

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND CHILD NEGLECT AMONG SINGLE
PARENTS IN RUHAAMA SUB-COUNTY NTUNGAMO DISTRICT**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE COLLAGE OF ECONOMICS AND
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A BACHELORS
DEGREE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING OF
KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL
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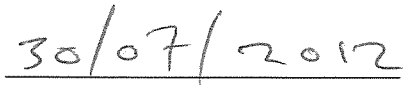
JULY, 2012

DECLARATION

I Musinguzi Alon declare that this is my original work and it has not been submitted to any university or institution of higher learning for the award of degree in Guidance and counseling.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alon', written over a horizontal line.

Signature

A handwritten date '30/07/2012' in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my beloved dad Mr. Elidad Bamuhayira, Mum Mrs. Kinkuhaire Merabu, my brothers most especially Nimusiima Laban and my sisters of mirama hill village Ntungamo district. I also dedicate it to my Niece Arinda Macklin.

APPROVAL

The research has been presented for an examination with my approval as supervisor.

Name

Signature

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research report was conducted using concerted efforts, commitment and knowledge of Kampala international University student and other stakeholders that deserve mention and recognition.

Appreciation and great thanks goes to my supervisor Mr. Omuya Ronald who worked tirelessly to advise, guide and monitor the work done accordingly, this led to a greater improvement and achievement in my study report.

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With great pleasure, I wish to appreciate my dear parents who always provide me with support in form of finance, material and spiritual advice which made me what I am.

Above all, God is the master of all things and without him nothing is possible. I remain thanking him and praising his name forever and ever. Amen.

List of acronyms

CPS	Child protective services
PCAA	prevention child abuse America
ANPPCAN	Africa network for prevention and protection against child abuse and neglect.
UPE	universal primary education
USE	universal secondary education

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ABSTRACT

The study was aimed at investigating the risk factors or causes of child neglect in Ruhaama Sub-county Ntungamo district. The total number of respondents was 40 and these were single parents. The study design involved the use of non experimental study in which a range of variables were measured. The justification of this design is that it favors the topic of the study and this also allowed easy collection of data from the samples. The method of data collection was random sampling technique. Data was presented by tabulation, description and percentages.

The presentation and interpretation of the data revealed significant findings which included. The causes of child neglect as poverty and unemployment, inadequate information about child development, prostitution, early marriage alcohol and Disability among others. The study went ahead to identify possible ways of reducing child neglect as community empowerment programs, Use of media, Proper implementation of children's Act, Justice, Advocacy and public education among others.

The recommendations made include, rehabilitation, strict laws on child neglect, vocational skill training, psycho-social support as well as use of child focused TV and Radio programs.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

Background of the Study

Child neglect can be defined as the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs resulting in serious impairment of health and/or development.

Neglect occurs when a parent or other primary caretaker choose not to fulfill their obligations to care for, provide for, or adequately supervise and monitor the activities of their child. Parental and care giving obligations include the physical, emotional, and educational well-being of the child. Thus, neglect can also occur when the parent or caretaker does not seek adequate medical or dental care for the child.

The number of children nationwide who are harmed or endangered by neglect is greater than any type of abuse.

In the United States more children suffer from neglect than from physical and sexual abuse combined. During 2005, 7.1 percent were emotionally or psychologically maltreated, and 2.0 percent were medically neglected. In addition, 14.3 percent of victims experienced such "other" types of maltreatment as abandonment, threats of harm to the child, and congenital drug addiction.

In Uganda the problem of child neglect is a big and dynamic one. For instance Out of the 278 child related to ANPPCAN-Kitgum between January and April 2010, child neglect accounted for a total of 142 (51%) compared to 2009, were out of the total 547 registered neglect constituted only 53(10%) compared to defilement which was the leading offence then registering 390(68%) of the total 547 reported.

It seems that child neglect has been associated with the following income, education and occupation. Majority of Ugandans are low income earners and this makes them unable to meet all the basic needs of their children for example physical needs like food, clothes, and shelter and psychological needs plus some other needs hence neglecting them.

Better economic and psychological outcomes for example more income, more control and greater social support and networking are associated with higher levels of education, unfortunately in Uganda very few people are educated and majority of those who are educated have low levels of education which makes them still earn less thus making them unable to meet all their children's basic needs such as physical, medical, psychological and some other needs like education.

Some occupations like physicians, and surgeons, lawyers, chemical and biomedical engineers and communication analysts provide more challenging work and ability therefore due to these challenges a parent may be forced to concentration on his or her job and spare no time to spend with the child which finally leads to emotional neglect because the child lacks the supervision and guidance of the parent, this scenario is common in single parent families where parents go to work and leave their children at home alone.

It is necessary to carry out the study because child neglect has affected the child's development for instance poor nutrition has negative consequences on the child's physical and psychological development, common physical and psychological reactions to neglect include stunted growth, chronic medical problem, inadequate bone and muscle growth, and lack of neurological development that negatively affect normal brain functioning and information processing.

Statement of the problem

Child neglect can be defined as the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs resulting in serious impairment of health and/or development.

According to Abigail Lawrence, horrors of abuse and the rebellion (1993) child neglect occurs when a parent or other primary caretaker choose not to fulfill their obligations to care for, provide for, or adequately supervise and monitor the activities of their child. Parental and care giving obligations include the physical, emotional, and educational well-being of the child. Thus, neglect can also occur when the parent or caretaker does not seek adequate medical or dental care for the child. Although the United Nations convention on the rights of the child Article 16 states parties are reminded to take specific legislative, administrative, social and educational measures of protect the child against all forms of torture and neglect it is still a challenge in Ruhaama Sub-county Ntungamo District because children are still seen suffering from neglect, denial of their rights like to education, discriminated and stigmatized which are exposing them to extreme psychological and emotional trauma which have jeopardized their growth and development. Children also lack adequate nutrition which has rendered them to malnutrition and prone to sickness. There fore it is on this ground that the study should be carried out in Ruhaama sub-county. To investigate into the phenomenon and find out in depth the causes of child neglect.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out if socio-economic status has an impact on child neglect in Ruhaama Sub-county.

Research objectives

General: This study determined the correlation between socioeconomic status and child neglect among single parents in Ruhaama Sub County Ntungamo district

Specific:

1. To determine the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of:-
 - 1.1 Age
 - 1.2 Gender
 - 1.3 Education level
 - 1.4 Income level
 - 1.5 Occupation
2. To determine the levels of child neglect among the respondents.
3. To establish if there is a relationship between socio economic status and child neglect among respondents.

Research questions

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of:-
 - 1.1 Age?
 - 1.2 Gender?
 - 1.3 Education level?
 - 1.4 Income level?
 - 1.5 Occupation?
2. What are the levels of child neglect among the respondents?
3. Is there any relationship between socio-economic status and child neglect?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the levels of socio-economic status and child neglect.

Scope of the study

The study was carried out among selected single parents of Ruhaama Sub-County, Ntungamo district.

Significances of the study

The study will help parents know their responsibilities towards the lives of their children for instance supporting them physically, medically, psychologically and giving them their attention.

The study will help children who are neglected enjoy their rights or get their needs like other children hence improving their lives.

It will also help the government and other stake holders to strengthen the strategies of reducing child neglect in the area.

The study will encourage the sub-county chief and police of the area to deal with parents who neglect their children for instance those who are denied a chance of going to school yet there are UPE and USE schools in an area.

Operational definitions of key terms

Socioeconomic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation.

Income refers to wages, salaries, profits, rents, and any flow of earnings received.

Occupational status this is the educational attainment and skills required to obtain the job.

Child neglect defined as the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs resulting in serious impairment of health and/or development.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Child neglect can be defined as the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs resulting in serious impairment of health and/or development.

Neglect occurs when a parent or other primary caretaker choose not to fulfill their obligations to care for, provide for, or adequately supervise and monitor the activities of their child. Parental and care giving obligations include the physical, emotional, and educational well-being of the child. Thus, neglect can also occur when the parent or caretaker does not seek adequate medical or dental care for the child. The causes of child neglect are complex and can be attributed to three different levels; an intrapersonal, an inter-personal/family and a social/ecological level.

Although the causes of neglect are varied, studies suggest that, amongst other things, parental mental health problems, substance use, domestic violence, unemployment, and poverty are factors which increase the likelihood of neglect. Children that result from unintended pregnancies are more likely to suffer from neglect; they are also more likely to live in poverty. Neglectful families often experience a variety or a combination of adverse factors.

At the intra-personal level, the discussion around neglectful parent's characteristics often focuses on mothers, reflecting traditional notions of women as primary caregivers for children. "Neglectful attributes" have included an inability to plan, lack of confidence about the future, difficulty with managing money, emotional immaturity, lack of knowledge of children's needs, a large number of children, being a teenage mother, high levels of stress and poor

socioeconomic circumstances. Mental health problems, particularly depression, have been linked with a parent's inability to meet a child's needs.

Likewise, substance misuse is believed to play a crucial role in undermining a parent's ability to cope with parental responsibilities. While the literature largely focuses on mothers, the role of fathers in neglect as well as the impact of their absence remains largely unexplored. There is still little known about whether mothers and fathers neglect differently and how this affects children. Similarly, not much is known about whether girls and boys experience neglect differently. More research in this area and a gendered analysis of neglect would be useful.

At the inter-personal/family level, a significant number of neglectful families are headed by a lone mother or have a transient male.

Unstable and abusive relationships have also been mentioned as increasing the risk of child neglect. The impact of living with domestic violence on children frequently includes either direct violence or forced witnessing of abuse, which is potentially very damaging to children.

Socio-economic status

Socioeconomic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation.

Socioeconomic status is typically broken into three categories, high socioeconomic status, middle socioeconomic status, and low socioeconomic status to describe the three areas a family or an individual may fall into. When placing a family or individual into one of these categories any or all of the three variables income, education, and occupation can be as Socio-Economic Status.

Income refers to wages, salaries, profits, rents, and any flow of earnings received. Income can be looked at in two terms, relative and absolute. Absolute income, as theorized by economist John Maynard Keynes, is the relationship in which as income increases, so will consumption, but not at the same rate. Relative income dictates a person or family's savings and consumption based on the family's income in relation to others. Income is a commonly used measure of Socio-Economic Status because it is relatively easy to figure for most individuals.

Income inequality is most commonly measured around the world by the Gin coefficient, where 0 corresponds to perfect equality and 1 means perfect inequality. Low income families focus on meeting immediate needs and do not accumulate wealth that could be passed on to future generations, thus increasing inequality. Families with higher and expendable income can accumulate wealth and focus on meeting immediate needs while being able to consume and enjoy luxuries.

Education also plays a role in income. Median earnings increase with each level of education. As conveyed in the chart, the highest degrees, professional and doctoral degrees, make the highest weekly earnings while those without a high school diploma earn less. Higher levels of education are associated with better economic and psychological outcomes (i.e.: more income, more control, and greater social support and networking).

Education plays a major role in skill sets for acquiring jobs, as well as specific qualities that stratify people with higher Socio-Economic Status from Lower Socio-Economic Status. Annette Lareau speaks on the idea of concerted cultivation, where middle class parents take an active role in their children's education and development by using controlled organized activities and fostering a sense of entitlement through encouraged discussion. Lareau argues that families with lower income do not participate in this movement, causing their children to have a sense of constraint. A division in education attainment is thus

born out of these two differences in child rearing. Lower income families can have children who do not succeed to the levels of the middle income children, who can have a greater sense of entitlement, be more argumentative, or be better prepared for adult life.

Occupational prestige as one component of Socio-Economic Status encompass both income and educational attainment. Occupational status reflects the educational attainment required to obtain the job and income levels that vary with different jobs and within ranks of occupations. Additionally, it shows achievement in skills required for the job. Occupational status measures social position by describing job characteristics, decision making ability and control, and psychological demands on the job.

Occupations are ranked by the Census (among other organizations) and opinion polls from the general population are surveyed. Some of the most prestigious occupations are physicians and surgeons, lawyers, chemical and biomedical engineers, and communications analysts. These jobs, considered to be grouped in the high Socio-Economic Status classification, provide more challenging work and ability and greater control over working conditions. Those jobs with lower rankings were food preparation workers, counter attendants, bartenders and helpers, dishwashers, janitors, maids and housekeepers, vehicle cleaners, and parking lot attendants. The jobs that were less valued were also paid significantly less and are more laborious, very hazardous, and provide less autonomy.

Occupation is the most difficult factor to measure because so many exist, and there are so many competing scales. Many scales rank occupations based on the level of skill involved, from unskilled to skilled manual labor to professional, or use a combined measure using the education level needed and income involved.

According to Morgan Farkas & Maczuga children from low-Socio-Economic Status households and communities develop academic skills more slowly compared to children from higher Socio-Economic Status groups. Initial academic skills are correlated with the home environment, where low literacy environments and chronic stress negatively affect a child's pre-academic skills. The school systems in low-Socio-Economic Status communities are often under resourced, negatively affecting students' academic progress (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008).

Inadequate education and increased dropout rates affect children's academic achievement, perpetuating the low Socio-Economic Status of the community. Improving school systems and early intervention programs may help to reduce these risk factors, and thus increased research on the correlation between Socio-Economic Status and education is essential.

According to Aikens & Barbarin,(2008) Children's initial reading competence is correlated with the home literacy environment, number of books owned, and parent distress. However, parents from low-Socio-Economic Status communities may be unable to afford resources such as books, computers, or tutors to create this positive literacy environment (Orr,2003).In a nationwide study of American kindergarten children, 36% of parents in the lowest-income quintile read to their children on a daily basis, compared with 62% of parents from the highest-income quintile (Coley, 2002).

Socio-economic status and child neglect

According to Abigail, horrors of abuse and the rebellion (1993) suggested that although each family's situation is unique with regard to stressors and characteristics that might precipitate in neglect, there are some general factors that have been associated with neglect of a child and these factors include characteristics of the parental figure, and socioeconomic status.

Parental figures who neglect may have been neglected or abused themselves. There is a tendency for parental figures that neglect their children to have low self-esteem, poor impulse control, and to experience anxiety or depression, and this may make them act aggressively towards their children because they do not want to be disturbed they feel okay when they are alone.

.He also believed that inadequate information about child development, including age-appropriate expectations of what children may be able to do could lead to child neglect; this is because parents may also feel overwhelmed by parenting responsibilities and feel negatively about the child's demands on them. Such parents may never have fully adopted the role of a parent or a care giver the internal pressures often push them to take care of their own needs while ignoring the needs of their children.

Substance abuse is often associated with neglect, particularly for those parents who are more self-absorbed and focused on their needs rather than their child's. This characteristic is also consistent with the findings of other studies indicating that some neglectful parents have an inability to be empathic, or to understand the feelings and needs of others. Child neglect is more often associated with severe levels of poverty and lower educational level. The external stressors feel more extreme in single parent families, leading to neglectful behavior. Even in families where the parent is attempting to provide for the children, absence due to multiple work demands may lead to a neglectful situation.

Families that are disorganized and socially isolated for example where you find the parent or caregiver is doing his own things and child is doing his or hers are more likely to neglect the children in their care(Lawrence 1993)

According to Mc, PC and SJ price, families& change (2000).Families with high socioeconomic status often have more success in preparing their young children for school because they typically have access to a wide range of resources to

promote and support young children's development. They are able to provide their young children with high-quality child care, books, and toys to encourage children in various learning activities at home. Also, they have easy access to information regarding their children's health, as well as social, emotional, and cognitive development. In addition, families with high socioeconomic status often seek out information to help them better prepare their young children for school which might be impossible for families with low socioeconomic status (2000) publication.

According to Depanfilis (2006) Child protective services (CPS), a division within state and local social service agencies, are at the center of every communities' child protection efforts. In most jurisdictions, CPS is the agency mandated by law to conduct an initial as Socio-Economic Status or investigation of reports of child abuse or neglect.

Community professionals including law enforcement officers, health care providers, mental health professionals, educators, legal and court system personnel, and substitute care providers are involved in efforts to prevent, identify, investigate and treat child abuse and neglect. In addition, community and faith-based organizations, substance abuse treatment (Diane, 2009); However this has not been carried out in Ruhaama Sub-county hence increase of child neglect in the area.

According to P CAA report (2005) Services such as home visiting, early childhood education, and parent education, provide emotional support, knowledge, and guidance on how to be a good parent. Family planning helps parents determine whether they are ready to have a child, the number of children they wish to have, and helps parents effectively manage the children they already have, Hence reducing the rate of child neglect. Mental health services to parents who are unstable and depressed, those who experienced poor attachment to their

primary caregivers when they themselves were children this service can help such parents become more emotionally stable and less depressed, and better able to adequately care for their children making mental health services available to victims of child neglect as early as possible can prevent the future perpetuation of neglect. (2005) report. However the study has not been carried out in the area hence increasing child neglect.

According to Abigail, (1994) horrors of abuse and the rebellion, Community prevention efforts and individual parenting skills. A community-based program that actually combines the two facets of intervention is the "Parents as Teachers" program, which is available through many local school districts throughout the nation and is free of charge and accessible; parents simply need to call for the free service and the in-home interventions provided by the program. Although the program is not part of the social service network of agencies, the fact that workers go into the home replicates that aspect of caseworker interventions. The simple act of having a paraprofessional in one's home can reduce the likelihood of neglect. Specific interventions that further reduce the likelihood of neglect include focusing on the parent-child relationship, reviewing appropriate expectations for the child's behavior (based on child development principles), and teaching basic parenting skills.

He also suggested that mandated reporters with concerns about neglect such as physicians, teachers, and counselors. Any of these professionals may make the initial call if neglect is suspected. Concerned individuals may also call social services to report suspected neglect

Treatment efforts for the child should include family counseling aimed at communication skills and appropriate expression of affection and emotion within the family. Assertiveness skills training may be helpful for older adolescents in asking for their perceived needs. (Lawrence 1994) However child neglect has

increased in the Sub-county due to lack of paraprofessional people especially counselors.

According to the study that was carried out in Ibadan metropolis (2000) from four junior Secondary schools on educational level and socio-economic status as correlates of child neglect. Results showed that students whose parents had lower educational level were significantly neglected than their counterparts whose parents had higher educational levels. The study also found that Students with lower socio- economic background experienced significant neglect than students with higher socio-economic background.

According to Ramey (1994) describe the relationship of family socioeconomic status to children's readiness for school:

Across all socioeconomic groups, parents face major challenges when it comes to providing optimal care and education for their children. For families in poverty, these challenges can be formidable. Sometimes, when basic necessities are lacking, parents must place top priority on housing, food, clothing, and health care. Educational toys, games, and books may appear to be luxuries, and parents may not have the time, energy, or knowledge to find innovative and less-expensive ways to foster young children's development.

Even in families with above-average incomes, parents often lack the time and energy to invest fully in their children's preparation for school, and they sometimes face a limited array of options for high-quality child care-both before their children start school and during the early school years hence emotional neglect.

Families with low socioeconomic status often lack the financial, social, and educational supports that characterize families with high socioeconomic status. Poor families also may have inadequate or limited access to community

resources that promote and support children's development and school readiness. Parents may have inadequate skills for such activities as reading to and with their children," Having inadequate resources and limited access to available resources can negatively affect families' decisions regarding their young children's development and learning. As a result, children from families with low socioeconomic status are at greater risk of neglect than their peers from families with median or high socioeconomic status (Ramey 1994)

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study design involved the use of non experimental in which a range of variables will be measured. The justification of this design is that it favors the topic of the study and this also allowed easy collection of data from the samples.

Non experimental research design examines variables such as performance exhibited by a group or groups over time.

Non experimental designs are helpful in identifying the relation of one variable to another, and seeing the frequency of co-occurrence in two natural groups

Non experimental research is good at establishing that a relationship is present but has problems with establishing proper time order and ruling out alternative explanations.

Research population

The study cut across a total population of 80 single parent families that are in Ruhaama Sub-county.

Sample size

Out of 80 single parent families that make up the population, 40 families were used as the sample size.

Sampling technique

The researcher used random sampling technique to get subjects in order to make each one of the population feel was part of the exercise. I chose random sampling technique because each individual is chosen entirely by chance and

each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample.

Research instrument

The researcher used questionnaire as a research tool, questionnaires which was distributed to respondents in order to get the information, the researcher chose to use questionnaires because it gives first hand information since it is filled by the respondent without being forced but on his or her wish.

Data: gathering procedures

40 questionnaires were printed and given out to 40 single parents to be filled. This helped the researcher get information in relation to certain questions because the respondent is seen physically.

Data analysis:

Data collected was analyzed using tables, because it is easy to use, interpret and make comparison easy and it suits the area of study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This chapter highlights the findings of the study. It provides presentation, interpretation and analysis of data. Presentation and analysis of data was computed by using tables. Percentages (%) were widely used to convey the findings. The % was obtained using the formula;

$$\frac{n}{N} \times 100$$

Where n = number of respondents

N = Total population

Profiles of respondents

The data presented below is based on 40 questionnaires. In total 40 people took part in this research.

Table 1 Showing Gender Composition

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	16	40%
Female	24	60%
Total	40	100%

In table 1, the findings above indicate that 60% of the respondents are female and 40% males. This indicated that females dominated list of respondents. It also implies that child neglect are female dominated. Both parties participated because child neglect cuts across gender thus information got from women was cross-checked with that from men so that there was harmony in the data gathered.

Table 2 showing age Group composition

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 years and below	-	-
19-29	4	10%
30-39	6	15%
40-49	12	30%
50 and above	18	45%
Total	40	100%

In order to gather views that were objective, the researcher considered various age brackets of the respondents as shown above in table 2. According to the table above the highest age bracket was of 50 and above years of age. This implies that the researcher got reliable data since he got information from the old people who cannot easily manipulate their status. Further all respondents were above 19 years of age leading the researcher to have valuable information from different age brackets.

Table 3 showing the level of Qualifications

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
o-level	26	65%
A-level	6	15%
Technical	2	5%
University	6	15%
Total	40	100%

Table 3, the findings indicate that the majority of the respondents 80% had attained secondary school education. This implies that the most of the respondents had the ability to understand and appreciate answer the questionnaires as required.

Table 4: causes of child neglect in Ruhaama Sub-county Ntungamo district.

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage %
Poverty and un employment	14	35%
Inadequate information about child development	10	25%
Prostitution	8	20%
Early marriage	4	10%
Drug abuse	2	05%
Disability	2	05%
Total	40	100%

From the table 4, it clearly shows that Poverty and unemployment is a big threat that attributed single parents to neglect their children. This was due to lack of creativity, innovation and laziness of parents who needed every thing to be done on their behalf (spoon feeding).

Inadequate information about child development including age appropriate expectations of what children may be able to do. it was found out that many parents force their children to do heavy works when they are still young for instance washing clothes for themselves, going outside to work for money in order to cater for themselves for example in buying books, clothes, pens and many other things for them selves.

Prostitution has also contributed to child neglect this was confirmed by 20% of the population, they said that there is a lot prostitution in the area due to the trailer drivers who pass there going to Rwanda and Burundi, these drivers give a lot of money to young girls and sleep with them which in turn leads to unwanted pregnancies and finally give birth to children they cannot be able to look after.

10% of the population showed that early marriage also contributes to child neglect in the area, said that many young girls and boys get married when they are still young and most of the times such couple separates because each of them does not know his or her responsibility which brings collision between them which leads to separation and when they separate their children suffer.

05% of the population indicated that many children especially girls drink alcohol which makes them sleep with every one hence leading to unwanted pregnancies.

To a less extent, disability also contributed to child neglect in the sub-county this is because community members take disability as inability.

Table: 5 Ways of reducing child neglect in Ruhaama sub-county

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage %
Community empowerment program	16	40%
Use of media	12	30%
Proper implementation of children's Act	6	15%
Advocacy and public education	6	15%
Total	40	100%

From the table 5, respondents were requested to give appropriate ways of addressing the problem of child neglect and most of them gave community empowerment program as the best solution. This is because people lacked

knowledge and skills which could enable them become creative and innovative hence coming up with that strategy.

They also gave use of media as next best alternative ways of addressing the problem. This is because many people have radios through which they can always listen to and get information about the cause, prevention and effects of child neglect as well as punishments given to people who neglect children.

Proper implementation of children act was the least pronounced. The idea behind this is to design quick justice to people who neglect children than the usual long proceedings.

Advocacy and public education was given as a last response and it was purposely to raise awareness and massive sensitization of community members about the dangers of child neglect.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion on knowledge of child neglect

The findings revealed that the situation of child neglect in Ruhaama Sub-county is high because there are rampant causes of child neglect which were reported by the majority of the respondents. For instance many children are medically neglected, emotionally or psychologically maltreated and physically neglected

Discussion on causes of child neglect

From the table one, the majority of respondents revealed that the major cause of child neglect in **Ruhaama** Sub-county Ntungamo district is poverty and unemployment. This finding is in line with the finding of NIS study 1993, who found out that children from families with annual incomes below \$15,000 were more than 22 times more likely to be harmed by child neglect as compared to children from families with annual incomes above \$30,000. It is important to underscore that most poor people do not maltreat their children. However, poverty particularly when interacting with other risk factors such as depression, substance abuse, and social isolation can increase the likelihood of child neglects. From this view children in poor families are more forced to look for survival in terms of basic needs as they are engaged in heavy work and copolo punishments which have resulted into child neglect.

In supplement to the above one of the respondents argued that because of poverty and unemployment parents do not have enough money to cater for basic needs of their children. He added that poverty caused violation of human rights which stretched far beyond material deprivation and exposed children to all kinds of dangers. He went a head and said that children in extreme poverty are

suffering from diseases, malnutrition, dropping out of school, same engage in child labour like house maids, poor health and lack access to clean water.

From table one; the findings revealed that the second most cause of child neglect was inadequate information about child development including age appropriate expectations of what children may be able to do. it was found out that many parents force their children to do heavy works when they are still young for instance washing clothes for themselves, going outside to work for money in order to cater for themselves for example in buying books, clothes, pens and many other things for them selves.

Respondents also showed that child neglect in Ruhaama Sub-county Ntungamo district is caused by prostitution they said that there is a lot prostitution in the area due to the trailer drivers who pass there going to Rwanda and Burundi, these drivers give a lot of money to young girls and sleep with them which in turn leads to unwanted pregnancies and finally give birth to children they cannot be able to look after. And this was confirmed by 20% of the population.

The findings revealed that early marriage contributed to child neglect they said that girls and boys get married when they are still young and most of the times such couple separates because each of them does not know his or her responsibility which brings collision between them which leads to separation and when they separate their children suffer.

The findings revealed that many children especially girls drink alcohol which makes them sleep with every one hence leading to unwanted pregnancies.

In addition the findings showed that Children with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities experience higher rates of neglect than other children. This finding is in line with the finding of a national study, which was completed in

1993; it found out that children with disabilities were 1.7 times more likely to be maltreated than children without disabilities.

In general, children who are perceived by their parents as "different" or who have special needs including children with disabilities, as well as children with chronic illness or children with difficult temperaments may be at greater risk of neglect. The demands of caring for these children may overwhelm their parents. Some researchers and advocates have suggested that some societal attitudes, practices, and beliefs that devalue and depersonalize children with disabilities sanction abusive behavior and contribute to their higher risk of neglect. For instance, there may be greater tolerance of a caregiver verbally berating or physically responding to a disabled child's inability to accomplish a task or act in an expected way than there would be if similar behavior was directed at a normally a bled child.

In conformity to the above, the findings of Westat 1993, Relate to the Findings of National report which revealed that National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) released a study regarding the neglect of children with disabilities. This first national effort to determine the incidence of neglect among the population found that children with disabilities are neglected at approximately twice the rate of children without disabilities. Other studies document an increased risk of neglect for children with disabilities between four to ten times that of the generic population. In addition to the fact that children with disabilities are at increased risk of neglect is the fact that child neglect can cause disabilities. The exact number of neglect -caused disabilities is unknown, but it is estimated to represent 25% of all developmental disabilities (Baladerian, 1992). In addition, more than 50% of the child victims of severe neglect sustain permanent disabilities, including mental retardation and other forms of learning and cognitive disabilities.

This means that children with disabilities are taken as burden in a family compared to non disabled ones hence discriminating, stigmatizing and marginalizing them.

In conjunction with the above, one of the respondents reported that in most families where children with disabilities live they are denied food, clothes, right to education, locked up indoors to be off sight of visitors and above all they are denied health care. In addition to the above, another respondent was quoted saying "my child is disabled, he can't do anything even feeding himself, and now looking after him will be wastage of time and money."

Discussion on ways of reducing child neglect

The findings revealed that the best and most possible convenient way of reducing child neglect in Ruhaama Sub-county Ntungamo district reported by the majority of respondents is community empowerment programs. This finding is in line with the findings of ECCA which facilitates outreach programs like multi sectoral mechanism for Community leaders, Child welfare practitioners, care and service providers such as legal, teachers, police, Counselors, doctors, village leaders, parents, the children themselves, to help them work together to address the problem of Child neglect and to equip the communities with the skills and information they need to address the needs of their children. They indicated that skills may be entrepreneurial skills, counseling skills, community, adult literacy, capacity building and starting up Income Generating Activities, among others.

The second best alternative way of reducing child neglect in Ruhaama Sub-county Ntungamo district is use of media. In Uganda, the media is recognized as a key partner in the fight against child neglect. It is a powerful tool in sensitizing, mobilizing and advocating for children's rights. This finding is in line with the findings of United Nations Population Fund Report 2006 which acknowledged media for having been recognized as a significant ally in influencing public opinion and policies on development and human rights issues. The 1995

Constitution of the Republic of Uganda as well as the Information Act 2006 clearly acknowledge the media as a key partner in creating awareness on human as well as children's rights. This was done through news bulletins, feature stories, documentaries and paid for advertisements among others. The media, the world over has been helpful in setting public debates and influencing public opinion. In Uganda the media has been instrumental in setting public debates especially on political issues through talk shows on radio and televisions, opinion pages in news papers among others. The media therefore can be powerful tool in influencing people's opinions about child neglect and initiating a national wide debate on this social mayhem.

In conformation with the above the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 17 states that Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. And to this end, States Parties shall:

- (a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29;
- (b) Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books;
- (c) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being

This implies that with media all people including children can always raise their voices especially on matters concerning with violation of human rights, raise awareness on existence of child neglect as well as punishments given to those who neglect children.

In response to the above, one of the respondents said that radios have helped us so much because "I always listen to children' programs like "Emiti Emito" at UBC radio and "Abato" on radio west and I feel happy when children are

articulating their ideas especially their right to be protected by their parents that because they are the leaders of tomorrow” he therefore called upon other radios and TV stations which has no program for the young ones to start it because children like to listen to it and is the best way of changing the attitudes of parents who neglect their children.

The third best alternative way of reducing child neglect in Ruhaama Sub-county Ntungamo district that was given by the respondents is proper implementation of children’s right. This finding is in line with the finding of the government of Uganda which enacted the Children Act 2004 as a principal law that deals with children’s affairs and their protection under the law. The act was aimed at consolidating all laws relating to child care, protection and maintenance. It also sought to establish institutions that can ensure easy access to justice by children and deal with children in conflict with the law like the Family and Children Courts and remand homes.

According to Uganda Law Reform Commission (ULRC) 2000. This law gives legal status to many of the commitments in the CRC and follows the CRC principle of 'The best interests of the child. It establishes the rights of children such as the right to live with parents, have custody, protection from discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect Article 5 (6). The implementation of the Act however is undermined by among other things inadequate human and financial resources in the established institutions and the negative attitudes of the society on matters of children’s rights.

Despite the fact that these laws and structures are in place, the problem of child neglect is increasingly depriving children of their rights. This implies that, as a system, one or if not most of its organs are not functioning well for its whole wellbeing. There is therefore a need to amend some of the components of this system which include policies, practices, structures and interventions so as to create a Ugandan society fit for children.

In support of the above article, one of the respondents said children are neglected because policies that protect their rights are dormant and therefore if properly implemented it will yield fruits and creating conducive atmosphere for children to grow well and develop.

Summary

This research was conducted based on opinion of single parents who are neglecting children. Specifically, the objectives of this study were three fold; To determine the levels of child neglect among the respondents. To establish if there is a relationship between socio economic status and child neglect among respondents. And To raise awareness of local strategies, resources and policies that can be utilized to address child neglect. The study was guided by the following hypothesis. There is no significant relationship between the levels of socio-economic status and child neglect.

Conclusion

The data clearly shows that children in Ruhaama sub-county have a high exposure to child neglect. Due to the wide range of causes such as poverty and Un employment, inadequate information about child development, Prostitution, early marriage, Alcohol and Disability

Recommendation

The findings revealed that the most common cause of child neglect in Ruhaama Sub-county Ntungamo district is poverty and unemployment, therefore I recommend that vocational skill training in income generating activities should be introduced.

Inadequate information about child development the government should put in place sensitizing organizations to give people information about child development.

Prostitution, people should be sensitized about the dangers of Prostitution

It was found that early marriage contributes to the problem of child neglect therefore I recommend that people should be sensitized on dangers of early marriage.

To the problem of Alcohol people should be sensitized also about the dangers of alcohol

The issue of Disability I recommend that Community based rehabilitation should be commenced for example provision of assistive devices, mobility and rehabilitation programs among others respectively.

The findings have it that the most possible convenient ways of reducing child neglect in Ruhaama Sub-county Ntungamo district are community empowerment programs, use of media, Advocacy and public education, and proper implementation of children's Act. In addition to the above, I recommend that psycho-social support, use child focused TV and radio programs, as well as safety and resettlement of neglect children should be done.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a student of Kampala international university conducting a research study requirement for the award of Bachelor of guidance and counseling. The purpose of the study is to assess the causes of child neglect in Ruhaama Sub-county Ntungamo District.

I request you to spare some time by availing the required information to this study by answering the following questions. The information will be used for study purposes and the information will be kept confidential.

Please tick any which apply to you.

Gender Male ☐ Female ☐

Age 18yrs and Below ☐

19---29 ☐

30—39 ☐

40—49 ☐

50 and above ☐

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

I. University or college or equivalent ☐

ii. Technical training ☐

iii. A-level ☐

iv. O-level ☐

v. primary school ☐

2 Which kinds of income do you receive?

- i. Earning from employment or self-employment ☐
- ii. Pension from former employer ☐
- iii. Child benefit ☐
- iv. Housing rent ☐
- v. No source of income ☐

3. What is the name or title of the job?
.....

- 4 Are you working full-time or part -time?
- Iv. Full-time ☐
 - Iv. Part-time ☐

6. What kind of work do you do most of the time?
.....

7. What materials or machinery do you use?
.....

8. What skills or qualifications are needed for the job?
.....

9. During the previous month did anyone in the family receive public assistance or welfare payments from the government?
- Yes ☐
 - ii. No ☐
 - iii. Don't know ☐

10.	Do you now receive any of the following social benefits	Yes	No
	i.Sick leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	ii Rehabilitation allowance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	iii Disability pension (fulltime or partial)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	iv. Unemployment benefit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Is house-keeping your main occupation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Please read the following statement each one describes a situation please write the number of your choice in the box provided before each option.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

12. Communication

i.	Communicate warmly through eye or body contact	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii.	Indifferently through accusation	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Satisfying the child's needs

i.	I consider my child's needs very important.	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii.	My needs are very important than those of my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. When am enforcing discipline?

i.	I negotiate with my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii.	I love to tell and punish my child or children.	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii.	I do give in and give up in case my child is rebellious	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv.	I offer very little or no guidance to my child or children	<input type="checkbox"/>