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### Gender-Based Violence Prevention in Schools in Myanmar: A Study from Taunggyi

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#### ABSTRACT

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Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in schools is a critical and pervasive issue in many countries, including Myanmar. There is persistent concern in preventing GBV and particularly in protecting women and girls. This article examines the understanding of GBV among primary school teachers and the extent of GBV prevention in schools. This research examines forms of GBV occurring in Basic Education High schools in Taunggyi and explores teachers' responses to GBV in schools from a human rights perspective. For this study 19 educators and a GBV expert were interviewed using in-depth interviews as well as focus group discussions held in two schools. The findings suggest that in order to prevent GBV it is necessary to improve the awareness and knowledge of GBV in schools, not only to ensure students' safety in school and the surrounding environment but also to equip students with awareness of GBV by integrating it into the school curriculum. It is necessary to improve responses to GBV at the primary school level in terms of policy, activity programmes and curriculum, since schools can play an important role in cultivating a culture of human rights and awareness to prevent GBV which could gradually become embedded in the community and society.

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## **Introduction**

On 16 May 2019, a 2 years and 11 months old girl was raped while at the Wisdom Hill Nursery School in Naypyidaw, Myanmar. There was only one suspect, Aung Kyaw Myo or Aung Gyi, a school driver who was arrested on 30 May 2019 and quickly released due to a lack of evidence to prosecute the case. This case initiated a public campaign for “Justice for Victoria” in Myanmar, where the victim was given the pseudonym “Victoria” to protect her privacy. Public resentment grew across the country because of the failure of law enforcement: no new evidence was found but the same suspect was rearrested on 3 July 2019. This triggered a mass action as six thousand people demonstrated in front of the headquarters of the Central Investigation Department (CID) in Yangon (Beake, 2019).

However, in Naypyitaw, Dekkhina District Court, acquitted the accused on December 18, 2019 in the Victoria Case. At police press conference Victoria’s real name and parental address were disclosed, violating the provisions of Article 96(d) of the Child Rights Law, 2019; states that “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks and nor to publish in newspapers, magazines, journals and books” (Child Rights Law, 2019: Article 96(d)). Government has a responsibility to take action to prevent this from happening again. There is also a need to implement Gender-Based Violence (GBV) knowledge initiatives in primary and schools.

Violence against the toddler has focused attention on the high number of sexual assault cases. In the past couple of years rape cases in Myanmar have increased by 50 percent. There were 1,528 rape victims in 2018 and about two-thirds of these cases were children (Beake, 2019). Demonstrators had demanded child protection measures to prevent sexual violence and had high expectations of the Child’s Rights Law enacted in June 2019 that would make it possible for police to open cases without complainants (Hundreds protest in Myanmar over two-year-old Victoria rape case, 2019; Maung, 2019; International Commission of Jurists, 2019).

Both public resentment about ineffective law enforcement and pervasive incidents of sexual violence in the country had raised awareness of sexual assault prevention in schools.

Therefore, this study aims at investigating primary schools' initiatives in instrumentalizing these tools and guidelines to preventing GBV in schools and obstacles to them. This study selected two schools in Taunggyi as they have adopted life skill courses into their curriculums. The findings of this research reflect teachers' first-handed experiences, and provides valuable lessons-learned that could improve GBV prevention measures in schools.

## **Literature Review**

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a global phenomenon and was first recognized as an issue in the society when feminist activists in the 1970s were trying to address the undesirable sexual attention faced by women in private and public spaces (Bjastad, 2008). GBV happens not only to adults but also children. School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) has increasingly gained attention in many countries as it affects millions of children, families and communities. Perpetrated as acts or threats of sexual, physical, or psychological violence it happens in and around schools driven by gender norms and stereotypes.

Around the world, 246 million young boys and girls experience violence at or on their way to school every year (Swanson & Anton-Erxleben, 2016). As a result, many countries attempt to develop both prevention and protection strategies and mechanisms to avoid all forms of violence to ensure universal and fundamental human rights of children are fully protected. A survey conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reported that in many countries Ministries of Education have adopted policies on school discipline and procedures for disciplinary measures, sanctions and prosecution in cases of GBV in school and teacher misconduct. In schools, widespread GBV is not fully recognized but the UNESCO report mentions bullying, coercion, non-observance of discipline and fighting as issues. Although most governments are implementing approaches to address GBV, there is little documentation of national strategies specifically to address GBV in schools. A study by Leach, Dunne and Salvi (2014) suggests that to enhance effectiveness in tackling school violence governments need to collaborate with NGOs and other organizations in nationally coordinated programmes and policies. For example, the Ministry of Education in

South Africa has incorporated knowledge on GBV in schools in their syllabus. There have also been a number of national initiatives using the media, which have addressed gender violence among children within schools (Dunne et al., 2003).

### **School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV)**

SRGBV refers to physical, sexual and psychological acts of violence in schools against children and underpinned by norms, stereotypes and gender inequality that affect both girls and boys. In the twenty-first century, gender-based violence in schools has risen to international attention, research, policy and practice.

Gender is sometimes used simply as a synonym for ‘men and women’. However, it is not the same as sex: gender describes each of the two sexes, but especially when considered a socially and culturally constructed definition of men and women. Gender displays and roles are centred on concepts of masculinity and femininity. Masculine and feminine characteristics are not biological attributes, whereas sex describes the biological characteristics of men and women. Gender dictates behaviours of boys and girls, and men and women, including assigning their relative roles in the home, school, and society. Gender norms are often imposed on both girls and boys in the school’s environment, teaching which types of behaviour are suitable for a girl or boy, man or woman.

In a society where gender inequity is systemic, men and boys are socialised to express their masculinity through dominant and aggressive behaviour. Meanwhile, women and girls are socialised to express their femininity through passive and obedient behaviour. Men and boys dominate others to demonstrate their masculinity, and this internalization can lead to verbal and physical bullying and other forms of gender-based violence (Swanson & Anton-Erxleben, 2016). At school, when teachers and other school administrators articulate that “boys need to behave like boys” and “girls need to behave like girls” they are reproducing gender stereotypes and norms which lead to the perpetration of GBV and make conventional gender relations acceptable (Swanson & Anton-Erxleben, 2016).

The nature of GBV in schools can be distinguished between explicit and implicit or

symbolic forms of violence. *Explicit* GBV may include unwelcome and undesirable physical conduct, for example, kissing, touching, sexual advances, name calling, taunts, and verbal abuse, including teachers' chauvinist or disparaging remarks in class. *Implicit or symbolic* GBV is less visible, occurring in the normal course of events in everyday practices and structures of the school through its rules, standards and practices. These routine practices allow and legitimize discrimination against those who resist. Some acts of violence go unreported and unpunished, because they would simply be identified as a natural gender-related characteristic such as "girls like to gossip" or "boys like to play hard" or "men are natural hunters". Both explicit and implicit forms of GBV that occur on school premises include all forms of violence, i.e., physical, sexual or psychological harm to both genders. GBV can happen on the way to and from school and in and around the school environment: perpetrators may be teachers and other education personnel, students and community members, both female and male (Leach et al., 2014).

In 2006, the United Nations (UN) produced a World Report (as cited in Leach et al., 2014) on Violence against Children to explore violence against children in the school context. The report reveals three types of violence: physical, sexual and psychological, commonly found in schools in three forms; corporal punishment, sexual violence and, bullying. Leach, Dunne and Salvi (2014) criticize that the report was gender blind and did not see how corporal punishment and bullying could be separated from the inequality of gender relations.

In 2015, for the first time, 58 countries passed a UN Resolution on SRGBV under UNESCO that defined SRGBV as:

(a) is an expression of gender stereotyping and gender inequality at work in all of our societies, the reproduction of which is sustained through that violence; (b) includes all forms of violence and threats of violence directed specifically against a pupil because of gender and/or that affects girls and boys disproportionately, as the case may be; (c) can be of a physical, sexual or psychological nature and take the form of intimidation, punishment, ostracism, corporal punishment, bullying,

humiliation and degrading treatments, harassment, sexual abuses and exploitation; (d) can be inflicted by pupils, teachers or members of the educational community; (e) can occur: within the school; in its outbuildings; on the way to or from school; during extracurricular activities or through the increasingly widespread use of information and communication technology (ICT) (cyberbullying, sexual harassment through mobile phones); (f) can have serious and long-term consequences such as: loss of confidence and self-esteem, impaired physical and psychological health, early and unintended pregnancies, depressions, reduced learning achievement, absenteeism and drop-out, aggressive behaviours etc. (Parkes et al., 2016, p. 3).

Since gender norms are constructed within a particular context, gender norms and roles are dynamic and can be changed over time. Gender can be restructured by all societies, and political, economic and social institutions, including the education system.

### **Human Rights, Education and Gender-Based Violence Prevention**

In policy and practice, gender is often seen as an entry point to leverage changes in power relations and social interaction (Parkes et al., 2016). Education plays an important role in promoting behavioural and social changes and a means to change the behaviours of individuals and to eliminate gender-based violence and redress gender inequality (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women [UN Women], 2016). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 envisage (United Nations, 2018):

A world free of fear and violence. A world with universal literacy...a world, which invests in its children and in which every child, grows up free from violence and exploitation. A world, in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed.

SRGBV is a human rights issue and an education issue: it violates human rights and obstructs learning. So, it is essential to end SRGBV as it affects children's ability to learn and to stay in school and may have serious and long-lasting consequences on children's psychological, social and physical wellbeing. In order to achieve SDG 4 on quality of education goal 5 on gender equality, schools should play a transformative role in changing harmful gender norms and discriminatory practices. Safe and secure schools provide an appropriate learning environment where children can develop mutual respect, an understanding of gender equality and raise their voices against discrimination and GBV (United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, 2015).

At the global level, international human rights standards demand that states parties respect full the rights of all children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), requires that a signatory country government adopt appropriate measures to protect children's right to be free from all forms of violence, including physical, psychological and sexual violence, and bullying. The CRC Committee, a body of experts that monitors states parties' compliance with the CRC, stresses that proactive prevention of violence is in the best interests of the child - to protect children's right to education and freedom from violence in schools (Greene et al., 2013).

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) aims to end all forms of violence against girls. GBV is recognized as a form of discrimination that violates girls' and women's human rights and as such governments must take positive measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish any incidents. Educators, teachers and staff are obliged to protect children from violence while they are at school and in transit to and from school (Greene et al., 2013).

Myanmar ratified the CRC in 1991 and the CEDAW in 1997. As a signatory country, Myanmar accepted the obligation to put in place legislation and policy to ensure the protection and promotion of child rights and gender equality. In order to eliminate SRGBV, the Myanmar government is responsible for ensuring children's rights to safe, equal and comprehensive education in a safe school environment. The government's role in education is to provide a safe environment in schools free from violation of children's rights, so that

SRGBV will not limit children's capacities to enjoy the advantages of education and take part in their own and in their society's development. The educators should be responsive to SRGBV by seeking to sanction and prosecute it, including through efforts to address the root causes of SRGBV (UN Women, 2016).

In schools and their surrounding environment teachers, students, or community members may commit SRGBV and both girls and boys may be victims as well as perpetrators (Swanson & Anton-Erxleben, 2016). Therefore, to shield children from all types of violence and protect their physical and mental health (UN Women, 2016), a comprehensive curriculum and prevention measures are needed. Dunne et al. (2003) suggest all teachers and students engage in tackling GBV in schools and ensure the school curriculum is consistent and reinforced by the whole school approach management system. Attitudes and experiences of teachers are crucial for change regarding GBV and to play an effective role in addressing GBV (Dunne et al., 2003). A framework designed to prevent GBV in primary schools, as highlighted in Kirinyaga Country, Kenya, emphasized raising awareness on GBV in line with cultivating a new culture to eliminate gender discrimination and enhance gender equality. The framework comprises 1) all forms of violence, including physical, sexual, psychological and emotional, are prohibited and monitored; 2) provide extra-curricular activities that prioritize gender equality; 3) teachers and students learn to recognise the existence of gender discrimination within school; and finally, 4) ensure safe spaces for both girls and boys, and actively perform gender practices and norms that create equal opportunities to girls and boys (Vanner, 2019).

In Myanmar, according to the new curriculum of moral and civic education, life skills and social studies, all teachers are expected to have knowledge of human rights (National Education Law, 2014; The Basic Education Law, 2019). Human rights concepts are integrated in the new curriculum and textbooks on life skills course are provided to teachers in schools. Teachers are expected to master the knowledge from self-study and be able to apply it in their class activities and teaching to promote human rights concepts appropriate to children of different ages. In schools, a life skills course began in 2014-2015 at primary school level to be extended to secondary schools. At primary level, students will learn about health care, sex education through poems and stories and about life skills course. This research examines

forms of GBV occurring in schools in Taunggyi and teachers' responses to prevent it. In addition, this research investigates the extent to which teachers apply human rights knowledge to prevent GBV in schools under this new curriculum of moral and civic education, life skills and social studies that has recently been enacted and implemented.

## **Research methods**

The informants in this research were those who have at least 20 years of experience in education in Myanmar to provide information and insights regarding forms of violence in school, and the needs and challenges schoolteachers and headmasters face on a daily basis. In Myanmar, every Basic Education High School includes primary, secondary or middle and high school levels. This research used qualitative methods comprised of document reviews (i.e., online media, email enquiries, and published material), In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) with 10 teachers from two primary schools in Taunggyi, including a) two Heads of Basic Education High Schools, b) two primary school teachers per school, c) two secondary school teachers per school. There were two in-depth interviews with NGO staff (the managers of the Rule of Law Centre) and a State Education Officer. Two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held in each school, comprising 2 primary teachers and 2 secondary teachers from each school.

Interviews were conducted in April 2020. Questions were qualitative including semi-structured, open-ended and close-ended questions. The interview was recorded and notes taken, and interviews were agreed to be confidential. Two interviews with managers of local NGOs who provided information on GBV prevention were made by e-mail while an Assistant Director in the State Education office in Taunggyi who oversees the schools in the study area, could not be interviewed and so responded in writing. The findings are presented in the following section.

## **Findings and Discussions**

This section discusses three elements of the findings: awareness and knowledge on GBV in schools; school initiatives to prevent GBV and challenges in implementing measures

on SRGBV prevention.

### **Awareness and Knowledge on Gender-Based Violence in schools**

The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) has been assisting schools in teaching human rights education since the 2014-2015 academic year. In 2014, the MNHRC distributed a textbook on life skills aimed at providing guidelines to teachers at primary and secondary levels to equip students with human rights knowledge, which included gender-based violence prevention. This knowledge was integrated into Myanmar's curriculum within its life skills subjects in schools. A course on life skills has been introduced to students in primary school, Grade one to Grade five; with the exception of the kindergarten level there has been no elements about gender and sex education. The textbook on "Life Skills" for Grade 1 introduces the issue of strangers - teaching children to not follow strangers (Ministry of Education, 2017). For Grade 2 and 3, the Life Skills course introduces stranger danger, providing more explanation of how strangers could be dangerous, for example in terms of violent abuse and trafficking (Ministry of Education, 2018; 2019). If family members do not come to school, students should inform teachers and if they are forced by strangers, they must shout for help and run away. Students are taught not to commute alone and if necessary, to inform their parents.

Regards to rights to their body, students are taught that they should not allow strangers to touch parts of their body and if strangers touch those areas, students are advised to be assertive and telling them to not touch their body. In case this happens to either boys or girls, they need to talk to teachers, parents or trusted adults. If they do not inform an adult, the risk is much higher. Life Skills for Grade 4 is about the transformation of the body both for boys and girls and includes an introduction to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and sexually transmitted disease (Ministry of Education, 2020).

In the FGDs with teachers from two schools, they stated that "there is a communication gap between teachers and students. Often, things can occur in a school environment without the knowledge of the teachers. Students are afraid to share their

problems with teachers” (FGD on April 3, 2020). Notably, the communication gap between teachers and students came from a lack of awareness about violence against girls. Girls did not feel safe to report to their teachers and parents when their rights were violated. There is a need to create an environment that enables students, and girls in particular, to inform their teachers and be confident that they will be protected if they have experienced violence.

After the incident of the Victoria case, even though this occurred in a different township, schools in Taunggyi become more cautious to ensure students’ safety than before. Teachers in interviews and FGDs, reflect that: “the Victoria case makes us become more careful with the children than before. For example: they go to the toilet, teachers accompany students and after schoolteachers hand over students to their parents. Then, they are given sex education in classroom, teachers show pictures and indicate those places on the body that should not be touched, and if someone touches them there, they need to inform teachers” (interview on April 3, 2020).

In Taunggyi, the research explored the level of awareness and understanding of teachers about gender-based violence through interviews with the State Education Officer, the principal and teachers who have not received training on GBV or Human Rights Education (HREs). Teachers deepened only on the textbook and have received no other training or support. All teachers in this study say they want to greater knowledge about gender-based violence. They all agree that knowledge of gender-based violence prevention should be introduced at primary levels. They said that “we have never received any training on sex and gender-based violence or sex education and teachers work on the basis of our own knowledge and are self-taught.” GBV and human rights training is important to raise teachers’ awareness of gender-based violence, so they can name different forms of gender-based violence and be aware of different kinds of interventions and strategic campaigns to promote change.

Most of the teachers in this study agree that it is appropriate to teach GBV in primary and secondary schools from around 5 years of age. Because of economic constraints many families have limited space in their households and some students are inevitably exposed to sexual activities of their family members and potentially to sexual harassment from their immediate family members. However, teachers did not get a proper training in tackling cases

of GBV but have to address each case based on their own knowledge, experience, and beliefs. Therefore, to assist teachers in addressing GBV more effectively it is necessary to strengthen teachers' capacity by supporting curriculum materials and training in GBV, strategies to address GBV cases and training in interactive and inclusive pedagogies. Teachers in this present study agree that teaching GBV in schools will benefit students not only when they are at school but also in their daily lives as a student and after their graduation. Students can learn to assert their rights, respect others and transfer knowledge to those around them.

According to the e-mail interview with the Manager of the Taunggyi Rule of Law Center (ROLC), they work to strengthen prevention and accountability for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Shan and Kachin states. Events that they hold provide a space for government officials such as police, General Administration Department (GAD), the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), lawyers, law officers, judges and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working for women's rights, human rights and with SGBV cases to discuss issues around SGBV, challenges and possible solutions. The centre targets the community to increase awareness of SGBV and to access justice and does not work with schools. In her opinion, the teacher should first know the concept of SGBV well. Teachers' awareness should first be raised to change the attitude of the teacher and to provide correct information to students (April 21, 2020 communication through e-mail).

In summary, both teachers and experts on GBV have similar thoughts that proper training on GBV is crucial for awareness raising on SRGBV and sex education must be provided to teachers as the first step towards teaching GBV to students and preventing GBV in schools. Information should also be prepared with care to target each level of students in primary, middle and high schools to prevent misinformation that would reproduce gender stereotypes and bias.

### **School Initiatives to Prevent Gender-based Violence**

Informants from both schools stated that although there are no existing initiatives to respond to GBV incidents in Taunggyi Schools, if there is such an incident, they expect school

principals and teachers to respond by approaching victims and perpetrators in a child-friendly manner and listening to them confidentially. Then they assess cases to see which approaches (e.g., a traditional disciplinary approach, a mediation approach or a restorative approach) could be most appropriate.

In every school they have a set of committees including: School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), Parent Teacher Committees (PTCs), Teacher Associations (TAs) and disciplinary committees. These committee and associations are expected to ensure students' well-being. Even there is not a clear responsibility on whose task it is to address complaints of violence in the school and take disciplinary action, teachers are confident that the committees have legitimate authority and can influence to resolve the problem at both policy and practice levels.

The committees are expected to work with parents, teachers and manage disciplinary issues, which were set up to take direct action and tackle GBV. Teachers are obliged to notify the principal immediately if there is a reason to believe that a child has been ill-treated or injured in any way. If the perpetrator is a student, the school will manage the case internally. They will inform parents of victims and perpetrators, then discuss the case and report to the school committee before taking any further action, reporting to the police if needed. Where the perpetrator is not a student they will investigate and refer to relevant organizations for further action.

Another action that can prevent GBV in schools is when teachers appoint certain students to report incidents or any misbehavior to teachers. By assigning students such responsibilities, the teacher will be able to address problems that are happening at the school in a timely manner. The interviews show that violence such as verbal abuse, bullying, non-compliance with discipline, name calling, coercion and fighting between students in Taunggyi Basic Education High schools. They reveal that students who commit violence mostly come from difficult backgrounds where there is an absence of parental care, low economic status, a broken home, effects of alcohol and drug user in the family. Such children are most likely to be violent or abuse other students. Moreover, GBV incidents are not limited to the school compound and perpetrators could be intermediate family members or someone in the

community. GBV is complex and arises from the interplay of social, economic and cultural factors. GBV prevention measures solely in schools will not be adequate, an ecological approach is needed engaging with the interplay of diverse factors contributing to GBV and strategically designed interventions to prevent and eliminate GBV at interpersonal, communal and societal levels at the same time (UN Women, 2013).

The barriers that schools face when considering how to promote GBV knowledge include a lack of resources, the need to change teaching styles such as moving from a teacher-centred to a student-centred learning system and communication. More than this, a teacher must know how to manage children and educating them on the effects of using alcohol and drugs that can help children throughout their life. GBV prevention knowledge can be integrated into a handbook, as part of initiatives against violence at the school level. In addition, this handbook can be used as a teaching aid and support the incorporation of GBV prevention into national curricula for teacher training. It is also necessary to make a violence prevention plan in schools and to train teachers in GBV, classroom management and how to teach students to protect themselves from violence.

### **Challenges in Implementing Measures on SRGBV Prevention in Primary Schools**

In interviews, teachers indicated that they did not find teaching GBV in schools difficult, but would welcome more training: “In Taunggyi, however, they face no challenges when they teach GBV in schools but they want more knowledge from relevant organizations to share with their students.” They agree that closed-circuit television (CCTV) will assist them to end GBV in school, as teachers stated; “we want to install CCTV in every classroom and monitor the situation of teachers and students, but we haven’t enough money and don’t have funds for the GBV prevention project.” Teachers expected the government to provide the necessary financial resources. Moreover, they demand that the government advance a policy in collaboration and cooperation with international and national organisations to addressing GBV and ensure a safer school environment, for example: by arranging school buses for child safety and good support of school facilities.

There are various challenges to GBV prevention and protection, including education frameworks, and the attitudes of individuals, governments and policymakers, schools and broader societies, in term of social and cultural norms, gender inequalities, capacity constraints, weak coordination and monitoring mechanisms, inadequate service support and referrals for victims, lack of administration, accountability mechanisms, insufficient data reporting specific forms of violence. The education system that works to prevent SRGBV by overcoming such barriers will require coordination with teachers, parents, communities and cultural standards that demand change. However, cultural change may be necessary to enhance knowledge and to share information. Most countries do not have specific legislation to protect children from violence in the education sphere, and some states have recently introduced awareness of such violence specifically into the school syllabus. However, implementation of such legislation is an ongoing challenge and requires adequate prosecution and punishment for perpetrators (UN Women, 2016).

Implementing and promoting the prevention of violence in the education sector can also contribute to peace, equality, tolerance and social cohesion. In this regard, a lot of effort has been put into GBV curricula and pedagogy: providing comprehensive education is crucial (UN Women, 2016, p. 23). Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have sought to tackle gender inequality to address against the social norm of violence against women (Magar, 2003). Training and capacity building are the most effective ways to raise awareness about GBV. Adding GBV to the curriculum for school children helps them after they leave school and supports the community; workshops, Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) and organized community for guardians, individuals from School Management Committees (SMCs)/Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and others in the community. Training can also be provided to school students as leaders in peer-teaching exercises related to school clubs (Leach et al., 2013).

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

GBV in schools is a major problem and the victims of GBV can be both girls and boys. Children spend much of their time in school and they must be safe and free from violence

while there. Every teacher and student should know about GBV prevention and coordinate with parents and teachers for more effective prevention and to help teachers help end GBV in Schools. In both schools all principals and teachers interviewed agreed to teach gender-based violence prevention in extra-curricular activities, and to promote and protect students from gender-based violence. Every school should carefully implement prevention as well as effective protection of victims and ensure violators are sanctioned, in order to avoid repetition of such conduct. Every school should also establish GBV free standards such as: non-discrimination, equal opportunities both boys and girls and freedom from all forms of gender-based violence.

Based on the findings, local NGOs who have expertise in GBV prevention and protection can assist teachers to do a better job in teaching and initiating activities to prevent GBV and by giving workshops that are an important strategy for improving GBV prevention, care, and support against violence against women and girls. Both teachers and students need to attend such workshops. During workshops, participants work closely with trained staff from NGOs to promote positive changes in attitudes in their personal lives and in their communities for the elimination of GBV.

GBV is a complex phenomenon influenced by diverse factors at various levels (Morrison et al., 2007). Preventing GBV is not only a duty of teachers but also of parents and community members that the schools need to involve in awareness raising as an effective mechanism to prevent GBV. Furthermore, there is a need to collaborate with ministries of education, police, health, social services, child protection and NGOs to drive fundamental change and to fight against GBV deeply rooted in gender inequality, embedded in all aspects of life including the social, legal, and cultural.

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