

Abstract

Sexual abuse has for a long time been recorded in literature, art and science in many parts of the world. Reports of defilement, indecent assault, rape and other forms of sexual abuse against children with physical disabilities date back to ancient civilizations. Children with physical Disabilities are subordinated to adult control and associated with social exclusion that makes them vulnerable to sexual abuse. This paper describes the voices of physically challenged children on sexual abuse against them based on a qualitative study conducted between August 2010 and August 2011 in Bungoma County in Western Kenya. The main objective of this study was to document the various forms of sexual abuse children with physical disabilities encounter in rural Kenya. Purposive and snowballing sampling procedures were used to draw respondents for the study. A total of twenty (20) respondents (children with physical disabilities) who included ten boys and ten girls participated in this study. Data was collected using in-depth interview guide, Focus group discussions guide and observation guide for a period of one (1) year. Results indicate that children with physical disabilities in rural Kenya face various forms of sexual abuse which affect them in various ways. Majority (60%) of the cases of sexual abuse were committed by immediate family members and were not reported to law enforcement agencies, and those cases that were reported to law enforcement agencies, majority (55%) of them did not go to court due to lack of sufficient evidence. Girls with physical disabilities were more likely to experience sexual abuse than boys with disabilities. The findings justify the need for workshops to sensitize the rural communities and other stakeholders on the various forms of abuses children with physical disabilities experience, their human rights and how to prevent child abuse particularly in rural Kenya.