UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

A good Wife? A theological challenge to cultural practices and gender-based violence in Rushinga, Zimbabwe

By

Tsitsi Mwapfaa

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Philosophiae Doctor* (PhD) in Dogmatics and Christian Ethics in the Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Pretoria

Supervisor:

Prof Tanya Van Wyk

September 2024

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

DEPARTMENT OF SYSTEMATIC AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

Declaration Regarding Plagiarism

The Department of Systematic and Historical Theology emphasises integrity and ethical behaviour with regard to the preparation of all written assignments. Although the supervisor and UP' library will provide guidelines regarding reference techniques, as well as ways to avoid plagiarism, you also have a responsibility to fulfil in this regard. Should you at any time feel unsure about the requirements, you must consult the lecturer concerned before submitting an assignment.

You are guilty of plagiarism when you extract information from a book, article, web page or any other information source without acknowledging the source and pretend that it is your own work. This does not only apply to cases where you quote the source directly, but also when you present someone else's work in a somewhat amended (paraphrased) format or when you use someone else's arguments or ideas without the necessary acknowledgement. You are also guilty of plagiarism if you copy and paste information directly from an electronic source (e.g., a web site, e-mail message, electronic journal article or CD-ROM) without paraphrasing it or placing it in quotation marks, even if you acknowledge the source.

You are not allowed to submit another student's previous work as your own. You are furthermore not allowed to let anyone copy or use your work with the intention of presenting it as his/her own.

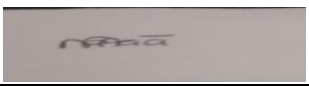
Students who are guilty of plagiarism will forfeit all credits for the work concerned and referred to the University for Disciplinary Action. Plagiarism is considered a serious violation of the University's regulations and may lead to your suspension from the University. The University's policy regarding plagiarism is available on the Internet at *http://www.library.up.ac.za/plagiarism/index.htm.*

For the period that you are a student at the Department of Systematic and Historical Theology, the following declaration must accompany all written work that is submitted for evaluation. No written work will be accepted unless the declaration has been completed and is included in the particular assignment.

	Student
I (Full names & Surname)	Tsitsi Mwapfaa
Student Number	22624946

Declare the following:

1. I understand what plagiarism entails and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this assignment is my own, original work. Where someone else's work was used (whether from a printed source, the Internet or any other source) due acknowledgement was given and reference was made according to departmental requirements.
3. I did not copy and paste any information directly from an electronic source (e.g., a web page, electronic journal article or CD ROM) into this document.
4. I did not make use of another student's previous work and submitted it as my own.
5. I did not allow and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of presenting it as his/her own work.



Signature: Student

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wonderful parents, who sacrificed what little they had to ensure I received a quality education. I have a key to unlocking the wonders of this world and beyond thanks to their efforts and sufferings. My courage and diligence in completing this course stemmed from their support. In addition to raising and nurturing me, my father, Peter Pikisanayi Mutema Mwapfaa sacrificed much over the years for my education and intellectual growth. Unfortunately, he passed on two months before my graduation, on 22 February 2025. They used the money they earned from farming for me to attend school. In times of hopelessness and discouragement, my mother, Gladys Mwapfaa, was a source of inspiration and fortitude. Throughout my life, she showed me incredible maternal care and support. As she used to say, "*Verenga mwanangu nekuti haudi kurima"* (You don't like farming, so you should read and educate yourself). From the beginning, she has been my rock. Regretfully, she passed away on November 2, 2022, the same year I began this research. I wish you could have been here to see me graduate. I'm grateful, Mama. I hope you find eternal peace with your lovely spirit! We'll get together once more.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ebenezer! To produce such great work, many hands and sleepless nights were put in by different people who wanted this work to succeed. It indeed takes the whole village to raise a child. I salute my supervisor, Professor Tanya Van Wyk, who has been with me throughout the entire journey up to completion. Her encouragement was unparalleled. Although I encountered several challenges along the way, her informative insights, suggestions, criticism, supervision and consistent guidance enabled me to remain focused. She worked wholeheartedly right up to the end of this work; indeed, without her dedication, I could not have done it. May God continue to bless and enlarge your territory!

Dr Matarirano, Dr Siwela, Dr Nhengu, and Dr Tsara thank you for your great insights. To Rev Dr Gondongwe, words will never fully express how honoured I am that you proofread my work. Thank you for taking the time to edit my work. I am grateful.

My sincere gratitude goes to my family, my brothers and sisters for their support. You are a blessing in my life. You started to call me Dr Tsitsi from the time I was working on my proposal showing how much you believed in me. To my late sister Shupikai Pauline, the one that I wished was around to see my achievements, thank you so much for the love you showed me during your life here. I know you could be very proud of me if you were here today seeing your little sister graduating.

Lastly, I want to thank all and sundry who contributed to the accomplishment of this great work including the respondents who shared their stories and insights with me. I want to thank my prayer partners who prayed and fasted with me to make sure I produced good work. Honestly, the list is inexhaustible. I pray the Almighty meets you at your point of need for sacrificing for me. I will forever be indebted to Jehovah, my Lord, and the one who was there in the beginning and will forever be in my life. God made sure that the good thing God started in me, came to fruition and completion. Without God, sure it was impossible for me to produce such a magnificent work. Glory to God's name!

ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe has been immersed in gender-based violence (GBV) for a very long time. Reports of cases of GBV, where women and female children are abused, dominate the print media, electronic media and social media. The laws of Zimbabwe are meant to address such challenges. Unfortunately, these laws often fail the women of Zimbabwe because of the misappropriation of culture by patriarchy. In this country, women account for most victims of all forms of domestic violence committed mainly by men who suffer from the effects of toxic masculinity and who have internalised the tenets of patriarchy. Therefore, if women are to be considered human beings too, there is a need to transform this understanding from a familial and societal level where this culture and tradition to manipulate women originates, and is perpetuated. Considering this realisation that change needs to start from a family and societal set-up, this thesis challenged the effects of cultural practices in perpetuating GBV and the way cultural practices exacerbate the physical, social, emotional and psychological scars and wounds that GBV leaves on women's lives. While acknowledging that there is existing research related to this context, this thesis focuses on how tradition, culture and social norms have affected women and girls in Rushinga (Kore-Kore), Zimbabwe. The reason for this is that the district of Rushinga has not been included as a focus of existing studies and, as the study pointed out, there are challenges related to GBV in this context. A womanist perspective was utilised to approach the problem of how culture is used to undergird gender-based violence in a society with a strong traditional background and to explore traditional and cultural practices which exacerbate violence toward women. It is indicated that women are expected to be good wives, despite their experiences of GBV. A qualitative approach was followed in which data was gathered from fieldwork, which included interviews. The study found that traditional and cultural tendencies such as teaching a girl how to be a good mother and raising them with the idea that they should please men, make women vulnerable and expose them to violence. It is suggested that culture must be aligned within the societal and lawful context of the Constitution and the provisions of the Bill of Rights.

ABBREVIATIONS/ ACRONYMS

COVID-19	Corona Disease 2019
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
DVA	Domestic Violence Act
EFA	Education for All
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Program
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
PAHO	Pan American Health Organisation
SAFE	Stopping Abuse and Female Exploitation in Zimbabwe
SV	Sexual Violence
SGBV	Sexual Gender-Based Violence
UN Women	United Nations Women
UP	University of Pretoria
VAW	Violence Against Women
VFU	Victim Friendly Unit
WCC	World Council of Churches
WHO	World Health Organisation
WCoZ	Women Coalition of Zimbabwe
ZDHR	Zimbabwe Doctors for Human Rights
ZWLA	Zimbabwe Women's Lawyers Association (ZWLA

Table of Contents

DEDICATION iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv
ABSTRACT v
ABBREVIATIONS/ ACRONYMS vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Background 1
1.2 Motivation for the Study 4
1.3 The Research Problem 6
1.4 Overview of Existing Literature 7
1.4.1 GBV in the African context and Zimbabwe 7
1.4.2 “Culture” and the African Context, including Zimbabwe 9
1.4.3 Researching women and gender in Africa and Zimbabwe 11
1.4.4 Existing research about violence in Rushinga 15
1.4.5 The intersection of religion and culture 17
1.5 Research Gap and Contribution of the Study 18
1.6 Research Questions 21
1.7 Research Methodology 21
1.7.1 Positionality 22
1.7.2 Theoretical Framework 24
1.8 Structure of the Study 25
CHAPTER 2: 27
CULTURE, THE HARMFUL NOTION OF A “GOOD WIFE” AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE 27
2.1 Introduction 27
2.2 Clarification of terms 27
2.2.1 Gender-based violence 27
2.2.2 Culture 28
2.3 Culture and the problematic construction of the notion of a “good wife” 28
2.3.1 Culture: A multifaceted phenomenon 29
2.3.2 Tradition and social norms 33
2.3.3 The intersection of religion and culture 40

2.3.4 Gender and gender norms 47
2.3.5 Zimbabwean marriage legislation 60
2.4 Gender-Based-Violence 67
2.4.1 Gender-based violence toward women in Africa 68
2.4.2 Gender-Based-Violence toward Women in Zimbabwe 73
2.4.3 Gender-based-violence toward women in Rushinga 77
2.5 Conclusion 81
CHAPTER 3 83
WOMANIST THEORY AND THEOLOGY AS A CRITICAL LENS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO CHALLENGE THE NOTION OF A “GOOD WIFE” 83
3.1 Introduction 83
3.2 The History and Scope of Womanism 84
3.3 Womanist Theory 86
3.4 Womanist Theology 87
3.4 Main Themes and Scholars within Women Theologians in Africa 90
3.4.1 African Women Theologians 92
3.4.2 Zimbabwean Women Theologians 100
3.4.3 African Women's Experiences of God 104
3.4.4 Women theologians’ interpretation of the Bible 109
3.5 Womanist Theology as a Critical Lens on Culture 119
3.6 Conclusion 126
CHAPTER 4: THE EMPIRICAL COMPONENT OF THE STUDY’S METHODOLOGY 127
4.1 Introduction 127
4.2 Methodological Framework 128
4.3 Qualitative Research Approach 129
4.4 Preliminaries of the Research Project 131
4.4.1 The site of the research and process of gaining access 132
4.4.2 Sampling and sampling procedure 133
4.4.3. Sample 133
4.4.4 Sample Size 134
4.4.5 Purposive sampling 135
4.5 Research Ethics 137
4.6 The Research Process 138

4.7 The Tools for Data Collection 139
4.7.1 Secondary Data 139
4.7.2 Interviews 140
4.7.3 Semi-structured in-depth interviews 142
4.7.4 Informal interviews 143
4.8 Field Experiences 146
4.8.1 Limitations of the Study 147
4.8.2 Methodological Limitation 147
4.9 Conclusion 148
CHAPTER 5: DATA RESULTS AND ANALYSIS 149
5.1 Introduction 149
5.2 What the data points out about the causes of GBV 150
5.2.1 Culture 150
5.2.2 Covid 19 156
5.2.4 State laws and legislations 164
5.3 Traits / Signs and Symptoms of GBV 168
5.3.1 Physical 169
5.3.2 Psychological 171
5.3.3 Social 173
5.4 Effects of GBV 175
5.4.1 Social 175
5.4.2 Psychological 178
5.4.3 Economic Effects 181
5.4.4 Effects on Family 184
5.4.5 Effects on women and their health 186
5.4.6 Effects on the Perpetrators 189
5.4.7 Effects on society 190
5.5 Conclusion 192
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 193
6.1 Introduction 193
6.2 Summary 193
6.3 Findings 195

6.4.1 Recommendations for the Church 198
6.4.2 Recommendations for Policymakers in Zimbabwe 201
6.4.3 Recommendations for future research 204
REFERENCES 206
Internet Sources 245
APPENDIXES 248
Appendix 1a. Interview Questions for Women 248
Appendix 1b: Shona Translation 249
Appendix 2a: Interview Questions for Men 250
Appendix 2b: Shona Translation 251
Appendix 3a: English Briefing and Consent Letter to the Participants 251
Appendix 3b. Shona Translation: Tsamba Yechibvumirano 252
Appendix 4a Declaration by Participants 253
Appendix 4b Shona Translation 254
Appendix 5: Village Head Letter Granting Permission to undertake a study in His Area 255
Appendix 6: Ethical Clearance Letter from the University of Pretoria 256
Appendix 7: Map of Kore-Kore Peoples 257

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The government of Zimbabwe enacted the Domestic Violence Act in 2007 to protect women against gender-based violence, but such violence continues to occur. The Domestic Violence Act of 2007, in its preamble, states explicitly that the Act is intended to "make provision for the protection and relief of victims of domestic violence and to provide for matters connected with or incidental to the foregoing."[1] The legislation was enacted almost two decades ago, and currently, in Zimbabwe, gender-based violence (GBV) remains a scourge. The Act states that the definition of domestic violence covers all persons who have been abused because of their disability, age, incapacity, or mental disorder[2]. The law establishes that acts of domestic violence are punishable with up to ten years in prison and/or a fine. Given this situation, the extent to which the Domestic Violence Act had a real impact and was implemented to its whole intention is examined in this study.

Monitoring by the World Health Organisation (WHO) has indicated that women continue to suffer because of the abuse imposed on them (WHO 2013:4). The report shows that this phenomenon is not new and not peculiar to Zimbabwe alone, although the rate at which it occurs in Zimbabwe seems worrisome (WHO 2013:4). The report shows that about one in three women aged 15 to 49 have experienced physical violence, and of four women, one of them has gone through sexual violence since the age of fifteen (WHO 2013:5). Zimbabwe, South Africa, Malawi and Mozambique appear in the top five countries with the most GBV cases in Africa. In Tanzania, 30% of all women aged between 15 to 49 years have at least experienced physical violence, and 17% of them have experienced sexual violence (Tanzania GBV Assessment 2022:6). Zambia has experienced a decline in GBV cases since 2021 as compared to 2020. It is reported that

[1] Cf. "The Domestic Violence Act," viewed at chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.jsc.org.zw/upload/Acts/2006/0516done.pdf; and also available at https://www.veritaszim.net/node/146, on 27 October 2023.
[2] Cf. "The Domestic Violence Act," viewed at chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.jsc.org.zw/upload/Acts/2006/0516done.pdf; and also available at https://www.veritaszim.net/node/146, on 27 October 2023.

in the first quarter of 2021, 4254 cases were reported countrywide compared to the first quarter of 2020, which recorded 5040 GBV cases, showing a decline of 786 cases, translating to a 15.6% reduction (Krupa, Manasyan, Woodman, Muttau, & Menon 2023).

Recent statistics on gender-based violence indicate that the epidemic known as COVID-19 has increased the risk of violence against women. Once the lockdown (referring to governmental instructions for their citizens to stay at home) started, GBV service providers in Zimbabwe noted an increase in reported GBV cases (Mukamana, Machakanja, & Adjei 2020:113). The National GBV Hotline administered by the Musasa Project (a social organisation that provides relief to survivors of GBV headquartered in the capital city of Zimbabwe), registered 764 cases a month, compared to 500-600 cases a month before COVID-19. Beyond the spike in reporting, service providers have witnessed an increase in the severity of violence.

From the start of the lockdown on 30 March 2020 until the end of December 2020, 6832 calls related to gender-based violence were received: 1312 recorded in April, 915 in May, 779 logged in June, 753 in July, 766 registered in August, 629 in September, 546 in October, and 567 in November and lastly 565 in December, with an average increase of 40% compared to the pre-lockdown trends (Mukamana *et al.* 2020:40). About 94% of the calls are from women. Psychological violence remains the most frequent with 55% of total cases, followed by physical violence at 22% of total cases, economic violence at 15%, and sexual violence at 8%. These statistics provide a scary snapshot of the realities of women in Zimbabwe. It indicates that for women in Zimbabwe, living in close quarters with a man can be extremely dangerous.

Of the 10 provinces of Zimbabwe, Rushinga records the highest percentage of GBV occurrences, with a 56% incidence rate (Mrewa 2022). Rushinga is located in one of the eight districts in the Mashonaland Central province of Zimbabwe, and it is 281, 3 kilometres from the capital city, Harare. Police records show that the female species are being abused because of their gender (Mrewa 2022). This means there is already existing information from the police concerning the abuse of women. Besides police

reports, there are reported cases of GBV that aired on Zimbabwe Television, on social media, and in local newspapers. The pandemic exacerbated the occurrence of GBV in Zimbabwe because women were confined in their homes, their movement restricted, and support was more challenging to access. However, the prevalence of gender-based violence was high even before the pandemic, as Mukamana *et al.* (2020) have indicated. According to data from a Demographic Health Survey, as referenced by Mukamana *et al.* (2020), about 35% of women have experienced physical violence from the age of 15, while 14% experienced sexual violence once in their days. The report further revealed that 32% of married women had experienced spousal emotional violence. Other studies further indicated that 40% of women and a third of men accepted and justified the physical chastisement of women. It has been reported that almost a quarter of married women who experience domestic violence also experience sexual violence (Mukamana *et al.* 2020:43).

Further confirmation of the current state of things in Zimbabwe is found in the United Nations Women Global Database on "Violence against Women." The database indicates that in Zimbabwe, the rate of women who experience physical violence in their lifetime is at 37.6%, and those experiencing sexual intimate violence are at 19.9%. Lastly, statistics on child marriage indicate a 32.4% prevalence in Zimbabwean society (UN WOMEN 2016:6). The United Nations Population Fund (2021) noted that violence against women has emerged as a significant issue on the international human rights agenda. This acknowledgement has been realised largely through the untiring advocacy efforts of women's establishments worldwide, such as the UN Women and The Global Fund for Women.

The underlying problem of these statistics is cultural constructions of what it means to be a woman. If a woman does not perform her gender roles according to the cultural norms, she is punished. In this study, this phenomenon as it pertains to married women is the focus. If a married woman does not perform specific duties, does not behave in an expected way, does not dress modestly as expected, and does not talk in such a way as expected by society, then she is not a "good wife." This means a woman should

"perform" her gender duties, and this "performance" is like a standard for women's behavior (Butler 2009:12). It places an unbearable burden on married women within specific cultural settings. A question that arises is: Is the standard for being a good wife, being a servant of the man, bending to his every whim?

Despite some gains for women on the global stage, in spaces like Rushinga, women are expected to have an inner sense of men's expectations about their roles, such as nurturing their husbands almost like children. Women are expected to protect the home and do a lot of chores while men can "relax" or "rest." Cultural constructions do not make way for any alterations, and so in such a setting, it does not matter whether both men and women go to work – when both arrive home from work, women are expected to do chores (Zulu 2015). A woman is labelled a "bad wife" if she does not conform to this. Unfortunately, although men are at the forefront of making sure norms are adhered to, women are also abused by other women if they fail to exhibit the traits of a "good wife." In my experience and context, the sister-in-law or aunt starts by condemning woman X for not being a good wife. Aunts and sisters do this to protect their brothers or nephews or to spite the daughter-in-law into submission.

Thus, this study, using a womanist theological approach, explores traditional and cultural practices that exacerbate violence toward women and suggest responses to violence against women. The study problematizes the idea of a "good wife" that is constructed by culture and performed by society and considers the challenges that women experience when they try to fit in with societal standards. The study finally investigates how the committers of gender-based violence are held responsible for their wrongdoings and whether the Zimbabwean Government enacts its legislation in terms of the Domestic Act Of 2007.

1.2 Motivation for the Study

Womanist theology recognises personal experience as a foundation for creating knowledge that, is, as a category of knowledge (Kolawole 1997). This study used womanist theology as a theoretical framework because it focused on women's

experiences, especially Black women. In this regard, my interest is to empower victims of abuse with the knowledge to protest and address cultural and societal tendencies that belittle and oppress them. As a liberation theology, I utilised the womanist theology since it offers weapons of resistance (Townes 2003) to readers so that they can be able to get out of the webs and cages they are in.

Linked to womanist theology, I present my positionality as part of the motivation for this study. I stayed in Rushinga for a decade and observed that cultural practices caused a lot of harm to women, specifically married women. Women are supposed to, and expected to be good, passive, and subordinate wives no matter how terrible life is, no matter how their husbands treat them. They are supposed to withstand all cultural pressure and keep on going to keep the marriage intact at all costs. GBV in the form of cultural practices is a “pain in the neck” for women. Women are abused for the slightest mistake, like burning food (which everyone would agree is a mistake because no one burns food willingly). They can also be abused for arriving home “late” from some of the places they have been, for example, church or women’s social clubs. Women also suffer abuse due to cultural perceptions of sexual purity. Women shared their narratives about being beaten by their husbands if rumours about their virginity surfaced in their talks. Cultural practices, like the conviction that a woman should not answer back to her husband, led to women being beaten and, in some cases, injured to the extent of being hospitalised.

I live in a community where it would not be strange to hear about women who died because of GBV or to hear of victims of femicide. This situation is not unique to my province but is a countrywide problem. Within the topic of this study, it was important to mention that I was also a victim of GBV. This motivated me to challenge cultural practices which are performed by men when they expect their wives to be “good wives” while making women guilty of abuse.

Connected to the above observations, Manyonganise (2017:120) highlights that the status of women is exacerbated by violence, which has been the demarcating feature of

their social environment and has negatively affected Zimbabwean society. Manyonganise goes on to say that this violence against women is due to various factors, such as cultural practices, which perceive women as subordinates to their spouses (Manyonganise 2017:121). This served as further motivation to conduct this study to emphasise the human dignity of women and their equivalent status as human beings, alongside men.

1.3 The Research Problem

Issues of GBV against women are a global problem, and Zimbabwe experiences the same situation where it is now customary to hear reports every day of women being brutally killed, assaulted, and murdered by their partners. Zimbabwe has been engulfed in gender-based violence (GBV) for a very long time. Unfortunately, the laws in Zimbabwe meant to address such challenges have failed and, in the process, let down the women of Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, issues of women abusing men and women-to-women violence were recorded, but the number of women who are victims of all forms of domestic violence executed primarily by men was on the rise.

The primary cause for this abuse imposed on women by men is mainly caused by patriarchal tendencies, for example, culture and tradition. There are elements of cultural and traditional practices which are performed by men and are abusive, yet they expect their wives to be “good wives.” These elements are a problem to society and the world at large as they aggravate the abuse of women and obstruct any chances of gender equality. Women are on the periphery of society because they are made to feel inferior. Such practices resulted in loss of lives, social and economic fallouts, and women’s human rights deprivation and undermined women’s sense of worth and self-esteem. The problem this research seeks to investigate is the extent to which cultural practices perpetuate GBV.

Given that in Africa, religion played an important role in shaping people's lives, the Bible is a resource for Zimbabwean women to draw hope and inspiration. This study-sought to establish whether or not the Church in Zimbabwe had employed strategies in its

theology to help the broken and abused women in the struggle against gender-based violence in Rushinga District, to be specific.

1.4 Overview of Existing Literature

This section aimed to provide an overview of existing literature on GBV, culture, and religion and their intersections in an African context, situating the research gap.

1.4.1 GBV in the African context and Zimbabwe

Existing research on the phenomenon of gender-based violence indicates that worldwide, women are exposed to many forms of violence and often have no safe place to go. Most societies have been mainly patriarchal, where most men serve as the heads of the families or clans (Nani 2011:18). Nani says that through the ever-present threat of sexual violence, women are controlled by men through physical domination and fear. The nature of male sexuality and the distortion and suppression of female sexuality lie at the core of patriarchy. Women's difference is diminished by a patriarchal society, which forces them to accommodate an alien and oppressive culture that gives freedom to masculinity (Nani 2011:21). The findings from the earlier research show that African women are more often treated as enslaved people and servants in the household. In some cultures, women have less value than cattle and are seen as mere sex objects. Thus, men have the liberty to do as they please, and for example, men can use their strength to resolve domestic problems. Because of their submissive mindset, wives feel obligated to do what their husbands want, even against their own will (Theron 2015:63).

Writers like Chitando (2015), Mapuranga (2014), Manyonganise (2015), and reports from organisations like the AIDS-Free World (2009), among other writers have worked on issues of gender-based violence in Zimbabwe, and they found out that in many African societies, violence is not spoken of; as it is regarded a private family matter. This is because the large number of perpetrators are men and this kind of action is accepted as "normal" family practice. It is accepted that a man should "discipline" his wife for "misbehaving." Ironically, many men justify such acts as part of their husbandly duties. GBV cannot by any chance be disclosed because it is regarded as "reflecting

badly" on the community once it gets to be known outside. It is often ignored in families as the woman is always blamed for being thoughtless and disrespectful to her husbands and other male family members and thus deserving of the punishment she receives (Kapuma 2015:253).

Kapuma goes on to say a "home is a place where everybody is supposed to feel safe and secure, protected, cared for and loved. The home is also the best and first school for children where they learn many things to guide them through life, many of which are learned by example" (Kapuma 2015:253). However, this is not the case in all homes as in many homes, children are often eyewitnesses to violence and abuse or even the subjects thereof, which will wound them for life. "Domestic violence cuts across divides of class, income, and culture" (Kapuma 2015:253). The abuse may not necessarily be physical but rather psychological and emotional and equally damaging. Many forms of abuse take place behind shut gates.

Chitando (2015), writing about gender-based violence in Zimbabwe, admittedly says, "Those of us who are male must admit that we have not treated women and children with justice. We have done violence to women and children based on our pursuit of our idealized masculinities" (Chitando 2015:273). He continues to say men are socialised to dominate and always have things go their way and do violence to women and children. Chitando acknowledges that men have privileges bestowed upon them by culture, religion, and economic systems, which they use to batter and suffocate women and children (Chitando 2015).

The research from the AIDS-Free World (2009) confirms that violence has been used on women and is still being imposed on them. According to the research, in Zimbabwe, since 2000, women have suffered political and sexual violence. From the women who were interviewed, it was evident that some of the women ended up getting infected with HIV, others got children from the rapes, and some are mentally and psychologically disturbed. In contrast, others go through trauma which they cannot go out of (AIDS-Free World 2009). The Zimbabwe Doctors for Human Rights (ZDHR 2009) notes that the report on political violence produced in Zimbabwe lacks a gendered perspective, and

structural and cultural violence against women in Zimbabwe has always been a cause for concern, for it curses our society (ZDHR 2009:10-22). The above information shows that gender-based violence is not a foreign phenomenon in Zimbabwe since there is literature at hand that confirms this. The current study builds from that information to fill the gap.

1.4.2 "Culture" and the African Context, including Zimbabwe

The available literature on the phenomenon of culture shows that women in the contemporary world are "culturally and socially an endangered species, and their plight is compounded by a transitional society's tenacious hold on traditional norms" (Nwachuku 1992:54). Consequently, societal norms are prescribed by the dominant, male sex. Attitudes towards women are always tinged with a particular cultural bias. The Shona culture values women as partners to men in reproduction, homestead maintenance, economic sustenance, and moral education of the younger generation. Women in Zimbabwe are not considered equal to men. The husband is unquestionably the head or leader of the wife (Musopole 1992:198).

From an African point of view, Oduyoye, Kanyoro, and Dube (1992) contributed a lot to culture. They all agree that "in some African communities, men and women continue to uphold cultural traditions and practices that enslave them. These enslaving cultural practices constantly make them vulnerable" (Oduyoye, Kanyoro & Dube 1992). African societies are culturally bound, where most of the prescribing on women tends to be carried out by male power authorities. The resulting role of women tends to be constrained by an unchanging set of norms enshrined in a culture that appears to be unchanging (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1992:10). Wasike (1992) argues that whatever men think and say to be good and right, women are supposed to affirm and support. Men are self-appointed spokespersons for women and children in every patriarchal society (Wasike 1992:110). However, Wasike comments, "We must condemn the demeaning and segregating systems created by people. These are the systems within our cultures which legitimise some exploitation while preserving the privileged status, prestige, and power of others" (Wasike 1992:115). This information corroborates the view that men

enjoy and have more benefits than women because culture has been shaped in a way that men are superior to women.

In Zimbabwe, findings from Mapuranga (2011), Makore (2004), Rutoro (2015), and others confirm that culture has made it easy for women to be looked down upon. Mapuranga (2011) argues for the “silver lining in the dark cloud presented by some harmful cultural practices that present Zimbabwean traditional religions as oppressive and ruthless to women” (Mapuranga 2011:3). In the book, Mapuranga deliberates on how the roles of women should not be looked down upon, and why maleness should not be a means to power if the response to HIV/AIDS is to be effective (Mapuranga 2011). In agreement, Nani (2011:25) posits that “violence is seen in the patriarchal attitude which has strengthened the traditional customs which men use to control women”. Nani further argues that culture plays a significant role in the lives of people, including the suppression of women. Male dominance is justified by arguments derived from culture, traditions, and religion, which continue over generations (Nani 2011:25).

Findings from existing research in Zimbabwe show that “women in Zimbabwe have largely remained trapped in a communitarian structure steeped in tradition where primary allegiance is to the community rather than to the person” (Kwaramba 2018). For Makore, “In traditional Zimbabwean society, the focus is usually on making available resources to the boy, that is, money for education, better food and clothing because the boy child is a permanent feature of the family and must be educated to take care of the family” (Makore 2004:49). This conception has meant that the girl child’s full mental potential has often been immature as compared to a boy child and that women live to please society and not themselves. Thus, existing information on culture points the study in the right direction where a starting point is shown. Thus, earlier work plays as a front or a drawing table as it provides and supplies the current study with information that empowers and equips women with knowledge of their rights as women.

1.4.3 Researching women and gender in Africa and Zimbabwe

When consulting existing research on this topic, some themes or trends emerge. The first theme is gender-based violence (Jousse 2021:1). For Jousse, although, women are important to a country's development and functioning, they still face a great deal of discrimination and violence because of their gender. She concludes that the situation on the African continent is that women are those who suffer the most from gender inequality and marginalisation (Jousse 2021:1). According to the United Nations Report (2023), across 39 countries in Africa, four out of ten respondents say that GBV is common in their community. Of the 89,000 women intentionally killed globally in 2022, Africa had the highest number of reported femicides compared to other regions. In Southern Africa, 27 per cent of women 15 years of age and older experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime from an intimate partner (Sardinha, Maheu-Giroux, Meyer, and García-Moreno 2022:808). These statistics show that women in Africa face gender-based violence.

The second one is HIV, and Africa comprises about two-thirds of the global HIV infections. Southern Africa remains the region most severely affected by the epidemic (Ramjee & Daniels 2013:5). Women continue to bear the brunt of the epidemic, with young women infected almost ten years earlier compared to their male counterparts (Ramjee & Daniels 2013:5). Gender inequality and discrimination exacerbate the significant HIV burden faced by women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa. According to Karim and Baxter (2019:147), these factors limit women's access to education, health, and economic opportunities and deny them sexual autonomy, decision-making power, dignity, and safety. Women in Africa are disproportionately impacted by HIV, particularly adolescent girls, and young women.

Another theme that emerges about women and gender is patriarchy. According to Mpunzana and Mofokeng (2023:690), gender studies demonstrate how patriarchy perpetuates poverty among women in African nations. African nations still adhere to customs restricting women's economic independence, particularly in public spaces. This, in a way, causes gender-based violence because the moment a woman tries to

“stray” from customs that hinder her independence, she is regarded otherwise. In opposition to gender equality, patriarchy is triggered, portraying women as inferior and as consumer goods. Because they are inadvertently positioned as inferior to men in the social hierarchy, women are now at the mercy of men (Okafor 2020:53).

The fourth central theme about women and gender is education. Unfortunately, not everyone in Africa has equal access to education, particularly when it comes to gender. According to Bennett (2002), in Africa, the gender gap in education is glaring and still a significant problem. Gender equity in education has not yet been entirely achieved across the continent, notwithstanding advancements made toward the Education for All (EFA) objectives. Although men are disadvantaged in some areas, there are still significant gender differences in education, frequently to the detriment of women. Girls and women are significantly affected by not having access to education.

Last but not least is *lobola* (bride price), which the groom pays to the bride's family (Ogoma 2014). There is a link between lobola and the maltreatment of women within marriages. Ogoma (2014:96) found that lobola violates women's rights to their children, resulting in women often being portrayed as the property of their husbands. Johnston (2023:43) writes about the role played by bride price in facilitating violence against women. The bride price is a prevalent marriage rite in numerous African and other nations. Hague, Thiara, and Turner (2011:551) point out that while it has ongoing cultural longevity, the practice has been subjected to increased scrutiny by women's activists and academics who are concerned about its negative impacts on women and girls. This, therefore, means men can justify violence because they have paid the bride price.

More so, The Circle for Concerned African Women Theologians, since its inception in 1989, has been at the forefront of doing and supporting research regarding women and gender on the African continent. The Circle, as it is known, has researched all the major themes raised by other scholars above and reinforced research that has indicated how religion and culture have been abused to condemn women and children to premature

deaths in Africa (Chitando 2016:74). “Faced with the challenges of GBV, activists in Africa have been calling for the transformation of masculinities. They contend that religion has a role to play in this transformation, as it has up until now promoted aggressive masculinities” (Chitando 2016:75).

The Circle was initiated under the leadership of Mercy Amba Oduyoye and includes the likes of Musa Dube, Teresia Hinga, Musimbi Kanyoro, Brigalia Bam, Isabel Apawo Phiri, Fulata Moyo, Anne Wasike, Teresa Okure, Sarojini Nagar, Bernadette Mbuy Mbeya, and Elizabeth Amoya, among others. The Circle has highlighted “issues related to intersections of gender studies, religion, and theology, including gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health to sexuality, HIV/AIDS and gender justice” (Oduyoye 1995). For Oduyoye, the Bible is not a monolithic scheme; if the Bible is read from a womanist perspective, there is no way that one can say “God wants women to be troubled” (Oduyoye 1995:100). In her work, she argues that the scripture is misquoted and is used to justify whatever thing (Oduyoye 1995). Any religion can be used in that manner. Men need to read the Bible well, not “upside down,” so that they will understand that women need to be respected as well (Oredein 2016:154). Thus, through their writings, the Circle provokes women to regard themselves highly and love themselves first.

In *Daughters of Anowa*, Oduyoye analyses the lives of African women today from an African woman's perspective. It studies the influence of culture and religion- particularly of traditional African cultures and Christianity - on African women's lives (Oduyoye 1995). Oduyoye illustrates how myths, proverbs, and folk tales (called "folk talk") operate in the socialization of young women, working to preserve the community's norms. Daughters of Anowa reveals how global patriarchy manifests itself in these social structures, in both patrilineal and matrilineal communities (Oduyoye 1995:67). Organised as a narrative in three cycles, *Daughters of Anowa* demonstrates how folk-talk alienates women from power, discourages individuality and encourages conformity (Oduyoye 1995). Throughout the book, Oduyoye posits that change will come about only when the daughters of Anowa (representing Africa) challenge the authenticities of

culture and religion in perpetuating patriarchal oppression and work to understand the goal of a new woman in a new Africa (Oduyoye 1995:67).

Okure (1992:223), a member of the Circle, also highlighted the challenges African women go through and what patriarchy expects of them. She says African women are traditionally expected in most cultures to be dependent. She gave an example of African women being like Jairus' daughter because they depend on others to speak for them and present their plight and needs before the world. Women sometimes find themselves dependent on men because of the social structure of African societies where women are limited to access resources. Thus, the earlier literature helps the current study by providing a starting point for the issues it is researching. Wasike (1992:41), a member of the Circle, again stressed that Christ's message was a challenge to some of the cultural structures and systems, especially those that legitimized the exploitation of others to preserve the privileged status, power, and prestige of a few. This shows that there are structures that demean women and make them feel like outsiders in their homes and societies. These and other themes discussed above are the primary concern for African women theologians.

In Zimbabwe, researchers are at the forefront in making sure they expose the ill-treatment of women, and they have written vastly on the above themes. Mapuranga (2010) highlights publicly the impacts of HIV and AIDS on traditional Ndau women in Chipinge District, how women are the most affected by HIV and AIDS, and the sacrifices they make to care for those suffering from HIV and AIDS. Machingura (2012:50) notes that the Shona culture and most religions in Zimbabwe, like African Traditional Religion and Christianity, are the major stumbling blocks in the empowerment of married women in safe sex. This then explains why women are the most affected by HIV and AIDS because they do not have a say, even in matters that affect their health. Manyonganise (2010:3) talks about the painful experiences that often make women suffer in silence. She gave an example that even after reporting their husbands for abuse to the police, most women withdraw their cases due to societal

pressure because a “real” woman (*mukadzi chaiye*) does not do that. She goes on to say that the construction of an ideal woman has led many to their death; for example, even after discovering that their husbands are engaging in extra-marital relationships and have contracted HIV, most women continue to sleep with their husbands, making themselves vulnerable to infection in the process.

Earlier research is important to this study because it encourages women to hold on and go through whatever challenges life throws at them. Again, it is important in that it exposes the traditional and social behaviours that are so abusive to women and maps a way forward.

1.4.4 Existing research about violence in Rushinga

When considering research about this, there are trends which emerge. There is not much literature about Rushinga District in general, but the little that is available is written on political violence and child marriages, not about gender-based violence or intersections of culture, religion, and gender norms. The literature on IPV is through the works of Diki, Makochekanwa, Moyo, and Mhloyi (2022). They posit that Mashonaland Central province has had the most recorded cases of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as recorded by 2021 statistics. Their paper focused on analysing the causes of physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse between intimate partners in Mashonaland Central, Rushinga. They measured the prevalence and distribution of IPV in Mashonaland Central to check how much of the violence has been perpetrated by men and women distinctively.

Rushinga District is a hotbed for political violence and is widely known for its support for ZANU-PF. In a local newspaper (New Zimbabwe), Munhende (2018) writes about the politically unstable Rushinga District, where residents have accused their traditional chiefs and headmen of being central to incidents of electoral violence and associated violations observed in previous elections. The residents blamed chiefs for encouraging bloodshed for political reasons. Villagers also called for the government and political parties to ensure citizens' safety. The worst politically driven violence occurred in

Mashonaland Central province and in Rushinga District, specifically in the run-up to the 2008 presidential run-off elections. In every election period, places like Rushinga experience deaths and assaults related to political violence. Munhende (2018) reports that, according to the MDC, around 200 of its supporters were slain during what may have been the worst election season since the Gukurahundi massacres.

Another theme that emerges in Rushinga is child marriages. Rushinga District records 60 per cent of child marriage cases (Mrewa 2022:47). Mrewa (2022) writes to explore the social and cultural context of Rushinga communities in dealing with the problem of child marriage. His work questions how social and cultural practices fuel the practice and subsequently adds another dimension to the interpretation of the causes and mitigation of the practice of child marriage. Chenge, Chenge, and Maunganidze (2017:87) deliberate on the family factors that contribute to secondary school dropouts in the Rushinga District, which ultimately leads to child marriages for most girls. They argue that the literacy level is very low in Rushinga District, and when the literacy level is very low, there is a tendency to a vicious circle of illiteracy (Chenge *et al.* 2017:89).

According to Zanza (2015), the above themes are why there is a persistent lack of Rushinga women's participation in some economic projects. There is a lack of poor rural women's participation in community development projects, which makes it difficult to alleviate poverty and eliminate gender inequalities effectively in community development. This specifically led this study to further examine the lack of participation of some rural women in these gender-mainstreaming community development projects. The above are possible barriers to Rushinga women's lack of participation (Zanza 2015:5). Analysing the above themes, there is a pattern which leads to gender-based violence against women, and if the pattern is not broken, the war against gender-based violence will be endless.

1.4.5 The intersection of religion and culture

Existing research on the intersection of religion, gender-based violence, and culture indicates that worldwide, women are exposed to many forms of violence that come in the form of religion and culture. For Nwachuku (1992:65), religion and culture are inseparable. Oduyoye (1992:1) posits that religion shapes the life and thinking of the people and is an area of life that seems to be able to escape public attention. She maintains that religion may intimidate individuals into abdicating responsibility for their lives and into placing themselves and everybody else "in God's hands." In my view, these opinions from religion have made women prone to abuse. In the same line of thinking, Edet (1992:36) argues that the church's concern about the welfare of women can stop harmful traditional rituals and replace them with the church's rites instead of allowing them to operate on parallel levels. It is these rites and teachings that reduce women to nobodies, as they (women) try to please religious leaders.

Musopole (1992:199) blames men for the abuse they impose on women and argues that men should be made to realise that a man's God is born of a woman. She says that when she compares Christianity to her culture, as a matriarchal person who believes in being included in decision-making, she sees Christianity as very oppressive to women. Oduyoye (2001:81), on the other hand, says women's experience of the church is no different from that of the culture outside the church structures. She says women often experience more recognition of their humanity outside the church. At the same time, their suppression in socio-culture referred to religious teachings and demands, in this case, of the church. Instead of being there for its members, here, the religion is blamed for being oppressive and taking advantage of women.

Additionally, Machema (1990:131) demonstrates that although Christianity has long been experienced in Africa and has preached that Jesus came to liberate everybody irrespective of sex, race, strength, or financial status, African women have been locked up in a safe compartment together with their good ideas. Here, Machema (1990) is raising the same point as the above scholars, indicating how manipulative and suppressive religion is. Oduyoye (1995:175), argues that unfortunately, biblical

interpretation and Christian theology in Africa have had the effect of sacralising the marginalization of women's experience. In *Introducing African Women's Theology*, Oduyoye (2001:31) professes that there are sayings that say 'there is no woman as beautiful as an obedient one" and "women are the servants of men," which women cannot help but object to if they have any sense of self. The widespread use of biblical texts and the mass media ignore the humanity of women and focus on their biological makeup.

Moyo (2010) boldly challenges churches to interpret the Bible in ways that would indeed set people free economically and by suggesting practical ways in which churches may address economic injustices towards women. This is a clear indication that religion is playing a role in the abuse imposed on women. In the same vein, Chebet and Cherop (2015:11) implore the church to recognise and oppose unfair structures at all societal levels, such as the unequal allocation of wealth and power. Edet (1992:35) says that Christian teachings are not practical but theoretical. She acknowledges that although women benefit from religion, the main point remains that Christianity legalises and reinforces the oppression of women and their subjugation to men in all aspects of life. The adage that "women should be seen and not heard" is taken over by the churches and given a biblical foundation in the first letter to the Corinthians. In wrapping up this section, already existing literature shows that religion and culture play a role in the subjugation of women, and something needs to be done to help women.

1.5 Research Gap and Contribution of the Study

From the overview of existing literature, it seems there is a need to recognise women as the primary targets of the Zimbabwean traditional culture. Though men and children are victims of this culture in Zimbabwe, there is a way in which women are uniquely victimised. Women suffer torture, assault, harassment, and intimidation. The study is important to all individuals and groups because this is where a clear understanding of domestic violence and the implementation of strategies are fostered to sustain human development.

Ultimately, this study did not wish to shelve the information in the university library but conscientize women on issues that affect their safety, health, and self-development. The study engages pastors and counsellors who listen to women's issues and help them throughout their journey of recovering and finding themselves again. The study used fieldwork, where victims were visited in their homes, and again, meetings were held in groups. This study wishes to approach and work with organisations that support victims of GBV and women in poverty. I wish to work from a practical perspective where I would have an operational Private Organisation (PVO) that would shelter the victims of GBV.

The study considers the need for a PVO, which acts as a halfway home to shelter the victims of GBV. For example, after being beaten and having to regain consciousness from the hospital bed, the victim, after being treated, would need to go back home and face the same husband who had beaten her. Thus, the shelter or accommodation helps such victims find time to heal and relax while being counselled before going back home to face the abuser. The issues of emotional and psychological trauma are dealt with at this shelter before victims go back to their homes to face their abusive husbands.

The main context of this study was introduced with the question, “What academic resources do the affected women in Zimbabwe, Rushinga to be specific, possess to deal with the situation?” My search for resources reflected a dearth of literature, particularly from a theological or biblical perspective. Sakala (1998), for example, wrote on *Violence against women in Southern Africa*. While her book is about the problems encountered by women, particularly in Southern Africa, it comes from a feminist perspective and is less helpful to those looking for biblical resources. The book dwells on how patriarchal structures oppress women in Africa, thereby leaving out intersections of religion and gender norms, which are the core of this research. A careful analysis of the literature reveals that little attention and recognition has been given to understanding the intersections of religion and culture, which construct an idea of a

“good wife,” and how this caused gender-based violence in Rushinga District despite the highest prevalence of GBV cases.

Mapuranga (2014) wrote about Zimbabwean women's economic challenges from 2000-2010 during the “Operation Murambatsvina” era. She focused on the effects brought by the “operation” on Harare women. She, however, mentions nothing on how scripture could be used as a tool to help these women despite her writing for a predominantly Christian community (Zimbabwe has a population of 13.5 million, and statistics have it that 80% of the population are Christians). Rutoro (2012:434), whose work sought to establish the extent to which the African communitarian philosophy as a core value in the Shona culture affects the career aspirations of both male and female teachers, noted that African communal setup is associated with social responsibilities and expectations that limit one's freedom and autonomy. While appreciating the good work by the author, the work also lacks a Christian input. Other scholars, whose work will also be looked at, ignore the sociological interpretation of the Bible. While the above only reflects a sample of the literature available on the plight of women in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa, justification of the uniqueness of this research against the above works is provided.

Bearing in mind the fact that in Africa, religion plays an important role in shaping the lives of people, the Bible is a resource for Zimbabwean women to draw hope and inspiration. This study sought to challenge the role religion has in the development of women and establish whether the Church in Zimbabwe had employed strategies in its theology to help the broken and abused women in the struggle against gender-based violence in Rushinga District, to be specific. Considering how women are treated in the Church, the study challenged how the church interpreted and applied biblical verses like Gen 1:26, 2 Cor 3:17, and Gal 3:28, to mention a few, in its teaching. This persuades readers who are aware of the Zimbabwean context to infer cues from the Bible and apply them to the abused Zimbabwean women and analyse if the Church is doing its mandate.

Using a womanist perspective, this study exposes the cultural practices that aggravate GBV, maps the social, economic, and psychological effects of violence on women and the community at large, and explores possible solutions to the culture that causes GBV against women in Rushinga. Studies on the relationship between culture and gender-based violence in many parts of Africa have been led.

1.6 Research Questions

The study pursues to answer the question: What are the cultural practices that exacerbate gender-based violence against women in Rushinga village, Zimbabwe, and how can these practices be challenged from a womanist-theological perspective to reduce gender-based violence?

To address the research question, the study highlights the traditional and cultural practices that lead to violence toward women. Cognisant of the fact that GBV is a global phenomenon and Rushinga is not exempted, the study further explores Rushinga women's experiences with gender-based violence in their culture and how they are expected to remain "good wives" in such scenarios where their husbands, fathers, and brothers abuse them. The study is, therefore, focused on heterosexual couples.

Sub-research questions

1. Why and how does violence occur mostly to women in Rushinga?
2. How do cultural norms influence women's everyday life in Rushinga?
3. When violence occurs within a marital relationship, why are women the victims of such violence?
4. How does a marriage affect a woman's agency?

Answers to these questions are attempted after a thorough theological challenge of the cultural practices and social norms that cause violence and its effects on women.

1.7 Research Methodology

1.7.1 Positionality

The methodology of this study is situated in my position and comprises two aspects: Theoretical framework, which is the womanist theological critical approach that informs womanist theology, and qualitative data collection using interviews. My position influenced the topic I researched and the methodology I used because I am reacting to what happened in my life. I acknowledged that I have a position from an affected point of view (because I was a victim and a survivor of gender-based violence). However, I am objective because of my academic position. I grew up in a family with a robust traditional background where culture was followed and adhered to. I am a black Shona female with one foot in Shona tradition (father's side) and the other in Ndebele (mother's side); one would notice how hard it was for me as I grew up to learn from two different cultures. I grew up with identity struggles because of cultural differences between my parents. I then taught at two schools in Rushinga, where culture is practised passionately. I observed that it is only women who are "groomed" to be good wives before their partners, and in so doing, women are mistreated in the name of culture "says this." My thirst influenced the research to challenge cultural practices that affected women who are constantly reminded to be "good wives," thereby exposing them to gender-based violence.

For interviews, the sample comprised eighteen people. The first group comprised three married and not working women. This group was selected to find out the reasons for violence among them. The researcher also selected three working and married women. The purpose of this selection was to unpack the truth from hearsay that says there is a higher risk of GBV among working women than unemployed women. Also, three single women were interviewed: one who had chosen to stay single, another who had lost her spouse, and the last one who was mature and marriageable age but single. This group was selected so that their voices were heard, why they had chosen that path, and what their opinion on GBV was. Youthful but not married women were selected as well. These were selected so that they also gave their insights on what they-saw at home; some of them had experienced GBV. They gave possible suggestions that vibe with

their era, how they felt was supposed to be done, and what they thought-caused GBV among people their age.

The other group was divorced women; some of them had been abused, and some still experienced it while their husbands were gone. Their views were also welcome and helped shape and mould the study. The last group was the older women. The reason for selecting this sample was that since these people are senior members of society, they were well-versed in the harmful practices that undermined women's rights. The other reason they were selected is that most helped maintain and govern these practices and are responsible for ensuring people stick to them. In as much as patriarchy contributed to women abuse, there is also women-to-women abuse, which mostly comes from the elderly because they are the ones that make laws that govern other women, especially the widows and young girls, for virginity testing. From them, the study gathered valid reasons why the practices had to be withheld without changing them as the "new generation" mourns.

A small sample of men was interviewed as well to hear their side of the story as it comes to the reasons for GBV; they shared their views on reasons why women are abused. Thus, the daily encounters and experiences of black African married women who resided in the Rushinga district were looked into in detail. How life is for them as women living in communities and homes where they mix and mingle with men who abuse them under the pretext of culture was recorded. The interviewees were drawn from victims of gender-based violence, women and men who observed violence against women between the ages of 25-49. Some of them I knew from church, and others were former work colleagues. The victims were interviewed, and the questions were open-ended and structured. Questions were asked in a way that they avoid re-traumatising the respondents. This methodology section is more detailed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

1.7.2 Theoretical Framework

The current study uses a Womanist theological approach as its theoretical framework. Womanist theology is a methodological approach to “theology that centers on the experience and perspectives of Black women, particularly African American women” (Williams 1995:55). Womanist theology was first used in an article in 1987 by Delores Williams (Townes 2003:159). Alice Walker initially used the term Womanist. However, it has since spread in various ways that shed light on the experiences and viewpoints of Black (African-descended) women (Hayes 2010). Womanist theology is derived from the context, voice, action, and agency of Black women of the African Diaspora. It is based on the shortcomings of the Black (overtly male) and feminist (overtly white female) liberation theologies that came before it, but it also critiques them (Hayes 2010).

The word was initially used theologically by Dr Katie Cannon and others who aimed to break free and move away from the masculine by bringing up topics that Black (African Diasporan) women cared about (Hayes 2010). Since then, it has changed over several generations and waves. Every generation or wave allowed Black women's problems and worries to be acknowledged, recognised, and clarified. Williams (1995:56) points out that “Womanist theology emerged as a corrective to early feminist theology written by white feminists that did not address the impact of race on women's lives or take into account the realities faced by Black women within the United States.” Similarly, womanist theologians highlighted how Black theology was written predominantly by male theologians who failed to consider the viewpoints and perceptions of Black women (Williams 1995:56).

Black women and the men and children that comprised their lives and histories were supported and nurtured by Womanist theology, which emerged from within the Black community and the Black church. At a time of tremendous need, it offered a new way of speaking, living, and acting that promised new ways of being in the world. A new epistemology made possible by womanist theology offers a fresh perspective on the historical experiences of Black (African-descended) women (Hayes 2010).

1.8 Structure of the Study

The first chapter presents the background and motivation for the study and presents a research gap based on an overview of existing literature. An explanatory overview of the overarching methodology of the study and an outline of the study is also presented.

In the second chapter, key terms of the study are worked out, and these are key themes on culture, a “good wife,” and gender-based violence. The section reflects on the nature of culture, how it functions in society, and how it contributes to gender norms and roles. How culture shapes societal expectations of a good wife and how it contributes to GBV is clarified fully. The study unveils the types of marriages in Zimbabwe and how each affects women and gender. Lastly, the controversial new amended marriage Act of Zimbabwe, which was passed in May 2022, is analysed as to what challenges it has on women of all statuses-married, single, and divorced. Thus, this chapter presents some ethical issues for women who end up being trapped between observing their culture (being a good wife) and tradition and being their “own woman.”

Chapter three deals with the theoretical underpinnings of the study. This study focuses on the lens that informs the study, which is the Womanist theological approach. The section talks about African women’s theologians who present a preferred version of African women as it relates to their experiences. This was done because it was vital to hear from the African women’s position since Zimbabwe is in Africa. The findings are considered authentic and reliable because they were taken from the perception of other African women. The chapter also looked at the womanist interpretation of the Bible, how they interpret the Bible, how the Bible speaks to them, and their experiences. Lastly, the chapter ends with applying Womanist Theology as a critical lens on culture.

The fourth chapter considers the methodology of the study. This chapter discusses the data collection methods to be used. A qualitative approach was more suitable for this study since it involved investigating information about a particular group.

Various data collection instruments, including in-depth interviews, contributor observation, and secondary sources from published and unpublished sources were discussed, showing how each was applied and necessary in the study. The design for the study, sampling and sampling procedures, ethical issues, and data analysis techniques were presented in this section. The researcher mainly used qualitative research to analyse the lived realities of the people of the Rushinga District and understand these realities from their perspectives.

Chapter five dealt with findings from the field and data analysis. This was achieved by mapping the social, economic, and psychological effects of gender-based violence on women and the community at large. The study was restricted to the three effects of gender-based violence named above although there are so many. The chapter showed how gender-based violence limited women's abilities and deprived them of their chances to achieve their full participation in society by threatening and affecting their safety.

Finally, in chapter six, a summary of the study and findings were presented. This chapter also provides measures or suggests a holistic way forward to be taken or put in place to ensure that there is a reduction in cases of gender-based violence. The recommendations were addressed to the Church, policymakers and academic scholars.

Throughout the work, the study followed a "general" to "specific" approach; data was presented from Africa, Zimbabwe, and then Rushinga.

CHAPTER 2:
CULTURE, THE HARMFUL NOTION OF A "GOOD WIFE" AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the study and showcased its contents. This chapter, therefore, presents key themes on culture, unpacks the notion of "a good wife," and considers the multifaceted challenge of gender-based violence. The chapter deliberates on the nature of culture, how it functions in society, and how it contributes to gender norms and roles. How culture shapes societal expectations of a good wife and how it contributes to GBV is explained fully. In this chapter, the types of marriages in Zimbabwe and how each affects women and gender are also discussed. Lastly, the controversial new amended marriage Act of Zimbabwe, passed in May 2022, is analysed, and the challenges it poses to women of all statuses, married, single, and divorced, are discussed. Thus, this chapter presents some ethical issues for women who end up being trapped between observing their culture (being a good wife) and tradition and being their "own woman".

2.2 Clarification of terms

In this section, an initial clarification of terms, as utilised in the introduction, is presented.

2.2.1 Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to destructive and dangerous acts directed at a person based on their sex. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power, and harmful norms. As rightly put by the United Nations (UNHCR 2020:4), gender-based violence can include all harm imposed on a person, be it sexual, physical, economic, or mental. The harm includes force, compulsion, and manipulation and can happen in the form of forced child marriage and sexual violence. It also includes threats of violence, coercion, and manipulation. This can take many forms, such as intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation, and so-called "honour crimes" (UNHCR 2020:4). Therefore, whenever the phrase GBV is used in this

study, it refers to violence as it is perpetrated against women and girls who are identified as female. Gender-based violence is violence directed against a person because of their sex. Both men and women experience gender-based violence, but most victims are women and girls (UNHCR 2020:4). In the stated statistics of women experiencing gender-based violence, Rushinga women are not exempted. Hence, this study was conducted to suggest ways, in the end, to prevent or end gender-based violence.

2.2.2 Culture

Culture can be defined as a latent, hypothetical variable we can only measure through its manifestations. In this view, culture is separated from the individual. It is not only located in the minds and actions of individual people. Instead, it denotes what people in a society are exposed to by living in that environment (Schwartz 2009:128). Culture, therefore, relates to those patterns and practices which a group of people portray. In other words, humanity's actions result from what we have acquired from our surroundings (Schwartz 2009). The study, therefore, examines if some of the perpetrators' behaviours resulted from their surroundings.

Concurring with the above definition, Matsumoto (1996:16) postulates that culture is "…the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a group of societies, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next". Here, Matsumoto suggests that people react differently to any socialisation that they could have gone through, and this is why men in the same family will act differently- it is one's choice to be violent or not. They could have gone through the same beliefs and values, but they would be different for everyone.

2.3 Culture and the problematic construction of the notion of a "good wife"

Different cultures understand the concept of a "good wife" differently. In a bid to explicitly delineate the plight of women in Rushinga, it is important to submit a working definition for "culture" and a contemporary contextual understanding of being a "good wife".

2.3.1 Culture: A multifaceted phenomenon

There is no universally accepted definition for the word or notion of culture since it can refer to different sub-issues within a broader phenomenon. This study utilised a working definition of culture, as stated in the introduction since a core aspect of this study was the culturally constructed idea of “a good wife.”

The word culture comes from the Latin word ‘culture” derived from colour, which means “to cultivate” (Mugambi 2001:17). It generally refers to the way of life of a particular group of people which includes their social way of life, economic activities, and their political life. It is handed down from one generation to the other. Specifically, “culture refers to the arts, systems of beliefs, societal institutions, behaviour, dress, language, rituals, and norms. The common patterns of culture are language, ritual, art forms, and design” (Mugambi 2001:17). Mugambi goes on to argue that “culture is the revelation of a people’s self-understanding and self-expression, in their context. Such patterns do help people to understand themselves about their environment” (Mugambi 2001).

In his article about recent definitions of culture, Gustav Jahoda (2012) divides definitions of culture into three broad categories. In the first category, definitions of culture centre on culture as external. Jahoda used the view of Schwartz’s (2009:128), who says, “Culture is a latent, hypothetical variable that we can measure only through its manifestations” (Schwartz 2009:128). The underlying normative values emphasise that they are central to cultural influence and give a degree of coherence to these manifestations. In this view, “culture is outside the individual. It is not located in the minds and actions of individual people” (Schwartz 2009:128). In my opinion, the above definition implies that culture is what society demonstrates and displays, what a group of people shows, and that can be observed. Cole and Parker (2011) say, “We think of culture as a dynamically changing environment that is transformed by the artefacts created by prior generations. Culture can be seen as the medium of human development which prepares humans for interaction with the world” (Cole & Parker

2011:135). In my understanding, the authors see culture as an agent or channel that people use or go to for reference.

In the second category, culture is defined as internal, or internal and external, and is grouped into five parts. Jahoda used Hong's (2009:4) definition of culture

> "As shared among a collection of interconnected individuals who are often demarcated by race, ethnicity, or nationality; externalized by rich symbols, artefacts, social constructions, and social institutions (e.g. cultural icons, advertisements and news media); used to form the common ground for communication among members; that is transmitted from one generation to the next…and undergoing continuous modifications"

From this definition, Hong explains that if culture is not internal, that means it is both, internal and external. The definition encompasses all aspects of earlier definitions. Thus, culture comprises people with the same ethnicity who share the same views on things, and these views are shared from the past generations which continue to change with time.

In the third category, culture focuses on groups of several definitions. Jahoda (2012) quotes Keith (2011) and Heine (2008), who surveyed a range of definitions without specifically favouring any particular one. The authors agree that "culture is information (e.g., beliefs, habits, and ideas) learned from others, that is capable of influencing behaviour, and a group of people who share context and experience" (Jahoda 2012:298). Jahoda goes on to include Matsumoto's (2009) definition in this category which states that "culture is a unique meaning and information system, shared by a group and transmitted across generations that allow the group to meet the basic needs of survival, by coordinating social behaviour to achieve a viable existence, to transmit successful social behaviours, to pursue happiness and well-being, and to derive meaning from life" (Matsumoto 2009:3). Therefore, this category hems in the two above categories.

In a nutshell, Jahoda (2012) says there is no precise definition of culture because the definitions on their own vary. He argues that while some are based on classic formulations, others are newly invented, and many are logically incompatible (Jahoda 2012). In wrapping up the discussion, he maintains that the supposed location of culture is “variously said to be only in the mind or both in the mind and in the material, world created by humans; external only” (without specifying where) (Jahoda 2012). He goes on to say that some writers explicitly state that their definition is correct and that others are wrong. He, thus, concludes that ‘‘culture’’ is not a thing, however, a social construct vaguely referring to a vastly complex set of phenomena” (Jahoda 2012:299). He used Kuper’s (1992) words to say, “Culture has now become part of our everyday vocabulary. Everyone is into culture now’’ (Kuper 1992:2).

Culture is distinguished from ethnicity, specifically when the word “culture” is sometimes misused as interchangeable to refer to different ethnic groups. As Spencer-Oatey (2012) indicated, there are 12 characteristics of culture. Firstly, culture manifests in observable artefacts, values, and underlying assumptions. Secondly, culture affects behaviour and interpretations of behaviour in that “their cultural meaning lies precisely and only in the way insiders interpret these practices” (Hofstede 1991:8). The third characteristic of culture is that “it can be differentiated from both universal human nature and unique individual personality” (Hofstede 1994:5-6). Culture influences biological processes (Ferraro 1998:19).

More so, Ferraro (1998:6) argues that culture is associated with social groups where at least two or more people share it. The sixth characteristic of culture is that it exists in everyone, so “it is as much an individual, psychological construct as it is a social construct” (Matsumoto 1996:18). Culture is seen as a vague concept in that in a population, people will not share the same attitudes or beliefs, but rather share “family resemblances”. In addition, culture has universal (etic) and distinctive (emic) elements (Triandis1994:20). Furthermore, “culture is learned from the people one interacts with as they are socialized” (Lustig & Koester 1999:31). Culture is “subject to gradual change” (Ferraro 1998:25-29) and is “interrelated to some degree” (Ferraro 1998:32-35). Lastly,

culture is a descriptive, not an evaluative concept, meaning cultures are like or different from each other (Spencer-Oatey 2012).

Ethnicity is not the same as this “learned behaviour” of culture. Ethnicity refers to where one comes from and those with whom one shares this ancestry. In other words, ethnicity refers to a group of people who share or are identified with a common cultural background (Desmet, Ortuño-Ortín & Wacziarg 2017). For example, an ethnic group can be distinguished or identified by their dress, language, values, food, etc. Some characteristics of culture may overlap with characteristics of ethnicity, but there is no exact correlation. (Desmet *et al.* 2017). Although there is a strong link between culture and ethnicity, the two are two sides of the same coin (Desmet *et al.* 2017).

This study considered the culture of the Kore-Kores, which are found in Mashonaland Central Province. Zimbabwe primarily comprises the Shona and Ndebele people with distinct language and cultural practices. The Shona people are grouped according to their language or dialect, which helps identify one’s town or village. Thus, there is the Karanga, Manyika, Zezuru, Ndau and Kore-Kore. The Kore-Kores are part of the Shona ethnic group (Rasmussen 1979). They constitute the Northern Shona cluster of people, living in the northern part of Zimbabwe and Zambia and spilling over from the high plateau into the Zambezi Valley. They appear to have originated from the break-up of the Karanga state based on the Great Zimbabwe (Bourdillon 1979). The people and their culture have grown from an influx of population from areas that have become highly populated. The core characteristic features of the culture are that they are communalistic and share each other’s burdens as a community. Their gatherings were important to them, where they shared music, songs, dances, and stories. What is unique and identifies them is that they put their family’s interests before their own and learn from their people. They have a popular understanding that what they do is communal and, thus, learn from each other. They take pride in their socialisation process since it is their “best teacher”.

Regarding gender equality, Theron (2015) has stated that “culture, well meant as it may be, often seems to be an obstacle in the realisation of gender equality, with the effect that people, especially women, neither reached their full potential nor experienced their inherent dignity as people created in the image of God” (Theron 2015:10). Theron asks the critical question of whether this implies that people should abandon their culture. Her conclusion: “I do not think so, because culture makes people who they are, gives them a sense of belonging, and distinguishes groups of people from each other” (Theron 2015:10). Thus, in my opinion, Theron is implying that whether culture plays a negative role in the lives of women or not, people should not abandon it because it shapes who we are and distinguishes us from others.

Nwachuku, in *The Will to Arise* (1992:54), argued that in developing nations like those in Africa, the Christian woman’s plight is compounded by a transitional society’s tenacious hold on traditional norms. At the same time, it grapples with the social changes of intruding foreign cultures. She argued that most human societies are “patriarchal” (1992:54). Consequently, the subordinate female sex in transformed or transitional societies, when faced with matters of choice or preference, is bound to come into conflict with the mainstream cultural norm in question. She says, “When they lead to a so-called deviation from the norm, such cultural conflicts are normally unwelcome, whether based on empirical facts, emotions, or faith” (Nwachuku 1992:54).

Makonese argues that African “culture and its application have also often been misinterpreted and used selectively, thereby leading to the preservation of cultural and customary norms that perpetuate the superiority of men over women whilst undermining the value of women, their work, and their status in society” (Makonese 2017:104). This shows how far men can go to “preserve” their culture because they practice violence under the pretext of culture and tradition.

2.3.2 Tradition and social norms

Depending on the discipline, the word tradition is used in various ways to mean different things. This study used a definition that is related to a social discipline. A “tradition is a

belief or behaviour passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past. Traditions can persist and evolve for thousands of years. The word tradition itself derives from the Latin *tradere* meaning to transmit, to hand over, to give for safekeeping" (Giddens 2009:39). Generally, a well-known definition for tradition is the handing down of information, beliefs, or customs from one generation to another or a belief or custom handed down from one group to another.

The English word "tradition" comes from the Latin "*traditio* via French and was originally used in Roman law to refer to legal transfers and inheritance. The concept includes several interrelated ideas; the unifying one is that tradition refers to beliefs, objects, or customs performed or believed in the past, originating in it, transmitted through time by being taught by one generation to the next, and are performed or believed in the present" (Giddens 2009:39). From the above definition, it can be said that tradition is a belief, principle, or a way which people in a society or community continue to follow for a long time.

Tradition can also refer to "beliefs or customs that are prehistoric with lost or arcane origins, existing from time immemorial. Originally, traditions were passed orally, without the need for a writing system" (Shils 2006:14). In the same way, Shils adds that tools to aid this process include poetic devices such as rhyme and alliteration. Traditions are often presumed to be ancient, unchangeable, and deeply important, though they may sometimes be much less "natural" than is presumed (Shils 2006:14). It is presumed that at least two transmissions over three generations are required for a practised belief or object to be seen as traditional (Giddens 2009:39). Tradition, therefore, "is a way of behaving or a belief that has been established for a long time, or the practice of following behaviour and beliefs that have been established" (Giddens 2009:39).

Some traditions were deliberately invented for one reason or another, often to highlight or enhance the importance of a certain institution (Green 1997:800). Traditions may also be "adapted to suit the needs of the day, and the changes can become accepted

as a part of the ancient tradition" (Chrys 2008:60-61). For Green, "tradition changes slowly, with changes from one generation to the next being seen as significant" (Green 1997:800). Thus, those carrying out the traditions will not be consciously aware of the change. Even if a tradition undergoes significant changes over many generations, it will be seen as unchanged (Shils 2006:14).

In his contribution titled *"Masks and the Men behind Them: Unmasking culturally-sanctioned gender inequality"* Zulu (2015) pointed out that "cultural practices serve various purposes in African cultures and communities, including religious, cultic, and entertainment purposes" (Zulu 2015:81). In addition, these cultural practices are "vehicles of history and identity; they are sometimes frightful and imposing, but always powerful symbols. Traditions, cultural norms, values, and practices are transitional; they are never permanent; they transform and reinvent themselves" (Zulu 2015:81). Whilst some cultural traditions and practices are sound and mean well for the community and should be cherished and respected, for Zulu, others "are so enslaving and need to be reformed or even abandoned altogether" (Zulu 2015:81).

When considering tradition, in combination with aspects of culture, can have a damaging effect on how women are perceived. This is also applicable to the context of this study. For example, the combination of culture and tradition can infringe on women's access to resources. An example of this is found in the work of Bryceson (2019), which discusses gender, labour patterns, and land allocation. Bryceson indicated that women receive smaller land allocations than men for various reasons linked to how women and their abilities are regarded from a cultural-traditional lens. This includes the perception that a woman cannot achieve an outcome such as farming successfully on her own because of the cultural link between women and domesticity (Bryceson 2019). From such a background, the implication is that women are not strong enough to stand as individuals and succeed in businesses like men, and this is because of the perception, formed by the link between culture and tradition, that men are stronger than women.

Men can have more than one wife, even without consulting their first wife. Kambarami (2006) agrees with Rutoro (2015) that “in marriage, the husband can have as many wives as he wants and can have extramarital affairs as a bonus. When such a scenario happens, however, it is the wife who is blamed for failing to satisfy her husband or for failing to curb his desire to do so” (Kambarami 2006:4). Men tend to have more leeway than any woman to the extent that a woman is forced to accept the second wife, third or fourth to save her marriage, her feelings over this are not contemplated because she is considered a “door mat” in the relationship. Some women do not agree to polygamy, but they do not have a choice since decisions on such matters are made mainly by the men. Women who agree to polygamy mostly do so for the sake of peace in the marriage, while others can even go to the extent of leaving their marriage if they do not consent to have a second wife; it depends on societies, though.

However, “if it so happens that a married woman engages in an extramarital affair, she is not spared, she is labelled as “loose” and has to be sent back to her parents so that they can instil some discipline into her, or she is divorced straight away” (Kambarami 2006:5). Axiomatically, elderly women do perform such practices on their daughters in the name of cultural preservation. These women are afraid of being labelled “stray” or “taboo breakers”. Women in Rushinga are not considered equal to men. Their physical nature, weak in comparison to men, put them in a secondary position in the largely Zimbabwean communities. The husband is unquestionably the head of the home and rules the wife. Thus, such tradition thwarts the self-esteem of many women who will not make it because tradition has exposed them as failures. Women are limited only to household chores, meaning they will always depend on men for a living.

In her book *Challenges Faced by Urban Women Entrepreneurs* (2011), Nani's theoretical findings about Zimbabwe showed that traditionally, women are excluded from actively participating in decision-making. Economically, women are denied ownership of resources such as land and thus depend on men, who are regarded as breadwinners (Nani 2011). She goes on to say that socio-culturally, activities are arranged according to gender; thus, there are activities strictly done by men and others

reserved for women. For her, women are legally regarded as minors, and for that reason, women cannot enter any contractual obligations (Nani 2011).

Nevertheless, social norms, as propounded by Killian and Mann (2020), are the "unwritten rules of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that are considered acceptable in a particular social group or culture" (Killian & Mann 2020:635). Social norms are rules of behaviour. They "inform group members how to construe a given situation, feel about it, and behave in it. They exert social influence on group members by prescribing which reactions are appropriate and which are not" (Killian & Mann 2020:635). This then means social norms are shared standards of acceptable behaviour by groups and can both be informal understandings that govern the behaviour of members of society, as well as be codified into rules and laws.

Legros is of the idea that "social norms are deemed to be powerful drivers of human behavioural changes and well organised and incorporated by major theories which explain human behaviour" (Legros 2020:65). For Finnemore and Kathryn, "institutions are composed of multiple norms" (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998:887). Norms are shared and social beliefs about behaviour; thus, they are distinct from "ideas", "attitudes", and "values", which can be held privately, and do not necessarily concern behaviour (Young 2016:359). Norms are contingent on context, social group, and historical circumstances (Young 2016:359). There are varied definitions of social norms, but there is agreement among scholars that "norms are social and shared among members of a group, related to behaviours and shape decision-making, proscriptive or prescriptive and socially acceptable way of living by a group of people in a society" (Legros 2020:80).

According to Katzenstein, Jepperson, and Wendt, "norms are collective expectations about proper behaviour for a given identity" (Katzenstein *et al.* 1996:54). Sandholtz Finnemore and Sikkink argue against this definition, as they posit shared expectations "are an effect of norms, not an intrinsic quality of norms" (Sandholtz *et al.* 2017:10). They define norms instead as "standards of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity" (Sandholtz *et al.* 2017:10). In this definition, norms have an "ought-ness"

quality to them (Sandholtz *et al.* 2017:11). Opp and Hechter define norms as "cultural phenomena that prescribe and proscribe behaviour in specific circumstances" (Opp & Hechter 2001:354). This entails that norms are widespread expectations of social approval or disapproval of behaviour.

This study used the definitions above and investigated the Kore-Kore social norms, which gave an expected idea of how the Kore-Kore society behaved and functioned to provide order. It is from the definitions again that the study predicted society's actions or treatment of women. There is a proverb that says, "An apple does not fall far away from its tree". This proverb matches well with the issue that Rushinga men could only do what their norms dictated. However, this is still a scholarly investigation, hence the need to understand the societal social norms to get the actual truth on the ground- whether it is the social norms that make men exert violence on women or other reasons. Since these norms fostered reliable guides for daily living and contributed to the well-being of a group, the study found answers from this group of people.

Several social norms were identified that singly or jointly increased the risk of the number of women experiencing GBV. These included cultural and religious practices such as families and society, acceptance of wife beating as a way of "correcting a stray wife" and a sign of love (Oyediran & Feyistean 2017), family privacy and stigma associated with divorce or being unmarried, women`s responsibility to maintain a marriage and their reproductive role; social norms surrounding lobola (bride price) payment, which acts as a compromising factor in (Intimate Partner Violence) IPV tolerance (Mesatywa 2014); and men's entitlement to sex. These social norms have been deep-rooted in some women to such an extent that there is an acceptance of abuse and, thus, a heightened vulnerability to GBV.

WHO (2009) postulates that there are specific rules or expectations of behaviour, which are also called norms within a cultural or social group that can encourage violence. "Norms can protect against violence, but they can also support and encourage the use of it. For instance, cultural acceptance of violence, either as a normal method of

resolving conflict or as a usual part of rearing a child" (WHO 2009:3). Different cultural and social norms support different types of violence. For example, traditional beliefs that men have a right to control or discipline women through physical means make women susceptible to violence by intimate partners and place girls at risk of sexual abuse.

Zulu (2015) subsequently looks at cultural practices from a male perspective. While he affirms the important and formative role of cultural practices (such as ritual, religion, and entertainment) in African communities, he radically "challenges Christian men to use their unique position of power and authority by taking the lead in reforming or removing enslaving and life-threatening practices and to reclaim gender justice, liberation, and dignity for all" (Zulu 2015:10). Here, I think he was referring to cultural and social factors, for example, the assumption that because men are heads of households, they alone have the right to talk on behalf of the household.

Nwachuku (2015) concurs with Zulu by saying, "Most human societies are "patriarchal," and the dominant, male sex prescribes societal norms and sex-role functions" (Nwachuku 2015:54). Since social cohesiveness is maintained by strict adherence to social roles, appropriate role performance usually receives approval while inappropriate performance brings condemnation, rejection, role sanction, and in extreme cases, social shunning (Nwachuku 2015:54). These social norms are to be adhered to and not adhering means a person is going against what the elders and forefathers have seen fit to do. In the end, women are at the receiving end and are stuck between following oppressive norms (which bring approval) and rejecting (which brings rejection). Chirongoma (2006) also reiterates the same in these words, "Often seen as legal minors, barred from owning or inheriting property, and unable to make independent financial decisions, women are vulnerable to poverty, violence and ultimately to HIV infection, which lies at the end of this long causative chain of injustice" (Chirongoma 2006:51).

Mukanangana and Mesatywa (2014) are among those who see lobola payment as an enslaving and life-threatening practice. They attest that young girls find themselves in

poorly functioning marriages because some parents are poor, so they sell off their children, while some are greedy and do not see the value of a girl child. Regarding lobola payment, most scholars agree again that it causes women to be valuable. Lobola payment puts a woman in the spotlight, and she is abused because the parents received her dowry. For most parents, when a girl is of marriageable age, she is fit to be someone's wife. However, Mbuwayesango, (1997) comes in with a different perspective on the issue of lobola in Zimbabwe. She argues that one is not considered a mature woman until her parents have received lobola, which can only be paid when the woman is pregnant. This means that for a woman to have a significant status in society, she must have a child. She goes on to indicate that the value of women in Ndebele and Shona societies is still determined by their biological reproductive capability (Mbuwayesango 1997:30). Usually, the husband prefers to get another wife independently, and it is left to the childless woman to stay or leave the man. Such behaviour kills the inner person of women, but they are left with no choice but to follow what their culture expects them to do.

Nevertheless, it is women who are penalised for being infertile and not men. From this lens, Mbuwayesango (1997) highlights the toxic elements that are found in Zimbabwean culture. Such information from scholars raises important points on the challenges that women and the girl child face in the hands of men as their husbands and fathers. The current study wished to make it clear that the connection of social norms relating to lobola payment, women's poor family background, and their physical location meant that they had limited access to opportunities and resources contributing to their vulnerability and controlling their ability to leave violent relationships.

2.3.3 The intersection of religion and culture

Dube (2017), in Gender and the Bible in Christianity, remarks that African Christianity is a vibrant institution that houses millions of females and males and preaches salvation, redemption, healing, deliverance, and empowerment for its members. Unless African Christianity fully investigates how gender affects its members and the structures of the African Church, then its core business will not be realised by its members. To bring

freeing salvation to its people and the communities they serve, African Churches must prioritize gender equity in their message, initiatives, and organizational structure (Dube 2017:144).

On religion, Siwila and Settler (2013) argued that Chitando (2011) presented it in a way that may be described as a "double-edged sword" concerning masculinities, gender, and patriarchy (Chitando 2011). In other words, it is potentially constructive and destructive at the same time. For him, religion and culture are major contributors to dangerous masculinities both in their nature, structure, and practice. Patriarchal systems have been supported, legitimised, and encouraged by religion and culture. They have also promoted ideals like headship and leadership as exclusive to men to whom women and children are subjects. On the other hand, Chitando (2011) argues that religion can also be utilised to transform such "dangerous' masculinities into life-promoting and harmless alternative ways of being "men". He argued that men have used such religious and cultural resources as 'ancestral tradition', doctrines, and sacred texts as stories of masculine figures in the Bible to sustain their patriarchal privileges (Chitando 2011:271).

Moyo (2010), in her thesis titled *The Influence of Cultural Practices on the HIV and AIDS Pandemic in Zambia*, is against the church's support of traditional norms and practices that demean women. She pointed out the justification of gender inequality and discrimination by saying "But it is our culture", can no longer be accepted as a legitimate reason for these practices and perceptions (Moyo 2010). Examining what is good and bad should be done according to the Word of God (Moyo 2010). Moyo is challenging the church to be instrumental in the change of cultural norms and practices that promote discrimination against women. She reminds the church in sub-Saharan Africa about its key role in bringing about socio-cultural transformation. She suggests the concept of the Imago Dei and the example of Jesus Christ as powerful indicators in the church's quest for gender justice and equality (Moyo 2010).

Chebet (2015) in *Living with Dignity: African Perspectives on gender equality* argues that the church needs to take a positive stance and move away from abusing biblical texts. She said a culture that insists that the wife belongs to her husband while the husband is free to do whatever he wants with his body is unbiblical. Eph 5:22-23, if this passage is misunderstood, unhealthy relational or emotional dominance may result. This and other similar verses have been misused as proof texts to disparage women. Preachers have frequently emphasised the need for a wife's submission to her husband while downplaying the need for the husband to love his wife and be willing to give his life to protect her (Chebet 2015:45). This again, is proof that the church needs to realign with women and make sure the misrepresentation of biblical verses does not abuse them.

In the story of a woman who was caught in an adulterous act, the present church should learn a lot from this. Legros highlighted that in terms of justice, questions such as the following might have raced through Jesus's mind, as they perhaps do in our minds today:

> -If the woman was caught in the act, she was assuredly not acting alone
>
> -Where, then, was the other party to the adultery? Why did the Pharisees and the teachers of the law not bring the man before Jesus as well?
>
> -When the Pharisees and the teachers of the law appealed to it and demanded that the stoning of such women, was the same law applicable to such men?
>
> -Was this not a blatant case of gender injustice?
>
> (Legros 2015:27)

Therefore, the woman should be stoned only by those whose lives did not warrant stoning. Jesus, the impartial judge, saw beyond the accusation and recognised the unfairness of unequal punishment and, in this way, became a champion for gender justice. Today's society also often "throws stones" at women yet ignores the indiscretions of men. At times, this even happens in the church. Should the church not

follow the example of Jesus and be a champion of gender justice in communities? Urging them to "bless those who persecute" them (Rom. 12:14) and to forgive "seventy times seven times" (Matt. 18:21–22) is just too simple. When those preaching to them may also be the ones who commit injustice, does it make sense to give them the promise of a crown in heaven? Legros (2015:29). Many women who are physically or emotionally wounded attend church every Sunday with the hope of being healed from these wounds, and what is asked of the church now is to go further and correct the causes of gender-based injustice. That way, the church could be answering its' "call".

Chitando (2012) mentions that the Circle has demonstrated how inequitable gender relations buttressed by religion and culture have left African women and girls more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. The Circle has shown how religion and culture have been abused to condemn women and children to premature deaths in the era of HIV in Africa. Chitando further pointed out that faced with the challenges of HIV and GBV, activists in Africa have been calling for the transformation of masculinities. They contend that religion has a role to play in this transformation, as it has, up until now, promoted aggressive masculinities (Chitando 2012). For example, many men cite the scriptures of various religions to defend their authority to "discipline" women. An "abuse of sacred texts and traditions by men has allowed men to project having multiple sexual partners and using violence as "divinely sanctioned". Others maintain that as "heads" they have the license to make decisions without consulting women" (Chitando 2012:75). In many instances, this leads to GBV as women resist such abuses of power. In summary, the church implicates itself in promoting death-dealing masculinities in the time of GBV. Raw statistics show that no one is untouched by the realities of GBV, and it is now time that the church acts.

Musopole (1992), in *The Will to Arise*, is of the same view as earlier writers on the role of the church in condoning the suppression of women. She asked how she could arise and walk when our men continued to break our knee joints. How can I talk about Jesus when pastors instruct young men about being married to treat women as their helpers

and not as partners? (Musopole 1992). How can we stop men from limiting and defining women's role to that of producing children, being good wives, and feeding the family? How can we help our sisters who are not married because they do not fit into the model the church has made? (Musopole 1992:198). What strategy should we use when men refuse to allow us to tell what we know about Jesus? Musopole raises valid points about how difficult it is for women to live in churches and homes. There is no breather for them; they are reduced to nothing.

As forwarded by Maposa and Sibanda (2013), the status of women in the church could be described as mixed. They are characterized by marginalization, domination, and subordination to men, as reflected in the government and surrounding communities. Because of its silence and its involvement (covertly or overtly), the churches and church leaders seem to be a significant obstacle in Zimbabwe towards the emancipation of women (Maposa & Sibanda 2013:97). Museka (2013:112) has this to say concerning churches in Zimbabwe, "Only male voices and their dreams and desires continue to be dominant in the church. Women are largely insulated and safe during public church functions even though they are not given leadership roles".

In light of the above statements concerning women's suppression and subjugation, it is high time that the church should be reminded to begin within its walls to tackle GBV. The world as a whole is looking up to the Church to find strategies to stop or reduce GBV, and in return, the church is doing the opposite. For this reason, Magezi (2019) agree and says that "religious organizations and communities have proven to be exceptional in addressing the HIV pandemic" (Magezi 2019). However, "the same vigour and energy have not been witnessed in addressing GBV" (Brade 2009:17; Herstad 2009:3; Owens 2008:15).

Grady (2006), in, *Ten Lies the church tells women: How the Bible Has Been Misused to Keep Women in Spiritual Bondage* warns that churches should guard against telling women lies, such as that God created women as inferior beings, destined to serve their husbands, or that God made a helper, and helpers are subordinate to the ones they

help. The church should assist in and should be the first to acknowledge that women are not what society says they are, they are image bearers of God and possess an inherent dignity because of that (Grady 2006:17). They cannot and must not be reduced to socially constructed roles. At the end of the day, gender inequality is still prevalent and often the position of women's participation in and benefits from development initiatives, in general, remains slow (Grady 2006:18). The church cannot be silent or accept the unequal treatment of persons based on their sex in any form, including unequal treatment in the economic sphere of life.

Le Roux said the church is systematically absent in responding to the reality of sexual violence, both in a preventive sense and in providing after-care. As such, congregants are actively creating a context in which Sexual Violence (SV) survivors are stigmatised and discriminated against, and in which sexually violent practices are condoned. There is a bleak picture of church involvement in dealing with sexual violence (Le Roux 2012:48). SV is like the proverbial elephant in the room; the church knows what is going on in the community but pretends and attempts to be unaware of it. In doing this, it takes its lead from the community. Cultural norms typically dictate that SV survivors are stigmatised and shunned and that offenders are rarely punished thus communities refuse to confront the problem. SV is frequently accepted as "normal" or acceptable and is not even acknowledged as such. Because of the cultural and social convictions and principles dominant within the community, the churches choose not to address the issue of SV (Le Roux 2012: 53). I contend with Le Roux here to say that a situation is created in which abuse is overlooked because some cultural beliefs and practices are innately related to power and gender. In such a situation, the church cannot do anything but comply with the flow.

On the contrary, many churches are actively contributing to the stigma and discrimination that Sexual Violence survivors face. Some churches are preaching and teaching in ways that support gender-discriminatory and sexually violent practices; others even openly advocate it. Some churches say that SV is not a "spiritual" topic (Le Roux 2012:50). Le Roux echoes that "little support is available for survivors in such a

context; they are usually not even allowed space to talk about what happened to them" (Le Roux 2012:50). Thus, some churches' encouragement for or support of traditions and beliefs conducive to sexual violence is not the only problem; even though churches may not actively support sexually violent practices, their lack of opposition also indirectly supports such practices (Le Roux 2012:50).

In *The Will to Arise*, Okure added that African women are also traditionally expected to depend on most of their cultures. So far, like Jairus' daughter, we have primarily depended on others to speak for us and present our plight and needs before the world. Has the time now come for us to speak for ourselves? (Okure 1992:223). Okure is bringing home the fact that the Bible is also used as an example to oppress women since there are circumstances in it where women were expected to say nothing, even on matters that affect them. For example, in Genesis 29:26, Jacob is caught up in a custom issue where he is denied his first choice, Rachel because it was not Laban's custom to give the younger one in marriage before the older one. Custom could not care enough for the feelings of Leah and Rachel. That custom did not consider whether Leah loved Jacob or not she was given to him.

The study shows the church's voice in the oppression and subjugation of women. What is the church doing and saying about the oppression of women? Is the church vocal in matters that affect women? These are issues raised by this work to bring awareness to the Church, letting it know of its flaws and giving recommendations on how it could improve and be a better ambassador for its people. The church will be able to do self-introspection and critically challenge its role when it comes to women who are marginalised and abused. This section aims to help women out there who cannot speak out because they are abused in the name of religion, making sure that these women and girls' voices are heard and this problem must be rectified; women and girls should be empowered to speak out and have their voices heard. This is meant to break the ground for men who think they are the only special species. Women need to know that they are all created in the image of God together with men and should not take abuse lightly.

2.3.4 Gender and gender norms

Gender is described as a "set of behavioural, cultural, psychological and social characteristics and practices associated with masculinity and femininity" (Buchanan 2010:198). Tolbert asserts, "Gender is constructed, and constructed differently, in diverse local settings" (Tolbert 2000:101). This, therefore, means every society constructs its gender roles differently and therefore explains why others accept other behaviours while some condone such.

Ayanga (2012) defines the term "gender" as a tendency to invoke certain emotions in both the user and the hearer of the term. For men, it conjures up images of militant women who forcefully and emotionally want to become like men" (Ayanga 2012:85). In this case, these women want to wrench "power" in its various dimensions from the rightful "owners" who in this case are the male human species. "For some women, the term "gender" calls up images of their fellow women who have lost direction and who want to destroy the God-given mandate to be submissive and indeed only follow their husbands' direction" (Ayanga 2012:85). Ayanga suggests that the gender question is a cross-cutting one as it represents "one of the oldest power struggles of humanity" (Ayanga 2012:85).

Gender norms are societal expectations and rules regarding how men and women should behave, express themselves, and interact with others according to their gender. The specifics regarding these gendered expectations may vary among cultures, while other characteristics may be common throughout various cultures (Eisenchlas 2013). Gender norms are social principles that govern the behaviour of boys and girls, women and men in society, and restrict their gender identity into what is appropriate (Koenig 2018:43). Gender norms are neither static nor universal but change with time.

Gender roles are society's shared beliefs that apply to individuals based on their socially recognized sex. Gender role expectations can be descriptive as well as prescriptive (Eisenchlas 2013:19). The descriptive aspect "relates to beliefs about what men and women typically do, and the prescriptive aspect shapes expectations and

appropriateness of behaviour of self and others" (Eisenchlas 2013:19). For Koenig (2018), these aspects stem from the interdependence between men and women that not only facilitates the creation of cognitive schemas of how men and women act but also frame the individual and societal expectations for how they should act (Koenig 2018:43).

In simple terms, gender roles are "a set of socially accepted behaviours and attitudes deemed appropriate or desirable for individuals based on their sex. Gender roles are usually centred on conceptions of masculinity and femininity, although there are exceptions and variations" (Scott, Corra & Carter 2009:199). Men have always been known for their participation in business and leadership, while women are known for homemaking and motherhood. Below is how patriarchy and culture construct gender, that is, how women are expected to behave by society.

Gender construction, patriarchy, and culture

Patriarchy is a social system in which positions of dominance and privilege are held by men. The term "patriarchy" is used to describe a family or clan controlled by the father or eldest male or group of males, and in feminist theory to describe a broader social structure in which men as a group dominate women and children" (Green 2010:969). It is also "related to patrilineality" (Laura 2019:374).

In its narrow meaning, patriarchy refers to the system in which the "male head of the household has absolute legal and economic power over his dependent female and male family members" (Gerda1986:9). Patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestation and institutionalisation of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. Patriarchal ideology acts to explain and justify acts to explain and justify patriarchy by attributing gender inequality to intrinsic natural differences between men and women, divine commandments, or other fixed structures (Green 2010:969). Therefore, this section points to elements where there is male supremacy over the suppression of women. Women are dominated in all spheres of life, be it in the legal, social, political,

and economic life of women and children. Men will always justify their actions of mistreating their wives and children.

Dunkle (2003) argues that while culture is a key factor of gender power relationships, “patriarchal structures and systems are the vehicles through which gender inequalities, discrimination and the subordination of women are perpetuated and justified; and from which men reap unfair benefits and dominate women” (Dunkle 2003:31). The predominant patriarchal society insists on control, subordination and the undervaluing of females, categorising males as stronger, better, of higher value, and as leaders of women and society. That attitude, therefore, creates major problems for females and males of all ages, and nowhere has this been as evident as in the current situation in which GBV has ravaged humanity, especially in African countries. From such an analysis by Dunkle (2003), Makonese (2017) adds the issue of intersectional discrimination of women. She says, “As such, the issue of intersectional discrimination places women in multiple difficulties, as they must grapple with discrimination at multiple levels and in different situations and contexts (Makonese 2017:119). Women indeed face several forms of discrimination, but laws still discriminate against women based on various grounds such as sex and marital status.

Challenging these patriarchal structures would mean challenging culture, as patriarchy is culturally supported, and its practices and beliefs are culturally condoned. Not only is provoking culture a challenging and controversial exercise, but it is also usually perceived as a threat to the community. Thus, there is often resistance to any efforts to change culture and to those who do so. Furthermore, in many (if not most) African countries, culture remains a critical element of and encompasses every area of any individual’s life. Therefore, “it is perceived as a threat to community security if one is critical of culture, for there are elements in these cultures which are the very veins through which the solidarity of communities is nurtured” (Zulu 2015:35).

Oduyoye (1995) is attuned to the above view as she notes that another area in which our voices are silent is the treatment of single and childless women whose grim fate

undermines the solidarity of all women and serves to uphold the patriarchal norms. If we open these issues, we shall unmask the patriarchisation of the economy (Oduyoye 1995:199). Oduyoye gave an example of Sarah, who was also a culture-bound woman. Oppressed by a culture that has no value on childless women, she, in turn, became oppressor to Hagar, whom both she and Abraham exploited under the patriarchal provisions of their times (Gen. 16:1-16; 21:8-21). Cruelty among other women is often cited to dismiss our just demands or to muffle our voices. An analysis of the patriarchal hierarchy shows that “we have survived at the bottom of the pyramid by building our pyramids of hurt within that sub-structure” (Oduyoye1995:199). By this, Oduyoye is bringing home the fact that women are sometimes oppressors to their fellow sisters who are already oppressed by patriarchy.

Most African communities believe that “a husband’s authority extends to the children. Despite women's relatively high degree of independence, women do not regard themselves as having equal authority with their husbands concerning certain family matters” (Oduyoye 2003:52). The children are the husband’s, and the wife’s position in the affair is a helper. Women are regarded as dunderheads; their opinions do not matter at all. By so doing this reduces their self-esteem because the community generally demands passive and subordinate behaviour in women; this, in turn, makes them easy victims of violence and predisposes them to accept the violence done to them. For example, the wife is part of the family and a co-partner in a marriage (Oduyoye 2003:52). She dares not lay a finger on her husband, although he may beat her. She cannot take him to the local court unless it is unfair, excessive, and repeated punishment (Oduyoye 2003). As a woman is completely expected to depend on him, she is forced to respect her husband.

It has always been stated that traditional African women accepted polygamy and encouraged their husbands to take a second or third wife. There has been a fatal resignation of women to their status in society (Wasike 1992:112). Wasike echoes that women have been taken for granted and that what African men speak for African women has been ignored. Whatever men think and say to be good and right, women

are supposed to affirm and support (Wasike 1992:110). Men are self-appointed spokespersons for women and children in every patriarchal society. This shows that women are not happy with their lot, besides their seeming acceptance of what society expects of them. They quietly reject and resent what society and men have imposed on them. This quiet disapproval is, however, always interpreted as acceptance (Mouton 2015:111). Women are powerless and vulnerable due to patriarchal tendencies.

Nwachuku (2015) quotes Oduyoye & Kanyoro (1992) to say that “while in a patriarchal society, males are often accused by females of being the oppressors, a counterargument often put forward by men is that some of the obnoxious and repressive role functions of women whether in religion or social matters, were formulated in the distant past by powerful elderly women for female discipline in the areas of wifely submission, chastity, good maternal care, and for maintaining the aura of femininity (Nwachuku 2015:65). Kanyoro calls this “women struggling against each other to fulfil what society has designed for them” (Kanyoro 1992). Sarah uses Hagar and then dumps her when it fits her (Nwachuku 2015:66). Considering this quote, a question to be asked can be: To what extent do women condone, worsen, abate, or fully participate in enhancing cultural practices, and yet blame men for putting these practices into implementation? In as much as this study blames men for imposing harmful practices on women, it also acknowledges that women can be their own devils in trying to fit in with what society expects them to.

Nevertheless, men are allowed by culture to take another wife who can bear a “son/heir” in the case of women giving birth to girls only or the barren ones. A family can gather and plan to have a second wife taken so that she can bear a son who is supposed to take after the family legacy for those who will be bearing girls; barren ones will also go through the trauma of having another wife in the home so that she can bear children. This again shows how devalued a woman is by her society. This is concurred by Mbiti, who clearly stated that “for continuity in community, the supreme purpose of marriage according to African people is to bear children, to build a family, to extend life and to hand down the living torch of human existence” (Mbiti 1987:104). Mbiti addresses

marriage in the context of community as being important in fulfilling an obligation, a duty, and a custom that every normal person should be married and bear children (Mbiti 1987:105). Thus, society expects a "good wife" to bear children believed to extend the bloodline. A woman who does not bear children is blamed by society; she is seen as committing a crime against well-established community beliefs and practices.

Concerning Zimbabwean culture and traditional practices, Nani (2011:18) in *Challenges Faced by Urban Women Entrepreneurs* argues that most societies have largely been patriarchal where men serve as the heads of the families or clans. She reiterated that "radical proponents claim that through sexual violence, and the ever-present threat of sexual violence, men can control women through physical domination and fear" (Nani 2011:21). The nature of male sexuality and the distortion and suppression of female sexuality lies at the core of patriarchy.

Writing from a Zimbabwean perspective, Chitando and Chirongoma (2012) postulate that "concepts of "maleness" that are lubricated by religion enable boys and men to dominate and do violence. Globally, boy children tend to receive preferential treatment as patriarchy celebrates the arrival of its "chief technical operators" (Chitando & Chirongoma 2012:271). Mostly pampered and assured of the benefits of being male, young boys and men know they occupy a rung higher than their sisters and mothers. Sexual and gender-based violence, where men are by far the prime "doers" of violence, is informed by this very sense of power, control, and authority (Chitando & Chirongoma 2012:271). Across Rushinga, men are led to believe that they are "more human" than women. Violence by women is a strategy of "putting women in their rightful place". To them, manhood entails control over women and their bodies.

The problematic definition and construction of a "good wife."

Based on the previous sections, where the more challenging aspects of culture, tradition, gender norms, and gender roles were discussed to indicate how these influence the way a woman is perceived, one can ask the question: Is it the right question to ask if a woman is a good wife? This is because what is regarded as "a good

wife" is intermingled with many layers of constructions and norms. In a perfect world, what it means to be a marital partner should not be linked to all these constructions. That is at the heart of this study: the "definition" of a good wife is not regarded in terms of human dignity and equality– rather, the definition is often only regarded in line with the more problematic aspects of culture, tradition, and gender constructs. According to these norms, the expected characteristics of a good wife in 1920 cannot be the same in 2020.

Ebila (2015) questioned the unjust practice of loading responsibilities of good behaviour on women only, and questioned why women should be viewed as promoters of culture and not men (Ebila 2015:146). Thus, this section investigated what it was like to be a good wife in the Kore-Kore culture. Individuals, groups, communities, and societies had sets of ideas about gender and gender role expectations requiring men and women to conduct themselves in a certain way. These dictated what they should or should not do and how to dress, behave, or present themselves in public and private (Eisenchlas 2013:19). Besides society, husbands tend to have configured expectations from their wives. They want adherence to their expectations from their wives. Failure to do that, GBV erupts.

Concurring with the above, Parveen (2020) argues "that husbands and wives have several expectations of each other, and society as well as its expectations of the land's inhabitants. These expectations are shaped by gender role attitudes alongside cultural and societal norms" (Parveen 2020:4). Unmet expectations and deviation of behaviour from the perceived norms can result in the development of marital conflict which can escalate to GBV. The significance of this section lies in understanding the expectations of a good wife from the perspectives of husbands and society and how unmet expectations contribute to marital conflict and GBV.

Gendered spousal role expectations and attitudes may contribute to marital conflict, one of the important contributors to GBV (Vives, Vozmediano, Suarez, & Goicolea, 2014:107). The writers say the presence of male dominance and marital conflict is

identified as a predictor of IPV, used as a corrective mechanism or punishment for deviating from the gender role expectations or exercising power and control. “Explaining and understanding marital conflict as a risk factor of IPV is … often considered as a type of violence against women in its own right” (Vives *et al.* 2014:107). One out of three women are affected by intimate partner violence (IVP) across the world. One of the reasons for this is how women are belittled by society and how their role is perceived (Vives *et al.* 2014:107).

Society’s expectations of a good woman are that she must be a caretaker of the home and take a secondary role in decision-making. This point is supported by Ogletree, who contends that traditionally, gender role stereotypes ascribe authority and dominance as male traits and submission and powerlessness as female traits contributing to power differences in society (Ogletree 2014). He is supported by Ali *et al. (2019),* who argue that in African cultures, men must go out and provide their families with security and sustenance, while women must remain at home to take care of children and household responsibilities. Households where both husband and wife pursue their careers and ambitions subvert these traditional cultural expectations and are seen as disruptive (Ali *et al.* 2009:178). By this, men are expected to be providers and decision-makers of a family, and women are expected to be helpers. When the woman wants to participate in decision-making, she will be seen as a “bad wife” going astray and needs to be tamed.

A good woman is “a stoic, self-effacing, loyal and biological mother. If a woman behaves in a way that does not conform to and confirms these stereotypes, she is labelled a witch, prostitute and murderer” (Vambe 2013:2). The role of culture is evident in making role expectations stronger, and, therefore, a failure to meet expectations by any of the partners, especially the woman, can give rise to marital conflict that can escalate into IPV (Ali *et al.* 2019:180). Empirical research has shown that hostile sexist attitudes as the basis of preserving men’s dominance over women are stuck in traditional gender role expectations (Mastari & Siongers 2019). Gender roles stemming from the concept of masculinity and societal norms are further fixed through cultural expectations. Many cases of GBV stem from men who feel their women are not

obedient. Most men who hold traditional views about gender roles are more likely to justify and use GBV when feeling “neglected”, “not listened to”, or “challenged”.

Furthermore, in Africa, the very idea of a “free woman” conjures up negative images. Oduyoye demonstrates that we have been brought up to believe that a woman should always have a suzerain, that she should be “owned” by a man, be he father, uncle, or husband (Oduyoye 1995:4). She goes on to comment that a “free woman” spells disaster. An adult woman, if unmarried, is immediately mistaken to be available for all males to “play” with her. The single woman who manages her affairs successfully without a man is an insult to patriarchy and a direct challenge to the so-called masculinity of men who want to “possess” her. Some women struggle to be free from this compulsory attachment to the male (Oduyoye 1995:4). The society declares that women are fit only to go to church, to work in kitchens, and to bear and support children. Therefore, being a good wife means that a woman must not be independent and free. If a woman shows some traits of being independent and self-supporting, automatically, she is labelled with a bad/negative tag.

More so, culture expects that a good wife obeys her husband at every whim and must never disrespect, show arrogance, or show disharmony for her husband. Such kind of opposite behaviour that is highly offensive to the husband is not permitted. A wife is expected to gather and prepare food, serve her husband, and provide clothing and other personal needs. As a mother, she must care for the children and their needs, including education. A “good wife” is expected to participate in community activities and volunteer work within her community and through social organisations. By contrast, men have traditionally had just one role, as the family’s breadwinner, and little obligation to be socially active within their community. These multiple burdens of responsibility on women impose hardship on them and leave them vulnerable.

Oduyoye (1995) agrees with the above, as she narrates that the “daughters of Anowa” are expected to be supportive and hide their festering wounds from outsiders. They are supposed to be custodians of all the ancient healing arts and keepers of the secrets that

numb pains inflicted by internal aggressors (Oduyoye 1995). They are expected to pray, sing, and cry. She argues that “they are to tend the wounds from battles in which they are not allowed to fight. They are only permitted to look on from afar, “for their good”, stand by, shaking loosened wrists in desperation, powerlessly watching their brothers flounder” (Oduyoye 1995:90). Indeed, the situation with women is a sad one, as they are expected to do the impossible and supposed to go through torture to show their loyalty and commitment to the marriage. In contrast, men are allowed to “explore the world of women”. Women are nurtured to endure the pain inflicted on them, and the community should not know what they are going through. A good wife must be able to hide her problems and pray for them, not fight back against their husbands. This is the extent to which our society expects of women- to stay in weeping with no one wiping their tears.

In *Daughters of Anowa,* Oduyoye postulates that African men say African women are dear, they know their place and keep it. Should an African woman differ with this assessment, she becomes an imitator of Western women, a model in which Africa has no interest. Unlike beauty, however, oppression does not lie in the eye of the beholder; it tugs at the soul of the one who feels it (Oduyoye 1995:81). From this insight by Oduyoye, a good woman stays at home. A good woman should always be where she is expected to be, always at hand and always useful. Women are expected to be silent, thus, the silence and anonymity of the African woman are her greatest hindrance to freedom. Rushinga women were burdened with so many restrictions. Oduyoye describes African women as “she, the oppressed rarely has time for such luxuries. The African woman is seen under such rubrics as marriage, family, or population, but hardly ever as a person (Oduyoye 1995:82).

Furthermore, success and happiness are things that an individual must earn independently from others (Rudman & Glick 2001). As a result, the idea of sacrificing individual aspirations for family or community is perceived as respectfulness and gentleness. A concept of respectfulness and gentleness is focused on the preferred characteristics of a good wife role. Africans have traditionally emphasised a preference

that a good wife display respectfulness and modesty (Gabrenya & Hwang 1996). That is the case as well in the Rushinga community, where a woman should possess gentleness attributes to be taken as a good wife. To them, a good wife is considered one with passive love, dependency, moral obligations, modesty, and harmony as her key features. The Rushinga community expects that it is important for a wife to become a mother and show loyalty, commitment, and moral commitment to her family. There is a high reception of violence as a way of ensuring women are controlled and perform their roles effectively, as they are considered the possessions of men and, therefore, expected to be controlled by men.

Additionally, lower literacy levels, especially among women, broader socio-economic conditions of the society, limited opportunities for women to work, social makeup and the patriarchal structure of society, and the influence of religious and cultural practices make change in gender roles expectations a much slower process (Ali *et al*. 2019). Cultural and societal factors, and the fact that childcare responsibilities mainly lies with women, also meant that certain gender role expectations were not easy to change, especially in developing African countries like Zimbabwe and in traditional societies like Rushinga, to be precise. All these factors contributed to an acceptance of GBV. The analysis from Ali above is correct in that even if married couples in their home want to change, it will take time because the man might also fear what his relatives and society will say if he allows his wife to have freedom and make decisions. In Zimbabwe, they call that man *akadyiswa,* which means he was given a love portion. Again, because of low literacy levels, many women are content with what they have; they will not raise their heads and realise what they are missing. For this reason, it will take time for our societies to change because of what the society dictates.

Marriage is regarded as the only acceptable intimate relationship between men and women. It is regarded as an achievement and is often arranged by family members (Hamid, Stephenson, & Rubenson 2011:38) and people often live in a joint family system (Hamid *et al.* 2011). Much emphasis is placed on the importance of family as an entity. It may result in marital conflict, which can then escalate to violence (Hadi & Ali

2017:18). Violence is considered a private matter that happens within a family and should remain within and be dealt with in the family. Rushinga is a patriarchal society with a dominant emphasis on gender role expectations. Women are considered more restricted compared to men in personal and social life spheres. When GBV erupts, a good wife is expected to sweep this under the carpet and move on because that is the nature of marriages. A good wife must stay strong for the good of her marriage; she is not supposed to move around telling people.

Thus, societal expectations of a good wife are so unfair to women since they are left defenceless in trying to save their marriages. In addition, because marriage is the predominant form of intimate relationship in Rushinga, almost all IPV takes place within marital relationships. As such, the effects of expectations within marriage as a source of conflict were also a source of GBV in Rushinga. Another societal expectation that is harsher to women is in terms of infidelity because men have always made the rules that have controlled women. Women are expected to stay calm and composed when their husbands cheat, and women are not allowed to cheat. To be a good woman means valuing their marital vows and not breaking them. In an article written by Linda Culp, *why do you think society is harsher to women in terms of infidelity,* the writer said as they do for many of their actions, men often get away lightly with infidelity.

Culp contends that instead of holding them accountable for their actions, or at least asking them for answers, society has gifted men with a free pass that is applied in such cases by default. Men will be men; men are like that only (Culp 2020:1). She argues how men are “wowed” because they cannot control themselves. She goes on to pose a question, “not justifying the act but have you ever heard of a man being paraded naked through the town for adultery?” (Culp 2020:1). It is seldom seen scrutiny of a man’s character when he commits adultery, but if it’s a woman, they are seen as a bad influence on other women, a threat to the moral fabric of the society. A man is honest if he comes clean about his affair, but a woman is seen as evil or loose.

Culp (2020) goes on to blame men and argues that men have also given themselves far more leeway in accepting their infidelities. In addition, men have created and perpetuated the idea that men have higher sex drives than women, despite the truth. They have perpetuated the notion that women just do not want sex that much, because that is simply what they want to believe about women (Culp 2020:2). That is why shaming and shunning happens so often when a woman wants to express her natural sexuality fully. It is simply to keep women in line. Therefore, if a woman cheats on a man, the problem is always supposedly with her, and not with her husband who likely mistreats her and drives her to seek solace elsewhere. Men also created the idea of marriage so they could own and control their wives (Culp 2020:2). They also created the rules for single women because they thought they had the right to dominate all women. It feels so good and normal for men, and even other women, to blame the woman for being “uncultured” when caught cheating, and the man is said to be a “bull” who goes around doing these acts without being blamed or cursed.

Oduyoye pointed out that sometimes, we ask why women affirm a practice that they know has at times been injurious to women’s health. A dominant strand in the practice responds to men’s needs and women are socialised to meet these male needs. According to her, to be a real woman is to be married and to produce children. In some African cultures, disciplines are imposed on women by socio-cultural expectations. In Africa, wife beating is one of domestic violence around which a heavy cloak of silence is drawn. Worse, some men see wife beating as a duty and are proud to declare their compliance. When this battering is made public and resisted by a woman, she is viewed as disloyal or unwomanly. These types of violence against women need to be resisted and transformed as they tend to pervade all facets of human life (Oduyoye 1995:168). Abuse is engraved in women’s hearts to the extent that you will never hear women talk about the beating they receive; to them, it is a normal part of their marital relations. Against this background, something must be done; women need to “wake up” from their sleep and realize how much danger they are in and how it requires them to be deviant from such deleterious practices that keep affecting them and other generations to come.

Nevertheless, men and women are gradually moving toward more democratic gender expectations, where social, domestic, and financial responsibilities are shared by both partners (Ogletree 2014), with a focus on marriage and intimate relationships (Koenig 2018:15). As expected, egalitarian views are more closely linked to contemporary societies, higher education levels, and working mothers' upbringing (Boehnke 2011:24). However, before this phenomenon achieves an equitable balance throughout all societies, a lengthy time will pass. "Women are still expected to be much more submissive and less capable than their male intimate partner, even in developed societies that claim to have made progress regarding gender and gender role expectations" (Loscocco & Walzer 2013:7), and household responsibilities are still considered a woman's role (Papp 2018:19).

Expectation theory explains how men are prone to be more hierarchical because of culturally grounded performance expectations, which further explains why traditional gender roles are more dominant (Mast 2004:110). This, therefore, means that men tend to perceive their partner's egalitarian attitude as controlling towards themselves, which, in turn, might lead to aggression. There will be no issues if the wife is passive and submissive. However, the problem arises as to how men understand a free wife. In trying to show that you are also educated and want to contribute to matters of your family, men can misinterpret this and see it as the wife is controlling.

2.3.5 Zimbabwean marriage legislation

Post-colonial gender constructs of men and women continued to position women as inferior to men and accorded them the status of minors. Guardianship and marriage laws often took away women's ability to make decisions for themselves concerning, for example, land rights, property rights, sexual health and reproductive rights, and even the right not to be raped in marriage (Saungweme 2021). After independence, Zimbabwe passed laws dealing with women, which are always amended if needed. In May 2022, a new Marriages Act was passed, which became effective in August 2022, and it sought to replace the Customary Marriages Act and the Marriage Act.[3] The study

[3] Cf. "The New Marriages Act," viewed at https://www.veritaszim.net/node/5682, on 27 October 2023.

saw it fit to look at the current Marriages Act and its relation to women in Zimbabwe since the Act is said to present an opportunity to reconcile the ambiguity and gaps that the two laws have. How women are affected positively and negatively by this Act is the major concern of this section so that it is able to tell whether the government has now put women at heart or it is still the same that men are always at the advantage, pushing women to the periphery because they are voiceless.

The recently enacted Marriages Act acknowledges an unregistered customary law relationship as a marriage and establishes a qualified legal marriage and civil partnership. According to Chimwamurombe and Mujaji (2022:1), the new law "seeks to introduce various new types of "marriages" and modify existing concepts within the marriage law framework" (Marriage Act 2022). The matrimonial property rule in Zimbabwe is still outside of the community of property, notwithstanding all of these developments. New marriage legislation in Zimbabwe has given women in registered unions and "girlfriends" identical rights in the event of a marriage dissolution or the husband's passing (Chimwamurombe & Mujaji 2022:1). The recognition of customary law marriage as equal to civil law marriage is one of the most significant improvements in the new law. Under customary law marriages, parties were not considered to be married at law.

Types of Marriage

The new Marriages Act (2022) offers an interesting new dimension for the interpretation of relationships in our Zimbabwean society. Below are the types of marriages in Zimbabwe as spelt in the Marriage Act.

Civil Marriage

Once one is married under this marriage, they are not eligible to enter into any other marriages, except the civil partnership. Otherwise, it is bigamy, which is against the law. Two consenting people older than 18 are all needed for a marriage (Marriages Act 2022:3). It is not necessary to use Lobola. Monogamous marriages are those in which there is only one husband and one woman. After getting into this type of marriage, a

wife or husband is not allowed to get married to anyone else. If they do, they are breaking the law, known as bigamy, and the victim may file a lawsuit for damages related to adultery. This implies that a spouse in this kind of marriage can possess or dispose of property registered in their separate names without the other spouse's agreement (Chimwamurombe & Mujaji 2022:1).

Registered Customary Law Union

Marriage with the potential for polygamy (one man, multiple wives) requires registration and payment of the lobola and is limited to marrying women under customary law; if one wife remains, one may upgrade to a civil marriage. According to this Act, (2022:7) the magistrates solemnise it within their respective spheres of authority. This union may be polygamous, which permits a husband to have multiple wives. For women, this was not the case, though. If a wife betrayed him, the husband might file a lawsuit for damages related to adultery, but the wife was not permitted to do the same. After the lobola was paid, the marriage was officially registered at the Magistrates Court. The marriage was also out of the community of property hence the law that applies to a civil marriage in relation to property also applies (Marriages Act 2022:7).

Unregistered Customary Law Union (UCLU)

According to the Marriages Act, (2022:8), this marriage type is characterised by payment of lobola. A man can marry many wives under customary law. The marriage should be registered within three months but there is no sanction for failure to do so. It is solemnised by a Chief within their area of jurisdiction. The union can be upgraded to registered customary law marriage (Chimwamurombe & Mujaji 2022:1).

Civil Partnership

In Civil Partnership, a man and a woman live together without exchanging lobola (small homes, situation relationships, cohabitation). Partners remain with a married person; this also holds for cohabiting lovers and girlfriends (*kuchaya Mapoto).* This is only acknowledged to establish rights in the event of death or relationship breakdown; it is

not recognised as a marriage. After paying the lobola, parties may upgrade to UCLU. A civil partnership is a relationship in which a man and a woman are not within the degrees of affinity or consanguinity specified in section 7, have lived together without being legally married, and are both over the age of eighteen (Marriages Act 2022:8). Considering all the circumstances surrounding their relationship, have a relationship as a couple living together in a legitimate domestic setting; to ascertain the parties rights and obligations upon the dissolution of the relationship, they will be in a civil partnership.

In cases where a partner in a civil partnership is legally married to another person, the division, apportionment, or distribution of the partnership's assets must consider the rights and interests of the partner's spouse. Additionally, the court's ruling must not be applied to any assets that the partner's spouse can claim to be rightfully owned. Put another way, unless the property is in the name of the affected party and the party is married in a civil union, the affected party from the civil partnership is not entitled to the property acquired by the other party (Chimwamurombe & Mujaji 2022:1).

Highlights and Challenges of the Marriages Act

In her paper, Cassim (2022) made the case that the Bill is a step in the right direction toward domesticating international standards. To the degree that these laws are consistent with the constitution, they demonstrate advancements in the acknowledgment of gender equality, the protection of the child's best interests, the importance of consent in marriage, and the recognition of the right to culture (Cassim 2022:2).

Clause 4 of the Marriage Act (2022:4) demonstrates issues of gender equality, which expand on the primacy of free and full consent of both parties for a marriage to occur. Early and forced marriages are a feature of Zimbabwean society through practices such as *kuripa ngozi* (virgin pledging) and *kugara nhaka* (wife inheritance). These unions are not entered into by consent of the women or girls. They are culturally prescribed and take place in the private sphere of the family. *Kuripa Ngozi* is defined as “the customary practice of compensatory payment in inter-family disputes as well as in the appeasement of avenging deceased spirits” (Cassim 2022:2). Typically, the family

provides compensation by allowing their virgin daughter to wed a member of the bereaved family. Most of the time, the families of these ladies marry these women against their will because it is more convenient or out of duty.

This practice is now outlawed making it an advantage to innocent girls who were being used without their consent. The Bill takes a step further to impose criminal liability on any person involved in the marriage of a child under the age of 18. The law thus recognises the role parents, and the community play in promoting child marriage. This eliminates the unfairness of being married off as a youngster and allows kids to complete their education and have fulfilling lives.

As one of the countries with the highest prevalence of child marriages, reported at 32%, the introduction of the need for consent in the solemnisation of marriages presents a chance to strengthen equality in marriage by enforcing the basis of marriages to be consented to by both parties equally. Article 16 (2) of Cedaw states that the marriage of a child will not be legally recognised, and states must take steps to specify a legal age for marriage. This is an important harmonisation of Zimbabwe's international obligation to ensure children are not forced into marriage. The Bill goes further to provide that a marriage officer shall not formalise or register a marriage without proof of age of the parties involved. Both parties to the marriage must be 18 years or older. The Bill also recognises its misalignment with the Children's Act of 2001, which defines a child as any person under the age of 16. Clause 48 amends the Children's Act to define a child as any person who is under the age of 18. Clause 42 (1) (a) voids any marriage of a minor who is under the age of 18 (Marriages Act 2022:4).

Civil marriages under the Marriage Act were considered superior and handled differently upon divorce. But now all marriages are treated equally, "giving Zimbabweans in other marriages more rights to inherit property. In terms of inheritance, it just means that those in a civil partnership are now on equal footing with other marriage regimes upon the dissolution of their marriages" (Cassim 2022:2). There is a worry out there that the new law is now giving rights to "girlfriends" but in Zimbabwe, 80% of unions are not

registered and most women are in unions where they are having kids but still being regarded as girlfriends (Cassim 2022:1). Thus, those women living with men and having kids but not married officially can now receive the property of their “husbands” in case of death.

Most Zimbabwean men have girlfriends with children outside the matrimonial home, and it has been a disadvantage to these women and their children because they were hibernated and could not enjoy their father’s sweat but now, they can get the inheritance. Most women in Zimbabwe have not had their lobola, or bride price, paid, yet they have built homes and accumulated properties with their husbands, and often the wives and even children sired out of these unions are left out of the will. This is what this new law sought to resolve. However, this is two-sided as it will on the other side be a disadvantage to the woman who was married and known by the family, who has worked so hard for the properties to be enjoyed by some girlfriend who was not there when the wealth was being accumulated. Some of the girlfriends were there to come and squander the money they did not work for, and this was an ongoing war between married/official women and girlfriends/unofficial.

In an online article, Cassim (2022:2) argues that Zimbabwe has ushered in a new marriage law that gives equal rights to "girlfriends" and women in registered unions upon the dissolution of a marriage or the death of the husband. Upon the death of a husband or termination of the marriage, very little could be gained in terms of property rights, particularly by women who were disenfranchised in a lot of these unions. Unlike in the past, the new law recognises civil partnerships, which were not marriages but were recognised only for property sharing. When the relationship is ended, any one of these two can use the civil partnership provision, to get protection which is also accorded to married people who were divorcing. Civil marriages under the old Marriage Act were considered greater and handled differently upon divorce. But now all marriages were treated equally, giving Zimbabweans in other marriages more rights to inherit property. In terms of inheritance, it just means that those in a civil partnership are

now on an equal foothold with other marriage regimes upon the dissolution of their marriages.

Despite the above highlights that the Bill presents prospects for women and marriage in Zimbabwe, it also has apparent gaps and discrepancies that perpetuate inequality, violence, and discrimination against women. The inconsistencies and gaps must be rectified before the Bill is re-tabled before Parliament. Among the criticisms levelled against the Bill included “its “warped” view of protecting the rights of married women; its failure to recognise queer marriages and the inequality of marriages” (Mubaiwa, 2023:3). As a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Zimbabwe has a legally binding obligation to domesticate its CEDAW obligations in its municipal law and take steps to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women. On the other hand, the Bill contains inconsistencies that may deter the realisation of some core women’s rights. These include the failure to appreciate same-sex marriages unregistered customary marriages and polygynous unions before the law (Mubaiwa 2023:3).

In rural areas, most women get married under customary law and do not register. Due to the dual legal system, women are somewhat protected while using customary law to pursue legal action over inheritance disputes. However, this system has drawbacks. For instance, family members need to attest to the marriage. Sometimes, in-laws will not confirm this because they do not get along well with the widow or because they do not want her to get anything from her husband's estate. The courts can use the standards set in the Bill to determine whether the civil partnership is recognisable. But there is no standard for determining the validity of a civil partnership, leaving the law subject to interpretation and women vulnerable (Cassim 2022:2). *Kugara nhaka*, for example, is a practice where the widow is made to choose one of her husband’s male relatives as a husband. This is understood to be the one who takes care of the deceased’s family and inherits the wife as well. This practice disadvantages women because there is usually no legal solemnisation of the marriage, which poses a threat to the woman’s right to claim in the deceased *sarapavana’s* estate.

2.4 Gender-Based-Violence

Gender-based violence often takes place between people who are closely related to each other (Jakobsen 2014:540). This indicates that relationships in which the perpetrator and the victim are well-known to one another are likely to result in gender-based violence. The definitions also imply that “apart from violence between different genders, gender-based violence can occur in different relational settings such as between parents and children (child abuse) and among siblings in child-headed families” (Ezezew 2013:36). Therefore, gender-based violence can occur in virtually all settings which involve relationships between persons like husband and wife, father and daughter, and among relatives.

Gender-based violence is defined as violence that is directed against a person based on their gender or sexual orientation, such as coercion, threats of coercion, acts that cause bodily, mental, or sexual injury or suffering, or other forms of deprivation of liberty. It covers acts of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse committed by family members, members of the public, or by the government and its institutions. Such violence can take many different forms: social, physical, emotional, and psychological (WHO 2015:6). Logar’s definition of gender-based violence is “violence against women based on women’s subordinate status in society. It includes any act or threat by men or male-dominated institutions that inflict physical sexual, or psychological harm on a woman or girl because of their gender” (Logar 2000:4).

Gender violence occurs in both the “public” and “private” spheres. In addition to happening in families and the larger society, this kind of violence is occasionally encouraged by the government through laws or the deeds of its agents, including the military, police, and immigration authorities (Logar 2000:5). Gender-based violence happens in all societies, across all social classes, with women, particularly at risk from men they know. Gender-based violence is not exclusively a woman’s concern. It is both a cause and consequence of gender perceptions. Examples of violence against women

are the trafficking of women and girls for prostitution, forced marriage, and sexual threats at work.

In the current study, the use of the term “gender-based violence” provided a new context in which to examine and understand the phenomenon of violence against women in Rushinga. It “shifts the focus from women as victims to gender and the unequal power relationships between women and men created and maintained by gender stereotypes as the basic underlying cause of violence against women” (Logar 2005:7). The study revealed as it proceeded that it was not only men who exerted violence on women but there was such violence as women-to-women where women also abused or exerted violence on other women. Women tended to want to see other women suffer; because of this mentality, women were suffering at the hands of other women. Evidence was provided as the study was in motion.

2.4.1 Gender-based violence toward women in Africa

“Violence against women and girls is assuming alarming proportions across the world. It occurs during times of conflict and periods of peace” (Owusu 2016:5). Owusu, (2016:5) said violence continues to manifest itself in harmful cultural abuse during pregnancy, spousal murder, and psychological and physical violence among others. In his study, Gnanadason (2012:241) charges that the United Nations has brought up the subject of gender violence on multiple occasions to get nations to acknowledge the gravity of crimes against women. According to estimates from the UN Development Fund for Women, one in three women worldwide may experience some form of violence during their lives, including beatings and rape. The abuser is typically a member of the victim's own family (Gnanadason 2012:241).

“Behind these cold statistics are the faces of women scarred and humiliated, beaten into submission, their bodies are broken in times of conflict and of peace’, argues Gnanadason (2012:241). Gnanadason goes on to say that while the forms of violence and intensity of violence may vary from context to context, the fact remains that, regrettably, no society can yet claim that women and children live in a violence-free

environment. He quotes US theologian Mary Hunt, who has rightly pointed out that we live in “a universe of episodic justice and contextual violence” (Gnanadason 2012:243). It was the mandate of this study to help those scarred women, abused and embarrassed women, women who were staying in marriages for the sake of wanting a status, to be called “Mrs. so and so”. Others were scarred but for the sake of the kids, they were forced to stay. Women needed to open up and stand their ground when it came to matters that affected them and their future.

Women concluded that violence was functional – to keep systems of domination in place, whether it was in the context of economic globalisation or of social and cultural structures such as race, caste, sexual orientation, or ecclesial structures. Violence was not a symptom of a dysfunctional society – it was so “normal” that many did not react to it! (Gnanadason 2012:247). From this argument, women were now used to violence to the extent of not reacting to it, they now live with it. This was so worrisome because in every organisation, social, religious, or political; women were put down on the last step of the ladder because they were simply women, and they were to act like “proper women.” The saddest part was that women tended to accept that that was the way it was because they wanted to fit in society and be called good wives who did not question their husbands or authorities. Women were treated as “doormats” by men. Gnanadason explains:

> It is well known that most women would give up everything, including their own dreams and aspirations, for the sake of their families, especially for their children. Often this is a voluntary act, a conscious decision that some women make. However, it is equally true that because of this, women have borne the pain. Many times women stand silently on the threshold of a violent death at the hands of the man with whom they live. Alternatively, it could be the experience of restrictions of time, space and movement that are imposed on women through strict mores and values of a patriarchal world order
>
> (Gnanadason 2012:251)

The study condemned the cultural practices with a popular understanding which continued to be that a woman was created as less than a man and therefore was open to abuse and violence at the hands of men. For Gnanadason, Kanyoro and McSpadden (2009), patriarchal misconceptions of this time were the source of much of the inferiority heaped on women –creating, in the hierarchy of creation, the female body a barrier to the full expression of a woman's humanity. It was the objective of this study to let it be known to the readers that violence which was caused by culture and social norms were major obstacles or hindrances to women's health, development and human rights. Gabaitse (2012) says "those of us who are male have to admit that we have not treated women and children with justice. We have done violence to women and children based on our pursuit of our idealised masculinities" (Gabaitse 2012:273). He meant that "men were socialised to dominate and always to have things go their way, they violated known women and marshalled state resources to do violence to women citizens of our countries.

Although some women are violent as well-sometimes more than men, by far many men across the region do violence more than women" (Gabaitse 2012). Gabaitse goes on to argue that because of the privileges bestowed upon men by religion, culture and economic systems, men have raped, battered, slapped and suffocated women and children (Gabaitse 2012:273). Gabaitse is admitting on behalf of men, that women are abused and exploited willy-nilly, and this affects gender relationships on all levels. Detrimental cultural norms have resulted in women's low standing in families and society, which keeps them from escaping abuse and obtaining legal protection. Domestic abuse was accepted as a form of discipline and was ingrained in girls from a young age. Doing so would jeopardise the safety, independence, and autonomy of men, women were prevented from realising their full potential. These so-called moral practices kept manifesting and were consequently not questioned enough.

Kapuma (2015: 257), in *Living with Dignity: African Perspectives on gender equality*, said children acquire numerous life lessons in the home, which serves as their first and finest classroom. A lot of these lessons are taught by example. It is the duty of parents

to get their children ready for life's challenges. However, this is not always the case, and in the majority of houses in African communities, it does not occur. Children are either the victims or the spectators of violence and abuse in many homes, leaving them with lifelong scars. It is possible for the abuse to be psychological, emotional, or even non-physical. Most women are trapped emotionally which Miller referred to as:

> …stuck emotionally and in other ways. Financially, she is likely to be dependent on her husband and unable to support herself and her children. She may already have tried single parenting and found the stress and isolation of living alone with her children to be unbearable
>
> (Kapuma 2015:257)

Therefore, men need a cultural paradigm shift from the present worldview of masculinities that view women as infra-humans to one that acknowledges them as part of a whole web of interdependent relationships without which the men's existence is empty (Legros 2020:93). Once men understand that the same way they would not want their sister, daughter or mother to be abused, was the same way that their wife's parents and brother felt, then we would not be talking about GBV because brothers are so caring of their sisters, so do fathers to their children. Once that concept of Ubuntu is within men, then they could not go around abusing someone's child. It is high time men are educated on taking care of women and stop saying "Our culture does not allow this and that". Many are times when men abuse women in the name of culture. If culture was a person, she/ he would not want what people do and blame her/him".

In trying to show the vulnerability of African women, Bahemuka (2001) in *The Will to Arise* quotes Oduyoye (2001) and points out that it was ingrained in African women's DNA to live for others. They believed that a person's children, family, and community were the centre of their worth. In many instances, this came to imply that women existed solely to satisfy males by upholding tradition and ensuring continuity. They dreamt of working for the elimination of injustice and violence and continue to struggle with how the images of womanhood rule their lives (Oduyoye 2001:31). Some sayings say "There is no woman as beautiful as an obedient one"' and "Women are the servants

of men", which women cannot help but object to if they have any sense of self. The popular use of biblical texts and the mass media ignores the humanity of women and focuses on their biological makeup (Oduyoye 2001:31). It is indeed sad to see that most women had come to terms with this kind of oppression and even if they are not happy in their homes, they stay for the sake of kids. Marriage is for the sake of kids, and what the community "will say".

Bahemuka, (2001:36) argued that the injustice that women experience has become the context of their theology. Women find societies unjust because, for the greater part of their existence, women are taken for granted. The context of struggle portrayed in women's theology includes the injustice of having to carry out decisions they do not contribute to making and the injustice of having to fight to have one's humanity acknowledged and treated as such (Bahemuka 2001:36). Women in Africa are marginalised or given secondary roles not commensurate with their skills and qualifications.

In as much as most authors agree on the above, Nwachuku and Oduyoye brought new lenses to this framework and suggested that although men do oppress and abuse women, there are also situations where women do abuse other women. They say women exert pressure on their own (Nwachuku & Oduyoye 1992:66). They suggested that it is high time women learn to stand up for other women. In their writing, they both used the term "struggle against each other", to explain the extent to which women are willing to go to show each other who is in control. They said women struggle against each other to fulfil what society has designed for them, thus, women are the cause of their oppression (Nwachuku & Oduyoye 1992:66). This kind of information was essential in that it provided a different background and showed that men were not the only ones to be blamed for the abuse. Thus, this again showed how objective the study was - it was not only focusing on blaming men. This study acknowledged that it was not only men who exerted pressure on women, but women are also abusing other women.

2.4.2 Gender-Based-Violence toward Women in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has many different cultures, which may include beliefs and ceremonies. Zimbabwe's largest ethnic group is Shona, and the majority of Zimbabweans are Christian. About four per cent of Zimbabweans express their religion to be Traditional, but most Christians continue to practice elements of their traditional religions (McGrath & Marks 2008:474). The nation is also home to a wide variety of communities, languages, ideologies, and customs. Zimbabwe's dominant culture has evolved greatly from its traditional form because of British colonisation, modern societal forces, and technological advancements (McGrath & Marks 2008:474). Violence against women in postcolonial times has also been noted in times of economic downturn where the conventional male-breadwinner model is put under strain by the economic downturn. The Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) presented a challenge to the male breadwinner. The retrenched men could not assert their role as providers and used violence to stamp authority on the wives (Nembaware 2020:10).

Most men who dominated formal sector employment suffered the brunt of these measures and found themselves failing to sustain their families and having their masculinity challenged. They found themselves contributing less and less to the upkeep of their families and their breadwinner role, which was the basis of their masculine identity withered away. They became increasingly dependent on their wives' meagre income from vending and small trade. Many of them resorted to violence (Osrin 2002:5). What was happening just after independence is happening now. Men are threatened by women who show some signs of independence, they want to see women kneel before them for food and money to take care of themselves and their parents as well. To be a good wife, this perpetual minority of women, therefore, means that women are unable to achieve economic, social, or personal freedom and are dependent on one or more male guardians, such as their father, husband, son, or uncle.

Nothing seemed to be changing as far as women were treated in homes, workplaces and churches. Women were always treated as second-class citizens no matter what. At the household level, a boy child was still treated as superior no matter if he was the last

born. Things that concerned businesses and land would always be addressed to the boy child while household chores were relegated to the girl child. This is the reason why men created businesses and received institutional support, while women struggled for recognition. Jeater is of the view that in relation to access and ownership of land, men argued that women could not own land as it is not their responsibility to ensure that families are properly provided for but the responsibility of men as heads of families (Jeater 1993:85).

On the same note, Chitando (2013:156) purports that several socio-cultural, economic and biological factors have made women more vulnerable to GBV. Culture has also compounded the vulnerability of women. Women are unable to negotiate safer sexual practices with their partners, especially in the marriage context. Religious and cultural factors combined to dangerously expose women to HIV infection (Chitando 2013:156). This study offers a re-reading of Proverbs 31:10-31 and interrogates the meaning of being 'the good wife' in the context of HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe. Patriarchal values and norms ensured that the laments of women remained muzzled and muffled. Notions of masculinity, where the man was a sexual predator have compromised married women to a larger extent (Chitando 2013:159).

In accordance with the above, Imas and Lorenzo (2023) maintain that women are stigmatised from a young age, pushing them to fulfil stereotypical, subordinate roles as inferior beings. In Zimbabwe, subordination is experienced by threats and harassment from male counterparts (Imas & Lorenzo 2023). This seemed to be everyday life for women in Zimbabwe, even girls at a young age experienced this. Uchem and Ngwa (2014:18) define the subordination of women as an oppressive practice that exposes women to physical abuse and creates fear, repression and submission. As women have limited access to education, this has allowed them (especially in the rural) to acknowledge their inequalities, and not challenge the patriarchal rule and their stereotypical positions as "child-bearers", "wives" or "cooks". Men sit freely with others to discuss business, while women fight to be heard (Hungwe 2006:4). In all aspects of their lives, since time immemorial, women have been struggling to create names out of

their faces. When there is a business that needs to be presented, it is so easy and comfortable for people (both men and women) to believe a man over a woman despite her intelligence. Just being a woman places one in a déclassé position.

In the Tinashe Mugabe DNA Closure Show (Zimbabwean Show) (aired on 2022-7-9 May) where a young girl aged around 16/17 years old was impregnated but could not tell who the father of the child was. She said the child came from heaven. Upon being asked who was going to make sure the child had a birth certificate; she said her father. This implies that the father could have impregnated his daughter, but the girl was not allowed to say it. She had to remain silent because culturally, she could not expose her father. These are issues affecting the girl child, the father gets away with such a kind of abuse. The situation meant that the girl was impregnated by a close relative or some rich man but because the girl was underage the father could have received money to silence the daughter. All these happenings affected the girl child for the rest of her future.

The above scenario is what organizations like the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ)[4] are against. The organization gathers women who take part in group activism on issues impacting Zimbabwe's female population. The primary function of WCoZ is to serve as a focal point for advocacy pertaining to the rights of women and girls. Women from a variety of backgrounds come together through WCoZ to collectively fight for the realization and enjoyment of their rights. The organization is doing a great work in Zimbabwe in ensuring that girls' and women's rights are protected through their advocacy strategies. Stopping Abuse and Female Exploitation (SAFE Zimbabwe)[5], is another GBV prevention organization funded by the UK government in Zimbabwe. In order to lessen the incidence of intimate partner violence (IPV), the SAFE team created and tested the Toose (meaning Together in Shona) approach between 2019 and Zimbabwe, concentrating on addressing discriminatory social norms and economic insecurity as major contributing factors. Publicly presented as a family wellbeing

[4] Cf. "Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe," viewed at https://www.wcoz.org/, 20 December 2024
[5] Cf. "SAFE Zimbabwe', viewed at: https://www.sddirect.org.uk/, 20 December 2024

program, Toose is a theory-driven strategy for economic and social empowerment that operates at the individual, interpersonal, and community levels.

Moreover, Matarirano's research places the parable of the persistent widow in context, interpreting it as a parallel to dealing with widows following the passing of their partners and utilizing the conclusions drawn from the parable's discussions to advocate for the needs of widows in Zimbabwe. He queries what kind of unconventional conduct may Zimbabwean women adopt to overcome cultural barriers, and how the narrative found in Luke 18:1–8 inspires women to resist the possible seizure of their property (Matarirano 2019:44). This shows how merciless culture can be; thus, the study provides positive insights into challenges faced by women in Zimbabwe and specifically in Rushinga who are disadvantaged by tradition. The current section shows how women are abused, that tradition does not care even if the woman is left a widow, aunts and brothers of the deceased will come and loot property all in the name that the property “belongs to our son”. They take it from that understanding that a woman is not supposed to own property, so they will take all the property not considering that the property was for the couple. This is what women face, sometimes in the hands of other women who are supposed to look after their other sisters’ backs.

Matarirano (2019:44) quotes Brown (1997:227) who notes that in first–century Palestine, women were also marginalised members of societal social codes, but Jesus of Luke breaks the boundaries of these patriarchal structures. This was further demonstrated by the fact that Jesus had women followers and supporters and often used women figures in the illustrations he told (Luke 15:8-10; and 18:1-8.) He socialised with women in public and treated them equally and fairly, for example, while Matthew's account of Jesus' birth centres on Joseph, Luke's account emphasises Mary more. As a result, Luke becomes the only Gospel to tell the account of Jesus' visitation to Mary and Martha's home, where he taught and listened to them as disciples (Luke 10:38-42) (Matarirano 2019:20). Matarirano also wrote on how tradition abused widows in Zimbabwe by quoting and relating with the verse of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8 who sought justice before the judge.

However, Wells (2003) said legislation since independence offered women much greater chances to break from unhappy marriages, maintain child custody, secure inheritance and demand fairness in the workplace. Yet few academics have asked the question of why or how this came about. For most it remains an unexamined issue, implying that such changes reflect a natural socio-economic evolution. Or, the post-independence legislation tends to be portrayed as the benevolent gift of idealistic revolutionaries. Only a few, like noted Zimbabwean journalist and writer, Lawrence Vambe, quoted above, identify women as "active agents in changing their status" (Wells 2003:101). Wells took a different path from other scholars above. He saw women as those who have become independent, as people who now can stand on their own and challenge patriarchal tendencies. It was taboo for a woman to make a choice and leave her marriage but now it is happening, among other things that were considered a non-starter.

2.4.3 Gender-based-violence toward women in Rushinga

Rushinga is one of seven districts in the Mashonaland Central province of Zimbabwe. It covers most of the Rushinga District in Mashonaland Central Province and is one of six senatorial districts in the province. Customs and traditions depend on the views of the community and society. In addition, social norms influence individual choices and they determine the criteria that an individual makes when deciding on the course of action to take. In making choices, individuals are sometimes influenced by community values in conforming to social expectations. Thus, this section elaborates on Rushinga society's take on the issues of gender-based violence, culture, and women.

There is abuse and unequal and unfair relations between spouses among the Kore-Kores. "Once a young boy manages to gather enough resources to pay *roora*, the price for his bride, he considers himself licensed to treat her like a slave. Thus, the wife is expected to execute all the household responsibilities, for instance, domestic maintenance and farming, while men are aimlessly moving from one traditional beer-drinking place to another in the surrounding villages" (Mrewa 2022:5). However, when it

comes to the harvesting of the crops, men become the managers of the produce, especially the cash crops (Mrewa 2022:5). Some take all the proceeds from agricultural production and squander all the money on beer-drinking sprees. It is the women's role to take care of the home and nurture the children and in some instances work in the fields to raise fees for children while the father would be gallivanting. In Rushinga, women are still not completely equal to men. They use violence to solve domestic problems. As wives believe that they should be submissive to their husbands, they feel obligated to do what their husbands want, even against their own will.

A traditional practice that exposes women and girls to abuse is "*chiramu* (a practice whereby the husband of a sister or aunt has the privilege to play sexual games with a young sister or niece" (Dandah & Chiweshe 2024). According to Dandah & Chiweshe (2024), Zimbabwean traditional cultures accommodate the practice of sexual "games" whereby girls were exposed to sexual socialisation by elderly men through the custom of *chiramu*. This practice is not unique to Rushinga villages where a girl is fondled her buttocks and breasts without necessarily engaging in sexual intercourse. Such flirting may lead to pregnancy, and when it happens, the perpetrator is forced to marry the girl (Dandah & Chiweshe 2024). There is much open talk on cultural norms on dating, sexual conduct, and how to handle a man in bed, and these are spoken right in front of young girls. Such a practice is an abuse of young girls and an attempt by men to control the sexuality of young girls (Dandah & Chiweshe 2024). Society will tell them to stay in their marriage because a woman must keep strong and do it for her family-how sad it is though.

Accordingly, to protect the men's ego and masculinity, "the practice of *kupindira* (a young brother or nephew having sexual intercourse with the affected man's wife to sire children) is often used" (Mrewa 2022:6). Chingombe, Mandova and Nenji (2012:81) noted that it is "culturally taboo to publicize a man's infertility or weakness because the autocratic and patriarchal nature of the Shona culture is intent on protecting and perpetuating masculine chauvinistic tendencies. Thus, the *kupindira* practice was customarily arranged by close family members, and the woman was rarely allowed to

decide on this arrangement" (Chingombe *et al*. 2012). In cases where the wife may have choices, the problem was that infertility would warrant divorce or *barika* (polygamy), thereby putting pressure on the woman to accept the arrangement (Chingombe *et al*. 2012).

There is a dance performed in the form of preserving the culture and tradition of the people and conforming to societal expectations, yet, on the other side, abusing women, especially young girls, is the well-known dance called *Jiti*. Jiti is performed as celebratory and played mainly during marriage celebrations, victory celebrations, bumper harvests, traditional ceremonies and many other cultural events. The boys demonstrate their drum beating, composing and singing skills while the girls also exhibit their dancing skills as well as their melodious voices as they outdo each other in gyrating their bottoms to the tempo of the drum. Jiti music is highly cultural because it is believed that it is an integral part of their culture. In as much as it preserves the culture, it is at these ceremonies that young girls are abused by men. Parents allow young girls, even those below the marriageable age, to attend these ceremonies. These are done at night and can be an all-nighter. At such times, girls will be fondled their breasts in the dark and be abused sexually.

There is a well-known practice of child marriage in Rushinga and it is highly regarded in the whole district where women are abused in those marriages (Mrewa 2022). To society, it is shameful for a girl to be unmarried. The belief is that if a girl is not married, she will indulge in illicit sexual activities. Hence, to control the girls, they are supposed to marry in order to avoid the "temptation" of not being married. They used the word *kuchenerіwa* to mean that a person is too old and has passed that stage of getting married. It is all because of how they socialised growing up. According to Mrewa (2022), the proliferation of child marriage in the Rushinga District stands at 50 percent in Zimbabwe. According to Mrewa, "A clear understanding of the problem of the marriage of children is essential to bridge the knowledge gap on the proliferation of the practice of marrying off children in the district. This perspective points out that the incidences of the betrothal of girls in marriage are embedded in the social structures and attitudes that

support the practice within a social group" (Mrewa 2022). Customs and traditions surrounding the marriage, including the desired age for this, depend on the views of the community and society (Mrewa 2022:2). In Rushinga, girl children are married off at a young age and experience all forms of abuse in their marriages but with nowhere to turn to.

Le Roux (2015:238) posits that men control women's behaviour and maintain control of social institutions. It is this "culture of fear that secures men's control over women". Power thus remains the key issue in patriarchy, and the liberation of women must mean a loss of power for most men. Practices and beliefs that enforce this superiority are thus accepted and supported, even if they lead to VAW (Le Roux 2015:238). Women in Rushinga prefer to take the silent route, where they stay in deep pain, then report the matter because reporting such kind of cases has not yielded any positive results. Women are expected to stay strong for the sake of the marriage, thus, they keep weeping and have no one else to report to. Many types of abuse occur behind closed doors, and social norms push women to keep whatever abuse they may have experienced a secret.

However, Zanza (2015:57) took a different slant and argues that though women are victims of societal expectations, they play a very significant part in the empowering and perpetuation of those practices because they are the ones who sometimes put some of the norms, especially on those who are barren and on widows. Women are at the forefront of suggesting measures that must be taken for women who will go against the expectations of society on set rules. Relating to Zanza's argument, indeed, it is women who will look for a woman to replace their brother's barren wife. It is women again who will be spearheading issues of taking property from a widow.

Again, the report from the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (2021) took a different standpoint and accentuates that there is also women-to-women brutality in homes and workplaces. The writers of the report indicate that even on government premises,

women officials are abusing their fellow women by labelling them names. Instead of looking after their “sister”, they abused them. Consequently, the report stressed that to end ignorance and treat women and men equally before the law, education must become a top priority according to the current Constitution (ZLHR Report 2021). It is beyond doubt that the current study is at pains to educate all men and women to look after each other and treat each other well. We might blame cultural practices, yet, alas, it is the women to blame again. A mentality of sisterhood needs to be instilled in the women’s minds.

The above section provides an insightful analysis of the fundamental issues that surround the discourse of culture, a “good wife”, and GBV. To end these behaviours and practices in Africa at large and in the Kore-Kore men of Mashonaland Central, this study sought to provide a new model for what should be done. This thesis sought to cover this gap by suggesting a womanist theological approach for men, patriarchal societies, and governments as they seek to play a meaningful role in the process of ending GBV in Zimbabwe. Almost all the available works on this subject focusing on Zimbabwe have not brought out the Womanist theological perspective through a gendered analysis. From the above discussion, it seems there is a need to see women as the major victims of the Zimbabwean traditional culture. Though men and children are victims of this culture in Zimbabwe, there is a way in which women are exceptionally victimised.

2.5 Conclusion

According to Sithole and Dziva (2009), violence can be overcome by broad structural innovations that would dismantle the existing myths around tradition, custom, and religion and the interpretation and symbolisation of violence. Societal expectations of a “good wife,” which puts women’s lives in danger because they want to please their society, must be investigated and adjusted. The chapter ended with a discussion on the New Marriages Act of Zimbabwe, which favours “girlfriends” over those in formal marriages. In as much as the government tried to incorporate informal relationships so that they would not be at a disadvantage, it created a loophole in civil marriages. The

New Amended Marriage Act is of value as it “opens” women’s eyes to issues they should not tolerate in their marriages and lives” (Marriage Act 2022). All humans, irrespective of their diversity, have the right to equality, safety in relationships, self-development, fulfilment, and freedom from victimization. Men and women are all equal and should be treated in such a way.

The next chapter deals with the theoretical underpinnings of the study. This study focused on Womanist theology. The theoretical framework presents African women theologians’ preferred version of African women as it relates to their experiences. I am going to share the stories of women who have themselves been victims of GBV. Their insights bring depth, greatness, and immediateness to the discussion needed to get to grips with. This is vital to hear from the African women’s standpoint. Since Zimbabwe is in Africa, the findings are going to be authentic and reliable because they are taken from the perspective of other African women. The chapter also looked at the womanist interpretation of the Bible, and how the Bible speaks to them, and their experiences.

CHAPTER 3

WOMANIST THEORY AND THEOLOGY AS A CRITICAL LENS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO CHALLENGE THE NOTION OF A "GOOD WIFE"

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with key aspects of culture, a "good wife," and gender-based violence in Africa, Zimbabwe, and Rushinga. The current chapter deals with the first part of the study's methodology, namely the theoretical framework. The study uses womanist theory to inform womanist theology.

Womanist theory is a feminist intellectual framework that focuses on the experiences of Black women and their fight for equality and inclusion in society (Philips 2006). On the other hand, womanist theology is derived from the context, voice, action, and agency of Black women of the African Diaspora (Hayes 2024). It offers an innovative approach to communication, existence, and behaviour that assures novel modes of engagement with the world during a period of significant necessity (Hayes 2024). This study proposed this theory because it saw the exploitation and ill-treatment of most females in Rushinga due to cultural and traditional beliefs that underrate the gender differences, concerns of women, and how women have contributed to the development. Thus, justifying the use of a womanist theological approach to explore women's oppression and suggest methods to emancipate them.

Moreover, this study was constructed on the assumption that Rushinga society's expectations of women or "good wives" were precisely influenced by their culture and patriarchal tendencies; thus, this study deconstructed this. This chapter focused much on women's struggle with culture and patriarchy and society's take on issues of GBV. The chapter also considered the womanist interpretation of the Bible, how the Bibles speaks to them, and their experiences. The chapter further explained the cultural

expectations of a good wife and issues surrounding violence against women. Due to these struggles,Oduyoye (2001), Kanyoro (2002), and Dube (2004) have developed theories that address women's experiences. These women theologians critique how culture and the Bible have been used as oppressive tools among African women.

3.2 The History and Scope of Womanism

The term womanism was coined by the writer and poet Alice Walker (1983) and has many definitions and interpretations. A womanist is a "black feminist or a feminist of colour." Womanism is "simply another shade of feminism" (Page 2019). Longley (2020) defines womanism as a form of feminism focused especially on the conditions and concerns of black women, while Plumwood (2002) defines it as a form of feminism that acknowledges women's natural contribution to society. From the foregoing definitions, we can discern two essential characteristics: Womanism is a form of feminism that focuses on black women or women of colour. Black women's compounded oppressions are the main subject of womanism, which examines the connections between race, gender, class, and other social categories (Page 2019). Additionally, womanism fights against racial oppression of black people.

Womanism originated in the 1970s in an African American community in the United States of America, especially in reaction to the perceived inadequacies of mainstream feminism in addressing the distinct experiences of women of colour, including Black women (Maparyan 2012). Together, the theologians Jacqueline Grant, Delores S. Williams, and the ethicist Katie Cannon formed an intellectual movement that characterised Black women's history, faith, and action, and it still does. Black women frequently felt marginalised by the male-dominated goals of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the 1960s and 1970s, which is when womanism first appeared. At the same time, mainstream feminism came under fire for primarily addressing the issues facing white, middle-class women (Mitchem 2014). In short, womanism was created as a reaction to feminism, which did not address all the problems of injustices against Black women. Precisely, the injustices not widely acknowledged by mainstream feminism are addressed by womanism.

The main ideas of womanism are that the movement recognises the inherent beauty and strength of Black womanhood and seeks connections and solidarity with Black men (Brady 2017:6). Womanism identifies and criticises sexism in the Black American community and racism in the feminist community. It further holds that Black women's sense of self depends equally on their femininity and culture. Black American civil rights advocate and scholar of critical race theory Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term in 1989 to explain the interrelated effects of sexual and racial discrimination on Black women (Brady 2017:6). Womanism has been used to describe Black women who are deeply committed to the wholeness and well-being of all of humanity, male, and female. "Womanist" unites women of colour with the feminist movement at "the intersection of race, class, and gender oppression (Page 2019:4).

Katie Cannon (1985) used the term womanism to refer to an approach to interpreting the Bible concerned with Black women's liberation. Weems examines selected stories of women in the biblical text and connects them to contemporary realities and relationships of women. Jacqueline Grant (1989) published *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response in* 1989. Grant examined how Black women interpret Jesus's message, noting that their experience is not the same as black men or white women (Grant 1989). Grant pointed out that many black women must navigate between the threefold oppression of racism, sexism, and classism. For Grant (1989), Jesus is a "divine co-sufferer" who suffered in his time like black women do today. Johnson (2002) argues how Hagar and Esther can be seen as models of resistance for black women: Womanism may be envisioned as a post-colonial discourse that allows African-American women to embrace a Jesus and a God free of the imperialism of white supremacy (Johnson 2002:203).

Lastly, Nkealah (2016) argues that womanism was not wholly a reaction to being excluded from white feminists' vision of feminism but also from their ingenuity and desire to create a feminism that embraced their backgrounds and experiences. Womanism voices the realities of women in varying African countries; women's needs, reality, oppression and empowerment are best addressed by having an inclusive and

accommodating understanding of the generic and more general issues as well as the peculiarities and group attitude to self-definition as women (Gillman 2006:20). Nkealah (2016) writes that womanism "strives to create a new, liberal, productive and self-reliant African woman within the heterogeneous cultures of Africa" (Nkealah 2016).

Weems argues that womanism is "family-oriented" and focuses on discrimination against women in the contexts of race, class, and gender (Weems 1988). In essence, womanism stresses the equal importance of both femininity and culture in women's lives (Walker 1983). By including gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, womanism has broadened the scope of feminism. Other disciplines, such as African womanism and womanist theology or spirituality, have also emerged due to it. From the discussion above, it is evident that womanism focuses exclusively on Black women and their struggle to achieve equality and inclusion in society. This section distinguishes between womanism, womanist theory, and womanist theology, showing their connection and explaining why the approach/lens selected is used in this study.

3.3 Womanist Theory

With an emphasis on the lived experiences of Black women and other women of colour, womanist theory expands upon the ideas of womanism and offers a framework for examining and resolving issues of identity, social justice, and oppression (Phillips 2006:117). It incorporates womanism's cultural, spiritual, and community-focused facets into a scholarly, social, and political debate as a critical social theory and praxis-oriented methodology. Fundamentally, womanist theory challenges injustices and promotes empowerment and wholeness in communities by serving as a lens for knowledge and a tool for action. It links scholarly research and real-world experience, especially for people whose opinions are frequently ignored in popular discourse (Parker 2011:206).

The Womanist theory, while used by many scholars in different ways, advocates that both femininity and culture are equally important to a woman's existence. In this conception, one's femininity cannot be stripped from the culture within which it exists

(Layli 2006:18). The theory supports the idea that the culture of the woman, which in this case is the focal point of intersection as opposed to class or some other characteristic, is not an element of her femininity but rather is the lens through which femininity exists (Gillman 2006:225). A woman's blackness is not a component of her feminism. Instead, her blackness is the lens through which she understands her femininity. The Womanist theory grew in large part out of the perceived indifference of the feminist movement toward the concerns of black women (Layli 2006:18).

3.4 Womanist Theology

Womanist theology is a theological interpretation of the ideals of womanism and is informed by womanist theory. Womanist theology is a methodological approach to theology that centers on the experiences and perspectives of Black women, particularly African American women (Townes 2003). As a practice of thought, womanist theology intends to attend to the particularity and specificity of black women's experiences to cultivate methods and concepts that are adequate to their situation (Turman 2019:33). The goal of the womanist movement is not only to eliminate inequalities but to assist black women in reconnecting with their roots in religion and culture and to reflect and improve on self, community, and society (Turman 2019:33).

Womanist theology has been defined in the following way:

> Womanist theology is a prophetic voice concerned about the well-being of the African-American community, male and female, adults and children. Womanist theology challenges all oppressive forces impeding black women's struggle for survival and the development of a positive, productive quality of life conducive to women's and the family's freedom and well-being

(Williams 1995: 67)

In addition, Womanist theology developed in dialogue with black theology, particularly as articulated by James Hal Cone. Cone broke new ground in 1969 with the publication

of *A Black Theology of Liberation*, which sought to make sense of theology from the black experience in America. In the book, Cone (1969) argued that "God is black" and that God identifies with the struggles of Black Americans for justice and liberation (Cone 1969). In reaction to the shortcomings of feminist and Black liberation theologies, womanist theology emerged to address Black women's experiences (Brady 2017). Katie Cannon, Jacquelyn Grant, and Delores S Williams are the leading scholars of womanist theology.

Junior (2015:14) contributed an important work in womanist biblical interpretation with *An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation.* In the text, she argues that “womanist biblical interpretation [was] a natural development of African American women engaging in activism instead of simply as a response to second-wave feminism”. Junior (2015) writes that while feminist biblical interpretation looks mainly at gender and power relationships, womanist biblical interpretation looks at the personal experiences of African American women and their engagement with the text in light of those experiences, particularly as women of colour. She states that womanist biblical interpretation is not merely a “derivative element of feminist biblical interpretation” (Junior 2015:13). Thus, Junior includes the experiences and interactions with biblical texts that have marked the thinking, writing, speaking, and activism of many African American women from both past and present, for example, Sojourner Truth, Renita Weems, and Raquel St. Clair Lettsome, to mention only a few) (Junior 2015:13).

Womanist theology has evolved due to its critiques that have happened in new waves in recent years. Womanist theology has expanded to encompass the spiritual, social, and political concerns of those who do not identify as black Christian women (Junior 2015:21). Grant (1989) examined how Black women interpret Jesus's message, noting that their experience is not the same as black men or white women. She pointed out that many black women must navigate between the threefold oppression of racism, sexism, and classism. For Grant, Jesus is a "divine co-sufferer" who suffered in his time like black women do today (Grant 1989). Delores S. Williams took the work of theologians such as Cone and Grant and expanded upon them. She suggested that

womanist theologians need to "search for the voices, actions, opinions, experience, and faith" of black women to experience the God who "makes a way out of no way (Williams 1997:68).

According to Townes, Gilkes, Sanders and Cannon (2006), the biblical interpretation of Womanist theology is that Womanist theologians use various methods to approach the scripture. Some attempt to find black women within the biblical narrative to reclaim the role and identity of black people and black women within the Bible (Townes *et al.* 2006:173). Examples include the social ethicist Cheryl Sanders and the womanist theologian Karen Baker-Fletcher. Some approach the Bible "objectively" to critically evaluate text that degrades women and people of colour and to offer an African-centred form to resist male domination and bias, or what could be termed anti-women or androcentric attitudes and forms (Townes *et al.* 2006:175). Others draw on resources outside the Bible to enhance the plurality and cohesion of the texts along with our life experiences and reject scripture as a whole or part, which is seen to serve male interest only. These methods are not separate and can be endorsed together.

Through womanist imagination, Weems (2007:203) helps to understand female roles, personalities, and woman-to-woman relationships when the biblical texts were written. The womanist theological perspective speaks to the hearts of all oppressed Black women; it is way closer to home, thus making it the best model to use in this study. This theory uncovers and evaluates those aspects of African culture that are not life-sustaining to women and regains those facets that give life to women. This is supported by Le Roux (2012:237), who said womanist theology is a gendered approach to theology that acknowledges that people construct culture and that our cultural practices or the cultural practices in the Bible should, therefore, not be confused with the will of God (Le Roux 2012:237). African women's theologies are not anti-culture; they appreciate and support the many ways culture is good and wholesome. Le Roux posits that culture is only challenged when it threatens people's dignity, especially women (Le Roux 2012:240).

As mentioned, the study uses a womanist theological approach informed by the womanist theory. Clarity was given above on the development and main ideas of these approaches. However, it is good to show the relationship (similarities and differences) between womanism, womanist theory, and womanist theology, as there is a thin line between them. Firstly, they share origins and goals but diverge in focus, application, and disciplinary scope. These frameworks are interconnected, yet they have distinct emphases depending on the context in which they are applied. As outlined below, the connections and distinctions exist on theoretical and conceptual levels. All three frameworks are based on Alice Walker's idea of womanism, highlighting Black women's experiences and focusing on themes of spirituality, community, survival, and completeness. With a dedication to elevating underrepresented voices and communities, they all tackle the overlapping oppressions of race, gender, class, and other social categories. Each framework prioritises the well-being of the group, eschewing individualistic methods in favour of solutions that benefit families, communities, and society as a whole.

3.4 Main Themes and Scholars within Women Theologians in Africa

African womanist theologies form part of a worldwide phenomenon of women developing and raising their theological voices, thus interpreting and speaking out of and from the perspective of their particular experiences in their particular contexts (Le Roux 2012: 242). Beginning with women's experiences, African women's theologies concentrate on the oppressive aspects of life brought about by injustices including racism, capitalism, sexism, globalisation, colonialism, neo-colonialism, patriarchy, oppression, and more (Phiri 2004). Other themes include gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS and women emancipation. This section provides an overview of African Womanist scholars who started empowering women by letting their voices be heard and have not stopped since. The section briefs readers on major themes that these Womanist scholars have tackled.

According to Chidili (2003), Oduyoye has written four books and more than eighty articles focusing on Christian theology from a feminist and African perspective. She is considered one of the leading Protestant African theologians. One of her central subjects is how African religion and culture influence the experiences of African women. Chidili (2003) further argues that Oduyoye is affectionately known and is highly regarded as the mother of African women's theologies. A renowned theologian, educator, writer, mentor, and poet, she has worked tirelessly to address poverty, health care, youth empowerment, women's rights, destructive cultural and religious practices, and global unrest. To Hinga (2017), Oduyoye is an influential leader in the ecumenical movement, serving as a Deputy General Secretary of the WCC and the first woman president of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians.

Oduyoye founded the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, an organisation that encourages African women to research, write, and publish their own books and articles on "African issues" and concerns (Hinga 2017). As a dynamic professor, she has led provocative courses, workshops, and seminars in theological schools, universities, conferences, and local church gatherings. Her work is of importance to this study because it encourages women to hold on and go through whatever challenges life throws at them. Again, it is important in that it exposes the traditional and social behaviours that are so abusive to women and maps a way forward.

More so, Musimbi Kanyoro was President and CEO of the Global Fund for Women from 2011 to 2019 and is globally recognised for her leadership of organisations and initiatives that advance women's and girls' human rights, as well as for philanthropy for communities (Cathy 1998). Musimbi is passionate about using philanthropy and technology to drive social change. Musimbi brings over 40 years of global leadership on women's and girls' human rights issues and has led cross-cultural international organisations focusing on these issues. Musimbi served on the international steering committee for the Beijing World Conference on Women and led delegations to five United Nations World Conferences throughout the 90s (Cathy 1998). Kanyoro is currently a member of the Civil Society Advisory Group to support UN Women's work.

She also recently completed her four-year term as a member of the World Bank Gender Advisory Group. Thus, her work acts as a front or a drawing table as it empowers and equips women with knowledge of their rights as women. The work also provides women and girls with skills and ensures that women cannot continue to be abused in this technological era. The way she advocates for social change in her works motivates readers and victims of social, traditional, and cultural practices so that even after going through abuse, they can give life a second chance.

Malawian theologian Isabel Apawo Phiri is well-known for her contributions to African theology, HIV/AIDS, and gender justice. Since 2012, she has served as the World Council of Churches' Deputy Secretary. She has written diversely on HIV and AIDS and African theology (Lowery 2020). She wrote articles on Ruth, Rape, The Bible and Polygamy, Weddings, and Lobola while serving as a theological counsellor for the Africa Bible Commentary (Adeyemo 2010). Showing her commitment to African theology, the Scottish Parliament's "Faith in Gender Justice" exhibition in 2018 included a picture of Phiri along with her statement, "Prophetic theology has turned me into an advocate for gender justice," and she has since urged religious leaders to condemn violence against women as sinful (Wilson-Harris 2018). This study greatly acknowledges contributions from such African women theologians as it draws insights from scholars like her.

3.4.1 African Women Theologians

As it is not all white female religious scholars are feminists, and not all black female religious scholars are womanists. For the sake of this discussion, this study looked at African women theologians' contributions to the intersections of culture, patriarchy, and GBV. African women's theology incorporates the experiences of African women in their perspectives while analysing women's subordination. African women "telling stories" (Le Roux 2012:242) can mean an oral method of communication that is so characteristic of and popular in most African societies. It is a method of empowerment, both for the storyteller and listener. Telling stories, suggested here, is a way in which Violence

against Women (VAW) can be addressed in a way that is sensitive, relevant, and appropriate to the African context, especially for African women.

African women theologies see stories as an acceptable source of theology (Le Roux 2012:242). Thus, this section gives hindsight from some African women theologians' experiences on significant issues raised by this study, like how patriarchy and culture influenced GBV. African women have not been quiet and have used this avenue to communicate their feelings and experiences. This section looked at women theologians who are the major proponents of African theology- those who synchronised when it came to the experiences of black African women. These are the likes of Oduyoye, Hinga, Dube, Kanyoro, Nyambura, Mapuranga, Rutoro, Phiri, and Mbuwayesango among others.

Mercy Amba Oduyoye

The current study uses Mercy Amba Oduyoye's work where she spoke about religion, patriarchy, and reinterpreting the Bible. The work was as relevant to the current research as it talked of the oppression of women by male Christians who oppress their wives. She argued that people do not understand what Christianity is about. She says people think Christianity is the oppression of women and Christianity is not the oppression of women (Oduyoye 2001). She urged people to go back and read the New Testament and see how Jesus treated women if they wanted to see what Christianity did with women.

Secondly, she argued that when people read any text, they read it from where they stood and from their own experiences. She told readers how she felt when reading the Bible with her mind focused on the fact that this was supposed to be a message from a God of love, compassion and justice who wants human beings to behave like beings created in God's image (Oduyoye 2001). Oduyoye went on to explain how she expected to come across verses of compassion from the Bible and she questioned verses which were not compassionate on women. She argued that the Bible is a historical book. Every one of those books within it came from a particular

culture, a particular period in time. Also, “we often don’t read the Bible thoroughly enough- within the Bible itself you have a critique of some of the more conservative teachings that people quoted out of context” (Oduyoye 2001). For Oduyoye (2001), the male species misinterprets the Bible just to quench their thirst for female dominancy. It is the men, usually in churches who quote verses that normally speak about women being subordinate and quiet, they do not open those verses which speak about them loving their wives.

In her work, she argued that the scripture was misquoted and was used to justify anything (Oduyoye 2001). There were sixty-six books in the Bible and each one had its own history with links running through. Oduyoye (2001) went on to quote ancient theologians like Luther who said that the thread that goes through the Bible is the love of God and any person that does not make another feel like they have to honour another human being, deal with them as human beings, talk to them kindly, respect their humanity, that person is not a Christian, they are simply using it for their own ends. Any religion could be used in that manner. The above quotation shows that men need to be educated when it comes to the issue of seeing women as human beings as well. Men need to read the Bible well not “upside down” so that they would understand that women need to be respected as well.

Oduyoye (1995) analysed the lives of African women today from an African woman's own perspective. It was a study of the influence of culture and religion- particularly of traditional African cultures and Christianity - on African women's lives. Oduyoye (1995) illustrated how myths, proverbs, and folk tales (called "folk talk") operated in the socialisation of young women, working to preserve the norms of the community. Organised as a narrative in three cycles, *Daughters of Anowa* demonstrates how folk-talk alienates women from power, discourages individuality and encourages conformity (Oduyoye 1995). It also considered the possibilities for the future.

Oduyoye (1995) posits that change will come about only when the daughters of Anowa (the mythic representative of Africa itself) confront the realities of culture and

religion in perpetuating patriarchal oppression and work to realize the goal of a new woman in a new Africa (Oduyoye 1995:67). This is what is called women emancipation, giving women the power to rise up and challenge cultural tendencies that dehumanise them. It is true indeed that women could only rescue themselves from this abuse if only they stood up and raised their voices. No one is going to come and stand for them. Her work is of importance to the current research because it talked about women in Africa and the response they should get from the Bible, and that Christianity has helped to liberate women. The research seeks to teach women to listen to the voice of God and know that it is only God who is compassionate. The study motivates women readers to read the Bible from their perspective so that they would see that Jesus would never forsake them since Jesus is one of them.

Oduyoye (1995) reiterated that the credibility of the church is not enhanced by any exhibition of sexism in its beliefs and practices. Either women or men are of equal value before God, both created in the image of one God, or else Gen1:26 is declared a lie. “If we stand with the text, then the male alone cannot stand for God if the female cannot also do so. We cannot use scripture to legitimise the non-inclusion of femaleness in the norm of humanness” (Oduyoye 1995:181). She went further to say the African church needed to empower women not only to speak for themselves and manage their “women’s affairs” but to be fully present in decisions and operations that affected the whole church. For Oduyoye (1995) the sexist elements of Western culture simply fuelled the cultural sexism of traditional African societies. The Christian churches had not encouraged or even accommodated women who had raised their voices in protest (Oduyoye 1995:181).

In addition, Oduyoye (1995:184) highlighted that in Africa, as in other areas of the world, the churches often waited for political crises to make statements. Tsara (2020) quotes Oduyoye (1995), who echoes that the church in Africa tended to be a “rear-action” church, rarely visible on the front lines and often delayed in arriving on the scene afterward to pick up the pieces (Oduyoye 1995:184). Regarding being with the people in crises, the church in Africa, except for some clergy and lay

leaders, had usually stood aloof and remained mute. Despite the pain and the ugliness of brokenness, there often seemed to be a lack of concern in the churches in Africa on issues of women's being (Oduyoye 1995:184). The church has not joined in the search for a new value system; rather, it has suggested that there is no issue, thereby demonstrating its complicity in the structures of injustice that Western feminist and womanist thinkers covered (Oduyoye 1995:184). This study questioned the church's role in Zimbabwe if it is doing what it is supposed to do. The church must be the umbrella for love, hope, and faith. Issues of gender-based violence should be publicly addressed and included in the daily practices of ecclesial life. It is the church's role and duty to stay informed, understand issues happening to its members, and provide practical tools to discover these issues. Thus, female theologians like Oduyoye critiqued the role of religion in fighting against GBV.

Musimbi Kanyoro

The language of women about the church often indicated that the church dismissed women's pain or treated it lightly (Kanyoro 1997:82). She stressed that often, the language of the church put women down. Kanyoro explained further that women speak of the church's neuroses and double standards concerning human sexuality and that hypocrisy reigned in the church when men needed to change their ways. Often, women's power is denied and their experiences rejected while the church prided itself on being in the world but not of the world. Kanyoro (1997) described the church as "enculturated", that is, they took on the cultures of the communities that generated them. The hypocrisy around sexuality and men's lack of solidarity all marked the church of women's experience as different from the church that could be the body of Christ and the hearth-hold of Jesus (Kanyoro 1997:83).

In addition, Kanyoro, Oduyoye and Moyo (2012) are of the same view when it comes to the misuse of the Bible by most men. They concurred that there is the "the Bible says this" mentality in churches where men would always find a scripture to support their arguments when it comes to the suppression and subjugation of women and girls. Men

are so desperate for power to the extent of quoting Paul's epistles where they do not fit. As long as they have women "under their feet", men could do anything to please their egos. It is indeed this hypocrisy that needs to be addressed so that the Church could not function like this, thus, this current study looked at events that happened in the Church that pointed to its hypocrisy.

Madiapone Masenya

Masenya (1997), writing from a Womanist perspective, argued that in many African contexts, the Bible had been used and is still being used to subordinate women. She argued further, saying, "Women have to stand up and embrace this book which they have come to treasure and use it for their liberation. Only give them the proper tools! Among the tools, equip them with the Bosadi approach to the re-reading of Biblical texts" (Masenya 1997:448).

Masenya went further and pointed out that:

> Despite their majority, they suffer exploitation, invisibility, and silence; as a result, they are "unknown" …During adverse socio-economic conditions, they survive. These women form most church members, but they have had virtually no sisters to interpret the Bible for them
>
> (Masenya 1997:94)

Masenya came up with this approach of rereading the Bible in the context of a South African woman (Bosadi) due to a lack of scholarly views meant for liberating women in South Africa. The theory centered on the experiences of Black South African women and how they deal with many types of oppression, including sexism, classism, and racial oppression (Masenya 1997). The foundation of the Bosadi method is the belief that African culture included both positive and negative features and that it is crucial to emphasise the former. In her work, the author explained how the Bosadi approach took into account how women had influenced history, including how Solomon's African bride affected both his life and the history of biblical Israel (Masenya 1997). According to the

Bosadi perspective, patriarchy is a social ill that endangers Black women and men alike. Thus, African women are equipped with tools to fight any form of abuse and oppression that could be imposed on them by patriarchy. This research used Masenya's work as inspiration to motivate other women to "rise" on their feet and stand for themselves.

Fulata Mbano-Moyo

Mbano-Moyo, a systematic theologian, is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. (World Council of Churches 2016). This reality also shaped her research on gender and sexual justice. She became involved in the Tamar Campaign, which sought to address violence against women and children using the contextual study of the Bible (Moyo 2004). She hoped that the current matrilineal system would "translate into something of a matriarchy- where women had as much final say as the men in a patrilineal society" when she conducted six years of ethnographic research in southern Malawi. However, she was disappointed to discover that patriarchy persisted even in a matrilocal system that also embraced Christian values of justice (Moyo 2004). While in Argentine, she encouraged churches to adopt the "Thursdays in Black" campaign against rape and violence. Her writings mainly focused on how religion and culture shaped women's sexuality and gender construction (Moyo 2012). She contended that to assist in bringing attention to problems that dehumanise women, religious texts had to be understood in light of women's experiences (Moyo 2004). Her literature showed her zeal for issues affecting women; hence, it was a model that this study used.

Gwendoline Vusumuzi Nani

Nani is not a theologian, but her work was important in this section. Her contributions regarding GBV could not go unmentioned in this study. From the onset, Nani (2011) lays out the causes of violence in most of her work. Nani says, "Gender differences are evident throughout the social world. These gender differences are grounded in relations of power and inequality because, in most societies, men are accorded a disproportionate share of social, political, economic, and cultural power" (Nani 2011:18). The status of women and men in society is primarily a product of social customs and traditions. Most societies have largely been patriarchal where men serve as the heads

of the families or clans. She went on to say that radical proponents claimed that through sexual violence, and the ever-present threat of sexual violence, men could control women through physical domination and fear. The nature of male sexuality and the distortion and suppression of female sexuality lie at the heart of patriarchy. Women's difference is devalued by a patriarchal society, inhibiting women's recognition of their true capacities, and forcing them to accommodate an alien and oppressive culture which privileges masculinity (Nani 2011:21).

Nani (2011) gave all the reasons which caused violence against women. She said politically, there was sex segregation based on custom which meant that women generally possessed less political power than men (Nani 2011). Men did not see it fit for women to hold political offices and if women tried to come and campaign, violence erupted (Nani 2011:22). The violence started in the woman's home where her father, brother or husband would not support her to take the office. Economically, there is a sexual division of labour between men and women, which allocates tasks according to gender. Sex segregation based on custom meant that women, in general, possessed less economic power compared to men. Women are seen as minors who have to be dependent on men, as well as gender biased in the labour market. Some women lacked self-confidence and the ability to take risks due to the early indication of a dependency mindset. Women are denied the ownership of land (Nani 2011:22). The gender gap in the ownership and control of resources is the single most significant contributor to the gender differences in economic well-being, social status, and empowerment because the one who owned the means of production had status and thus decision-making power.

Religious violence was seen in the patriarchal attitude which strengthens the traditional customs which men use to control women. Nani (2011) went further to argue in his study that religion plays a significant role in the lives of people including suppression of women. Male dominance is justified by arguments derived from culture, traditions and religion which persisted over generations. She thus argued that patriarchal culture

produced the Bible and the book explained how biblical resources and religion had been used to maintain patriarchy (Nani 2011:25).

3.4.2 Zimbabwean Women Theologians

Tapiwa Praise Mapuranga

Mapuranga was a well-known writer who produced a lot of literature on women, especially in Zimbabwe. Her books are so important because she was a woman who wrote about issues affecting women; this meant she understood the real issues at stake in her writings. The writings are essential to this study as it explores the causes and effects of economic violence on Harare women during the period when the government of Zimbabwe sought to "Restore Order" in the country (Mapuranga 2014:227). The economic challenges Zimbabwe faced, especially in that period, seemed to be highly gendered. Mapuranga writes:

> Women are characterised by poverty, oppression and violation of human rights. During such a crisis, it has been mostly women who have been and still are struggling for abundant life in the crisis of poverty. The struggles of the women in Harare are twice that of men"
>
> (Mapuranga 2014:227).

Mapuranga (2014) went on to unpack the complications the girl child faced…all people felt the economic burden, but the burden doubled on girls and women. The reason for this dilemma is that society has placed women at the lowest step of the human ladder (Mapuranga 2014:227). With particular reference to Operation Murambatsvina, women are among those grossly affected. "Women watched helplessly as the bulldozers crushed their homes or, worse still, many were forced to demolish their homes with their own hands, knowing fully well that they had absolutely nothing to fall back on" (Mapuranga 2014:231). Women with children on their backs were forced to demolish the places they called home, and returning to their ancestral lands, they were accused of being sex workers (Mapuranga 2014). From the above quotations, it is clear that the

suffering of women is clear, not only in the Murambatsvina Operation but in all aspects of life Mapuranga (2014) notes how the status of women "…is still a status of struggle, a struggle to survive collectively and individually against cultural and traditional realities in their society" (Mapuranga 2014:231).

Women in Zimbabwe have faced a lot of socio-political and economic challenges due to socio-traditional attitudes that continued to be reinforced by socialisation which branded women as second-class citizens. Mapuranga (2014) posits that throughout history, women have suffered serious challenges and patriarchal ideologies have left many women at the bottom of the heap. The history of women in Zimbabwe shows multiple struggles that women have endured. Society should reflect critically on the silent and undeclared war between men and women and review its negative attitude towards women.

This research helped the study to unpack some of the causes and effects of violence on women in Zimbabwe. Some information from this book already tallied with the aim of this study and the fact that the author wrote about challenges faced by women in Zimbabwe, made it a good research to use for this study which was also looking at women in Rushinga, Zimbabwe. It is because of such comments from earlier researchers that this study investigated more on such statements.

In one of her other works, Mapuranga (2011) highlights the effects of HIV and AIDS on the traditional Ndau woman in Chipinge District in Zimbabwe. It emphasises how much the woman has sacrificed in providing care to people living with HIV and AIDS. The book argues for the silver lining in the dark cloud presented by some harmful cultural practices that present African traditional religions as oppressive and ruthless to women. In the book, Mapuranga deliberates on how the roles of women should not be looked down upon (Mapuranga 2011). The book provides a social framework on how such cultures and customs could be contextualised, reinterpreted, remodelled, adapted and adopted. Thus, it made it a good model book to be used in this study.

Her works are essential to the study since HIV and AIDS was revealed as one of the effects of sexual violence. Women are not allowed to air out their concerns when it comes to sex matters, thereby having a high risk of being infected by the disease. Ndau men were also too traditional and patriarchal to the extent that they did not allow their women to have a say in matters that concerned their health and bodies. For the reason that these women felt so inferior and in fear of their husbands, they get infected in the name of “respect” for their husbands. So this study looked at those factors which make women so inferior and vulnerable in the hands of men and what consequences this bears on them. Together with Mapuranga’s contribution, the current study looked at how women in Rushinga are affected by violence.

Molly Manyonganise

She has written extensively on issues affecting Zimbabwean women, especially on religion, gender and sexual reproductive rights. In the context of post-independence Zimbabwe, this book examined the interconnections of gender, religion, and migration, paying particular attention to how gender inequality affected economic growth. (Manyonganise 2023). The book discussed the need for gender equity, gender inclusion, and gender mainstreaming in both religious and societal organisations by showing how these links affected the daily realities of women and girls. This book analysed the relationship between migration and gender in Zimbabwe and looked at how religious and cultural beliefs affected women's status. She wrote an article on the dynamics of gender power that characterised the majority of African countries. The study investigated how women's reactions to COVID-19 affected them. The emphasis of her study is on how religion had significantly impacted the range of experiences that women had during this time (Manyonganise 2022). Manyonganise, like any other women theologians and writers acknowledges that because of culture and religion, women were stepped on and there was no equality between men and women in African societies. This thesis used her work to map a way forward on what could be done to reduce forms of ill-treatment against African women.

Sophie Chirongoma

She is a Zimbabwean theologian and writer who has contributed immensely to topics relating to women and girls. Chirongoma (2006:173-186) wrote about women, poverty, and HIV in Zimbabwe where she explores inequalities in health care. Chirongoma contributed to major themes which are raised by other scholars in relation to women and gender issues. In light of the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe, Chirongoma wrote another article examining the rights of women and children in Zimbabwe. The article elaborates on how the repressive nature of the majority of Zimbabwe's customary laws and the inherent disparities in resource distribution affected the health of women and children (Chirongoma 2006). The current study also grappled with issues of customary laws and their effects on women and children. She contributed and edited a book with writers like Kudzai Biri which investigated how African women's health and well-being were impacted by religion and culture. The experiences of women in African religions, such as Christianity, Islam, and Indigenous religions, were examined in the book. The writers provide examples of how religious practices and beliefs could either support or impede women's overall growth and development. The volume explored how African Indigenous Religions, Christianity, and Islam tended to undervalue women in Africa and favour men, with a particular focus on Zimbabwean women's experiences with religion and culture, (Chirongoma & Biri 2022).

Esther Rutoro

Rutoro is not a theologian, however, her writings were important in this study as she brought our attention to the Shona culture of Zimbabwe which formed the foundation of the study. Research from this article has shown that management in education is dominated by men in nearly all countries in the world despite the enactment of several policies at global, regional and national levels. This research thus sought to establish the extent to which the African communitarian philosophy as a core value in the Shona culture affected the career aspirations of both male and female teachers and thus affected the implementation of gender-sensitive policies in education management. (Rutoro 2012:434) noted that African communal setup is associated with social

responsibilities and expectations which some people see as external impositions that limit one's freedom and autonomy.

In, *The Struggle against Sexism and Gender Stereotyping in Education,* Rutoro (2012) points out that the division of labour in the communitarian system is based on the patriarchal system which is a father-ruled system in which all power and authority rests in the hands of the male head of the family (Rutoro 2012:435). As a result, there are gender-differentiated spaces in a communitarian society. The communitarian system restricted women in terms of freedom to enjoy autonomy and realise their full potential. Rutoro (2012) pointed out that women in Africa have largely remained trapped in a communitarian structure steeped in tradition where the primary allegiance is to the community rather than to the person.

Rutoro's work points out how patriarchy denied women their space, and how their freedom stifled their ability, aspirations and dignity. Thus, women in African communitarian societies remained in subordinated positions. The mandate of this current study was to suggest ways of dealing with patriarchal tendencies which suffocated women and restricted their capabilities. Drawing insights from the research by Rutoro, the current study made it clear that women are not only abused in their homes but also in different spaces and fields in which they find themselves. Probable solutions for this "cancer" were suggested in this study.

3.4.3 African Women's Experiences of God

As disadvantaged people, African women groaned with creation itself. Oduyoye and Kanyoro wrote an anthology to seek, find, examine, and expose the historical and cultural aspects that were the roots of belief systems that continued to dehumanise women. In their works, they also attempted to bring to the attention of the church in Africa the truth about the love of God, who considered all women and men sinners needful of the grace that came through Jesus Christ (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1992:4). In this anthology, they shared experiences in their own lives, in their families, and in those of their sisters, aunts, mothers, and grandmothers. "We see patterns in our

desire to share experiences, to reflect together on our respective practices and to analyse historical events" (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1992:4).

Oduyoye (1995:9) gives an example of Adam and Eve. In her version, Eve's burdens reflect her own experience "You will seed. The rain will beat on you there. The sun will burn you there as you think of your husband's soup. For that is what you choose." Accepting the myth of the Hebrew Bible, this African woman appropriated what it meant to be a woman in her own culture, and accepted it as punishment. This internalisation of the church's teaching showed its negative effects on the self-image of African women, Oduyoye relates (Oduyoye 1995:9). This is a clear indication of what women are experiencing, they are still bound to the events that took place so many centuries ago and they are stuck with that idea that Eve was punished, so are they. Until such a time when women decide to be their own persons, then they would never experience God as a loving God because they are always suffering in the hands of religion and men.

The writings of Devarakshanam (1996) show that African women are very bitter when it comes to how they experience God as compared to men. She cited that since in the Church in Africa men and the clergy presumed to speak for God and to demand the obedience of women, it is not easy to experience God as empowering and liberating when one is in the Church's ambit. Women experienced God as the one who ordered their subordination, who required them to serve and never be served. God is the one who made them women, with a body deemed to be the locus of sin and impurity. God is experienced as the source of women's oppression and Jesus as the author of the exclusion of women from sacramental roles in the Church. This is the God the Christian tradition wanted women to love and obey (Devarakshanam 1996:135). The church, which is supposed to be a refuge for troubled and abused women, is acting as a cage to women to the extent that they do not feel like they are in the confinement of the Church. It is in the church where women should experience God, alas, this is not the case.

In addition, Grant (1989) notably argues that the oppression of black women is different from that of black men. She also advances the idea that black women are more oppressed and ultimately need more liberation than white women and black men. She examined how black women were the vast majority of active participants in their churches and that their work tended to be undervalued (Grant 1989:325). Grant expounded on this and similar notions in her writings. She explained that while it might sound like a compliment that black women are called the "backbone" of the church, in fact, the author chided, "The telling portion of the word backbone is “back.” For her, it had become apparent that most of the ministers who use this term had reference to location rather than function. What they meant was that women are in the 'background' and had to be kept there” (Grant 1989:321). Against that background, how then could women experience God when they are seen as dunderheads? It is really hard for women to experience God, some would be in the building and not in church.

Agreeing with the above, Oduyoye (1995) went further to say women turn to their history of struggle, collaboration, and solidarity to seek knowledge and to free themselves from the pre-eminence of men to work out new and life-giving ways of relating to others. She gave an illustration of the image of the African Christian woman as wife and mother as modelled in Proverbs 31:10-31, which had a close affinity with African culture. Womanhood in Africa was almost synonymous with motherhood (Oduyoye 1995:199). My understanding is that Oduyoye was citing that it is always difficult for a woman in Africa in that she is always compared to a mother. A mother is known for protecting and nurturing, by so doing they put their lives aside for the sake of others. In her own words (1995:199), she said “Women’s experience of being human is that of making space for others to grow, mothering, assisting at the making of the human in others” and being simultaneously affected by that effort. We must study texts such as Proverbs 31 against their background as well as ours, for biblical models also can grow obsolete” (Oduyoye 1995:199). Oduyoye argues that women cannot be stuck with Proverbs 31 in an era where things are changing. What used to apply during biblical times could not keep applying now; hence, there

is a need to come up with new models so that women could also be free and experience God the same way men do.

Despite sexism making it difficult for women to experience God in the Church, women had nevertheless witnessed their experience of God in Christ, the one who brings salvation (Landman 1999). While critical of certain aspects of biblical culture, they had nevertheless testified to their experience of the liberating God of the Bible in events in their own lives (Landman 1999). Rereading Scripture, and especially the stories of women in the Bible brought God closer to women and enhanced the presence around them. Women experience God as groaning with them as they participate in straining toward the birth of a new Africa free from sexism and racism, poverty, exploitation, and violence (Landman 1999:111). All experiences of "love beyond self," all that was just and life-giving, were understood to be expressions of the presence of God. Some women, although experiencing aspects of biblical culture in their lives, have turned a blind eye and are seeing the positives where God is working in their lives, crying with them. They see God as a helper in times of need, God as a father to their children, etcetera.

An experience of God in Christ is very real to African women (Hinga 1995). Women often described Jesus as the friend and companion who helps them bear life's burdens (Hinga 1995:190-91). There is also the prophetic Jesus who challenged oppressors and hypocrites but forgives sinners (Hinga 1995). In Jesus, women experienced the God who is love. These experiences of God are affirmed by women in terms of "nevertheless" (Hinga 1995:185). Women described themselves as being in the image of God even if sexism denied their dignity (Hinga 1995:190-91). In this context, amidst all the challenges and the pain exerted on them, women still perceive God as their friend. They do not hold grudges against men when it comes to their God, they know God is faithful and even if men apply harmful practices on them, God remains God to them. They do not want to reject their experience of God due to cultural practices inflicted on them.

In the women theologians' circle, NyaGondwe, (2016) argues that the Circle revealed women's experience of God as the Great Householder who empowered all and recognised all as children in a parent's home and around one table. The Circle gives expression to the experiences of the God who sustained in times of dire need and who brought victory where it was least expected (NyaGondwe 2016). They constantly attributed all recognition and inclusiveness to the power of God which transformed human beings and human conditions (NyaGondwe 2016). In her report, NyaGondwe (2016) reports that women expressed their experience of God by affirming cultural beliefs and practices, while they felt called by God to denounce and deconstruct oppressive ones. All that enhances the dignity and worth of women is attributed to the presence of God. Women who took the image of God in human beings seriously saw it in the faces of the starving children around them and in all those who suffered needlessly in Africa. In her exposition, she went on to record that when women lived by caring, they were expressing the caring God in whose image they were created. Hopefully, those who experienced love, justice and compassion would realise that God is present (NyaGondwe 2016).

Many women experienced God differently and could not allow themselves to be subjected to cultural codes that masked the image of God in women (Devarakshanam 1996:116). They experienced God as empowering them with a spirituality of resistance to dehumanisation. The androcentric Bible and Church had not been able to warp women's direct experience of God as a loving liberator (Devarakshanam 1996). The experience of God is articulated by these women in terms of a theology of creation and the implications of the Christian affirmation that "God was in Christ" (Devarakshanam 1996:118). Overall, this shows that in as much as there are cultural hindrances to women, they have decided to look on and ignore them and perceive God for who God is in their lives. Their lives are centred on Jesus, a friend, and liberator who upheld the dignity of the humanity of women (Devarakshanam 1996). For Devarakshanam (1996:118) women experienced God in Christ as affirming the goodness of the sexuality of women. This factor had been a pretext in both African Religion and Christianity for the diminution of women,

discrimination against them, and their marginalisation from centres of power. (Devarakshanam 1996:118). Writings of women theologians from Africa were replete with these experiences.

3.4.4 Women theologians' interpretation of the Bible

According to Pui-lan (2005), the importance of the Bible as a tool should not blind women to the myriad of problems and challenges inherent in that very importance. She argues that how women relate to the Bible and how they interpret and apply its message is part of a challenging process (Pui-lan 2005). Any cursory reading of the Bible showed that it contained both positive and negative teachings on gender equality (Pui-lan 2005:80). The role of the Bible in gender is intimately related to the role of the Bible in Africa in general (Pui-lan 2005). The Bible is as important as it is a controversial document in Africa. Whether critical or just plain controversial, the Bible is indeed a prized possession of many in Africa (Pui-lan 2005:86). Written from varied backgrounds with the modern world now, yet still speaking to our lives, there is a need for the Bible to be interpreted carefully and in a way applicable to the modern style of living. Considering that the Bible had different connotations, it is fair that against this background above, the study turned to how different women interpreted the Bible, how the Bible spoke to them and their experiences.

Dube, (2016:6) quoted Oduyoye's work with Masenya, (2015:78) where they argue that there is a need to criticise the patriarchal imports associated with Jesus and the Bible. Dube (2016) drew from Oduyoye's publication which seemed to crystalize her arguments and ideas. Masenya's (2015:78) common phrase is "life-affirming", which reminds us of Okure and Oduyoye. She coined the Bosadi (womanhood) approach to argue that a hermeneutic of suspicion is needed when reading the Bible (Masenya 2015). The Bible is life-affirming, but it should not be taken at face value. Being South African and coming from a context where the Bible was subjectively used to support apartheid, Masenya (2015:78) is cautious in her approach to the Bible. She insisted that not everything within the pages of the Bible is life-affirming. Instead, while drawing the life-affirming narratives from the Bible, theologians should

be careful not to blindly accept everything from the Bible as God's word (Masenya 2015). She says:

> Issues concerning patriarchy, particularly in its multifaceted forms in differing women's contexts, need to be treated as a matter of urgency in our Biblical interpretation endeavour
>
> (Masenya 2015:78)

Dube (2016) goes on to reveal that the majority of African women theologians voiced against how the African culture found hideouts in a similar biblical patriarchal culture. For example, Kanyoro (2002:17) and Van Klinken (2013:30), taking a constructivist approach to gender, argue that the Bible came from a patriarchal culture and thus, exegetes should be aware of the cultural imports that oppressed women. Kanyoro (2002) avers that there is a need to be critical of the culture behind and reflected in the Bible. Equal caution is needed regarding culture. Phiri (2007:155) echoes the same sentiments that the reading of the Bible that empowered women had to begin by identifying the contextual challenges that oppressed women-child marriages. Dube (2016:6) postulates a need to safeguard women and children against exclusion from education and other forms of gender inequalities. A similar surgical approach should be used in the Bible. From these writings, it is clear that the Bible needed to be approached with eyes wide open, not just taking it literally. This would help considering different time gaps between when the Bible was written and now. Obviously, the target audience was different, and hence, this had to be taken into consideration.

In an article by Gafney (2022), womanists read scripture through the lived experiences of Black women. She says humanity must not replace or negate the ancient or literary-cultural contexts of the text. Rather, read with them in concert, knowing the fundamental human experience of Black women, often missing from biblical translation and interpretive discourses, is a crucial conversation partner for hearing the ancient text in the contemporary world (Gafney 2022:1). This is based on differing types of oppression Black women experience based on the varied elements of their identities, most often race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, gender, orientation, dis/ability and

economic status, among others. Gafney (2022:1) says “A womanist reading is interested in the ethical issues raised by the text and how they redound to Black women and our communities. Womanist readings engaged the text vigorously, conversing, questioning and occasionally, rewriting”, she says.

Womanist theologians use a variety of methods to approach the scripture. According to Townes (2003), some attempt to find black women within the biblical narrative so as to reclaim the role and identity of black people in general, and black women specifically, within the Bible. Examples include the social ethicist Cheryl Sanders and the womanist theologian Karen Baker-Fletcher. Some approach the Bible “objectively” to critically evaluate text that degraded women and people of colour and to offer an African-centered form to resist male domination and bias, or what could be termed anti-women or androcentric attitudes and forms (Townes 2003:160). Others draw on resources outside the Bible to enhance the plurality and cohesion of the texts along with life experiences and reject scripture as a whole or part, which is seen to serve male interest only. These methods are not separated and could be endorsed together.

Johnson (2002:203) writes "Renita J. Weems, a womanist professor and scholar of the Hebrew Bible, examines scripture as a world filled with women of colour. Through the use of womanist imagination, Weems helps students to understand female roles, personalities, and woman-to-woman relationships when the biblical texts were written”. Johnson (2002) quoting further, also showed how Hagar and Esther could be seen as models of resistance for black women: "Womanist theology may be envisioned as a post-colonial discourse that allows African-American women to embrace a Jesus and a God free of the imperialism of white supremacy (Johnson 2002:197).

African women theologians have realised that as long as men and foreign researchers remained the authorities on culture, rituals, and religion, African women would continue to be spoken of as if they were dead (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1992). The *Will to Arise* is the voice of African women theologians. It challenges Scriptures and its works are grounded on the results from a new wave of change (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1992:1).

African women reading scripture began to see that God's call to them is not passive (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1992:1). It is a call to action and it is a call to wholeness that challenged the will and the intellect. Christian and Muslim alike women, wrote about the realities of being African, women and religious in a continent where religion shaped the life and thinking of the people (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1992:1). So, all women, whether Muslin, Buddhist, Christian or what, all agreed that their religions are so cunning to them. They all agree that religion is not fair when it comes to women, women are put in this situation by men and not by God. It is men who interpret scriptures the way they want for their benefit.

In consonance with the above, Oduyoye (1995) reiterates that because of its widespread treatment of the Bible as an infallible oracle, the church in Africa is slow to change its attitude, and this is particularly true of its attitudes towards women. We have to study the Bible with our own life experiences as the starting point (Oduyoye 1995:190). Oduyoye (1995) went on to say that this is what the authors of the Bible did. Indeed, the Bible gathered together theologies made up of experiences of individuals and whole communities over hundreds of years to answer the question: What is God doing? Or what is God saying to us? Even though the biblical times are removed by nearly two millennia, God continued to work and talk to us through the Bible, a human story with events, scenes, and beliefs some of which we feel very close to as Africans. As we review and record our own experiences of God, we begin to write a "new book" of how God deals with today's world and its people. Nothing lies beyond the scope of this "African testament" (Oduyoye 1995:190). Oduyoye (1995) replicates what was said above that women are now interpreting the scriptures the way they want, or else they would be ridden over and over again by men. Instead of letting men dictate what the scriptures are saying to them, women believe that God is working in their lives.

Backing up her argument above, Oduyoye (1995) encourages women to reread the Bible to seek guidance on how to listen to God and to recognise where God is at work in their world today. She is cognisant of the fact that times have changed, when she indicated that although today's issues may at times appear different, they are

nonetheless the same fundamental human dilemmas, such as the meaning of marriage, the value of human relations, the nature of sin, the functioning of grace. Be that as it may, she motivated women to engage in a continuing synthesis of their past experiences and present possibilities instead of simply accepting the dogmas and lifestyles imposed upon them by religion or culture. "We do not, of course, always find women in the Bible who provide answers for the problems of today. But we do find women who inspire us to devise the answers", she declares (Oduyoye 1995:190). Oduyoye proved to be a true heroine, a motivation to women who had lost confidence in them because of the circumstances they had gone through in life. Women are to interpret the Bible in a way comfortable to them, not mindful of what tradition and culture dictated to them, and ignore those biblical texts that are oppressive to them.

However, Dube (2000) has mainly approached feminist biblical interpretation from a post-colonial perspective. Indeed, in her first published book entitled *Post-colonial feminist interpretation of the Bible* (Dube 2000:176), she argued strongly that although women in general are oppressed by patriarchy, African women – or rather women of the Two-Thirds World (Africa, Asia, Latin America) – faced double or triple oppression (that is, from patriarchal systems and colonialism or neo-colonialism) (Dube 1999:216). It is in this light that Dube (2000) has interpreted biblical passages either to liberate women or to expose the oppressive nature of biblical texts. In the article *Woman, what have I to do with you?* (1996:244), she interpreted John 2:1-11 and John 19:25-28 in terms of women's liberation. She argued that Jesus' ironical address of his mother in both texts was meant to challenge the male disciples' view of women. By using the same texts, she "challenges the African church's refusal to accept women as full human beings who are entitled to serve God even through leadership" (Dube 2001:13).

Dube (2000) has interpreted the Bible to address what women in Africa are experiencing both in the church and outside the church. In her interpretation of the story of the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42), she compared the experience of the woman

who had been married to five different husbands to what many African women were experiencing: poverty and starvation, violent civil and ethnic wars, oppressive international financial policies, HIV and AIDS (2001:3-24). Thus, through biblical interpretation, Dube (2000) fought for the liberation of the African woman. For Dube (2000) poverty represented a woman, starvation represented a woman, and so on. So by experiencing wars and oppressive elements, women today are like that Samaritan woman, it is only the context that was different but women continue to suffer. Dube (2000) preached a liberation theology which refused to blame women for evil and offered new interpretations of scripture.

Oduyoye and Kanyoro (1992) equate the daughters of Africa with what Jairus' daughter went through in the Bible. They were hoping that in the African culture there could be men like Jairus who stood for his daughter. When people were saying she was dead, he did not listen to them. The situation is so relatable to many African women. They suffer abuse at the hands of their relatives. Oduyoye and Kanyoro say like Jairus' daughter, daughters of Africa had been dead, spiritually, of malnutrition caused by the injustice of the church (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1992:201). Unlike Jairus, African fathers or brothers had not gone to ask Jesus to heal women's sickness or snatch them from death. While mothers were asking Jesus to heal their daughters from the sickness of oppression, some of the brothers, uncles, and nephews went to Jesus to say "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher anymore" (Luke 8:49). Such is the situation on an African continent where, instead of being there for their daughters and nieces, men would always tell Jesus that "she is already dead, do not bother yourself" (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1992:201). This is where African women theologians are coming in to say that injustice and exploitation of the girl child are orchestrated by her close male relatives.

Musopole (1992) shared the same sentiments with Oduyoye & Kanyoro (1992). She posits that, Jesus told our mothers not to fear, but only to believe, and their daughters would be well. It is our fathers and brothers who are weeping and wailing to prevent Jesus from coming to our aid. They laughed and said, "Our daughters are dead; we do not need them in our church after all" (Musopole 1992:203). She went on to say Jesus

came to them, took their hands and commanded them to arise. Jesus not only returned the spirit to, but he had given the Holy Spirit to get up at once; he directed him to live. Would that be Africa is blessed with fathers like Jairus? The female theologians are crying for a world where women are recognised; if there could be a few “Jairus’, who values their daughters, then the world would be a better one where people would live in harmony. Thus, the Bible is interpreted to mean that men are the ones who put the last nails on women’s coffins; instead of rescuing them, they made it worse for women.

Nevertheless, the Bible is seen as a double-edged sword. The Bible is regarded as the most important book for both women and men in the church (Kanyoro 2002). Kanyoro (2002) spelled out the view of African women theologians regarding the Bible. “The Bible is a message of liberation for African women, much as it is also used to deny their freedom (Mombo & Joziasse 2012:184). Since the fall, women have suffered enormously under patriarchy. In the church, in the world, and the home, women have always been subordinate to men, and as a result, they have been abused, oppressed, and silenced. Some say gender hierarchy is God’s perfect design—a pristine plan for women's and men’s good and flourishing. They point to Genesis, arguing that God intended patriarchy from the start. But the text tells a different story. If we look closer, it becomes clear that patriarchy was never God’s plan for humanity (Kanyoro 2002:12). From the insights above, the authors brought home the idea that the Bible could not be read at face value, because one moment it is interpreted as freeing women and the next moment it is talking about oppressing them. This meant that men with a patriarchal mentality were the ones abusing the Bible, but on its own, the Bible is not like that.

In *Introducing African Women’s Theology,* Oduyoye (2001) mentioned that the hermeneutics and fundamental principles of our interpretation of Scripture and culture are related to distinguishing the “good”-that is, the liberation from the evil that is oppressive and domesticating, which put limitations where none is necessary. We are re-reading our world, the texts that history set before and around us. We acknowledge the variety of this tableau and the varieties of interpretations of our readings (Oduyoye 2001:20). The stories told of women’s hurts and joys are sacred. Telling them made

them vulnerable, but without this sharing, they could not build communities and solidarity. Their stories are precious paths on which they have walked with God, and struggled for a passage to their full humanity. For Oduyoye, the only way that could rescue women is for them to read anew the texts, understanding them in their own context and not permit history that was laid before them (Oduyoye 2001). Women's cry is that they are freed from the intoxicating scriptures that are used to justify culture and tradition for the benefit of men.

Furthermore, Oduyoye (2001) pointed out that while women are yet asleep or presumed dead, they hear the voice of Jesus saying *amka* (wake up). Those who declared them dead would see the resurrection of the image of God in the humanity of the African women (Oduyoye 2001:20). African women shared their stories as people who believed that true community thrives where there is sharing in solidarity. African women's theology bore the marks of the creation of a people whose human rights are trampled over. They are women who are doubly and triply burdened, women whose humanity needs to be proclaimed. This is an area where women of Africa have numerous stories to share. Stories of poverty, exploitation, violence and racism are constants in the context of theologising (Oduyoye 2001:20). Here, Oduyoye (2001) agrees with Dube (2001) who equated women's experiences nowadays with that of a Samaritan woman who was said to have multiple husbands. Her husbands represented all the troubles women faced now. There is a lot of bitterness among women when it comes to how they have been treated in the past and now. Now they are fighting to have their voices back by reclaiming and going through the Bible again to find verses that release them from the yoke that is surrounding them.

Moreover, women see God as their elevator, who raised women. On this, Musopole (1992) announced that God rewarded women not according to their iniquities, as men of this world would have wanted. God wanted to tell human beings, not through a parable of the learned paper, but through an actual event, that the woman is human and a child of God. Women are elevated when one woman is chosen to be "the mother of the highest God" (Musopole 1992:200). It must be shocking to African men to see that

wonderful things came from and through a woman who is deemed inferior. We see the righteousness of God with God's redeeming mercy falling upon women. She went on to say that men are afraid to see their system of dominance shaken by the advent of women who practised self-determination. Women's goal of liberation is not only to destroy men's dominance over them but also to teach men the right way to be human (Musopole 1992:200).

God is interpreted again as a liberator. Jesus is a revolutionary who liberated the woman with the issue of blood and restored the son of the widow of Nain. Jesus never tortured them nor demanded purification rites (Edet 2006:37). Women are called to freedom and salvation. Edet (2006) remarked that women are part of that people and, as such, are on the move, both in the historical process and transcendentally, towards a Kairos that was proclaimed. Edet, (2006) thus, suggested that women's responsibility is to go forward with the people, to reaffirm from the revelation of their liberation as *Imago Dei* called to an equal status with men and united in the community of all who believed in the message of salvation and could effectively proclaim that message to all humanity. (Edet 2006:38). Kapuma (2015) contemplates with Edet (2006) that women are created in the image of God. Yet, this is hard to believe when one sees how they are treated in most societies, even by their family members. Abusive relationships abounded, and violence against women within their communities (Kapuma 2015:61). Women are treated differently from men, although they are created the same. These are the issues that women addressed, putting men on the right path so that the Bible would be interpreted the way it must be.

Musopole (1992) went further to say that Christianity, as it was first introduced, spelt out that there was a dominant sex and a lesser sex. According to these teachings, man is dominant, and the woman is man's helper, who has to be obedient and submissive. Musopole gave examples of Deborah when God chose Deborah to lead and direct Israel. God was seen as a liberator of women in the patriarchal community of Israel; Deborah summoned Barak: Go and gather your men and Mount Tabor (Judges 4: 6-7). In Susa, God chose Esther to liberate the Jews from death. Likewise, Esther gave a command: go and gather all Jews, to be found in Susa (Esther 4:16). Through these

studies, the message is that even in the patriarchal tradition, when men are trembling, God chose strong women to stand up and fight for them (Musopole 1992:198). In the New Testament, salvation came to the world through a woman. In the gospel of Luke, God reconciled with human beings by sending an angel to Mary in Galilee. Women felt that their scope for movement is restricted and reduced by human sinfulness, which has created structures in which some dominate others (Edet 2006:38).

Musopole in *Will to Arise* (1992:203) mentioned that women from generation to generation unquestioningly accepted that men are of great value and that marriage meant loving, even if the husband harassed them. They accept attack and aggression as being natural; they believe that manliness implies power, and womanliness means passivity and submission. This has been deeply implanted in the minds of older women brought up by the missionaries but not in the minds of all women. This idea came from authoritarian, patriarchal societies. Feelings of powerlessness and worthlessness made women unable to take hold of organising their own lives. Therefore, they are forced to glorify their oppressors and allow them to dominate their minds. Men who dominate women are like thieves stealing the humanity of women (Musopole 1992:203). This insight from Musopole is realistic in that a feeling of dependence on women is implanted in women, especially by men from the Church. Women are taught to depend on men, and once a woman shows independence, she is not seen as a good wife. Women now interpret the Bible differently to mean they, too, are to be treated as the children of God, and they, too, have to experience freedom and live happily in their homes, not as objects but as equal partners with their husbands.

Additionally, Hinga (2015) said that the image of Jesus as their personal friend is one of the most popular among women because they need such a personal friend the most. Thus, the image of Christ, who helped them bear their grief, loneliness, and suffering, is a welcome one indeed. Christ became the voice of the voiceless, the power of the powerless, and the vindicator of the marginalised in society. Women, as victims of oppression and muteness in society, would undoubtedly find this image of Christ proper in their quest. For Christ to become meaningful in women's search for emancipation, he

would need to be a concrete and personal figure who engendered hope in the oppressed by taking their (women's) side, giving them confidence and courage to persevere (Hinga 2015:191). Equally important, Hinga's utterances showed that modern women now need a Christ who is on the side of the powerless by giving them power and a voice to speak for themselves. Thus, they interpret the Bible in a way that Christ is displayed as one who is actively concerned with the lot of victims of social injustice and the dismantling of unjust social structures.

To this end, Oduyoye (1995:12) concluded that it must never be forgotten that culture and religion are so significant within African life that neither Muslims nor Christians in Africa could be free of the values that emanated from the traditional African religions. The "our women are not oppressed" stance is an ideological statement that emanated from Africa *ad extra* (Oduyoye 1995:12). In contrast, women of Africa are expected to collaborate with the essentially male propaganda. Then, Hinga collaborated with Oduyoye to say Christ would, therefore, be expected to be on the side of women as they fought to dismantle sexism in society. This sexism oppressed them through the ages, and along with formulating a relevant Christology, women would also need to be on the alert and be critical of any form of Christology that would be inimical to their cause (Hinga 2015:191).

3.5 Womanist Theology as a Critical Lens on Culture

When the "application" of womanist theory and theology is considered in this regard, it can be noted that womanist theology sought to hear multiple voices involved in the practice, supporting women while keeping the embodied knowledge of marginalised participants at the heart of their work (MarrSource 2014:107). Thus, being pro-woman involves being committed to combating women's oppression, sexism, and gender inequality. It entails acknowledging women's experiences and placing them at the forefront of a movement to extend viewpoints rather than push out men. This thesis suggests that Kore-Kore women need to adopt what was done by Misihairabwi (a Zimbabwean female politician), who broke the rules for "acceptable" behaviour and would not comply with whatever was "respectable" and polite forms of engagement. She

declares that “adhering to respectability or bringing your best behaviour to activism would never yield results – it never has. Yet decency had never moved the needle for women’s rights in varying degrees; it took uprising, resistance, and radicalism to realise gains towards the attainment of gender equality in this country” (Misihairabwi 2021:2). Women, therefore, need to take a radical stance and be pro-woman to realise their worth.

African women are in a position to re-awaken their strength. The Cushite woman, who did not speak and appeared to watch passively while Miriam and Aaron chastised Moses for marrying her, is compared to the modern assigned her (Adamo 2018:2). Unlike Moses’ Cushite wife a Womanist in action knew what to do, she knew that she need to rise and stand on her two feet and this is the aim of this section, to give way forward to women so that they are awakened and realise their God-given potential. Women need to come out of their comfort zones; they need to move away from being docile and move to being active. Women had to move from being passive partakers of tradition to being assertive and influential. This is the kind of woman created by womanist theologians, who makes her own decisions and says no when she feels she is coerced—a womanist who says no to societal demands and puts herself first instead of others.

Oduyoye provides African women with a voice throughout the majority of her works, enabling them to discuss issues that oppress them from both a cultural and religious standpoint (Oduyoye, Mananzan, Tamez, Clarkson & Grey 2004:33). She identifies multiple scriptures in the African context, which she cross-studied concerning Old Testament texts. This, in turn, makes the scriptures alive and accessible to the women in Africa (Oduyoye *et al.* 2004:33). Dube (2013) “challenges African women to understand texts in ways that help them to name prevailing social injustices and to use biblical texts as a basis to protest against undesirable social injustices by calling for transformation and living hope” (Dube 2013:23). Hence, a womanist theology perspective was appealing to all women to be outspoken and open-minded on issues that oppress them. Scripture must be read and understood in a manner that also frees

women. Womanist theology is all about women in action, women getting up and saying they we tired of being mistreated.

With the same view, through the Bosadi hermeneutics, Masenya re-reads Prov 31:10-31 to investigate what ideal womanhood should be for an African South African woman reader of the Bible (Masenya 2012:6). This approach is an African woman's liberation reading of the text. It would consider the African-ness of an African woman and her attributes. Masenya argues that the text of Prov 31:10-31 “is liberating for women because it pictures women as being hard workers (Masenya 2012:6), independent and powerful who, like the virtuous woman, could hold their own in the world of men (Jerome 2010:42). Likewise, Kore-Kore women could picture themselves in the same way, taking the Proverb positively and not allowing society and tradition to interpret the Proverb to them. They must confront scripture positively and declare the best out of their lives- for a change.

Furthermore, Masenya (2003) rereads Judges 19 to confront and challenge violence perpetrated against women. Judges 19:24 states, “Now allow me to bring forth his concubine and my virgin daughter. Do whatever you choose to them, ravish them, but do not act so vilely toward this man.” This text describes an older man who, in return for his almost unknown guests, is willing to give up his virgin daughter to be used by strangers. Masenya rereads this passage using Bosadi hermeneutics, calling on women to rise and fulfil their potential as human beings with dignity made in God's image rather than continuing to live as victims (Masenya 2003:108). This is what Womanist theology is denouncing or fighting against- women being abused even by their fathers and brothers. In such a situation as in the above text, a womanist is encouraged to stand up against her father and tell him that she would not do what he is asking her to do. A womanist will take necessary measures to make sure the father gets punished for such an act of abuse towards her.

Thus, women today must use this lens and take charge of their lives. Saying no does not mean a person is rebellious, but the person is expressing themselves and

exercising their rights. Our grandmothers and mothers could not do this during their time, but now womanism is calling for a positive change where men and women can live in harmony without stepping on each other's toes. This shows how the Bible was and still is misused, and this is women's fair chance to say no to all forms of oppression by reading it through their lenses and understanding it from their perspective. When this is done, the womanist perspective is achieved.

Women's experiences are not valued, making them unnoticeable in almost all social, political, economic, and sometimes religious life. It seems women have accepted the status society and men have given them, and they have relaxed a bit. This section aims to suggest strategies or, instead, a way forward for women so that they do not continue to allow such abuse where they are being stepped on their toes. A plan is needed to empower women to be gender-responsive. Fanusie (2006) is among the scholars who see women as people who get themselves in such a mess because they ignore red flags. However, he proposed that women should do something about this and start taking action. He emphasised:

> We have a problem. We see the marks of discrimination- we are sometimes mutilated in the name of culture and religion. These things are happening in real life. We know the root causes are sometimes misinterpretation of the Scripture, sometimes ignorance, sometimes selfishness, and sometimes bossiness. Our challenge now is what we can do about the situation. Women have begun to make themselves felt and respected. We are pretty active in making the males aware of our human strengths and weaknesses. We want to share and share alike
>
> (Fanusie 2006)

The same view was noted by Oduyoye and Kanyoro (1992), who argued that it is high time women stand up for themselves. They said women must discover and eliminate the hurdles in their way and create new and joyful patterns of true worship of the God of Truth. Women would be able to demonstrate that the same power of God that allowed the Hebrew people to keep their stories of faith is now present in us, for whom the

promise of the Spirit was given and fulfilled at Pentecost, by sharing the tales of the trials and experiences of faith of God's people today.

African women can no longer withstand the will to arise (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1992:5). African women in the Rushinga district should follow what was advocated for by African women theologians, namely that they should become the agents of their liberation. Mosala says, “One does not stumble upon liberation. It needs to be asserted and safeguarded. I cannot give you my freedom, and you cannot give it to me” (Mosala 1986 132). Thus, Rushinga women should take part in fighting against the gender inequalities perpetuated by the patriarchal system and cultural practices, for example, unequal access to land, unequal access to education, harmful practices imposed on women, etcetera. Moyo (2010) opts to reread the Bible to seek direction on listening to God and identify where God works in today’s women’s world. She says that although today’s issues may appear different at times, they are the same fundamental human dilemmas, such as the meaning of marriage, the value of human relations, the nature of sin, and the functioning of grace.

As women, we must engage in an ongoing synthesis of our past experiences and present possibilities instead of simply accepting the dogmas and lifestyles imposed upon us by religion or culture. So we read the Bible, remaining always open to the voice of God and knowing that what works in one situation or period does not necessarily or always work in another (Moyo 2010:179). Landman and Shumba (2020) agree with Moyo (2010) on this aspect when they spoke about women rereading the Biblical passages where women were portrayed as equal to men. Citations like that of Priscilla, who was her husband Aquila’s equal in teaching in the early Church (Acts 18:2 &26) (Landman & Shumba 2020). Rushinga women must be conscientised by these verses. Galatians 3:28 speaks of all people as no Greek or Jew, no male or female. Women must use this verse again, which shows the theology of equivalence in fighting the patriarchal system.

In *Daughters of Anowa*, Oduyoye (1995) says any strategy to achieve greater power must be accompanied by "voicing," for if we do not deliberately try to break the silence about our situation as African women, others will continue to uphold it. "But we must not let our voices grow quiet. Simultaneously with our cries, both men and women are waging a vigorous campaign against change" (Oduyoye 1995:170). Sometimes, we must laugh to keep from weeping. Sometimes, we do more than weep (Oduyoye 1995:184). As was observed by the African women theologians, the women in Rushinga district had to recognise that behind the oppressive patriarchal structure lies an androcentric ideology that honours masculinity as a standard of humanity (Landman & Shumba 2020). Therefore, the Rushinga women should note that they and no one else must fight the battle to achieve their full humanity as women. Women must collaborate in this struggle for liberation from patriarchal, political, ecclesiastical, and economic structures. Without these "sister collaborations," women would continue to become easy prey while men continued to boost their egos as "real people."

Kanyoro (1995) argues the need for women to "use introspection and think more deeply about the realities faced by them. She states that this is not a refusal to address male oppression but rather a way of empowering women to remove what she called the "log in our eyes so that we can see the log in other people's eyes" (Kanyoro 1995:23). For this reason, opposing men's dominance and oppression over women should not be seen as the end aim of women's emancipation but rather as a necessary stage in their advancement. "Total freedom for women cannot be fully attained only when inhumane cultural practices are still prevalent. Culture is dynamic, and as such is changeable", she pointed out (Kanyoro 1995:23). This is supported by Bahemuka (2015), who argues that women are enemies to themselves because they help perpetuate oppressive social structure. Again, they socialise their children to understand that girls should be dependent and that boys should exercise supremacy (Bahemuka 2015:153).

It is sarcastic and regrettable that in many African cultures, women and not men are the custodians of culture and the primary transmitters of culture in society. It is the women who socialise children when they are growing up (both boys and girls, who would turn

into adults in the future). Boys are socialised in that girls should do the cleaning and cooking. The same boy would grow into a man and tell his wife that a woman must do all house chores. The study drew attention to the fact that by not questioning prevailing customs and by often openly supporting them and transmitting them to the next generation, women acted as agents of men in perpetuating culturally enforced gender inequality. When men implemented these hazardous habits, women (including the mothers who were the transmitters of the culture) would lament, putting all the blame on men whom they taught and helped preserve the culture when they were growing up.

Lastly, women should take seriously the statement by Oduyoye (1995), which is so pregnant with meaning, “I cannot be thrown into an overly patriarchal pot without seeking a way of crawling out” (Oduyoye 1995:185). Indeed, women must find ways of crawling out of this unruly behaviour of men, especially patriarchy, which had to be done with; otherwise, it would not be easy for women to be free. All these harmful practices are a result of patriarchy and its tendencies, which seek to undermine and control women from birth until the grave. Women would find no peace if they do not devise ways of creeping out of this.

Wells (2003) suggests that the resentment of many African women towards the old patriarchal ways deserves to be counted as an essential factor in bringing about this transformation in gender relations. University of Zimbabwe students (2003) interviewed three generations of women in one family, and their evidence reveals how resisting and challenging patriarchal attitudes translated, over the generations, into higher educational and economic status for their daughters and granddaughters. The students were taken aback and stunned by the grandmothers' intense feelings of indignation about women's subjugation (Wells 2003:101). A much stronger sense of women's rebelliousness is seen in studies from Zimbabwe, which suggest that women actively accelerated the processes of change, motivated not only by the socio-economic contexts but also by adverse reactions to various facets of the old patriarchal order (Wells 2003:103). For this researcher, there was a need to thank the heavens for the turnaround of events that women are now seeing and challenging what had been

oppressing them for generations. This initiative by women would change their story to being recognised in a society by a society that has been rejecting it.

3.6 Conclusion

Towards this end, the above discussion has shown that institutions of culture, religion, and society are so distorted by patriarchy that it is difficult to regard them as supporters of women in their quest for emancipation. As suggested by Hinga, “On the contrary, patriarchal culture and other social institutions help to engender their oppression and subjugation. For women to succeed in their quest for liberation, they should learn not to look up to any models, least of all that of Jesus in his role as a victim” (Hinga 2015:184). This chapter dealt with the history and development of womanism, womanist theory, and womanist theology. The chapter discussed the African women theologians’ interpretation of the Bible, how the Bible speaks to them, and their experiences. The views of African women theologians on issues of GBV were recorded. The following chapter sought the presentation and analysis of data. The methodology and tools used in the study are discussed.

CHAPTER 4: THE EMPIRICAL COMPONENT OF THE STUDY'S METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The foregoing chapter drew attention to the study's theoretical underpinnings, focusing on the womanist theory. The theory talks about African women's theologians presenting a preferred version of African women as it relates to their experiences. Their perspective brought depth, intensity, and immediacy to the discussion. The chapter also looked at the womanist interpretation of the Bible, how they interpreted it, how the Bible speaks to them, and their experiences. The current chapter discusses the data collection methods used in this study. Since this study involved investigating information about a particular group of people, a qualitative approach was more suitable (Babbie & Mouton 2002:11). According to Babbie & Mouton (2002:11), qualitative research methods are the most appropriate approach when one wants to study a deeper understanding of given community in depth.

This empirical study used various data collection instruments, including in-depth interviews and secondary sources from published and unpublished sources. This chapter discusses these tools in detail, showing how each was applied in the study. This section also presented the design for the study, sampling and sampling procedures, ethical issues, and data analysis techniques. The chapter further describes the research site, the selected area of study, the importance of the research site, and its effect on the study's findings. The chapter showed how the participants were identified and how the data analysis methods were identified. The researcher mainly used qualitative research to analyse the lived realities of the people of the Rushinga district and understood these realities from their perspectives. Before these factors, this chapter first clarified the meaning of the term methodology.

4.2 Methodological Framework

This methodology section addressed two main questions: How was the data collected or generated? How was it analysed? (See, for example, Oliver, Holloway, Polit, and Hungler). The methodology for this study assisted me with finding out the status of the violence and mistreatment of women and whether it was caused by traditional and cultural practices only or not. It considered what the government of Zimbabwe said on issues of abuse so that it could be established how far the government and Church considered the role played by cultural practices in putting disorder in society and reducing GBV. The views of the women who were affected by and had witnessed this GBV and how it has affected the way people lived were again considered. As such, the methodology I have chosen and the steps followed took into consideration the traditional values that guard and guide the people of Rushinga. It sought to establish how far the government and women can interact to foster peace and tranquillity.

This chapter reviews the data collection methods utilised in carrying out this study through interviews, particularly in-depth individual interviews and key informant interviews (Babbie & Mouton 2002:11), and a broad consultation of books, journals, articles, newspapers, and diaries. In doing this, the researcher extracted information from the views of women who survived the violence and those people who have witnessed the abuse inflicted on their fellows. It was of paramount importance to hear from the voice of the people what they thought about the government and Church to see whether they were aware of the existence of these cultures and traditional values, which are believed to be historically transmitted patterns of meanings that humanity perpetuates and developed to the best of their knowledge about the acceptable attitude towards life. These patterns could not be shoved to the peripheries because they bound society together, and the government needed to be aware of them.

The researcher chose interviews to be able to get to the bottom of the behavior of the people in Rushinga and establish their feelings regarding the GBV that they went through. This study analysed human behavior, and chose the methods that were suitable for this. It must be understood that in the study of human behaviour and the

attempt to design processes to understand the course of future events, there are two distinct approaches: quantitative and qualitative research designs. Qualitative research seeks to interpret behaviour to assign meaning to particular actions of an individual or group, and this research was mainly centred on it.

4.3 Qualitative Research Approach

Scholars such as Field and Morse (1996) elucidate that qualitative research refers to inductive,all-inclusive, individual, and procedure-adapted approaches used to comprehend, understand, pronounce, and improve a concept on a phenomenon or situation (Field & Morse1996:24). It is a systematic, subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning (Field & Morse1996:24). Holloway (1997) agrees with Field and Morse that researchers in the qualitative approach adjust a person-centred and broad perspective to comprehend the experience of humanity, without concentrating on explicit theory (Field & Morse1996:24). The natural context of the knowledge that is distinctive and rich information and insights could be produced thoroughly to present an actual image of the participant's reality and communal setting. These proceedings and situations were significant to the investigator (Field & Morse1996:24).

Musengi and Mukopadhyay (2012:27) highlight the importance of using the qualitative method in enabling participants to share their experiences. In this study, the qualitative method allowed women disadvantaged by cultural practices to express their understanding of how patriarchy related to women. Qualitative methodology was crucial in this study because it allowed for creating beautiful data based on understanding participants' attitudes, feelings, opinions, and skills as they happened in real life. This method was very flexible for the researcher because it enabled her to make variations to this research whenever appropriate. The methods brought the emotional state of the members interviewed concerning the cultural and traditional practices that affected them and other women in their society (Musengi and Mukopadhyay 2012:27).

Qualitative research methods usually rely on the know-how of the investigator to meet the objective of the research (Merriam 1988:65). Moreover, Merriam reiterates that whenever one attempts to use a qualitative research method, one is supposed to be a good listener, take note of all conversations and observations accurately, examine all the data fairly and try to accomplish a sense of balance amid their preconceived ideas (Merriam 1988:65). Concerning this utterance, I was able to maintain this to achieve the aim of this research, which sought to challenge cultural practices and see their influence on the suffering and subordination of women. I was able to listen carefully, taking note of what women went through, and then I managed to examine the data from the insights and opinions raised by participants.

A qualitative study aims to develop new perceptions to come up with new conceptions. As the researcher, I needed to be open to new insights from the data received during the research process. The qualitative approach describes the characteristics and the importance of human understandings as pronounced by participants and understood by the researcher at different levels of abstraction (Merriam 1988:65). In my case, I attempted to understand the traditional and cultural practices that exacerbate violence toward women and suggest responses to violence against women. This study made use of the qualitative research method as its practical methodology for the investigation of the women of Rushinga District who were affected by gender-based violence, which translated to a severe abuse of their rights.

Through the qualitative method, the researcher gathered information in the form of field notes, audio recordings, and transcripts. The instruments that were employed in data collection were in-depth interviews coupled with secondary sources from both published and unpublished sources. These research tools were analysed in greater depth in the process of discussing this topic, particularly stressing how they had been used and helped in this study. Despite the strengths, Cohen (2007:34) points to the subjective nature as one of the major weaknesses of qualitative research design. This meant that the participant could not share where they were wrong, we could only get one side where the participant blamed the culprit and they remained victims. The other weakness is the

use of ethics where individuals' rights to privacy were denied due to the public's access to information (Cohen 2007:34). This weakness was overcome by raising awareness of all the probable risks to the participants and assuring them that their identity would be protected through the use of anonymity. Moreover, the qualitative approach demands different ways of reducing researcher-induced bias (Cohen 2007:34).

4.4 Preliminaries of the Research Project

Before the start of the research project, critical formalities were undertaken because they helped me design the methodology since it was regarded as research on course. It was worth noting that in the course of writing the project proposal, the researcher sought permission from the gatekeepers, in this case, Rushinga ward eight village head, Mr Kumapenda. The researcher went to Mr Kumapenda's homestead before approaching the participants and provided a letter from the university that she was a student who sought authorisation from his office to undertake research in his ward. According to Kawulich (2011:56), gate-keeping means the procedure by which researchers obtain the right to enter the site of investigation where the study is taking place and to interact with those who were taking part in that site (Kawulich 2011:56). This was in line with the general guidelines for the ethics review process which also regarded gate-keeper permission as gaining access to an institution or organisation. In this case, the access can either be physical or informational (Kawulich 2011:56).

Ethical clearance is the necessary document approved by the Department acknowledging that the researcher was eligible to go into the field for research. The researcher got approval from the Ethical Department. A researcher must be prepared to follow the rigorously upheld ethical procedures that are meant to protect participants during the research process (Crowhurst & Kennedy-Macfoy 2013:459). It also gave protection to the researcher because she had done all the required and critical procedures that were necessary for conducting the research (Crowhurst & Kennedy-Macfoy 2013:459). Heath *et al*. (2007) confirm that the ethical relationship between researcher and informant is the same whether they conduct research with adults or

children (Heath *et al.* 2007:409). Receiving ethical clearance gave me the impetus to engage in the field of study as a researcher.

Roux and DuPreez (2005:17) opine that the research on human rights violations requires that the researcher be sensitive and respect the participants because this exercise is emotive. The topic of GBV is very sensitive and involves many stakeholders and consent was asked from participants. In particular, this researcher sought agreement from participants to see if they would want her to make use of their real names or pseudo names. The researcher asked the interviewees if they were comfortable with their real names being shown or if they remained hidden. Some participants had no problems with both options while others preferred anonymity. Participants who feared reprisals were protected and assured that their data would not be made public in newspapers and that their data was purely for academic purposes.

4.4.1 The site of the research and process of gaining access

This research's site was Rushinga District in Mashonaland Central Province of Zimbabwe. Choosing the place for the research was directly linked to the problem prevailing in that area. In this case, the problem in the region is women abuse mainly due to cultural practices that demean women and often label them names while being a wife comes with connotations such that much is expected of a wife. The first reason for the prevalence of violence is that Rushinga is still too rural in background and civilisation did not reach all parts of the District. It is because of this that the area remains a hotspot and hotbed for violence that is caused by culture and societal expectations of a good wife. As highlighted by Strydom (2005), the choice of the problem was directly linked to the particular field in which the inquiry was to be undertaken (Strydom 2005: 282). In this case, the problem of women being unrecognised and given their place had a stern bearing on the research site selected. This is because the Rushinga area is very remote in terms of development, and the literacy rate is low.

Strydom went further to say that some concerns in choosing a research site included the community's policy, attitude toward outsiders, and the format of getting permission from the people involved (Strydom 2005:282). My experience of working in the Rushinga community was that I observed many women being abused because most people said that their “custom” does not allow certain things related to women's independence, and some were traumatised because of the emotional and physical torture they received from their male figures. Being a community member gave this study the upper hand in obtaining all the information that no stranger could be given. After highlighting the importance of the location of the research site, the researcher now looked at how the data for this research was collected. The researcher used interviews as research tools for data collection. Before looking at that in detail, the researcher discusses the sample and sampling procedures for the interviews that were carried out (Strydom 2005:282).

4.4.2 Sampling and sampling procedure

Having discussed the issues with the research site, the next area to focus on is the methods of collecting data. Only two methods of collecting data were used in this study: the interviews and the use of secondary sources. However, before delving into the issue concerning the methods, it is essential to show the sampling procedure and the sample for the methods that were used in the study.

4.4.3. Sample

When conducting research, the researcher could not study or collect data from the whole area. As such, sampling became very critical and a prerequisite. Sampling is a critical approach to getting data for the entire population without measuring all members of the population. “The notion of sampling as applied in qualitative research entails that only a subset of the population known and referred to as a sample is selected for a given research inquiry” (Oppong 2013:203). Leedy also defines sampling as the method where the researcher selects a section of the population that she/he is investigating (Leedy 1996:16). It is a segment of the population that has a specific opportunity to take action on the problem you have identified or is specifically affected by it (Leedy

1996:16). Put in simpler terms, a sample is a sub-collection or subsection of the population (Leedy 1996:16); it is a research strategy.

Morrison (1993:112) points out that the quality of a piece of research stands or falls not only by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted. In this study, I used the purposive sampling method. However, one worth noting was that the participants participated in the research of their own volition (Zhou 2013). It entailed that the participants agreed to share their experiences regarding how violence affected their lives and how they related to the people who violated them. This study's sample comprised eighteen people, six men and twelve women. The criteria for selection were based on age, gender, and how they related to violence (Morrison 1993:112) (are they victims or witnesses of GBV). The researcher targeted participants who were in the reproductive ages (25-49 years) because they are more vulnerable to Gender-based violence, and she targeted men between the same ages as women. Hence, as Elam (2003) would argue, the study targeted those who were most likely to give the information required to meet the study objectives (Elam 2003:50).

4.4.4 Sample Size

For interviews, the sample comprised eighteen people (six groups with two women per group and six men). The first group comprised two married and not working women. This group was selected to find out the reasons for violence among them. Was it because they spend their time at home? Previous research says those “stay-at-home mums” were more prone to GBV, and this study wanted to hear from the horse’s mouth. The researcher also selected two working and married women. The purpose of this selection was to unpack the truth from hearsay that said there was a higher risk of GBV among working women than unemployed women and the suggestion implied that women who earn more income than their spouses are more likely to experience violence than those women who earn less or the same as their spouses. Also, single women were interviewed, one of whom had chosen to stay single and another of a

mature and marriageable age but single. This group was selected so that their voices would be heard and their opinion on GBV and why they chose that path.

Youthful but not married women were selected as well. These were selected so that they also give their insights on what they see at home, and some of them have experienced GBV. They were selected to give possible suggestions that vibe with their era, how they felt it had to be done, and what they thought caused GBV among people their age. The other group was divorced women; some of them were abused, and some still experienced it while their husbands were gone. Their views were also welcomed and helped shape and mould the study. The last group was the older women. The reason for selecting this sample was that since these people were senior members of society, they were well-versed in the harmful practices that undermined women's rights.

The other reason they were selected was that most help maintain and govern these practices and are responsible for ensuring people stick to them. In as much as patriarchy contributes to women abuse, there is also women-to-women abuse, which mostly comes from the elderly because they are the ones that make laws that govern other women, especially the widows and young girls, for virginity testing. They raised valid reasons as to why the practices are to be withheld without changing them, as the "new generation" is mourning. Lastly, a sample of six men was selected as well. Men were selected to give their views on what they thought caused GBV in homes. Their contributions were important as this study was objective, and could not take views from women only.

4.4.5 Purposive sampling

Tongco (2007:147) defines the purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, as the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. In other words, the researcher is the one who decides what he or she needs to know and then sets out to look for the participants to

provide the necessary data because those participants have the knowledge and the experience required for the study (Lewis & Sheppard 2006:97). Purposive sampling is best demonstrated by way of the key informant technique (Lyon & Hardesty 2005). This is when participants are requested to stand in as guides to a culture. The participants solicited are those who have in-depth knowledge of the subject under study. They are heedful, reflective members of the community under study, in this case, the members of the Rushinga District, who knew the culture and were willing to communicate their knowledge.

The participants of this study were identified from the researcher's former church and work members. The researcher approached those whom she knew had issues in their homes during her stay in Rushinga, and others she did not have a personal relationship with but had heard stories related to GBV about them. She knew most of their stories during their "women talk" at church and work. She approached them directly and made known her reasons for visiting Rushinga. She also approached those who fit the eligibility criteria of age, gender, and status. Therefore, this research targeted participants who were willing to share their knowledge about women's rights violations and the role played by culture and tradition in responding to these violations. This researcher made use of purposive sampling to select the respondents who were targeted for violence by their abusers and to identify the elderly who were believed to be well-versed with some of the practices that were put in ages ago and were still practised at the time this research was carried out.

All the in-depth interviews were done in Shona and English. Freedman (2007) argues that this enables the researcher to handle both the spoken and written information from the interactions with participants. This research purposively selected only participants to give the information needed for this research. According to Freedman (2007), this sampling approach selects sample members based on their understanding, affiliation, and know-how concerning the subject under investigation. In this current study, the selected sample participants had a special relationship with the subject under study and enough important knowledge about the brutal effects of GBV on women and society at

large (Freedman 2007). These participants witnessed how their sisters and mothers were affected by violence, while some were mere victims who were devastated by such incidences in their daily lives.

4.5 Research Ethics

Rubin and Babbie (1993:58) aver that ethical considerations bear heavily on how social research is conducted. Saunders (2009) is of the view that ethical consideration is when one behaves appropriately taking into consideration the fact that those who become his/her subjects have their rights. This research followed the code of conduct of research ethics as set by the University of Pretoria. The current study was subject to certain ethical issues; some participants reported their written acceptance regarding their participation in the research by signing a consent form (Rubin and Babbie 1993:58). Participants were not deceived or forced to participate. They were reassured at the beginning of the interviews that their participation in the research was voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw from it at any point and for any reason if they felt like doing it. Due to the assurance guaranteed to participants, all participants agreed to participate. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality of their identities as all information in the data was disseminated anonymously by using pseudonyms in reporting the findings. The works of other people were acknowledged accordingly to avoid plagiarism (Rubin and Babbie 1993:58).

The participants were informed about how their participation in the research would help the researcher in attaining her goals as a student and that data would be used solely for academic purposes. Research ethics adhered to the code of conduct stipulated by University of Pretoria (UP) ethical guidelines. As a researcher, I was sensitive to the possible impact of the research on society through information dissemination, publication or otherwise. I was ethically responsible to the people with whom I worked. Thus, as a researcher, I acknowledged that people had a right to confidentiality, including the right to participate in the interviews. The people had the right not to be harassed in any way be it physically, emotionally, psychologically or in other ways. This research is of benefit to the participants and society at large because it creates

awareness of how tradition and culture affect women and reduce development in society. This was a way of empowering women in society as a whole and those in Rushinga in particular (Rubin and Babbie 1993:58).

The research reliability was determined by selecting data collection instruments that accurately gathered data required within a short space of time. The researcher selected the data instruments that enabled gathering consistent results whenever used repeatedly using the same respondents. Thus, this research is valid and reliable because it used both primary and secondary data for the findings of this research. Moreover, the researcher interviewed elderly women who were senior members of society who happened to be custodians of the “beloved” tradition. These women have been around and are well-versed in the tradition of their society.

This was done to gather information or data that helped me to achieve the objectives of the study and to answer my research questions and led me to make certain conclusions. Furthermore, I asked the same questions twice to the same group on two different occasions and the reliability was guaranteed by comparing two responses. I also gave similar questions to different groups in order to test the accuracy of the information from the participants. Lastly, this study was valid and reliable because I used an audio recorder for the interviews which minimised any bias in the interpretation of the data.

4.6 The Research Process

The research used open-ended semi-structured questions that were designed in advance to collect information from the participants. It used the questions to interview all the participants from different categories. Interviews were held during the day with the targeted respondents. Appointments were made in the form of phone calls to obtain their consent to participate in the research. More specifically, respondents were asked to participate in the research after explaining the nature and the scope of the study. However, not all the participants consented to participate in the study, some gave their reasons for not having time while others could not agree to being recorded and the

researcher could not force them. The interviews lasted approximately thirty to sixty minutes. Moreover, a recording device was always made ready before the interview session began. The participants always signed the consent forms before the interview commenced. I recorded the interviews to analyse the data gathered. In as much as the researcher had the freedom to probe during the interviews, the participants were also free to express their views on topics which were not included in the interview schedule. Finally, it should be noted that all the interviews flowed well.

4.7 The Tools for Data Collection

Parahoo (1997:51) defined an instrument of research as a tool used to collect data. An instrument is a tool designed to measure knowledge, attitudes and skills. This research used two types of data sources which were, primary and secondary data. Primary data involved the data collected from interviews and discussions as it formed the main focus of the analysis. Research quality depended on the tools used to collect data. The tools for data collection are known as research instruments. The task of research instruments is to test the research aim. According to Walliman (2011), research instruments are tools and techniques that are used in research to uncover interesting or new facts. The tools designed for the measurement of data on the subject under investigation are known as research instruments. These instruments give data on the target population as well as the measured variables. Following this, the two types of sources that were used for this research were the primary and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained from the oral interviews while secondary data was sourced from published and unpublished materials.

4.7.1 Secondary Data

As put by Kothari (2004:111), secondary data refers to information that already existed and is published by somebody. This study utilised literature from published books, academic journals, magazines, newspapers, articles and unpublished sources such as university theses on the relevant subject being studied. The thrust of this was to see how other scholars had wrestled with issues of women and patriarchy and how these

issues affected women and the development of societies at large. Secondary data was needed to further add and supplement the data that was collected during fieldwork. The data collection process focused on the case study of how cultural practices affected women and what it is to be a good wife in the district of Rushinga in Mashonaland Central Province of Zimbabwe. I travelled and lived in the Rushinga area for a month to have enough time to collect data.

4.7.2 Interviews

In trying to explain interviews, Patton observes that:

> The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone's mind. The purpose of open-ended interviewing is not to put things in someone's mind but to assess the perspective of the person being interviewed. We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. The fact of the matter is we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. Wehave to ask questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit
>
> (Patton 1990: 271)

The above quotation is pregnant with meaning because it clearly states that the major aim of an interview is to enable the person being interviewed to bring the interviewer to his or her own world.It shows that the observation method is complemented by interviews in order to close the gaps that may be left during the research process. In this case, the interview method alleviates gaps left by observation and other secondary sources such as data from books and archives. Interviews as a data collection method have the advantage that at times, they can unveil what written sources fail to express. Borg & Gall (1971) stipulates that oral sources reveal what tends to be hidden- the spoken message fugitive by nature. This points to the fact that not all information can be put down in writing. Nevertheless, Patton (1990) stipulates that oral sources make the

story more vibrant and, in an interview scenario, it enable the researcher and the interviewee to recall the experience.

Sidhu (1984:72) opines that the advantage of interviews is that the researcher gets to see the reactions of the participant in terms of facial expressions and the language of the body. Over and above that, the interviews are dependable as techniques for gathering data. Borg and Gall (1971:66) note that, as a research tool, the interview is a way of making sure that views obtained from the subject matter are valid. In situations where there is a need to get into the person's life to get information about the things that we cannot observe on our own, that is where interviews become critically important. It must be noted that we cannot observe everything because other things are subjective. What it means, therefore, is that for the things that we cannot observe, we need to ask questions about them. For the information that the books and other literature cannot cover, the interviews were critical to close those gaps. The researcher employed semi-structured interviews that enabled her to follow up on participants for clarity as well as expand on their responses as in the words of Hatch (2000:43).

Furthermore, oral interviews enabled the researcher to gather information important on each issue and could read the feelings, gestures, reactions and emotions of the interviewees. It was easier to make decisions because the information was obtained face to face and results were taken since responses were immediate from the respondents. Denscombe (2002:27) is of the view that the only drawback in using interviews relates to the issue of time since they require a lot of time. However, in this study, the researcher had ample time to traverse the Rushinga District to meet relevant interviewees to be able to hear the stories of the people in relation to women's abuses.

Gill, Stewart and Treasure (2008:46), state that the reason for carrying out interviews is to make an exploration of how people view situations, their lived experiences, belief systems, and/or what motivates them on certain matters. The women in Rushinga encountered difficult situations and as a researcher, I wanted to establish how these situations affected the spirit, soul and body. Hearing stories and seeing some of the

victims (during my stay there as a teacher) told me that indeed these women were tortured physically, emotionally and spiritually and that something must be done about it because they are living in their own world full of turbulences. When I was interacting with the participants, I got the reality of the situation from the perspective of the participant. Thus, these interactions took me from my world into the world of the participants appreciating the urgency for healing of the dejected people.

For this study, interviews were used to gather the information that was necessary to answer the key question which was to explore the traditional and cultural practices which exacerbated violence towards women and suggest responses to violence against women in Zimbabwe. This method was very useful as it closed various gaps left by archival sources. Personal interviews took the form of interactive conversational narratives, where open-ended questions were asked and some probing further was employed where there was a need for clarification to have quality findings. As mentioned earlier in the sampling procedure section, the choice of participants was made using purposive sampling. This was undertaken by selecting the participants from married and not working, single women, divorced women, youthful women, elderly women and those who were married and working.

In addition, interviews in this study were used to complement the rich findings from the available literature. Gondongwe (2011:20) explains that a disadvantage is that human beings are mortal and once they die the library crumbles. In this research, the results of the interviews were systematically analysed to come up with a balanced testimony. Thus, other sources such as observations, books and archives were consulted and compared with information from the interviews to present a reliable and factual academic account. The interviews were recorded where possible by an audio recorder and transcribed.

4.7.3 Semi-structured in-depth interviews

The study used semi-structured in-depth interviews. Interviews were carried out with eighteen participants (twelve females and six males). The age of the participants ranged

from 25-49 years and above at the time of the interviews. These respondents were drawn from social class (two members for six groups for women and six from men without a designated class). Each of these members were interviewed individually using a semi-structured interview guide. These members were selected according to age and social class.

4.7.4 Informal interviews

Besides formal interviews, the researcher also engaged in informal interviews with the members of the local community of the Rushinga area to help situate and map the traditional and cultural practices that led to violence toward women, as related to cultural constructions of gender and a “good wife”. Both old and young men and women were also interviewed about the reasons why there is abuse and the effects of this abuse. This then helped the researcher to establish whether it was their tradition or culture that spelt and “whispered” abuse or not.

4.7.5 Recording and transcribing interviews

During the conducting of the interviews, the researcher carried a recorder with her and one of the advantages of accompanying one’s self with an audio recorder when going to the field is that both the person carrying out the interview and the participants can concentrate on what is transpiring in the interview. Patton (1990) explains that no matter what style of interviewing is used, and no matter how carefully one-word interview questions, it all comes to nothing if the interviewer fails to capture the actual words of the person being interviewed. The raw data of interviews are the actual quotations spoken by interviewees (Patton 1990:347). This is critical in the process of conducting interviews, the researcher always needed to have a voice recorder and a phone as a backup in case the recorder failed in the middle of the interview. Jacob and Ferguson also support this notion when they comment that:

> It is important to note that by choosing to rely on a recording device rather than handwritten notes,means that you should make sure that your equipment is in good working order and

> make sure youhave backup plans to counter hitch-ups if the equipment fails
>
> (Jacob & Ferguson 2012:7)

In qualitative research methods, a voice recorder is usually used as an indispensable tool that does not change what has been said. It is important to note that a voice recorder increases the accuracy of data collection and allows flexibility for the researcher to pay special attention to the participant's expressions. Patton also weighs in by saying the interactive nature of in-depth interviewing can be seriously affected by the attempt to take verbatim notes during the interview (Patton 1990:348). Recording validates and removes biases to the study being conducted as concluded by Tuckett (2005:4) when he outlines that a recorded in-depth interview facilitates credibility and dependability of the data collection procedure. Some of the participants agreed to their interviews being recorded using the voice recorder and the phone as a backup, while others refused. The recording process was achieved by explaining to the participants the purpose of the study and asking for permission to allow the researcher to record the interview by signing the consent form as a requirement of qualitative research. As has already been stated:

> …the anonymity of the interviewee in relation to the information shared must be maintained during interviews as the interviewee may share information that could jeopardize his or her position in a system. Information gathered must remain anonymous and protected from those whose interests conflict with those of the interviewee
>
> (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006:319)

No challenges related to the audio recorder during the interview process were encountered. Data in the voice recorder was then transferred to a laptop and a USB flash drive for storage as backup in case the recorder malfunctioned. The interviews were transcribed into readable manuscripts.

Sullivan (2010) also adds that recorded interviews will always help the interviewer to revisit the data for references in future, to capture important aspects that may have been skipped by the interviewer when the interview was carried out. This was the case in this research in that in the process of transcribing the information, the researcher obtained critical insights that helped her understand the issue of women's rights violations in the District. It came to her realisation that most women had a lot of bottled emotions in their hearts and by interviewing them, they had actually found someone to help them lift their burdens. The expressions of the interviewees were important. Where they expressed pain through their facial expressions, the researcher could also respond the same way which was not the case when she was taking down notes which made it difficult to concentrate on such physical expressions. The good part was that she had with her a counsellor so that if people were to break down in the process of narrating their stories, the counsellor would attend to them. One other vital advantage of the audio-recorded interview was that there was an accurate record of what was said. It meant that once the information was recorded, it could not be altered. Therefore, the interviewer got information that was not biased and was credible.

Wengraf (2001:221) defines transcribing as an instrumentation practice of examining sound data from audio tape to create visual data to become printable on paper. This is a demanding and tiresome process that needs higher concentration in terms of listening skills. Hence, the researcher only transcribed verbatim. This is also supported by other scholars like Hill (2012) who states that "data collected through interviews are transcribed verbatim except for minimal utterances" (Hill 2012:12). Hence, in the process of transcribing data, the researcher discovered that sometimes the interviewee did not complete the sentence and rushed to give another view or went back to what he or she said in the beginning.

However, when transcribing it is not the responsibility of the transcribers to correct the conversational sequence as demonstrated by Patton (1990:380) when he postulates that the grammar in natural conversations is atrocious, sentences begin and then are interrupted by new sentences before the first sentences are completed.

Thus, during the process of transcribing, challenges such as background noises in some recordings were encountered. Crabtree confirms that:

> Transcribers often have difficulties in capturing the spoken word in text form because of sentence structure, use of quotations, omissions and mistaking words or phrases for others. This is because people often speak in run-on sentences; transcribers are forced to make judgment calls. The insertion of a period or a comma can change the meaning of an entire sentence. When working with audio data,most experienced researchers listen to the audiotape while reading the transcriptions to ensure accuracy during the interpretation of data

(Crabtree 2006:318)

The above assertion is true since these were some of the challenges encountered during transcribing but the researcher had to constantly refer back to the audio recording during the process of analysis to verify the authenticity of the quoted data. The method of analysis will be explained later in this chapter.

4.8 Field Experiences

Rushinga District is a GBV hotbed and the people in the area were very suspicious of people who talked about this phenomenon in their area. As such, I was received with mixed feelings. Some of the people were very hospitable and very eager to give information, whilst others had some mixed feelings and were very hostile when I first approached them. They were afraid of being interviewed as they were concerned about the dissemination of the findings. They asked questions like: “What are you going to do if you find out and what if my husband gets to know that I spoke about our home affairs?” “What do you want this information for?” I answered these questions by guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity that no information from these interviews was given to anyone, and data will would be kept locked away for the sake of publication.

Besides the above questions, other participants were at first suspicious of me and were reluctant to provide information as soon as I mentioned culture. The participants thought I wanted to use the information to implicate them and then lure them into going against their culture and tradition. It was only after I clarified that the intention of my visit was not to report anyone and I was a genuine researcher, I then managed to interview them. This showed me that these women were just following culture but many things were being done against their will, they feared being victimised. They also gained confidence in me when I showed them the letter I got from the University, which gave me permission to get into the field and do the research. Again, since I used to teach in the area, they gave me the benefit of the doubt to say “We know her”. As an area I stayed in for a decade, I was very conversant with the language,beliefs and behaviours of the society in this research, thus, there was no linguistic barrier during the gathering of data. I was well acquainted with the information of the participants since I once stayed with them.

4.8.1 Limitations of the Study

The first and foremost limitation of this study was that it vacillated between a Christian and Womanist understanding of women’s abuse and an African traditional understanding of abuse. To overcome this limitation, the study focused on a Womanist theological approach to bring out what women thought should be incorporated from African traditional ideals. The second and last limitation was that the study was limited to the Rushinga District in Mashonaland Central yet there were human rights violations in the whole province and the country at large. This meant that the places not studied might affirm and contradict the points of critique for this study. To overcome this limitation, references to places omitted here were mentioned to illustrate key points in this analysis.

4.8.2 Methodological Limitation

Some of this study’s limitations were that initially, some of the participants were not willing to provide the necessary information due to fear that I was going to “air their

laundry" after they had provided information. Some of them knew me before so they were rather shy to share their unpleasant experiences. To deal with this problem, I assured them of their anonymity by using pseudonyms instead of their real names. I also guaranteed them that I was not going to divulge any information they had shared with me.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter started with an introduction to the methodology giving an orientation of what was covered as methodological considerations. The chapter highlighted, step by step, how the research was done. The chapter introduced the cardinal points of the procedure taken in the field. The chapter explained the methods used in the thesis, study area and sample size, research instruments and ethical considerations that were observed by the researcher. The procedures by which the researcher went about unpacking, describing, explaining and women's rights violations were presented. This study was enhanced by the use of multiple sources to collect data through interviews, published or unpublished books and theses with relevant material to the research, journals and articles. Limitations to this methodological study were presented at the end of this chapter to show the fact that the study was not free of challenges, but gave a convincing interpretation of an analysis that could be reached,even in the face of challenges that inevitably arise in a study. In short, this chapter has given the reader a glimpse of the conduct of this research and critical things to consider when carrying out a research project. The next chapter deals with data presentation and analysis. Its thrust is to present and analyse the findings as they were gathered in the field.

CHAPTER 5: DATA RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 presented the research methodology to meet the objectives of this study. The methodology chapter discussed population sampling, the sampling process, data analysis, ethical considerations, and study limitations. In this current chapter, data from the field is presented, interpreted, and analysed. The approach helped the researcher to "give voice" to women who went through some painful experiences and are still going through these experiences in their life journey in the hands of men. This methodology aims to deal with the issue from the roots, addressing the lived experiences of the group under investigation.

Gender-based violence is globally prevalent in different forms, as evidence has shown that almost one in three women globally have experienced one or more forms of gender-based violence (WHO 2021). At one point or another, victims of domestic violence are often subjected to one or more forms of abuse, which usually affects them negatively (Oluwayemi 2018:5). Different forms of violence are strongly interconnected and often share root causes (CDC 2022). It is essential to take note of the fact that gender violence is not clear-cut because it could be a mixture of religious, economic, psychological, physical, or even a combination of all these. One partner may choose to live in an abusive relationship because of religious beliefs and practices, while the other opts out of the relationship to be free. Still, another may be compelled to stay because of the sociocultural or psychological imperatives.

Although men are also victims of domestic violence, most victims are women and girls, with men being the primary perpetrators (Kabeer 2014:29). While women can be violent, the percentage of violent women is negligible compared to that of men. Thus, while more focus is placed on women, who account for many cases of domestic violence, we should also note that men and children are sometimes affected by domestic violence as well. Still, it is not as severe as the violence faced by girls and women (Iyabo, Ibukunoluwa, & Busayo, 2020:8). The researcher found it imperative to

ask women themselves to speak out and tell what they experienced as women and what routes to liberation they suggest.

To fully perceive the experiences of the Kore-Kore women's views on culture, youthful women (YW), older women (EW), divorced women (DW), single women (SW), married working class (MWC), and married unemployed women (MUW) were interviewed. To be highlighted is that even though the participants might fall into one category, they are affected differently by issues under review; that is, "the effects of violence on a divorced woman cannot be the same with a married working-class woman." Despite all this, the open-ended questions allowed them to give a free response in which, even within every category, they could provide different responses. The research highlights the lived experiences of these women and how these experiences affected their dignity and their perception of marriage. When asked about their views on the causes of GBV, its effects, and measures that can be put in place to reduce GBV, the data generated birthed the themes stated below. A few men (M) were also interviewed to get a picture of why they think women are abused.

5.2 What the data points out about the causes of GBV

GBV should be treated from a holistic approach because everyone in Zimbabwe is a victim of it. Unfortunately, some cases of GBV have been swept under the carpet, giving false statistics even though the numbers are there, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 1. Below are the causes of GBV, as provided by the interview participants. They are not exhaustive, but the study reports what came from the field.

5.2.1 Culture

Of the women and men interviewed, women blamed culture for creating a rift between men and women, thus, violence among these species. On the contrary, men blamed women, saying they do not have respect, which is why they see themselves being abused. Kambarami advocates for socialisation that promotes equity between men and women. The family is a major social institution, and if this re-socialisation starts in the

family, it will permeate into other social institutions (Kambarami 2006:10). For Kambarami, all this unequal treatment of women starts at a young age; this is why young boys need to be taught so that they will grow up with a favourable treatment on women. The following is a statement from one of the participants:

> *Honestly, I blame culture for the mistreatment of women because our societal expectation is that a woman's self-worth is dependent upon keeping a man and bearing his name. The shame and stigma attached to women from broken marriages here are usually very high. So, you will find out that if a woman does not behave according to what society and her culture expect, she will be in trouble, especially independent women. She will be accused of things that she does not do. This is another reason why most women stay in marriages to protect their identities while men no longer take self-worth and dignity. (Interview with MWC* A*, 7 July 2023)*

Kambarami (2006:10) points out that the patriarchal nature of our society has shaped and perpetuated gender inequality to the extent of allowing male domination and female subordination. The socialisation process has fuelled this sad state of affairs; therefore, to amend the situation, this calls for re-socialisation. Consequently, patriarchy should be seen as it is, that is, as a social construction and not a biological one. Women should also be educated so that they understand how culture imprisons them since most of them have accepted the status quo to the extent that they worship male domination.

Rajuili (2012:188) says it is also sad that women often, due to circumstances or cultural pressure, accept the disadvantages they suffer in life. Women are so used to the situation that they have taken it as their way of life at work, school, the marketplace, and even home. Agreeing with Rajuili (2012) is a married and employed woman whose bitterness could be felt during the discussion.

> *For me, culture needs to be investigated because it hurts us. We are violated at work, girls are violated at school and even in the marketplace, and women are constantly stepped on. I am constantly having challenges with men at work because they see me as incapable. They always say haiwawo rega tiite izvi ndezvevarume,*

> *vakadzi garai kumba muchichengeta vana (Ooh, please leave this to us men; women need to stay at home taking care of children). Moreover, my husband sometimes would say that I should stay home. This can lead us to fight normally because I will tell him I am like him. What irritates me most is that my husband, at the end of the month, will expect me to put my salary on the table so that it helps in the house. (Interview with MWC* B*, 7 July 2023)*

Another woman who is divorced blamed culture for her divorce because she claimed that her husband was too much into the culture to the extent that he blamed her for barrenness. Culture always blames a woman if there is no child in the marriage. She narrated how her husband refused to go for medical tests, claiming he had been taking herbs that boosted his manhood since he was a boy, so there was no way he could be sterile. Instead of seeking help as a family, he pushed on having a second wife.

> *I do not have a child and have been married for seven years. I was divorced because my husband had to marry another woman. I was blamed for being barren, but interestingly, he has been married for two years now, and congratulations are not yet in order. This issue of childlessness was a daily talk pushing us to fight almost every day because I was the one barren, according to him. This cultural mentality has even sunk into other women's minds. His sisters and aunts used to scold me also that I was not fertile and that their brother had to marry another wife because he needed an heir. (Interview with DW* A*, 8 July 2023)*

In the same line of thought, Oduyoye (1995) in *Daughters of Anowa* declares that another area in which our voices are silent is the treatment of single and childless women whose grim fate undermines the solidarity of all women and serves to uphold the patriarchal norms. The easy labelling of women as prostitutes evades the whole issue of the defiling male (Oduyoye 1995). Since we are human and participate in structures of class and race, there are oppressors and oppressed among us as well. Sarah was also a culture-bound woman in an authority role. Oppressed by a culture that has no value on childless women, she, in turn, became oppressor to Hagar, whom both

she and Abraham exploited under the patriarchal provisions of their times (Gen. 16:1-16; 21:8-21). Cruelty among other women is often cited to dismiss our just demands or to muffle our voices. An analysis of the patriarchal hierarchy shows that we have survived at the bottom of the pyramid by building our pyramids of hurt within that substructure (Oduyoye 1995:199). It is the culture that puts pressure on women and is so insensitive to issues of childlessness, which are blamed on women. The same way Sarah oppressed Hagar is the same way her aunts and sisters-in-law treated the above participant.

Nevertheless, the desire for men to have more than one wife is the root cause of violence in many households because our culture permits a man to have polygamous relationships. There is bound to be noise and unrest where there is more than one wife. So, most men will have two or three wives, and that is the beginning of violence and abuse. In as much as our culture takes pride in polygamy, it has, on the other hand, caused havoc and has been a cause of violence. Women do not get along, and putting them in the same space is not a good idea. This concurs with sentiments from scholars like Moyo (2012:179), who argues that there is a need to liberate women from societal norms and structures that keep them imprisoned, with culture as the leading cause of this imprisonment. Women cannot and must not be reduced to socially constructed roles. Unjust societal norms and structures must be unmasked, and the reality of gendered power imbalances must be acknowledged and rejected.

However, men praised culture and blamed women for being disrespectful and naughty, so some men do not want to talk much, and they will end up beating them. For most men, women are the ones who instigate violence because they talk non-stop, yet men are not given the gift of using their mouths but hands. A comment from a man was recorded as:

> *Culture does not in any way cause gender-based violence; it tries to help by laying down rules that should be followed. Those that do not follow the rules are the ones that cause violence. Women must follow cultural practices and take their position. Culture is good nekuti inoisa vakadzi panzvimbo yavo,*

> *varumewo vachimira panzvimbo dzavo (Culture puts women in their place as well as men in their place. (Interview with M* A*, 7 July 2023)*

The study got interesting responses, especially on what a good wife is. There were mixed feelings regarding what a good wife is for both men and women. Most responses were looking at how a woman must match and fit the expectations of society and how she must strive to please her husband as culture dictates. A good wife does not compete or fight back with her husband even if he does terrible things to her, but she fights positively for her marriage. For example, one remark included:

> *Good wives should know their positions. If they avoid trying to be men in the home and take their roles as women, they should understand that baba vanoteererwa kana vataura. The problem with most women is that they also want to be kind heads. A good wife must listen to her husband and do whatever he says, full stop. (Interview with M* B*, 8 July 2023).*

An interesting remark came from a man, and he said that sometimes it was men who abused culture and then expected women to be happy about mistreatment in the disguise of culture. He says he was aware that women sometimes are a bunch of "talkers" because that is their nature, but no one deserves to be mistreated because she is a woman or because culture says that. A wife reciprocates what she gets; if the husband is good to her, and the opposite is true.

> *A wife is good in response to the love her husband gives her. If we say a wife is good because of the definition of culture, we run into problems of culture oppressing women in the pretext of their wanting to be good. A wife is as good as her husband. (Interview with M* C*, 10 July 2023)*

The other remarks came from a youthful woman who said that she either sided with men or women. She spoke about how men and women needed to live in harmony without quarrelling:

> *A good wife fears the Lord and is respected and treated equally to any other human being. One who celebrates her gender and at the same time respects the other gender. I do not understand why a couple wastes time*

> *fighting instead of loving each other. Isn't it so that they both left their families to build one home for themselves? So why do they fight? Honestly, I now really have to sit down and decide if I will ever marry because of the stories we hear about the experience of violence between lovers. (Interview with YW A, 7 July 2023)*

Mukamana and friends argue that while efforts were being made to curb GBV through various legislation, in developing countries, the scourge is still rampant. In Africa, several factors, including the patriarchal system, culture, and social norms, were identified as contributing factors to the rise of violence among partners in the region (Mukamana *et al.* 2020:430). Concurring with the above scholars are sentiments from Anderson (2005:853), who postulates that, in general, IPV is tolerated and perceived as a cultural norm and accepted to keep women disciplined and on track. In Africa, over 75% of wife beating is justified, for example, when a woman is deemed as not living up to her husband's and society's expectations (Anderson 2005:853). This was precisely the case with Rushinga communities, which tolerated the male use of violence to maintain control over women because the women were not displaying "good wife" characters. Thus, there is a general acceptance in Rushinga of culture's rigidity over generations, and the young ones see it as a good thing that they take the button stick of violence forward.

However, Mouton (2015:74) avers that in challenging these patriarchal structures, one was challenging culture because cultural practices and beliefs propelled patriarchy. Not only is challenging culture a challenging and controversial exercise, it was usually perceived as a threat to the community. Thus, there is often resistance to any efforts to change culture and to those who do so. More so, culture is at the core of any individual's life. Therefore, it was perceived as a threat to the security of the economy if one was critical of culture, for "there are elements in these cultures which are the very veins through which the solidarity of communities is nurtured" (Mouton 2015:74). The challenge is thus to find a way of challenging culture and the cultural practices which empower men at the expense of women, and which enable and lead to VAW, while at the same time not denying or denigrating the importance of culture. Culture should not

be abandoned for the sake of identity. Those good elements should be kept, while the evil and oppressive elements should be made obsolete. Gender inequality should not be justified in the name of culture, for these are just excuses by those who want to perpetuate gender imbalances.

5.2.2 Covid 19

During the COVID-19 era, almost everything and everyone was affected- and for women, it was a double tragedy for them since they were trapped between two pandemics (COVID and men). Everyone was concerned. However, the burden weighed heavily on women. According to Chigevenga *et al.* (2020:2), women's vulnerabilities, which are brought about by their biological makeup and their low position in society, exacerbated the problems they experienced during the COVID-19 era. Home isolation orders presented abusers with increased opportunities to inflict harm on victims who were rendered more vulnerable by reduced access to their support networks and limited options for escape from the home. It must be noted that women were locked down and had nowhere to run to during the lockdown period, even if they wanted to escape. The government ensured that there was no mobility, and people were confined to their homes, making it worse for women. Under normal circumstances, women always ran to their sisters, aunts, or mothers when faced with difficult situations, but during the lockdown, indeed, they were "locked" in with their violent husbands. Below are responses that substantiate the above:

> *Covid yakatokonzeresa. Ndopatakatotongwa worse. Taitomboti tikanetsana ndombobuda panze kushamwari dzangu but pa Covid raive basa jeri chairo. Covid worsened the situation because munomuka makatarisana kusvika ravira. Two years here, vakomana. (COVID messed things up for me. I used to go to my friend's place whenever we fought, but with COVID, it was complete jail time for me because you woke up together and the whole day together, imagine for two years) (Interview with MUW A, 10 July 2023)*

In an online article by the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO), COVID-19 brought untold suffering to the general populace. For women and girls, the COVID-19 virus was a double-edged sword. They faced rampant food shortages, food insecurity due to the loss of jobs and incomes, halted livelihood activities, a general rise of gender-based violence, and high crime rates where they were the immediate victims (NANGO 2021). The worst nightmare was the lowered economic activities, especially for women, and there was too much screen time and an increase in the abuse of alcohol and other intoxicating substances, especially by men. One of the interviewed working-class women reported thus:

> *The time of COVID-19 has been the most difficult worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching effects on people. There was an increase in abuse, exploitation, and violence against the vulnerable. People were not used to staying together at home continuously. When people went to work, it gave them time to breathe away from each other. Living with each other constantly has provoked profound provoking feelings, increasing GBV. COVID-19 made people idle, yet spending more time together, and some with no income, became fertile ground for increased GBV cases. I am one of those who were affected by it (Interview with MWC C, 7 July 2023).*

The economic meltdown and the looming drought in Zimbabwe meant that with the lockdown in place, the potential for high levels of transactional and unwanted sex by women and girls increased. Chigevenga *et al.* (2020) pointed out that during emergencies, intimate partner violence is inevitable, and women become the most brutal hit. Forced lockdowns and movement restrictions also meant that women suffering gender-based violence became trapped at home with their abusers at a time when support services were disrupted or inaccessible. The majority of women and girls in rural set-ups were impoverished to such an extent that affording three meals a day was unheard of (Magezi & Manzanga 2020:14). Chigevenga *et al.* (2020) also highlight that their lives hinged on selling produce like tomatoes, onions, airtime, firewood, sweets, second-hand clothes, and etcetera. COVID-19 lockdown halted this line of business and left dozens of women blindfolded and clueless in terms of their need to provide for their families. Lockdown, together with travel restrictions, became a double

tragedy for women. Some researchers are of the view that hand-to-mouth is a way of life for many women in poor communities (Magezi & Manzanga 2020:15). The COVID-19 restrictions instituted by the government and the international community meant that women were inevitably going to find it challenging to survive.

The following statements support these views.

> *As a vendor, my life was so difficult during COVID that we were not allowed to go out and sell. This meant that food was so scarce again that we moved to eating only one meal daily in the evening. In the morning, we would have tea without bread or rice; sometimes, we would eat porridge to avoid hunger, saving the main meal in the evening. Making matters worse was that we could spend the whole day at home with the kids and my husband. My husband is so stingy and harassing. I was blamed for being wasteful, yet I did not bring any food to the table. COVID for me was the worst nightmare that has ever happened to me. It was way better to die of COVID than to live the life I was. My husband would make me cry daily about how wasteful I was. He did not care that we were not allowed to go out and do business. We could eat the food sobbing. (Interview with MUW B, 9 July 2023)*

Many of the respondents unanimously argued that violence cases increased during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Many women became vulnerable to various forms of violence attributed to financial struggles, idleness, and being together for extended periods. NANGO report echoes the same sentiments, which indicated that cases of gender-based violence increased during the pandemic era, with nearly 1000 cases reported in Zimbabwe nationwide by April 2020. Musasa Project, a prominent organisation that offers shelter and counselling services to battered women in Zimbabwe, indicated that it had recorded 764 cases of GBV between the start of the lockdown on March 30, 2020, and April 9, 2020 (NANGO 2021). How sad and heart-breaking it is that women were always caught up in all forms of violence, and they were always the victims. It was like COVID came for women because the effects of it were well felt by women. The next part discusses how the church is regarded as a cause of household GBV.

5.2.3 The Church

The Church is expected to act as a refuge for the homeless, the father to the fatherless, and the voice of the voiceless, but many people do attest that the church is doing the opposite of its mandate here on earth. Most religious institutions in Africa prohibit divorce or separation, and Hendriks (2012) states that submission is a fundamental stance that all Christian people should adopt in various situations. We are to submit to God (James 4:7). We are also urged to submit to our parents (Eph. 6:1), to those in church leadership (Heb.13:7), and to governments and ruling authorities (1 Peter 2:13; Rom. 13:1, 5). Surprisingly, the issue of submission is twisted when it comes to women because they are the ones to submit, and religion is silent when it comes to men's submission.

No one questions men, saying they are forwarded to their parents and the government as expected in the above verses, but they sing songs of how women are to submit to them to be seen as good wives. According to Oduyoye (1995:171), women's voices should be listened to when they speak about the God-ordained dignity of every human person and the consequent need for each person for respect. Mouton (2015) propounds that the challenge for the church is thus to start listening to the so-called alternative voices, those that use different communication methods. There has often been resistance to doing so. Often, this has been because women's voices are seen in opposition to men's voices and thus as a threat.

The following quotes help to answer one of the questions posed by the study on the role of the Church and other civil societies and the kind of support GBV victims must get from them. Edet in Oduyoye & Kanyoro says,

> As a concerned African woman, I wish to remind the churches that women are part of the people of God and the Body of Christ. We are called to freedom and salvation. At the same time, the people of God are the mystery of the presence of the risen Christ and the sociological expression of human activity at a particular time in history. We are part of that people, and, as such, we are on the move, both in the historical process and transcendentally, towards a Kairos that has been proclaimed. As women, we feel our scope for

> movement is restricted and reduced by human sinfulness, creating structures in which some dominate others.
>
> (Edet 1992:38)

One interviewee was recorded saying what Edet (1992:38) said above: the Church must stop treating men and women as different people but as equals who were both created in the image of God. She says that the Church must teach men not to see women as second-class citizens, and the church has to preach the true gospel of Jesus, who never selected men over women.

> *The church is crucial in changing cultural practices that cause gender inequality. The church should help people, especially women, to reach their full potential and experience their dignity as people created in the image of God by birth. It is because of patriarchal traditions and practices that women's status is secondary to that of their husbands. Men of God have to do what God called them to: free the oppressed and set them at liberty. Men will not see Heaven judging by their actions towards women, I tell you. (Interview with SW* A *10 July 2023)*

Oduyoye (1995:190) spells out that our lifestyle as Christian women is shaped not only by traditional imagery of religion, culture, and society but also by incorporating Western colonial norms in the teaching of the church. For the reason for its widespread treatment of the Bible as an infallible oracle, the church in Africa is slow to change its attitude, and this is particularly true of its attitudes towards women. The starting point is that the Bible should be studied from the point of view of our own life experiences. That is what the authors of the Bible did. Indeed, the Bible gathers together theologies made up of experiences of individuals and whole communities over hundreds of years to answer the question: What is God doing? Or what is God saying to us? Even though biblical times were removed from us by nearly two millennia, we believe that God continued to work and to talk to us through the Bible, a human story with events, scenes, and beliefs, some of which we feel very close to as Africans. Looking at our own life experiences in

our relationship with God, a “new book” was written about how God dealt with today’s world and its people. This was a true “African testament” (Oduyoye 1995:191).

One woman who identified herself as the Boss lambasted the Church and said it all started with the churches. She said that as much as culture contributed to the abuse by women, the men of God also played a role. Violence was like the proverbial elephant in the room because the church knew what was going on in the community but pretended and attempted to be unaware of it (Hendriks 2012). By so doing, it is letting the community down. She went on to say that the significant difficulty we faced as women was that community leaders refused to address the issues. At the same time, cultural practices generally dictated what happened to the victims and survivors, who were mostly stigmatised and with perpetrators rarely punished.

> *Church leaders are the ones who visit homes, and sometimes a victim will report her issue to her pastor, then the pastor, instead of addressing the issue, brushes it off and takes the side of the men. If they are clever enough, why can’t they address such issues openly in the church, where men will be hearing? This means that the church is helplessly silent because facts like these present real-life challenges to the church of today, and in return, the church is doing nothing. The voiceless Christian woman and her children are calling loudly and clearly to the church for rescue, and no one seems to care. (Interview with YW* B, *9 July 2023)*

In addition to the above, the situation on the ground and from earlier research indicate that churches could be complicit in GBV matters. In linking what was happening in the church to the rest of the community, it should be noted that the Christian community was not only in the society where GBV is rampant, but it was also a participant in some cases (Le Roux 2012:52). There are despicable cases of GBV within the church that have come to be expected or treated as standard (Oliver 2011:12; Ushe 2015:102). This researcher, agrees with Ushe and Oliver that some abusive practices are now taken to be expected even in churches because leaders have designed that tradition where women know that

"this is men's work that is not for us." Women have also developed a culture of accepting that men have the final say in matters affecting the church; women will listen and not contribute. Hendriks (2012) avers that although the church has rejected some cultural practices that undermine gender equality, it has also imposed measures of gender oppression that still make it difficult to achieve gender equality within its ranks. To substantiate this, the following statements were recorded:

> *For me, the church is absent in responding to the reality of violence because it does not do anything to prevent or provide after-care. Its church members are stigmatized and discriminated against, and violent practices are condoned. For me, the picture of church involvement in dealing with sexual violence is bleak, so faint. There is no doubt that violence is a serious problem here in Rushinga, but I have never heard of any church addressing or engaging with this issue. Their lack of opposition or engagement also indirectly supports such practices. (Interview with YW C, 13 July 2023)*

Lee (2000:67) warns that churches should guard against telling women lies, such as that God created women as inferior beings, destined to serve their husbands, or that God made a helper and helpers are subordinate to the ones they help. These are cultural biases, not spiritual or scientific principles. The church should assist in and should be the first to acknowledge that women are not what society says they are; they are image bearers of God and possess an inherent dignity because of that (Grady 2006:67). He quotes a well-known theologian, Fiorenza (2021:26) who passionately summarizes: "women are not ladies (to serve men), wives (to bear children), handmaids, seductresses, or bears of burden but full citizens." First of all, the church cannot be silent or accept the unequal treatment of persons based on their sex in any form, including unequal treatment in the economic sphere of life (Grady 2006:66). Mouton (2015) argues that the church as an institution should not only participate in public, political and economic discourse but should support and encourage its members

to do so well, collectively or individually, at work, at school, or wherever people are discriminated against or when injustice is done.

Le Roux (2012:69) like Manyonganise (2015) argues that it is the church's responsibility to liberate women from unjust experiences they go through in the community. The church is a critically important agent in achieving a society in which women's equality and dignity are recognized. Hendriks (2012) is of the view that the church has to identify and side with women, not only to improve the situation of women but also because it is their Christian duty to be in solidarity with those who are in pain. Some churches are preaching and teaching in various ways that support gender-discriminatory and violent practices. The church is called to listen to the stories told by women, of their experiences of abuse and pain, of the struggles women go through and how these can be made public to bring positive change. It appears that the Church is contributing to the pain that women already experience in their homes by downgrading the status of women when preaching. The following quote helps in supporting this point:

> *There is nothing called gender-based violence the problem is vakadzi vakangoteerera varume chete zvinonzi gender-based violence hakuna. Inga bhaibheri rinotaura wani kuti vakadzi zviisei pasi pevarume venyu. Pamba hapafaniri kuiita machongwe maviri. Anotorumana chete. A woman must know her place if she wants to take the place yemurume trouble begins (If women could just listen to their husbands, there wouldn't be gender-based violence. Even the Bible says women must submit to their husbands. A home cannot have two cocks, there is bound to noise. (Interview with EW* A, *10 July 2023)*

Lastly, on the other hand, Mwaura (2015:71) confirms that churches are liberating women through education. Ackerman and Jones (2006) encourages churches to continually convey the message that women and children, their bodies and their humanity, should be honoured. From the perspective of Mwaura, the Church is trying to bring back the dignity of women and children and these are taught in churches. There is a testimony from one participant alluding to this:

Uuumh when it comes to the church, all I can say is that it is trying. I don't know about other churches but my church always teaches about girl child rights and from a tender age, children are taught to respect everyone equally. Women are also given opportunities in my church to preach and do other works in the church that alone shows how my pastor is willing to help women and get them to talk about their grievances through a Council which consists of our pastor, the wife and senior elders of the church. (Interview with SW B*, 7 July 2023)*

5.2.4 State laws and legislations

While the laws are meant to protect women, it is evident that justice is not served when it comes to the implementation of this. According to UN Women (2012) Zimbabwe enacted the Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 5:16) on 26 February 2007 and then came into force eight months later, in October of the same year. The UN Women (2012) states that the Act addresses physical, emotional, sexual, economic and emotional abuse. The Act also provides for protection and relief to survivors of domestic violence. The Act further aims to protect women and criminalises domestic violence and such acts as abuse derived from any cultural or customary rites or practices that discriminate or degrade women. Examples include virginity testing, female genital mutilation, pledging of women and girls for purposes of appeasing spirits, abduction, child marriages, forced marriages, forced wife inheritance and other practices. This is an Act to make provision for the protection and relief of victims of domestic violence (Human Rights Forum 2011:4). This part of the section intends to answer the question of whether perpetrators of GBV are punished enough and what the participants take on the state laws on GBV and if the law is doing enough.

Matsai (2019) argues that Zimbabwe's new 2013 Constitution addressed women's rights and gender equality, and its bill of rights addressed damaging cultural and discriminatory practices. A gender commission was also established to accelerate the implementation of provisions related to women. More specifically, the Constitution recognised gender equality and women's rights among Zimbabwe's founding values and principles. It mandated that the State and all its institutions consider gender equality

in laws and policy, implement measures that provide care and assistance to mothers, and grant women opportunities to work. The state must also prevent domestic violence and ensure marriages are consensual and that there are equal rights in marriages. In the event of the dissolution of marriage, the State must provide for the rights of spouses and children. The state is also obliged to afford girls and boys equal educational opportunities. The Bill of Rights specifically stipulates that women are equal to men, including deserving of equal opportunities in political, economic, and social activities (Zimbabwe Legal Information Institute 2016**)**. Is the State adhering to all these commitments? Are women and girls given equal treatment with men and boys? Are women safe from cultural practices? Once again, the researcher asked men and women to hear their thoughts on such.

The response below came from a man who said that the law and the punishment given to perpetrators of violence seemed fair, but the major problem was corruption, which caused the implementation of these laws to be disappointing. Some perpetrators were well-known big “fish” and did not want their names to be dragged in the mud or their dirty laundry to be aired publicly, so they would try by all means to cover up, thus manipulating the justice system.

> *The law is great and commensurate with the feasible perpetrators' deserving; sadly the implementation is very pathetic. In most cases, justice is either delayed or denied. (Interview with M A, 13 July 2023)*

Another participant who addressed herself as a divorced mother of two spoke about strict measures which needed to be put in place so that perpetrators would know that the State meant serious business, and any silly move they would face the consequences.

> *Hurumende ngaiise mutongo unorwadza pamunhu wese anokonzera mhirizhonga. Ukuwo nyakukuvadzwa anofanirwa kuwana rubatsiro nekuchengetedzwa kuitira kuti zvaakasangana nazvo zvirege*

> *kumukanganisa. (Perpetrators should be given stiff penalties as a deterrent against GBV while victims should be protected and counselled so that they are rehabilitated after such traumatic experiences). (Interview with DW* A, *12 July 2023)*

In addition, Kambarami (2006:10) avers that in the same way when she argued that laws should be made and policies amended to accommodate women, to grant them the same sexual freedom that their male counterparts enjoy. For these changes to materialise it needs passion, determination and commitment of everybody in society, man or woman.

Moreover, the participants' feelings were mixed as to how perpetrators were punished. The statement below was recorded by a woman who thought that there was a need for stats of GBV to go down if the perpetrators were punished enough. She went on to say that there was a need for lawmakers to revise and adjust some laws because what was happening was not helping at all. She blamed the laws that were put by traditional leaders and by the State to be the cause of GBV.

> *I think if offenders were punished enough, we should be seeing a reduction in GBV. The rise in the levels of GBV shows that there is a need to revise the laws concerning GBV by those in power culturally and legally. (Interview with YW* B*, 9 July 2023)*

The Zimbabwe Women's Lawyers Association (ZWLA 2021) says that the patriarchal nature of our culture still influences how men relate to women, and this has played a part in the rise of sexual and physical abuses and violence against women. This continued to happen to such an extent that society not only legitimised such acts by dressing them up as common misunderstandings which every woman should get used to but has seen family support structures, particularly aunts and uncles, even covering up for their relatives or threatening victims when they decided to speak up and seek legal action or redress.

Since many women remain dependent on men economically, this further compromises their ability to challenge such men, opting to remain in abusive relationships for survival or the sake of their children. In addition, another participant who addressed himself Baba Gee said current laws were fine and no need to revise them but blamed women saying they needed to be respectful of their husbands. He said there was nothing wrong with the laws but the problem was women with their "big heads".

> *The laws that are there should not be changed otherwise vakadzi vangatokura musoro (…women will be more problematic). If anything, chiefs should be given more power to teach women to respect their husbands in the home. Headsmen should be allowed to preside over cases to teach women to respect their husbands. (Interview with M* B*, 14 July 2023)*

Lastly, a single and youthful woman talked about men and women being taught the dangers of violence. She mentioned that especially offenders needed to be taught so that they would commit such crimes fully aware of what the consequences of their actions were. She was thus put on record:

> *I feel they are not punished enough. There is a need to be proactive in conscientizing them of the dangers of violence and its effects. More work should be done on the advocacy side than on reparations. (Interview with YW C, 14 July 2023)*

Manyonganise (2019) argued in her article that the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act of 2007 needed to be understood in this context of gender-based violence. She alluded that:

> The Shona proverb which says *'chakafukidza dzimba matenga'* (implying that the secrets of the home need to remain untold) was mainly meant to silence women from disclosing how they were being

> treated by their husbands. The abusive husbands continue with their abuses boasting that the public will never know about it. One would have thought that the statement of the aforementioned law would be lauded by both men and women as an effort to create peaceful environments within the home
>
> (Manyonganise 2019:169)

This is clear that some (especially men) felt that the law was empowering women to expose what traditionally would have remained within the confines of the home. This is the reason why most men were quick to dismiss and render null and void the Human rights law because they saw laws as suppressing them from doing what they were used to doing.

The responses reviewed in this section confirm that the government and traditional leaders have a critical role to play in ending GBV when it comes to law-making and implementation. However, there was evidence that little work had been done showing how the government and traditional courts were helping women in their situations and experiences with GBV. This is what this study was at pains to do- to look at whether the government of Zimbabwe is cognisant of the mentioned issues.

5.3 Traits / Signs and Symptoms of GBV

It was incredibly difficult for most people to share when they experienced harassment, rape or other forms of GBV. Victims of gender-based violence would often choose to keep quiet due to reasons like victim shaming or stigmatisation. Although domestic violence and abuse sometimes is hidden, knowing the signs of an abusive relationship might help to recognise it better and seek or offer help. Below are signs and symptoms of gender-based violence. This will help readers to realise and be able to tell if their loved ones are going through GBV and then help them to seek or offer help. This section answers the major element and question of this study- What is Gender-Based

Violence? The study managed to ask men and women what they thought gender-based violence was and the signs were categorised into physical, psychological and social.

5.3.1 Physical

It might be difficult to see what was worrying a person from the inside, but visible bruises, scratches or marks could show that a person has gone through a fight or beating. These marks were a testimony that a person was being abused. From these marks, there might be multiple bruises in different healing stages showing the person was continuously being beaten. Physical signs were that most people would test HIV positive and then one would wonder what happened along the way. In our culture, most men do not give their wives a chance to speak their minds especially when it comes to using protection or family planning. If a man is promiscuous, there is a high chance that the wife will contract viruses that lead to HIV. When a relative was in an abusive relationship that was when one noticed unexplained, vague or suspicious medical complaints. These medical conditions related to HIV included infections in the genital areas, especially sexually transmitted infections. Out of the men and women who were interviewed, there was a difference in how they understood GBV. Women seemed to be well versed with it while men could not say GBV was there really, but they labelled it as a “misunderstanding” between lovers or family members.

Another sign that a person was going through GBV was the inability to concentrate or focus on a specific task, victims of GBV tended to lose focus even on important things that mattered in their lives. When asked about how they could notice that a person was going through GBV, one elderly mother narrated her ordeal with victims of GBV and said:

> *Munhu anoshungurudzwa mumba haananetse zvachose kuona. Unoona nekutadza kufamba zvakanaka kana kuvhara chiso, nekusada kutarisana nevanhu wotoziva kuti pane zviri kuvanzwa. Ukazoti haa madii kuenda kuchipatara, anoramba uye haadi kunzwa nezvazvo. Izvi zvinoratidza kuti anenge ane zvaari kutya kuendera kuchipatara. (Interview with EW* A 10 *July 2023)*

This was translated to mean that “it is so easy to identify an abused person who is going through GBV. You will see they will be showing discomfort or difficulty in walking or sitting then that person will be avoiding eye contact with people. If you suggest that they go see a doctor, they will easily dismiss you, fear of medical examinations”.

More so, it seemed that a victim of GBV did not enjoy happiness but excessive crying. Thinking of what they would be going through leads to their crying. Some will be crying about the evidence or marks of GBV that they carried like broken bones. Asking them the reasons for their cry, one would not get a genuine answer. To substantiate this, the following statements were recorded from a victim who was married and unemployed:

> *With what I have been experiencing in this marriage, I can sum up and say more of my days are spent crying. Whenever I get a chance alone without being preoccupied, I start to cry. I will be reflecting on my life. I sometimes think of leaving but then where will I start, I am an orphan with no supportive relatives and I am now a mother of three. (Interview with MUW* C*, 13 July 2023)*

A divorced woman shared her sentiments saying she had to divorce her husband because he put all the blame on her. Whatever problems they had could not be resolved peacefully because the husband would quickly point a finger at the wife game blaming her for everything. So, she said this resulted in her eating much, that is, a change in eating habits, causing her to gain too much weight. After she became so big and huge, he started telling her that he didn’t find her that attractive any longer and started chasing after “slender women”. The woman explained that it was no longer easy staying with him because he could always remind her how she was no longer as attractive and sexy as before. Below is her narration:

> *The other embarrassing thing is that I allowed stress to get to me. I gained too much weight because of the stress from his cheating, I put my frustrations on food, thus becoming like an elephant as you can see. So this also has caused my ex-husband to body shame me, saying what I know is just eating.*

> *Honestly, I always regret marrying this man. Now I am stuck in this body shape and he is living his life. (Interview with DW* B*, 9 July 2023)*

Furthermore, another woman who said she was married and employed narrated her ordeal. She said the violence and abuse that she was going through caused her to act inappropriately in sexual activity and showed an unusual interest in sexual matters, and she also had gone violent and developed self-destructive behaviours. To substantiate this, the following statements were recorded:

> *What frustrates me is that he does not relate to why I am acting this way. Imagine, after coming from work to help him put food on the table, he starts saying all those nasty things to me. It was after my lack of interest in sex that I then discovered that I was now depressed about this situation. He is so jealous of whom I associate with at work, so when I come back from work, what we all do is fight about his jealousy. He wants me to bring money also, but I should not be communicating with male figures from work. This is so draining, and I have sought help, but it is not working. I have decided to quit so that I will be a stay-at-home mum, but then I am worried about his salary alone, which cannot sustain us. You wonder what men want. (Interview with MWC C, 14 July 2023)*

Above is a sample of what women had to say about the signs that showed them they were going through abuse, and this also helps readers to pick if they notice any of these behaviours in their relatives and friends. So the above statements and remarks should not be taken to mean that this was what all women thought.

5.3.2 Psychological

Besides seeing the physical bruises as a sign that someone was going through abuse, there were also psychosomatic factors, which were matters of the “mind”. This had to do with a person’s mind and thoughts. Even when not seeing any physical marks that showed that the person was beaten, the person’s mind was showing it was far away (Mukanangana, Moyo & Zvoushe 2014). Below is a discussion from the participants

where they expressed their understanding of the psychological signs of a person going through abuse. It seemed from the participants, that the victim would always complain of recurrent abdominal or headache pain, fearfulness and suicidal behaviour. A sudden acting out of feelings or aggressive or rebellious behaviour was another psychological sign that a person might be experiencing abuse or violence. This normally was seen when a person started to act out of character and do weird things (Iyanda, Boakye & Olowofeso 2021). These included unusual psycho-social symptoms such as acting infantile, insecure, and scared. A psychologically disturbed person would do the weirdest things that people could not imagine or what they could not do under normal circumstances.

The following statements support these views: A woman who identified herself as single almost shed tears when narrating her experiences with the father of her child. She explained that she experienced startled responses. Upon being asked to explain what she meant she said:

> *I could be startled by anything; the noise of my baby crying will be so intense and lasts longer in my ears than normal. I could get frightened by silly things and sometimes my reaction to things was so weird as compared to people around me. Once I got this feeling, it could last days singing in my ears and the sound did not habituate. What made matters worse was that sometimes I could be called and not heard even when there was no distance at all between us. (Interview with SW C, 12 July 2023)*

Men also are familiar with the signs and symptoms of a person going through violence or abuse. Among the men that were interviewed, one said that his cousin started to use drugs and alcohol out of the blue, and that is when he realized that something was not right with her. He said his cousin started talking about how death is real and how she wishes to die rather than live. All her life energy was gone as she started talking about people who committed suicide who are even “resting” and in a “better place”.

> *Talking to her and asking what the matter was had yielded no results but things started to make sense when I saw her drinking beer and smoking, a thing she had never done. She started asking me to leave some beers for her and cigarettes. When I asked why she was doing that, she said ndiri kuda kumborohwa nemhepo (I just want to clear my head and get some fresh air) I was like clear your head from what? It was after some drinks that she started opening up and venting about how her husband was abusing her. (Interview with M C, 14 July 2023)*

In addition, among the interviewees was a divorced woman who mentioned that she had to leave her matrimonial home because of the stress she was having and her mind had no peace. She then realized that the situation she was living in was not good for her and that is what people call abuse.

> *I never knew that I was a deep victim of gender-based violence until I got into a serious depression that almost took my life. The stress started when we were fighting over divorce and eventually after the divorce, I became a mess. I started withdrawing from my loved ones and my children. I was stressed that I now had suicidal tendencies all the time. I did not care about my kids anymore or anyone else, I always wanted my time alone thinking about taking my life. Stress can kill a person; a little minor thing will make me very angry and my temper is all over the place. I thank God for my pastor who after discovering that I was already "sick in the head", took time to counsel and prayed for me. (Interview with DW C, 10 July 2023)*

The above quotes from the participants were just a representation of the voices of the interviewed sample and should not be taken to mean this was what all people in Rushinga thought.

5.3.3 Social

Apart from the psychological and physical signs, there are also the social signs where someone will be acting bizarre and so odd, and once a person acts like that those around him/her need to look out if the person is not being abused. So, it is again difficult to easily recognize that this person is being abused but there are a few things that will

change in the person's social life that will show the person is affected. Some signs are that someone is aloof where there are others, the person will show signs of stress, distress, and sometimes bursting unnecessarily and not forgetting to distance himself. Below are responses that came from the field about the issue of social signs that point to an indication of abuse.

> *For me, it was not difficult at all to know that my sister is going through a rough phase in life but I could not figure out what was troubling her. She suddenly became a loner, totally what she was when we were growing up. She started distancing herself, especially from certain people. I had to have a serious talk with her that's when she opened up after a long time. She then narrated to me what she was going through. She told me she was distancing herself because most of the time she will be crying and if she is around people they will notice. She also explained why she no longer attends family gatherings because people will start talking… (Interview with SW A, 16 July 2023)*

Another woman who was a stay-at-home mom (not employed) explained how the abuse affected her socially and how easy it was for her children to see it.

> *So vana vangu vakandipa nguva yakaoma vachindibvunza mibvunzo isingaperi kuti why ndachinja. Zvairema kuti ndivaudze kuti baba vavo vari kundishungurudza. Saka ndaivabvunzawo kuti vari kuonei kuzoti ndachinja-vaibva vati muri kutiisa Kure nemi. (So, my kids gave me a hard time asking me why I suddenly became introverted. It was so hard for me to tell them that their father was abusing me. So, I got to ask them also why they say I have changed, they then said I am keeping them far. (Interview with MUW C, 10 July 2023)*

After seeing the signs that a person was in an abusive relationship, that is when relatives and friends could intervene and help them to seek help. The following section talks about the effects of GBV from the perspective of the participants.

5.4 Effects of GBV

As a result of the normalisation of GBV, the effects of domestic violence on the general welfare of women in particular and the nation as a whole were overwhelming, particularly in terms of the nation's socioeconomic development (WHO 2005). Gender-based violence, specifically, domestic violence, was the most prevalent yet relatively hidden and ignored form of violence against women and girls (Kapoor 2000). Studies have shown that GBV is a grave issue that affects the world and no matter the amount of research done on this subject, it still prevails. According to Nyataya (2019), several historically normalised, complex, and interconnected institutional, social, economic, and cultural factors have pervasively violated the human rights of women throughout the world, making them consistently and increasingly vulnerable to domestic violence (Nyataya 2019). All the respondents agreed that violence had negative effects on people and communities. For this study, the effects were grouped into social, psychological, and economic categories and then analysed on women in general, on the family level, on perpetrators, and on the community at large. These are explained below.

5.4.1 Social

Ugowe (2022) points out that generally, gender-based violence is not limited to women alone, but globally, women account for the majority of people who suffer from various forms of gender violence, which are often perpetrated by men. While this is seen as a problem in developed countries, it is still widely accepted as a norm in most parts of Zimbabwe, and Rushinga to be precise, as Ugowe (2022) addressed it where cases of domestic violence were treated as private matters by the society. It was on this basis that the researcher did a general review of how violence against women had affected social development and fostered poverty through loss of jobs, income, employment opportunities, and death and health hazards. It showed that not only did violence against women affect the individuals involved, but it also had an impact on business and government alike.

Abandonment or neglect of women by their partners or husbands seemed to be the most common effect that women faced. It was surprising how men wanted to be taken care of and loved when they were sick or when going through difficulties in life, but they did the opposite to their wives or partners if they faced the same challenge. Women were always abandoned by men and the painful part was that the men were the trouble causers of this misery, women tended to live a compromised social life. The report below was from an elderly woman who addressed herself as Gogo Mandi.

> *It has affected families in a big way, like kurambana kwevanhu mudzimba, kuurayana chaiko (When couples divorce, a lot happens, even killings. Society has lost morals because mukadzi akada kutonga mumba murume anobuda mumba onotsvaga munhu anomuteerera zvokonzeresa chipfambi (women love being the heads of families when that position is not given to them, they go out looking for partners). Vana wo vanotiza pamba vonogara muma streets that's the reason behind a lot of street kids in towns (children also leave such homes and go in the streets). (Interview with EW* B*, 10 July 2023)*

In addition, a youthful woman confirmed that there was violence everywhere and its effects were gruesome. She said that families were affected because children grew affected because they always saw their parents fighting. The community would however try to hide this because they did not want it known. And women sometimes were scared to be laughed at. In her narration, she said:

> *Yes, violence exists and it is affecting everyone and everywhere. The effect has been mistrust between genders leading to broken unions. A lot of homes have broken up because of this, leaving children living a "not so good" life because their parents are living apart. Children will end up living with aunts and uncles who mistreat them. (Interview with YW* B*, 11 July 2023)*

The report from the above interviewee relates well with what Jack & Dill (1992:46) said about the community covering up violence and women being affected. Jack and Dill

(1992) said women judged themselves according to external rather than internal standards. They conformed to gender stereotypes dictated from the outside while feeling angry and rebellious internally. Jack & Dill (1992:47) further pointed out that women might adopt and internalize specific cognitive schemas to guide them in many aspects of the relationship. These schemas guided the way that women thought and behaved within relationships. Silencing the self-contributed to low self-esteem, decreased autonomy and intimacy within relationships, depression, lower levels of income and education, and unemployment for women (Modie-Moroka 2016:293). According to Jack & Dill (1992), gender inequality affected women's ability to leave damaging relationships and situations. Silencing might also occur externally if girls negotiated for condom use and their partners did not listen to them. Violence led to fear as survivors lived under constant control, and the threat of violence restricted a range of actions and reactions to destructive treatment.

Moreover, a single woman commented that married women were uncomfortable having single women in fear of their husbands. She was also angry that single women were seen as husband snatchers. She shared the following views:

> *Married women fear single women taking their husbands, everywhere we go married women are uncomfortable. If you try to be smart, they say she is being smart for our husbands. And then you try to be independent doing your own things, they say again she is taking money from our husbands. Being single is a double tragedy for us because of the discrimination that comes along with it. This has penetrated also in churches where single women are not given positions, this is total discrimination where there is reduced ability for women to participate in social activities. (Interview with SW C, 9 July 2023)*

Chitando (2008) says women in Zimbabwe have faced a lot of socio-political and economic challenges due to socio-traditional attitudes that continued to be reinforced by socialisation which branded women as second-class citizens. In agreement with Mapuranga (2014:229), Chitando (2008:19) echoes the same sentiments as he argues

that throughout history, women have suffered serious challenges. Patriarchal ideologies have left many women at the bottom of the heap. The history of women in Zimbabwe shows multiple struggles that women have endured. Society should reflect critically on the silent and undeclared war between men and women and review its negative attitude towards women. Society has placed women at the lowest step of the human ladder (Mapuranga 2014:230). This means that women would always be looked down upon unless some action was taken, and the painful thing was that there was now the Sarah-Hagar situation where women were also abusing their fellow women. Women did not like it when their sister friends were also making it in life, they would always connect it with men being involved.

Furthermore, abused women were seen as social outcasts in the society they were in. Most people did not see them as fit to be part of the community especially if they tried to report the matter to village leaders or the police. They were no longer entrusted even if they were educated. Abused women faced rejection, ostracism and social stigma at community level making it worse for them to face those challenges alone. The other painful thing was that a culture of violence was bred among couples. Even children would grow up thinking that violence is the only way to solve problems and this is to be passed from one generation to the other. A report from one interviewee was recorded saying:

> *Yes, GBV is existent and is very dangerous. It has nurtured a culture of abusive spouses. This is not good because some generations to come will be doing the same thinking it is good because they will be taking it from their parents, grandparents or neighbours. (Interview with SW* B*, 12 July 2023)*

5.4.2 Psychological

Gender-based violence did not only affect the social life of a person or a community but even psychologically (also known as hidden scars). GBV negatively impacted women`s reproductive health and is contrary to human rights and reproductive health instruments.

According to Riedl *et al.* (2019), the consequences of GBV on the mental health of those affected included emotional distress, depression, anxiety, phobias, thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts and post-traumatic stress disorder (Riedl *et al.* 2019). The effects might also go beyond these mental health problems and could result in seizures and psychotic disorders. This glimpse of information tells how wicked and cruel GBV is, as it destroys the whole being of a person. The worst part of this type of effect is that these are hidden scars, unlike social or physical where people can notice. With psychological stress, a person can die without those around him knowing what is happening to him.

Effects can be either direct or indirect and among the direct ones are signs such as anxiety, fear, mistrust of others, inability to concentrate, loneliness, post-traumatic stressdisorder etcetera, and indirectly a person can show psychosomatic illnesses, withdrawal, alcohol or drug use (Drapeau *et al.* 2012:105). Sad responses were recorded especially on how horrible GBV was on the mental health of a human being. Fearful stories were told especially about what happened to so and so after they were abused and one would wonder what is really happening in the world.

> *Families have been broken down and people have been killed. I know of a woman who killed her two children and then killed herself. She then left a note narrating how tired she was from the abuse her husband was imposing on her, so she saw it better to die with her kids to end the suffering. (Interview with MWC A, 11 July 2023)*

The above participant's comment was in the same line of thought as Mirowsky and Ross (2002:153), who deliberated that gender-based violence undermined a person's sense of self-worth and self-esteem. It affected not only physical health but also mental health and might lead to self-harm, isolation, depression and suicidal attempts.
In addition, GBV caused unstableness in the mind of a person, the person would have trust issues and would always be on the edge. These people can burst at any time because of traumatic life experiences they had. It was possible that some faced GBV

while they were children and then got married to an abusive man, so their experience of life was terrible, and they would not even think twice to take their lives because they had "seen it all in life". This is supported below by a man who said he lost a sister to violence.

> *My sister, people have been wounded out there and others are living traumatic lives. Others are on various kinds of medications either because of high blood pressure or sugar. I lost my beloved sister because her husband was abusive but we never knew until her last days. She died of depression because she was unfortunate that when growing up my father used to beat girls blaming them for sleeping around, then she got married kumhuka yemurume (a monster of a husband), so it was too much for her because she could not go back home because of my father. Thus, she persevered in all the abuse she received, leading to her depression. (Interview with M C, 15 July 2023)*

Again, another participant raised important points on how leaders and parents should be on the watch guarding their children even when they are married. Most women were restless in the homes they were staying but because society dignified a married woman, some were just sitting in abusive relationships because of that. The participant went on to say that "it is good to keep checking on our children because if we do not ask them, they will never open up to us and at the end of the day it is going to be our loss". The interviewee says:

> *There are so many people in jail today because of gender-based violence. Society is fragmented because there is no respect for each other because of gender-based violence. Relations are no longer intact and the painful truth is that most women now say ndogarira vana vangu chete ndingaendepi? (I am now staying for the sake of my kids, where else can I go?) (Interview with MWC B, 11 July 2023)*

5.4.3 Economic Effects

The economic effects of gender-based violence against women are considered the worst. Ugowe (2022) argues that although every effect of violence against women, no matter how minute we might think it to be, is as damning to the welfare and rights of women as it is a threat to their existence, and economic abuse that is believed to perpetuate their continuous sufferings, gender-based violence should be a matter of concern to the global community. Nyataya (2019) argues that it made people underachieve at work and in education, and it negatively affected their productivity. Many people who suffered from gender-based violence could not stay at home and needed a place to stay, which sometimes resulted in homelessness. The end result was that women, as the ones on the receiving end of violence were unable to participate in economic activities that should otherwise enable them to prosper and break the cycle of poverty and violence.

To support the above claims, one participant was quoted saying:

> *This issue of violence in homes really affects the economic life of a person since women always lose jobs due to absenteeism as a result of violence. A woman cannot come to work with a blue eye, so normally she will lie and then keep lying until she is dismissed. Thus, there is a negative impact on women's income-generating power because the same man who abuses her, will not give her money after she is fired from work. (Interview with MWC A, 15 July 2023)*

This is supported by a scholar known as Olojede (2020) who agrees with the same participant that being a victim of IPV, particularly over an extended period of time, can indirectly prevent and impede women from securing and retaining employment due to their poor health or those for whom they were responsible. Cuts, bruises, broken bones, internal bleeding, and head trauma were among the most common physical health issues or injuries female victims experienced (Olojede 2020:6). In addition, scratches and bruises were common, compelling them to miss work to visit the doctor or to spend

the majority of their time at home. Duvvury (2013) agrees also with Olojede (2020) that domestic violence frequently prevents victims from attending paid employment, which has a negative effect on their earnings. As a direct result of the assault, the victims' income falls. Consequently, the household's resources and the manner in which they are allocated are likely to be affected (Duvvury 2013). The high costs of violence against women had a ripple effect on those who provided financial assistance to cover these costs and it was again the woman who continued to suffer in all this mess.

In not so many words, another interviewee shed light on how GBV affects the economic life of a person.

> *Damage to women's confidence results in fear of venturing into public spaces, which in turn can limit their income-generating opportunities. If a person is always abused at home and harsh words are thrown at her, it means this person is exposed to other types of gender-based violence and is now vulnerable. Losing confidence in yourself means the person is already limited and cannot work to full capacity. (Interview with YW A, 10 July 2023)*

The above view is supported by Makonese (2017:111) who argues that fear and embedded bottlenecks result from the existence of structural violence whilst fear and violence-related sicknesses are a real impediment to participation in situations where physical violence is used. It is in this context that Makonese (2017) opines that the violence in Zimbabwe must be analysed, especially bearing in mind that the violence was a perpetuation of a culture that dated back to the country's liberation struggle which was fought between 1966 and 1979. The impact of gender-based violence shows how violence suffered by women greatly reduces their economic output and also makes it increasingly difficult for women to put food on the table.
Another participant who also has witnessed changes in economic life due to violence echoes that:

> *Kuno kwedu kune irrigation scheme kwatinondorima kuti tiwane fees yevana nemari yekutenga sugar, asi pamwe pacho unokundikana nekuda kwekuti*

> *unenge wakakuvadzwa zvekuti haukwanisi kuenda kumunda kundoshanda. Saka paunenge ugere kumba, vamwe vanenge vachiita basa rinozovapa Mari, pakukohwa iwe unobuda usina chinhu nenyaya idzodzi dzemhirizhonga. Nguva yema cash crops semadomasi nemuriwo panoda kushandwa kuti uwane Mari yechigayo, asi pamwe unotadza nekuti unenge wakavharirwa mumba nemurume. (Interview with MUW C, 13 July 2023)*

This is translated to mean that they had an irrigation scheme where they planted cash crops like tomatoes and vegetables for selling and then got money for fees and buying groceries but sometimes they failed to go to the farms because they had been physically abused and could not go out. When it was time for people to harvest, they would not get anything and all thanks to violence. This was exactly what Otufale (2015) said concerning the effects of abuse on the economy of women. The scholar argued that domestic violence also resulted in women losing the time needed for productive work and that one of the effects of gender-based violence on the agricultural livelihood activities of women was that it reduced time spent by women working on the farm, thus resulting in a low investment of time and money by women in agricultural livelihood activities (Otufale 2015:8).

Lastly, victims of GBV were more likely to be distracted at work possibly due to the psychological stress associated with being a victim. More evidence indicated that abused women who were employed were more likely to be in unstable employment. According to the authors, women in abusive relationships frequently change or lose their employment. They were frequently forced to quit or be fired, making it difficult for them to remain committed to their jobs, maintain job stability, and advance their careers (Morrison & Orlando 2005:10). It was clear that abuse obstructed development and is really a thorn in the flesh when it came to financial matters. Violence and money were not friends at all, where there is violence, money vanishes. The frustrating point in all this was that when a woman lost her job, such abusive men would not even be responsible and take care of the household needs, they just did not care. This resulted

in victims spending their savings on medical expenses and preventing them from working to provide for their children.

5.4.4 Effects on Family

As highlighted above, GBV has ghastly effects on its victims. This section, therefore, clarifies that it was not only the victim who would have this horrible and scary experience but the family at large was affected. The consequences and costs of violence had impacts at the individual level (for both survivors and perpetrators, as well as within the family, community and wider society, which translated into costs at the national level. So, this section explains (from the participant's point of view) the effects violence has right from the family level up to the community at large. The participants' views answered the sub-questions, "Has GBV affected you? Has GBV affected your family? Has GBV affected the country and nation you are part of, or where you live?

Below is a response from a married and not working woman whose family was also affected by violence. She narrated thus,

> *My kids at school are affected psychologically because at home there is no nurturing because of the breakdown of the fibre of the family. My greatest fear is my boy kids who are likely to fight with their wives because they see their father beat me. I also have a daughter who detests marriage because of what she sees in my marriage. I can see this fighting is haunting them but there is nothing I can do. (Interview with MUW* B*, 16 July 2023)*

Bott (2005:18) agrees with the data from the field about the devastating effects of violence on the family especially on children. He argues that violence drove children away and they would end up in the streets. Children who witnessed violence were more likely to have emotional and behavioural problems, performed poorly in school and were at risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence in the future (Bott 2005:18). Children, both girls and boys, who witnessed or suffered from gender-

based violence, were more likely to become victims and abusers later in life because of the way they were socialised.

Another working-class woman who was single narrated her ordeal and could not help her tears running down her cheeks, explained while in sobs.

> *I had to leave my matrimonial home for the sake of my inner peace and health but the damage was already done. My kids used to watch us wrestle in front of them and now they are always angry at anything, they are psychologically disturbed. I hope they will find peace and forgive their father because now they speak so badly about their father. (Interview with SW C, 13 July 2023)*

The above participant agrees with a report from the United Nations Women (2010) which reported that gender-based violence threatens family structures; children suffer emotional damage when they watch their mothers and sisters being battered causing two-parent homes to break up, leaving the new female heads of household to struggle against increased poverty and negative social repercussions (UN WOMEN 2010:3). Psychological scars often impede the establishment of healthy and rewarding relationships in the future. Victims of gender violence might vent their frustrations on their children and others, thereby transmitting and intensifying the negative experiences of those around them. Children, on the other hand, might come to accept violence as an alternative means of conflict resolution and communication. It is in these ways that violence is reproduced and perpetuated.

Another elderly woman expressed her concern about the nasty effects of violence on the family. She spoke about divorce which left broken families and ultimately jeopardised family economic and emotional development. In her narration, she exclaimed:

> *Noise mumusha haina kunaka nekuti inokonzera kurambana.*
> *Ukazvitarisa hapana kana chisvinu chinobuda kana mai nababa*

> *vachigara vakaparadzana, havakwanisi kuvaka kana kutonga mombe chaidzo nekuti umwe neumwe anenge achiita mazvake mazvake. Saka kwandiri mhirizhonga haina kunaka, inoputsa musha. (Violence is not a good practice because it leads to divorce and there is no development because a wife will be doing her things separately from her husband. A family cannot buy even cattle or buildings because of misunderstandings. (Interview with EW C, 12 July 2023)*

This results in a family having a family member who is born disabled or with health disorders as a result of violence experienced by the mother during pregnancy after divorce. Most pregnant women had premature births or low birth weight because of the stress they encountered during their pregnancy. More so, most children were expelled from school, while some were left with no friends at all because of the behaviour they displayed. These children were so aggressive against peers, had low self-esteem and sometimes experienced nightmares at night, they had withdrawal symptoms and self-blamed. These are collateral effects on children who witnessed violence at home.

5.4.5 Effects on women and their health

Gender inequality is constructed as a social hierarchy with devastating effects on the safety of women, and language plays an important role in sustaining hierarchical structures, with detrimental effects on the mental health and identity of women. Tolman and Rosen (2007), cited in Iyabo (2020), report that domestic violence often sabotages women's efforts to gain employment, acquire job skills, and acquire education, thus hindering their opportunities to become self-reliant. It may affect economic stability and sustainability. In mapping the effects of violence on women, one participant pointed out that:

> *Women are at the receiving bay when it comes to violence, all the effects are a slap in their faces. Some women are victims of rape who were left pregnant and they have to deal with the child with an absent father. This can result in the rejection of women by family or society. Some are left with*

> *serious health problems which are physical and psychological. Women have a high chance again of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and high risk of unwanted pregnancies. (Interview with YW C, 9 July 2023)*

In consonance with the data from the field, Duvvury (2013:38) suggests that abuse leads to the woman having to reposition herself within society. Both cultural practices relating to women and also cultural views on women serve to create an entirely new identity, role and position for the woman within her community and broader society. The woman is physically isolated, with people avoiding her, leaving her in a lonely situation and this is the most torturous experience abused people go through (Duvvury 2013:38). Abused women are sexually abused by society, and those who know them are now single. They go through psychological pain, trying to understand why it happened to them. The compromised ability of the survivor to care for her children, for example, child malnutrition and neglect due to the constraining effect of violence on women's livelihood.

Chebet and Cherop (2015) say gender-based inequalities in education, health and nutrition, labour and other areas are likely to increase the overall level of poverty of women. Globally, it is mostly women who suffer from a lack of income and productive resources, as a result of which they have a poor livelihood, suffer hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other services, increasing morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environments and social discrimination as well as exclusion from society. It is called the feminisation of poverty (Chebet & Cherop 2015:196). The effects of poverty also cause psychosocial stress, frustration and the disruption of family life and often go hand in hand with increases in crime rates and violence.

A record from a married and not working woman showed that unemployed women faced the greatest challenge of abuse in their homes, unlike employed women. She said that men did not have respect for a woman who stayed all day at home, but did respect those who hustled and brought food to the table. She thus, narrated:

> *I have realised that a man will treat you like trash if he knows that you are not independent and you depend on him. You can be beaten because you have asked for money to buy tomatoes, and because of this, there is always havoc in the home because of money, worse if the man is not getting enough salary. I think men admire those women they meet at their workplaces and respect them more (Interview with MUW* A*, 12 July 2023)*

The above opinion corresponds with Duvvury (2013) who argues that those with less education are more susceptible to violence. According to Duvvury, women with lower education levels are more likely to be abused than those with higher education levels. The author went on to say that the rate of domestic violence was affected by how much education a person had. The author argued that most households with illiterate women frequently experienced domestic violence (Duvvury 2013:38).

However, another participant who was working and married came in with a contradictory view saying that the most educated women were the most vulnerable to GBV. In her explanations, she highlighted that men did not want challenging women, those who did things on their own were seen as a threat by men. She went on to say men wanted women whom they could challenge and tell them what to and what not to do, so if a woman was educated and had her job, she would suffer violence.

> *To me, working-class ladies are in trouble with their men and are more prone to violence than unemployed ones. These kinds of women are seen as a threat by men and no matter how submissive you are, they will always take it to mean you are disrespectful because you have their own money. They will also accuse their women of cheating with their bosses, and a whole lot of stories will be cooked up just to make sure they find a justification to harass and abuse their wives. (Interview with MWC* B*, 9 July 2023)*

According to a study conducted by Project Alert (2016), it was observed that 65% of educated women had experienced gender violence compared to their less educated counterparts, which was at 55%. Meaning, the more educated a woman was, the more she experienced violence from her partner (Project Alert 2016). The impact of gender-based violence on education was as complex as the impact on employment. Based on the two views above, men did not know what they wanted, they were just abusers whether a woman is educated or not.

5.4.6 Effects on the Perpetrators

In as much as violence has its impact on the victims, it does have repercussions on the instigators or perpetrators. The participants were not keen enough to say much on the perpetrators' side because most of them suggested that these instigators deserve whatever punishment comes their way. But this study still believes that whatever decision is taken, also affects the victims and their children because if the perpetrators are locked in jail, their families still suffer.

It has been found from the responses that violent inciters also experience anxiety, they go through depression, anger, poor anger management, poor social skills, pathological lying, manipulative behaviour, and lack of empathy. They are also affected by their wrongdoings which will drive them to depression and most of them cannot manage their anger, they are always quick to anger people or be angry. One participant explained how these people are also disturbed by their actions saying:

> *The perpetrators of violence are also human as the victims and thus, they also face rejection. These people are so boring in that they can manipulate people into believing their lies. Most men tend to be so insecure and impulsive which goes back to affect the victims. Interview with M A, 11 July 2023)*

The other effects were that the instigators were likely to be sanctioned by the community, and they could be reported and face arrest and imprisonment. This again affected the family because when the father was arrested, there was a gap

that would need filling leaving the children and wife alone and not protected enough. Furthermore, this led to divorce, increased tension in the home, or the break-up of families as most families would not be able to recover from such impacts. There could be conditions where legal restrictions on seeing their families were set. This would tear the family apart and would not be able to recover from such, thus, there is a feeling of alienation of perpetrators from their families.

5.4.7 Effects on society

Gender-based violence is one of the most effective ways of terrorising communities. There was no way to quantify the negative impact of GBV on a community. The impact was incredibly deep, complicated, and long-lasting, leaving legacies of shame, anger, distrust, disease, and divide (Orner & Schnyder 2003:8). While women were usually the immediate victims of gender violence, the consequences of GBV extended beyond the victim to society as a whole. Women were the most affected directly, but there were situations where the family and society felt the heat too because what affected a woman, affected the family, community and ultimately the nation. If men were careful about how they treated women, our societies would be progressive.

One elderly person expressed concern about how violence scared people out of participating in neighbourhood activities and limited business growth and prosperity. He narrated how their village was always backwards in education and there was no progress as a society.

> *Vanhu nazvino havazivi kuti kushungurudza vanhukadzi zvinokanganisira nzvimbo yese. Izvezvi mudunhu redu hatiwani vabatsiri nenyaya yemhirizhonga inoitwa kuvakadzi. Vakadzi vagara ndivo vanobatsira kusimudzira nzvimbo manje kubudikidza nekurambana nekukuvadzwa kwavari kuitwa, hapana budiriro muno munzvimbo. Vakadzi nevanasikana ndivo vanowanzoita zve food for work nekundoshanda kuirrigation nekuti varume havadi, manje misha mizhinji haisisina vanhu vacho vanoenda kundoita basa racho. (Up to now it is shocking that people have not realized*

> *that abusing women affects everyone. Now in this area, we do not have sponsors because we are known for being violent. Women are the ones that brings growth through Food for work program and in the fields because men are lazy, but due to divorces, separations and abuse, women and girls children are no longer staying in this area, and homes are deserted, hence, no development. (Interview with EW* B*, 10 July 2023)*

The above record correlates with scholars Orner and Schnyder (2003) who argue that GBV strains education, justice and medical systems. GBV is a hindrance to economic stability and growth through women's lost productivity, a hindrance to women's participation in the development processes and a lessening of their contribution to social and economic development. They continue to say that GBV causes a constrained ability of women to respond to rapid social, political, or economic change (Orner & Schnyder 2003:17). This ultimately causes a breakdown of trust in social relationships and weakened support networks on which people's survival strategies depend.

A youthful woman could not hide her anger when she explained how raped women were unfairly treated in communities which then caused divisions and hatred among families. She said it was so hurting that some women were abused with all people knowing but the matter would be swept under the carpet.

> *The ripple effect of this GBV can put forceful stress on cultural and community bonds. Imagine a girl who is raped by a man who lives in the same society as her and then she becomes pregnant. If the family of the girl desire to have abortion, they are going to be condemned by their community, causing social trauma to the girl and family who will still face the rapist every day. If the matter is then reported, the family of the rapist will despise those that reported them saying they reported our son. This is where the breakdown of ties are coming in, people of the same community not seeing eye to eye because of violence. (Interview with YW* C*, 10 July 2023)*

5.5 Conclusion

The preceding chapter deliberated on the feelings and insights that came from the participants on the causes and effects of violence. It was brought to light that women were indispensable to the growth and development of any nation and the global community as a whole and whatever affected them, affected everyone. It was also revealed by participants that social norms and values that promoted gender inequality, stereotypes, and male dominance over women prevented women from taking their rightful place economically, and even socially, thereby preventing them from reaching their full potential. Again, the lines were clearly marked that women accounted for the majority of victims of all forms of domestic violence perpetrated by predominantly male perpetrators who were influenced by personal and social factors. It was demonstrated again through responses and scholars that due to the complexities of the issue, education or employment alone did not determine whether a woman would experience more or less violence since some responses showed that unemployed women suffered more violence than employed and some said it was the opposite. The following and final chapter looks at the summary, findings and recommendations for the Church, law makers and future research.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter interrogated significant themes that came out of the findings. The discussion and the analysis were done from a Womanist theological perspective, pointing to the fact that if Rushinga men and other older women embraced their culture with a Womanist theological approach, the problems of violence would be solved because the approach considered women. From this approach, the Rushinga men and their culture could map out a strategy to mould a theology that considers the dignity of women. This chapter summarises the research, draws conclusions, presents the study findings, and provides recommendations. Recommendations for this study are directed to three audiences: The Church, policymakers, and future research. Before that is done, a survey summary will be provided to deliver the framework for recommendations.

6.2 Summary

In summation, it can be argued that the research unearthed pertinent issues. For example, in the first chapter, the research introduced the study and gave the direction to be followed in undertaking it. The opening chapter delved into a general introduction to the research study, which consisted of an outline of the Research Question. The chapter also provided an overview of the significant issues discussed in the study. In this case, the chapter set the tone of the survey. It mainly acknowledged that cultural, social, and traditional violence was a persistent problem, as revealed in the background of the study. Thus, the first chapter unveiled the research question, aim, and objectives. In addition, the theoretical framework to guide the study was presented, including a literature review and methodology.

The study unveiled key themes in the second chapter: culture, good wives, and gender-based violence. The section deliberated on the nature of culture, how it functioned in society, and how it contributed to gender norms and roles. How culture shaped societal

expectations of a good wife and how it contributed to GBV was explained thoroughly. The study unveiled the types of marriages in Zimbabwe and how each affected women and gender. Lastly, the controversial new amended marriage Act of Zimbabwe, which was passed in May 2022, was analysed as to what challenges it had on women of all statuses-married, single, and divorced. This chapter, therefore, unpacks some ethical issues for women who end up being stuck between observing their culture (being a good wife) and tradition and being their “own woman.”

Chapter three addressed the theoretical foundations of the study. This study focused on the approach that informed the study, which is the Womanist theological approach. The section discussed African women’s theologians who presented a preferred version of African women as it intersected with African women’s experiences. This was done because it was vital to hear from the African women’s standpoint since Zimbabwe is in Africa. The findings were considered authentic and reliable because they were taken from the perspective of other African women. The main trends in womanist theology and different contexts of womanist theology were explained, along with the leading African and Zimbabwean theologian scholars. The chapter also looked at the womanist interpretation of the Bible, how they interpreted the Bible, how the Bible spoke to them, and their experiences.

The fourth chapter considered the Methodology of the study. The chapter discussed the data collection methods, such as a qualitative approach, which was relevant since this study investigates information about a particular group of people. Various data collection instruments, including in-depth interviews and secondary sources from published and unpublished sources, were discussed, showing how each applies to the study. This section also presents the design for the study, sampling and sampling procedures, ethical issues, and data analysis techniques. The researcher mainly used qualitative research to analyse the lived realities of the people of the Rushinga district and understood these realities from their perspectives.

Chapter five dealt with findings from the field and data analysis. This was achieved by mapping the social, economic, and psychological effects of gender-based violence on women and the community at large. From the field, information was gathered that there were so many effects of gender-based violence, but this study was restricted to the three effects named above. The chapter unveiled how gender-based violence limited women's capabilities and deprived them of their opportunities to achieve their full involvement in society by threatening and affecting their safety.

Lastly, Chapter Six is the Summary and recommendations, which explores ways to change norms and attitudes that support gender-based violence against women. This chapter also gives measures or instead suggests a holistic way forward, which must be taken or put in place to ensure that there is a reduction in cases of gender-based violence. The way forward is grouped into social, political, cultural, and religious; thus, all areas of a human being are covered. The conclusion of the study is also given in this study.

6.3 Findings

Major themes emerged from the study findings, which were explained in this section. Firstly, the impact of culture and society on the standards of a "good wife" was one of the elements that surfaced during fieldwork. The responses from the study's participants and the literature both pointed to culture having a significant influence on how women were expected to behave and, in a way, cultivated the abuse of women. Despite its good intentions, culture frequently appeared to stand in the way of gender equality, which prevented people, especially women, from realising their full potential and from experiencing their innate dignity as beings made in God's image. Additionally, culture and its usage have frequently been misunderstood and applied selectively. This has resulted in the maintenance of cultural and customary norms that uphold men's dominance over women while diminishing the worth of women, their contributions, and their place in society. Men utilise violence under the guise of tradition and culture, this demonstrates the lengths males and society will go to "preserve" their culture.

Therefore, women and girls were abused under the pretext that "culture says this."

Another core finding of this study was what constituted a “good wife” in the African setup. It was noted that wives and husbands had various expectations of one another, and society had expectations of those who lived in society. In addition to cultural and societal standards, gender role attitudes influenced these expectations. Unfulfilled expectations and behaviour that deviated from accepted standards led to marital discord, which then progressed to gender-based violence. A good wife must always obey her husband's wishes and never treat him disrespectfully, haughtily, or unfriendly. As a mother, she must attend to the children's needs, including their education. On the other hand, historically, males only had one responsibility: providing for their families. They also had a minimal duty to participate in community social activities. It was evident that women suffered and became vulnerable as a result of these numerous responsibilities. A "free woman" was a recipe for trouble. A single woman who effectively ran her affairs without a man was a direct challenge to the so-called masculinity of males who wished to "possess" her and an affront to patriarchy. Some women were finding it difficult to break free from this forced bond with men. However, the method applied assisted and motivated both men and women to make recommendations about how to establish an equal partnership between men and women in marriage.

The study found that a complicated problem with roots in cultural norms and values was GBV, which was imposed on women and limits women’s capabilities in society by threatening and affecting their safety. Sadly, no culture currently asserted that women and children lived in a violence-free environment because GBV dominated all societies. African societies, Zimbabwe and Rushinga experienced all kinds of violence where women were butchered and abused every day. It was discovered that women were harmed, humiliated, and tortured, yet remained in marriages because they wanted to be referred to as "Mrs. so and so, and they wanted to fulfil the expectations of society that a woman must get married. Others were scarred, but they stayed for the children's sake and that *lobola* that was paid for them. Interestingly, although women were abused mainly by men, there were cases where men were also harmed by their female counterparts. Women-to-women violence was also recorded, where some women also

participated in the abuse of other women by complying with other practices that abused other women. Women applied pressure to themselves and were the source of their oppression because they fought against one another to achieve what society had planned for them. However, the applicability of womanist theology helped women to speak up and take a stand regarding issues that impacted them and their future.

Nevertheless, African societies were found to be patriarchal. Men were viewed as superior, stronger, and more valuable than women and were seen as leaders of both society and women. The dominant patriarchal culture insisted on controlling, subjugating, and undervaluing women. These patriarchal systems that viewed males as superior to women were what either directly or indirectly made violence against women acceptable. The role of a wife in African homes was that of an assistant, and the children belonged to the husband. Women were seen as dunderheads, and their opinions were entirely irrelevant. This lowered their self-esteem because women were typically expected to behave passively and submissively by society, which made them easy targets of abuse and made them more likely to tolerate it. Patriarchy was one of the primary reasons for the current state of affairs, in which men regulated women's behaviour and upheld power over societal institutions. The painful part is that even if the behaviours and viewpoints that upheld this supremacy resulted in VAW, they were tolerated and encouraged. From the perspective that was used, it was hoped that traditional leaders considered having women in their Councils and understood that patriarchy did not affect women only, but it affected all. It was, therefore, wise to consult and involve women from the onset.

Religion was presented in a manner that could be characterized as a “two-edged sword” about patriarchy and gender, meaning it was both beneficial and harmful. It was found that religion significantly influenced the nature, structure, and practice of harmful masculinities and has legitimised, promoted, and supported patriarchal institutions. When it came to addressing the realities of gender-based violence, both in terms of prevention and aftercare, religion was systemically lacking. Religion was found guilty of

fostering an environment that stigmatised and discriminated against survivors of sexual violence and that tolerated sexually violent behaviour. Thus, religion's role in addressing sexual violence was shown in a negative light because women and children were condemned to die young due to the misuse of religion.

6.4 Recommendations

Despite the devastating evidence for the prevalent nature of GBV, it appeared that it remained a phenomenon that many still choose to disbelieve, ignore, or find acceptable. While people tend to acknowledge GBV in other locations, it is uncommon for people to recognise the occurrence of GBV in their communities. Thus, anyone who tries to address GBV in any community will always face this first challenge. From the previous chapters, it was shown with no doubt that with all the problems surrounding and haunting women, there needed to be a solution to end or reduce the problem. This section looks at the recommendations suggesting the methods that must be applied or adopted to help curb the problem. These are generally addressed to the Church in Africa, particularly in Rushinga, policymakers, and future research.

6.4.1 Recommendations for the Church

Over the years, there have been significant points of dispute on the role played by the Church, particularly on issues affecting women like GBV. For a long time, the Church has frequently observed from the terraces because, in addition to the reality that patriarchy has always controlled society, the Church also held the view that it could not be involved in family and societal matters. Thus, this study recommends that religious organisations demonstrate their disdain for gender violence by conducting information and awareness campaigns aimed at altering cultural aspects that permit gender violence (PAHO 2002:20). The campaigns on GBV bring together people from all over the world, allowing them to share their own experiences and learn from others. According to PAHO, the church has to introduce Faith-Based Programs and Services – like religious counselling, support groups, study groups, and assistance programs that

can address GBV and emphasise the importance of peace and tolerance with their participants and worshippers (PAHO 2002:20).

One strategy to promote awareness and conversation about GBV that the Church can employ is to frame the issue within religious principles. It might also be a means of locating and helping victims who are uncomfortable speaking with a police officer or medical professional. Religious organisations can use several conferences, conventions, and agreements to unite in the fight against gender-based violence. During these conferences, what the Bible says about men and women in general should be openly and aggressively preached in African seminaries. The Church must teach men and women about their equality before God. It is the responsibility of the Church to teach men to understand that using physical force against women for selfish benefit is a manifestation of pure evil. Instead, they must follow the example set by the love of the Lord Jesus and give their lives for their spouses, ready to serve them and demonstrate their innocence and purity on the final day.

In *Christianity and African Women's Rituals*, Edet (1992) argues that the Christian proclamation of human liberation and the equality of men and women is good news for women. Still, this teaching is more theoretical than practical. If it were valid, Christianity could have emancipated women from adverse rituals. The scholar does not deny the fact that African women have benefitted from the Good News but argues that Christianity legalises and reinforces the oppression of women and their subjugation to men in all aspects of life. The adage that "women should be seen and not heard" is taken over by the churches and given a biblical foundation in the first letter to the Corinthians (Edet 1992:36). The recommendation is for the church to address itself to Rushinga women so that the saving and liberating power of the gospel may liberate women from unnecessary psychological, economic, and political chains. It must be mandatory for the church to be concerned about the welfare of women and stop harmful traditional rituals and replace them with the church's rites rather than allowing them to operate side by side.

During fieldwork, a participant also lambasted the church, saying it ~~is~~ was the primary suspect in causing GBV in how it interpreted scriptures. The participant, however, recommended the church.

> *The intervention method that can be used is for the Church to interpret scriptures correctly to protect the victims of GBV. I somehow feel that the church is responsible for the happenings because it is the same elders and leaders of the church that make church laws and, at the same time, abuse their women. So, the church needs to take a stand and be a place of refuge for the victims of GBV rather than adding salt to their wounds by teaching heresy. (Interview with SW C, 10 July 2023)*

After the churches have accomplished this, they should establish secure spaces where women can discuss their experiences with injustice and adversity. The churches must pay attention to these stories and weep alongside these women in a spirit of Christian solidarity. The Bible, the church's most significant and authoritative source of guidance, must be utilised responsibly in a way that frees rather than enslaves. The church must be the umbrella for love, hope, and faith. To avoid being “spectators,” the church must help people, especially females, to reach their full potential and experience. The church has to join in the search for a new system that values women and not be complicit in the structures of injustice.

The church may become a tool of justice for women and oppressed people by offering them wholeness, healing, and emancipation through some realistic pastoral care approaches. Church leaders themselves ought to be well-versed on the issues of gender in their congregations. To guarantee that the church finally becomes gender-responsive, the pastor, with a transformative mindset, could instill the same attitudes in congregations. The minister's altered outlook will impact the congregation.
Last but not least, the church should play a key role in changing societal attitudes and behaviors that support discrimination against women. The Bible should be followed when carrying out this procedure. As strong markers in the church's pursuit of gender justice and equality, the church in sub-Saharan Africa has to be reminded of its crucial

role in enacting sociocultural change and serving as an example of Jesus Christ. The church recognises and opposes unfair structures at all societal levels. As the community of the redeemed, the African church should be able to depict what an African community is like.

6.4.2 Recommendations for Policymakers in Zimbabwe

A lot of Social institutions will be covered here, including Health, Education, and Social Services, which again includes the government since almost all of these are public services from the government. On the side, the government should launch welfare institutions and provide national and international organisations that provide social and economic funding to victims of GBV, allowing them to leave violent relationships and abusive partners without fear for their own or their children's well-being. This is so because many married women are stuck in marriages because they are doing it for their children, yet they are not happy.

This study recommends that this approach be adopted where perpetrators and victims are all embraced, and there can be a change. When perpetrators are put close to the system, there is a high chance that they can change their ways (in fear or trying to please and not disappoint people) and give the government ideas on dealing with offenders. Fortunately enough, a Tilda Moyo show in Zimbabwe is already functional. The show deals with victims and offenders of all forms of abuse and violence. So the government needs to take the button stick and help run the race with Tilda, who is already helping many people with her show.

More so, there is a need for the government to train healthcare providers who will be able to recognise and respond to gender-based violence. This is one of the most important ways of identifying and assisting victims. All healthcare professionals must learn to recognise the signs of a person who is abused or depressed. If all medical personnel are trained, it will be easy for hospitals, both public and private, clinic staff, all general/family practitioners, nurses, and the staff of family planning clinics to take note of danger once a patient comes through the door. I think that

there is a need in villages and communities for support groups that can be essential for victims to organise proactively and take charge of their situation. Beyond emotional sustenance, group members can also provide one another with a sense of safety and even, if needed, a place to go.

Furthermore, Media Information and Awareness Campaigns are another big step toward curbing violence. This generation has gone technological; media is a key conduit for making GBV visible. The policymakers are to help the media advertise solutions, inform policy-makers, and educate the public about legal rights and how to identify and address GBV. Newspapers, magazines, newsletters, radio, television, the music industry, film, theatre, advertising, the internet, posters, leaflets, community notice boards, libraries, and direct mail inform victims and the general public about GBV avoidance and available services. Now, information moves fast, like in the blink of an eye. Hence, media must be taken advantage of to enhance the victims' understanding of what can be done when faced with challenges. Gone are the days when people suffered without knowledge; now, it is exposed to everyone and must be used effectively.

Policymakers should make sure that the message that violence is unacceptable and can be curbed is conveyed through standard curricula, sexuality education, school counselling programs, and school health services. Offer substitute examples of masculinity, impart conflict-resolution techniques, and support to kids and teenagers who might be victims or offenders of violence. To help providers recognise and address this issue, GBV must be included in psychology, sociology, medicine, nursing, law, women's studies, social work, and other disciplines. Children will naturally benefit from programs that tackle masculinities to investigate what "makes a man" and what constitutes a lady. The main goal is to teach boys that violence (against anyone) is immoral from an early age. The dominant definition of masculinity must be dismantled, and girls must be taught again that despite their physical differences, they have the same rights and opportunities as men.

Interesting and quite important is a response recorded from a youth who talked about improving policy frameworks because that was where it started. She believed policymakers should improve how they framed policies, considering that things and times were changing fast. Changing times must mean changing policies and how things were done to correspond.

> *One strategy to improve this is strengthening policy frameworks dealing with GBV. There is a need to deal with the problem of GBV from its roots. Revise cultural activities, laws, and thinking that violate women's rights. We cannot remain rigid in the 21st century. Remember, culture itself is not static but dynamic. We need to be logical in this. If this is done, I suppose there can be a change. (Interview with YW C, 9 July 2023)*

More so, this study proposes that to end Gender-Based Violence, policymakers should strengthen the existing sexual laws to ensure they are implemented. It seems that the existing rules need to be adhered to, and the government and traditional courts must be strict in that everyone follows them. If funds permit, it would be great to provide legal support for the victims, such as a government lawyer, as a courtesy of the government. Create awareness in the community on what to do to curb sexual violence and where to turn when it happens. Laws must be implemented after approval; they cannot simply exist on paper. However, consistency is also essential to achieving the intended outcome. Lawbreakers need to understand that there are consequences for breaking the law. A significant step in ending GBV may be the establishment of women's police stations, where women may voice their complaints without fear of retaliation or prejudice from male law enforcement.

Lastly, the study indicated in Chapter 1 that the researcher wished to have a halfway home where victims of GBV will be sheltered. The researcher saw a gap in that most women who were abused get half and not all the support they needed after going through such a time. Most get medical help, while the spiritual and emotional side is not helped. So, the study wishes to have a home where all matters will be addressed after a person goes through a traumatic experience. The

study will do this in conjunction with other PVOs. With this being said, the government is also advised to have as many shelters as possible where victims will be sheltered and offered the help they need. In most remote communities, services are often located in different physical locations, inhibiting rather than facilitating efficient responses for survivors. Such shelters must provide services such as medical care, counselling, police, and legal services all under one roof since it is known that police stations and hospitals do not offer an appropriate atmosphere to report GBV. With this in mind, all stakeholders must ensure an effective, holistic, and coordinated approach to prevention, response, and service provision for GBV. Rushinga would be a better place to be GBV-free.

6.4.3 Recommendations for future research

The study managed to cover how the intersection of religion, patriarchy, and culture affects women's rights and limits them of their potential. The study again challenged the role of culture in expecting women to be "good wives" amid the GBV they go through in their lives. However, too much emphasis was placed on how a woman was expected to be a "good wife," and the issues of a girl child were not looked into thoroughly. For example, what can be done to stop or reduce early child marriages?

Research is ongoing, and as it progresses in this critical area of GBV, one thing needful to realise is that women are abused, and their hearts are bleeding. Therefore, for further research, the following areas should be taken into consideration:

- The role of the government in stopping early girl-child marriages in Rushinga;
- The church and cultural justice: A magic bullet for social cohesion;
- A culturally defined definition of a "good wife"

Other researchers can pursue other related topics to broaden the view on the role of culture, religion, and patriarchy in promoting violence against women. This would be important because it would help cement the relevance of this thesis to society and ensure that it gains traction within the academic fraternity. Adopting a womanist

theological approach is vital in solving African problems using African understanding and perspectives concerning different situations. Again, women will not always fight with men but collaborate on how best women and men can live amicably without squabbling.

REFERENCES

Ackermann, D., A., 2004, *Tamar's Cry: Re-Reading an Ancient Text In The Midst Of an HIV and Aids Pandemic*, In Dube, M., W., & Kanyoro, M., R., A., (eds.), *Grant Me Justice! Hiv/Aids & Gender Readings of the Bible.* Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, 300-316.

Ackerman, D.M. and Jones, K.D., 2006, *The Law of Church and State in the Supreme Court Revisited*. Nova Publishers, New York.

Adamo, D., 2018, *A silent unheard voice in the Old Testament: The Cushite woman whom Moses married in Numbers 12:1-10* https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v52i1.2370.

Adeyemo, T., (ed.), 2010, *Africa Bible Commentary: A One-Volume Commentary Written by 70 African Scholars.* Zondervan Academic, Michigan.

Ahmed, S., 2000, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality,* Routledge, New York.

Ali, A. and Siddiqi, R., 2019, 'Sexual harassment at workplace: a study of women political workers in Pakistan', *Pakistan Journal of Applied Social Sciences*, *10*(1), 1-20.

Anderson, E., 2005, 'Orthodox and inclusive masculinity: Competing masculinities among heterosexual men in a feminized terrain', *Sociological perspectives,* 48(3), 337-355.

Andoh-Arthur, J., 2019, *Gatekeepers in Qualitative Research*. SAGE Publications Ltd, London.

Ayanga, H., 2012, *Kenya inspired and gendered: The hermeneutic challenge of teaching gender in Kenya*, In Hendriks, H.J., Mouton, E., Hansen, L.D. and Le Roux, E. eds., *Men in the Pulpit, Women in the Pew? Addressing Gender Inequality in Africa,* African Sun Media Press, Stellenbosch, 85-92.

Babbie, E., R., & Mouton, J., 2002, *The practice of social research*, South Africa Oxford University Press, Cape Town.

Babbie, E., R., 2010, *The Practice of Social Research.* 12th ed., CA Wadsworth Cengage, Belmont.

Baderoon, G., & Decker, A. C., 2018, *African Feminisms Cartographies for the Twenty-First Century Meridians*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Bahemuka, J.M. and Brockington, J.L., 2001, *East Africa in transition: communities, cultures, and change,* Acton Publishers, Nairobi.

Bahemuka, J., 2006, *The Hidden Christ in African Traditional Religion* in Oduyoye, M.A. and Kanyoro, M.R. (eds.), *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition and the Church in Africa,* Maryknoll, Orbis Books, New York, 119-134.

Bennett, J., (ed.), 2002, 'Exploration of a" Gap": Strategizing Gender Equity in African Universities'*, Feminist Africa* 1: 34-65.

Boehnke, M., 2011, 'Gender role attitudes around the globe: Egalitarian vs. traditional views'*, Asian Journal of Social Science*, *39*(1), 57-74.

Borg, W., R., and Gall, M., D., 1971, *Educational Research: An Introduction, 2nd (ed.)*, David McKay Company, New York.

Bott, S., Morrison, A. and Ellsberg, M., 2005, *Preventing and responding to gender-based violence in middle and low-income countries:* A global review and analysis, (Working Paper No. 3618), https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/8210.

Bourdillon, M.F.C., 1979, 'Religion and authority in a Korekore community', *Africa Journal, 49*(2), 172-181.

Bourdillon, M., F., C., 1984-1985, 'Religious Symbols and Political Change', *Zambezia Journal,* 12, 39-54.

Brade, K.A., 2009, '*Let the Church stop saying "Amen": Domestic violence perceptions and experiences from a cohort of African-American clergy in divinity school'*, PhD thesis, Dept. of Theology, Howard University.

Brady, D., Finnigan, R.M. and Hübgen, S., 2017, 'Rethinking the risks of poverty: A framework for analyzing prevalences and penalties', *American Journal of Sociology*, 123(3), 740-786.

Bricki, N., & Green J., 2007, *A Guide to Using Qualitative Research,* Medecins sans Frontiers, Creswell, Chicago.

Brokensha, D., W., 1964, *Women of Tropical Africa,* University of California Press, Berkeley.

Brown, R.E., 1997, *Introduction to New Testament*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Bryceson, D.F., 2019, 'Gender and generational patterns of African deagrarianization: Evolving labour and land allocation in smallholder peasant household farming', 1980–2015, *World Development*, *113*, 60-72.

Buchanan, K.S., 2010, *Our prisons, ourselves: Race, gender and the rule of law*, Yale L. & Polly Rev Publication, New Haven.

Buchanan, I., 2010, *Oxford Dictionary of Critical Theory*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Burnard, P., Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E. and Chadwick, B., 2008, 'Analysing and presenting qualitative data', *British Dental Journal,* 204(8), 429-432.

Butler, J., 2001, G*ender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*, Routledge, London.

Butler, J., 2009, 'Performativity, precarity and sexual politics'. *AIBR. Revista de Antropología Ibero Americana,* 4(3). DOI: 10.11156/aibr.040305

Cannon, K.G., 1985, 'Resources for a constructive ethic in the life and work of Zora Neale Hurston', *Journal of feminist studies in Religion,* 1(1), 37-51.

Cathy, M., 1998, *In Search of a Round Table: Gender, Theology & Church Leadership,* In*,* Kanyoro, M., (ed.)*, Women and Church Leadership,* WCC Publications, Geneva 431-433.

Chebet, D. and Cherop, B., 2015, *Gender and Poverty: Rereading Proverbs 31 in pursuit of socio-economic justice for* women *in the Reformed Church of East Africa,* In Mouton, E., Kapuma, G., Hansen, L., & Togom, T., *Living with Dignity: African perspectives on gender equality*, Sun Press, Stellenbosch, 193-219.

Cheng, J., T., 2020, *Dominance, prestige, and the role of levelling in human social hierarchy and equality Current Opinion in Psychology,* York University, Toronto, 33, 238–244

Chenge, R.P., Chenge, E. and Maunganidze, L., 2017, 'Family Factors that contribute to school dropout in Rushinga District in Zimbabwe'*, International Journal of Law, Humanities & Social Science,* 1(4), 87-105.

Chidili, B.U., 2003, *The vision of Mercy Amba Oduyoye an African feminist theologian and educator: Pedagogy of human dignity*, Fordham University, New York.

Chigevenga, R., 2020, 'Commentary on COVID-19 in Zimbabwe,' *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*', 12(5), 562-564, https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/tra0000692.

Chigidi, W.L., 2009, 'Moral dimensions of some Shona Taboos (Zviera)*', The Journal of Pan African Studies*, *3*(1), 174-187.

Chingombe, A., Mandova, E. and Nenji, S., 2012, 'Perception and management of human fertility: A Shona landscape', *International Journal of Management and Sustainability,* 1(1), 1-12.

Chirongoma, S., 2006, 'Women's and Children's Rights in the time of HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe: An Analysis of Gender Inequalities and its Impact on People's Health', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 2(126), 48-65.

Chitando, E. ed., 2008, *Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in theological education: Experiences and explorations, 6-18,* WCC Publishing, Geneva.

Chitando, E. and Manyonganise, M., 2011, *Voices from faith-based communities*, In Murithi, T., & Mawadza, A., (eds.), *Zimbabwe in transition: A view from within*, 77-111, DOI: 10.1080/02533952.2012.699246

Chitando, E., 2012, 'Even When There Is No Rooster, the Morning will start': Men, HIV, and African Theologies, *Journal of feminist studies in Religion,* 28(2), 141-145.

Chitando, E., 2013, 'The Good Wife': A Phenomenological Rereading of Proverbs 31:10-31 in the Context of HIV/Aids in Zimbabwe*'*, *Scriptura* 86, 151-159

Chitando, E., and Van Klinken, A., 2015, 'Masculinities, HIV and religion in Africa', In 'The Routledge Handbook of Religions and Global Development', 127-138, Routledge, Oxford.

Chitando, E., 2016, 'Religion and masculinities in Africa: an opportunity for Africanization', In African traditions in the study of religion, diaspora and gendered societies, 133-146, Routledge, Oxford.

Chrys I., 2008, *White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture, 2nd edition*, New York, Routledge.

Cohen, L., & Manion, I., 2007, *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge, London.

Cole, K., and Parker R., 2011, *Qualitative methods in psychology: A research guide*, McGraw-Hill Education, New York.

Coleman, J., S., 1958, 'Relational Analysis: The Study of Social Organizations with Survey Methods'*. Human Organization,* 17, 28-36.

Cone, J., 1969, *Black Theology and Black Pow*er, Seabury Press, New York. https://doi.org/10.1177/004057367002700320.

Crabtree, B., and Cohen, D., 2006, *Qualitative research guidelines project*, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton.

Creswell, J., W., & Plano V., L., C., 2011, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Method Research.* 2nd edition, Sage Publications, Nebraska.

Creswell, J., W., 2013, *Qualitative Research Design. Choosing among Five Approaches*: Sage, Publications, London.

Creswell, J., W., 2017, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods*. Approaches (4th Ed.). Sage Publications Ltd, London.

Crowhurst, I. and Kennedy-Macfoy, M., 2013, 'Troubling gatekeepers: Methodological considerations for social research', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology,* 16(6), 457-462.

Dandah, G. and Chiweshe, M.K., 2024, *Introduction to Marriage in Contemporary Zimbabwe. In Marriage in Contemporary Zimbabwe*, 1-23, Routledge Pub, New York.

Denzin, N., K., 2000, *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications, London.

Denscombe, M., 2002, *Ground Rules for Good Research: A 10 Point Guide for Social Researchers*, McGraw-Hill Companies, Open University, Philadelphia.

Desmet, K., Ortuño-Ortín, I. & Wacziarg, R., 2017, 'Culture, ethnicity, and diversity', *American Economic Review*, *107*(9), 249-283.

Devarakshanam, B.G., 1996, *In Search of Our Own Wells. Groaning in Faith: African Women in the Household of God,* Acton Publishers, Nairobi, 112-135.

DiCicco-Bloom, B. and Crabtree, B.F., 2006, 'The qualitative research interview', *Medical Education,* 40(4), 314-321.

Diki, G., Makochekanwa, A., Moyo, S. and Mhloyi, M., 2022, 'Experience of Intimate Partner violence among married couples: the case of Mashonaland Central, Zimbabwe, *Cogent Social Sciences,* Taylor & Francis Pub, United Kingdom, https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2082096.

Dobash, R. E., and Dobash, R. P., 1979, *Violence against Wives: A case against Patriarchy*, Free Press, New York.

Drapeau, A., Marchand, A. and Beaulieu-Prévost, D., 2012, 'Epidemiology of psychological distress', In Labate, P., L., 'Mental illnesses-understanding, prediction and control'*, 69*(2), 105-106. DOI: 10.5772/30872.

Dube, M. W., 1999, "*Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation*," In *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, Spring, 8, 299-303.

Dube, M.W., 2000, HIV/ AIDS *and the Curriculum Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes,* WCC Publishing, Geneva.

Dube, M. W., 2001, "*Post Coloniality Feminist Spaces and Religion*," 100-120. In Donaldson & Kwok Pui Lan, (eds.), *Post colonialism & Feminism Religion.* New York: Routledge.

Dube, M. W., & Musimbi Kanyoro, (eds.), 2004, *Grant Me Justice: HIV/AIDS and Gender Readings of the Bible,* Pietermaritzburg: Cluster and New York.

Dube, M. W., 2008, *The HIV & AIDS Bible: Selected Essays*: University Of Scranton Press, Scranton.

Dube, M. W., 2013, '*African Biblical Interpretation'*, In *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 8-17.

Dube, M. W., 2013, 'Decolonizing the Darkness," *Soundings in Cultural Criticism: Perspectives and Methods in Culture, Power and Identity* in New Testament', Fortress, Minneapolis.

Dube, Musa W., 2016, "Gender in African Christianity," 144-154, In Phiri, I., A., (ed.), *Anthology of African Christianity,"* WCC Pub, Geneva.

Dube, Musa W., 2016, *Postcolonial African Feminisms: A Reading of Women Characters in Boleo.* In *Barolong Seboni Ed, Amantle A Collection of Critical Writing on Botswana Literature,* Abingdon Press, Nashville.

Dube, M., 2017, 'The Bible in the Bush. Post Coloniality, Translation, and the Bible in Africa', *Translation* 2 (2013): 79–103.

Dunkle, K.L., 2003, *Gender-based violence as a risk factor for HIV infection among women attending antenatal clinics in Soweto, South Africa*, University of Michigan, Michigan.

Duvvury, N., Callan, A., Carney, P. and Raghavendra, S., 2013, *Intimate partner violence: Economic costs and implications for growth and development,* The World Bank, Washington DC.

Dziva, C., & Sithole, L., 2019, 'Eliminating harmful practices against women in Zimbabwe: Implementing article 5 of the African Women's Protocol', *African Human Rights Law Journal*, Harare, 568-590.

Eaton, K., 2008, *Womanism Literature, and the transformation of the Black community* (1965–1980), Routledge, New York.

Ebila, F., 2015, 'A proper woman, in the African tradition': The construction of gender and nationalism in Wangari Maathai's autobiography Unbowed', *Tydskrif vir letterkunde,* 52(1), 144-154, https://doi.org/10.4314/tvl.v52i1.10.

Edet, R. N., 1992, 'Shifting new theological paradigms for women in the African Society and African Church,' In book: Sankofa: Liberation Theologies of West African Women (Circle Jubilee Volume 1), 245-256, DOI: 10.20378/IRB-93234.

Edet, R., N., 2006, *Christianity and African Women's Rituals,* Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York.

Eisenchlas, A., 2013, 'Gender Roles and Expectations', *SAGE Open*, 1-11, http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2158244013506446.

Elam, G., and Fenton, K.A., 2003, 'Researching sensitive issues and ethnicity: Lessons from sexual health', *Ethnicity and Health, 8(1)*, 15-27.

Erez, D., 2002, 'Domestic Violence and the Criminal Justice System: An Overview', *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing* 1. 3-18.

Ezezew, A., 2013, 'Assessment Of The Impact Of Hiv/Aids On Female Child-headed Households: The Case Of Ten Female Child-Headed Households In Adama Town,

Ethiopia', PhD thesis, Dept. of Rural Development, St. Mary's University.

Fanusie, L., 2006, *Sexuality and Women in African Culture*, In: Oduyoye, Mercy A. and Kanyoro, Rachel A. (eds.), *Will to Arise: Women, Tradition and the Church in Africa*. Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, 145-154.

Ferraro, G., 1998, *The Cultural Dimension of International Business*. 3rd Edition, New Jersey, Prentice.

Fiedler, Rachel, N., 2017, *A History of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologian* 1989-2007, Mzuni Press, Malawi.

Finnemore, M. and Sikkink, K., 1998, 'International norm dynamics and political change, *International organization', 52*(4), 887-917.

Fiorenza, E., S., 2021, *Congress of wo/men: religion, gender, and kyriarchal power*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, Oregon.

Freedman, E., 2007, *No turning back: The history of feminism and the future of women*, Ballantine Books, New York.

Freeman, M., De Marrais, K., Preissle, J., Roulston, K. and St. Pierre, E.A., 2007, Standards of evidence in qualitative research: An incitement to discourse, *Educational researcher*, 36(1), 25-32.

Gabaitse, R., M., 2012, *Passion Killings in Botswana: Masculinity at Crossroads, In* Ezra Chitando & Sophie Chirongoma (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Man, HIV and Religion,* World Council of Churches, Geneva, 305-322.

Gabrenya Jr, W.K. and Hwang, K.K., 1996, *Chinese social interaction: harmony and hierarchy on the good earth,* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Gafney, W., 2022, Reflections *on Teaching Biblical Interpretation through a Black Lives Matter Hermeneutic. Bitter the Chastening Rod: Africana Biblical Interpretation after*

Stony the Road We Trod in the Age of BLM, Say Her Name, and Me Too, Lexington Books, Lanham.

Gaidzanwa, R., B., 2015, *Grappling with Mugabe's Masculinist Politics in Zimbabwe: A Gender Perspective',* in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Mugabeism? African Histories and Modernities*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 157-179.

Geisler, G., 1995, 'Troubled Sisterhood: Women and Politics in Southern Africa: Case Studies from Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana', In 'African Affairs', *Oxford Journal*, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.afraf.a098873, 548-578.

Gerda, L., 1986, *The Creation of Patriarchy. Women and History, Volume 1,* Oxford University Press, New York, 8–11.

Giddens, A., 2009, *Sociology*. 6th Edition, Wiley India Pt. Ltd., New Delhi, 329-331.

Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E. and Chadwick, B., 2008, 'Methods of data collection in qualitative research: interviews and focus groups'. *British Dental Journal*, *204*(6), 291-295.

Gillman, L., 2006, *Unassimilable feminisms: reappraising feminist, womanist, and mestiza identity politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Gnanadason, A., Kanyoro, M., R., and McSpadden, L., A. (Eds), 2009, *Women, violence and nonviolent change*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, Oregon.

Gnanadason, A., 2012, 'Violence against Women Is Sin Violence against Women Is Sin: God of Life, Accompany Us on Our Journey toward a World Free of Violence'*, Ecumenical Review*, 64, 241-250.

Goodman, L., A., 1961, 'Snowball sampling', *Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, 32 (1): 148–170. doi:10.1214/aoms/1177705148.

Gondongwe, K., 2011, 'African ministers and the emergence of resistance to colonial domination: The development of indigenous clergy in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe from 1891 to 1980', PhD thesis, Dept. of Theology and Religion, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Grady, J.L., 2006, *10 Lies the church tells Women: How the Bible has been misused to keep women in spiritual bondage.* Carol Stream, IL: Creation House.

Grant, J., 1989, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response,* Scholars Press, Atlanta.

Green, L., 1997, *Music, gender, education*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Green, Fiona Joy, 2010, 'Patriarchal Ideology of Motherhood'. In O'Reilly, Andrea (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Motherhood, Volume 3*. Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, California, 969–970.

Guyo, F., B., 2017, 'Colonial and Post-Colonial Changes and Impact on Pastoral Women's Roles and Status', *Pastoralism* 7, no. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13570-017-0076-2.

Hague, G., Thiara, R.K. and Turner, A., 2011, 'Bride-price and its links to domestic violence and poverty in Uganda: A participatory action research study'. *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 34, No. 6, 550-561, Pergamon.

Hallfors, D.D., Cho, H., Iritani, B.J., Mapfumo, J., Mpofu, E., Luseno, W.K. and January, J., 2013, 'Preventing HIV by Providing Support for orphan girls to stay in school: does religion matter?' *Ethnicity & health*, *18*(1), 53-65.

Hamersley, M., & Atkison, P., 2007, *Ethnography*, Oxon College, London.

Hamid, S., Stephenson, R. and Rubenson, B., 2011, 'Marriage decision making, spousal communication, and reproductive health among married youth in Pakistan', *Global health action*, *4*(1), DOI:10.3402/gha.v4i0.5079

Hatch, M.J., 2000, 'The cultural dynamics of organizing and change', *Handbook of organizational culture and climate*, 245-260.

Hayes, D.L., 2010, *Standing in the shoes my mother made: A womanist theology*. Fortress Press, Minneapolis.

Hayes, D.L., and Brendan N. Wolfe2024, (ed.), *Womanist Theology*, St Andrews Encyclopedia of Theology. https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/WomanistTheology.

Heath, C. and Heath, D., 2007, *Made to stick: Why some ideas survive and others die*. Random House, New York.

Heckathorn, D., D., 1997, 'Respondent-Driven Sampling: A New Approach to the Study of Hidden Populations', *Social Problems, 44*(2), 174-199, https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.1997.44.2.03x0221m.

Heine, S.J., Takemoto, T., Moskalenko, S., Lasaleta, J. and Henrich, J., 2008, 'Mirrors in the head: Cultural variation in objective self-awareness', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin,* 34(7), 879-887.

Hill, C.E., 2012, *Consensual qualitative research: A practical resource for investigating social science phenomena*, American Psychological Association, Washington DC.

Hinga, T., M., 1995, 'Women Liberation in and through the Bible: The Debate and the Quest for a New Feminist Hermeneutics,' *African Christian Studies 6,* 33–49.

Hinga, T., M., 2017, *African Christian Feminist: The Enduring Search for What Matters*. Orbis Books, New York.

Hofstede, G., 1991, *Cultures and Organizations Software of the Mind*, McGraw-Hill, London.

Hofstede, G., 1994, 'The business of international business is culture', *International business review,* 3(1), 1-14.

Hong, Y.Y., 2009, 'A dynamic constructivist approach to culture. Understanding culture: Theory, research, and application', 3-23. New York, Routledge Press, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781441605054

Human Rights Forum, 2011, *Globalizing Human Rights from Below: Challenge of Human Rights Cities in the 21st Century*, Republic of Korea, Kwangju.

Hungwe, C., 2006, 'Putting Them In Their Place – "Respectable" and "Unrespectable" Women in Zimbabwean Gender Struggles', *Feminist Africa* 6, 33-47.

Hunnicutt, G., 2009, 'Varieties of Patriarchy and Violence against Women: Resurrecting "Patriarchy" as a Theoretical Tool', *Violence against Women. 15*, 553-573. Doi10.1177/1077801208331246

Idang, G.E., 2015, 'African culture and values', *Phronimon*, *16*(2), 97-111.

Imas, J., M., & Lorenzo, L., G., 2022, 'A postcolonial and pan-African feminist reading of Zimbabwean women entrepreneurs', *Gender Work and Organisation,* https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12931.

Iyabo, O., Ibukunoluwa, B.O., & Busayo, Q.I., 2020, *Gender-based violence and socio-economic development in Lagos State*, Nigeria, Sapientia.

Iyanda, A.E., Boakye, K.A., Olowofeso, O.H., Lu, Y. and Salcido Giles, J., 2021, 'Determinants of gender-based violence and its physiological effects among women in 12 African countries', *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 36(21-22), Doi: 10.1177/0886260519888536.

Jack, D.C. and Dill, D., 1992, 'The Silencing the Self Scale: Schemas of intimacy associated with depression in women', *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 16(1), 97-106. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1992.tb00242.x

Jackson, L., 2000, *Violence: Sub-Saharan and Southern Africa*, in Cherise Kramarae and Dale Spender, (eds.), *the Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women's Issues and Knowledge,* Routledge, London.

Jacob, S. A., & Ferguson, S. P., 2012, 'Writing Interview Protocols and Conducting Interviews: Tips for Students New to the Field of Qualitative Research. Qualitative Report,' *Scientific Research 17, 1-10.*

Jahoda, G., 2012, 'Critical reflections on some recent definitions of "culture", *Culture & Psychology*, *18*(3), 289-303.

Jakobsen, H., 2014, 'What's gendered about Gender-Based Violence? An Empirically Grounded Theoretical Exploration from Tanzania,' *Gender & Society*, 28, 537-561. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243214532311

Jeater, D., 1993, *Marriage, Perversion and Power: The Construction of Moral Discourse in Southern Rhodesia 1894-1930*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Jerome, O.M., 2010, 'The Rhetoric on Fraternal Love in Psalm 133 & its Relevance to the Nigerian situation,' *Nigerian Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1), 148-166.

Johnson, P., A., 2002, *Womanist Theology as Counter-Narrative.* In Radford, R, R., (ed.), *Gender, Ethnicity and Religion: Views from the Other Side Minneapolis*, Augsburg Fortress, Minnesota.

Johnston, M., 2023, 'Bride Price's Relationship to Conflict, Class, and Violence against Women', *Journal of Global Security Studies*, *8*(1), 043.

Jousse, L., 2021, *Discrimination and Gender Inequalities in Africa: What about Equality between Women and Men? Translated by Charline Vandermuntert,* Geopolitics Institute, France.

Junior, N., 2015, *An introduction to womanist biblical interpretation*, Publishing Corp, Presbyterian.

Kabeer, N., 2014, *Violence against women as 'relational' vulnerability: Engendering the sustainable human development agenda.* Occasional Paper, United Nations Development Programme, New York, USA.

Kambarami, M., 2006, 'Femininity, Sexuality and Culture: Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Zimbabwe', PhD thesis, University of Fort Hare.

Kanyoro, M.R., 1997, 'Biblical hermeneutics: ancient Palestine and the contemporary world', *Review & expositor*, 94, 363-378. https://doi.org/10.1177/003463739709400304

Kanyoro, R.A., 2002, *Introduction to feminist cultural hermeneutics: A key to African women's liberation theology,* Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield.

Karim, S.S.A., and Baxter, C., 2019, 'HIV incidence rates in adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa', *The Lancet Global Health*, 7(11), DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/ S2214-109X (19)30404-8.

Kapoor, S., 2000, 'Domestic violence against women and girls', *Innocenti Digest* 6, 1-30 ISSN-1028-3528.

Kapuma, G.A., 2015, *Gender-Based Violence and the Church?* , 253-268, In Mouton, L., Kapuma, G., and Hansen, L., *In Living with Dignity: African Perspectives on Gender Equality,* Sun Press, Stellenbosch.

Katzenstein, P., J., 1996, *The New Culture of Security Studies*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Kawulich, B.B., 2011, 'Gatekeeping: An ongoing adventure in research', *Field Methods*, 23(1), 57-76.

Keith, L.C., 2011, *Political repression: Courts and the law*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Pennsylvania.

Kilian, R., Beschoner, P., Gündel, H., Becker, T., Frasch, K., Panzirsch, M., Schmauß, M. and Krumm, S., 2020, 'Masculinity and help-seeking among men with depression: A qualitative study', *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 11, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2020.599039.

Koenig, A.M., 2018, 'Comparing prescriptive and descriptive gender stereotypes about children, adults, and the elderly', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1086.

Kolawole, M.E.M., 1997, Woma*nism and African consciousness*. Africa World Press, Trenton.

Kothari, C.R., 2004, *Research Methodology*, Routledge, London.

Kotze, E., Els, L. and Rajuili-Masilo, N., 2012, 'Women… mourn and men carry on": African women storying mourning practices: A South African example. *Death Studies*, 36(8), 742-766.

Krupa, E., Manasyan, A., Woodman, K., Muttau, N. and Menon, J.A., 2023, *Catalyzing Action on Intimate Partner Violence against Pregnant Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Zambia. In Young People, Violence and Strategic Interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Springer International Publishing, Cham, 163-185.

Kuper, A., 1992, *Conceptualizing Society (1st Ed.)*. Routledge, Oxford.

Kvale, S., 1996, *Interviews, An Introduction to Qualitative Interviews.* Thousand Oaks Sage Publishers, California.

Kwaramba, J., 2018, *A Practical-Theological Perspective on Female Leadership in a Pentecostal Context of Zimbabwe*, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Landman, C., 1999, *The Piety of African Women,* CB Powel, Pretoria.

Landman, C. and Sibiziwe, S., 2020, 'Religion and Gender Policy Implementation in Zimbabwe: Women's Access to Land Ownership in Gwanda District', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae,* 46(2), 1-15.https://doi.org/10.25159/2412-4265/7246

Lapchick, R., & Urdang, S., 1982, *Oppression and Resistance: The Struggle of Women in Southern Africa*, Westport: Greenwood.

Laura, F, 2019, 'Lineal kinship organisation in cross-specific perspective". *The Royal Sciences. 374 (1780):20190005. Doi:10.1098/rstb.2019.0005. ISSN 09628436. PMC 66 64128.*

Law, K., 2020, 'We Wanted to be Free as a Nation, and We Wanted to be Free as Women: Decolonization, Nationalism and Women's Liberation in Zimbabwe', *Gender and History Journal,* https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-042*4.12491, 249-268.*

Layli, P., 2006, *The womanist reader*, Routledge, London and New York.

Leedy, P. D., 1996, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, Pearson Education Limited, New York.

Le Roux, E., 2012, 'Book history in the African world: The state of the discipline', *Book History, 15(1), 248*-300.

Le Roux, E., 2015, 'A scoping study on the role of faith communities and organisations in prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence: Implications for policy and practice', PhD thesis, Dept. of Religion and Development Research, Stellenbosch University

Legros, S. and Cislaghi, B., 2020, 'Mapping the social-norms literature: An overview of review', *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 15(*1), 62-80. Doi: 10.1098/rstb.2023.0023.

Lerner, G., 1986, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Lewis, J.L. & Sheppard S., R., J., 2006, 'Culture and communication: can landscape visualization improve forest management consultation with indigenous communities? Landscape and Urban planning', *Ethno botany Research & Applications,* 77, 291-313, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.

Logar, R., 2000, 'Male violence against women and children in families: A brief survey of the situation in Europe'*. In a presentation for the Women's World Forum against Violence,* 23-25.

Loscocco, K., and Walzer, S., 2013, 'Gender and the culture of heterosexual marriage in the United States', *Journal of Family Theory & Review,* 5(1), 1-14.

Lowery, Stephanie A., 2020, *"*African Women Theologians You Should Know About*"* *The Global Church Project, 5-18*.

Lunn, J., 1994, *Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe 1870-1939, African Affairs*, James Currey, London.

Lustig, M. W. & Koester, J. 1999, *Intercultural competence*, Addison-Wesley Longman, New York.

Lyon, L.M. and Hardesty, L.H., 2005, 'Traditional healing in the contemporary life of the Antanosy people of Madagascar,' *Ethno botany Research and Applications*, 3, 287-294.

Lyons, T., 2004, *Guns and Guerrilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean National Liberation Struggle*, Africa World Press, Trenton.

Machema, A., 1990, *Jumping Cultures' Fences*, In Oduyoye, M.A., and. Kanyoro, M., (eds.), *Talitha, qumi! Proceedings of the Convocation of African Women Theologians,* Daystar Press, Accra, 147-151.

Machingura, F., 2012, 'A look at the struggle of Zimbabwean married women regarding safe sex', *Africana* 6(1), 40–60.

Magezi, V., 2019, 'Gender-based violence and efforts to address the

phenomenon: Towards a church public pastoral care intervention proposition for community development in Zimbabwe', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies,* 75, 1-9, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v75i4.5532.

Magezi, V. and Manzanga, P., 2020, *'*COVID-19 and intimate partner violence in Zimbabwe: Towards being church in situations of gender-based violence from a public pastoral care perspective', D*ie Skirling /In Luce Verbi*, 54(1), 9.

Magwa, S., & Magwa W., 2015, *A Guide to Conducting Research*, Strategic Books Publishing, Dubai.

Makonese, M., 2017, *Women, Law and Power: Perspectives from the Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Programme.* Harare: Weaver Press.

Makore, S., 2004, 'Women in music: Some notes on Zimbabwe'. In Magnus, S., (ed.), 'Sounds of change: Social and political feature of music in Africa', *David Pub,* 47-56.

Manganyi & Buitendag, 2013, *'*A Critical Analysis on African Traditional Religion and the Trinity', *HTS Theological Studies, 1-13,* DOI: 10.4102/hts.v69i1.1934

Manyonganise, M., 2010, From "safety" zones to public spaces: Women's participation in sport in Zimbabwe'*, In Shehu, J., (ed.),* 'Gender, sport and development in Africa: Cross-cultural perspectives on patterns of representations and marginalization', *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 13-26.

Manyonganise, M., 2015, 'Oppressive and liberative: A Zimbabwean woman's reflections on ubuntu'*, VERBUM ET Ecclesia*, 36(2), 1 -7 http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v36i2.1438

Manyonganise, M., 2017, 'Invisibilising the Victimized: Churches in Manicaland and Women's Experiences of Political Violence in National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe'*, Journal for the Study of Religions,* https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3027/2017/v30n1a5.

Manyonganise, M., 2019, *Partnering 'Soft Masculinities' in Tackling Violence*

against Women in Zimbabwe, In Kugler, J., Chitando, E., Gabaitse, R., Gunda, M.R., Stiebert, J., and Togarasei, L., (eds.), *The Bible and Gender Troubles in Africa*, 169-184, University of Bamberg Press, Bamberg.

Manyonganise, M., 2022, 'The March Is Not Ended': 'Church 'Confronting the State over the Zimbabwean Crisis. *Religions*, 13(2), 107. DOI: 10.3390/rel13020107

Manyonganise, M., (ed.), 2023, *Religion and health in a COVID-19 context: Experiences from Zimbabwe*. DOI: 10.20378/IRB-58422, University of Bamberg Press, Bamberg.

Maparyan, L., 2012, *The womanist idea*. Routledge, Oxford.

Mapuranga, T.P., 2010, 'A phenomenological investigation into the effects of traditional beliefs and practices on women and HIV and AIDS, with special reference to Chipinge district, Zimbabwe', *Unpublished PhD Thesis,* Department of RSCP. UZ, Harare.

Mapuranga, T.P., 2011, *Gender, HIV and AIDS and African Traditional Religion in Zimbabwe*, University of Zimbabwe, Harare.

Mapuranga, T.P., 2014, *Surviving the Urban Jungle: AICs and Women's Socio-Economic Coping Strategies in Harare (2000-2010),* In Kugler, J., Chitando, E., Gabaitse, R., Gunda, & Ruzivo, M., (eds.), *Multiplying in the Spirit*: African Initiated Churches in Zimbabwe, University of Bamberg Press, Bamberg, DOI:10.20378/irb-6445, 227-240.

MarrSource*, V., 2014, Ditching' the Master's Gardening Tools for Our Own: Growing a Womanist Methodology from the Grassroots*', University of Illinois Press, Illinois.

Masenya, M., 1997, 'Proverbs 31: 10-31 in a South African context: A reading for the liberation of African (Northern Sotho) women. *Semeia*, (78), 55-68.

Masenya, M., 1997, 'Redefining ourselves: A bosadi (womanhood) approach. *Old Testament Essays*, *10*(3), 439-448.

Mast, S., 2004, 'Men are hierarchical, women are egalitarian: An implicit gender stereotype', *Swiss Journal of Psychology*, *63*(2), 107-111.

Mastari, L., S., B., and Siongers, J., 2019*,* 'Benevolent and hostile sexism in social spheres: The impact of parents, school and romance on Belgian adolescents' sexist attitudes. In Shaw & Aluko, (eds.), *'*Africa Projected From Recession to Renaissance' *42. Frontiers in Sociology*, *4*, 4-47, https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2019.00047.

Matarirano, C., 2019, "Talking Back to Power': Deviance in Luke 18: 1-8 and Women in Zimbabwe,' PhD thesis, Dept. of New Testament Studies, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Matsai, V. 2019, 'Economic Experiences and Coping Strategies of Single Mothers in Zimbabwe,' Masters in Community Development in the Department of Social Work. University of Johannesburg. South Africa.

Matsumoto, D., (Ed) 2009, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology*, Cambridge University, Cambridge.

Matsumoto, D., R., 1996, *Culture and psychology*, Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing Co, California.

Matswetu, V.S. and Bhana, D., 2018, 'Humhandara and hujaya: Virginity, culture, and gender inequalities among adolescents in Zimbabwe,' *Sage Journals,* https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018779107

Mbano-Moyo, F.L., 2004, *Touching our embodied and interconnected spirituality in the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians,* Weaving Dreams–Träume Weben.

Mbiti, J.S., 1990, *African religions & philosophy*. Johannesburg, Heinemann.

Mbuwayesango, D.R., 1997, 'Childlessness and woman-to-woman relationships in Genesis and in African Patriarchal society: Sarah and Hagar from a Zimbabwean woman's perspective' (Gen 16: 1-16; 21: 8-21)', *Semeia*, (78), 27.

McGrath, A.E. and Marks, D.C. eds., 2008, *The Blackwell companion to Protestantism*. John Wiley & Sons, New York.

Merriam, S.B., 1988, *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach.* Jossy-Bass Publishers, New Jersey.

Mesatywa, N.J., 2014, 'Validating the evidence of violence in partner relationships with regard to Xhosa African women. *Social Work*, *50*(2), 235-257.

Miles, M., B., & Huberman, A., M., 1994, *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*, Sage Publication, London.

Mirowsky, J. and Ross, C.E., 2002, 'Depression, parenthood, and age at first birth', *Social science & medicine*, 54(8), 1281-1298. DOI: 10.1016/s0277-9536(01)00096-x

Mitchem, S.Y., 2014, *Introducing womanist theology*, Orbis Books, New York.

Modie-Moroka, T., 2016, 'Masculinities, gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS in Botswana', *Journal of African Studies* 30 (2), 284-297.

Molefe, M., 2017, 'Personhood and Rights in an African Tradition', *South African Journal of Political Studies*, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, 1-15, DOI: 10.1080/02589346.2017.1339176.

Mombo, E. and Joziasse, H., 2012, *From the Pew to the Pulpit: Engendering the Pulpit through Teaching 'African Women's Theologies', Men in the Pulpit, Women in the Pew*, in Mouton, E. Kapuma, G., Hansen, L., & Togom, T., *Living with Dignity: African Perspectives on Gender Equality*, Sun Press, Stellenbosch, 183-194.

Morrison, K.R.B., 1993, *Planning and Accomplishing School-Centred Evaluation*, Peter Francis Publishers, Norfolk.

Morrison, A. Buvinic, M., and Orlando, M.B., 2005, Violence, crime, and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean, *Papeles de población*, 11(43), 167-214.

Morse, J.M. and Field, P.A., 1996, T*he purpose of qualitative research. Nursing Research: The application of qualitative approaches,* 2nd Edition, Chapman & Hill, London, 1-17.

Mosala, I.J. and Tlhagale, B., 1986, *The unquestionable right to be free.* Black theology series, Orbis Books, New York.

Mouton, E., Hansen, L.D & Le Roux, E (Edts), 2012, *Men in the Pulpit, Women in the Pew? Addressing Gender Inequality in Africa*, Sun Press, Stellenbosch.

Mouton, J., 1996, *Understanding Social Research*: Van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria.

Mouton, J., 2001, *Research Methodology: The Practice of Social Research*. Cape Town: Oxford University.

Mouton, J., 2002, *Social Research,* Wadsworth Group Pub, Belmont CA.

Mouton, E., Kapuma, G., Hansen, L. and Togom, T., (eds.), 2015, Livi*ng with Dignity: African perspectives on gender equality*, Sun Press Media, Stellenbosch

Moyo, F., L., 2004*, "*Religion, spirituality and being a woman in Africa: gender construction within the African religio-cultural experiences"*, Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity, JSTOR 4066604. 61 (61): 72–78.*

Moyo, N., J., 2010, "The influence of cultural practices on the spread of HIV and Aids on Zambian people*,'* PhD thesis, University of Pretoria.

Mpunzana, T. and Mofokeng, N.R., 2023, 'The Impact of the Patriarchal System in South Africa: Exploring the Challenges of Women in Poverty Reduction', *Gender and Behaviour*, 21(2), 689-695.

Mrewa, J., 2022, 'Socio-Cultural Norms and Their Influence on the Practice of Child Marriage. A Case of Rushinga District, Zimbabwe,*' AJHSSR Journal*, 47-55.

Mrewa, J., 2022, 'The proliferation of child marriages in Rushinga District, Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe'*, PhD thesis*, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.

Mugambi, J., Kanyua, N., Wasike, A., N., 1992, *Moral and ethical issues in African Christianity: exploratory essays in moral theology.* African Christianity series, no. 3. Nairobi, Kenya.

Mugambi, J., N., K., 2001, *Interpreting the New Testament in Africa*. Acton, Nairobi.

Mugambi, J., N., K., 2002, *Christianity and African Culture*, Acton: Nairobi.

Mukamana, J.I., Machakanja, P. & Adjei, N. K., 2020, 'Trends in prevalence and correlates of intimate partner violence against women in Zimbabwe, 2005-2015'*, BMC International Health and Human Rights,* https://doi.org/10.1186/s12914-019-0220-8

Mukanangana, F., Moyo, S., Zvoushe, A. and Rusinga, O., 2014, *'*Gender-based violence and its effects on women's reproductive Health: the case of Hatcliffe, Harare, Zimbabwe', *African Journal of Reproductive Health,* 18(1), 110-122.

Mukhopadhyay, S. and Musengi, M., 2012, *'*Contrasting visions of inclusive education: Comparisons from rural and urban settings in Botswana and Zimbabwe, *Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education,* 2(10), p.6.

Museka, G., Phiri, M., Kaguda, D. and Manyarara, B.C., 2013, *'*The prophylactics debate: is Unhu/Ubuntu an alternative for Zimbabwe? *Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research,* Harare, 39-54.

Musingafi, M.C., 2013, *Domestic Violence in Urban Areas in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Glen Norah (Harare)*, IISTE Publishing, US.

Musopole, A.C., 1992, 'Witchcraft terminologies, the Bible, and African Christian theology: an exercise in hermeneutics,' *African Christian Studies*, *8*(4), 33-41.

Mwaura, G., 2015, 'Educated youth in Kenya: Negotiating wait hood by greening livelihoods,' PhD thesis, University of Oxford.

Nani, G.V., 2011, 'Challenges faced by urban Zimbabwean women entrepreneurs,' PhD thesis, Dept. of Business Management, University of the Free State.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S., J., 2015, *Mugabeism and the Entanglements of History, Politics and Power in the Making of Zimbabwe*, in Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (ed.), *Mugabeism? History, Politics, and Power in Zimbabwe*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, https://doi.org/10.35293/srsa.v38i2.259, 319.

Nduye*, G., E., 2011, '*Tilling and Keeping the Earth in an Unjust Economic Order: Towards an African Eco Theological Framework', Master of Theology Dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Nembaware, N., 2020, 'Beyond Monolithic Patriarchy: Towards a better understanding of Violence against women in post-colonial Zimbabwe'*, 1-22,* International Christian University – Tokyo.

Nhongo-Simbanegavi, J., 2000, *For Better or Worse: Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*, Weaver, Harare.

Nicola, A., 2001, Because it's our culture!" (Re) Negotiating the Meaning of Lobola in Southern African Secondary Schools', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 697-716, DOI: 10.1080/03057070120090691

Nkealah, N., 2006, 'Conceptualizing Feminism(s) in Africa: The Challenges Facing African Women Writers and Critics,' *English Academy Review*, 133–141.

Nkealah, N., 2016, 'West African Feminisms and Their Challenges'*, Journal of Literary Studies.* 32(2): 61-74, DOI: 10.1080/02564718.2016.1198156

Nwachuku, D.N., 1992, *The Christian widow in African culture. In* Oduyoye, M, A., & Kanyoro, R.A., (eds.), *The Will to Arise: Women, tradition, and the church in Africa*, 54-73, Wipf & Stock Publishers, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

NyaGondwe, F., R., Hofmeyr, J., W., and Fiedler, K., 2016, *African Feminist Hermeneutics: An Evangelical Reflection.* Mzuni Books No. 18. Mzuzu: Mzuni Press.

Nyataya, I.P.K., 2019, 'Domestic violence incidence impacting socio-economic development of rural areas in Rwanda,' *International Journal of Research in Sociology and Anthropology* (IJRSA), 5(2), 51-66.

Oduyoye, M., A., & Kanyoro, R., A., 1992, *Will to Arise: Tradition and the Church in Africa,* Wipf and Stock Publishers, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Oduyoye, M., A., 1995, *Daughters of Anowa,* Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York.

Oduyoye, M., 2001, *Introducing African women's theology* (Vol. 6), A&C Black, London.

Oduyoye, M.A., Mananzan, M.J., Tamez, E., Clarkson, J.S. and Grey, M.C. (eds.), 2004, *Women resisting violence: Spirituality for life*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Oduyoye, M.A. and Kanyoro, M.R. eds., 2005, *The will to arise: Women, tradition, and the church in Africa*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Ogbomo, O., 2005, 'Women, Power and Society in Pre-colonial Africa,' *Lagos Historical Review* 5, 49-74, https://doi.org/10.4314/lhr.v5i1.32524

Ogletree, S., M., 2014, 'Gender role attitudes and expectations for marriage'. *Journal of Research on Women and Gender*, 5(1), 71-82

Ogoma, D.E., 2014, 'Reflection on an African traditional marriage system.' *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Affairs*, 4(1), 94-104.

Okafor, S.O., 2020, 'Patriarchy and Women Plight in Africa: The Consequences of Living in Passivity,' *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, 17(2).

Okure, T., 1992, 'The Significance Today of Jesus' Commission to Mary Magdalene,' *International Review of Mission*, 81(322), 177-188.

Oliver, R.M., Wehby, J.H. and Reschly, D.J., 2011, 'Teacher classroom management practices: Effects on disruptive or aggressive student behaviour,' *Campbell Systematic Reviews,* 7(1), 1-55. https://doi.org/10.4073/csr.2011.4

Olojede, I., Bose, O.I. and Ibikunle, B.Q., 2020, 'Gender-based violence and socio-economic development in Lagos state, Nigeria'*. Sapientia Foundation Journal of Education, Sciences and Gender Studies*, 2(4).

Oluwayemi, V., and Osisanwo, A., 2018, 'Divorce as conflict: Representation of participants in selected Nigerian newspaper reports on divorce cases,' I*badan Journal of Humanistic Studies*, 28(1), 91-108.

Opp, K.D. and Hechter, M., 2001, Soci*al norms*. Russell Sage Foundation, New York.

Oppong, S.H., 2013, 'The problem of sampling in qualitative research,' *Asian Journal of Management Sciences and Education*, *2*(2), 202-210.

Oredein, O., 2016, 'Interview with Mercy Amba Oduyoye: Mercy Amba Oduyoye in her own words,' *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, *32*(2), 153-164.

Orner, R. and Schnyder, U., 2003, *Reconstructing early intervention after trauma: Innovations in the care of survivors*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Osrin, M., J., 2002, 'Crisis in the State and the Family: Violence against Women in Zimbabwe,' *African Studies Quarterly 7*, 153-169.

Otufale, G., 2015, 'Assessment of Vulnerability of Rural Women Households to Climate Change Hazards In Farming Communities in Ogun State, Nigeria,' *Journal of Global Intelligence & Policy,* 8(14).

Owens, G., 2008, 'Gender differences in health care expenditures, resource utilization, and quality of care,' *Journal of Managed Care Pharmacy*, *14*(3), 2-6, DOI: 10.18553/jmcp.2008.14.S3-A.2.

Owusu Adjah, E.S. and Agbemafle, I., 2016, 'Determinants of domestic violence against women in Ghana,' *BMC Public Health*, 16, 1-9, DOI: 10.1186/s12889-016-3041-x.

Oyediran, K.A. and Feyistean, B., 2017, 'Prevalence and contextual determinants of intimate partner violence in Nigeria,' *African Population Studies*, 31(1). DOI**:** https://doi.org/10.11564/31-1-1003

Page, M., Hair J., and Brunsveld, N., 2019, *Essentials of business research methods*. Routledge, Oxford.

Pan American Health Organization, 2002, Women, Health and Development Program, Fact Sheet: *SocialResponses to Gender-Based Violence*.

Papp, L.M., 2018, 'Topics of marital conflict in the everyday lives of empty nest couples and their implications for conflict resolution,' *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 17(1), 7-24.

Parahoo, K., 1997, *Nursing Research: Principles, Process and Issues*, Macmillan Publishing, New York.

Parker, E.L., 2011, 'Womanist theory,' *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, 204-213.

Parveen A., A., 2020, 'Spousal Role Expectations and Marital Conflict: Perspectives of Men and Women,' *Journal of interpersonal violence*, *9-10,* DOI: 10.1177/0886260520966667

Pateman, C., 2016, *Sexual Contract.* In Naples, N. A., (ed.), *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies, Volume 5*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, New Jersey.

Patton, M., Q., 1990, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, 2nd Ed*, Sage Publishing, Newbury Park.

Peace, Gender and Governance in Africa*, 2000, A Conceptual Framework for Research and Policy Analysis and Monitoring.* A Draft Issues Paper presented at the African Knowledge Networks Forum Preparatory Workshop Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Philippe, A., J., Mathias, D., Luosha, D., Ann, H., Legros, P., 2015*, Industrial policy and competition,* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Phillips, L., 2006, *The Womanist Reader*, Routledge, New York and Abingdon.

Phiri, I. A., 2004, 'African women's theologies in the new millennium,' *Agenda, 18(61)*, 16-24, DOI: 10.1080/10130950.2004.9676034.

Phiri, I.A., 2007, *Women, Presbyterianism and patriarchy: Religious experience of Chewa women in Central Malawi* (No. 4), African Books Collective, Oxford.

Pittman, C., T., 2010, 'Race and Gender Oppression in the Classroom: The Experiences of Women Faculty of Colour with White Male Students*,' Teaching Sociology*, vol. 38, no. 3:183-196, doi: 10.1177/0092055X10370120

Plumwood, V., 2002, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. Routledge, Oxford.

Pui-Lan, K., 2015, 'Postcolonial preaching in intercultural contexts,' *Homiletic*, 40(1) 8-21. DOI: 10.15695/hmltc.v40i1.4117

Rajuili-Masilo, N., and Kotze, E., L., 2012, 'Women… mourn and men carry on": African women storying mourning practices: A South African example,' *Death Studies*, 36(8), 742-766. DOI:10.1080/07481187.2011.604463

Ramjee, G., and Daniels, B., 2013, Women and HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. *AIDS research and therapy, 10, 1-9,* DOI: 10.1186/1742-6405-10-30.

Ranger, T., 1985, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*, James Currey, London.

Rasmussen, J., 1979, *On the Structure of Knowledge a Morphology of Mental Models*, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Richard-Grinker, Lubkemann, S., & Steiner, C. B., (eds.) 2010, *Perspectives on Africa: A Reader in Culture, History and Representation*, Wiley-Blackwell, New Jersey.

Riedl, D., Silvia Exenberger S., Daniels, j., k., Böttcher, B., Beck T., Dejaco D., and Lampe, A., 2019, 'Domestic violence victims in a hospital setting: prevalence, health impact and patients' preferences,' *European Journal of Psychotraumatology,* DOI: 10.1080/20008198.2019.1654063

Roger, T., 2005, *Preface to Colonialism: a theoretical overview,* Markus Weiner Publishers, New Jersey.

Roux, C., and Du Preez, P., 2005, 'Religion in education: an emotive research domain: International Network for Interreligious and Intercultural Education,' *Scriptura*: *Journal for Contextual Hermeneutics in Southern Africa*, *89*(1), 273-282, DOI: 10.7833/89-0-1015.

Rubin, A., and Babbie, E., R., 1993, *Research Methods for Social Work*, 2nd Edition, Brooks/Cole, Belmont.

Rudman, L.A. and Glick, P., 2001, 'Prescriptive gender stereotypes and backlash toward agentic women,' *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 743-762. https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00239.

Rutoro, E., 2012, 'Gender Equity Dilemma and Teacher Education in Zimbabwe: The Quest for Gender Justice,' *International Journal of Education and Research,* 1-35.

Rutoro, E. and Madimbo, M., 2015, *Gender equality from the perspective of single womanhood.* In Mouton, E., Kapuma, G., Hansen, L. and Togom, T., (Eds), *Living with dignity: African perspectives on gender equality*, Sun Press Media, Stellenbosch, 325-342.

Rutoro, E., 2015, *Your Desire Shall Be For Your Husband and He Shall Rule Over You!* In Mouton, E., Kapuma, G., Hansen, L. and Togom, T., (Eds), *Living with dignity: African perspectives on gender equality*, Sun Press Media, Stellenbosch, 309-324.

Sakala, F., 1998, *Violence against women in Southern Africa*. In: McFadden, Patricia and Chiriga, Jenifer (eds.), *Southern Africa in Transition: A Gendered perspective*, SAPES Books, Harare, 580-594.

Sande, N. and Chirongoma, S., 2021, 'Construction of rape culture amongst the Shona indigenous religion and culture: Perspectives from African feminist cultural hermeneutics,' *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 77(2), 1-10, DOI: https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i2.6619.

Sandholtz, W., 2017, 'International norm change,' *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics,* https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.588.

Sarantakos, S., 1998, *Social Research 2nd Edition*, MacMillan Education, Australia.

Sardinha, L., Maheu-Giroux, M., Stöckl, H., Meyer, S.R. and García-Moreno, C., 2022, 'Global, regional, and national prevalence estimates of physical or sexual, or both, intimate partner violence against women in 2018,' *The Lancet*, 399(10327), 803-813.

Saunders, M., 2009, *Research methods for business students.* Person Education Limited, South Africa.

Saungweme, F., J., S, 2021, 'A Critique of Africa's Post-Colonial Freedoms through a Feminist Lens: Challenging Patriarchy and Assessing the Gains, In *African Feminism Across Generations, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 7-13*

Schilt, K., 2003, 'A Little Too Ironic: The Appropriation and Packaging of Riot Grrrl Politics by Mainstream Female Musicians,' *Popular Music and Society. 26 (1): 5-16,* Doi 10.1080/0300776032000076351

Schmidt, E., 1991, *Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Colonial State in Zimbabwe*, James Currey, London.

Schwartz, M., 2009, 'Cognitive Development and Learning: Analyzing the Building of Skills in Classrooms', *Mind, Brain, and Education, 3*(4), 198 208. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-228X.2009.01070.x.

Scott, C., J, Corra, M., & Carter, S., K, 2009, 'The Interaction of Race and Gender: Changing Gender-Role Attitudes,' 1974–2006, *Social Science Quarterly*, 90 (1): 196–211, DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-6237.2009.00611.x.

Shaw, C., M., 2015, *Women and Power in Zimbabwe: Promises of Feminism*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana.

Sheldon, K., 2013, 'Women and Colonialism' In Jean, A., Geiger, S., and Musisi, N., (eds.), 'Women in African Colonial Histories,' 04, *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 38(1):158-160, DOI: 10.2307/4107271.

Shils, M.E., Shike, M., et al., 2006*, Modern Nutrition in Health and Disease,* Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore.

Sidhu, K., S., 1984, *Methodology of Research in Education*, Sterling Publishers, Greater Noida.

Sipeyiye, M., Konyana, E.G., Chirara, T., Chimeri, D., Shoko, T., Muguti, M., Mbewe, T., Mujinga, M., Tsara, L., Munamati, S. and Machingura, F., 2022, In Chitando, E., Chirongoma, S. and Biri, K. (eds.), 2022, *Women and Religion in Zimbabwe: Strides and Struggles*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Sithole, L., & Dziva, C., 2019, 'Eliminating harmful practices against women in Zimbabwe: Implementing article 5 of the African Women's Protocol', 675-697, *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 568-590, https://doi.org/10.17159/1996-2096/2019/v19n2a1

Siwila, J., S., F., and Settler, L., C., F., 2013, 'Men Can, Should and Must Change!' An Analysis of Ezra Chitando's Writings on African Masculinities'*, Journal of Gender and Religion in Africa,* 19(2), 159-181.

Smith, Y.Y., 2016, *Mercy Amba Oduyoye.* Biola University, California.

Spencer-Oatey, H., 2012, 'What Is Culture? A Compilation of Quotations*'*, *Global PAD Core Concepts* 1, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.29603.37925.

Srivastava, K., 2017, 'Misogyny, Feminism, and Sexual Harassment,' *Industrial Psychiatry Journal,* vol. 26, no. 2, 111-113, DOI: 10.4103/ipj.ipj_32_18

Stagg, E., & Stagg, F., 1978, *Woman in the World of Jesus*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia.

Stamarski, C., S., & Leanne S. S., H., 2015, 'Gender Inequalities in the Workplace: The Effects of Organizational Structures, Processes, Practices, and Decision Makers Sexism'. *Frontiers in Psychology*, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01400

Stephen, O., Murray & Roscoe W., 1998, *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexuality,* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Strydom, H., & Reid, S., 2008, 'Research at Grassroots for the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions', *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology* 30(1), DOI:10.4102/sajip.v30i1.132.

Strydom, H., 2005, *Information Collection: Participant Observation. In Research at Grassroots: For the Social Science and Human Service Professions 2nd ed*., De Vos, A. S., (ed.), 278-290. Van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria:

Sudarikasa, 1986, Status of Women in Indigenous Africa Society*:* Feminist Studies 12, *91–103.*

Sullivan, G., (Ed), 2010, *Art practice as research: Inquiry in visual arts.* Sage Pub, California.

Testa, R.J., Sciacca, L.M., Wang, F., Hendricks, M.L., Goldblum, P., Bradford, J. and Bongar, B., 2012, 'Effects of violence on transgender people,' *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *43*(5), 452–459. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029604

The Oxford Etymological Dictionary of the English Language of 1882, 2010, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Theron, P., 2015, *Cultural Perspectives on gender equality: Preliminary indicators for the Christian church in Sub-Saharan Africa*. In Mouton, E., Kapuma, G., Hansen, L. and Togom, T., (Eds). *Living with Dignity: African perspectives on gender equality*. Sun Press, Stellenbosch, 53.

Tolbert, K., De Gruttola, V., Mann, J., Izazola-Licea, J.A., and Gortmaker, S.L., 2000, 'Prevalence of same-gender sexual behaviour and HIV in a probability household survey in Mexican men,' *Journal of Sex Research*, 37(1), 37-43.

Tolman, R.M, Rosen, D., S., and Mallinger, G., 2007, 'Intimate partner violence, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder as additional predictors of low birth weight infants among low-income mothers,' *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(10), 1305-1314.

Tong, R., 2018, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. Routledge, Oxford.

Tongco, D., C., 2007, *Purposive Sampling as a Tool for Informant Selection*, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.

Townes, E., 2003, 'Womanist Theology, *Union Seminary Quarterly Review,* Vanderbilt University, 159-176.

Townes, E.M., Gilkes, C.T., Sanders, C.J., and Cannon, K.G, 2006, 'Roundtable Discussion: Christian Ethics and Theology in Womanist Perspective (1989). The Womanist Reader, *The First Quarter Century of Womanist Thought*, 126-134.

Triandis, H. C., 1994, *'Major cultural syndromes and emotion'. In S. Kitayama & H. R. Markus (eds.),* 'Emotion and culture: Empirical studies of mutual influence,' 285-308, *American Psychological Association*, https://doi.org/10.1037/10152-008.

Tsara, L., 2019, 'Women's education and sexual reproductive health rights: a case of African apostolic indigenous churches of Tangwena area Nyanga, Zimbabwe,' PhD thesis, Dept. of Theology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Turman, M, E., 2019, 'Black women's wisdom,' *The Christian Century.* Vol. 136 Issue 6: 30–34.

Tyson, L., 2006, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide 2nd Edition,* Routledge, London.

Ugowe, D. 2022, *The impact of gender-based violence on socio-economic development in Nigeria.* Wissen Finden & publizieren, Germany.

Uchem, R.N. and Ngwa, E.S., 2014, 'Subordination of women in 21st century Africa: cultural sustainability or a new slavery? Implications for educational development,' *Journal of Developing Country Studies*, 14, 1-9

UNFPA, 2005, *Equity, Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals,* UNFPA Pub, Sunninghill.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme UN-HABITAT, 2007, *Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Planning*, UN Publishing, New York.

United Nations Women, 2010, *The World's Women 2010 Trends and Statistics*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York.

Vambe, M.T., 2013, 'Women, nation and voicing in Sharai Mukonoweshuro's Shona Novels'*. Literator: Journal of Literary Criticism, Comparative Linguistics and Literary Studies,* 34(1), 1-6, http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/lit.v34i1.20.

Van Klinken, A.S., 2013, 'Gay rights, the devil and the end times: public religion and the enchantment of the homosexuality debate in Zambia,' *Religion*, *43*(4), 519-540, DOI:10.1080/0048721X.2013.765631.

Vives-Cases, C., Briones-Vozmediano, E., Agudelo-Suarez, A.A., and Goicolea, I., 2014, 'Economic crisis, immigrant women and changing availability of intimate partner violence services: a qualitative study of professionals' perceptions in Spain*, International journal for equity in health,* 13, 1-9.

Wadesango, N., Rembe, S. and Chabaya, O., 2011, 'Violation of women's rights by harmful traditional practices,' *The Anthropologist,* 13(2), 121-129, DOI: 10.1080/09720073.2011.1189118.

Walby, 1989, Theorizing Patriarchy. *Sage Journals. 23* (2) 213-234. Doi: 10.1177/0038038589023002004.

Walby, S., 1997, *Gender Transformations*, London, Routledge.

Walker, *A., 1981, Coming Apart, You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down,* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York.

Walker, A., 1983, *Preface to in Search of our Mothers Gardens: Womanist Prose*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York.

Walker, A., 1986, *In Search of our Mother's Gardens*, Aspen Pub, New York.

Wallace, M., 2015, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, Verso Books, London.

Walliman, N., 2011, *Your research project: Designing and planning your work*. Sage Publications, California.

Wasike, A., Oduyoye, M.A. and Kanyoro, M.R., 1992, *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa,* Cluster Publications, Pietermaritzburg.

Watts, C., Ndlovu, M., Njovana E., & Keogh, E., 1997, Women, violence and HIV / AIDS in Zimbabwe. Safaids News. *Southern Africa AIDS Information Dissemination Service Bulletin*, *5*(2), 2-6.

Weems, R., 2007, *Just a Sister Away: Understanding the Timeless Connection between Women of Today and Women in the Bible*, Warner Books, New York.

Wells, J., C., 2003, *The Sabotage* of *Patriarchy* in *Colonial Rhodesia*, *Rural African Women's Living Legacy* to *Their Daughters*, James Currey, London.

Wrigley, M., 2002, Review: Tom Wengraf, 2001, 'Qualitative Research Interviewing: Biographic Narrative and Semi-Structured Method',' *Forum Qualitative Sozial forschung Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *3*(4), 11-30, https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-3.4.801

Williams, D. S., 1995, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-talk,* Orbis Books, Mary Knoll, New York.

Williams, D.S., 1997, 'Straight talk, plain talk: Womanist words about salvation in a social context. Embracing the Spirit,' *Womanist Perspectives on Hope, Salvation and Transformation*, 97-121.

Wilson, M., & Sapsford, R., 2006, *Data Collection and Analysis*, Sage Publication, London.

Witherington III, B., 1984, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus: A Study of Jesus' attitudes to women and their roles as reflected in his earthly life,* Cambridge University Press, England.

World Council of Churches, 2016, 'A Discussion with Fulata L. Moyo, World Council of Churches,' *Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace and World Affairs,* Georgetown.

World Health Organization, 1999, *Gender Violence, War and Globalization*, UN, New York.

Yoder, C., R., 2009, *Old Testament Commentaries Proverbs*. Abingdon Press. Nashville.

Young, R.J.C., 2003, *Post-colonialism: An historical introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Young, R.J., 2016, *Post-colonialism: An historical introduction*. John Wiley & Sons, New Jersey, DOI: 10.1002/9781119316817.

Zanza, C., E., 2015, 'Gender and community development: examining women's participation in gender mainstreaming community development projects in Rushinga District, Zimbabwe,' PhD thesis, University of KwaZulu Natal.

Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2009, *Zimbabwe Human Rights Report*, Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum Pub, Harare.

Zosuls, K., M., Miller, C.F., Ruble, D.N., Martin, C.L. and Fabes, R.A., 2011, *'*Gender Development Research in *Sex Roles*: Historical Trends and Future Directions,' *Journal of Sex Roles*, vol. 64, *11-12, 826-846. 2001.*

Zhou, L., Zhang, P. and Zimmermann, H.D., 2013, 'Social commerce research: An integrated view,' *Electronic commerce research and applications*, 12(2), 61-68.

Zulu, E., 2015, *Masks and the men behind them. Unmasking culturally-sanctioned gender inequality*, in E. Mouton, G. Kapuma, L. Hansen & T. Togom (eds.), *Living in dignity: African Perspectives on Gender Equality,* 81, Sun Press, Stellenbosch.

Internet Sources

AIDS-Free World, 2009, *Electing to Rape: Sexual terror in Mugabe's Zimbabwe* https://www.law.cornell.edu/women-andjustice/resource/elected_to_rape_sexual_terror_in_mugabe%27s_zimbabwe

Cassim John, 2022, *Zimbabwe's new marriage law give 'girlfriends' inheritance rights* (Published online 10/09/2022), Available at: https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/zimbabwe-s-new-marriage-law-give-girlfriends inheritancerights/2681788#:~:text=But%20now%20all%20marriages%20are,to%20resolve%2C%E2%80%9D%20added%20Zoro.

Chinwamurombe, F., and Mujaji, T., 2022, *A Reflection on the Civil Partnerships Concept in the New Marriages Act*, https://www.mondaq.com/family-law/1206658/a-reflection-on-the-civil-partnerships-concept-in-the-new-marriages-act.

Leopold Munhende: *Rushinga Zanu PF violence victims row with their chiefs in front of peace commission* (published online on (26/10/2018), last updated 10/07/2024), Available at: https://www.newzimbabwe.com/rushinga-zanu-pf-violence-victims-row-with-their-chiefs-in-front-of-peace-commission/

Longley, R., 2020, Womanist: definition and examples, (Published online on 11/09/2020), Available at: *https://www.Thoughtco. Com/womanist-feminism-definition-3528993* (Accessed on 2 November 2024)

Misihairabwi, P., *The Elephant in the Room With Milayo Ndou | Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga: Thank you for being pro-woman* (Published online 19/09/2021), Available at: https://newzwire.live/column-the-elephant-in-the-room-with-milayo-ndou-priscilla-misihairabwi-mushonga-thank-you-for-being-pro-woman/ (Accessed 6 November 2023).

SAFE Zimbabwe, Available at: https://www.sddirect.org.uk/, (Accessed 20 December 2024).

Tanzania GBV Assessment, 2022, Available at https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099155003312242676/pdf/P1760510738 8b40600a73a0ef1c83555589 (Accessed on 25 October 2023).

The Domestic Violence Act, 2007," viewed at https://www.veritaszim.net/node/146 (Accessed on 27 October 2023).

United Nations Women, 2012, Handbook for national action plans on violence against women. UNESCO Publishing, Available at: https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/7/handbook-for-national-action-plans-on-violence-against-women#:~:text (Accessed 18 May 2023).

United Nations Women, 2016, Global guidance on addressing school-related gender-based violence. UNESCO Publishing. Available at: https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/12/global-guidance-on-addressing-school-related-gender-based-violence (Accessed 26 May 2023).

UN Women, 2023, *Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/ feminicide)*, UNODC, Available at: https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/11/gender-related-killings-of-women-and-girls-femicide-feminicide-global-estimates-2022 (Accessed 17 June 2023).

Vox, L., 2021, *The Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not End the Movement for Equality,* Available at: https://www.thoughtco.com/the-civil-rights-act-of-1964-45353 (Accessed 20 April 2024).

Wilson-Harris, N., 2018, *Cruel Christians! - Church elder blasts those who use the Bible to justify abuse".* The Gleaner, Available at: https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/lead-stories/20181007/cruel-christians-church-elder-blasts-those-who-use-bible-justify-abuse (Accessed 27 April 2023).

Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe," Available at: https://www.wcoz.org/ (Accessed 20 December 2024).

World Health Organization, 2009, *World Health Statistics 2009*. World Health Organization. Available at: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241563819 (Accessed 10 February 2023).

World Health Organization, 2013, *Responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women: WHO clinical and policy guidelines*. World Health Organization. Available at: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548595 (Accessed 10 February 2023).

Zimbabwe Legal Information Institute 2016, Available at: http://www.zimlii.org/ (Accessed 21 December 2014)

Zimbabwe Women's Lawyers Association, ZWLA v Minister of Justice, Legal & Parliamentary Affairs and 4 others (13 of 2021) [2021] ZWCC 13 (9 December 2021) Available at: https://zimlii.org/akn/zw/judgment/zwcc/2021/13/eng@2021-12-09 (Accessed 16 December 2024)

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1a. Interview Questions for Women

1. In your understanding, what do you consider Gender-Based Violence?
2. In your opinion, what are the causes of GBV, generally (outside your context)?
3. In your opinion, what are the main causes of GBV in your context? Please describe your context as well.
4. Has GBV affected you?
5. Has GBV affected your family?
6. Has GBV affected the country and nation you are part of or where you live?

   If your answer to these questions is 'yes', please state what the effect has been. If the answer to your question is 'no', please state if you know someone else who has been affected by GBV. How has GBV affected you, your family, the nation, and the world?

7. What is your definition of 'culture'?
8. What is your view on the cultural expectations of women?
9. Do you think culture is fair to women?
10. What would you say it means to be 'a good wife'?
11. Is the definition of a 'good wife' determined by culture, religion, or both? Please explain.
12. Do you think women try to be good wives, according to your definition? Are there women you know that do not want to live according to that definition?

13. How do you feel about the social norms and practices that support GBV?
14. What are your feelings towards attitudes and behaviours that classify women as second-class citizens?
15. How do you feel about what you have gone through, and what is your advice to people going through GBV?
16. What do you think must be the role of the Church and other civil societies and what kind of support must GBV victims get from them?
17. What kind of social support would you like to receive?
18. How do you feel towards the perpetrators of GBV?
19. How do you feel about women?
20. How do you feel about the Zimbabwean law towards perpetrators of violence? Do you think they are punished enough?
21. What, in your thinking must be the intervention methods to prevent GBV?
22. How do you feel about COVID-19 and its effect on GBV?

Appendix 1b: Shona Translation

1. Sekunzwisisa kwenyu, chii chinonzi GBV?
2. Muono wenyu ndeupi pamusoro peGBV?
3. Sekufunga kwenyu, ndezvipi zvinokonzera kushungurudzwa kwevanhukadzi?
4. Mukufunga kwenyu, GBV ndezvipi zvinokonzereswa kana zvinouya kana pachinge paitika mhirizhonga kubvira pachikero chemhuri, seraini, senyika uye sepasi rese?
5. Munoona sei tsika nemagariro echiShona nezvinotarisirwa munhukadzi kuti aite pamusha? Tsika iyi haidzvinyiriri vanhukadzi here?
6. Imi mane nguva yakadii muchishungurudzwa?
7. Imhando ipi yemhirizhonga yamunosangana kna yamakasangana nayo?
8. Saka pakushungurudzwa kwese uku, makamboendesa nyaya iyi here kumapurisa kana kudare remutemo? Kana makaenda, ndezvipi zvakabuda? Kana musati mamhan'ara nemhaka yei musati?
9. Hukama huri pakati penyu neanokushungurudzai hwakamira sei?

10. Bumbiro remutemo rinotarisa kodzero dzevakadzi muno muZimbabwe munoriona sei?
11. Ko iro bumbiro rinotaura nezve vanoshungurudza vanhukadzi munoriona sei uye kufunga kwenyu vanhu ava vanoripa mhosva dzavo kwazvo here kana mutongo wavo wakaringana here?
12. Ko dziSvondo kana makereke arikuita here nomazvo basa ravo kuti vadzivirire vanhukadzi mukushungurudzwa?
13. Mukuona kwenyu kereke dziri kuita basa here?
14. Ivo vanoshungurudza vanhukadzi, munofunga kuti vanofanirwa kuitwa sei?
15. Kuitira kuti muenderere mberi nehupenyu, sezvamunofanira kuita, ndezvipi zvamunoda kuona zvichiitwa kune vanoshungurudza vanhukadzi?

Appendix 2a: Interview Questions for Men

1. In your own understanding, what do you consider as Gender-Based Violence?
2. Has GBV affected the country and nation you are part of, or where you live?
3. If your answer to these questions is ‘yes’, please state what the effect has been. If the answer to your question is ‘no’, please state if you know of someone else who has been affected by GBV. How has GBV affected you, your family, the nation, and the world?
4. What is your view on the cultural expectations of women?
5. Do you think culture is fair to women?
6. What would you say it means to be ‘a good wife’?
7. How do you feel about the social norms and practices that support GBV?
8. What do you think must be the role of the Church and other civil societies and what kind of support must GBV victims get from them?
9. How do you feel towards the perpetrators of GBV?
10. How do you feel about the Zimbabwean law towards perpetrators of violence? Do you think they are punished enough?
11. What, in your thinking must be the intervention methods to prevent GBV?
12. How do you feel about COVID-19 and its effect on GBV?

Appendix 2b: Shona Translation

1. Sekunzwisisa kwenyu, chii chinonzi GBV?

2. Mukufunga kwenyu, GBV ndezvipi zvinokonzereswa kana zvinouya kana pachinge paitika mhirizhonga kubvira pachikero chemhuri, seraini, senyika uye sepasi rese?

3. Munoona sei tsika nemagariro echiShona nezvinotarisirwa munhukadzi kuti aite pamusha? Tsika iyi haidzvinyiriri vanhukadzi here?

4. Bumbiro remutemo rinotarisa kodzero dzevakadzi muno muZimbabwe munoriona sei?

5. Ko iro bumbiro rinotaura nezve vanoshungurudza vanhukadzi munoriona sei uye kufunga kwenyu vanhu ava vanoripa mhosva dzavo kwazvo here kana mutongo wavo wakaringana here?

6. Ko dziSvondo kana makereke arikuita here nomazvo basa ravo kuti vadzivirire vanhukadzi mukushungurudzwa?

7. Mukuona kwenyu kereke dziri kuita basa here?

8. Ivo vanoshungurudza vanhukadzi, munofunga kuti vanofanirwa kuitwa sei?

9. Kuitira kuti muenderere mberi nehupenyu, sezvamunofanira kuita, ndezvipi zvamunoda kuona zvichiitwa kune vanoshungurudza vanhukadzi?

Appendix 3a: English Briefing and Consent Letter to the Participants

Faculty of Theology and Religion

Department of Systematic Theology

University of Pretoria, Hatfield,

Republic of South Africa.

Dear participant

My name is Tsitsi Mwapfaa. I am currently registered for a PhD in Systematic Theology at the Universityof Pretoria. My contact details are: Cell. Number: +263775852367; E-mail:tmwapfaa@gmail.com; Postal address: No. 2863, Glaudina, Harare.

My thesis is titled “A Good Wife? A Theological Challenge to Cultural Practices and Gender-Based Violence in Rushinga, Zimbabwe. My supervisor is Prof .T VanWyk and her email is

tanya.vanwyk@up.ac.za. Please feel free to contact her if need arises on your side based on your participation in this study.

This study seeks to explore traditional and cultural practices which exacerbate violence toward women and suggest responses to violence against women. The choice of research is informed by the observation and my experience that many women and girls are exposed to violence because of traditional and cultural practices that surround them.

In light of the above, I would greatly appreciate it if you afford me time to interview you or participate in a focus group discussion. If you are willing to participate please sign the declarationbelow. For any further enquiries, you are free to contact my supervisor whose contacts are above.

Yours,

Tsitsi Mwapfaa

Appendix 3b. Shona Translation: Tsamba Yechibvumirano

Faculty of Theology and Religion
Department of Systematic Theology
University of Pretoria, Hatfield,
Republic of South Africa.

Kune Mubvunzwi
Zita rangu ndinonzi Tsitsi Mwapfaa ndiri mudzidzi we chidzidzo che PhD pa Univesity yePretoria ku South Africa. Nhamba dzangu dzenharembozha dzandinobatika ndedzinoti +263775852367. Kero yemasaisai edandemutande yangu inoti: tmwapfaa@gmail.com; kero yepamba pandinogara inoti Nhamba. 2863, Glaudina, Harare Harare

Musoro wenyaya wandirikunyora nezvavo unoti: “Mukadzi chaiye” Ndakatarisana nechivanhu netsika nemagarire evanhu nemhirizhonga dzinosanganikwa nadzo nemadzimai muZimbabwe kunyanya muRushinga. Murairidzi wangu arikundibatsira pakuongorora nyaya iyi anonzi Muzvinafundo Tanya Van Wyk. Kero yavo yemasaisai edandemutande inoti tanya.vanwyk@up.ac.za.

Chidzidzo ichi chirikuda kutsvakurudza kuti chivanhu chedu netsika dzemuZimbabwe

dziri kukonzera zvakadii mukushungurudzwa mevanhukadzi, uye ndezvipi zvingaitwa kuti dambudziko iri rigadziriswe.Musoro wenyaya yangu ndakautsvaga mushure mekuona kuti vanhukadzi nevanasikana vazhinji vari kushungurudzwa zvakanyanya vanhu vachihwanda nekuti chivanhu chedu chinoti zvakati.

Nekuda kwetsananguro yandapa pamusoro apo ndingafara chose mukandipawo nguva yenyu yekukurukura nemi uye pandichazodawo kutaura nemi muri chikwata. Kana mandibvumidzawo kukurukurirana nemi ndinyorereiwo siginicha yenyu nezita renyu pazasi apo. Kana pane zvimwezvamunoda kuziva pamusoro pangu makasununguka kutaura nemudzidzisi wangu wandakupai.

Wenyu

Tsitsi Mwapfaa

Appendix 4a Declaration by Participants

DECLARATION

I (….....) have read the above information and

hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the researchproject. I therefore agree to participate in this study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I

so desire.I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview	YES
Audio and video-record focus group discussion	NO

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT	DATE
……	……..

Appendix 4b Shona Translation

(Ini……..) ndawerenga zviripamusoro ndikabvumirana nazvo zvese nezvirikubvunzwa pamusoro wenyaya wakasarudzwa uyu. Ndinobvuma kubatirana netsvakurudzo iyi.

Ndazvinzwisisa kuti ndinobvumirwa kurega hurukuro

pandodira.Ndirikubvuma kurekodhwa	Ehe
Kurekodhwazve munhaurirano nevamwe	Ehe
Siginicha yemubvunzwi	Zuva
……	……..

Appendix 5: Village Head Letter Granting Permission to undertake a study in His Area

To The Village Head

Ward8

Rushinga

6 July 2023

Ref: Permission to Carry out a Research in your area.

My name is Tsitsi Mwapfaa, a PhD Student at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. I seek authorization from your office to carry out a research oh how traditional and cultural practices foster the violence of women and girls in Rushinga. The research is purely for academic purposes.

I am looking forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

THE -HEAD BHOBHav/·
C:HIEFMAm.
t ARD t

Tsitsi Mwapfaa

Appendix 6: Ethical Clearance Letter from the University of Pretoria

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Theology and Religion

Research Office
Mrs Daleen Kotzé

15 February 2023

NAME:	Ms T Mwapfaa
STUDENT NUMBER:	22624946
COURSE:	Doctoral
DATE:	15 February 2023
APPLICATION NUMBER:	T104/22

This letter serves as confirmation that the research proposal of this student was evaluated by:

1) **The Research committee**: This applies to all research proposals
2) **The Research Ethics committee**: This applies only to research that includes people as sources of information

You are hereby notified that your research proposal (including ethical clearance where it is applicable) is approved.

Dr JW Beukes
Chairperson: Research committee: Faculty of Theology and Religion

Prof T van Wyk
Chairperson: Research Ethics committee: Faculty of Theology and Religion

Appendix 7: Map of Kore-Kore Peoples