

## **CHAPTER 4: Evidence from Chinhoyi**

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This chapter presents the analysis of data and findings from the research study. Qualitative data were generated from married women aged between 19–49 years who have experienced domestic violence. This data were collected using focus group discussions from in-depth interviews with family members, traditional leaders and religious leaders. The chapter begins with the description of the analytic process which includes data cleaning, coding, organisation and reduction. Research findings are presented in thematic areas or categories in the form of figures and direct quotes that capture the essence of how the research participants view domestic violence. In the presentation, the study takes note of the assumptions that cultural practices and religious practices contribute to domestic violence among married women in Zimbabwe and women are ignorant of their rights.

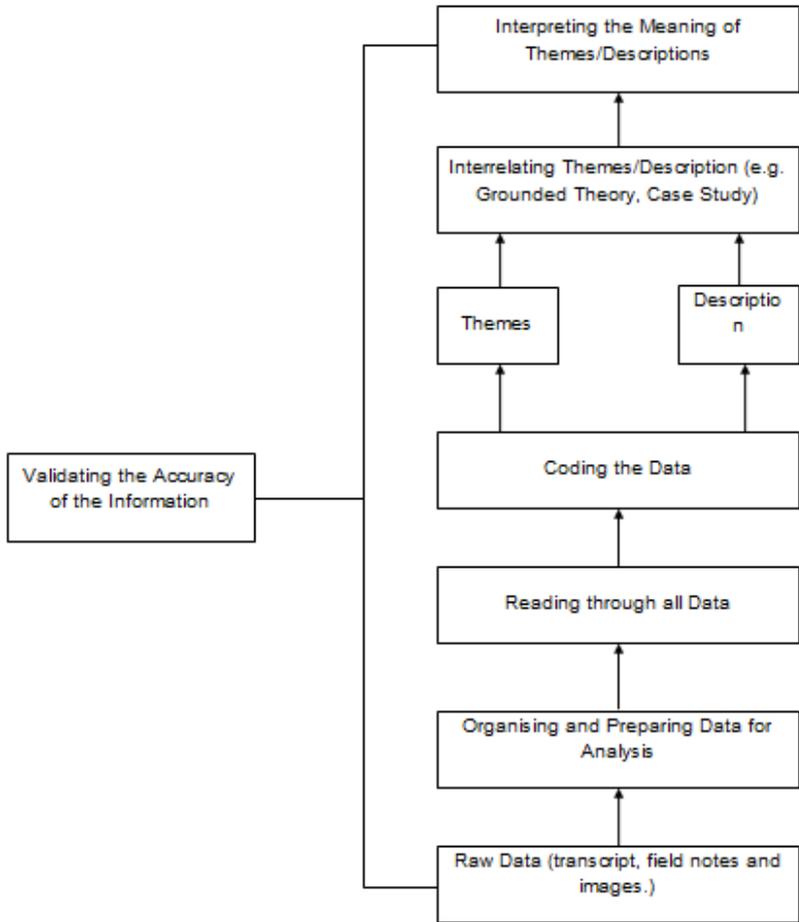
The purpose of the study was to develop strategies for educating communities within an African context on the prevention and control of domestic violence affecting married women in Zimbabwe. The results were reported in relation to the research questions which were as follows:

1. What are the roles of the community in the prevention and control of domestic violence?
2. What are the experiences of married women about domestic violence?
3. What are the strategies for educating community members on the prevention and control of domestic violence?

The study used Betty Neuman's Systems Model which has been used widely in nursing practice because it assists the study in getting the intended results. The Model views the client as an open system that responds to stressors in the environment. Physiological, psychological, socio-cultural, spiritual, and developmental are client variables that are

protected by lines of resistance with an individual. When stressors break through the lines of defence, disintegration occurs in the form of illness, pain or disengagement (Fitzpatrick, 2010:13). Betty Neuman's Systems Model provides unifying focus for approaching a wide range of nursing concerns. It's a comprehensive guide for nursing practice, research, education and administration. This guide is open to creative implementation, clarifying the relationships of variables in nursing care and role definitions at various levels of nursing practice (Current Nursing, 2012). The Model focused on the response of the client system to actual or potential environmental stressors. It also focuses on the variables which can affect the client's response to stressors on the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of prevention.

According to Creswell (2009:183) qualitative data analysis is a process that involves making sense out of text and image. This data further involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper into an understanding of data. Creswell further describes the analysis as involving multiple layers of analysis, as shown in the figure below:



**Figure 1:** Data Analysis in Qualitative Research adopted from Creswell (2009:185)

The approach to data analysis presented above should not be assumed to linear, as is shown in the diagram. The different levels are interrelated in practice and can occur simultaneously or interchangeably. This was evident during data analysis for this study.

The individual's interviews and the focus group discussions for this study were analysed using Nvivo software package. This package assists when presenting results in thematic forms. According to Babbie (2010: 412) Nvivo allows for the simultaneous organisation and analysis of content from several interviews. Nvivo creates a platform for deep analysis of data using powerful search, query and visualization tools. Subtle connections assist the study to justify findings which can be made and the study can gain more insight and ideas during the data entry process.

Qualitative data were used in this study, data editing and analysis of content to prepare data coding. Babbie (2011:333&338), defined content analysis as the study of recorded human communication and coding being the transformation of raw material into a standardised form which is suitable for computer analysis. Qualitative data goes through a process of content analysis, whereby themes or concepts are derived and codes can be assigned to the themes. The frequency of the codes can then be counted and participants' responses are incorporated into the reports quotes to support or negate the findings.

Findings from this study are presented according to the participants of the study. The socio-demographic presentation of the married women will be presented.

The demographic data collected and analysed from the structured questionnaires is presented in this section. This will include age, educational background, and occupation, total income per month, residential background and religious background. This information provides an understanding of the context in which participants experience domestic violence. The women surveyed in this research provided an intersecting kaleidoscope of social backgrounds, which defy specific patterns. The social demographic data presented below crucially highlights how all women regardless of age, education,

religion, occupation and place of residence experience domestic violence. These demographic characteristics also highlight how women across different cultures narrate similar experiences and impacts of domestic violence, which are psychological and highly personal.

There were fifty (50) married women who made part of the study. There were 13 participants whose age ranged from 31-35 years. Women who were within the economically productive age group of between 31 to 46 years old were 37 and thus making most of married women who participated in the study. This is important in that it highlights that women who are economically productive are also victims of domestic violence. As the study discusses the strategies to combat domestic violence, it is important to note that age is not a determinant of being a victim of domestic violence as it affects across the ages.

Most of the participants (n=26) had a university degree. This shows that most women in Zimbabwe have higher education qualifications. This clearly shows that education however does not immunize one from domestic violence. Only one participant of the married women had no formal education, which shows that lack of education is not an important determinant. Strategies geared towards improving women's education to reduce domestic violence are thus limited in their impact. On a different view, WHO (2012) found out that women with at least a secondary education within marriage, have a wider range of choices in partners and are more able to choose whether and when to get married. Such capacities have often been associated with lower levels of violence in the home (Kimani, 2012:21).

According to McCloskey *et al.* (2014:5) women with less education are more prone to abuse than educated peers at a ratio of 1:7. Lower educational attainment among partners predicts domestic violence (Madhivanon *et al.*, 2014:170).

Government programmes and most gender related literature have long viewed economic empowerment as a panacea for domestic violence. The findings in this study are however highlighting the need for a more holistic socio-cultural and legal system that goes beyond economic empowerment. Educated, skilled and professional women are not immune to various forms of abuse. At times this can lead to violence as one woman noted in the focus group discussions;

“You get beaten up if you want to show you are more educated or earn more money because men are insecure.”

According to the Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (2012:22), the education background of household members is among the most important characteristics of the household, because it is associated with many factors that have a significant impact on health seeking behaviour, reproductive behaviour, use of contraception and the health of children.

A significant number (n =22) of the participants’ spouses are self-employed. This can be related to the current economic situation in Zimbabwe where the vast majority of people are involved in the informal sector. Incomes in the informal sector depend on the nature, size and seasonality of the activities. This means that most of spouses are experiencing economic difficulties which lead men to be emasculated, as wives take more and more household head roles. A significant number (n =15) are professionals, whom the participants indicated that even their professional spouses are highly abusive despite their status.

The results show that (n=15) of the participants has a total monthly income that is between \$1000-\$2000. A significant number (n =20) of the participants earned below \$500. The Total Consumption Poverty Line (TCPL) for an average of five persons per household stood at \$481.00 in 2016. This means that number (n =20) of the households participants are living below the poverty datum line. They are in many

ways eking out a living which brings with it multiple stressors especially for married couples who are constantly fighting over providing for their families. Some strategies to end domestic violence may require increasing incomes of families thereby providing better employment opportunities, a situation that the current government is working towards. This is because better jobs will mean better salaries and hence reduce the financial conflicts in the home resulting in reduced domestic violence.

It was also important to understand the residential status of the participants. Domestic violence is mostly visible in high-density areas where the housing stands are smaller and houses are clustered. Neighbours and community are thus quicker to notice violence in such areas. This may however give the impression that domestic violence is more prevalent among the poor who inhabit in these high-density areas while in fact it might not be necessarily true. The results show that (n =22) of the married women participants were residents in high-density areas. This also shows the ease of accessing research participants in high-density areas as compared to low-density areas. Participants from low density areas are generally secretive due to their closed up high walled and gated houses but this does not immunise them from domestic violence.

Most of the married women (n=30) participants own the house they live in. Ownership of houses is also important because those who rent tend to move frequently which affects follow up programmes or services. The results also show that (n=19) of the married women participants are however still renting though it's not clear whether they are the only inhabitants of the homes. Living with a landlord or other tenants means that any form of domestic violence affects other families. In the focus group discussions one participant noted that;

"Domestic violence disturbs those living near you. People now must explain to their children why a grown up man is fighting with his wife."

Most of the married women (n=41) participants live with immediate family. This means that it is mainly children who witness and suffer the effects of domestic violence. Some strategies to combat violence include involving the extended family in finding solutions but from the focus group discussions and it was also noted that the extended family could also be a factor in causing domestic violence.

The final question focusing on social demographic information related to religion. Results show that the participants belong to a varied number of Christian churches (for example Seventh Day Adventists (n=7) and Pentecostal (for example Apostolic Faith Mission (n=14). Studies have shown how religious ideologies have been used to justify abuse of women and children.

Domestic violence arises from religious practices that subordinate women Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWALA, 2011:1). Chireshe *et al.* (2009) found that many abuses in Zimbabwe are perpetuated and justified in the name of religion.

The findings from the 15 family members indicated that the most prevalent form of abuse is physical, followed by verbal, emotional, economic, and lastly sexual abuse.

According to (n=14) family members of the abused married women, most married women experience physical abuse. In addition (n=9) of the family members indicated that married women experience verbal abuse. Family members (n=8) further highlighted that married women experience emotional abuse. According to (n=5) family members of the abused women some married women experienced economic abuse and other (n=3) family members of the abused women stated that married women experience sexual abuse. Family members also identified the existence of spiritual abuse which participants referred to the denial of accessing one's preferred religious group.

The family members further explained that;

“...some men have tendencies of refusing their wives access to churches by claiming that pastors or prophets sleep with people’s wives”.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe guarantees the right for free religious worship yet within marriages some women do not have this right. According to the study’s experience, a married woman should join the church of her husband and if the husband does not attend church then she should join church of the mother-in-law.

The above findings concur with the previous findings from Made (2015:9), who revealed that women in Zimbabwe continue to suffer high levels of physical and sexual violence. According to Gender Equity (2013:1), 80% of married women were physically abused in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In addition WHO (2012:1), found that common forms of domestic violence against married women includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse by the husband. Rahman *et al.* (2011:1) also found that the world today is full of domestic violence which comes in many forms including physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse. The above findings also are supported by Spreahman *et al.* (2013:5) who found that common forms of domestic violence among married women include physical, sexual, economic and spiritual abuse.

The study discovered that there are many reports of domestic violence from the church leaders. Some participants outlined that there were fifteen to twenty cases of domestic violence per month. One of the church leaders from Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) noted that in his area, which is a farming area, the rate of cases is seasonal. He noted that there is a dramatic increase in cases when tobacco-selling season starts because most fights emerge over the control and use of proceeds from tobacco sales. Men tend to be abusive in multiple ways to avoid planning on how to utilise the money with their wives.

Another leader from the same church noted that in his area the cases are prevalent because of shortage of cash and the general economic hardships and due to the use of drugs, especially alcohol by one of the partners especially men. A leader from the Roman Catholic Church also blamed the economic hardships for the increase in domestic violence. The argument here is that economic hardships are emasculating men who are unable to assert their authority as fathers and households through providing for their families. When men fail to assert their manhood through providing they turn to violence.

A leader from an apostolic church has a different experience in his area where there are virtually no reports of domestic violence. In his estimation, this is because within the church and community most types of domestic violence are being done secretly and victims are not reporting such cases. Another leader from the Salvation Army echoed these sentiments highlighting the difficulties involved in discussing domestic violence that means that most cases go unnoticed and unreported.

It is thus imperative for any strategy to combat domestic violence to involve the promotion of reporting and education on rights that victims have. In many instances the reported cases are only those that become violent thus public. With many forms of abuse, which are hidden such as psychological, spiritual, social and economic, abuse can occur for years without anyone knowing what is happening. For another church leader the emerging pattern in his area is that many reports are coming from young couples. This maybe because of numerous reasons related to the increased knowledge of rights by younger women or the culture of silence that older women grew up being taught from a young age.

From the interviews with traditional leaders it is clear that there is a high prevalence of domestic violence cases at the traditional courts. In

rural areas, the traditional court is often readily available as a remedy for victims of violence. The research focused on apex (*madzimambo*/chiefs) traditional leaders and also lower-level leaders (*Sabhuku*/kraal head). It is also important to note that there are counsellors who represent traditional leaders in urban areas. In the interviews the leaders noted that cases of domestic violence range from two to twelve per month. This shows that domestic violence remains a systemic problem in Zimbabwe. One of the traditional leaders noted that:

- Domestic violence cases still persist among married women in his area. The cases cut across the newly married and those who have been married for a long time.

This shows traditionally it is not permitted to abuse your wife yet cultural practices and norms remain the biggest factor raised by the women in the survey. This needs to be interrogated further mainly because traditional leaders remain adamant that it is other factors such as drug abuse, poverty and women's lack of reporting because they fear losing their marriages. Another leader noted that women's ignorance about their rights is directly linked low literacy in his area. One other factor identified is the emerging cases of small houses (semi-permanent girlfriends who are second wives in all but name and ceremony). Men with small houses tend to be violent to stop their wives from confronting them about having a girlfriend. There was however some leaders who did not shy away from critiquing culture as a driver of domestic violence.

Some of their responses are outlined below;

"Men foolishly treat women as second-class citizens".

"Cultural beliefs are strongly linked to domestic violence. It is common practice that you beat your wife for neglecting the children, burning food when cooking and lack of knowledge on their rights".

"Culture allows the moderate beating of a wife as a way of disciplining her".

There are cultural sanctions for husbands to beat their wives in certain circumstances. The ideologies base their discussions on a particular constructing of sexual identity. Masculine construction requires manhood to be equated with the ability to exert power over others hence infringing on their rights especially through use of force. Masculinity is exposed, gives man power to control the lives of those around him especially women. Custom, tradition and habitually invoked to rationalize the use of violence against women.

According to most of participants during discussions because of unequal power dynamics, women have been placed into a subordinate position, where the male sex is dominant over the female sex. In turn this deprives women from realising their full potential and opportunities for personal development.

Participants indicated that they are assisted by village committee members to assess the problems of both parties to identify the route problems of domestic violence at the traditional court.

Both parties are counselled, whereby elderly men counsel the husband and elderly women counsel the wife to aid reconciliation. The perpetrator is charged when necessary through paying a fine in terms of money or a goat depending on the severity of the matter.

Serious matters are referred to the police for counselling and charges and to the hospital for treatment and further counselling. All participants advocated for awareness campaigns against domestic violence in the community.

Domestic violence occurs in the family ranging from one to three times especially around month end according to 14 participants from the family members. This shows that domestic violence is very high within the family system.

Findings from this study revealed that victims of domestic violence usually turn to their family members when involved in domestic violence for family support. Out of 15 participants of the family members (n=5) married women experiencing domestic violence turned to their sisters in-law (n=3) turned to their brothers in law (n=2) turned to their mothers in law and (n=2) turned to their sisters (n=1) turned to the cousin sister (n=1) turned to the daughter and ((n=1) turned to the grandfather for family guidance and counselling.

#### Why married women become victims of domestic violence

According to Zimbabwe Women's Lawyers Association (ZWALA) (2011:1), domestic violence arises from social cultural and religious practices that subordinate women. In addition, domestic violence is facilitated by patriarchal (male controlled) social hierarchies, acceptance of violence as a mode of social interaction and political interface. In addition, cultural and traditional practices have perpetuated the subservient position of women making them more vulnerable. All African men benefit from the patriarchal dividend where men gain from the overall subordination of women (Connell, 1995:79).

The study results highlight the reasons why women become victims of domestic violence. Findings revealed that (n=20) of the 50 participants indicated that cultural beliefs are major drivers of domestic violence. This is compounded (n=13) who highlighted the ignorance of rights and laws protecting people (especially women) from domestic violence.

Some participants highlighted the following reasons;

"The traditional consideration of women as second-class citizen predisposes women to domestic violence"

"The issue of lobola is central, so the husband feels that he possesses the wife thus the traditional influence to domestic violence". Thus, suggest that

if a man traditionally had to pay lobola (marrying) they attributed a greater value to women.

“Abusers have a belief that abuse whether physical or verbal is acceptable”.

“Imbalances between married couples for example married women who are most dependent on spouses for economic well-being”.

“Due to lack of respect, some couples and their families follow the culture which underlines the submission of women to their husbands”.

“Women are weaker than men, lack of empowerment, timid, do not have voices in their homes and usually women are not bread winners”.

“Traditionally women are regarded as under their husbands therefore men take advantage of women”.

Therefore, many abuses in Zimbabwe are perpetrated due to gender inequality, social norms, poverty or low social and economic status of women. They are regarded as weak legal sanctions within marriage, lack of women’s civil rights, marriage laws are weak and there is broad social acceptance of violence (WHO, 2012:4). In addition, women who lack economic resources are expected to obey their husbands according to social – cultural norms. Any deviations from the set norms subject them from being disliked by their families resulting in domestic violence (Seema *et al.*, 2014:124)

The study observed that (n=42) participants of the 50 married women responded indicated that the husbands have a problem with substance abuse such as alcohol or other drugs. It is evident that alcohol is closely related to domestic violence. However, there was one married woman who did not know whether or not their husband was having a problem with substance abuse such as alcohol or other drugs. The findings also revealed that (n=40) participants of the 50 married women highlighted that their partners were not currently on bail or parole, or has served a time of imprisonment or has recently been released from custody in relation to offences of violence. Given that domestic violence against women is a real threat, this shows that fear is being deeply engraved within women such that they fail to report their

husbands over violence and its related offences to the police, church leaders and traditional leaders.

It's very important to understand whether type of abuse was affected or influenced by the total monthly income. The incomes are used here as a yardstick to understand whether income differentials that can also indicate class differences has a bearing on the type of abuse. The results show that income has marginal to no impact on the type of abuse. Women across the income categories tend to suffer similar types of abuse. The only marginally significant issue is how within those that suffer physical abuse there are marginally more women in the below \$500 category.

The results also focused on another analysis that looked into whether education level would also impact type of abuse. The data again shows that there are multiple interesting intersections between type of abuse and level of education. An example is how within the count for verbal and emotional abuse most of the cases (n=36) were reported by women with university education. This can be explained by the fact that more educated women tend to understand the various forms of abuse especially emotional and verbal. Education helps women to understand and question specific behaviours despite this there is however no distinct difference between the different educational levels in terms of types of abuse.

Education does, however, not automatically translate in a lower incidence of domestic violence. In fact, women with primary and secondary education are more likely to have experienced domestic violence than uneducated women, among whom incidence rates are similar to rates among women with higher education, a puzzle which deserves further inquiry (Christiaensen, 2016).

Study results focused on the type of abuse and occupation of the women. Cross tabulations did not show any discernable pattern or relationship between these two variables. Again, the type of abuse is independent of economic variables such as occupation or education level. Domestic violence is thus not a function of economics but rather socio-cultural and religious beliefs that are transmitted through socialization and promoted via social institutions. Such beliefs underpin community practices around domestic violence and are even affected by the law institutions like police and courts.

The research findings on the relationship with the victim, revealed that out of 15 family members (n=5) participants of the family members were the sisters in law of the victim (n=3) participants were brothers in law of the victims (n=2) participants were mothers in law of the victims and (n=2) participants were sisters of the victims. Therefore, most victims preferred to report their cases to their sisters in law followed by brothers in law of the victims.

The identified themes are discussed below using the exceptions from respondent's narratives. The discussion of these themes is based on the main themes that came out from data collection namely: The roles of the community members on the prevention and control of domestic violence, the experiences of married women about domestic violence and the strategies for educating communities on the prevention and control of domestic violence among married women.

Church leaders and family members were interviewed about the roles of the community in the prevention and control of domestic violence.

Roles of the community by church leaders:

The role of the community was emphasised by the various church leaders who argued that domestic violence requires the effort of everyone to be eradicated. The community is seen as an important driver of programmes that promotes safety of women and all the

victims of domestic violence. It can act as a sanctuary and a source of encouragement unlike now where people simply ignore and do not get involved even when the abuse is public. This statement is supported by excerpts below from one of the leaders from the Seventh Day Adventist;

“The community should facilitate for programmes that educate and conscientize people to guard against domestic violence. We need to conduct workshops often which give room for question and answer sessions as compared to campaigns that do not engage the community in a participatory manner”.

“The community should be the vanguard and play an important role through informing authorities of any incidences of violence that they come across. Awareness campaigns should be championed by the community and not outside organisations and institutions. Ownership of ending domestic violence should be a grassroots initiative in which the community holds its members accountable for their actions on domestic violence”.

The findings reveal that communities of faith play a unique and vital role in the response to and elimination of domestic violence, as they carry the responsibility to protect and nurture the spiritual wellbeing of the community as a whole and its individual members. Victims and survivors of domestic violence may turn to faith leaders for spiritual guidance in support before or instead of secular domestic violence services, because of the unique dimension they can add to the sometimes-overwhelming experience of seeking help.

The church leaders provide numerous ways in which they handle cases of domestic violence within the context of the church. The following strategies were outlined in the interviews:

**Counselling** – This includes the use of Bible and Christian messages to help the victims and also the perpetrators to move on and accept comfort in God. For women this type of counselling is done in such a way that it does not challenge the patriarchal order or empower them to leave an abusive marriage. One of the participants noted the process they use as follows;

“We talk to the affected person first providing relevant counselling from the word of God”.

“When the victim is comfortable we then counsel the perpetrator”.

“Where applicable they can call me for professional help”.

One of the church leaders however noted that in their church they advise victims to report to the police if the violence continues.

Mediation –This is one of the most important aspects of how churches respond to domestic violence. All the church leaders noted how divorce is shunned and thus the idea for mediation is to find a resolution that brings the couple together and saves the marriage. Chapters and verses in the Bible are used to promote reconciliation.

Campaigns against violence - Some of the church leaders noted that they are involved in programmes, which denounce domestic violence. Such campaigns include training, advocacy and couples’ retreat. These awareness campaigns are geared towards changing attitudes and promoting peaceful conflict resolution within the home.

Family members highlighted what they perceive as roles of the community in preventing domestic violence as shown below;

“Men are encouraged to solve issues amicably and not resort to physical violence to solve domestic issues.”

“Support, educate, empower the victim and protect her from further violence or injuries.”

“Bring peace between the two by reporting the matter to police.”

“Community members at times organise awareness campaigns and community meetings educating couples about negative effects of domestic violence on families.”

“Women are encouraged to submit themselves to their husbands to avoid further problems of abuse”.

In Zimbabwe, women are viewed as property and a gender role assigned to them as sub servants to men (Mashiri, 2013:97). Therefore, in a male-dominated society women are supposed to be submissive and obedient for every decision pertaining to their household affairs,

contraception, number of children and their education (Matizha, 2014:5).

Participants in the study outlined multiple forms of domestic violence, which they have experienced. These forms of violence are not mutually exclusive but in many ways feed into each other. According to the married women experiencing domestic violence, physical abuse is the most common form but (n=5) participants highlighted a multiplicity of abuses. This shows how being physically beaten also leads to other forms of abuse such as emotional and spiritual abuse as victims develop problems related to their self-esteem and self-worth. It is worth noting how (n=5) participants reported sexual abuse especially in our cultural space where the paying of *lobola* (bride wealth) is seen as a tacit acceptance that a man can use his wife sexually however he pleases. Zimbabwean law now recognizes marital rape as illegal Domestic Violence Act 2006. According to (n=7) participants verbal abuse was said to include being shouted at and also demeaning comments in front of children or other people that are meant to kill self-esteem of women. Such comments usually relate to physical appearance or some other perceived flaw on the person of the woman. If a woman answers back to such verbal abuse she can then be physically beaten thus in many ways one abuse can lead to others.

The results showed that (n=48) of the 50 participants, indicated that their partners were jealous towards them and were controlling them. According to (n=40) participants the violent and controlling behaviour was becoming worse or more frequent. This indicates that most married women are experiencing hostile relationships with their spouses. On a recent or imminent separation (n=15) participants indicated that they have had a recent separation in the last 12 months or that a separation was imminent. The findings revealed that (n=1) of the 50 participants refused to answer on the violence or controlling behaviour of the husband becoming worse or more frequent. It is

probably since such a woman could be a victim of serious violence to the extent that she fears even to discuss such issues to the wider public.

The study discovered that (n=41) of the 50 married women indicated that their partners had done things to them, of a sexual nature, that made them feel bad or physically hurt and (n=19) nineteen of them having had their husbands arrested for the sexual assault. It gives the picture that married women are being sexually abused but, for whatever reasons known to them, they do not want their husbands to be arrested for the sexual abuses. Maybe it is because of the cultural inheritance and beliefs surrounding such issues, an area which can be further researched on.

**Theme 3:** Strategies for educating communities within an African context on the prevention and control of domestic violence

Twelve sub-themes emerged out of the theme of strategies for educating communities within an African context on the prevention and control of domestic violence.

This section discusses community strategies to combat domestic violence. Community strategies are important in promoting or ending domestic violence. The study found that (n=7) of participants offer counselling to both the victim and perpetrator of domestic violence. The belief here is that marriage is a sacred institution, which should be promoted at all cost including reconciling couples even after multiple episodes of beatings. This is built on a strong Christian ethos that promotes marriage survival over the safety of women. According to the research findings (n=2) participants noted that community prays for the victims of domestic violence, which again shows the importance of religion in any discussion of domestic violence in Zimbabwe. Study results also worryingly indicates that (n=6) participants thought that there are more people who will do nothing

(n=6) before calling the police. In addition study results indicated that (n=2) participants actually noted that the victim is stigmatized by the community. These responses show serious gaps in how the community views domestic violence. It shows that communities are ill equipped to deal with domestic violence. There is a distinct lack of systems to deal with domestic violence.

The findings revealed the perceived weaknesses of community strategies in domestic violence. Accordingly (n=8) participants highlighted the biggest weakness in community strategies is that people tend to turn a blind eye towards domestic violence. Community rarely engages or talks about the issue rather they tend to push it under the carpet. One of the problems noted in the focus group discussions was that 'domestic violence is seen as an individual problem which does not affect everyone in the same way thus people tend to keep away even when they witness domestic violence. The findings from (n=4) of the participants there is a lack of unity within the community in denouncing domestic violence. This is related to the cultural acceptance of domestic violence. What is also of concern is how (n=8) of the participants reported that the community is also involved in taking pictures and videos to post on social media. Over the past five years, Zimbabwe has seen the rise of social media use in which cases of abuse are openly shared and have become memes and jokes. Many such videos have gone viral and have in many ways trivialized the effects and dangers of domestic violence. Study results revealed that (n=5) of the participants highlighted that the community also tend to side with men. Cultural beliefs are at the heart of such practices that favour men and turn a blind eye to the suffering of women.

The findings revealed suggested plans of action that the community can embark on to prevent domestic violence. The findings from (n=15) of the participants were for the idea of forming support groups for

victims to ensure that they are not isolated and that they have a support structure to lean on. The study results indicated that (n=11) participants highlighted the need for more awareness campaigns focusing on ensuring women and men are capacitated with knowledge of laws and knowledge of what to do in the event of domestic violence.

Domestic violence arises from religious practices that subordinate women. Women noted how Christianity in particular is highly patriarchal (male controlled) social hierarchies, acceptance of violence as a mode of social interaction. (ZWALA), 2011:1). Studies have shown how religious ideologies have been used to justify abuse of women and children. Chireshe *et al.* (2009) argues that many abuses in Zimbabwe are perpetrated and justified in the name of religion and culture.

The research went on to understand the perception of the church leaders on their successes in resolving domestic violence cases. The findings were varied but most of the church leaders thought their methods were effective as there were low numbers of couples reporting future incidences of violence. The leaders also outlined various ways in which they resolve domestic violence cases. Some of the experiences of the church leaders are outlined in the quotes below;

“We resolve cases by monitoring and giving advice on their day-to-day living. The older women in the church are responsible for this task”.

“Family counselling programmes and seminars are conducted and we invite victims of domestic violence to attend”.

“We have group couple meetings and also through teaching the word of God and ensuring salvation of people. Those who are born again are less likely to be involved in domestic violence”.

“We try and bring them together by taking them for an outing and encourage them to have dialogue”.

“We give women advice on how to handle their husbands perfectly to avoid conflicts”.

“We counsel both parties and we also pray with them”.

“For serious cases we actually refer to the police. As a church we are not going to follow traditional and cultural practices”.

The above quotes highlight the different experiences and ways in which church leaders are involved in combating domestic violence. What is clear again is how the churches are more interested in mediation that protects marriage and the family unit even to the detrimental of women victims in some cases. Only one of the church leaders highlighted that they will encourage reporting to the police. Some of the leaders noted that their churches have ways of disciplining perpetrators that includes stripping of positions in church. It is however not clear how effective such moves are.

The advice given to married women is of interest in the context of this research. They highlight the patriarchal underpinnings of Zimbabwean society that seeks to shape how women behave within the home.

One of the leaders noted;

*"Our modern day women should understand the cultural norms of their society or where they are married."*

Another leader noted that they advise women to choose what to do depending on the level of abuse. To show the patriarchal nature of church messages one leader noted;

*"I greatly encourage the women to submit themselves under their men/husbands".*

There is nothing in this message that focuses on the perpetrators of the violence. Women in many ways are blamed for the violence they suffer. One other church leader noted that:

*"We normally encourage self-introspection first and ask them to try to identify if there are any riles they have played in the emanation of conflict after which an appropriate counselling route is chosen".*

The experiences at one of the churches were indicated as involving;

*"We advise women to forgive their husbands. If the couples cannot accept, we advise them to separate for a season when the tempers are calm; they can change and come together."*

A leader at Goshen City Church noted;

“We advise women to make a report first with the police or organisations such as Musasa before seeking spiritual counselling.”

“Advised to seek help with the pastors to verbalise their feelings.”

This Goshen City Church leader was different from most that actually cited husbands.

The church leaders in Zimbabwe have admitted that domestic violence is a major problem even in churches. The church leaders revealed that they constantly counsel women and men experiencing violence. They indicated that despite of many initiatives that presently exist to address domestic violence in their churches in Zimbabwe; domestic violence is still highly prevalent. The church leaders also revealed that Zimbabwe is a larger Christian community and it would be expected that religious values would contribute to ending domestic violence and ensuring peaceful families, but unfortunately this is not the case.

Most of the church leaders indicated that women should submit themselves under their husbands and in most cases women are blamed for the violence they suffer. Handling of domestic violence within the churches is more or less the same by church leaders as most of them counsel the affected parties, educating the affected parties on the negative effects of domestic violence to the whole family.

Multi religious support groups for victims of domestic violence have been created to support the victims in Zimbabwe according to the church leaders during the focus group discussion. Religious leaders know how to respond to diverse situations of violence since they are trained during church seminars.

Most religious leaders have been advocating for enactment and enforcement of laws to protect community members from domestic violence. In addition according to church leaders’ multi religious

centres have been created where married women can receive help/legal assistance in Zimbabwe.

Most of the church leaders indicated that, many churches in Zimbabwe have started sensitising community on domestic violence and related issues. Multi religious sermons have been conducted specifically targeting men from different religions including topics such as domestic violence.

During the focus group discussions some church leaders revealed that they have started providing shelter and counselling services to domestic violence victims at existing religious structures.

Overall comments: Most participants were advocating for equal treatment of both sexes and that misinterpreting the message can contribute to domestic violence. In addition faith and belief should reinforce the spirit of love, peace and equity in dealing with one another.

Participants reported on activities they have already undertaken related to domestic violence in their churches. The range of activities was broad, with participants representing numerous organisations that address these issues. Several organisations highlighted were Musasa Project, ZWALA, Kushinga, Zimbabwe Republic Police and Ministry of Women affairs and Gender.

They have been active in providing psycho-social support for victims. These groups have addressed domestic violence through home counselling and referral of victims to the hospital for treatment. This range of programmes and actions illustrate that the participants were already active in addressing some of the issues of domestic violence. Therefore there is need to create country based multi faith teams to broaden the reach of the activities.

In this section the discussion turns to the role of traditional chiefs in combating domestic violence. Traditional leaders remain an important and influential constituency in Zimbabwe. As such the campaign against domestic violence in Zimbabwe requires the full participation of this group for it to succeed. Domestic violence is steeped in a system of harmful practices, which are justified using custom and religion under a patriarchal worldview that has no place in any democratic spaces. It is thus important to highlight how traditional leaders as the custodians of culture in Zimbabwe can be used to fight these practices. A study by Safaids (2010) indicates that traditional leaders and structures remain influential among a large majority of the population in urban and rural Southern Africa. Traditional leaders wield influence and command much respect in their communities therefore are in many ways the gateways to any intervention seeking the participation of local people.

They are viewed as the custodians of culture that makes them important drivers of change because most of the discriminatory practices are justified as culturally acceptable forms of behaviour. As part of the governance structure, traditional leaders have an important role in the development of societal values and ethics, including those on domestic violence. Traditional leaders have a constitutional role to respect human rights and to uphold family values. Within the confines of the Customary Law and Local Courts Act, traditional leaders are part of the judiciary and they play an important role in dispute resolution. In rural Zimbabwe the people as compared to formal state institutions for conflict and dispute resolution use these traditional courts more frequently.

Ways used in mediating domestic violence cases by traditional leaders  
It also important in the context of this research to understand the practices utilised at traditional courts when dealing with domestic

violence cases. Responses to this question elicited the following responses;

“The cases do not include me only as the leader but other committee members in the village. The committee is there to assist me in all matters and to ensure that there is consensus over decisions. In cases of domestic violence we mainly lean towards reconciliation through elderly men counselling the husband and elderly women counselling the wife”.

“I first listen to both parties to better understand the whole issue as a way of reconciling the two”.

“There some serious matters we send to the police but this is dangerous because when the police get involved it is difficult to reconcile the parties”.

The responses mainly point towards the need to promote reconciliation in cases of domestic violence. Traditional leaders are interested in protecting the family unit thus discouraging any strategies that further escalate the situation especially by involving the police.

On being asked whether women are satisfied with how their cases are handled at the courts a leader indicated that;

“In most cases I preside over women and they are generally happy because we prove that men are in the wrong and they apologise to their wives”.

The survey did not include women in rural spaces so it is difficult to ascertain such statements. Most of interviewed leaders were also against the idea of women rushing to report to the police about their abuse. Some of the responses included;

“A wife should first report to relatives or friends before then going to sabhuku and then the chief”.

“It is wrong for the wife to do that because if you are reconciled by family or traditional leaders who learn new things, but with the police the husband can get arrested and the wife is left to suffer with the children”.

One of the leaders differed with the others arguing that whenever violence is involved it is better to involve the police. It is clear that for women spaces to find protection and help are limited by many beliefs

and practices built around a man's ability to provide for the family. Women are encouraged to shun police so that they do not lose the breadwinner to prison.

This section highlights the role of family members in the prevention and control of domestic violence. Family members are recognized as relevant and influential when it comes to the prevention and control of domestic violence as it affects the well-being of every member of the family (Lions *et al.*, 2005:3; Meyer, 2009).

Therefore family members have an important role when it comes to prevention and control of domestic violence among married women. Hence family support alleviates social stress and improves mental health and psychological well-being of married women experiencing domestic violence. Family members should promote women's safety and strengthen family unit.

There are many strategies that emerged out of the focus group discussions around the strategies for educating community members on the prevention of domestic violence. These strategies include awareness campaigns, training camps family counselling, family meetings and having various information packs available in communities that speak to domestic violence prevention. Traditional leaders, church leaders and family members remain important players and will be important in any initiative to combat domestic violence.

Some of the thoughts outlined by the church leaders include:

- Awareness campaigns are important in educating the people especially women on domestic violence. Women need to learn their rights and what to do when they suffer violence.
- Information should be available in churches for women and men on the rights and laws around domestic violence.
- Information provided by family members advocated that women should be given family support and be empowered on

how to handle violent men. Women should be taught on how to stand for their rights.

Ways used in mediating domestic violence cases within the families

Participants pointed out the following;

“Boy child must grow up being taught to respect women and no outside interference from either men or women.”

“Families should give support to the abused women by educating abused women on how to handle violent men.”

“Women should be empowered on life survival skills.”

Women should be taught on how to stand up for their rights.

“Enforcement of the law to correct perpetrators.”

The findings were supported by Spreachmann *et al.* (2013: 22).

The participants eluded the following;

“Counselling of both parties against domestic violence”.

“Consulting church leaders on how to deal with domestic violence in the family”.

“Conducting family meetings and counselling”.

“Seeking help from elders within the family and counselling.”

“Counselling and separating the two”.

The prevention of domestic violence among married women within the families

The following findings were revealed by the study respondents;

“Enforcing the law to correct perpetrators”.

“Workshops should be carried out to educate men against domestic violence”.

“Educating women on their rights”.

“Encouraging women to report cases of domestic violence early”.

“There is need for regular education and counselling to both couples by church pastor, chief and family members”.

“Families to offer support to abused women (victims)”.

“Women should be empowered on survival skills.”

Domestic violence has deep rooted impacts on the victims and survivors. It was important for this study to highlight the effects of domestic violence to highlight the need for strategies to combat this

social scourge. Domestic violence affects women in deep and emotional ways that affects self-esteem and self-worth. The study results show that (n=10) of the 50 participants have low self-esteem; (n=10) feel depressed; (n=8) feel hopelessness and bitter; and more concerning (n=6) are suicidal. These statistics highlight the deep psychological effects of domestic violence. Ultimately, it is the victims who feel shame and social isolation from abuse. This affects work, family life and women's ability to reach their full potential. One of the women in the focus group discussions noted;

*"Domestic violence affects my self-worth and makes me lose confidence".*

Women who suffer domestic violence find it difficult to excel at home or at other activities.

The study results clearly show that the women mainly felt hopeless and bitter, felt suicidal, felt depressed and had a low esteem after being involved in domestic violence.

Domestic violence affects the family unit especially children. Most of the participants live with their children who must witness and live through some of this violence. One respondent in the focus group discussions highlighted;

*"Domestic violence affects children negatively".*

The study found that most of participants (n=8) believe that domestic violence leads to negative behavioural change in children such as drug abuse, low grades and embarrassment. (n=4) of the participants noted that it affects children psychologically.

The study results help illuminate that domestic violence also negatively affects the local community. This shows that domestic violence is not relegated to the secrecy of the bedroom but it is rather a community problem. The study findings (n=5) of the participants noted that domestic violence leads to disruption of peace and

tranquillity from fights. Importantly (n=3) of the participants noted that it is difficult to explain to their children about domestic violence. When children see married people fight it is disconcerting and parents are put into a difficult situation where they must explain to their children about domestic violence.

The study found that (n=46) of the 50 participants had their partners threatening to harm or to kill them. At the same time (n=4) out of 50 participants have never been threatened to be harmed or to be killed by their partners. The study results show that (n=30) of the 50 participants indicated that their partners have ever been charged with breaching an apprehended domestic violence order. On the other hand (n=9) nine of the participants indicated that their family pets were ever been harmed or killed or threatened to do so by their partners. This can be viewed that most married women are ever threatened by their partners and (n=41) of the participants denied. On the overall picture percentage of married women (n=48) admitting to risk indicators is very high especially when it comes to physical violence. This can be viewed that women are more often living in constant fear of being harmed or killed by their partners.

The study found that (n=36) of the 50 participants have had the experience of being threatened or physically violated towards while pregnant, it shows that the level of domestic violence has scarily heightened. Regards having lodged a complaint between the married women and their partners pertaining child contact or residency issues and/or at the current Family Court proceedings, it turned out that (n=29) of the 50 participants had indeed lodged a complaint at the family court proceedings. It shows that these married women are aware of their rights to custody of their children. They are also knowledgeable to contraception issues with (n=16) out of 50 indicating that they have children who are 12 months apart.

The participants revealed the following;

- "Domestic violence brings shame on the family".
- "Domestic violence leads to police cases and breaks the family".
- "Domestic violence can cause severe injuries due to physical violence".
- "Children suffer from domestic violence".
- "Under reporting cases of domestic violence as the family will be trying to protect the family name".
- "Domestic violence can lead to wars between families".
- "The victim can lack support from family members".
- "Application of divorce due to domestic violence".

Domestic violence predisposes married women to stress related conditions such as depression. The participants revealed the following;

- "Sometimes they become confused and unstable".
- "They are withdrawn, they lack confidence".
- "They suffer from depressions".
- "They become emotionally unstable".
- "Emotional stress which can lead to suicidal cases".
- "They suffer from anxiety".

Research findings revealed that domestic violence victims often suffer from stress leading to depression and loss of self-esteem (Mashiri, 2013:96). The findings were supported the Victorian government (2012:27) who revealed that domestic violence victims often suffer from psychological trauma which ranges from depression, anxiety, self-harm tendencies and loss of self-esteem.

The above findings were supported by several researchers who revealed that domestic violence predisposes women to mental health challenges. Domestic violence is associated with mental health conditions which include depression, insomnia; anxiety, suicidal ideations and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Deran *et al.*, 2009:1135, Stephenson *et al.*, 2013).

The participants highlighted the following;

- "They are not so free to interact and when they do so they are hot or temperamental and weeping".

“Normal conversations are shortened”.

“By opening up to those closest to them and other elderly family members”.

“They are blamed for their situations and treated as the outcasts”

“They are not open to disclose the abuse; if they open they leave out major issues”.

The participants interviewed highlighted their opinions as follows;

“By seeking comfort and advice from family members and church leaders”.

“Some devote most of their time to their children and the church”.

“They put fake smiling faces and act as if they are living a happily ever after life”.

“They run away from the marriages, some become prostitutes of which our culture does not allow that”.

“By consulting church leaders and other family members and reporting to the police”.

“Some ignore, some go to the church leader in rural areas they go to the chiefs”.

“They go into silent mode”.

Most of the participants supported the view of consulting family members and church leaders to seek comfort and advice and report the matter to traditional leaders or to the police.

The study utilised a qualitative approach maximising the chances and confidence of having obtained sufficient understanding of strategies for educating communities within an African Context on the prevention and control of Domestic Violence affecting married women in Zimbabwe.

Domestic Violence is mostly visible in high density areas where the housing stands are smaller and houses are clustered. This may however give an impression that domestic violence is more prevalent among the poor who inhabit high density areas. There was also easy access of research participants in high density areas compared to low density areas. Physical abuse is the most common form of abuse although some victims highlighted a multiplicity of abuses. Domestic

violence affects our distance, those living near (neighbours). Age is not a determinant of being a victim of domestic violence as it affects across the ages.

Women are progressively attaining higher education qualifications in Zimbabwe. However, education does not immunize one from domestic violence. Educated, skilled and professional women are not immune to various forms of abuse. However, education helps women to understand and question specific behaviours.

Most of spouses are self-employed meaning they are experiencing economic difficulties leading them to be emasculated as wives take more and more household head roles.

Domestic violence is thus not a function of economy but rather socio-cultural and religious beliefs that are transmitted through socialization and promoted via social institutions. Such beliefs under-pin community practises around domestic violence and are even affected by the law institutions like police and courts.

Domestic violence affect work, family life and women's ability to reach their full potentials. In addition domestic violence affect the family unit as a whole for instance conflicts between and within the family. Therefore there is need for family support to promote women's safety. A caring supportive family enables abused women to be cared for in the community, thus reducing the risks of developing physical, social and psychological problems. Substance abuse is strongly linked to domestic violence as most married women are experiencing hostile relationships in Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe, culture and religion are important factors when considering the perpetual existence of domestic violence. Traditional leaders remain an important and influential constituency in Zimbabwe and they are the gateways to an intervention of domestic violence

seeking the participation of local people and their constitutional role to respect human rights and to uphold family values. Some strategies to end violence are through family counselling, educative campaigns, couple meetings and workshops.

This chapter provided an investigative and descriptive analysis of the strategies for educating communities within an African context on the prevention and control of domestic violence affecting married women in Zimbabwe, based on the research questions, aim and objectives of the study. The findings were presented in themes derived from the research questions, aims and objectives of the study. The study explored the roles of community members in the prevention and control of domestic violence, the experiences of married women about domestic violence and strategies for educating community members on the prevention and control of domestic violence.

From the data analysis and review of literature, there is a consistent finding that study subjects are affected emotionally, physically and psychologically. In addition, their self-esteem and self-worth is also affected. The study rose out of concern that given the availability of the constitution that protects the rights of women, married women are still violated.

Cultural beliefs and religion are strongly linked to domestic violence. Overall, these results suggest that the acceptance or rejection of violence against women is deeply rooted in ancestral social norms of different ethnic groups. These social norms persist even when economic and social conditions evolve, and may affect many generations (long-term persistence of cultural values has been widely documented). Given the pervasiveness of domestic violence against women, policy action is called for. Our results that violence behaviours are deeply rooted in ancestral socio-economic conditions warn us against disappointments from quick solutions.

Communities are still ill equipped to deal with domestic violence as there is distinct lack of systems to deal with domestic violence. The strategies for combating domestic violence are through counselling, educative campaigns and workshops.