

Media Coverage of Sexual Violence and its Implications on Educational Leadership

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Abstract

This paper presents the key findings from the content analysis of sexuality-related issues by the two most widely circulated dailies (the Daily Nation and the Standard), weeklies (Citizen Weekly and the Independent) and monthly magazines (Drum and Eve) in the second half of year 2005. The authors undertook the task on behalf of the African Regional Sexuality Resource Center which coordinates and promotes sexuality focused research and discourse in Egypt, Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria. The purpose of the analysis was to determine how the Kenyan print media portray sexuality, sexual health and sexual rights issues. This paper also discusses the implications this is likely to have on educational management.

By the end of the exercise, the writers had painstakingly analyzed the content of 368 dailies, the majority of 50 weeklies and 12 monthly magazines. The sexuality-related issues included sexuality and sexuality education, sexual violence, HIV/AIDS, child marriages, reproductive health and rights, as well sexual orientation and identity. This paper however concentrates on the issues most frequently reported by the media.

On the whole, the coverage of the sexuality was found to be relatively general and lacking in detail. During the period in focus, the media seem to have assumed the basic role of information transmission and not of imparting education or raising the readership's consciousness to sexuality and related issues. Incidences of sexual violence received more coverage in terms of the number of articles featured. The dailies and weeklies consistently highlighted numerous incidences of child defilement and sexual violence. They also featured the findings of a few related research studies, which had concluded that fathers, gangs, teachers, teenage boys and significant family members are among the main perpetrators of sexual violence against male and female minors and women. Indeed, the analysis found that fathers are responsible for the defilement of two-fifths of the cases reported. Of the 717 reported cases involving girls aged between one month and four years, 43% of the perpetrators were fathers. Over four-fifths (83%) of the defilement cases reported to the police occurred at home and nearly five percent (4.9%) at school.

In this paper we seek dialogue in ways in which a tripartite partnership between the school, community and parents could be helped to work together to reduce sexual violence in Kenya.