

Childhood and its impact on perceptions of violence:

A Rapid Assessment on Domestic Violence
Experienced by Boys and Men in Fiji

By Marie Jane Fatiaki

Abstract

This research study responds to the question: What happens to a child growing up, that resorting to violence becomes a part of his life? It explores situations of domestic violence and abuse experienced by boys, young men and adult men in Fiji, and the implications of childhood experiences of violence and abuse on adult attitude, behaviour and perceptions of violence.

Extreme violence, abuse and neglect is experienced by boys, young men and adult men in Fiji families. Domestic violence experienced by children has a profound and usually damaging effect on their lives as adults, influencing young men's perceptions and definitions of behaviour that is appropriate. Gender norms and biases, discrimination and inequalities fuel violence, and the disintegration of moral values, the increasingly lack of respect people have for one another, the general acceptance of the use of violence to solve problems, and the deterioration of the social foundation of the family, aggravate and allow violence and abuse to prevail. This paper explores situations of domestic violence and abuse experienced by males in Fiji, and the implications of childhood experiences of violence and abuse on adult attitude, behaviour and perceptions of violence.

1.0 Introduction

*Violence against infants and younger children is a major risk factor for psychiatric disorders and suicide, and has lifelong sequelae including depression, anxiety disorders, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, aggression and violence towards others, risky sexual behaviours and post-traumatic stress disorders.*¹

The prevalence of domestic violence is high in Pacific Island countries, with lifetime prevalence rates for physical and sexual violence against women estimated between 60-80%² The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) estimates that 64% of women in Fiji are subject to domestic violence in their lifetime, and over 90% of the perpetrators are males.³ FWCC states that "Domestic violence has been the cause of an untold number of deaths, suicides, and mutilations,... [resulting in] deep-seated psychological scars that have destroyed the lives of numerous women and children..."⁴

Domestic violence has not only destroyed the lives of women and children, but also destroyed the lives of men who experienced violence and abuse as boys, and remain trapped in the intergenerational and vicious cycle. Domestic violence has many negative impacts on children including a range of behavioural problems and failure to progress at school. Growing up in a family with domestic violence is one of the biggest risk factors for girls to experience violence, and for boys to perpetrate violence in their own relationships.⁵

Domestic violence is often seen as a female victim and male perpetrator problem. Available research and existing programmes on domestic violence focus on female victims/survivors. Domestic violence from the perspective of males who are victims or perpetrators is a topic that has yet to be researched thoroughly in the Pacific. Information is limited and data on male victims of domestic violence is lacking as these incidences are largely unreported. There is a need to explore all aspects of domestic violence and critically analyse root causes that fuel violence by perpetrators. Newland (2016) states that, "Although there is no doubt that boys and men are almost always the perpetrators of gender violence, these forms of violence exists in a wider field of violence that includes male to male violence, female to female violence and female to male violence."⁶

1 http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/child_maltreatment/en/

2 UNICEF & UNFPA, 2015; Harmful Connections: Examining the relationship between violence against women and violence against children in the South Pacific; UNICEF, Suva, Fiji.

3 <https://www.newsdeeply.com/womenandgirls/articles/2017/05/25/climate-change-drives-domestic-violence-in-fiji>; accessed 7/04/2018

4 <http://www.fijiwomen.com/flare/domestic-violence/domestic-violence-whose-responsibility/>; accessed 7/04/2018

5 Hunt, J. 2013. Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business! National Research on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Fiji (2010/2011): A Survey \ Exploring the Prevalence, Incidence and Attitudes to Intimate Partner Violence in Fiji. Suva: Fiji Women's Crisis Centre

6 Newland, L; 2016; Villages, Violence and Atonement in Fiji; University of the South Pacific, University of Western Australia and University of St. Andrews; <http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/n2168/pdf/ch01.pdf>

7 FRIEND Grassroots Voices for Good Governance was awarded a European Union grant of 650,000 euros in December of 2016

1.1 Background

The research paper “Childhood and its impact on perceptions of violence: A Rapid Assessment on Domestic Violence Experienced by Boys and Men in Fiji” was commissioned by the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development (FRIEND) as part of the Grassroots Voices for Good Governance Project, funded by the European Union.⁷

The Grassroots Voices for Good Governance was a multi-layered and worked on the development of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) through capacity building and networking. There were various forums organized where citizen groups could engage in policy dialogues. During discussions some key issues and challenges were raised. Violence in the communities which slows development has been a constant issue raised. It was decided to commission a research to look at violence in the communities and develop a position paper to engage with various stakeholders including CBOs, faith groups and policy makers.

CBOs are at the forefront of development in any community – when there are pressing needs, citizens organize themselves, raise funds and undertake community development projects whether its building schools, water projects, roads or cemeteries.

The project created training opportunities for leaders of various community based organisations to strengthen good governance and financial accountability practices - training 70 CBO leaders, and supporting 32 of the CBOs through small grants to undertake community development projects. These were audited by the University of the South Pacific for accountability, improving documentation and operational best practices. The project also created opportunities for inter-ethnic dialogue and strengthening relations between CBOs, and promoted policy dialogue between CBO leaders and Government. Dialogue forums were organised between the CBO leaders and district administrators in Lautoka for communities to engage with government officials on policy and development in their communities. These forums provided a platform for CBOs to look at common issues facing the different ethnic communities living side by side, which previously operated in their separate ethnic silo. For example, all the CBOs in the area found that flood damage was a key concern so they and rallies together to lobby for better management of the nearby river.

The Grassroots Voices for Good Governance project commissioned a series of research papers to explore issues raised by the communities so that a structured document could be used for policy advocacy and to open conversation spaces on issues that affect the lives of people living in Fijian communities. One such issue raised by the communities was domestic violence, particularly from the male child perspective, leading to the question: *What happens to a child growing up, that resorting to violence becomes a part of his life?* This research responds to community concerns.

⁷ FRIEND Grassroots Voices for Good Governance was awarded a European Union grant of 650,000 euros in December of 2016

2.0 Research Method

In the last 20 years, rapid assessments have become very popular as a means to aid project design and evaluate interventions, drawing on a number of techniques including focus groups, participant observation, in-depth interviews, or more participatory techniques such as mapping, pile sorts, community mapping, and seasonal calendars.⁸

2.1 Research objectives

The research objectives were:

- i) To identify the types of domestic violence experienced⁹ by boys and men, its causes and impacts, and,
- ii) To assess services provided for men and boys who experience domestic violence and recommend what more can be done.

2.2 Target Area

The research area was identified as Vitogo district and therefore focus group discussions were conducted mainly in Vitogo and Lautoka area. Additional focus group discussions were carried out in Suva and Sigatoka to broaden the collection of knowledge and perceptions on the issue. Personal narrative interviews were conducted where participants were willing to be interviewed, noting that domestic violence has no geographical, socio-economic, cultural or religious boundaries.

2.3 Research approach, method and tools

A representative sampling methodology or household survey may not generate reliable data on domestic violence, thus the research adopted an interpretive inquiry approach, using qualitative research methods, collecting data on the general theme of violence against boys and men, and refining research questions as data was collected and analysed. The research was designed based on the Rapid Assessment (RA) methodology, guided by the manuals “Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists”¹⁰ by the World Health Organization (WHO) and PATH and “Child Labour Rapid Assessment Methodology” by UNICEF and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

A Rapid Assessment is an exploratory study implemented prior to designing an intervention or to supplement quantitative research, and responds over a relatively short period to a few specific questions. The RA does not pretend to provide a full, detailed account of all aspects of abuse, and is intended to inform further research, to assess local needs, or to evaluate interventions.¹¹

The ILO and UNICEF use RA methodology¹² for child-centred action-oriented research of hidden labour where children are sexually exploited, in domestic work, engaged in armed conflict, involved in criminal activities such as drug trafficking, or are trafficked or in bonded labour. The RA employs several research strategies simultaneously, aiming at a relatively rapid understanding of the problem. It is conducted explicitly for the purpose of developing action-oriented strategies and intervention policies and practical solutions to problems. Although primarily a qualitative methodology, RAs integrate quantitative data such as sex-disaggregated data and can also produce comparative results. RAs often use chain referral techniques such as snowball sampling for hidden groups and difficult to reach target populations. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that identifies a number of child respondents who then identify other child respondents thus increasing the sample size.¹³

8 Ellsberg M, and Heise L; 2005; Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists; World Health Organization, PATH; Washington DC, United States.

9 In identifying the types of violence experienced by boys and men, this included violence experienced whether on the giving end (perpetrators of violence, abusers) or receiving end (survivors of violence).

10 Ellsberg M, and Heise L; 2005; WHO PATH

11 Ellsberg M, and Heise L; 2005; WHO PATH

12 ILO and UNICEF; 2005; Manual on Child Labour Rapid Assessment Methodology

13 For more information on research techniques for child labour research see also Verma, V; 2013; Sampling of Elusive Populations: Applications to Studies of Child Labour; ILO, Geneva.

The RA methodology was selected to stimulate discussion and reflections on the issue of domestic violence against boys and men by members of the community, service providers and community-based and religious organisations. The RA tools used included:

- i) Focus group discussions- knowledge and perceptions of domestic violence;
- ii) Key informant interviews- experience, knowledge and perception of domestic violence;
- iii) Personal narratives- direct experience of domestic violence.

A brief literature review was conducted to provide an understanding of the problem and the context in which to discuss research findings. Where relevant, excerpts from the literature review have been inserted in the discussions on the research findings.

2.3.1 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were planned with various groups: civil servants, teachers, church groups, youth groups, women's groups, residents of informal settlements and villages, housewives/ self-employed, ex-offenders and community workers. The purpose of the focus group discussions was to stimulate discussion and reflections on the issue of domestic violence, and document participants' knowledge and perceptions of the issues as it exists in their communities and/or families. Guiding questions for focus group discussions were developed under each research objective, and facilitators for the focus groups explored questions further based on group discussions. The guiding questions were:

- i) To identify the types of domestic violence experienced by boys and men, its causes and impacts;
 - What is your own perception (view/opinion) of violence? Domestic violence?
 - What are the most common forms of violence experienced in communities & families in Fiji - by boys? by young men/ youths? by adults?
 - Select a violent episode that is common in families and discuss what led to the violence (the causes) and the results (impacts) of the violence?
 - How do boys and men who experience violence in families cope?
- ii) To assess services provided for men and boys who experience domestic violence and recommend what more can be done;
 - In your opinion, would you say that boys who grow up in a violent environment become violent themselves? What factors either cause them to have violent attitudes and behaviour - **or not**? Can you give some examples?
 - How does the community respond to boys and men who have experienced domestic violence?
 - If you had experienced violence and as either a perpetrator or a survivor, would you go for help/ counselling? Why or why not? Where could you go for help?
 - What more can be done to prevent violence in families and communities?

2.3.2 Key informant interviews

The guiding questions for key informants also followed the same vein as focus group discussions, relying on key informants to share knowledge of the issues based on their personal experiences through their work as development practitioners, service providers, religious or community leaders and so forth. Key informants were also queried on the types of services or programmes provided by their organisation for boys and men who experience domestic violence, whether as victims or perpetrators; and on accessibility of these services to boys/men.

2.3.3 Personal narratives

Personal narratives of males who experienced domestic violence were documented to illustrate the nature and circumstances of violence, highlight vulnerability factors and explore cause and effect. Guiding questions included questions on family life as a child and experiences in relation to parents or household members taking drugs, drinking alcohol, getting in trouble with the law, witnessing and/or experiencing violence in the household and/or the community, and coping strategies as a child and adult. The interviewer asked additional questions to further examine issues as they were raised by the respondent. Males were identified

through the use of snowballing technique and were interviewed only if they were willing to share their experiences and assured that confidentiality applied to all participants who shared personal narratives.

2.4 Research Team and Timeframe

The Rapid Assessment was designed, implemented, and the report prepared by Marie Fatiaki with the support of Mr. Jiuta Korovolavula, a Development Practitioner with extensive experience in research on development and social issues. Mr. Daniel Patel, a BSC student at the University of the South Pacific was trained to conduct personal interviews. Additional focus group discussions were also facilitated by Ms. Asela Naisara, Mr. Jason Tutani, Mr. Pene Penjueli and Mr. Simione Kototuibou.

The Rapid Assessment was conducted over the course of 8 weeks:

- Research design, question design and selection of research assistants; initial key informant meetings: 1-6 April
- Data gathering, literature review: 7-30 April
- Initial findings presented on 20 April
- Data analysis and reporting: first draft report submitted on 14 May, and final paper submitted on 25 May.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data collected through the literature review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and personal narratives were analysed thematically, and triangulated to validate or expand on information provided through each research tool.

2.6 Ethical Guidelines

The guidelines outlined below, served to inform the decisions of the researcher throughout the research process¹⁴

- i) The researcher will at all times ensure that the research activity is conducted in a neutral setting and a secure environment.
- ii) The researcher will at all times, at the beginning of interviews, explain to the respondents, regardless of youth or gender, who he or she is, where he or she comes from and why he or she is conducting the research.
- iii) The researcher recognizes that 'informed consent' is a vital aspect of research and will therefore ensure that all respondents give their informed consent before participating in the research.
- iv) The researcher will both give and observe confidentiality, ensuring that respondents are comfortable with how information will be presented whilst maintaining their confidence.
- v) The researcher will be knowledgeable and reflective to avoid prejudicial behaviour and maintain gender neutrality at all times.
- vi) The researcher will not remunerate respondents, either in cash or kind and will not raise the respondents' expectations of dramatic lifestyle changes as an outcome of the research activity.
- vii) The researcher will go through a debriefing session with all stakeholders upon the completion of the fieldwork.

2.7 Limitations

The short time frame for the Rapid Assessment was the major limitation. In addition the tropical cyclones that hit Fiji in April hampered the collection of data from focus groups in the Western Division, particularly from the Vitoġo communities that were affected by severe floods. Therefore additional data was collected from other areas in Lautoka, Suva and Sigatoka. As a result, the timeframe for the Rapid Assessment was delayed for two weeks, extending from a planned 6-week to 8-week exercise. Additionally, as domestic violence and child abuse is a sensitive issue, identification of survivors willing to share their stories is gradual, thus more personal narratives could have been collected over a longer timeframe, providing greater insight into the issue.

14 It is recognized that the guidelines cannot replace contingent ethics - those decisions or actions made in specific contexts, in the unplanned and creative spaces of gender and social interaction, thus these guidelines served as an aid to sound judgement.

3.0 Literature Review

“...parents who are neglectful, rejecting, physically abusive, or commit antisocial acts will teach their children that these are appropriate ways to interact with others.”¹⁵

3.1 Defining Violence and Domestic Violence

Violence is “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.” The World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of violence encompasses interpersonal violence as well as suicidal behaviour and armed conflict and covers a wide range of acts, going beyond physical acts to include threats and intimidation. Besides death and injury, the definition also includes the less obvious consequences of violent behaviour, such as psychological harm, deprivation and mal-development that compromise the well-being of individuals, families and communities.¹⁶

According to Tsao et.al, violence takes many forms, including intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child maltreatment, bullying, suicidal behaviour, and elder abuse and neglect. Violent behaviour is complex and many factors increase or decrease the likelihood of violence. The communities people live in can protect them from violence or can increase their risk of violence. Factors that make it more likely that people will experience violence (risk factors) include rigid social beliefs about what is “masculine” and “feminine,” lack of job opportunities, and family conflict. Things that make it less likely that people will experience violence (protective factors) include connection to a caring adult or access to mental health services. Risk and protective factors can affect an entire community, and occur in interactions with family and friends and within organisations and systems like schools, faith institutions, and workplaces. Individual experiences or traits can also be risk and protective factors, such as witnessing violence or having skills to solve problems non-violently.¹⁷

Domestic violence is violence perpetrated by intimate partners and other family members, manifested through physical abuse (slapping, beating, arm twisting, stabbing, strangling, burning, choking, kicking, threats with an object or weapon, and murder); sexual abuse (coerced sex through threats, intimidation or physical force, unwanted sexual acts, forcing sex with others or sexual acts without voluntary consent); psychological abuse (threats of abandonment or abuse, confinement to the home, surveillance, threats to take away custody of the children, destruction of objects, isolation, verbal aggression and constant humiliation); and economic abuse (for example, denial of funds, refusal to contribute financially, denial of food and basic needs, and controlling access to health care, employment and other services.)¹⁸

According to the Fiji Domestic Violence Decree Act 2009, domestic violence means violence against a person (‘the victim’) committed directly or undertaken by another person (‘the perpetrator’), with whom the victim is or has been in a family or domestic relationship, and includes any of the following¹⁹:

- a. Physical injury or threatening physical injury
- b. Sexual abuse or threatening sexual abuse
- c. Damaging or threatening to damage property of a victim
- d. Threatening, intimidating or harassing
- e. Persistently behaving in an abusive, cruel, inhumane, degrading, provocative or offensive manner

¹⁵ Based on the Social Learning Theory, in Hoffman, J; Parenting and Delinquency; in Krohn, M and J. Lane (Ed.); 2015; The Handbook of Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Justice; John Wiley & Sons Inc.; West Sussex, UK; pp161-180

¹⁶ Krug EG et al., eds.; 2002; World report on violence and Health, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland.

¹⁷ Wilkins, N., Tsao, B., Hertz, M., Davis, R., Klevens, J.; 2014; Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Institute; Oakland & Atlanta, USA.

¹⁸ <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/347-glossary-of-terms-from-programming-essentials-and-monitoring-and-evaluation-sections.html>

¹⁹ Domestic Violence Decree 2009 (3) Definition of domestic violence

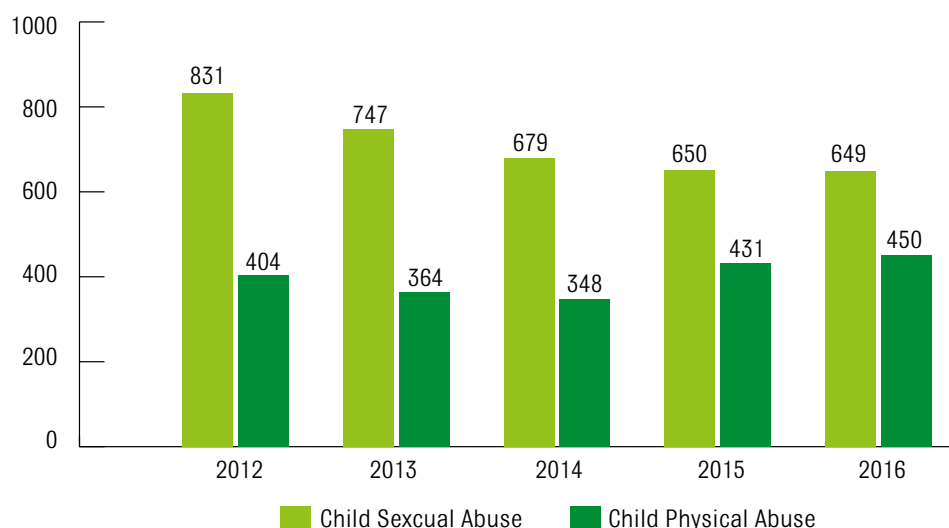
- f. Causing the victim apprehension or fear by (i) following the victim, or (ii) loitering outside the workplace or other place frequented by the victim, or (iii) entering or interfering with a home or place occupied by the victim, or (iv) keeping the victim under surveillance
- g. Causing or allowing a child to witness any of the violence referred to above (a to f)²⁰
- h. Causing another person to do any of the acts referred above (a to g) towards the victim. The family or domestic relationship means the relationship of spouse, other family member, person who normally or regularly resides in the household or residential facility, boyfriend or girlfriend, person who is wholly or partly dependent on ongoing paid or unpaid care, or a person who provides such care.²¹

3.2 Violence Against Children

The United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children (2006),²² estimates that as many as 275 million children are exposed to domestic violence, highlighting that this is chronically underreported and some countries have no data at all, thus it is difficult to quantify how many children are affected. Global data also indicates that being in a violent household increases the risks of children being abused. Young children are at greatest risk of physical violence, while sexual violence predominantly affects those who have reached puberty or adolescence. Boys are at greater risk of physical violence than girls, while girls face greater risk of sexual violence, neglect and forced prostitution. An estimated 150 million girls and 73 million boys under 18 experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence.²³ The UN 2006 report states that growing income inequality, globalisation, migration, urbanisation, health threats, technological advances and armed conflict affect how children are treated.

Violence against children is a growing concern in Fiji with over 1000 cases of child sexual abuse and physical abuse reported to the Fiji Police Force each year (Fig.1). The breakdown of the types of child sexual abuse and child physical abuse cases in Fig. 2 and 3, illustrates that child abuse and violence against children are synonymous.

Figure 1: Child physical abuse & sexual abuse statistics from Police (Key Statistics, March 2017, FBOS)



²⁰ Person suffering from the violence is not regarded as having caused or allowed or put the child at real risk of having to witness the violence.

²¹ Domestic Violence Decree 2009, (2) Interpretations

²² <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/491/05/PDF/N0649105.pdf?OpenElement>

²³ Based on WHO estimates during 2002: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/child_maltreatment/en/

Figure 2: Breakdown of child sexual abuse cases, Fiji Police 2016 (Key Statistics, March 2017, FBOS)

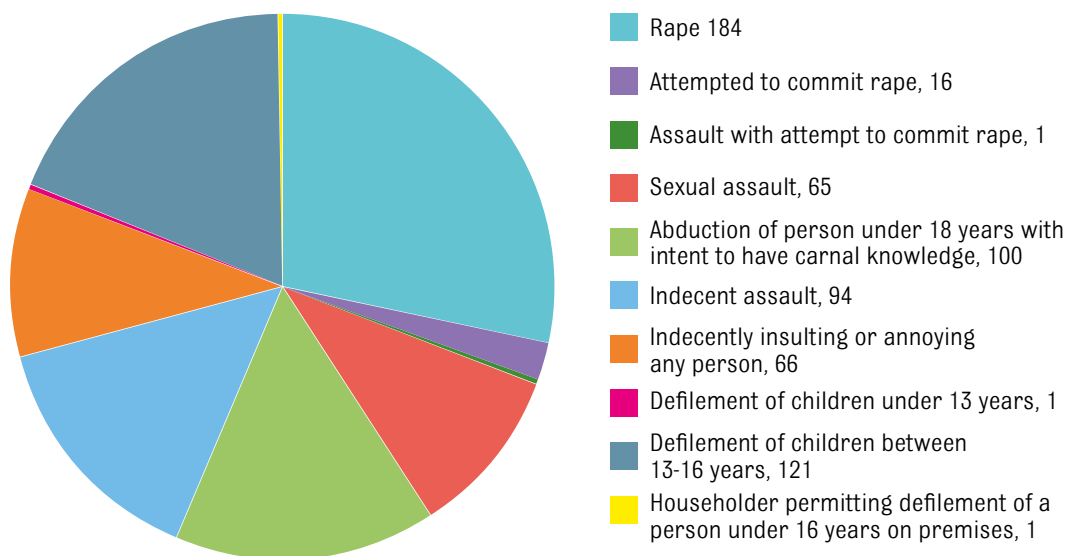
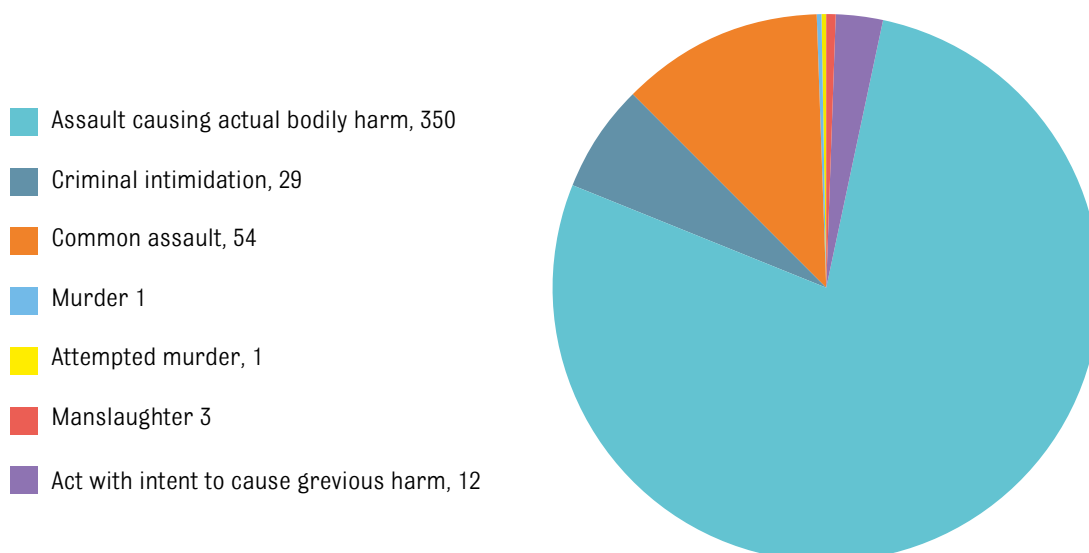


Figure 3: Breakdown of child physical abuse cases, Fiji Police 2016 (Key Statistics, March 2017, FBOS)



The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation also receives over 1000 cases of child abuse and neglect each year reported by mandatory authorities (Police Officers, Teachers, Medical Officers) under the Child Welfare Decree Act.²⁴

In 2016, 1077 cases of child abuse and neglect were reported to the Ministry,²⁵ this figure rising to 1145 in 2017, the highest in the past five years according to a Fiji Times Report. In 2016, 59% of the cases involved children 10 years old and below, and in 2017, 67% of the cases involved children 12 years old and below, with the largest cohort of abuse and neglect cases being children under 5 years old (Fig.4). In most child abuse and neglect cases, the 339 female and 299 male perpetrators were from the immediate family, including parents, aunts and uncles and step parents. In 2015, sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy, child neglect and physical abuse topped the list of reported cases under the Child Welfare Decree (Fig.5).

²⁴ The Child Welfare Decree was gazette by the Fiji Government in 2010. Reporting of child abuse and neglect cases to the Ministry of Women and Children by authorities such as Police, Health Officials, Teachers, is mandatory.

²⁵ <http://fijisun.com.fj/2017/03/09/1077-child-abuse-neglect-cases-reported-in-2016-vuniwaqa/> accessed 18/04/2018

Child Welfare Decree statistics for 2012-2017 released by the Ministry, indicates that child neglect is a growing concern, increasing from 305 cases in 2016 to 416 in 2017.²⁶ Psychology Today defines child neglect as a type of maltreatment related to the failure to provide needed, age-appropriate care, and includes:

- Physical neglect - the refusal to provide necessary health care, child abandonment, inadequate supervision, the rejection of a child leading to child leaving home, failing to provide for the child's safety and physical and emotional needs, inadequate nutrition, clothing, or hygiene, and reckless disregard of the child's safety and welfare.
- Educational neglect occurs when a child is allowed to engage in chronic truancy, is not receiving schooling when he or she is of the compulsory school age.
- Emotional neglect includes inadequate nurturing and affection, spousal abuse in the child's presence, allowing a child to use drugs or alcohol, encouraging or permitting delinquency, severe assault or other anti-social behaviour.
- Medical neglect is the failure to provide for appropriate health care for a child, who may show signs of poor health, fatigue, infected cuts, and constant itching or scratching of skin²⁷

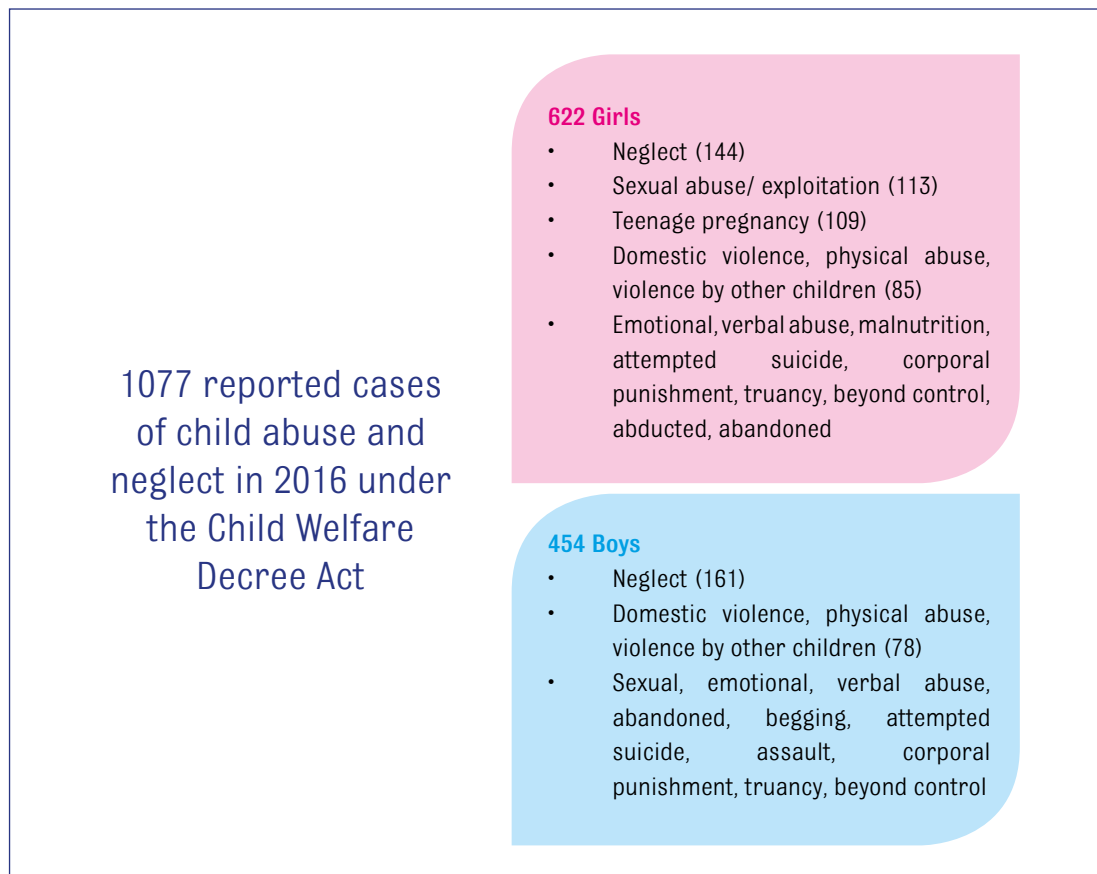


Figure 4: 2016 Reported Cases

²⁶ <http://www.fijitimes.com/child-abuse-highest-in-5-years/> accessed 29/04/2018

²⁷ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/conditions/child-neglect>

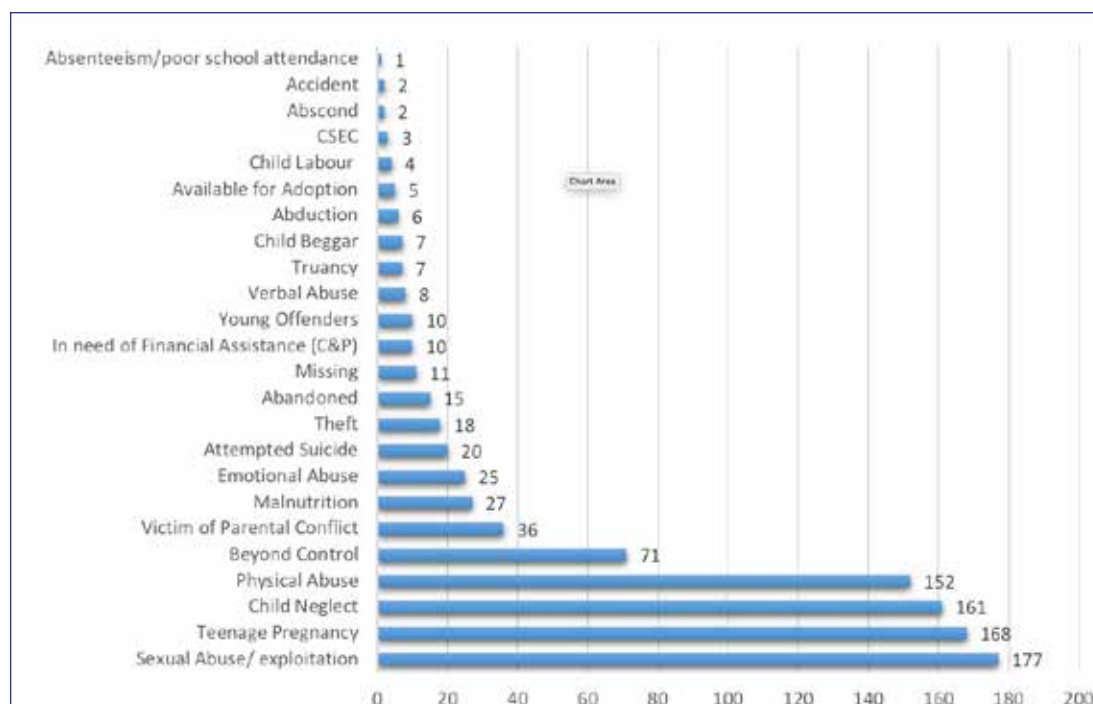


Figure 5: 2015 Reported cases under the Child Welfare Decree Act

3.3 Child Victims to Adult Perpetrators of Violence

Using data from a Multi-country Study on Women and Health and Domestic Violence Against Women²⁸, a 2015 report by UNICEF²⁹ found a strong link between being abused as a child, growing up in a household where domestic violence occurs and the acceptance of violence as part of life. Of the women interviewed in the study in Fiji aged between 14-65 years, 40% indicated their mother had experienced intimate partner violence, 17% indicated their mother-in-law had experienced intimate partner violence, and 20% indicated that their partner had been beaten as a child.

Findings from the Multi-country Study suggests that violence is a learned behaviour, and children who experience violence at the hands of parents and/or witness their parent's violence towards each other learn that violence is appropriate in personal settings and may imitate these early childhood lessons in adult relationships. The report also illustrated that children of women who had experienced violence were more likely to experience nightmares, display aggressive behaviour, repeat a year of school or drop out of school, and were more likely to become abusers themselves. Children who grew up in violent homes were more likely to have been abused than those who did not.³⁰

Preliminary findings of the first Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study in the Pacific presented at the Pacific Conference on Ending Violence Against Children in 2015³¹, found that the impact of violence is lifelong and has a negative impact on men who had experienced it in childhood. The ACE study interviewed 400 males, aged 18 to 72, from randomly selected households in Honiara using WHO's Adverse Childhood Experiences International Questionnaire (ACE-IQ)³². Childhood adversities reported by men before the age of 18 years included 75.5% of household members were treated violently, 16.5% had a household member in prison, 9% had single or divorced parents, 50.5% were bullied, 84% witnessed community violence, and 26.3% were exposed to collective violence. Findings suggested that violence during childhood sustains the cycle of violence against females and males across generations, promoting the transference of violent attitudes and behaviour patterns from parent to child and from sibling to sibling.³³

28 Hunt, J. 2013. Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business! National Research on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Fiji (2010/2011): A Survey \ Exploring the Prevalence, Incidence and Attitudes to Intimate Partner Violence in Fiji. Suva: Fiji Women's Crisis Centre

29 UNICEF & UNFPA; 2015; Harmful Connections: Examining the relationship between violence against women and violence against children in the South Pacific; UNICEF, Suva, Fiji.

30 *ibid*

31 UNICEF, Report on the Pacific Conference on Ending Violence Against Children, 18–20 May 2015 Nadi, Fiji

32 http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/adverse_childhood_experiences/en; accessed 29/03/2018

33 Presented by P. Lui, a PhD student of Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Domestic violence has many negative impacts on children including a range of behavioural problems and failure to progress at school and growing up in a family with domestic violence is one of the biggest risk factors for girls to experience violence, and for boys to perpetrate violence in their own relationships³⁴. According to UNICEF, early childhood which spans the period up to 8 years of age, is critical for cognitive, social, emotional, physical and optimal development requires a stimulating environment, adequate nutrients and social interaction with attentive caregivers. Unsafe conditions, negative interactions and lack of educational opportunities during these early years can lead to irreversible outcomes, which can affect a child's potential for the remainder of his or her life.³⁵ WHO further states that violence against infants and younger children is a major risk factor for psychiatric disorders and suicide, and has lifelong sequelae [result of consequences] including depression, anxiety disorders, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, aggression and violence towards others, risky sexual behaviours and post-traumatic stress disorders³⁶

3.4 Social Learning Theory and General Strain Theory

Both the Social Learning Theory and General Strain Theory provide explanations to help us understand how the violence and abuse children experience in their childhood may shape their attitudes and perceptions as adults, and the impact of these traumatic experiences on their lives.

According to the Social Learning Theory (SLT), parent-modelling plays a key role in child problem-solving and regulatory strategies. Parents' use of harsh and aggressive behaviour management techniques reinforces child disruptive behaviour, teaching children to use such conflict resolution strategies to deal with interpersonal difficulties with siblings in the home, and with peers and adults outside the home. According to Winfree, the SLT proposed by Akers and Burgess in 1966 is a general theory that explains the sociological, social psychological and social structural forces behind a broad range of miscreant and aberrant behaviour.³⁷ The SLT has four parts-

- *Differential association* referring to direct social interaction with a primary group and important identifications with more distant groups which are also sources of learning, and are the sum of all social influences including family, school teachers, public officials, neighbors, and religious figures.
- Imitation occurs when children or individuals start to copy the behaviour of others, not really understanding why the behaviour is important or in what ways or when it may be rewarding. Imitation is the most basic form of learning, a case of monkey see, monkey do.
- *Definitions* serve as guideposts for behaviour, good and bad, rewarding and punishing.
- Differential reinforcement exists in social or non-social forms and suggests to the actor whether the behaviour guided by their definitions is likely to be rewarded or punished.³⁸

SLT proposes that parents who are neglectful, rejecting, physically abusive, or commit antisocial acts will teach their children that these are appropriate ways to interact with others.³⁹ Social learning approaches promote parent management strategies in many intervention programmes, focused on reducing negative parenting techniques such as hostility, harsh punishment and coercion and promoting positive parenting techniques such as sensitivity, positive reinforcement, and consistent limit setting.⁴⁰

34 Hunt, J. 2013. Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business! National Research on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Fiji (2010/2011): A Survey \ Exploring the Prevalence, Incidence and Attitudes to Intimate Partner Violence in Fiji. Suva: Fiji Women's Crisis Centre

35 https://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/files/Brochure_-_The_Formative_Years.pdf

36 http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/child_maltreatment/en/

37 Winfree, T.L; Social Learning Theory and Delinquent Behaviour: Past, Present and Future Investigations; in Krohn, M and J. Lane (Ed.); 2015; The Handbook of Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Justice; John Wiley & Sons Inc.; West Sussex, UK; pp257-273

38 Akers (1985) cited by Winfree, T.L; Social Learning Theory and Delinquent Behaviour: Past, Present and Future Investigations; in Krohn, M and J. Lane (Ed.); 2015; The Handbook of Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Justice; John Wiley & Sons Inc.; West Sussex, UK; pp257-273

39 Based on the Social Learning Theory, in Hoffman, J; Parenting and Delinquency; in Krohn, M and J. Lane (Ed.); 2015; The Handbook of Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Justice; John Wiley & Sons Inc.; West Sussex, UK; pp161-180

40 Brennan, L.M and D. S. Shaw; Prenatal and Early Childhood Prevention of Antisocial Behaviour; in Krohn, M and J. Lane (Ed.); 2015; The Handbook of Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Justice; John Wiley & Sons Inc.; West Sussex, UK; pp351-369

Robert Agnew (2015)⁴¹, uses the General Strain Theory (GST) to explain that certain strains or stressors (events or conditions that are disliked) increase the likelihood of delinquency in certain people. Agnew states that strains may involve the presence of negative stimuli such as verbal and physical abuse. Strains that are more likely to lead to crime and delinquency, called criminogenic strains, are severe, frequent, of long duration and expected to continue into the future. They threaten core goals, needs, values, activities and identities of individuals and are often seen as unjust, and are associated with low social control (for example parental abuse is associated with forming a weak bond with parents) and create incentive or pressure for criminal coping and exposure to others who model crime or teach beliefs favourable to crime.

Agnew provides the following list of 'criminogenic strains' which increase the likelihood of delinquency:⁴²

- Parental rejection, where parents show little love or affection for their children, provide little support and are often hostile to them;
- Supervision and discipline that is erratic, harsh and/ or excessive for example, use of humiliation, insults, threats, screaming and/ or physical punishment;
- Child abuse and neglect;
- Negative secondary school experiences, including low grades, poor relations with teachers (being treated unfairly, belittled, bullied, humiliated), and perceiving school as boring and a waste of time;
- Peer abuse, including insults, ridicule, gossip, threats, attempts to coerce and physical assaults;
- The failure to achieve selected goals, such as masculine status and money in a short period of time;
- Criminal victimisation;
- Residence in economically deprived communities associated with exposure to a host of strains including victimisation, family and school problems and peer abuse;
- Homelessness;
- Discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religion.

These strains lead to negative emotions such as anger and frustration, reduced social control and commitment to school. Negative emotions may push juveniles to associate with delinquent peers, juveniles may use drugs to feel better and come to believe that violence is a justifiable response to provocation. Chronic exposure to these strains contributes to traits conducive to crime. Reducing the exposure of adolescents to criminogenic strains is an urgent policy response.⁴³

41 Agnew, R; General Strain Theory and Delinquency; in Krohn, M and J. Lane (Ed.); 2015; The Handbook of Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Justice; John Wiley & Sons Inc.; West Sussex, UK; pp239-256

42 Agnew, R; General Strain Theory and Delinquency; in Krohn, M and J. Lane (Ed.); 2015; The Handbook of Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Justice; John Wiley & Sons Inc.; West Sussex, UK; pp239-256

43 Ibid

4.0 Research Findings

4.1 Primary Data

- i) A total of 30 key informants participated in the Rapid Assessment. These included representatives or members of various organisations with insights into working with children, youth, women, men, prisoners and communities. These organisations included FRIEND, Save the Children Fiji, Empower Pacific, Homes of Hope, People's Community Network, Fiji Teachers Union, Operation Foundation, and church groups and associations. Community workers were also interviewed and shared knowledge of the issue from their work experiences around Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, and in the outer islands of Fiji.
- ii) Over 100 respondents participated in focus group discussions, including civil servants, teachers, church groups, youth groups, women's groups, residents of informal settlements and villages, housewives/self-employed, ex-offenders and community workers. Five focus group discussions were conducted in the Vitoḡo area and three focus groups conducted with women and youth groups in Lautoka. An additional six focus group discussions were held in Suva and one focus group discussion in Sigatoka.
- iii) A total of 10 male adults were interviewed to draft personal narratives.

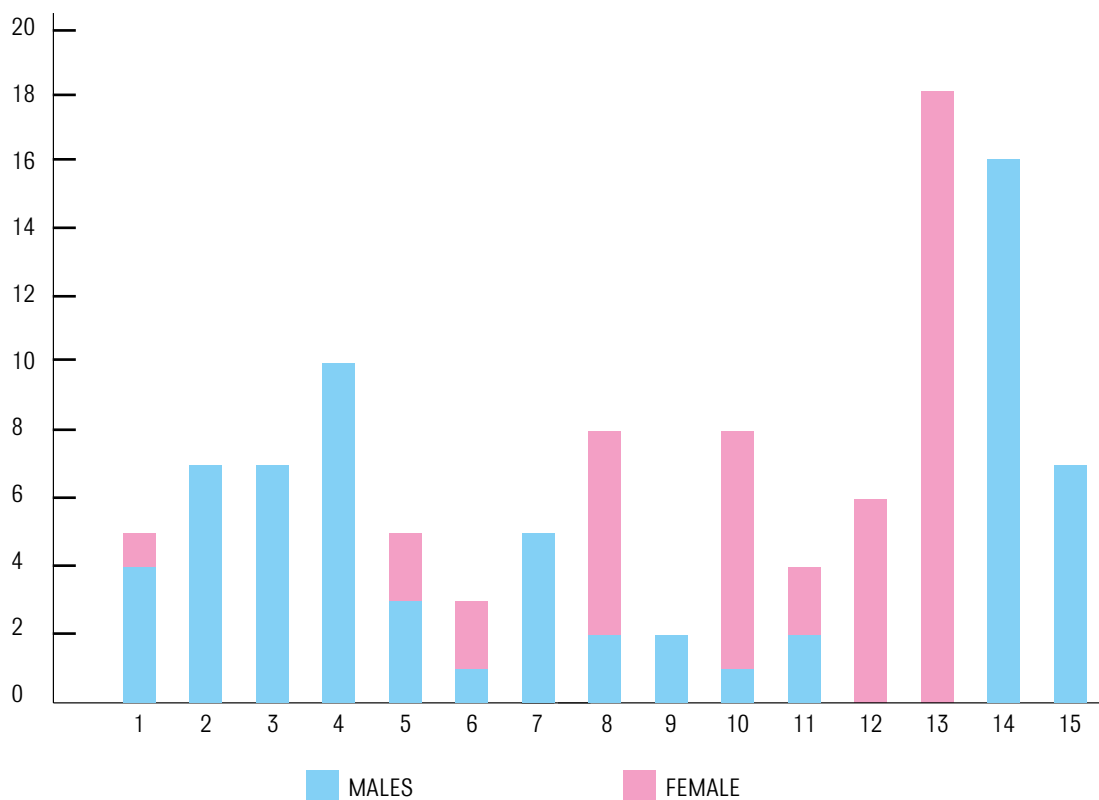


Figure 6: Distribution of male and female participants of focus group discussions

4.2 Types of domestic violence experienced by boys and men, its causes and impacts

4.2.1 Perceptions on violence and domestic violence

Most focus groups defined violence by the types or acts of violence and the impact of violence. According to participants, violence is aggressive behaviour or action that causes harm both physically and emotionally. The intention is to cause harm or hurt, or to cause a person to feel bad or ashamed, demeaning or small and uneasy. Violence could be emotional, physical, verbal or psychological and involves acts such as invasion of privacy; street or gang violence such as brawling on the streets; drunk and disorderly conduct including brawling, damaging property, yelling and screaming; child abuse and neglect; doing bad things to others, saying bad things, fighting with others. Violence can be applied or received by anybody regardless of age, gender and ethnicity.

A woman's group in Lautoka stated, "*Violence is something that cannot be stopped but something we can address.*" The statement is concerning as it possibly indicates that people accept violence as inevitable and normal behaviour. A number of key informants support this notion, stating that in most cases the level of community acceptance of physical violence and abuse is high.

"The level of acceptance around physical abuse is high. Police beating up young boys [for breaking the law] would be joined by fathers and uncles contributing to the beating." (Key informants, Males)

Focus groups defined domestic violence according to their experience, by the act and impact of domestic violence. Participants were able to relate this type of violence as happening in families and in the home environment. Acts of domestic violence they identified included:

- **Abuse between parents** including:
 - o Husbands abusing the wife physically, sexually and verbally;
 - o Women pouring hot water on their husbands and cutting their clothes to pieces when they come home drunk.
 - o Husbands being stressed with wives nagging for more expensive things and fussing about every little thing because it's never enough.
 - o Wives being the dominant figure at home that the husband has no say
- **Physical, emotional and verbal abuse of children** by parents/ guardians including:
 - o Children being beaten daily at home, being told that they are good for nothing, stupid and a mistake by parents/guardians;
 - o Being witnesses of fights between parents resulting in separation including witnessing father being abused by mother because she is the one earning or fathers beating mothers;
- **Abuse of children by extended family members** if living with aunts/uncles and **step parents**;
 - o Made to do all the chores at home as the eldest and being too tired to do homework resulting in beating for poor results;
 - o Ill-treatment by step parent or relatives.
- **Child neglect** including:
 - o Being left alone and unsupervised as a child and neglected by parents so that they can go clubbing or spend time with their friends;
 - o Being victims of parties held at home either by their own parents or friends.
- **Rape and forcing other family members** to do what you want
- **Rivalry between families and conflict over traditional titles**, was also identified.

4.2.2 Violence experienced in communities and families in Fiji by boys, young men and adult men

Violence is not a new phenomenon in Fiji's turbulent history of tribal and religious warfare, abusive labour traffic and indenture system, and military and civilian coups. According to Brewster (1923), old Fijian legends speak of the old people who were a quiet and peaceful people and only learned war and bloodshed from strangers who arrived and lived amongst them at some very remote period. Early settlers wrote that the Fijians of their time were rude, boisterous and savage and only those who encountered them can know how dreadful they were, yet at the same time it seems that their cruelty and violence were foreign to their real nature.⁴⁴

In writing on everyday resistance of Indian indentured immigrants on the plantations, Nicole (2006) illustrates that violence permeated the lives of all, irrespective of their place in the hierarchy. Violent acts of retaliation by indentured labourers were often driven by an outraged sense of injustice, in response to beatings, abusive language, extortion, overtasking, meddling with women labourers, or rape. *"If redress and revenge is not promptly sought with the ever-handly working knife or cutlass, the man is apt to brood his wrongs and nurse his wrath until his feelings are relieved by an act of violence against the objects of his resentment, or upon himself."*⁴⁵

Brewster (1922) shares an interesting piece of history from the *Hill Tribes of Fiji* to illustrate situations of violence young boys experienced and some of the norms expected of young boys. Young men of puberty age were circumcised publicly in the Great Tribal Hall in the presence of the whole tribe, men, women and children, and this had to be borne without a murmur. Even when they winced, the youths were ordered to remember the tribe they belonged to and comport themselves like men. Like the Noikoro, the Noemalu [clans] performed the ritual publicly in the great hall, but a further trial had to be endured on the fourth day when the young boys purified themselves by washing in the river. The public would be notified including neighbouring villages, and would come armed with spears, short throwing clubs, stones and all sorts of missiles. After bathing in the river the young boys would make a simultaneous rush for home, a signal for all the people to chase them and hurl their missiles at them. The youths who successfully dodged these would become celebrated warriors but those who got hit would not have a long career. Their sponsors who were also armed would throw themselves between the youth and the pursuers with whom they would have a sham fight. This lasted until the newly circumcised reached home and all would sit down to a feast, many badly bruised and cut, to show there was no animosity and to celebrate achieving manhood of the young boys.⁴⁶

Brewster also illustrates a common situation of domestic disputes at the time, involving both parties (husband and wife) inflicting violence upon each other. He writes,

"Man is certainly the Lord of Creation, but in the hill country he had to do his share of the daily tasks. A typical sight is the man striding ahead carrying the baby and the woman behind carrying the heavy backload of firewood, dalo and yams. It is recognized as a fair division of labour that whilst the woman is occupied with domestic details the husband looks after the children. It was common for the Courts to hear cases of assault and battery between married couples and they all had striking family resemblances. The man would be in the upper part of the house where the sleeping accommodation is, nursing the baby, and the woman in the lower end doing the cooking when the quarrel arose. When the husband got sufficiently into a rage he would hurl the kali (wooden pillow) at the wife who would retaliate by flinging billets of firewood at him. Then he would rush down to the fireplace to pummel her and she would probably seize a fire-stick and brand him and they would both appear in court each bearing their distinctive marks."⁴⁷

44 Brewster, A.B; 1923; Genealogies and Histories of the Matanitu or Tribal Governments of C. Viti Levu, Great Fiji.

45 Nicole, R; 2006; Disturbing History: Aspects of Resistance in Early Colonial Fiji, 1874-1914; Thesis for PHD, University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

46 Brewster, A.B; 1922; The Hill Tribes of Fiji: A Record of Forty Years' Intimate Connection with the Tribes of the Mountainous Interior of Fiji with a Description of their Habits in War and Peace Methods of Living, Characteristics mental and Physical, From the Days of Cannibalism to the Present Time; Seeley, Service & Co. Limited; London.

47 ibid

4.2.2.1 Types of violence experienced by the boy child in families/communities

Research participants all agreed that violence against boys occurs in Fiji, although some were more aware of the severity and incidence of violence against boys than others. The types of violence against boys ranged from physical abuse, emotional, psychological and verbal abuse, sexual abuse, bullying, corporal punishment, neglect and labour exploitation. Participants agreed that boys suffer more than one type of abuse simultaneously, for example, physical, emotional and verbal abuse. Perpetrators were commonly identified as fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, older siblings, step parents, teachers, and peers.

Some of the most severe **physical abuse** identified by research participants include gang bashing and gang bullying; boys put in a sack, strung from a tree and beaten [this incidence is not isolated, nor restricted to boys, as there have also been reports of girls who have been physically abused in the same way, and then sexually abused. According to some participants this may be more common in some villages than others]; and boys beaten with an open hand, closed fist, iron rod, lemon branch or stick, belt or strap. One should be concerned about the severe nature of physical violence against young boys shared by participants, and the negative impacts of these experiences, as illustrated by the narratives below and presented throughout the research findings:

“He grew up in a violent neighbourhood and was abused by both his parents. His father tied him in a bag and used him as a punching bag, physically abusing him until he turned 21 and was able to move out from home. His mum left home when he was a child and his aunty sexually abused him when he was a young boy and he didn’t know what was going on. He was injured often by the violence he experienced at home and in the violent neighbourhood where he grew up, experiencing racism, street brawls and ending up in hospital a couple of times. He didn’t become violent and he is a loyal father but he is an unfaithful husband.”

(Personal narrative, Male)

“As a 9 year old he was put in a sack, tied up and hung up on a tree and beaten with the branch of a lemon tree by his uncles. He stayed with his extended family and single mum who left him with his uncles while she went to work. He didn’t become violent - except when playing rugby. He is still fearful of authority, allowing others to make all the decisions and following along... In another incident a young boy for his punishment had to stand out on the reef and was still standing there when the tide came in, as his mother looked on in tears... another boy was tied to the stairs and beaten by his father...”

(Key informants, Mixed)

“He was 4 years old when he was punched up by his drunken step father... sometimes he would be shocked awake in the middle of the night by his stepfather hitting him with a belt for a mistake he may have made during the day. Sometimes he would be kicked, beaten with iron rods...he grew up walking on eggshells around his stepfather, always wary, looking over his shoulder... his mother tried to protect him by trying to control his every action so he would not do something that angered his stepfather. He started lying, stealing, ‘stepping’ school and became resentful and aggressive himself. As he grew older the physical abuse ended but the silent treatment remained, being ignored and on the receiving end of hateful and angry glares. He never knew whether he was ever wanted.”

(Personal narrative, Male)

Child neglect was identified by research participants as a major concern. Neglect was identified by participants as a form of abuse which also put children at risk of physical and sexual abuse by others. In most cases neglect overlapped with other forms of violence and abuse. When asked what neglect looks like, a key informant said, *“absent father, absent mother, parents don’t teach them, they allow them to roam while they are busy drinking grog [yaqona], or on Facebook.”* Examples of child neglect in Fiji identified by participants through focus groups and key informants included:

- *8 year old child burnt while making her siblings’ breakfast as her mother had gone to drink grog the whole night and was fast asleep. Her skirt caught fire while she was boiling the water on the primus and although the mother heard the girl screaming she was too sleepy [grog doped] to register what was happening.*
- *Small children (2 year olds) swimming in the sea unsupervised.*
- *2-year-old boy fell from a tree and broke his arm. Parents did not realise he had broken his arm until they came back home and found him crying.*
- *Father tried to drop his 6 very young children [primary age and younger] at the swimming pool during the school holidays to swim on their own but the pool attendant refused to allow the father to leave the children to swim there without adult supervision.*
- *Boy was very sick but his parents sent him to school because no one was at home to look after him.*
- *Young boys playing at the game centres 24 hours a day during school days and parents unable to control them, send them to school or take them home.*
- *A mother left her two-year-old twins alone in the house so she could go clubbing. Her husband works night shift.*
- *Parents who take their time to come home and do not go looking for their children if they are not at home- this is quite common. In primary schools, some parents do not pick up their children until very late.*

Although child neglect is a major issue, most stakeholders agreed that it receives much less attention than physical and sexual abuse. Signs of neglect according to *Psychology Today* may be observed as children being malnourished, frequently absent from school, stealing or begging for food or money, lacking needed medical or dental care, being consistently dirty and having severe body odour, unwashed, uncombed hair; tattered, under or oversize and unclean clothing, frequently lacking supervision, abusing alcohol or other drugs, and stating that there is no one at home to provide care.⁴⁸

The **sexual abuse** of young boys by older men and women was also identified as an abhorrent type of violence against young boys. This involved young boys being raped, being sodomised and molested by men and older boys, usually their own family members. According to various key informants, boys from 8-12 years old also experienced sexual initiation by older females above 50 years old, by females in their early 20s, and by older men who introduce young boys to pornography. According to key informants the average age for boys who access pornography is from 8-10 years old. Focus groups and key informants also noted that younger teenage boys may also experiment with sexual activity as a group, masturbating and watching porn together. Some key informants spoke of young boys ‘playing’ with each other as they bathed together in the river. Older teenage boys may participate in gang rape, usually involving the same female - a silent victim who has been used sexually and boys introduce other boys to the group who take turns to sexually exploit her. Personal narratives shared below illustrate these abuses, the factors that create vulnerability to being sexually abused and impacts.

48 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/conditions/child-neglect>

“Harassment of young boys (10-16 years old) by older gay men who were relatives [uncles] living in the same village and close to their homes. These older gay men would accost the young boys in the evening and even touch them when they were sleeping, offer to buy them phones or new shoes and give them money. They would attack the boy’s self-esteem, calling them “ugly boys” and saying that no girls would want them. One of the boys admitted that this led to him having sex with his uncle after which he felt ashamed of himself.”

(Personal narrative in a focus group, Males)

He was 5 years old when he was sexually abused and raped by his 23-year-old cousin. His parents were drinking at home with friends at the time and didn’t know what was happening to their son under their own roof. His cousin would be part of the drinking crowd and would go to the children’s bedroom to sleep when he got drunk. The sexual abuse would carry on until he was 15 years old when he gathered up the courage to stop the abuse. He became a rebellious child, stealing from supermarkets, smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol by the time he was 12 years old. He transformed from a hyperactive little boy to an effeminate boy and transgender, much to the confusion of his parents. He finally told his mother one day when he was drunk, accusing her, “Where were you? You were supposed to protect me!”

(Personal narrative, Male)

“My father left my mother and my brothers and I. We were penniless and homeless, walking door to door. We stayed with an old man and his 30 year old son sexually abused and raped me. I was 9. When I was 10 years old, a family friend helped us to find our own place, he came around often, gave us advice, we grew to trust him and he filled the gap left by my father. He sexually abused me, sometimes violently for 5 years until he got married. When I threatened to report him he laughed and said ‘just look at you - who will believe you? I was depressed, suicidal. I listened to a lot of music to help me. I meditate to build up my self-esteem.”

(Personal interview, Male, on FBC TV, Aina, 14/4/18)

Children living with step parents or away from home were identified by research participants as being more vulnerable to violence and abuse and could be forced out of their homes to work or be subjected to heavy work at home. This is supported by a UNICEF report stating that families hosting multiple children face challenges in coping, and hosted children are sometimes engaged in **informal labour** and removed from school in times of economic hardships. Biological children received favourable treatment over hosted children and are prioritised when it comes to feeding, schooling, and assignments of household labour.⁴⁹

“Kids who have to leave home and stay with someone else in order to go to school often experience discrimination and are treated differently by the family, bullied and made to work to earn their living. They grow up in families that are compelled to keep them.”

(Key informant, Male)

Stories of ill-treatment of children by step parents or relatives was shared through focus group discussions, key informants and personal narratives. Many of the stories illustrate that often children are subjected to an **overlap of neglect, physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse**.

“M’s parents separated before he was born. His mother raised him until he was 2 years old before she left for work, leaving him to stay with her brother and his family. He was beaten with an iron rod by his aunt almost daily from the time he was 3 years old. He would not eat with the family and was made to eat alone outside, feeding mainly on cassava and bread. By the time he was in primary school he was a rebellious boy, receiving beatings at home and at school for being naughty. His teacher would make him ‘scrum’ against the wall [run and head butt the wall] and he would receive beatings in front of the whole school. When he was 12 years old he was sexually initiated by a 56 year old woman, and became the sex slave [in his own words] for a few women in the village. His family finally moved him to stay with his mother’s sister and his

⁴⁹ Copland, M and K. Roberts; 2010; Children living away from parents in the Pacific; UNICEF, Suva.

uncle took over the beatings. He started stealing food to eat, smoking and drinking in primary school until he dropped out of high school. When he was 19 his mother took him to stay with her, but it was too late. He continued abusing alcohol and eventually turned to hard drugs. He used violence to confront problems, constantly fighting in the clubs and physically and sexually abusing his girlfriends as he moved from one intimate relationship to the next. One day after taking some hard drugs, he beat up the mother of his children and would have killed her if he had not been stopped by the Police. He can only recall that he was angry at something she had done in the past and his next memory was the Police holding him down. This was the turning point of his life but it would take many more years of relapse and progress and support from the church and his new family before he was able to control his violent behaviour.”

(Personal narrative, Male)

“A woman from another village married into my village and brought her son from the previous marriage. The step-dad ill-treated the step-son badly and his own sons from the woman did the same. The other villagers related to that the step-dad would also made cruel comments about the step-son’s lineage.”

(Focus group discussion, Males)

“Two sons of a single mother found themselves constantly verbally and physically abused by their mother. When she remarried their situation worsened, as not only their mother abused them, but also their step father. They were also made to babysit their new siblings. After running away from home a few times, their mother requested authorities that they be put into a state home.”

(Key informant, Female)

4.2.2.2 Types of violence experienced by young men in families/communities

Participants in focus group discussions and key informants identified the types of violence experienced by young men as mainly gang related bullying; physical, verbal and sexual abuse; assault or rape as either victims or perpetrators; neglect; labour exploitation; brawls in relation to alcohol abuse; and criminal activities including robbery with violence. Focus groups and key informants also highlighted the issue of bullying in boarding schools with young men being both victims and perpetrators. Two common incidences of gang bullying or gang bashing are illustrated below:

“A group of boys would chase him down, catch him and beat him up calling him a freak. The beating happened throughout his childhood if he didn’t conform. Older boys and men also participated in this bullying. The abusers were closely related to him - brothers, uncles, cousins and even his own father.”

“Boxing Ring is when the older boys would organise a boxing match between the young boys. The match can be organised to sort out a misunderstanding or for entertainment for the older boys. The two boys are placed in the middle of a ring, made up of a group of boys and told to beat each up until they have a winner. The older boys would encourage the young boys to fight and throughout the fight would shout encouragement or haul verbal abuses if one of the boys wanted to pull out. Sometimes older boys would use this tactic for the initiation of younger boys into their group.”

(Focus group discussions, Males)

In many instances, young men at this stage mostly experience violence through retaliation. Physical and verbal abuse of young men from fathers, mothers, uncles, older siblings and step parents are still common. Participants indicated that by this stage, boys who were neglected were now young men in gangs, drop-outs from school, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, smoking and sniffing glue, fighting with other youths, fighting with parents and getting involved in other delinquent behaviour including committing crimes.

Key informants noted that neglect is not so obvious, yet so common among young men who are violent. Many children who have grown up neglected feel they are less than or not part of the family. As a key informant stated, “neglected children, rejected children... they don't mind beating others up!”

“So many boys stopped going to school, drop out. What can they do? They look for food, smoke, fight, drink grog the whole night with others. This is a sad situation that is happening with so many young Fijian boys.”

(Key informant, Male)

According to key informants, young men referred by the courts for anger management sessions often suffered abuse as children. Additionally, adolescent transgender and homosexual males often experienced sexual abuse as children, some self-refer to counselling agencies for anxiety and depression, and others struggle with sexual orientation. Some key informants also indicated that boys sexually abused as children are sometimes forced onto the streets and into sexual exploitation [prostituting themselves and others]. A participant in a focus group discussion recounted a recent incident of rape of a young boy that happened in his village,

“A man well known for his womanising and violent behaviour, recently raped his 16 year old son. After the rape, the father sat in the sitting room and waited for the son to sleep before he [the father] went to sleep as he did not want the son to run out and seek help. But once the father fell off to sleep the son ran for help to the Turaga ni Koro who called the Police. The father is in now in prison.”

Focus group discussion, Males

4.2.2.3 Types of violence experienced by adult men in families/communities

The data on domestic violence against men in Fiji is scarce. Many key informants were unaware of where data on domestic violence against men existed, identifying a few organisations such as the Fiji Police Force, Fiji Prison Service, St. Giles Psychiatric Hospital and counselling service agency Empower Pacific as key institutions where information on violence experienced by men as victims and perpetrators could be sourced through case files. Individual priests/ pastors/ religious leaders, private counsellors were also identified as sources of information.

A thesis written by a University of the South Pacific psychology student on her experiences as a nurse dealing with men in Fiji who had been abused by women, indicated that shame is the primary reason for under-reporting of males who are victims of domestic violence. Male pride is a barrier to a man admitting to himself that he has been abused before admitting this to an outsider⁵⁰ The research found that violence women used against men were physical, psychological abusive behaviours including financial, verbal and emotional abuse, and creating fear and frustration for male victims. Physical violence involved being the target of a thrown object, pushed, slapped, hit with an object, punched, kicked, burnt with a hot object, and body scratched and being bitten with intention to injure. Psychological abuse included being called insulting names, shouted at, unjustly accused, money withheld, money taken without permission, valuables destroyed, denied access to household information, love or attention withheld, and threatened with a weapon. Anger, jealousy, retaliation for emotional hurt, and efforts to gain control and dominance were the most common reasons women became violent towards their husbands. Coping strategies were avoidance, to disassociate themselves, suicidal thoughts, with most men seeking help from relatives, priests and friends/workmates. Only 6% of men reported going for counselling. The results of her study indicated that verbal abuse is the main form of abuse experience by men during marriage.⁵¹

Focus group discussions, key informant interviews and personal narratives revealed that adult men do experience physical, verbal and emotional abuse from their wives or partners, however this was perceived by some as not being very common, and others perceived this as an issue that existed but not much research had been done to determine the scale and nature of the problem.

50 Kasami, A; 2010; Spouse Abuse by Women: The Hidden Side of Domestic Violence in Fiji; MA Thesis USP; Fiji.

51 ibid

Research participants identified types of physical abuse husbands or male partners experienced including husband being burnt, wife pouring boiling water over him, scratching, hitting with objects, slapping and punching. In addition, partners/wives' withholding funds, threatening with divorce, threatening to take the children away, verbally abusive and manipulative, and being depressed due to wife's extra marital affairs are some examples of emotional abuse men are subjected to in the family. Other forms of violence experienced by adult men as victims were police beatings, prison violence, male teachers verbally and physically assaulted by male students, and criminal actions [victims of robbery with violence]. The personal narratives shared below illustrate some cases of domestic violence against adult men, and the narrative of Z also highlights some of the challenges and discrimination that men face in domestic violence cases.

"I'm just an ATM machine for my wife. We have been married for 20 years and every day I face the same emotional abuse from her. She withholds her salary from me - I pay for everything in the family, the bills, food and my children's tertiary education and she does not have to pay for anything. Yet she continues to harass me for money for holiday trips and other leisure expenses, and when I tell her that I don't have the money to give her, she starts to accuse me of not being able to look after her, of being cruel and useless. Once she had an affair but I forgave her and yet she treats me as if I was the one who made the mistake. She doesn't know how much her words hurt. I stay because of the children but I don't know how much longer I can take this abuse."

(Personal narrative, Male)

"Wife bashing Husband" story shared during a focus group discussion by a man who was the recipient of this violence. Whenever he and his wife had arguments, she would physically abuse him with either her hands or use objects. Sometimes she would threaten to hurt the kids or lodge a complaint against him to the police. She would also involve her family in the arguments and they would threaten to have him beaten up. He said the worse threat was when she said she was going to take the kids away from him. They are now separated and he occasionally sees his kids but says that the meeting is painful as he can see that his kids see him as a 'bad person'. The emotional blackmail is the most painful.

(Personal narrative in focus group discussion, Males)

"According to Z, he first experienced the 'discrimination' of the Fiji justice system against men/fathers when his wife abandoned him and his children to work overseas. After a while of looking after the children on his own, his wife returned and snatched the children from him, taking them to live in a small flat with her sister's family. Despite the children being abandoned by their mother, and well looked after and more than adequately provided for by their father, the court and welfare department from the beginning treated him as the guilty party and decided that the children belonged with their mother. He asks, "So is it ok to kidnap your children as long as you are the mother?"

His second experience with the justice system was a few years later when he took his partner to court for physically abusing their newborn baby. From the time their baby was two weeks old to six months old the mother would physically assault the baby, violently shaking her whenever she could not handle her. Despite the police record, the magistrate put a domestic violence restraining order on the mother, allowing her to remain in the premises and in contact with the child. The abuse of the baby continued until eventually Z was able to gain full custody of the child. He remains in contact with the child's mum, trying to help her deal with her anger management issues and alcohol abuse. Z, as a male who has survived domestic violence feels that the issue of domestic violence is less about gender and more about the use and acceptance of violence as a way of life and means to solving problems. He states, that every time there is mention of domestic violence, we only think of how it affects women and not the fact that it is another form of violence that affects everyone regardless of gender, and that men are generally held to be guilty until proven innocent. Dealing with domestic violence is about promoting respect for all and we need to be aware that children need to be protected from women also."

(Personal narrative, Male)

All research participants agreed that most domestic violence cases involved men as perpetrators of violence and often of extreme violence. This included men physically and verbally abusing the wife and children; being drunk and disorderly, involved in brawls; engagement in criminal activities and drug trafficking and abuse; being perpetrators of sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape, molestation.

Some common situations were discussed in focus groups: *“Husband punching wife because he is jealous and hurting children; husband beating wife when she goes against his will; husband coming back stressed from work and taking it out on wife and children; and partner going out with friends, drinking and spending his wages and goes home drunk resulting in husband punching wife after they start arguing, blaming and complaining.”* Key informants also stated that violent behaviour is sometimes triggered when men or boys feel they are not heard by family members and want to display their power and control over other members in the family. The consequences may be deadly as illustrated in the narrative of *W*, below:

“W is in his early 40s and serving a life sentence for murdering his wife and children. W was married for more than 10 years and worked as a labourer. One day he was informed by a friend that his wife was having an affair so W asked his wife and she denied it. Then one morning W pretended to go to work but returned home later to find the wife with another man. He used his cane knife to murder his wife but the man managed to escape so still filled with rage he also murdered his children. He then gave himself up to authorities. The last time W was interviewed he still felt no remorse for his actions and only regretted that he did not murder the man who was having the affair with his wife.”

(Key informant, Male)

4.2.3 General discussion on the factors that lead to domestic violence and impacts of domestic violence on attitudes and behaviour

Key informants and focus group participants identified the **lack of respect people** had for one another, the general acceptance by society of **violence as a ‘norm’**, the inability of family members to **resolve conflicts** positively, the lack of **positive parenting** skills and general **disintegration of moral values** as the major causes of domestic violence in Fiji. Research participants also identified the **patriarchal society** which has set expectations on the roles of boys and girls, males and females, husbands and wives, and **gender biases and inequality** as being a cause of domestic violence. **Urbanisation** and **socio-economic pressure** families face to survive has exacerbated these issues in urban areas. Many of the factors that led to domestic violence in Fiji have been discussed previously under types of violence, and some important factors highlighted by research participants are again presented below:

- a) **Child neglect** - Most key informants identified neglect or absence of parenting, especially among parents who rely on the community parenting model that makes it easier for parents to disengage with their children. Boys who were neglected become young men in gangs, often dropped out from school, start taking alcohol, drugs, smoking and sniffing glue, fight with other youths and fight with parents and get involved in other delinquent behaviour including committing crimes. Key informants noted that neglect is not so obvious, yet so common among young men who are violent. Research participants also noted that children who are from broken families and are living away from home with relatives seem to be more at risk of suffering child abuse and neglect.
- b) **Over consumption of alcohol, excess time spent on drinking kava and drug abuse** – this is also closely linked to child neglect, arguments, violence and mental health issues, and the physical, emotional, verbal and sexual abuse of boys and girls.
- c) **Poor parenting** - closely linked to neglect, poor parenting is also associated with the use of harsh punishment as the normal way that parents discipline children. For example, in some cultures family members often ridicule children as a way of discipline which can be demeaning and hurtful or beat them as they do not know of other means to discipline children. On the other extreme, there are parents who do not impose any discipline on their children resulting in them becoming ill disciplined and exhibiting uncontrollable and delinquent behaviours.

- d) **Poor problem solving and communication skills, anger and stress management techniques** - also associated with poor parenting and poor anger and stress management causing miscommunication, misunderstandings, high blood pressure, irritability, anger and resulting in violence and abuse of family members. Poor coping mechanisms of family members in response to pressures from work or unemployment and financial insecurity, resulting in anger and frustration that they 'take out on' other family members.
- e) **Witnessing violence at home and in the community** - this reinforces the perceptions that violent behaviour is normal and influences behaviour of boys who may imitate violence they have witnessed either by bullying others as boys and young men, and physically, psychologically, emotionally and sexually assaulting others as young and adult men.
- f) **Poor role models** - according to key informants, children grow up in families and communities where they see many poor role models. Children witness violence in their homes, schools and communities. Some research participants also indicated Fiji's coup culture as contributing to the rising incidences of violence in Fiji, suggesting that the military coups have role modelled to the public that the use of threat plus force equals rewards.

4.2.3.1 Perceptions on the intergenerational cycle of violence

Do boys who grow up in a violent environment become violent?	Responses from the focus group discussions on factors that cause violent attitudes and behaviour and impacts
<p>Yes – participants in 10 of the focus group discussions agreed that boys who grow up in a violent environment become violent themselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Monkey see, monkey do' - children imitate what they see, for example, boy sees his father punch his mother and swear at her. He starts swearing at other boys and bullying other children in school. He tells lies and fights with the other children. • "Monkey see, monkey do becomes the norm" - violent behaviour is normal. It's the norm. They are used to that way of life and it seems the only way to run a family. • 'Problem-solving' - To be violent is the way to address problems and deal with confrontations. • 'Unchanging context' - Aggressive, unsupportive and insecure partners or spouses continue to feed violent attitudes and behaviours. In other situations, boys/young men who have not moved away from the same neighbourhood they grew up in or from the violent family environment remain trapped in the cycle of abuse as the context has not changed.
<p>No - participants in 5 of the focus group discussions stated that not all boys who grow up in a violent environment become violent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some boys who experience violence do not grow up to be violent as they do not want their own family to have the same experiences. They don't want that way of life and focus on better education, values, character. • Some boys live in fear and grow up afraid. They live in the shadows. • Boys, men can choose not to become violent and find something or someone they are able to change for. • Usually there is someone in his life who helps the son to cope so that he doesn't become violent. • He may become attached to his mother and refuse to do the same to his wife. • Child may have undergone a change in upbringing and environment from a violent home to a non-violent supportive home.

Key informants acknowledged that some boys who experienced violence and abuse as children will not grow up to be violent, seeing the need for change and not wanting to put others through the same experience. Having external role models, sport, education or church outlets are some of the ways that have helped boys in violent situations to grow up without resorting to violent attitudes and behaviours in their lives.

However most also believed that there is a greater risk that boys who experienced violence and abuse while growing up will become violent themselves. A group of key informants who provide counselling services agreed that in most of their cases, the violent behaviour of older men they worked with was a direct result of growing up in an environment of where there was violent, insulting, condescending speech accompanied by beatings. Many of these men now beat their own children and use sexist and disrespectful language, and some have low emotional attachment to children which can also result in abuse. For example a man who was physically abused by his stepfather is finding it difficult to show love and affection to his own son. Negative family experiences result in boys protecting themselves, sometimes by becoming violent. Participants also highlighted that when parents are separated, boys are pressured to be strong and stand on their own feet. As a result some become controlling and this attitude spills over as they try to better manage their own family. The following narratives explore how childhood experiences of violence have shaped attitudes and behaviour of some men:

“K grew up in a community where violence had been the norm since their ancestors were brutally kidnapped during the labour traffic and worked under violent and abusive conditions. As a boy, he experienced physical punishment - being punched, slapped, beaten with a the stick and knifed - and he was verbally abused by his parents and teachers. He witnessed his father beating his mother, uncles beating aunts, men and women in the community physically and verbally abusing each other. Drunken brawls were very common in the community. One day two brothers got into a drunken fight and one brother killed the other. K joined the church and left the community. He found that whenever he returned home he would be pulled back into the drunken brawling. He would also beat up his wife and children. K started to change when he became exposed to human rights training. Although he still has aggressive feelings sometimes, he is able to manage this as he has quit drinking and smoking. He has also had to move his family from the community to live elsewhere but still visits occasionally. He blames himself for his son falling into the habit of drinking, smoking and drunken brawling every week. He believes that the families who are focusing on educating their children are the ones whose mindsets are changing.

(Personal narrative, Male)

My father was a church minister. He didn't take alcohol, grog or smoke. I heard that he was very kind to his younger siblings as the eldest in the family. But he would regularly beat my mother and beat us - his children - until we could only crawl. Once we had just come back from church and he couldn't find the 50c in his jacket pocket. He was so angry that he beat us with anything he could get his hands on. I became close to my mother and isolated from my father. I vowed I would not treat my wife and children like that. My youngest brother followed my father, beating his wife on a weekly basis.”

(Personal narrative, Male)

“His mother used to beat him up, one day going as far as breaking a heavy torch on his head. Home was a silent place where they [parents and siblings] all stayed inside their rooms, coming together only for family meals and retreating back to their rooms. He witnessed his uncle also beating his aunt and as a victim, sympathised with her, vowing never to do the same. He found out later that as a young girl his mother had been forced to stay home and do all the chores as her brother went to school. She would be beaten for not doing the chores properly. She only managed to go to school when she was 12 years old and was noticed by a teacher. This helped him understand some of the reasons behind his mother's abuse of him and his brothers.”

(Personal narrative, Male)

“This guy always beats up his wife when she goes against his will. He is a very hard working, committed guy, always working, and also caring and loving. But he gets angry very quickly. His father also used to beat up his mother and was a very violent men. His father didn’t drink and he was very sickly. His father used to get stressed over things being done the way he wanted it and was full of hate. He didn’t like small children, children were always frightened when he was home and he was not a kind man. Children always lived in fear and didn’t feel loved at home. Their home was a place to eat and sleep - they had fun outside home.”

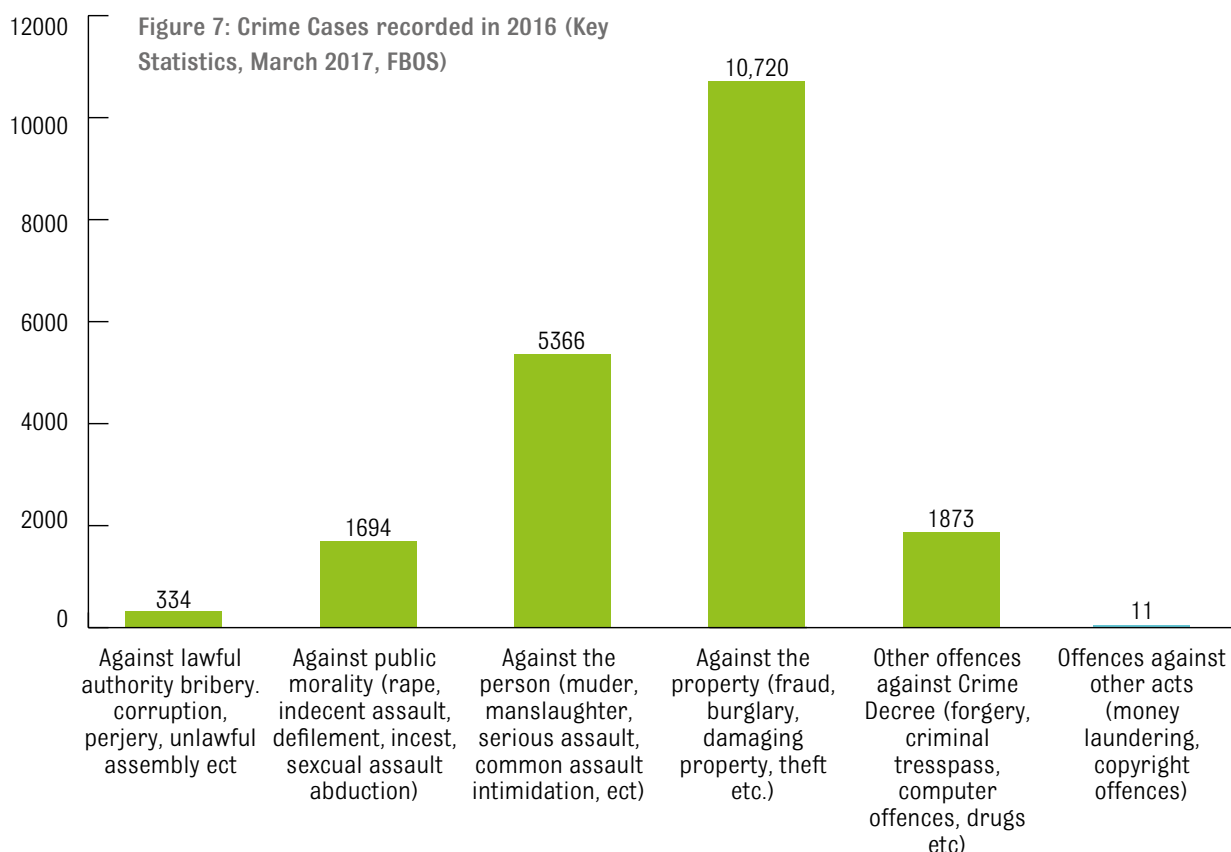
(Focus group discussions, Mixed)

“J was 10 years old when his mother abandoned him and his father for another man. Emotionally devastated, J began to resent and hate his father for his mother leaving. He kept to himself most of the time. He began to beat his wife when he was 23 years old and physically abused his children for minor reasons such as not making their beds. J kept his feelings of anger and hurt from his ‘abandonment’ bottled up until he finally broke down, staying at home out of a job for 3 years and becoming depressed and suicidal. He was admitted to hospital for a few months and is now on medication.”

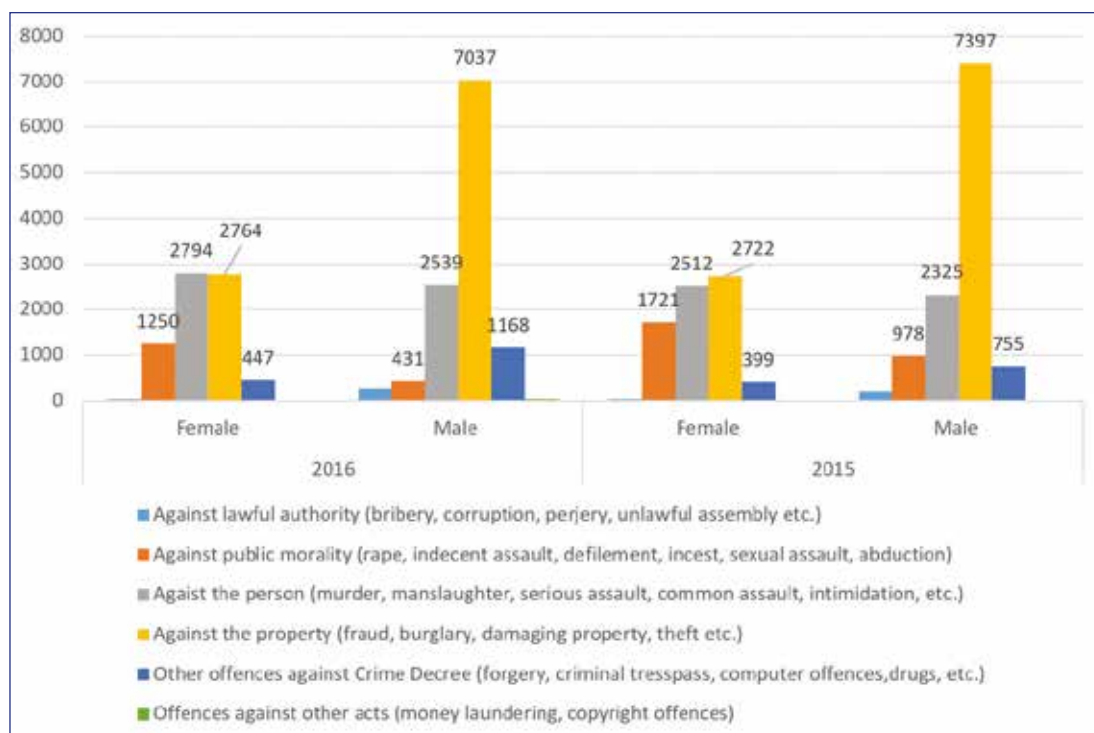
(Personal narrative, Male)

4.2.3.2 Perceptions on criminal behaviour as a consequence of experiencing violence and abuse as a child

Witnessing violence does not only increase the likelihood of violent behaviour but also of being a victim by communicating that such behaviours are acceptable. Victims of child abuse are likely to become abusers themselves and criminal offenders, and childhood experiences of violence can last up to five generations.⁵² According to recent statistics, 5366 cases of violence against the person and 1694 sexual crimes were recorded in Fiji in 2016, affecting both male and female victims. In 2015 and 2016, 2971 females and 1409 males were victims of sex crimes and 5306 females and 4864 males were victims of crimes against the person, mainly assault causing actual bodily harm. (Figs.7&8) It is likely that many of these prisoners experienced violence as children.



⁵² Finkelhor, D, Gelles.R.J, G.T. Hotaling & M.A. Strauss; 1983; The Dark Side of Families: Current Family Violence Research; Sage Publications, London in Kasami, A, 2010; Spouse Abuse by Women: The Hidden Side of Domestic Violence in Fiji; MA Thesis USP; Fiji.



12Figure 8: Victims distribution by gender 2015-2016 (Key Statistics, March 2017, FBOS)

According to a key informant, at least 75% of male prisoners they have worked with in Fiji have experienced significant abuse episodes in the formative years of their life. One third of these male prisoners are sexual offenders and one third convicted for robbery with violence. Additionally, over 95% of female prisoners they work with sustained early childhood trauma, and were either sexually or physically abused.

Some common characteristics of violent offenders in Fiji prisons include relational and intimacy deficits, emotional immaturity, poor decision making skills, selfishness, lack of self-control and problem solving skills, anti-social attitudes and behaviour and anti-social peer associations, substance abuse, marital and family violence. These are characteristics that have resulted from the neglect and abuse that most suffered as children, as illustrated in the narratives of V, X and Y below:

When V was 3 years old his parents separated and he was raised by his grandparents. When he was 12 years old his grandparents passed away so he had to move to stay with his extended family. After being severely mistreated and abused by the family, V ran away from home and joined up with boys from the streets. In order to survive in the streets he got involved with pick pocketing, 'grab n run' and also got involved with alcohol and drugs. V's first case was robbery with violence where he was sentenced to 8 years, and after his release he was sentenced again for robbery with violence. V is now in his early 40s and he is currently serving a life sentence for another robbery with violence.

X suffered a violent, abusive childhood and was neglected as a child. Now in his early 40s, he has over the years found maintaining a relationship and a job challenging. With every relationship and job he has had, if there was an offense or perceived slight, he would retaliate with a payback on the person or property. He has not been taught how to cope with difficult situations, how to resolve problems or how to make good decisions. As a result, he has not been able to navigate a healthy relationship, and has been in and out of the prison system a number of times.

“Y grew up with extreme violence in the home, including physical, psychological and emotional abuse. When still a teenager he flew into a violent rage over not being given money to go to the movies. This resulted in him ‘smashing’ the first person he came across. To this day he is still unable to self-reflect on or rationalise the hurt and trauma he went through and consequences on his actions. He still cannot speak of his abuser.”
(Key informants, Males)

Various key informants and focus group participants also agreed that in many cases, sexual offenders had been sexually abused as a child and/or initiated into sexual activity at a very young age, usually between 8-12 years old by older females [sometimes violently], and by older men who introduce young boys to pornography or sexual intercourse. Pornography was also noted by most key informants as a major pathway into committing sexual offences, with the average age for boys who access pornography, according to key informants being from 8-10 years old. Focus groups and key informants noted that younger teenage boys may also experiment sexual activity as a group, masturbating and watching porn together. Older teenage boys may participate in gang rape, usually involving the same female, a silent victim who has been used sexually, and boys introduce other boys to the group who take turns in sexually exploiting her. These experiences have negatively influenced their perceptions, attitudes and behaviour towards women.

Alcohol and drug use also play a key role. Findings from the Health in prisoners in Fiji study involving 198 ex-offenders [ex-prisoners], mostly i-Taukei male aged less than 36 years, reported that alcohol, cannabis and ‘yaqona’ [kava] use was very common during the months leading up to imprisonment. The findings also revealed that over 50% of the former prisoners interviewed had sexual intercourse before the age of 18 years, including 25.9% first sexual intercourse before 14 years old and 30.6% first sexual intercourse between 15-17 years old.⁵³

Other surveys of prisoners’ childhood and family background undertaken in England and Wales found that many prisoners had problematic backgrounds. Twenty-four percent had been in care at some point during their childhood, 29% experienced abuse as a child, 41% observed violence in the home as a child, 37% had family members who had been convicted of a criminal offence, 18% had a family member with an alcohol problem, and 14% had a family member with a drug problem. 59% of prisoners had regularly played truant from school, 63% had been suspended or temporarily excluded, and 42% expelled. Working with ‘troubled/problem’ families and addressing truancy and school-dropout could have a positive effect on young people’s lives, reducing their likelihood of future offending.⁵⁴

“Over the past decade working with offenders, I have heard some truly heart-breaking stories of neglect and abuse. I have worked with young men who have been victims of sexual abuse, who as small children witnessed terrible domestic violence in the home, even watching their mother being raped. I have had to ask myself whether if I’d had similar experiences, I would be where I am today. The answer is a resounding no.”
Activist Nathan Roberts, The Guardian⁵⁵

The findings indicate that there is a link between adverse childhood experiences and criminal offenders, who are likely to be victims of child abuse and violence. Addressing bullying and truancy and protecting children from abuse and violence can make a difference in preventing deviant behaviour as adults.

4.2.4 How boys and men who experience violence in families cope

Both positive and negative coping mechanisms were identified by focus groups, key informants and through personal narratives. Most participants agreed that in most cases boys and men who experience domestic violence will keep it to themselves either because they are too ashamed to share the problem or their

⁵³ Winter, R., Saxton, K., Kinner, S.; 2013; Health in prisoners in Fiji. Research report prepared by the Burnet Institute and Empower Pacific for the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Mebourne.

⁵⁴ Williams, Kim, Vea Papadopoulou and Natalie Booth; 2012; Prisoners’ childhood and family backgrounds Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners; Ministry of Justice; <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/research-and-analysis/moj>

⁵⁵ Nathan Roberts; Our Prisons are Overflowing with Immature and Vulnerable Men; The Guardian, International Edition, 1 December 2016; <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/dec/01/prisons-overflowing-immature-vulnerable-men-jails>. Nathan Roberts is chief executive of Band of Brothers, a UK charity committed to positive social change through personal development and community building.

experiences with others, or they want to deal with it themselves to prove to others that they are 'real men'. Some will endure the abuse for the sake of the children. Some participants said that if the wife has some status in the village, for example if she is from a chiefly clan or is the one earning the money, then his voice will not be heard and he will carry on pretending that everything is okay.

When asked whether boys and men who experienced violence as a perpetrator or victim/ survivor should seek counselling, most said that they should as they may not be the only victim and it may help them to talk about it. A few disagreed because this would involve reliving the nightmare and the victim may not be believed or shunned and chased away from home.

Most research participants said that they would handle the problem on their own, keep it to themselves or share with a close friend or someone they trust. This is because of the shame, guilt and lack of support from families. The young men in a focus group who had been sexually harassed said they were unsure of what to do and did not want to report the harassment and embarrass themselves and their families, especially since the policemen were from their area and family and friends might find out and tease them. Statements such as this highlight the need for the sensitisation and education of communities on violence and abuse, and the provision of easily accessible, reliable and trustworthy counselling services to assist boys and men in communities.

Only a few will seek help or counselling, usually from the church, for example, in some cases when the church pastor is engaged to help counsel the couple. Counselling is also provided by friends, family members or peers, however if men and boys are not empowered to speak out about their abuse, this makes it difficult as they will keep the problem to themselves and it may manifest in a negative way. Some participants stated that there is a stigma associated with counselling especially among males thus men are less likely to access formal counselling services.

Key informants also noted that communities may disown or ostracise boys and men who are victims or perpetrators of violence, and in some cases downplay violence and accept these situations as 'something that just happens'. This attitude was obvious when discussing cases of female violence against males, with humour involved in the storytelling and the general comments of "he probably deserved it." However other research participants emphasised that violence in any sense, against any gender should not be tolerated, and this should not only apply to male to female violence but also female to female, male to male, and female to male violence. Negative coping mechanisms were identified as drinking excess alcohol and kava; having extra-marital affairs; 'taking it out' on other people; fighting back; withdrawing from the family; running away; directing violence at others; spending more time outside the home; moving out of the home (separation); marriage breakdown (divorce); depression and in extreme cases, suicide.

Key informants identified substance abuse, alcohol and drugs and glue sniffing as ways boys and young men cope. The issue of young boys playing truant from school, seen bus riding during school hours, selling food and roaming around at night, hanging around the streets, and stealing was raised as a possible coping strategy in response to violence and abuse faced back at home. Children taking to the streets saw the streets as the 'solution to the problem' and not the problem.⁵⁶ According to key informants questions should be asked about why children, especially boys, are out of school and what is happening at home.

Research participants agreed that communities fail to provide the enabling environment to prevent violence or help victims of violence recover. In most cases the family will keep it quiet to avoid shame on the family, and the community attitude to domestic violence is to let the family handle it themselves. Minding their own business and keeping silent about what is going on was a popular response to the question on how the community responds to victims or perpetrators of domestic violence. Resolving the issue traditionally was

⁵⁶ This was also identified by the Street Children in Child Labour Survey conducted by the Foundation of the People of Pacific International NGO in 2009, through an ILO child labour research project.

also identified and notifying authorities only when the incident was serious, for example, involving stabbing or robbery with violence. Newland (2016) notes that in situations of domestic violence in Fiji, people were reluctant to interfere as this could cause wider problems within the community, leaving it to close relatives to intervene. Whether the perpetrator of domestic violence is the husband or father, the victim is frequently blamed by both men and women.⁵⁷ Thus the attitudes of communities allows violence to prevail.

“My father beat my brother when he was 15. I don’t know why but I can still remember crying. The whole neighbourhood witnessed it. My brother was black and blue from head to toe. He couldn’t sit down and missed school for weeks. He was so ashamed. He dropped out of school and left home. He started to use violence as a way to release his anger after that. No one was ever going to do that to him again.”

(Personal narrative, Male)

“It was a very bad experience to remember. As children we used to get angry but couldn’t do anything, except wish that someone could do something bad to our violent father. At that time we were in a space where no one could say or do anything. Some of us children became violent as well.”

(Focus group discussion, Mixed)

4.3 Services provided for men and boys who experience domestic violence

Not many services are accessible to boys and men who are victims or perpetrators of violence. Prison rehabilitation was identified by most participants as the service that they were aware of that was available for men who are perpetrators of domestic violence. Empower Pacific was also identified as providing counselling services to men and boys who experienced violence and/or abuse, who either self-referred or were referred for counselling through the court, police, social welfare or hospital. Some of the organisations and services provided for victims of domestic violence were identified as:

- Empower Pacific provides counselling for boys, girls, men and women who self-refer or are referred to the organisation by police, the courts, and the hospitals. They also conduct parenting education and has a Men’s Behaviour Change Curriculum that focuses on conflict resolution and anger management. Their Employee Assistance Programme supports workers well-being in the workplace, providing individual trauma counselling and group training.
- The justice system through the Yellow Ribbon Programme assists prisoners. The Operation Foundation organisation works with Fiji Prisons to provide counselling for prisoners and ex-offenders, and provides trauma counselling in crisis situations.
- Save the Children Fiji- receives complaints and referrals of abuse of children from parents, teachers and communities and connects parents and children to counselors on request. Their Kids Link and Child Forums are spaces for children to raise issues pertaining to children. In addition the organisation implements positive discipline training for families and schools to learn how to discipline children in a healthy, respectful and positive way, without the use of violence or other negative forms of punishment, that threaten, demean, or disrespect the rights of a child.
- Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre supports women and girls through counselling and coordinates a Male Advocacy Programme for Women’s Rights and to prevent Violence against Women. This is a joint initiative with the government Violence Against Women Taskforce to conduct training with men from key agencies such as police, military, community workers, chiefs, religious groups etc.
- Homes of Hope provides trauma informed care, marriage counselling, family court counselling, parenting education and other services for sexually exploited single mothers and their children. Males can participate in the community advocacy and safety net programme implemented by Homes of Hope.
- People’s Community Network appoints community advocates who go into informal settlements and communities to talk about issues such as violence and abuse. Through family visitations, some cases of domestic violence are identified and referred to Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre, Social Welfare or relevant authorities.

⁵⁷ Newland, L; 2016; Villages, Violence and Atonement in Fiji; University of the South Pacific, University of Western Australia and University of St. Andrews; <http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/n2168/pdf/ch01.pdf>

FRIEND also works with communities on socio-economic issues, promoting active citizenship, community governance, healthy living, income generation, disaster management, participatory budgeting and health, and works with ex-offenders who are a part of their communities. Teachers' unions/associations also provides spaces for teachers to meet and discuss issues, such as violence and abuse during workshops or forums. Lifeline Fiji was also identified as an on-line counselling service that all can access and the Child Helpline managed by Medical Services Pacific provides online counselling and referral for children who call in and need assistance.

Churches were identified as providing ad hoc responses to situations they become aware of. Some church leaders have received training on child protection, a few churches provide some counselling through youth departments, boys club and men's fellowship groups to provide space to share issues openly and feel accepted. Most research participants identified the need for the churches and religious groups to be more pro-active in preventing and eliminating violence and abuse of children, women and men.⁵⁸ However, most research participants felt that churches and religious groups were not doing enough. According to key informants, this is because the churches do not have the capacity to address the problem and religious leaders are not trained as trauma counsellors and to deal with issues of abuse and violence. As a focus group participant stated, *"the church is made to look like it is the safe place to go but when they get there the help is not what is needed."*

4.4 Further actions to prevent violence in families and communities

Suggestions and recommendations from research participants for further actions to prevent domestic violence were many and included:

- **Empower parents and young people:**
 - o Conduct marriage counselling for youth before marriage;
 - o Implement parenting education and positive discipline training;
 - o Train youth to manage conflict, anger and stress and work-life balance; and
 - o Establish 'model families' in communities to demonstrate strong families.

- **Provide counselling services:**
 - o For students, teachers and members of the communities that are easily accessible, trustworthy, and ensure confidentiality;
 - o Establish men's helpline and space to share experiences and create positive change.

- **Enhance the education system:**
 - o Include module on violence and child protection/abuse in the school curriculum to include learning good touch, bad touch at an early age, the local laws, step-by-step of what to do in situations of physical and sexual abuse, and on reporting child abuse and neglect cases;
 - o Focus largely on values education in early childhood education up to Year 2, in particular respect, cooperation, patience, tolerance and kindness;
 - o Train preschool teachers and parents to handle children according to their developmental needs;
 - o Implement programmes to nurture role models and good leaders and to address the intergenerational attitudes that promote bullying as part of the culture of some schools.

- **Strengthen the role of the church and religious groups:**
 - o Establish counselling services and victim support services in churches and religious organisations for young boys, youth, men and women;
 - o Train the trainers and leaders (priests, pastors, pundits, imams) of the religious groups/ bodies in Fiji on domestic violence, child abuse and neglect.
- **Conduct further research on:**
 - o Child neglect;
 - o The impact of social media on violence and communication, including cyber bullying and the use of social media by children to address the issues they are experiencing;
 - o Violence against men and violence in families and communities, and whether traditional expectations from the *vanua* on men and boys influence violence;
 - o The issue of school drop out as a cause and consequence of violence.
- **Conduct more awareness**
 - o In schools, communities, churches and provincial meetings and communities should hold forums at all levels on violence, relevant local laws, understanding child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse, and reporting abuse and violence.
- **Penalties**
 - o Harsher sentences on sexual abuse cases, rape and indecent assault.
 - o Enforce penalties on parents/guardians for child neglect.

Generally, research participants agreed that there needs to be a change in mindset towards domestic violence and on promoting respect regardless of race, gender, religion, culture etc. To prevent domestic violence participants stated that the focus needs to be on strengthening the family and upbringing of the child in the home. There is an urgent need to revisit the family foundation and the community foundation to map out what it used to be as opposed to what it is now, to assess how much work we are doing together as a family and how much work we are doing individually to contribute to the development of the family. There is a need for individuals in families to work together to plan a transition from being dependent to become someone who is independent, to set individual goals and develop plans to meet a common family vision.

5.0 Conclusion

The research clearly demonstrates that violence and abuse that children experience in childhood has a profound and usually damaging effect on their lives as adults. The narratives reveal that extreme violence, abuse and neglect is experienced by boys, young men and by adult men in families and by their families. Domestic violence experienced during childhood influences young men's definitions of behaviour that is appropriate, good, bad, punishing or rewarding and reinforces perceptions that violent behaviour is normal.

Norms and expectations on the roles of boys and girls, males and females, husbands and wives, gender biases, discrimination and inequality of both men and women are major causes of violence. The disintegration of moral values, the lack of respect people have for one another and the general acceptance of violence as a normal way of solving problems allow violence and abuse to prevail. Domestic violence needs to be tackled within the broader framework of violence, recognising that domestic violence is first and foremost an issue of violence. Accepting that men have a legitimate right to be heard as victims of domestic violence is an essential step towards ending and preventing domestic violence.

The social foundation of our family and communities have also deteriorated because of our lack of capacity to manage conflicts and eradicate elements that fuel violence. This is further aggravated by the socio-economic demand for family survival, gender inequalities and biases, and moral decay, and giving rise to negligence, lack of social cohesion inside the home due to the absence of parents who are working, the over-dependence of parents on the extended family and community to raise their children [although evidence shows that the concept of "it takes a village to raise a child" is failing], and increasing incidences of child abuse and violence in the home. Strengthening the family foundation and the community foundation is also critical. This may involve revisiting how families and communities used to be, assessing efforts to contribute to the development of the family and community, training families to develop transition plans for children to become independent and productive citizens, assisting families set individual goals and to develop plans to meet a common family vision.

Policy makers and practitioners should implement a range of different intervention methods for both perpetrators and victims to reduce domestic violence. The range of interventions should include:

- reducing children's exposure to violence and adverse childhood experiences;
- promoting values and virtues education;
- building skills in positive parent management strategies that reduce negative parenting (hostility, harsh punishment and coercion) and promote positive parenting (sensitivity, positive reinforcement and consistent limit setting);
- improving community advocacy and actions against violence;
- expanding accessible and reliable counselling services;
- expanding counselling services and programmes for offenders and ex-offenders;
- enhancing peace education in schools and early childhood education centres; and
- supporting churches and religious organisations to establish victim and perpetrator services and programmes.

This list is not exhaustive and practitioners should seek to design new, non-traditional and innovative strategies that are locally relevant and have the ability to mobilise change.

Finally a major barrier to ending domestic violence is organisations working in silos, independent of each other, protecting their territories, and competing for the limited resources available. Synergising efforts, building on each organisation's strengths and developing joint strategies for funding will strengthen effectiveness in preventing and eliminating domestic violence.

Specific recommendations to FRIEND include:

- Focusing on strengthening the family social structure and eliminating child abuse and neglect, and violence against anyone and everyone. Organising consultative forums with religious bodies, communities, provincial councils and key stakeholders to:
 - o Critically examine violence in families, especially against children and impacts and assess how the unequal power relations between men and women, boys and girls results in violence
 - o Map the family and community foundation as it used to be and where it is now and set a vision for the future family that may be endorsed by communities;
 - o Secure a commitment by the religious bodies and key stakeholders to research and share strategies on rebuilding and strengthening the family social structure;
 - o Train stakeholders on how to help families set goals and to develop plans to meet a common family vision, and work with communities to develop a long term plan for eliminating violence.

- Design and implement projects to prevent violence in the home and to support children who are separated from their parents, who live in families where domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse is present, who live in poverty, who has a parent in prison, and who are displaying signs of neglect.

- Pilot a child outreach programme in Vitogo that includes after-school activities and holiday camps, peer mentor support, health checks, fitness/sports and skills building for the most vulnerable and marginalised children, implemented and monitored over a 2-3 year period;

- Form a coalition of relevant agencies to support the training of religious groups and communities on positive discipline, conflict resolution, anger management and managing stress. This should involve an analysis of the existing training programmes available.

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7.0 Appendices

A. Key Informant Interviews

Organization	Name	Designation	Gender
FRIEND	Kiniviliame	Project Officer	M
Save the Children Fund Fiji	Iris Low- MacKenzie	Chief Executive Officer	F
Homes of Hope	Pastor Mark Roche	Director	M
	Turenga Nakalevu	Manager	F
	Alita Waqabaca	Counsellor	F
Fiji Teachers Union	Agni Deo Singh	National Secretary	M
People's Community Network	Fr. Kevin Barr	Consultant/ Founder	M
Empower Pacific;	Mereoni Radio	Counsellor	F
	Harrison Kautoga	Counsellor	M
	Jane Cousins	Gender Specialist	F
	Note: 7 counsellors from Lautoka & 3 Counsellors from Suva participated in focus group discussions to provide comprehensive responses to key informant questions		
International Labour Organization	Edward Bernard	Programme Officer	M
Operation Foundation	Peter Schultz	Director	M
Catholic Women's League	Asela Naisara	President	F
International Planned Parenthood Foundation	Tura Lewai	Project Officer/ Male Advocate	M
ADRA	Iliapi Tuwai	Country Director	M
Fiji Community of Churches	Bruce Edwards	Director	M
Anglican Church	Fr. Wame	Priest	M
Human First	Shiri Raman	Advocate	M
Community	Confidential	Community Representatives/ Social Workers (5)	M/F

B. Focus Group Discussions

Group	Location	Gender	Age range	Description
Group 1	Suva	4 males, 1 female	Above 40 years (5)	Teachers
Group 2	Suva	7 males	25-39 years (2) Above 40 years (5)	Civil Servants
Group 3	Suva	7 males	25-39 years (4) Above 40 years (3)	Church Laymen
Group 4	Suva	10 males	Above 40 years (10)	Church Group
Group 5	Suva	3 males, 2 females	19-24 years (1) 25-39 years (2) Above 40 years (3)	Informal Settlement
Group 6	Suva	2 females, 1 male	Above 40 years (3)	Community Workers Group
Group 7	Sigatoka	5 males	19-24 years (2) 25-39 years (3)	Professionals/ Friends Group
Group 8	Vitogo	6 females, 2 males (TG)	25-39 years (8)	Housewives/ Self-employed
Group 9	Vitogo	2 males	25-39 years (2)	Ex-offenders
Group 10	Vitogo	7 females, 1 male	Above 40 years (6) 25-39 years (2)	Informal Settlement
Group 11	Vitogo	2 males, 2 females	Above 40 years (4)	Village
Group 12	Vitogo	6 females	19-24 years (1) 25-39 years (3) Above 40 years (2)	Women's Group
Group 13	Lautoka	18 Females	25-39 years (2) Above 40 years (16)	Women's Church Group, Catholic
Group 14	Lautoka	16 males	19-24 years (5) 25-39 years (11)	Youth Group, One Connection
Group 15	Lautoka	7 males	19-24 years (3) 25-39 years (4)	Youth Group, Waiyavi

C. Key Informant Interviews: Guiding Questions

- i) To identify the types of domestic violence experienced by boys and men, its causes and impacts
- From your experience, what are the most common forms of violence experienced by boys and men in Fiji families?
 - In the work that you do, have you come across any of these situations of violence experienced by boys and men in Fiji families? Can you please elaborate? (*Description of some of the cases*)
 - Are there distinct differences in the types of domestic violence that are experienced - By boys? By young men/ youths? By adults?
 - What would be the reasons/ root causes of violence experienced by boys and men in Fiji families?
 - In your opinion, and from your experience, would you say that boys who grow up in a violent environment become violent themselves? What factors either drive them to display violent attitudes and behaviour- **or not**? *Explore examples of cases where violent childhood led to violent adults or non-violent adults; explore factors that helped to prevent violence.*
 - How do boys and men who experience violence in families cope?
- ii) To assess services provided for men and boys who experience domestic violence and recommend what more can be done.
- What types of services/ programmes does your organisation provide for boys and men who experience domestic violence? *Services they can access as victims. Services they can access as perpetrators.*
 - How accessible are these services to boys/ men? How do they access these services?
 - What more can be done to prevent domestic violence? (laws, social services, research/ information gaps, etc.)

D. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Location of interview:

Sex:

Age range: _____ 15-18 years _____ 19-24 years _____ 25-39 years _____ above 40 years

Ethnicity:

Education level:

Work status:

Civic status: (*married, defacto, separated, divorced, single, widowed*)

Date:

Time Started:

Time Ended:

Guiding questions

1. Before you were 18 years old, did you:
 - a. Live with your parents- *ask whether stayed in nuclear or extended family, who was the breadwinner, how many in household, were parents separated/ divorced or did a parent die and if staying with relatives- why did he move from home?*

- b. Experience any of the following instances:
 - i. Household members taking drugs, drinking alcohol
 - ii. Parents too drunk to take care of you
 - iii. Household members in trouble with the law/ sent to jail
 - iv. Violence witnessed in the household (*explore between who, why, when, what happened, how often etc.*)
 - v. Violence experienced in the household (*As a victim or perpetrator? What happened? Who was the perpetrator or victim? How often? Why? etc.*)
 - vi. Witness or experience violence in the community

Note: Explore the nature of the incidences- who was involved, how often occurred, why, when. Ask probing questions based on what is being shared.

2. Are there any experiences you went through as a child that influenced your attitudes/ behaviour in a negative way towards:
 - a. Wife/ partner/ women? *Explore his attitudes towards women and also when (age) he first use fists against someone else, against wife, against any other women/ female?*
 - b. Children?
 - c. Other members of the community?
3. What are the factors that can create violence in the home?
4. If there has been a change in his behaviour/ attitude to violence explore what led to the change.
5. What are the main forms of violence experienced in your community/ family (as victims/ perpetrators):
 - a. By boys
 - b. By youth/ young men
 - c. By older men
6. How do boys/ men who experience violence cope? Who did they go to for help? (*Explore what services exist and how they access these services*)
7. What is the response from members of the community to perpetrators or victims/ survivors of violence?
8. Do you know any other boys who grew up in these violent situations- who were abused or experienced violence- and **became violent** themselves? Explore possible reasons why.
9. Do you know any other boys who grew up in these violent situations- who were abused or experienced violence- but **did not become violent** themselves? Explore possible reasons why.
10. What would best work in families to stop/ prevent violence?