



Embracing
Intersectionality
for Health Equity
& Justice

EXAMPLE OF AN ISJA COMMUNITY STUDY

This study was implemented by the Circle in Kenya on 16 July 2022, in Nakuru, with youth from the Black Coffee Network (BCN), and a follow-up on 28 July 2022, in Limuru.

Religious text (II Samuel 13:1-22)

In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David. 2 Amnon became so obsessed with his sister Tamar that he made himself ill. She was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.3 Now Amnon had an adviser named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. 4 He asked Amnon, "Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister." 5 "Go to bed and pretend to be ill," Jonadab said. "When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.'" 6 So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, "I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand." 7 David sent word to Tamar at the palace: "Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him." 8 So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it. 9 Then she took the pan and served him the bread, but he refused to eat. "Send everyone out of here," Amnon said. So everyone left him. 10 Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom. 11 But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, "Come to bed with me, my sister." 12 "No, my brother!" she said to him. "Don't force me! Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing. 13 What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you." 14 But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her. 15 Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out!" 16 "No!" she said to him. "Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me." But he refused to listen to her. 17 He called his personal servant and said, "Get this woman out of my sight and bolt the door after her." 18 So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. She was wearing an ornate robe, for this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore. 19 Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornate robe



she was wearing. She put her hands on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went. 20 Her brother Absalom said to her, "Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart." And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman. 21 When King David heard all this, he was furious. 22 And Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.

Contemporary story (My Father My Husband: a teenager's painful confession)

Source: (<https://nation.africa/kenya/health/my-father-my-husband-teen-s-painful-confession-3868526>), Tuesday 5 July 2022.

This is the story of Fatuma, a teenage girl from Rangwe, Homa Bay County. Her biological father died when she was seven years old. Her mother was later inherited, according to traditional custom. The only man Fatuma now knew, and identified with as a father, was the man who inherited her mother as his wife.

One day, when Fatuma was 13 years old, her father staggered home drunk and found her washing the dishes. He stood behind her and took a photo of her. In the evening, as they were having their meal, the man sat next to Fatuma and showed her the photo, whispering to her that she had grown into a beautiful girl. "At this point, I did not consider his words offensive. I took it as fatherly love, and that he was just appreciating me. At no point did it occur to me that my father was having sexual thoughts about me," she says. When Fatuma was about to sit her final examination, her father insisted on being the one to escort her to her early morning lessons at school, which was three kilometres from their home. At first, her mother had escorted her, and picked her up after the evening lessons, as most of the time the man would be out drinking. However, to advance his moves towards Fatuma, he told his wife that he would be the one taking her to school and picking her up late in the evening. "My father changed. He would come home early, and even my mother was happy, since previously they often quarrelled about his drinking habit," says Fatuma. "Fatuma, your father really loves you, so make sure you pass your examination, since he has promised to send you to a good school if you pass," my mother told me at one time." Not once, not twice, but repeatedly, her father would embrace her, hug her and even kiss her on the forehead. "This was new to me, but I was not worried, because of what my mother told me. I knew he was just trying to show love for me. In the process, he promised that if I avoided boys and concentrated on my studies, I would be his favourite child and he would pay my school fees until I had finished my schooling." One day, on their way to school, her father started touching her inappropriately. She tried to resist, but he warned her that if she didn't cooperate, he would stop paying her school fees. That evening, he went to pick up Fatuma at 7 p.m. "This is the day my father slept with me for the first time in a sugarcane plantation. He told me it was our sordid little secret, and that if I told anyone, he would stop paying my school fees and kill me, so I just kept quiet about it." On reaching home, she did as she was instructed – she

kept quiet. The father gave her Sh100, and told her to buy a sanitary towel, as she was bleeding. Her virginity had forcefully been broken. Noticing that she kept it a secret, he slept with Fatuma every morning on the way to school and every evening on the way home from school. She kept the shocking abuse hidden for 36 months “for fear of hurting her mother” until she got pregnant and could not hide it anymore. The neighbours who knew, who had seen the two together, whispered to each other that the man was responsible. But, of course, no one dared to say this out loud. “When my mother asked who was responsible, I revealed it was my father. He denied it and even threatened to kill me. He stopped paying my school fees and left our family for another family,” she says. “I wish my father could be arrested, so that he does not do this to other young girls. If only I’d sensed the danger and informed my mother, I would not be pregnant now. Many other girls could suffer in the same way, as he has gone to another village to inherit another woman,” says Fatuma. Fatuma’s mother did not report the case to the authorities. She says it is an embarrassment to the family and that the matter will be resolved at a family level. She says she forgave the man and moved on.

ISJA community study questions

Part I: Issues analysis

1. Who are the characters in the stories we have read and what do we know about them?
2. Who has power and how do they use it?
3. Name the crimes committed in these stories.
4. (a) Why did Amnon rape Tamar?
(b) Why did Fatuma's father rape her?
(c) What other reasons lead to rape?
5. How is Tamar's story similar to that of Fatuma?
6. Name the different aspects that describe the identities of Tamar and Fatuma.
7. How do the aspects that describe Tamar and Fatuma's identities, which you pointed out in question 6, expose them to sexual abuse?
8. What are the SRHR issues in the two stories?
9. What role do religion, patriarchy and culture play in the two stories?

Part II: Action planning

10. What action will you take as a result of this ISJA community study?

- Individually (now, in the near future, and long-term)
- Communally (now, in the near future, and long-term)

11. What resources do you have to implement the action you suggest in question 10?

12. Who will you collaborate with to implement the action plan you have proposed?

13. How will you know that the action you take has led to the desired change?