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ABSTRACT

Gender-based violence (GBV) is the most pervasive and primitive form of violation of human rights (UN Women, 2016). Though, the international community anticipates that people should live free of fear, intimidation and abuse by the year 2030, there is evidence of increasing incidents of GBV in most communities in Kenya (National Gender Equality Commission (NGEC, 2016). Global statistics reveal that 35% of women are physically and/or

sexually abused are in their lifetime, 47% are murdered compared to 6% men by intimate partners or family members, 55% are victims of forced labour and 98% are victims of sexual exploitation (UN Women, 2016). Besides GBV being an extreme violation of human rights, it results into huge economic costs (NGEC, 2016; UN Women, 2016). Global cost of GBV is approximately 2% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) which is an equivalent of 1.5 trillion (UN Women). This avoidable cost poses challenges to sustainable development at individual and community levels. Therefore, this paper generally endeavoured to establish how GBV hinders effective sustainable development in Kenya. The study was guided by four objectives; identify forms of GBV, establish prevalence rates of GBV in Kenya, explore causes of GBV, and suggest how GBV could be mitigated to promote healthy social functioning of individuals, families and communities towards inclusive, constructive and productive participation of men and women in sustainable development initiatives. Desk top research methodology was adopted, where existing literature on GBV was reviewed. The findings revealed that GBV is still a major concern in Kenya; physical, sexual, emotional, economic and harmful practices are the forms of violence common and are mainly perpetuated against women and girls; causes of GBV are based on; individual, relationship, community and society while the cost of GBV is approximated to be 1.1% of Kenya's GDP. Mitigation strategies are; survivor-centered, communities-centered and right-based, upholding humanitarian philosophy and the principle of "Do No Harm". Key recommendations are; create awareness of the irrational causes and negative effects of GBV on individuals and society, strict and punitive justice system to deter perpetuators of GBV and integrating GBV knowledge and skills in school curriculum as a preventive strategy.

1.0 Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is the most pervasive and primitive form of violation of human rights (UN Women, 2016). The United Nations (UN) in the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 defines gender based violence (GBV) as any act that is likely to or results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats or acts of coercion, arbitrary deprivation of liberty, private or public, in the family or community (UN Nations 2010). GBV is a serious, lifethreatening protection issue, primarily affecting women and girls more than men and boys.

According to a joint study conducted by Kabul University, UNDP and UNESCO (2010), the term GBV itself can take several forms, ranging from sexual harassment, sexual assault, verbal and physical abuse, psychological and economic violence. Women and girls are specifically vulnerable to these forms of violence, given their secondary positions in the power hierarchy in most families and communities in the world (Kenya Human Rights Commission, 2003). The root causes of gender-based violence, most often than not lie in the perceptions and attitudes that people have with regard to men and women, which eventually lead to gender discriminative actions and practices (Davis, 2012). Besides, there are rarely effective and



appropriate strategies available to address the problem of GBV (UNDP & UNESCO, 2010).

2.0 Problem Statement

Though, the international community has been promoting gender equality and anticipates that people should live free of fear, intimidation and abuse by the year 2030, globally, just like in Kenya, there are evidences to proof that GBV is on the increase (National Gender Equality Commission (NGEC, 2016). Global statistics reveal that, at least one out of every three women has been violated psychologically, physically or sexually by their intimate partners in their lifetime (Duvvury & Nui, 2014; UN Women, 2016). Further statistics reveal that 35% of women are physically and/or sexually abused in their lifetime, 47% are murdered compared to 6% men by intimate partners or family members, 55% are victims of forced labour and 98% are victims of sexual exploitation (UN Women, 2016).

Even with these alarming statistics, GBV unlike other forms of violence is often shrouded in secrecy because it takes place within unequitable gender relations supported by existing sanctioned power structures in most communities. Though GBV is generally condemned by existing international instruments such as CEDAW, 1979 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 and national constitution (Republic of Kenya, 2010) legal frameworks, most cultural beliefs, attitudes and practices related to this form of violence tend to be ambiguous in most communities, especially patriarchal societies where GBV is culturally condoned (CARE International, 2015). Attempts to redress this vice at the international as well as national levels has been futile since GBV is still on the raise, especially in Kenya where several and severe cases of GBV are reported in the media (Muasya, 2018; Odunga, 2013 & Omollo & King'wara, 2018) just to mention a few. It is based on this background that this study sought to investigate the dynamics behind GBV and its implication on sustainable development.

3.0 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by four objectives that sought to;

- **3.1** Identify the various forms of gender-based violence in Kenya,
- **3.2** Establish the prevalence rates of gender-based violence in Kenya,
- **3.3** Explore the causes of gender-based violence in Kenya, and
- **3.4** Suggest Strategies that could be used to mitigated GBV and promote healthy social functioning of individuals,

families and communities towards inclusive, constructive and productive participation of men and women in sustainable development initiatives.

4.0 Theoretical Framework of the study

This study was informed by the normative support of violence theory which suggests that societal norms and values related to masculinity, femininity, family, and heterosexual relationship within a culture constitute the problem of gender based violence and its prevalence (O'Neill, 1998). The proponents of this theory argue that GBV is an extension of normative beliefs and societal practices. Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) confirm that there are cultures that normatively support use of physical force, hence they sanction the practice violence as the normal order in the day-to-day lifestyle of people. In most communities, family norms condone family members to physically discipline each other. Most often than not, men discipline women and children while women discipline children based on the hierarchy of seniority based on family power structures. Such violence is perceived as personal or family issues that does not call for external interference since it is subjected to different moral and judgmental criteria Loseke (1992).

According Bograd (1988),to socialization encourages men to be competitive, tough, aggressive, unemotional, and objectifying. Normatively, as heads of households, men are supposed to have rights to control and dominate other members of the family. On the contrary, women are taught to be obedient and submissive to their male counterparts. This imbalance power relationship between the two genders exacerbate gender based violence. Women are subjected to societal sanctioned abuse, suffer in silence while they blame themselves for not being good daughters, sister, wives or mothers, hence they deserve abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). This is as a result of cultural practices and norms that devalue women and openly treat them with contempt. Consequently, women are perceived as sexual objects or properties in helpless positions within the society. It is assumed that they enjoy to be subordinated, accept coercion, admire men's aggressiveness and are desperate to be identified with and be used by men even when they are deprived of their human dignity. All these constructions justify GBV in most patriarchal societies. As Merry (2011) pointed it out, these constructions endorse practices that institutionalize men's dominance and women subordination, including gendered violence.

Despite the normative support on GBV, violence



against women and girls brings huge economic costs to any society (Rowell, 2013). The negative impact on women's participation in education, employment and civic life undermines poverty reduction efforts as it results in lost employment and production (Women Funding Network, 2006). Eventually, GBV drains resources meant for social services, justice system, health-care agencies and employers which could have been used for development initiatives.

To realize the adopted Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, GBV is a target area under Goal 5 on gender equality. The inclusiveness of GBV under this goal reaffirms that violence is a barrier to gender equality, women's empowerment and overall sustainable development. Therefore, the need to urgently address GBV as a way of promoting human rights, for the realization of economic productivity, justice and cohesion geared towards sustainable development (UNDP, 2016).

5.0 Methodology of the study

Desk top research methodology was adopted, where documented general and empirical literature on GBV was reviewed. On the basis of reviewed secondary data, the study findings, conclusions and recommendations were made in cognizance with the study objectives.

6.0 Findings of the Study

The findings of this study were presented in line with the study objectives. They are discussed in the subsequent sub-sections.

6.1 The various forms of gender based violence in Kenya

There are mainly four categories of GBV witnessed in the Kenyan society, that is; physical, sexual, emotional (mental and social), economic and harmful traditional practices (Makoke, 2015). Physical gender based violence is the intentional use of physical force with the potential to cause death, disability, injury or harm and is the easiest form of violence to identify. It includes assault, domestic violence and harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage (Sanjel, 2013). The second form of GBV is sexual gender based violence which is the use of physical force to compel a person to engage in a sexual act against his/her will whether or not the act is completed. These include sexual harassment, rape, sodomy and attempted rape, amongst others (Matoke, 2015).

The third form of GBV is emotional violence which entails traumatic or post traumatic experiences of victims caused by perpetrators' threats, acts, coercive tactics following physical or sexual violence, or threats of physical or sexual violence. They involve verbal, emotional abuse, humiliation and discrimination, amongst others. The fourth form

of GBV involves harmful traditional practices ingrained in people's ways of living that are harmful to others. Such practices include, female genital mutilation (FGM) and early childhood marriages (Sanjel, 2013).

Another categorization of GBV is based on levels of violence perpetrated. According to Matoke (2015), there are three levels, that is; at home or family level, at the community level and at the state level. The family level is considered as the primary site of gender violence. Family prepares members for social life through the processes of socializations packed with gender stereotypes and perceptions of strict gendered division of labour and power structures (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Merry, 2011). In the family, exists various forms of abuse such as; spousal abuse, sexual assault and abuse, as well as psychological abuse in the form of forced child marriages, confinement, insults, threats and neglect aimed at controlling women's sexuality and actions. Unfortunately, violence at the family level is perceived as a private family issue and information about it is secretive and scanty.

The second level is the Community or society level where people share common cultural norms and practices that perpetuate power inequalities between men and women that justify abusive behaviours by the dominant group (men) and aimed at controlling the subordinate group (women) through harmful traditional practices such as; devaluing the worth of women, wife battering corporal punishment (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Women are also aggressed at the work place as they are vulnerable to sexual aggression, sexual assault and intimidation as well as commercialized violence in form of sexual exploitation through trafficking and prostitution. The third and last level is the state which in some cases legitimizes gender inequalities by permitting the enactment of discriminatory laws and policies and poor implementation of state laws that protect people from GBV (Kameri-mbote, 2002).

6.2.1 Establish the prevalence rates of gender based violence

Available statistics (UN Women, 2016; Women's Funding Network, 2006) reveals that one in every three women are beaten, coerced into sex by a man once in her lifetime. More than 20% of women are abused by men they live with. Approximately, 60% of women in Asia are "missing" because they are killed as infants through selective abortion, female infanticide, deliberate under-nutrition and lack of access to health care, among others. Trafficking of women and girls is common among poor populations as at least 2 million girls between the ages of 5-15 are introduced into commercial sex



work industry. in some cases, abuse of women and girls is used as a weapon of war and civil conflicts. Additionally, 130 million women and girls in Africa, Middle East and Asia have gone through female genital mutilation while one-quarter to one-third of 170 million women and girls who live within the European Union are subjected to male violence and 45% to 81% of working women experience sexual harassment in the workplace. In France, 95% of survivors of violence are women and 51% of them are violated by their husbands. In Russia, half of all murder victims are women killed by their male partners.

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 2014 and Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS), 2014), 38% of women aged between 15- 49 years have experienced intimate partner physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. In 2013, the Kenya police service received 3,596 defilement cases, 913 rape cases, 242 incest cases and 124 sodomy cases. The report further states that girls aged 12-17 years represent 41% of survivors followed by 18-49 who make up 32%. Girls with disabilities have not been spared and they represent 1% and women over 50 years accounted for 24% of BGV survivors. Additionally, the regions in Kenya hit most by acts of GBV are western Kenya and Nyanza accounting for 51.6% and 49.5% respectively, Followed by Nairobi (46.1%), Eastern (40.6%), Central (32.8%), Rift Valley (32.4%), Coast (27.4%) and North Eastern (12.1%). According to the UN women (2015) report, 72.6% of survivors of GBV were unwilling to pursue justice for fear of ridicule stigmazation and insensitive law enforcement agencies, cost and the amount of time it consumes (Kameri-Mbote, 2002).

6.3 Explore the causes of gender based violence in the Kenyan society

Causes of GBV are complex and are influenced by a combination of factors that increase the risks of perpetrators committing violence and survivors experiencing violence. According to (Heise, 1998), the ecological framework offers a comprehensive understanding of the factors responsible for GBV and how they interact with each other to cause violence. They are; individual factors, relationship factors, community factors and societal factors.

Individual factors focus on biological and personal issues and they include; personality and mental challenges, level of education, economic status, past experiences of violence, exposure to abuse, use of alcohol and drugs and one's attitude and perceptions that lead to violent behaviours. Relationship factors that contribute to GBV are associated with peer pressure, influence of family members and practices of the wider community. For instance, in most

families, response to GBV against women will focus on blaming women and they concentrate on restoring 'lost' family honour rather than punishing men for their actions, hence creating an environment of impunity (Kameri-Mbote, 2002). At the community level, there is general tolerance towards GBV, especially violence towards girls and women right from the family, learning institutions, workplace and neighbourhoods. This increases the prevalence of abuse. Similarly, disproportionate poverty makes women more vulnerable to GBV. For instance, poor women who go in search of water and firewood stand a higher risk of sexual abuse and rape. Poverty may also push women to prostitution, domestic work where the chances of abuse are high. Finally, at the societal level, cultural and social norms perpetuate gender inequality through existing power relations between men and women, making men to assume superior positions with entitlement to control to control of resources and decision-making processes while women assume subordinate positions with no power make them more vulnerable to abuse both in private and in public spheres (Mogute, 2017). There could also be issues related to war and civil strife that make the community a fertile ground for propagation of GBV (Natale, 2017).

6.4 The cost/effects of gender based violence in Kenya.

Besides GBV being an extreme violation of human rights, it results into huge economic costs (NGEC, 2016: UN Women, 2016). Though it is not easy to tag monetary value against GBV due to its complexity, global cost of GBV is approximately 2% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) which is an equivalent of \$1.5 trillion (UN Women). The global statistics are a reflection of the national cost of GBV in Kenya. A study by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC, 2016) reveals that in Kenya, the economic burden of gender-based violence to individual survivors and their families is huge. The average cost of medicalrelated expenses per survivor in a family is Kshs 16,464, reporting the incident to the local authorities such as chiefs or any other community structures costs Kshs 3,111, reporting an incidence to the police cost around Kshs 3,756 while productivity loss from serious injuries sustained by survivors of abuse amount to Kshs 223,476 and productivity loss from minor injuries amount to Kshs18, 623. Productivity loss from premature mortalities arising out of GBV amounts to a massive sum of Kshs The report further shows that the 5.840.664. perpetrators and their families incur losses associated with incarceration, litigation, social stigma, loss of time and productivity in the



following order; legal fees (33,000), court fines (Kshs 85,000), other costs related to litigation (Kshs 20,000), and loss of monthly income due to incarceration (28,000). These combined costs have serious economic implication to the victims and perpetrators of violence, their families and the country at large (NGEC, 2016).

According to a report by Muiruri (2015), Kenya losses Ksh.46.5 billion annually to gender based violence vice; serious victims' injuries cost the country about Ksh14.8 billion, minor injuries take an additional Ksh8.1 billion while the value of costs incurred due to gender based related deaths stands at Ksh10.5 billion. The total loss amounts to Kshs 46 billion which translates into about 1.1% of the Kenya's GDP. This notwithstanding, the most serious cost of GBV in Kenya is incurred through low productivity by GVB survivors, perpetrators and affected households. Muiruri (2015) further points out that 56% of GBV survivors are incapacitated, hence they cannot productively and effectively work as before. GBV victims with minor injuries take an average of 27 days to resume productive working lifestyle while it takes an average of 12 months for those with serious injuries. Only 19% of victims of GBV work during the recovery period (Muiruri, 2015). This loss is huge in a staggering Kenyan economy. Eventually, it affects and undermines the overall economic growth of the country; her strategic plans and subsequent sustainable development initiatives are undermined, and in some cases, they stalled since billions of shillings intended for development projects and welfare services are diverted to take care of GBV survivors and their dependents.

These statistics provide evidence of drained resources from families, communities and states as a result of GBV (Rowell, 2013). Other nonmonetary costs incurred include; physical costs such as injuries, illnesses including psycho-somatic diseases, disabilities and in extreme cases death of gender based violence victims. There are also social costs like stigma, isolation and alienation, ridicule, lack of trust especially with the perpetrators of GBV, poor social or familial relationships and fear. Other costs are manifested through psychological, mental or emotional instability of the survivors of violence, their dependents and perpetrators themselves. These effects are exhibited through increased stress levels, stress-related injuries while at work, low productivity, absenteeism from school/work, low self-esteem, suicidal tendencies and in extreme cases, death (Rowell, 2013).

Likewise, there is the cost of time that survivors of GBV takes to go to hospitals to seek treatment, visit police stations to report the abuse and attending long

and frustrating court sessions marred with delays, poor implementation and corruption (Kameri-Mbote, 2002). Some injuries sustained by the survivors of violence take time to recover, though they finally recover, they leave behind remarkable and lingering scars while some injuries never heal at all. Such injuries remain as constant reminders of the ordeal the survivors went through and most often not they present themselves as post-traumatic disorders that need professional intervention to be resolved (Lancaster, et al., 2016). The other cost of GBV is incurred while conducting preventive intervention national awareness and advocacy campaigns against uncalled for gender based violence. Resources which could have been otherwise used for alternative development projects and provision of services to the citizens.

Kenyan statistics on the cost of GBV is in tandem with what was reported in Bangladesh in 2010 where the total cost of GBV was equated to 143 billion taka an equivalent of approximately US\$1.8 billion. This amounted to 2.05 per cent of the national GDP or an equivalent of 12.65 % of government budget, and close to the total government expenditure for health and nutrition sector in Bangladesh for that year. Majority of this cost was borne by survivors and their families. In Australia, the annual financial cost stands at AU\$81 billion while in the UK the cost is estimated to be £3.1 billion, in South Africa the cost is approximately US\$ 15.5 million while in Uganda it is approximately US\$ 2.5 million and in Colombia, the cost of GBV is estimated to be US\$ 73.7 million. In 2005, the cost of GBV calculated across thirteen countries (Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, Finland, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States) by the United Nations stood at US\$ 50 billion per year (Rowell, 2013). This is colossal amount of money that could have been used in development projects and services provisions.

6.5 Gender based violence mitigation strategies to promote healthy social functioning of individuals, families and communities.

The strategies to be used in mitigating this vice are varied but contextualization. However, it is necessary to enhance human rights as key strategy to mitigating GBV and its harmful effects on individuals, families and the society at large. Consequently, men and women need to be accorded full human rights to live free from violence and abuse of any nature (GBV sub-sector (2017) report. Besides, this report further points out the need for the government and private sectors concerned with GBV to ensure that services are accessible, prompt,



confidential and appropriate to survivor's needs wishes and decisions, and available in locations where need is manifested. There should be detailed and systematic multi-sectorial response to address needs of survivors of violence to ensure holistic interventions that involve inter-agency collaboration and coordination across key sectors. Therefore, GBV mitigation should be guided by the following principles;

- 1. Survivor-centered strategies which aims at creating a supportive environment while upholding the dignity, value, respect, confidentiality, non-discriminative attitude and safety of survivors. It is important to stop labelling survivors of violence as victims, instead see them as agents of change (Sida, 2015).
- Right-based strategies which seeks to analyse and address the root causes of discrimination and inequality to guarantee each person freedom and dignity, safety from violence, protection from exploitation and abuse in line with the international and national instruments that promote and protect human rights.
- 3. Community-based strategies that engages affected populations in coming up with suitable and contextualized approaches related to prevention, protection and provision of humanitarian services and assistance. This strategy will uphold inclusiveness and engage women, girls, and at-risk groups in all phases of prevention and mitigation of GBV (Sida 2015; Varghese & Reeds, 2012).
- 4. Humanitarian strategy that is built upon humanitarian principles of humanity, independence and neutrality in the implementation of GBV strategies with a view of maintaining access to affected populations and ensuring rapid and timely humanitarian response.
- 5. 'Do no Harm' Strategy which involves taking all measures to avoid exposing people to further harm because of acts of humanitarian response (Attifield, 2001).

To benefit from these five strategies, there is need to increase survivors' access to well-coordinated and holistic response services that go a long way to provide; material assistance to survivors of violence, holistic health care that embraces physical, psychological, spiritual, social and environmental well-being. Besides, survivors of violence need individualized case management, provision of mental health and psychosocial support, provision of safety and secure services where they can feel

physically and emotionally safe. There is also need to provide legal aid services to survivors of GBV to ensure justice is done even to those who cannot afford private legal fees.

There is also need to increase awareness on the effects and prevention of GBV as a way of strengthening community preventive and protection approaches through; community empowerment and capacity building, development of life skills, knowledge acquisition and vocational training to facilitate effective prevention and response. Likewise, there is need to enhance community GBV protection systems through existing social structures like; the family unit, learning institutions, faithbased institutions and corporate organizations among others. Finally, there is need to mainstream GBV intervention in all forms of humanitarian right from advocacy, response planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of intervention and mitigation strategies through effective policy formulation and implementation, data and information management, coordination, mainstreaming, reporting and learning from M&E appraisals.

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendation7.1 Conclusion

To realize sustainable development, it is imperative to address GBV in a holistic, cross-cutting and multi-sectoral manner both in Kenya and beyond. This is because GBV affects different sectors of the society causing huge losses that negatively affects national as well as global economy. Funds which could have been used in development projects and service provision are diverted to respond to GBV related expenditures, thus. retarding effectiveness of attaining sustainable development goals. Additionally, there are monetary and nonmonetary losses incurred due to unexpected medical and legal fees, low productivity occasioned by lost man-hours during the recovery period of survivors of violence, confinement of perpetrators of violence and general demotivation that follows GBV due to psycho-social effects on individuals and families.

7.2 Recommendations

- **7.2.1** Promote awareness creation on the relationship between GBV and the economy and how they affect the process of sustainable development.
- 7.2.2 Encourage people's participation in promoting equitable societies where men and women, boys and girls have rights to freely get involved in development initiatives in a safe and secure environment.



- 7.2.3 Promote socio-cultural and normative changes to discard gender discriminative beliefs and practices and place, promote gender its inclusiveness in all spheres of life regardless of sex. This can be achieved through mainstreaming of GBV courses in learning institutions curriculums and organizational policies.
- 7.2.4 At the policy level, it is important to encourage gender-sensitive formulation and implementation of laws and policies, strict penalties to perpetrators of violence as a way of protecting the interests of those populations who are at risk of gender based violation, such as women, girls and the disabled sections of society.
- 7.2.5 Conduct more research to clearly bring out the impact of GBV and sustainable development at counties or regional levels. This is because, for instance in Kenya, county governments are implementers of development initiatives and are key in the provision of welfare services to the citizens.

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