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THE WIDER VISION OF SOCIAL POLICY: EXPLORING THE WAYS OF CURBING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN FOUR WARDS OF SHAMVA NORTH CONSTITUENCY (ZIMBABWE)

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ABSTRACT

The researchers sought to discover the forms and depths of violence against women, and to analyse the current responses to the violence in Shamva North constituency in Zimbabwe. Prevent violence against women through in-depth understanding of such violence and the analysis of the current responses in the 4 wards was the overall aim of the study. This aim emanated from the view that violence against women is enduring despite the existence of national policies, regional and international frameworks and platforms for action against violence on women. Four wards of the constituency were selected for the study. These are Wards 7, 10, 18 and 29. A mixed methods research design was applied because the problem has both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The results of the study indicate that women are the main victims of various forms of violence in the four wards. Violence against women is rooted in the social structures and relations of the wards. The results of the study show that the current responses to violence against women are inadequate in both scope and rigour. There is need therefore to widen the scope and depth of the responses to enhance effectiveness. A successful response to violence against women is a vital instrument of social policy and human development.

Keywords: Gender, Domestic, Violence, Prevention, Policy.

Contribution/ Originality

This study is one of the very few studies on Zimbabwe which analyses the various forms of violence against women on the basis of social policy and its multiple functions. The study contributes to the existing empirical knowledge and literature on how pro-active social policy can be designed and implemented to curb violence against women.

1. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a violation of basic human rights. Several international conventions, national and organisational policies, and strategies for action emerged over the years

to defend human rights particularly those of women and girls, who for a long time have been considered a secondary group. In Zimbabwe, the Republic of Zimbabwe National Gender Policy (2004) and the Republic of Zimbabwe Domestic Violence Act (2007) are essential social policy instruments that are meant to establish, protect and sustain the human rights and dignity of both men and women. In addition, such social policy instruments are meant to create a context in which both men and women of all ages, sexes, races and ethnic groups should access and enjoy the various forms of socioeconomic and political development in Zimbabwe. However, the glaring paradox is that despite the existence of these national social policy instruments, violence against women in all its various forms is still rampant. This does not mean that the existing literature and media reports are not showing cases of violence by women against men.

The study sought to analyse the types of violence and the approaches and strategies that are being used to reduce and/or eliminate violence against women in Shamva district. In addition, the study sought to suggest solutions to the identified challenges and failures. The composite aim revolves around the social policy objective of increasing and sustaining the wellbeing of both men and women through reducing or elimination violence. Instead of focusing on the whole district, the researcher concentrated on four wards. These are Wards 7, 10, 18 and 29. Moreover, the study is of great importance to various stakeholders including victims of violence, perpetrators of violence against women, human rights organisations, policy and law makers; and community and national leaders.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Violence against women is increasing despite the existence of national legislations and organisations meant to curb such violence. There is widespread knowledge of violence against women as a gross abuse of human rights and a serious obstacle to women's active participation and benefit in human sustainable development at both macro and micro levels. Several local, national and international organisations and policy initiatives have emerged over the years to improve the situation of women in the social, political and economic spheres. However, violence, mostly against women rages on and continues to pose serious challenges to women's human development. To what extent then are the initiatives to prevent violence against women achieving the intended objectives?

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- discover the types of violence against women in the four wards
- analyse the way(s) in which violence is being perpetrated against women
- identify the ways being applied to reduce and/or eliminate violence against women in the four wards
- suggest sustainable ways of reducing and/or eliminating violence against women

1.3. Research Sub-Questions

The sub-problems of the study are:

- What are the forms of violence against women in the four wards?
- How does violence against women occur?
- What ways are being applied to reduce/or eliminate violence against women?
- How can sustainable reduction and/or elimination of violence against women be achieved?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The available literature on violence and human rights indicate that violence against women is an old reality that pervades all societies. Such violence seems to have been accepted in most societies as a normal form of interaction between men and women. Moreover, the perpetration of violence against women is enduring in a context of organisational, national, regional and international actions against all forms of violence against women. The available literatures suggest four major points of departure in the discourses on violence against women. Firstly, that violence against women is socially constructed. Secondly, that violence against women is a human rights abuse that poses serious challenges to human development. Thirdly, that there is urgent need to tackle violence against women at all levels. Fourthly, that violence against women can be reduced and/or eliminated through appropriate social policies. The literature reviewed in this section incorporates violence against women, human rights and social policy. The literature has been chosen because of its conceptual, theoretical, methodological and empirical relevance to the study.

2.1. Violence against Women in Brief

Watts and Zimmerman (2011) point out that violence against women is as old as humanity. No society- historical or contemporary, developing or developed was, or is free from violence against women. Violence against women and girls is one of the most systematic and widespread human rights violations. It is deeply rooted in unequal gendered social structures rather than caused by individual and random acts; it cuts across age, race, ethnic, socio-economic, educational and geographic boundaries. Moreover, it affects all societies; and is a major obstacle to the efforts that are aimed at ending gender inequality and discrimination globally.

In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly (2013) adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. This declaration defines violence against women as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

The United Nations Women (2013) and Erturk (2009) observe that violence against women is among the key human rights issues because such violence crosscuts the totality of women's lives. The same organisation observes that at least one in five of the world's population has been sexually abused by a man or men at some time in their life. Once off or repeated violence are used

to create, maintain and reinforce by men to subordinate women. Between 15% and 76% of women are targeted for physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. In Zimbabwe, 68% of all the women have suffered gender-based violence (GBV) conducted by men. Shockingly, 75% of the women in a Harare-based study conducted by the Republic of Zimbabwe Ministry of Women's Affairs (2013), Gender and Community Development and Gender Links in 2013 were raped by their husbands. A 60% increase in murder cases linked to gender-based violence has been noted at the Zimbabwe High Court (Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, 2013). However, they did not report the case to the police due to fear and the general culture of silence.

Violence against women is a human rights issue with tremendous health, social and economic implications (Visari, 2008). Against a backdrop of all these facts and the pervasive disapproval of violence against women, United Nations (1994) and World Bank (1993) point out that the prosecution of the perpetrators of violence against women low as compared to the number of the offence. This is a cause for concern for social policy scholars or practitioners.

Violence against women takes various forms. The most universally common forms are domestic and intimate partner violence, sexual violence (including rape), sexual harassment and emotional/psychological violence. Sexual violence as a tactic of warfare and in the aftermath of emergencies is also common in the countries and areas affected by crisis. Other widespread forms around the globe include sexual exploitation, sexual trafficking, and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation/cutting, forced and child marriage and the so-called 'honour killings' (World Bank, 1993; Krug *et al.*, 2009). All the key scholars and practitioners on violence against women converge on the view that no woman or girl in the world has been entirely free of the risk of violence and abuse. This is still the situation in contemporary societies, and such a situation cannot be allowed to continue unabated.

Ireland (2013) points out that there are several international standards and norms that have emerged in response to violence against women. Many countries are also developing or have developed national action plans in response to violence against women. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948) emphasises the rights of all human beings and it forms the basis for all the other treaties and policies on human rights. Regional and international frameworks aimed at reducing and/or eliminating violence against women include the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Violence against Women (1979); Beijing Platform for Action (1995), United Nations Conference on Human Rights (1993), United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (2004); Council of Europe Convention on Poverty and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2011); United Nations (2000) and SADC Protocol on Political, Social and Economic Rights of Citizens. At a national level, the Republic of Zimbabwe Domestic Violence Act (2007) and the Republic of Zimbabwe National Gender Policy (2004) were crafted to reduce and/ or eliminate violence against both men and women. However, special focus is put on women and girls because of a long history of gender inequalities and abuse of women and girls.

The continued prevalence of violence against women and girls despite the existence of national, regional and international policies, frameworks and platforms of action demonstrates

that the problem needs concerted efforts from all sectors. Violence against women must be prioritised at all levels. Leadership, unwavering political commitment and budgetary allocations of resources are essential in such efforts (Michau, 2010). The current situation indicates that violence against women is yet to get the necessary support in policy dialogue for significant change to be attained. The promotion of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment should be a key objective of every local, national, regional and international policy.

Awareness and sensitisation campaigns and prosecution of perpetrators are the main ways of responding to violence against women. The UN Secretary-General's 2013 in-depth study on violence against women, suggests that the most effective tool to eliminate violence against women is a clear demonstration of political commitment. This demonstration should go beyond mere statements by high-level government officials. Essentially, they should be backed by actions and proactive assignments of the core resources by the State as the main agent, but also supported by the private and NGO sector. Furthermore, some scholars, such as Kraantz and Gracia-Moreno (2010) hail the importance of the United Nations as an international organisation in curbing violence against women. Their suggestion is that the UN should permeate all sectors and levels through viable ideas on how to curb violence against women.

2.2. The Social Policy Perspective and Violence against Women

The violence against women and the policy efforts to curb all its forms can be situated in the context of social policy. The overall concern of social policy is to address the social question through creating and sustaining wellbeing for all the citizens of a country. Social policy has a long history in the social sciences. In addition, it is encompasses diverse theories, concepts, methods and practices that are aimed at understanding and responding to social problems. There are several social policy scholars and practitioners whose works can be applied to the violence against women and the specific need to generate and sustain women's wellbeing. These are Titmuss (1974), Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004), Baldock *et al.* (2007), Adesina (2007; 2009; 2010), Mkandawire (2001; 2007; 2011), Sen (1998) and Alcock *et al.* (2012). However, it should be noted that these scholars did not specifically focus on violence against women.

Adesina (2009) defines social policy as the collective public efforts aimed at affecting and protecting the social wellbeing of people within a given territory. This definition has two major implications to violence against women. Firstly, the view of collective public effort implies that the wellbeing of any group of people within a society should be the responsibility of everyone. In this case, the wellbeing of women against all the forms of violence should be a result of plural actions by women, men, women's organisations, men's forums, government, private and non governmental organisations etcetera. Secondly, there is need to ensure maximum, not minimum wellbeing of the women (and everyone else) against all forms of violence. These two major implications of social policy to violence against women can be done residually, palliatively or transformatively. Furthermore, the vulnerability of women to violence should be done *ex post* not mere *ex ante*. Such comprehensive assessments ensure that the impacts of the policies that are aimed at curbing violence against women are understood before and after they are implemented.

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Titmuss (1974) explains that social policy is about means and ends leading to change on practices, behaviour, ownership, systems etcetera. An example is the general belief by some men that women are secondary citizens to men, and that violence against women is natural (God given). The Timussian conceptualisation of social policy also emphasises the view that public beliefs that they can effect change and the actions they take to achieve their beliefs are important in explaining social policy. For example, the belief by all the citizens of Zimbabwe that they can eliminate violence against women and the actions they take to fulfil the belief are vital. This general belief can be turned into a general will of the people that can be enforced by the government.

Titmuss (1974) also draws social policy scholars to three important aspects of social policy. Firstly, all social policies have a beneficient objective in that they are formulated and implemented to benefit the target group(s). Secondly, all social policies have both economic and non-economic objectives. For example, the Republic of Zimbabwe National Gender Policy straddles the social, political and economic aspects of all the citizens of Zimbabwe. Thirdly, all the social policies should lead to redistribution of opportunities and resources. An example is the call for the redistribution of decision making power from men to women.

Baldock *et al.* (2007) explain that social policy is a phrase that encompasses both formal and informal conception, and implementation of measures that ensure that citizens have safe, fulfilling and healthy lives. Accordingly, social policy involves institutional mechanisms for deliberate provisioning such as the state, market, family, community and voluntary organisations. The study of social policy therefore becomes a study of how to deliver wellbeing to people in a given society. Alcock *et al.* (2012) view such actions a practice of welfare. The emphasis on diversity of the institutions providing wellbeing is a core theme in both the Republic of Zimbabwe National Gender Policy and the Republic of Zimbabwe Domestic Violence Act.

Mkandawire (2011) and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2006) converge on the view that social policy is an overall concern that is based on redistribution, production, reproduction, protection and social cohesion. The social and economic spheres are presented as intertwined in terms of meeting these tasks of social policy. For, a nation to achieve these five tasks of social policy, the collective efforts of men and women are essential. Such collective efforts can only be realised and harnessed for sustainable development in the absence of gender violence, exploitation and oppression. Overall, all the reviewed social policy literature emphasises the need to create and sustain wellbeing for everyone regardless of sex, gender, age, race, ethnicity and geographical location among other socioeconomic and political variables.

3. METHODOLOGY

Three crucial elements of the study methodology used are explained in this section. These are philosophical assumptions about what constitutes knowledge claims, general procedures of research (strategies of inquiry) and detailed procedures of data collection, analysis and writing (methods).

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3.1. Research Design

Several authors have focused their works on research designs. Among these are Creswell (2002; 2005), Flick (2006), Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007), Punch (2005), Denzin and Lincoln (1998). The researchers applied a mixed methods research design. However, qualitative methods and techniques dominated the step by step process of addressing the research problem. The mixed methods were applied concurrently. Qualitative and quantitative data gathered were integrated in the overall data analysis to attain a comprehensive analysis.

In relation to the study, the mixed methods design was the most appropriate because the research problem has both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The chosen design therefore has several comparative advantages over the other designs. Some of the elements of the study required quantification while the other components entail situated meanings and lived experiences, and as such are qualitative. Feelings and experiences of violence could only be best captured using qualitative methods while the numbers and percentages of women abused are quantifiable. On the basis of this understanding, combining qualitative and quantitative methods and strategies was the best design for the study. Both qualitative and quantitative methods and strategies had strengths and weaknesses in the context of the study. By combining the two, the strengths of one counteracted the weaknesses of the other. For example, qualitative methods were strong on exploration, discovery and in-depth interpretation of violence against women; processes, interactions, symbols and meanings of violence. However, the quantitative methods and strategies were the most appropriate. Mixing the methods improved the collective advantages of both approaches. Furthermore, mixing the methods in Shamva district served a larger transformative purpose to change and advocate the elimination of violence against women. The mixed methods design also facilitated the triangulation of data sources on violence against women. The researchers used primary, secondary and documentary data sources in the same study. Triangulating data sources helped the researchers to manage the biases of each source. However, this is not always the case. A comprehensive understanding of the responses to violence against women also justified the need for mixing the qualitative and quantitative methods and strategies.

3.1.1. Population and Sampling

According to the Zimbabwe Statistical Agency 2012 Census, the population of the four (4) wards is 18 128. Ward 7 has 1764 males and 1921 females. Ward 10 has 1806 males and 2087 females. Ward 18 has 1707 males and 1613 females while Ward 29 has 3816 males and 3414 females. Of this population, three types of potential participants emerged. These are the female victims of violence, male perpetrators of violence, key informants from government and NGOs.

The researchers used non-probabilistic and probabilistic sampling methods for selecting participants. Participants for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and structured interviews were selected randomly, and those for in-depth interviews were selected purposively. The one-hundred and twenty male and female participants who were in the 18 years and above age category were selected randomly for FGDs. Five (5) participants from government and NGOs were purposively

selected for in-depth interviews. The 18 years and above age group was selected because to meet the requirements of the Zimbabwean law which specify 18 years as the legal age of majority. People at or above 18 years can make independent decisions. An example is choosing to participate in a study.

3.2. Types of Data and Data Sources

Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered. These were primary, secondary or documentary. The types of data gathered in the study and their sources are explained briefly explained below.

(a) Qualitative Data

Data that were based on experiences, descriptions and observations of violence against women were gathered. Primary, secondary and documentary sources were used. FGDs, in-depth interviews and structured interviews were used to gather primary data.

(b) Quantitative Data

Numeric data were gathered from primary, secondary and documentary sources. A structured interview guide was used to collect primary quantitative data in preparation for quantitative analyses.

3.3. Data Collection Methods

The researchers used FGDs, in-depth interviews and structured interviews concurrently in an attempt to address the two-pronged character of the study.

(i) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The researcher conducted three (3) FGDs in each of the four wards. The 4 wards were randomly selected from the 29 wards of Shamva district. FGDs were important because they created a platform for the emergence of key issues and debates on violence against women. Small groups of ten (10) participants were appropriate for easier management. The groups were composed of similar or near similar members in terms of demographic and economic characteristics for 'uniform' group dynamics. Both men and women were included in the FGDs either separately or simultaneously so that the stratified views on violence against could be gathered. The key issues that emerged from the FGDs were addressed through in-depth and structured interviews.

(ii) In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with 5 the key informants on gender-based violence and social policy from government and NGOs. Advance formal written requests for interviews and permission to record the interviews were sent to the potential key informants in advance.

(iii) Structured Interviews

A standardised interview guide that had both open and close-ending questions was applied 'uniformly' to randomly selected to some female victims of violence and key informants to get quantitative data. The limitations of structured interviews were managed by the strengths of FGDs and in-depth interviews.

3.4. Validity and Reliability

The researchers ensured validity by designing interview and FGDs questions that addressed the research problem comprehensively. Standardisation of structured interviews and random selection of respondents help the researchers to attain reliability. Moreover, the researchers did a pilot study in Mukumbura (Mount Darwin) to test the data gathering methods. The methods were refined after the pilot study.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

The researchers observed ethical considerations such as informed consent, non-deception, avoidance of harm, respect for privacy and giving feedback to participants. Ethical considerations are a priority in research despite the ethical dilemmas that are experienced in research processes (Creswell, 2003; Punch, 2005); (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2007).

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Presentation of data and its analysis are organised in thematic form.

4.1. Total Population of Shamva District

The sex and household categorisation of the total population of Shamva district and the 4 wards selected for the study are shown in Table 1 below.

Table-1. Population of Shamva District by Ward, Sex, Household and Average Size

Population				Households	
Ward	**Males**	**Females**	**Totals**	**Number**	**Average Size**
Ward 01	1 972	2 120	4 092	952	4,3
Ward 02	928	1 044	1 972	492	4,0
Ward 03	2 426	2 746	5 172	1 209	4,3
Ward 04	1 058	1 249	2 307	537	4,3
Ward 05	1 890	2 180	4 070	918	4,4
Ward 06	1 680	1 965	3 645	873	4,2
Ward 07	1 764	1 921	3 685	870	4,2
Ward 08	2 127	2 425	4 552	1 068	4,3
Ward 09	2 789	3 055	5 844	1 405	4,2
Ward 10	1 806	2 087	3 893	888	4,4
Ward 11	2 104	2 325	4 429	1 038	4,3
Ward 12	1 818	1 900	3 718	871	4,3
Ward 13	1 556	1 466	3 022	712	4,2
Ward 14	1 909	1 944	3 853	800	4,8
Ward 15	2 359	2 361	4 720	985	4,8
Ward 16	3 731	3 649	7 380	1 614	4,6
Ward 17	3 560	3 269	6 829	1 478	4,6

Ward 18	1 707	1 613	3 320	740	4,5
Ward 19	2 190	2 019	4 209	983	4,3
Ward 20	3 384	3 075	6 459	1 514	4,3
Ward 21	1 889	1 511	3 400	721	4,7
Ward 22	2 975	3 250	6 225	1 659	3,8
Ward 23	1 744	1 260	3 004	628	4,8
Ward 24	711	713	1 424	368	3,9
Ward 25	922	974	1 896	436	4,3
Ward 26	937	1 038	1 975	484	4,1
Ward 27	1 848	1 792	3 640	731	5,0
Ward 28	1 831	1 734	3 565	880	4,1
Ward 29	3 816	3 414	7 230	1 698	4,3
Ward Total	59 431	60 099	119 530	27 552	4,3

Source: Zimbabwe Statistical Agency (2012).

4.2. Distribution of the Selected Participants by Ward and Sex

Table 2 below is a presentation of the distribution of participants by Ward and sex.

Table-2. Distribution of participants by ward and sex

Ward	Number of participants	Female	Male
7	30	20	10
10	30	20	10
18	30	20	10
29	30	20	10

Table 2 above shows that thirty (30) participants were selected from each ward. Twenty (20) of the participants in each ward were female while ten (10) were male.

4.3. Forms of Violence against Women

The study revealed that there are several forms of violence against women, particularly those perpetrated by men. The forms of violence against women that were mentioned in all the four wards are presented in Table 3 below:

Table-3. Forms of violence perpetrated against women

No.	Form of Violence against women
1.	Sexual
2.	Physical
3.	Social
4.	Economic
5.	Emotional/psychological

Table 3 above shows that the five forms of violence against women were identified in the selected four wards of Shamva North. These are sexual, physical, social, economic and emotional/psychological. This confirms the UN Women's argument that the most universally common forms of violence against women are domestic and intimate partner violence, sexual violence that also includes rape, sexual harassment and emotional/psychological violence.

However, only 20 out of the 120 participants (which is approximately 17%) in the study reported that some men are also victims of physical, emotional and emotional violence from women.

4.4. Sources of Violence against Women

The study showed that violence against women and girls is primarily rooted in gender-based discrimination, social norms and gender stereotypes that perpetuate such violence. Both male and female participants referred violence against women to cultural values, beliefs, taboos and norms. The basic foundation of these cultural components is that women are naturally and religiously subordinate to men therefore men have the freedom to do as they wish on women. In fact, for the majority of the participants, violence against women is culturally justified.

4.5. Perpetrators and Victims of Violence

The study revealed that the main perpetrators of violence on women are men.
90% of the participants emphasised that men are the main perpetrators of violence against women while 10% argued that women may also be active in perpetrating violence against men and other women.
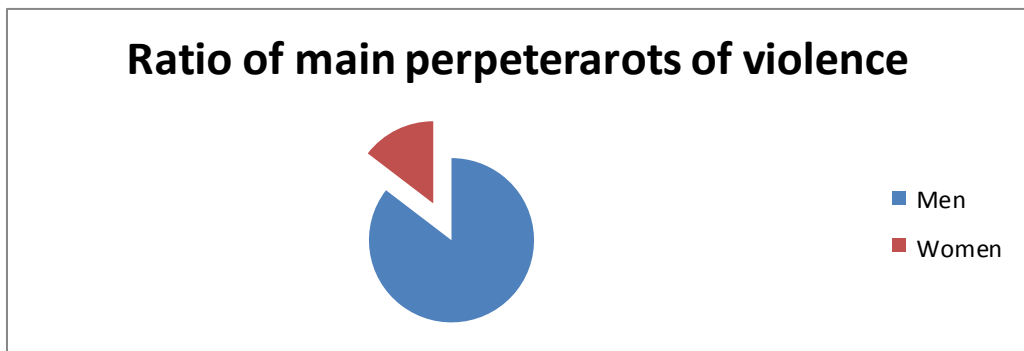

Figure-1. Ratio of perpetrators of violence in the four wards

Field-level data indicated that men are the major agents in violating the human rights of women. These findings are in line with both local and international studies. However, it is also vital to acknowledge that some women abuse some men physically, economically and psychologically. Such findings are consistent with the Republic of Zimbabwe Domestic Violence Act (2007) explanation that perpetrators or victims of violence can be men or women. However, the study confirmed the DVA and the Gender Policy in that men are the main perpetrators of violence in Zimbabwe and worldwide.

4.6. Influence of Violence against Women on Development Goals

The study reveals that violence against women directly puts at risk the achievement of the community, national, regional and international development goals. Examples include the Zimbabwe Socioeconomic Development Goals and Targets and the Millennium Development

Goals (MDGS) related to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The various forms of violence against women in the four wards are threatening sustainable human development because sustainable development and its benefits can only be realised when both men and women contribute and benefit from it. Continued violence against women that was exposed by the study is contrary to national and international development goals.

4.7. Interpretation of Violence against Women

The study revealed mixed interpretations of violence against women with some arguing that male perpetration of violence against women is justifiable through African Traditional Religion (ATR) in that area and Christianity as outlined in the bible. Fifteen women reiterated that it is 'normal' for men to do as they wish to women because even God created it that way.

The view that gender inequality, women bashing and sanctioning by men has always been experienced in all societies therefore women should accept all such abuses as 'part of normal life' was highly prevalent in all the 4 wards of Shamva. Such findings indicate a serious sensitization gap among some sections of women in all the four wards, particularly those from the Johwani Marange and 'traditionalists' who accept violence against women religiously. However, the majority of the women and men dispelled the view that violence against women is God given. These findings reveal that the more that a group of people views violence and other forms of abuse against women as socially-created, the more the group is likely to act against human rights abuses.

4.8. The Ways Being Used to Reduce/or Eliminate Violence against Women by State and Non-State Actors

The actors who are responding to violence against women in the four wards are:

- Family and household structures
- Churches
- The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP)
- A community-based organisation called Batanai

The study shows that churches and family or household structures are highly conservative and patriarchal therefore are of limited use to female victims. Batanai is a local community-based organisation that is led by local women. This organisation is a member of the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ). There was consensus among the participants that religious teachings on violence and counselling sessions by church leaders or elders are of no use to the victims of violence because they reinforce such violence by justifying male superiority and protecting the male perpetrators. The socialisation patterns in religious organisations are ideologically conservative and highly anti-transformation. A strong culture of silence is created and sustained by the religious organisations and family structures.

Batanai and the ZRP are considered more useful in dealing with violence against women. Both Batanai and the ZRP conduct awareness and sensitisation campaigns, and they counsel both the victims of domestic and non-domestic violence. The ZRP has a victim-friendly unit that deals

with domestic violence and child abuse. However, it is only the ZRP that has the mandate to arrest the perpetrators of violence. However, there was specific concern that these organisations mainly respond in cases of physical violence. This is a lacuna because violence against women is broader than physical violence. Moreover, there was a general concern that all the organisations primarily concentrate more on female victims than the male perpetrators. Moreover, most of the male participants pointed out that the male victims of violence are not prioritised.

Given the devastating effects violence have on women, efforts of both the state and non-state actors have mainly focused on responses and services for survivors of violence. For example, all the police stations in the four wards have victim-friendly units. All the NGOs on human rights that support Batanai in the area provide emotional support and human rights information to victims of violence, the majority being women. Emotional support is important but it does not eliminate the socio-structural causes of violence against women. An aggressive stance against the perpetrators of the violence, especially the men is missing in the current responses. Patriarchy and its negative contributions to violence against women and children are palliatively addressed. The result is therefore a partial and inadequate response to violence against both women. In addition, the responses to violence against women are disjointed and partisan. Rarely are men and women deliberately integrated in sensitization programmes on domestic violence and other forms of violence in the wards. This weakness in responses by both the state and non-state actors stands in stark contrast to the recommendation by the UN and the Republic of Zimbabwe Domestic Violence Act (2007) that if responses to violence against humanity are to be more comprehensive and effective, they should incorporate both men and women, and both perpetrators and victims.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Violence against women is a major human rights abuse in the 4 wards studied. The various forms of violence retard women's wellbeing, and the overall human development of Zimbabwe.
- Violence can be perpetrated by anyone in society. However, men are the main perpetrators of violence against women.
- Five forms of violence against women were identified as sexual, physical, social, economic and emotional/psychological.
- Violence against women and girls is primarily rooted in gender-based cultural norms and values. Women and children are culturally viewed as subordinate to men therefore men have cultural support on violating women's rights.
- The churches and family or household structures are overall conservative and patriarchal therefore are of limited if no use to female victims.
- The response by the ZRP and Batanai are palliative and they are only proactive when there are cases of physical violence.
- A comprehensive approach that proactively integrates the perpetrators and victims of the violence is missing.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

- Culture, family and religious institutions should be re-engineered to transform the studied wards and Zimbabwe at large to prevent violence against women, all other forms of violence and human rights abuses. Socialisation should be based on principles of peaceful gender relations and societies.

- A multi-stakeholder approach that is supported by high political will and budgetary allocations should address the root causes of violence against women. Stakeholder networking and collaboration should increase. Institutional capacity should be enhanced.

- Stiff legislations should be enacted against perpetrators of violence against women.

- Men's and boy's forums against violence on women should be created and supported.

- Curricula that specifically address violence against women should be part of the education and academic system of Zimbabwe.

- Policies and programmes on prevention of violence against women and any other group in society should be assessed *ex post* and *ex ante*.

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