

An Ethnography at a Distance of the 'Shadow' Pandemic

Privileging the Well-being of Girls in the Context of Gender-Based Violence in Rural South Africa during the time of COVID-19

by Darshan Sanju Daryanani

The Shadow Pandemic

An allusion to alarming rise of global levels of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and girls during COVID-19.

Research Question

- How has COVID-19 reversed progress on gender equality?
- How can researchers reach out to girls and women safely while socially distancing and following COVID-19 precautions?

Importance of Research

The estimates of SGBV are difficult to obtain because while health workers are counting the number of COVID-19 cases, the number of SGBV cases are ignored. Moreover, less than 40% of women who experience violence report these crimes or seek help.

Research Methods

- Reflexive revisiting
- Reports from police, women's shelters and national hotlines
- Participatory Methods

Consequences of Inaction



Violence



Adolescent Pregnancy



Cyberbullying



Pressure on Essential Services



Economic Insecurity



Drop-Outs



Food Insecurity



Psychological Trauma

Key Findings

As a response to lockdown measures and school closures, estimates suggest that for the first time in almost 30 years, girls are more, not less at risk of child marriage. Worldwide, 2.5 million girls at risk of child marriage and adolescent pregnancies are expected to rise by up to 1 million in 2020.

Table: Additional Girls At Risk of child marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa in the next 1 year and 5 years

Year	1 year	5 years
Number of girls	31,600	158,000

Inventory of Tools and Methods



Extending Community Partnerships

Include teachers, health workers, and religious leaders in reporting efforts



Strengthening Alliances between Researchers & Media

Media should avoid gender-based assumptions and guard against continuing negative gender stereotyping



Ensuring Girls' Agency

Include the voices of girls themselves through cellfilms, photovoice, digital storytelling, phone interviews



Learning from Previous Pandemics

A girl-led mobilization and an evidenced-based advocacy will help to draw attention to the increased sexual violence cases.