The Deputy Mayor of Gatsibo District in charge of social affairs, Mukamana Marceline has revealed that over 200 teenage girls got pregnant last year.

Records available at the district indicate that the victims were mostly adolescent girls aged between 14 and 17.

According to Ms. Mukamana, the statistics were drawn from official records of 892 pregnant girls from different age groups who sought antenatal healthcare services at health centers.

The report also indicates only two girls under the age of 14 years were found to be expecting, while 235 girls aged between 14-17 were pregnant.

“This is a serious matter” Makamana warned adding “We still have children who are pregnant at the age of 18 and 19 which is worrying that people take it for granted and they remain neglected”.

She further revealed such cases were due to neglect by parents who decline to assist these girls, while lack of education and parental monitoring is also to blame.

“Several of them are preexposed to business and the latest lifestyle that predispose them to getting pregnant,” She added

While explaining the role of authorities, the representative of the Rwanda Investigative Bureau (RIB) in the Gatsibo district, Emmanuel Mugabe, underlined that the role of RIB is not only to deal with crimes but also to prevent them.

“Based on the 2003 Constitution as amended in 2015, in its articles 18 and 19 it provides that both parents have the right and duty to protect their children.” He said adding that parents should cooperate together as a form of prevention because punishment occurs later.

“We don’t need to investigate these cases because if they stopped it would be peaceful, but we have to work together with parents, and the local authorities to prevent crimes of sexual abuse.” He pointed out.

Clement Sebatware, the social worker responsible for coordinating children’s activities in Gatsibo District, says that when they talk to these children they’re told that family conflicts are the main cause of ending up being abused.

“Parents have neglected their responsibilities, so children are always independent. That independence causes them to easily lie because they don’t have a caretaker at home.” Sebatware said.

He adds that child molestation is driven by lust, where they crave expensive things and lifestyles. He says that even the bicycle plays a role to deceive, causing them to be trafficked and abused.

The Secretary of State in the Ministry of Justice, Amb Soline Nyirahabimana, tasked authorities to prevent such crimes from happening and urged those responsible to embark on measures to eradicate child sexual abuse.

In order to protect teen girls from abuse, Gatsibo districts authorities say that different measures have been put in place, which include, providing support to victims of pregnancies and abuse, keeping victims engaged in home abused work as of avoiding redundancy that exposes them to risky social behavior and to allow the teenage mothers to complete education.