

Impact of interventions of the Murder of People with Albinism in Lake Victoria A case of Shinyanga Region

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of interventions of the murder of persons with albinism in Lake Victoria, Tanzania. The study was conducted in Shinyanga Region in two Districts namely; Shinyanga and Kahama Districts. A total number of 100 respondents participated in this study, two focus group discussions sessions were conducted, each involving 8 participants and key informant interview was done to three traditional doctors used for capturing qualitative responses whereas data from 52 People With Albinisms (PWAs) and 29 stakeholders of PWAs including heads of households of PWAs, friends of PWAs, journalists, and advocacy officers were collected by using the structured questionnaires for the collection of primary data while documentary review was applied to collect secondary data. The study has revealed that, in Tanzania there is a high rate of murder of PWAs principally for ritual purposes. This belief directly led to the murder of PWAs by people desperate for success in the form of good luck and money. The core of this practice is witchdoctors. The eradication of such killings has become very difficult and complicated process. Poverty, low quality of settlements, absence of witchcraft law, and inadequate government readiness, to mention a few make interventions to fail and ultimately increase the murders. The study recommends on the urgent measures to assess and address the situation in asylums where PWAs are centered, to enact witchcraft law and provide public awareness, strong collaboration of all stakeholders, political will, and equal access to socio economic and political opportunities

Introduction

People with albinisms (PWAs) have been experiencing unsociable life due to various social cultural barriers imposed to them. According to UTSS and TAS (2013), PWAs face two major challenges. The first challenge is genetic disorder in relation to the environment. This shortens their life as the sun burns their skin and skin cancer make them die around the age of 40s. The second major challenge is mutilation and killing from fellow human beings. Mutilation and killing of PWAs is definitely a serious violation of their right to life, to which they are inherently entitled to be protected, recognized and respected.

Historically there have been mutilation and killings of PWAs performed by the family or the tribe. In recent years the mutilation and killing of PWAs has got increased to an extent that the media and the government have raised the attention to the problem with the purpose of stopping it. The mutilation and killings of PWAs have caused tension in a study area, in Tanzania, Africa and all over the world. Since 2006 there is a high rate of mutilation and murder of PWAs in Tanzania. Until May 2014, 73 murders, 29, mutilation and 17 grave robberies of PWAs have been reported (UTSS, 2014). Further, UTSS, (2013) has identified 207 witchcraft-related attacks and killings of PWA's in 16 different African nations. A more accurate estimate of murders relating to albinism would be considerably higher given that many cases are not reported.

The mutilation and killing of PWAs is definitely a serious violation of their right to live, although they are inherently entitled to be protected, recognized and respected in the community. The various efforts

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have been employed to address the problem in Tanzania including distributing cell phones to PWAs (Makulilo, 2012; TAS, 2013 UTSS, 2013), National vote of suspects (Makulilo, 2012), nomination of a woman with albinism to be a member of parliament, (TAS and UTSS 2013). Burning of witch doctors licenses (Kiishweko, 2008), charges for murderers at the court of law, (The European Parliament, September 2009), the establishment of special places and schools for PWAs as asylums (MOVET, 2012), and passing of United nations resolutions (UTSS, 2013). Regardless of the measures taken against, still the eradication of such mutilation and murder has become very difficult and complicated process. This study attempts to investigate the impact of interventions of the murder of PWAs Lake Victoria zones specifically Shinyanga region.

The region of the 'Great Lakes' in East Africa has been most affected. Most of attacks, mutilation, and murder took place in the North-Western part of Tanzania (Mwanza, Kagera, Geita, and Shinyanga regions), the area largely covered by the Sukuma people, and to a lesser degree, the Nyamwezi people. It has reported that at least 8 PWAs were mutilated and 3 PWAs murdered in 2008 alone in Shinyanga and Kahama districts in order to supply witch doctors with limbs, organs and hair for their potions (Kanjiwa, 2013)

The central problem of this study questions how effective the national framework is towards the protection of people with disabilities? The study examined the suitability of measures employed to protect PWAs is inevitable as it seems the situation is long-lasting. What was not known is the efficiency of measures taken against the murder of PWAs. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating the impact of interventions of the murder of PWAs in Lake Victoria particularly Shinyanga region.

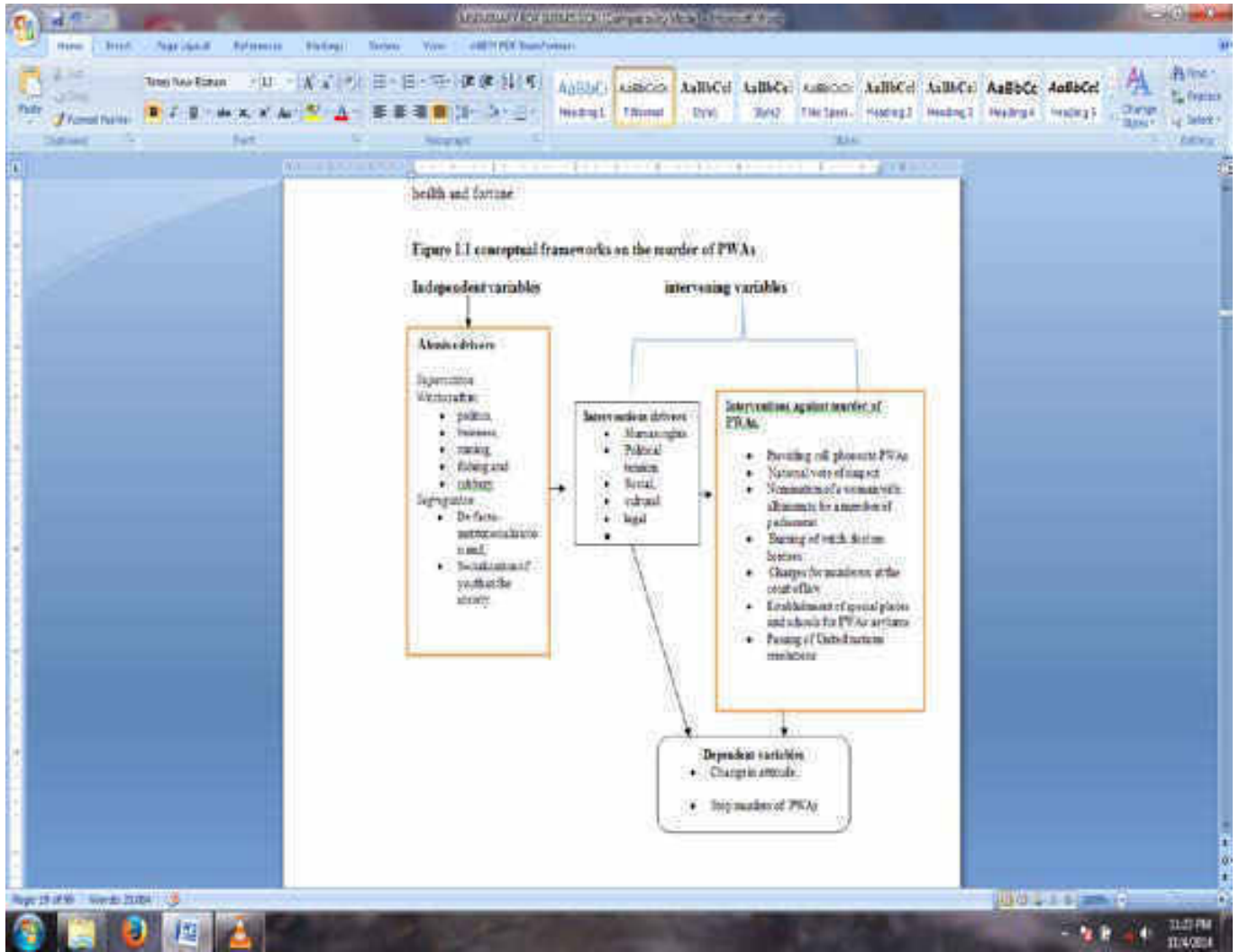
The overall objective of this study was to investigate the impact of interventions of the murder of PWAs in Lake Victoria particularly Shinyanga Region and the specific objectives of the study were

1. To examine the factors influencing the murder of PWAs.
2. To assess the impact of the murder of PWAs to the individual family and the nation.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of interventions of the murder of PWAs to the individual family and the nation.

Conceptual framework and Methodology of the Study

The conceptual framework of this study is shown in the Fig 1.1, and it comprises the multiple variables, consisting of the dependent, independent and intervening and intermediate variables. The dependent variable is an outcome of this study includes the change in attitude and finally the end of the mutilation and murder of PWAs. The independent variables include the abusive drivers which are superstition and segregation, and within superstition we have the witchcraft in politics, business, mining, fishing and robbery. According to the European Parliament (2008), witchcraft industry is growing in everyday and in many places some people believe in it and use it in politics, business, mining, robbery and finishing sectors to become rich and more successful in their areas they go for witchcraft. Witchdoctors sell severed body parts and blood of albinos to miners and fishermen who believe that these parts can bring them luck, health and fortune.

Figure 1. 1: Conceptual frameworks on the murder of PWAs



Two aspects of segregation against PWAs are identified, the first one is de facto institutionalization of segregation, according to Makulilo, (2012), PWAs in Tanzania have no access to socio-economic and political rights as normal human beings. They do not have equal access to education. He says, when PWAs get education opportunity, it becomes very difficult to attend because of security (being hunted like animals for killing), skin protection facilities are not distributed to albinos, no health care for albinos, no employment opportunities which can go along with their disorder, and the second one is socialization of youth in the society, this has to do with culture on process of socializing young kids to the society. Here in many societies, kids are socialized in such a way that they come to distinguish between “we are” and PWAs, “they are”. In such categorization, kids are raised with negative narratives about PWAs. This makes some families to kill their infants if they are born albinos, or to discriminate them from family and society at large. Both aspects have great impact in making hard life of PWAs in Tanzania, and also leading to murder.

The intervening variables are the interventions taken against murder of PWAs. Interventions include the issue of Human rights and political tension globally. Others include providing cell phones to PWAs, National vote of suspects, Nomination of a woman with albinism to be a member of parliament, burning of witch doctors licenses, Charges for murderers at the court of law, establishment of special places and schools for PWAs asylums and passing of United Nations resolutions. Whereas, there are additional intervening variables that hinder the interventions murder of PWAs in the study area, Tanzania and Africa as a whole, these consist of social, political, cultural and legal factors.

The study was conducted in Shinyanga Region located in the Southern Zone of Lake Victoria. Only two districts of that region were included in the study, the districts were Shinyanga and Kahama, (Map 1). Shinyanga is one of the six districts of the Shinyanga Region of Tanzania. It is bordered to the north by the Mwanza Region, to the East by Kishapu District, to the South by Tabora Region, and to the west by the Kahama District.

Map 1: A Map of Study Area



Source: RAS Shinyanga (2013).

The selection of the study area was based on the fact that, it is one among the areas where a large number of populations of PWAs are residing and are highly hunted. The statistics show that, about 264 PWAs live in Shinyanga Region, whereby 72 and 24 of them live in Shinyanga District and Kahama District respectively and the remaining proportion (180) are placed at Buhangija camp (TAS, Shinyanga, 2013; Muduma person communication, 2013). Apart from having large number of PWAs, Shinyanga and Kahama Districts are the places where not only there is a high number of incidences about the attacks of PWAs but also are the places where PWAs are being medaled brutally. According to TAS (2013) until June 2013, twelve mutilations and three murders of PWAs have been reported in Shinyanga. Snowball technique to select the respondents from traditional doctors was used. Snowballing was a useful technique as the traditional doctors are in hidden populations which are difficult for researchers to access and in respect to this study are accused to be the root cause of the mutilation and murder of PWA. Therefore the researcher began by identifying one of the traditional doctors perceived to be an appropriate respondents

Literature

Albinism

Albinism is an inherited, congenital condition resulting in reduced synthesis of melanin pigment in the hair, skin and eyes. It leads to a host of lifelong physical health problems, in particular visual impairment and ultraviolet induced skin damage. There is no cure for albinism, although with careful management a reasonable quality of life can be enjoyed. In Africa such problems are worsen by exposure to harsh sunlight and reduced access to adequate health care, especially in rural areas. (UTSS, 2012 and 2013; Salewi, 2011; Tanner, 2010,)

The population of people with albinisms (PWAs) varies from one region of the world to the other. North America and Europe are considered the regions with low population of PWAs, it is estimated that 1 in every 20,000 people has some form of albinism. In Africa, East Africa is the region with high number of PWAs of which Tanzania is considered the country with highest number of PWAs in the world. Tanzania is estimated to have 170,000 PWAs of 1 in 2,000 people being affected. (Possi, 1998; Makulilo, 2012; TAS, 2013; UTSS, 2013; Salewi, 2011; Tanner, 2010.).

In countries where the population has dark-coloured skin, hair and eyes, PWAs stand out easily making them easy targets of mocking, discrimination and dangerous myths. In Tanzania and several parts of Africa, some of these myths are fatal. For example, the myth that the body parts of a PWA can, when mixed in witchcraft potions, lead to wealth and other desirables.

Theory of stigma

The theory of stigma focuses on the social rejection of people who are treated as different. Stigma is defined as a two part sequences that firstly uses a norm as a starting point for the stigmatization, secondly an attribute is needed to function as a link between the person and the stigmatization. The theory of stigma centers on social rejection connected to norms and values in the society. Roles are constructed by the society and closely connected to the values of the people. It brings about different “truth” in relation to people and groups that say that they are different. When these differences are taken for granted stereotypes are created and with the intention in a way that makes them recreate in a way that has a negative effect on the stigmatized group. That makes a distinction between a “we” and “them” were the stigmatized people experience discrimination and a loss of status. The access to power depends on asset to social, economic and political power. The exclusion of power contributes to separation of people and distinctions of people in different categories. Power is therefore relevant when it comes to the creation of opportunities and maintains stigmatization of people or groups. On an individual level people may stigmatize other people for their own benefit to feel self-esteemed, and to be in control and superior to the “others”. This can also be used between groups so that one group are superior to the other. Stigmatization can also serve political purposes. By fuelling discrimination and segregation of certain groups the power of the country can be maintained. (Durkheim, 1983; Goffman, 1963)

Since the theory of stigma exposes the “truth” that is created by the society and about certain people, it is a useful tool in this study. Stigma theory focuses on the exposure of underlying normative structures and the creation of a “we” and a “them”. The creation of identities is legitimised through the structures of the society. The purpose of using this theory is that it is more specific emphasizing the signs and actions which the norms and identities are based upon. According to Larson (2011), PWAs have a history of stigmatization in Tanzania. Many do not attend school, which leads to an inability to secure gainful employment. If they go to school, they are more likely to drop out due to stigmatization. However, more recently, an estimated 10,000 PWAs have gone into hiding because of the fear that they too will be attacked or killed. Even absent the recent killings, PWAs are discriminated against and face segregation throughout most of their lives. Larson, (2011), observed that the albinos in Tanzania are stigmatized in the society and that people treat them based on myths and preconceptions. This stratification goes as far as to the murders of PWAs. This is why the theory has been describing the discrimination of certain people and groups in the society.

Stigma and Myths about PWAs.

There are various studies conducted with regard to stigma and myths on PWAs in Africa particularly in Tanzania. Kromberg, et al, (1987), conducted a research on albinism focusing on the African history with regard to stories, myths and tales. The study found that attitudes tales and myths have developed and changed over time. The results of the study indicated that some stories and tales suggest that albinism is the product of a Negress-gorilla or Negress-water spirit mating. Some of the societies in Africa refer to PWAs as monkeys. Other studies have revealed existence of myths about albinism that regard them as blessings as well as punishments, and skills in sorcery as well as healing.

Possi conducted three studies one in 1998 on stigma and People with Disability, the other in 1995 on some myths and facts about albinism and, in 1999 on stigmatization of Albino people. To date, these studies have remained influential on the topic of stigma in the social sciences context. Possi (1998), observed that societies create categorizations, where some personalities are considered to be normal within a category, the outcome can be referred to as social identity. Possi (1995), differentiates among people who are dishonoured and people who are dishonourable. A dishonoured person is someone whose distinctions are obvious on the spot, while a person who is dishonourable possesses unwanted characteristics that are not instantly perceivable to those present. Possi (1999), Identifies three types of stigma namely abominations of the body, blemishes of individual character, and tribal stigma. She further argued that a person who is stigmatized is seen as a victim, inferior, and someone who is not quite human. She concludes that Albinos undergo stigmatization in societies hence being perceived as inferior and due to this act they run away from the tasks of those considered normal, hiding behind their stigma.

Lund and Gaigher (2002) conducted a study on the health intervention programme for children with albinism at a special school in South Africa. The results of the study revealed that albinism is the result of witchcraft. The study also found similar myths that advocate that families with babies that have albinism are victims of witchcraft and that it is because of this that these babies are born with albinism. The study concluded that the lack of knowledge about albinism can lead to many superstitions. Although the study focused on health interventions for children with albinism, it was points that the existence of poverty in the society combined with superstitions would magnify problems related to skin, eyesight for children in special schools, mutilation and murder of PWAs

Murders of PWAs

Makulilo, (2012), conducted a study on Albino killings in Tanzania. The study came out with the results that Tanzania has a high rate of murder of PWAs that are associated with witchcraft, wealth, politics and racism. The study points out that the end of the murder of PWAs is difficult since there is the absence of witchcraft law, lack of government readiness, and increasing racism on cultural sphere. He concluded that it is until witchcraft law and government readiness are addressed and fixed, albinos in Tanzania will be safe.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The attacks and murder of the people with albinisms in Africa were mostly between age 3 and 16 years that confirms that children are more susceptible to the attack because are easily captured and unable to defend themselves from attackers but also they are being viewed as more potent in producing the intended witchcraft outcomes since they are innocent (UTSS, 2012, 2013). In terms of age distribution the respondents ranged from 10 to 60 years and above in both districts. Among the respondents who were PWAs 69% in both Shinyanga and Kahama Districts were aged between 10 and 19 years. The population of children with albinisms in Shinyanga District is higher than that of Kahama District. (Table 1)

In terms of sex the killing of PWAs is a new phenomenon and it is by no means a traditional way of practicing medicine where both sex are at risk (TAS & TGPSH, 2009. These were 61.7% of respondents in Shinyanga District and 41.2% in Kahama District while 38.3% in Shinyanga and 58.8% of the respondents in Kahama were females respectively. Almost the same distribution found among the PWAs, whereby 54.3% in Shinyanga and 52.9% of the respondents in Kahama District were males (Table 1). This equal distribution of the sex among PWAs implies that the risks that are associated with sex are reduced.

The level of illiteracy in the community is a determining factor for the killing of PWAs (Mutungi, 2013). That is because the low level of education is considered to perpetuate the existence of irrational beliefs against PWAs which endanger their lives (Dave-Odigie, 2010). The study revealed that slightly more than half 70.2% of the respondents in Shinyanga District and 11% in Kahama District had primary education at the same time 19.01 % of the respondents in Shinyanga and 20.6% in Kahama had secondary education. About 8.5% of the respondents in Shinyanga with 32.4% in Kahama had tertiary education respectively (Table 1). Having the majority of the respondents with primary education in the study community it supports the fact that in Sukuma land the number of youths who have attained primary education is higher than those who continue with further studies like secondary education (Mutungi, 2013). The results also show that among PWAs most of them in both Shinyanga and Kahama Districts had primary education. This result indicates that PWAs in this community are being denied the chance to continue with further studies. This is a tendency of many families, perceiving that investing on further education for PWAs is wastage of both time and resources because PWAs don't live long (Mutungi, 2013).

In terms of marital status People who are perceived by others or themselves as being different may be due to race, religion, height and even Albinism, have difficulties in being fully integrated into the society which makes it much harder for them to form relationships with opposite sexes (TAS & TGPSH, 2009). PWAs are often more worried than others of being refused by prospective love partners (TAS, 2009). The distribution of the respondents based on their marital status is summarized on the Table 4.3. The respondents were of different marriage status such as being married, single, divorced and separated. The findings show that the majority (78%) of the respondents in Shinyanga District and 52.9% in Kahama District were single. That is because most of them were between the age category 10 and 19, and this age marriage is very rare. The proportion of the respondents who were widowed and separated was negligible, where 8.8% in Kahama District were widowed, and in Shinyanga District none of the respondents was widowed. About 2.1% in Shinyanga and 2.9% in Kahama Districts were separated. The general results show that more than two thirds (86.5%) of the PWAs in both Shinyanga and Kahama Districts were single.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

Age	Shinyanga		Kahama		Total N=81
	PWAs N=35	Stakeholders of PWAS N=12	PWAs N=17	Stakeholders of PWAs N=17	
10-19	85.7		35.3	11.8	40
20-29	11.4	00	23.5	41.2	15
30-39	2.9	25	35.3	23.5	14
40-49	00	16.7	00	17.6	05
50-59	00	33.3	5.9	0	05
60+	00	8.3	00	5.9	02
Sex of Respondents					
Males	54.3	83.3	52.9	29.4	43
Females	45.7	16.7	47.1	70.6	38
Level of education of respondents					
Never attended	2.9	00	11.8	17.6	06
Primary	85.7	25	47.1	17.6	44
Secondary	11.4	41.7	17.6	23.5	16

Tertiary	00	33.3	23.5	41.2	15
Marital Status of Respondents					
Single	97.1	25	64.7	41.2	55
Married	2.9	66.7	29.4	41.2	21
Widow	00	8.3	00	17.6	04
Separated	00	00	5.9	00	01

Source: Field work 2013

Factors influencing the murders of PWAs

The killings of PWAs are linked with witchcraft. It is believed that organs of PWAs when mixed-up with other witchcraft items by a witchdoctor would make someone rich. Most of the believers of this illusion are involved in fishing and mining activities in the Lake Zone, Northern and Southern parts of the country.(TAS, 2013; UTTS, 2008; LHRC, 2009). The data shows that, the majority of the respondents in Shinyanga district 55.3% and 28.3% in Kahama district indicated that the murders are witchcraft motivated, while 27.7% in Shinyanga and 34% in Kahama districts showed that getting wealth was the cause of murder of PWAs. About 10.6% of the respondents in Shinyanga and 13.2% in Kahama district indicated that the cause was ignorance. While, 2.1% in Shinyanga and 7.5% of the respondents in Kahama showed that the cause was poverty. On the other hand, 5.7% of the respondents in Kahama district pointed out outdated customs as the cause of murder of PWAs. At the same time, discrimination, low quality of settlements, negative attitudes, and ignorance of some PWAs and lack of humanity were each mentioned by 1.3% of the respondents in both districts (Table 2). Generally, it means that superstition is a leading factor of murder of PWAs in Tanzania, the other factors revealed spring from the root, superstition (Plate 1).

Table 2: Causes of murders for PWAs

Responses	Shinyanga				Kahama				Total N=100
	PWAs N=33		Stakeholders of PWAs N=14		PWAs N=25		Stakeholders of PWAs N=28		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Witchcrafts	17	51.5	9	64.3	6	24.0	9	32.1	41
Getting wealth	10	30.3	3	21.4	10	40.0	8	28.6	31
Ignorance	3	9.1	2	14.3	3	12.0	4	14.3	12
Poverty	1	3.0	0	0	02	8.0	02	7.1	05
Unknown	1	3.0	0	0	-	-	-	-	
Because of differences from normal people	1	3.0	0	0	01	4.0	00	00	02
Segregation	-	-	-	-	01	4.0	00	00	01
Low quality of settlement	-	-	-	-	00	00	01	3.6	01
Outdated custom	-	-	-	-	02	8.0	01	3.6	03
Negative attitude	-	-	-	-	00	00	01	3.6	01

Decrease of humanity	-	-	-	-	00	00	01	3.6	01
Ignorance of some PWAs	-	-	-	-	00	00	01	3.6	01

Multiple responses were allowed

In addition, during focus group discussion one small scale miner at Nyangalaya village at Lunguya ward in Kahama district had this to say:

Attacks and killing of PWA operate under secret environment. Victims of the killings are treated cruelly in which body parts are cut while victims are still alive, in the belief that screams of the victim enhance the medicines efficiency. Amulets worn around the neck, waist or wrist by people in mining sites are believed to contain parts of albinos while other medicines with parts of albino borne or ground bones mixture are buried on the mine sites (29.12.2013).

Meanwhile, one fisherman during focus group discussion at Old Shinyanga narrated that:

Weaving albino medicine is made of PWA's hair in fish nets, it is believed to attract more fish in nets (31/12/2013).

The findings have also shown that poverty, low quality settlement, ignorance, negative attitude, decrease of humanity, and ignorance of some PWAs are also contributing factors to the murders of PWAs,(Plate 2 &3). For example, it has been revealed that almost all murders reported are among of the poor families with PWAs in which even their settlements are worse some with no proper doors in such a way that it is easy for attackers to complete their immorality.

Plate 1: Promotion of witchcraft which lead to murder of Albino



Plate 2: A PWA whose arm was brutally mutilated



Plate 3: A body of PWAs who was brutally killed in a low quality settlement, the legs PWAs were chopped off



The impact of the murders of PWAs to the individual family and the nation

The findings point that, the mysterious killings have caused apprehension among the PWAs family as they now feel very insecure under the circumstances. They are even afraid of staying, walking or travelling alone to avoid potential risks. As a result of this, some families with PWAs had surrendered their children to asylums and others have decided to overprotect or lockup or hide PWAs inside their houses to save their lives. (Possi, 1998; Makulilo, 2012; TAS, 2013 UTSS, 2013). The data revealed that, about 59.7% of the respondents in Shinyanga district and 55.3% in Kahama said that fear is biggest

effect of murders of PWAs to individual families. On the same question, 25% of the respondents in Shinyanga and 19.1% in Kahama district mentioned the decrease of population of PWAs. Meanwhile 3.2% in Shinyanga and 10.6% of the respondents in Kahama district pointed a decline of economic growth. Another 3.2% in Shinyanga and 4.8% of respondents in Kahama district said that hostility was rampant, whereas, 3.2% of the respondents in Shinyanga and 4.2% in Kahama pointed out divorce as one of the effects. Some 1.6% of the respondents in Shinyanga and 2.1% in Kahama district said the separation from families was common. At the same time 2.1% of the respondents in Kahama pointed out that there was disappearance of peace. Nonetheless 1.6% of the respondents in Shinyanga said that they were sad and upset with this problem. Moreover, 1.6% of the respondents in Shinyanga said that parents feel pain (Table 3).

Table 3: Effects of murders of PWAs to the individual families

Responses	Shinyanga				Kahama				Total N=109
	PWAs N=39		Stakeholders of PWAs N=23		PWAs N=22		Stakeholders of PWAs N=25		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Fear	27	69.2	10	43.5	13	59.1	13	52.0	63
Decrease of population of PWAs	8	20.5	8	34.8	04	18.2	05	20.0	25
Decline of economic growth	00	00	2	8.7	02	9.1	03	12.0	07
Hostility/friendliness	00	00	2	8.7	00	00	03	12.0	05
Divorce	01	2.6	01	4.3	01	4.5	01	4.0	04
Parents feel pain	1	2.6	00	00	-	-	-		01
Separation from families	1	2.6	00	00	1	4.5	00	00	02
Sad and upset	1	2.6	00	00	-	-	-		01
Disappearance of peace	-	-	-	-	1	4.5	00	00	01

Multiple responses were allowed

Meanwhile, the crisis facing people with albinism in Tanzania has been costing much and it is still a threat to the national economic growth. The government had distributed cell phones to albinos aimed to help PWAs for calling the police and other departments of emergency when killers are around. Police handed out free mobile phones to 350 Tanzanians with albinism. (UTSS, &TAS, 2012). The other thing is the National vote for suspects, the government lunched a special countrywide referendum to do secret votes for suspected albino killers in their locality. The government spent Tanzania shillings 15 million for this project. The logic behind this mechanism was to call upon every individual to protect PWAs (Makulilo, 2012).

The murders of PWAs have been psychologically, economically and socially detrimental to the national, PWAs, and their families. PWAs are technically forced to stay indoors, some are exiled, others refuge in different places. There is a prevailing state of fear and lack of security which makes PWAs more poor economically and psychologically tortured. It has revealed that children with albinisms are no longer going to school alone, unless escorted by the father or mother or teachers. Sometimes even mothers are not allowed to walk outside fearing the killers.

The impact of interventions of the murders of PWAs to the individual family and the nation

The main of this study was to investigate on the impact of interventions on the murder of people with albinisms. The effectiveness of the interventions against murder of PWAs is the innermost variable of the study. A number of steps have been taken by the government to protect PWAs including the provision of cell phones, National vote of suspects, Nomination of a woman with albinism to be a member of parliament, burning of witch doctors licenses, Charges for murderers in the court of law, establishment of special places and schools for PWAs (asylums) and ratifying United Nations resolutions (TAS & UTSS, 2013).

Regardless of the measures taken against, still the eradication of such murders has become very difficult and complicated process, the government is facing the crisis and losing trust from PWAs and community at large in respect to the protection of albinos. Some families with children with albinisms in the study community were forced to send away their children at Buhangija in Shinyanga town as one of interventions of murder of PWAs, where it was thought that they would get better protection and given chance to attend school. Buhangija primary school began harboring children with albinisms following the rampant killings and attacks against PWAs in the years 2008/2009. The school accepted children from around lake zones from the regions of Simiyu, Shinyanga, Geita and Mwanza. Currently, the school has a total of 247 children of whom 180 are children with albinisms. The school is overcrowded beyond capacity for it was meant to shelter only 100 children (TAS, 2013).(Plate 4)

Plate 4. PWAs at Buhangija Center.



Unfortunately, the findings revealed that, Buhangija primary school has been neglected with lack of funds and children are left to take care of themselves leaving them in much greater danger as they have fled from their homes which has led to children leaving in harsh conditions without enough food, learning materials as well as sun screen lotion for protection of their delicate skin(LHRC, 2013) Furthermore, it has been pointed out that, children sheltered at Buhangija have been complaining for being abandoned at the center by their parents and relatives, making them feel like orphans. One of the children at the center had this to say:

We are now living like orphans and remembered more by people not in relation to us than our own parents. We are deeply saddened by our parent's actions (26.12.2013)

Most of the children have not seen a member of their families since they were brought at the school in 2009. This means that children remain at the school all this time without any connections to their families. This is not good for the emotional and health growth of the children for they need to grow up with family values. This is a clear indication of the fact that the present interventions of murder to PWAs are important but not well organized and others have nothing to do in ending the violence.

Despite the initiation of these measures, Albinos living in Tanzania have not seen a ray of hope in the form of increased governmental protection and assistance. Since 2006, more than 100 albinos have been chased, stoned, beaten, burned and until May, 2014, 73 PWAs had been killed.

Further, the findings have shown that the majority of PWAs are questioning the willingness of the government and its courts towards cases which are in the Courts of law. It is observable that PWA's killings are still happening. A good example is the murder cases held at high courts in Mbeya region where the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) withdrew murder charges facing suspected PWA's killers. The DPP withdrew charges of traditional doctors and other residents

Conclusion

Generally, the study revealed that in Tanzania, there is a high rate of murders of PWAs. The results have shown that, the killings of PWAs are mostly associated with illogical. The Murder of PWAs has caused depopulation, increased cost for internally displaced persons, less engagement in economic activities, and technically made PWAs living in a state of great fear. They have brought up hostility in families, divorce and separation. The eradication of such killings has become very difficult and complicated process. Lack of awareness among family members and relatives of PWAs, low quality of settlements make interventions fail and ultimately increase the killings. Also absence of witchcraft law, inadequate of government readiness to act increasing stigma as well contribute to the killings of PWs. It is until and when all these are addressed and fixed, PWAs in Tanzania will be safe.

The study revealed that the national strategies to eradicate murder of PWAs in Tanzania are unsuccessful as murders are increasing. The study recommends ways of solving challenges faced by PWAs.

To the policymakers/government

The government of Tanzanian in collaboration with other stake holders should take urgent measures to assess and address the situation in areas where PWAs are murdered. Measures should be taken to reduce poor living conditions and ensuring that there are effective remedies, to reduce PWAS murder. The staff working with PWAs in the centers including social welfare officers, teachers, medical personnel and police officers, should be well trained on their own special needs, particularly with regard to security and basic preventive measures to avoid skin cancer.

During colonial period, the colonial laws acknowledged existence of witchcraft and enacted witchcraft law of 1928, but currently there is no such law. The government should make a reversal to acknowledge the existence and enact laws on witchcraft which can help to stop PWAs killings as the data pointed out that it is sometimes difficult for judges in the court of law to prosecute people as the courts and laws do not believe in witchcraft. The question which the government should ask is how can we say murders of PWAs are due to witchcraft while we do not acknowledge witchcraft?

In order to have proper implementation of laws governing human rights in the country, the government is advised to empower law enforcement agencies such as courts and police in terms of resources as well as human rights education. It should also make sure that these agencies comply with principles of accountability. The government should by all means ensure that the police force is more committed to conducting investigations and prosecuting perpetrators. Timely investigation and prosecution will send a clear signal to perpetrators that the government is serious in protecting its people regardless of their

differences. To attain this, the government should make a planned effort to equip the police force with modern working equipment and tools. It should also improve their working conditions and raise their salaries. This will reduce the level of corruption which makes them ineffective in investigating PWAs killings as claimed by the media in Tanzania.

To the family and community of PWAs

Guidance and counseling should be practiced to families and parents of children with albinisms so that they may be able to better handle the emotional and social problems connected with the conditions. Families should be involved in all stages of counseling. If the families of PWAs in Tanzania are provided with proper guidance and counseling, the myths about albinisms may be replaced with more accurate information.

The findings have shown that different promotions and advertising of witchcraft in towns encourage people to engage in those activities. Most of the promotions advertise to serve those who need wealth and other fortunes within few days, these real influences and it can be a factor leading to murder of PWAs. The government and the whole community at all should look upon such promotions and take serious actions. This will reduce murder of PWAs.

In addition, PWAs should obtain equal access to socio economic and political opportunities. For example if many PWAs get education opportunities and other benefits like health care and employment, will reduce severe poverty to PWAs and in a long run that will reduce myths attached to albinism. People have not come across PWAs in high positions.

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