and rivers, resulting in an increase in diseases such as diarrhoea and bilharzia.

The drought has had a devastating effect on parenting. Parents have become perpetrators of violence against their own children, in some instances. Gender-based violence is on the rise, mainly perpetrated by men.

Participants often indicated that children lacked a balanced diet. Home deliveries were perceived by nurses and community members to have increased due to lack of money for transport to health facilities. Men have resorted to greater alcohol consumption to relieve themselves of the stress from challenges brought by the drought.

Conclusion

The results of the assessment highlight several key areas for intervention: child protection, WASH, and maternal, newborn, and child health. It is recommended that interventions on sexual abuse and exploitation be prioritized, and that parents be taught good parenting practices. It is further recommended that communities and schools be educated on water treatment, water harvesting techniques and storage. More community outreach activities are needed to reach pregnant and lactating women in need.

Why is it important?

The overall objective of the assessment was to generate information and ascertain the impact of the drought on the lives of children, youth (particularly girls), and pregnant and lactating women.

The results of this assessment are intended to inform policy and programming activities.

Methodology

The study applied qualitative methodology involving a literature review, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. There were 72 focus group discussions consisting of 10-12 participants each and 31 key informant interviews. The data were analyzed thematically using a grounded approach, namely Nvivo. The qualitative data was coded into themes, and patterns identified inductively through reading and rereading the transcripts and triangulation. The analysis of qualitative data involved a rigorous process, where interviews were translated into English and transcribed.

Key findings

Food insecurity remains the root cause of numerous child protection issues and remains the key driver for transactional sex and harmful behaviour among youth, affecting girls more than boys. More girls remain vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation, defilement, teenage pregnancy and abortion.

Lack of water has negatively impacted girl’s personal hygiene and hand washing among children has declined significantly. Children are increasingly drinking untreated water from dams and rivers, resulting in an increase in diseases such as diarrhoea and bilharzia.

The drought has had a devastating effect on parenting. Parents have become perpetrators of violence against their own children, in some instances. Gender-based violence is on the rise, mainly perpetrated by men.

Participants often indicated that children lacked a balanced diet. Home deliveries were perceived by nurses and community members to have increased due to lack of money for transport to health facilities. Men have resorted to greater alcohol consumption to relieve themselves of the stress from challenges brought by the drought.

Conclusion

The results of the assessment highlight several key areas for intervention: child protection, WASH, and maternal, newborn, and child health. It is recommended that interventions on sexual abuse and exploitation be prioritized, and that parents be taught good parenting practices. It is further recommended that communities and schools be educated on water treatment, water harvesting techniques and storage. More community outreach activities are needed to reach pregnant and lactating women in need.