

Gender-Based Violence in Nairobi Informal Settlements: Women Survivors' Access to Justice through SMS

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Abstract

This paper explores the role of SMS platforms in facilitating access to justice for survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Specifically, it investigates the extent of SMS use among GBV survivors in Mukuru informal settlements and the factors influencing their adoption of this technology. The study is anchored in the Technology Acceptance Model and employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A sample of 310 women GBV survivors from Mukuru was selected for the study. Key informants included representatives from ActionAid Kenya – a local NGO that introduced the SMS service – Wangu Kanja Foundation, ActionAid's local partner in Mukuru, as well as paralegals, community health workers, police officers, and local chiefs. The findings reveal that women in Mukuru heavily rely on SMS platforms to report GBV cases and seek justice. Additionally, the SMS system provides a safe space for accessing and sharing information, empowering survivors to make informed decisions. The study concludes that SMS technology plays a pivotal role in reporting GBV incidents and facilitating access to justice for survivors. These findings are valuable for technology developers creating mobile-based solutions, GBV practitioners integrating technology into their interventions, and policymakers addressing the root causes of GBV in informal settlements.

Key Words: *Gender-Based Violence, SMS, Justice, Women Survivors, Informal Settlements, Trauma*

Introduction

Gender Based Violence is a leading cause of mortality globally for individuals aged 15 to 44 (WHO, 2018). World Health Organization (WHO) views GBV as any harmful act imposed on an individual against their will, rooted in socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. This encompasses acts that cause physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, as well as threats, coercion, and other forms of deprivation of liberty, whether these acts occur in public or private settings (WHO, 2018).

In Kenya, as in many other parts of the world, GBV manifests in various forms across all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, including physical, sexual, emotional (psychological), and economic abuse. The viciousness and frequency of recent GBV cases in Kenya are alarming (Ochieng, 2018). Media coverage of femicide in January 2024 made GBV a subject of public discourse. The media steered a national debate on the need for respect for human rights and the Constitution of Kenya, and more specifically, articles that safeguard the rights and freedoms of women and protect them from violence (Media Council of Kenya, 2024).

According to Femicide Count Kenya, there were 150 femicide cases recorded in 2023. This number only represents cases reported in the media; the true count is probably much higher. Additionally, statistics from relief online indicated that, in just the first month of 2024, at least 10 women had lost their lives, exacerbating an already alarming trend. Femicide Count Kenya data indicates that 504 women were killed between 2019 and 2024 (Reliefweb, 2024). The data by Africa Uncensored also indicated that Nairobi, Kiambu, and Nakuru Counties reported the highest incidences of femicide-related killings (Media Council of Kenya, 2024).

According to the Kenya Demographic Health Survey, 45% of Kenyan women aged 15 to 49 have faced physical violence since turning 15 (KNBS, 2018). The Gender Violence Recovery Centre (GVRC) reports that 45% of women in this age group have experienced either physical or sexual violence, with women and girls making up 90% of reported GBV cases. Additionally, 21% of Kenyan women have encountered sexual violence (Wangechi, 2018). This issue is exacerbated by deep-rooted traditions and a patriarchal society that limits women's access to income, physical assets, and education.

Survivors of GBV suffer from enduring emotional distress, psychological health issues, poor reproductive health, trauma, stigma, and various other health consequences. Many lack access to support and perpetrators often go unpunished.

Gender-based violence is mostly experienced in informal settlements. Kenya is experiencing a rapid increase in informal settlements within its urban centers. Over 34% of the country's population resides in urban areas, with more than 71% of these urban dwellers living in informal settlements (Mutisya & Yarime, 2011). These areas are typically inhabited by low-income residents with limited assets (UN-Habitat, 2003). They are characterized by inadequate housing, basic services, and social amenities, as well as overcrowding, high population density, insecure tenure, poverty, hazardous locations, and social exclusion (Oxfam, 2018). Mukuru, one of Nairobi's largest informal settlements, has an estimated population of 700,000 people

spread across various villages. It is located along the Ngong River, in the industrial area of the city, between Mombasa Road, North Airport Road, and Outer Ring Road, spanning three constituencies: Starehe, Embakasi South, and Makadara. The villages within Mukuru include Mukuru Sinai, Paradise, Mukuru Kwa Reuben, Kayaba, Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Jamaica, Fuata Nyayo, Kingstone, and Mariguini.

Mukuru experiences a high rate of violence because of poverty, inadequate lighting, overcrowding, male dominance and other overpopulation-related issues. Poverty, overcrowded housing, cultural practices, and insufficient government action against perpetrators of violence create an environment where crime can flourish. Many families reside in corrugated iron shacks measuring three meters by three meters and work as casual laborers in nearby manufacturing industries.

Poverty and disempowerment are closely linked due to the inability to meet basic needs, leading to dependence on others and limiting the capacity for meaningful choices (Kabeer, 2005). Women and girls in informal settlements are especially impacted by the lack of adequate sanitation facilities, such as toilets and bathrooms. Women have distinct physical needs, including those related to menstruation, and require greater privacy when using these facilities. As a result, inadequate and inaccessible sanitation, combined with ineffective policing and general insecurity, increases their vulnerability to rape and other forms of Gender-Based Violence.

Although the Kenyan government has enacted a progressive legal and policy framework, the number of women and girls suffering from such violence remains high. These policies include the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011), and the Sexual Offences Act (2006). Other policies include the Protection against Violence Act (2015), the Children's Act (2001) the National Gender and Equality Commission Act (2011), and the Penal Code (2009). These are essential national laws that safeguard women by ensuring the prevention, response, and management of GBV and Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

The criminal justice system, encompassing both police and judicial processes, is affected by irregularities and inconsistencies, leading GBV survivors to lose faith in it. As a result, numerous cases remain unreported. Things do not get any better when you consider fear of stigma, ignorance, intimidation by perpetrators and fear of interference in cases by family members.

While the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in violence prevention is relatively new, some interventions have shown promising results. ICTs are tools that manage information and enable various forms of communication between humans, between humans and electronic systems, and between electronic systems themselves (Rathi & Niyogi, 2015).

A potential beneficial application of ICTs resides in mobile telephony. In Kenya in 2020, mobile phone penetration among adults was 98%, with 43% of adults using the internet (96% of them on smartphones rather than computers) and 17% using social media (98% of them on

smartphones) (Hootsuite, 2020). Kenya has seen broad uptake of mobile technology, with higher phone penetration than the global average (67%) and near-universal use of mobile banking through M-PESA (Kharono et. al., 2022). While urban areas still have better internet access compared to rural areas, the differences are diminishing. As a result of this, messages transmitted through SMS can reach large populations. Indeed, this level of mobile phone penetration makes mobile phones a potential 'mass media' in Kenya.

There are approximately 66 million mobile phone subscriptions in Kenya (GeoPoll, 2024). With the widespread use of mobile phones, SMS services should find more use as they offer easy accessibility. In Kenya, one of the most cited uses of SMS is through the Ushahidi platform during the 2007-2008 post-election violence. Individuals with mobile phones could send text messages to a designated number to report human rights abuses and incidents, which were then geographically mapped on a website (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, 2011). This combination of text messaging and online tools facilitated real-time event reporting and helped in the mobilization of community groups to prevent further violence.

Work of ActionAid in Mukuru Informal Settlement

It is with this in mind that ActionAid Kenya initiated the Access to Justice Project, which is a Gender Based Violence SMS reporting and monitoring system in Mukuru in Nairobi. The goal of the project is to ensure that around 10,000 people have greater awareness of the impact of violence on women and girls and hundreds of women have access to medical, legal and psychosocial support. The system also has a Google map that plots the geographical areas where the cases occur. It is then possible to know how many cases are reported from which area and use the information for policy advocacy on service provision with the county and national governments (ActionAid, 2024). A survivor can report a case of violence at no cost by sending the word HELP to 21094, where they receive a prompt to provide details of the type of violence and the location, after which the survivor receives a case number. Immediately, an alert is sent to SMS systems administrators who call the rescue team and paralegals to the specific locality to rescue the survivor. The survivor is subsequently taken to the police station to file a report.

The survivor is then taken to hospital for medication and later on linked with psychosocial support services. The rescue team and paralegals help the survivor to protect evidence and seek justice through the provision of legal services. The rationale for starting the program was that, while some people may report incidences of violence through formal channels like the police, a higher percentage of the population never does because they do not know what to do after surviving an assault. The situation is worsened by the stigma, shame and a culture of silence that prevents them from seeking help. The use of the SMS platform short code such as 21094 is one way of reaching out to the vulnerable group through their mobile phones so that they can feel safe and secure in reporting cases of GBV and receive legal, medical and psychosocial support services.

Although access to a safer space and a tool for survivors of GBV to report cases and access justice is critical, the extent of adoption and use of the SMS service in Mukuru is not known.

The purpose of this research was, therefore, to ascertain the uptake of the SMS platform in helping survivors of Gender Based Violence (GBV) access justice and other support services. It explores factors influencing the use of SMS, and the potential of SMS in pursuit of justice for women and girls in Mukuru.

Theoretical Framework

The study used the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to examine factors that influence the uptake of SMS service and the potential of SMS use to access justice for women and girls in Mukuru slum, Embakasi Constituency, Nairobi County, in Kenya. The essence of any innovation is to provide a platform for which intended target users can use it effectively to enhance their work.

TAM proposes that perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) are the two most important factors in explaining system use (Figure 1). Perceived usefulness is the degree to which a person believes that using a specified system would enhance his or her job performance. Perceived ease of use stands for the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort (Davis, 1989). It has one dependent variable – behavioural intention, which means the degree to which a person has formulated a conscious plan to perform or not perform some specified future behavior (Ibrahim & Jafaar, 2011). The attitude toward adoption will depend on the adopter’s positive or negative behavior in the future concerning new technology. People who perceive technology as useful and easy to use will accept it more readily than those who do not, with usefulness more important than ease of use.

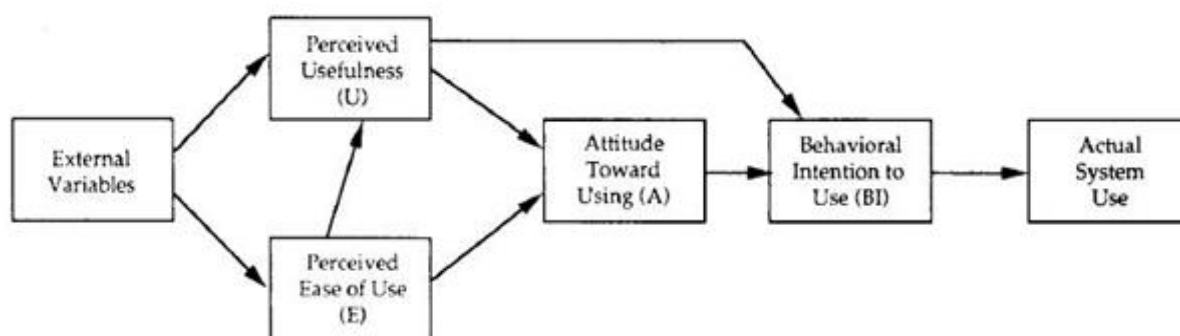


Figure 1: Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989)

In Figure 1, both (U) and (E) are specific perceptions and are anchored to specific beliefs users hold about the system. According to TAM, they have a significant impact on a user's attitude toward using the system (A), defined as feelings of favorableness or unfavorable toward the system. Behavioral intentions to use the system (BI) modelled as a function of A and U. BI then determines actual use. Research has consistently shown that BI is the strongest predictor of actual use (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989). Understanding the factors that influence user acceptance of information technology is key to any technology developer or organization

that is championing innovation. For example, privacy, ease of use of the SMS service and useful information on GBV is key in adoption.

Rejection by the intended user is a significant impediment to the success of new information systems. Users are often unwilling to use information systems, which, if used, would result in impressive performance gains (Ibrahim & Jafaar, 2011). TAM attempts not only to predict but also to explain to help researchers and practitioners identify why a particular system may be unacceptable and pursue appropriate steps. Thus, this model was very useful in determining factors that led to the acceptance or rejection of the SMS system.

Research Methodology

A mixed methods research design that involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches was used to examine factors that influence the uptake of SMS service and the potential of SMS use to access justice for women and girls in Mukuru informal settlement, Embakasi Constituency, Nairobi County, in Kenya. The quantitative phase enabled the collection of quantitative data on the role of the SMS platform in helping survivors of GBV access justice in Mukuru. The qualitative phase collected data that helped to triangulate the quantitative results obtained. A purposive sample of 310 women survivors of GBV in Mukuru was selected. The majority of women in Mukuru slum (87%) who were surveyed were aged above 35 years. Further, a majority of the women (72%) were casual workers, and a slim majority (56%) were educated up to the secondary school level. Ten Key informants purposively selected were drawn from ActionAid Kenya, which is a local NGO that rolled out the SMS service, Wangu Kanja Foundation which is an ActionAid Kenya local partner based in Mukuru, paralegals, community health workers, police officers, chiefs and volunteers offering technical support for the SMS system. Data was collected using questionnaires and key informant interviews. Data was gathered in three months in Mukuru. Trained local interpreters were used to access respondents who were not proficient in English. Quantitative data collected through questionnaires was analysed using descriptive statistics. The qualitative interviews conducted for KIIs were recorded and thereafter transcribed. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data collected from all the participants. The data was categorised into themes and sub-themes, and then interpretation was done as per the responses. Ethical considerations were made since the study involved participants from a vulnerable group. Informed consent was obtained from each participant to use their responses and information in the research. Furthermore, throughout the interviews, effective communication techniques that encouraged active listening, individualizing, and restatement by the respondent were employed.

The Extent of SMS use by GBV Survivors in Mukuru Informal Settlement

GBV survivors in Mukuru were asked about their extent of SMS use for reporting GBV. Results indicated that most women (89 %) are aware of the 21094 SMS line for reporting GBV. However, only about half the women (5,149) from the original target of 10,000 women have registered to the SMS system database (ActionAid, 2024). The findings imply that awareness campaigns about the service have been effective. However, there could be other extraneous factors hampering the adoption of the service.

In an interview on the use of SMS service, a female respondent stated: “I am aware of the 21094 SMS service. I like the initiative. However, I find the procedure of reporting lengthy and complex. If you are in distress, it’s almost impossible to follow the prompts.” The complexity of the SMS service is a hindrance to its use. This implies that many incidences of GBV go unreported. Therefore, there is a need for the service providers to simplify the process further and incorporate feedback from the users to make the service more user-friendly. Other respondents interviewed noted factors like affordability, accessibility of various service providers' networks, and language, as the factors hindering rapid uptake of the service.

Female respondents in Mukuru were asked about their sources of GBV information and support services. Findings indicate that a majority of respondents (45%) rely on SMS service while fewer respondents (29%) use radio to access GBV information (see Figure 1). Significantly, fewer respondents (9%) use face-to-face access to information on GBV. Most women using the SMS service reported receiving weekly SMSs on GBV information SMS. On the other hand, the fact that very few women use the face-to-face approach to access information and support on GBV could be attributed to the sensitivity of the information, stigma, and culture associated with GBV.

Police officers who were interviewed indicated that police stations in Mukuru have a gender desk where community members can report GBV. The police officers noted that most women shy away from using the gender desk to report GBV. A police officer interviewed stated, “We have a gender desk with user-friendly police officers manning the desk yet the community members don’t use it. I think they are afraid because of the stigma associated with GBV.” The findings indicate the need to further interrogate the underlying issues to come up with a more effective approach for addressing GBV.

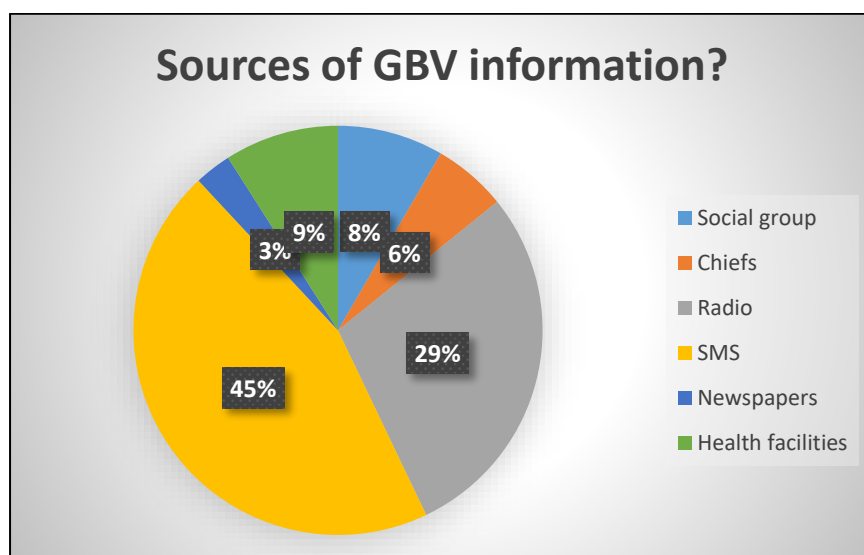


Figure 1: Sources of GBV information

Factors influencing the use of SMS by GBV survivors in Mukuru informal settlement

Factors affecting the use of SMS by GBV survivors in Mukuru were examined. The study sought to find out how access to technology affected access to GBV information. Respondents were asked how they accessed GBV information. A majority of women (73 %) reported that they accessed GBV information through SMS service through their mobile phones (see Figure 2). Other women reported that they accessed GBV information through local groups, radio or social centres. Most women who did not use the SMS service cited a high cost of purchase and maintenance of mobile phones. Although findings indicate that mobile phones are the most accessible platform for women, the low socio-economic status prevalent in the informal settlements hinders some women from using this platform. Therefore, there is a need to subsidize mobile phones to increase women's access to information on GBV.

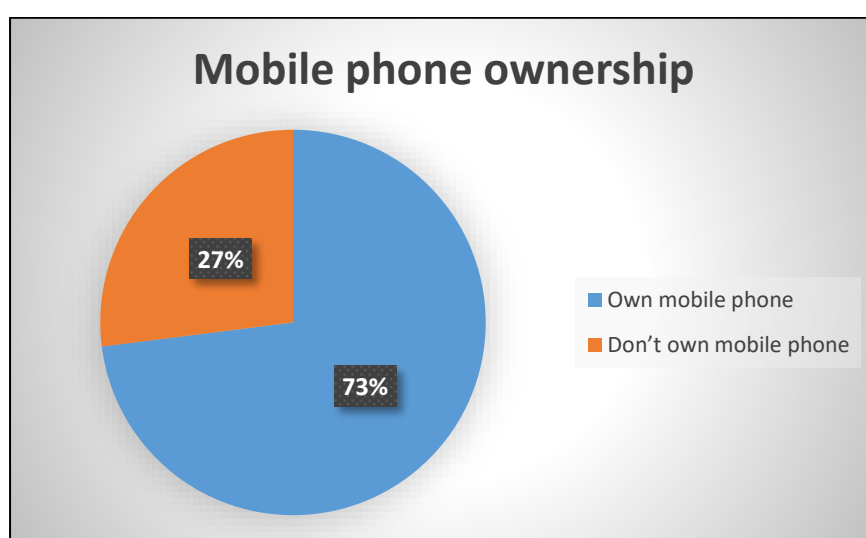


Figure 2: Mobile Phone Ownership

The second factor that was considered was ease of use. From the questionnaires administered, findings indicate that few women (63%) are confident to use the 21094 SMS service (see Figure 3). They, in effect, consider the SMS service as safe, private and secure. However, the language used on the SMS platform was rated as difficult (8%), hence pointing to the need for re-evaluating language use. Most women felt that the language used should be simple and user-friendly and preferred the slang slum language.

A paralegal officer working in Mukuru who was interviewed reported that the SMS reporting process was lengthy and could potentially be challenging, especially for users with low literacy levels. An official from Wangu Kanja Foundation was interviewed on the ease of use of the SMS platform. He cited the restriction of using only one service provider, Safaricom, as a challenge. He stated that most women wanted the inclusion of other mobile service providers like Airtel and Orange/Telkom since not everyone had a Safaricom phone line.

Despite these challenges, the SMS platform is proving to be popular with men as well. A system administrator with ActionAid Kenya who was interviewed stated, “we were shocked to see

male survivors of GBV reporting their cases through the SMS system. We did not expect it but we are happy that the system can serve both genders in GBV.’’ Secondary data from the 21094 SMS system corroborated this finding because it indicated that men have begun reporting violent cases through the platform. One possible explanation for the uptake of the SMS service by men is the assurance of confidentiality, which makes them enjoy the benefits of the service.

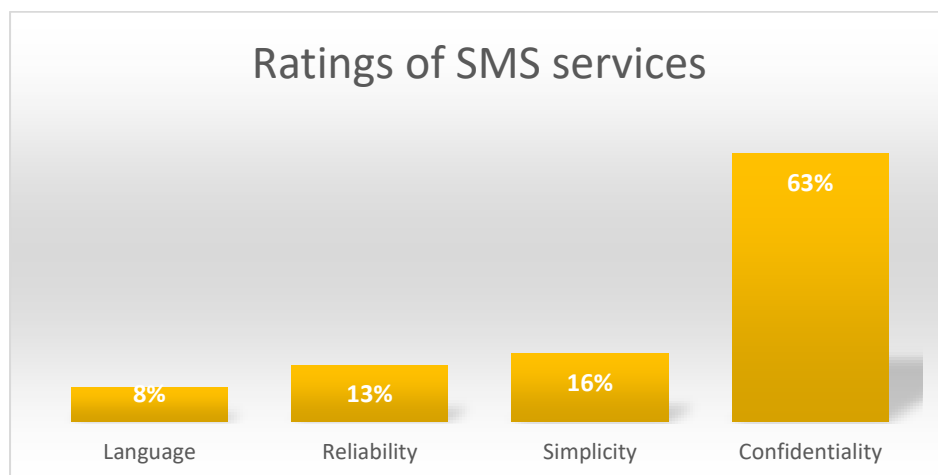


Figure 3: Assessment of SMS Services

The third factor that was considered was the type of content available on the SMS platform. Results from the questionnaires administered indicate that a slim majority of the women (22%) used the SMS service to access information on how to report GBV cases while others (39%) used the SMS service for information on how to handle rape survivors (see Figure 4). Some women accessed information on how to protect themselves from violence (18%). However, fewer women (7%) sought information on where to access legal aid clinics.

A member of Mukuru Action Network who was interviewed stated: “I receive weekly tips on GBV which have been very useful. I heard about how to preserve evidence after rape and how to help a rape survivor for the first time through the SMS system. I usually disseminate such information to my group members every month when we meet. I realized many of my group members are interested in such information, and that they have so many questions about Gender Based Violence. Because of the limitation of number of words that used on the SMS service, there is a need for a radio program, which can further educate and empower us on GBV.’’ These views point to the usefulness of the SMS service as well as indicate the need to re-examine the barriers to information on GBV. The findings on use of GBV content also reveal that rape is an increased concern in the informal settlements. There is a need to examine the root causes of the vice and ways to stop it. In addition, the findings provide useful insights into what type of psychosocial support is required for the survivors.

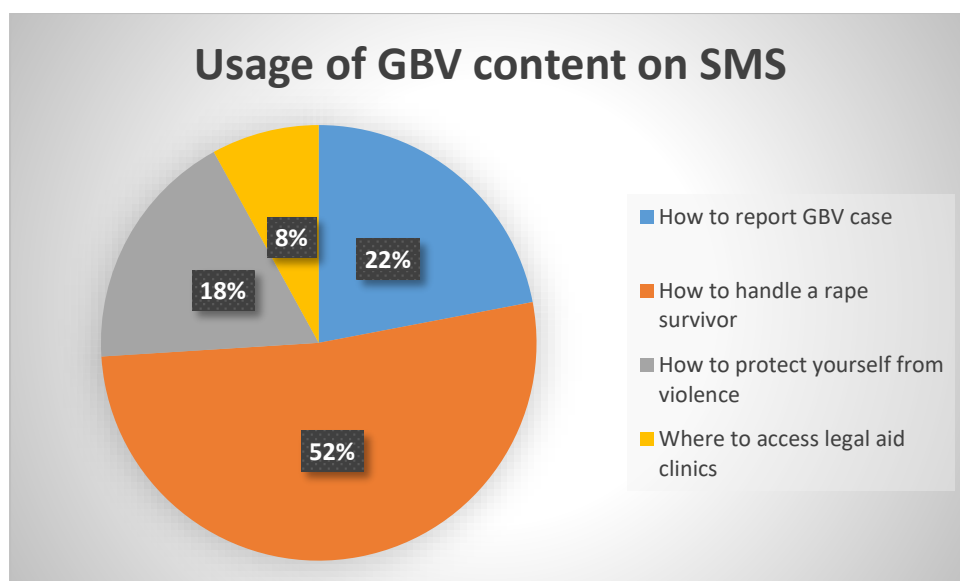


Figure 4: GBV content usage

Accessing Justice for GBV Victims through SMS

Women in Mukuru were asked to what extent they used the SMS platform to report GBV cases compared to other available reporting channels. Results indicate that a majority of the women (46%) use SMS to report GBV (see Figure 5). Other women (22%) indicated that they visit the Wangu Kanja Foundation, a local NGO that supports survivors of GBV, to report cases of GBV. A mother to a six-year-old survivor of rape in Mukuru who was interviewed stated: “One evening, I sent my six-year-old daughter to the shop to buy cooking oil so that I could prepare dinner. My daughter took longer than expected and because it was getting dark, I decided to follow her to the shop, I saw a crowd gathered around a small girl and decided to rush to the scene to see what was happening. My heart bled, my six-year-old girl was lying helpless on the ground in pain and bleeding. I was informed by the onlookers that she had been raped by our neighbour, who had disappeared after the act. I remembered the hotline number and decided to try it to get help, I sent a text to report the case, and fortunately, an ambulance with a paralegal and two volunteers came and took my daughter to Nairobi Women's Hospital for medical attention. I reported the matter to Mukuru Police Station. Although the paralegals helped us file a case at the Makadara law courts, the case has never been concluded yet it has been one year since. It is very traumatizing to take my daughter to the courts every time for her to recount the ordeal. On the other hand, the perpetrator and his family keep on threatening us. I am even thinking of relocating to another neighbourhood. It is very difficult for us and we hope we can access justice sooner. I am sure if we had proper security lights on the pathway, my daughter would not have been raped.”

From this narrative, the conclusion is that although the SMS platform is helping survivors in reporting cases and linking them with paralegals, there are barriers in the judicial processes, especially the prolonged court processes that may hinder access to justice. There is need to address such barriers for survivors to access justice.

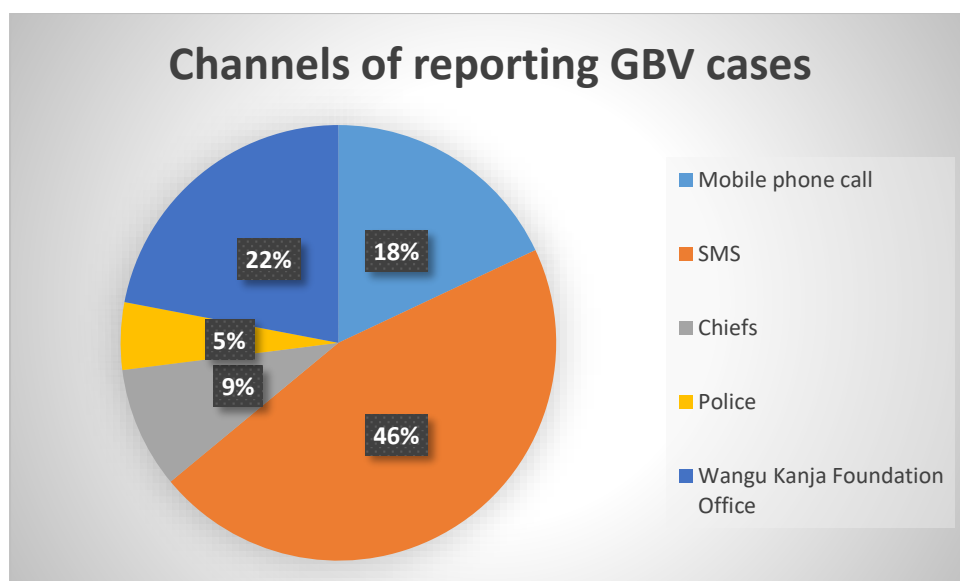


Figure 5: Channels used for Reporting GBV

Few respondents indicated that they report cases to police officers and chiefs. These findings indicate that, although the police station should be the first line for reporting GBV, women in Mukuru find it difficult to visit police stations.

Women in Mukuru were asked why some of them hardly reported cases of GBV to the police. One respondent interviewed cited intimidation, long legal procedures of accessing justice, corruption and stigmatization as the main barriers. The respondent stated: “We prefer to use the SMS because it is a channel that is confidential and safe.”

Women in Mukuru were asked to what extent the SMS service was useful. A majority of women survivors of GBV (88%) found the SMS service extremely useful and suited to their needs (see Figure 6). A woman survivor who was interviewed stated, “I am happy that there is an SMS platform where women can report cases and receive assistance. I was violated by my ex-husband and intimidated by his relatives. I used the SMS system to report the case, they [volunteers and paralegals working on the SMS system] responded and I was able to get all my property back. Thank you very much; I received justice through the SMS system.”

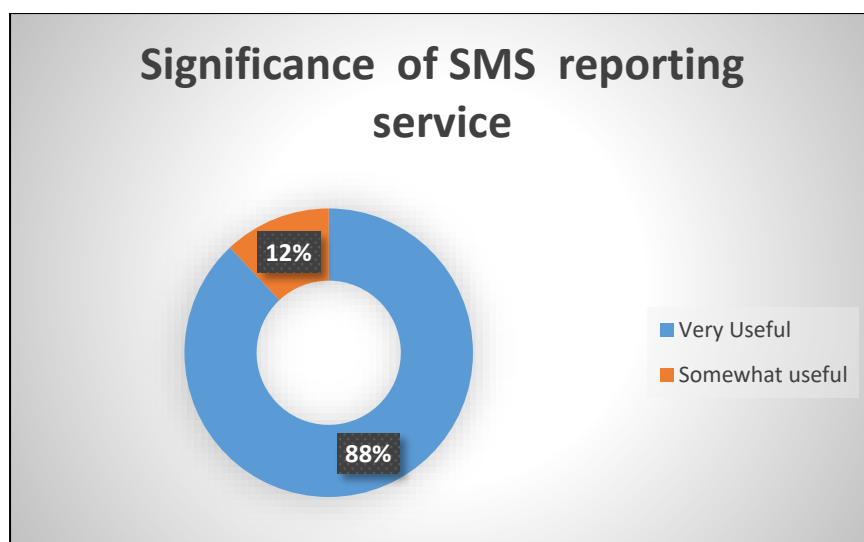


Figure 6: Significance of Content

In another interview, a female user of the SMS service, stated: “I went home one day and witnessed a rape case along the way. I quickly remembered the SMS platform and reported the matter, they [volunteers and paralegals working on the SMS system] responded quickly and the girl was rescued and taken to Nairobi Women’s Hospital for treatment. The perpetrator of the crime was arrested and the matter is in court.”

These success stories from survivors of GBV point to the need to invest heavily in the SMS service. A toll-free and accessible service on a 24-hour basis can improve access to justice for women survivors of GBV.

A member of the Mukuru Women Network interviewed stated, “There is a lot of gender-based violence going on in our community. We have been living like animals, and GBV is on the rise. When we report cases of rape, the perpetrators are always freed on bond or even through bribery and continue intimidating the witnesses, survivors and relatives.”

Police officers at Mukuru Police Station were interviewed on access to justice for women survivors of GBV. One police officer at the station indicated that police officers are hesitant to handle domestic violence cases but refer such cases to family (clans) resolution mechanisms. This indicates the unwillingness of the police officers to handle GBV cases in the community.

According to information from the chief’s camp of Mukuru kwa Njenga, at least two cases of defilement of girls aged between 10-15 years are received monthly. Disturbingly, the perpetrators are mostly family relatives: either step-father, uncle or someone close to the family. This finding points out the need to investigate the underlying factors of GBV cases in the community and agrees with the findings from the police on referrals to family resolution mechanisms.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although a majority of women in Mukuru are aware of the 21094 SMS service for reporting GBV cases, its adoption remains limited. Traditionally, GBV has been perceived as an issue primarily affecting women, but findings reveal that some men are also utilizing the service. This shift highlights an evolving attitude toward gender-based violence, recognizing it as an issue that can impact individuals across genders. There is a need for more publicity on how to use the service. There is also a need to make the SMS reporting procedure less complex so that the uptake of the technology increases its uptake. It is recommended that Action Aid Kenya and the Wangu Kanja Foundation which runs the 21094 SMS service works at simplifying the SMS platform application to make it more user-friendly.

The SMS service is a vital tool for accessing justice because it provides GBV survivors with a user-friendly environment for reporting cases, accessing justice, and vital support services. Findings indicate that factors like literacy levels, affordability of mobile phones, ease of use, accessibility of the service on various service providers' networks, and language, as the factors that affect the uptake of the SMS service. A significant concern is whether survivors can independently compose and send SMS messages or if they must rely on others for assistance. Dependence on third parties can delay the reporting process and compromise confidentiality, limiting the effectiveness of the service. It is recommended that government and non-governmental actors institute programs to subsidize mobile phones for women living in informal settlements. This will ensure that the women have more access to SMS services.

Secondly, the 21094 SMS service ought to be availed on other mobile service providers like Airtel and Orange/Telkom since not all the women in informal settlements are Safaricom subscribers. Further, incorporating other services such as a 24-hour toll-free voice line would help agencies to respond to reported cases reported promptly.

Most GBV survivors prefer to use SMS because it is confidential and safe. Most of the survivors find it difficult to report similar cases to police officers and chiefs. The success stories from survivors of GBV point to the need to invest heavily in the SMS service. The government's gender department ought to consider providing appropriate information on GBV for awareness and provide support services to survivors of gender-based violence to access justice so that they can feel confident in reporting cases. There is a need for the provision of professional counsellors to offer counselling sessions, address secondary trauma and follow-up for survivors.

Due to the sensitive nature of various types of violence, including domestic violence, defilement, and rape within families, maintaining anonymity is crucial. It is essential to further investigate issues related to user privacy, data sharing, and reporting. Technology companies must ensure that sensitive information is not leaked to the public.

The media plays a pivotal role in shaping societal perceptions of GBV. However, recent reporting trends highlight a mix of sensational headlines and occasional human-interest stories about survivors. While this coverage raises awareness, it often lacks a focus on solutions or the

promotion of available support systems like the 21094 SMS service. In addition, many survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) do not receive justice, and many others suffer from lasting trauma and stigma. The fight against GBV is hindered by inadequate policies to protect residents in informal settlements and poor infrastructure. It is crucial to address the underlying developmental factors that perpetuate violence, such as poverty, lack of access to sanitation services, security lighting, and economic inequality. The government must implement mechanisms to tackle these root issues, thereby reducing violence and enhancing gender-responsive public services for vulnerable women and girls in informal settlements.

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