



RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

FACT SHEET

CHILD ABUSE IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

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This fact sheet reflects and reminds us of the levels of child abuse occurring in our schools. Teachers, to whom parents and guardians expect protection of their children, happen to be the main perpetrators of child abuse. This situation should be stopped.

Cases of Child abuse are on the increase in Zimbabwe, especially in the education sector where more than 700 rape cases of girls aged 5 to 16 were reported in 2005 to the Girl Child Network Zimbabwe. According to the statistics, 93 percent of the victims are girls whilst the remaining 7 percent are boys. The types of abuse range from sexual abuse, physical abuse and emotional abuse and are perpetrated mostly by guardians at the schools. Analysis by the Girl Child Network of 246 reported cases of abuse in 1996 by teachers in secondary schools in Zimbabwe identified 212 cases of sexual abuse, 33 cases of physical abuse and one case of emotional abuse.

Sexual Abuse

According to the 1996 analysis by Girl Child Network, 99,1 percent of the perpetrators were male, of which 69.3 percent were under 30 years of age and 29.7 percent were 30 to 40 years of age, and only 1percent was over 40. Furthermore, 81.6 percent of the perpetrators were trained teachers. A total of 65.6 percent of the perpetrators had had ‘sexual intercourse’ with their pupils and other kinds of abuse including writing love letters, fondling (breasts, buttocks, thighs, private parts), kissing or hugging, rape, attempted rape and showing pornographic material to pupils.

Physical Abuse

Analysis of the 33 cases shows that most perpetrators (94.1 percent) were male and trained teachers. Most pupils, (75.8percent) had been caned, beaten, whipped, or hit without the head teacher’s authority. Others had been slapped, punched and one pupil was kicked. The study found that 80 percent of the pupils caned, beaten, whipped or hit were male students whilst female students were either slapped or caned.

Emotional Abuse

One case of emotional abuse was reported involving a male teacher who had made both male and female pupils to kneel on hot cement surfaces without shoes resulting in the development of blisters on their feet.

The tables below show the information highlighted above;

Table 1:

Analysis by Gender of Teachers

Teacher Gender	Number of cases	Percentage
Male	210	99.1
Female	2	0.9
Total	212	100

Table 2:

Analysis by Teacher Status

Teacher Status	Number of Cases	Percentage
Trained	173	81.6
Untrained	39	18.4
Total	212	100

Table 3:

Analysis by Nature of Abuse

Nature of Abuse	Number of Cases	Percentage
Sexual Intercourse	139	65.5
Love Letters	55	26
Fondling, kissing, and hugging etc	23	10.9
Rape or attempted rape	4	1.9
Showed Pornographic material	1	0.5
Total	212	100