

## ECONOMIC STATUS AND PERSISTENT DEFILEMENT CASES IN THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA

### Abstract

Statistics on child abuse revealed that defilement is the most common form of abuse in Kenya. This paper explores the effect of economic status on persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. This study was guided by **theory of Four- Factor Traumagenic**. This study used **phenomenological research design** to collect qualitative data. The unit of analysis for this study was victims of defilement. The target population for this study was all the 98 defiled children (93 girls and 5 boys), 98 parents/caregivers and 5 chiefs. There were three interview schedules developed for parents/guardians of defiled children, chiefs and defiled children. **Collected data was analysed using thematic method** which entails identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. The study **findings revealed** that the need to provide basic needs, assist parents/caregivers in income generation, use of motorbikes to school, and need for money in exchange for sex have greatly contributed to high defilement cases in the study area. **The study recommends** that the parents need to advance their economic sources of livelihood in order to alleviate themselves from poverty levels and meet the social and basic needs of their families including their children.

**Key Words:** Defilement, economic factors, child abuse

### Introduction

#### 1. Background of the Study

Defilement is any sexual intercourse with a child under the age of 18 years old, whether or not the child consents. According to Sexual Offences Act, 2006 defilement is a crime. Under the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 defilement is a breach of children's human rights (Ojo *et al.*, 2017).

In the global domain, statistics show that 69,184 children in the United States were officially counted as victims of child sexual abuse where at least 12-35 percent of American women and 4-9 percent of American men experienced some form of sexual abuse as children (Miskiewicz, Ramisch, Surjadi & Teeruthroy, 2016; Finkelhor, Shattuck, Turner & Hamby, 2014). In Uganda, barely a day passes without media reports on cases of defilement, or other forms of sex-related crime against children (Nyangoma, Ebila & Omona, 2019). According to the Violence Against Children (VAC) report (2018) 35.3% of girls and 16.5% of boys experienced sexual abuse in childhood (Ojo *et al.*, 2017). In Kenya, the prevalence of defilement among children is exceptionally high at 55%, (Mutavi, 2016). According to National Crime Research Centre (2020), the defilement rate in Kitui is 3.4%, Embu 3.1%, and Meru 2.1% as compared with Tharaka Nithi county with 7.2%. The statistics show that defilement is a problem in society.

Defilement is often a taboo subject because the public believes that such kind of abuse does not exist or is not prevalent enough to warrant discussion. This, therefore, means that not all child victims and families respond to sexual abuse in the same manner (Mutavi, 2016). Each victim

and family have unique reactions to the problem; their responses are influenced partially by the offender relationship and the nature of the abuse (Ojo *et al.*, 2017). When the perpetrator is a stranger or even an acquaintance outside the family, parents are the ones who typically report the offense to the authorities. They initially feel blame and guilt for not having protected their child adequately (Winters *et al.*, 2020). But in the case of incest, the problem may go unreported.

Children who are victims of defilement and their parents, often face insurmountable obstacles in trying to bring the perpetrators to justice (Smetana, 2020). The children have suffered defilement and other forms of abuse but they are too intimidated by cultural attitudes and nation inaction to seek redress since doing so can lead to hostility from family, the community and the police. Those who do seek justice are confronted by a legal system that ignores, denies and even condones violence against child victims and protects perpetrators (Mercer *et al.*, 2015).

As a response to defilement community responses is key to addressing the problem. Community responses are diverse, dynamic, and highly contextual. They have a unique ability to: Identify and quickly respond to people's needs and concerns (Koss, White & Lopez, 2017). Community responses for rape victims are often piecemeal and uncoordinated as different systems perform different functions. For example, victims go to the hospital for the rape exam and evidence collection; to the police station to meet with a detective; to the state's attorney to discuss prosecution; to the rape crisis center for information and crisis counselling; and to many other agencies as well. Community-based interventions rely on reporting mechanisms, existing child education on sexual abuse, and community actions against perpetrators

Literature has shown that economic status can lead to persistent defilement. According to Abikoye, Ogungboye, and Tari (2019) when a person is economically dependent on another, they usually have no say in any aspect of their life. Kaye et al (2020) argue that financial constraints due to the adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic which has triggered red economic hardships have contributed to many people living below the poverty line leading to children fleeing from home and turning to the streets for support a phenomenon that can lead to defilement.

Similarly, research carried out by the Uganda Law Reform Commission (2016) established that 34% of cases of sexual abuse were linked to low economic status. Parents' separation and lack of finance lead to low economic status since the parents could not support the children financially (Ochen, Chi and Lawoko, 2019). Parent-child alienation due to financial constraints leaves their children vulnerable to defilement in society. Also, Rogan et al. (2017) revealed that low economic status was a significant risk factor that puts women and children at high risk of early sexual debut, transactional sex, and unwanted pregnancy which concurs with the current study on how economic standards and background impacts the incidences of defilement in the society. Based on the above literature, there exists a link between economic factors and defilement but it is not known whether the same have a hand in the rise in defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County hence this paper explores the effects of economic factors on persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### ***Theoretical Review***

This study is based on the theory of Four- Factor Traumagenic. The theory was developed by Finkelhor, Harvey, Forehand, Brown and Holmes (1988) and dealt with child sexual abuse. The theory explains the dynamics associated with sexual abuse and violence. Finkelhor *et al.* (1988) describes the make-up of individual who sexually abuse children without depending on basic character pathological attributes. Finkelhor contends that once sexually abused in childhood, one may lack relationship skills and more extensive elements that offer generally to the sexual orientation and socialization of the abused.

Finkelhor et al. (1988) identify four factors vital for understanding child sexual abuse's impact on the victims. The first factor is traumatic sexualization which implies to children engaging in sexual activity after socialization into it. This may lead to the inability of the abused children to enjoy sexual relations normally in their adulthood.

The second factor is the betrayal. This is when important people in the child's life cause mistrust to an innocent child. The child loses trust in both perpetrators of abuse and other people. Powerlessness is the third factor. This is when the child's ability to choose appropriately is taken away, the child's rights are violated and her integrity. The will of the perpetrator is imposed on the child through trickery, coercion or force. Most societies are patriarchy; hence male-dominated and they have power and influence over women and children. This makes them vulnerable to be abused.

The fourth factor is stigmatization; here, the child begins judging herself and how others see and think about the act. Even when the child has not disclosed, she is likely to evaluate what happened to her and the social/cultural norms. The child might decide to keep quiet after being sexually abused due to the sensitivity of sex and the secrecy involved as most cultures treat it. This sometimes leads the child into the isolation of herself from others.

In relation to this study, the theory provides a conceptual and methodological guide to the research on elements of defilement on a child and how to measure them in the target population. This was helpful to the framework of tackling persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. The theory explained the dynamics associated with sexual abuse which in this case was child defilement. Economic status of a homestead has a great significant impact on child defilement in the community. Lack of parental care contributes to child defilement. It is more open that the inability of most parents to provide adequately for their children due to poverty forces girls into sexual relations with taxi drivers, bus drivers, *boda boda* riders and other so that they raise some money to afford them to eat something. Therefore, the theory has helped this study to identify factors which leads to persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County such as economic status of a household.

### ***Empirical Review***

Economic status is the level of continuously, by earnings (wages and salaries), income (earnings plus income from property and other sources), an occupational prestige index, or wealth (Kelley & Evans, 2021). Low economic can mean the lack of access to resources, productive assets, and

income, resulting in a state of material deprivation. Low economic can also be recognized as more than shortage of income. Although it implies low income, it also means malnutrition, persistent ill health, lack of education, poor housing, chronic unemployment, lack of access to basic social services, and inability to assert legal or political rights (Carter, 2019). Economic status which can lead to persistent defilement is usually shows through negligence, property grabbing, and refusal of the right to work or low rewarding incomes among others. When a person is economically dependent on another, they usually have no say in any aspect of their life (Abikoye, Ogungboye & Tari, 2019). These studies show that one's vulnerability due to economic status can make one yield to anything which leads to persistency in defilement. The current study filled the gap by comparing and contrasting impacts of economic status and what should be done in order to minimize child defilement due to economic status.

Financial constraints due to the adverse effects of Covid-19 pandemic which has triggered economic hardships, have contributed to many people living below the poverty line leading to children fleeing from home and turning to the streets for support (Kaye et al., 2020). According to the research carried out by the Uganda Law Reform Commission (2016), 34% cases of sexual abuse was linked to low economic status. Parent's separation and lack of finance lead to low economic status since the parents could not support the children financially (Ochen, Chi & Lawoko, 2019). Parent-child alienation due to financial constraints leaves their children vulnerable to defilement in the society.

Pinea-Lucaterro, Trujillo-Hernandez, Millan-Guerrero and Vasquez (2019), study found that defilment cases primarily affects 108 girls among low-income families who lack both economic and social resources. Turner and Stagg (2016) in a nationally representative sample of 2030 children aged 2–17 in the USA found that factors related to poverty such as low socioeconomic status, low parental education and parental availability were significant risk factors in child maltreatment including child sexual victimization. Also, Rogan et al. (2017) revealed that low economic status was a significant risk factor that puts women and children at high risk of early sexual debut, transactional sex and unwanted pregnancy which concurs with the current study on how economic standard and background impacts the incidences of defilement in the society.

Wrigley-Asante, Owusu, Oteng-Ababio, and Owusu (2016) conducted research on economic statuses and crime: Uncovering the hidden face of sexual crimes in Ghana's urban low-income areas. The study examined the occurrence and determinants of sexual offences in urban low-income communities using official police data, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs) from five low-income urban neighbourhoods in Ghana. Despite the legal and institutional structures in place to prevent such crimes, the investigation indicated that sexual offences constitute one of the most serious crimes in Ghana. According to the study, poor housing (as seen by high room occupancy rates, overcrowding, and congestion) and poverty in general encourage sexual offences in low-income urban settings. Furthermore, patriarchal views heighten females' exposure and vulnerability to sexual offences. The study by Wrigley-Asante, Owusu, Oteng-Ababio, and Owusu (2016), on the other hand, was conducted in Ghana, whereas the current study is a case study of Kenya but even so, it informed the current study on how the economic status is associated with the defilement prevalence which was brought out in those studies that concurs with the current study objective.

Phiri (2016) investigated whether the Zambian criminal justice system sufficiently protects women and girls' victims of rape and defilement while acquiring corroboration evidence. According to the study, women and girls who have been raped or defiled suffer from significant physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual stress. Trials are particularly traumatic, with many victims reporting that the day they testified in court was the worst day of their lives. Victims are traumatized not only by the crime itself, but also by their communities' negative attitudes against them. Finally, the report includes conclusions and recommendations on Zambia's rule of corroborating evidence. Phiri (2016), in his study, did not, however, show how poverty leads to defilement cases, as was the case in the current study but even so, crime that involves girls and women usually drives them to poverty levels which eventually makes them subscribe to defilement.

A study on economic position, gender, and reproductive justice was conducted by Ninsiima, Michielsen, Kemigisha, Nyakato, Leye, and Coene (2020). This study examines how poverty combines with gender power dynamics to influence the sexual and reproductive lives of adolescent girls in Western Uganda. A qualitative study involving 147 individuals was conducted. This included 59 in-depth interviews and 11 focus group talks with groups of young women aged 12–14, instructors, and parents. The data was manually analysed with open and axial coding, and conclusions were formed inductively. The findings show that young women's sexual and reproductive rights are hampered not just by poverty and unequal gender relations, but also by corruption and poor service provision. Nonetheless, Ninsiima, Michielsen, Kemigisha, Nyakato, Leye, and Coene (2020) focused on girl children, as opposed to the current study, which focused on defilement in general but even so, it helped bring out the point of the current study on how economic status may influence the rate of defilement in the society.

Otieno (2019) investigated the impact of economic position violent extremism in Kenya: a case study of Mombasa County. Descriptive analysis and Pearson's simple correlation analysis were used to analyse the data. According to the findings of the meta-analysis, economic practises were the primary contributor to violent extremism. According to the statistics, Mombasa's poverty rate is around 38% and has been consistent, according to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2015), while unemployment is projected to be 15% in 2009. According to the analysis, there is a high labour migration from rural areas among the working-age population aged 15-64 years, but there are also many non-coastal people. According to the findings of the investigation, indoctrination and recruitment into violent extremism is the most serious security danger in Mombasa, and a large number of young people are being recruited to join Al Shabaab which render many youths to defilement in that process by those recruiting them, all this is because of poverty of the families from where children come from because, they are promised huge lumpsum of money after joining the terror group. However, Otieno's (2019) study, on the other hand, concentrated on violent extremism, whereas the current study focuses on defilement cases

### **3. Methodology**

This paper is the outcome of a study conducted on defilement in Tharaka Nithi County in 2022. The basis for choosing the study area is the rising cases of defilement in the last four years, with young men finding themselves behind bars for committing sex offenses. Many children are defiled by people in all spheres of life, in the hands of their biological fathers, stepfathers, relatives, friends, religious leaders, caregivers, and strangers.

This study used phenomenological research design to collect qualitative data. This research design is because of its ability to investigate issues relating to lived experience within a particular group (Morrell-Scott, 2018). The unit of analysis for this study was victims of defilement in the study area.

The study adopted a census method where all 98 victims of defilement in the Sub-County were included in the study since the target population was small and manageable while carrying out the study. The Census technique, therefore, provided the opportunity for all victims of defilement to provide varied experiences with regard to defilement in the study area. In addition, a purposeful sampling procedure was used to draw key informants who included chiefs and parents/caregivers. However, the study was able to conduct 70 interviews with the defilement victims.

The interview and key informant interviews were the methods of data collection used in this study. The interview method was used to collect data from victims of defilement while the key informant interview method was utilized to collect information from chiefs (5) and parents/caregivers to cross-check the information given by respondents.

After data collection, the thematic analysis technique was used analysis data. This was used to identify themes from this data. The study adhered to ethical principles among them confidentiality, provision of adequate information about the study for decision-making on whether to participate or not and researchers' responsibility. Additionally, to ensure ethical considerations for the participation of minors the researcher ensured that the minors' parents were involved in the decision-making process for their child. An additional adult consent procedure to supplement assent by the minor was only included if it did not interfere with the dignity of the child. The design and execution of the consent process and research procedures will support or mitigate any vulnerabilities such as decision-making capacity, literacy level, poverty, legal rights, and cultural contexts.

## **4.0 Results & Discussion**

In this section, we provide data from 70 respondents in this study on the effect of economic factors and the rise in defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. We begin by discussing the demographic information of respondents after which the effects of economic factors on defilement in the study area are examined.

### **4.1. Demographic Information of Respondents**

This section provides the gender and age of respondents in this study.

#### **4.1.1 Gender of Respondents**

Respondents were asked to give their ages. Table 1 provides responses.

**Table 1: Gender of Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
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Male	4	5.7
Female	66	94.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Results in Table 1, show the vast majority 66(94.3%) of the defiled children were girls. On the other hand, 4(5.7%) of the defiled children were boys. The study results concur with Nansasi (2010) who assessed that the majority of the defiled children are girls since they are more vulnerable compared to boys.

#### 4.1.2 Age Category of the Defiled Children

The study sought to determine the age category of the defiled children and the findings are presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Age Category of the Defiled Children.**

Age Category	Frequency	Percent
9-14 Years	6	8.6
15-18 Years	64	91.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From the study results in Table 2 the majority of defiled female children 64(91.4%) were between 15 and 18 years. Those between 9 and 14 years accounted for 6(8.6%).

#### 4.2 Effects of Economic Status on Persistent Defilement Cases

The study investigated the effects of economic status on persistent defilement cases. Interviews were given to the parents, children, and chiefs. The study revealed that various economic factors in the community have contributed to defilement cases. These factors are; the provision of basic needs, aiding of caregivers/parents to generate income, and engaging in sexual activities for money. These economic factors in the community have led to an increase in the number of defilement cases in the societies.

##### 4.2.1 Provision of Basic Needs

The study intended to establish the provision of basic needs in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**

*Provision of Basic Needs*

Provision of Basic Needs	Frequency	Percent
Father	47	67.1
Mother	14	20

Boyfriend	8	11.4
Others	1	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

The results in Table 3 show that 47 (67.1%) of the respondents have a father as a provider of basic needs, 14 (20%) have a mother, 8 (11.4%) have a Boyfriend and 1 (1.4%) have others as a provider of basic needs. This shows that most of the providences of basic needs are met by the father despite being unemployed.

Parent [1] aged 30 years, said:

*“To a greater extent, the issue of lack of economic resources has contributed to persistent defilement in my area because it brings about poverty which exposes a child to being lured with money so that she can settle her needs. This is so because children lack basic needs and hence find themselves in the trap of accepting gifts from people who in turn ask them for sexual pleasure.”*

As a result of living in inadequate and/or congested housing, children are exposed to molesters because poor families are very vulnerable and lose their sense of identity and affiliation, exposing them to predators.

#### **4.2.3 Assisting Parents/Caregivers in Generating Income**

The study also sought to establish how assisting parents/caregivers to generate income influence defilement in the study. The study established that children help parents to generate income through the sale of alcohol in the study area as shown in table 4 below.

**Table 4**  
*Assisting Parents/Caregivers in Selling the Alcohol*

<b>Assisting Parents/Caregivers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Yes</b>	5	7.1
<b>No</b>	65	92.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

The results in Table 4 above shows that 5(7.1%) of the respondents said that yes that they assist parents/caregiver in selling liquor and 65 (92.9%) said No. This implies that most of the respondents do not help their parents/caregivers in selling liquor.

Child [3] a girl aged 14 years, said that:

*“My parents are not in variance with me engaging with men or selling alcohol, as long as I generate some income for the home and for myself, it is a persistent thing.”*

The exception above implies that the economic status of a homestead has a great significant impact on child defilement in the community. The fact that a family is in a state where they cannot provide the most basic needs opens a door and an opportunity for the opportunists who take advantage of any chance that presents itself.

Whether respondents involved in the sale of alcohol are sexually harassed by drunkards, table 5 below provides responses.

**Table 5: Sexually Harassed by Drunkards**

Sexually Harassed by Drunkards	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	8.6
No	64	91.4
<b>Total</b>	70	100

The results in Table 5 above show that 6 (8.6%) of the respondents said Yes that they have ever been sexually harassed by drunkards at their home and 64 (91.4%) said No. This indicates that most of the respondents have never been sexually harassed by drunkards at their homes.

Chief [4] a male, identified that:

*“Indeed, economic status has been a major cause of defilement in my area, because people without land to cultivate are idle, which increases their chances of consuming alcohol, which, in many instances, leads to defilement.”*

This demonstrates that people's living conditions can drive them to such desperation that they will accept anything to improve their plight. Poverty is related to malnutrition, hazardous housing and working conditions, unclean water and sanitation, and lack of access to healthcare in low-income nations.

Still, on alcohol and defilement, the study sought to establish if the victims of defilement are involved in the brewing of alcohol by their parents. The findings are presented in Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Brewing of Alcohol for Sale**

Brewing of Alcohol for Sale	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	8.6
No	64	91.4
<b>Total</b>	70	100

The results in Table 5 above show that 6 (8.6%) of the respondents noted that their parents brew alcohol for sale and 64 (91.4%) said no. This implies that most of the respondents' 91.4% of parents do not brew alcohol for sale.

Child [1] a girl aged 16, said:

*“My parents are not well-off, both are unemployed and at times, I end up with someone so that I can cater for my food and my siblings or brew alcohol for that matter.”*

This shows that child defilement is closely pegged to the economic status of a family or a homestead. Poverty as depicted here as lack of land is a contributing factor to children’s vulnerability to defilement.

Parent [3] a female, also noted that:

*“It is an open fact that we all witness currently that, lack of sufficient economic resources leads to poverty which exposes a child to being lured to exchange sex for basic needs, for example, a girl was given 50bob so that she could get food and she was impregnated. This is child defilement in the highest sense of the word.”*

This suggests that financial stability can significantly influence the prevalence of child defilement in society. The passage above demonstrates conclusively that there is a strong relationship between poverty and child defilement. As a result, child defilement has its roots in poverty. Parents abandon their responsibilities to provide for their children's needs due to poverty. A parent may advise a girl to find a capable somebody to care for her basic requirements. A female may wind up getting defiled for money out of bewilderment.

#### **4.2.4 Mode of Transport to School**

The study also sought to determine whether they are going to school and whether the mode of transport to school influences defilement in the study area. The study results are presented in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Going to School**

<b>Going to School</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	43	61.4
No	27	38.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

The results in Table 6 above show that 43 (61.4%) of the respondents said yes, that they go to school and 27 (38.6%) said no. This implies that most of the respondents go to school. The majority of the respondents noted that the school is not far away from their home and they get there by walking, relying on Samaritans or boda-boda riders to take them to school.

Chief [1] a male, said that:

*“Poverty is undoubtedly produced by one key factor: a lack of sufficient economic resources, which exposes youngsters to the risk of taking money or presents in exchange*

*for sex from older people, who, for example, give sex in exchange for food and shelter, which is already defiling to minors.”*

This suggests that family values and standing have a substantial effect on children, which may predispose them to child sexual abuse. As married men relocate to urban regions in pursuit of employment, poverty is the primary cause of family dissolution.

In support of the above statements, Chief [5] aged 45 years, said that:

*“Many of my community members suffer from poverty and this tend to make them rush for any quick money scheme to alleviate the problem which in many occasions, end up in defilement of children in my community.”*

The exception above demonstrates that poverty is a significant factor in cases of child defilement within the community. Poverty has a crucial part in child exploitation since it renders children susceptible.

On the mode of transport to school, the study also sought to establish whether the participants went to school using boda-boda which is a common mode of transport Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 8 below.

**Table 8: Using Bodaboda to Go to School**

Using Bodaboda	Frequency	Percent
Yes	3	4.3
No	67	95.7
<b>Total</b>	70	100

The results in Table 8 above show that 3 (4.3%) of the respondents said Yes, they use boda-boda to go to school and 67 (95.7%) said No. This implies that most of the respondents do not go to school by use of boda-boda. The majority of respondents walked to school because they cannot afford to pay for Boda-Boda.

Chief [3] aged 42 years, said that:

*"It is an open fact that we all experience today that a lack of appropriate economic resources leads to poverty, which exposes a youngster to being led to swap sex for basic requirements, such as a girl who was paid 100 shillings to acquire food and was impregnated. This is child defilement in the most extreme sense.”*

This suggests that financial stability can significantly influence the prevalence of child defilement in society. The preceding passage demonstrates conclusively that there is a strong relationship between poverty and child defilement.

The study engaged the respondents so as to establish whether they are asked for sexual intercourse by boda-boda riders in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 9 below.

**Table 9: Bodaboda Rider Asking for Sexual Intercourse**

Asking for Sexual Intercourse	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	5.7
No	66	94.3
<b>Total</b>	70	100

The results in Table 8 above show that 4 (5.7%) of the respondents said Yes, they have ever been asked for sexual intercourse in exchange for fare, and 66 (94.3%) said No. This implies that many of the respondents have never been asked for sex by boda-boda riders in exchange for the fare.

Child [2] aged 13 years opined that:

*“Bodaboda rider usually takes advantage of me because I cannot afford to pay for my fare to and from school, my parents are not in a position to pay my school fees, and also my fare.”*

This says that youngsters are readily influenced since their needs are not met. In addition, the inability of some parents and/or guardians to provide for their children rendered these children vulnerable and susceptible to influence by child molesters through the presents of money, food, clothing, and ornaments.

#### **4.2.5 Money in Exchange for Sex**

The respondents were further asked whether they are taking money in exchange for sex in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 10 below.

**Table 10: Money in Exchange for Sex**

Money In Exchange for Sex	Frequency	Percent
Yes	13	18.6
No	57	81.4
<b>Total</b>	70	100

The results in Table 9 above show that 13 (18.6%) of the respondents said Yes, they were given money in exchange for sex and 57 (81.4%) said No. This implies that most of the respondents have Yes, never been given money in exchange for money.

Parent [4] aged 50 years, opined that:

“For sure, poverty is caused by one major factor which is lack of sufficient economic resources which exposes children to the danger of accepting money or gifts for sex by older people, for instance, they give sex for food and shelter which already is defilement to children.”

This demonstrates that poverty is a significant factor in incidents of child defilement in the community. Poverty is a significant factor in child defilement because it makes youngsters vulnerable. Parents are compelled to surrender their children to able men in exchange for food because of entrenched poverty, lack of education, and lack of income-earning options.

In relation to the theoretical review, this current study was guided by the theory of Four- Factor Traumagenic provides a framework of tackling persistent defilement cases. The theory explained the dynamics associated with sexual abuse which in this case was child defilement. The theory helped this current study to identify factors which leads to persistence of defilement cases such as economic status, cultural practices, traditional songs, and lack of parental care.

## 5. Conclusion and recommendations

The economic status of a homestead has a great significant impact on child defilement in the community. The fact that a family is in a state where they cannot provide the most basic needs opens a door and an opportunity for the opportunists who take advantage of any chance that presents itself. The study recommends that the parents should seek to advance their economic sources of livelihood in order to alleviate themselves from poverty levels and meet the social and basic needs of their families including their children.

### Consent

As per international standard or university standard, parental(s) written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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