

Original Research Article

## Factors Underlying the Increase in Domestic Violence Cases in Zimbabwe Despite the Existence of the Anti-Domestic Violence

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### ABSTRACT

Cases of domestic violence are on the increase in Zimbabwe regardless the existence of anti domestic violence laws. Not much has been done to establish why the existing laws in Zimbabwe are failing to reduce or stop Domestic Violence. Some of the factors for increased cases of Domestic Violence in Zimbabwe include amongst others, total disregard of the African Traditional culture and practises, poverty and economic hardships, increase in awareness of the law, non coverage of remote areas during anti domestic violence campaigns, limitations in the enforcement of the law, natural characteristics of perpetrators, challenges faced by organisations who deal with domestic violence cases, corruption, alcohol and drug abuse and infidelity. A qualitative research was conducted in Highlands, Dema and Chitungwiza Suburbs. What boggles the researcher's mind is the non intervention in domestic violence by members of the society. Domestic violence is manmade and so why does it continue unstopped since it is hating and sometimes ending lives of innocent people. The research recommends the inclusion and use of the African Traditional cultural practises in solving cases of domestic violence. It is also recommended that the anti domestic violence laws be made restorative in nature, catering for both the healing of the victim and the rehabilitation of the perpetrator. It is also recommended that there should be a zero tolerance to domestic violence amongst Zimbabweans and that everyone should play his or her role to fight domestic violence.

### Introduction

This paper is an extract from a research by me on the factors underlying the increase in Domestic Violence in Zimbabwe despite the existence of the anti domestic violence laws. There has been an unprecedented rise in domestic violence cases in Zimbabwe despite the fact that there is legislation against domestic violence.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like Musasa Project, Padare, Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association, are always occupied attending to victims of domestic violence who will be seeking assistance which could be, reporting and seeking medical attention, shelter or advice on what to do after a domestic violence incident. The situation is also the same at the Magistrate court where people visit as complainants in domestic violence cases, particularly women. It is even not surprising to think that maybe the anti-domestic violence legislation is doing nothing to stop domestic violence.

Whilst the provisions of the laws are there at the disposal of the Magistrates and the Police specialised Units one wonders where the gape is lying. Is the law failing to stop domestic violence or there are other reasons behind that which are inhibiting the conclusive suppression of domestic violence? This paper highlights the underlying causes of domestic violence

from different perspectives and lay bare the food for thought on the possible solutions in ending domestic violence. The restorative justice is emphasised as proposed solution as it promotes healing of the victim and rehabilitation of the offender

### Background to the Problem

Domestic was not regarded as a crime before the introduction of the Roman Dutch law in Zimbabwe and recently the Beijing platform for action and other conventions that Zimbabwe became a signatory. To date, some sections of the Zimbabwe community continue to commit domestic violence in total disregard of the law. Domestic violence is regarded as justified assault, a private matter which is supposed to be dealt with at family level. Rather it is considered trivial, a day to day thing that could be solved amongst family members. Ghani (2014), posits that prior to the 1970s, domestic violence was thought to be a private matter and any disputes were mainly ignored and left to be settled within the family.

In those countries that have the Domestic violence laws in place cases of domestic violence are still being witnessed because putting the laws in place is a step on its own and then evaluating to see if the law is serving its purpose becomes another step. One factor which was drawn by the researcher from the above observation is that the implementation of the DVA and other laws are facing some challenges or the implementation has got weaknesses. The weaknesses which need not be swept under the carpet but should be laid bare for public scrutiny. In the light of an acknowledged literature gap in the evaluation of the effectiveness of anti domestic violence laws at a global scale, it is significant that an impact assessment is done on the Zimbabwean anti-domestic violence legislation. Currently, the Anti domestic violence Council of Zimbabwe is like a hunter without a bow and arrow but is expected to bring meat home. Its membership is not permanent, provision of funds is not guaranteed and material resources are at their minimum. One wonders how this Council is supposed to evaluate the domestic violence laws. The Barometer Zimbabwe [2012] notes that Zimbabwe’s legal framework to prevent all forms of domestic violence is relatively strong but implementation remains weak.

While the Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 5:16) (DVA) is an important social policy instrument that was put in place to mitigate gender based violence and inequality, the glaring paradox is that despite the existence of this national social policy instrument, domestic violence in all its various forms is still rampant.

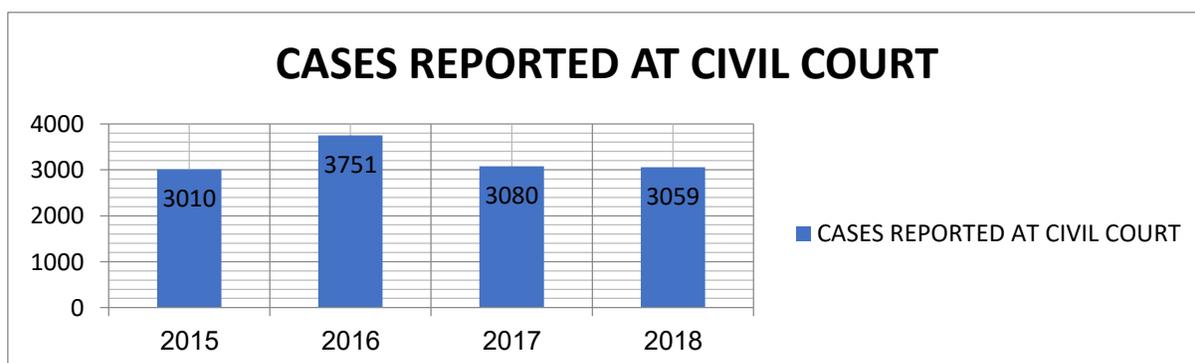
From a distance it appears that females are the majority of victims of domestic violence. However, it was noted that domestic violence is also not blind to gender.

In an article published in the Herald of 09 April 2019, the Anti Domestic Violence Council gave an impetus to this latest development when they noted that the number of males who reported cases of domestic violence has been on the increase since 2016. According to the Council, in 2017 alone, the figures rose to 2 461 from the previous 1 993 that was tabulated in 2016. Thus, in the researcher’s view, domestic violence is characterised by both female and male victimhood with females and males as perpetrators.

### Manifestation of the increase in domestic violence

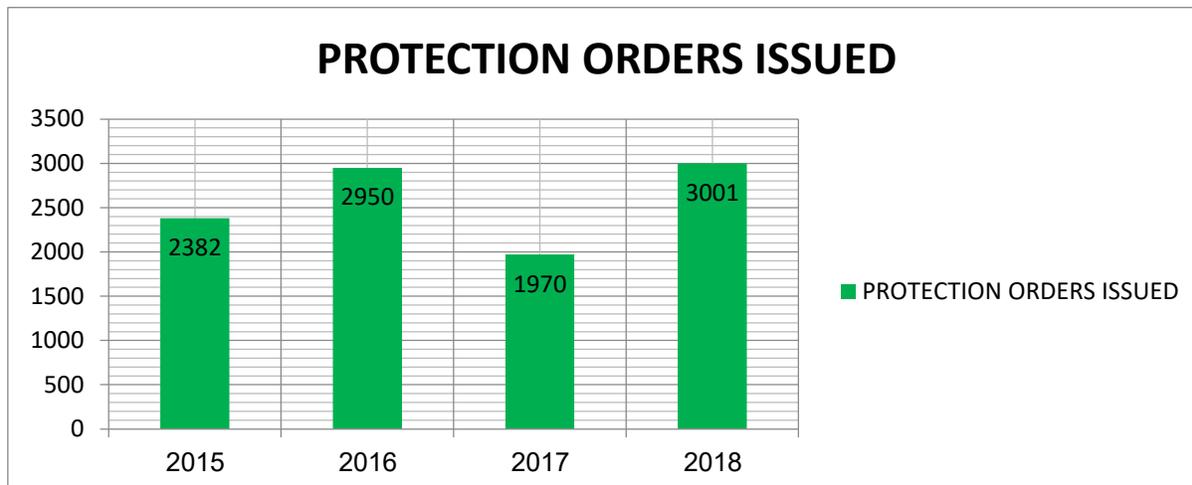
Manifestation of the increase in domestic violence is vividly shown by reports received by the Police, the courts and the pastors and elders at the churches although the churches will never reveal the statistics due to their beliefs and undertakings.

Below are statistics on cases that were reported to the courts during the period 2015 to 2018.



When the Civil Courts receive reports of Domestic Violence, they book them and set a date to hear the case when the victim and the perpetrator will be testifying. If the victim applies for a protection order against the perpetrator and the court is satisfied, then a protection order will be issued. The issuance of protection orders is a clear manifestation of the increase in domestic violence cases.

Below is a graph showing the number of protection orders issued during the period extending 2015 to 2018.



Hardly, a day passes in Zimbabwe without a newspaper article on domestic violence. Most of the articles show that cases of domestic violence continue to rise. The number of men who are reporting cases of domestic violence perpetrated against them is also increasing. Cases of domestic violence involving other members of the society, for example, children-to-parents violence are also evident in the newspaper articles.

The manifestation of domestic violence is also shown in the social media via Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. Social media has grown tremendously in the last few years and though informal, it has proven in some circumstances that it is reliable. One good thing about the social media is that the cases will be complimented with real pictures and videos of the incidences. Some pictures will be horrific, showing the effects of domestic violence.

Manifestation of the increase in domestic violence is also shown by the number of counselling sessions conducted at the churches. At some churches the sessions are called biblical counselling. The researcher noticed at his church that the domestic counselling sessions are increasing. The pastors and elders are always conducting counselling sessions to couples, parents and children or family members. The researcher noticed that the sessions are usually conducted strictly in private and the statistics cannot be divulged to everyone.

### Conceptual Framework

The concept of domestic violence is viewed using two perspectives, the Western view and African traditional view. The Western view is Western inspired and characterised by the use of the legislation to fight domestic violence. The anti domestic violence laws focus on the structured arrest, prosecution and sentencing processes. The perpetrator of domestic violence should be arrested and brought before the courts and sentence given by the Magistrate or Judge. The perpetrator might be imprisoned behind bars or might be given community service. In some cases the victim might apply for a protection order which restricts the perpetrator from other activities, even from coming to his or her house. On the other hand, the African traditional view is African inspired and is characterised by the use of family members and the community to fight domestic violence. The African traditional culture has various mechanisms to deal with domestic violence. These mechanisms encompass conciliation and mediation strategies to resolve cases of domestic violence. The family and community play a crucial role in resolving cases of domestic violence.

- 1) The anti domestic violence law focuses on punishment whilst the African traditional culture focuses on healing of the victim and rehabilitation of the offender. Using the African traditional culture the rehabilitation of the perpetrator is ensured when the perpetrator is taken for counselling by elders of the community and relatives. The perpetrator is also*

made to compensate the victim and thus, promoting the healing and fostering peace at large. Anti domestic violence laws ignore the needs of the victim during the criminal proceedings. The future of the victim is also ignored save for advising the victim to seek medical treatment. The criminal courts do not compel the offender to give the victim the required financial assistance at the time of need. On the contrary; the African traditional law compels the offender to compensate the victim there and then.

2) The use of the anti domestic violence laws looks at the past and is not concerned about the future. In the case that the perpetrator is sent to prison or during the criminal justice procedure the anti domestic violence law ignores the future of the family, continuity of the marriage and the future of children and other dependants. The African traditional culture makes use of effective communication to maintain family harmony. Effective communication is regarded as crucial in the family in order to reduce cases of domestic violence. It involves the ability to pay attention to what others are thinking and feeling in a family or community. In the African tradition, gregariousness of men is fostered.

3) Cultural communication within the family is extremely important in the African tradition because it enables members to express their needs, wants, and concerns to each other. It is believed that open and honest communication creates an atmosphere that allows family members to express their differences as well as love and admiration for one another. It is through communication that family members are able to resolve the unavoidable problems that arise in all families. Just as effective communication is almost always found in strong, healthy families, poor communication is usually found in unhealthy family relationships, associated with domestic violence.

### **Statement of the problem**

Zimbabwe has a law against domestic violence that is the Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 5: 16). However, despite the existence of the law there appears to be an increase in cases of domestic violence for which this law exist to combat.

This study was aimed at determining what underlying factors are at the core of the increase in cases of domestic violence.

### **Significance of the Study**

Domestic violence is ubiquitous and its effects are affecting all and sundry since it is not blind to gender, colour or race. It knows no regional or international boundaries. The study would be an addition to the existing body of knowledge regarding the impact that the Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 5:16) has had in curbing domestic violence related offences. The study would also assist to expose shortfalls that are militating against full implementation of the Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 5:16). The Ministry of Justice would be assisted in identifying grey areas in the Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 5: 16) which require to be amended arising from the findings of the study.

It is hoped that the study would raise awareness of the damage caused by domestic violence particularly to victims who suffer in silence for the sake of protecting a marriage. The study may also instil in the community and society in general the spirit of love as opposed to hate which degenerates into domestic violence. The study would be a game changer as the communities and society in general would see the danger of allowing perpetrators of domestic violence to do it with impunity. The ADVCA would be the biggest beneficiary from the study findings as the Council is statutorily mandated to complement the effective implementation of the DVA.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the impact of domestic violence?
2. What are the reasons for staying in abusive relationships?
3. Why are domestic violence related cases prevalent whilst the anti-domestic violence laws are fully operational?
4. How can the victims of domestic violence benefit from the full implementation of the Act?

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### *Individualist approaches*

According to Floppy (2009), individualist approaches are mainly of the view that the problem is located within the person and the person is the site of change and it is understood in terms of individual choices, characteristics, interests, biology, genetics, and pathologies. Basing on this understanding, it is clear that there are personal attributes, characteristics, interests, biology, genetics and pathologies which result in one being a perpetrator or victim of domestic violence. Personal attributes such as personality have an effect to domestic violence. Perpetrators of domestic violence are naturally violent and are people who

had a poor upbringing and a bad life experience. Interventions such as rehabilitation of the offender may correct the problem.

#### Contemporary socio-biology and neo-Darwinism

According to Terry (2009) this is one of the individualist approaches to domestic violence which suggests that domestic violence is mainly caused by males in order to maintain female fidelity and secure reproductive control. It suggests that males use violence to control their female fidelity and to secure reproductive control. The theory is supported by other theories such as the culture theory and the feminist theories which provide that domestic violence is mainly perpetrated by males.

The reality is that some men feel insecure and use violence to safe guard their wives. This appears to be natural and despite the existence of the anti domestic violence laws domestic violence cases will always occur. Some immediate precursors of domestic violence include provoking acts of partner. Perceived and actual infidelity is perceived to be the main reason for domestic violence. However, there is need for other interventions to be put in place to reduce such cases.

#### *Women-blaming explanations*

According to Rice (2001) these are common currency in public domain, and collude with the perpetrator's claims of provocation and denial of responsibility. They usually rely on assumption of gendered roles and expectations of appropriate or 'unacceptable' female behaviour in performance of domestic or sexual duties. Social arrangements also suggest that there are times when women 'deserve' to be chastised although beating is considered uncivilised. This indicates that cultural attitudes based on gender inequality and male entitlements do promote domestic violence to a large extent.

The notion suggests that there are acceptable or sufficient reasons why victims are subjected to domestic violence. Hot button issues such as failing to cook in time may result in one being subjected to domestic violence. The situation will result in domestic violence despite the existence legislative framework meant to curtail such cases.

#### *Male pathologies*

According to Lethel (2002) this theory assumes that domestic violence as 'deviant' behaviour of psychologically disturbed perpetrators especially men. Researchers and practitioners who adopt this perspective often focus on childhood and other experiences/events which shape perpetrators to 'become abusers'. The claim is made that the perpetrators of domestic violence suffer more distress, personality disorders, anger, hostility and alcohol problems than 'normal'. According to Holtzworth (1997) many of these perpetrators lack resources or feel powerless, and they are more likely to have violence in family of origin.

Current life circumstances or attributes which include such factors as mental unhappiness, family worries, health problems and alcohol or drug abuse cause domestic violence.

Using these assertions, domestic violence will always occur or increase despite legislative frameworks. Factors such as distress, personality disorders, anger/hostility and alcohol problems are natural and will always trigger domestic violence.

#### *Anger management and 'loss of control' issues leading to 'explosions' of violence*

According to Rice (2011) men are conventionally assumed to have an 'innate' violence which will surface when they are in situations leading to anger or frustration. But the human emotion of anger is widespread, sometimes just and positive, and does not always or necessarily result in attacks/assaults on others, especially intimate partners. Basing on this theory domestic violence will always exist despite the presence of the anti domestic violence law because of many situations which may lead to anger and frustration.

In family setups there are many situations which may trigger anger and frustration. Economic hardships characterised by lack of employment, having little or no money and poor living standards is pre supposed to be one of the main cause of domestic violence.

#### *Domestic violence caused by alcohol or substance use*

According to Richard (2006) the underlying premise is that perpetrators of violence are 'naturally' violent and this is unleashed by use of alcohol and other substances. Alcohol is a factor in many domestic assaults. It is assumed that most domestic violence cases happen during alcohol related incidents, and many victims are severely abused by perpetrators who use alcohol and drugs frequently. According to Horley (2002) it is a socially acceptable reason for loss of control.

Even if the anti-domestic violence legislation is in place those who take alcohol and other toxic substance some of them will always act violently.

#### *Familial/Systems Approaches*

According to White (1999) the focus is on patterns of interaction between couples and within families. Typical terminology refers to 'abusive couples', 'family violence', dysfunctional relationships. The site of change is couples and/or families, because both partners play a role in 'family violence', but remains primarily individual rather than social.

#### *Family/Systems Conflict and 'Family Violence'*

According to Potter (2001) this approach sees the family as dynamic organisation made up of interdependent components. Behaviour of one member (e.g. violent man) is affected by responses and feedback of other members. Such issues as communication, relationship and problem solving skills between victims and perpetrators of domestic violence come into play.

According Praise (2006) family control is regarded as an important but non gendered variable and violence is seen as used to correct behaviour or dynamics to enable functioning of family according to appropriate roles/behaviours. Problems of poor communication, relationship and problem solving skills are believed to be rampant in families and are seen as causes of the increase in cases of domestic violence.

#### *Feminist theoretical approaches*

According to Adolf (2003) domestic violence exists as part of patriarchal social structures, and is an intentional pattern of behaviour utilised to establish and maintain power and control over a female partner or ex-partner. Thus, the appropriate response to challenge and end domestic violence must be major, social, communal and cultural change. According to Dutton, (1995) the feminist theory partially came about in order to challenge limitations of psychological theories in that domestic violence is a rare event specific to males with a psychological disorder or addictive behaviours.

The argument is on structural power differentials between males and females and how these are played out at the level of intimate relationships where men abuse power to maintain control over women. According to the theory, beliefs and attitudes, structures and processes in society maintain and support abusive practices towards women. Also, according to Bowman, (2003), it is difficult to avoid interpreting domestic violence in Africa in terms of pervasive gender inequality. To this end, feminist theory in domestic violence underscores gender and power disparity in marriage institutions.

Further, the theory advances the thesis that the major cause of domestic violence is the fact that society condones violent behaviour which is perpetrated by men upon women. Generally, women are regarded as non-violent.

In the same vein, the feminist paradigm supports the notion that domestic violence primarily and culturally supports male enterprise and that female violence is always defensive and reactive.

However, Kurz, (1997) acknowledges that women can sometimes act violently towards their husbands, they view such abuse as trivial and therefore of no consequence. On their part, Dobash (1992) argues that when women instigate domestic violence, it is just a pre-emptive strike whose intent is to provoke an inevitable attack from their husbands. Some scholars have argued however, that patriarchy thrives best in States where law enforcement has little interest in or authority to control domestic violence.

According to Ray, (2004) feminism focuses on gender and power between women and men, and its theoretical position focuses on the traditional ideas about marriage, the family and gender roles supported by patriarchy and a male dominant society which encourages abuse as a form of expression of power. Ibid [2004] adds that the feminist theory illustrates the way men oppress women due to the construction of male power within society and families.

Feminists talk of violence against women as a weapon available to men wishing to assert their masculinity and to ensure continuing control over women and resources [Williams 2001]. It is a belief under patriarchy that man should have authority in the home and they feel and enjoy hitting a woman.

Accordingly, Swisher (2004) under patriarchy the family was believed to be a private domain. This contributed to Domestic Violence as male battering of women in intimate relationships was untouched by law which protected it as a home affairs or part of private sphere of life which did not warrant outside interference.

According to Abbot (1997) feminism as a theory or world view is not a unified one. Feminists do not agree on the ways in which we can explain women's subordination or on how women can be emancipated. Feminist theories that have made important contributions are Liberal feminists, Marxist feminists, Radical Feminist, and Black feminists, to mention a few. All address the question of what constitutes the oppression of women; all suggest strategies for overcoming the problem. Liberal Feminism whose main proponents are Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Kate Millet, Leonora Walker, is concerned with uncovering the immediate forms of discrimination against women and to fight for legal and other reforms to overcome them.

According to, Viljoen, (1997) liberal feminist theory's main focus is on male dominant culture that society maintains and behaviours that are modelled in law, religion and traditions in members of society where women are generally oppressed and discriminated by the legal system, custom, religion and tradition. Liberal feminism focuses on a sexist attitude as the view in which gender roles are entrenched in societal cultures.

Liberal feminism asserts that to liberate women it is necessary to demonstrate that men and women are equal in potential Abbot (1997). Such legal reforms can be witnessed in international instruments such as CEDAW, regional instruments such as the African Charter, and national instruments such as the Constitution of Zimbabwe and the Domestic Violence Act that are meant to deal with discrimination against women.

Violence against women is blamed on patriarchy, which is described as a set of social relations which enables men to dominate and control women. Patriarchy is confirmed through socialisation and may be perpetuated through ideological means and sustained by gender system in which men assume positions of power while women adhere to positions of subordination. On crimes against women radicals states that women are vulnerable to violent attacks both physical and sexual by men with whom they live. They advocate that women must fight to free themselves from this control. Radical feminists according to Tshesane, (2001) links patriarchy with sexual violence such as rape, wife abuse and incest.

Tshesane, (2001) also states that black feminism locates the problems of black women within the parameters of three kinds of oppression that is gender, race and class. At the gender level, women irrespective of colour are viewed as reproducers and consumers in a society, where their roles focus, in procreation and maintaining the household. At the race level, black women are seen as inferior beings. At class level black women suffer from lower levels of education and lack of empowerment opportunities. There are few employment opportunities for women with few employable skills because of inadequate education. Women suffer violence in relationship because of economic dependency on their partners.

Thus all feminist advocates that women should fight against inequality to address the problem of violence against women. The feminist theory therefore gives an overview on how women experience violence due to the fact that patriarchy leads to the oppression and subordination of women in society.

#### *Cultural Theories*

The power of traditional norms within African culture is attributed to the wide spread of incidence of Domestic Violence. African tradition is seen as direct cause of wife beating because by custom wife beating is regarded as normal.

Family female members traditionally existed in terms of their relationships with men. As daughters they were subject to the control and whim of fathers. Daughters represented a means of economic or political gain through marital agreements and bride wealth Swisher (1994).

According to Potter, (2006) cultural theories, like feminism recognises significant connection between intimate partner abuse against women and structural, cultural and familial influence.

As wives women became their husbands' property and symbols of power. Violence was perpetrated to coerce women acquiescence in this scheme to perpetuate subservience to male relatives. Women were regarded as a mat which must be beaten. Payment of bride price to the wife's family at the time of their marriage makes it difficult for women to leave abusive husbands as their family of origin will not be willing or afford to return the amount paid as bride price.

By scrutinizing the characteristics of perpetrators' abusive behaviour and the motivations for victims to remain in abusive relationship among black couples, it can be explained that the method in which these men are still able to assert some level

of power and control over women is the assertion by African feminists that domestic violence in the home should be attacked in the context of culture not in the western human rights discourse Meena, (1992)

A woman is expected to suffer abuse in silence. In Shona culture she is not expected to wash dirty linen in public, “*kufukura hapwa*”, or in IsiNdebele “*ukhu vezimfihlo*”, by relating abusive episodes to other people especially outside the family unit. By considering family embeddedness as a focal point among Africans in an understanding of battered black women’s help seeking behaviours, their dependent on the custom as a resource as opposed to relying on systemic resources in the public sphere make them to suffer in silence by not reporting to the police.

Thus, Potter, (2006) emphasizes, that some embeddedness in culture can demonstrate how abuse in the family of origin and among other close family members can be detrimental compounding factors on the survivor as she is told that is how marriage goes.

To this end, women do scarifies their health in order to preserve their marriages. These compromises by women are also viewed by the writer as factors fuelling the increase in domestic violence cases. Traditionally women are more associated with the private sphere, which is the home doing domestic chores, cooking and washing for men and caring for children whereas men are seen in connection with public life and ensuing social roles.

Thus women’s movements are determined by men. Women can be harassed for leaving home without partners’ agreement, for coming home late or moving with friends. In African traditional culture, marriage is polygamous. According to Tshesane, (2001) husbands are allowed to have more than one wife but women are expected to remain faithful to one husband. Women and men are not equal in the nature of culture it is believed that a black man is not for his woman as a black woman is for her man.

In Shona culture this is put as “*murume ndewe vakadzi, mukadzi ndewe murume*” this is meant to say a man belongs to several wives as he is allowed to marry more than one wife but a woman belongs to one man. Hence man batter women suspected of infidelity or those who ask about men’s multiple affairs. In African communities women are dependent on their husbands to provide them because they have no other means to support themselves. Men are seen as breadwinners and must care for their families.

Thus black feminists’ assertion that domestic violence has to be attacked in the context of culture forgets that culture is the major obstacle to claiming women’s freedom from oppression. A look at the struggle for women for self-realization and self-fulfilment in the past and present shows that the theory of feminism does not address the special conditions on which African women find themselves.

Rigid traditions discriminate against African women who are seen as perpetual children to be corrected by the rod when viewed to be wrong.

## **Data presentation and analysis**

### *Purposeful Sampling*

Using this technique the researcher identified and selected individual participants who were assumed to have knowledge or experience in domestic violence cases. The police was helpful in giving details of those who have knowledge or experience in domestic violence cases. The researcher then approached these individuals and sought their consent to participate in the research.

The researcher also considered the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner. Following the above guidance, the researcher selected research participants based on their experience and knowledge in domestic violence related offences. The participants were actively involved in the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act in various capacities.

Therefore, they were presumed to have the required level of knowledge and experience in the area under study.

### *Snowball Sampling*

The study used snowball sampling where potential participants were hard to find. The method is viewed as an effective sampling strategy from a perspective of research design and the choice of research methods.

This allowed the researcher to reach populations that were difficult to sample since domestic violent victims and perpetrators by nature have a lot of stigmatisation although the researcher did not have control over this method. This method is cost effective as the referrals are obtained from a primary data source. It's is convenient and not so expensive as compared to other methods. Some people do not want to come forward and participate in research studies, because they don't want their identity to be exposed. Snowball sampling helped for this situation as they ask for a reference from people known to each other.

### **Recommendations**

This article makes the following recommendations in order to curb domestic violence in Zimbabwe.

Fashion changes from time to time in line with contemporary dressing. A close analysis of fashion clearly shows that all modern fashion is a development from the traditional dressing. However, the criminal law in Zimbabwe seem not to have taken a leaf from the African Traditional law or custom. Gacaca, the Rwanda's traditional community-based conflict resolution system was employed and it adjudicated local property crimes and civil disputes although it was controversial in that it did not meet international legal standards. This has created a glaring gape in the implementation of the Domestic violence Act in reducing cases of domestic violence. The following recommendations are thus made.

African Traditional Culture and practises must be accommodated in the fight against domestic violence in Zimbabwe. It is true that the Western ideology has taken centre stage in Zimbabwe. The ideology has paved way for the enactment of Western inspired laws in particular the DVA which ignores the culture of the people of Zimbabwe. There are indications of a clear need for the recognition and inclusion of our traditional culture in the fight against the reduction of domestic violence. The traditional justice mechanisms allow members of the family, society and community leaders to promote reconciliation between the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and at the same time promoting family harmony and gregariousness of man. Systematic recording, documentation, preservation and improvement of our cultural values and tradition practices that promote family harmony must be done.

The Police VFU should involve other family members from both families of the perpetrator and the victim. Traditional leaders such as Chiefs must also be included. This will assist the Police to accommodate African traditional methods of bringing families together during counselling. Thus, merging the African Traditional culture and the Western culture.

The Police VFU, marriage officers and the churches should also provide mandatory pre marital counselling on domestic violence to those intending to marry and to continue to monitor the marriage for a period of at list six months and make evaluations, taking the role the aunt (tetes and sekurus). All marriage ceremonies should be solemnised by experts. Workshops, seminars and Sunday sermons at church should include education on domestic violence to the congregation. By so doing, men and women will be enlightend on their rights and responsibilities. The congregation will get to know the facilities of organisations and government that give assistance to victims of domestic violence.

The ADVA should provide mechanisms to deal with early warning signs of domestic violence and on the other hand, section 5(2) (a) of the ADVA should also provide for mechanisms for the full payment of medical bills for victims of domestic violence immediately when the payment is required.

More rehabilitative measures should be put in place to deal with perpetrators and victims of domestic violence. It is an open secret that some perpetrators of domestic violence reoffend in a short time after leaving prison, given community service or even after being acquitted often with a more serious and violent offense. The way perpetrators are dealt with is very important in the fight against domestic violence. Section 4(1) of the ADVA should provide mechanisms for rehabilitation of both the perpetrator and the victim. Rehabilitation clinics must be established to deal with the cognitive aspects of perpetrators of domestic violence. There is need for the law in particular the DVA to acknowledge the difference between punishment and restraint. When a perpetrator of domestic violence has become more dangerous he or she must be restrained. This is different from inflicting pain on the perpetrator as a way of teaching him or her a lesson. At the end of the day the perpetrator might only have learnt to inflict pain on others. So the only rational purpose for the anti domestic violence law is to restrain those who are violent while helping them to change their behaviour from that pattern to one that

is nonviolent. The Government must be devoted to providing every form of therapy perpetrators needed. Therapy interventions need to address the factors most linked to reoffending, including alcohol and substance abuse, mental health issues, poor education, lack of employment and an absence of positive relationships. Jailed perpetrators should be treated with exactly the same degree of respect and kindness as we would hope they would show to others after they return to the community. On the other hand, some victims also need rehabilitation as they are the ones who provoke the situation in some circumstances.

There should be an increase in the number of organizations (i.e. governmental and non-governmental) providing a wider range of appropriate services to victims of domestic violence. This will go a long way in reducing the impact of domestic violence and help victims staying in abusive relationships. The services could include counselling based intervention, for example individual counselling, family and marriage counselling, career coaching, religious and spiritual guidance as well as crisis counselling. Such services should focus on emergency responses that involve a healthcare team (medical aspect), social care professionals (psychological support and safe accommodation options) and legal experts including the police force for legal aid provisions. In terms of availability of the resources, equal distribution of service centre locations should be planned strategically to facilitate access for victims especially in small towns and rural areas. More importantly, agencies which are involved with domestic violence cases should establish effective networking along with the exchange of information so as to develop systematic coordination arrangements particularly in regards to confidential referrals and follow up support. Professionals who work with domestic violence victims should be equipped with knowledge relating to recent developments on domestic violence locally as well as at an international level, and be familiar with domestic violence information including policy reviews, legislative changes and the debate pertaining to the key problems of this subject. They should be trained with effective communication skills as well as attending training and cross-training between organizations for knowledge advancement on a periodic basis. These strategies will improve human capital competency among the professionals in order to more effectively advocate for victims of domestic violence.

Payment of lobola should not be viewed as an income generating project rather it should be viewed as a token of appreciation to the in laws by the husband. More effort to be done to empower victims of domestic violence especially women so that they become economically independent. Most of the victims of domestic violence are females, who are in most cases not employed, not well educated and with lower levels of income. This makes them to stay in abusive relationship and at times it forces them to withdrawal their domestic violence cases against their violent husbands for fear of losing the bread winner. According to Miriam (2014) women's empowerment is the process in which women elaborate and recreate what it is that they can be, do, and accomplish in a circumstance that they previously were denied.

Empowerment enables women to make their own decisions. It involves the action of raising the status of women through education, raising awareness, literacy, and training. It is all about equipping and allowing women to make life-determining decisions through the different problems in society. It increases women's access to formal government programs, mobility outside the home, economic independence, and purchasing power. The Government should provide more formal education opportunities for women that would allow for higher bargaining power in the home. They would have more access to higher wages outside the home and as a result, make it easier for women to get a better job. Strengthening women's access to property inheritance and land rights is another method that can be used to economically empower women. This would allow them better means of asset accumulation, capital, and bargaining power needed in the home.

Everyone in the Zimbabwean society should unite and put an end to all forms of domestic violence. The fight to prevent, manage and ultimately reduce cases of domestic violence needs much attention from the Government. The ADVC and the Police's Victim Friendly Unit must be given a dedicated budget and resources. Domestic violence awareness campaigns must be increased and should also be spread to remotest areas. The government must make more effort to rehabilitate alcohol and drug addicts by opening up rehabilitation According to Patton (2002) purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources.

## **Conclusion**

The discussion of the study revealed the following major findings:

The research showed that domestic violence has a negative impact on individuals, families, communities and the nation at large. Nothing is good about domestic violence. There is extensive evidence of the adverse impact of domestic violence. The impact may be long term, affecting emotional adjustment, physical, health and subsequent relationships. Majority of victims

of domestic violence are females and majority of perpetrators of domestic violence are males. The belief that men are superior to women makes men solve conflicts through physical and emotional abuse. Physical abuse is the most common form of domestic violence reported at Police stations.

In most extreme cases domestic violence has resulted in death. Perpetrators attack victims using open fists, axe handles, guns and knives resulting in death. Some victims' commit suicide because of the pressures of domestic violence. Victims of domestic violence suffer from stress, depression, permanent body injuries, heart problems, nightmares, sleeplessness, no need for sex with abusive perpetrator or become sexually passive. Domestic violence also disrupts family harmony resulting in divorces and child headed families and street kids.

Children can be the direct targets of physical violence or can get hurt when they try to protect another family member, often the mother, or try to stop their parents from fighting. Behavioural and psychological impact of childhood violence include poor school performance, bedwetting, aggression, isolation from peers, running away, stealing, overeating and depression. Cases of unwanted pregnancies and terminations among women experiencing domestic violence were encountered. Pregnant women ended up engaging in behaviours harmful to health such as smoking, drinking excessive amounts of alcohol and substance misuse.

It was shown that leaving an abusive relationship is complicated and is often most dangerous for the victim. Victims felt trapped in the abusive relationship due to cultural issues, fear of retaliation, lack of social, family and community support networks, family expectations and experience, distorted thoughts, belief that the abuser will change, fear of not being believed, dependency on abusers, for the safety of children and for need of shelter and feeling for the abuser. Most women victims sacrifice their health and wellbeing simply because they want to preserve the marriage.

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