

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HIV/AIDS INFECTION RISK: A CASE STUDY OF MOROGORO DISTRICT IN TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT:

Domestic violence may cause change in sexual behaviour, for example, by influencing one to practise sexual promiscuity, polygyny or polyandry. An increase in any of the three is likely to increase risks of infection by the deadly human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV). The extent of the violence is likely to vary with systems of bride price payment, common marriage systems and gender imbalances in a society or ethnic group. The general objective of the study from which this paper has emanated was to determine the associations among bride wealth payment, marriage systems, domestic violence and HIV/AIDS infection risk. The specific objectives were to: (a) Record the monetary values of bride wealth paid, (b) Find common marriage systems, (c) Find common types of domestic violence, and (d) Determine the associations among bride wealth, marriage systems, domestic violence, and HIV/AIDS infection risk. Data were collected in January 2002 from 60 women (30 from Morogoro Rural District and 30 from Morogoro Urban District). The association between domestic violence and HIV/AIDS was gauged using Pearson's Chi-square test of significance. The results showed an overall significant association ($p \leq 0.05$) between domestic violence and HIV/AIDS infection risk. Based on the findings, it is concluded that domestic violence contributes significantly to HIV/AIDS infection risk. Therefore, it is recommended that gender education and campaigns against domestic violence be intensified to help reduce risks of HIV/AIDS infection.

KEY WORDS: *HIV/AIDS infection, domestic violence, marriage systems, and bride wealth.*

INTRODUCTION

The term domestic violence in the context of this paper is mistreating women at the household level, including beating them; denying them schooling, property ownership and decision-making; forcing them to marry early or after death of a spouse; giving them heavy workloads; and subjecting them to female genital mutilation. Such violence is due to various cultural and socio-economic factors, and has various adverse effects.

Bride wealth, which is also known as bride price or marriage payment, is the payment made by the groom or his kin to the kin of the wife in order to ratify marriage. The practice is common in all parts of the globe in one form or another. In many African societies the husband may not assume full right over sexual, economic or procreative powers of his wife until his standard portion of bride wealth has been transferred. Consistently, a marriage is not reckoned to end until the return of the bride wealth has

been acknowledged, signifying divorce (Safra and Goukard, 1977). Payments may consist of goods, cash or less frequently of services, and it may be paid in one sum or regularly over a period of time. The goods transferred vary considerably from specified amount of livestock or spears to bolts of cloths, drinks, foods, money, or even an exchange of women.

Morogoro District is one of the areas that have been hit hard by the HIV/AIDS scourge in Tanzania. For example in 2001, the number of HIV/AIDS cases reported in hospital was 250 (57.9%) in Turiani, Morogoro Rural District (MoH, 2001). The problem of the research was: While Morogoro Region is one of the most affected regions by HIV/AIDS, and many campaigns have been waged to end domestic violence, the malpractice lingers in the District while HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is high. If domestic violence is not curbed, it is likely to contribute significantly to increase in HIV/AIDS infection.

Reasons for the violence lingering and how the violence might impinge on HIV/AIDS infection risk had not been studied empirically in Morogoro Region, particularly in Morogoro Rural and Urban Districts. Therefore, the research was worth undertaking to find the above empirical information, which may help to devise more strategic campaigns to reduce HIV/AIDS infection through reduction in domestic violence.

The general objective of the study was to determine the associations among bride wealth payment, marriage systems, domestic violence and HIV/AIDS infection risk. The specific objectives were to: (a) Record the monetary values of bride wealth paid, (b) Find common marriage systems, (c) Find common types of domestic violence, and (d) Determine the associations among bride wealth, marriage systems, domestic violence, and HIV/AIDS infection risk. Two hypotheses were tested, viz.: (i) Whether bride wealth payment and marriage systems were significantly associated with domestic violence or not, and (ii) Whether bride wealth payment and marriage systems had influence or not on HIV/AIDS infection risk in the society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bride Wealth and Marriage Systems

Bride wealth stabilizes marriages since the couples are compelled to stay together. Without full payment of bride wealth, it is easy for marriages to break up. If a marriage breaks up while the bride price has been fully paid, it is difficult for the parents of the woman to return the bride wealth to the husband since by the time the marriage breaks up the bride wealth has already been invested in other forms or consumed up (Kayongo and Onyango, 1984). Bride wealth influences types of marriage in various ways including the following: Without full payment of the bride price, the couples are not allowed to stay together legally according to traditional laws even if they may go on staying together; the higher the level of education of a daughter, the more the bride price; the more the bride price, the more the women are likely to tolerate domestic violence.

In Tanzania, among the Coastal Swahili and the matrilineal Luguru of Morogoro Rural and Urban Districts, it is customary for the groom to provide two payments. The first payment is a representative of the Islamic Maher, which is given to the bride. In the case of Luguru, the bride often gives this payment to her maternal grandmother (Kikopa,

1981). The second payment is the customary African practice of providing bride price to the bride's family (Romero, 1988). The bride's family, in turn, is expected to provide furniture and other household necessities for the new married couples. The bride wealth is sometimes foregone if the bride is marrying into a prestigious family in a religious community (Romero, 1988). As is typical of many Islamic and non-Islamic East African groups, if the couple divorces, the bride price is not returned to the groom (Romero, 1988).

Marriage is a voluntary union between a man and a woman, which is intended to be permanent in their lives. Marriage between one man and one woman is called monogamy while marriage between one man and more than one woman or vice versa is called polygamy. If one man has more than one wife it is polygyny. If a woman is married to more than one husband it is polyandry, but it is not common in Tanzania. There are some conditions that must be fulfilled before marriage. The most basic of such obligatory conditions to fulfil before contracting a marriage are:

- The union must be voluntary. Deceit, duress or undue influence makes the union not to be voluntary hence it becomes void.
- The union must be permanent. Temporary marriages are unaccepted in the laws.
- The union must be between male and female partners. A marriage between people of the same sex is void, although it is legally acceptable in the Netherlands. Legally, a woman is the one who was born with female genital parts. Likewise, a man is one who was born with male genitalia. In both cases the genitalia have to be functional with regard to biological reproductive roles.
- The union must not be between closely related people e.g. a person cannot marry his sister, her brother, etc.
- Prospective marriage couples must have attained the age of the majority, which is 18 years. However, parents or guardians can allow a girl to be married below 18 years but not below 15 years. In East and Central Africa, the average age for a woman's first marriage is between 19 and 22 years.

There is reputable presumption that if any man and woman live together they are married. However, the following conditions must be fulfilled: -

- They must have lived together continuously for two years or more.
- By the time they started living together, they should have had the capacity of being a husband and wife.
- The surrounding public and relatives should regard them as husband and wife.

There are rights and duties of a woman in her matrimonial life. These include:

- **Maintenance:** It is obligatory for a husband to maintain his wife by providing her with the basic needs in accordance with his ability. A wife has the same role if the husband cannot provide those needs and there is a reason to believe so.
- **Property ownership:** A wife has the right to own the property she acquired before being married or during the marriage through her personal means. She has the right to enter contracts, to collect her debts, to sue or being sued etc. A man enjoys the same rights.

- **Matrimonial home:** No one has the right to dispose sublet, or mortgage the matrimonial house without the consensus of the two. This is irrespective of who owns the house.
- **Property acquired during the subsistence of marriage:** A wife has the right to get equal share of the property acquired during the subsistence of their marriage in case the marriage breaks up (Mhoja *et al.*, 1996).

In Tanzania, the 1977 law incorporated customary and religious marriages into a uniform marriage code, giving both customary and Islamic marriages state sanction, but also subjecting them to state regulations, which include protections for women. The law stipulates that: (i) Marriage must be registered as monogamous or polygamous and cannot be changed; however marriages are not considered invalid if are not registered; (ii) Marriage must be voluntary by both man and woman, theoretically prohibiting forced or arranged marriages; (iii) A woman who cohabits with a man for two years has the legal rights of wives, (iv) Bride wealth is no longer a requirement for a marriage to be legal; and Corporal punishments by either spouse were outlawed (Bryceson, 1995).

The Government of Tanzania recognizes four types of marriages: (1) Monogamous Christian marriage, (2) Polygamous Muslim marriage (3) Civil marriages (which is understood to be potentially polygynous), and (4) Traditional/customary marriages (which are also understood to be potentially polygynous) (Mukangara and Koda, 1977). However, the Marriage Act explicitly states that it supersedes both Islamic and customary laws in regulation of all the four types of marriages (Rwebangira, 1996). The Marriage Act guarantees women's rights to property acquired on their own, as well as rights to matrimonial assets. Furthermore, the law requires judges to take domestic activities into account as contributions to marital assets (Mukangara and Koda, 1997). Despite these legal protections, Tungaraza (1995) argues that the law has not produced consistent or effective results. Most people fail to register their marriages and few women are financially or socially able to pursue court remedies. When women go to court, judges with traditional attitudes toward women seldom enforce the women's rights outlined in the law (Tungaraza, 1995).

Domestic violence and HIV/AIDS Infection Linkages

Meaning and types of domestic violence

According to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against women, violence against women is understood to encompass, but not limited to, physical, sexual, psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation (URT, 1995).

Wife beating in Tanzania is quite common. A 1990 survey showed that 90% of women are beaten or have experienced violence in some form. However, very few cases are reported to the police and fewer violators of women rights get prosecuted. This is partly because the women victims withdraw the cases and prefer settlements out of the court and partly because the society in general treats domestic violence as a private matter. A woman might feel ashamed even to shout for help fearing contempt from the society. This makes the enforcement of the laws very difficult. The law of marriage prohibits

violence against a spouse and, the violence offence is punishable by a 14-year imprisonment under the Penal Code (URT, 1995). Wife beating impinges negatively on children and on the dignity of women. Most of the time a woman is beaten in the presence of her children, it is humiliating, and the children internalize their fathers' actions. Accordingly, girls grow up feeling submissive and weak while boys feel that they can beat their sisters and girl friends or even their mothers (URT, 1995). Sexual violence is expressed in rape and child defilement. Usually victims of rape are embarrassed by the episode and feel dirty, isolated, violated, angry, suicidal, and deeply ashamed.

HIV/AIDS infection risk

The first three victims of HIV/AIDS in Tanzania were diagnosed in 1983, but not until 1985 were several hundreds of other people confirmed to be HIV positive. Epidemiological analysis has illustrated that 80% of the HIV transmission results are from heterosexual transmissions. As a result of polygamous practices in most of our societies, and male dominance in sexuality and over women's rights, women have fewer options than men in protecting themselves against HIV/AIDS (URT, 1995). Women are infected at much younger ages than men, the peak being 20-24 years compared with men whose peak ages of infection are 25-35 years.

Women's dependence on crude, labour intensive technology leads to overwork, wear and tear of the body. Polygamous practices in our societies have turned into extra marital promiscuity, sexual abuse, rape and sex even with young girls. If women are many in polygynous households and the husbands mistreat them, some of them may decide to go to bed with other men to avenge their husbands for the mistreatments. This increases chances of HIV/AIDS infection.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research area

The research was conducted in Morogoro Region, which is one of the 21 regions of Tanzania Mainland. It was confined to Morogoro Rural and Morogoro Urban Districts for easy reach by the researcher, who is based in Morogoro Urban District at Sokoine University of Agriculture. Little budget for the research was a major constraint. Morogoro Rural District is situated between Latitudes 5⁰ and 7⁰40' South of the Equator. The longitudes are 37⁰10' to 38⁰33' East of the Greenwich. Morogoro Urban District is located 193 km from the capital city, Dar es Salaam. From Morogoro Urban District, Mazimbu Ward was chosen while from Morogoro Rural District Sungaje Ward was chosen.

The ethnic groups found in the two districts are Luguru, Sagara, Kaguru, Ndamba and Pogoro. Apart from these ethnic groups other people from other areas of Tanzania are found living in these districts, especially in Morogoro Urban district, although they form little proportions. These include Chagga, Pare, Ha, Ngoni, Hehe, Kinga, Bena, Nyakyusa, Jita, Haya, etc.

Research Design

The research design was an explanatory cross sectional case study in which data were collected once. Such a design is advantageous for time and financial resources saving.

The Population, Sample and Sampling Methods

- The population for the research was all women in Morogoro Urban and Morogoro Rural Districts.
- The sampling unit was an individual woman.
- A sample size of 60 women was equally selected, from two strata of rural (Sungaje Ward) and urban women (Mazimbu Ward) sub-populations
- Respondents were chosen through simple random sampling.

Variables for the Research

- Research variables were the bride wealth payments, marriage systems (polygamous and monogamous), domestic violence and HIV/AIDS infection risk.
- The background variables of the respondents were age; ethnic groups, level of education, and number of children.

Data collection and Analysis

- Data were collected in January 2002 using a structured questionnaire to tap information on the variables of the research. To supplement their responses, a checklist of items that were discussed with key informants, including local leaders, was also used.
- The data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 9.0 for Windows.
- Univariate analysis was done to compute frequencies, means, standard deviations, and percentages.
- Bivariate analysis was done through cross tabulation to find associations between bride wealth and domestic violence; bride wealth and marriage types and bride wealth and HIV/AIDS infection risk.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1.2 Occupation of respondents

The occupations of respondents varied greatly. Of all the respondents, 40.0% were doing crop production while 31.7% had salaried employments. The only other main occupations were trade and livestock production, which were being undertaken by 21.7% and 6.7% respondents, respectively. Their occupations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Occupations of Respondents (n=60)

Main occupation	Morogoro Rural		Morogoro Urban		All	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Crop production	22	73.3	2	6.6	24	40.0
Salaried employment	2	6.7	17	56.7	19	31.7
Trade	5	16.7	8	26.7	13	21.7
Livestock production	1	3.3	3	10.0	4	6.6
Total	30	100.0	30	100.0	60	100.0

Source: Field Survey, January 2002

In Morogoro Urban District, it was observed that the main occupation was salaried employment, which was the case with 56.7% of respondents. The second most

important main urban activity was trade (26.7%). In rural areas the most important activity was crop production (73.4%) followed by trade (16.7%).

Marital Status

The results showed that 51 respondents out of 60 respondents (85%) were in marriage ties. Divorced respondents were 4 (6.4%); separated respondents were 3 (5.0%); and widowed respondents were 2 (3.3%). More than four-fifths of respondents (88.3%) were monogamous while 11.7% were polygynous.

Bride Wealth Payments

In most cases a man who is about to marry pays bride wealth. Of the 60 respondents, 37 (61.7%) said so. Other 10 (16.7%) respondents said that the marrying man pays the bride wealth being assisted by his parents. Other respondents, 11.7%, 8.3%, and 1.7% said that the bride price is paid by parents of the man that is about to marry, the father of the son that is about to marry, and contributions of relatives, respectively.

Parents of both parties normally bargain the amount of bride wealth to pay. Most respondents (36.7%) said that the main decision maker with regard to the amount to pay is the father of the daughter that is about to marry, with some advice from clan members. Others (20.0%) said that the main decision makers are the father and uncles of the daughter that is about to marry.

Amounts of Bride Wealth Paid

On average, rural households were paying about half of the bride wealth that was being paid by the urban people. The average urban and rural bride wealth were TSh 167,333/= 84,800/=, respectively.

Table 2: Amounts of bride wealth paid (n=60)

Amount	Urban (TSh)	Rural (TSh)	All (TSh)
Minimum	30,000	10,000	10,000
Maximum	500,000	450,000	500,000
Mean	167,333	84,800	126,067

Source: Field Survey, January 2002

Four-fifths (80.0%) of respondents said that the amounts of the bride wealth usually demanded were not affordable to every person. Due to economic constraints most people could not pay the amounts that were in most cases demanded. Only 12 respondents (20.0%) said that the amounts were affordable. The differences in opinions may be due to differences in economic statuses of the families and also varying amounts demanded in different ethnic groups. Moreover, it was indicated that if a person was not capable of paying the required amount of bride wealth, he was allowed to pay half of the required amount of bride wealth and seek the permission to pay the rest of the amount (portion) in due time of marriage. More than three-fifths (61.7%) of the respondents revealed the common practice of partial payment of bride wealth.

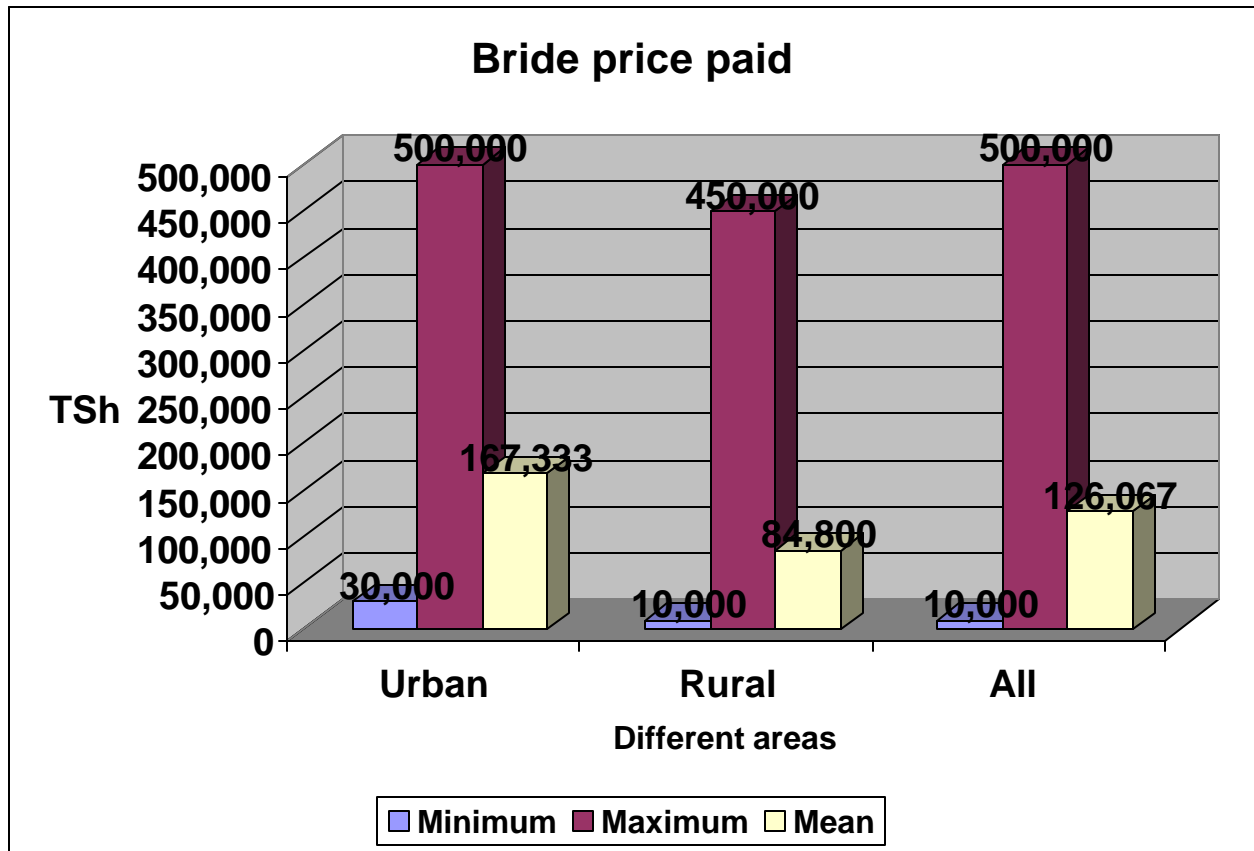


Figure 1: Values of bride wealth paid

Domestic Violence

When respondents were asked about the types of domestic violence that were common in their areas, 90% of them mentioned the ones indicated in Figure 2. The percentages in the figure indicate how many times the violence types were mentioned. The most common types of violence were being beaten (21%), denial of property ownership (19%), denial of decision-making (15%), and early forced marriage (15%).

Table 3: Common Kinds of Domestic Violence (n=60)

Kinds of domestic violence	Frequency	%
Being beaten	38	63.3
Early forced marriage	2	3.3
Denial of property ownership	32	53.3
Women inheritance	3	5.0
Denial of decision making	25	41.7
Girls being denied school attendance	3	5.0
Heavy workload	23	38.3
Psychological mistreatment	22	36.7
Being abandoned by husband	20	33.3
Being regarded as assets	4	6.7

Source: Field Survey, January 2002

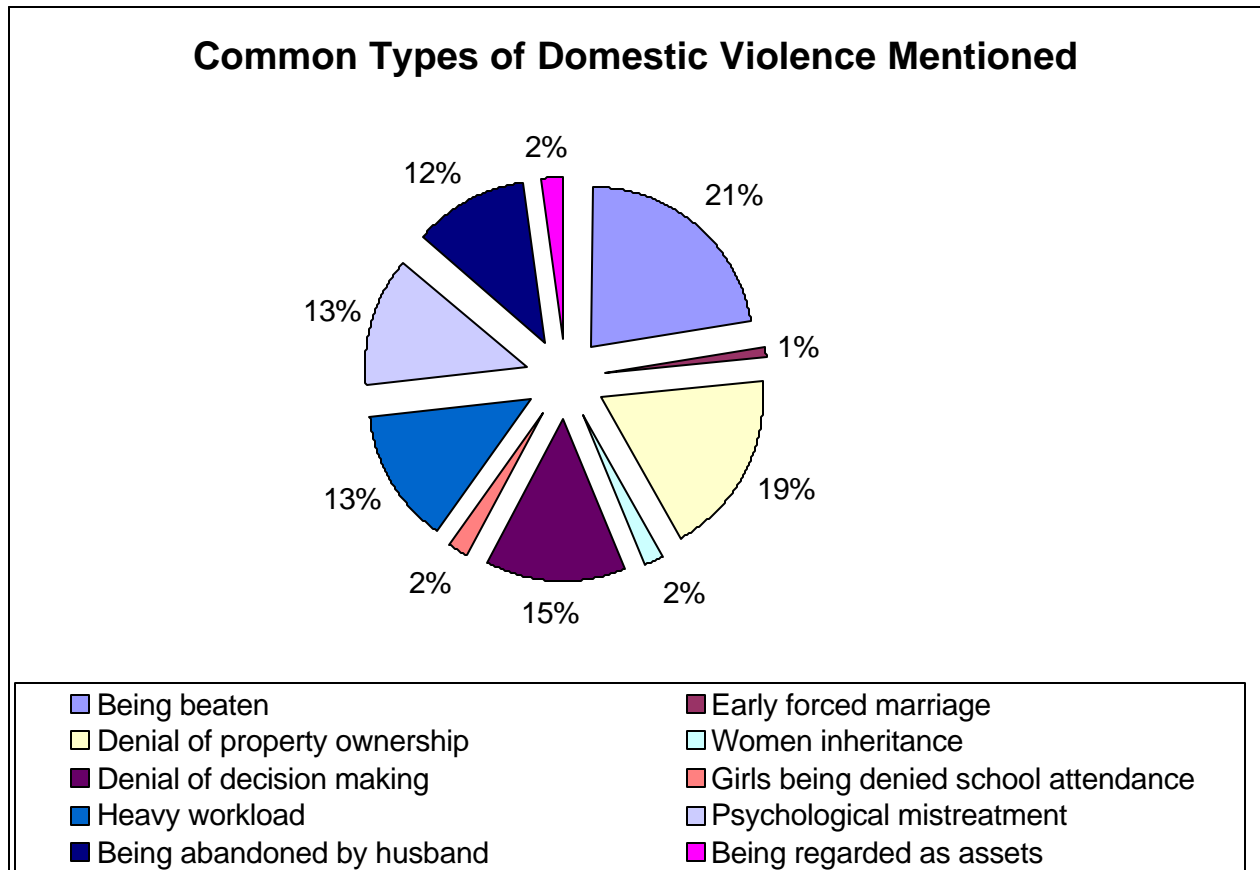


Figure 2: Common Types of Domestic Violence

Bride Wealth and Domestic Violence

The results showed that 21 respondents out of 60 (35.0%) said that the bride wealth payments contribute to domestic violence. They further revealed that the domestic violence was practiced even between friends, or from one who did not pay any bride wealth. These were especially with cases whereby high amounts of bride wealth had been paid. At high amounts of bride wealth women were forced to have heavy workloads and were being denied the right to own property because "they had been bought and themselves were assets". Even if they were severely beaten, they could not go back home to their parents due to the high bride wealth paid for them because parents would not be able to pay back the bride price. Others, 36 respondents out of 60 (60.0%) said that bride price was not contributing to domestic violence. About a half of respondents (46.7%) said that bride wealth does not contribute to HIV/AIDS infection risk. Others, 15 respondents out of 60 (25.0%), said that bride wealth contributes to HIV/AIDS infection risk in the society. At the same time, 17 respondents out of 60 (28.3%) said that they knew nothing about the relationships.

The respondents who agreed that the bride wealth contributes to HIV/AIDS infection risk gave the following reasons:

- That a man with the ability to pay bride wealth marries whomever he wishes or marries many wives. This contributes to infection risk because having many

wives/partners increases chances of getting various sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS.

- Levirate, which is the practice of inheriting widows, was found in the research areas. This was caused by the fact that bride wealth paid during marriage could not be paid back after the death of the husband. Therefore, letting the woman go back to her parents was regarded as total loss of the bride wealth. Instead they select one man among the clan members to inherit the woman, regardless of the cause of the death of the husband. For this case if one has died from HIV/AIDS there could be transmission of HIV.
- A man who was unable to pay the bride wealth completely (even a half of it) does not only marry but continues with sexual intercourse randomly and may even engage himself in raping activities. This usually leads to the HIV/AIDS infection risk.

Cross-tabulation and Hypothesis Testing Results

Besides the above qualitative description of the influence of bride wealth payment and marriage systems on domestic violence and HIV/AIDS transmission risk, in order to gauge the associations between bride price and marriage systems; bride price and presence of domestic violence; and bride price and HIV/AIDS infection risk; bivariate analysis was done using chi-square to determine quantitatively the association between each of the above pairs of variables. Answers to each of the above variables were regrouped into two categories to facilitate cross-tabulation. The answers are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Levels of variables for cross-tabulation (n =60)

Variables associated		Urban (n=30)		Rural (n=30)		Total (n=60)	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Amount of bride wealth	High	21	70.0	8	26.7	29	48.3
	Low	9	30.0	22	73.3	31	51.7
Marriage types	Monogamous	29	96.7	24	80.0	53	88.3
	Polygamous	1	3.7	6	20.0	7	11.7
Domestic violence prevalence	Yes	25	83.3	29	96.7	54	90.0
	No	5	16.7	1	3.3	6	10.0
Contribution of the violence to HIV/AIDS	Yes	11	36.7	4	13.3	15	25.0
	No	19	63.3	26	86.7	45	75.0

Source: Field survey, January 2002.

Less bride wealth was less than TSh 200,000/= while more of it was TSh 200,000/= and more.

The responses of Table 4 were crosstabulated with particular interest in Pearson's chi-square test of significance to quantify the associations, and the results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Cross-tabulation results (n = 60)

Pairs of variables associated		Extents of the associations (Pearson's chi-square)		
		Urban	Rural	All
Bride wealth	Marriage type (monogamous or polygamous)	0.060 ns	0.000***	0.097ns
Bride wealth	Domestic violence	0.270 ns	0.036*	0.050*
Bride wealth	HIV/AIDS infection risk	0.235 ns	0.2736 ns	0.452ns

Source: Field Survey, January 2002

- ns = No significant association
- *** = The association is significant at the 0.1% level
- * = The association is significant at the 5% level

Tables 4 and 5 tell us that overall, domestic violence is more in rural than urban areas. One of the reasons may be the fact that in rural areas people are less sensitive to gender issues. Another lesson we learn from the two tables is that marriage system and bride wealth are more associated in rural areas, where it is highly significant unlike in urban areas where the association is not significant. This is because more rural people are polygamous than urban people. This is due to different lifestyles in the two places. In rural areas life is mainly based on land while in town life mainly depends on self-employment in non-farm activities or salaried employment.

General Views on Polygamy and HIV/AIDS infection

The respondents' general views on polygamy were assessed during this work. The responses were that the kind of marriage was not good because it results into a number of problems between married couples.

Table 6: Problems of Polygamy (n=60)

Problems	Frequency	%
Facilitates domestic violence (e.g. Unequal love, beating of one who is less loved, etc.)	44	73.3
Facilitates the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STIs	43	71.7
Conflicts among children and wives (married women)	20	33.3
Results into big families (many children) with a few resources the basic needs cannot be obtained	8	13.3

Source: Field Survey, January 2002.

According to Table 6 responses, the problem of marriage arrangement, particularly polygamy, influences HIV/AIDS infection to a considerable extent.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

- Domestic violence increases women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS infection in an attempt to counteract, or cope with, the violence. Domestic violence is more in rural than urban areas, mainly because rural areas people are less sensitive to gender issues. Marriage systems and bride wealth are more associated in rural areas, where it is highly significant unlike in urban areas where the association is not significant.

Recommendations

In order to reduce the problems of domestic violence and risks of HIV/AIDS transmission among women of Morogoro Urban and Rural Districts, and possibly elsewhere:

- Women are advised to strive to become members of decision-making organs for more realisation of their rights.
- Parents, policy makers, religious organisations and NGOs are urged to empower women more educationally.
- The government is urged to intensify the already existing efforts to empower women to reduce poverty since poverty is one of the major reasons for domestic violence against women.

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