

Domestic Violence: Causes and Implications for the Education System

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Domestic violence in Zimbabwe is increasing annually despite the fact that Domestic Violence Act Chapter 5:16 has been put in place to protect those who are domestically abused by their spouses, (Police Report. 2011). The Act protects both parties, thus men and women in spousal relationships. Laing (2002) suggests that understanding domestic violence has been demonstrated to depend on the beliefs and/or theories chosen to explain domestically violent behaviour in men. This is strongly evidenced through a range of different perceptions of and approaches to domestic violence across relevant social groups. Domestically violent behaviour finds both expression and explanations in the individual characteristics of both perpetrator and victim, societal beliefs about domestic behaviour in general and incidences of domestic abuse in the home in particular and systems theories that have been developed to try and understand the nature and in particular the causes of domestic violent behaviour of men in spousal relationships. Below are a brief discussion on the nature of domestic violence and the dominant theories that have been developed in an attempt to explain domestically violent behaviour.

Statement of the Problem

What seems to be the problem in the problem of domestic violence is the fact that, given the number of theories developed to explain the possible causes of domestic violence, the trend has been moving upwards instead of down and its effects are felt not only by the spouses but become imprinted on the siblings minds and those of the community at large. This has led the researcher to look deeper at both the perpetrator and victim characteristics and the how consistent these are with the theories that have been developed and how intervention programs by professional agencies could benefit from the observed relationship and help them fashion effective rehabilitative behavioural change of domestically violent men. The question that needs to answered, therefore is: What are the causes of domestic violence?

Purpose of the Study

With domestic violence cases on the rise, there are a large number of services like counselling, education, imprisonment, available for men who abuse their partners. The researcher found these interventions to be consistently in competition in terms of their effectiveness. Perceptions surrounding the nature of domestic violence have grown in diversity across the community. A unified understanding of causal factors about why domestic violence exists is crucial in providing a baseline for professionals to adhere to when deciding successful and effective intervention approaches. The growing number of explanations for, and responses to, domestic violence provide the purpose of the present study, which is to analyse the current relationship between these two factors.

Research Questions

Five research questions were put forward in order to measure these variables. The five research questions are:

- What are the possible causal explanations of spousal domestic violence?
- How are the perpetrator and victim characteristics contributing to domestic spousal abuse?

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- What are the community beliefs regarding the rising incidence of domestic violence?
- How can educational institutions assist in the averting the escalating rates of domestic violence?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Domestic violence is defined by Domestic Violence Act (Zimbabwe) Chapter 5: 16 as any unlawful act, omission or behaviour which results in death or the direct infliction of physical, sexual or mental injury to any complainant by a respondent and includes the following: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, verbal and psychological abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment and stalking. Recent researches carried by Austin & Sootsman-Eicher defines domestic violence as a means of controlling or an attempt to control another to get one's own wishes fulfilled. Severe actions of domestic violence include violent actions that are likely to induce injury that is, beating, hitting, use of weapons. For the purpose of this research, domestic violence refers to an act that is unlawful and results in negative consequences on the victim

Definitions of domestic violence are culture specific. (Laing 2002) posits that domestic violence is often used in an attempt to control another to get one's own wishes fulfilled. Tulloch, (1993) suggests that this type of violence refers to abuse towards a married or de-facto, unmarried but living together for six months or more, partner which happens in the home. According to Dutton (1995) severe actions of domestic abuse include violent actions that are highly likely to induce injury including beating, hitting and use of weapons. The same author argues that the term ‘domestic’ has been used to reduce spousal violence both in its seriousness and extent. The researcher acknowledges the seriousness and criminality of domestically violent behaviour. However, the study focuses domestic violence directed at adult women. Dutton (1995) goes further to suggest that for domestic violence to exist, it must involve unequal grounds of power between a couple where the victim is afraid of being hurt.

Domestic violence can be summarized as an abuse of power in a relationship displayed by exertions of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological and emotional control. This type of behaviour is argued to repeat itself in a cycle of events which, in the absence of professional intervention, could spiral out of control in time. This domestic violent behaviour has ramification well beyond the domestic walls of the home into the greater community and beyond. In this regard, domestic violence becomes a communal if not a universal concern. Survey and police reports have revealed a concern with domestic violence within the community (Police report, 2011). The study also acknowledges that victims of domestic violence range from the tender age of sixteen which is the legal age for marriage for women, according to the Constitution of Zimbabwe to elderly spouses who are not spared by this scourge.

Smith (2001) posits that a relationship where domestic violence occurs includes all types of partners, whether they are heterosexual, gay, lesbian; living together, separated or dating. However, for purposes of the present study, focus will be on heterosexual couples who are either married or de-facto. The rationale for exploring domestic violence within couples in such relationships, stems from evidence that different perceptions of the cause of domestic violence are widely divergent and begs the question of how intervention measures, if ever they are going to be instituted, will be effective given the general lack of causal factor consensus from researchers.

Domestic violence induces damaging effects including depression, low self-esteem, worthlessness, low self efficacy and loss of opportunities for the victims and at the same time generates feeling of remorse and shame within the perpetrator. Such feelings could be either short lived, given timely and appropriate professional intervention or they could be a permanent feature of the spousal relationship with potentially dire consequences. While this is the case this study will not dwell on effects rather than the causes of domestic violence.

FORMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence finds expression in a number of ways and below are the common forms of it;

- Physical
- Verbal

- Sexual
- Psychological and
- Emotional

Physical abuse is the most commonly reported type of domestic violence according to police statistics from 2009 to 2011 (Police report). Sexual abuse involves any kind of forced sexual contact without partner consent (Domestic Violence Act Chapter5:16). Sexuality largely determines one’s identity as a person and when attacked in a sexual manner it can be injurious to the victim’s character. It can be reasonable to suggest from this evidence that sexual assault is less common due to cultural specific factors which do not overtly encourage victims to discuss let alone report on such matters of spousal intimacy. The types of subtle forms of suffering endured by victims of domestic violence have include feeling helpless, depressed, low self - worth and self esteem, and these have been classified as defamation of character and as such legal intervention is expressly excluded (Domestic Violence Act 5:16). Other forms of domestic violence include financial abuse, such as withholding money from the victim, controlling the entire household bills and expenditure. Social abuse, where the perpetrator isolates the victim from friends, family and support services is also commonly reported during interview sessions. Harassment and stalking are included as forms of domestic violence, as these behaviours induce unequal power relations and harmful consequences to the victim (Domestic Violence Act Chapter5:16).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Psychological Theories

From a psychological perspective, which focuses on the individual, it posits that domestic violence is viewed as a medical problem, suggesting that abusive men have some sort of illness that causes them to behave violently towards their partners, such as excessive use of alcohol and drugs. This view inevitably reduced the men’s accountability for their abusive behaviour, for he is not in full control of his emotions, and in need of medical intervention. Thus, it does not explain the cause(s) of the domestically violent behaviour in men. (Esteal, 1994)

Psychological theories do not account for all acts of domestic violence committed by men, but tell only part of the story. There are a large group of domestically violent men who do not show signs of violent behaviour in other social contexts such as workplace, and community events. Hastie, (2001) & McGregor (1990) research results reveal that domestic violence can occur in males with a normal state of mind or with no associations with addictive behaviours. This evidence suggest that the insignificant degree to which perpetrators’ of domestic violence show signs of a personality disorder questions the credibility of these theories.

Feminist Theory

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 that 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 this feminist model, beliefs and attitudes, structures and processes in society maintain and support abusive practices towards women.

Feminist theory fails to account for the men who are not abusive at all in a relationship with their female partners. Women can be abusive within homosexual relationships (lesbian couples) which again challenges the feminist premise in terms of men behaving dominantly over women. Dutton (1995) argues that lesbians adopt the values of patriarchal culture and that a dominance-submissive relationship may exist whereby the functional male, the dominant member, is the abuser

Systems Theories

Hastie (2001) claims that domestically violent behaviour is not due to one sole factor. Instead, this behaviour is caused by a number of factors including individual features and socialisation of violence within the community. According to the same author, socially acquired behaviours or individual instigators of domestic violence are not sufficient on their own to generally account for abusive behaviour in men. Hastie (2001) also claims that this angle of explaining their behaviour opposes

simple cause and affect explanations suggesting that any number of variants within a system occur to create a single effect.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PERPETRATORS

There are certain characteristic trends that are showed by male perpetrators which the study intends to analyse with a view to better understand the motivation behind the violent abusive behaviour males exhibit in private. A number of these characteristics will be examined and their explanatory power rated according to research results that have been carried out. Mental illness, power and control factors over victims, poor communication skills, lack of self control over aggressive behavioural patterns, denial and other excuses put forth to rationalize domestically abusive behaviour.

With regards to mental illness, Austin and Scootsman-Eicher (2000) report that domestic violence only happens at home in private. The detections of physical abuse, such as bruises and cuts, are usually inflicted in places on the victims’ body that are normally hidden by clothing. A mentally ill person with violent tendencies may act violently uncontrollably, regardless of the area of infliction. Moreover, if a person were suffering a condition of mental illness, due to their violent tendencies being uncontrollable and inconsistent, such behaviour would not happen just behind closed doors of the home. On the other hand, perpetrators of domestic violence intend to hit in certain places.

Power and control issues meaning men who satisfy their need for power through having an impact on, or control over their partner (Dutton, 1995). The same author and others go on to describe “effective communication” as a person who clearly states how and what they feel to the person receiving the message. Tillet (1999) states that to be effective, communication should involve the motivation to communicate, effective disclosure, clear precise messages, assertiveness, clarity of thought and language, empathy and effective listening. Perpetrators of domestic violence communicate aggressively towards their partners in the form of yelling, criticizing, and manipulating. According to Tillet’s (1999) definition these forms of aggression are not effective ways of communicating.

Perpetrators also tend to deny or minimize their abusive behaviour. Reasons put forward include feelings of shame of what they did, that the perpetrator cannot recall all the details due to being in an uncontrollable state of rage when the domestic violence occurred. According to Gondolf’s (1985) research on perpetrator characteristics, two categories were defined. The first category, known as the oppressors, are argued to behave violently towards their partners due to the socially accepted beliefs of the man being superior to the woman and therefore feel they have a right to control them. The second category, commonly referred to as the “angry group”, have difficulty communicating and therefore violently lash out in anger on their partners from their frustration.

More recently, Romans, Poore and Martin (2000) have put forward three subcategories in an attempt to describe domestically violent men:

- Cyclically emotional volatile perpetrator.” This group type is dependent on being with their partner emotionally and physically. When tension build’s, it usually starts from psychological abuse, leading to aggressive behaviour. The cycle usually ends with the perpetrator feeling remorseful until the tension starts again.
- Over-controlled perpetrator.” The perpetrator controls the partner both physically and psychologically. However, other forms of control are usually apparent including verbal, sexual, and emotional abuse.
- Psychopathic perpetrator.” This type usually possesses symptoms of psychopathy including an absence of feelings or emotions of guilt of the abuse they have inflicted on their partner.

However, every perpetrator of domestic violence will differ both in terms of what aversive stimuli trigger their violence and how they rationalize it, (Dutton, 1995).

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study used a qualitative approach to research and thus adopted the descriptive survey as the research design. In order to fully understand the community perceptions on the question of domestic violence in the Marondera Urban District, an empirical survey and interviews were conducted in selected areas of the district, enquiring about the personal experiences of victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. In the absence of a comprehensive sample frame of the victims and

perpetrators of domestic violence in the district, a judgemental sampling procedure. The survey included open-ended questions to collect further opinions about the issue of domestic violence. These questions were also included to acquire further information about the relationship between perceptions of, and responses to domestic violence. The participants from the community groups were surveyed according to a schedule.

THE POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population for the current study consisted of 250 victimised women and 220 perpetrators (according to police statistics). Out of a total population of 470, a sample of fifty respondents was chosen. The sample consisted of 40 victims and 10 perpetrators. The researcher adopted the convenience sampling technique. She got information from ZRP Marondera on an abused house wife and tracked the woman to her matrimonial home. She agreed to an interview only if her identity was kept anonymous. She provided the address of another abused woman who was also successfully tracked. The process was repeated until fifty respondents had been interviewed.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Data on the Background of Participants

Table4.1. Gender of the Participants (N=50)

Sex	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	10	20
Female	40	80
Total	50	100

The above table shows that the majority of the respondents were women, constituting 80% and the remainder was men. This indicates the willingness of domestic violence victims to come out and speak out. On the other hand, 20% of the men were willing to be interviewed and respond to questionnaires in connection with the domestic violence they perpetrate in the privacy of their homes.

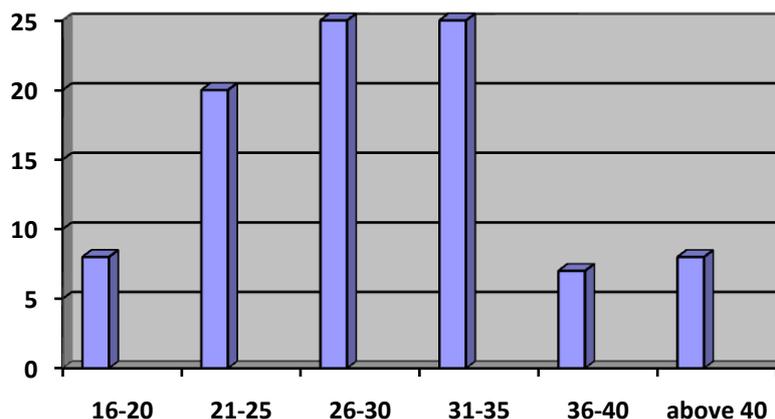


Fig4.1. Age Ranges of Participants

The above graph indicates that the age range of participants was from 16 years which is the age legal age of majority to above 4 years. The majority of participants were aged between twenty six years to thirty five years followed by twenty one to twenty five years.

Table4.2. Literacy Levels of the Participants (N=50)

Gender	Grade seven	‘O’ level	‘A’ level	Tertiary	Total
Women	10	23	10	2	45
Men	1	2	1	1	5
Total	11	25	11	3	50

The table shows that 49% of the respondents had attained at least an O’ level type qualification, with those with Grade 7 and A’ level qualifications at 22% respectively and the remainder with tertiary qualifications. These criteria were important to ensure that the participants understood the questions and were in a position to articulate their responses well.

Table4.3. *Participants’ Causal Explanations of Domestic Violence*

Causes	Explanations
Cycle of Violence Social Learning Theory Poor Communication Skills	72% of participants agree that this factor is still valid in explaining a significant number of domestically violent behaviour in men. 64% argue that this theory is more considerable today in explaining domestic violence due to a wider range of influential sources thus media and culture. 80% of participants supported this factor, arguing that it is a root cause of domestically violent behaviour.
Socialisation Stress/Frustration Low Socio-economic Status	72% argued that domestic violence is an underlying social fabric issue. 64% of participants supported this factor, indicating a fairly high degree of consistency with the research 3% argued this to be a cause of domestic violence in men. The remaining 97% of participants argued that domestic violence sees no economic boundaries
Power and Control Issues Patriarchal beliefs	Most supported explanations across participants and with literature review explaining domestically violent behaviour in men. Only 54% of participants supported this theory. The remaining 46% argued that there has been a societal shift of gender roles in the domestic and social sphere

All participants (100%) agreed to domestic violence being a serious issue that has significant negative implications for the whole community. The effects were notably reported to affect society at personal, cultural, political and structural levels. They argued that the event is often looked upon by society in isolation to other behaviours in terms of its short and long term negative consequences. Although participants displayed noticeable variations explaining domestic violence, the data shows notable degrees of support across paradigms. Participants explained that domestically violent behaviour in men arises primarily from sociological, psychological and feminist influences. The data highlighted the most supported explanations of domestically violent behaviour in men including power and control issues, intergenerational transmission of violence, and socialisation of violence in the African culture including social learning conditioning in early developmental years. The figures highlight that domestic violence is predominately explained by the perpetrator’s characteristics that have possibly been established in early childhood years and reinforced by socialisation influences through a multitude of social and cultural sources. The previously mentioned notion is support by Freud who emphasise that past experience influence the present. Participants argued perpetrators’ poor communication skills to be a root cause of domestic violence. The remaining participants argued that this factor would only delay the violence from occurring. The feminist explanation of a patriarchal society and domestic violence also received varied support from participants.

Table4.4. *Victim Profile of the Participants by Type of Domestic Violence Abuse*

Type of abuse	Frequency	Total
Physical	90	90
Sexual	85	85

This table shows that 100% percent of the victims had suffered domestic violence physically while 85 participants had suffered sexual abuse in the home. The majority of the victims also suffered both forms of domestic violence at the hands of their partners.

Table4.5. *Reported Cases of Domestic Violence to the Law Enforcement Agencies*

Forms of domestic violence	Years		
	2009	2010	Jan – march 2011
Sexual abuse	40	56	11
Physical abuse	34	137	62

The table shows the number of reported cases to the Zimbabwe Republic Police on domestic violence is increasing from 2009 annually indicating the possibility of people willing to report cases of domestic violence. Participants were reluctant to report domestic violence cases for possible cultural factors and the belief that the police interventions are not effective given the material as well as legal constraints.

Table 4.6. Convictions

Forms of domestic violence	Years		
	2009	2010	Jan – march 2011
Sexual abuse and physical abuse	110	297	93
Total	110	297	93

The above table shows that the convictions are increasing on a year by year basis. This suggests that more and more people are reporting cases of domestic violence.

Participants’ Explanations and Approaches to Domestic Violence

Overall, participants’ reasons behind their explanations of domestic violence were directly related to their suggestions of approaches to the issue. The data revealed the following themes that participants argued to be paramount when understanding and responding to domestic violence effectively: accountability, responsibility, justice, safety and equity.

Table 4.7. Interventions and Explanations of Domestic Violence by Participants

Theme	Intervention	Explanation
Accountability	Proactive	Cycle of domestic violence
Safety	Proactive	Cycle of violence theory
Equity	Proactive	Social Learning Theory
Responsibility	Proactive	Socialisation
Justice	Reactive	Holistic causal theories

The above table shows the type of intervention in domestic violence cases which can be either proactive or reactive depending on the dominant theory of the intervening professional agency. The agencies could be the police, judiciary, correctional services, counselling and rehabilitation services.

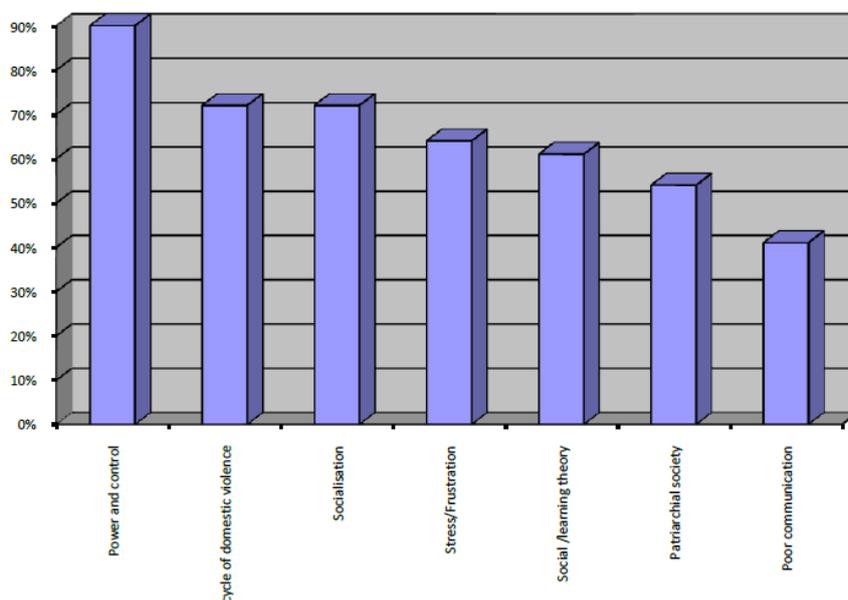


Fig 4.2. Consistency of Respondents Supporting Categorical Explanations of Domestic Violence

Power and control got support 90% of the participants who argue that this theory is more considerable today in explaining domestic violence due to a wider range of influential sources that is media, values, morals beliefs and culture. Poor communication skills 80% of participants supported this factor, arguing that it is a root cause of domestically violent behaviour. Socialisation systems was also believed to be a causal factor and is consistently reported with 72% in support. Stress/ frustration was supported by 64% of participants indicating a fairly high degree of consistency with the previous research findings. Low socio-economic status was supported by one participant argued this to be a cause of domestic violence in men. The remaining 97 % of participants argued that domestic violence see no economic boundaries. Power and control issues is supported by the majority of participants and with literature review explaining domestically violent behaviour in men. The current research claims patriarchal beliefs to remain a notable explanation of domestic violence; only 64% of participants supported this theory. The remaining 36% argue that there has been a societal shift of gender roles in the domestic and social sphere. Participants also supported the argument that domestic violence

should be seen as a community problem in terms of acknowledgment, accountability, safety, reporting of, and responding to domestic violence. Participants were also consistent in that measures including fines and imprisonment do not address the perpetrator’s problem of violence, and the response should consider this factor and the others mentioned in order to be effective.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Sub problem 1 was stated as follows: What are the possible causal explanations of domestic violence?

The majority 72%, of participants agreed that the Cycle of Violence was still valid in explaining a significant number of domestically violent behaviour in men. Sixty percent argue that the Social Learning Theory is more considerable today in explaining domestic violence due to a wider range of influential sources thus media and culture. Poor communications skills was as well cited by 80% of the participants supported who argued that it was the root cause of domestically violent behaviour in spousal relationships. This was supported by the research finding that was carried by Furham when he purported that domestic violence is caused by poor communication. The stereotypes that the culture has cultivated tends to get a significant support in explaining domestic violence, thus 72% argued that domestic violence has its roots in the upbringing of children through observation. The explanations got support from social learning theory which postulates that every behaviour is learned and those who domestically abuse the partners have seen it during their childhood experiences. This also found support from psychodynamic theoretical approach when they say childhood experiences influence the present manhood. Stress and Frustration was highlighted as the explanatory cause of domestic violence with 64% of participants supporting this factor, indicating a fairly high degree of consistency with the previous research. These frustrations could come from unemployment, lack of finance to support the family and even the environmental factors. Low socio-economic status was indicated as a cause of domestic violence in men. This got support from 3% of the participants, the remaining 97% of participants argued that domestic violence sees no economic boundaries.

Sub problem 2 was stated as follows: How adequate are these in explaining domestic violence in the home?

All the information given explain the causes of domestic violence and these have adequately explained issues in domestic. However, the researcher feel that Domestic Violence Act Chapter 5: 16 does not have much on domestic violence. It focuses much on the physical and sexual abuse leaving other forms of abuses without explanations because there is not tangible evidence. It has listed the forms of domestic abuses but cannot establish it for example, emotional and economic abuses. So the researcher still feel that the information provided is adequate but attention should be given to all the forms of domestic violence since they have equal impacts in spousal relationships.

Sub problem 3 was stated as follows: How are the perpetrator and victim characteristics contributing to domestic spousal abuse?

The research findings indicate the domestic violence found its roots in perpetrators characteristics. Mental illness, power and control, poor communication skills, jealous, lack of self control, frustrations, unemployment, low socio economic status and denial were given as the perpetrators, characteristic which trigger domestically violent behaviours in men. These gained support when the questionnaires were returned. The victims characteristic were also viewed as contributing factors towards domestic violence. The research found out that the victims of domestic violence at times feels that they have failed to fulfill their roles, thus being a wife and mother therefore deserve to be abused by their partners. Financial and emotional dependence was also highlighted as the characteristic of victims which later cause domestic violence in spousal relationship. A significant percentage of the participants argued that the roles has shifted, some of the victims are the one who take care of their families thus financially, socially and even emotionally. The vows made on the wedding days have left wounds on women because they remember and keep the vows to them “till death do us part” has increased cases of domestic violence. This found support from the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

Sub problem 4 was stated as follows: What are the community beliefs regarding the rising incidence of domestic violence?

The community belief that domestic violence is not their problems, thus they feel it is a private issue in the homes. However, a notable figure agreed that domestic violence need to be addressed at

community level to protect the victims of domestic violence. The community believe that the majority of women are domestically abused because they are mixing what happens at friend’s house should be seen happening at their homes. Also the issue of domestic violence act has caused domestic violence to increase because statements like “ndiri kuda kuona kuti ndinoitwa sei nemutemo wenyu iwowo”, I would like to see what will happen to me when you report the case of domestic violence to law enforcement agencies. The Domestic Violence Act is misinterpreted by the majority of the community. Domestic violence only happens in families who live in poor areas of the community. Domestic violence is caused by the consumption of alcohol. However 50% supported that alcohol plays a crucial role in domestic violence and the other 50% argued that domestic violence occurs even without alcohol, it is just an addictive which speed up the aggressiveness. The community also believes that if domestic violence is serious in home, why are women staying, ‘If it were that bad, women would just leave. This was supported by the majority of participants.

Sub problem 5 was stated as follows: How consistent are participants’ explanations why domestic violence happens within the community with regards to the literature researched?

The most consistent stance of explanations of domestic violence was based on psychological and sociological factors. Nearly all participants from the group highlighted that a perpetrator’s and victims family of origin (upbringing) plays a strong part in a significant number of domestically violent men. participants frequently reported from their experience with domestic violence cases that this type of violence historically has been, and still is, accepted in a large number African families. From my experiences they have grown up around domestic violence and to them it’s an accepted way of life and in the majority of cases it’s mainly to do with their upbringing.

The most consistent stance of explanations of domestic violence was based on psychological and sociological factors. Nearly all participants from the group highlighted that the upbringing of a perpetrator plays a strong part in a significant number of domestically violent men. Police participants frequently reported from their experience with domestic violence cases that this type of violence historically has been, and still is, accepted in families. Alcohol was highlighted to be an associative causal factor regarding its triggering effects to domestic violence in homes though a concise and clear information was highlighted that alcohol alone does not trigger domestic violence.

Further explanations included a deficiency in the perpetrator of some type: frustration, lack of education, lack of respect, inability to be assertive, selfishness. General stresses were also frequently identified in participant responses when explaining why domestic violence occurs. For example, stress from the workplace, frustration, the community and society’s expectations could all lead to men behaving violently towards their partners, as some participants suggested.

However, the second most consistent explanation of domestic violence from the police group related to issues of gender inequality, reflecting a feminist stance. Participants argued that this factor has quite a strong relationship with violent behaviour in men towards women. A typical common response is illustrated below: ‘I think it’s because traditionally in our culture men are taught to be tough, they have been brought up to suppress their emotions, ‘big boys do not cry’ so slowly through their maturing years they learn that it’s not OK to show any emotion other than anger. The data suggests that the social and psychological conditions that form the basis of early development within a child, and societal reinforcements of these conditions in the child’s later life, both plays a notable role in men’s violent behaviour towards their partners. ‘Societal reinforcements’ include persistent attitudes which legitimize the use of violence or some form of control by men towards women in relationships. This is evidenced in the workplace where a considerable number of authoritative positions in male careers for example, military may reinforce these attitudes.

CONCLUSIONS

The data highlighted the following:

- The need to continue to promote, advertise and educate the community members about the reasons behind the problem. The actual rate of domestic violence needs to be recorded.
- From the trends in research, professionals, especially groups which record domestic violence cases, have increased their understanding about how to challenge the belief
- All participants recognized that alcohol is a contributing factor in domestic violence cases in the sense that it can contribute to the severity of violence, but not necessarily cause it. One participant

claimed alcohol was present in a lot of reported domestic violent cases. Participants’ perceptions were that a lot of cases of domestic violence are related to alcohol and drugs, and even though we all know it is not a causal factor, it’s definitely a major contributor for a lot of people. Participants consistently reported that there are underlying factors behind domestically violent behaviour, and that alcohol is only used as an excuse for men to behave violently towards their partners. Alcohol consumption is definitely not the reason why domestic violence occurs. Participants described alcohol as truth syrup that is typically used to gain courage to behave aggressively.

- Participants again agreed that perpetrators’ communication skills are a significant determinant in domestic violence cases. From their responses, these participants believe this factor to be a primary cause of domestically violent behaviour in men. Men have more difficulty communicating verbally than women do. Women traditionally talk things through. We need to get men to connect with their emotions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of some of the findings of this study the following recommendations were made in an attempt to improve the incidence and occurrence of domestic violence cases and the interventions there after.

- The Domestic Violence Act Chapter 5:16, adopts a very narrow definition of domestic violent abuse, leaving out the more subtle forms of abuse which lead to the physical abuse of women. Due to physical power differentials, most women even when they get domestically abused, are beat in such a way by the perpetrator that no physical evidence is visible. Physical evidence of domestic violence is the criteria used in the act. This is the one end of the physical domestic violence spectrum. The whole spectrum of domestic violence should be dealt with, not necessarily in a criminal way but more deterrent manner.
- The government could be involved in informational campaigns to deliberately change certain culture specific perspective on what is regarded as domestic.
- More and more awareness campaigns should be held to spread the causes, implications and where to seek help when caught in the domestic violence cycle.
- Stiffer penalties on domestically violent perpetrators should be enforced, thus the government need to intervene to reduce the occurrence or rate of domestic violence as can be deduced from the police statistics on figures that domestic violent is on increase annually
- Possibly the government should consider working with different church leaders so that the two dimensions speak the same language on domestic violence, with major focus on causes and implications of domestic violence on the perpetrator, victims, juveniles and the community at large.
- The research recommends that professionals like social workers, psychologists, counsellors, be part of court officials who assist the magistrate elaborate on the type of abuse the victims might be going through.
- The research recommends that the victims form support groups to assist the domestically abused women so that they cope with the challenges of domestic violence which have some negative ramifications if not dealt with professionally.
- The community should now understand that domestic violence is not a one man problem; instead the community should react when it discovers that there is some form of violence occurring in surrounding homes. The community is supposed to report the cases of domestic violence to responsible authorities and law enforcers so that it can be easily eradicated.
- The study also recommends that the churches be given time to preach gospel on marriage, the importance of marriages and how it is viewed by the bible as the majority of community people believe that there is someone up there who controls our lives.
- The perpetrators of domestic violence in this case men are recommended to refrain from domestic violence. There is need to think of something else which make their wives happier than abusing them all the time. For example men are encouraged to form income generating projects so that their minds become heavily occupied rather than thinking of domestic violence.

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