

Gender-Based Violence: Engaging Children in the Solution

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Abstract:- The goal is to investigate how kids may act as change agents in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV). It looks at how well different interventions work to give kids the information, abilities, and self-assurance they need to talk about GBV. **Key Topics:** Theoretical frameworks (such as Social Cognitive Theory and Ecological Systems Theory) for comprehending children's behavior and learning within the setting of GBV. The efficacy of various treatments, such as curriculum modules, creative expression exercises, and bystander intervention training, in including children in GBV prevention. effects of treatments over time on kids' attitudes and actions about GBV. gaps in the body of knowledge regarding kids' contributions to GBV prevention. **Principal Arguments/Results:** With focused interventions, children can be invaluable allies in the fight against GBV. Good interventions can raise children's awareness, competence, and self-assurance in dealing with GBV. More research is required to determine how treatments affect kids' attitudes and actions over the long run. For change to be sustained, it is essential to address the underlying causes and contextual elements of GBV. **Methodology/approach:** The literature on children's involvement in GBV prevention is reviewed and analyzed in this review. It makes use of reports, academic articles, and other pertinent sources. **Significance/Implications:** This review highlights how critical it is to give kids the tools they need to prevent GBV. It provides knowledge to help academics, practitioners, and politicians create solutions that work and pave the way for a world without violence.

Keywords:- *Those Involved in GBV Prevention and Child Development—Researchers, Educators, Legislators, and Practitioners—are the Target Audience for this Review.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence is a global epidemic, impacting millions of lives every year. Globally, violence against women and girls is a horrific reality. **A staggering 1 in 3 women worldwide will experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.** This pervasive issue demands a solution, and one surprising answer lies right before us: children. While they may not be the first to come to mind, children have the potential to be powerful agents of change in the fight for a safer future. Let's explore how we can equip them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to dismantle gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is deeply ingrained in a complex network of "privilege, toxic

masculinity, and patriarchy," according to Kilmartin and Allison (2007:5). This is demonstrated by the widespread perception in many African countries that women and children "belong" to men and do not require authority or the ability to make decisions in the house or in public areas. Cultural customs and traditions, such as dowry or lobola payments, reinforce these detrimental patriarchal aspects and further impair women's capacity to manage their lives and make decisions. Gender is "used to describe all the society given attributes, roles, activities, and responsibilities connected to being male or female in a given society," according to March, Smyth, and Mukhopadhyay (1999: 16). Therefore, these cultural characteristics shape behavior and, in this case study, gender-based violence. A more comprehensive strategy was implemented to guarantee that men are actively involved in development concerns and to consider their role.

While the statistics are staggering consider including a specific statistic here on the prevalence of gender-based violence, a future free from this violence is achievable. Globally, violence against women and girls is a horrific reality. It not only affects adults but also tragically, a significant number of children. While the statistics are staggering (consider including a specific statistic here on the prevalence of gender-based violence, particularly against children), a future free from this violence is achievable. The key lies in empowering the next generation. This paper argues that children are not just future leaders, but both victims and current allies in the fight to end gender-based violence.

The key lies in empowering the next generation. This paper argues that children are not just future leaders, but current allies in the fight to end gender-based violence. Globally, violence against women and girls is a horrific reality. It takes many forms, from physical and sexual abuse to emotional and economic control. Children are especially vulnerable to this violence, facing threats like child marriage, female genital mutilation, and sexual exploitation. These experiences can have devastating consequences, impacting their physical and mental health, education, and overall well-being. Rape is one of the major crimes against women and girls that occurs throughout the world; Carrillo et al. (2003:11) note that rape is frequently viewed as a crime of passion rather than a misogynistic act. Any type of sexual abuse, including rape, is frequently handled as a personal, private, and domestic issue that belongs in the home. It has been observed that in nations where civil conflicts have raged for many years, rape is a tactic used to target, subjugate, and injure women.

Despite the challenges, a future free from gender-based violence is achievable. The key lies in empowering the next generation. Traditionally viewed as passive recipients of adult actions, children hold immense potential to become powerful agents of change. Their fresh perspectives, openness to learning, and lack of ingrained prejudices make them uniquely positioned to challenge harmful norms and build a more equitable world. This paper explores how children of various ages, from elementary school to high school, can be instrumental in dismantling this pervasive issue. By equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to identify and challenge harmful behaviors, we can create a generation of advocates who actively promote respect and equality.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global issue that affects millions of people, primarily women and girls. It takes many forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse. This violence can occur in the home, workplace, community, or online. Gender-based violence, emphasizing that it can be physical, sexual, emotional, or economic and targets a person based on their gender. The consequences of GBV are devastating, impacting physical and mental health, limiting opportunities, and perpetuating a cycle of violence. It's a complex problem, but there's growing recognition that addressing it requires a multi-pronged approach, and that includes empowering the next generation.

A. Problem Statement

Gender-based violence persists as a pervasive social ill, creating a ripple effect of fear, trauma, and inequality. While current efforts focus on intervention and support for victims, the cycle of violence continues. We need a preventative approach that disrupts harmful attitudes and behaviors before they manifest. This is where a critical gap exists: empowering children to become active participants in dismantling GBV. Furthermore, Heyzer (2003: 7) states that gender-based violence is a pandemic and that eradicating it will require coordinated measures.

B. Research Aim

The main research aim are to investigate the effectiveness of engaging children in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) through various interventions and explore the potential for long-term positive impact.

C. Objectives: Focus: Engaging Children In Addressing GBV

- Evaluate the effectiveness of different interventions (curriculum modules, creative expression, bystander training) in improving children's knowledge, attitudes, and potential for action regarding GBV.
- Explore the long-term impact of these interventions on children's behavior and potential leadership in preventing violence as they mature.

This main aim provides a broad direction for this research, encompassing the exploration of various interventions and their lasting effects on children's role in dismantling GBV.

D. Research Objectives

Based on the main research aim, here are some specific research objectives the article will explore:

➤ Objective 1: Evaluate the Effectiveness of Interventions

- Assess the impact of age-appropriate curriculum modules on children's understanding of gender equality, healthy relationships, and recognizing signs of GBV.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of creative expression activities (e.g., art therapy, writing workshops) in fostering children's agency and promoting positive social norms around gender roles and respect.
- Examine the impact of bystander intervention training on children's willingness and ability to speak up or report GBV in different scenarios.

➤ Objective 2: Explore Long-Term Impact

- Investigate the long-term effects of GBV prevention programs on children's attitudes and behaviors related to GBV as they transition into adolescence and young adulthood.
- Explore the potential of these interventions to cultivate leadership skills in children that can contribute to preventing GBV in their communities.

E. Research Questions On Engaging Children In Addressing GBV:

➤ Effectiveness of Interventions:

- To what extent do age-appropriate curriculum modules combined with creative expression activities improve children's knowledge, attitudes, and intentions to intervene in situations of GBV?
- Does bystander intervention training for children increase their willingness and ability to speak up or report GBV in different scenarios?
- How do culturally tailored interventions specifically address the vulnerabilities and needs of children from marginalized communities regarding GBV prevention?

➤ Long-Term Impact:

- What are the long-term effects of GBV prevention programs on children's attitudes, behaviors, and potential leadership in preventing violence as they mature into adults?
- How do children who participated in GBV prevention programs as youth carry forward their knowledge and commitment to preventing GBV as parents and community leaders?

➤ Specific Populations:

- How can program models specifically address traditional notions of masculinity and promote healthy expressions of emotions and positive relationships among boys to prevent GBV?

- What are effective strategies to encourage boys to intervene in situations where they witness violence against girls or other boys?
- How can art therapy programs help children who have witnessed or experienced GBV process their emotions and develop healthy coping mechanisms?

➤ *Supportive Environment:*

- How does training teachers to integrate GBV prevention education and bystander intervention skills into their curriculum contribute to a more sustainable approach in schools?
- How can we create supportive school environments that encourage children to report GBV incidents and feel safe seeking help from trusted adults?
- How can we design robust evaluation methods that go beyond immediate program effects to capture the long-term influence of these interventions on children and their communities?

F. *Significance of Engaging Children in Addressing Gender-Based Violence*

➤ *This Study holds Significant Value for Several Reasons:*

- **Prevention at the Root:** By educating and empowering children, we can disrupt harmful attitudes and behaviors before they lead to violence. This proactive approach has the potential to create a lasting shift towards a more respectful and equitable society.
- **Building a Culture of Respect:** When children learn about gender equality, healthy relationships, and bystander intervention from a young age, these concepts become ingrained. This fosters a culture of respect that can permeate schools, communities, and future generations.
- **Empowering Bystanders:** Children are often present in situations where GBV might occur but may not know how to react. Equipping them with the skills and confidence to intervene or report violence can create a safety net for victims and deter potential perpetrators.
- **Breaking the Cycle:** GBV often stems from learned patterns and societal norms. By engaging children, we can break the cycle of violence by fostering positive attitudes and behaviors from a young age.
- **Sustainability of Change:** The impact of involving children goes beyond immediate results. Empowered children become informed adults who can continue advocating for change and building a violence-free future.

This study contributes not just to addressing GBV but also to fostering a society built on respect, empathy, and equality.

G. *Theoretical Framework*

Theoretical frameworks that guide this study on engaging children in addressing gender-based violence:

➤ *Social Cognitive Theory (SCT):*

One of the theories of health behavior that is most commonly used is social cognitive theory (SCT) (Baranowski et al., 2002). According to SCT, there is a reciprocal deterministic relationship between an individual, their environment, and their behavior; these three factors interact and generate behavior both dynamically and reciprocally, as well as providing a framework for prospective interventions to modify behavior (Bandura, 1997). Because it emphasizes the interaction between internal factors—like thinking and symbolic processing, which includes attention, memory, and motivation—and external determinants—like rewards and punishments—in determining behavior, social cognitive theory has frequently been referred to as a bridge between behavioral and cognitive learning theories.

SCT emphasizes the role of observational learning, social interactions, and internal mental processes in shaping behavior. In this context, it can be applied to understand how children learn about gender roles, healthy relationships, and violence through observing adults, media portrayals, and their social environment. The study could explore how interventions targeting these factors can influence children's attitudes and behaviors related to GBV. For example, introducing curriculum modules that challenge gender stereotypes and promote positive bystander intervention models could be analyzed through the lens of SCT.

• *Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and Understanding Children's Responses to GBV*

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) provides a valuable framework for understanding how children learn about and respond to gender-based violence (GBV). Here's how SCT can be applied to your analysis:

➤ *Core Concepts of SCT:*

- **Observational Learning:** Children learn by observing the behavior of others, particularly adults and peers. Witnessing violence in the home, media portrayals that normalize unhealthy relationships, or even seemingly harmless jokes about gender roles can shape their understanding of what is acceptable behavior.
- **Social Interactions:** Children interact with various individuals and social groups. These interactions influence their beliefs and attitudes about gender roles, healthy relationships, and violence.
- **Internal Mental Processes:** Children don't passively absorb information. They actively process what they observe and interact with, forming their own interpretations and justifications for behaviors.

➤ *Applying SCT to GBV:*

- **Understanding the Source of Beliefs:** SCT helps us identify the sources through which children learn about GBV. Are they witnessing violence at home? Consuming media that glorifies aggression? Exposed to social norms that perpetuate gender stereotypes?

- **Potential for Change:** SCT emphasizes that learning is not a one-time event. By creating positive social interactions and providing alternative models of behavior, we can counteract negative influences and promote healthy attitudes.

➤ *Ecological Systems Theory:*

This theory views human development as influenced by a complex interplay of environmental factors. For GBV prevention, it highlights the importance of intervening at multiple levels: the individual child, their immediate environment (family, school), and the broader societal context (norms, laws). The study could examine how engaging children intersects with these different ecological levels. For instance, it might explore how bystander intervention training for children is most effective when combined with workshops for parents and teachers who can reinforce positive messages.

- *Ecological Systems Theory and Multi-Level Intervention for GBV Prevention*

The Ecological Systems Theory (EST) complements SCT by offering a broader perspective on the factors influencing children's experiences with GBV. Here's how EST can be applied to your analysis:

➤ *Core Tenets of EST:*

- **Interconnected Systems:** EST emphasizes the interconnectedness of various environmental systems that influence development. These systems include the individual child, their immediate environment (family, school, peers), the community, and the broader societal context (laws, policies, cultural norms).
- **Multiple Levels of Influence:** GBV prevention requires interventions at multiple levels of these ecological systems.

➤ *Applying EST to GBV Prevention:*

- **Targeting Different Levels:** Example of bystander intervention training for children is a great illustration of how EST can be applied. This program targets the individual child but can be even more effective when combined with:
- **Family-Level Interventions:** Workshops for parents and caregivers can equip them to model healthy relationships and create safe spaces for children to disclose abuse.
- **School-Level Interventions:** Integrating GBV prevention education into the curriculum and creating supportive school environments can further reinforce positive messages.
- **Community-Level Interventions:** Community awareness campaigns and support services for victims can contribute to a broader cultural shift toward non-violence.

➤ *Combining Frameworks for a Holistic Approach:*

Many studies utilize elements from both frameworks. For instance, a study could explore how bystander intervention training for children (SCT) is most effective

when delivered within a supportive school environment and reinforced by positive parenting practices (EST). This combined approach provides a more holistic understanding of how to empower children and prevent GBV. By incorporating both SCT and EST, your paper can offer a comprehensive analysis of how to effectively engage children in dismantling gender-based violence.

II. LIETRATURE REVIEW

A. *Engaging Children in Addressing Gender-Based Violence*

Gender-based violence is defined as "a host of harmful behaviors that are directed at women, girls, boys, and girls, including with abuse, sexual assault, dowry related murder, marital rape, assault, forced prostitution, female genital mutilation, and sexual abuse of female children," according to Heise, Ellsberg, and Gottmoeller (2002:S6).

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a significant global issue. While interventions exist to support victims, a preventative approach that disrupts harmful attitudes and behaviors before they manifest is crucial. Here, a growing body of research explores the potential of engaging children as agents of change. Wies and Haldane (2011:7) explain in their analysis of gender-based violence that in order to fully address gender-based violence, it is necessary to recognize that gender-based violence is structural violence that is systematically committed by entrenching oppression and exploitation all the way up to macro levels. This indicates that gender-based violence is sadly firmly supported at the household level through culture or custom and extends to the larger economy.

➤ *Education and Awareness:*

- Studies demonstrate the effectiveness of age-appropriate curriculum modules in improving children's understanding of gender equality, healthy relationships, and recognizing the signs of GBV.
- Research highlights the importance of challenging gender stereotypes in educational materials to prevent the normalization of violence.

➤ *Empowering Bystanders:*

- Work examines bystander intervention training for children, showing an increase in willingness and ability to speak up in situations of potential GBV.
- Explore the limitations of bystander training, emphasizing the need for supportive school environments and clear reporting mechanisms for children to act effectively.

➤ *Creative Expression:*

- Research investigates the use of art therapy and creative writing workshops in fostering children's agency and promoting positive social norms around gender roles.

- While the effectiveness of creative expression methods in directly preventing GBV needs further exploration, studies suggest their potential for building empathy and communication skills, crucial for healthy relationships.

➤ *Forms of Violence Against Children:*

Expand on the specific forms of gender-based violence that children experience. Examples include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Child marriage
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Neglect
- Emotional/psychological abuse
- Online harassment

• *Impact of Violence:*

Briefly discuss the devastating impact of gender-based violence on children's physical and mental health, education, and overall well-being.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is any harmful act directed at an individual or group based on their gender. This violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, or economic and aims to control or punish the victim. Tragically, children are far from immune to GBV. They experience a range of harmful behaviors, including physical and sexual abuse, child marriage, female genital mutilation, neglect, and emotional manipulation. The consequences of GBV on children are severe, leading to physical injuries, emotional distress, difficulties in school, and increased risk of engaging in risky behaviors themselves.

Children can be powerful agents of change in the fight against gender-based violence. Here's how to engage them in a safe and age-appropriate way:

➤ *Education is Key:*

- **Age-appropriate lessons:** Integrate lessons on gender equality, respect, and healthy relationships into the curriculum. Tailor the content to their age group. Younger children can learn about kindness, empathy, and

respecting boundaries. Older children can delve deeper into topics like consent and healthy communication.

- **Challenge stereotypes:** Discuss how media portrays girls and boys. Encourage critical thinking about these portrayals and challenge stereotypes that limit expectations.

➤ *Empowering Bystanders:*

- **Recognize the signs:** Teach children how to identify situations where someone might be experiencing violence. This could be witnessing bullying, yelling, or controlling behavior.
- **Speak up safely:** Role-play how to speak up to a friend who's being treated unfairly or how to report something to a trusted adult.

➤ *Creative expression:*

- **Art projects:** Give children a platform to express their ideas about respect and healthy relationships through art, poetry, or writing.
- **Campaigns and Events:** Organize age-appropriate campaigns like poster contests or school plays to raise awareness about gender-based violence.
- **Safety first:** Ensure all conversations are age-appropriate and avoid graphic details.
- **Focus on solutions:** Empower children to feel like they can contribute to a positive change.
- **Lead by example:** Model respectful behavior and challenge gender stereotypes in your own interactions with children.

By engaging children, we can build a generation that values equality, respect, and stands up against violence.

Many categories exist for gender-based violence, including damaging cultural practices, socioeconomic violence, and sexual, physical, emotional, and/or psychological abuse. Victims of gender-based violence typically experience many violations, such as emotional, physical, and sexual assault. Additionally, a UN report defined intimate partner violence based on four characteristics, which Burrill, Roberts, & Thornberry (2010:4) emphasized in a tabular style.

Table 1 Gender-based Violence Definitions

Physical Violence	Slapping and throwing something, pushing or choking, pinching, pulling a woman's hair, hitting, clubbing, kicking, dragging, burning, throwing acid or boiling water, threatening or actually using a weapon.
Sexual Violence	Being forced to have sexual intercourse when the female partner did not want because she was afraid of what the partner might do; was forced to do something sexual that she found degrading or humiliating, specific attacks on the breasts or genitals.
Emotional Violence	Being insulted or made to feel bad about herself, being belittled or humiliated in front of others, being scared of the male perpetrator, by the way the male partner looked at her, by yelling, by smashing things, by having the male partner threaten to hurt someone she cared about, harassment, degrading comments, threatening with divorce or intentions of taking another wife.
Controlling behaviour	Being kept from seeing friends, being restricted from seeing her family of birth, by the male partner insisting on knowing where she is at all times, by ignoring her or treating her with indifference, by getting angry if she speaks to another man, by being suspicious that she was unfaithful and by demanding that she asks his

permission before seeking health care for herself, isolation, deprivation of physical and economic resources, restricting access to family income, excessive possessiveness

Source: Burrill, Roberts & Thornberry (2010:4).

III. ENGAGING CHILDREN IN ADDRESSING GBV (2020-2024)

This review explores how research supports engaging children in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) through education, bystander intervention skills, and creative expression.

➤ *Educating Children about Gender Equality, Healthy Relationships, and Recognizing GBV*

- **Curriculum-based learning:** Studies by Schuster et al. (2020) demonstrate that age-appropriate curriculum modules effectively improve children's understanding of these topics. Eschle and Schweinhart (2005) further emphasize the importance of dismantling gender stereotypes within these materials to prevent the normalization of violence.

➤ *Empowering Safe and Effective Bystanders*

- **Bystander intervention training:** Research by Crawford et al. (2019) shows promise in equipping children with bystander skills, leading to increased willingness and ability to intervene in potentially violent situations. However,
- Bryk, (2010). Organizing Schools for Improvement. highlight limitations. Supportive school environments and clear reporting mechanisms, as emphasized by their research, are crucial for children to act effectively.
- Chidi, (2013). Early childhood classroom teachers' perceptions of successful inclusion.

➤ *Creative Expression for Solutions and Respect*

- **Art therapy and creative writing:** Sweeney (2015) investigates art therapy and creative writing workshops as tools for fostering children's agency and promoting positive social norms around gender roles. While the direct impact on GBV prevention requires further exploration, studies by Ybarra et al. (2007) suggest these methods hold potential for building empathy and communication skills, essential for healthy relationships.

➤ *Ways to Avoid GBV*

Two particular strategies that could be used are promoting gender equality and addressing the societal acceptance of violence (Gevers, Jama-Shai, & Sikweyiya, 2013). According to Davids (2020), a thorough framework is necessary for the prevention of GBV. Institutions of higher learning are expected to have comprehensive policies that address sexual harassment and associated issues. Because they don't want to risk damaging their reputation, institutions are reluctant to confront GBV. The identification of contextual norms, institutions, and cultures that support

gender prejudice and discrimination ought to be a key component of the GBV prevention framework.

Richards and Kafonek (2017) state that comprehensive, theory-driven, relationships-encouraging, socioculturally relevant, using a variety of teaching methods, delivered in a sufficient dosage, well-timed, with staff who have received the necessary training, and including the necessary outcome evaluation are all examples of prevention programs. The idea is that campus safety officers should oversee the institutional GBV program. Furthermore, it is imperative that preventive programs recognize and specifically target kids and staff who are vulnerable or at danger (Richards & Kafonek, 2017).

Joseph (2015) asserts that the effectiveness of GBV laws depends on how well universities and colleges carry them out. Students, staff, administrators, and academics must all support preventative initiatives. Campaigns that are conducted throughout the entire campus must convey the message that GBV is intolerable, that students who violate associated behavior norms will face repercussions, and that victims can access resources and support.

IV. GAPS IN THE STUDIES ON ENGAGING CHILDREN IN GBV PREVENTION

While research has shown promise in engaging children as agents of change in preventing gender-based violence (GBV), there are still areas that require further exploration. Here are some key gaps in the studies:

- **Long-Term Impact:** While some studies suggest long-term benefits of GBV prevention programs, more research is needed to understand the sustained effects on children's attitudes and behaviors as they mature. Longitudinal studies tracking children over time can provide valuable insights.
- **Contextual Considerations:** The effectiveness of interventions might vary depending on cultural contexts, socioeconomic backgrounds, and gender norms within different communities. Research that considers these contextual factors is crucial for designing culturally sensitive and adaptable interventions.
- **Addressing Underlying Causes:** Many studies focus on equipping children with knowledge and skills. However, a deeper look at addressing the root causes of GBV, such as harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal power structures, is necessary for sustainable change. Interventions that challenge these underlying issues alongside skills development could be explored.
- **Focus on Bystander Intervention:** While bystander training is valuable, research on how children can navigate their own safety and well-being in potentially risky situations deserves further attention. Strategies for self-care and assertiveness training could be beneficial additions to existing interventions.

- **Voice of the Child:** Many studies focus on adult perspectives of effective interventions. Including children's voices through participatory research methods can offer valuable insights into their needs, preferences, and preferred approaches for learning about GBV prevention.
- **Measurement and Evaluation:** Developing standardized and culturally appropriate tools to measure the impact of interventions on children's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors is crucial for evaluating program effectiveness and informing future strategies.
- **Sustainability and Scalability:** Many studies focus on pilot programs in specific settings. Research is needed on how to ensure the sustainability and scalability of effective interventions across diverse contexts and resource limitations.

By addressing these gaps, researchers and practitioners can develop more comprehensive and effective strategies for engaging children in preventing GBV, creating a lasting

impact and empowering the next generation to build a safer and more equitable future.

➤ *Gender and Violence*

Research into individual-level risk factors indicates violence is a learned behaviour: for instance, boys who witness or experience violence as children are more likely to use violence against women as adults, and a history of sexual abuse distorts perceptions about sexual violence and the risk of HIV infection (Rumbold, 2008:14). Women globally continue to face brutal attacks within their homes and their communities. Gender-based violence issues are broadly defined with the household, community and state levels, thus making it a complex interplay of various factors. Heise, Ellsberg & Gottmeller (2002:S7), using the ecological framework, seek to understand the “interplay of personal, situational and socio-cultural factors that combine to cause abuse” thus making some states like Papua New Guinea less prone to gender-based violence. This model has four inner circles:

➤ *Factors that Perpetuate Gender-based Violence*

Table 2 Factors that Perpetuate Gender-based Violence

Individual factors	Relationship factors	Community factors	Societal factors
Alcohol and drug use - Coercive sexual fantasies and other attitudes and beliefs supportive of sexual violence - Impulsive and antisocial tendencies - Preference for impersonal sex - Hostility towards women - History of sexual abuse as a child - Witnessed family violence as a child	Associate with sexually aggressive and delinquent peers - Family environment characterized by physical violence and few resources - Strongly patriarchal relationship or family environment - Emotionally unsupportive family environment - Family honour considered more important than the health and safety of the victim	Poverty, mediated through forms of crisis of male identity - Lack of employment opportunities - Lack of institutional support from police and judicial system - General tolerance of sexual assault within the community - Weak community sanctions against perpetrators of sexual violence	Societal norms supportive of sexual violence - Societal norms supportive of male superiority and sexual entitlement - Weak laws and policies related to sexual violence - Weak laws and policies related to gender equality - High levels of crime and other forms of violence

Source: Krug et al, 2002: 98.

➤ *Future Study Directions:*

- Many studies acknowledge the need for research on long-term impacts of interventions engaging children. Can these programs translate into sustained positive attitudes and behaviors as children become adults?
- Culturally specific approaches are crucial. Research highlights the importance of tailoring interventions to consider diverse social norms and contexts.
- A collaborative approach is needed. Studies emphasize the importance of involving educators, parents, and community leaders alongside children for a comprehensive approach.
- Long-term impact: Research like Schuster et al.'s (2023) follow-up study is needed to understand if these interventions translate into sustained positive attitudes and behaviors as children mature.
- Culturally specific approaches: Mishna et al. (2014) highlight the importance of tailoring interventions to diverse contexts.

➤ *Collaborative Approach*

Research by Catalano et al. (2012) emphasizes including educators, parents, and community leaders alongside children for a comprehensive approach. By integrating these strategies, we can empower children to become active participants in dismantling GBV. Further research on long-term impacts and culturally specific approaches will strengthen these efforts.

This literature review provides a starting point for understanding the potential and ongoing research needs in engaging children to address GBV. By fostering knowledge, bystander skills, and positive social norms among the next generation, we can move towards a future free from gender-based violence.

V. PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENGAGING CHILDREN IN ADDRESSING GBV

Practical recommendations across various levels to create a comprehensive approach:

➤ *Societal Level:*

- **Shifting the Narrative:** Promote media portrayals that challenge stereotypes and depict healthy, respectful relationships. Advocate for national campaigns raising awareness about GBV and the role children can play in prevention.

➤ *Employee Level (Educators, Social Workers, etc.):*

- **Training and Resources:** Equip educators, social workers, and youth leaders with training on GBV prevention and effective communication with children. Provide age-appropriate curriculum materials and resources.

➤ *Organizational Level (Schools, Community Centers):*

- **Safe and Inclusive Environments:** Create school environments with clear anti-bullying policies and dedicated personnel for reporting concerns. Foster open communication and encourage bystander intervention.
- **After-School Programs:** Develop creative programs like art workshops, theater productions, or peer support groups that address healthy relationships and GBV prevention through engaging activities.

➤ *Youth/Children Level:*

- **Age-appropriate Discussions:** Start conversations about respect, boundaries, and healthy relationships early. Tailor discussions to their age and understanding.
- **Empowerment Activities:** Organize age-appropriate activities like debates, poster contests, or writing competitions on gender equality and GBV prevention. These activities can spark creative expression and ownership of solutions.
- **Start Early:** Even young children can grasp basic concepts of respect, kindness, and bodily autonomy. Use simple language and relatable examples to introduce these ideas.
- **Tailor Discussions:** As children mature, discussions can delve deeper into topics like healthy relationships, consent, and recognizing unhealthy behaviors. Encourage open communication and answer their questions honestly.
- **Create Safe Spaces:** Ensure children feel comfortable expressing themselves without judgment. This could be through individual conversations, group discussions, or anonymous suggestion boxes.

➤ *Field Studies:*

- **Pilot Programs:** Implement pilot programs in schools or community centers that combine elements like curriculum modules, bystander training, and creative expression activities.
- **Data Collection and Evaluation:** Conduct research to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs, analyzing impact on children's knowledge, attitudes, and potential behavior changes.
- **Collaboration:** Encourage collaboration between researchers, educators, and community leaders to design culturally relevant and sustainable interventions.

➤ *Empowerment Activities:*

- **Creative Expression:** Organize art workshops, writing contests, or drama productions where children can explore themes of respect, gender equality, and healthy relationships.
- **Peer Education:** Train older youth to become peer educators, leading workshops, or discussions with younger children. This fosters a sense of agency and allows children to learn from their peers.
- **Campaigns and Events:** Encourage youth to participate in age-appropriate campaigns like poster contests, slogan creation, or even flash mobs raising awareness about GBV.

➤ *Building Skills and Confidence:*

- **Bystander Intervention Training:** Teach children how to recognize situations of potential GBV. Role-play different scenarios and practice ways to intervene safely, like speaking up directly, seeking help from an adult, or reporting anonymously.
- **Conflict Resolution Skills:** Equip youth with communication skills to navigate disagreements in a respectful and assertive manner. This can help them handle difficult situations and avoid potential violence.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Connect youth with positive role models who can provide guidance and support on issues like healthy relationships and GBV prevention.

➤ *Utilizing Technology:*

- **Social Media Campaigns:** Encourage youth to utilize social media platforms to spread positive messages about respect and healthy relationships. This can involve creating educational content, sharing stories of hope, or participating in online challenges promoting GBV awareness.
- **Safe Online Spaces:** Develop online platforms or forums where youth can discuss issues related to GBV in a safe and supportive environment. This can be facilitated by trained professionals or mentors.

A multi-pronged approach is key. By combining societal awareness, effective training for adults, and engaging activities for children, we can empower the next generation to be active participants in creating a world free from GBV. Remember, involving youth is not just about giving them information. It's about empowering them to act, use their voices, and become active changemakers in their communities.

VI. CHILDREN

Here are some practical recommendations specifically focused on engaging children in addressing GBV:

➤ *Building a Foundation:*

- **Start with Empathy:** Read age-appropriate books or watch shows that portray kindness, respect for boundaries, and healthy friendships. Discuss these concepts and how they make characters feel.
- **Body Positivity and Consent:** Introduce basic concepts of body autonomy in a way they can understand. Explain that everyone has the right to say no to touching, even if it's from someone they know.
- **Safe Touch vs. Unsafe Touch:** Help children differentiate between safe touches like hugs from family members and unsafe touches that make them feel uncomfortable. Encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone touches them in a way they don't like.

➤ *Engaging Activities:*

- **Storytelling and Role-Playing:** Create scenarios where children can role-play healthy interactions and bystander intervention. For example, act out a scene where someone is being teased, then role-play different ways to step in and help.
- **Arts and Crafts:** Organize art projects where children express their ideas about respect, friendship, and healthy relationships. This can be through drawings, paintings, or even creating posters with positive messages.
- **Games and Activities:** Develop age-appropriate games or activities that reinforce positive behavior and bystander intervention skills. For example, a board game where players earn points for demonstrating respect or offering help in different situations.

➤ *Building Confidence:*

- **"My Voice Matters" Activities:** Organize activities where children can practice expressing themselves confidently. This could involve public speaking exercises, presentations about respect and kindness, or even creating short skits about healthy relationships.
- **"Upstander" Training:** Help children understand the difference between a bystander and an upstander. Teach them safe and age-appropriate ways to speak up if they see someone being treated unfairly.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Acknowledge and celebrate children's efforts to show respect and kindness to others.

This could be through verbal praise, small rewards, or featuring their acts of kindness in a classroom newsletter.

➤ *Key Takeaways:*

- Studies have shown the effectiveness of various interventions, including curriculum modules, creative expression activities, and bystander intervention training, in empowering children to address GBV.
- Theoretical frameworks like Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and Ecological Systems Theory (EST) provide valuable insights for designing interventions that target individual learning and consider the influence of children's environment.

By actively engaging children in GBV prevention efforts, we nurture a generation that understands equality, respects boundaries, and champions change. This collaborative approach, informed by ongoing research and addressing identified gaps, holds the key to dismantling GBV and building a future where every individual is safe and valued.

VII. CONCLUSION

➤ *Empowering the Next Generation to Dismantle GBV*

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a persistent global challenge. However, a growing body of research highlights the immense potential of engaging children as agents of change. By educating them about gender equality, healthy relationships, and recognizing GBV, we equip them with the knowledge to challenge harmful attitudes and build a more respectful future. This review explored various methods to engage children: curriculum-based learning, bystander intervention training, and creative expression activities. These strategies, when combined with a supportive environment and culturally sensitive approaches, can empower children to become active participants in preventing GBV.

Further research is crucial to explore the long-term impact of these interventions and develop effective strategies for marginalized communities. Investigating the role of technology, creative expression, and teacher training can further strengthen these efforts. Ultimately, by fostering knowledge, skills, and a sense of agency in children, we empower them to not only be bystanders but upstanders in the fight against GBV. This investment in the next generation holds the promise of creating a world free from violence and built on the foundations of respect and equality. Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive issue demanding a multi-faceted solution. This review has explored the encouraging potential of children as powerful allies in dismantling GBV. By equipping them with knowledge, skills, and confidence through effective interventions, we can create a generation of advocates who actively promote respect, equality, and a future free from violence.

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