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Father's Involvement in the Mitigation of Child Sexual Abuse, in Mvita sub-county, Mombasa County

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Abstract

Child sexual abuse is a serious public health issue that violates their rights. This study sought to investigate the father's involvement in the mitigation of child sexual abuse in Mvita Sub-County, Mombasa County. It was guided by the following specific objectives; to examine how fathers' income status influences the mitigation of child sexual abuse, to determine how fathers' upbringing influences their involvement in the mitigation of child sexual abuse, to assess the extent to which father's involvement in child upbringing mitigates child sexual abuse and to determine effective preventive strategies for supporting fathers' involvement in mitigation of child sexual abuse in Mvita Sub -County, Mombasa County. The study was anchored by two theories: Attachment theory by John Bowlby (1958) and Ecological Systems Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979). A mixed-method research approach with a focus on convergent parallel mixed-method design was adopted. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered using semi-structured questionnaires and interview guides, respectively. The target population was 154,166 people while the sample size was 400 respondents. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 23 while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic content analysis and presented in narrations. The study findings indicated that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the father's income status and involvement are directly linked to their ability to mitigate child sexual abuse. The study found that equal childcare and division of housework, the introduction of community protection programs, and sex education in schools could be effective preventive strategies for fathers in the mitigation of child sexual abuse. Based on the study findings, the researchers concluded that fathers' involvement in child upbringing could help mitigate child sexual abuse in Mvita-Sub-County, Mombasa, Kenya.

Keywords: *Father's involvement, Mitigation, Child sexual abuse, Mvita Sub-County, Mombasa*

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1.0 Background to the Study

Child sexual abuse is one of the most serious social problems the world must deal with. It is regarded as one of the pervasive, deeply rooted acts of aggression that damages, degrades, and offends the targets (Siu et al., 2018, p. 1020). According to a study conducted by Mbaya (2019), Child sexual abuse hurts children's psychological health and adult development. (p, 4). Despite the negative consequences it has on children's growth and development, records from throughout the world show that child sexual abuse occurs often in most civilizations. Furthermore, a lot of studies exclude the part dads play in addressing the problem and instead blame fathers for child sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect. (Guterman & Lee, 2015, P. 137). The Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 provide us with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to give child safety a high priority in every nation's policy choices and to build a world in which all children are free from all forms of violence and fear. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize that children are marginalized by poverty, violence, illness and abuse, lack of education, conflict or natural disasters that deprive them of a good quality of life. In addition, deprivation and inequality prevent them from achieving their goals and participating fully in the lives of their communities and the world. The 17 goals of the SDGs provide a holistic approach to meeting the needs of children, protecting them from harm and ensuring that the environment is safe. Many of the new goals address some of the most pressing risks facing children today, such as violence that threatens the lives of millions of children. The goal is to end poverty, inequality and gender discrimination that harm children and undermine their potential.

To fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals, which include eradicating all forms of discrimination, and harmful customs like early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and encouraging men and women to share household responsibilities, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are prioritized (United Nations, 2017). Gender inequality has a significant impact on health, whether it is by influencing the distribution of wealth and resources, determining who is recognized and prioritized for health care, or directly affecting physical and mental health because of enhanced exposure to prejudice and abuse. These circumstances are impediments to the development of the nation according to the internationally agreed targets in the SDGs and the Kenya Vision 2030. Research in Japan on parental leaves by (Mun & Brinton, 2015, p. 340) demonstrates that men who ask for paid time off are more invested in raising their children throughout the holiday season and eventually in their children's lives. According to this study, providing both parents with paid parental leave can help advance gender equality in the home and at work. On the other hand, if only women are granted paid leave, this may contribute to the assumption that women are the main assistants and men are the main workers. As a result, there are more possibilities for fathers to get to know their children and lessen the impact of child sexual exploitation.

It is difficult to make generalizations regarding child sexual abuse since its frequency differs from location to place. There are 42 million survivors of sexual abuse in the country, according to the national network of adult survivors of child abuse. Additionally, it is predicted that 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 5 boys in the US will suffer sexual assault before the age of 18 (Lauren, 2020, p. 1). Despite U.S. studies by Osborne et al. (2017, p. 1) demonstrating the relationship between healthy father engagement and better outcomes for nearly every measure of a kid's well-being as well as preventative actions that lower the likelihood of future child abuse, this is the case. In the United States, a report from the Children's Bureau (2018) emphasized the value of dads' involvement and

presence in raising kids (p. 2), the advantages of parent participation on a child's development in terms of their physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and behavioural outcomes. Children are said to suffer immensely as they grow up without their fathers. Fatherlessness, in the opinion of former president George W. Bush, is one of the worst social issues facing the country. This happens because children of absent fathers were more inclined to leave school early, become drug addicts, get involved in criminal activity that lands them in jail, and have children outside of marriage. The survey found that toddlers lacking father figures were 40 times more likely to experience sexual abuse. Regarding counselling for afflicted children, Boursier and Hébert (2015, p. 1185) believe that including the father expedites the healing process for children who have experienced sexual assault. However, neither the report nor the research addressed how dads may help to stop or lessen child maltreatment. Although it differs from nation to nation, child sexual abuse is very common throughout Africa.

A review of a study titled Sexual Abuse Against Children with Physical Disabilities in Rural Bungoma County, Kenya by Were et al. (2014, p. 82) discovered that most incidents of child sexual abuse were disabled children who were either left alone or with someone who eventually became an abuser. In a comparable study by Rwiza and Kamau (2020, p. 10) in the Embakasi Sub-County, between 67 and 73 per cent of children are victims of abuse. Children with disabilities are more at risk of abuse since they are unable to fully participate in society and suffer other problems. According to Rwiza and Kamau (2020), socioeconomic issues such as parental negligence, unfavourable cultural norms, and misinformation are to blame for the high frequency of CSA instances among children with disabilities (p. 11). Were et al. (2014) recommended that the government hold workshops, inform rural communities and other stakeholders about the various forms of abuse that children with physical disabilities experience, their human rights, and how to lessen child abuse generally in rural Kenya to reduce the prevalence of child sexual abuse (p. 82)? Fathers should be active in reducing CSA cases, although the researchers of this study did not investigate this or offer any recommendations on the subject. Githinji (2015) discovered a substantial correlation between parental participation and the likelihood of child sexual assault in Nakuru County, Kenya. Most sexual abuse involved children who were reared without their parents. The research claims that sexually abused children had deep-seated fear; some had been sexually assaulted, while others had contracted sexually transmitted diseases, the majority of which had a negative influence on the children's lives (p.15).

One of the rare social projects in sub-Saharan Africa that involves fathers in preventing child abuse is the Kenyan Campaign Families Matter programs, which was adapted from the US initiative Parents Matter (Vandenhoudt et al., 2010, p. 40). The program, which encourages parent-child discussion on lowering sexual risk, family education, and good parenting methods, is also being adopted in Tanzania. In Uganda, research conducted by Siuet et al., (2018, p. 1021), piloting a parenting program that included both fathers and mothers produced a lot of positive benefits. The program according to the men, made them aware of how little they knew about kid development and upbringing. Despite the well-known advantages of fathers participating in co-parenting, Panter-Brick et al. (2014) note that most parenting programs have trouble enlisting fathers due to a variety of obstacles, including cultural, institutional, professional, operational, and policy limitations. Statistics show that child sexual abuse happens often, but little study has been done to look at how fathers may mitigate CSA, particularly in Kenya. In light of this, the study aimed to

investigate father's involvement in the mitigation of child sexual abuse in Mvita Sub-County, Mombasa County.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Child sexual abuse degrades and threatens the life of the victim and equally negatively impacts their psychological well-being and development. It is for this reason laws and policies have been enacted to discourage perpetrators of this violence against children. Children Act of 2001 also promotes children's rights and how they should be looked after and secured from any abuse, but this has not stopped Kenya's rising number of child sexual abuse cases. In Mvita Sub-County, Statistics on cases of sexual violence against children from Coast General Hospital under the Gender-Based Violence and Recovery Centre reported incidents of sexual abuse of children are on the rise with 90% of perpetrators being family and community members (Temmerman et al., 2019). Additionally, Kenya Demographic Health Survey (2017) indicated 74.0% of cases of child abuse reported in Mombasa County were sexual. This problem is blamed on the absence of fathers who are busy eking a living for their families and negative cultural beliefs. Initiatives like stiff fines for sexual offenders haven't done much to lessen the issue. Children who experience sexual abuse are more likely to quit school, be sexually exploited, have children outside of marriage, and develop drug addictions. Previous research, which has been conducted in high-income nations, only looked at sexual assault without taking into account the role of fathers in mitigating the issue. This study sought to narrow the gap created by this by investigating fathers' involvement in the mitigation of child sexual abuse in Mvita Sub-County, Mombasa County.

1.2 Research Objectives

To assess the extent to which father's involvement in child upbringing mitigates child sexual abuse in Mvita Sub-County, Mombasa County.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on attachment theory and socio ecological model.

2.1.1 Attachment Theory

John Bowlby's key work from 1958 is when attachment theory first emerged. Born in London on February 26th, 1907, Edward John Mostyn Bowlby passed away on September 2nd, 1990, on the Scottish island of Skye, at the age of 83. The first to specifically name the child's primary caregiver as the most crucial environmental factor was a British doctor and psychotherapist Bowlby. He made it very evident that a child's environment has a significant impact on their development. Bowlby emphasized mother-child relationships as the main source of interest in many of his published works; this emphasis lasted in attachment theory for many years (Bowlby, 1958, p. 1). Bowlby also highlighted several crucial ways that a child's upbringing may affect them, including how their mother treats them, each time they are away from their mother, illness, abuse, or the loss of a family member (Bowlby, 1940, p. 25). According to Bowlby (1973), a child or adult's degree of security, concern, dread, and discomfort is largely determined by how approachable and attentive their primary attachment figure is (p. 1).

The attachment theory is supported by several fundamental presumptions. One of the underlying presumptions is that attachment behaviors, especially when a child's life is in danger, are adaptive and help the child survive better. One of these inclinations is the tendency of toddlers to stick close

to persons they recognize. A newborn or child's attachment system is therefore activated by cues that correlate to possible threats, such as new settings or objects moving swiftly toward them, and this causes them to take measures that keep them close to caregivers (Jain, 2015, p. 78). The second presumption is that people do not naturally prefer certain figures, such as their parents. Instead, as a result of their interactions with this individual, children grow to need to find their primary attachment figure. The person who is most readily available and receptive to the newborn, particularly in stressful and tense situations, the individual becomes the child's main attachment figure. According to Bowlby, attachment is a particular facet of a child's relationship with a parent, and it serves to keep a youngster safe, secure, and protected (Benoit, 2004, p. 541). It does not happen because someone is playing with the child, giving them food, correcting them, or teaching them new skills. By giving the kid a stable foundation from which to explore and, when required, a haven of protection and a source of comfort, the caregiver supports the development of their bond.

One of the strengths of the attachment theory is that a child gaining attachment to their main caregiver enables the child to meet his or her needs in the setting, develop and learn. A secure relationship between a daughter and her father, as to Jain's (2015) research, has a good impact on the development of the daughter. The daughter's growth, though, can be harmed by an uneasy bond. The author also notes that daughters with unfaithful fathers tend to be less socially adept, socially aware, self-assured, and communicative satisfied (p. 80). That means if the daughter is sexually assaulted, she will not even feel comfortable telling the father to step in and help where she can to prevent such cases in the future. In support of this, a study conducted by Sandhu (2014) discovered a substantial association between father attachment and a child's social competence, social issues, and internalizing behavior problems (p. 46). A healthy attachment bond with a caregiver also provides a child with an internalized sense of safety and protection that is necessary for life (Guterman & Lee, 2015, p. 137). The notion falls short of explaining how the environment, in addition to other institutions and procedures, is likely to help lessen child sexual assault. Since women are the major caregivers for providing care and safety for the children and shielding them from any damage, it also fails to explain the genesis of child maltreatment, which involves several circumstances.

2.1.2 Social Ecological Model

In 1979, Urie Bronfenbrenner published this idea. On April 29, 1917, Bronfenbrenner was born in Russia, and on September 25, 2005, he died in the United States. He was a developmental psychologist of Russian American ancestry and a co-founder of the Head Start initiative. Though the socio-ecological model (SEM) was initially put up by Urie Bronfenbrenner as a theoretical framework for understanding human evolution in the 1970s, it was subsequently formulated into a theory in the 1980s (Kilanowski, 2017, p. 295). To illustrate the central principle of the socio-ecological model, Bronfenbrenner (1977, p. 520) constructed nested rings with the individual at the centre and other systems surrounding them. Microsystems, macrosystems Exosystem, Macrosystem, and Chronosystem are the order in which the systems are arranged, starting with the innermost system and moving outward.

The microsystem nearest to the person, which includes relationships in the immediate surroundings and familial interactions, has the strongest influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The second circle, or mesosystem, considers interactions that extend beyond the present and considers individuals

that the person has direct contact with, including people in their neighborhood, place of employment, institution of higher learning, house of worship, and place of employment. Although the ecosystem doesn't directly affect a person, it nonetheless interacts with them in both positive and harmful ways through things like social networks and shared spaces. Social, religious, and cultural ideas and influences are part of the macro system (p. 522). In more modern models, this level also considers policy effect. The last level of the chronosystem consists of both internal and external components connected to time and historical data (McGregor & Devaney, 2020, p. 15). An ecological framework for preventing child sexual abuse is built on the tenets listed below. Families and children are essential components of an ecological system. Therefore, the focus of preventive actions must be on societal, familial, community, and individual initiatives. The social ecology model is a method for conceptualizing the intricate interplay between individual, relational, community, and societal influences and how each of these elements, taken separately and collectively, affects risk or prevents child abuse. The issue of child abuse requires several initiatives that concentrate on both internal and external levels.

One of the shortcomings of the socio-ecological theory is the requirement that various layers of the social-ecological model be addressed to provide the most efficient therapies. Even if it is undeniable that circumstances and individuals evolve, the theory does not take into account how the interaction of the mechanisms designed to prevent child sexual abuse changes with time. Interventions, particularly ones that span several levels, can be expensive. Each intervention level that is used requires time and money (Rowley et al., 2015, p. 16). The social-ecological model was used to understand the role fathers play in child sexual abuse. The theory explains how the environment or surrounding of a child can influence their life. The Father of the child who is closest to the child in the environment can assist in mitigating risk factors that predispose the child to sexual abuse. This is because in the microsystems closest to the child; the father has the strongest influences and interacts with the child in the immediate environment frequently. When a father is hostile or absent, child sexual abuse is more likely to happen; yet, when a father and kid have a close, loving relationship, child sexual abuse is less likely to happen. So, to comprehend the father's involvement in minimizing child sexual abuse, this theory was used in this study.

2.2 Empirical review

The interactions between parents and children as well as between fathers and mothers have a big impact on child sexual abuse. According to findings made by Belsky (1999, p. 760) on husband-wife and parent-infant relationships in the USA, wives may have more of an impact on fathering than husbands do on mothering. Additionally, according to his research, some families may be prevented from having active parental engagement by the way the spouses communicate. According to a study by Brunelli et al. (1995, p. 160), a father's effect on his children is directly correlated with his interactions with the mother and indirectly through the mother's feelings of support, which affect their views toward raising children and their parenting activities (p.160). On the other side, a study by Fields (2008, p. 300) has shown that fathers have a buffering role on children by reducing their risk for future problems. The research has shown that fathers can reduce the risk that a child would experience abuse in the future by acting as a protective factor. Children are safeguarded from negative consequences when Fathers' support plays a protective role in connection to mothers' depression, and it promotes mothers to be more sensitive to their children. In Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Kenya, where this study was undertaken, this kind of research is uncommon. Furthermore, it is unclear how and to what degree fathers aid in reducing

child sex abuse. The current study intended to close this gap by analyzing how much Fathers help to prevent child sexual abuse in the Mvita Sub-County.

Additionally, it has been shown that Australia's deteriorating family structure is a factor in the rise in child maltreatment (Tomison, 2006). According to Tomison's research, the rate of child sexual abuse rises as divorce, bad marriages, and cohabitation become more widespread. His study found that stepparents suffered more abuse than other family members, especially when it came to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. This is consistent with Coohey's research in 2015, which showed a link between the mother's physical abuse of and neglect of her children and low male support for the mother. According to Coohey, compared to women who do not abuse their children, 75% of those who do have less connection with their partners and received fewer resources and support from their husbands (p. 890). There has not been any research done in Kenya on the relationship between stepfathers who get along with their wives and a decline or rise in child sexual abuse. Fathers who spend more time with their kids may show them more affection and support (Yogman & Garfield, 2016). Some of the roles that South Africans naturally embrace is the patriarchal figure, the controller, the economic provider, the earner, or the family guy who offers emotional support as a father and a husband. The patriarchal father was emphasized as the head of the home, the family's financial manager, and the enforcer of child regulations. Black dads in South Africa are regularly accused of being absentee or, even worse, of brutally and sexually assaulting wives and young children. According to KoenigVisagie & Van Eeden (2013), the general public and the government hold Black South African dads responsible for a lot of socioeconomic problems.

Father involvement has a significant impact on a daughter's outcomes, including mental health, schooling, aggressiveness and delinquency, family relationships, and social and economic status (Trahan & Cheung, 2016). It has been found that fatherly engagement and involvement are significant determinants of teenage females' social initiative, integration of values, and social adjustment. Additionally, Trahan & Cheung (2016) found that girls who have close relationships with their fathers or other father figures are four times more likely to be poor than girls who do not. This is particularly common in African civilizations, where single women are sometimes the only source of income for families with high rates of poverty. Wessels and Lesch (2014) assert that father participation is crucial for young adult girls since it is linked to good health outcomes including higher self-esteem and sex rejection practices. These results support Katz and Kloet's (2010) assertion that girls who do not have frequent contact with their fathers are more prone to seek out alternative types of masculine attention from male friends, notably sexual involvement. This leads to an imbalance about the possibility of girls in the Mvita Sub-County having improper sexual engagement with other men.

Dads encounter societal, family, and personal challenges that hinder them from actively engaging in their children's lives, according to a study on the advantages of men's positive active presence in children's lives in Uganda. Fathers who are present and involved have several good benefits for their children, including discipline, self-motivation, and academic accomplishment. In contrast to absent or inactive males, who raise the risk of child maltreatment, early pregnancy, low self-esteem, and poor academic performance (Lubanga et al., 2019). However, due to a combination of institutional, financial, and emotional barriers, it can be difficult for dads in Uganda to be actively involved in their children's lives. Even though some Fathers may use this as a justification for being away while concealing their lack of interest in childcare work, the cultural description of

males as providers indicates that they are preoccupied and busy looking for income-generating opportunities away from home (Karuiki & Sewragi, 2016, P.18). There is not much time left for men to be available (Lubanga et al., 2019). Positive marital harmony, which is characterized by the absence of spousal conflict and violence, has an impact on fathers' involvement in childcare (Nkwake, 2009).

It also stops fathers from looking for an excuse to leave the house, allowing them to monitor children's conduct and provide childcare. Men can discuss childcare responsibilities with their wives when there is no marital conflict (Siu et al., 2017). The fathers' involvement in child care and emotional closeness are related to their ages. Father involvement in children's vaccinations increased with age, with senior fathers (45 years and older) being more likely to be involved than younger parents, according to a study on the topic (Baguma et al., 2016 P. 18). The two studies demonstrate that good partner in child care, father-child relationships, and father-mother interactions are influenced by other factors and cannot be solely attributed to them. According to studies conducted in Kenya by Karisa and Mckenzie (2021, P. 1), men frequently make decisions for the family and bring in money for the household. They may be more successful in achieving the child's wellness if they are involved in issues that are important to the child's upbringing. The child's improved emotional, linguistic, social, and cognitive development is connected to father-child interactions. Other long-term advantages of father engagement in a child's life include improved young child social development, successful academic performance, lower risk of child sexual abuse, low rates of juvenile delinquency, and reduced criminal behaviour (Harewood et al., 2017, P.27).

The author also highlights the connection between father involvement and father satisfaction, which increases the likelihood that involvement will continue as the kid becomes older (P. 28). According to Mwoma (2015, P.410-428), factors like job obligations have affected how much time dads and their children spend together and how much bonding occurs between them. Kids now spend more time at school than at home, dads spend less time with their kids than they did in earlier generations. In different research on the role of fathers in a rural part of Kenya by Abubakar (2017, P. 87-98), just one parent out of nine claimed that children need their father's attention. Dads seldom realize the need to excite. Additionally, studies have shown that Fathers and their children usually form strong, autonomous ties (Fields, 2008, p. 200). Father-mother interactions influence this father-child bond. A father's participation with his children also affects risk, particularly for child abuse and neglect, according to a study (Brown et al., 2016, p. 18). Dubowitz et al., (2010) study on father participation in child abuse, in contrast, found a connection between father childcare and a child's risk of abuse (p. 136). The study also found a significant association between father involvement in other elements of the family and a lower risk of child maltreatment. The study's authors hypothesized that fathers' increasing involvement in childcare may have been influenced by women's greater unavailability in the position of childcare, which may have increased the likelihood of child abuse. Such empirical data show that there is a knowledge gap regarding the connection between father-mother-child relationships and child sexual abuse, which was the goal of this study.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework is a visual representation of how a study's independent and dependent variables are connected (Kothari, 2010, p. 6). Figure 1 shows framework for understanding the link between father's involvement and the mitigation in CSA.

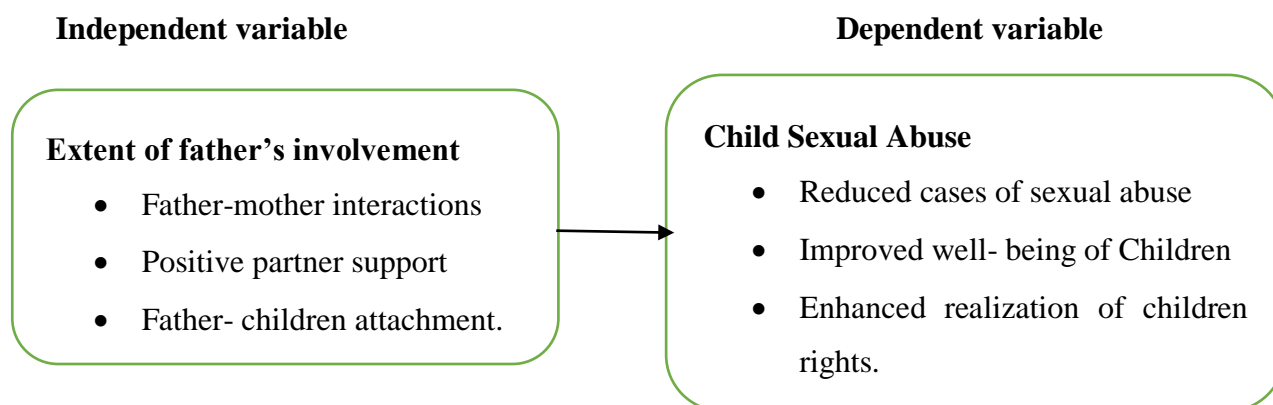


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

3.0 Methodology

In this work, a mixed methods research approach with a focus on convergent parallel mixed method design was prioritized. The technique necessitates the simultaneous gathering of both quantitative and qualitative data, individual data analysis, and fusion of the findings during interpretation (Edmonds & Thomas, 2019, p. 6). The target group for this study consisted of 6 sexually abused children from the Mahali Pa Usalama rescue centre, 384 biological young and middle-aged men who assumed the role of a father in the home, 1 administrator, 1 counsellor, 1 Sub-County children officer, 5 chiefs, and 2 staff of Coast General Hospital (GBVRC). Even though mothers' opinions on the same subject were also solicited, fathers made up the majority of the respondents. In the Mvita Sub-County, there are 75,565 males and 78,601 females totalling 154,166 people with 38,995 households which a median household size of 3.8 based on the 2019 census (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019, p.1). The sample size for the study was 384 respondents. The study employed a mixed method paradigm, therefore collecting both qualitative and quantitative data the researcher used questionnaire guides and semi-structured interview guides. Data analysis in this study included reviewing the questionnaire, amending, coding, testing any assumptions, and finally analysis. Thematic content analysis was used to examine qualitative data from interview guides. In this process, the replies were categorized, collated, evaluated, and then interpreted. Narrations were used to present the data. Themes connected to the father's involvement in income status, the father's upbringing, the extent of fathers in child upbringing and effective preventive strategies were identified from the data that was coded. By putting the data into the SPSS program version 23 for analysis, quantitative data collected from questionnaires was descriptively evaluated.

4.0 Research Findings

The general response rate was 349 out of 400. 87.5% representing 335 men and women about the returned questionnaires. The interviews achieved 100% representing 1 children officer, 80% representing 4 chiefs, 83.3% representing 5 children, 100% representing 1 administrator, 100% representing 1 counsellor, and 100% representing 2 staff officials from Coast general hospital under Gender-Based and Recovery Centre. Thus, the study's total response rate for the questionnaires was 87 per cent, while the overall response rate for the conducted interviews was 93.9 per cent. The respondents as per the questionnaire had male dominating (80.9%) as indicated by 271 respondents followed by female respondents (19.1%) representing 64 respondents.

4.1 Extent to which Father's Involvement in Child Upbringing mitigates Child Sexual Abuse

The remaining questions on this issue, except one that was graded on a nominal scale, were qualitative and required content analysis. Therefore, a variety of questions were posed to respondents on the extent of the father's involvement in child upbringing and its influence on child sexual abuse in the Mvita Sub-County. According to the findings, 95.5 per cent of respondents agreed that fathers' engagement in a child's upbringing helped prevent child sexual abuse. Instilling discipline and good conduct; a father figure in the family providing a sense of security to the children; monitoring the child's activity and giving security and supplying basic needs are a few examples of how 87.1 per cent of respondents agreed that a father's involvement may be seen.

In another question, respondents were asked to indicate how a parents-child interaction in child upbringing influences child sexual abuse. The majority of the respondents agreed it influences. As noted by one respondent;

“It mitigates because of positive parenting, it gives the children a sense of security, it instils good values in them, it reduces because the father is always being involved by providing both basic and educational needs and positive upbringing of a child, it leads to love, affection and defining sexual orientation to the girls, it lowers cases of Child Sexual Abuse.” (Respondent 020, 28/7/2022).

When asked to indicate how fathers provide a buffer against child sex abuse in Mvita Sub –County, the majority of the respondents agreed as noted by one respondent;

“Fathers provide a buffer against CSA by educating and upbringing their children in a positive and good manner, being on the forefront against underage marriages, the father is a sign of security in every family setup hence keeps predators of child's abuse away, by protecting them with a lot of passion and meeting basic needs for children and being available for them, sharing openly and providing security to children.”(Respondent 030, 28/7/2022).

In a nominal rated question, respondents were asked to support whether fathers' attachment to their children reduce the risks of child sexual abuse and majority of the respondents (94.6%) as indicated by 317 respondents supported the idea as shown by table 1.

Table 1: Father's attachment and their children's reduction of the risks of Child Sexual Abuse

Fathers' attachment	Frequency	Percent
Yes	317	94.6
No	18	5.4
Total	335	100.0

When asked to elaborate their answers on their responses, majority of the participants (95.5%) argued that father figure brings love and security to a child; a responsible father teaches and guide his child; being attached to the children the children feel free to share life and as a father you know a lot; being supportive care givers in their lives; Bond between father and child becomes strong when fathers stand up to their role of providing, security and basic needs to the family. This was indicated in table 10 above. Elaborating on this questions,

Respondent 004 for example, noted that;

“If father and mother have misconduct that suggests sexual practices then the children are likely to learn from them and go to practice with their peers or even their relatives or be quick to give in if approached by an adult for sexual satisfaction following the parent's behaviors; Depends on what they discuss in front of children; and If the interaction is positive, it will enlighten the child.” (Respondent 004, 26/7/2022).

In a separate question, 99.2% of the respondents supported the idea that interactions between the mother and the father influence the mitigation of child sexual abuse to a very great extent. This implied that when both parents are involved in taking care of their children, there was no lacuna which would expose children to attacks both within and outside the home. These observations are in line with those of Belsky (1999, p. 760) who posited that the interaction of father-mother interactions and parent-child interaction play an important role in child sexual abuse.

The above findings agree with several scholars for example, Brunelli et al. (1995, p. 160) that showed that a father's effects on their children are directly related to his interaction with the mother and indirectly through the mother's perceptions of support that contribute to their child-rearing attitudes and parenting behaviours (p.160). Trahan & Cheung (2016) found that father involvement significantly affects a daughter's outcomes in terms of mental health, education, aggression and delinquency, family connections, and social and economic status. According to Trahan & Cheung (2016), fathers' involvement and engagement are significant predictors of teenage girls' integration of values, social initiative, and social adjustment.

In separate follow-up interviews on the same aspect, children were not sure what to answer about this question. There were mixed reactions whereby some children who had been abused pointed fingers at their fathers while others blamed their mothers who had left for Middle East countries for greener pastures without considering their welfare. Only one said that the father was very concerned when he learnt that the child had been abused. Additionally, when questioned about their fathers' level of engagement in preventing child sexual abuse, children reported the following:

Respondent 003 argued that;

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“Fathers should be fully involved to safeguard their children from any form of abuse and be providing basic needs to their children. They also need to offer good parenting talks to their children especially teens and adolescent. They need to talk to their children in friendly manner. Moreover, children will have enough security and respect to their fathers and there will be less exposure.” (Respondent 003, 25/7/ 2022).

The counselor also opined that father-child attachment influenced child sexual abuse although, they indicated that this was depended on the exposure of the child by the father especially the environment and the kind of direction, talks he offers to the children. He further explained that some fathers are so lovely and kind to their children.

Questions in the same trend were posted to the informants. The first question required them to explain ways in which fathers’ involvement in childcare helped to mitigate child sexual abuse. Respondents were in agreement that fathers’ involvement helps in mitigating cases of CSA in that they: Tell children what to do with sexual energy, what they can do and not to and how to control themselves as growing children; protect children from any abuse; are involved in chores of the mother, like dressing a girl child, bathing while touching sensitive parts, he might be tempted to sexually abuse the child if the mother she’s not around not divorced; are the heads in the family and bread winners therefore if fathers fully are involved in child care, they will provide all needs for the children hence children will be safe because their needs are provided for both love and affection this will help mitigate CSA.

The results of the interviews were in agreement with Fields' findings (2008, p. 300), who described the buffering role that fathers play in minimizing the likelihood that children may experience sexual abuse in the future. When Fathers' support plays a protective function in connection to mothers' depression, it protects babies from unfavourable outcomes and encourages mothers to be more receptive to their children. This is consistent with Coohey's (2015) research, which showed a link between the mother's physical abuse and neglect of her children and poor father's support for the mother. According to Coohey, compared to women who do not abuse their children, 75% of those who do have less connection with their spouses and received fewer resources and support from their husbands (p. 890).

Most respondents in the study felt that father involvement in child upbringing decreased child sexual abuse. A father figure in a home offering a sense of security to the children; monitoring the child's movement and providing security and basic needs; instilling discipline and good behaviour helps to mitigate child sexual abuse.

5.0 Conclusion

When it comes to fathers’ upbringing and their involvement in the mitigation of child sexual abuse in Mvita Sub-County, the results of the study confirmed that fathers who experienced abuse as children are more likely to abuse their children. This is followed by the idea that fathers’ exposure to harmful cultural practices such as marrying their children earlier for dowry and other benefits is a catalyst for child sexual abuse in Mvita. The prevalence of child sexual abuse is also influenced by fathers' socialization in society and their level of knowledge of various parenting methods. The study has often concluded that each person's future and chances of experiencing certain things, including the dangers of CSA, are significantly influenced by the sociocultural environment in which the father and even the children are reared.

6.0 Recommendations

The study's assessment of the extent to which fathers' involvement in child upbringing mitigates Child Sexual Abuse, the study recommends that fathers should be supported, taught and included in programs to mitigate child sexual abuse. Fathers who are actively involved in their children's lives provide a sense of security and bonding with them, doing so helps children feel loved, appreciated, and protected, which in turn boosts their self-esteem. Fathers should be encouraged and made aware of the importance of creating and spending time with their children.

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