

**THE EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE ON CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE IN RUKUNGIRI DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS:  
A CASE STUDY OF KATOJO PRIMARY SCHOOL  
IN BUYANJA SUB COUNTY**



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## DECLARATION

I BEINOMUGISHA PHIONAH declare that this is my original work and to the best of my knowledge, the work has not been submitted to any university or any other institution of higher learning for the award of degree or diploma.

Signature  .....

**BEINOMUGISHA PHIONAH**

Date ..... 2 AUG 2010 .....

## APPROVAL

This research report has been carried out under the title "THE EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE ON CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN RUKUNGIRI PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY IN KATOJO PRIMARY SCHOOL IN BUYANJA SUB-COUNTY

The research has been under my supervision and it is ready for submission to the academic Board with due approval.

Signature .....  .....

**PROFESSOR ONGODIA S. P**

Date ..... *2 AUGUST 2010* .....

## DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my Loving Aunt NSHUNGUYINKA MIRAZE ANNE, my Mother Tibahwerwayo Jolly, and to the memory of my late Father Tibahwerwayo Simon my Aunts, Brothers and Sisters, Agaba and friends for their encouragement during the time of my study at Kampala International University.

To you all I say may the good Lord bless you abundantly and replenish all your resources.

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May God Bless you.

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## ABSTRACT

This study was designed to find out the effects of child abuse towards children's academic performance in Katojo Primary school, Rukungiri District.

The questionnaires were administered on samples of teachers, parents, students and law enforcers.

Interviews were also used as a method of data collection as well as focused group discussion.

The data was analyzed using tables and percentages to determine the effect of child abuse towards children's academic performance. There fore the study findings concluded that child abuse affects children's academic performance and that it resulted into poor performance, hatred, feelings towards school, teachers, peers and education in general and high dropout rates.

The researcher then made recommendations based on the findings as indicated in chapter 5, some of these recommendations are:

- The political leaders should take a leading role in fighting the extent to which child abuse has reached the whole country.
- Cases of child abuse should be handled as a community problem and not as individual problem.
- There is need for professional counselors who can handle the abused children and help them to cope up not only with the stigma but also with the situations.



## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 Background of the study

In our communities child abuse has always existed in that who and what a child meant was differently viewed as in the old days, there was no spelt out law or legislation about who a child was and what rights a child had. It was only taken for granted that a child was a property of his parents and the whole community.

A child was expected to respect the elder at home and the community and these systems were expected to encourage traditional values, morals and ethics in children.

In the context of African countries, child abuse always existed except that people did not realize they were violating a child's right. For instance, most girls were married at an early age of 12-16 years as a tradition and society saw it as appropriate. In fact if someone went beyond 17 years of age, such girls was seen as cursed.

Today as it was in the old days, society is influenced by both cultural and religious values and requirements for instance, despite the existence of law (children statute) some religions are still involved in child abuse, like Islamic faith see it normal for child below 18 years of age to get married. This is similar to formally marriages of young girls to traditional leaders (kings, chiefs). Such girls were seen as morally upright for they were not supposed to engage in sex before marriages. This alone created difficulty in handling child abuse in society because the elders themselves were involved in it and yet could have backed the fight against child abuse.

The evaluation of the law on child's rights, however, has changed the trend of events. The majority of the people in Uganda know who a child is and the rights of those children. The law has been put in place to help in bringing up children well and guiding them to the extent that if any of their rights is violated then the violator is expected to be punished.

In the old days the community punished child abusers in various ways; doing some community work like digging in the gardens of the chiefs, pay a small fine in form of a goat to the family of abused child (Ntulson 1995).

But such child abuse was handled in a way that most of the perpetrators were people with authority, wealth and yet at the same time was acting as the legal officials.

Today, children`s rights are categorized into different types depending on how a child has been abused and the punishments are clearly spelt out. It should also be appreciated that with the introduction on sensitization about children`s right in schools, social institutions and the communities, there`s a great impact as far as child abuse is concerned because we now have Family and Juvenile courts, the police, the local councils (LCs) and other organizations advocating children`s right.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Despite the existence of the law on children`s rights, knowledge about the causes of child rights preparation of children`s right, enforcers of children`s right, there is still little known about the effect that occurs to children who have been abused academically. The researcher`s interest is to dig down to know what impact child abuse may have as regards academic progress.

### **1.2 Objective of the study**

#### **1.2.1 General objectives of the study**

The researcher intends to carry out a study on the results of abuse in children towards their academic performance.

#### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

- (i) To find out the causes of child abuse
- (ii) To critically examine the effects of child abuse in relation to academic performance

- (iii) To find out the challenges faced by civil society organizations in compacting child abuse
- (iv) To find out the possible solutions to child abuse

### **1.3 Research questions**

- (i) What are the causes of child abuse?
- (ii) How do children who have been abused academically perform?
- (iii) What are the measures being put in place to combat child abuse?
- (iv) What are the possible solutions to child abuse?

### **1.4 Scope of the study**

The study was conducted in three primary schools that is; Katojo primary school, Rukungiri central primary school and Rwetuha primary school in Rukungiri district. The study investigated the effects and described the perceived state of contributions of child abuse and whether the effects are perceived equally in the sampled schools. The study covers a period from 2000/2009. The study has taken three to four months.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The study is significant in number of ways; it is beneficial to parents, teachers, communities, law enforcers, child advocates, political and religious leaders especially as it regards to the impact of child abuse towards children's academic performance.

Policy makers on children and human rights will also benefit from this study. The generated ideas by the study will assist them when making policies directed at the rights of children.

The Researcher also realized that they are the leading perpetrators of children's rights; hence the need to take the maximum care to observe the rights of children and avoidance of severe punishments defilements and psychological torture.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, literature that concerns major variables in the study is presented. Effects of child abuse towards children's academic performance are therefore looked at. The researcher has cited some theories on the concept of child abuse the rights of children, the law relating to children and the causes and types of abused children.

#### 2.1 Concept of child abuse

Child abuse is a broad term that includes many forms of forceful conceptional sexual activities (Notherall 1985). Whatever form of child abuse that takes place, it is exploitation by adult of the vulnerable situation of a person who is helpless; ignorant of sexual matters and graft (Nyonyintono and Yiga 1994). Other forms of child abuse include abduction for sacrifice by witch doctors.

Children who are forcefully recruited into the army especially in Northern Uganda, child neglect and torture by some parents like the case of Ssebanga whose father and step mother are serving 14 years imprisonment at Luzira, are physically assault by parents, teachers and relatives, child labour and defilement.

Sunyike (1991) confirms that child abuse represents a type of violence against children and is increasingly recognized as an exercise of power, violation by force of the integrity of person's body, and the basic human rights to the security of a person. The perspective is shifting; rape is now being seen from point of view of the victims.

Although it appears that there is rapid growth of child abuse, recorded cases are estimated in Uganda. According to Mirembe (1994) and Musick (1993) many reasons can be given to explain the humiliation and embarrassment felt by the victim. Secondly the fear of court appearances where conventionally women are treated as defendants rather than the

victims. Thirdly women may have apprehensions of wealth care providers and the rape examination.

Therefore it has been observed that some children in Uganda suffer untold physical abuse at the hands of mothers, fathers, servants, relatives, school authorities and rebel activity in North children are physically assaulted with all types of weapons like pangas, knives they are burnt with petrol, burning plastic jerry and are battered for just small or minor offences like stealing a piece of meat or 100/= which at the end of the day affect their performance at school and attitude towards life.

## **2.2 Assessment of impact to abused children academic**

In the “New vision” of 25<sup>th</sup> February 2000, a teacher of Bright Parents’ Primary School in Kampala, appeared to defend himself against allegation of beating up a pupil who refused to have sex with him.

The Buganda Road court magistrate while making ruling said that Charles Mayobwe the teacher had a case to answer. Such heavy punishments or physical abuse normally affects pupils in their goals to achieve education. They may drop out of school or may hate such teachers and ultimately their subjects states that “parental attention, encouragement, affection, consistence and other factors make the child feel value, significant and responsible members of the family”.

However, children in most cases miss that parental love, company and guidance as seemed not to have enough time for them. This attitude affects academic performance and social interaction of the pupils while at school. Children performing well academically for a parent who looks after his child well, feeds him or her gives all facilities needed for schooling as well as encouraging the child helps the child perform better at school.

## **2.3 Establishing the effects of child abuse in regards to children’s academic performance.**

Children who have been defiled may feel inferior and ashamed to interact with their peers and therefore may resort to absent themselves from class or school which will lead to poor performance and subsequently may drop out of school.

Children who are physically abused, inflicted with pain to their bodies at home or school through corporal punishments, burns and bruises may not be able to attend school regularly and this may affect their academic performance adversely.

According to "Teacher's Talk Magazine" of April 2003, states that "such children are psychologically and emotionally damaged and this results into High School dropout rate, poor performance and feelings of violence and hatred towards school, teachers, other pupils and educational institutions in general".

It also states that, physical abuse promotes violence as a way to solve problems and it distorts a child's perception of justice, goes against the goals of societal peace and personal security. Failure to provide protection, medical care, food, shelter to children as forms of child abuse leads to poor concentration on children's studies and this leads to poor academic performance.

Unprotected children in war torn areas and refugee camps and children employed in the army and other economic activities find it difficult to be at school and to attend regularly as they are often on the run.

UCRNN (Uganda Child Rights NGO Network) on the children in armed conflict supplement, "New Vision" of 15<sup>th</sup> September 2003, states particularly that, the insurgency in the North has chronically subjected thousands of children to abuse through separation from their parents or unaccompanied and has led to children fend for themselves without any parental or guardianship cover. As a result these children form the majority of child headed households and are subjected to worse forms of child labour including voluntary recruitment into armed forces. They also constitute the majority who end up dropping out of school because they cannot afford scholastic materials among other school equipments.

#### **2.4 Existing law related to child abuse**

Due to the shortcomings and miss outs in the existing law related to children, it necessitated urgent government action in form of legislation and thus the child review committee which was established on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1990 with view to examine the then existing law concerning child welfare hence appropriate legislative changes for greater protection, survival and development.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the method through which data can be collected and analyzed. It presents: research design, the population to be studied, the sample and sampling techniques/procedures. It also looks at the instruments and methods that are to be used in data collection its management and analysis.

#### **3.1 Research design**

descriptive systematic survey, research design, qualitative data is to be used to determine the suitability to seek opinions held by pupils on how they are generally abused and to what extent. The research is to include both qualitative and quantitative method of data collection since the number of respondents has to be known while some responses that are not statistical require the qualitative aspects of interpretation.

#### **3.2 Areas of study and population**

The research was conducted in Katojo Primary School, Kebison Primary School, Rwetuha Primary School Buyanja -Rubabo County in Rukungiri District.

#### **3.3 Sample size and selection**

Data will be collected from the representative sample selected from the study population. The total of 234 pupils in three primary schools, teachers, parents basing on this composition, the sample will be categorized as follows: Katojo Primary School 86, Rukungiri Primary School 76 Rwetuha Primary School 72, 4 teachers and 4 community members from each school.

#### **3.4 Sampling technique/procedure**

Stratified random sampling will be used in choosing the schools. It respected the categories of what is available in the population and considered ideas that emphasized choosing respondents who gave the researcher the necessary information. Questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents that generated data in form of figures after analysis.

### **3.5 Data collection**

The data collection methods in this study included the following

#### **3.5.1 Interviewing**

This involved interviewing of the police in charge for the children affairs in which an interview schedule is drawn. He will be asked to give his opinion on the effects of the child abuse that affects the children`s academic performance. This will be got by use of face to face interviews with the respondents. The questionnaire will also be designed according to the topic.

#### **3.5.2 Questionnaire**

The questionnaires were administered to pupils, teachers and the researcher compared and contrasted between the two areas.

### **3.6 Sources of data**

#### **3.6.1 Primary source of data**

This would be got through observation across examination of pupils and respondents. Further there would be group discussion with the respondents are the pupils respectively.

#### **3.6.2 Reference to secondary data**

Most of the work based on, textbooks and other related works of the scholars published in Magazines, News Papers were referred to so as to give opinions on how they perceive the effects of child abuse and its relevance towards academic performance.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

Data will be analyzed after data collection using special package, social scientific and MS excel to draw tables. Tentative themes will be identified basing on the objectives



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

#### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

The results of the investigations are presented mostly in table form, indicating cases of child abuse, ways in which child abuse affect children's academic performance, knowledge of who a child is, in Uganda.

##### 4.1.1 Data representation

##### 4.1.2 Knowledge of who a child is in Uganda.

It was found out that most of the respondents did not know who a child is. This partly explains why child abuse has remained for good number of decades.

**Table1. Knowledge of who a child is in Uganda.**

| Response        | Score | Percentage |
|-----------------|-------|------------|
| They Know       | 99    | 99         |
| They don't know | 1     | 1          |
| Total           | 100   | 100        |

The results in the above indicate that all the respondents (100%) know who a child is in Uganda.

##### 4.1.3 Commonest cases of child abuse.

The research findings revealed that most respondents (35%) said all cases of child abuse were common while (30%) said, child labor and corporal punishments are the most common as shown below.

**Table2. Below shows the common cases of child abuse**

|                      | Frequency | percentage |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Rape                 | 1         | 3.8        |
| Defilement           | 1         | 3.8        |
| Child labor          | 12        | 46.1       |
| Corporal punishments | 12        | 46.1       |
| Total                | 26        | 100        |

**4.1.4 Table3. Below shows the Ways in which child abuse affects child's academic performance.**

| Response   | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| The child will not be given ample time to concentrate on studies.  | 8         |
| It psychologically creates mental torture that affects their performance.  | 3         |
| Abused children are socially isolated from their peers and hence will not learn.   | 10        |
| Every person around seems to be an enemy to the child, can not trust them and hence they have difficulty in benefiting from the teacher. | 6         |
| They may run away from school. It interferes with their concentration and understanding in class.  | 7         |
| A child comes to school late and misses lessons resulting into poor performance and dropping out of school.                              | 15        |

From the above table most respondents(15)said one way in which child abuse affected a child's academic performance by interfering with their concentration in class followed by isolation for papers(10) and then adequate time to concentrate(8).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the findings of the study are interpreted and analysed in relation to the research objectives .

#### 5.1 Discussion

Basing on the findings of the study, it has been proved that there is a problem of child abuse with drastic consequences in Rukungiri district and mostly in Katojo Primary School to an extent that if the stake holders i.e. the teachers, parents, leaders the police do not act immediately the situation may go out of hand.

#### 5.2 Research question one;

The question was set to examine the causes of child abuse. The research revealed that most of the respondents said that parental negligence and care, poverty, moral degeneration in society, illiteracy and ignorance were the leading causes of child abuse.

The study findings tally with Nabwiso Cox (2000) that there were several causes of defilement as a specific type of child abuse. These he said include corruption, parental neglect and abandonment, poverty, media technology etc.

Nyonyintono (1994) also says that whatever form of child abuse that takes place is exploitation by an adult of the vulnerable situation of a person which may be due to ease of access, helplessness, ignorance of sexual matters.

#### 5.3 Research question two

This research question was purposely set to find out how these children that have been abused perform academically. The research revealed that child abuse affects the pupils' academic achievement. The study findings revealed that most abused children in schools become school dropouts. Most of the respondents the researcher interviewed said that

child abuse affected a child's academic work by interfering with their concentration in class, isolated from peers and subsequent drop out from school. The study closely tally's with the researchers observation that the development of a child who lives in a midst of abusive situations such as sexual abuse is academically interrupted and different from that of a child who has no victimization history.

"The Monitor" of 15<sup>th</sup> September 2003, on the Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UNCRNN) reported that unaccompanied or separated children in Northern Uganda were at great risk of abuse. These children formed the majority of children subjected to all forms of child labor including voluntary recruitment into armed forces. They also constituted the majority who ended up dropping out of school.

It has been discovered that many children are or can be described as "silent majority" for they are vulnerable to abuse. It has been found that teachers and parents are among the leading violators of children's rights and that this abuse can lead to severe effects like mental disorder and consistent depression.

"The New Vision" of 25<sup>th</sup> February 2000 reported that some children in Uganda suffer untold physical abuse in the hands of mothers, fathers, servants, relatives, school authorities and rebel activity like in the north, children are physically assaulted with all types of weapons like Pangas, knives some times burnt and are battered for just small or minor offences like stealing a piece of meat or failing a mathematical assignments at school. This at the end of the day affects their performance at school and attitude towards life.

It has also been discovered that there was a serious lack of civic education among all sectors/stakeholders in child abuse and that although the law enforcers have not been vigorous, they are doing everything possible to reduce the menace. And because there is lack of adequate, appears there is no action taking place.

#### **5.4 Research question three**

Basing on the findings of the study, the following were given as policy approaches or solutions to the problem, policy makers should observe child's right with maximum care, avoidance of severe punishments and psychological torture.

#### **5.5 Conclusion.**

It can be concluded that child abuse has diverse serious effects on the academic performance of children and their future lives, consequences which accrue from child abuse have to be looked at in relation to children statute of 1996. It can also be concluded that children's rights have to be champion by their parents, teachers and every one in the community in order to avoid the serious consequences which accrue from child abuse.

The issue of poverty and moral degeneration is very serious and it can be concluded that, unless they are addressed there is still a problem in the community. The community's attitude towards child abuse has an impact on the observation of children's rights, and parents, teachers and the communities are responsible for what happens to children.

#### **5.6 Suggestions for further research.**

It has been noted that our law enforcers and legal system lack commitment to the fight against child abuse. It is suggested that the legal system and the law enforcers should be investigated so that the exact hindrances to the implementation against child abuse is realized.

The community should be made to understand and realize that the attitude towards child abuse as an individual problem will not solve the problem. General contribution and involvement may change the status quo. It investigation should be done on why poverty is a strong factor in child abuse yet not only poor children are abused nor have not only poor people abused children. Further more research should look at the magnitude of child abuse not only in katojo primary school. In fact all institutions of learning i.e. primary, secondary and higher institutions of learning both rural and urban should be considered.

## 5.7 Recommendations.

The following are the recommendations brought forward by the study;

The political leader should take a leading role in fighting the extent in which child abuse has reached in the whole country.

The local communities should stop handling child abuse cases such the legal system can do there work especially the police and the courts of law. This is because the local councils are not qualified enough to handle such cases.

Cases of child abuse should be handled as a community problem and not as an individual problem.

Sensitization and community mobilization should be more extensively and vigorously done to help all people including the children to know their rights. This should be done through seminars, workshops, books, posters and mass media.

The government should work hand in hand with schools, churches, mosques, Non government organizations (NGOs) and donor community in reducing the menace of child abuse.

Teachers and parents should take a leading role in preventing child abuse through installing good morals into the children and community because teachers have not only been seen to the potential abusers but also very negligent in their own behavior to their children.

The law should be strictly observed more so against child abuse so that it is not misinterpreted.

The community members should be allowed to arrest perpetrators of child abuse since the police are slow in its operating.

Teachers should work hand in hand with the local community to report cases of child abuse ton relevant authorities like the locals in the area, police and FIDA.

## APPENDIX 1

### Questionnaire answered by pupils

This questionnaire seeks to find the effects of child abuse academic performance. You are therefore requested to be honest and open in answering the questions you do not need to state your name because this study is purely under taken for academic purposes.

1. Sex of respondent

- Male  
 Female

2. Do you know a child is in Uganda?

- Yes  
 No

3. If yes, what is the maximum age for a child?

- Below 14 years  
 15-17 years  
 18-20 years  
 None of these

4. Which of these are categories of child abuse?

- Defilement  
 Rape  
 Child labour  
 Corpal punishment  
 All of them

5. What do you think should be punishment for people who violate children`s rights?

- Life imprisonment  
 Death penalty  
 A few strokes of the cane

## Appendix 2

Questionnaire answered by teachers

Dear respondent,

You have been selected to answer this set of question. It is like the researcher's hope that your ideas and answers will greatly lead to the success of this study and provide relevant information which later will be used to improve on teacher's awareness on child abuse towards children's academic performance.

Please answer freely and truthfully by filling in the gaps or ticking the most appropriate alternative where applicable. Your response will be taken as confidential.

1. Sex of respondent

Male

Female

2. Marital status

Single

Married

Widowed

Divorced

3. What is your age?

25-35

35-45

45-55

55-above



4. Which of these are categories of child abuse?

- Defilement
- Rape
- Child labour
- Corporal punishment
- All of them

5. Does child abuse affect child class work?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

6. What kind of children are abused mostly?

- Non-schooling
- School children
- None

7. Where should children's abuse cases reported?

- School
- Police
- Church
- All the above

## Appendix 3

### Interview guide for parents

1. Marital status
  
2. What is your age?
  
3. Who is a child in Uganda?
  
4. What is the maximum age of a child?
  
5. What is child abuse?
  
6. Which of these below are categories of child abuse?
  - (a)  Defilement
  - (b)  Rape
  - (c)  Child labour
  - (d)  Corporal punishment
  - (e)  All of them
  
7. Do you think child abuse is bad in our community?  
 Yes  No
  
9. What do you think should be punishment for people who violated children's rights?
  - Imprisonment
  - Beating
  - Death Sentence
  - Community Service
  - Be fined

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