

Gender-based Violence and its Impact to Secondary School Students' Education Participation, Retention and Performance

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Abstract

Gender-based violence (GBV) in schools is a global concern perpetuated by gender norms, relations and stereotypes; and influenced by the gender socialisation processes. GBV is not only a human right and public health issue, but also an educational one as it limits the ability of students to realise their education privileges with regards to participation, retention and performance. GBV affects male and female students alike, but with a different outcome. Girls are more affected due to decision-making power, context and the persistent societal gender norms. While various GBV-related studies have focused at household settings through quantitative or qualitative approaches, this study investigated diverse socio-cultural and gender-related issues in rural and urban school settings in Bagamoyo and Chalinze districts, Coastal region, through a mixed approach. The study engaged 220 respondents, including 155 students and 65 adults. The findings show that GBV among students emanate from home, school and community environments, and they include: early and forced marriages, forced termination of school, forced sexual affairs, threats, bad cultural practices, female genital mutilation, corporal punishment, heavy punishment, and rape. GBV-related outcomes that affect female students were manifested in terms of poor performance at school, early engagement in sexual relationships, early pregnancies, dropping-out, truancy, disability or complications during child-birth, STIs and HIV, and eloping from home. For males, the outcomes included early engagement in sexual affairs, truancy, poor school performance, and school drop-outs. The study concludes that GBV and its associated implications in schools demand a multi-dimensional approach for effective interventions.

Keywords: *gender-based violence, secondary school students' rights, education access, participation and performance*

Introduction

It is globally believed that education is a basic and acknowledged tool to promote individual and national development. The United Republic of Tanzania (URT) also sees education as among the major resource that transform lives, expand future opportunities and choices for both girls and boys. Education is perceived as an empowering and a basic tool for transforming lives, particularly for children and young people. Worldwide, the major goal of any educational policy is to enhance access, participation and equity for all children; although some have been highly excluded. Among the restraining factors identified are the overlooked gender-based violence (GBV) practices at school that greatly limit many students to access such

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a right, especially girls. GBV in secondary schools limit students from realizing their educational rights with regard to participation, retention and performance (Otieno, 2020; HakiElimu, 2020; Vanner, 2019; UNESCO, 2019). One of the hurdles to the attainment of sustainable social and human rights, and gender equity and equality in education globally—and in Tanzania in particular—is the continuing GBV and its multifaceted forms categorized into sexual, psychological, economic, health and physical violence. In this study, three GBV forms are considered given the occurrence and the school environment: physical, sexual and psychological violence. Physical violence may include beating, punishment, punching, pushing, injuring and the like; while psychological violence includes verbal abuse, threatening, isolating, bullying, verbal humiliation, gesture, annoyance, insulting and dishonouring. Sexual violence includes rape, forced sexual relations, sexual comments and insults, unwanted jokes, uninvited touch, unprotected sex, dishonesty in relationship, touching of private parts of a person without his/her consent, and pressurizing for sexual activity, etc. (Tora, 2013; Mekuria et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2019; Beyene et al., 2019; HakiElimu, 2020).

According to the UNICEF (2019), half of every one billion children experience violence. Globally, every year at least 246m children and adolescents face violence at school (UNICEF, 2019; UNESCO, 2019; USAID, 2018). The World Health Organization (2021) also noted that one billion children aged between 2–17 years old experienced physical and sexual violence in 2019. Different studies have revealed that, worldwide, 1%–21% of girls experience sexual abuse before their 15th birthday; and an estimated 150m and 73m under-18-years old boys and girls have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact (WHO, 2021; UNICEF, 2019). Psychological violence—which includes bullying, sexual violence such as forced sexual relations, pressurizing for sexual activity and physical violence, particularly corporal punishment—has been identified as the most GBV practices that affect the majority of students within and around the school environment worldwide (WHO, 2021; UNICEF, 2019; UNESCO, 2019; UNESCO, 2018; USAID, 2018). It has been noted that one in three students between 13–15 years worldwide has faced bullying; one in ten girls below 20 years has been sexually violated; and more than 80% of students are subjected to corporal punishment (USAID, 2018; UNESCO, 2019). Other studies show that unwanted sexual contact, sexual assault and rape at schools persist; and more girls have been reporting such incidences than boys (WHO, 2021; UNICEF, 2019; UNESCO et al., 2015). In addition, half of all children globally live in countries that have not legalized the prohibition of corporal punishment (UNESCO, 2019), as it is more perceived as a disciplinary mechanism.

According to the UNICEF (2014a), one in five women and men in Kenya who had experienced sexual violence before their 18th birthday, the first incident happened at school. The UNICEF (ibid.) further revealed that 31% of girls under the age of

18 years, and 5% of girls under the age of 15 years, are faced with early and forced marriages in Africa. Moreover, the UNICEF (*ibid.*) reports that an estimated 100m girl-children undergo genital mutilation yearly; and out of these up to 3m come from Egypt and Sudan. Traditional practices such female genital mutilation (FGM), and early and forced marriages expose children to violence that limits their access to their educational rights. The Republic of Kenya (2019, in Otieno, 2020) reports that in 2019, 49% of girls and 48% of boys aged between 13 and 17 years had experienced physical violence; whereas 11% of the girls and 4% of the boys had experienced sexual violence. The Kenya report on VAC shows that 45.9% females and 56.1% males had experienced childhood violence, and that physical violence is the most common form of violence experienced during childhood (Republic of Kenya, 2020).

A study conducted in five African countries (i.e. Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) shows that physical and sexual violence stood at 27–50% and 9–33%, respectively (Brown et al., 2009). Another study that assessed GBV among adolescents aged 10–17 years in South Africa, revealed physical abuse (56.3%), emotional abuse (35.5%) and sexual abuse 9% (Meinck et al., 2016). In addition, a study conducted in one African university discovered other GBV incidences among female students to include: attempted rape (18.7%), actual rape (23.4%), physical violent harassment (8.7%), verbal harassment (24.2%) and forced initiation 11.2% (Tora, 2013). Furthermore, another research revealed 11% of lifetime rape prevalence among female secondary students (Mekuria et al., 2015).

In Tanzania, GBV persists with its various forms, and continues to challenge the social and educational rights of secondary school students. Studies show that nearly one in three girls, and one out of seven boys, experience some form of sexual violence before reaching 18 years (URT et al., 2016; HakiElimu, 2020). According to the URT et al. (*ibid.*), 72% of girls and 71% of boys experience physical violence; while emotional violence is meted to both boys and girls equally at approximately 25%. According to HakiElimu (2020), three-quarters of female and male students experienced physical violence, perpetrated by an adult, before their 18th birthday; while one-quarter have experienced emotional violence, also perpetrated by an adult. According to the URT (2016) 40% of women aged 15–49 years reported having experienced physical violence; and between 15% and 17% reported having experienced sexual violence. A similar report revealed 23% of non-married women experienced physical violence since age 15 from a teacher or a relative (URT, 2016). In addition, between 13% and 15% of never-married women experienced physical violence from sibling, mother/stepmother, other relatives, or father/stepfather (URT, 2016: 369). According to Yaghambe and Tshabangu (2013, in HakiElimu, 2020), physical violence in Tanzania, particularly corporal punishment, is more experienced than other forms of punishment. In addition, physical fighting among students has been also noted as among the physical violence at school at 50.6% for both female and male students (Rudatsikira et al., 2007, in HakiElimu, 2020). Further, Due and Holstein (2008) in HakiElimu (2020)

observed that every fourth school child has experienced bullying. Recently, the increasing use of cell phones and the Internet among students in Tanzania has led to online violence such as cyberbullying and online sexual harassment (ibid.).

A number of researches have revealed different perpetrators of GBV—particularly sexual and physical violence—among male and female students. These include teachers, both male and female; fellow students; and people surrounding schools (HakiElimu, 2020; Leach et al., 2014; Rwezaura, 1998; Mgalla et al., 1998). However, male teachers and male peers have been identified as the main perpetrators of sexual violence among female students. On the other hand, female teachers have also been reported to abuse male students sexually by forcing them into sexual relationships (Leach et al., 2014). In that regard, the attainment of the Education for All (EFA) goals; Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) 4 and 5; and the URT Vision 2025 that emphasize access to education, quality and equity: all might be hard to achieve with such GBV prevalence in schools.

Global, Regional and Tanzania Initiatives to Address GBV

In responding to GBV among students and pupils in schools, a number of international, regional and national initiatives have been put forward to rescue children by policy makers, researchers and education experts. The key worldwide conventions that have raised concerns on violence against children (VAC) and other gender-based violence are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW-1979), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC-1989), and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA-1995). The CEDAW requires member states to condemn violence as it is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm to those violated. The UNCRC, through Article 19, calls for the protection of children from all forms of violence as they have the right not to be harmed and mistreated physically or mentally (UNCRC, 1989). The BPfA also calls upon governments to implement and review legislations to guarantee citizens freedom from any violence. Other international instruments that have upheld the three conventions on fighting against any violence—and particularly ensuring equal access to education—include the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goals 4 and 5 (SDGs, 2015), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000), and the Education for All goals (EFA-2000).

At the regional level, several measures have been put in place to address violence against children through the African Union (AU-1990), which adopted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (AWRWC). Through Article 16 of the AWRWC, member states are recommended to take measures to protect children from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment; and especially physical or mental injury or abuse; and neglect or mistreatment, including sexual abuse (AU, 1990). Other regional instruments condemning GBV practices include the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol on gender and development (1997: 9), which through Article 4 (2) calls upon member states to implement

legislative and other measures to eliminate all practices that negatively affect the fundamental rights of women, men, girls and boys; such as their right to life, health, dignity, education and physical integrity. In addition, Article 11 (1: a–e) of the SADC protocol requires states to adopt policies, laws and programmes to ensure the development and protection of the girl- and the boy-child by eliminating all forms of discrimination against them in the family, community, institutions and at state levels; ensuring their access to education and health care; making sure they enjoy the same rights and are protected from harmful cultural attitudes and practices in accordance with the laws; protecting them from economic exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence, including sexual abuse; and guaranteeing their equal access to information, education, services and facilities on sexual and reproductive health rights (SADC, 1997: 12). In addition, the SADC protocol, through Article 20, is explicit on GBV; and recommends member states to enact and enforce laws prohibiting all forms of GBV at all levels (SADC, 1997: 17–18).

Adhering to international and regional instruments, the URT has adopted different legal documents that protect children from violence that leads to their abuse and torture in all areas. The URT enacted the Child Act of 2009, applicable in Mainland Tanzania. The Act shows that the URT has not only domesticated the international and regional recommendations, but also adheres to Articles 12 and 13 of the URT Constitution (1977). Article 12 ensures the right to equality and respect, recognition and dignity; and Article 13 safeguards citizens against any discrimination related to gender. Accordingly, Section 9 (1&2) of the Law of the Child Act recommends parents to take responsibility in protecting children from neglect, discrimination, violence, abuse, exposure to physical and moral hazards and oppression (URT, 2009). In addition, Section 12 is specifically on safeguarding children from harmful employment, while Section 13 protects children from any torture and degrading treatment (URT, 2009). Additionally, Section 83 guards children against sexual exploitation (URT, 2009).

Another legal document that condemns GBV among school children is the Tanzania Sexual Offences (Special Provisions) Act (SOSPA, 1998). In SOSPA (1998), and in the Tanzania Penal Code Cap. 16, children are protected from any exploitation. Furthermore, Section 5 of the SOSPA and Section 130 (2–e) of the Penal Code specifies the age of consent to sex as 18 years and above. In that case, children below 18 years are not legally permitted to consent to sexual activity. Such a situation also considers an individual having sexual activity with a child below 18 years as a rape case. Section 130 of the SOSPA provides that “... where the charge for sexual assault related to a boy or girl under the age of 18 years, it shall be no defence to the charge that the boy or girl consented to the act constituting the assault” (URT, 1998). Under Section 131, the punishment for rape has been set as imprisonment for not less than thirty years, with corporal punishment and fine (URT, 1998: 03). However, the SOSPA is silent on sexual engagement among peers within the child-age; making it difficult to punish less than 18 years-old boys who impregnate girls of their same child-age.

In condemning school children's early and forced marriages, the Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendment) (No. 2) Act, 2016 amends the Education Act, CAP 353. A significant landmark on criminalizing school children marriages as among the GBV practices is the 2016 judgement where the High Court agreed that Sections 13 and 17 of the Law of Marriage Act (CAP 29 R.E., 2002) does not comply with the URT Constitution, hence it directed the Attorney General to make amendments to the named sections. The two sections permitted 15 years-old girls to be married under parental, guardian or court consent. Such an age, however, has been more perceived by different cultures that practice rites of passage as the right age for girls to be informed about adulthood sexual information. In Tanzania, a majority of girls are involved in rituals and initiations immediately after sexual maturity (i.e., after starting menstruation), where for some it starts from 12 years or below. The key factor that facilitates early marriage in Tanzania has been the legal marriage acceptance of a 15-year girl through parental consent while other legal documents—such as the Local Customary Law, 1963, Employment Act, 2004; Anti-Trafficking Act, 2008; Law of the Child Act, 2009; and the Sexual Offence Special Provision Act (SOSPA), 1998—refer to a girl being perceived as a *child* at this age.

In addressing physical violence, such as corporal punishment in schools, the Education Circular No. 24 of 2002 is mandated to guide. The minister responsible for education is also authorized to develop regulations in the administration of corporal punishment in schools through the Education Act (1978) No. 25, Section 60. Further, the URT developed a Five-year National Plan of Action to end Violence Against Women and Children (NPAVAWC, 2017/18–2021/22). The plan, in its Thematic Area 7—titled 'Safe Schools and Life Skills'—is specifically clear on safeguarding children from any violence within the school environment (URT et al., 2016). Other statutes preventing GBV and its related impacts are the HIV/AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2008; Persons' with Disabilities Act, 2010; Human DNA Regulation Act, 2009, Anti-trafficking of Persons Act, 2008; and the initiation of some procedural reforms, including the amendment of the Police Form No. 3 (PF-3). These statutes are in place, together with several efforts by academic institutions, to develop anti-sexual harassment policies, and institute clauses in student regulations on the same. The extent to which the same efforts are placed at secondary and primary schools is also examined in this study. The National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP I) also identified the importance of girls' and boys' equal access to education. It stipulates that in attaining education, GBV at school-level should be addressed as it is a limiting factor to girls' access to education (URT, 2005). According to the URT (2005: 42), the learning environment for all children in schools has to be improved: educational institutions have to be safe, violence-free, child-friendly and gender-sensitive.

Despite the ongoing initiatives to address GBV among school children, the implementation is doubtful following the prevalence of GBV among school

children. This paper, therefore, is informed by the reality that Tanzania still grapples with unsatisfactory performance and/or retention of secondary school students despite its several initiatives to secure and promote access to education for all, girls and boys alike—despite their differences—given their multiple vulnerabilities than other population groups. Although primary and secondary school enrolment has reached almost parity since 2016, there have been substantial and descriptive educational disparities at different levels, and possibly between school status, e.g., between boarding schools and day schools. In the light of this background, this study sought to examine the context-specific circumstances and prevalence of risk factors to access, participation and retention in secondary education in Bagamoyo and Chalinze district councils of Bagamoyo, Coastal Region, in Tanzania.

The study was guided by four objectives, namely to understand the magnitude and forms of GBV affecting secondary school students; investigate people's perception on GBV practices among secondary school students; investigate who are GBV perpetrators and areas where GBV is most prevalent; and examine the effects of GBV in relation to secondary school students' access to education, participation and retention. The study seeks to make a contribution to the literature on GBV regarding access, participation and retention among lower secondary school students from a rural-urban context, and a gender perspective. The study intends to make a contribution on the discussions on how GBV-related practices contribute to secondary school poor participation, drop-outs and performance. The study also highlights how boys and girls are vulnerable to GBV practices, and how the constant socio-cultural attitudes that undermine boys' and girls' education facilitate GBV among secondary school boys and girls that trigger their dropping out, and influence poor performance. The study findings will help policy makers implement appropriate interventions in addressing GBV in secondary schools in relation to gender, vulnerabilities, socio-cultural perceptions and context.

GBV Among Secondary School Students: Causes and Effects

GBV is a pervasive problem not only at the household level, but also in other environments where people meet and live, such as schools. GBV in schools is a global concern cutting across all nations regardless of cultural, social, economic, ethnic or geographical borders. GBV acts faced by school children can be sexual, psychological and physical; which are influenced by gender discriminatory acts (UNESCO, 2019; Reilly, 2014). Different factors contribute to GBV; ranging from social, economic, political, religious and cultural (Sanjel, 2015; UNESCO, 2019). GBV occurrence in schools is perpetuated by gender relations, discriminatory practices, and gender norms and stereotypes: which are all influenced by the socialization process that continues to build a world of difference for boys and girls; where girls are more moulded as of inferior status, hence more susceptible to GBV.

The gender socialization process from family to different societal levels, and the deep-rooted patriarchal norms in African culture—of which Tanzania is not an exception—privilege males by giving them power over females; thereafter making males perceive such a situation as a license to discriminate females and vulnerable men and boys. Different forms of violence are discriminatory following the perpetrators having power over their victims. For example, older girls and boys are involved in beating and bullying young girls and/or boys. In addition, teachers violate young girls and boys sexually by imposing severe corporal punishment. Such a system encourages one to extend such practices of gender discrimination and inequality in other society settings, and schools in particular. Given that male teachers emanate from such societies, they extend risky masculinity and gender discrimination to school structural systems, leading to existing gender inequalities and unequal power relations in such settings. It is this situation that has made teachers exercise GBV practices in school settings. A majority of male teachers attract and/or force female students into sexual relationships despite the ethics and moral values imposed on them. In addition, students—particularly boys—use such a socialization process to dominate and violate girls and fellow boys who are perceived as weak.

Evidence from studies show that the home, school and other public environments are sources of GBV affecting different groups of people differently, and with varying outcomes (Bisika, 2009; UNESCO et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2017). Contexts can also fuel violence. It has been observed that in areas where patriarchal norms are entrenched, particularly in the rural contexts, children's rights are ignored (Badri, 2014; Burton, 2005). Following the ignorance of communities on the rights of a child, teachers use it as a chance to carry out GBV practices. With regards to secondary school children, GBV is associated with a range of limitations affecting many students worldwide in achieving their educational rights (WHO, 2021; Vanner, 2019; UNICEF, 2019; UNESCO, 2019; UNESCO, 2017, 2019; UNICEF, 2009). GBV has a big impact in secondary schools because there are no formal legal mechanisms of informing, addressing and exacting transparent punishment for those involved as a lesson and a measure to combat it (UNESCO, 2017).

Despite the fact that boys and girls are victims of GBV, girls are the main victims due to their attributed lower status in decision-making power, unequal gender relations, gendered socio-cultural norms, and persistent societal gender stereotypes (Musuguri, 2018; UNESCO et al., 2015; Leach et al., 2004; Niehaus, 2000). It is evidenced that GBV affects about 150m girls in schools worldwide (Greene et al., 2013 cited in UNESCO et al., 2015). According to WHO (2021), and UNICEF (2009, 2019), girls are more susceptible to psychological and sexual abuse; while boys are more prone to physical violence, particularly corporal punishment and bullying. According to Republic of Kenya (2020), sexual violence, particularly sodomy, has also been reported for boys. GBV, particularly sexual violence, leads to early pregnancies and early sexual intercourse that increases girls' drop-out rates and poor performances (WHO, 2021; UNICEF, 2019; UNESCO, 2019; USAID, 2018; UNGEI, 2010 cited in UNESCO et al., 2015).

GBV victims face different problems such as mental and physical health issues, drop-outs, absenteeism, depression and sometimes committing suicide (UNESCO, 2017). In addition, GBV has a greater impact on education outcomes: at school it affects children’s physical and mental health and comfort; hence compromising learning, mathematical ability, school attendance and completion (HakiElimu, 2020; USAID, 2018; UNESCO, 2017). Children’s rights are violated through GBV, thus limiting their cognitive learning and resulting into school drop-outs, truancy and poor performance (WHO, 2021; Otieno, 2020; UNESCO, 2017; UNESCO, 2019). HakiElimu (2020) shows that VAC prevalence in Tanzania’s schools facilitates truancy in schools for adolescent girls and boys.

Methodology

Study Area

This study was conducted in Bagamoyo district council, Coastal region in Tanzania, from July to October 2017, where two district councils—Bagamoyo and Chalinze—were involved. In each district four wards were purposively selected. These were Kiromo, Zinga, Yombo, Nia Njema for the former; and Mbweve, Ubena, Bwilingu and Kiwangwa for the latter (Table 1).

Table 1: Schools Identified for the Study with Respect to Wards and Status

District	Ward	Name of School	Status of School			
			Day/ Boarding	Single/ Mixed	Private/ Government	With or No Hostel
Bagamoyo	Kiromo	Premier Girls	Boarding	Single/Girls	Private	Hostel
	Zinga	Zinga	Day	Mixed	Government	No hostel
	Yombo	Matimbwa	Day	Mixed	Government	Hostel
	Nia Njema	Kingani	Day	Mixed	Government	Hostel - girls
Chalinze	Mbweve	Changalikwa	Boarding	Mixed	Government	Hostel
	Ubena	Bwawani	Day	Mixed	Private	Hostel
	Bwilingu	Mdaula	Day	Mixed	Government	No hostel
	Kiwangwa	Kiwangwa	Day	Mixed	Government	Hostel

Source: Field Data (Bagamoyo and Chalinze District Councils)

Methods

The study employed a descriptive research design; using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches that enabled the researchers to capture and describe the nature, forms, causes and effects of the study under investigation according to the diverse patterns (Kothari, 2004). The data collection methods included a semi-structured questionnaire, documentary review, focus group discussions (FGDs), and in-depth interviews (IDIs). A total of 8 schools were purposively sampled, 4 from each district council that represented the various school status, namely: mixed and single-sex, boarding and day, and rural and urban (Table 1). A total of 30 purposively identified respondents, 17 (57%) females and 13 (43%) males, from five categories—parents, motorcycle drivers (*bodaboda*), civil society representatives, community justice facilitators, and ward education officers (WEOs)—were involved in the IDIs (Figure 1).

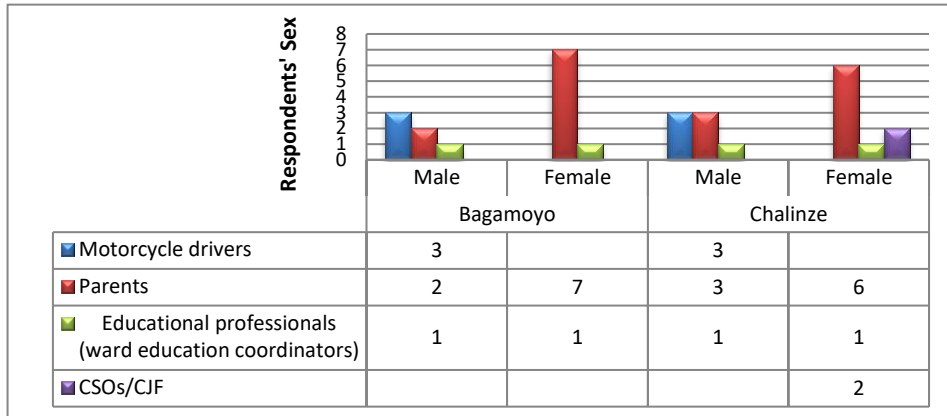


Figure 1: Respondents Involved in IDIs According to Respective Categories, Location And sex (n=30)

Source: Field Data (Bagamoyo and Chalinze District Councils)

A total of 42 purposively selected respondents were involved in six FGDs, of whom 12 (29%) were from the students' category. Also involved in the survey, 30 (71%) were from the categories of *bodaboda* and education personnel (teachers and ward education officers (WEOs) (Figure 2). Two FGDs, with 6 participants each, involved students; and the other two FGDs with 9 participants each, comprised of motorcycle drivers. In addition, the remaining two FGDs, with 6 participants each, involved a mixture of teachers and WEOs. Out of the 6 FGDs, 4 included female and male participants, while the other two that involved motorcycle (*bodaboda*) drivers included only males. This follows that almost all the *bodabodas* in the study areas were males.

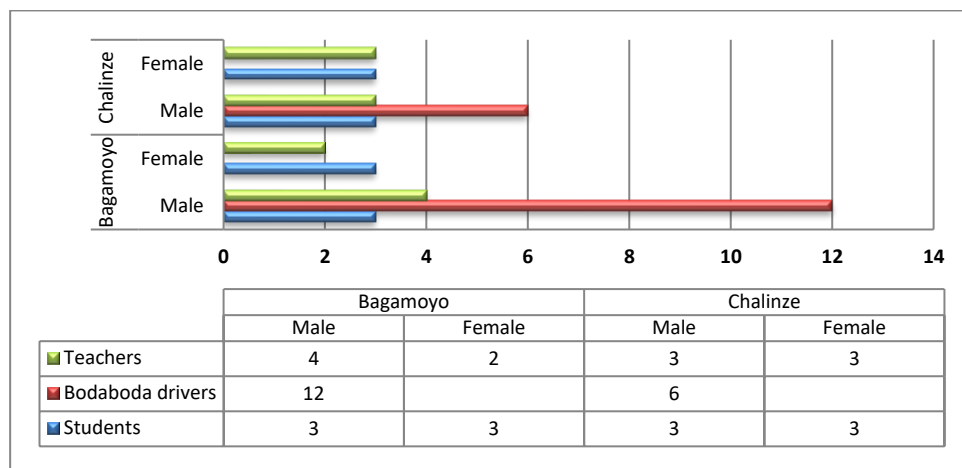


Figure 2: Participants Involved in FGDs According to Respective Categories, Location and Sex (n=42)

Source: Field Data (Bagamoyo and Chalinze District Councils)

A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to a total of 155 (97%) students, out of the expected 160 students (Figure 3). The researcher planned to administer a total of 20 questionnaires in each school from the 8 identified schools: 4 from each district, including students from Form I to Form IV. Two (2) schools were represented by 16 and 19 students, respectively. The students involved were purposively identified by the headmasters after a discussion with the researchers in relation to the number of students required. The questionnaires were administered under the guidance of the researchers who clarified different questions which the students could not easily understand. All the schools provided a classroom where the identified students were able to sit and fill in the questionnaire under the researcher’s supervision. As per Figure 3, out of the 155 students who filled the semi-structured questionnaires, the majority 74 (48%) were aged 15–16 years; followed by 46 (30%) aged 17–18 years. The next group aged 13–14 years were 21 (14%), while 14 (9%) were aged 19–20 years. The age variable was drawn from the student’s own responses. Accordingly, the findings show that the majority of the students 141 (91%) were in the child-age ranging from 13–18 years; and only 5 (3%) were above 18 years, whose education rights also needed to be protected as recommended at different global, regional and national levels. Following that in one school 9 (6%), students in Form V and Form VI responded to the questionnaire unintentionally, it made the findings show students in secondary schools above 18 years, but these were from upper secondary (Figure 4). However, the study was only intended for lower secondary schools.

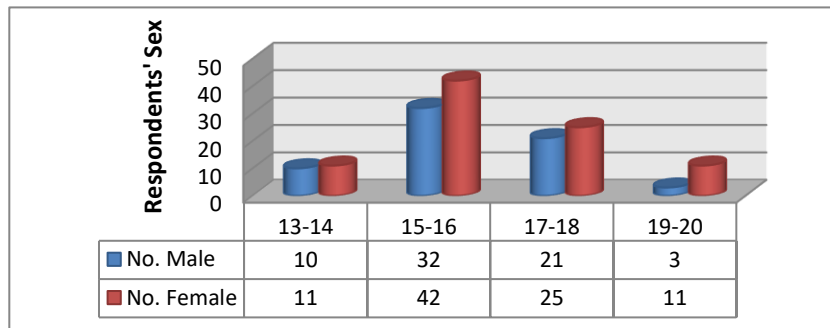


Figure 3: Respondents Involved in Filling the Semi-structured Questionnaire by Age and Sex (n=155)

Source: Field Data (Bagamoyo and Chalinze District Councils)

Figure 4 shows that out of the 155 students who filled the semi-structured questionnaires in the two study areas, 28 (18%) were in Form I, 46 (30%) in Form II, 41 (26%) in Form III and 30 (19.4%) in Form IV. In addition, 7 (4.5%) were in Form V and 3 (1.9%) in Form VI. The majority of participants 46 (30%) were in Form II, followed by 41 (26%) in Form II. The (academic) class level was, however, pre-determined since it was considered an important variable to elucidate possible differences in understanding or experiencing GBV, and the challenges of school participation.

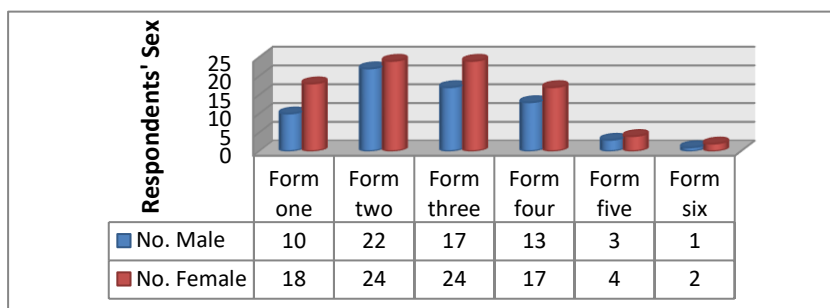


Figure 4: Students' Involved in Filling the Semi-structured Questionnaire by Class Level and Sex (n=155)
 Source: Field Data (Bagamoyo and Chalinze District Councils)

Document Review

A desk review and analysis of information related to the study's focus was conducted. Data was obtained from hard copies and e-documents such as journal articles, research reports, and official records from schools and district education offices, NGOs (whose foci relate to the study), respective ministries, and from research and academic institutions.

Data Analysis

All the research tools were designed in English and later translated into Kiswahili. Kiswahili was used for IDIs, FGDs and the questionnaires. The FGDs and IDIs were recorded after the consent of the respondents. The data that was recorded in Kiswahili was first transcribed, typed, and then translated into English. The qualitative data was then developed into themes guided by the study objectives. The emerging themes were then organized and compared. Quantitative data processing, cleaning and analysis were done by the use of Excel and the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS version, 20) software. Data entry and cleaning was proceeded by basic computations to show emerging patterns on various aspects in relation to the research objectives. Frequency distribution tables and cross-tabulations were conducted, and results presented in the form of tables and graphs for easier comparison and interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

Given the nature of the study, ethical considerations were maintained, especially by first ensuring a formal permission from the regional (Coast) and district council (Bagamoyo and Chalinze) authorities; together with permission from respective wards, neighbourhoods and village authorities. Consent from participating schools, CSOs, parents and other participants were also requested and received before starting any discussion. During the IDIs and FGDs, participants were informed of their right to either agree to participate or to withdraw from the study at any point. Verbal consent was requested from each participant. The participants were also assured of total confidentiality and, for purposes of anonymity, no names were

used. The IDIs and FGDs results were stored in a manner that ensured confidentiality. All the questionnaires were also given codes rather than names, and destroyed after being entered in the computer with the SPSS software.

Findings and Discussions

Respondents Involved in the Study

As shown in Table 2, out of the 220 respondents, 113 were females and 107 males from five identified categories, namely: parents, educational professionals (teachers and WEOs), motorcycle drivers, CSOs and students. In addition, the majority of the respondents were aged 13–19 years; and of the 70.4% of the 155 students, 66 were males and 89 females. The next group of respondents in size were those aged between 26–35 years. These were 25 (11.4%) and comprised of respondents from the four categories: parents, educational professionals, motorcycle drivers and CSOs. The remaining respondents were: 20 (9%), aged 36–45 years; 13 (6%) aged 20–25 years, 6 (2.7%) aged 46–55 years, and 1 (0.5%) was in the range of 56–65 years. Thus, according to the aim of this study it was imperative that students be the majority.

Table 2: Respondents’ Distribution with Respect to Sex and Age (n = 220)

Age	Parents		Educational Professionals		Motorcycle Drivers		CSOs		Students		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
13–19									66	89	155	70.4
20–25				1	12						13	6
26–35	1	4	6	7	6			1			25	11.4
36–45	4	5	7	3				1			20	9
46–55		3	3								6	2.7
56–65+		1									1	0.5
Total	5	13	16	11	18	0	0	2	66	89	220	100

Source: Field Data (Bagamoyo and Chalinze District Councils)

Understanding the Gender and GBV Legal Frameworks

According to the findings (Table 3), it was found that the majority of students 145 (93.5%) were able to describe the gender concept as a social relationship between men and women. However, 2 (1.3%) male respondents identified gender as a man, whereas 1 (0.6%) male respondent referred to gender as women. Also, 7 (4.5%) of the students said they did not know. It was noted that the majority of students were able to define it correctly, complementing the fact that the concept of ‘gender’ is integrated in the primary and secondary education curricula. Findings from the qualitative discussions showed richer understanding of *gender*, with certain qualifying aspects such as: (i) gender refers to a situation of equality between and/or within female and male relationships; (ii) gender connotes the equality between women and men, whereas sex is female or male; (iii) gender is a relationship between men and women according to their diversity and their responsibilities, and (iv) gender means women’s rights. Further, the study noted that whereas respondents understood the term differently, women had more knowledge than men; many of whom thought ‘gender’ meant *women’s rights*.

Table 3: Meaning of the term gender by age and sex (n=155)

Responses	13-14		15-16		17-18		19-20		Total	%
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M		
Man				1		1			2	1.3
Woman				1					1	0.6
Social relations between men and women	10	9	43	24	22	23	10	4	145	93.5
I don't know			3	1	1	2			7	4.5
Total	10	9	46	27	23	26	10	4	155	99.9

Source: Field data (Bagamoyo and Chalinze District Councils)

With regard to students' awareness of the Tanzania legal frameworks that address GBV offences, it was noted that out of the 155 students, 91 (58.7%) were aware, while 64 (41.3%) were not aware (Figure 5). Besides, more males were aware of the legal frameworks than female students; but female students were able to identify GBV practices they were aware of, and which are prohibited by law than their male counterparts. Surprisingly, however, it was more male students than female ones who could mention at least three stipulates—such as the Constitution (1977), SOSPA (1998), and the Land Act (1999)—and reprimands prohibiting the practice of discriminating or abusing women and children based on gender aspects.

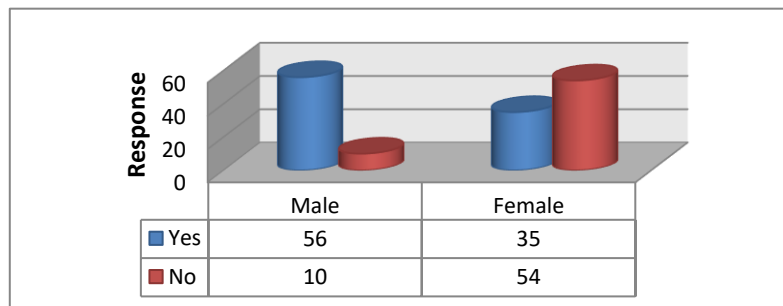


Figure 5: Students' Knowledge on Anti- GBV Offences in Tanzanian Laws by Sex (n=155)

Source: Field data (Bagamoyo and Chalinze District Councils)

Unexpectedly, the FGDs and IDIs did not generate much information on awareness on the legal frameworks addressing GBV practices, although there is a general understanding that the government has indeed put much effort in condemning GBV and VAC through the public media. Yet, most common to the students were the efforts by the government to apprehend and take to court teachers who had sexually abused school children. When probed as to why there was such low understanding, the following responses were given:

- (a) Community members have a low initiative to find legal documents addressing GBV because GBV was not a serious concern to them, although they would take steps in curbing such practices;

- (b) The government was to blame because although there was much anti-GBV advocacy, there was less efforts by government institutions and NGOs operating in the areas to create more awareness on GBV and its related legal provisions.
- (c) Sometimes some practices that are claimed to be GBV are not perceived as GBV by local communities. Hence, it becomes difficult for some community members to relate these practices to offences to be prosecuted by the law.

One male respondent commented as follows:

We have been hearing of such practices when there is an incidence in our communities, and it was painful to see individuals being punished for a practice which if we could have known was a GBV-related offence, we could have prevented it before it happened. For example, being punished for allowing a pregnant school girl to be married. In the circumstances one would definitely be expelled from studies (Male respondent, Chalinze FGD, October 2017).

Study participants were also encouraged to discuss how they viewed the Law of Marriage Act 1971, and how they could address such issues as the marriage of school girls. On this aspect, study participants debated whether SOSPA (1998) should be applicable to situations faced by female students in Bagamoyo and Chalinze districts. First, was the debate on girls having early sexual debut, and who was to blame in this practice. Participants in the discussions agreed that Section 130 of the Tanzania Penal Code (1981), which defines the defilement of a girl aged below 14 years as a criminal offence, and the amendments made through the SOSPA (1998) that identify rape as having sexual intercourse with a girl below 18 years, is correct. Section 130 (1&2e) of the Penal Code (1981), with revisions in the SOSPA (1998), states that:

Rape is illegal and defined as an offence for a male person to rape a girl or a woman with or without her consent when she is less than eighteen years of age, unless the woman is his wife who is fifteen or more years of age and is not separated from the man (URT, 1998: 3).

Some of the *bodaboda* operators, however, demanded that for an action to be termed an offence requires deeper discussions, and that the engagement in intimate relationship with young girls should not always focus on blaming a male only. They argue that sometimes girls are to blame too, given that they complied. The *bodaboda* refused outright that they are partly to blame for GBV, and that they should be subjected to the Penal Code or SOSPA provisions. These views were particularly given in consideration of the punishments stipulated for such offences... 'imprisonment for life' or 'imprisonment of not less than 30 years', and a 'fine' (Section 131 [1&2]) (URT, 1998: 4) whereas such an offense have been imposed to men only.

Another concern was on the insistence that the marriage of an underage (under 18) girl is an offence, when some girls go for marriage out of their own consent. There is often some hesitation to put the law in full force if a school girl is impregnated. A participant claimed that in the case of a schoolgirl becoming pregnant, the

perpetrator is hardly ever accused of rape, but is only sometimes accosted for impregnating a young girl; and because of this, it was difficult for people to attach any law addressing such incidences. Such concerns illustrated the challenge that people have in either subscribing to the law, or carrying on with local solutions regarding the welfare of their children who become pregnant while in school.

Marriage laws in Tanzania seem to facilitate early marriages following the contradictions brought by the different laws and Acts. For example, the Local Customary Law (Declaration) Order (Government Notice No. 279 of 1963) recognizes 21 years for a girl to be married, while the Tanzanian Marriage Act (1971) allows a 15-year-old girl to get married under a parents' accord. However, different initiatives have challenged the Marriage Act such as the 1994 Tanzania's Legal Reform Commission that recommends the minimum marriage age of girls and boys to be 21 years of age; and the modification of the Marriage Act of 1971 to recognize A 15-years-old girl as a child not mentally and physically ready for marital life.

GBV Practices Faced by Secondary School Students Identified by Respondents
 Students noted three forms of GBV confronting students the most. These were: sexual, psychological and physical violence committed against students in the two study areas.

Table 4: Identified GBV Practices Faced by Secondary School Students (n=155)

No.	GBV types	GBV practices	Sex		
			Female	Male	Total
1.	Sexual Violence	FGM	3	4	7
		Rape	3	0	3
		Forced sexual intercourse	35	28	63
		Child marriage	26	10	36
		Forced marriage	12	7	19
2.	Physical violence	Beating	45	55	100
		Punishment	35	53	88
3.	Psychological violence	Bad cultural practices	35	25	60
		Gender discrimination	9	3	12
		School Termination	12	8	20
Total*			215	193	408

Note: The total is more than 155 due to multiple responses

Source: Field Data (Bagamoyo and Chalinze District Councils)

The results in Table 4 on sexual violence show forced sexual intercourse as the common violence identified by 63 respondents, followed by child-marriage (36), and forced marriage by 19 respondents. Rape and FGM was less identified by only 3 females and 7 respondents, respectively. Regarding physical violence, beating was among the most common malpractice mentioned by 100 respondents, followed by punishment reported by 88 respondents (Table 4). The findings also revealed psychological violence, where 60 respondents identified bad cultural practices; 12 noted gender discrimination; while 20 respondents referred to school termination as

the major practice leading to psychological effects. Gender discrimination among secondary school students was also identified by Bisika et al. (2009), Badri (2014), and HakiElimu (2020). Different studies have also revealed GBV in academic institutions where physical and sexual violence leads; with girls reported as being more vulnerable (Bisika et al., 2009; Fawole et al., 2018; Beyene et al., 2019; HakiElimu 2020).

Other forms of violence that were mentioned by participants during FGDs and IDIs as confronting male and female students were:

- (a) Stigma against sick or unhealthy students;
- (b) Parents not fulfilling their responsibilities to take proper care of school children, such as not sending pocket money to students in boarding facilities;
- (c) Parents not paying school fees, while they can afford other personal luxuries such as weddings, rituals (*ngoma*), etc.;
- (d) Extreme forms of punishment to students without checking their health status;
- (e) Discriminating students by sex – e.g., telling a male or female student not to pursue a certain kind of profession; or not to do a certain kind of work simply because of his/her sex;
- (f) Parents allowing or forcing their female children to get married at a young age even when they are still in school; and
- (g) False accusations of a colleague – e.g., accusing a fellow student as having made unwanted sexual advances.

With regards to false accusations, participants in the FGDs with students discussed how this was possible, and as one of them commented:

“Nowadays it is always females who accuse males of GBV, any form of GBV, such as sexual advances, harassment, beatings ... the same as seen in newspapers ... it is always women who are being violated and men being the perpetrators; such as in domestic violence.”

Such perceptions arise from the fact that the majority of GBV victims have mainly been females, while the major cause has been gender inequality perpetuated by socio-cultural gendered stereotypes that locate males in a superior status and females an inferior status.

GBV Perpetrators

The study also wanted to examine how students and other adults perceived a GBV perpetrator within their communities. In this aspect two major questions were asked: where do most GBV practices against students occur; and who are the main perpetrators? On the first question, study participants mentioned that GBV was practiced within the school environment, at the household level, and in the community surroundings. Accordingly, 103 (66%) students identified the wider community environment as the location where they experience most forms of GBV. The locations included along streets as they walk from home to school, or when they go shopping; and students' neighbourhoods were also mentioned as unsafe places. Thus, community space was the most unsafe environment for students. A lesser

number of students (33 (21%)) mentioned the home environment, and a few (20 (13%)) identified the school environment as places where students were subjected to GBV practices. While rape, sexual harassment or coerced sex were mentioned as occurring in all the three environments, the students were able to single out other specific types of GBV being more prevalent in certain spaces than others.

The types of GBV experienced in the school environment were expressed in terms of love affairs sometimes forced upon female students by teachers or by fellow students. Most of the time it was teachers who convinced female students into love affairs, while only 25 (16%) students claimed that male students were also the perpetrators of GBV against female students. A related form of violence was also experienced by male students who were abused by male teachers because of competition over affection for female students: 68 (43%) respondents claimed that male students experienced excessive punishment, particularly corporal punishment, due to this reason. Excessive punishment by teachers was an issue also mentioned by parents who complained that this showed the lack of regulations on students' welfare in secondary schools in Tanzania. In addition, it was also noted by the majority of *bodaboda* drivers, who claimed that they had dropped out of school because of corporal punishment. A study by UNESCO (2014b, cited in UNESCO et al., 2015) noted that over half of children globally living in nations with no legal protection from corporal punishment have been suffering from such violence at school. Different studies also found GBV-related incidences—particularly sexual violence—in schools where teachers and male students were reported as perpetrators (Republic of Kenya 2020; UNESCO et al., 2015); and corporal punishment as the leading forms of physical violence in schools (Fawole et al., 2018; UNESCO et al., 2015). In Tanzania, however, corporal punishment is legalized with restrictions, though some teachers have been misusing it as a disciplining right in changing stubborn students' behaviour.

From the home environment, 82% ($n = 89$) of the female students identified the following types of GBV: forced marriage, favouritism of boys over girls, discriminatory traditional rituals and initiations, and irresponsible parents who do not support their children while they are schooling. The study noted that parents who do not give their children pocket money or enough fare to and from school are irresponsible because they do not give priority to their children's education, but would rather indulge in other prestigious activities such as weddings and *ngomas*. Such behaviour allures young girls to fall prey to material enticements in exchange for sexual favours to providers (KII, Chalinze, 2017). In the case of male students, some drop out of school to do odd jobs or petty businesses to earn an income. Thus, in the home environment, parents are in essence the GBV perpetrators.

GBV at the community level is characterized by deceit and love affairs by community members. In this case the most notoriously mentioned were *bodaboda* operators and fast-food vendors (*wauza chipsi*). The majority (79%) of the 155 students mentioned these as active perpetrators who entice students with money or certain favours, but in the end (may) commit GBV offences against them.

GBV Effects to Secondary Schools Students

According to the study findings it was revealed that boys did not experience GBV at the level of girls: only 25% (n=155) of the students admitted that some boys also experience GBV. However, it was observed that boys are not often ready to expose their GBV experiences to the public as girls do. The GBV effects for boys take a longer time to be noticed, hence the community have been perceiving that they are less affected. For girls, GBV-related effects are immediate and hence easily noticed. However, GBV affects girls and boys differently, leading to diverse outcomes that also need different curbing mechanism.

With reference to multiple responses (n=155), the following were identified as the GBV effects on girls (number of respondents in brackets): poor performance at school (75); early engagement in sexual relationships and promiscuity (55); early pregnancy and eventual dropping out from school (85); truancy (35); disability or death due to complications when giving birth for young girls (6); having health problems such as STDs and HIV (67); and running away from home to stay in brothels engaging in commercial sex (89). The qualitative findings also revealed GBV effects on girls as: (i) poor performance at school; (ii) early engagement in sexual relationships; and (iii) promiscuity and truancy.

The findings also revealed the impacts of GBV on boys that limited their effective participation in schooling, but did not result into any of the physiological impacts experienced by girls. Such effects were (number of respondents in brackets): truancy (75), poor performance (12) and school drop-outs (36). As observed by few male participants during FGDs, many boys drop out of school due to GBV cases, but the nature of these practices that amount to GBV are usually not known. As it was mentioned by some respondents, some teachers have been known to impose heavy punishment to boys who have affairs with girls that teachers also want. It was also noted that truancy in secondary schools was more common for boys who run away due to excessive punishment (Dunne et al., 2005). According to Dunne et al. (2005), UNESCO (2019) and HakiElimu (2020), GBV has had negative impacts on students (girls and boys), evidenced by poor performance, low participation in class, low self-esteem, irregular attendance and dropping out of school. Other studies also noted pregnancy and early marriages -- due to GBV -- as the leading cause of girls dropping out of school (Mensch et al., 1999; Chilisa, 2002; Gordon, 2002; Badri, 2014; Fawole et al., 2018; WHO 2021).

However, in responding to punishment and corporal punishment, the majority of teachers were able to defend themselves by saying that punishments that were experienced at school were not biased as all boys and girls at fault were equally punished; and such punishments could not be perceived as GBV. During one interview, a female teacher claimed that students are usually punished to instil discipline and good manners in them, and they are often not violated (IDI, Kiwangwa, Chalinze 2017). She identified the type of punishments given to students as strokes, farming, digging holes, cleaning the environment, fetching water, or searching for firewood. Another female teacher at Zinga had this to add:

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No work or punishment may lead to GBV at school. In case students misbehave, similar punishments are given and are done without academic timetable interference. The type of punishment to students is always considered before it is given, by looking at which one fits for a female or male student. For example, tough works like digging a hole for constructing toilets is usually given to boys, not girls; and to boys in Form III or IV (Zinga, Bagamoyo, October, 2017).

However, the study also noted other factors contributing to boys' drop-outs. Among these was poverty that pushed boys to petty businesses to support their families (Kiwangwa FGD, Chalinze, 2017). But this was in itself not seen as GBV as it was often forced upon male students only. This practice was explained very lightly and was not readily connected to the violation of young males' rights to education. The study also observed that limited schooling infrastructure, coupled with low economic status of households to cater for basic needs of school girls, exposed female students to the risk of entering into relationships amounting to GBV. On this challenge, a male participant at Kiwangwa had this to say:

The experience that we have here in Kiwangwa is the fact that it is a long distance from our homes at Minazini to where the school is. Hence, if it happens that a girl does not have anybody to support her at home, she may end up falling into the trap of a man who would seem to 'volunteer' to support her. Many girls end up having sexual affairs with them... ..and the implications [are]..... pregnancies (Kiwangwa FGD, Chalinze, 2017).

A study in Sierra Leone also revealed that poverty forces girls to engage in sexual affairs with male teachers (Reilly, 2014). Another study also noted that some adolescents are unable to attend school because of other school-related costs, including transportation, uniforms, books, or hostel accommodation (Human Rights Watch, 2017). However, the documents reviewed from the Bagamoyo District Council revealed diverse causes for drop-out cases for male and female students as: the lack of education awareness among parents; low family economic status, long distance to schools, harmful traditions and customs in the Coastal Region that put girls in an education dilemma, early pregnancies/child-marriages, and external forces from families and other women in the community (BDC, 2017). In Chalinze, the main reasons leading to school drop-outs were somehow similar to those of Bagamoyo. However, there was a significant attribution to peer influence, including engaging in intimate relations with girls, and inadequate attention by parents on the education of their children (Takwimu za Shule za Sekondari, 2018).

Other studies by Khamsini (2010) and Kalinga (2013) have also noted several challenges confronting students in primary schools in Bagamoyo District to include: the lack of awareness on the importance of education, abject poverty in families, cultural aspects such as early pregnancies, early marriages, divorce, polygamy, lack of family planning and negative attitudes towards education especially for girls, loss of parents, long distances to school, poor performance, poor infrastructure, low level of education of parents and guardians, illness and rape. According to the World Bank (2015), only less than one-third of girls who enter lower secondary school graduate,

due to—among others—GBV. This implies that the pace of transition to secondary schools and higher education is lower for girls than for boys in a country where GBV results generate more negative impacts to girls than boys.

Conclusion

This study on GBV and its impacts on secondary school students in Bagamoyo and Chalinze district councils has raised a number of important issues that are pertinent in the struggle of enhancing school children's rights to education, participation, retention and performance. The findings discerned that GBV is a menace to the completion of secondary education affecting both girls and boys; where the multiple effects identified include early marriages and pregnancies, poor performance, low participation in class, low self-esteem, irregular school attendance and school drop-outs. However, GBV has been identified as a common problem at school, home and in the surrounding community environments. Girls were noted as experiencing physical, sexual and psychological violence that emanates from diverse causes, although sexual violence affects them more. Conversely, physical violence stemming from school environment was observed as considerably affecting male students. Poverty at the household level was found to lead many girls into the trap of sexual violence; and while for boys it mostly led to drop-outs for petty business. In that regard, poverty was among the key factors contributing to psychological violence among male and female students.

Given that the GBV facing girls and boys emanates from diverse areas such as school, home and community surroundings; strategies to address it have to be cohesive by involving the government, parents and the community at large. In addition, GBV-related education programmes directed to teachers, parents, community and students are urgently required in multiple settings that will be of easy access by each group. Given that GBV has been negatively impacting secondary school students' education participation, performance and retention, there is a need for urgent effective policy measures to address GBV practices in schools, at home and in the community at large. The study recommends more research on the impact of GBV on education outcomes and understanding of effective approaches to prevent GBV, and to support GBV survivors in educational institutions in Tanzania, given its socio-cultural diversity.

Acknowledgements

Part of this paper was presented at the 1st International Conference of Development Studies at the University of Dodoma, Tanzania, March 6-10, 2020. We would like to acknowledge the Community of Volunteers for the World, A Partnership with Africa (CVM/APA), Tanzania office, Bagamoyo District, for funding the study that culminated into this paper. Our sincere gratitude also goes to the officials of the Bagamoyo and Chalinze district councils for providing the research clearances to undertake this study. We also acknowledge the support from administration personnel and students of the secondary schools involved in this study, and to other study participants in Bagamoyo and Chalinze District Councils.

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