

POLICY BRIEF

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BREAKING THE SILENCE: THE FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN TANZANIA

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Abstract

The policy brief explores the persistence of gender-based violence (GBV) in Tanzania despite the country's ratification of robust international, regional, and national legal frameworks. It examines the intersection of harmful traditional practices, legal systems, and implementation challenges in sustaining violence against women and girls. Drawing on legal documents, policy instruments, and cultural examples such as unyago, vigodoro, and chagulaga, the brief highlights how deeply embedded patriarchal norms undermine formal legal protections. It critically assesses the enforcement gaps in national legislation, including contradictions between statutory and customary laws, and the continued legality of child marriage under the Law of Marriage Act. The analysis shows that while Tanzania has formally committed to international gender equality norms, the transformative potential of these frameworks remains limited in the absence of structural reforms, public awareness, and institutional accountability. The brief concludes with a set of evidence-based recommendations aimed at aligning legal commitments with cultural change, survivor-centred services, and multi-sectoral coordination. By situating the Tanzanian case within a broader African context, this brief contributes to the understanding of how legal pluralism, socio-cultural norms, and institutional weaknesses interact to perpetuate gender-based violence in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive and deeply rooted issue across Africa, affecting millions of women and girls. ¹ In Tanzania, GBV is commonly understood as any harmful act directed at an individual based on their gender, and it disproportionately affects women and girls. It

includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, as well as harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriages. ² GBV manifests in various forms, including physical violence, sexual assault, emotional abuse, intimate partner violence, and other harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage. ³ While GBV affects both men and women, women and girls bear the brunt, particularly in patriarchal societies where gender inequality is deeply entrenched.

Tanzania adopted its most recent National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children (NPA-VAWC) in 2017, marking a significant step in addressing gender-based violence (GBV). This five-year plan (2017–2022) was implemented by both the Mainland and Zanzibar governments and aimed to strengthen prevention, response, and coordination mechanisms across sectors. That align with ICESCR's principles.⁴

GBV is pervasive across Sub-Saharan Africa, with high rates of physical and sexual violence and harmful cultural practices.⁵ Despite legal frameworks in some countries such as Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda, which recognise the need for protection and equality, significant gaps remain in addressing the root causes and effectively tackling GBV.⁶ The continued prevalence of child marriage, harmful cultural practices, and widespread societal acceptance of GBV present serious challenges to the achievement of gender equality and the protection of vulnerable groups.⁷

Nonetheless, legal pluralism and cultural patriarchy in Tanzania undermine the effectiveness of gender-based violence laws, revealing a critical gap between formal equality and lived realities of girls and women.

1. Mahart, C.M., Carlson Rex, H., & Willman, A. (2023). A Vision for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention and Response in Eastern Africa. Available at A vision for gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response in eastern Africa accessed on 13 March 2025.
2. Durha, S. (2020) What is Gender Based Violence (GBV). Available at What Is Gender-Based Violence (GBV)? - SACAP accessed on 13 March 2025.
3. MacKinnon, C.A., & Dworkin, A. "Gender Violence: A Cultural Perspective." Available at Wiley.
4. UNICEF (2017). A Study of the Drivers of Violence Against Children and Positive Change in Tanzania and Zanzibar, p. 66-67. Accessed on 5 April 2025.
5. Kimeu, C. (2024). Available at Women's Rights and Gender Equality. Accessed on 7 April 2025.
6. UN Women (2018). Available at Prospects for Ending Child Marriage in Africa. Accessed on 5 April 2025.
7. UNICEF (2022). Available at Towards Ending Harmful Practices in Africa. Accessed on 5 April 2025.

Harmful Traditional Practices

Traditional ceremonies in Tanzania, such as vigodoro and bukwilima, often involve the sexualisation of young girls. During Vigodoro, physical contact is often encouraged by the crowd, with participants responding to the atmosphere created by the event. Reports indicate that DJs and onlookers play a role in influencing interactions, sometimes prompting dancers to engage in explicit movements.⁸ Alcohol consumption at these gatherings can also contribute to the initiation of contact. Young girls, often aged between 11 and 15, are encouraged to participate in dances where they may be required to partially undress. Men often touch them during these performances and is held in certain urban areas specifically Dar es Salaam region in Tanzania.

Bukwilima ceremony happens as part of the transition from childhood to adulthood within Sukuma community and the specific duration for the Bukwilima ceremony is typically a one-day event, held during harvest festivals. It is not conducted annually but is scheduled based on agricultural cycles and community traditions.

Similarly, if a Vigodoro ceremony is held during a wedding, the celebration of marriage, where women gather to dance, sing, and honour the new couple. During these events girls may be pressured to partially undress, engage in physical contact, or even face rape.⁹

In Shinyanga, Mwanza, and Coastal region in Tanzania, Chagula and Unyago ceremonies the primary guides are the kungwis, who are older women responsible for imparting knowledge about sexuality, marriage, and domestic responsibilities. Additionally, washikamkonos (slightly older girls who have previously undergone unyago) assist in teaching through songs and dances. Zaramo and Makonde ethnic groups in Tanzania practice Unyago, a traditional initiation ceremony for girls. This rite of passage prepares young girls for adulthood, marriage, and family responsibilities.¹⁰ Unyago ceremonies are typically observed by female family members, community elders, and occasionally, male relatives, depending

on the specific cultural practices of the community. During the harvest festival, girls are forced to choose among eligible men to have sex with through a ceremony known as chagulaga and may be subjected to physical and sexual violence if they refuse.¹¹

In addition, ceremonies such as unyago and chagulaga tutor girls about their roles in relationships and household management, often emphasising subservience to men. This cultural conditioning can normalise early marriage as a natural progression for girls, reinforcing societal expectations that prioritise marriage over education. In Unyago rituals, girls are secluded for weeks, force-fed to gain weight (as a sign of attractiveness), and taught how to sexually please men. Such practices prepare them for marriage at an early age, stripping them of agency and making them vulnerable to further abuse.¹²

FGM is another grave concern affecting women and girls in Tanzania.¹³ Samba is a harmful practice performed by the Sukuma community in the Shinyanga region, during which girls are taken to a witch doctor to prepare them for marriage using traditional medicine.¹⁴ After this ceremony, the girl must accept any marriage proposal offered to her, or else risk bringing shame or what is believed to be to her family.

While most initiation ceremonies originated to prepare girls for FGM and/or early marriage, these constitute distinct harmful practices and often continue to be prevalent even in communities with low rates of FGM and child marriage.¹⁵

Culture reproduces gendered control through deeply embedded norms, rituals, and social expectations that dictate women's roles and limit their autonomy through socialisation in early formative years. Feminists argue that patriarchal structures sustain these inequalities by normalising male dominance and restricting women's agency. Moreover, it remains crucial to continuously examine how cultural practices reinforce gender hierarchies while also providing spaces for resistance and transformation.

8. The Citizen. (2021). COVER: Origin of disgraceful Kigodoro dance expounded" Available at Citizen. Accessed on 15 May 2025.
9. UNICEF Tanzania (2017). "A Study of the Drivers of Violence Against Children and Positive Change in Tanzania and Zanzibar," p. 66-67. Available at A study of the drivers of violence against children | UNICEF United Republic of Tanzania accessed on 19 April 2025.
10. The Citizen. (2021). COVER: Origin of disgraceful Kigodoro dance expounded" Available at Citizen. Accessed on 15 May 2025.
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12. Nieminen, A. (2017). Traditional Unyago Training in Tanzania: A Step to Adolescence or a Leap to Motherhood. Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Available at Theseus. Accessed on 15 May 2025.
13. Tanzania Gender Based Violence Assessment available at World Bank Document accessed on 13 March 2025.
14. UNICEF (2025). UN Women, and Plan International on progress—and persistent challenges—for adolescent girls worldwide available at Girl Goals: What Has Changed for Girls? Adolescent girls' rights over 30 Years - UNICEF DATA accessed on 27 March 2025
15. Nafgem Tanzania (2017). Available at FGM and Its Impact. Accessed on 14 April 2025.

In Tanzania, traditions such as unyago and vigodoro illustrate how cultural engagement shapes gendered expectations. Unyago, a rite of passage for young girls, teaches adolescent young girls and women about womanhood, marriage, and sexual responsibilities. While some view it as empowering, critics argue that it reinforces submissiveness and prepares girls for early marriage.

¹⁶Vigodoro, celebratory dances often performed at weddings, symbolise femininity and social belonging but also reinforce expectations of women's behaviour and roles. These practices reflect how culture dictates gender norms, enables harmful traditional practices which often limiting women's choices.

Women's Resistance and Transformation

Despite these constraints, women actively resist, negotiate, and transform traditions. Feminist organisations such as Tanzania Gender Networking Programme challenge patriarchal norms by advocating for gender equality and empowering women through education and activism. ¹⁷Similarly, grassroots movements, including women's cooperatives and legal advocacy groups, work to reform discriminatory laws and promote women's rights. ¹⁸While local champions, such as female elders and activists, reinterpret cultural practices to align with gender justice, ensuring that traditions evolve rather than oppress.

Women engage with cultural practices in complex ways, sometimes embracing them while subtly reshaping their meanings. For instance, some unyago trainers now incorporate lessons on consent and reproductive health, shifting the narrative from submission to empowerment. Similarly, women participating in vigodoro use the space to express solidarity women often form a circle where one steps forward to dance while others cheer, sing, or clap in rhythm. This act of uplifting one another especially when sharing personal stories or struggles through song or movement demonstrates solidarity in a safe, communal space.

It allows women to affirm shared experiences, challenge gender norms, and support each other emotionally and socially, particularly in contexts where their voices are otherwise marginalised and challenge restrictive gender norm through dance and storytelling.¹⁹

These contestations highlight how women navigate tradition, asserting their agency within cultural frameworks. Culture is not static; it evolves through engagement and resistance. While patriarchal traditions persist, women in Tanzania actively challenge and redefine them, to transform harmful practices into opportunities for empowerment. By advocating for change within cultural contexts, women ensure that traditions serve rather than oppress them.

Legal and Policy Frameworks

Tanzania ratified several key international human rights instruments by 1989, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966 ratified in 1976 (ICCPR) in 1976.²⁰ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966 ratified in 1976.²¹ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1985.²² United Convention on the Rights of the Child (UCRC) of 1989.²³ , and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) of 1981.²⁴ These commitments were reinforced regionally through instruments such as the Maputo Protocol.²⁵ Affirming its commitment to gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence (GBV).

Additionally, has established legal frameworks to address GBV and promote gender equality. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and United Nations human rights bodies confirm the country's commitment to implementing these treaties, though enforcement and policy alignment continue to face challenge. As a party to these legal frameworks, Tanzania is committed to

16. Women Fund Tanzania Trust(2023).Available at <https://wfttrust.or.tz/our-impact/addressing-patriarchy-harmful-traditions-and-practices-affecting-women-and-girls/> accessed on 14 April 2025.

17. National Survey on the Drivers and Consequences of Child Marriage in Tanzania, February 2017, p. 51.

18. Nieminen, A. (2017). Traditional Unyago Training in Tanzania: A Step to Adolescence or a Leap to Motherhood. Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Available at Theseus. Accessed on 15May 2025.

19. Mbilinyi, M. (2015). Transformative Feminism in Tanzania: Animation and Grassroots Women's Struggles for Land and Livelihoods. In Rawida Baksh & Wendy Harcourt (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Transnational Feminist Movements* (pp. 507–528). Oxford University Press. Available at Oxford Academic. Accessed on 15 May 2025

20. Badstue, L., Farnworth, C. R., Umantseva, A., Kamanzi, A., & Roeven, L. (2020). Continuity and Change: Performing Gender in Rural Tanzania. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 57(2), 310–325. Available at Taylor & Francis. Accessed on 15 May 2025.

21. Ndola, Z. B. (2021). Adventists and African Traditional Practices in Tanzania. *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*. Available at ESDA. Accessed on 15 May 2025.

22. *Isiaga v United Republic of Tanzania* (Application No. 032/2015) [2018] 2 AfCLR 218. Available at AfricanLII and WorldCourts. Accessed on 15 May 2025

upholding their principles, which guide its efforts to combat GBV, protect and promote women's rights, and ensure gender equality through national policies and legal reforms.

From the 1990s onwards, Tanzania translated this commitment into national legal reforms, including the Law of the Child Act (2009). The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, adopted in 1977, serves as the foundation for human rights protection. The Domestic Violence Act (DVA) of 2015. The Law of Marriage Act (2014). The Sexual Offenses Special Provisions Act (1998). The National Plans of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children. Despite these efforts, gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence (DV) remain widespread.

The 2023 Multisectoral Country Gender Profile confirms that Tanzania has developed legal and institutional frameworks aligned with these treaties, such as the National Plans of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children (NPA-VAWC). These efforts are supported by UN agencies like UNFPA, which work with the government to strengthen GBV prevention, survivor support services, and legal reforms.

However, challenges remain in policy enforcement, data availability, and institutional capacity, as noted by both the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and UN treaty bodies.

Contradictions Between Domestic Laws and Ratified International Instruments

Tanzania has ratified several international treaties aimed at promoting gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, contradictions arise between these commitments and domestic laws, particularly the Law of Marriage Act (1971). While CEDAW mandates the elimination of child marriage, Tanzania's Marriage Act permits girls as young as 15 to marry with parental consent, contradicting the international standard of 18 years. Despite court rulings declaring these provisions unconstitutional, legislative amendments have stalled, highlighting the gap between ratification and implementation.

In Tanzania, cultural practices such as early marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), and gendered expectations around education and domestic roles continue to expose adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) to significant harm. These practices are deeply rooted in social norms and are major drivers of GBV, school dropouts, and long-term economic inequality.

According to the World Bank, 40% of Tanzanian women aged 15 to 49 have experienced physical violence, and 17% have experienced sexual violence. Nearly 30% of girls experience sexual violence before the age of 18, and child marriage remains prevalent, particularly in rural areas. These figures reflect how cultural norms such as prioritising marriage over education undermine girls' rights and safety.

The Law of Marriage Act, which still permits marriage under the age of 18 with parental or court consent, directly contradicts Tanzania's commitment to universal education. This legal inconsistency allows harmful practices to persist, contributing to high school dropout rates among girls and reinforcing cycles of poverty and dependence.

23. UN Nation Human Rights Treaty Bodies(2024). Available at tinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?Treaty=CESCR accessed on 5 April 2025.
24. UN Women (2023). Available at <https://open.unwomen.org/> accessed on 5 April 2025.
25. TANZLII (2019). Available at Law of the Child Act. Accessed on 28 March 2025.
26. Dr. Kuma, S. (2024). Assessing the Incorporation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in Tanzania: <https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijrsi/articles/assessing-the-incorporation-of-the-african-charter-on-human-and-peoples-rights-in-tanzania/> accessed on 5 April 2025.
27. Protocol To The African Charter On Human And People's Rights On The Rights Of Women In Africa Adopted by the 2nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union Maputo, Mozambique 11th July 2003 available at [37077-treaty-charter_on_rights_of_women_in_africa.pdf](https://www.africanunion.org/37077-treaty-charter_on_rights_of_women_in_africa.pdf) accessed on 28 March 2025.
28. African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). (2008). Concluding Observations and Recommendations - Tanzania: 2nd to 10th Periodic Report, 1992-2006. Forty-Third Ordinary Session, 7-22 May 2008, Ezulwini, Kingdom of Swaziland. Available at ACHPR. Accessed on 15 May 2025.
29. Law Shun (2024). Available at International Law's Domestic Adoption in Tanzania. Accessed on 27 March 2025.
30. TANZLII (2019). Available at Law of the Child Act - TanzLII accessed on 28 March 2025.
31. Constitute (2005). Available at https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Tanzania_2005?utm_ accessed on 14 April 2025.
32. Understanding Domestic Violence Protection Measures in Tanzania November,29,2024 available at Understanding Domestic Violence Protection Measures in Tanzania accessed on 28 March 2025.

A study conducted in Misungwi District, Tanzania, revealed that female students in day secondary schools are subjected to multiple forms of GBV, both within and outside the school environment. The research, carried out by Stella Lukendakenda and published by Sokoine University of Agriculture, provides a comprehensive and evidence-based account of the situation.

Symbolic vs Practical Impact of Ratification in Tanzanian Governance

Ratifying international treaties symbolises Tanzania's commitment to human rights and gender equality, strengthening its global reputation. However, practical enforcement remains inconsistent. Reports indicate that while Tanzania has ratified CEDAW, ICCPR, and ACHPR, implementation is hindered by weak institutional frameworks, lack of political will, and entrenched patriarchal norms. For instance, despite ratifying CEDAW in 1985, Tanzania has yet to fully incorporate its provisions into domestic law, limiting its practical impact.

Legal scholars argue that Tanzania's dualist legal system complicates treaty enforcement. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has criticised Tanzania for failing to align domestic laws with ratified treaties. Case studies, such as Rebecca Gyumi's legal challenge against child marriage, demonstrate how civil society efforts have successfully pressured courts to rule in favour of international human rights standards.

Also, Women's Legal Aid Centre (WLAC) in Tanzania, which has empowered survivors of GBV through community-based paralegal services. WLAC, in collaboration with Norwegian Church Aid, trained local paralegals to provide free legal assistance to women and girls, particularly in rural areas where access to justice is limited. This initiative has helped many survivors navigate the legal system and challenge harmful gender norms. However, enforcement remains weak, with police often failing to act on GBV cases due to corruption and social biases.

33. Bond Advocates LLP (2014). Available at <https://www.bondadvocates.com/blog/highlights-of-the-marriage-act-2014/> accessed on 28 March 2025.
34. UNHCR(1998). Available at Tanzania: Act No. 4 of 1998, Sexual Offences Special Provisions Act, 1998 | Refworld accessed on 15 March 2025.
35. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Tanzania. (n.d.). Gender-based violence. Available at UNFPA Tanzania website. Accessed on 20 June 2025.
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40. CEDAW Task Force Tanzania. (2014). Thematic Issues for Tanzania CEDAW Shadow Reporting. Submitted by WLAC, WILDAF, TAWLA, TAMWA, CWCA, TWCWC, LHRC & Envirocare. Available at ecoi.net and Docsbay.
41. Warioba, I. (2023). The Impact of the Maputo Protocol in Tanzania. Pretoria University Law Press (PULP). Available at PULP.

Customary laws continue to undermine statutory protections. In rural areas, traditional dispute resolution mechanisms often favour male authority, preventing women from accessing justice. Corruption within law enforcement further weakens GBV protections, with reports showing that bribery and patriarchal biases influence police responses to domestic violence cases. Additionally, police accountability remains a challenge, as officers frequently dismiss GBV complaints or pressure victims into informal settlements.

While Tanzania has ratified key international instruments, contradictions between domestic laws and treaty obligations persist. Symbolic commitments to gender equality are undermined by weak enforcement, patriarchal customs, and systemic corruption. Legal reforms, stronger institutional oversight, and grassroots advocacy remain essential to bridging the gap between ratification and real-world protections.

Challenges in Safeguarding Women Against GBV

Despite Tanzania having strong constitutional and legal frameworks to protect women and girls, GBV persists due to the following issues: Legal pluralism weakens GBV enforcement in Tanzania by creating inconsistencies between statutory and customary laws. Statutory laws seek to protect women and girls, but customary laws often allow harmful practices such as child marriage and domestic violence. The Law of Marriage Act permits girls as young as 15 to marry, conflicting with statutory law, which sets the minimum age at 18. In rural areas, customary norms dominate, leading to selective legal application and leaving many women without legal protection.

Patriarchal norms resist legal change because they are deeply ingrained in society and shape behaviours across generations. These norms position women as subordinate to men and legitimise practices like early marriage and domestic violence. Cultural traditions, religious teachings,

and socialisation reinforce these beliefs. Legal reforms that challenge these long-standing power structures often face opposition, as communities perceive such changes as a threat to their identity. Without societal acceptance, reforms struggle to take effect.

Political will plays a crucial role in enforcing GBV laws. Although Tanzania has introduced legislation to address GBV, weak political commitment hinders its implementation. Courts have ruled against discriminatory marriage laws, yet lawmakers delay necessary amendments. Community members and leaders often hesitate to confront patriarchal norms due to potential backlash from influential groups. Without firm political determination, legal reforms fail to offer real protection for women and girls.

There are five key issues that are worth noting and these will be discussed briefly;

1. **Weak law enforcement:** Police and the judiciary often lack training on GBV and may regard it as a private or minor issue. Despite legal provisions, enforcement is inconsistent, particularly in rural areas where law enforcement agencies lack resources and training to handle GBV cases effectively.
2. **Gaps in the legal framework:** Some laws are outdated or contradictory, such as the Law of Marriage Act, which still permits girls to marry at 15 with parental consent. Additionally, marital rape is not explicitly criminalised in Tanzania.
3. **Lack of awareness:** Many women and girls in Tanzania are unaware of their rights under the law. Hence, remain unaware of their legal rights due to limited access to education, legal literacy, and outreach services. Customary practices and patriarchal norms often overshadow statutory protections, leaving many unaware of laws safeguarding them from gender-based violence, discrimination, or property rights violations.

42. Kigodi, H. M. (2013). Paralegal services and the fight against gender-based violence and other gendered injustices in Tanzania: The case of Women's Legal Aid Centre (WLAC) (Master's thesis, University of Bergen). Available at <https://hdl.handle.net/1956/7324>. Accessed on 20 June 2025.
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45. Mwanache, M. E. (2023). *Understanding Corruption Practice in Police Force: A Case of Ilala Municipality, Dar es Salaam*. Master's thesis, The Open University of Tanzania. Available at The Open University of Tanzania Institutional Repository and Repository OUT.
46. UN Women. (2024). *Analysis of the Laws of Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar from a Gender Perspective*. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Available at UN Women. Accessed on 14 May 2025.
47. Jakobsen, H. (2014). What's Gendered about Gender-Based Violence? An Empirically Grounded Theoretical Exploration from Tanzania. *Gender & Society*, 28(4), 537-561. Available at ResearchGate.

4. **Limited Access to Justice:** There is a shortage of shelters, counselling services, and legal aid for GBV survivors, particularly in rural areas. Survivors of GBV often struggle with legal costs, lack of legal aid, and lengthy court procedures, making it difficult to pursue justice. The judicial system lacks specialized courts or units dedicated to handling GBV cases efficiently.

5. **Economic dependence:** A significant number of women are economically dependent on their abusers, making it extremely difficult to leave abusive relationships or report violence.

In conclusion, Tanzania's ratification of key international and regional conventions reflects its commitment to combating GBV and promoting gender equality. The continuity of cultural practices such as One cultural practice that has historically undermined efforts to combat GBV in Tanzania is the customary belief that only men particularly fathers should speak for the family, often referred to as "kichwa cha familia" (head of the family). This norm reinforces male dominance in household decision-making and limits women's agency and voice within the family and community.

These cultural norms undermine such commitment. However, the continued success of these efforts depends on effective implementation, sufficient resources, and a strong legal framework that holds perpetrators accountable. By aligning national policies with international standards, Tanzania can further create a more equitable society where women and children can live free from violence and discrimination.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Accelerating the Fight Against GBV in Tanzania.

1. Strengthen the implementation and enforcement of existing laws and policies. Given that the police often do not enforce GBV laws in rural regions due to capacity and bias, we recommend comprehensive GBV training for police officers, judicial officials, and community leaders to ensure proper case handling. Additionally, establishing specialised GBV units within law enforcement agencies can expedite investigations and prosecutions. Ensuring consistency between national laws and international treaties like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

Against Women (CEDAW) and the Maputo Protocol is crucial for comprehensive protection.

2. Invest in Survivor Support Services (SSS), including shelters, healthcare, and psychosocial support. Survivors of GBV face significant challenges due to insufficient support services we recommend the establishment and funding of comprehensive survivor support services. This includes setting up shelters, providing healthcare services, and offering psychosocial support to help survivors recover and reintegrate into society. Such services are essential for ensuring the safety and well-being of survivors.
3. Challenge harmful social norms through community education and male engagement. This can be implemented through Capacity-building, advocacy campaigns and media campaigns. Given that cultural, family, and social pressures often prevent women from reporting abuse, we recommend implementing community education programmes aimed at challenging harmful social norms. Engaging men and boys in these programmes are crucial to changing attitudes towards GBV. Capacity-building workshops, advocacy campaigns, and media campaigns can be effective tools in this endeavour.
4. Improve data collection for evidence-based policymaking and continuous monitoring. The absence of accurate data on GBV incidents make it difficult to assess the full scope of the issue, we recommend improving data collection mechanisms to facilitate evidence-based policymaking. Regularly collecting and analysing data on GBV cases can help in identifying trends, allocating resources effectively, and monitoring the impact of interventions. This approach ensures that policies are responsive to the actual needs of communities.
5. Foster Multi-Sectoral Coordination (MSC), including government, civil society, and international partners.

Addressing GBV presents significant challenges due to its complex nature, we recommend fostering multi-sectoral coordination among government agencies, civil society organisations, and international partners. Collaborative efforts can lead to more comprehensive and effective interventions. Regular coordination meetings, joint programmes, and shared resources can enhance the collective impact of all stakeholders involved in combating GBV.

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14. MacKinnon, C.A., & Dworkin, A. "Gender Violence: A Cultural Perspective." [Wiley](#).
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16. National Survey on the Drivers and Consequences of Child Marriage in Tanzania (2017), p. 51.
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