

***THE SCOURGE OF ABUSE AMONGST SCHOOL GOING  
CHILDREN IN SWAZILAND***

***DRAFT REPORT***

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child

CSO – Central Statistics Office

G&C – Guidance and Counselling

MoE – Ministry of Education

SWAGAA – Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse

HIV – Human Immuno-deficiency Virus

## **Executive Summary**

The scourge of abuse is at the moment a major challenge to the country's schools and communities at large. This study highlights findings on children vulnerable to abuse, those that are exposed to abuse and the circumstances surrounding such situations.

Findings of the study revealed that there is indeed a high level of abuse (+ 60%) among school going children in the country, Evidence of this came from responses given by the students, teachers and community members who participated in the study.

Sexual abuse was identified as the most prevalent type abuse, closely followed by physical abuse. Other types of abuse listed to be occurring included neglect, verbal and emotional abuse. Verbal and emotional abuse was prevalent in female-headed homes.

A high number of abuse cases were be perpetrated by adult males between the ages of 21 to 40 years, mostly related to the survivor, especially in the cases of sexual abuse. The male perpetrators identified as abusers were fathers, uncles and cousins of the survivors. Mothers and grandmothers were linked to physical, verbal and emotional abuse. Teachers were also mentioned as perpetrators of abuse including sexual abuse.

The most vulnerable age group age group were those children of aged between 10 – 15 years (+50%). Most of these were children who were not under the care of both parents that is they were either staying with the father alone, mother alone or with relatives.

Perpetrators of abuse were found to be taking advantage of the poor economic status of their prey. Most of the survivors of abuse came from poverty stricken families. Some of them were abused because they had no one to protect them, like in the case of orphans or when their own parent or guardian was abusing them. Alcohol abuse was also said to be one other factor that leads to child abuse.

The findings of the study interestingly revealed that a high number of abuse cases were reported. In like manner, 60 % of the perpetrators in the reported cases were punished. There were however, cases that went unreported because of traditional beliefs that cushion such practices. These include cases where the perpetrator was within the family structure, hence the abuse would be treated as a family matter “tibi tendlu”. In some cases after family discussions the survivor would even be asked to “apologise” to the perpetrator.

Orphan hood, need for money, dependency on the perpetrator and death threats from the perpetrator hindered some of the survivors from reporting the abuse. In most of the cases the abuse was not reported because the survivors were young and afraid of the abuser as well as not being aware of the reporting structures.

According to the findings of the study, teachers and community members were aware of the prevalence of child abuse. They attested to the fact that they had heard and witnessed abuse of children at some point in time, either at home, school or in the community, but they had not responded to the abuse either by confronting the perpetrator, or reporting the abuse.

At the most, 30.5% of the sampled pupils had lost a parent. This includes some children who had lost both parents. This situation rendered the children vulnerable to abuse, and this resulted in very unnerving consequences.



Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), pregnancy, baby dumping, drop in school performance and children being moved from their original homes to live with relatives were among the list of consequences of abuse on the survivor. These situations affected the survivors physically, emotionally and psychologically. These consequences also caused bad blood between the survivors and their families and/or communities.

To address the scourge of child abuse amongst school going children respondents were one in recommending that:

- ❑ There is an urgent need for government to come up with a policy and law on how perpetrators of child abuse should be dealt with.
- ❑ There should also be continuous public awareness on the subject of child abuse.
- ❑ Trained Counsellors should be placed in all communities and schools to provide psychosocial support to the survivors. These people, especially the school counsellors, should specifically look at the children's welfare
- ❑ Lessons on Positive Parenting should be given to parents so that they are able to take good care of their children.

The children should be empowered to talk when faced with a threatening situation.

## **Chapter One**

### **1.0 Background to child abuse**

The Kingdom of Swaziland is the second smallest country in Africa after the Gambia. It is situated in the South Eastern part of Africa and shares borders with the Republic of Mozambique in the East, and South Africa in the north, west and south. Swaziland is divided into four administrative regions namely Manzini, Hhohho, Lubombo and Shiselweni. It also has four geographical regions each with its own unique climatic conditions. These are Lowveld, Lubombo plateau, Middleveld and Highveld.

Swaziland has a total population of 929,718 sq. km with a population growth rate of 2.7% and a fertility rate of 4.5% (CSO: 1997). Of his 49% are young people, 44.4% of who are less than 15 years of age, the majority of who are in formal institutions of education. With a young population like this, it is not surprising that Swaziland is struggling to deal with the psycho – social and social problems of these children, the source of which is mainly abuse.

From reports by the media, both electronic and print and institutions such as SWAGAA, Save the Children dealing with abused persons, it is evident that the abuse of children is on the increase. Media reports have brought to our attention a high rate of increase of different types of both sexual exploitation as well as other types of abuse. Abuse including sexual exploitation that has found its way into print and electronic media. Is mainly perpetrated by teachers and persons closest to the children including parents. Unfortunately this is contravention of the CRC, which condemns abuse of children in the strongest terms. Since Swaziland is signatory to the CRC, it is important that she is seen to be making efforts to make the environment in which children grow safe and healthy.

The scourge of HIV and AIDS also lays children vulnerable to abuse due to parental deaths. At present, according to the Impact Assessment Survey by the Ministry of Education done in 1999, there are over 40,000 children who have been orphaned, and the number is still rising with as yet no sign of plateauing soon. The report actually predicts that the number of orphans will reach 120,000 by 2012 before there could be a decline in the numbers.

The majority of these children either live on the streets as street children or in child – headed homes with no adult supervision. This lays them as sitting ducks, which can be abused easily by unscrupulous members of society,

It is difficult though to quantify the proportions of the difficult types of abuse due to lack of systematic database. This situation emphasises that there is need for systems to be put in place to protect the children. Not only that, but also there should be legal reforms or enactment of laws to protect children from abuse. There are the non – bail able offences some of which include sexual abuse such as rape, which affects the children most, but unfortunately perpetrators still manage to escape conviction, return to those environments that still put the children at risk.

It is with great hope that this study will help to raise awareness about the great need for systems to be put in place to provide security and welfare of children, including access to education.

## **Chapter two**

### **2.0 Purpose and methodology of the Study**

#### **2.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to establish a database of vulnerable children, types of abuse that children are exposed to and circumstances surrounding the abuse.

A few instances of children who have been abused have been published in the media including television, but the magnitude of the problem, types of abuse and circumstances surrounding child abuse are not well established.

Documented information on the types of abuse and its magnitude would assist government, NGO's and/or concerned individuals to formulate strategies to help these children.

#### **2.2 Objectives**

##### **2.2.1 the general objective of the study was to establish**

- A data base of vulnerable children
- Types of abuse that children are exposed to
- Circumstances surrounding the abuse

##### **2.2.2 the specific objectives were to**

- Identify children vulnerable to abuse
- Establish types of abuse that children are subjected to
- Define conditions/environments that bring about their vulnerability
- Find out how vulnerable children could be helped
- Find out if teachers are aware of the problem

- Find out if the community is aware of the problem
- Make recommendations for intervention

### **2.3 Research Instruments**

Self – administered questionnaires for head teachers, teachers and community members were used. To ensure that respondents attend fully to the questions asked, an interviewer was always at hand to clarify any questions from the respondents.

A questionnaire or interview guide administered by an interviewer was used to gather information from the students. This was done to ensure accuracy in recording responses and to collect as much information as possible.

### **2.4 Data Collection**

Data was collected from primary sources. The survey was conducted in all the four administrative regions of the country i.e. Hhohho, Manzini, Lubombo and Shiselweni regions.

Prior arrangements were made with the schools selected for this study to enable them to make the necessary arrangements and adjustments in their teaching time and prepare room for conducting the interviews.

### **2.5 Sampling**

Fifty-two schools were systematically randomly selected; twenty-six primary schools and twenty-six secondary/high schools were selected to participate in the survey (appendix 2). These were further schools were further classified into rural, urban and semi - urban. Schools with relatively high enrolments were selected with the assumption that they are likely to provide respondents with a wide variety of experiences.

## **2.6 Characteristics Of Sample Schools**

Although forty schools were originally targeted the sample size increased to fifty-two schools. From each region five primary and five secondary schools were to be sampled, but this was not so. In some regions the schools that were sampled were not available so a new selection of schools had to be made.

Of the participating schools 48.1 percent were primary and 51.9% were high schools.

### **School Setting**

51.9 percent of these schools were in rural areas, and 32.7 percent were in urban areas. The remaining 15.4 percent were located in the peri-urban areas.

### **Type Of Schools**

34.6% of the schools were government schools, 21.2% were community, and 32.7% were mission schools while 11.5% were private schools.

### **Location of Schools**

Effort was made to have all four regions equally represented in this study. But eventually 32.7 percent of the schools represented the Hhohho region, 28.8 percent came from Manzini, 15.4% from Lubombo and 23.1% were from the Shiselweni region.

## **2.7 Choice of students/pupils**

The population for the study was chosen from school going children between the ages of 6 to 19 years. School going children also form a stable population of children in Swaziland, since school attendance rate is estimated at 73%. A deliberate effort was made to involve equal numbers of both sexes to make the sample as gender equitable as possible. At primary level, pupils were randomly selected from six grades i. e from grade two to grade seven. At the sec/high school level, the students were selected from forms 1, 2, and 4. The selection

was based on the fact that other grades and forms were already engaged in writing their external examinations and we did not want to disturb them.

## **2.8 Teachers and community members**

Head teachers and Guidance teachers of both sexes were asked to complete a questionnaire with the assistance of an interviewer. In cases where the guidance teacher was not there, a teacher of the head teacher's choice was asked to complete the questionnaire. In all, fifty-two head teachers and fifty-two teachers completed the questionnaires.

The head teachers were also asked to mobilise community members for the interviews. Even though fifty schools were sampled and the expectation is that there should be fifty-two community members who filled in the questionnaires, Sixty-four community members completed the questionnaires.

## **2.9 Recruitment and Training of Research Team**

A team of sixteen data collectors, four researchers and a team leader was involved in the data collection over a period of ten days from the 11 November to the 22 November, 2002). The selection of data collectors was made on the basis of their level of education, maturity and experience.

Three days were set aside for training. The training included introduction of the research instruments and one day of pre-testing of the instruments in four schools. The review of results of the pre – test and incorporation of suggestions into the instruments also took one day. The actual data collection was undertaken over ten days.

## **2.10 Limitations**

Data collection coincided with the exam period for school thus pupils were not readily available. Time and lack of transport were also serious constraints.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 Responses from pupils

#### 3.1 Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 1401 pupils were interviewed in the 52 schools primary and High schools. The table below shows the distribution of respondents from high schools and primary schools.

**Figure 1: Distribution in high and primary schools.**

High/Primary	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	786	56.1
High	615	43.9
Total	1401	100

The Students were classified according to the types of schools, location of the school i.e. government, community, mission and private schools. Their distribution was as follows:

**Figure 2: Location of pupils by type of school**

Type of school	Frequency	Percentage
Government	568	40.5
Community	388	27.7
Mission	377	26.9
Private	68	4.9
Total	1401	100

These schools were further classified into rural (58.6%), urban (27.1%) and peri-urban (14.3%).



All four regions were represented as students from the Hhohho region made up 25.9%. Manzini 25.2%, Lubombo 25.0% and Shiselweni had 23.9%.

Efforts were made to interview an equal number of boys and girls from each region, however there were slightly more girls than boys interviewed as shown in figure 7:

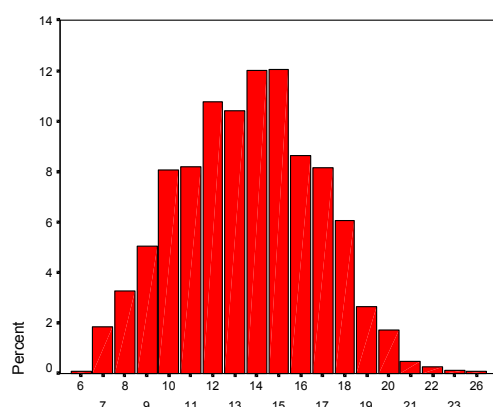
**Figure 3: Pupils' distribution by sex**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	661	47.2
Female	740	52.8
Total	1401	100

The pupils' age distribution ranged between 6-17 years (primary school) and 12 - 22 years (high school).

**Figure 4**

### Participants' Ages

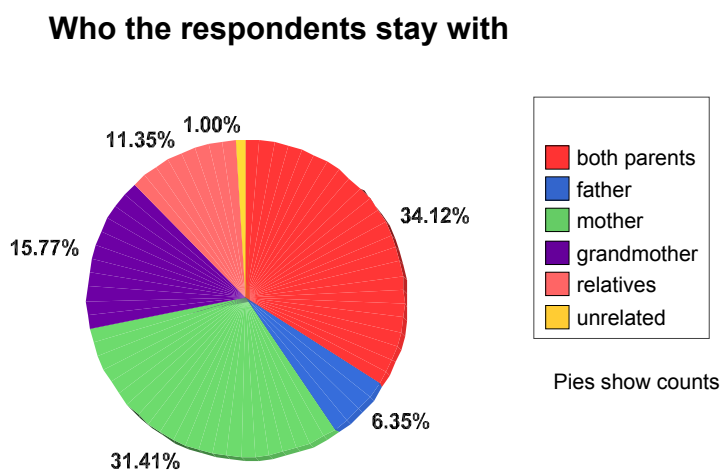


The highest number of interviewees was in the 10-15 age group.

Although pupils at primary school level normally range within the six to twelve (6 – 12) years age bracket, it was noted that there were interviewees aged 16 and 17 and still at primary school.

The sample population was drawn from Grades two to grade 7 and from Form one to Form five. There were however very few interviewees who came from Grade seven, form 3 and 5. Reasons behind this were that these classes were already involved in their external examinations and/or had already finished examinations and had left the school.

The majority of the respondents had at least one parent, (father 78.6%) and (mother 90.9%) still alive. It also came out that 34.2% of these children live with both parents, while the rest of them live in single parent homes either with father, mother or grandmother. Some live with other relations such as aunt, uncle etc.



**Figure 5**

Pupils who did not live with their parents, gave the following reasons

- Parental divorce,
- Separation and re-marriage of parents,

- Fathers denied paternity,
- Mothers refusing that children stay with their fathers even when the mothers have remarried and are not staying with the child,
- Unemployment of parents and poverty,
- Parents never married,
- Parents working far away from home,
- Desertion by parents and
- Death of parents.

In the majority of the homes, there was an average of about 5 people living together. There were however exceptional cases where about 28 to 50 people lived in the same homestead. In these families the majority were children and In some homes there were as many as 19 to 25 children living in one household.

### **3.2 Leisure time**

It was apparent from their responses that children in the rural areas work a lot more when they are not in school, as opposed to their counterparts in the urban areas. The latter hang out with friends, listen to the radio and watch TV. While on the other hand, pupils in the rural areas, spend most of their time doing housework i.e. cooking, cleaning, fetching water, firewood, weeding as well as herding animals. In their own words these children said, “We do not have time to play”. The results also showed that more students in urban schools mentioned study as one of the things they do when they are not at school than their rural counterparts and these differences were highly significant. This is probably because the children in the urban setting have fewer chores to do than those in rural areas.

### **3.3 Communication with parents**

The study also found that parents nowadays do talk to children about issues of sexuality and growing up, though this is mainly to warn them against engaging in certain practices that might be dangerous, rather than these being ordinary

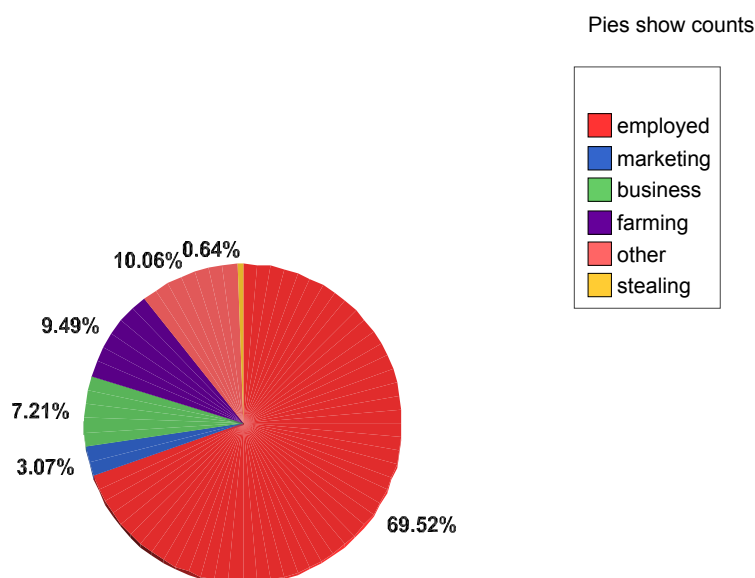
parent and child discussion, 48% of the pupils said their parents do not talk to them about such issues while 52% said they do. When asked exactly what it was they discussed, the children said, " our parents tell us about what it will be like when we are grown up", or that "we should be wary of boys as they will make us pregnant". There was no significant difference between responses of rural and urban children.

### **3.4 How parents make a living**

In order to determine if there is any relationship between poverty and child abuse, respondents were to state means through which their parents or guardians make a living. According to the findings of this study, the majority of the parents and guardians are in formal employment while some live through market vending, subsistence farming, business and other means including stealing. Though parents were said to be employed, the physical appearance of some of the children, especially those in rural schools, was of children living in abject poverty. A few had come to school wearing torn uniforms, some were even without shoes and visibly hungry.

**Figure 6: How parents/guardians make a living**

### How parents/guardians make a living



### 3.5 Knowledge About Abuse

When respondents were asked if they knew the meaning of the term “child abuse”, 74.8% of them gave positive responses while 25.2% of them said they did not know what it was. Those who said they knew what child abuse is, gave a variety of definitions of child abuse including the following:

- Beating up a child for no reason
- Beating a child excessively/wrongly
- Rape/having sex with a child against her will
- Touching a child uncomfortably
- Ill-treating a child/Scolding a child/making a child unhappy.
- Forcing a child to do something which is beyond their capability
- Overworking a child
- Not providing food, clothing or any of the needs of a child
- Forcing a child to do what they don’t want to do.

Among these, “ill treatment”, was cited by most of the children (73%) as abuse. This was followed by sexual abuse which they put in many different words such as “ ***when a child is held where they do not like***”, “***when an old person like your father has sex with you***”. There were other diverse definitions but none of them was actually wrong, they could all be categorised under the known forms of abuse i.e. sexual, emotional, verbal, physical, neglect etc.

To probe students further on their knowledge of abuse, specific questions were asked. In this case they had to say whether a given illustration/act was abuse or not. Figure 11 illustrates the percentage of children who positively identified the different scenarios as abuse.

**Figure 7: Acts identified as abuse**

Scenario	Frequency	Percentage
Being fondled intimately	1180	84.2
Lack of parental supervision	720	51.4
If someone tickles you uncomfortably	1076	76.8
If an adult ask you to lie on top of him or her	1257	89.7
Being called by insulting names	1269	90.6
Being sent to do teacher’s Chores during a lesson	1124	80.2

It should be noted that a higher percentage of those who did not label the scenarios above as abuse were not sure whether these depicted abuse or not as opposed to ruling them out..

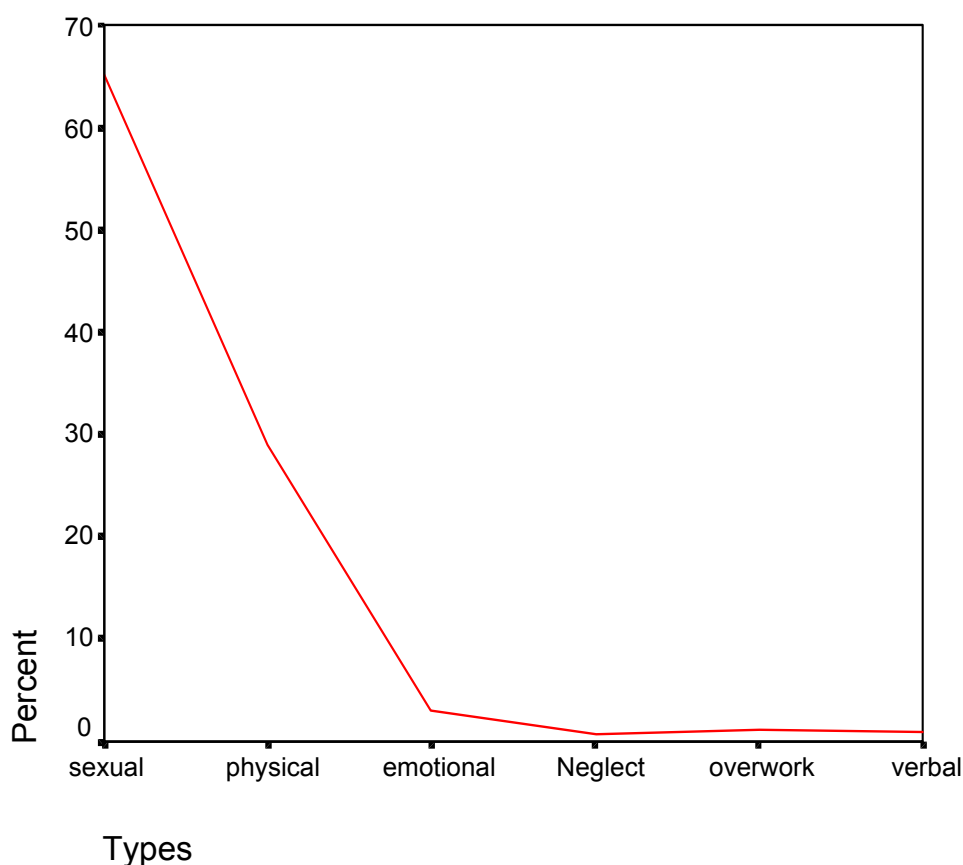
27.5% of the children knew of an adult-child intimate relationships and 15.1% of the children said they knew of a teacher-student sexual relationship in their schools. According to the pupils, the head teachers of the schools never know about the student-teacher relationship or they pretend not to be aware. In cases where teachers knew, pupils said nothing is done to punish the culprits. A few of

the respondents said the head teacher gives a warning to the teacher and the student involved in such a relationship. In some schools, teachers reported to be involved in such conduct, get transferred to other schools. There were some respondents who were not aware of any action taken.

### 3.6 Knowledge of Cases of Abuse

about 36.8% of the total sample size of the respondents knew of a child who had been abused and 15.3% of them said they had actually been subjected to abuse. The types of abuse identified to be occurring among school going children were sexual, physical, emotional, overwork, neglect and verbal abuse. Figure 12 illustrate this.

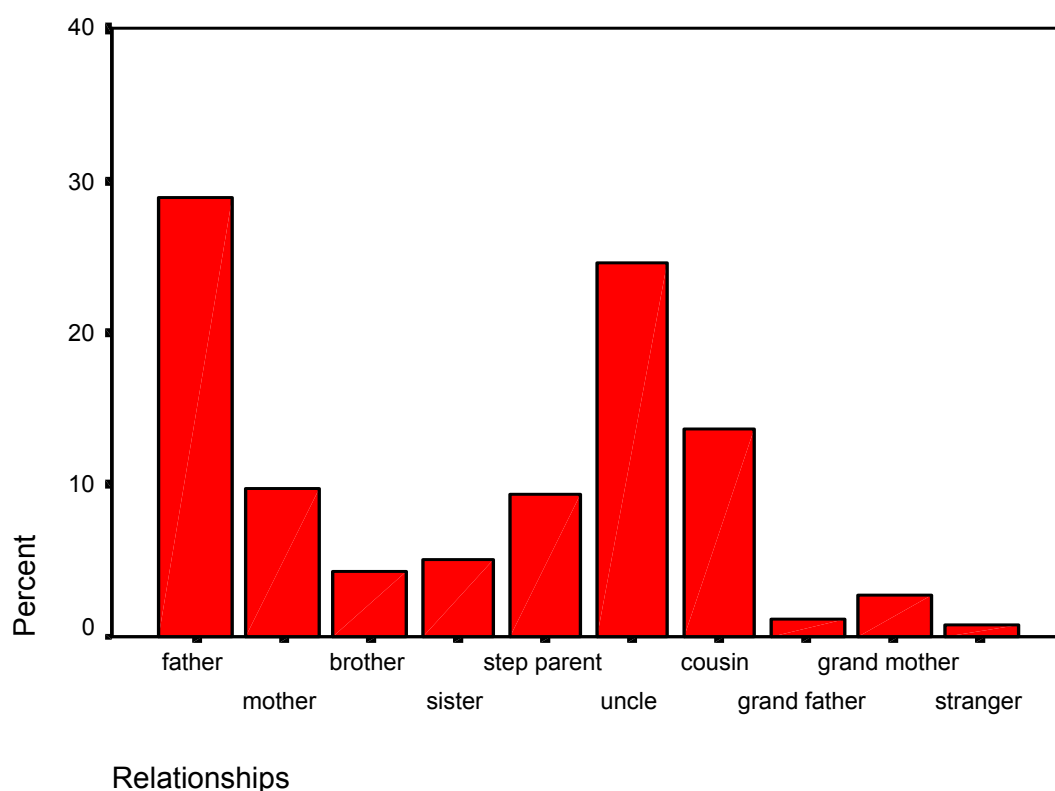
**Figure 8: Types of abuse inflicted on children**



It was noted though, that when children were relating their own abuse experience, the most common abuse mentioned was physical abuse (49.5%), followed by sexual abuse at 19.2%, as opposed to when they were relating the abuse of others.

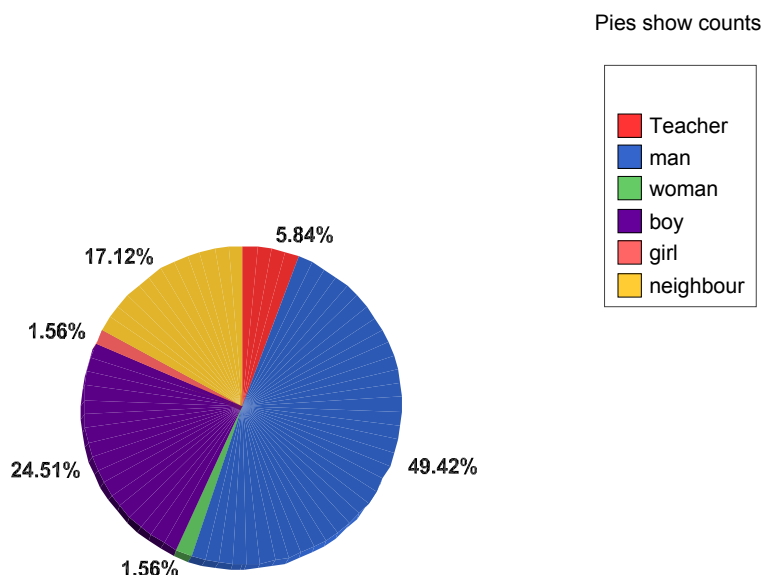
About 49.8% of the perpetrators were related to the child while 50.2% were not related. Figure 13 shows the relationship between the perpetrator and the survivor.

**Figure 9: Relationship between perpetrator and survivor**



In cases where the abuser was not related to the child, the most common perpetrators were community men, boys, and neighbours. Teachers were also cited as perpetrators of several types of abuse including sexual abuse.



**Figure 10: Perpetrators not related to the survivors**

The types of sexual abuse ranged from fondling of the private parts to actual rape and penetration. Sodomy was identified as another type of abuse. Sexual abuse, especially incest, came up as the most prevalent type of abuse, which children are subjected to according to this study. The most common perpetrators of sexual abuse mentioned by the respondents were fathers, uncles, teachers, and other close relatives.

Surprisingly mothers and grandmothers were also cited as the most common abusers when it comes to emotional, verbal and physical abuse.

Perpetrators' ages ranged between 10 to 80 years. There was an insignificant number of cases of abuse perpetrated by children against children. A majority of the perpetrators ranged between the ages 21 to 40.

**Figure 11: Age of Perpetrators**

Age Group (years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
10 – 20	83	16.1
21 – 30	180	34.9
31 – 40	161	31.2
41 – 50	70	13.6
51 – 60	11	2.1
61 – 70	9	1.7
71 – 80	2	0.4

In some instances, the abuse was said to be ongoing at the time of the study. While other cases of abuse had happened a day ago up to over a year ago.

### **3.7 Causes of Abuse**

According to the opinions of the children, the following factors led to the abuse of children.

- Loneliness on the part of the perpetrators of sexual abuse
- The abusers are sex starved/ sexual desire
- Alcohol abuse
- Ill discipline
- Just because the child is young and cannot protect themselves
- Poverty, (perpetrators take advantage of the state of the child and give them little goodies for sex because they are needy, or overwork them only to give minimal wage).
- Children walking in the remote places alone.
- Lack of love from stepparents.
- The child has no parents to protect them because they are either dead or have left them when they remarry. Even if they are abused they have nowhere to go.
- No parental/adult supervision, then children are abused by neighbours and other relatives.

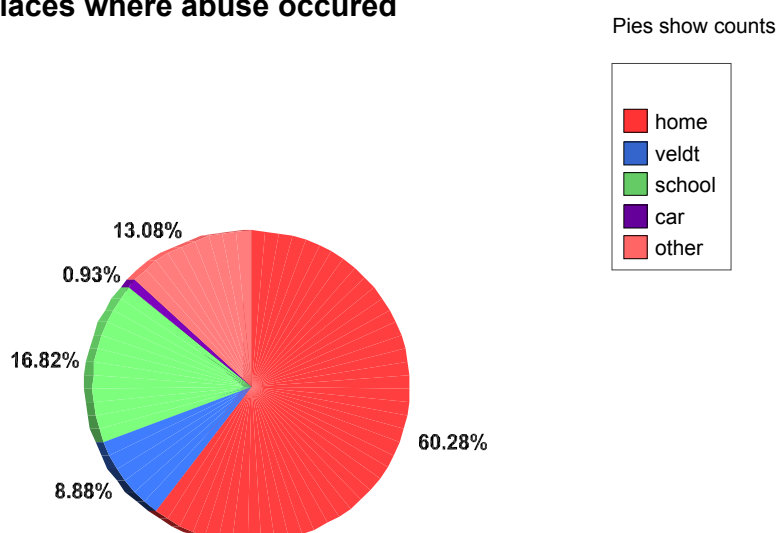
However, a considerable number of the respondents had no idea of what led to the abuse.

### 3.8 Where Abuse takes place

The findings of the study show that most of the abuse takes place in the home. At the school, cars and kombis that the children ride to school, in the veldt while children are herding animals and many other places. Figure 12 illustrates this.

**Figure 12:**

**Places where abuse occurred**



### 3.9 Reported Cases and Action Taken

of the total, 52.8% of the survivors had reported the abuse whereas 47.2% had not. Abuse cases were reported to the police, family, SWAGAA, parents, mother and others as shown on the table below:

**Figure 13: Whom was the abuse reported to?**

Name	Percentage
Police	50.3
Family	21.4
SWAAGA	18.3
Parents	5.2
Mother	4.1
Other	1.7
Total	100.0

In most cases where the abuse was reported, the perpetrator was punished. Punishment included imprisonment and transfer. Some of the respondents said:

- The issue was discussed between the survivor's parents and the perpetrator,
- The abuser being reported to 'umphakatsi' and tried in the traditional court,
- SWAGAA personnel promised that they would talk to teachers,
- Survivor was taken for counselling.

In most cases where no action was taken, the perpetrators would be someone related to the survivor as such would be kept a secret amongst the family members as (tibi tendlu). In some instances after the family discussions the survivors would be asked to apologise to the perpetrators, and one respondent said, **"I apologised to him and forgave him"**.

30.1% of the survivors said nothing was done while 7% did not know what action, if any, was taken against the perpetrators of the abuse.

### **3.10 Why Some Cases of Abuse Are Never Reported**

Most of the cases of abuse, especially cases of sexual abuse, were not reported due to the fact that the children were intimidated by the perpetrators who warned them against reporting the abuse and threatened to kill them.

In the case where abuse was not reported, respondents gave reasons, which could be summarised in the following way:

- Not being old enough to look after self.
- Dependency on the perpetrator such as parents or stepparents.
- Children need money from the perpetrators so they do not want the abuse to stop because that would mean the end of the supply (cases of sugar daddies and mummies).
- The survivors are not even aware that they are being abused.
- Others do not know who to tell, as they are not aware of the reporting structures and how they can get help.
- Perpetrators give money and other goodies to the children to keep them quiet, especially young children.

### **3.11 Consequences of Abuse on the Survivor**

While relating their abuse experience and how the abuse has affected them, it was evident that some of the respondents had been seriously affected. Some of The consequences of the abuse ranged from infection with Sexually Transmitted Infections, abandonment of children by their parents, girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy, to children being moved from their homes to live with relatives because the abuse is perpetrated in the home by the parents.

These are some of the responses given in their own words:

- “My arm was a bit disabled”
- “I am disturbed and can not fully concentrate at school, my performance has even dropped”
- “I am not doing well in school because of late coming”
- “I don’t trust people any more”
- “I have constant fear of the perpetrator who is my relative”
- “I am hurt that no one believes me and I feel so all alone and lost”
- “Since it was my father who abused me, I was moved away from home and I miss my family so much’

- “I am no longer free”

The abuse experience did not only affect the survivor, but also their relationship with their family and community. 33.9% of the respondents said their relationship with the family was indeed affected, while 33.6% of them had spoilt relations with the community.

### **3.12 Respondent's Suggestions on How Abuse Can Be Eradicated**

To reduce child abuse, children had the following suggestions:

- Abusers should be imprisoned for life/punished
- Abusers should be killed
- Parents should teach their children about abuse and how to protect themselves
- SWAGAA, Save the Children and the police should come to schools and communities and teach about abuse
- There should be people in the communities to report these child abuse matters to.
- Trained counsellors should be placed in the communities to provide counselling to the survivors within their communities.
- Parents should take care of their children and not leave them alone at night.
- Parental organisations should be formed so that so that they can be taught how to treat their children
- Government should increase sporting facilities.
- Alcohol should be banned
- Parents must believe what their children are saying because it might be right.
- Laws to punish perpetrators should be revised or enacted where they do not exist

A considerable number of the respondents(+75%) said they had no idea as to what can be done to reduce abuse of children because they don't know why people do it.

### **3.13 HIV/AIDS and Discrimination**

The study revealed that children did not know much about the cause of death of their schoolmates' parents. It can be assumed that HIV/AIDS is still treated with the strictest confidentiality and secrecy hence only 3.5% of the sample pupils knew of schoolmates whose parents suffered from HIV/AIDS. Also, only 0.5% of the children acknowledged that there were children discriminated against because their parents were sick with AIDS or had already died of AIDS.

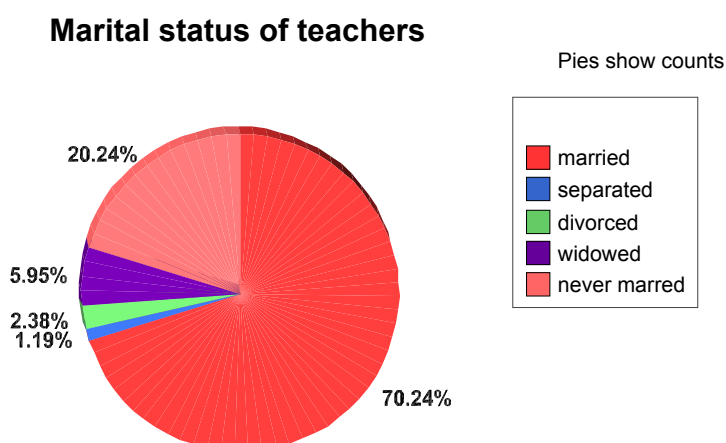
## Chapter Four

### 4.0 Responses from teachers and head teachers

#### 4.1 Characteristics of responding teachers.

More than half of the (53.6%) of the participating schools were primary and 46.4% were high school teachers. These teachers came from rural, urban and peri-urban schools.

The teachers in the sample were distributed across the four regions of the country. The participating teachers had different marital status as illustrated by figure 14 below:



52.4% of the participating teachers were male and 47.6% were female. These participating teachers' age ranged from 24 to 60 years. The largest group, were around 50. In terms of level of education attained, 33.3% possess university degrees; 26.2% have college diploma and 29.8% hold college certificates. 11.2% have qualifications, which are not related to the teaching profession.



## 4.2 Knowledge about abuse

Of the responding teachers, 95.2% said they knew the meaning of child abuse. 88.1% of the respondents considered abuse as 'ill-treatment'. while 7.1 percent of the teachers defined child abuse as 'beating'.

In probing further on their understanding of abuse, teachers were presented with scenarios where they had to identify whether they were abuse or not. Figure 19 shows the percentages of teachers who positively identified the different scenarios as abuse.

**Figure 15: Acts identified as abuse**

Description	Percentage
Fondling a child intimately	89.3
Lack of parental supervision to children	92.9
Tickling a child uncomfortably	89.3
An adult asking a child to lie on top of him/her	88.1
Calling a child with insulting names or statements	96.4
Sending a child to do teacher's chores during a lesson	90.5

Of the responding teachers, 63.1% knew someone who was having a sexual relationship with a minor. Further, 67.9% of the respondents said they had witnessed and that they had also seen signs of abuse in their homes.

The participating teachers were able to list some of the symptoms that would show if a child is being abuse. These included:

- Bruises

- Quietness
- Love bites
- Absent mindedness
- Aggressiveness

According to the responding teachers, there are very little abusive relationships among pupils themselves, as 90.5% of them said there was none such. In fact, only 9.5% of the teachers had observed abuse amongst old boys and young girls. An even smaller percentage of 6% had seen older girls abusing young boys. On the contrary, a majority of them (86.9%) knew of abusive relationships between teachers and their students. A considerable number of the respondents were also aware that other adults abused children.

#### **4.3 Action taken on reported cases**

A majority of the sample teachers (74.4%) had no knowledge of action taken against abusers. There was also no known action taken to compensate and to rehabilitate those who had been abused. Figure 20 shows small numbers of teachers who knew actions taken against abusers.

**Figure 16: Action Taken Against Abusers**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Imprisoned	3.6
Reported	6.0
Discussed	10.7
Suspended	2.4

Those who had knowledge of action taken also listed a variety of people who took action against the perpetrators. These included Mothers, Aunts, the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) and other people. In Figure 21, we see that mothers constituted the largest identifiable group that took action against those who had abused their children.

**Figure 17: People who took Action Against Abusers**

Who Took Action?	Percentage
Mothers	26.5
Aunt	10.6
TSC	10.6
Other	52.3
Total	100.0

Widespread abuse of children is known throughout the country. About 71.4% of the respondents reported knowledge of child abuse in their area. The area referred to was either where they resided near their school or their home area.

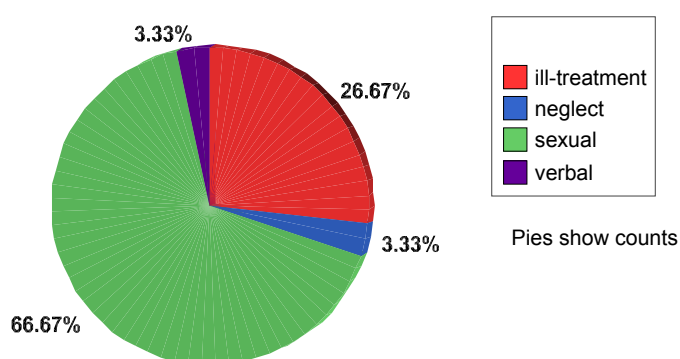
#### **4.4 Causes and correction of abuse in general**

The study also attempted to understand causes of abuse. Only 29.8% of the respondents stated what they thought led people to abuse children. They listed among other things corruption and frustration. The rest knew nothing about what the cause of abuse was. Figure 22 illustrates the causes of abuse as stated by the responding teachers.

**Figure 18: Causes of Abuse**

Cause	Percentage
Corruption	35.9
Sexual desire	12.1
Frustration	8.1
Other	43.9

In figure 19, different types of abuse which children suffer from are shown, sexual intercourse being the most widespread and most serious.

**Figure 19****Types of abuse****4.5 Abuse in schools**

The teachers who participated in the study reported that there was abuse of children in schools. The types of abuse identified included sexual, physical, verbal and social abuse, with sexual abuse as the most prevalent.

According to some of the respondents, victims of child abuse in schools were mainly aged 15 years and above. 13.1% reported abuse of children aged between 10 and 15 years. A small portion of the teachers interviewed reported knowledge of students abusing teachers in schools.

About half of these respondents (48.8%) did not know how schools addressed abuse. Only 22.6% knew of actions taken in schools to deal with pupil abuse.

A high proportion (85.7%) of the respondents reported that teachers in their particular schools did not abuse students. Sexual abuse was cited as the most prevalent and that students aged 15 and above experienced most abuse.

**Figure 20: Knowledge of action taken by schools**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Action taken	22.6
No Action taken	28.6
Don't Know	48.8

#### **4.6 Discrimination against pupils who have lost parents due to HIV/AIDS**

31.0% of the respondents knew of students in the school whose parents and guardians suffered from HIV/AIDS. However, 97.6% of the respondents reported that there was no discrimination against students whose parents or guardians suffered from HIV/AIDS.

#### **4.7 Knowledge about cases of abuse**

Figure 20 shows how teachers learned about abuse in their schools or among their pupils. Some of them were told by the children themselves or some concerned individuals. Others 'discovered' or found out on their own about abuse among their pupils. Amazingly, an overwhelming majority, 57.2% of the teachers who participated in the study could not say how they came to know that some of their students were abused.

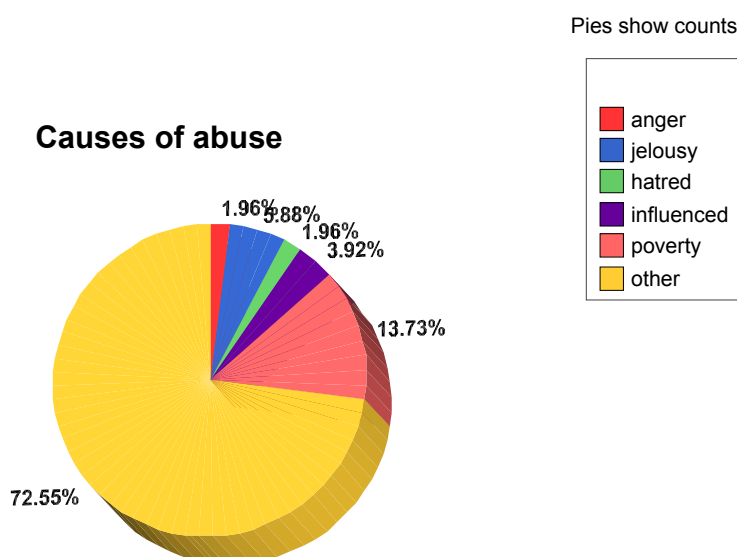
**Figure 21: How teachers got to know about pupil Abuse in the School**

<b>Method of Information</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Discovered	9.5
Told	20.2
Heard	3.6
Other	9.5
Did not know	57.2

#### 4.8 Causes of abuse and methods of redress in schools

In figure 22, the pie chart shows probable causes of abuse. However 39.3% of the respondents had no idea why people abuse children

**Figure 22:**

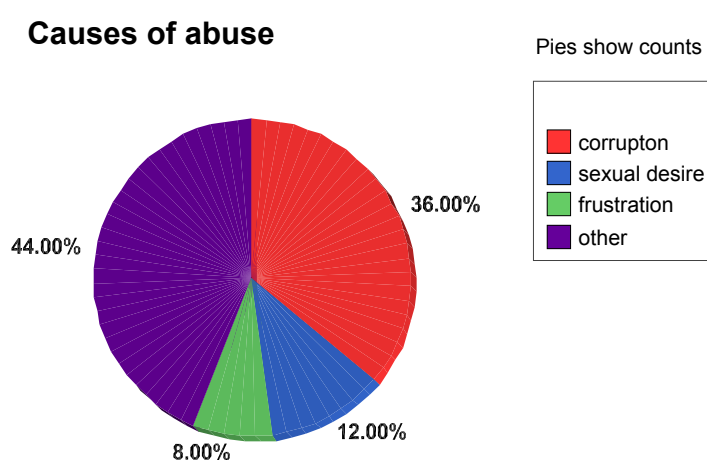


31.0% of the respondents knew of students in the school whose parents and guardians suffered from HIV/AIDS. However, 97.6% of the respondents reported that there was no discrimination against students whose parents or guardians suffered from HIV/AIDS.

A smaller number of respondents knew that action was taken against abusers in schools. About 41.7% of participating teachers who took part in the study knew of action taken against the abusers. About 14.3% stated that abusers were imprisoned while 10.7% reported that a discussion with the abuser was done. However 58.4% did not know what action was taken against the abuser.

According to figure 23, some teachers did not know who took action about the abuse of children. Those who knew of action taken reported that most action on abuse was taken by schools' administration and remedial action in school. According to the respondents, parents took action in cases of abuse they knew. Teachers reported that mothers and grandmothers took action too.

**Figure 23: Those who took action**



Among the abusers listed by the responding teachers were relatives of the children, teachers, other community members and other pupils. Only a handful of the teachers indicated that they know that the abuse was reported.

Teachers gave a variety of actions that were taken after the perpetrators were reported. Some of them stated about five different forms of actions taken against those who abuse children. The majority of the participants reported that abusers were imprisoned. The second largest number of respondents said that discussions were held following abuse.

#### 4.9 Effects of abuse on children

51.2% of the respondents indicated that the abused children had emotional, physical, social and mental effects. According to 28.6% of the respondents, abused children exhibited mental signs of abuse while 16.7% said that the abused children had physical effects.

On the basis of these observations, the majority (61.9%) of the respondents stated that the most abused children were those who were aged 10 and above. 31.0% of the teachers thought that the most abused group were aged between 10 and 15 years. Out of the respondents, 39.3% reported a variety of effects specifically relating to schoolchildren. Figure 24 shows different kinds of effects, which abused school children, exhibited. The majority of the respondents stated that the abused students or children neither showed a clear or specific effect of abuse.

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**Figure 24: Effects Of Abuse On Children**

Nature of Effect	Percentage
Hatred	1.2
Quiet	3.6
Shy	4.8
Other	27.4
Drop in school marks	2.4



## **Chapter Five**

### **5.0 Responses from the community members**

#### **5.1 Characteristics of respondents**

Most of the community members interviewed were selected by the head teachers as they had been asked to request two community members to be available in the school on the day of the visit of the data collectors. However in other cases, the data collectors visited homes in the neighbourhood of the school or interviewed market vendors in the school. These members were very cooperative and wished more could be done for the abused children and about abuse of both those in schools and those out of school. Interviewed. Members were from all the four regions. In total there were 64 of them. From the Hhohho region 26.6% participated in the study, while 21.9% from the Manzini region were interviewed. The other two regions, i.e. Lubombo and Shiselweni regions had 20.3% and 31.3% participating respectively.

Of all the members interviewed, 21.9% were male and 78.1% were female. Their age ranged from young parents or guardians aged 21 years of age, and the oldest was 80 years old. Of these, 54.7% were married, 34.4% never married, 6.3% were widowed, while 3.1% and 1.6% were divorced and separated respectively.

The schools were from which the community members were selected were classified into 31.3% were government; community and mission schools while 6.3% were private schools. Private schools were either company schools or were schools that were not under direct government control. The schools were either from the rural (59.4%) areas, urban (34.4%) areas, while the 6.3% was from peri-urban areas.

The members interviewed, 50.0 % had secondary school education. The majority of them had either primary school education 25.0 %, were graduates 1.6 %, or had other qualifications 12.5 %.

The majority of the members 46.9 % were self - employed. The rest 35.9 % and 17.2 % were in paid employment and in other types of employment respectively. Those in self-employment were engaged in selling, farming, hawking or other types of self - employment. There were those who were unemployed or doing nothing to provide for their families. Some of these unemployed people when asked how they make a living simply said " we steal". This was shocking revelation.

The age range also indicates that the members had children who were either in school or were out of school. Of all of these, 79.7% had children who were in school, while 15.6% had children who were of school going age but were not in school. Reasons for non-attendance of the children were:

- Shortage of funds
- Misbehaviour of the children
- Pregnancy and others, which were not explicitly detailed.

## **5.2 Knowledge About Abuse**

Community members were asked if they knew about abuse, and 82.8% knew about abuse, the types of abuse they identified were

- Sexual            20.7%
- Physical        17.0%
- Emotional      1.9%
- Verbal          5.7%
- Neglect         9.4%
- Child labour    28.3%
- 15.1% gave other descriptions of their understanding of abuse.

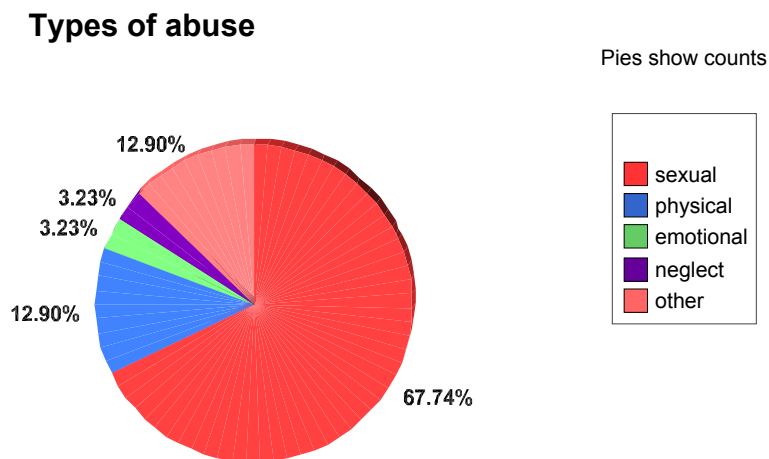
51.6% had heard of abuse in their own community.

The community members were aware that activities such as fondling (71.9%), tickling the child uncomfortably (82.8%), lying on top of someone (90.6%), calling someone with insulting names (90.6%), and doing teachers' private chores during lesson time (89.1%), were all abuse.

85.9% of the community members knew of someone who was having a sexual relationship with the minor children.

According to the responses of the community members there is abuse in the communities. Of all the community members, 23.4% had noticed or witnessed signs of child abuse in their homes, and 48.4% in their area. They were either told (17.2%) or had observed (82.8%) the abuse. The type of abuse they had witnessed or had been told about included:

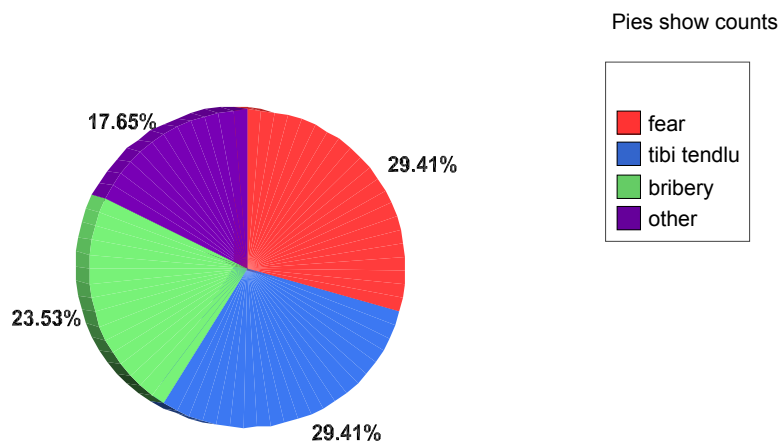
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect
- Other

**Figure 25:**

The causes of the abuse ranged from

- Death of parents or guardian
- Orphan - hood
- Step parents
- Irresponsibility of parents or guardians
- Sexual starvation of the perpetrator
- Neglect

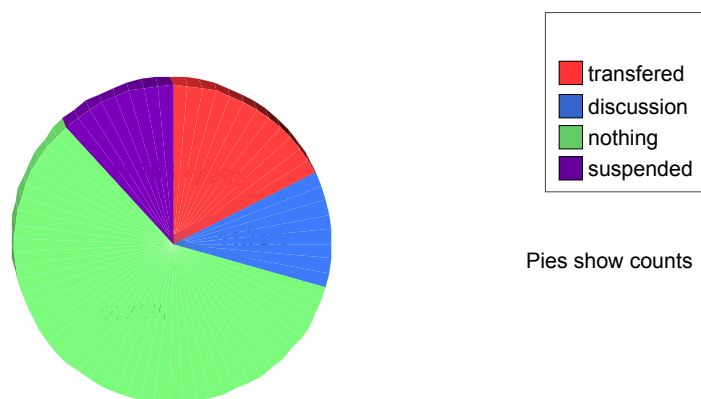
Though members were aware that abuse was taking place in their community, 10.9% of the time the abuse was either ignored or it was not reported. The abuse was not reported because of fear of the perpetrator (4.6%), because the abuse was referred to as “tibi tendlu”, family matters (4.6%), bribery of the survivor (1.6%). In the 4.7% of the time when action was taken, it was either reported to the police (10.9%), discussed in the family (9.4%), the perpetrator was punished (3.1%) not every body took action when they were aware that abuse had taken place.

**Figure 26:****Why abuser was not reported**

The community members were asked what actually happened when the abuse was identified. Only a few of them acknowledged that they took action. The people who took action were mainly mothers (3.1%), relatives (4.7%), fathers and the community only (1.6%).

**5.3 Abuse and the school**

Of the community members, 23.4% of them knew of teachers who had sexual relations with the students in school. When asked how they deal or how the schools dealt with cases of abuse, the responses received were, the abuse was reported (4.7%), discussed (3.1%), perpetrator punished (9.3%) or nothing was done (15.6%).

**Figure 27:****How abuse is dealt with in the community****5.4 What could be done to reduce abuse of children?**

The members of the communities represented, felt very strongly about child abuse. They felt that the perpetrators should be punished (43.8%). They also expressed strong sentiments about educating everyone about abuse (28.1%). Children should be taught about caring for themselves, thus reducing the rate of abuse. They should also be empowered to talk about problems they encounter, and issues that

When pressed further, they felt that Swazi culture is a problem when it comes to child abuse. The culture according to them actually encourages abuse. Practices such as "inhlanti", arranged marriages, "kutekwa" and many others actually encourage abuse. A person is only able to consent to sex at the age of eighteen, but with practices such as these, that age of consent is violated, thus abusing the children especially the girl child. They felt that the elders of the nation were really dragging their feet when it comes to addressing the issue of abuse of the child.

They felt that the CRC should be re visited. When it was introduced into the country, they felt enough time was not taken to educate both parents and the children about it, hence there were a lot of misunderstandings.

The scourge of poverty and death of parents, leaves a lot of children vulnerable, because there was no food, no money for paying fees, hence a lot of the children drop out of school

Respect for children by children and adults should be encouraged. In fact civil education, which includes respect for country and for self should be introduced into schools.

From the data about community members, it is apparent that they know about abuse. This is corroborated by the students' data where 78.8% knew about abuse. Though they knew about abuse 10.9% of the time the abuse was ignored or not reported. Swazi's are a secretive nation. Airing of the family's dirty linen is an acceptable thing. This results in the non-reporting of abuse cases. This thus encourages the abusers because they know that chances of the matter being reported are almost nil. This is why the rate of abuse from the data seems to be lower than what is reported by the media. According to media reports, the rate of abuse is at an alarming rate.

Sexual abuse (17.2% and from the students data, 23.7%) tops the list of abuses perpetrated against the children. What is most hurting is that the perpetrators are the children's male relatives especially the fathers and uncles. Commissioner of Police Edgar Hillary, has on numerous occasions, called upon the fathers to desist from abusing their daughters, and has described this as the worst decay of moral fibre that he has ever witnessed. He challenged men to be men enough and not rape their daughters. The number of incestuous cases attests to this. Abuse by children against children is insignificant.

It is depressing to note that adults blame the children for the perpetration of abuse against them. They say "children should dress properly, long dresses so as to stop arousing males...school". An adult is the person who provides security to the child, and if the very security provider is so easily aroused, the safety of the children is highly compromised at all quarters.

Data collected indicates that 23.4% of teachers had sexual relations with minors i.e. children in school. This is corroborated by the many reports by the media. This is very depressing because teachers are regarded as guardians of the children in school. Teachers stand in place of parents during the eight hours that they spend with the children. During this period they are solely responsible for the safety and security of the children. This is unethical as far as the teachers are concerned.

When the community members were asked how they dealt with the cases of abuse in the schools, some (4.7%) mentioned that they reported the matter to the police, as abuse is a crime. Also 3.1% mentioned that they discussed the case with the perpetrator. This is because adults either do not want to invoke the anger of the teacher concerned, or they are not aware of their right as adults when it comes to the safety of their children or due to poverty, they will not stop the flow of food supplies to the home. If the matter was reported to either the police or the teaching Service Commission, then the teacher was punished (9.3%) of the time. It is disturbing to note though that 15.6% of the time the abuse was not reported or in the community members words "nothing was done".

Teachers are not the only adults that abuse children. The data reveals that 85.9% of the adults have sexual relations with the minor children in schools. It is time that the reports that are in the media are taken seriously. Laws that protect children should be either reviewed or enacted where they do not exist. The girls and women's protection act for example is out dated and no longer serves the purpose that it was supposed to serve when it was drafted.



According to the non - bail able offences act, rape is non - bail able, but sodomy, incest are bail able. These are serious criminal acts against children, but the act is insufficient enough to let people who committed these crimes off the hook. This is why urgent review or enactment of the protection laws is necessary.

Schools need to be empowered to deal harshly with cases of teachers who abuse children in their care. The data also revealed that 89.1% of the time, teachers ask the students to do their personal chores during class time. This is big time abuse. The teachers are denying the children their right to education, which is clearly articulated in the Mbokodvo manifesto, the CRC and the EFA document to which Swaziland is signatory. Parents need to actively monitor what goes on in the schools. It is their right to know what goes on in schools where their children spend more than eight hours daily.

Of the data collected, there were more females (78.1%) than males (21.9%). This shows that females, be they mothers, aunts or grandmothers are more active in the affairs of the children than males who could be fathers, uncles or grandfathers. Also this corroborates the fact that the male relatives of the children are the primary abusers and hence they would not like to be too close to the survivors lest they blow the horn on them.

According to the data, fathers (5,4%), uncles (4.5%) are most of the time the major perpetrators. The scourge of HIV and AIDS (as shown in 8<sup>th</sup> HIV Sentinel Sero-surveillance Report) also renders a lot of the children vulnerable. They are either orphaned or have to stay with stepparents especially stepmothers. Orphans are most vulnerable because the majority of them live in child headed homes where they have no resources to make living with. They therefore resort to commercial sex work in order to make a living. This then lays them bare to infection. Those that live with sep mothers have to bear with difficult living conditions where some of them say “ I sleep outside and am not given food”.

The majority of the community members are either unemployed or are self-employed on a very small scale, therefore under great stress and depression. They therefore vent their frustration on their children.

Though the data does not conclusively show that parents and guardians are getting younger and younger, this is true from other sources. Children are rising up children, without any parental skills, and still immature for the responsibility they are shouldering. It not surprising therefore that verbal abuse (4.7%) and neglect (7.8%) are some of the abuses against children. Children need to be given time to grow and be ready to be responsible for another human being (their babies).

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **6.0 Discussion of research findings**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

In discussing the findings of this study, this section attempts to identify certain key issues. Views of the three groups of informants are brought to bear on each issue raised. At certain points it was necessary to repeat some data from the three groups of informants in order, both to increase clarity and to situate explanation on specific data in a broad context. Thus, where possible, this section of the report aspired to be as self contained as possible in synthesizing evidence from the three main chapters of the report. However, a major limitation of this chapter is that it has not fully recognised earlier and on-going research on children and abuse, which is done specially by SWAGAA, Save the Children Fund and UNICEF. However, these research activities informed the preparation of this study; so did a May 2001 study by the Department of Guidance Testing, Educational Counselling and Psychological Services in the Ministry of Education on knowledge and behaviour change among students and teachers as strategies to combat the spread of HIV infections (SHIP).

#### **6.2 Knowledge About Abuse**

The informants indicated an over whelming awareness of child abuse inside and outside the schools. The three groups of informants, namely, students, teachers and the community, commented on various aspects of abuse among children who are in and outside school. In many areas, there was a high correlation in their responses. For example, 74.8 percent of the student respondents, 95.2 percent of the teachers and 82.8 percent of the responses from the community knew what 'child abuse' was. This confirms a high prevalence of child abuse in many Swazi schools and communities. The print and electronic media, radio and television report on child abuse with a disturbing regularity, but these were not

the major source of information for our informants. The informants provided information based on their first hand knowledge about abuse in their schools, communities and about children in fact all respondents positively identified scenarios of abuse. This widespread abuse of children is consistent with research undertaken by some NGOs such as SWAGAA.

A large number of teachers and head teachers, 89.3% said that they knew that fondling was a common form of abuse. About 71.9% of the community responses showed that fondling was common. Further, about 90.6% of the community responses, 88.1% of the teachers and 89.7% of the students stated that inviting a child to lie on top of a male or female adult was 'child abuse'. Thus, young girls are induced into sex in different ways.

### **6.3 Types of Abuse**

The types of abuse identified were sexual, ill treatment, beating, physical, emotional, fondling, verbal, negligence and improper use of child labour. An overwhelming majority of the pupils and teachers cited ill treatment of children as the major form of abuse. Among community members, the level of knowledge about ill treatment as abuse was estimated at 82.8%. Term is broad and included many different forms of improper behaviour towards children. Ill-treatment denoted lack of nurturing and normal disciplinary procedure from adults in dealing with children. However, sexual abuse of children is the most prevalent. About 20.7% of the community responses indicated knowledge of sexual abuse among the children in the schools and communities. Similarly teachers and pupils identified sexual abuse as the most prevalent

About 15.1% of the students knew that there were sexual-relationships between teachers and students though some are quick to qualify it by saying that such activities were not there 'anymore'. Similarly, about 23.4% of the communities reported that sexual relationships existed between teachers and students. About 85.9% of community respondents knew someone who had sexual relationship

with a minor. Among the teachers, 63.1% reported that they knew someone who had a sexual relationship with a female child. About 42.6% of the students made the same observation. Sexual abuse was also known between students. However, adults who abuse female students, i.e. teachers and adults who are members of the community, represent greater abuse than that among students. In general, female students are subjected to more abuse than male students. As a result the female students suffer sexual abuse in addition to general ill treatment. However, there is a wide range of abuse to which children in and out of school are subjected. There also appears to be more abuse in rural schools than is the case in urban schools. This worsens unfavourable conditions in rural areas where poverty, travelling long distances to and from school and inadequate food during the course of school attendance are among the major factors, which interfere with learning in rural schools. This is a rather unusual phenomenon because about 77% of the Swazi population that lives in rural areas is considered the vanguard and custodians of Swazi cultural values. These values place a high premium on nurturing children. However, some traditional nurturing methods such as beating as a form of discipline and being dutiful by working for adults may be inconsistent with current definition of abuse and children's rights.

#### **6.4 Sources of Abuse**

The sources of abuse are embedded in the varied social relationships between children and adults. The adults pervert these relationships by taking advantage of young and inexperienced children. Although the study found that some children abused other children both within and outside the school, most of the abuse emanated from adults who are either related to the child, teachers or community members. This is contrary to traditional Swazi values that regard all adults in loco parents in absence of biological parents. All the three groups of informants stated that they considered it as abuse when students were assigned to do personal chores of their teachers. It is teachers who ask students to do teachers' personal errands while classes are in progress. It is curious that students scored (80.2%) lower than teachers (90.5%) and community members

(89.1%) on whether or not it was abuse to ask pupils to do teachers' personal chores during learning time. In discussion with some of the pupil respondents, it would appear that cultural influence led some pupils to believe that it was a duty of young people to be obedient and to obey elders or those in authority. It is considered courteous for young people to serve those who are senior in Swazi society.

There is also a lot of abuse of children taking place in the home and in the communities. In fact, 60.3% of the students reported that most of the abuse took place in the home. About 16.8% suggested that abuse was at school while 2% thought that abuse took place 'in the car' and 8.9% said that abuse took place in the open veldt. The responses were largely slanted towards sexual abuse, however, most students, 49.5%, reported cases of 'physical abuse'. This indicates a high prevalence of corporal punishment both in school and in the community. In about half of the cases reported that 49.8% of the perpetrators were related to the children. It was reported by the students that 'the relationship between the perpetrator and the survivors varied and ranged from fathers (28.8%); mothers (9.7%), neighbours (17.0%) step-parents (9.3%), uncles (24.4%) to cousins (13.6%). About 23.4% of community members felt that most abuse took place in the home while about 48.4% thought most abuse took place in the community rather than at school. In fact, an overwhelming 85.9% of the community members knew of someone who was having a sexual relationship with a minor. Similarly, the majority of the teacher (47.6%) felt that sexual abuse was the most serious form of abuse. In contrast, 49.5 % of the students felt that physical abuse was the most common violation of children's rights.

With the observation that about half of the perpetrators were related to the children while 50.2% were not relatives but were known to the abused children. One can assume that it is difficult to find a safe place for a Swazi child. The Swazi family is highly atomised and is still subjected to much pressure. The research showed that the majority of the children had both parents who were

alive but only about 34.2% lived with both parents. The majority of the children lived in single-parent homes with a father, or mother or grandmother or an uncle. This situation is likely to get worse because the economic prosperity of the late 1970s to the early 1990s is gradually being reversed. As families are subjected to increased economic pressure, it may also increasingly become difficult for family units to survive and look after their children.

### 6.5 Causes of abuse

All the three groups of informants cited several causes of abuse. All those causes underline worrying attitudes of adults towards children. Adults simply took advantage of children who are vulnerable because of their age, in experience, special needs and basic lack of resources. It is instructive that the students had the longest list of causes of abuse as shown below.

#### Causes of Abuse

STUDENTS	TEACHERS	COMMUNITY
Loneliness of sexual abusers	Corruption	Death of parents or guardians
Abusers are sexually starved	Sexual desire	Step-parents
Alcohol	Frustration	Irresponsibility
Poor discipline		Sexual starvation of the perpetrator
Just because the children are young and cannot defend themselves against adults		Neglect
Poverty. Perpetrators take advantage of the state of the child and give them little goodies in exchange for sex.		
Children walking in the forest.		

They don't like children because they are step-children		
Children have nowhere to go because parents are either dead or are away.		
No parental supervision opens abuse by neighbours		

This tabulation describes circumstances leading to abuse, the condition and state of the abuser and the difficult situations in which children find themselves. Descriptions of the abuser as 'frustrated' or 'sexually starved' also imply poor self-control among adults and in adequate policing mechanism for raising alertness and calling for help. It would appear that neither the teachers nor adults in communities take pro-active interventions in suspecting circumstances. There appears to be widespread absence of the Biblical edict of being a brother's keeper. In contemporary language, the spirit of advocacy is either weak or completely absent among teachers and adults in the communities. The virtue of protecting the weak and vulnerable is either low or generally absent. The fact that the respondents cited sexual desire or sexual starvation as the cause of abuse indicates that adults and teachers are not taking the responsibility of protecting the children against abuse seriously.

## 6.6 Reporting abuse

Most of the students, teachers and community members knew that some abuse was reported to different authorities. About 52.8% of the students and 77.4% of the teachers knew where abuse was reported. The abuse was reported to the Royal Swaziland Police, family of the abused child, mother of the abused child and the Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA). For teachers, they were further reports to the Teaching Service Commission. There exists in the schools and the communities individuals and institutions to turn to for those who



have suffered abuse. However the study reveals that most of the abuse cases were not reported because of several reasons. Some of the reasons given for not reporting cases included fear of the perpetrator or not knowing who to report to and how.

### **6.7 The abused and the abusers.**

While adults abuse most of the children, girls have suffered more abuse than boys. The data in this report clearly show that sexual abuse is the most widespread and the most frequently committed abuse. Kith and kin constitute the largest number of abusers. Thus, the adult relatives abandon their responsibility of nurturing the children when they abuse the minors entrusted to them. Even boys who are abused are those in difficult circumstances. These conditions range from orphan hood to poverty or from a permanent situation to a potentially transitory state. Teachers too are among the abusers. These sometimes forsake their professional duty of imparting knowledge and skills to the young. Meanwhile the nation had invested huge sums of money in training teachers who would prepare the future professional and skilled cadres. Thus, the immediate abused person is the child and an obscured victim of abuse is the entire Swazi nation. The abusers also break moral boundaries because they prevail over their own children too. Widespread and diversity of abuse would seem to suggest that life skills relating to assertiveness are not well developed among the children, especially those who have been abused. Thus there is a clear challenge for education on abuse, advocacy and life skills.

### **6.8 Action taken against abuse**

It is fortunate that some abusers are caught and punished. Unfortunately, the punishment has not eliminated abuse because some children reported recent and on-going abuse. About 58.4 percent of the teachers did not know what punishment was taken against erring teachers. An equally large number of teachers, 58.3 percent, did not know of structure to address abuse in the schools. However, there are a few known cases of teachers who have been

dismissed from the teaching profession for sexually abusing school children. The police, the family who talk to the abuser and the “umphakatsi” also deal with the perpetrators. There are also counselling services provided by SWAGAA for those who have survived abuse.

One important observation to make is the absence of a collective and open commitment to eradicate abuse in the schools and the communities. There appears to be a tendency to avoid involvement in eradicating evil and unearth practices against the most vulnerable groups in society.

In concluding this discussion, it should be noted that only certain aspects of the data presented in the report has been selected. As stated already, the major concern was to pull together views of the three groups of informants on particular points. This synthesis provides a way for general and collective remedies. The report has also highlighted the need to equip young people with life skills so that they can defend themselves against abuse. Finally, the report has focused on the complex and multi-faceted nature of abuse. It can only be hoped that comprehensive and targeted remedies could be systematically implemented

## Chapter Seven

### Conclusion and recommendations

#### 7.1 conclusion

From the report, it is apparent that the rate of abuse is still rising, with no sign of slowing down. What is most disheartening is that the perpetrators are the fathers and male relatives who are supposed to provide security and love to the children. Most depressing though was the fact that mothers and grandmothers are also classified as perpetrators.

“ Each day, countless children around the world are exposed to dangers that hamper their growth and development. They suffer...violence.... Or as victims of neglect, cruelty and exploitation” (first call for children, UNICEF, 2002) Indeed in Swaziland, though there is no war, children’s lives are still in jeopardy. They suffer malnutrition, poor sanitation, gender discrimination and most prevalently, abuse. The high rate abuse lay the children vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, thus denying them the security and health they need to grow into productive citizens.

Vulnerability of children is an issue that government and all stakeholders should be concerned with. From the study, poverty, naivety, lack of information about reporting structures, abuse of alcohol have come out as causes of abuse. Children therefore need to be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, especially the child, and in a manner which takes into account ...of persons of his/her age, (Article 37, CRC).

It is important that when a child reports abuse, it should be dealt with the urgency it requires. This will facilitate and promote both the physical and psychological recovery and social re-integration of a child survivor. It is this important those that laws should be reviewed or enacted to protect the child. These laws should “have teeth”, so that justice is seen to be done.

Abuse takes a lot out of the children; it distracts and distorts their view of the world or the environment they are living in. The quote from the *world declaration on the survival, protection and development of the children* summarises and concludes the findings of this report, thus “ the children of the world and of Swaziland are innocent, vulnerable and dependent. They are also curious, active and full of hope. Their time should be one of joy and peace, of playing, learning and growing. Their future should be shaped in harmony and cooperation. Their lives should mature, as they broaden their perspectives and gain new experiences”

This is though, not the reality of most children in Swaziland. Let us all strive to make the above quote a reality of our children.

**“The Lord God helps us all” as one of the children, said.**

## 7.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are derived from the suggestions of the respondents of the study and also by the researchers observations made during the study. It is hoped that the recommendations could help address the scourge of child abuse amongst school going children in the country.

- ❑ There is an urgent need for government to come up with a policy or law on how perpetrators of child abuse can be dealt with.
- ❑ There should also be continuous public awareness on the subject of child abuse.
- ❑ Trained Counsellors should be placed in all communities and schools to provide psychosocial support to the survivors. These people, especially the school counsellor, should specifically look at the children's welfare only.
- ❑ Lessons on Positive Parenting should be given to parents so that they are able to take good care of their children.
- ❑ Life Skills Education should be intensified in schools
- ❑ Both government and the communities should support initiatives such as "Lihlombe Lekukhalela" by UNICEF.
- ❑ Organisations fighting against abuse such as SWAGAA should be supported.
- ❑ Police should be sensitised about child abuse and trained in handling such cases.

- ❑ All teachers should be sensitised about issues of abuse and trained to teach about and handle reported cases of child abuse.
- ❑ Ministry of Education should put in place systems to deal with and handle reported cases of child abuse
- ❑ Rules and Regulations of the teachers should be revisited and enforced.
- ❑ Teachers, children, communities should be introduced to the “Convention on the Rights of the Child”.
- ❑ Cultural practices that impact negatively on the children such as “Indluyekugugela”, “Tibi tendlu” and many others should be discouraged.
- ❑ Only those forms of discipline that are not abusive, should be encouraged in schools.
- ❑ Teacher Training Colleges’ curriculum should include issues of abuse.

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## **Research Instruments**

### **THE SCOURGE OF ABUSE AMONGST SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN IN SWAZILAND**

=====

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

Name of Interviewer: -----
Date of interview:-----
Name of school:-----
Type of school:-----
Rural/Urban:-----
Region:-----
Locality:-----

### **Section A: Personal information:**

1. Sex

Male

☐

Female

☐

2. Age: -----

3. What is the highest academic qualification you hold?

A. None

☐

B. Primary school leaver

☐

C. Secondary /High school leaver

☐

D. Graduate

☐

E. Other (specify)

☐



## 4. Marital status;

- A. Married ☐
- B. Separated ☐
- C. Divorced ☐
- D. Widowed ☐
- E. Never married/not yet married ☐

## 5. What occupation do you do?

- A. Self-employment ☐
- B. Paid employment ☐
- C. Other (specify) ☐

## 6. If you are not earning cash income, how do you provide food and other needs for the family (please specify)

-----

-----

-----

## 7. How many children do you have? -----

## 8. How many are in school? -----

## 9 a) Do you have children who should be in school but are not?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

## b) If yes How many? -----

## c) Specify reason: -----

-----

## **Section B: information on abuse**

10. a) Do you know what child abuse is?

Yes

☐

No

☐

b) If yes, explain what it is? -----

-----

-----

11. Would you consider the following as abuse?

a) Someone fondling a child intimately

Yes

☐

No

☐

b) If parents leave children alone with no adult supervision overnight or longer periods of time

Yes

☐

No

☐

d) Someone tickling a child uncomfortably

Yes

☐

No

☐

e) Someone asking a child to get on top of him/her.

Yes

☐

No

☐

f) If a person calls a child with insulting/degrading language names.

Yes

☐

No

☐

g) If a teacher asks a child to do personal chores during lessons.

Yes

☐

No

☐

12. Do you know of someone who is having sex/intimate relationship with a minor

Yes

☐

No

☐

13. a) In your home, have you noticed/witnessed any signs of child abuse?

Yes

☐

No

☐

14. If yes, how did you get to know about it? -----

-----  
-----

15. Could you say exactly what type of abuse? -----

-----  
-----

16. What do you think was the cause of the abuse?-----

-----  
-----  
-----

17.a) Was there any action taken?

Yes

☐

No

☐

18.a) If yes, what action was taken? -----

-----  
-----

b) By who? -----

19. If no, why not?-----

-----  
-----  
20.a) Have you heard of any child abuse in your area?

Yes

☐

No

☐

21. Could you say exactly what type of abuse it was? -----  
-----

22. What do you think was the cause of the abuse? -----  
-----  
-----

23. Was there any action taken?

Yes

☐

No

☐

24. a) If yes, what action was taken? -----  
-----  
-----

c) By who? -----

25. If no, why not? -----  
-----

26. Are there any student/ teacher intimate relationships you know of in the school?

Yes

☐

No

☐

27. If yes, how does the school deal with such? .....

.....

.....

28. As parents, how do you deal with such cases?.....

.....

.....

29. What do you think should be done to reduce/eradicate the abuse of children?

.....

.....

.....

30. Is there anything else you would like to say? .....

.....

.....

## END OF INTERVIEW

Interviewer's personal comments .....

.....

.....

.....

**THE SCOURGE OF ABUSE AMONGST SCHOOL GOING  
CHILDREN IN SWAZILAND**

=====

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS**

<p>Name of Interviewer: -----</p> <p>Date of interview: -----</p> <p>Name of school: -----</p> <p>Type of school: -----</p> <p>Rural/Urban: -----</p> <p>Region:-----</p> <p>Locality: -----</p>
--

**Section A: Personal information:**

1. Sex

Male

☐

Female

☐

2. Age:-----

3. Form/Grade: -----

4. Are your parents still alive?

Father

Yes

☐

No

☐

Mother

Yes

☐

No

☐

5. Who do you stay with?

Both parents

☐

Father

☐

Mother

☐

Grandmother

☐

Other (specify) -----

6. If one or both parents are alive but staying with grandmother or relative, can you give a reason why you are not staying with your parent(s)? -----

-----

-----

7.a) How many people live with you? -----

b) How many of these are children?-----

8. How do you spend your time when not at school?-----

-----

-----

-----

9. Do you and your parent spend time discussing issues such as growing up, sexuality and related issues?

Yes

☐

No

☐

10. How do your parents/guardian make a living?-----

---

---

**Section B: Information on abuse**

11. Do you know what child abuse is?

Yes

☐

No

☐

12. If yes, explain what you understand by child abuse. -----

---

---

13. Would you consider the following as abuse?

a) Someone fondles you intimately.

Yes

☐

No

☐

Not sure

☐

b) Your parents leaving you alone with no adult supervision overnight or longer periods of time

Yes

☐

No

☐

Not sure

☐

c) Someone tickling you uncomfortably

Yes

☐

No

☐

Not sure

☐

d) Someone asking you to get on top of him/her.

Yes

☐

No

☐

Not sure

☐

e) If a teacher or someone else calls you with insulting names

Yes

☐

No

☐

Not sure

☐

f) If a teacher asks you to do personal chores during lessons

Yes

☐

No

☐

Not sure

☐



14. Do you know someone who is having sex/intimate relationship with a minor.

Yes ☐ No ☐

15. Do you know of any student-teacher intimate relationship?

Yes ☐ No ☐

16. If yes, how does the school deal with such? -----

-----

-----

-----

17. Do you know of anyone who was once abused?

Yes ☐ No ☐

18. If yes, how did you get to know about it?-----

-----

-----

19. What type of abuse was it? -----

-----

-----

20. Was the perpetrator related to the child who s/he abused?

Yes ☐

No ☐

21.If yes, specify the relationship. -----

22. If no, who was it? -----

23.. How old was the perpetrator?-----

24. When did it happen? -----

25. What do you think led to the abuse? -----

-----

26. Was the abuse reported?

Yes

☐

No

☐

27. If yes, to whom? -----

-----

28. If yes, what action was taken?-----

-----

-----

29. If no, why? (Specify) -----

-----

-----

30. a) Have you ever been abused?

Yes

☐

No

☐

b) If yes, how? -----

-----

-----

-----

31. a) Is the person who abused you related to you?

Yes

☐

No

☐

b) If yes, specify the relationship. -----

c) If no, who was it?-----

32. a) Were you given/told anything by the perpetrator?

Yes

☐

No

☐

b) If yes, what were you given or told? -----

-----

33. When was the last time you were abused?

A week ago

☐

A month ago

☐

Six months to a year

☐

Long time ago

☐

34. Where did it take place?-----

-----

35. What do you think led to the abuse? -----

-----

36. Has this affected you? Explain -----

-----

-----

37. Did you report the abuse?

Yes

☐

No

☐

38. a) If yes, what action was taken? -----

-----

-----

a) If no, why not ?-----

-----

-----

39. Has it changed your relationships with people in the

a) Family

☐

Yes

No

☐

b) Community

Yes

☐

No

☐

40. What do you think should be done to reduce/eradicate the abuse of children?

.....

.....

.....

.....

41. Are there pupils in your school known to have parents/guardians suffering from HIV/AIDS?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

42. Do you know if they have suffered discrimination or stigmatisation from peers or teachers?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

43. State how they were stigmatised or discriminated.-----

-----  
-----

44. Is there anything you would like to say?-----

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

**.....END OF INTERVIEW.....**

**Interviewer's personal comments.** -----

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-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

## SCOURGE OF ABUSE AMONGST SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN IN SWAZILAND

=====

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – HEADTEACHERS AND TEACHERS

<p>Name of Interviewer: -----</p> <p>Date of interview: -----</p> <p>Name of school: -----</p> <p>Type of school:-----</p> <p>Rural/Urban:-----</p> <p>Region:-----</p> <p>Locality:-----</p>
---

#### Section A: Personal information:

7. Sex ☐
- Male
- Female ☐

8. Age: -----

9. What is the highest academic qualification you hold?

- |                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Certificate     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Diploma         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Degree (First)  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Other (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. What position do you hold?

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| A. Head teacher        | <input type="text"/> |
| B. Deputy Head teacher | <input type="text"/> |
| C. Teacher             | <input type="text"/> |

11. Marital status:

- |                                  |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| A. Married                       | <input type="text"/> |
| B. Separated                     | <input type="text"/> |
| C. Divorced                      | <input type="text"/> |
| D. Widowed                       | <input type="text"/> |
| E. Never married/not yet married | <input type="text"/> |

12. How many children do you have?

- A. Boys  
B. Girls

13. How many are in school?

- A. Boys  
B. Girls

8 a) Do you have children who should be in school but are not?

Yes

No

b) If yes How many? -----

c) Specify reason: -----

-----

-----

**Section B: Information on Child Abuse**

9. a) Do you know what child abuse is?

Yes ☐

No ☐

b) If yes, explain what it is? -----

-----

-----

10. Would you consider the following as abuse?

a) Someone fondling a child intimately

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

b) If parents leave children alone with no adult supervision overnight or longer periods of time

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

c) Someone tickling a child uncomfortably

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

d) Someone asking a child to get on top of him/her.

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

e) If your peer or an elder or another student calls a student with insulting names/degrading language

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

f) If your peer asks students to do personal chores during lessons

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐



11. Do you know of someone having sex/intimate relationship with a minor?

Yes ☐ No ☐

12. In your home, have you noticed/witnessed any child abuse or signs of it?

Yes ☐ No ☐

13. If yes, what was it?-----

-----  
-----

14. What was the abuse between

Elder boy/ younger child	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Elder girl/ younger child	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher/student	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Adult/child	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

15. What do you think was the cause of the abuse? -----

-----  
-----

16. Was there any action taken?

Yes ☐

No ☐

17. a) If yes what action was taken? -----

-----  
-----

b) By who? -----

18. Have you heard of any child abuse in the area?

Yes

☐

No

☐

19. Could you say exactly what abuse it was?-----

-----

-----

20. What was the abuse between?

Elder boy/ younger child

Yes

☐

No

☐

Elder girl/ younger child

Yes

☐

No

☐

Teacher/student

Yes

☐

No

☐

Adult/child

Yes

☐

No

☐

21. What do you think was the cause of abuse? -----

-----

-----

22. Was there any action taken?

Yes

☐

No

☐

23. a) If yes what action was taken? -----

-----

-----

b) By who? -----

24. How has the abuse affected the child? -----

-----

25. What age group is mainly affected? -----

26. Are there children in your school known to have parents or guardians suffering from HIV/AIDS?

Yes ☐

No ☐

27. Do you know if they have suffered discrimination or stigmatisation while in school from peers or teachers?

Yes ☐

No ☐

28. State how they were stigmatised -----

-----

-----

### **Section C: Institutional Information**

29. How many students are enrolled in your school? (H/T)

A. Boys ☐

B. Girls ☐

30. How many teachers are in the school? (H/T)

A. Female ☐

B. Male ☐

**Teacher: Student ratio** ☐

31. Have you witnessed/heard about child abuse in the school?

A. Yes ☐

C. No ☐

32. If yes, what type of abuse was it? -----

-----

-----

33. Who was the perpetrator?

Student

☐

Teacher

☐

Other (specify)

☐

34. How did you get to know about it?-----

-----

-----

35. How has the abuse affected the child? -----

-----

-----

36. What age group is mainly affected? -----

37. Are there any student-teacher intimate relationships you know of in your school?

Yes

☐

No

☐

38. If yes, how does the school deal with such? -----

-----

-----

-----

39. Are there any teacher-student abusive relationships you know of in the school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

40. Does the school do something about such cases?

Yes ☐ No ☐

41.a) If yes, specify-----

-----  
-----

b) If no why not? -----

-----  
-----

42. a) Since the beginning of this year, how many children have dropped out of school?  
-----

b) What were the reasons? -----

-----  
-----

43. How would you rate the socio-economic status of your community?

Able ☐

Average ☐

Poor ☐

44. What do you think should be done to reduce/eradicate the abuse of children?

-----  
-----  
-----

45. Is there anything else would like to say?-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

**.....END OF INTERVIEW.....**

Interviewer's personal comments: -----

-----

-----

## **List of schools that participated in the study**

### **Primary schools**

1. Qedusizi
2. Mhlambanyatsi
3. Makhwane
4. Emvembili Central
5. Sigombeni
6. Mount Hermon
7. Nyanyali
8. Mliba Nazarene
9. Ebenezer
10. Hluti Central
11. Evelyn Baring
12. Mbukwane
13. Lubombo Central
14. Madubeni
15. Bhekephi
16. Boyane
17. Ezulwini Valley
18. Malkerns Valley
19. Hawane
20. The Peak
21. Dumisa
22. Sigcaweni
23. Othandweni
24. St. Anselm
25. Mhlumeni

**Secondary schools**

1. Hermann Gmeiner
2. Motjane
3. St. Mark's
4. Enhlanganisweni
5. Bhunya
6. Mayiwane
7. Salesian
8. St Anne's
9. Lomahasha
10. Mpaka
11. Mhubhe
12. Lusoti
13. Lamawandla
14. Hlatikulu Central
15. Ngudzeni
16. Mahamba
17. Nhlangano Central
18. Sitsatsaweni
19. Mpolonjeni
20. Mjingo
21. Nkhaba
22. Mcozini
23. Somnjalose
24. Hillside
25. Maphalaleni
26. Mpundle
27. Lulakeni



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