

Experiences of GBV for learners in Tanzanian Schools

Kajula et al.,
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Sciences

Researchers

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Background

- Young people aged 13-24 in Tanzania are exposed to gender based violence (GBV) at rates that are of concern.
- Physical, emotional and sexual violence are most prevalent.
- Focusing on GBV in young adolescents provides an opportunity to influence future adult behaviors in this regard.

Objectives

- To explore dynamics surrounding experience of GBV among young adolescents in school settings.
- Describe social norms associated with GBV
- Describe parenting styles (connectedness, control, and communication)

Methods

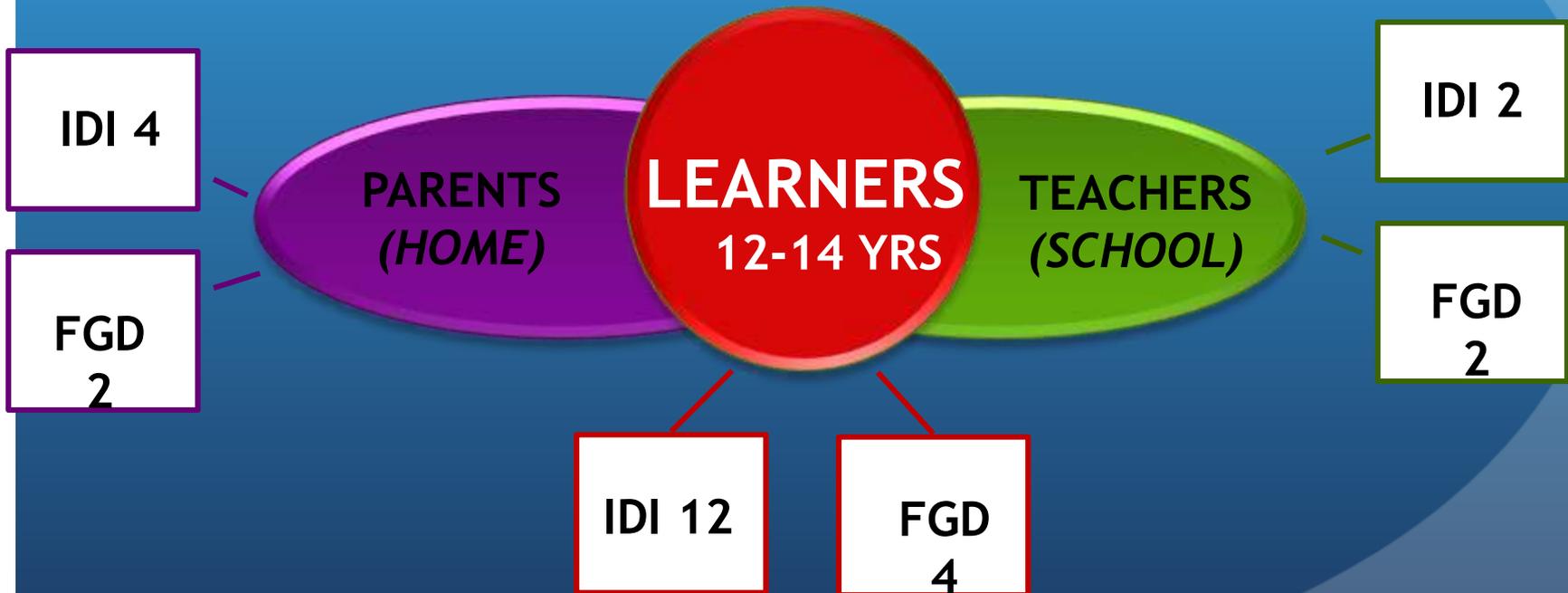
- This was a qualitative study
- Learners aged 12-14 years from public schools
- Dar es salaam, Tanzania's commercial capital
- MUHAS IRB reviewed and provided ethical approval for this study. Local government leaders gave permission for the study.

Methods: participants

- Head Teachers 2
- DEO 1
- DSWO 1



- District GBV focal person 1
- Police gender desk (1M/1F)
- CBO/NGO GBV prevention (1M/1F)



Results

Key themes :

- **Corporal punishment**
- **Sexual violence**
- **Children witnessing GBV at home**

Corporal punishment

Some parents and teachers suggested that they use corporal punishment in the quest to discipline adolescents.

- The father below suggested that his son's teachers punished him by beating after he was caught stealing and gambling:

“The teachers beat him and his friends confirmed his pilfering habit. So I tried to follow up and see where he takes the money, that's when I realized there is gambling going on near the school compound.”

Corporal punishment ...

- Teachers on an FGD discussed widely about corporal punishment, some suggesting that they have been using it for quite a long time:

“In my 9 years of work experience I see that our Tanzanian children are already used to corporal punishment, without it they don’t study, I have even built a mentality of carrying a cane with me to the class and just placing it on the table for students to see It even if I know am not going to use it, once students see a cane they know they may get beaten, so they behave accordingly.”

“On my side I started working many years ago and I used corporal punishment in every school I have taught so I could change at this school, and I can’t deny using canes because of the teaching conditions; there are so many students in a class it’s not easy to control them, tools are not available for example things that children like, things to play with so that you may not need to use a cane.”

Sexual violence at home

- Was reported to be a major issue; suggested to occur at home, on the way to school and in schools.

“The newest case is about a man who tore his 12 year old daughter’s genitalia with his fingers. The father is HIV infected so he was feeling pity for his daughter, and decided to insert his fingers in her vagina and rectum ... As usual, the X (name of location withheld) people destroyed the door after suspecting something. They found the father and his daughter in bed. We wrote a police form for the daughter to be treated at a hospital and the father was sentenced to 7 years in jail. That father had chased his wife and son from the house and had remained with the daughter”.

Male Police Officer, KII

Sexual violence at home

“There is a student who is in standard seven now who used to sleep in the class and I made a follow up on her. I asked her why she always slept in class and she said that it’s because of her uncle. She told me that her mother went to X (name of region withheld) and she is with her stepfather and the uncle used to rape the girl when the stepfather left the house early in the morning. He threatened to kill her if she made any noise”.

Female teacher, IDI

“Last week a girl was raped, she is mentally challenged and was left at home alone. A man who was working on a construction site for a nearby house called her into the unfinished house and coerced her to have sex after offering her one hundred shillings (equivalent to 0.06 USD) so that she can keep quiet. But as this was happening a group of four year old children saw what was happening and told her parents, when asked she agreed but said that she was afraid of saying anything before, because the man had threatened to beat her mother if she came asking around”.

Female learner, FGD

Some of the sexual violence are reported to occur on the way to & from school:

“Aah, we have dealt with a lot of such cases. Children pass through the narrow passage when they are heading to the bus station. There was a chips vendor who was offering chips to some boys and in return for sodomizing them. The learners were going to see that chips businessman daily, he was sodomizing them in turns. One boy reported this to his father and we prepared a plan to snare him”.

Male police officer, KII

Children Witnessing GBV at home

Witnessing of familial conflicts by children was a concern raised by parent participants. A female parent noted during an in-depth interview:

“The man went to the place the women were cooking and started to hit his wife. He hit her so hard and the food poured onto the ground. He took her outside and hit her until all of her clothes were torn and the undergarments could be seen. A lot of people gathered there to see what was happening. My children were the ones that called me outside to see that. The woman that was hit was feeling ashamed and humiliated because all of her clothes were torn”.

Female parent, IDI

Conclusions

- Learners' experience of GBV involves multiple layers, and multilevel and gendered approaches are needed to prevent gender based violence in school based young adolescents.
- Teachers also need an intervention so as to reduce normative use of violence.

Way forward

- **Schools:** to model our GBV intervention for adolescents integrating GBV prevention components.
- **System:** Alternative disciplining approaches for teachers are to be emphasized.
- **Advocacy for positive disciplining strategies in schools and families** are to be considered.

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