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THE OBSTACLES HINDERING PERFORMANCE OF POLICE GENDER DESKS IN ADDRESSING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE, A REFLECTION OF ARUSHA REGION

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1.0 ABSTRACT

The study assessed the role of the Police Gender Desk(PGD) in fighting gender-based violence (GBV) amidstincreased cases of GBV in Arusha region, Tanzania. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used where questionnaires, interview, focus group discussion, and documentary review were used as key data collection methods. The study reached total of 100 participants across northern Tanzania, applied key informant interviews, focused group discussion as well as questionnaire.The study employed descriptive methods whereby collected data, after being processed by computer through SPSS package in which data where tabulated in tables and percentage, then calculated so as to facilitate the interpretation as well as drawing a conclusion. The study revealed numbers of challenges included limited resources, inadequate training, societal norms and attitudes towards gender-based violence, lack of coordination with other agencies, and institutional barriers within the police force

KEYWORDS: Gender, Gender Based Violence, Gender Desk and Gender equality

2.0 INTRODUCTION.

Globally, gender based violence has been a problem since time immemorial. Efforts have been made by putting in place United Nations declarations on the rights of women and domesticated in municipal laws and policies but the said problem have never ended (WHO, 2020). The level of the Gender Based Violence is not the same around the world; its intensity differs from country to country. Example in Tanzania under Police Gender desks, strict laws

and policies have managed to reduce the problem to great extent but it still facing many challenges that leading to poor results(Doody, O, & Doody, C. M. 2015).

WHO (2015) revealed that, 130 million women and girls were the victims of female genital mutilation (FGM) worldwide, 35% of women experience physical and sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. However, 14.1% of men and 29.3% of women aged 16 and over have experienced some form of domestic abuse since the age of 16 (2021/22) equivalent to an estimated 3.3 million Male victims and 7.1 million female victims. For every three victims of domestic abuse, two will be female, one will be male. One in four women and one in six to seven men suffer from domestic abuse in their lifetime. (2) 3.0% of men (699,000) and 6.9% of women (1.671 million) aged 16 and over were victims of domestic abuse in 2021/22 equating to a ratio of two female victims to every one male victim.

Gender based violence in Tanzania is rapidly growing, despite the introduction of Police Gender Desks. Police Gender Desk is amongst essential agency for combating Gender Based Violence in Tanzania, the study focused mainly in obstacles hindering perfornace of Police Gender Desks in addressing GBV in Tanzania

3.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used a cross-sectional research design because helps the researcher to collect many data at a single point, it also allows to collect both qualitative and quantitative research. A sample of 100 participants where engaged in the study. The study used a Purposive and simple random sampling approach to select participants. Data was collected using key informant interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaire and in-depth interviews.The study employed only descriptive methods whereby collected data, after being processed by computer through SPSS package, were tabulated in tables and percentage, was calculated so as to facilitate the interpretation as well as drawing a conclusion.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Challenges facing PDG in addressing GBV cases(%)

Challenges facing police gender desks in addressing gender-based violence	SA	A	N	D	SD
The training programs improves the skills of officers working in PGD	50	40	5	0	5
The lack of specialized training Affect the handling of gender-based violence cases by PGD	45	45	5	0	5
The limited resources impact the ability of police gender desk	15	40	5	25	15

to effectively address GBV cases					
Police gender desks can improve engagement with local communities to raise awareness about GBV and encourage reporting	55	35	5	5	0
There are strategies that can be implemented to build trust between PGD and survivors of GBV	45	40	10	5	0
Gaps in the legal framework may impede the prosecution of perpetrators of GBV	35	45	5	10	5
Lack of data on gender-based violence affect the ability of police gender desks to address these issues effectively	40	40	10	0	10
PGD face challenges in collaborating with other agencies, such as social services and healthcare providers, to provide comprehensive support to GBV survivors	40	50	5	5	0
Police Gender Desk improve data collection and reporting mechanisms to better track GBV trends and measure the impact of their interventions	40	40	10	5	5
There are cultural barriers that may prevent survivors seeking help from the police Gender Desks n	55	25	5	5	10

Source: Research Findings, 2026

Findings reveals that, 50% of respondents strongly agree, 40% of respondents were Agree, 5% of respondents were Neutral, while 40% of respondents were strongly disagree on the Only a small fraction (5%) remain neutral, and an equally small percentage (5%) strongly disagree. This suggests that while there is overwhelming support for training programs, there may still be some areas for improvement or differing opinions on their effectiveness, training programs as one of the impacts on improving the skills of officers working in Police Gender Desks (PGD), with 50% strongly agreeing and 40% agreeing that these programs are effective. This indicates that proper training was enhancing the capabilities of officers to handle gender-based violence cases effectively. Research by (Kelly & Westmarland, 2016) highlights that despite the existence of training programs to police officers, there is a need for continuous and specified training on handling GBV cases to ensure officers are adequately prepared to respond to the complexities involved in such cases.

Findings reveals that 45% of respondents were strongly agree, 45% of respondents were Agree, 5% of respondents were Neutral, while 5% of respondents were strongly disagree on the lack of specialized training were identified as a factor affecting the handling of gender-based violence cases by PGDs, with 45% agreeing and 45% strongly agreeing that this issue impacts their ability to address such cases. Findings reveal that importance of providing specialized training to officers working in PGDs to better equip them in dealing with gender-based violence incidents. This findings related with a research conducted by (WHO, 2015)

which proposed that limited training for a particular topic will hinder the overall understanding of the community about a certain program. Lack of political commitment, poor awareness and general public resistance to improving GBV are some of the obstacles to addressing gender based women violence, (WHO, 2015).

Findings reveals that 15% of respondents were strongly agree, 40% of respondents were Agree, 5% of respondents were Neutral, while 25% of respondents were Disagree, 15% of respondents were strongly disagree on the limited resources were another challenge for police gender desks, as indicated by 40% agreeing and 15% strongly agreeing that this impacts their ability to effectively address gender-based violence cases. Adequate resources were helps ensure that PGDs operate efficiently and provide necessary support to survivors of GBV, PGDs organize community meetings, workshops, and campaigns to educate people about GBV's signs, consequences, and available support systems. Increased community engagement leads to higher reporting rates as victims feel more supported and informed about their rights. Research conducted by Brady, A. (2021) emphasizes that inadequate funding, and lack of essential resources such as safe shelters impact the overall capacity of PGD to provide comprehensive support to GBV survivors.

Findings reveals that 55% of respondents were strongly agree, 35% of respondents were Agree, 5% of respondents were Neutral, while 5% of respondents were Disagree on the engaging with local communities to raise awareness about gender-based violence and encourage reporting were identified as potential area for improvement, with 55% strongly agreeing and 35% agreeing that police gender desks enhance their engagement efforts. Building strong community relationships was help in creating a supportive environment for survivors and increasing reporting rates. The high percentage (90%) of respondents who either strongly agree or agree suggests a general consensus among the participants that engaging with local communities is an effective strategy in addressing gender-based violence. By fostering partnership with community organizations and conducting outreach programs, PGD can leverage community support to supplement their resources in responding to GBV cases effectively (Smith and Johnson, 2018).

Findings reveals that 45% of respondents were strongly agree, 40% of respondents were Agree, 10% of respondents were Neutral, while 5% of respondents were Disagree, on the strategies were seen helps to the implemented structure in build trust between PGDs and survivors of GBV, with 45% strongly agreeing and 40% agreeing that such initiatives are

feasible. Establishing trust were seen as one ensuring that survivors feel comfortable coming forward and seeking assistance from PGDs. The findings indicate that 45% of respondents strongly agreed that the strategies implemented were effective in building trust between PGDs and survivors of GBV. 40% of respondents agreed with this assessment, further supporting the notion that the strategies are perceived positively by a majority of participants. Findings reveals that 35% of respondents were strongly agree, 45% of respondents were Agree, 5% of respondents were Neutral, while 10% of respondents were Disagree, 5% of respondents were strongly disagree on the gaps in the legal framework may impede the prosecution of perpetrators of GBV, with 45% agreeing and 35% strongly agreeing that this issue hinders the legal process. Through the police gender desk helps to addressing these gaps by ensuring justice for survivors and holding perpetrators accountable. Studies by (*Brown et al.* 2019) reveal inconsistency in legal provisions and enforcement mechanisms related to GBV, leading to challenges in holding perpetrators accountable. Strengthening strategies can enhance the efficacy of PGD in addressing GBV cases.

Findings reveals that 40% of respondents were strongly agree, 40% of respondents were Agree, 10% of respondents were Neutral, while 10% of respondents were strongly disagree on the lack of data respondents in the study were by 40% agreeing and 40% strongly agreeing, believe that the lack of data on gender-based violence affects the ability of police gender desks to address these issues effectively. The findings were show the importance of data collection and analysis in informing responses to gender-based violence. Without accurate and up-to-date data, it becomes challenging for law enforcement agencies to understand the scope and nature of gender-based violence incidents, leading to potential gaps in their response strategies. Accurate collection of data to track the number of GBV reported, response times and outcome is more significant in implementing standardized reporting protocol that enhancing transparent and accountability (Brown et al.2018).

Findings reveals that 40% of respondents were strongly agree, 50% of respondents were Agree, 5% of respondents were Neutral, while 5% of respondents were Disagree on the Collaborating with Other Agencies, regarding collaboration with other agencies, such as social services and healthcare providers, 50% of respondents agree and 40% strongly agree that police gender desks face challenges in providing comprehensive support to gender-based violence survivors. This finding reveals that collaboration with others agencies were another barrier in establishing effective multi-sectoral partnerships to address the complex needs of

survivors. Findings from a study by (Betron, M. (2018).) highlights the complexity in interagency collaboration, emphasizing the need for streamlined communication challenges to facilitate effective cooperation in supporting GBV survivors.

Findings reveals that 40% of respondents were strongly agree, 40% of respondents were Agree, 10% of respondents were Neutral, while 5% of respondents were Disagree, 5% of respondents were strongly disagree on the data collection and reporting mechanisms this helps to enhancing data collection and reporting mechanisms, 40% agree and 40% strongly agree that police gender desks should improve these processes to better track gender-based violence trends and measure the impact of their interventions. Finding show the important on robust data systems in monitoring progress, evaluating intervention outcomes, and identifying areas for improvement within police gender desk operations. The high percentage of respondents who strongly agree and agree suggests a positive perception among stakeholders regarding the efficacy of data collection and reporting mechanisms implemented by police gender desks. The findings are in agreement with study conducted by (Brown et al.2019) indicated the importance of accurate and comprehensive data in addressing gender-based violence effectively.

Findings reveals that 55% of respondents were strongly agree, 25% of respondents were Agree, 5% of respondents were Neutral, while 5% of respondents were Disagree, 10% of respondents were strongly disagree on the cultural barriers that may prevent survivors seeking help from the police Gender Desks majority of respondents express strong agreement with the existence of cultural barriers hindering survivor access to support services, there is also a notable minority who hold differing views on this matter. This diversity of opinions reveals the need for comprehensive strategies that take into account various perspectives and experiences when designing interventions to combat gender-based violence. The impact of cultural norms, stigmatization and victim-blaming attitudes on survivor engagement with law enforcement agencies, therefore recognizing and addressing cultural barriers through culturally sensitive approaches can enhance trust and cooperation (Anderson, L. (2018)).

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