

Gender Based Violence Among Families And Family Stability In Kisoro District: A Case Study Of Nyarusiza Sub-County

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Abstract

The study sought to examine gender Based Violence among families and family stability in Nyarusiza Sub-County, Kisoro District- Uganda. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of gender based violence on family stability among families. The study objectives were; to find out the causes of gender-based violence among families in Nyarusiza Sub—County, Kisoro District, to establish the relationship between gender-based violence and family stability in Nyarusiza Sub-County, Kisoro District and finally, to find out the solutions or possible measures to reduce gender-based violence among families in Nyarusiza Sub-County, Kisoro District. The study adopted a qualitative approach utilizing a case study design to collect qualitative data by means of interviews from a sample of 10 community leaders (4 LC1s, 2 counselors, 2 LC2, 1 LC3 and 1 sub- county community development officer, 30 households taking 1 per household and 4 church leaders from different faith and 10 social workers. The data was analyzed qualitatively and the findings are presented as descriptions, narratives and verbatim. The results of the study show that gender-based violence is as a result of socio-cultural factors of male dominance, alcohol abuse, and misunderstanding between partners, different family backgrounds and financial problems. The results also show that gender-based violence mainly affect children and women in the families. Finally, it was concluded that domestic conflict and gender-based violence affect family peace and family instability leading to divorce and family disorganization. Considering the findings of the research, it was recommended that the Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare, the Law Enforcement Agencies, the Legislators and various Non-Governmental Organizations should consider empowering women socially and economically to reduce financial over-dependence on their male spouses, partners and husbands. Furthermore, it was recommended that communities must be educated on gender equality and such education can be incorporated in the school curriculum to sensitize and empower children from early age groups

Keywords: Gender Based Violence, Families And Family Stability

Background of the study

Globally, gender-based domestic or family violence is also seen as a range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against adult and adolescent women by current or former male intimate partners” (Deal et al., 2023). According to Adkins. K (2010), a growing body of evidence highlights the scale of the problem of gender-based homestead

violence in developing countries. (Ronald et al., n.d.) observed that initially gender-based domestic violence (abuse) is usually an attempt by one partner to gain control through intimidation, fear, verbal abuse or threats of violence. In the past decade, recognition of the extent and significance of gender-based violence on homesteads has increased globally.

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Women in Asia and the Middle East are being killed in the name of honor. Girls in West Africa undergo genital mutilation in the name of custom. Migrant and refugee women in Western Europe are attacked for not adopting the social mores of their host community (Mercy et al., 2023). Young girls in southern Africa are being raped and infected with HIV/AIDS because the perpetrators believe that sex with virgins will cure them of their disease. And in the world's richest and most developed countries, women are beaten to death by their partners (Kazaara et al., 2023). Girls and women around the world continue to experience gender-based violence throughout their life cycle in homes, schools, churches, workplaces, on the street, and even in therapeutic settings (Winny et al., 2023). A recent cross-national review of population-based survey data found that the proportion of women who had experienced lifetime physical assault by an intimate partner ranged from 10% to 69% (Richard, 2022).

In the United States, the National Violence Against Women Survey estimated that one in five (22.1%) women had been physically assaulted in their lifetime and one in 13 (7.7%) had been raped by an intimate partner. An estimated 1.3 million women have experienced physical assault and over 201,394 women have experienced intimate partner rape in the previous year (Musaibah et al., 2023). Intimate partner violence was the most common source of injury for women aged 15 to 44 years, more common than assault, car accidents and cancer deaths combined (Zowena et al., 2023). Today, gender is theorized as a complex, multi-

level cultural construct that determines the meaning of being female or male in a particular situational context (Frank et al., 2023). In Western society, gender is typically organized around the social categories of male versus female and is assigned at birth based on biological sex (which can be defined anatomically or genetically, depending on the situation). The cultural package that represents the meaning of gender assignment to a category should not be confused with the category itself. Gender can be understood as a set of many interrelated elements including gender traits, emotions, values, expectations, norms, roles, environments and institutions that change and evolve within and across cultures and over time. Gender is also a “master” (or meta-) status that determines social status in society, one that typically grants women less power, privileges, and resources than men (Kazaara et al., 2023).

In Africa, empirical evidence on the prevalence of gender-based violence in homesteads is limited and limited to a small number of population or special population studies (Carney M. B, 2007). There is also growing recognition of the links between gender-based homestead violence and family stability. It is a consequence of adverse reproductive health outcomes of female partners, such as not using an unwanted pregnancy, poor pregnancy and birth outcomes, sexually transmitted diseases, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) (Jac & Kazaara, 2023). Carney M. B (2007) further noted that understanding of the underlying determinants and impact of homestead gender-based violence on family stability

is still limited, especially for families in developing countries such as Uganda.

In Uganda, most families are under so many different pressures. However, there are many ways that families can create good relationships and provide a stable base and then avoid gender-based violence in homesteads, not only for family members but also for others around them. Gender-based household violence and divorce often occur within the same family (Ronald et al., n.d.). Gender-based violence in homesteads physically, psychologically and socially affects women, men and the stability of their families in general. However, the authors further noted that there are no facts regarding the extent to which gender-based homestead violence affects family stability, arguing that although gender-based homestead violence is a growing public health problem among families in developing countries, evidence of its

association with family stability is limited. Low household incomes in Uganda (in particular) are now shaken by escalating divorce rates due to gender-based homestead violence (Oromo et al., 2023). Spouses are cited as the main cause of problems because they are always arguing, cursing and even torturing each other day in and day out (Eades, R. A., 2003). In past generations, conflict was accepted as a normal part of a stable family. Conflict is too often a harbinger of divorce. These are signs of gender-based violence in homesteads. According to a report by the World Health Organization (2015), gender-based violence in homesteads includes; physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and abuse of property and pets. This study will therefore focus on whether there is a relationship between gender-based violence and family stability in families in Uganda, but specifically in Kisoro District, Nyarusiza Sub-District.

Statement of the problem

Gender-based violence (GBV) is the most widespread but least visible human rights violation in the world. Many attempts have been made to increase family stability in Uganda through a number of programs such as community sensitization and many others (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). Unfortunately, gender-based violence, which is an obstacle to increased family stability, does not seem to receive equal attention from the government and other civil society organizations. A growing body of research confirms that the two most common forms of violence women experience are abuse by a spouse or intimate partner (USAID, 2008). About 100 cases of gender-based violence in families are reported to the police station (Records, Child and Family Protection Unit CFPU) every month (Ntirandekura and Friday, 2022). In Nyarusiza sub-county, most families continue to face gender-based violence. It is believed that low economic status/income, alcoholism are associated as risk factors for experiencing and perpetrating intimate partner violence. However, despite repeated efforts by the Ugandan government to prevent gender-based violence, little success has been achieved and therefore the researcher attempts to examine the relationship between gender-based violence and family stability in Kisoro District, Nyarusiza Sub-District in this regard.

Specific Objectives

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1. To find out the Possible causes of Gender Based Violence among families in Kisoro District Nyarusiza Sub-County
2. To find out the relationship between Gender Based Violence and Family stability in Kisoro District Nyarusiza Sub- County
3. To find out the possible measures of reducing gender based violence among families in Kisoro District Nyarusiza Sub-county

Methodology

The study largely applied qualitative research design. To lesser extent, it also applied quantitative research design where descriptive statistics were used. This is because the research questions that were generated necessitated observing explanatory, descriptive and analytical aspects of the research. Quantitative design involved use of close-ended questionnaires which was issued to the community officers, households and counselors as the method was convenient for them to fill during their free time. The study took place in Nyarusiza Sub—County, Kisoro District. The area was purposely selected because of its' convenient location and also bore the necessary and required study elements. The study population involved 58 participants where by 10 were community leaders (4 LC1s, 2 counselors, 2 LC2, 1 LC3 and 1 sub- county community development officer, 34 households taking 1 per household and 4 church leaders from different faith and 10 social workers in Nyarusiza sub-county.

Table 1. Target population

Type of population	Target population
Community leaders (Lc1s,LC2s,LC3 and CDO)	10
Households or families	34
Church leaders	4
Social workers	10
Total	58

Sample size

The Sloven's formula (1978) was used to determine the minimum sample size.

$$n = N / (1+N (e)^2)$$

n = no. of samples

N = total population

e = error margin / margin of error

$$n = N / (1+N(e)^2) \quad n= 68/ (1+68*0.05)^2$$

Therefore, n= 58

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The sample was purposively and randomly selected. The community leaders of Nyarusiza Sub-County, Kisoro District were purposely selected because they were believed to have vital knowledge about the relationship between genders based violence among families and family stability. The household family members were randomly selected to give each an equal chance of representation. All respondents were assumed to have vital information on the subject matter of the research. Respondents who were willing to participate were approached. The study used both primary and secondary data. This was obtained through use of self- administered questionnaires and interview guide to the respondents. On the other hand, secondary data was acquired from text books and other related works of outstanding scholars such as published magazines, written data sources including published and unpublished documents, company reports and internet sources which were all referred to, to provide more information on the relationship between gender based among families and family stability in Nyarusiza sub-county Kisoro District. The study used both questionnaire and interview guide. Both open and close ended questionnaires were used in the collection of data and these were distributed to all the respondents. The instrument was purposely selected because it sought personal views of the respondents and thus enabled the respondents to use their knowledge in providing a wide range of data as they would never shy away in any way.

The researcher also organized key informant interviews with the top community leaders from Nyarusiza Sub County, Kisoro District who enriched the study findings. The researcher therefore had to interact with the respondents, face to face and ask them relevant questions to the study. The method was used purposely because it provided for a systematic flow of information due to the order of questions and it also helped in covering information that would have been skipped in the questionnaires. The processing of data was done after the collection of data for verification of the information that was gathered and for attainment of completeness, accuracy and uniformity. Data editing involved checking the information for errors, which was an added advantage because it enabled the researcher to delete and eliminate possible errors that was traced which in the end would have manipulated the results of the study. Data was analyzed concurrently to avoid duplication thereby guiding the entire study for balanced and critical analysis (Nelson et al., 2023). The researcher used hypothesis based on the questionnaire and for other items, tables and percentage and simple statistical methods were used for data presentation, analysis and qualification.

The study explained, described and presented the findings basing on the specific objectives of the study and research questions, where data analysis was initially done through sketch)' and generalized summaries of the findings from observation and conclusions in the process of data collection. Data analysis was done using percentages and frequencies and thereafter were presented in tables using SPSS & STATA (Nelson et al., 2022).

Results

4Causes of Gender based violence among families in Nyarusiza sub-county Kisoro District Uganda

Table 1: Have you ever experienced gender based violence at home?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Yes	30	60
No	20	40
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2023)

The table above indicates that 60% of the respondents agreed that they had experienced gender based violence at home and the remaining 40% of the respondents disagreed. This implies that majority of the individuals had at least been victims of gender based violence.

Table 2: If yes, are you aware of the major causes of gender based violence in our families

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	35	90
No	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field Data (2023)

The study results revealed that 90% of the respondents agreed that they were aware of the major causes of gender based violence in homesteads and the remaining 10% were not aware. This implies that most families were aware and knew the most common causes of gender based violence in their homes.

Table 3: Do you agree that cultural and social norms cause gender based violence in our families?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	33	66
No	17	34
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2023)

The table above indicates that 66% of the respondents agreed that cultural and social norms cause gender based violence in families and the remaining 34% disagreed with this statement and this implies that most of the families were aware of that culture and traditions are the major causes of gender based violence.

Table 4: Are you aware that social and political idealizations cause gender based violence in families?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	26	52
No	24	48
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2023)

The study results presented in the table above indicate that 52% of the respondents agreed that they were aware that social and political idealizations cause gender based violence in families and the remaining 48% of the respondents

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noted that they were not aware and this implies that most of the respondents believed that social and political ideologies often trigger gender based violence in most families mostly during politics period.

Table 5: Do you think traditional attitudes towards women is another cause of gender based violence in families?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	4	8
Disagree	2	4
Not sure	7	14
Agree	31	62
Strongly Agree	6	12
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2023)

It was revealed that 8% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 4% of the respondents disagreed 14% of the respondents were not sure, 62% of the respondents agreed and the remaining 12% of the respondents strongly agreed that traditional attitudes towards women is another cause of gender based violence.

Table 6: Does financial insecurity lead to gender based violence in families?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	80
No	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field Data (2023)

According to the table above, 80% of the respondents of the respondents agreed that financial insecurity lead to gender based violence and the remaining 20% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and this implies that most of the respondents supported that poverty has a significant relationship with gender based violence.

Table 7: Do you think power relations and economic power imbalances also lead to gender based violence in families?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	31	62
No	19	38
Total	50	100

Source: Field Data (2023)

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The table above illustrates that 62% of respondents agreed that power relations and economic power imbalances also lead to gender based violence in homesteads and the remaining 38% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and this implies that most of the households in the area were aware that economic power imbalances within the society today contribute to increased cases of gender based violence in most families.

Relationship between Gender Based violence and family stability in Nyarusiza sub-county Kisoro District Uganda.

Table 8: Do you think beating of women affects family stability?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	80
No	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2023)

The results presented in the table above indicate that 80% of the respondents agreed that beating of women greatly affects the family stability in Nyarusiza sub-county and the remaining 20% of the respondents disagreed. This implies that the small percentage as shown above still believes in beating their wives and therefore still more sensitization needed.

Table 9: Do you agree that allowing property rights to women boosts family stability?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	41	82
No	9	18
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2023)

The study results presented in the table above indicate that 82% of the respondents agreed that allowing property rights to women boosts family stability and the remaining 18% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and this implies that most of the households were aware that denying women access and rights to land further affects their family stability.

Table 10: Are you aware that granting girl child education has a relationship with family stability?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	49	98
No	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2023)

According to the results presented in the table above, 98% of the respondents agreed that granting girl child education has a positive and strong relationship with family stability as represented by that huge percentage and only a few disagreed with the statement that girl child education affects family stability as represented by 2%. This further implies that denying girl child access to education affects their family stability when they grow.

Table 11: Are you aware that empowerment of women and girls is a key component of the struggle against violence towards them?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	37	74
No	13	26
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2023)

The table above illustrates that 74% of respondents agreed that they were aware that empowerment of women and girls is a key component of the struggle against violence towards them and the remaining 26% of the respondents disagreed. This implies that most of the respondents were aware that a lot still needs to be done regarding empowerment of the women and girls through sensitization.

Table 12: Do you think men have been accountable enough to address gender based violence in our families?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	2	4
Disagree	4	8
Not sure	9	18
Agree	27	54
Strongly agree	8	16
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2023)

According to the table above, 4% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 8% of the respondents disagreed, 18% of the respondents were not sure, 54% of the respondents agreed and 16% strongly agreed that the men have been accountable enough to address gender based violence in families in Nyarusiza sub county.

Table 13: Do you agree that legislative change and effective implementation of laws can protect women from male violence?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	80
No	10	20

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Total	50	100
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Source: Field data (2023)

The study results presented in the table above indicate that 80% of the respondents agreed that legislative change and effective implementation of laws can protect women from male violence and the remaining 20% of the respondents disagreed. This implies that most respondents supported that proper laws against gender based violence can help to reduce violence based on gender.

Table 14: Does training at all levels of the criminal justice system help to stop gender based violence in families?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	36	72
No	14	28
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2023)

The table above indicates that 72% of the respondents agreed that training at all levels of the criminal justice system help to stop gender based violence and the remaining 28% of the respondents disagreed. This implies that the government should ensure that there is effective criminal justice system for prevention of gender based violence in order to foster family stability in Nyarusiza sub county and Uganda at large.

Table 15: Has the government put in place initiatives targeting the engagement of men to overcome violence against women?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	10	20
No	40	80
Total	50	100

Source: Field Data (2023)

The table above indicates that 20% of the respondents agreed that government has put in place initiatives targeting the engagement of men to overcome violence against women and the remaining 80% of the respondents disagreed with this statement and this implies that majority of the respondents were of the view that the government has done little to overcome violence against women

Conclusion

The study concludes that individual-level causes are biological and personal history causes that increase the risk of violence. For example, a low level of education, young age (early marriage) and low-economic status/income have been associated as risk causes for both experiencing and perpetrating intimate partner violence

Relationship-level causes contribute to the risk of GBV at the level of relationships with peers, intimate partners and family members. For instance, men having multiple partners are more likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence or

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sexual violence. Such men are also more likely to engage in risky behaviors with multiple sexual partners by refusing condoms, exposing themselves and their intimate partners to a higher risk of HIV infection.

The study concludes that the role of women's emancipation with special emphasis on gender equality as a fundamental cause of gender based violence in homesteads. The women's struggle for equality in Africa has been wrongly perceived by both men and women. While most women take it to undermine men, men take it as a sign of disrespect. The study concludes drug abuse, alcoholism and negative behaviors are other outstanding reasons for marital instabilities. Excessive consumption of alcohol and drug abuse damages our behaviors to the worst. By crippling our sense of our rational reasoning, Alcohol and drug use tempts to indulge us into scenes of marital offences. The community of Nyarusiza Sub—County, Kisoro district is ridden in alcoholism

The empowerment of women and girls is a key component of the struggle against violence towards them, and challenges men individually and collectively to change. It is also a challenge for patriarchal institutions to be changed. Legislative change and effective implementation of laws, in all levels and areas of the law, are needed to protect women from male violence, including in the family. In addition, training at all levels of the criminal justice system, and all other areas of the law, are needed to accompany and support the transformations concerned.

Recommendation

Upon completing a thorough analysis of the data collected through extensive interviews and focus group discussions with victims, community leaders and key stakeholders regarding the prevalent issue of gender-based violence and its profound impact on destabilizing family harmony within Nyarusiza sub-county of Kisoro district, we provide the following strategic recommendations aimed at establishing sustainable solutions which affirm the dignity, rights and safety of all residents through fostering non-violent households founded on equality, compassion and respect. It is vital that community-driven programs are instituted in close collaboration with local parish committees, women's groups, youth organizations and district authorities to systematically raise awareness about relevant national laws and policies concerning GBV through culturally-sensitive dialogue and educational campaigns addressing harmful social norms and beliefs which have historically condoned the oppression of women.

Supplementary to this, we recommend establishing a 24-hour help center staffed by trained counselors and social workers offering psychosocial support, medical treatment, shelter, legal aid and rehabilitation services for victims discreetly under one roof to facilitate easy access to multidisciplinary support. Furthermore, livelihood empowerment programs such as vocational skills training, mentoring schemes, village savings programs and assistance securing land rights or establishing income-generating activities can economically emancipate vulnerable groups from violent situations by developing their self-sufficiency, resilience and leadership skills. Strict enforcement of GBV protection

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laws must also be guaranteed through proactive community policing initiatives to foster accountability while restorative justice approaches promoting reconciliation between victims and offenders should be considered based on individual circumstances.

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