

Gender Based Violence (GBV) Survey 2006 Summary Report

In 2006, the Central Statistical Office (CSO), with the financial support of the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF), carried out The Gender Based Violence (GBV) Survey. This was a nationwide survey carried out to determine the prevalence of gender based violence in Zambia. The information collected from this household based survey were meant to facilitate the development, the implementation and the monitoring of policies and programmes against this phenomenon, as well as to promote social attitudes in favour of the sustainable prevention and progressive eradication of all forms of gender based violence.

Methodology and Data Collection

The Gender-Based Violence Survey (GBV) was conducted in 2006 and had a national coverage. The GBV surveyed household population in both rural and urban areas. The survey excluded institutional populations such as those in hospitals, Barracks or refugee camps. The sample size for the survey was 2000 household allocated between rural and urban areas in proportion to the population of each domain according to the 2000 census results.

The main objectives of the study were:

- To collect information on incidences of gender based violence in homes;
- To provide information on the prevalence of cultural practices such as initiation ceremonies;
- To provide information on men's attitudes towards women in relation to dowry and bride price;
- To provide information on property grabbing and inheritance as well as wife inheritance;
- And to provide information on sexual cleansing.

Summary of Results

At national level, more than 70 percent of all the persons between the age of 25 and 59 years were married. The sex distribution shows that, males delayed marrying. Most of the married males were in the age groups above the age 25 years. Results also showed that early marriages were still common in Zambia with all age groups above the age of 25 years recording more than 70 percent being married. Generally higher proportions of males than females reported to have been married in all age groups above the age of 30 years.

The results further showed that living together is not a very common phenomenon in Zambia with only 4 percent at national level.

A total of 33 percent reported to have been forced into marriage, 35 percent reported to have gotten pregnant or made someone pregnant and 10 percent reported that it was tradition. Twenty one percent reported that they had other reasons why they got married early. High percentages of males than females who were forced to get married for all the age groups Females mainly reported pregnancy.

At national level, 93 percent of the people paid less than a million kwacha as bride price. About 3 percent paid between one million and 1, 5 million kwacha. The results also show that less than 1 percent paid between 1.5 and 2 million kwacha and another 1 percent paid more than 2 million kwacha. A higher proportion paid below one million in rural areas, 96 percent compared with 85 percent in urban areas.

Almost half the persons in the survey thought Lobola is an honour to tradition while about a third said it preserves marriages. One out of ten persons indicated that Lobola guarantees full control of the partner while 6 percent indicated that Lobola guarantees getting the children in case of divorce.

People who thought lobola was bad gave reasons such as, It is a cost of a divorce, It is unreasonably high and that it introduces restrictions between partners. Nationwide, 39 percent thought that Lobola was unreasonably high, 23 percent thought it was a cost of a divorce and 25 percent thought it introduces restrictions between partners.

Nationwide, both males and females indicated that on average, men lived with 2 wives. In rural areas, both males and females indicated that the average number of wives is 2. In urban areas, females indicated 2 wives while males indicated that they lived with 1 wife on average.

Survey results indicate that overall 44 percent of respondents have undergone some kind of initiation ceremony. More females-about two thirds have been initiated compared to males of whom only 21 percent were initiated. In rural areas overall 48 percent have been initiated. Among the females in rural areas, above two thirds had been initiated compared to only 24 percent of their male counterparts.

According to the findings the average age at initiation is 16 years overall. Males are initiated at older ages than females. The average age at initiation for males is 19 years while it is 15 years for females.

Eighty four percent of those who were initiated revealed that they were taught personal hygiene. The second commonly taught lesson mentioned by 71 percent was about marriage. Fifty eight percent cited lessons that relate to respect for husbands.

According to results of the survey, six percent of the eligible population was circumcised. Among the males, 11 percent were circumcised and 1 percent of the female population was circumcised.

Sexual and gender violence increases the risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies, because it does not allow the victim to negotiate safe sex or condom use.

The study shows that 86 percent of women and men aged 15-49 years in Zambia have had their first sexual encounter. The average age at first sex is 18 years for both men and women, in both the rural and urban areas. However, 13 percent of women and 9 percent of men say they did not want to have sex the first time they had sex.

Knowledge of 'dry sex' is high among both women (59 percent) and men (46 percent), while the practice is relatively higher in rural than in urban areas. Overall, 31 percent of women reported having practised 'dry sex' in the twelve-month period prior to the survey (37 percent of women in rural and 18 percent in urban).

Three quarters of those who have practiced 'dry sex' in the last 12 months prior to the survey hold the view that the practice was more enjoyable. However, more women in urban areas than in rural are of the view that 'dry sex' is bad and should be discouraged

Four percent of the men and women aged 15-49 years in Zambia have experienced some form of sexual abuse, with more women abused in both rural and urban areas. The most common place of first sexual abuse was the Abuser's home (27 percent), the Relative's home (22 percent), the school (15 percent) and the respondent's own home (11 percent). 57 percent reported lack of action to stop the abuse. Only 7 percent reported that the abuse/abuser had been reported to local authorities, 9 percent that penalties had been imposed on the abuser. However, 2 percent reported being despised by those they shared their ordeal with.

Two in five persons (43 percent) reported that sexual cleansing is practiced in their culture or tradition. Comparison by sex shows that females were more likely than males to report that sexual cleansing is practiced (44 percent compared to 42 percent). Eleven 11 percent did not know if sexual cleansing was practiced in their culture.

Majority of persons were of the view that sexual cleansing should be done away with. About four in five (79 percent) persons said it should be done away with 14 percent saying it was tradition and must be practiced.

The results show that 43 percent reported going through a cleansing ceremony. Slightly more males (47 percent) than females (41 percent) reported being cleansed. Analysis by residence shows that cleansing was more common in rural than urban areas, 59 percent of persons in rural areas reported going through a cleansing ceremony, while only 16 percent of persons in urban areas reported going through a cleansing ceremony.

Results show that the majority of persons (77 percent) willingly went through sexual cleansing. Comparison between the sexes shows that more males than females reported that they willingly went through sexual cleansing, with almost nine in ten males (87 percent) compared to about three quarters (73 percent) reporting that they agreed to go through the sexual cleansing. Almost a quarter (23 percent) of persons reported that the cleansing was against their will with females showing less willingness than males to go through sexual cleansing (27 percent compared to 13 percent for males).

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents reported having received any of their spouse's assets or valuables. The practice of property grabbing was more prevalent in the rural areas than in urban areas.

Three out of four victims of property grabbing did not do anything to mitigate their plight. This was much more so in the rural areas. Only 12 percent reported to the police and/or the Victim Support Unit (VSU); women in the urban areas were six times more likely to report to the police/VSU than their rural counterparts.

Twenty-two percent of the children of the widowed respondents were affected by the inheritance issues. Female children were about twice more likely to be affected by the inheritance issues than male children. The proportion of children affected was higher in the rural areas than in the urban areas.

The survey results also reveal that 13 percent of the widowed were claimed in marriage to their deceased spouses' relatives. This was more common among females than males, as 15 percent of the females were married off to a relation of the deceased, compared to only 4 percent of the males who were married off to the sister of the deceased. This practice was more prevalent in the rural areas than in the urban areas. Most of the widows were claimed by cousins and brothers of the deceased.

Generally a high proportion of persons agreed that wife beating is not justified with the exception of circumstances when a woman goes out with another man. Women's infidelity was viewed as a justified reason to beat or hit the wife; about three in five (60 percent) persons said that a man was justified in beating the wife for this reason.

Almost two thirds (65 percent) in rural areas agreed that a husband was justified in beating the wife compared to one in five (20 percent) in urban areas. More than a third (38 percent) in rural areas said that a husband was justified in beating the wife if she neglected the children compared to 29 percent in urban areas.

Almost one in five (19 percent) respondents reported they were slapped sometimes, 3 percent reported being slapped often and 78 percent not at all in the twelve months preceding the survey. More females than males reported being slapped sometimes (23 percent compared to 14 percent).

The results show that 16 percent report that they had physically hurt their spouse or partner. Males were more likely than females to hurt their spouse or partners (20 percent compared to 12 percent).

For more information on the Gender Based Violence Report members of the public can buy the report from the CSO headquarters at K40,000:00 a copy.