

PARENTAL CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN ZIMBABWE

Muridzo, N. G., Chikadzi, V., Mafa, I., & Chinyenze, P. (2018). Parental circumstances leading to child sexual abuse in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 33(2), 135–168. [Google Scholar](#)

ABSTRACT

Child sexual abuse remains one of the leading social ills of our time. It is a phenomenon that has multi-faceted consequences on children, families and the society at large. This paper discusses findings emanating from a study which explored the phenomenon of child sexual abuse in Zimbabwe. Using a qualitative approach and a case study design, the study discusses how parental circumstances are key factors that lead to the vulnerability of children to sexual abuse. The authors call for a paradigm shift from curative social welfare services in dealing with child sexual abuse, and advocate for a preventative-oriented practice that addresses macro-ecological factors that contribute to vulnerability of children to sexual abuse.

Key words: *Child sexual abuse, Parental circumstances, Implications for social work, Zimbabwe.*

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is one of the major social maladies that still is a challenge on the child protection systems of many countries in Southern Africa (Chitereka, 2012; Euser et al., 2013; Servin et al., 2015). It is a phenomenon that has multiple negative consequences on children, families and the society as well. At a personal level, it wounds victims physically, emotionally, economically, socially and mentally (Omar, 2012; Bhaskaran et al., 2016). It can leave lasting mental scars on children many years after it has happened. At a family level, CSA can lead to family breakdown, loss of finances, psychological distress and conflict among other things. Within the boarder society, CSA has many hidden implications to it which are a drain on the