



Research Article

Civic Leaders Awareness on Human Trafficking in Arusha City Council, Northern Tanzania

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Abstract

Tanzania is reported in various researches as a source, transit, and destination for human trafficking. In order to address the problem, numerous measures like enactment of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2008, The National Anti-Trafficking in Persons Plan of Action (2021-2024) and the use of civic leaders at the grassroots has been enhanced. Civic leaders are lowest representatives at country's decentralized governance structure. However, their level of awareness of human trafficking is understudied. This study assessed civic leader's awareness of human trafficking in the Arusha City Council Northern Tanzania. The study employed a mixed-method research approach and a convergent research design. Probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to obtain 113 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides. Thematic and descriptive statistics were used to analyze data. The findings revealed a limited understanding of the signs and prevalence of human trafficking, low awareness of where to report suspected cases of human trafficking, and inadequate training on how to respond to human trafficking situations effectively. We recommend comprehensive training programs to improve their awareness and response to human trafficking, establish accessible reporting mechanisms, and enhance collaboration with law enforcement agencies and anti-trafficking organizations.

Keywords

Awareness, Civic Leaders, Human Trafficking

1. Introduction

Human trafficking involves the recruitment and exploitation of individuals for various purposes like forced labor and prostitution, inflicting significant physical and emotional harm [9, 19]. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates¹ that around 25 million individuals were victims of

human trafficking worldwide in 2016, with women and girls constituting 71% of these victims [3, 20]. This criminal enterprise generates approximately US\$150 billion in illegal profits annually, ranking among the most lucrative illicit activities globally [12].

In Africa, women and children are the most vulnerable; they are subjected to trafficking for forced labor, sexual exploitation, and even child soldier recruitment. The region

¹ <https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/forced-labour-modern-slavery-and-traffic> king-persons

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accounted for a significant portion of the 9.2 million victims of forced labor in Africa in 2016, with Africa and the Middle East having the highest prevalence of trafficking for forced labor globally [20]. Factors such as poverty, political instability, armed conflicts, and weak law enforcement have contributed to the prevalence of human trafficking across Africa [2, 14].

Various literature report Tanzania as a source, transit, and destination for human trafficking [4]. Between 2017 and 2019, Tanzania identified 1,321 trafficking victims who were destined for trafficking within the country as well as across borders for various forms of exploitation. Despite Tanzania's efforts, as highlighted in the Trafficking in Persons Report 2021, challenges persist in prosecuting traffickers and identifying victims.

To combat human trafficking, Tanzania has implemented measures like the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2008, which criminalizes human trafficking and sets penalties for offenders [4]. The National Anti-Trafficking in Persons Plan of Action (2021-2024) emphasizes collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners, as well as victim support, awareness campaigns, and capacity building [5]. Further, civic leaders who are grassroots government representatives can play a vital role in the prevention of human trafficking by raising awareness, implementing preventive measures, and supporting victims [7, 17].

Civic leaders are lower-level elected in the Tanzania decentralized governance structure. They include Ward Councilors, Village Chairpersons (street or neighborhood in urban areas), and hamlet chairpersons in rural areas. According to the Tanzania Local Government (Urban Authorities), Act No 8 of 1982, civic leaders are elected directly by all citizens residing in the area. Civic leaders' functions include political, administrative, and economic roles in their areas of jurisdiction. However, their level of awareness of human trafficking is understudied. The current study, therefore, assessed the level of awareness of human trafficking among civic leaders, focusing on street leaders in Arusha City Council, Northern Tanzania.

2. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess levels of awareness of human trafficking and challenges facing civic leaders in Arusha City Council, Northern Tanzania. Specifically, the paper sought to;

- 1) Assess the level of awareness of human trafficking among civic leaders in the mitigation of human trafficking in the Arusha City Council.
- 2) Identify challenges faced by civic leaders in preventing human trafficking in the Arusha City Council.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Theoretical Literature Review

The Empowerment Theory [16] provided a valuable framework for understanding how civic leaders in the Arusha City Council can enhance awareness and combat human trafficking. By emphasizing empowerment, participation, and social support, this theory underscores the pivotal role of community leaders in empowering individuals and fostering collective agency [6]. While the theory may not fully address systemic factors contributing to trafficking, it offers an understanding of how civic leaders can engage with communities effectively to prevent human trafficking through empowerment strategies and awareness-raising initiatives.

3.2. Empirical Literature Review

Mobasher examined the knowledge and perceptions of human trafficking among leaders and staff from community-based and faith-based organizations in the United States [13]. The researchers identified gaps in understanding local laws and procedures to combat trafficking, which underscored the need for targeted education and intervention to enhance responses within communities. These findings highlight the necessity for tailored educational materials that address specific needs and misconceptions among civic leaders.

Conversely, in Scotland, Atkinson and Hamilton-Smith [1] delved into the community impact of organized crime, with a focus on human trafficking. Noteworthy advancements in enforcement, legislation, and dedicated units were observed, signaling a shift in perceiving trafficking from a hidden issue to a core concern. While progress has been made in the policing landscape, there remains a gap in understanding the specific local context of human trafficking among civic leaders in Scotland, necessitating further exploration to enhance preparedness and effective responses.

In Nigeria, Olufemi, et al examined the impact of community education on human trafficking as a driver of sustainable community development [15]. The study underscored the significance of community education in raising awareness and improving community outcomes. While stressing the pivotal role of community education, there remains a crucial need to assess the baseline knowledge of civic leaders in Arusha, Tanzania, regarding human trafficking. Understanding their awareness of trafficking forms, indicators, and legal frameworks would aid in tailoring targeted educational programs to bolster their capacity to combat trafficking effectively.

In a local context, Magesa investigated human trafficking and the roles of traffickers in Arusha, Tanzania, shedding light on the prevalent involvement of women as perpetrators [10]. The study revealed that women, often familiar to victims, primarily utilized deceit and coercion in trafficking

operations. While informative, this study underscores the imperative of evaluating the understanding and knowledge of civic leaders in Arusha concerning human trafficking prevention. Such assessments can pinpoint areas where leaders require additional support, resources, or training to enhance their efficacy in mitigating human trafficking within their communities.

While existing studies shed light on various aspects of human trafficking awareness and prevention strategies, there was a pressing need to assess the understanding and knowledge of civic leaders directly. By identifying gaps in awareness and preparedness, personalized interventions can be developed to equip leaders with the necessary tools and information to effectively combat human trafficking within their communities.

4. Methodology

The study employed a mixed-method research approach and a convergent research design. Probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to obtain a sample of 113 respondents. Questionnaires and interviews were used to gather relevant data. Thematic analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Age: 47 (43.1%) of the sampled respondents were aged between 25 and 40 years old, 34 (31.2%) were between 40 and 55 years old, and 25.7% of respondents were 55 years old and above. In terms of Sex, 62 (56.9%) of respondents were male and 47 (43.1%) were female. With regard to occupation, 27 (24.8%) of respondents were employed, 68 (62.4%) self-employed, and 14 (12.8%) were un-employed. On education levels, 7 (6.4%) had primary education, 58 (53.2%) had secondary education, 28 (25.7%) had diploma education and 16 (14.7%) had a university education.

5.2. Awareness of Human Trafficking Among Civic Leaders in Arusha City Council

The study assessed the level of awareness of human trafficking among civic leaders in mitigation of human trafficking in Arusha City Council with three statements which were identification of common signs of human trafficking, awareness of the prevalence of human trafficking, and reporting knowledge of suspected cases of human trafficking. A summary of the results is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Awareness of Human Trafficking among civic Leaders in Mitigation of Human Trafficking (n=95).

sn	Statement	Yes		No	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
	Can civic leaders identify common signs of human trafficking in your community?	31	32.6	63	67.4
	Are civic leaders aware of the prevalence of human trafficking in our area?	37	38.9	58	61.1
	Do civic leaders know where to report suspected cases of human trafficking?	67	70.5	28	29.5

Regarding the ability of civic leaders to identify human trafficking, 63 (67.4%) of the respondents believed that local leaders could not identify common signs of human trafficking in Arusha City. Results from key informant interviews also corroborated these findings. An immigration officer from Sakina Ward in this city said:

“Some civic leaders struggle to spot human trafficking signs. For instance, they might miss when a child suddenly works long hours without pay, assuming it's a job. Another common mistake is overlooking a scared domestic worker, thinking they're just timid. Moreover, signs of abuse in a

worker might be dismissed as accidents”

Also, another response civic leader from Kati Ward remarked as thus *“I once thought a child working long hours was just ambitious, not a victim... I overlooked signs of exploitation in a worker, thinking it was just bad luck”*.

Concerning the prevalence of trafficking, results revealed that 58 (61.1%) of the respondents said that local leaders were not aware of the prevalence, while 37 (38.9%) agreed that civic leaders were mindful of the prevalence of human trafficking in their area. This finding also points to low awareness of local leaders. Olufemi, et al observed similar trends in

Nigeria and recommended comprehensive public awareness to address the matter [15]. In the same vein, Magesa observed deep-rooted cultural practices that, in a way, prevented community and leadership from seeing human trafficking as an issue in Northern Tanzania [11].

Regarding reporting knowledge, the results revealed that 67 (70.5%) of respondents agreed that civic leaders were knowledgeable about where to report suspected cases of human trafficking and 28 (29.5%) disagreed. In responding to a question during an interview, a ward police officer from Sakina Ward had this to say:

"I can confirm that most civic leaders in our area know where to report suspected human trafficking cases. Their awareness and prompt actions are vital in quickly helping and protecting potential trafficking victims in our community... several times they communicate to with potential suspects observations."

During interviews, a ward police officer from Sakina Ward confirmed that most civic leaders were well-informed about reporting procedures. The officer highlighted the crucial role these leaders play in swiftly assisting and safeguarding potential trafficking victims within the community, noting their proactive communication with suspected individuals. These findings suggest that empowering civic leaders with reporting knowledge is essential for effective intervention and protection against human trafficking in local areas.

High awareness of where to report human trafficking cases among local leaders is partly attributed to the strong presence of police officers right at the grassroots in Tanzania, thanks to community policing initiatives that began way back in 1973 when the government introduced the People's Militia popularly known as *Sungusungu* under the People's Militia Act of 1973 (amended in 1989) and revised in 2002 under Penal Code Cap. 112 [21]. In 2006, a special community police department was established within the Tanzania Police Force. These efforts enabled police to entrench and embed with the population as well as local leadership [22].

5.3. Challenges Faced by Civic Leaders in Preventing Human Trafficking

The study investigated specific challenges faced by civic leaders in preventing human trafficking in Arusha City. Results show that the majority, 69 (72.6%) of the respondents, believed civic leaders could not respond effectively to human trafficking, highlighting a critical gap in preparedness. Writing in the Nigerian context, Shittu and Pandian points out that the inability of civic leaders to respond effectively is also caused by leadership conflicts, poor cooperation, suspicions, challenges in information and intelligence sharing, disagreements on standards, and ad-hoc operations in joint patrols [18].

Potential causes may include limited access to training programs or inadequate awareness of available resources as correctly pointed out by Olufemi, et al, and Magesa, [11, 15]. Addressing this issue through targeted training initiatives,

workshops, and partnerships with anti-trafficking organizations can equip leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge to address trafficking situations adeptly. Enhancing training opportunities can improve responses and interventions, ultimately strengthening community efforts to combat human trafficking effectively [18].

Asked whether civic leaders had appropriate resources, the majority of the respondents, 60 (63.2%), noted that their leaders faced difficulties in accessing resources to support anti-trafficking initiatives. The same challenges were observed by Lufunyo who documented challenges of decentralized local government authorities in Tanzania, which include the inability to collect revenue, interferences from the central government, limited human and materials resources, and the like [8]. Shittu and Pandian also observed a similar challenge in Nigeria, where the problem was exacerbated by corruption, logistical hurdles, and leadership conflict, among others [18]. Addressing these challenges through resource mapping, grant assistance programs, and partnerships with funding organizations can provide leaders with the necessary support to implement effective anti-trafficking measures. Enhancing resource accessibility can strengthen community responses and overall efforts in combating human trafficking more efficiently.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study observed a significant awareness gap among civic leaders in Arusha City Council concerning the identification of human trafficking signs, although there was a promising understanding of reporting procedures related to human trafficking. The study recommends targeted training programs to enhance awareness of human trafficking signs among civic leaders in the Arusha City Council. Further, there is a need for research to explore the correlation between the level of awareness of human trafficking signs and the successful prevention of human trafficking cases by civic leaders.

Abbreviations

ILO	International Labor Organization
KCMUCo	Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College

Author Contributions

Gasper Mpehongwa: Conceptualization, Methodology, Project administration, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft

Asha Abdul: Data curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Project administration, Visualization, Writing – review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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