much anger. That is why we do not feel so free to share our experiences with the guidance teacher (interviewed on 30th March, 2021).

The above clearly reveal learned helplessness on the part of the learners. There is more to understand of learned helplessness in this situation. According to Stipek (1988), children with learned helplessness have their competence almost entirely destroyed. They lose confidence within themselves because they experience failures, leading them to believe they are failures. They might feel competent about something at first but if they fail in that activity they won't bother to try it again for fear of failure. The foregoing is true of the children in this study. For instance, some children reported to have tried to report cases of abuse in the past, and in their understanding, nothing was done. This eroded their confidence in their leaders and in their ability to stand up against the wrong. They started believing that they have no power to change the situation. Not only does this affect their social life, it also affects their academic achievements. The children experiencing learned helplessness also lose autonomy according to Stipek (1988), who argues that children with learned helplessness have faint autonomy. They feel as though they have no control over their environment because no matter how hard they tried in the past, they never succeeded. Therefore, they stop trying almost in everything and this will affect their individual growth and development in a social world.

However, the study also revealed that school administrators usually take action when reports of abuse get through to them. However, before taking action, they take time to investigate the case before they can decide on what action to take as revealed in the following verbatim.

Participant HD 1: The guidance and counselling department works together with the security committee on issues concerning the protection of children in school. What usually happens is that, when issues are reported, we assess and see the urgency of the matter and then act. For example, a few weeks ago some children came to report that a certain teacher was punishing them. When they did, they went back happy and were discussing among themselves when the same teacher overheard them. He was so unhappy and came to me fuming that you are the one destroying these children. I asked him to come down and visit my office. He never came to the office and he chased the girls from his class. I kept waiting for him to come to the office, but he never came until I reported him to the Deputy headteacher and subsequently the Headteacher. This issue took over a month to resolve and the teacher was disciplined. So you see, in the minds of the learners, we did not do anything after they reported (interviewed on 25th March, 2021).

Thus, because of the length of time that some cases may take, the pupils conclude that the school administrators do not take action. Therefore, from the forgoing argument, it can be concluded that the communication between the pupils and the school administrators is very poor.

V. CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to explore the prevalence of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse in selected secondary schools of Lusaka district. The study revealed that children in schools experience violence, exploitation and sexual abuse. The victims of sexual abuse are mostly girls. This study found that girls are more at risk of sexual abuse than boys. From sixteen participants consisting of boys only one boy was sexually abused compared to the sixteen participants consisting of girls whose statistics showed that more than half of them had been either harassed or abused sexually by teachers. Additionally, the study also found that, most boys experienced acts of violence from their teachers, ranging from beating, to bad words, to being chased out of the classroom for extended periods. Further, the study found that the perpetrators of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse in secondary schools are usually teachers. However, the study also revealed that sometimes these cases are perpetrated by the pupils who entice the teachers in order to get favours from them in form of money and sometimes good results.

Therefore, the study established for not reporting experiences of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse among pupils. Reasons for not reporting are that, (1) children were usually afraid to report these issues because they are afraid of being blamed that they are the cause. (2) The children do not trust the authorities enough to confide in them because they believe that teachers and school administrators always protect themselves and the image of their respective schools. And (3)

children do not report cases of abuse because they believe that authorities do not take action.

The study also established that children develop learned helplessness early on in their interactions with their teachers. This makes it difficult for them to report any cases of abuse to the school administrators because they believe that their actions do not matter. Thus, in the face of danger and oppression, they remain passive and feel helpless, believing that they cannot do anything to change the situation even when they can.

The study further revealed that schools have measures in place to ensure that children are protected. However, these measures are not effective and need to be revisited and revised if not reformed. Furthermore, Schools usually take a lot of time to take action on issues concerning child abuses. This makes the children to lose trust in the credibility of the disciplinary process. It was also apparent from the study that children who have experienced violence, exploitation and sexual abuse tend to be bitter, untrusting, withdrawn and become poor performers at school.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher provides six (6) recommendations.

- i. The government through the Ministry of General Education should strengthen the child protection policies in schools. This will equip the children with tools to face issues violence and sexual abuse with confidence. This will further help the learners to know that they are protected when they are in schools and thereby instilling confidence in them.
- ii. School administrators should always ensure that their teachers are professional enough to uphold high ethical standards in the manner they deal with their pupils.
- iii. The government through the Ministry of Higher Education should introduce a course in guidance and counselling to equip teachers in training colleges and universities with tools to help the learners open up whenever they are having challenges that might be sensitive to disclose.
- iv. School administrators should get more involved in the activities of the guidance and counselling department rather than just receiving reports that sometimes may not present the reality on the ground.
- v. The school administrators should ensure that they put up committees that can work in a transparent manner and be able to deliberate on issues related to child protection without taking too much time.
- vi. Teachers who interact with these children should be encouraged to report if they notice any significant change in behaviour in their pupils, especially if they notice a dropdown in performance, signs of withdraw or becoming rude without any proper reason.

REFERENCES

- [1] Agence France-Press. Sexual Abuse of young girls rife in Zambia, September 2003.
- [2] Akani, M., Imasiku, M.L., Paul, R., & Hazemba, A. (2015). Medical Journal of Zambia, Vol. 42, No. 4: 170-176
- [3] Akinade, E. A., Osarenren, N., & Sokan, B. O (2005). An introduction to Guidance and Counselling: A Basic Text for Colleges and Universities. Ibadan.
- [4] Andrews, G., Corry, J., Slade, T., Issakidis, C., & Swanston, H. (2004). Child sexual abuse. In M. Ezzati, A. D. Lopez, A. Rodgers & C. J. L. Murray (Eds.), Comparative quantification of health risk (Vol. 2, pp. 1851–1940). Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization.
- [5] Barth, J., Bermetz, L., Heim, E., Trelle, S., & Tonia, T. (2013). The current prevalence of child sexual abuse worldwide: A systematic review and meta-analysis. International Journal of Public Health, 58, 469–483. doi:10.1007/s00038-012-0426-
- [6] Bradley, A.R., Wood, J.M., (1996). How do children tell? The disclosure process in child sexual abuse, Child Abuse & Neglect, Volume 20, Issue 9, Pages 881-891, ISSN 0145-2134,
- [7] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77–101.
- [8] Butchart, A., Harvey, H.P., Mian, M. & Furriss, T. (2006). Preventing child maltreatment: A guide to taking action and generating evidence. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization and the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.
- [9] Camfed (2011). Research on the Extent of Sexual Abuse in Zambian Schools.
- [10] Chomba E, Murray L, Kautzman M, Haworth A, Kasese-Bota M, Kankasa C, et al. (2010) Integration of services for victims of child sexual abuse at the university teaching hospital one-stop centre. J Trop Med 2010: 1–7.
- [11] Cohen, L., & Manion, L. (1995). Research Methods in Education. London: Croom Helm.
- [12] Collings, S. J. (1991). Childhood sexual abuse in a sample of South African University males: Prevalence and risk factors. South African Journal of Psychology, 21, 153-158.
- [13] Collings, S. J. (1992). The process of victimisation in childhood sexual abuse. Social Work, 28, 2, 16.
- [14] Collings, S. J. (1993). Physically and sexually abused children: A comparative analysis of 200 reported cases. Social Work, 29, 4, 301-306.
- [15] Collings, S. J. (1994). Sexual aggression: A discriminant analysis of predictors in a non-forensic sample. South African Journal of Psychology, 24 (1), 35-38.
- [16] Collings, S. J. (1995). The Long-term effects of contact and non-contact forms of child sexual abuse in a sample of university men. Child Abuse and Neglect, 19, 1-6.
- [17] Collings, S. J. (1997). Child sexual Abuse in a sample of South African women students: prevalence, characteristics, and long-term effects. South African Journal of Psychology, 27 (1), 37-42.
- [18] Donovan, J. E., and Jessor, R. (1985). Structure of problem behaviour in adolescence and young adulthood. J. Consult. Clin. Psychol. 53:890-904.
- [19] Dunne, M. P., Purdie, D. M., Cook, M. D., Boyle, F. M., & Najman, J. M. (2003). Is child sexual abuse declining? Evidence from a population-based survey of men and women in Australia. Child Abuse & Neglect, 27(2), 141–152. doi:10.1016/S0145-2134(02)00539-2
- [20] Edgardh, K., & Ormstad, K. (2000). Prevalence and characteristics of sexual abuse in a national sample of Swedish seventeen-year-old boys and girls. Acta Paediatrica, 89(3), 310–319. doi:10.1111/j.1651-2227.2000.tb01333.x
- [21] Finkelhor, D., Shattuck, A., Turner, H.A and Hamby, S.L (2014). The Lifetime Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault Assessed in Late Adolescence, 55 Journal of Adolescent Health 329, 329-333
- [22] Finkelhor, D., Vanderminden, J., Turner, H., Hamby, S., & Shattuck, A. (2014). Child maltreatment rates assessed in a national household survey of caregivers and youth. Child Abuse & Neglect, 38, 1421–1435. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.05.005>
- [23] Finkelhor, D. Hammer, H. & Sedlak, A. J. (2008). Sexually Assaulted Children: National Estimates and Characteristics. Juvenile Justice Bulletin, (No. NCJ 214383). Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- [24] Garcia-Moreno, C., Jansen, H.S.F.M., Ellsberg, M., Heise, L., Watts, C., WHO (2005). Multi-country study on women’s health and domestic violence against women. Initial results on prevalence, health outcomes & women’s responses. Geneva: World Health Organisation.
- [25] Gilbert, R., Widom, C. S., Browne, K., Fergusson, D., Webb, E., & Janson, S. (2009). Burden and consequences of child maltreatment in high-income countries. The Lancet, 373, 68–81. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(08)61706-7
- [26] Gwirai, P., (2011). Child sexual abuse among urban secondary school pupils: Impact of family characteristics and family structure. International review of Social Sciences and Humanities Vol. 3, No. 1 (2012), pp. 36-50.
- [27] Haffjee, I. E. (1991). Sexual Abuse of Indian (Asian) children in South Africa: First report in a community undergoing cultural change. Child Abuse and Neglect, 15 (1-2), 147-151.
- [28] Heiberg, T. (2005). Essential learning points: Listen and speak out against sexual abuse of girls and boys .Save the children. <http://www.reddbarna.no/default.asp?V-ITEM-ID=2210> [Accessed 18th November, 2020].
- [29] Hobbs, C. (2005). The prevalence of child maltreatment in the United Kingdom. Child Abuse & Neglect, 29, 949–951. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.08.00.
- [30] Human Rights Watch. Scared at school (2001). Sexual violence against girls in South African schools. New York: Human Rights Watch.
- [31] Jewkes, R., Levin, J., Bradshaw, D., Mbananga, N. (2002). Rape of girls in South Africa. The Lancet.;359:319–320
- [32] Kabwe, C. (2017). Perception of the Community Towards Child Sexual Abuse in Chawama, Lusaka, Zambia. Lusaka: UNZA Press.
- [33] Kamuwanga, C. (2008). Perception About Child Sexual Abuse in Relation to Virgin Cure Among Convicted Prisoners in Lusaka. Lusaka: UNZA Press.
- [34] Jakupa, P. (2014). Exploring School Effectiveness in Challenging Contexts: A Study of Selected Day-Secondary Schools in the Western Province of Zambia
- [35] Kibaru-Mbae, (2011). Child sexual abuse in Sub-Saharan Africa. A review of literature. East, Central and Southern African health Community: World Health Organisation.
- [36] Levett, A. (1989). A study of childhood sexual abuse among South African University women students. South African Journal of Psychology, 19 (3), 122-129.
- [37] Maniglio, R. (2009). The impact of child sexual abuse on health: A systematic review of reviews. Clinical Psychology Review, 29(7), 647–657. doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2009.08.003
- [38] Magwaza, A. S. (1994). Perception of family relationships in sexually abused children. Social Work, 30, 4, 390-396.
- [39] McGee, H., Garavan, R., Byrne, J., O’Higgins, M., & Conroy, R. M. (2011). Secular trends in child and adult sexual violence—one decreasing and the other increasing: A population survey in Ireland. European Journal of Public Health, 21(1), 98–103. doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckp203
- [40] Mossige, S., & Abrahamsen, S. (2007). National reports: Sexual abuse in Norway. In S. Mossige, M. Ainsaar & C. G. Svedin (Eds.), The Baltic Sea regional study on adolescents’ sexuality (pp. 93–111). Oslo, Norway: Norwegian Social Research (NOVA).
- [41] Mundende, K., Simui, F., Chishiba, A., Mwewa, G. & Namangala, B. (2016). Trends and prospects of instructional material development and delivery at the University of Zambia. Global Journal of Human-Social Science: Linguistics & Education, 16(3),

- 5-11. Retrieved from 303. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2003.00380.x>
- [42] Mupeta, S., Muleya, G., Kanyamuna, V., & Simui, F. (2020). Imperial Districts Civic Entrepreneurship: The Implementation of Civic Innovations in the Governance of the University of Zambia. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*. 7(7) 674-685.
- [43] Mwanangombe, C. Mundende, K. Muzata, K.K. Muleya, G. Kanyamuna, V & Simui, F. (2020). Peeping into the Pot of Contraceptives Utilization among Adolescents within a Conservative Culture Zambia *American Journal of Educational Research*, 2020, 8, (8), 513-523 Available online at <http://pubs.sciepub.com/education/8/8/1> Published by Science and Education Publishing DOI:10.12691/education-8-8-1
- [44] Mwase, D. Simuyaba, E. Mwewa, G. Muleya, G & Simui, F. "Leveraging Parental Involvement in the Education of their Children as a Conflict Resolution Strategy in Selected Secondary schools, Zambia," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*. 2020, 4 (7).
- [45] Naker, D. (2005). Violence against children: The voices of Ugandan children and adults. Kampala: Raising Voices and Save the Children Uganda
- [46] Pereda, N., Guilera, G., Forns, M., & Gómez-Benito, J. (2009). The prevalence of child sexual abuse in community and student samples: A meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 29(4), 328–338. doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2009.02.007
- [47] Priebe & Svedin (2009). Prevalence, Characteristics, and Associations of Sexual Abuse with Sociodemographics and Consensual Sex in a Population-Based Sample of Swedish Adolescents, *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 18:1, 19-39, DOI: 10.1080/10538710802584635
- [48] Radford, L., Corral, S., Bradley, C., & Fisher, H. L. (2013). The prevalence and impact of child maltreatment and other types of victimization in the UK: Findings from a population survey of caregivers, children and young people and young adults. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 37(10), 801–813. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2013.02.004
- [49] Reza. A., Brieding, M., Gulaid, J., Mercy, J.A., Blanton, C., Mthethwa, Z., Bamrah, S., Dahlberg, L., Anderson, M. Sexual violence and its health consequences among female children, Swaziland 2007. *The Lancet*. 2009;373:1966–1972.
- [50] Richter, L., Dawes, A. and Higson-Smith, C. (2004). *The many kinds of sexual abuse of young children*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- [51] Sethi, D., Bellis, M., Hughes, K., Gilbert, R., Mitis, F., & Galea, G. (2013). European report on preventing child maltreatment. Copenhagen, Denmark: World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe
- [52] Shumba, A. (2001). *Sex Education, 'Who guards the guards in schools?' A study of reported cases of child abuse by teachers in Zimbabwean secondary schools Vol. 1,(1)*. University of Botswana: Taylor & Francis Ltd.
- [53] Simui, F., Kasonde-Ngandu, S., Cheyeka, A. & Kakana, F. (2018). Unearthing dilemmas in thesis titles: Lived experience of a novice researcher in Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 5(4), 99-105. <https://bit.ly/34qdnzy>
- [54] Simui, F., Namangala, B., Tambulukani, G., and Ndhlovu, D. (2018). Demystifying the process of ODL policy development in a dual-mode context: lessons from Zambia. *Journal of Distance Education*. 2018. Routledge, DOI: 10.1080/01587919.2018.1457946.
- [55] Simui, F., Thompson, L.C., Mwewa, G., Mundende, K., Kakana, F., Chishiba, A.B. & Namangala, B. (2017). Distance learners' perspective on user-friendly instructional materials at the University of Zambia. *Journal of Learning for Development*, 4(1), 90-98. <https://bit.ly/34nNS1L>
- [56] Slonim-Nevo, V. & Mukuka, L.(2007). Child abuse and AIDS-related knowledge, attitudes and behavior among adolescents in Zambia. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. ;31(2):143–159.
- [57] Steel, J. L., & Herlitz, C. A. (2005). The association between childhood and adolescent sexual abuse and proxies for sexual risk behavior: A random sample of the general population of Sweden. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 29(10), 1141–1153. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2004.10.015
- [58] Townsend, C., and Rheingold, A.A., (2013). Estimating a child sexual abuse prevalence rate for practitioners: studies.
- [59] Stipek, D. J. (1988). *Motivation to learn*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- [60] Stoltenborgh, M., van IJzendoorn, M. H., Euser, E. M., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J.(2011). A global perspective on child sexual abuse: Meta-analysis of prevalence around the world. *Child Maltreatment*, 16(2), 79–101. doi:10.1177/107755951140392
- [61] Svedin, C. G., & Priebe, G. (2009). Unga, sex och internet. In M. Nyman (Ed.), *Se mig. Unga om sex och internet*. [In Swedish.] (pp. 32–147). Stockholm, Sweden: Ungdomsstyrelsen.
- [62] Trocmé, N., Fallon, B., MacLaurin, B., Daciuk, J., Felstiner, C., & Black, T., Tommyr, L., Blackstock, C., Barter, K. (2005). Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect – 2003: Major findings. Ottawa, Canada: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.
- [63] Whitaker, T., et al. (2004). *If you're right for the job, it's the best job in the world. The National Association of Social Workers' child welfare specialty practice section members describe their experiences in child welfare*. Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.
- [64] Widom, C. S., & Morris, S. (1997). Accuracy of adult recollections of childhood victimization, Part 2: Childhood sexual abuse. *Psychological Assessment*, 9(1), 34–46. doi:10.1037/1040-3590.9.1.34.
- [65] World Health Organization (2018). United Nations, Violence against children.
- [66] Wurtele SK: Behavioral approaches to educating young children and their parents about child sexual abuse prevention. *J Behav Anal Offender Vict Treat Prev*. 2008, 1: 52-54.
- [67] Zulu, B. (2020). Zambia: Fighting gender-based violence as fresh cases continue to emerge. *Africa Renewal*.