

Child-on-child sexual abuse in public primary schools in Kibaha, Tanzania

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Abstract

This paper is based on research carried out to examine sexual abuse by children against fellow children, technically known as Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse, in short COCSA, by investigating factors which drove pupils to sexually abuse their fellow pupils and ways to prevent such abuse in public primary schools. The study was conducted in a public primary school in Kibaha, Pwani Region, using a qualitative approach which employed a case study design. Data collection instruments included in-depth interviews, naturalistic observation, focused group discussions and questionnaires. The study used a total of 82 respondents to generate the data needed for the study. After content analysis of the data, some of the findings showed that COCSA was real in the primary school and most of the respondents were aware of the existence of COCSA in the school. One of the four study conclusions was that there existed factors that contributed to making children either victims or perpetrators of COCSA. Finally, one of the three recommendations of the study was that Government should establish COCSA awareness programmes for the entire country through text and audio-visual media to help prevent children from being recruited into COCSA.

Keywords: Child-on-child sexual abuse, public primary schools, safe schools, school pupils

Introduction

Sexual abuse committed by children against other children, technically known as Child-on-Child Abuse, in short COCSA, is part of a serious and complex problem of child sexual abuse in Tanzania (URT-UNICEF, 2011a). COCSA, which has long been implicated in many research findings concerning child

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abuse, HIV/AIDS among children and reproductive health and safe motherhood education among young persons (Andersson, Parades-Solis, Milne, Ormer, Marokoane, Laetsang and Cockcroft, 2012), is a threat that may have already and is still causing more and more serious physical pains, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, psychological trauma, shame and isolation (Fox, 2013; Kigombola and Gotora, 2005).

Popular and social media in Tanzania has been rife with many stories about child abuse committed by children against other children especially incidences of sexual abuse in the form of penetration by penis. For example on April 10, 2014 the *Amani* newspaper reported about a boy aged 15 who had been sexually abusing three young primary school children (two girls and a boy) from his neighbourhoods in Dar es Salaam. The three children were studying in classes One, Two and Three, respectively. A contributor to *JamiiForums.com* reported on December 12, 2013 of an incidence of an eight- year boy who sneaked into a room of a neighbour and sexually abused a one-year girl baby when the mother left shortly to buy something from a nearby shop in Dar es Salaam. The *Majira* newspaper of September 5, 2013 reported about four primary school children in Kibaha who raped a class two girl to unconsciousness later on to be admitted to a referral hospital. The incidence happened while she was on her way from school around 12.00 noon when four relatively older boys (reported to be between 10 and 13 years old) from her school pursued, caught, blocked her mouth and sexually abused her causing her serious physical injury and bleeding. The *Nipashe* newspaper of March 18, 2012 reported their own findings of a survey they had conducted involving three (3) primary schools in Dar es Salaam city on the issue of child sexual abuse. Their findings revealed that many pupils were being sexually abused within the school premises by their fellow children and that it had become a normal thing.

Despite public knowledge that child abuse by children against other children was a common thing in Tanzania, very little has been studied about it. This researcher suspected that child-on-child abuse had been eclipsed by both government and researchers paying too much attention on child abuse committed by adults and thereby neglecting an equally abusive and dangerous behaviour of sexual abuse committed by children against their fellow children. To generate knowledge on the problem of child sexual abuse by focusing on child-on- child sexual abuse in primary schools, the researcher conducted a study in one primary school located in Kibaha semi-urban, in Pwani Region, as

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part of her work for a degree in Master in Social Work of the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) submitted in January, 2015. The aim was to conduct an in-depth study that would identify the risk and protective factors of child-on-child sexual abuse from respondents of a community related with one primary school in Kibaha, Pwani Region.

Literature review

Child-on-child sexual abuse (COCSA) is a sexual activity between persons under the age of 18 which occurs without consent, without equality or as a result of coercion (Shaw, 2000). Although there is a great paucity of the literature concerning child-on-child abuse, researchers have long pointed out that school pupils comprise a segment of those children who are sexually abused in society. For example, the Global School-based Student Health Survey of 13-17 year-old children in Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe estimated the prevalence of sexual abuse at 23% (Brown et al., 2009). In cross-sectional surveys conducted by Andersson et al. (2012) in 2003 and 2007 among schoolchildren aged 11-16 years in ten (10) Southern African countries, it was reported that 25% of boys and 29% of girls experienced forced or coerced sex. The same report also specifically mentioned that a high proportion of students were “experiencing and perpetrating abuse” and one source where schoolchildren are likely to learn sexual abuse behaviours is in the bars that are situated in the vicinity of schools (UNICEF, 2014).

The literature suggested that understanding children involved in incidents of COCSA is critical to effective prevention and intervention (Winokur, Devers, Hand and Blankenship, 2010). It is with that understanding that Tanzania conducted a large-scale research called Tanzania Violence Against Children Study (VACS) concerning child abuse in 2009 and released findings in 2011. The study findings revealed that violence against boys and girls is a real threat to the nation's health and well-being (URT-UNICEF, 2011a). The research showed that nearly three in ten females and approximately one in seven males in Tanzania had experienced sexual violence prior to the age of 18. The most common form of sexual violence experienced by both females and males before the age of 18 was identified (in their order of prevalence) to be (1) sexual touching (2) attempted sexual intercourse (3) physically forced sex and lastly (4)

coerced sex. Among the research respondents who had their first sexual experience prior to age 18, nearly one-third (29.1%) of females and 17.5% of males reported that their first sexual intercourse was unwilling, meaning that they were forced or coerced to engage in sexual intercourse.

It is even more insightful to note that although the dominant perpetrators of sexual abuse mentioned in the VACS were neighbours, strangers, dating partners, authority figures and relatives, the sad highlights of the report revealed that even children were sexually abusing their fellow children. The figures showed that 8.6% among girls and 10.6% among boys had been sexually abused by their fellow friends and classmates. Both males and females were involved in abusing fellow children and were therefore responsible for the resultant traumas inflicted on their fellow children. The findings also indicated that 38.1% of child sexual abuses took place within the school grounds and along the way while children were going to or coming from school, which was only second to the incidences being committed within someone's house (at 49% rating). All these local findings confirmed what earlier studies had found worldwide that a substantial proportion of child sexual abuse was also being perpetrated by younger children as opposed to the old view that adults were the major abusers (Brown, 2004). On the basis of the above literature and the argument that children are spending up to 12 hours a day in and around schools which are far from being safe (URT-UNICEF, 2011b), it became a matter of justifiable concern to this researcher to study child-on-child sexual abuse in a primary school context because no such study is known to have been done in Tanzania before.

Theoretical framework and conceptual model

The theoretical framework for this study was the human rights perspective as propounded by Amartya Sen. Sen (2004) in his early attempts to build a theory of human rights argued that because it is critically important to see the relationship between the force and appeal of human rights, it is also important to have a reasoned justification and scrutinized use of human rights. He submitted that a theory of human rights should consider several facts including (1) human rights are primarily ethical demands not just legal demands (2) the importance of human rights is related to the significance of the type of freedoms that form the subject matter (3) human rights should generate reasons for action for agents or

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people who are in a position to help in the promoting or safeguarding of the underlying freedoms (4) the implementation of human rights goes beyond legislations and includes public recognition, discussion and advocacy (5) human rights include economic and social freedoms (6) the universality of human rights relates to the idea of survivability of the rights through open discussions by people across national boundaries through interactive processes of free flow of information and views. The researcher was guided by this theoretical framework because most of the facts submitted by Sen are applicable to the study of child-on-child sexual abuse and also the researcher strongly believes that children are humans with rights to be respected and child-on-child sexual abuse is a violation of fundamental human rights for safe childhood.

The COCSA knowledge found in the literature and the findings of this study led the researcher to develop a conceptual model called COCSA Visualization Matrix or CVM (see Table 1 below) to help readers clearly see the link between major elements involved in dealing with the COCSA problem. The concept of ‘visualization’ was borrowed from the Japanese quality management literature in which visual control in production and quality performance is one of the key tools of “*Kaizen* (in Japanese) meaning “continuous improvement” (GRIPS, 2009). The idea is such that by visualizing what one is dealing with (making a mental picture or representation) helps to discover easily where there is a problem and where things are going right. So the CVM is for helping the reader to see the various elements involved in COCSA issues and use them to discover where there are weaknesses in dealing with the problem and again see possibilities for change. The various elements of the matrix are briefly described in Table 1.

Table 1: COCSA Visualization Matrix (CVM)

RISKS	CONTEXT S	PROTECTORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Non-existence of responsive policies and laws and by-laws -Inconsistent court and police decisions on COCSA -No COCSA research done to understand issues involved 	<p>MACRO National, Regional, District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Enacting child friendly policies and laws and by-laws -Just and fair court and police systems to COCSA victims -Conducting COCSA research to understand issues involved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School without COCSA awareness programmes -Unsafe school and classroom environment -Indecent dressing -Watching or reading pornographic content -School failure -Bad friends -Non-supportive community members -Community that is complacent about child sexual abuse -Lack of NGOs specifically addressing COCSA in community 	<p>MEZZO Community, School, Orphanage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School conducting COCSA education -COCSA-free school and classroom environment -Decent dressing -Watching or reading non-pornographic content -Better school performance -Good friends -Understanding and supportive community -Community that rebukes child sexual abuse -Presence of NGOs specifically fighting COCSA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Child's compliant/aggressive behaviour (personality traits) -Undue association with victims and perpetrators -Poor social skills -Lack of parental supervision and guidance -Family and neighbours with conflicts and separation -Children left to grandparents -Family poverty -Indecent dressing -Watching, listening or reading pornographic-loaded content 	<p>MICRO Neighbourhood, Family, Child</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Child's well-balanced behaviour (personality traits) -Guarded association with victims and perpetrators -Good social skills -Parental supervision and guidance -Family and neighbours with peace and strong family bonds -Responsible parenting -Financially stable family -Decent dressing -Watching, listening or reading non-pornographic content
<p>STRONG POSITIVE GUIDING VALUES</p>		
<p>STRONG PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION</p>		

Source: Developed for this work, 2015

The first important element in the COCSA visualization matrix is the *contexts* of COCSA. The contexts are presented based on the works of Veronesi, Larson-Samalus, Trevethan, Metcalfe, Osterman and Rodriguez (2011), Fischer, Glisson, and Thyer (2001) and Dubois and Miley (2008) who viewed social work intervention in three levels namely the *micro level*, the *mezzo level* and the *macro level*. The *micro level* context focuses on individuals or families or small groups of people. The *mezzo level* context focuses on organizations, teams and formal groups of people. The *macro level* contexts target an entire population of people (e.g. a country, state, county, city or societies). In this study these levels

are viewed as contexts in which the individual child, the family, the school, the community and the government can deal with COCSA.

The second element refers to the *risks* and *protectors* related to COCSA. Risks are those things likely to impact the children's sexual relationships negatively while protectors are those that will impact the child positively. Both can be found from the *contexts* of the child, that is, from within the individual child, the family, the neighbourhoods, the school, the orphanages, the community, the district, the region and the nation at large. Each context of COCSA needs to be examined carefully against risks and protectors to help discover negative or positive influences and possibilities at each level of handling COCSA. The specific contents presented in the matrix under Risks and Protectors or under Contexts are not to be taken as final or exhaustive. Rather, they only serve to demonstrate what can be included so interested parties may be more analytical in adding or removing things depending on their specific situation.

Third, in the matrix there are elements of *strong positive guiding values* and *strong practical implementation* at the base of the matrix. The whole idea of the visualization matrix depends on commitment to agreed *guiding values* and *practical implementation* measures. Without one of the two, nothing substantial will happen in eradicating COCSA. The word 'strong' is deliberate in each case to signify the use of time-tested, research-based and practice-based values and implementation measures, respectively. Strong positive guiding values imply strong principles on which to build our decisions to deal with COCSA. They may include religious values, psychological insight, time-valued community wisdom or research-based principles that have been proved to be practical in helping individuals to fight COCSA. Commitment to these values should guide everyone from the individual level to the national level. On the other hand values without implementation end up in people's minds or they become wishful thinking only, hence the need for strong practical implementation.

The matrix, therefore, helps to answer the question: *Who* is doing *What*, *Why* and *Where* about COCSA? Therefore, to eradicate COCSA in Tanzania we need to maintain our commitment to values and implementation measures for COCSA eradication. Values will guide to identify which sexual behaviours cannot be tolerated among children in society and then implementation will demand wise action from the individual child towards family, school, community and national level. That is why the matrix identifies potential risks

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and potential protectors to pinpoint areas that can be worked all through from micro, mezzo to macro contexts.

Research question and objectives

The study was guided by one major research question: What factors drove pupils to sexually abuse their fellow pupils and how could child-on-child be prevented? The study had the following four objectives: (1) discover respondents' awareness on incidences of child-on-child sexual abuse in the primary school (2) understand factors why some pupils got involved in COCSA, as victims or abusers of their fellow pupils (3) explore ways for preventing incidences of child-on-child sexual abuse among pupils, as victims or abusers (4) explore whether the school environment was safe from child-on-child sexual abuse.

Data and methods

The study employed the qualitative approach and used a case study research design. A case study, in contrast to a statistical study, places more emphasis on a full contextual analysis of an event or condition in order to understand it better (Cooper and Schindler, 2009). This emphasis on depth and detail in case studies provides valuable insights for problem solving, evaluation and strategy. Moreover, questionnaires were used to capture personal and sensitive information about the pupils that would otherwise be difficult to divulge in a face to face discussion (e.g. identifying who had personally been involved in child-on-child sexual abuse). Even so, the analysis of the data from the questionnaires was done qualitatively because the interest of the study was not in the numbers but in the facts presented in those questionnaires.

Because schools are known to be rich sources of information about children (Fox, 2013) this researcher collected data from participants related to one primary school in Kibaha semi-urban, in Pwani Region. At the time of this study, Kibaha was one of the four areas (others being Kisarawe, Shinyanga Rural District and the West District of Zanzibar) earmarked for a joint project by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children International (SCI) and Plan International launched in 2014 as a joint child protection initiative to end

violence against children as a follow-up to the Violence Against Children Study (VACS) undertaken in 2009 (UNICEF, 2014). The project aimed to support the National Plan of Action for Prevention and Response to Violence Against Children (2013-2016) and the Costed Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children (2013-2017) designed to establish child protection systems to effectively identify, prevent and respond to all forms of violence against children with a focus on children and their families, promoting protective community environment and safe schooling while building the capacity of frontline duty bearers.

The sample of this study consisted of 82 respondents, involving four different groups of informants including 61 primary school pupils, 8 parents, 11 teachers and 2 police officers. The types of research instruments used for this study were four including in-depth interviews (which were used for parents, teachers and the police officers), naturalistic observations (which were used to understand factors in the environment and classrooms whether they were safe or unsafe from COCSA), focused group discussions (which were used for small groups of between six [6] to Fifteen [15] pupils drawn from classes Four, Five and Six) and questionnaires which were used to elicit pupils' sensitive and private information (which they felt uncomfortable to discuss face to face) from both leaders and non-leaders from Classes Four, Five and Six.

Data analysis was performed using content analysis technique which measures the semantic content of the responses given by the informants while guarding against selective perception of that content. Kothari (2009) asserts that content analysis is a central activity whenever a researcher engages in studying verbal materials and that the analysis can be done both at a simple level and at a deep level. The researcher worked on the data right within the school environment because it helped her to recall the context for the data and therefore simplified their understanding and interpretation. After listening to audio recordings and checking notes, the next step was the transcribing of the words spoken by the respondents. Following suggestions from Saunders, Lewis and Adrian (2009), to reduce the vast amount of time that would be used to transcribe every word and reaction of the respondent, the researcher chose to use a process called "data sampling", that is, transcribing only those sections of the audio-recordings that were relevant to the research as sometimes respondents included irrelevant information in their responses.

From that stage, the researcher continued with the analysis of the data based

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on themes or perspectives which were pre-designed based on the four research questions of the study. Thematic analysis involved reading through each text of the in – depth interviews and focused group discussions in order to identify responses that were relevant to the study research questions (Creswell and Clark, 2007). The information that emerged in the categories (sub-themes) was summarized into the researcher's memos to help in writing the results. Memos are interpretive comments made by the researcher on the respondent's words (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). They reflect the researcher's understanding of what the respondents said in relation to the question asked. The total time spent for data collection and analysis was six weeks between September and October, 2014.

Findings and discussion

From the data analysis, four major findings were obtained based on the four research questions of this study. These findings include awareness of COCSA among respondents, risk factors for COCSA among pupils, protective factors for pupils against COCSA and school environment and its safety from COCSA. The findings and their discussions are thematically presented below.

Theme 1: Awareness of COCSA among Respondents

The findings indicated that COCSA was real in the primary school studied. All the pupils, all the teachers, all the police officers and most parents studied were aware of COCSA existing in the primary school and cited many true examples of COCSA incidences they knew including some pupils admitting themselves of being victims or perpetrators. Some of the 'voices' of the pupils on this theme include the following:

A boy child from class two lied to a girl in their class that he would give money to her but after he finished doing it he refused to give her the money so they quarrelled" (Girl in Class Four). "She was touching me whenever the teacher was not in class" (Boy in Class Six). "She refused and I got angry and did it to her (Boy in Class 5).

The finding confirmed what Boeree (2009) had reported that children are sexually active at the age of primary schooling. It was discovered that pupils

were practising COCSA which involved boys with girls, girls with girls and boys with boys with the form involving boys and girls leading in frequency, followed by boys with boys. All the parents interviewed were not aware that girls were sexually abusing fellow girls which may suggest that parents are not very close to their girls. The police officers noted a high increase in the cases involving sodomy amongst boys. All these findings corroborated with the research done in Kisarawe (same region where this study was done) by Kigombola and Gatora (2005) who had reported that 33% of primary school pupils in class Six and Seven were coerced to have sex with fellow pupils (see also Wamoyi, Frenwick, Urassa, Zaba and Stones, 2010). It was also discovered that pupils were practising COCSA in many different ways including writing a sexual note to a fellow pupil, pupil calling another pupil their fiancé (e), luring others through use of money, “throwing a kiss” at their peers, boys secretly placing a mirror below a sitting or standing girl in order to see her private parts, et cetera. This confirms earlier research which had shown that child sexual abusers could actually be their peers (Kisanga, 2012).

Theme 2: Risk Factors for COCSA among Pupils

Many respondents believed that COCSA did not happen by chance but that there were behaviours on the part of victims that invited or provoked perpetrators to act. This understanding agrees with Mnzava (2012) who had found out in Mara and Mtwara that poor traditional upbringing of children was encouraging girls to get involved in sexual intercourse at an early age by enticing men. Some of the things the respondents mentioned as “enticers to perpetrators” included girls sitting with their legs open, girls winking sexually at boys, girls wearing short skirts, boys behaving like girls and girls running their tongues over their lips at boys. Note some of the things the respondents said on this point:

Today's children [girls] prefer wearing short skirts so their fellow children [boys] lust after them.” (Parent) “Madam, the girls are gyrating their hips and buttocks in front of us...and some of them have big buttocks that attract us”. (Boy pupil) “They soften you with nice words and really tell you that they love you so much and you accept their words (Girl pupil).

It is only in the category of parents that the majority argued that there was nothing real that triggered the abusers to act but that they were doing it

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intentionally to destroy the lives of their fellow pupils. This might show that most parents did not know their children well. Other parents, however, said the wearing of short skirts could be a contributing factor for some girl-pupils to be sexually abused.

On the other hand, respondents also believed there were other behaviours or factors that contributed to shaping the perpetrators apart from the behaviours of the victims. Such factors included parents who involved their children in sexually explicit dances, children watching X-rated CDs and DVDs, boys to prove that they are 'men' and older boys displaying their 'power or superiority' through having sex with younger children. Some of their statements include the following: "Some of our friends are watching X-rated CDs at the video huts". (Pupil) "That's it; when children grow they must disturb a little bit" (Teacher). "It is only their humanity once they reach puberty". (Parent)

There was also a concern among teachers and the police officers over the custom of many Pwani Region dwellers to leave their children to stay with widowed and often poor grandmothers who had no alternative except to survive by receiving gifts from the lovers of their granddaughters. This behaviour was exposing the pupils to freedom that led to sexual involvement which they transported to school as COCSA. Andersson et al. (2012) had found that poverty (e.g. lack of food) was one of the factors for coerced sex among children. This is also supported by Winokur et al. (2010) who reported that children who engage in child-on-child sexual abuse have a history of unstable families. This may demand a region-wide education to conscientize parents towards the importance of rearing their own children instead of "dumping" their children in the hands of old grandmothers who cannot match with the energy of growing children.

Theme 3: Protective Factors for Pupils against COCSA

To stop COCSA before it happens respondents suggested things such as erecting a fence around the school to stop pupils who seduce their friends to get out of the school compound without teachers' knowledge, parents to control what children watch and listen, Ministry of Education to prepare videos for schools showing dangers of COCSA, parents to instil the fear of God in the children and educating the whole society about COCSA. Some of the respondents' comments on this include the following:

What will save us is to teach our children to have the fear of God and keep the teachings of the Bible and the Koran” (Parent). “Serious education is needed for the whole society about these things” (Police officer). “The government should erect a fence around our school to prevent pupils who force their friends to go out of the school to have sex during class hours (Pupil).

To stop or deal with COCSA after it happens, pupils suggested what seemed to this researcher as very harsh measures. For example, they suggested such things as offenders to be beaten up using electrical cables, to be shocked by electricity, to be incarcerated and to shame them by having them “advertised” on the media. It was clear from the pupils that they hated COCSA very much and were demanding justice especially for the victims through brutal punishment of the abusers. Perhaps this “hatred” against COCSA explains why Gabriel Myers killed himself after being sexually abused by a fellow child (Winokur et al., 2010). On the other hand, teachers, parents and police officers suggested such things as caning the children offenders (e.g. “a child ought to be caned; he/she should not be treated like an egg”), threatening them that they would be sent to a police station, suspending them from school and involving parents and the society in general to find solutions for COCSA (e.g. “We, parents of the victims and perpetrators have to work together as partners to help our children instead of becoming enemies”).

To explore more why pupils proposed such brutal punishments for fellow sexual abusers, the researcher asked them what they thought about the work of human rights advocates who were struggling to abolish corporal punishment in schools. This produced a discussion between the researcher and the pupils on the belief in the effectiveness of corporal punishment to stop COCSA among pupils. All pupils were totally upset by the idea of entirely abolishing corporal punishment in schools saying that alternative punishments do not help sexual abusers to stop and that they believed if the abusers are not made to feel the pain that the victims are feeling, they will never stop doing what they enjoy doing.

The pupils, however, recommended a judicial administration of corporal punishment depending on the amount of damage caused by the sexual abuse. Although teachers, parents and the police officers recommended counselling and educating the abusers, they confessed that stubborn and incorrigible pupils do not respond to mere words nor alternative punishments because actually they

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even refuse to do the alternative punishments. Teachers claimed that corporal punishment maintained order and protected innocent pupils against abusers in the school. There were a few parents who were desperate, not sure of whether both the corporal punishment and the alternative punishments were effective. They said it was God who could change people. It was obvious that such parents needed assistance in educating their children to become sexually healthy. The suggestions above from the respondents reflected that prevention of child abuse has to involve everybody in the society from individuals to the national level or helping one another from primary, secondary and tertiary level (Dwyer and Strang, 2009).

Theme 4: School environment and its safety from COCSA

Several things were observed in the school environment and its surroundings that did not guarantee pupils' safety against COCSA. Such things included a fenceless school compound, presence of two big pubs in very close proximity with the school, trespassers of every kind crisscrossing the school from every direction, pit-latrines with no doors or having defective door shutters where pupils peeped at one another, roads and paths passing along and across the school, a dense bushy area (which was cleared as the research continued) just at the end of the school compound where pupils went to play during school hours, ditches into which pupils hid and chatted during school hours, pupils going outside the school bounds to buy foodstuffs, pupils playing in compounds of neighbouring homes during school hours and beautiful trees and logs where lovers came to sit and chat as well as an open school playground which invited many young people who came with their boy/girlfriends to watch community football games in the evening. The Violence against Children Study (VACS) conducted in 2009 observed that primary schools were no longer safe places for children because they were places where many incidences of child sexual abuse took place, the leading types of sexual abuses being sexual touch and attempted sexual intercourse done within the school environment (URT-UNICEF, 2011a). The pupils, teachers and the police officers perceived the existing school environment as contributing towards COCSA. They believed pupils were being exposed to many temptations by seeing lovers crossing within the school and by hearing loud love music from the nearby pubs. Some of the respondents' comments on this issue are such as:

Children are human beings just like adults and if they are exposed to constant temptations from the surroundings of the school they can fall.” (Parent) “When girls start dancing at the loud music heard from Mkuu Pub the boys start kissing them and hold their buttocks when they are gyrating their hips.” (Teacher) “That woman neighbour came to school complaining that some pupils were doing bad things and stealing her potatoes and cassava from her field (Pupil).

Classroom observation showed that the class environment for Classes Five and Six looked conducive and spacious with two or three pupils sitting at a desk. However, the situation was different for pupils in Class Four who were overcrowded causing some of them to sit down on the floor. Comments by teachers and pupils on the Class Four situation indicated that overcrowded pupils tended to sexually molest their fellow pupils by touching one's buttocks or breasts without the teacher's noticing. UNICEF (2014) has pointed out that overcrowded classrooms can be a potential source of violence among children (including sexual violence) as pupils can easily touch and sexually arouse themselves because of the sitting arrangement. This shows that classes need to have enough spaces and desks for pupils to minimize COCSA cases.

It is clear that the findings and discussion in this paper resonate well with Amartya Sen's human rights perspective chosen for this study. All the six points raised by Sen (2004) as a basis for a theory of human rights clearly support this study. First, this study on COCSA addresses an ethical issue in the sense that abusing children is not ethically neutral and it is not acceptable internationally. Second, the children's rights presented in this study are significant in the sense that they deal with defending children as human beings who deserve respect and freedom from abuse from anybody including fellow children. Third, the author believes that COCSA is a sensitive human rights issue which calls for a platform for action from individuals, organizations and institutions committed to promoting and safeguarding human rights in general and children's rights in particular. Fourth, the type of children's rights brought up in this study requires implementation of everyone, not just the government. Fifth, COCSA should be understood as a human rights issue that impinges on children's economic and social freedoms by destroying their education potential as well as their social dignity. Sixth, the author believes that this study on COCSA will contribute to advocating universal human rights and thus extend the survival of children's

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rights in Tanzania and beyond. All Sen's (2004) points are helpful in understanding child-on-child sexual abuse raised in this article as a human rights issue just like any other human rights issues such as survival rights, participation rights, and rights against discrimination of individuals.

Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the findings of this study are based on the four research objectives that guided this study as follows:

(1) Respondents' awareness of the incidences of child-on-child sexual abuse in the primary school.

The conclusion from the findings is that COCSA was real and going on in Kibaha public primary school. The findings showed that all the respondents were aware of the COCSA incidences in their school and the pupils reported the incidences to the class teachers, parents and the police officers.

(2) Factors explaining why some pupils got involved in COCSA (as victims or abusers of their fellow pupils).

The conclusion from the findings is that COCSA did not happen by chance. There existed factors that contributed to making pupils either victims or perpetrators. Many respondents mentioned various factors they thought contributed to shaping pupils into COCSA victims (such as girls sitting with their legs open) or abusers (such as watching and learning from X-rated CDs and DVDs).

(3) Preventive measures for child sexual abuse by fellow pupils.

The conclusion from the findings is that respondents believed there were certain ways that could help prevent COCSA problems. Respondents mentioned various ways such as caning the offenders and parents to control what children watch and listen. Pupils suggested some things that were even against conventional wisdom (e.g. shocking abusers with electricity) to show their hatred of COCSA.

(4) Perception of school environment as safe from child-on-child sexual abuse.

The conclusion from the findings is that the school environment and its surroundings were considered unsafe from COCSA. Most respondents were dissatisfied by the situation of the school environment (e.g. children could get out of school unnoticed as there was no fence around the school). It is clear that

primary schools need to be safe places for pupils to learn and play instead of being places for child-on-child sexual abuse.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study the following are the recommendations to the government, researchers, pupils, parents, teachers, religious leaders and other stakeholders.

To the government:

- (1) The government should establish COCSA awareness programmes for the entire country through text and audio-visual media to help prevent children in general and pupils in particular from being recruited into COCSA.
- (2) The government should establish laws that recognize the human rights of the COCSA victims. The current Law of the Child, Act 2009 does not even mention COCSA which is a big anomaly for a law that claims to protect the rights of children. In other words, the Law of the Child should not only consider sexual offenses committed by adults against children but also should address the equally devastating sexual offenses committed by children to other children.
- (3) The government should strengthen the concept of safe schools and involve stakeholders in protecting pupils against COCSA through such things as erecting fences around primary schools and stopping passers-by from criss-crossing within schools.

To researchers:

Because this qualitative research was exploratory in nature, quantitative researchers may choose to take this study beyond one case and multiply it to other primary schools in the country to measure the extent to which COCSA is being practised in Tanzania.

To pupils, parents, teachers, religious leaders and other stakeholders:

All concerned parties such as individuals, organisations and institutions interested in children's welfare should partner together and forge movements to fight COCSA at all levels forming awareness clubs, establishing counselling programmes and even writing books about COCSA.

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