

Child abuse depicts anything that individuals, institutions or processes do (or fail to do), which directly or indirectly harms the child or damages her/his prospects of safe growth and healthy development. At the apex of this ill is Kenya, among other nations, that has since seen an unprecedented increase in cases of child abuse manifested in child battering, sexual abuse, child labour, verbal insults, child neglect, denial of physical and emotional needs, confinements and a legion other forms of assault. In recognition of this problem, this study was conducted to ascertain the incidents of child abuse within Kenya's urban informal settlements. The descriptive survey employed ex-post facto and comparative research designs to gather data from boys and girls in Kawangware slums of Nairobi city, using the questionnaire as the main tool for primary data collection. Data were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively and reported descriptively. Results indicate that Kenyan children are extensively abused. This was evidenced by established cases of verbal assault (68%), beatings (95%), inflicting of pain involving the child's sexual organ (35%), excessive labour (33.5%), incest and sexual abuse (46%) and denial of food (22.5%). Others included abandonment (18%), confinement (13.5%) and stigmatisation and discrimination (97%), just to mention a few. Orphans and destitute children were worst victims. Such abuses have resulted in regular nightmares, withdrawal, disturbed sleep, burns, multiple bruises and marks, fractures and bald spots on the abused children. Mothers (and/or female guardians) were the worst perpetrators of child abuse followed by fathers (and/or male guardians) and close family relatives and friends. Our research calls for programmes that address responsible parenthood in the slums. But where is Kenya when such evils are committed against her children, four years after publishing the Children's Act, 2001?