



SPRING OF THE ARID AND SEMI-ARID LANDS (SASAL)

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Findings from Household Survey on Root causes of Gender-Based Violence (AGBV) amongst Drought Affected Communities of Musenke Sub-location, Kajiado county.

Executive Summary

For time immemorial, the pastoral community of Musenke sub-location in Kajiado County has undergone a myriad of challenges directly or indirectly attributed to the changes in weather pattern, under-development, marginalization/neglect by the government and harmful cultural/societal practices that promoted back-ward thinking and highly influencing perceptions. These causative factors have resulted to a multiple other problem affecting health, gender equality, education, economic status and land. The purpose of this study was to carefully identify root causes of gender-based violence and closely associated themes, extent of harm and level of response, understand community's cultural practices, economic status and willingness to accept and welcome change. The study also helped in establishing baselines, understanding statistics and hence guiding the implementation plan as well as help in tracking impact and project sustainability.

The study found out that; **The most common type of GBV type encounter by women and girls of Musenke sub-location is early marriage and physical assaults.** These instances usually occur when they fetch water, collect firewood and when herding animals. Early marriage was highly perpetrated by the persistent droughts while the risk of rape and attempted rape was promoted by the long-distance treks to rivers and forest to fetch water and collect firewood. Cultural practices played a major role in driving or promoting some forms of GBV such as physical assault, emotional abuse and FGM. Other causes of GBV identified are; **lack of policing services, lack of access to justice and lack of awareness amongst the community members. The GBV victims within Musenke sub-location lack access to professional GBV care services.** The health centers that serve the sub-location include Musenke health center and Entasopia. **The health centers are inaccessible, of short supply of drugs and have no specialized unit that provide GBV care services.** The health-care workers in these facilities also lack specialized GBV training. Women and girls from this location also lacked economic status, hardly making enough with the small businesses they engage in such as milk vending, vegetable and Shuka selling hence unable to fend for themselves and are left at their husband's/society's mercy.

In conclusion, lack of access to water and energy was the main causative factor of GBV instances in Musenke sub-location. Climate change has indirectly aggravated instances of gender-based violence such as early marriages, rape, attempted rape and physical assaults through persistent droughts which resulted in massive livestock loss hence poverty and migration in search for water and pasture. Cultural practices on the other hand influenced the overall perception of women and girls as assets, insurance



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scheme and “slaves” hence increasing their vulnerability and subjecting them to harm. The lack of access to health, policing and justice services has further contributed to less reporting of GBV cases as most of the perpetrators failed to be held to account and leave victims feeling threatened and not trusted by their male counterparts.

This study recommends the promotion of access to water and clean energy as a means of reducing gender-based violence instances as well as economically empowering women to give them the power to stand for and fend for themselves, advocacy and awareness creation around harmful cultural practices/ GBV harm, basic human rights as well as avenues of seeking justice. The study also recommends the promotion of access to professional GBV services, psychosocial support and policing services among many other.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Purpose

The drought situation in Kenya and especially the recent drought (October 2022) has devastated the lives of the pastoral communities who solely depend on livestock keeping for sustenance. These communities are polygamous and hence big families living in most marginalized areas practicing nomadic pastoralism. Their economic model involves selling livestock to send children to school, buy food and purchase other necessities. They rely on the natural multiplication of their livestock/cattle to regenerate wealth. This drought has caused the death of 2.4 million livestock hence putting 4.1 million people at the risk of hunger and starvation.

The communities of Magadi ward in Kajiado county were not left behind in this. Livestock was lost and, hence promoting poverty, gender-based violence, school dropouts, health issues, increased distances to water sources as a result of migration and increased gender inequalities.

Gender based violence instances such as rape, physical and mental violence, child marriages and FGM has been further aggravated by extreme climatic events such as droughts, floods etc. in existing societal structures define a woman/girl's role as that of taking care of the family and domestic animals and that involves fetching water, firewood and feeds for animals. These chores result in women walking long distances (in the case of Magadi ward, approx. 10km) to the nearest river, village/ forest to do this, exposing them to attacks by strangers and animals. Some women face mental health diseases such as trauma, depression, others contract sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy, others commit



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suicide and to a further extent some die as a result of these attacks. The long treks, harsh weather/environmental conditions and poor quality of water also perpetuate illnesses such as heat stroke, fatigue, migraines, dysentery, cholera etc.

As a result of drought induced poverty, girls as young as 10 are given out in marriage and before which they have to undergo female genital mutilation to prepare them for marriage. Most of these girls are removed from school to undergo this as a means of compensation/insurance for the larger family who get cattle as bride price hence compensating them for their lost cattle. Some mothers, with no powers to make any decisions for their daughters' face stress and depression from seeing them married off to old men.

Lack of knowledge or awareness on the harm of such cultures and societal practices further contributes to the problem. The level of education in these areas is also low due to lack of schools and teachers (who often decline to be posted there for work). Additionally, the same practices and norms prevent victims from speaking about GBV, reporting to relevant authorities and hence promoting and encouraging such actions which continuously deteriorates the victim's physical and mental health also affecting their resilience/adaptation capability to climate change.

Purpose

The main aim of this assessment/study is to set the foundation of AGBV project implemented by Spring of Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (SASAL) in Musenke Sub-location. The assessment will establish the baseline information for the project, and provide an overview understanding of GBV extent, root causes and available services for girls, boys, men and women in Musenke Sub-location in Kajiado County and hence providing clear pathways for programs/solutions.

The specific objectives of the baseline assessment are:

1. Understanding the root causes and extent of GBV in Musenke Sub-location
2. Availability and accessibility of GBV and health care services to women and girls affected
3. Analysis of socio-economic conditions of women groups in Musenke sub-location
4. Assess the existence of Community wide advocacy on GBV challenging harmful societal and cultural norms

1.2 Methodology

A. Qualitative Methods:

- ❖ 10 key informants (5 service providers, 10 community members) were interviewed. The service providers were from the justice, health, protection sectors with individuals who provided insights on the cultural norms, perception, attitudes relating to GBV as well



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cultural barriers hindering access to support and services within the communities and counties.

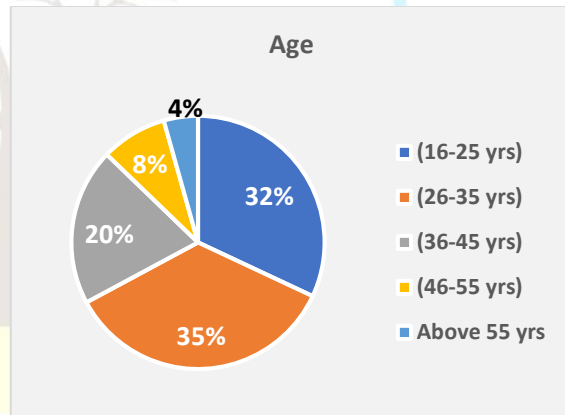
- ❖ 6 FGDs approximately 60 participants: 20 male adult, 20 women adult, 10 female youth and 10 male youth: the participants had vast experience in the community, the FGD were triangulated with the findings from KII and Survey.

B. Quantitative Method:

- ❖ Household survey: sample size of 343 HH were determined with 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error. Key quantitative HH questions were administered (refer to the appendices)

2. Findings and Analysis

Majority of the respondents in Musenke village were 93% female with 7% male. In terms of age, 67% of the respondents were between the age of 16-35 years old as shown on the figure on the right. 69% of the respondents were house hold heads, and 88% at least GBV victims.

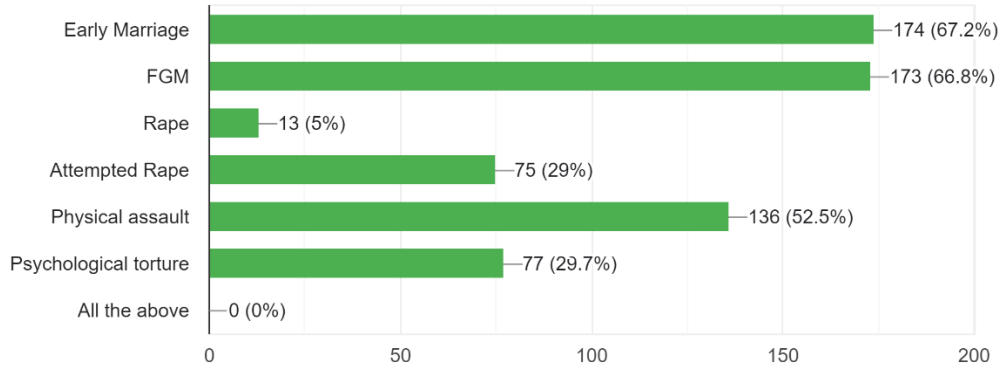




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The figure below shows the spread of different forms of GBV for those respondents who have at least experienced the acts of GBV,



Majority of the respondents indicated that the size of their house hold would comprise of at least six (6) individuals with an average income of KES. 11,779 per month.

2.1 Community profile & village layout:

Majority (98%) of the respondents in Musenke village derive their source of income from Pastoralism only animals and the rest from Small enterprise, Farming and Agro-pastorals_ both farming & livestock. 81% of the respondents indicated that the community has decision making bodies i.e committees and 85% indicated that women are not involved in the community leadership structures (formal and informal) with 83% saying that women are equal participants and decision-makers.

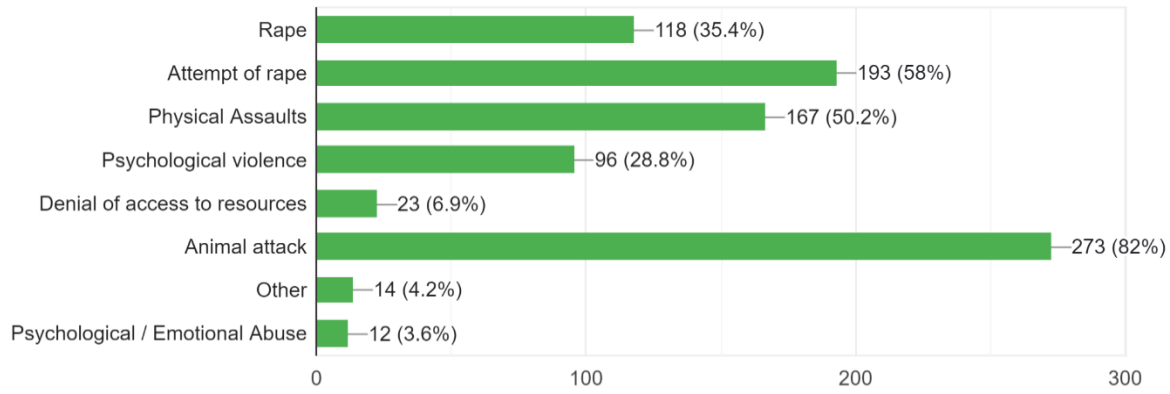
68% of the respondents are living in the house with people who are not part of their nuclear family. 83% do not have latrines in their households, 75% indicated that latrines are not safely to access for girls and women. **Majority of them (84%) indicated that they don't have access to adequate water at the household level.** Main source of water for the community is river Ewasongiro. **87% of them indicated that water collection points are not safe and not easily accessible for women.** Mostly (98%) women and girls are involved in firewood collection, and **similarly firewood collection points are not safe and not easily accessible for women and girls.**

Below are safety concerns associated with women and girls fetching water



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Almost all the FGD participants indicated that the **community main source of income is pastoralism, where they mainly rear cows**. However, few members of the community are engaged in small business i.e **bead making, shop, selling of vegetables, and “shukas” -traditional Maasai clothes-** in the local market. **The community in Musenke sub-location is patriarchal in nature**, where men solely head the households and take part in key decision-making process of the community. The average number of Female Headed Households(FHHH) in this sub-location as per discussants is three hundred and fifty (350HHS), they are mainly the women who are divorced and widows.

In recent years (2019-2022), the community was heavily affected by climate related shocks. The recurrent drought in the area, have negatively impacted their livelihood. **The livestock died, and few remaining animals lost value in terms of sale.** The community don't have adequate water for drinking and domestic use. The main source of water in the sub-location is river Ewaso Ng'iro, which recently dried-up.

Women and girls in Musenke sub-location play an active role both in the household and outside the households. Women take part in livestock production, domestic roles and reproduction. **At the household level, women and girls traditionally do house chores, taking care of children, fetching water, firewood and cooking food.** Despite women and girls being an active member of the communities in Musenke sub-location, **they have less active voice in community decision making process.**

Children, women (specially widows/divorced) and girls in this community are disproportionately impacted by the drought. They are among the most affected and vulnerable community members living within Musenke sub-location. **According to discussants, drought cause death of livestock, thus affecting the nutrition of children since they lack milk to feed them. Kids missed out of schools due to inadequate food and water at the house.** *“There is no water and food, animals are taken far place due to lack of pasture and water. The kids have been affected due to lack of water and food. The kids*



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sometimes don't go to school. When parents move away from home, children become under the care of others. They face abuses, rape or physical assaults."

According to key informant, **children drop out of school when their family move to another place**, in search for pasture and water, especially during the drought periods. **During the drought period, women and girls walk far distance to collect firewood, fetch water and go after weak animals to in search for pasture and water.** Women and girls face risks of GBV as they fulfil their domestic role expected by their men relatives. They can't access water and firewood from its source rarely without paying the price especially during the drought period. **As they trek long distance, desperately looking for firewood and water**, they encounter sexual exploitation and abuses by strange men in the bush and attack from wild animals such as elephant.

"Women and girls are not safe from such abuses, where sometimes they encounter not only wild animals which is dangerous to their life but also strange people at the water points and the bush. Women are forced to have sex even though they are tired after a long day of chores, if they refuse, they are beaten"- FGD session 1: women adults.

*"Women and girls are not safe when accessing firewood and water from the source. They meet unknown people on their way, threatens them and ended up being raped"-*Village elder.

*"Women are beaten by their husbands for delaying fetching water"-*KII women representative.

Additionally, a key informant noted that climate change had negative impact on the communities' livelihood, health and nutrition and as well as the education of their children.

2.2 Understanding the root causes and extent of GBV in Musenke Sub-location

In the community, there known danger zones in the sub-location or near the location where women and girls are at increased risk for violence:

- Orongelata
- On the way to the river
- Ilangata
- Oremit
- River
- Iremit
- Forest areas
- Osiati
- Endim

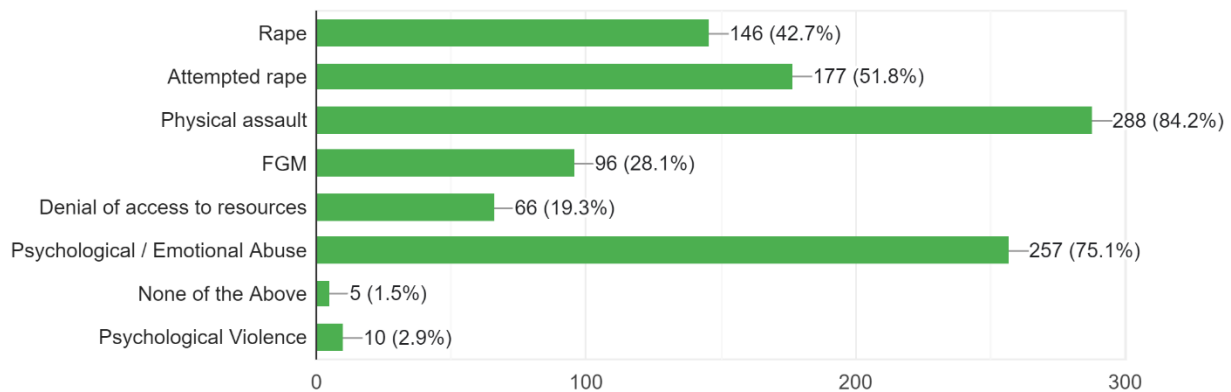


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- *Homes-women without husband exploited buy those left with them, Issues on widows facing challenges on denial of their rightful resources by the one entrusted with the responsibilities, also challenge on early marriage*
- *Mlimani*

Below are the types of GBV commonly faced by women and girls in Musenke village



The nearby forest where women and girls fetch firewood remain one of the riskiest areas within the sub-location. The river is also another danger zones for girls and women within the sub-location. **These two areas are where women and girls face GBV threats.** The participants reported that women and girls in Musenke sub-location encounter various types of Gender Based Violence (GBV). These includes; rape, attempt of rape, physical assaults and early marriages.

The most common type of GBV type encounter by these women and girls of Musenke sub-location is early marriage and physical assaults. Rape and attempt of rape also do happen. **Physical assaults, rape and attempt of rape cases usually occur when they fetch water, collect firewood and when herding animals.** Women and girls aged 15 years to 40 years in the sub-location are at a risk of GBV. **Early marriage happens during the rainy season, but recently it has increased due to the prolong drought period.** Victims of early marriage are girls of age 10 years to 18 years old which mostly happen without the consent of the girl.

“GBV occurs at any time, every woman and girl who can do a household chore is at risk of GBV” FGD session 1: women adults.



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“GBV most occurs in in the bushes and the river. It happens to women and girls when they fetch water and collect firewood. The victim is advised and taken care by the community”-Kil village elder.

The main causes of GBV are shortage of water and firewood, women and girls risk walking far distance and ended up being abused. Other causes are; lack of policing services, lack of access to justice and lack of awareness amongst the community members. The community in Musenke sub-location lack a police post and don't have access to police station. The nearest police station to the sub-location is located at Magadi town (Approx 30Km away), thus inaccessible by the community.

A key informant revealed that there was **no GBV cases reported by the communities living in Musenke sub-location except three cases of rape** which was not criminalized. Both KIIs and FGDs discussants revealed that there were three incidents of rape cases that was reported to the health centers, but most of the rape cases are unreported. **There is no interagency committee that deals of GBV issues within the sub-location.** According to the discussants, **the victims of the GBV don't report the cases to their relatives, however they report to the community leaders for medical assistance or referral.** One of the elders interviewed noted that **some victims report GBV cases to the chief and or the Divisional officer (DO). The victims shy away from their relatives, in fear of stigmatization.** Some of the discussants noted that victims of GBV don't report the case to the police but they do go to the hospital.,

“They fear that they will be accused of lying about the event”

The community are mainly influenced by their traditional systems, in regards to managing GBV cases. The discussants of the FGDs **revealed that GBV cases are resolved through traditional systems** at the community level and it is not reported to the police. **Rape victims in the sub-location don't get access to justice, but they further get abuses such as denial of access to education.**

Mental health problems and poor health conditions are also some of the health effects reported by women and girls due to the forced marriages and abuses related to the long treks to fetch water and firewood. Climate change events such as prolong drought have exacerbated some of the GBV occurrences by inducing migration in search for water and pasture moving the community deep into marginalized areas and farther away from social amenities. **Discussants of the FGDs reported that early marriage is a recent concept within the community and not culture since long ago adult male used to marry adult women (their adulthood could be estimated by breast size).**

Due to the economic pressure, during the drought, girls are married to adults at young age, for exchange of livestock as dowry. **The young girls drop out of school and are barred from education after being married to a man at an early age.** An informant explained that the main reasons for parent in the sub-location to marry off their young daughters to early, is due to the drought. **Most of these parents lost their livestock to the drought, as a result they promote early marriage to get cows in form of dowry of their daughters.**

“Drought increased domestic chores by women, increasing their work load both attending to household and other chores related to outside home. The long distance treks in search for firewood and water.



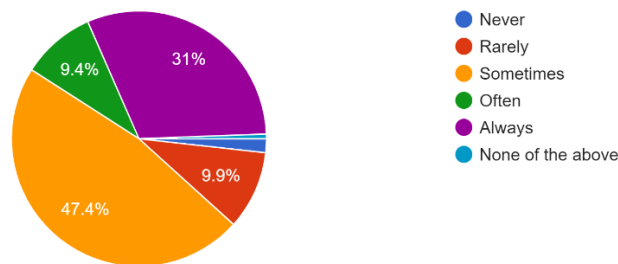
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They get raped. Drought results to death of livestock. Due to this, domestic violence against married women increases. Girls are given out for marriage at young age, for the father to get cows as dowry to replace those that he lost due to the famine.” Female youth

Key informant noted that the community have negative attitudes that promotes occurrence of GBV such as FGM. **“They believe if a girl has not undergone the “cut” it brings a curse hence they promote it.”**

In terms of frequency of occurrence of the GBV acts, 40% of the respondents indicate high frequency of the GBV acts in the community.



95% of the respondents expressed confidence in reporting GBV cases if they heard about a case of sexual violence against a woman or girl occurring inside or near the village. 55% of the respondents indicated to be aware of CSOs i.e women groups that sensitize people against Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), FGM and Child Early Forced Marriage (CEFM) in Musenke Sub-location and mentioned the likes of AMREF, Wamama, Naretoi, Women Village elders, Women groups, Elamae, Mary group, Nengoyo Tiparo, Naloimer, Duonte Women’s group, Church and leaders, Oldorko School, Namelok, Missionaries, Teyia, CHAK.

2.3 Accessibility of GBV and health care services to women and girls affected

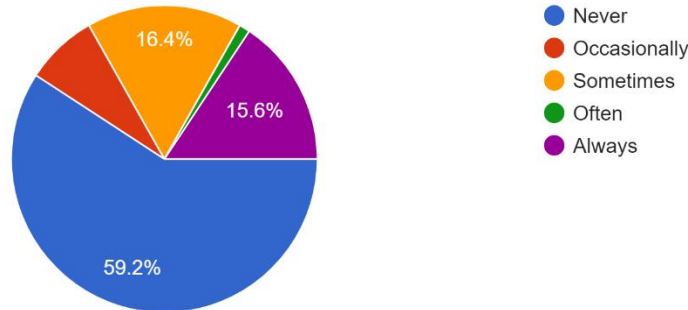
58% of the respondents expressed knowledge of health care centers that treat GBV victims in Musenke sub-location, however, only 6% have ever taken GBV victim, a relative or family to the health center to get a GBV care.

Only 35% of the respondents expressed knowledge of trained health care providers that provide psychosocial support at the community health center and the frequency of psychosocial care service provision, as shown in the figure below.



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95% of the respondents indicated positive knowledge of the number of professional health workers working in the village's health center of only two (2) professional health workers. 30% of the respondents indicated none to the number of women healthcare personnels and midwife that are trained on mental health and psycho-social support.

The GBV victims within Musenke sub-location don't get access to GBV care services. The health centers that serve the sub-location include Musenke health center and Entasopia. **The health centers are inaccessible, of short supply of drugs and have no specialized unit that provide GBV care services.** For instance, **the average distance of Entasopia health center is 10 KM far away from the settlements.** The health centers mainly provide primary healthcare. **The closest health facility which is located within the sub-location provide both outpatient and inpatient services such as maternity and family planning.** The facilities' staffs who are employed by Kajiado County government, lack training on GBV care. The health centers don't have midwives but with only some few nurses. Despite the staffs not trained, they encounter rape cases reported to them and they offer basic psychosocial support.

"The is only one nurse that offer diagnostic treatments and preventable services. We don't have resources to access SGBV trainings. The SGBV needs detailed trainings, the college basic education is not enough. We only offer basic services, but not full comprehensive GBV care services as required." Nurse at Musenke Health Centre

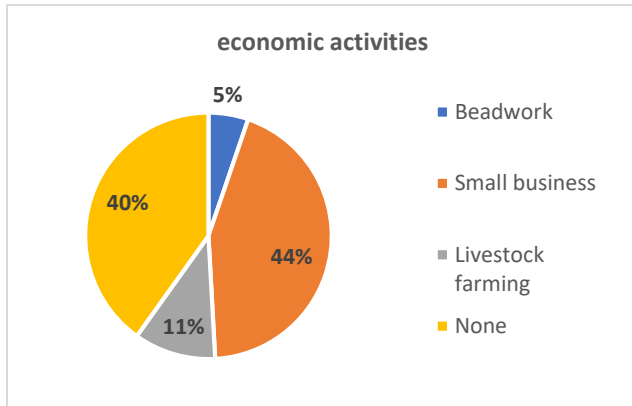
2.4 Socio-economic conditions of women groups in Musenke sub-location

Majority of women in Musenke village and engaged in small business as their economic activity

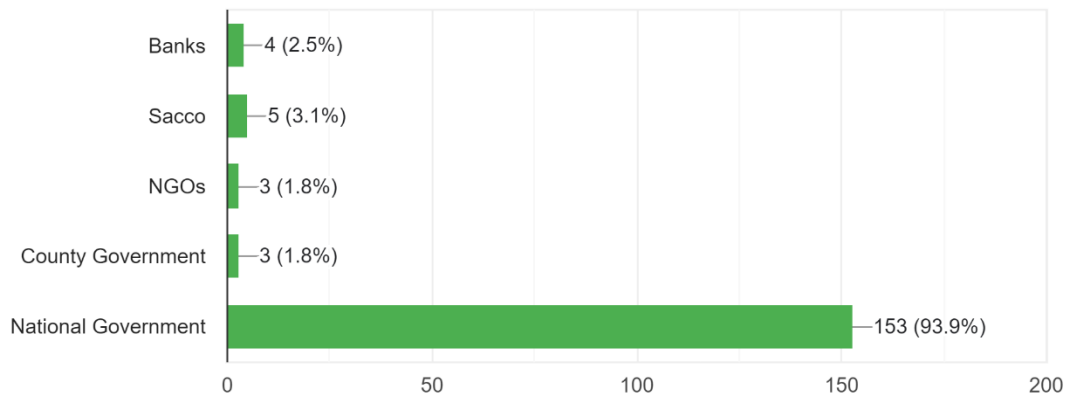


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Only 2% of those involved in beadwork are trained in entrepreneurship and only 23% are members of a group that engages in bead making, none of the respondents has a marketing platform i.e social media account to market and access information. Only 4% of the respondents do access loans from financial institutions with below as the sources of the loans.



The study further reveals that in Musenke sub-location, few women are engaged in bead making as individual entity and not as a group or cooperative. They don't have a market structure to sale the beads but do sale the products occasionally during wedding ceremonies and market days. **These women often don't get fair price for their products due to lack of negotiation power**, inadequate negotiation and entrepreneur skills. **Thus, they don't get reliable monthly income out of the bead making business.** The women engaged bead making also lack marketing platform and as well access to financial services such as loans. However, some of the informant interviewed revealed that some women engage in Merry go -round, where they can get access to informal loans. Thus, despite the vast opportunity for economic growth, **they often face huge challenges, poor income, lack of marketing, inadequate skills, lack of marketing platforms, financial resources, lack of promotions and market to sale off their products at a good price.**

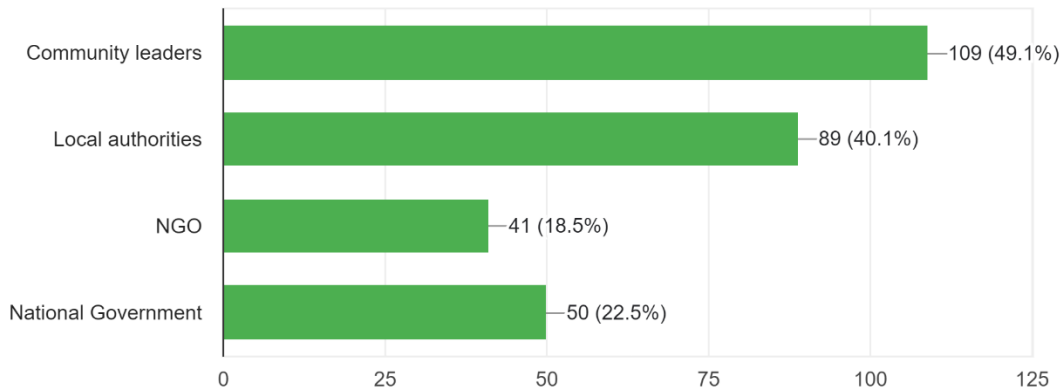


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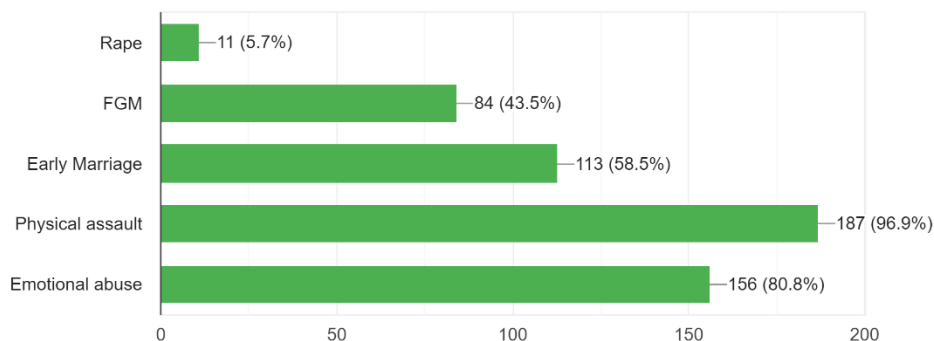
2.5 Community wide advocacy on GBV challenging harmful societal and cultural norms

49% of the respondents have ever attended community sensitization sessions on GBV causes and harm which was conducted by the organizations shown in the below figure.



About 35% of the respondents indicated to be taking part in voicing against GBV root causes, with 90% indicating that local authority does address GBV cases.

Cultural practices play a major role in driving or promoting some forms of GBV. The below figure briefly shows some of the practice/instances promoted by cultural practices.

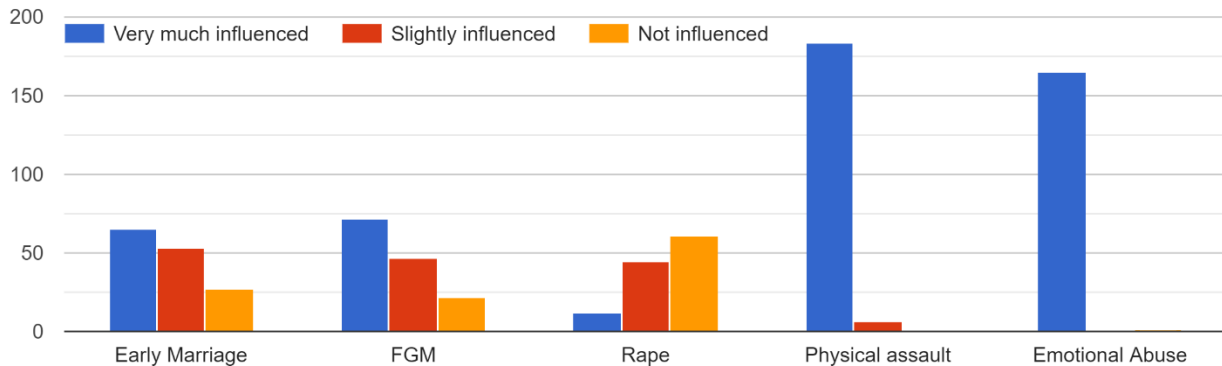


Physical assault and emotional abuse rank highest among the instances influenced by the cultural practices in Musenke village as shown in the figure below.



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There is poor awareness on GBV causes and harm amongst the community in Musenke sub-location. Women and girls have no voice within the community regarding GBV case resolution, advocacy and reporting. Women and girls don't actively take part in advocacy, neither do they well represented within community meetings or decision-making bodies. Discussants noted that the community have not been sensitized on GBV recently. Participants noted that currently, there are no CSOs and women groups that sensitize women and girls on GBV.

Women and girls have no voice regarding addressing GBV issues within the community. However, local authorities such as chiefs do little sensitization sometimes to the community and take part in addressing GBV issues affecting the community such as FGM and early marriages. The sensitization sessions on early marriage and FGM is mainly given to school going children at the schools. The last time sensitization was made by NGOs was decade ago, in 2013 where AMREF was running GBV care program in the area. In recent years, there was no such efforts were reported within the sub-location.

3 Conclusion:

The community members especially women and children including school going girls in Musenke sub-location are most vulnerable to climate change which exacerbated GBV cases that was already promoted by some cultural practices. **Women and girls in Musenke sub-location play an active role both in the household and outside the households.** However, during drought period, **women and girls pay a price for both indoors and outdoors roles, by facing GBV threats** especially around important community resource centers such as forest, where firewood is collected and as well rivers, where the community source water from. **These is a great concern that with poor awareness on GBV harm, the situation may be worse. Drought conditions led to children dropping out from school as they follow their parents when moving to another place to seek for pasture and water with their livestock.**



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Early marriage is the main common type of GBV type encounter by these women and girls of Musenke sub-location. Early marriage happens during the rainy season, but recently it has increased due to the **prolong drought period**. Victims of early marriage are girls of age 10 years to 18 years old which mostly happen without the consent of the girl. **Shortage of water and firewood make women and girls vulnerable to GBV threats. Other factors that contribute to this GBV risks is lack of policing services, lack of access to justice, community's perception and lack of awareness amongst the community members.** Most of the GBV cases went unreported, and end up being settled through traditional settings. **The community is mainly influenced by their traditional systems, in regards to managing GBV cases. Mental health problems and poor health conditions are also some of the health effects reported by women and girls who are victims of early marriage and other form of abuses.** It is clear that climate change events such as prolong drought have exacerbated some of the GBV occurrences.

The GBV victims within Musenke sub-location don't get access to GBV care services. The health centers are not adequately equipped and staffs not trained to provide GBV care. **Health centers that provide GBV care are inaccessible to the community. The closest that could have provided the GBV services lacks adequately trained nurses. Though efforts are being made by local authorities, in GBV advocacy and taking part in voicing against GBV root causes, cultural practices is a major set-back, promoting some forms of GBV cases that are threat to school going girls. Despite the challenges, some of the women in the sub-location play a role in running small business. Some are in vegetable business, milk vending and bead making.** These Women especially those in bead making business act as individual entity and not as a group or cooperative. **The major challenges they face include; poor income, lack of market, inadequate skills, lack of marketing platforms,** financial resources, lack of promotions and market to sale off their products at a good price

4 Recommendations:

- ✚ To effectively reduce the instances of GBV, the project needs to ensure access to water and clean energy (reduce distance to access both necessities)
- ✚ The AGBV project should focus on creating awareness to voice against GBV and harmful cultural practices that promote it.
- ✚ The AGBV project should promote access to services such as psycho-social support to GBV survivors.
- ✚ AGBV project should provide awareness to school going children on GBV harm, causes, gender zones within the sub-location and train girls on self-awareness and how to report incase GBV threats happens.



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- ✚ SASAL should collaboratively engage the traditional leaders, local authorities, parents and guidance on creating awareness and advocating against GBV and harmful cultural practices that promote it.
- ✚ SASAL should advocate for the community to get access to well-equipped health centers that provide GBV and other protection services to the community.
- ✚ SASAL should advocate for the community to get access to justices, and convince the national government to install police station to fully protect and provide justice to GBV victims.
- ✚ AGBV project should economically empower women to get better income through alternative sustainable livelihood activity, marketing, enhancing entrepreneur skills and financial support through grants or loans.

