

**ASSESSMENT OF THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE A  
CASE STUDY OF LAIKIPIA DISTRICT NANYUKI COUNTY KENYA**

**BY MAINA MARGARET**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The central focus of the study was to assess the causes and effects of child sexual abuse in Laikipia District Nanyuki county,. The study findings were based on four objectives which included; Investigation of the factors that contribute to child sexual abuse assessing people's attitude on child sexual abuse and what they are doing about various intervention measures.

The sample constituted 50 female children (0-16 years) who were drawn from Laikipia district. The respondents were selected using snowball sampling technique. Data was collected from the field using primary technique, which is the self-administered questionnaires, and analyzed using excel. The main objective was to get descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency distribution tables which were used in data presentation and interpretation.

From the findings, sexual abuse is one of the many forms of abuse that affects many children within Laikipia district. Child sexual abuse violates the child's health and human rights, and also interferes with the development of her personality. In most cases the offenders were well known to their victims. They coerced children by offering attention gifts, manipulating or threatening their victims, using aggression and a combination of tactics.

The findings also revealed that, most sexual abuse took place in the context of an ongoing relationship between the abuser and the child. The long term relationship gave the offender an opportunity to exploit the child's desires and fears. An incestuous father, for example, gave his child special privileges or gifts to obtain her cooperation and silence.

The study found that, child abuse often negatively affects long term psychological and social well being of a child. Sexual abuse survivors were at higher risk for mental health and social functioning problems resulting to feelings of powerlessness, guilt, shame, stigmatization and low self esteem. Powerlessness damages coping skills and reduces the ability to protect oneself from further abuse.

The study concludes that, child sexual abuse is largely a hidden crime, so it is difficult to estimate the number of people who are sexually abused at some time during their childhood. Both adults and children may be reluctant to report the sexual abuse. Their reluctance is related to the historical norm of keeping such behavior secret because of the sense of shame associated with it or because of the "myth" such as HIV/AIDs can be cured through sex with a virgin.

In the light of these findings, the study recommends that; a partnership needs to be established with all stakeholders; youth, parents, religious leaders, teachers, and counselors.