

**SOCIO-CULTURAL DYNAMICS INFLUENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN
NYERI COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Conferment of
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Peace and Conflict Studies of Masinde Muliro
University of Science and Technology**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work prepared with no other than the indicated sources and support, and has not been presented elsewhere for a degree or any other award.

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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned supervisors certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology a thesis entitled '**Socio-cultural Dynamics Influencing Domestic Violence in Nyeri County, Kenya**'.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Mr. Christie Macharia Kimotho and Mrs. Penninah Wanjiru Macharia, and to my sons Welvex Macharia and Powell Gitahi.

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ABSTRACT

Domestic violence is a violation of human rights and should not be condoned. Nyeri County has experienced tremendous development, and therefore, changes in terms of education, occupation, economic activities, making it one of the richest counties in Kenya. With these changes in society, there is high level of education, strong cultural adjustments, economic endowment, and the expectation is that there should be harmony in the homes. To the contrary, there is a lot of domestic violence as captured by scholars and the media. Therefore, this study intended to answer the question “why” by interrogating the influence of socio-cultural dynamics on this domestic violence. The specific objectives of the study were to: Examine the nature of domestic violence; evaluate the nexus between socio-cultural dynamics and domestic violence; and assess the challenges and opportunities resulting from domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya. The study was underpinned by the frustration-aggression theory and the social learning theory. Descriptive and evaluative research designs were used. The study was conducted in Nyeri County which has a population of 759,164. The study used random, purposive, convenience and census sampling techniques. The following respondents were sampled to participate in the study: 384 household heads, 12 assistant chiefs, 15 police officers, 30 religious leaders, 12 NGOs/CBOs, 3 Sub-county administrators, and 20 village elders. Primary methods of data collection were questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 25 to give frequency distribution, means and percentages, and findings were presented using tables, graphs, and charts. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic narrations, and findings were presented using narrations and descriptions. The results show that 84% of the respondents had witnessed violence, while 16% had not. According to the results, 67% of the perpetrators were men, while only 33% were females. Verbal insults are major form of domestic violence manifestation. Domestic violence also manifests through financial deprivation, psychologically and through female genital mutilation. The study found out that the main socio-cultural factors that influence domestic violence are chauvinism, gender role exchange, alcoholism, and the MAU MAU impact. Challenges to domestic violence include lack of political will 16%, modernity 15%, influence of social media 20%, societal victimization 29%, and high poverty levels 20%. There arises some opportunities to enhancing resolution of domestic violence such as boosting moral values, strengthening the justice system, enactment of social programs and sensitization, psychosocial support, boy-child empowerment, indigenous methods, intervention of religious leaders, intervention of police, community policing, and intervention by public administration. Generally, the study concludes that socio-cultural dynamics; alcoholism, chauvinism, change of gender roles, education levels, stereotypes, MAU MAU impact, and land inheritance issues influence domestic violence in Nyeri county; however, such changes in the society were expected to bring peace and harmony among families in Nyeri County, but unfortunately this is not the case. It is recommended that both men and women should be empowered in Nyeri County. Further, the study recommends that there should be sensitization in the study area to help people utilize the positive changes in the society such as high education levels to make a harmonious society instead of using it to fight among spouses. Also, the study recommends that the government, civil society, and the general public should work together to end domestic violence in the county as it is a major threat to human rights.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACWF	All china Women’s Federation
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CEDOVIP	Center for Domestic Violence Prevention
CJPC	Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
DM	Domestic Violence
DVAM	Domestic Violence Against Men
ELA	Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents
FGDS	Focus Group Discussions
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender based Violence
GBVAM	Gender-based violence against men
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
JPRC	Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Committee
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MAWA	<i>Maendeleo ya Wanaume</i>
MRC	Medical Research Council (South Africa)

NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation
NGEC	National Gender Equality Commission
NGOS	Non-governmental Organizations
OCS	Officer Commanding Station
PCEA	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
SACAP	South Africa Medical Research Council
SLF	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
SPPS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
VAW	Violence against Women
WHO	World Health Organization
WRAP	Women’s Rights Awareness Programme

OPERATIONALISATION OF KEY TERMS

Conflict Management Strategies: Refers to methods of resolving disputes between two or more parties, especially couples.

Conflict Management: The term is used to mean the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim of conflict resolution is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in an organizational setting.

Cultural: It denotes elements or forces related to people's way of life in a given society.

Domestic violence: Domestic violence refers to behavioral pattern that involves violence perpetrated by one partner against his/her intimate partner, within a family, cohabitation, marriage, or a dating relationship/courtship.

Families: Families refer to a group of people living together consisting of partners, their children and other relatives.

Gender: Gender is used to refer to either women or men, as they are structured by the society depending in the roles they are assigned.

Social: It describes interpersonal interactions and relationships between men and women in a particular society.

Socio-cultural dynamics: These are changes that combine social and cultural aspects. They relate to the ever-changing combination of social and people's way of life in a particular society.

Socio-cultural: According to this study, it relates to a conglomeration of both international interactions aided by cultural forces.

Violence: Refers to any form of coercion either intentional or deliberate with a motive of inflicting physical, sexual and psychological harm.

Vulnerability: This is used to refer to the diminished capacity of an individual or group to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural or man-made hazard. It is the relative ability of a community to bounce back in the aftermath of a disaster.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a background to the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, and the research questions. It further presents the justification of the study which includes policy, academic and philosophical justifications. The scope of the study is also given, and a chapter summary.

1.1 Background to the Study

Domestic violence has for many years been stereotyped as violence against women. Definitions of GBV directly or indirectly points women as the victims, while men are perpetrators. Majority of the world societies are patriarchal (The World March of Women Advocacy, 2004). Thus, the men are given responsibilities of making decisions that the women cannot question. In most traditional societies, men created rules that have to be followed by the women and children (Shell & Henlund, 2000). This included disciplining women through actions that are not friendly to them. Thus, women mostly emerged as the victims of domestic violence (Salami, 2010).

In 1993, the UN General Assembly defined GBV as actions that cause psychological, sexual and physical harm to women. The UN further indicated that gender-based violence is a manifestation of inequality in power relations. It oppresses the women and should be prevented (United Nations, 1993). The Beijing Platform for Action (2015) further explored the same definition and added that gender-based violence includes breach of women rights during wars, where the women are raped, forced to abort, with cases of

coerced sterilization, female infanticide and forced use of contraceptives. The men force their intimate partners to do things that are inhuman without their consent. The report also pointed out that women who are vulnerable to GBV are the poor, young adults, the elderly, and the illiterate ones (Beijing Platform for Action, 2015). They do not have a voice in the society, and they have no power to object what the men in their lives dictate. Thus, they live under oppression as they have to accept the decisions and actions of their spouses irrespective of their humiliating nature.

According to Njenga (2008), domestic violence occurs at all societal levels and within all societal classes. Thus, it can occur to infants, children, adolescents, young adults, adults, and the elderly. It can occur at home, learning institutions, and on the streets (Njenga, 2008). The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2014) adds that it takes several forms that encompasses varying actions which violate human rights such as verbal abuse, sexual molestation, physical aggression, threats, intimidation, economic deprivation, and emotional abuse among others (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2014).

On the other hand, the term domestic violence which is also referred to as intimate partner violence (IPV), domestic violence, battering, spousal abuse, dating abuse, and family abuse is a behavioral pattern that involves violence perpetrated by one partner against his/her intimate partner, within a family, a cohabitation, marriage, or a dating relationship/courtship (Hoelmes & Bhuvendndra, 2014). Traditionally, domestic violence has been occurring against women across all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The society forces women to accept, rationalize, and tolerate violence against them, and remain silent. They should not talk about their experiences even if they are emotionally, physically, and psychologically tortured (Mongare, Obonyo & Parsitau, 2018).

Domestic violence has remained a persistent problem in the United States of America (USA) for quite a long time, making it an endemic in most American societies. Recent statistics have shown that nearly 10 million adults experience domestic violence annually with women and girls being the most affected group (NCADV, 2020). Domestic violence has greatly impacted both genders because abuses or victims stem from either gender. Regarding this, numerous factors have been found culpable of exacerbating the already dire situation and they include but are not limited to education level, stereotype, cultural practices as well as the history of marital violence of either the victim or the abuser's family genesis. To unravel the sociocultural dynamics that fuel domestic violence, Pan *et al.* (2006) conducted a study that targeted immigrants from the city of San Diego in the State of California. Three communities namely; Somali, Latino and Vietnamese were sampled through a needs assessment strategy. The study established that domestic violence was a grave concern across the three communities with many participants acknowledging its frequent occurrences. Similarly, the sampled communities perceived domestic violence as intergenerational and mainly focused on the physical aspect of violence. For instance, in the Somali culture, domestic violence is limited to physical violence and implicates all family members. The changing gender roles were found as the greatest contributor to persistent domestic violence across Somali families, a factor that was attributed to the alteration of the power dynamics upon securing refuge in the United States (Pan, *et al.*, 2006). The US immigration laws tend to be favourable to women than men which in turn makes men feel helpless and useless owing to the fear of losing their stature as breadwinners, making most of them resort to violence to reclaim their lost control over the family. For the Vietnamese, domestic violence is seen as a

confidential family matter that is not disposable. The study established that the persistent domestic violence across Vietnamese families was a result of economic stressors that widened the economic inequality of both genders. On the other hand, Latinos reported gradually changing gender roles as the greatest contributor to domestic violence. In a nutshell, the study linked the persistent domestic violence, especially among the migrants to some sociocultural dynamics such as strict gender roles, unemployment, cultural identity, and spirituality among others (Pan *et al.*, 2006). A similar picture is painted on the typical households of the Americans with most of these dynamics playing a huge role in perpetuating the menace of domestic violence.

The African continent has not been insulated from the rippling devastations of domestic violence, especially on women. Notably, all the African regions have had a fair share of such violence that ever since has impeded the socio-economic development of a swath of the continent. Quite a similar picture is painted in the Middle East as highlighted in the correlational study by Kisa *et al.* (2021). The study noted that domestic violence, especially violence against women remains a common phenomenon in both Northern Africa and Middle Eastern countries and serves as an impediment to women's equality, and security vis-à-vis their legitimate right to enjoy fundamental freedoms. The study revealed that the regions consisted of a multi-ethnic society that was mostly patriarchal. The study notes that women are disadvantaged by the masculine nature of their societies, rendering them vulnerable to domestic violence. For instance, countries like the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia embed religious rules in their national laws which have huge impacts on women's perception of domestic violence. Additionally, high illiteracy, pervasive poverty, and low family labour force among

others have contributed to the high prevalence of domestic violence in both regions. This is further worsened by the conservative and widespread masculine gender attitudes which significantly impact the status of women. In Northern Africa, domestic violence is inherently linked to the structure of the family. Precisely, the region is largely patriarchal with family serving as a realm of male domination, with women's roles reduced to child education and rearing. However, owing to the societal changes that empowered women through education and job accessibility culminated in a new wave of conflict within the family which was accompanied by new gender negotiations within the family set-up (Kisa *et al.* (2021). The situation was worsened by the combination of economic stagnation, unemployment and superficial form of religiosity ushered in a period of masculinity crisis in the region which in turn led to intense violence, especially domestic violence (Gichango, 2020). In West Africa, especially Nigeria, domestic violence has been on the rise. Traditionally, like many African countries, most of the domestic societies consider wife beating and children as a form of instilling discipline. This is largely necessitated by the over-dependence of women on men for survival. Additionally, the societies are largely patriarchal which has dealt a blow to women who are considered subordinate. Domestic violence is regarded as a means of enforcing conformity to societal norms. This is further enabled by the privatisation of domestic violence across most societies in the Nigerian societies thus, such violence has been shielded from external scrutiny (Mutahi, 2017). Consequently, the persistent culture of silence over domestic violence strengthens stigmatisation rather than condemning the perpetrator of such crimes. Such among other factors have made domestic violence thrive in most of the Nigerian societies, making it an endemic problem.

The changes in the societal constructions, literacy levels and globalization have made the societal roles to adjust. Men, who were traditionally the heads and the discipline masters in the society, are also becoming victims of GBV. They suffer violence from their intimate partners, and are sometimes even killed in the process. In 2007, there was the introduction of men as victims of GBV in Kenya. Boys and men were officially declared as potential victims of GBV in the constitution, in the Sexual Offense Act no 3 (GoK, 2007). GVRC (2014) adopts the inclusion of men and boys as victims of GBV and states that gender-based violence includes all acts that violate the rights of men because they are men and women because they are women. Kenya Demographic Survey (2014) was the first research institute to document research on gender-based violence against men. The report pointed out that GBVAM was hitting the airwaves in an alarming rate that required national attention. According to Mutahi (2017), all regions in Kenya experience domestic violence against men. However, the report further indicated that the media was focusing on Nyeri County in a way that requires further investigation to assess the prevalence of GBVAM in Central Kenya (Kenya Demographic Survey, 2014).

Since the patriarchal society places the man as the head of the family, it becomes hard for men to report cases of violence whenever they are the victims. Cultural stereotypes make it practically hard for men to report that they are being battered by their partners in intimate relationships (Mutahi, 2017). They are the heads of the families, and thus they should lead. They feel that it is embarrassing to be victims, rather than perpetrators. Mongare *et al.* (2018) argues that the civil society agents and the government have failed to do enough in sensitizing the society on the causes, existence, effects, and prevention of domestic violence against men. Mucheru (2014) adds that the government has failed to

create public awareness on the economic impacts of domestic violence which leads to financial strains, misuse of finances, stress, depression and even suicide (Mucheru , 2014). In this case, there is need to insist the role the government should play to curb GBV.

The *Maendeleo ya Wanaume* (MAWA), which is a watchdog of GBVAM in Kenya reports that the cases of violence against men in the country have reached alarming levels. In 2009, MAWA records showed that 1.5 million men were harassed by their intimate partners on daily basis. In 2013, the number had increased to 2.1 million nationally (Daily Nation, 2013). Nderitu Njoka, who is the MAWA Chairman, points out that these levels raise a red flag considering the forms and manner in which husband battering takes. It humiliates the man, who should be the family head in a patriarchal society such as Kenya. Apart from infliction of bodily harm, violence against men also include sexual harassment, denying the man the cultural role of heading the family, forcing men to do menial chores such as baby-sitting, cooking and laundry among others which are traditionally viewed as female chores. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2014) adds that humiliating the male partner and intimidating him is also part of GBVAM.

The social cultural dynamics in Nyeri County have created an environment that breeds domestic violence. Firstly, as Cagnolo (2006) notes, the Agikuyu community was matriarchal. Women were highly ranked in the community. In fact, all the clans are named after the nine daughters, making every member of the community to identify with a woman. In this case, women were the leaders in the society, and even in the homes. The men started to fight for their space in the early 1990s after interacting with other tribes

such as the Akamba, Ameru and Masaai who had a patriarchal structure (Cagnolo, 2006). It is practically hard to fight a war that is culturally instilled in the social structures. Thus, as men try to fight an already established strong woman, conflicts arise.

In addition, Nyeri County is ranked the highest educated county in central region (KNBS & SID, 2013). In fact, one of the sub counties in Nyeri, Mathira Sub-county, is referred to as *Mathira ya Githomo* (Educated Mathira). The missionaries encouraged parents to take their children to school, and majority of the girls benefited. The education that women in Nyeri acquired empowered them. The boy child was abandoned as the girl child continued to shine. Considering the cultural structures, the educated women became more powerful (Salami, 2010). The women learned that they could live independently, without depending on men for financial assistance. In this case, Nyeri has the second highest number of single women in the country, after Nairobi County (KNBS & SID, 2013). Women who are married do not fear quitting their marriages as they see many other women surviving on their own. Men, on the other hand, are aware that the women are empowered. Consequently, a minor domestic disagreement finds a prepared man who is ready to fight back and win the battle. Thus, domestic violence in the county escalates.

Nyeri County is featured more in the news than other counties. Njoroge (2016) argues that the media is stereotypical. All the media stations analyzed in a study conducted between 2012 and 2015 showed that they had reported too many cases in Nyeri as compared to the other counties. The three media stations analyzed by Njoroge (2016) confirm the same. According to the Kenya Demographic & Health Survey (2014), Kenya has reported many cases in GBV. Media reports GBVAM in Nyeri County in a humorous tone. The tone used in packaging the stories, fails to capture the seriousness that the topic

deserves with the media using the topic as a comic relief. There is no follow-up for the GBVAM cases. Proper analysis that should follow them is usually absent. Consequently, the victims and perpetrators are left with no assistance to help them recover.

Njoroge (2016) and Mucheru (2014) argue that the cases reported in Nyeri are very many. The cases are also very serious, unlike in other counties where the cases are rarely reported, and if reported, there are hardly serious allegations like the ones in Nyeri County. The continuous reporting that is done by media houses shows that there is a serious problem in the county. Since 2010, the media has increasingly reported domestic violence in Nyeri County. On 6th February 2012, the media reported a case of a 40 year old man, Simon Kiguta, who was seriously attacked and injured by the wife, Julia Wairimu. The couple had been married for 12 years and lived in Mihuti Village, Mukurwe-ini Sub-County, Nyeri. Citizen TV reported that Kiguta came home drunk, and the wife attacked him with a machete. He was hospitalized as he had deep wounds on his body.

In another case, a woman named Alice Njeri was arrested on June 2015 in Belleview village, Kieni Sub County for chopping off her husband's private parts. The husband, Daniel King'ori was admitted at Nyeri Level Five Hospital with life-threatening injuries. The couple was reported to disagree because of financial mismanagement. KTN Television reported that on 5th June, Njeri claimed that King'ori was misusing the hard-earned money that they acquired from the farm. King'ori was alleged of using the money they had sold onions to enjoy liquor at Kiawara Shopping Centre (Njoroge, 2016). Njeri also claimed that King'ori had an affair as she had seen a packet of condoms from the husband's pocket, and that is why she chopped off his private parts.

Nyeri County is one of the richest counties in Kenya, and this can be attributed to the changes that have occurred in the community such as economic empowerment, high literacy rates, and also due to the industrious culture and horticultural farming zeal among the residents. This means that there has been always a good flow of income in that region. With all the resources in the region, it can be deduced that people do not struggle to get basic things such as food, shelter, and education among other critical things for survival. According to Muhindi (2012), Nyeri is one of the counties with the highest educated individuals in Kenya. Education in the region has brought about cultural adjustment and economic empowerment. Unlike in other counties in Kenya, women in the region have also been in the forefront of becoming educated for better means of living. With all this in place, the general society has set some expectations which are normally common among the educated and economically stable societies. One of the expectations was that there will be harmony at homes within Nyeri County. Contrary to the expectations, Nyeri has experienced an increase in domestic violence. Bitrus-Ojiambo & King'ori (2016) argue that a high level of education brings about competition between the father and mother in the house because each of them wants to have a say. Such competition causes unnecessary disagreement and might lead to violence in the house. Scholars such as Bitrus-Ojiambo & King'ori (2016) and some media houses in Kenya have clearly indicated that despite the high level of education and economic stability in Nyeri County, domestic violence still exists. Therefore, it is of prime interest for this study to answer the question of “why” by interrogating the influence of social-cultural dynamics on domestic violence.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Nyeri County, the high prevalence of domestic violence is far from receding. Notably, Nyeri is one of the Kenyan counties that have and continue to post a remarkable stellar economic performance. It has experienced tremendous development, and therefore, changes in terms of education, occupation, and economic activities, making it one of the richest counties in Kenya. With these changes in society, there is a high level of education which has highly contributed to the holistic empowerment of both genders, thus making some of the women secure the most stable jobs that were primarily held by men, cultural adjustments which have seen the decline in male domination, exchange of gender roles among others. Notably, cultural adjustments have imprinted severe changes in the feminine perception which in turn has influenced the dynamics of domestic violence. Again, economic endowment and empowerment have contributed significantly to the independence of both genders since even women have become a reckoning force in various economic sectors that drive the development of the county.

These among other factors ought to be a clear expectation that peaceful coexistence should be the order of the day and that peace and tranquillity should prevail in all homesteads. On the contrary, there is a lot of domestic violence as captured by scholars and the media. Scholars have conducted significant research to ascertain the validity of increased domestic violence in the county; with the media being the voice to the outside world as it unearths the brutalities perpetrated by spouses to their intimate partners. Therefore, this study intends to answer the question “why” by interrogating the influence of socio-cultural dynamics on domestic violence.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to interrogate the socio-cultural dynamics-influence on domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- (i) To examine the nature of domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya.
- (ii) To evaluate the nexus between socio-cultural dynamics and domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya.
- (iii) To assess the challenges and opportunities of domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya.

1.4 Research Questions

- (i) What is the nature of domestic violence in Nyeri County?
- (ii) What is the nexus between socio-cultural dynamics and domestic violence in Nyeri County?
- (ii) What are the challenges and opportunities of domestic violence in Nyeri County?

1.5 Justification of the Study

1.5.1 Policy Justification

It is practically impossible to completely avoid conflict, thus the notion that conflicts are inevitable. In this case, policy makers should put in place strategies on managing conflicts to help the society live harmoniously. According to Mwakiru (2006), conflicts are quite vital for the co-existence of any society. Healthy conflicts bear positive fruits

that bring progress, tranquility and peace in every society, nation, country or region. The conflict in Nyeri County resulting from domestic violence has turned out to be negative. There are real and perceived threats from the Nyeri woman that make the man to retaliate (Mutahi, 2017). The man fights back and finds a woman who is empowered by the society to remain strong. The two genders are in continuous conflict that requires assistance to bring peace. Thus, this study examined the socio-cultural factors influencing domestic violence in Nyeri with an aim of restoring peace in the families.

The study examined the nature of domestic violence in Nyeri County. It used the prevalence of the conflict in order to come up with recommendations to reduce the suffering of the victims of domestic violence. It investigated the nexus between the socio-cultural dynamics and domestic violence and revealed the factors that contribute to the conflict and escalate it. Consequently, the study gives relevant recommendations on what should be done to mitigate the conflicts and prevent recurrence. Further, the study evaluated the strategies and challenges of enhancing domestic violence prevention to give the stakeholders a scientific view that they can apply in making effective policies. The media, which has greatly influenced the society into stereotyping the Nyeri woman, also understands the harm it has done to the Nyeri County community. Thus, the media houses will take the necessary measures to ensure they air the news of GBVAM with the caution and seriousness it deserves.

The research findings shall be used to sensitize the general public especially the local community on the importance of peaceful co-existence. The research findings are aimed at creating awareness to the members of the public so that they can accord harmony the respect it deserves (commands) as well as highlighting to them the negative effects of

conflict in general. It also provides relevant information to stakeholders such as NGOs and CBOs who operate within Nyeri County so that they can assist the affected residents, and try to address their needs properly. The findings and recommendations from the case under study are used to identify suitable management strategies within the study area and the entire republic at large.

Since domestic violence affects the entire Kikuyu community, the research recommendations can be used by the National and county governments respectively to formulate policies. In this way, the government policy makers and implementers can come up with policies that can assist in stamping out conflicts which are unnecessary and those that do not add value to the livelihoods of the residents wherever they are in the republic of Kenya and especially in the central region and Nairobi County.

1.5.2 Academic Justification

Academically, this study aimed at filling academic gaps in knowledge that had not been filled. Several scholars have investigated domestic violence in the Central region, with a few focusing on Nyeri County. Nonetheless, none of the studies had concentrated on socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence in Nyeri County. In this case, considering the increased number of reported cases of domestic violence in the study area, there was a need to conduct the study so as to fill this research gap.

Mongare, Obonyo and Parsitau (2018) investigated the effects of domestic violence towards men, focusing on Kiambu County. Their study sought to establish the existence, prevalence, and factors that promote GBV against men in Kiambu County. However, the study did not include women, as it focused on GBVAM. The current study was inclusive

as it examined the socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence in Nyeri. It focused on domestic violence against both men and women.

Njoroge (2016) conducted a study on the evaluation of television news in framing domestic violence against men in Nyeri County. The study focused on the frequency of airing domestic violence against men, and the frames that the media houses use. However, this study did not investigate the factors or dynamics that make Nyeri County to feature more than all other regions, and this is what the current study investigated. Further, Njroge (2016) only concentrated on GBVAM and left the women, who are also suffering as victims of the same.

Mutahi (2017) studied the factors contributing to domestic violence against male partners in Kenya. He did a case study of the rural Nyeri County. This study touched on the influence of women socio-economic empowerment on domestic violence. However, it did not assess the socio-cultural dynamics influence on domestic violence. Also, the study did not attempt to look into strategies that can help resolve GBV in Nyeri County, whereas the current study sought to fill such gaps.

There is also academic justification in that the findings and recommendations from the research study will benefit the academicians/scholars who review the literature on the socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence in Central Kenya, with a view of discovering new knowledge and gaps for further research on the subject under study. The research findings and recommendations can be used to predict future occurrence of the same conflict problems by the respective conflict departments/managers, and even conflict agencies. In this case, the prediction of future conflict occurrences will be known

and proactive measures put in place to curb the occurrence of the same and for better management of domestic conflicts.

1.5.3 Philosophical Justification

The study adopted interpretivism approach. As one of the philosophical approaches to research, its origin is traceable in the early 20th century and it emerged as a contestation to the positivism approach. It has its intellectual roots in the Chicago School of Sociology championed by influential and famous scholars such as Max Weber, Cooley, Goffman, Bulner and Mead among other prominent scholars. The approach mainly involves the interpretation of the study elements thus incorporating human interests into study. According to this approach, the possible way to reality accessibility is through social perceptions including language, shared meanings and consciousness. The approach is interlinked to the philosophy of idealism that champions among other things freedoms and is utilized to reinforce diverse approaches including phenomenology, hermeneutics and social construction. This approach employs numerous methods of data collection to attain a perceptual diversity of the issue of study. Additionally, it largely employs qualitative data that is contextualized. This makes it a knowledge subjective approach since it largely relies on the extraction of people's opinions, cultural beliefs, social values and personal experiences thus making it a people-centred approach (Williams, 2000).

In the context of the study, interpretivism social and cultural dynamics are largely influenced by the people. Imperatively, to harness crucial information on these dynamics, people must be fully incorporated into the study. In light of this, the approach helps deduce people's knowledge and understanding of the nature and causes of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Accordingly, given the flexibility of this approach, especially

in the data collection methods, it enables the researcher to utilise various types of data collection merging that is people-centred with the motive of gaining a deeper understanding of the research topic based on the people's experiences, beliefs and values. Again, the approach fits the study since domestic violence involves people making their opinions to be a necessity of the research. Therefore, the interpretivism approach applies to the study since it incorporates people's opinions which are essential to the understanding of the persistent nature of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Furthermore, interpretivism is a people-centred approach to research study which makes the most applicable philosophical justification since domestic violence involves people whose opinions and beliefs are instrumental in harnessing the magnitude of the menace in Nyeri County. Also, it is anchored on social interaction which was beneficial to the study since it helped in ascertaining the trends in domestic violence in the study area since the menace was mainly fuelled through social mingling.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focused on Nyeri County, Kenya, with an objective of examining the socio-cultural factors influencing domestic violence in the study area. The study covered all the Sub-Counties in Nyeri County. The periodization of the research study dates from 2010 to 2022. The year 2010 is selected because it is the time the media started reporting many cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County. In addition, 2022 was selected because it is the year the study was conducted and cases are continuously being reported. The span of 10 years gave answers to the research questions. The target populations included household heads, village elders, National Police Service, religious leaders and Non-Governmental Organizations. The data was collected using the appropriate tools to

collect data; Questionnaires, Interviews Schedules, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Observation checklists. Data collection was conducted from the month of March, 2022 to September, 2022.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter gives the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, justification and scope of the study. The next chapter (Chapter 2) reviews related study to show the gap in knowledge that this study intended to fill. It also presents the conceptual framework and conceptual model adopted by the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explored literature that is related to the socio-cultural factors influencing domestic violence. The literature review is based on the three objectives of the study. The chapter also has the conceptual framework that guided the study.

2.1 Nature of Domestic Violence

2.1.1 Prevalence of Domestic Violence

The first official definition of GBV was done in 1993 when the UN General Assembly defined GBV as:

Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (United Nations, 1993).

Further, the UN General Assembly added that:

Violence against women (VAW) is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to the domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women. VAW is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men (United Nations, 1993).

According to Hoelmes & Bhuvendndra (2014), the term domestic violence which is also referred to as intimate partner violence (IPV), battering, spousal abuse, dating abuse, and family abuse is a behavioral pattern that involves violence perpetrated by one partner against his/her intimate partner, within a family, a cohabitation, marriage, or a dating relationship/courtship.

GVRC (2014) defines gender-based violence as:

Any act that results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life perpetrated against a person based on socially-ascribed (gender) differences between males and females (GVRC, 2014).

Bitangora (1999) adds that gender-based violence mostly refers to the harm inflicted to a person or people in the society because of belonging to a certain gender. In most of the countries, gender-based violence affects females as they are considered defenseless in comparison to the males (Bitangora, 1999). According to UN Economics and Social Council (2017), women in some countries have been restricted by the law and culture from participating in developing the economy. This has been the reason behind the motive to restructure the law and educate women so that they can withstand the different types of violence they have been subjected to.

In most cases, domestic violence is limited to physical violence. However, Mongare, Obonyo & Parsitau (2018) argue that GBV also includes stalking, kidnapping, endangerment, harassment, trespassing and unlawful imprisonment. In fact, in most patriarchal societies such as Kenya, the society accepts violence against women as a “correct” way of disciplining a wife. The patriarchal society socializes the woman to accept and anticipate such discipline (Mutahi, 2017). As a result, such practices are deeply engrained in the society and the woman should take such punishment from the husband positively.

In most societies, women have since time immemorial been properties of men (Meyersfeld, 2010). When a girl is born, she becomes the property of her father and automatically takes her father’s name as the surname. When the woman gets married, the

status changes and she becomes the property of the husband (Holmes & Bhuvanendra, 2014). Mostly, the woman moves from her father's home and joins the husband and starts living there as the man's property. As a result, the woman is entitled to do everything that the man wants her to do without questioning (Mutahi, 2017). In case the woman fails to obey her husband, she is battered or punished for her actions. Olufunmilayo (2004) adds that the woman is supposed to apologize to the man and try behaving well so that she will not receive punishment (Mucheru, 2014; Olufunmilayo, 2004).

According to Flemke & Allen (2008), domestic violence against men is not something new in history. Nonetheless, the worrying issue is the increase in the rate of domestic violence against men in different societies. Psychological abuse, sexual harassment and physical battering are the most common typologies of abuse that men in the current world are going through (Flemke & Allen, 2008). Apparently, thousands of men irrespective of their age, color, race, and religion live under the threat of domestic violence (Mongare, Obonyo & Parsitau, 2018). Most of the men do not report the cases because they fear stigmatization that comes with such cases. Unfortunately, there are few and in many cases no efforts to stop DVAM in many countries.

In the Middle East Countries, women are not allowed to enjoy some privileges such as driving and going for higher education. King Salman, from Saudi Arabia in May 2017 issued a directive which aims at empowering women in attaining the highest education level, taking jobs, or undergoing surgery to beautify themselves (Wald, 2017). However, this action was not received positively as the society is not yet ready to empower the women. Carr (2007) argues that women are expected to remain in the silent world where they can be oppressed without raising alarm. Consequently, Salman received a lot of

political and religious criticisms because of his action. It is unfortunate that even in the 21st century, the world is still struggling to attain equality and zero domestic violence.

Mucheru (2014) argues that in most societies, domestic violence against women is acceptable as part of culture. Women have been oppressed for many ages with the society taking the harassment and oppression as a cultural practice that is acceptable and unquestionable (Mucheru, 2014). However, in the recent years, men have also become victims of domestic violence. The rate of domestic violence perpetrated by women is rising, creating alarm to the entire world. The cultural belief that men should be strong and should not be battered makes the men more vulnerable. They go through hard times as they cannot report the cases to the authorities or to the family because they will be depicted as “incomplete men” (Mongare, Obonyo & Parsitau, 2018).

Domestic violence is a general term that entails all harmful actions directed to an individual based on their gender. Violence can appear in various forms including forced marriages, sexual violence, domestic violence, femicide, female genital mutilation, and emotional violence (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). Domestic violence is the most common form of violence (Kangas *et al.* 2015). It commonly involves partners in a romantic relationship but can also occur between siblings or between a child and the parent. According to the United Nations, Gender-based violence (GBV) contributors include gender inequity, dangerous norms, and power abuse. The available data on GBV reveals that one in every three women, among about 730 million women worldwide, have been exposed to physical or sexual violence or both at least once in their lifetime (UN Women, 2021). These statistics focused on women aged 15 years and above. Domestic

violence is a significant threat and causes adverse effects, evident in all countries globally.

Domestic violence is a major problem in the US, affecting about ten million people each year. One in every four women has been exposed to domestic violence (Lewis *et al.* 2019), While one in nine men has been affected by the same. Domestic violence involves the physical, emotional, economic, and sexual abuse of adults and children in a home. COVID-19 pandemic initiated the implementation of lockdown measures to curb the spread of the virus. However, domestic violence cases were also on the rise during this lockdown. For example, the Portland Police documented a 22% increase in domestic violence arrest cases from 23rd March 2020, unlike other times (Bureau, 2020). The Sherriff's office in Alabama also reported an increased number of domestic violence calls in March 2020, unlike the previous year (Money, 2020).

Amnesty International (2019) tells stories of various women from Louisiana who survived domestic violence. The women endured years of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and did not get the required help from the system. The Amnesty International report also indicates that the justice system fails domestic violence victims in Louisiana. In the article, Angela tells her story about her abusive partner. Angela narrates that the abuse began as verbal but later progressed to physical. She recounted when her husband was choking her, and she yelled for her eldest son. The partner then got off her. She also tells on how her partner then shot her and how she survived the shooting but became paralyzed. Angela's story reveals the negative impacts of domestic violence as bodily

harm, which may permanently affect the body. The emotional turmoil Angela went through is also a danger to one's mental health. Children who witness domestic violence may grow up believing that domestic violence is the way to solve conflicts (Hucker *et al.* 2018).

Various studies in the US have revealed that domestic violence cases in police officers' families are more than in any other family. About 24-40% of police officer families have reported cases of domestic violence (Neidig, 2001). In the article "When the Batterer Is a Law Enforcement Officer", Wetendorf (2004) explains that she listened to police officer batterers' victims and tells how the victims described their stories in police culture. The individuals referred to it as the "police family" or "brotherhood." The victims explained that being a wife or girlfriend to a police officer meant adhering to the police culture. All victims tell of being warned by their abuser not to mention a thing about what was happening. Otherwise, they would pay dearly. However, when the situation became unbearable, they decided to talk to someone who could keep the issue discreet. Wetendorf explains that the victims could not take any legal action for fear that their partners would find out and do the worst to them.

According to Griffiths (2013), the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) report indicates that almost a quarter of Chinese women have prior exposure to domestic violence in their marriages. The ACWF statistics also revealed that about 30% of Chinese women believe that seeking help is no use. 30% of them also think that one should not talk about domestic violence out loud, claiming that it is a private matter. A home

security video that shows a man from a city in Xi'an trended online and evoked different reactions from its viewers. The footage showed the man assaulting his wife during the Covid-19 lockdown. He repeatedly hit his wife as a child watched from a distance. The police response to the incident caused a greater rage of uproar, top-ranking the hashtag with more than 300 million views. The police claimed that the man, Wang, would stay behind bars for five days over the weekend, then get released with no charges pressed against him. An existing China domestic violence law states an offender cannot be detained for more than twenty days unless serious injuries are proven. The police had therefore acted according to the law.

The domestic abuse impacts were evident through the citizens' replies on social media. One individual commented, "Domestic abusers only get punished with five days' detention, and you wonder why Chinese women don't want to get married or have babies?" (Agence France-Presse, 2022). This comment clearly explains how Chinese women are afraid to get married because of domestic violence. They also fear that their partners may abuse them, but the law can only permit their detainment for just five days which is not enough. The reason for not having babies is the fear of a mother exposing her child to the sight of abuse from the child's father. She is willing to protect her baby from witnessing that abuse by not giving birth.

Police officers made a statement claiming that the fight between the two partners arose due to the wife's intense acts and words. Another individual then commented that there is no need to trust the law for protection against domestic violence when all they do is blame the victim. This statement indicates how the individual perceived the law as of no

help due to the incident observed. However, Wang's employer fired him for infringement of community party regulations. There is a new change in china's divorce laws that introduced a mandatory 30-day "cool off" session for divorcing couples. This law makes it difficult for victims to leave their abusive marriages. They, therefore, continue to suffer in silence.

The European Union has made significant efforts to combat the issue of domestic violence. However, various cases of the same have emerged in its member countries. The European Institute for gender equality (2012) estimates that about 100 million women in the European Union will be victims of male violence at some point in their lives. Majority of domestic violence victims are usually women and girls. However, men can be affected as well. A study conducted by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) reveals the economic impacts of domestic and intimate partner violence. The European Union spends about €366 billion a year. Violence against women costs about €289 billion, making up 79% of the total cost (Walby & Olive, 2014), while intimate partner violence takes up around €174 billion.

The UN system is currently working with the civil society and government to eradicate the domestic violence issue. The UN calls for all countries to set up strong laws, prevention measures, and action plans to counter domestic violence. Obaid (2012) explains that the UN has developed joint programs for data collection, initiative measures, and assessment initiatives in various countries. There is also a United Nations Trust Fund that has distributed around \$44 million to violence initiatives. The United

Nations Population Fund has supported some pilot countries involved in the fight against domestic violence. The UN has trained, in Honduras and Indonesia, police and faith-based organizations on dealing with violent cases against women. At a global level, the UN is bridging the gap of domestic violence by implementing measures of data collection in various countries.

A healthcare provider will be the most likely professional a victim of violence will contact. Evidence reveals that the victims trust the healthcare professionals most and will readily disclose their cases of abuse. WHO has formulated a list of guidelines for healthcare providers on responding to the violence issues. One of the guidelines states that a health care provider should offer first-line support to a woman who discloses any kind of violence (World Health Organization, 2013). The health care provider should be supportive and listen without judgment, then provide helpful information and help for the domestic violence victim.

Domestic violence occurs in all countries despite economic, religious, social, and cultural differences (Wash, 2015). Factors contributing to violence include male dominance, social ways such as the notion that men should be aggressive, and structural indifferences between both genders. Domestic violence cases have been on the rise since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The United Nations Women conducted a study on six Sahelian countries before and after the pandemic. The study revealed that domestic violence increased by 30% in Chad, 14% in Senegal, and 10% in Mali (UN Women *et al.* 2020), with Mauritania, Niger, and Burkina Faso increasing by less than 10%.

Moyo (2020) tells a story of a Zimbabwean man, Dickson, who received a suspended jail sentence after physically abusing his wife. Consequently, Dickson still beats his wife,

causing bodily harm but is not yet in jail. The wife claimed that Dickson bribed his way out of custody. The Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey conducted in 2015 revealed that 35% of women between 15-49 years had received beatings by their partners. According to the results, 20% of them were married women, while 14% were abused by former husbands or boyfriends (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2015). Megan Chinowawa, an economist in Harare, claims that the stressful economic times are a major factor contributing to an increase in domestic fights.

There are cases of men experiencing domestic violence as well. A 42-year-old Pritchard of Kadoma, west of Harare, claims his wife is serving a five-year jail term (Moyo, 2020). Pritchard reported that his wife claimed to have read text messages from his girlfriend. She then got furious and burned him with boiling water. The children's rights advocate in Harare stated that children become violent due to the domestic violence environment they grew up in (Moyo, 2020). Another impact of domestic violence stated above is emotional torture caused by the violent acts. Domestic violence victims also suffer severe body injuries.

African cultural beliefs define women as objects or properties to be inherited. A study conducted by the Human Rights Watch in 2003 revealed how Ugandans perceived the cultural idea to be true. The study explained how family members forced a widow to be inherited by another family member of the late husband. The individuals claimed that it was the right thing to do since all the family members of the late husband had contributed to the dowry given to them and that the bride price provided officially made the woman a family property. The study also indicated that if the woman decided to sign up for divorce or separate from the new husband, her family members had to pay back the dowry. The

family, in this case, is usually never willing to give the dowry back. They may even go to the extent of beating up the woman and forcing her to accept the new husband.

Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's first President, was against domestic violence and backward cultural practices. In 1984, he stated that denying a woman the right to inherit property continuously leaves them in a state of economic desperation. They have had to keep toiling on properties they do not own and in the end cannot be in control of the yields produced (Kimani, 2007). The women may later end up being divorced and sent away with nothing at all. Africa's ailing economy has left the many women in a worse state. A study by the World Health Organization revealed that women have no option other than enduring domestic violence in the hands of their partners. Majority of the women are uneducated and poor, so the men serve as opportunities for social and financial security. Thus, there is need to investigate the relationship between socio-cultural dynamics and domestic violence with an aim of understanding the relationship, and then come up with workable solutions on the same.

An estimate of about 12% to 28% of women in South Africa report cases of being raped (Jewkes, 2009). BBC News covers the story of Sarah Midgley, a warrior of domestic violence. Sarah narrates the violent story she experienced decades ago in South Africa during the World Cup. She tells of how her ex-boyfriend raped her in 2010. The ex-boyfriend abused her for more than 18 months before Sarah got the courage to leave. She had just been out of a failed marriage and her self-esteem was relatively low which made her not inform anyone about the abuse. The ex-boyfriend had also been threatening her that he would physically abuse her children if she left. Ten days after she had left

discreetly, the ex-boyfriend showed up at her doorstep claiming that he just needed a ride to his uncle's farm and would then leave her alone. Sarah narrates that she made a mistake trusting him because he and his friend raped her later.

The injuries sustained from the rape forced her to get a hysterectomy. During Sarah's stay in the hospital, the court granted her ex-boyfriend bail. However, he was later arrested and sentenced to eight years imprisonment. In the seventh year of his jail term, her ex-boyfriend died of prostate and bladder cancer. Sarah reveals that she was relieved with the news considering the trauma he had caused her. Sarah says that she used to get nightmares and is still terrified of men. As a rape survivor and a mother, Sarah is greatly protective of her daughters. She bought them phones on which she tracks their every move and can sometimes follow them around (BBC News, 2019). Sarah finalizes her story by saying that she does not feel like the South African government is doing enough to protect women and children against domestic violence.

Various factors, such as poverty, lack of future insights, and cultural norms that encourage gender inequality, contribute significantly to forced and child marriages. About 60% of girls are married off at a young age, before 15 years (Das, 2020). Zainab Oussman, now 16, lives in Kwassaw village, Niger. She explains that her parents wanted to marry her off at 14, but she refused and stayed in school. Zainab now features videos used to convince villagers to stop early marriages. Most African communities view this practice as a way of strengthening tribal or familial bonds, protect the girl's future, and save the family from dishonor in case someone sexually abused the girl out of wedlock. There is a practice in South Africa termed as *ukuthwala* through which women and young girls are kidnapped and forced into marriages. Forced and child marriages have mental,

physical, emotional, and intellectual impacts that affect the victims in their lifetime. The marriages expose them to health effects such as sexually transmitted diseases caused by forced sexual intercourse (Raj, 2010). Young girls are also denied an opportunity to education since they have to drop out of school to take care of the home and raise children.

In many African setups, men are viewed as home leaders and are entitled to control their wives (Mshweshwe, 2018). Men use the concept of patriarchy in the traditional African system to exploit and show dominance over women. The idea also outlines that a woman's place is at home and that the man is the breadwinner of the family. Therefore, the man is required to work outside the home to earn an income that can provide for his family. Society views men unable to provide as "not men enough" (Conell, 2013). The patriarchy concept describing men as dominant and strong contributes to domestic violence. The idea creates room for abusive men to establish selfish rules that control the wife and the family at large. The wife does not have a right to say anything, and even when she does, her opinions do not matter. The man, therefore, does all the decision making and all that other family members are expected to do is submit. The perception of a man who cannot provide as "a not man enough" lowers the individual's self-esteem, making him view himself as unequal or weaker than other men (Mshweshwe, 2018).

A population survey based on three counties of Somalia studied domestic violence with 2376 women. The women were all above the age of 15 years. The study showed that about 35% of the women reported domestic violence cases from their partners. 16% of them reported non-partner domestic violence cases (Perrin *et al.* 2019). Women at great risk of GBV include those in the minority clan, the displaced, and those exposed to

childhood and parental violence. Survivors of GBV report adverse effects on reproductive health, physical health, and mental wellbeing (Wirtz *et al.* 2013). The victims of domestic violence cases do not generally address the issues. They prefer to keep them discreet. The victims are usually afraid of being judged or blamed to be the cause of the violence due to the existing social norms.

Delphine, a survivor of domestic abuse in South Africa, narrates her survival story to ABC News. Delphine starts with a memory of her ex-boyfriend first hitting her. She describes that the slap came as a shock to her. Delphine also states that she prefers getting slapped to verbal abuse because words are hurtful. Her ex-boyfriend had accused her onetime of being the reason why her parents were dead, that she was bad luck. She decided to move out years later during her second daughter's pregnancy. Her turning point was when her ex-boyfriend wanted to hit her. Debra, her first-born daughter, who was five years by then, stood before her, trying to protect her from the hit. This act made Delphine realize that her daughter deserved better, leaving the abusive relationship (Smith, 2019). Delphine states that she lost a lot, but she found power through all the trauma she underwent. She also notes that people need to say no to domestic abuse and that no one deserves any form of abuse.

Gender violence is a common phenomenon worldwide and measures need to be undertaken to curb it and boost equality. The World Health Organization in 2017 made a report, which clearly indicated that women are the main victims of the domestic violence. According to WHO (2017), in every three women one of them has experienced gender violence. This translates to 35% of the number of women globally. Most of the women are experiencing gender violence in intimate relationship from their spouses. The

violence experienced is mostly sexual or physical harassment. Domestic violence has been found to be mostly perpetrated by the uneducated men against women (UN Economics and Social Council, 2017). This is in accordance with the analyses obtained from the research conducted in more than 80 countries in the year 2013 by different organizations such as WHO, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the South Africa Medical Research Council. The report has also stated that men have also been experiencing violence from their female partners. However, it is only a small number of them who come out to report the issues of domestic violence. Nevertheless, the number of men who have been affected directly by domestic based violence in the world is minimal when compared to the number of women.

South Africa is among the African countries where the cases of domestic violence are prevalent. According WHO (2015), prevalence of domestic violence is as a result of poverty, drug abuse and victimization of women. SACAP (2014) claims that domestic violence in South Africa is raising much violence and has brought suffering not only to the adults but also to the children. This toxic behavior has been hereditary and it has become a culture, which is likely to wipe away the sense of humanity among the South Africans (Redempta, Kenneth & Christina, 2018). Domestic Violence in South Africa is becoming a complex issue despite the reports from police recording a reduction in number of reported cases. In its view, SACAP (2014) has categorically stated that between 2011 and 2012 there was massive domestic violence experienced by adults and children where 15,609 people were murdered and 64,500 South Africans were sexually mistreated across all the genders. In support of sentiments made by SACAP (2014), South Africa Medical Research Council has pointed out that 40 % of South African men

have in one or more occasions hit their partner. MRC has also added that one in every four men has ever raped a woman where some of them did it while they were still teenagers. They did it to women they were attracted to or in close relationships. Inadequate role models in the families especially among the men could complicate the issue as most of them have been brought up in single parenthood.

The rate of domestic violence in South Africa and other African countries reflects the Kenya statistics; hence, it can be concluded that women and children are the main victims of domestic violence in Africa. Recently, there has been increase in violence especially after 2007-2008 post-election violence. This is because most of the Kenyans were involved in bullying activities, and opted to take it as a means of livelihood (UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2010). One of the most prevalent forms of domestic violence experienced by most of the Kenyans is sexual coercion. In their research, Hatcher, *et al.* (2013) has established that sexual coercion cases are rampant and majority of Kenyans experience it from their tender age either from friends, relatives, or strangers. According to the estimate made in 2004, 11% of the men and 21% of the women aged between 10-24 years have experienced domestic violence in form of sexual harassment (GoK, 2004). Most of the individuals subjected to domestic violence do not like involving their relatives on such issues as the depicted by the report. It is only 23% of women and 22% of the men who report to their relatives about domestic violence they have been involved in (GoK, 2004).

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), statistic results in 2010 on the Kenyan population reveal that the victims usually know perpetrators in most domestic GBV cases. Only 6% are strangers (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2014). KNBS

also reported that 47% of women aged 15-49 years had been victims of physical or sexual violence. The number of individuals who have prior exposure to domestic violence increases with age. 35% of them are aged between 15 and 19 years, while 54% are between 40 and 49 years (Ali, 2017). Domestic violence also occurs in individuals of Kenya's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. However, the Kenyan Government has not been more open about this type of abuse (Ombuor, 2020).

Samuel is 29 years old and was born in Narok. He discovered that he was attracted to other male individuals more than females at around ten years. After research, he realized that he was gay. Samuel could not reveal that to his parents because they would view him as an outcast. He, therefore, only shared the secret with his cousin and told him not to say a word to anyone. However, the cousin shared it with Samuel's brother, who shared it with his father. Samuel later went home, where his father asked him whether whatever he was hearing about him was true. Samuel affirmed that he was gay, and his father responded that he did not have such a son. The father kicked him out and warned him against ever setting his foot at home again. Samuel later amended the bond with his father, and the father promised never to talk about that issue again.

Samuel narrates that he had a white boyfriend, whom they met online and later started living together. Samuel and Mark had lived together for about four months when he traveled to London. On his return to Kenya, Mark came back accompanied by another man who apparently was his other boyfriend. Samuel tried to confront Mark about the issue, but Mark hit him, and he bled. Mark then pulled out a gun on him and told him that if he could not be silent, he could silence him with the gun. That issue made Samuel walk out of the relationship, never to return even after Mark's numerous calls wanting them to

work things out. Samuel narrates that he could not go to the authorities after the abuse since he knew that they would not help. Samuel was also ashamed of being gay in Kenya and what his friends would say (Ghoshal & Tabengwa, 2015). He also felt that even if he took legal action, Mark would bribe his way out.

Several cases of domestic violence have been reported in Nyeri County. For instance, Kimani (2007) reports an incident of domestic violence. In 1998, a Kenyan police officer, Felix, went home and demanded meat for his supper. The fact that there was none in the house made him beat up his wife, and she incurred brain damages and became paralyzed. The wife died five months later during her birthday. The media extensively covered that story, which led to mass protests. The Kenyan government then passed on a protection bill against wife-beating and other domestic violence ways. Another tale of Janet Adhiambo, a survivor of domestic violence, reveals the impacts of GBV. Janet narrates that her husband started physically abusing her when he began drinking. She says that every time her husband got drunk, he would beat her, claiming that it was a way of teaching her to respect him. However, in 2006 the husband attempted to kill her using a knife. That's when she filed for divorce and custody of her children.

The Kenyan Department of gender states that GBV reports have greatly increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, a report from various activists states that the number is way much higher since many victims of domestic violence do not speak out. There are many more other cases of GBV that remain hidden due to the fear of being stigmatized. In an article on GBV, Jackline Karemi recalls how her partner accused her of having an affair and attacked her. Jackline says that the partner wanted to lock her in the bedroom, but she wrestled him and managed to leave the room. Jackline tells of how she hit her

partner when he tried to push her off the fifth floor (Amunga, 2021). She, however, got severe injuries on her head and face inflicted by the partner using a Maasai sword.

In another instance, Goretti Ondola also narrates her story of how the in-laws abused her. In 2001, Ondola traveled to Western Kenya to bury her husband. According to the cultural traditions, a widow was to stay with the mother-in-law if she had no property. During her stay, the family of Ondola's husband denied her food. Everything she had carried from Nairobi, including clothes, was taken away and divided among the family members. The dowry paid to Ondola's family imprisoned her to the abuse that lasted for almost twenty years after her husband's death. In 2020, she was hospitalized and could not work due to the beatings received. She then contacted a local human rights defender. The defender assisted Ondola in reporting the case to the local police, but the officers claimed that they had no vehicle to use to arrest the victims. Ondola later found out that the family had bribed those police officers. Caren Omanga, a human rights defender who assisted Ondola in reporting the issue to the police, says she almost got arrested for standing up to the police officer in charge. Omanga explains that she knew the family would oppose Ondola by any means, so she started an alternative solution by taking the case to court. The court finally settled the case, and Ondola got her own property and piece of land. The court also forced the abusers to pay a fine. Ondola now claims that her son is more secure, and it feels like she has a new beginning after the twenty years of suffering.

Central region of Kenya has witnessed increase in the rate of domestic violence, which sometimes leads to murder. The domestic violence is associated with consumption of illicit brew, alcohol, drug abuse, and poverty. Unlike other parts of Kenya, Kiambu

County and Nyeri county are recording high incidences where men are being affected by the domestic violence occurring in the regions. Mutahi (2017) depicts that 3.8 women and 1.3 men per 1000 have experienced domestic violence. However, this statistic is changing as the number of men rapidly increases in comparison to the ladies (Mutahi, 2017). In the year 2012, about 500,000 men experienced beating from their wives; hence, there has been need to bring different mechanisms to end such trends despite increase in female superiority. The current study aims at investigating the contribution sociocultural factors so that the appropriate steps can be suggested.

Most of the scholars as indicated in the above discussion (Hoelmes & Bhuvendndra, 2014; Bitangora, 1999; Redempta, Kenneth & Christina, 2018) focus on domestic violence against women. The studies did not investigate the role women play as perpetrators. There are cultural dynamics that have made women to become perpetrators as well. Concentration on the girl child has empowered women, and they are getting opportunities that would have been considered for the mle gender. In this case, violence at home has become a two way occurrence. Women perpetrate violence as men do the same. Thus, it is the prime interest of this study to investigate both genders as perpetrators of domestic violence due to the cultural dynamics in the 21st century. There are a few studies that focused on women as the perpetrators of domestic violence (Mongare, Obonyo & Parsitau, 2018; Mucheru, 2014; Mutahi, 2017; Njoroge, 2016). However, these studies only focus on men as victims, without integrating women as victims, and the reaction the men in the society has to GBVAM. The current study will investigate domestic violence against men and women in Nyeri County to come up with a combined conclusion.

2.1.2 Manifestation of Domestic Violence

According to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2014) domestic violence takes several forms that encompass varying actions which violate human rights such as verbal abuse, sexual molestation, physical aggression, threats, intimidation, economic deprivation, and emotional abuse among others (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2014). The most common form is physical manifestation where the victims are physically harmed. There has been a decrease in the other forms of GBV especially due to the fact that people are now learning their rights. The society is gradually learning the rights to freedom, sexual rights, and rights to make decisions among others (Olufunmilayo, 2004). Consequently, survivors of GBV expose the rights that were violated by their intimate partners.

Women have been subjected to different forms of sexual harassment. According to the UN women (2016) report, sexual harassment has been a major challenge in most of the countries, among them being China. This has drawn major concerns from different activists (UN Women, 2016). Most of the societies embrace domestic violence towards women. Women's rights are being violated from the workplace to their homes. Among the people accused of causing sexual harassment to women are male employers. This can be depicted by the story of Zhang Cheng who was sexually harassed by her employers (Zou, 2018). Zhang pointed out that it was worse when she went home because her husband added to the violence claiming that she is shaming him. Her husband battered her as a punishment for failing to respect fellow men, which is a manifestation of "disrespect" to him as the husband. Zhang Cheng later became an activist who has pioneered in advocating gender equality and fighting against any form of domestic

violence. The World Health Organization (2015) has indicated that there have been higher cases of domestic violence that are being reported on daily basis. This has led to recommendation of stringent measures that can eradicate domestic violence (World Health Organization, 2015). Rape cases are punished in different ways depending on the law of the country. Like for instance, Saud Arabia has law, which allows killing of any, individual who has been found guilty of rape (Carbone-Lopez & Kruttschnitt, 2010).

African countries have been exposed to different forms of violence, which are mostly associated to politics. Those forms of violence create conducive environment where domestic violence can thrive. Social violence perpetrators enjoy the state of anarchy because safety mechanisms of the country might decide to focus on the forms of domestic violence people have been exposed to (Holmes & Bhuvanendra, 2014). According to Ball (2019), South Africa has been among the countries where sexual violence has been prevailing recently. The report made in the year 2018 by a non-governmental organization referred to as Crime Against Women in South Africa has revealed that sexual harassment aligned with women has increased by 53% (CAW, 2018). In comparison, the same report has indicated that it is a minimal number of men who are normally exposed to the sexual harassment from either women or their fellow men (CAW, 2018). In general, this report has pointed out that World Health Organization has depicted that only 7% of the men who are sexually harassed (WHO, 2018). Despite of the postulations made by WHO, it should be noted that most of the men do not report any case associated with sexual infliction hence bringing disparity in the statistic made.

In Kenya, sexual harassment is a prevalent issue as far as domestic violence is concerned. The culture in most Kenyan communities is the reason behind sexual violence, as it tends

to uphold male chauvinism (Shell & Henlund, 2000). High cases of sexual harassment were reported during post-election violence mostly in Rift Valley. Despite the time of violence, Kenya has been known to be a patriarchal country where sexual harassment can thrive without being noticed. Entrenched masculinity has legitimized males to expose vulnerable members of the society since the cases of men being sodomized have increased (UN Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, 2016). In Nyeri County, domestic violence is mainly associated to sexual harassment. Both male and females have been victimized, with some suffering to the extent of occurrence of death. Drug abuse has been mentioned to be the reason behind higher cases of sexual harassment since drug addicts tend to make inappropriate judgment. According to Boniface (2016), women Members of County Assemblies have been exposed to sexual harassment at a political level. The violence is extended to the homes with men claiming to be the sole decision makers, and thus have the right to beat their women.

From global perspectives, women and children have been found to be the main victims of the domestic violence. UN Human Right Council mentioned in 2007 that about 64% of the female homicides are normally perpetrated by a member of the family or an intimate partner. Through National Crime Victimization Survey, WHO has concluded that domestic violence is one of the crimes which mostly go unreported. One in three women mostly experience domestic violence in terms of physical abuse or rape worldwide. In America, immigrants are normally subjected to domestic violence regardless of their genders. Andrew (2010) argues that 36 % of all immigrants have reported cases of being victimized by the either people who they work for or their spouses who mostly happen to be Native Americans. UN Women (2016) has established that most of the men and

women in Middle East and North Africa who experience domestic violence in their childhood lives tend to perpetrate intimate partner violence in their adulthood.

The World Bank has shown that Congo has the highest rate of domestic violence due to the often violence that has been occurring in the country. Occurrence of domestic violence in Africa has been attributed in a major way to the economic difficulties experienced by Africans (Flemke & Allen, 2008). The frustrations in various households and the struggle for survival have made most of the women and children victims of gender violence. However, African men have also been suffering silently since only a minimal number of them opt to report the violence they have been experiencing (The World March of Women Advocacy, 2004). In this case, therefore, it is evident that women's violence against men in Africa is a serious issue, and needs to be focused on like in a case violence towards women. Gender violence leads to occurrence of multiple injuries where the number of women who suffer from this is twice as that of men.

Domestic violence has been occurring in Kenya just like any other part of Africa. In their document, Redempta, Kenneth & Christina (2018) have postulated that the rate at which domestic violence has been occurring to Kenya needs to be addressed from psychosocial intervention. Boniface (2016) conquered with their ideology of approaching gender from psychological counseling perspective. However, these studies did not show the connection between the socio-cultural factors contributing to the domestic violence in the county. This study will investigate this connection in order to reveal the main factors contributing to domestic violence.

NGEC (2016) report indicates that psychological wellbeing of Kenyans in the areas prone to domestic violence minimizes such cases, as people will tend to look for other options to solve their disagreement. In Nyeri County, more than 93 % of the households have experienced domestic violence which are either related to male or females in the specific families involved (NGEC, 2016). In another report, WHO (2017) has made hypotheses which suggest that mental wellbeing and drug abuse have been the main reason behind increase in domestic violence in Nyeri. The current study examined the nature of domestic violence. Thus, it will show the prevalence and manifestation of the violence. This will give a clear picture of the extent of the harm so that the appropriate actions can be taken by relevant actors.

Hatcher *et al.* (2013) investigated the social context and drivers of intimate partner violence in rural Kenya. The study concentrated on the health implications to the pregnant women where it found out that in most cases, domestic violence might end up bringing physical responses from the parties involved. As a matter of fact, physical responses have been causing harm or death to the pregnant women (Hatcher *et al.* 2013). Domestic conflicts in Nyeri County have made it difficult for the families experiencing it to concentrate on economic activities for their survival. In some other situations, where domestic violence involves married couples, there is a higher possibility of divorce occurring. When divorce occurs, children from such parents end up suffering psychologically hence messing up with their entire lives at their tender age. Hatcher *et al.* 2013 focused on the health implications and indicted the need to research on the social cultural factors contributing to the increased domestic violence. The current study will work towards bridging that gap.

Domestic violence has been manifested through payment or demand of dowry. According to Dutton & Nicholls (2005), payment of dowry is practiced in different ways depending on the culture of the society involved. There are some cultures in western countries where payment of dowry is mandatory and either male or female can pay for their spouse (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). This is contradicting the Kenyan Culture where only the man can pay dowry. Due to international economic crises, there have been dowry crises in Asian countries such as Bangladesh. Sarah (2014) points out that dowry have been a determining factor for the marriage relationship and the conjugal rights. A report made by World Bank depicted that society respects men depending on the amount of dowry they have paid for the bride. When men are unable to pay dowry and are denied respect from the society, making them develop bitterness, which may lead to domestic violence. This phenomenon has affected stability of the families. The World Health Organization (2015) agrees that recently there have been increased conflicts among the family members due to unsettled dowry debt.

In most of the Sub-Sahara African countries, dowry is a key element of the marriage contract. Unfortunately, payment of dowry has been commercialized unlike before when it used to be defined as a simple appreciation for the bride's parents. According to the World Bank report released in 2017, poverty in some African countries has been the reason as to why most of the communities have made it a tradition where payment of dowry is treated as an economical issue. On the issue of commercializing dowry payment and on how it has attributed domestic violence, Kenya cannot be treated as an exception (Andrew, 2010). Men who pay dowry assume that they have the mandate to control the lives of their wives. They punish them with violence whenever they make mistakes. On

the other hand, those who are unable to pay dowry feel intimidated. They use violence as a mechanism to show that they are still the superior to women, and the head in their families. Dowry payment has also been cited as a cause of domestic violence against men. Husbands who do not meet the required payment feel inferior. Their wives intimidate them and keep reminding them that they do not have power to order them. The women do not submit to such men as it is expected in the society. Instead, they violate their rights by physical violence, emotional torture, psychological and sexual harassment.

UN-Habitat (2014) has claimed that most of the families from Nyeri County have been unable to afford decent life and habitat after occurrence of domestic violence. The community has commercialized dowry payment to the extent that only the rich can pay enough. As a result, both men and women in the county become victims of domestic violence. The UN-Habitat (2014) postulates that the role of dowry payment cannot be treated as a peripheral issue as far as gender violence are concerned. There is need for the society to reconstruct dowry payment so that it will no longer be a cause of domestic violence. Dowry payment is one of the cultural factors influencing the increase in domestic violence in Africa. The current study aims at investigating other factors that result to the same.

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a major public health and human rights problem involving all ages and sexes. Although the term “gender-based violence” is widely used as a synonym for violence against women, GBV also occurs among men (Cascardi, Langhinrichsen & Vivian, 1992). The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVW), defines the term “violence against women” as: “Any act of domestic violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological

harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts as coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Physical abuse is a pattern of physical assaults and threats used to control another person. It includes punching, hitting, choking, biting, throwing objects at a person, kicking, pushing and using a weapon such as a gun or a knife. Sexual violence has been defined as any sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances or acts to traffic women's sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm or physical force by any person regardless of relationship to the survivor in any setting (Krug, Dahlberg & Mercy, 2002). The scope of this definition has been expanded to include forced sex, sexual coercion, rape, and child abuse (Saltzman, *et al.* 1999). In this study, sexual violence is defined as any unwanted sexual act, such as forced sex.

Current estimates of domestic violence indicate that between 8-70% of women worldwide have been physically and sexually assaulted by a male partner at least once in their lives (Heise, Ellsberg & Guttemoeller, 1999). In Zambia, DHS data indicates that 27% of ever-married women reported being beaten by their spouses or partners in the past year and about 13% of 15-19 year olds were sexually coerced in the past 12 months (Zambia Demographic and Health Survey, 2002). In rural Ethiopia, 49% of ever-partnered women have never experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, while 59% had ever experienced sexual violence (WHO, 2005). All these variations may be a consequence of underreporting, stigma, shame, or other social and cultural factors that deter women from discussing episodes of violence. In another hospital-based study in Nairobi, the prevalence of sexual violence was 61.5%, while the proportion of physical assault was 38.5% (Saidi, Awori & Odula, 2008). This study also reported that majority

of the perpetrators of domestic violence were married (72.3%) and alcohol was a significant contributor in 10.1% of determinant cases. In a study of Igbo communities in Nigeria, 58.9% of women reported battery during pregnancy while 21.3% have been forced to have sexual intercourse (Okemgbo, Omideyi & Odimegwu, 2002).

Most investigations of domestic violence have centered on men as the perpetrators of violence; however, this is not to deny that cases of men being victims of domestic violence do not exist. It has been reported that men have their share of adverse consequences of domestic violence. In the study by Fawole *et al.* (2002) on violence among young female hawkers, 19.7% of women had experienced physical assault, 36.3% had received sexual harassment, while only 7.2% had emotional or psychological violence. Prevalence of wife beating among civil servants in another study was 31.3%; 42.5% of the men had been perpetrators, while 23.5% of the women had been victims (Fawole, Ajuwon & Osungbade, 2005). In this study, alcohol consumption and growing up in an environment where parents fight publicly were significantly associated with men beating their wives, while being young, unmarried, and domestic violence between parents of the respondents were significantly associated with women being beaten. Despite all the studies on violence against women, documentation of violence against men is almost non-existent. This may largely be due to the wide spread tolerance of such acts and lack of appropriate legal framework that protects women and men from domestic violence in Nigeria.

Relatively young age, income, being divorced or separated, and prior victimization have been identified as characteristics that are associated with an increased risk for domestic violence from studies conducted by Hotaling & Sugarman (1990). In another study

conducted by Oladepo *et al.* (2011) exploring the factors for domestic violence against males and females, factors identified for male respondents include informal education of partners of male respondents as a strong correlate for physical violence. This is more like the findings of Ghazizadeh (2016) in Iran who reported a significant association between husband's education level and violence against their wives. However, this is not consistent with the report from Zambia where those with lesser education are less likely to report physical violence (Anderson, *et al.* 2007). This difference may be due to the different cultures and populations. Also, male respondents who were married had a higher risk of experiencing physical violence than single males. This is in correlation to the work of Anderson (2007) who reported that having partners is a risk factor for domestic physical violence. However, the studies do not give a deep nexus between the two variables, and this is what the current study works to give.

The study by Ghazizadeh (2016) in Iran also reported that married men experienced physical violence. Higher risk of experiencing sexual violence was observed among professional male respondents compared to those that were unemployed (Ghazizadeh, 2016). However, this did not achieve statistical significance. In addition, males who did not drink alcohol, had a lower risk of experiencing sexual violence compared to males who drank alcohol even though this also did not reach statistical significance. Even though the exact relationship between alcohol and violence remains unclear, researches have consistently found drinking patterns to be related to intimate partner and sexual violence. These findings are similar to those reported by Saidi, Awori & Odula (2008) and Fawole, Ajuwon & Osungbade (2005) in which there was an association between alcohol intake, young age and violence. These findings reflect that factors which

influence physical violence differ from those that influence sexual violence against men. Females who had partners who smoke were at a higher risk of physical violence.

An additional finding of interest is that physical and sexual violence is more common in young people particularly those less than 30 years (Karamagi *et al.* 2006). This is consistent with findings of Thobejane, Mogorosi & Luthada (2018). This may not be unconnected with their active life which may not go well with their partners. Female respondents with low income experience sexual and physical violence more than those with higher income (Okemgbo, Omideyi & Odimegwu, 2002; Fawole, Ajuwon, Osungbade & Fawega, 2002). This is not unexpected as lack of resources can facilitate a stressful situation which is a precursor to violence. Behavioral factors of partners greatly influence domestic violence against females which corroborates the findings by Coker (1999). Females who have partners that smoke have a higher risk of experiencing physical violence. In the same vein, females who have partners that drink alcohol experience sexual violence more than those whose partners do not drink alcohol. In order to determine any real evidence between alcohol and domestic violence, case control and cohort studies are needed.

Little has been done on the nexus between socio-cultural factors influencing domestic violence. In fact, most of the studies focus on social-economic factors such as joblessness and alcoholism. Ghazizadeh (2016) confirms that men who experience domestic violence are jobless and alcoholics. Women also experience domestic violence if the male partners are alcoholics and smokers. However, the socio-cultural aspects that lead to domestic violence are missing in these studies. In this case, therefore, it is important for this study

to focus on the socio-cultural factors that contribute to domestic violence in the study area.

2.2 Nexus between Socio-cultural Dynamics and Domestic Violence

Gender stereotype is a preconception or generalized view about characteristics or attributes, or the roles that ought or are to be performed by, or possessed by, men and women. These stereotypes are harmful because they limit men's and women's capacity to advance their abilities, pursue their careers, or/and make choices in their lives (United Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2022). These harmful stereotypes, whether seemingly benign 'women are nurturing' or overtly hostile 'women are irrational,' perpetuate inequalities or domestic gendered violence. For instance, the traditional notion of women as caregivers means that women are given the responsibility for child care.

Similarly, gender stereotypes intersecting and compounded by other forms of stereotypes have a lopsided negative impact on some groups such as women. Within some more diverse countries, the impact is felt more among women from indigenous or minority groups, women from lower classes, women with disabilities, women belonging to lower caste groups, or migrant women (United Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2022). This practice of ascribing to an individual, especially women, because of their attributes is wrongful, citing that it causes violations of human rights in other instances. Some of the domestic gendered violence accelerated by gender stereotyping includes marital rape and sexual violence meted against women.

According to the United Nations Human Rights, wrongful gender stereotyping has also been a cause of a lot of discrimination against women (United Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2022). It is a factor that has contributed to violations in a vast

array of freedom and rights such as marriage, adequate living standards, freedom of expression, education, the standard of living, health, political representation and participation, effective remedy, freedom from GBV, and family relations.

According to the normative expectations of masculinity and femininity, men are perceived as more masculine than women, who are expected to be feminine. Due to this aspect, the masculinity elements allow men to be dominant and competitive, and females are supposed to embellish femininity by being gentler and more affectionate (Perrin *et al.* 2019). Due to this reason, this factor has been used to confine women to being caretakers, wives, and mothers. Out of this, the position of girls is reduced to just carrying out roles within the household level. This has made many girls lack education due to being restricted from outside opportunities.

In conflict-prone regions, women and girls are more likely to be more confined to only the household and are more likely to have their movement limited. This has resulted in more time spent by women at home than boys and men. This has foreseen women suffer on the economic spectrum citing that they cannot go to work. On the same aspect, girls are also at a disadvantage citing that they are more likely to get 'double work duty.' This means that they have had to work and fulfill household chores (Kachel *et al.* 2016). Such factors make women unable to fulfill or pursue their goals as men would easily accomplish the same. In the same perspective, parents are influenced most at times by gender norms about the role of girls within society and henceforth denies girls the privilege of attaining education compared to boys who go-ahead to complete school to provide for their families, a form of economic violence against girls.

Gender socialization is how children learn about behaviors, social expectations, and attitudes with one's gender. Due to this factor, the children attain the sense of understanding their gender identity, whether they are a girl or a boy. This is due to the heightened attention paid to information connected to gender and models of the same gender (Handel, 2017). This awareness of gender, alongside exposure to gender from various socialization sources such as peers, siblings, and parents, has an immediate consequence on children's behaviors and attitudes towards individuals belonging to the same and from other-gender groups.

Due to the socialization of gender, children may be socialized to favor their gender borne out of their attitudes. This can be deduced from positive feelings towards members of the own group and may also show behaviors of gender discrimination. This is seen in their increasing preference for interaction with members from their gender only. This segregation is further continued by adults but even more often in their children's choice (Churchill, 2018). It goes on to cause problems since children need to function effectively in gender-integrated settings. Due to this factor, the interaction patterns between boys and girls are limited. This degenerates to cause aggravated domestic violence as the children grow up since they have the oneness of gender.

The concept of how war and conflict contribute towards gendered violence is an aspect that has remained under-studied. However, evidence has shown that GBV increased in conflict periods in some African countries such as Cote d'Ivoire. According to a study by Horn *et al.* (2014) gendered violence was the most frequently reported type of violence following a period of armed conflict, with 20.9% being reported in women and 9.9% being reported among men (Horn *et al.* 2014). The studies further suggested that the rates

of domestic gendered violence were higher among war veterans than their civilian counterparts and trace the relationship based on war experiences, an increased likelihood of experiencing or perpetrating domestic gendered violence, and mental health problems. Horn *et al.* (2014) further went on to study some of the pathways through which the experiences of war potentially contribute towards domestic gendered violence. They found that structural factors played a role in sustaining and permitting domestic gendered violence in areas affected by the war. In settings of conflict, there is an existence of kinship support systems that are fractured when there is a displacement of people when conflict resolution mechanisms are not functioning effectively; and when there is the development of a culture of impunity (Horn *et al.* 2014). Even though these factors are not unique in such contexts, they are exacerbated when the conflict is protracted.

Additionally, experiences from the conflict have also impacted just about every aspect of one's socioeconomic life. One of these factors is that poverty is amplified due to the limited income generation options. Horn *et al.* 2014 notes that it is in observation of refugees from several countries where they found out that poverty is a repeated cause of violence. It followed that the inability of a man to fulfill their traditional role of being a provider had the impact of eliciting feelings of shame and anger which can manifest itself in the form of violence, especially upon their children or wife when they asked for things that they are unable to provide.

Women play a crucial role within African families. This is because they are responsible for preparing, processing, and producing food for their families. As a result, they are an integral part of African societies. However, malnutrition and hunger are huge impediments to their role within society. It follows that hunger and malnutrition lead to

an unpredictable environment at their homes and inefficiencies in food production (Kambou, 2013). Such instances foresee women facing domestic violence or suffering from the same. This is due to their inability to provide, which foresees the men meting physical abuse on them due to their failure in food production. In some instances, women are the victims of sexual abuse as men tend to take advantage of them during periods of hunger. The women may thus fall into sex traps to get food for their children.

The African culture supports certain norms that can cause domestic gendered violence. These norms include sex selection, honor killings, widowhood rituals, child marriage, female genital mutilation, and dowry-deaths. Female genital mutilation is believed to traditionally preserve virginity till marriage and nonconformance to the practices leads stigma and inability to find a husband together with social exclusion (Perrin *et al.* 2019). Such actions are also the ones that have foreseen infanticide, mistreatment, severe health impacts for women, sex-selective abortions, and neglect for children. These norms typically asserted upon women who cannot bear children manifest pervasive African preferences for the son typically grounded in African patriarchal systems. It also enhances the special role that sons have been designated in African societies.

These practices, alongside dowry, strengthen the son's preference as it leads the parents to consider their daughters more like liabilities. This has, as a result, been linked to violent acts meted out against women so that it can extract more resources from the family of the wife. These acts include domestic violence, suicides, murders, and harassment (Cislaghi and Heise, 2019). In some cases, it has also led to ill-reputed dowry-deaths. These honor killings include murders that close relatives often do as a means of 'family honor.' Such sanctions are perpetrated against women so that they can enter into an arranged marriage

and ensure that the woman does not marry outside their social group (Kachel *et al.* 2016). Widows have also been victims of violence from their in-laws and humiliating rites and their consequent isolation as part of the mourning process to demonstrate grief and the innocence of the husband's death.

Research has shown that conflict, burden, and support reciprocation are ubiquitous factors in human relationships. Nevertheless, there has been limited research on how negative social relationships can affect or be a causal factor of accelerated domestic gendered violence (Machisa *et al.* 2018). Social conflict has been used as a better predictor of health outcomes than perceived support benefits due to social support, as can be understood from conflict or costs, even though the social conflict has been utilized to moderate a positive impact on the support of individuals of domestic gendered violence, especially concerning health.

Studies have, as a result, shown that for survivors of gendered-based violence, social conflict can be a common experience. This is because most victims of domestic gendered violence often rely on their social support in the form of their neighbors, friends, and family to get resources and refuge. However, the lack of social support may also be detrimental, citing that it can undermine a woman's decision-making by maximizing the abuse. The lack of support can spur the abuse by shifting the blame on the women (Guruge *et al.* 2012). Also, the lack of these helpers who are important in reducing the complexity of domestic gendered violence may make the women discouraged from seeking help and, in some instances, be silenced.

Due to community values and norms, some social support can force women to be secretive about the abuse. Some can even go to the extent of siding with the abuser by

criticizing women's choices, misleading them, siding with the abuser, or refusing to lend them the necessary practical assistance. This is notably saddening, citing that it can lead to overt conflicts or tension among women's social networks (Machisa *et al.* 2018). In other instances, support from professionals, friends, and family may come tied to 'conditions' that force women to take unwanted actions. This, as a result, degenerates the physical abuse into emotional torment, which affects the ability of women to promote their mental health and that of their families, or even the inability to leave their abusive partners.

Women's empowerment should now more than ever be lauded. This is because it can be deemed the magic bullet that can mitigate and respond to violence by increasing women's bargaining power within their communities, households, and yonder (P.B., 2018). The contrary, however, has the impact of accelerating domestic violence. The panacea that has been prevalent of only leaving women to house duties has inquired on their earning capability. This is because it has reduced their bargaining power, impoverished them, and led to gender inequality. However, critics have contended that a focus on economic empowerment is critical, this is because such approaches may need to address gender and social norms that perpetuate and underlie behaviors such as violence, especially in situations where women do not have the freedom of leaving their partners, dissolving marriages, and taking their property and families with them (P.B., 2018). When African women participate in paid work, some men may see this as an infringement of their traditional role of being the breadwinner and, as such, may seek to retrieve their power by compensating for their displacement through retaliating with violence.

However, the situation of domestic gendered violence has long been perpetuated for failure in giving women equal opportunities as men. In African societies where patriarchy is most common, men feel that they are more entitled to many things compared to women. Due to this reason, women do not have a say in society and cannot actively participate in activities that require them to be decision-makers (P.B., 2018). Correspondingly, women are continually impoverished and are not allowed to participate in income-generating activities, a form of economic abuse. Such actions have been permitted for a long time in African societies. The African patriarchal system is not ready to accommodate women by giving them equal opportunities or empowering them, consequently perpetuating domestic gendered violence.

Lack of education opportunities in Kenya is a huge contributor to the prevalence of domestic gendered violence. A health and demographic survey found out that there was a link between the level of an individual's education and the percentage of individuals who believe that it is justifiable that a man should resolve to violence should a woman argue with him. The survey was conducted on both women and men. Throughout the responses, it was a general trend for both women and men to show that as their education levels increased, the fewer the number of individuals who justified domestic violence (Nyangweso & Trivedi, 2019). Another trend noted from the survey was when the respondents' education was plotted against the number of individuals who agreed with the justifiability of hitting women if they go out without telling the man. Equally, as the education level increased, the percentage of individuals who felt that violence was justified decreased.

In another survey, almost similar to the one described above, the average education levels of respondents and their parents were considered. Deducted from the survey, it was evident that as the parent's education level increased, so was the percentage of respondents who justified domestic violence (Nyangweso & Trivedi, 2019). The explanation lies in that the surveys showed that the link might be because more educated parents raise their children in a manner that rejects domestic violence. Due to this fact, it can be perceived that low educational attainment is a leading cause of domestic violence in Kenya.

Unequal distribution of power is another reason for accelerating domestic gendered violence in Kenya. An inquiry into how this factor causes the continuation of gendered violence in Kenya showed that some heads of institutions and political leaders are part of the problem. It is contrary to society's expectations, citing that these are the very individuals who should offer mechanisms of appropriating responses and preventing the rise in domestic violence in Kenya (Nyangweso & Trivedi, 2019). However, some victims have cited that these individuals have also turned against them, and they have become perpetrators of GBV. Due to this reason, victims may fear approaching such individuals citing that they go ahead to perpetuate GBV.

Also, this demonstrates that unequal power dynamics are a huge contributor to violence against women, and to some extent, they are part of its normalization. Some incidences have shown how teachers have been enablers of GBV through the sexual abuse of their female students. These accusations have also shown the connection to some of the inappropriate responses women are likely to receive when such incidences of violence are brought to light by necessary authorities (Shako & Kalsi, 2019). It also shows the high

level of impunity with which acts of domestic gendered violence are committed and the lack of capacity by agents of law enforcement in handling these cases.

In Kenya, women with rather low educational attainment levels are likely to come from a lowly socio-economic status. Thus, most must depend on their male partners for financial support. However, such cases go on to perpetuate domestic gendered violence. Also, poor women are subordinate to their men to gain household maintenance. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that most men are not in support of their wives being employed (Thomas, Masinjila & Bere, 2013). Due to this factor, most women remain trapped within their physical homes and under the control of their men. Most women are forced to remain silent in the light of abuse, realizing that their men's financial aid may be removed if they talk.

Also, women who transgress gender norms are likely to encounter abuse. If a Kenyan woman does not show obedience and respect to their men or does not carry out her 'womanly' chores, then her partner is bound to 'discipline' her. Additionally, Kenyan men feel threatened by women who make independent decisions (Thomas, Masinjila & Bere, 2013). Henceforth, should a woman decide that the man makes a decision, it may cause violence. The same is replicated when women question a man's financial choices or make the man feel as if he is not sufficiently providing for the family. As a result, it is widely perceived that men should use violence to suppress their anger.

The aspect of gender inequality is so widespread and has further fuelled other social problems that have become socially accepted, such as infidelity. Infidelity can be deemed a form of emotional abuse, but it has become commonly accepted and encouraged where the individual committing the infidelity is the male. On the other hand, female infidelity

is seen as a behavior that warrants physical abuse and is, in fact, socially abhorred (Thomas, Masinjila & Bere, 2013). In some instances, the social acceptability of male infidelity is widely accepted, such that female refusal of such behavior is also another reason for warranting abuse. In some Kenyan communities, the issue of gender violence is so isolated that violence against women is seen as a way through which a man can forgive the 'transgressions' of a woman. Studies have indicated that some communities deem physical abuse of a woman is claimed as a form of expressing love (Thomas, Masinjila & Bere, 2013). It is socially accepted that after the husband's abuse or 'punishment,' the woman can regain their dignity within the household, making them a recipient of love from their male partner.

In Nyeri, just like other parts of Kenya, women are subordinate compared to their men. Due to this reason, they are culturally expected to behave as women as beset by the Kikuyu culture, and even more as a wife. The expectations are passed across various generations and are emphasized during marriage procedures such as dowry payment. For instance, the cultural and religious leaders highlight how women are categorically reminded that 'their grey hair shall be shaved' upon reaching their marital homes. The gift of a bed is symbolic of an end to her accommodation from where she was born and brought up (Nyanweso & Trivedi, 2019). Similarly, even from the Kikuyu word, 'mutumia,' which means a woman is an implication or means 'one who does not speak' Under such arrangements, many women suffer silently. Some even end up dead due to the violence meted out on them by their abusive intimate partners and/or spouses.

GBV cases, when aggravated, also tend to opt for their resolution in an informal manner, which further explains the reason as to why the vice continues. Some examples can be

deducted from a study conducted in some places, such as Narumoru and Tetu, and the practice is very common. In aggravated GBV scenarios, the perpetrators who give out something to settle the issue to the victims' families decide on the compensation. In such cases, even witnesses are unwilling to give evidence to fear of unknown reprisals and that of the known. It has also been reported that settlement of the cases out of court happens and is common especially if the 'compensation' is in livestock or cash. In many instances, the option has been considered attractive. Even when the perpetrators are found guilty, they could be jailed but with compensation to the victim's family unless they file a civil suit looking for reparation.

Agriculture is the main source of income in Nyeri, complemented by trading. Women in the country have variable control and access to land despite contributing the largest portion of labor. Most married women do not have or are not granted ownership of land, which impacts their options of accessing credit for sustaining or starting businesses (Njibwakale, 2019). Despite the high incidences of drug abuse and alcohol, particularly with the young men of Nyeri County, women are more likely to shoulder quite a lopsided burden when it comes to the economic sustenance of their families. Some incidences have been noted of how young men waylay their wives returning from manual jobs from farms and snatch their wages violently, or sometimes the husbands threatened their wives to force them to surrender their earnings (Njibwakale, 2019). The problem degenerates to a point where the women are physically beaten by their men when they refuse to give them money. Subsequently, such issues economically deprive the woman, which is an economical form of GBV, which drives such families further into poverty while increasing the number of children neglected in various parts of the county.

Intoxication is widely known to make an individual lack capacity and a general loss of control. As a result, this form of inhibition is likely to result in increased violence, among other activities that could be deemed dangerous such as unsafe sex, victimization, criminal offense perpetration, and increased risks of reckless driving. Overall, dangerous drinking is dangerous to society. According to research, alcohol abuse and the perpetration of domestic violence are interrelated. Towards this light, estimates show that women whose male partners go home drunk more frequently are likely to suffer violence by a multiple of four to seven times. Similar estimates showed that perpetrators of intimate-partner violence are more likely to consume alcohol than their non-perpetrator counterparts by a multiple of 5 times (Shako & Kalsi, 2019). The same indicators further showed that men with problems associated with alcohol are more than likely to commit GBV. Due to this, male-to-female violence is likely to degenerate on a scale of 11 times and likely to occur when the perpetrators are drunk.

The above statistics are very relevant to the case of Nyeri, which goes on to show that alcohol consumption is by far a grave public health issue. Additionally, there are other links between alcohol and gendered violence since the violence is perpetrated physically and sexually. Due to this reason, it explains the higher prevalence of HIV transmission. This is because there are established links between HIV transmission and alcohol abuse (Shako & Kalsi, 2019). Henceforth, compared to non-drinkers, there is a 1.6 higher likelihood for non-problem drinkers to contract HIV than a 2.0fold for problem drinkers. Also, comparing Nyeri to other regions with lower alcohol abuse rates, the incident rates of GBV and HIV are higher in Nyeri.

2.3 Challenges and Opportunities of Domestic Violence

Approaches to Coordinated Community Response to domestic violence are multiple. Often, several may be employed at one time in a local community or within a state. It is challenging to resolve domestic violence since every family has different issues that are specific.

2.3.1 Challenges of Managing Domestic Violence

One of the main challenges of managing domestic violence is the lack of political will and leadership. Experience suggests that sustained political commitment is required from the international community, national leaders, and top management to ensure security institutions uphold women's rights and address violence against them (Rynn & Hiscock, 2009). Sustaining such political will is difficult due to limited understanding of the impact that violence against women can have on security outcomes, for instance, community stability. Additionally, governments may not consider domestic violence to be a priority vis-à-vis other security issues due to financial or other capacity constraints. A lack of political will may result in inadequate resourcing of security institutions and dedicated mechanisms for security personnel to address violence against women. This also undermines the rights of survivors to access basic protections and perpetuates a political and social environment where such violence is tolerated (United Nations, 2006). Further, most of the governments do not consider domestic violence against men as a threat considering the few cases that are reported annually.

Secondly, limited resources and infrastructure hinders management of domestic violence. Even where there is political will, in many contexts, security institutions may simply lack the infrastructure, including basic equipment or transportation, or financial

resources to protect women and girls or respond to male survivors (Nair, 2010; Rynn & Hiscock, 2009). This affects the ability of the police to implement preventive security measures such as routine patrols as well as their capacity to investigate, appropriately respond to and provide referrals for survivors. In low-resource settings, particularly rural areas, there are communities with little or no police coverage or where the nearest police station is several hours away (Barnes, 2009). This creates additional barriers for reporting incidents of violence (e.g. transportation costs, time required to travel, ability to leave family and employment responsibilities, etc.), and enables perpetrators to act with impunity. The close relationships and connections within small communities may also prevent women from reporting to police, for example, if a perpetrator is an acquaintance or relative of a member of the police. It also hinders men as they fear the intimidation from the police officers.

In addition, initiatives to address domestic violence are often developed and implemented with a short-term timeframe and budget. Poor funding allocations for violence against women and girls are characteristic of many national budgets and the budgets of security institutions specifically (Barnes, 2009). The bulk of funding for security initiatives addressing domestic violence is derived from the international or donor community. This creates particular challenges for continuity and sustainability given the explicitly short-term and often externally-driven priorities underlying initiatives. Policy efforts and programmes focusing on domestic violence may also be isolated from institutional and sector-wide processes, further reducing their potential impact and sustainability. For example, the experience of specialized units such as women's police stations and gender desks, which are important short-term measures in

low-resource settings, has highlighted the risk of targeted efforts being marginalized from mainstream security policies and institutional practices (Rynn & Hiscock, 2009). Once established, the units are not always allocated sufficient resources to operate effectively with adequate coverage to reach the entire population. Additionally, the lack of sustained and institutionalized programming perpetuates the frequent turnover of staff knowledgeable on the issue, slows efforts to standardize norms and practices, and prevents promising pilot initiatives from being up-scaled and maximizing their effectiveness (Villalva, 2006).

Changing priorities within a broad mandate hinders management of domestic violence. Police are required to respond to a broad range of crimes and public order issues every day, which creates difficulties for balancing commitments to address violence against women with providing responses to more established crimes within the institution (Barnes, 2009). In addition, providing police with ongoing training so they are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills to respond appropriately to violence against women (including an understanding of gender equality) is difficult given the breadth and depth of training required across all areas of response.

Overall, there is a dearth of security personnel at all ranks, from administrative staff through leadership, with a sound understanding of gender inequality and how this relates to domestic violence against men and women. There are even fewer security actors with adequate technical expertise to address domestic violence at both the policy and operational levels. The dearth of competency has significant impact on the effectiveness of the sector to uphold its mandate to protect women and girls' fundamental right to live free of violence (Villalva, 2006). In many settings, security personnel have limited or no

training specific to domestic violence; and even where personnel receive specific training, security institutions often have high staff turnover due to difficult work environments (OECD/DAC, 2009). Further, there are often limited opportunities of upward mobility for staff specializing in this area. Cumulatively, these factors may act as a disincentive to being trained on the issue and reduces retention of trained personnel, who frequently leave their positions to work in units or functions that receive greater support and acknowledgement within the institution (Barnes, 2009).

Poor communication and collaboration between security actors and other sectors is another barrier. An effective response to violence against women and girls requires the stakeholders to work closely with other actors from health and justice sectors, and involving local authorities, legal assistance, and other survivor support groups and organizations in order to provide the maximum protection and care for the survivor, as well as to promote the potential prosecution of the perpetrator(s). In practice, there is often limited and at times no cooperation between security actors and other service providers (e.g. health, shelter, judicial personnel) or civil society organizations supporting women and girls (Hamilton, 2009). Cooperation between, across sectors, and among actors may be strained due to a lack of formal coordination mechanisms at both a national and community level; differing provider response protocols and referral policies; and weak relationships between individuals or distrust of security personnel, particularly if they are involved in perpetrating violence or are complicit when responding to cases reported to them.

Dominance of informal justice systems and customary law is a big challenge. In many communities across regions, especially within indigenous communities, rural areas

or in settings where formal justice systems are weak, informal justice systems, tribal and customary law prevail. Women may rely on or prefer to use informal justice systems as they may be perceived as the only option for recourse available, may be more easily accessible within the community than formal justice mechanisms, or may be seen to uphold traditional values (Villalva, 2006). Women may also pursue informal justice because they fear being stigmatized within their family and community or fear losing economic support and opportunities should they pursue a formal judicial remedy (for example, in cases where their husbands/ partners or a community leader or authority figure may be jailed as a result of a formal judicial process) (Swaine, 2003; Ladbury, 2009). In some areas, police may refer the case to an informal system or discourage women and girls from pursuing a response through the formal system. This limits women's access to protection measures by law enforcement (orders of protection, arrest, or removal of perpetrator on cases of domestic violence) and limits their opportunities to seek redress for acts of violence against them (Barnes, 2009). There is less oversight of informal justice systems to ensure their adherence to national or international human rights standards, and that women's rights are being upheld in practice. At times, these systems often discriminate against female victims, reaching settlements without the participation or agreement of the affected woman or girl. In the worst cases, the process may perpetuate the violence she has experienced, for example, by forcing a victim of rape to marry the perpetrator (UN Women, 2011).

Spraos (2008) argues that discriminatory socio-cultural norms and gender stereotypes have for many years hindered management of domestic violence. Most societies remain male-dominated and in many communities, violence against women and

girls is largely accepted as a norm. The social stigmatization of domestic violence survivors by family members, authorities, service providers, and police or other law enforcement actors can prevent women and girls from reporting cases of abuse (Spraos, 2008). Discriminatory beliefs and attitudes held by police related to women and girls' rights and roles within the family and community are a significant barrier to improving the sector's role in addressing the issue. Security personnel and management may treat violence against women as a private matter, rather than one for state intervention, which can prevent the establishment, implementation (including enforcement) of policies, protocols and other practices to uphold women and girls' rights (Sequeira, *et al.* 2007). For example, in cases of domestic abuse, police may try to mediate between the woman and the perpetrator with a focus on reconciliation of the couple. This may escalate the violence and dissuade the survivor from contacting police again. In other cases, research has shown that police officers have refused to record cases and have sent women back to abusive situations, often leading to further abuse and stigmatization or in extreme cases, femicide (USAID, 2006).

Discrimination and limitations on women's presence and roles in the security sector is another challenge. Despite increasing efforts to expand the recruitment and retention of women, female personnel remain a small percentage within the related sectors. In some contexts, women have been prohibited from working within security institutions, which are dominated by men altogether (Kaplan, 2000; Whitworth, 2005). For example, as of 2011, women represented an average of 9 percent of police forces globally (UN Women, 2011). Where they are able to find work in such institutions, other forms of discrimination in education, training and professional opportunities result in women

remaining in lower-ranking, administrative roles, often receiving less pay for their work. While each woman's experience is unique, institutional environments which promote discriminatory attitudes, negative perceptions about women in security roles, and perpetuate stereotypes of female personnel can deter women from joining and serving in the sector and affect their ability to fully contribute to the institutions in which they work (UNESCO, 2009). This has a critical impact on survivors, who often prefer to disclose their experience to a female officer, although women officers also need training in providing a survivor-centred response.

The rise of domestic violence awareness in Mozambique hassled the government, placing violence as a prime concern in its political agenda. The government made this decision in a trial to reduce domestic violence cases and improve the victims' quality of life (Jetha *et al.* 2021). Mozambique government and other non-governmental entities have made significant efforts in improving accessibility of services to domestic violence victims and strengthening the legislative structure for legal services on domestic violence. The Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Gender Child and Social Action, and the Ministry of Health also worked with the government and non-governmental organizations for a legal structure of domestic violence prevention (Romão *et al.* 2009). The government put in place integrated care, gender focal points (professionals), and assistance offices attached to police stations in every provincial capital, all for domestic violence survivors. However, despite all these efforts, there are gaps limiting the implementation of the enacted policies. Jetha *et al.* (2021) performed a research study comprising of two approaches; analysis of guidelines and protocols for domestic violence care and intensive interviews with domestic violence professionals.

According to Jetha *et al.* (2021), there is a small number of care providers for domestic violence survivors at the gender focal points. Most of them also lack proper training, which compromised their performance and ability to recognize domestic violence survivors or how to manage them. Another report made was that the care providers' attitude and practices compromised their work in implementing the law and other strategies for preventing domestic violence. The service care providers claimed that poverty and the survivors' mindset were the reasons barring them from effective implementation of the violence strategies (Jetha *et al.* 2021).

There are a number of guidelines and protocols to prevent domestic violence. However, for the effect to take place, the guidelines have to be implemented. The low qualification of service care providers is influenced by negative social factors such as the sex and age of the individual. Apart from developing guidelines and protocols, the research team proposed that it was essential to align the content with national and international recommendations. The information in them should be written in an understandable way for better understanding and implementation (Geneva, 2011).

The government has a legal framework that fights against domestic violence. The laws address domestic violence from the legal level down to the care provider level. Recognition of the set laws and policies is an illustration of determination to eliminate domestic violence cases. The implementation of the laws will not only protect the victim but also put the batterer to justice. However, it is important to address the available gaps for timely and adequate concerns about domestic violence (Jetha *et al.* 2021). This ensures that the domestic violence survivors receive integrated and standardized care through evaluation, advocacy, monitoring, and implementation (Ostlin, 2006).

The police are the ones at the front line in handling domestic violence issues. They perform a vital role in ensuring that victims of domestic violence are brought to safety and assist them in making decisions concerning the abuse (Corcoran *et al.* 2001). Retief and Green (2015) conducted a study to determine police officers' experiences in policing various types of domestic violence. Twenty-eight police officers were selected based on their experience on domestic violence, their training, and the communities in which they served. All the officers were from Cape Province. Four of the participants had the position of a captain, six of them were sergeants, while five were warranting officers. The rest were constables.

Gender equity still portrayed an imbalance since most police officers were male. The officers performed their shift duties in the community service center or attended to community complaints. The results revealed that the female officers had more experience in dealing with domestic violence. This was evident through claims such as "We have an agreement on our shift that sensitive cases where women and children are involved are handled by the female on the shift." The male officers also claimed that they left the social work issues with the females since they are more sensitive than men (Retief & Green, 2015). The roles perceived to be softer were allocated to the female, while the men handled "harder crimes."

The average number of domestic violence cases per shift differed with the geographical regions. The officers working in urban centers reported more cases than those in rural areas. The difference obtained was explained as due to a difference in geographical size and available resources. It was unanimously agreed that physical abuse was the most common form of domestic violence (Djamba & Kimuna, 2015). The officers described

physical abuse as very difficult and stressful to handle. Some of the participants justified physical abuse by claiming that the women provoked the men. The declaration was a clear sign that in cases of domestic violence, some legal officers take the side of the abuser by justifying the act.

Emotional abuse was rarely reported since most participants saw it as not life-threatening because the damage was not visible. This type of abuse was, therefore, hard to handle since there is no visible proof. Due to this reason, emotional abuse is usually not reported or recorded accurately (Sims, 2008). The abuse of damage to property was the most frequently reported. It was determined that damage to property occurred together with other forms of abuse, such as the physical one. There were claims that the abuse of damage to property was lightly taken compared to other forms of violence. Sexual abuse was the most likely crime to be reported. The reports also stated that sexual abuse usually occurs alongside other crimes such as physical and emotional ones. The research noted that abuse through rape cases was massive but was rarely reported due to various reasons. The officers claimed that rape cases were hard to deal with and that they had to try hard not to reveal to the victims that the issue affected them. Sexual abuse of children was the most difficult one to deal with, as most officers became emotionally exhausted. The study identified that it was difficult for the police officers to remain professional when handling cases of child sexual abuse.

Economic violence involves the unreasonable withholding of finances when one is in need and is entitled to it. This form of violence also proved hard to handle since the victims begged the officers not to arrest their partners since they would have no means of income (Djamba & Kimuna, 2015). The victims facing this type of violence do not

cooperate as they are scared. Stalking and harassment were the least reported abuse and the least challenging. The study revealed that the most difficult forms of domestic violence were those most reported once. The research made a recommendation that police officers should be given refresher courses on dealing with domestic violence effectively.

Despite the efforts made to promote gender equality among individuals, domestic violence cases are still on the rise. Speaking out about domestic abuse is viewed as disclosing family matters which are meant to be private. The women face discrimination and stigma in society and risk losing custody of their children in case the parental rights are granted to the father (Haylock *et al.* 2016). In cases of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender abuse, the victims prefer keeping their relationships a secret to avoid ridicule from their peers and other members of society (Hunter-Gault, 2015).

The economic burden contributes to one of the reasons why women may not report domestic abuse cases. Women's unequal economic status makes them dependent on their men for basic care and financial aid. This form of dependency on abusive men makes it difficult for the women to escape abuse (Roldos & Corso, 2013). The women may also continue holding to abusive marriages or relationships as long as the husband continues to provide. The low economic status among women is contributed by the discrimination in the labor forces (Rospabe, 2001). Most employers prefer men for the well-paying "tough jobs" and leave the low-paying "soft ones" for the females. Insecure employment and low wages contribute to female vulnerability to abuse.

Efforts to raise awareness of women's rights may be faced with challenges in communities that justify domestic abuse (Koenig *et al.* 2003). Areas with high illiteracy

and social isolation limit women's access to information concerning addressing domestic violence. Women in the marginalized areas, such as migrants, those in rural areas, and the disabled, may be unaware of their legal rights (Sokoloff & Pratt, 2005). There could also be limited access to information due to the numerous forms of discrimination they face. They may also have no idea whether safe shelters exist thus will have no idea where to seek help in cases of abuse.

African countries and other international organizations have worked hard to ensure that the issue of domestic violence is eliminated. However, there are challenges facing the continent as a whole that make it difficult to eliminate domestic violence. Studies on domestic violence show that the existing strategies have failed (Olufunmilayo, 2004; Rynn & Histock, 2009; Spraos, 2008). In fact, domestic violence is increasing against both men and women, causing a lot of harm to the families. The society is weeping as peace and harmony in the homes is lacking. The failures in the existing strategies indicate that there is need to come up with new strategies that can help manage domestic violence in the African setting.

2.3.2 Opportunities of Managing Domestic Violence

Domestic violence refers to a behavioral pattern in any relationship used to maintain power over the other partner and be in control. Violence involves abuse that may be physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, or any other harmful actions towards an intimate partner (Matud, 2007). Domestic violence occurs in relationships or a family setup and has rapidly increased over the years. Women and young girls are the most vulnerable to violence. Extensive study is still ongoing about the issue to enable different organizations to understand the causes of domestic violence and all that is there to know

about the subject. The information gathered is crucial in determining which strategies to apply or whether the ones in place effectively resolve domestic violence. It is also vital to decide on the proper support to give to the survivors of domestic violence. Gender activists, social workers, various organizations such as the United Nations, and other volunteers are all on the front line fighting domestic violence in Africa. There are strategies meant to resolve domestic violence cases in Africa, such as legal actions, education strategies, community-based options, social services interventions, and public awareness.

Domestic violence was viewed as a family matter in the past and most countries in Africa behaved as if this type of violence did not exist. However, as awareness of domestic violence's short and long-term effects grew, most African countries embraced using the legal system to deal with the issue. Namibia's legal protection against domestic violence came into act in 2003 (Horvath *et al.* 2009). In 2006, a similar legislative act was passed after several NGOs and civil organizations campaigns. Another country with implemented domestic violence laws is South Africa. South Africa is one of the countries in which patriarchal norms are still upheld (Williams, 2019). Therefore, women and children face a daily threat of domestic violence. However, the government has set legal solutions for domestic violence acts. The relevant statutes and codes include: "The constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996", "Domestic Violence Act, No 116, 1998", and "The Criminal Law Amendment Act, No. 32 of 2007".

Chapter 2 of the South African constitution states equal rights and freedom laws. It explains that everyone is equal before the law despite their gender, race, marital status,

color, belief, or culture. Therefore, every citizen has a right to equal protection by the same law, without discrimination. The “Domestic Violence Act, No 116, 1998” came into effect in 1999. This legislation act is specifically targeted for protection against domestic violence cases. It explains a domestic violence victim's legal procedure in a magistrate’s court. The act allows an interdict in the magistrate's court for any individual in a domestic relationship with the perpetrator. The act also includes anyone who had been married, engaged, or dating the perpetrator, regardless of whether the relationship was of the same or opposite sex. Section 3 of the act states that, an officer without a warrant may arrest a respondent suspected to be involved in any act of domestic violence. Section 4 of the Act permits the victim to apply for a protection order. The court clerk requests the complainant to fill in a form and attest to an affidavit (Naidoo, 2006). The court will then issue an interim protection order if it is convinced that the complaint filed is an act of violence. Domestic violence is treated as a criminal offense. “The Criminal Law Amendment Act, No. 32 of 2007” is a reformed act on sexual violence. The act explains different forms of sexual assault and states that one is guilty of sexual assault if it occurs without the complainant's consent.

“Extremists hate smart girls because smart girls are less likely to be kept down” (Khazan, 2014). The benefits of educating girls go way beyond having a more skilled labor force and a more robust economy. Education serves as a protective barrier to rape, domestic violence, and early marriages. In a World Focus Group, one Tanzanian woman claimed that it was normal to be beaten and get yelled at; she was used to the abuse, just like how she was with eating *ugali* (Khazan, 2014). Pub- Med did a research study on

Ethiopian women about their attitude on domestic beating. The study revealed that about 57% of them justified beatings from their partners. They claimed that they deserved it in incidents such as burning food, going out without informing the husband, unfaithfulness, and disobedience (Guracho & Biftu, 2018). World Bank statistics revealed that educated women were less likely to be sexually or physically abused.

The gap between men and women has drastically decreased due to the increased percentage of women enrolled in schools. The rate of maternal mortality is almost halved, and the ratio of women to men in labor also increased. Rwanda and Senegal are in the top list of countries with a higher number of female representatives in the government. In most countries, some work sectors are only reserved for a particular gender (Singh, 2014). However, Uganda has developed an educational program to boost women's employment sector. The Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents program (ELA) deliver life skills and vocational training to enable girls to be self-employed. The program has enrolled several girls who show a high chance of engaging in income-generating activities. Reports also indicate that the girls in the program are less likely to get pregnant at a young age. The likelihood of them engaging in sexual activities against their will is also reduced. The ELA program has made significant changes in the lives of many youths who lack access to enough economic opportunities for everyday life.

School is a great way to influence children's attitudes before getting engrained with negative ideas such as domestic violence. An education system that incorporates various programs such as violence goes a long way in eradicating the issue. The programs address different social norms and the risk factors involved. Children are taught how to develop positive relationship values and be strongly assertive in their relationships with

others. A confident person is less likely to be intimidated. They stand up to whatever does not feel right with them, thus reducing the probability of them getting abused. In instances of abuse, the individual will have the courage to speak out and even walk out of that abusive relationship.

The solution to domestic violence in education lies in adopting the best programs that incorporate all aspects of life, making the necessary changes, and getting proper funding. Women are the ones most abused in African homes. Education forms a basis for women's empowerment. The more women are empowered, the more they are less vulnerable to domestic violence because they can stand up for their rights (Lopez-Avilla, 2016). Education also provides a chance for employment opportunities to enable women to make their own money. This opportunity eradicates the issue of women persevering in abusive marriages just because the partner can provide for them (Sears, 2018). Some of the significant gender issues in Africa have a compelling inter-generational prospect. When the mothers are educated, say no to early marriages, take part in the labor market, and do not condone domestic violence, their daughters are more likely to grow up and develop the same characteristics and prospects in the future.

In several African countries, individuals do not report crimes to legal authorities. The reasons given for not reporting crimes include mistrust in the police, inability to easily access the police, and politicization of police forces. Community-based strategies, therefore, serve a significant role in confronting domestic violence. Most International policies against women's violence explain that for domestic violence to end, society

norms on the roles and values of a woman should also change (Michau & Voices, 2015). For the long-term eradication effect on domestic violence, the community has to take a primary approach to the violence issue. Primary interventions involve determining the cause of domestic violence. Reasons such as defined gender roles, imbalanced power, and low regard for women are considered.

The second approach involves all community members in preventing domestic violence, meaning that mobilization focuses on change in all levels of a community: family, environment, individual, neighborhood, and social institutions. Community organizations need to recognize all that shapes the community, such as its history, culture, and relationships between individuals. Efforts made should involve a wide range of community members (Shepard & Zelli, 2008). Members of the community need to be regularly engaged in information from various sources. Continuous exposure to information from different sources influences perception and promotes the need for practice. For example, in a particular week, a man is walking to work, and he hears a sermon about family unity; later on, a friend invites him over for a parenting skills class (Thobejane, Mogorosi & Luthada, 2018). The man then hears a broadcast about human rights from his radio and meets a peaceful protest on domestic violence on his way home. This example illustrates how a community works all around for one aim of preventing domestic violence.

Members of the same community must lead projects aimed at changing the perception of a community. The organization involved in impacting the change should work closely with individuals and groups of the target community to make them agents of change in

the community (Michau & Naker, 2003). Involving men in the fight against domestic violence is essential. Without men's support, women will be more vulnerable to domestic violence, causing fallout in work.

Community mobilization takes place in five phases: assessment, awareness, building networks, integration, and finally, efforts consolidation. The assessment phase is the period for gathering information and attitudes of individuals on domestic violence. Through this way, professionals build a relationship with the community members. The awareness phase is when information on domestic violence is explained to the community members. The negative impacts on an individual, family and the community are described in detail. During the building networks phase, professional sectors are encouraged to begin changes towards preventing domestic violence. Members work together to achieve this goal by integrating preventive measures and making them part of their daily lives. The final phase strengthens domestic violence actions and ensures continued progress and growth in the community.

The Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP) has implemented the use of a community mobilization program to combat the domestic violence issue. An assessment done on the division revealed community mobilization significantly contributed to individual, family, and community change. The change led to a decline in physical, sexual, economic, and emotional violence against women (Michau & Naker, 2003). Although a few individuals were against the idea, and some were resistant to change among men and women. The study findings revealed a significant trend in implementing a free violence life for women.

Several African countries provide a wide range of social services intended to prevent domestic violence. The services include advocacy and counseling of the domestic violence victims, shelter, support programs, protective guardianship, and other essential services or programs (Chalk 7 King, 2001). Social workers are trained to recognize the reasons for domestic violence. The workers can counsel and support communities in behavioral change to eradicate domestic violence cases. They also play a significant role in providing care and treatment services for domestic violence victims. Social workers create a conducive environment in which victims are encouraged to talk about the abuse they are facing freely.

The Women's Rights Awareness Programme (WRAP) narrates a story about Faustine, a mother of five who lives in the Korogocho slums of Nairobi. She experienced family discrimination due to her HIV status, and her husband left her with the children to care for. She also had to close her business to take care of her ailing child. The WRAP social worker met her, where she explained her situation. The program trained her on life skills to self-generate income (AUDA, 2018). She now runs her own business and has moved from a one room to a double room, thanks to her savings.

Organizations worldwide have adopted the use of media for attitude and behavioral change. Researchers conducted a study in Uganda to determine whether videos encouraging individuals to speak out about their experience in domestic violence created behavioral and attitude change in the citizens. Researchers created anti-violence videos ranging from four to eight minutes. Audiences viewed the videos through film festivals

held in bibandas; video halls found in rural areas of Uganda throughout the 112 villages (Green *et al.* 2015). The bibandas featured a film festival with six Hollywood films that were not related to domestic violence against women. The videos were displayed weekly through consecutive weekends, from July to September. Three short domestic violence videos were inserted in between the Hollywood films in randomly selected 48 villages. The other 64 villages watched the Hollywood film with no insertion of domestic violence videos. These 64 villages were to act as a “placebo”. The anti-violence videos were presented in the Luganda language by local actors. The villagers were able to recognize the characters in the clips.

A survey, through opinion polls, took place eight months after the films. The questions asked determined the behavior and attitudes of individuals among a random sample. The results proved that there were notable changes and that there was a reduced chance of domestic violence in villages where the domestic violence videos were displayed. The changes could have been contributed by the decrease in the level of perception that speaking out causes social punishment. Reports from various individuals who had been in violent relationships indicated that there was a 5% decline in the likelihood of women being abused. About 20% of the respondents claimed that there was at least one case of violence in the past six months (Green *et al.* 2015). The campaign then concluded that the number of violence cases had reduced by almost a half. The exercise had prevented domestic violence in around six families in each of the 48 villages shown the anti-violence clips.

There was little evidence of whether the anti-violence videos impacted the individual's attitudes and social norms. There was also no evidence indicating increased empathy for domestic violence victims or on the violent acts. The significant reduction in domestic violence cases was due to an increase in willingness to talk about the violence issue. The research concluded that media interventions were cost-effective to reduce domestic violence in rural areas (Green *et al.* 2015). More research was also needed to examine different media implementation strategies.

Public awareness campaigns are one of the most used strategies used against domestic violence. The campaigns are aimed at eliminating violence directly or indirectly. The direct way is specifically dealing with domestic violence, while the indirect way deals with the issues related to domestic violence, such as equality and human rights. The public awareness campaign "#BringBackOurGirls" started in 2014 when Boko Haram kidnapped around 300 school girls in Nigeria. The issue trended on social media, and the hashtag was used more than three million times. The campaign succeeded in bringing protesters to the streets, and their plea was heard. Foreign powers were also involved by sending military forces to help in combating the Boko Haram group (Vogl, 2019). The hashtag's message was clear and appealing to the online target groups, who did a great job influencing others.

Vogl (2019) highlighted several tips for a successful campaign in Africa. Before starting a public awareness campaign, one has to take enough time to understand their ultimate goal. The topic of the campaign should be a concern for several other individuals or groups of people. After understanding the issue in and out, one can then plan for a

campaign. The campaign should be simple for the target group and supporters to join. Social media can be a great tool in conveying the campaigning message, and one can reach out to their existing networks to help push the campaign message to more people online. The information on the campaign messages should be accurate to avoid legal measures due to false information. Finally, one should ensure that the campaign is sustained over the scheduled period.

There are various public awareness campaigns, namely: Public education campaigns and National or government-sponsored campaigns. Public Education campaigns aim to understand the problem at hand by defining the behavioral actions involved in domestic violence. Complete information on the extent of violence and its long and short-term effects is also provided. The campaigns can also state the illegal status of the abuse such as “Wife beatings is a crime”. Public Education Campaigns challenge public attitudes towards domestic violence by confronting them. The campaigns examine the factors that may contribute to negative attitudes on violence, such as the behaviors of the violent victims and the decisions they make, the impact of alcohol, glorification of media violence, and victim-blaming ideologies (Fletcher *et al.* 2020). The campaigns can then advise the victims on how to protect themselves and provide suggestions for the next action. The campaigns provide information to the public through visual and audio ways. They also ensure that the message reaches many people by availing the same message in different languages.

Government-sponsored campaigns have the potential to reach a massive amount of people. These campaigns require the cooperation and commitment of more than one level

of a government body. Non-governmental bodies may sponsor these types of campaigns as well. The campaigns should consider several strategies for the programs to meet their goal. The strategies include encouraging more community input, involving domestic violence victims and practitioners in the phases of the campaign, and use of social marketing techniques such as health programs to drive more force.

In many communities, the domestic violence program has elected the use of community partnering approach to build coordinated community response. In this model, the domestic violence program identifies a strategic plan for community action (Redempta, Kenneth & Christina, 2018). Tasks are prioritized. The program partners with individuals and organizations in the community to work on the various initiatives in the plan. Work groups that are task specific and draw upon the expertise of members in the community are established. Work plans are developed and implemented. From planning through execution, the work is collaborative with selected actors in the community. The domestic violence program orchestrates and oversees the work undertaken. As contrasted with other approaches, this one is decentralized by design. It readily works in many areas of the community contemporaneously (Ladbury, 2009). It is an approach that is accessible to professionals and other community actors who are interested in work but are not necessarily the power brokers in the community. It also enables the diverse leadership within the domestic violence program to be fully employed rather than limiting participation to executive staff. Those engaged are likely to volunteer rather than being drafted. Thereby, team building among the work groups is facilitated (Redempta, Kenneth & Christina, 2018). As the work groups are not public forums, problem-solving may be enhanced with public posturing and turf issues being minimized. Community

partnering does not require a formal infrastructure, and thus may be less costly and more manageable by grassroots organizations than other approaches. Many domestic violence coalitions as well as local domestic violence programs utilize this model.

According to Ladbury (2009), intervention projects are private sector programs designed to enhance justice system accountability to battered women. Their work includes orchestration and oversight of coordinated community initiatives related to domestic violence (Ladbury, 2009). The intervention program works with all sectors of the justice system (i.e., police, jail personnel, pre-trial services, prosecutors, judges, pre-sentence investigators, probation and parole, corrections) and the mental health system to create an effective deterrent to domestic violence, to safeguard battered women and children and to align the community in efforts to end violence against women as put across by Okemgbo, Omideyi & Odimegwu (2002). Elements of the work include the development, implementation and monitoring of protocols and practice guides with each component; training of all staff in every component on domestic violence, the goals of the intervention approach and the changes in job responsibilities and methods entailed in the reform; outreach to batterers in the civil and criminal justice systems, as well as education or treatment groups based in the Duluth curriculum or others; training and monitoring of the educators or therapists working with perpetrators; tracking of batterers and automation of data retrieval on batterer status in both civil and criminal justice systems; outreach, information and referral to battered women to enhance safety and autonomy; and community education and media initiatives to transform public understanding and response to domestic violence (Olufunmilayo, 2004).

Like the community partnering model undertaken by domestic violence programs, the intervention approach establishes the hub of coordinating activity in a grassroots organization. The intervention staffs are charged with primary responsibility for interface between the components. They negotiate changes that are essential, as identified through feedback from the several components or their own monitoring efforts. They convene meetings of the whole as necessary (OECD-DAC, 2011). They undertake independent evaluation of systemic function and coordination and seek modifications. In many ways they serve as cheerleaders to the system. The overarching principle of their work is accountability to battered women.

In the views of Okemgbo, Omideyi & Odimegwu (2002), intervention programs differ from partnering initiatives in that they provide direct services to batterers from entry through exit from the justice system. The foci of intervention work are cessation, surveillance and batterer education. Direct services and advocacy for battered women are sometimes provided by domestic violence programs, rather than the intervention program (Okemgbo, Omideyi & Odimegwu, 2002).

Ladbury (2009) points out that task forces seek to coordinate all the components of the criminal justice system to improve justice system practice and to better communication and collaboration in work to end violence against women. The initial work of a task force almost invariably is an assessment of the state of criminal justice (and/or human services) practice and resources in the community, followed by a report on effective practice and systemic deficits, along with a description of recommended remedies and potential resources (Ladbury, 2009). Nair (2007) further opines that a task force may then develop a work plan for incremental change and elevated coordination. The promulgation of

compatible and definitive protocols or guidelines for practice in each component of the justice system is often the first step in a work plan (Hatcher, *et al.* 2013; Nair, 2007). While each agency retains the exclusive authority to develop the protocol for that component, sharing of work product with a request for feedback from the other components, particularly in terms of interface of the various components, is routinely invited. Hamilton (2009) adds that other collaboration in training and problem-solving follows. Evaluation may be undertaken and systemic reform considered in the light of the results thereof. Informal systems of communication, conflict resolution and coordination among task force participants are an important outgrowth of the formal work of the task force (Hamilton, (2009).

According to Dutton & Nicholls (2005), training and technical assistance projects that are targeted at informed, improved justice and human service system practice have produced a plethora of training curricula and an almost equivalent amount of audiovisual materials. Ghazizadeh (2016) argues that legal advocacy training is offered in a number of states, where some certify advocates and require continuing education to maintain certification. Police training manuals, court clerk handbooks, prosecution guides, bench books, pre-trial service seminars, probation workshops, correctional curricula on victims of domestic violence, electronic monitoring pamphlets, safety planning and survival skills workshops, guides to maximizing compensation and restitution, court audit tools, and innumerable other educational materials have been crafted and implemented (Ghazizadeh, 2016). Training curricula for clergy, educators, health care providers, child protective service workers, public housing staff, private security firms, employers, civic groups, etc. have been developed. Media campaigns have been initiated. Clearing houses have been

established. Technical assistance projects to aid policy-makers and practitioners in the design of effective justice and human service systems have been instituted.

Community organizing initiatives are those which invite members of the general public to actively engage in work to end violence against women (Fawole, *et al.* 2005). Domestic violence programs and community activists have utilized organizing strategies with the goals of enhancing safety and achieving social justice for battered women and children; objectives of community organizing are expansion of the constituency of active participants in the work, articulation of a clear universal message that each citizen can take responsibility to end this violence, and transformation of the public discourse and consciousness about the causes of violence against women and the power of the community to end it. Many community organizing efforts originated in domestic violence programs. At times, organizing addresses a discrete problem and at others it, attempts to transform the consciousness and practice of the entire community. However, once organized, the community team often develops a mission and tasks of its own; at which time the organizing effort is passed on to the community. Among all the coordinated community approaches, organizing projects have, perhaps, best engaged communities of color and other marginalized constituencies in full partnership in the visioning and implementation of work to end violence against women and children.

The evaluation literature on coordinated community approaches is largely exploratory and preliminary. It lends support to the premise that multiple and coordinated approaches to ending domestic violence are warranted (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). Data on the question of when battered women will seek outside intervention suggests that the more resources and apparent options a woman has for ending the violence, the more likely she

is to act to seek intervention, to achieve protection or to leave the abuser. Thus, where a community offers multiple, viable options, it appears that the safety requirements of battered women will be better met than when a singular intervention is employed (Barnes, 2009). If one defines coordinated community response in terms of comprehensive, or at least multiple, options in the justice and human services systems, this appears to advance the goal of social justice for battered women. It is critical to note, however, that there has been relatively little research on outcomes of individual justice system or human service system endeavors. The singular intervention of arrest has been investigated (Carbone-Lopez & Kruttschnitt, 2010).

A smaller amount of inquiry has been directed at prosecution, lawyers, or the courts. A comparative treasure trove of research on batterer intervention services is now available, the results of which offer some direction for policy formulation (Andrew, 2010). There is a dearth of evaluation study on advocacy and domestic violence program services and the needs of battered women seeking shelter. There is an emerging body of research on the efficacy of civil protection orders and court processes. However, it is clear that the evaluation of discrete intervention strategies has barely begun. Significant additional investigation on intervention initiatives in the community is essential and will inform research on coordinated community response. The current study will evaluate the existing strategies in Nyeri County to show their effectiveness and ineffectiveness.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The study was underpinned by a conceptual framework borrowing ideas from the frustration-aggression theory and the social learning theory. The two theories

complemented each other in meeting the objectives of the study. The elements of each theory were tied together to form a conceptual framework.

2.4.1. Frustration-aggression Theory

Frustration-aggression theory was developed by scholars such as Dollard, Miller, and Doob among others in the early 1930s and later reformulated by Berkowitz in the late 1960s. According to the theory, aggression largely stems from frustrations, especially when an individual fails to attain his/her goals. In its first hypothesis, the theory postulated that frustration preceded aggression with the latter being the absolute consequence of the former. Barely two years after its formulation, scholars led by Miller and Sears restructured the hypothesis to denote that while frustration necessitated the need to react, some form of aggression is one possible outcome. Dollard and colleagues asserted that frustration is a condition that existed when an objective suffers distortion while aggression is conceived as an act whose intention is to inflict injury or pain (Breuer & Quandt, 2015). Attached and deeply linked to the theory is displaced aggression which describes a response to a frustration that is directed towards individuals who bear no responsibility for the interference in the attainment of one's objective. For instance, a man may be humiliated in his workplace but is incapacitated to respond in the fear of losing a job and may instead redirect his anger and frustration on the family. Naturally, the requirements for frustration to lead to aggression differ between various forms of aggression which may include but are not limited to direct, indirect, or physical aggression.

The theory was reformulated by Berkowitz (1978) who admitted the criticisms laid against the theory. In response, he reformulated the theory by arguing that not only

frustration but also the negative effect is the proximal cause of aggressive responses and that frustration is just one but many of the potential causes of negative effects. He suggested that additional sources of aggressive inclination included insults, anxiety, and unpleasant environmental conditions alongside other aversive circumstances (Berkowitz, 1989).

Nyeri County is one of the rapidly developing counties in Kenya. Despite the stellar economic performance, the county is still bedevilled by the menace of domestic violence. The socio-cultural dynamics have and continue to influence at an unprecedented level, the level of education, the rapid changes in gender roles and responsibilities and cultural advancement among others. Such changes have contributed either directly or indirectly to the increase in domestic violence in Nyeri County. In the light of this, the frustration-aggression theory fits the study since most of the societal and cultural changes have and continue to pose a significant threat to traditionally held assertions. Consequently, this has culminated in spiralling anger and frustration that in turn has contributed to the necessity of aggression to attain certain societal or individual objectives. For instance, scores of Nyeri women have undergone education and attained significant academic achievement to the detriment of some of their male counterparts. As a result, they have been educationally empowered with some having more stable jobs than their male counterparts. Accordingly, most men have been angered and frustrated by this emotive phenomenon and oftentimes resorted to aggression to curtail such empowerment. Displaced aggression has also been witnessed, especially when such aggression is extended to innocent family members including children, who are also affected significantly by domestic violence. Similarly, the change in gender roles is oftentimes

perceived as a threat to male dominance. Consequently, given limited ways to thwart such a change, the affected individuals, particularly the male counterparts, tend to be aggressive and resort to violence to avert some of the changes. As a result, cases of domestic violence continue to be on the rise in Nyeri County.

The frustration-aggression theory focuses on domestic violence, which is the dependent variable of the study. It does not touch on the socio-cultural dynamics that influence the violence. In this case, therefore, it was important to introduce the social learning theory to explain the dependent variable.

2.4.2 Social Learning Theory

The profound development of social learning theory is largely attributed to the influential works of Albert Bandura. As averred by Bandura (1986), people tend to observe behaviours either directly or indirectly mainly from social interactions with others. The theory holds that everything that we undertake has been learned. Much of the learning in mankind stems from behavioural observations of other people's actions as well as from imagining the dire consequences of our actions (Wren, 1982). Similarly, it conceives learning as an evolutionary process that is aided by social imitations that are inherently linked to close contacts, coping, and adapting to a superior understanding of concepts coupled with the role of model behaviour. It postulates and recognizes that aggressive behaviours may be conceived by an individual during the growth period or can be emulated through practice from bad influencers (Belanger, 2011). Relating to behaviours, the theory mainly focuses on both psychological and environmental factors as the greatest influence on a person's behaviour. The theory is underpinned by several assumptions; that people learn mainly through observations and imitations; the rewards, especially

punishment that may arise from one's actions pose direct effects on both learning and observations; that behaviours are influenced by the processes of meditation and that change is not necessarily brought by learning. Therefore, the theory comprehends violence as an emulated mechanism that is carried through observations or experience. Additionally, the intergenerational passage of violence remains the critical component of the social learning theory.

Social learning theory fits the study as it unravels the definition of violent behaviours perpetrated on individuals, a close interaction between the individuals and those that commit such violence. The theory signifies the study as it informs and emphasizes the evolutionary behaviours of the people from the study area that have either accelerated or decelerated the cases of domestic violence. For instance, male domination as a cultural belief has been entrenched through intergenerational learning. This has culminated in a largely patriarchal society that disregards the position of women in society. Again, wife battering as one of the manifestations of domestic violence has been facilitated by a patriarchal culture that is emulated in practice and through observation. Through social learning and interactions, Nyeri County has posted immense development and prosperity that has translated into stern changes in economy, occupation and education, making it one of the most prosperous counties in Kenya. Given the observational changes in Nyeri County including economic endowment, culturally related violence and adjustments in the educational level, peace and stability are expected to reign in all the households in the County. On the contrary, domestic violence tends to be on the rise as reported by the media and scholarly works. Therefore, the theory reinforces the study given its focus on

the process of socialization and the continued emulation of domestic violence practices in society.

Social learning theory is embedded in social interactions and observing then eventually imitating what has been observed. Accordingly, it was relevant to the study area since domestic violence was an observable phenomenon which was being learned and imitated thus, contributing to increased cases of the aforementioned violence. For instance, the study established that women battering was being learned and observed by the immediate neighbours which in turn triggered violence against women in the neighbouring households. Similarly, this has also been attributed to the acts of violence against men, which was also unearthed in the study area.

2.4.3 Conceptual Model

The interaction of variables is illustrated using the frustration-aggression theory and the social learning theory is outlined in Figure 2.1.

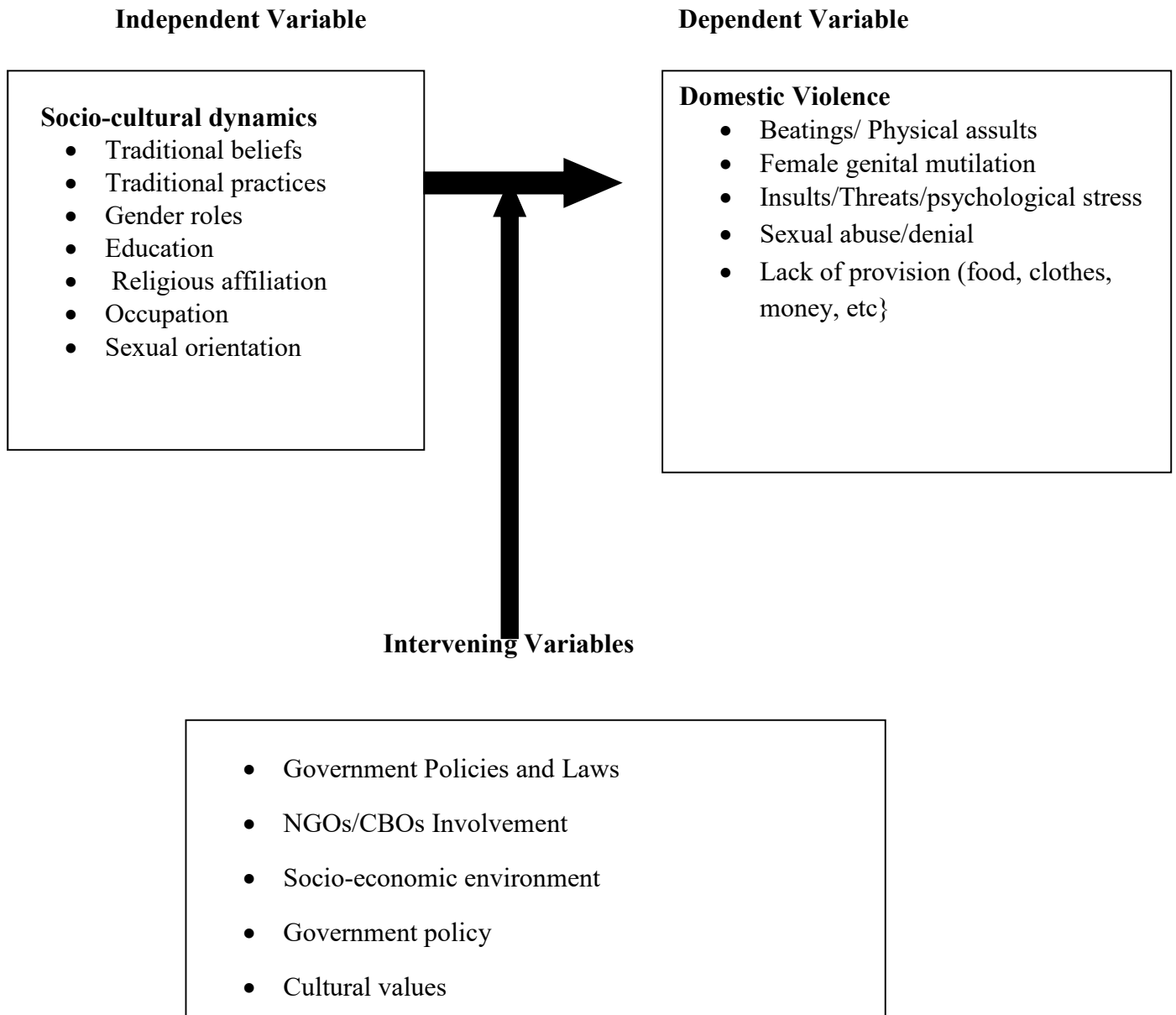


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model of the Study Showing Interaction of Variables

Source: Author (2020)

The conceptual model illustrates the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Both variables are interrelated to one another in a way that a change in independent variable leads to a change in the dependent variable. The independent variable is the socio-cultural dynamics, with parameters such as traditional beliefs and practices, religious factors, demographic factors which include age, education, gender, and marital status among others. The dependent variable is the domestic violence, with parameters such as physical assault, female genital mutilation, psychological insults, sexual abuse, and inadequate provisions of the basic needs. In numerous African societies, cultural and religiously held beliefs have been established as the main contributor of domestic violence. For instance, certain practices have held stereotypes that buttress men's sexual domination at the detriment of women oftentimes justifying the men's urge for sexual satisfaction. This in turn has culminated in unprecedented incidences of sexual-related violence which many atimes goes unpunished. Similarly, economic status, age and gender have been frequently utilized to continue sexual violence, especially among women. For example, women who are not economically empowered have oftentimes fallen victim of sexual violence, some are subjected to deplorable working conditions where sexual exploitation is widely practiced. Young women possess little powers over their sexual orientation, lack powers to dispel women, while some have no bargaining power to shun sexual exploitation. This in turn has led to increased sexual violence. Further the education disparity gap between the women and men have been huge with women being the most affected individuals. This in turn has increased the incidences of sexual abuse, especially among women.

The increased female genital mutilations in most African cultures have been largely attributed to cultural and religious practices. In the light of this, some cultures equate the practice with the preservation of dignity and women's value where the uncircumcised women are considered undervalued and not fit for marriages thus excluding them from the society. Similarly, other cultural practices have the bride price of the circumcised staked higher at the detriment of the uncircumcised as the former translates to some form of purity. This in turn has increased the high prevalence of female genital mutilation among women. Again, demographic factors including the level of education and age have been utilized to perpetrate the act on women. For instance, it is highly likely for uneducated women to be subjected to the cut as compared to the educated and economically privileged women. Again, it is also highly likely that women of young ages are likely to be forced to the cut as compared to the old-aged women. These among others contribute directly or indirectly to the increased female genital mutilation. Numerous established studies have revealed the interrelationship between psychological and physical violence to the economic status of women, a widely held culture that men should have autonomous control over their women, cultural justification that women should be beaten to instill discipline among others.

In a bid to root out the socio-cultural factors that tend to intensify domestic violence, respective governments around the world have responded by legislating and enacting laws that seek to address various forms of domestic violence by banning them, convicting the perpetrators and above all, protect the victims of domestic violence. These laws have manifested in the form of Acts of parliament, policy frameworks and strategies. Similarly, other non-governmental organizations have been established with an aim of

advocating, championing and fighting against all forms of domestic violence. Some of these agencies have attracted external donor funding and the locally sourced funding to drive some of their projects, especially women empowerment. Again, socio-economic environment can play a significant role in reducing or intensifying domestic violence coupled with socio-cultural dynamics. However, when the prevailing socio-economic environment that tends to favor men is reconsidered, the prevalence of domestic violence can reduce significantly.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviews relevant literature to the study. The chapter is organized in the following sub-topics: nature of domestic conflicts; the nexus between socio-cultural dynamics and domestic violence; and the challenges and opportunities of domestic violence. The chapter also discusses the various theories and framework that guided the study. It also presents the conceptual framework. The next chapter presents the methodology that was used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, the study area, study population, sample size and population, procedures and methods of sampling, tools and methods of data collection, data analysis, the study assumptions, ethical considerations, and the limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

The researcher employed the descriptive and evaluative research design. According to Kothari (2004), the descriptive research design is the deliberate format for the correct analysis and measurement of the data at the end of the collection (Kothari, 2004). Descriptive design aims to systematically obtain information in order to describe a phenomenon, situation, or a population. In this study, descriptive research design affords the incorporation of all the descriptions of the socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence in Nyeri County, as well as the link between real and/or perceived threat of violence and the increased rate of violence in the County. It also captured the respondents' attitudes, opinions, and experiences in the study area. This design is germane for using FGDs, interviews and questionnaires to collect information about the socio-cultural factors influencing domestic violence in Nyeri County. It revealed the link with the current society response and how they connect to the current manifestations of domestic violence in the study area. Descriptive research design was used to acquire and analyze data in line with the first and second objective of the study.

On the other hand, evaluative research design entails carrying out a structured assessment of the concepts with an aim of improving a situation or providing a better solution to an existing problem. It helps in identifying whether a certain phenomenon works as intended and uncovering areas for improvement. In this study, evaluative research design was used to evaluate the strategies of managing domestic violence in Nyeri County, which is the third objective.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Nyeri County, Kenya. Nyeri County has a population of 759,164 people, which was the study population (KNBS, 2019). It is the former headquarters of Central Province. Nyeri county lies between Latitude: 0° 24' 59.99" N and Longitude: 36° 56' 59.99" E. It is estimated to be 3,337.2 square Kilometers in size (Gok, 2013). It is approximately 150 kilometers North of Nairobi. Nyeri County borders five counties which are: Meru to the North East, Laikipia County to the North, Murang'a to the South, Nyandarua to the West, and Kirinyaga to the East. The County acquired its name from the Masaaai word *Nyiro*, which means red. The Masaaai Community lived in the area long time ago, and called it *Nyiro* because of the red volcanic soil in the region. The white settlers changed the name to Nyeri.

The county is divided into six (6) sub-counties namely, Mukurwe-ini, Mathira, Kieni, Tetu, Othaya and Nyeri Town. According to the 2019 National Census, Nyeri County is home to 759,164 people (male-49% and female-51%) (KNBS & SID, 2013). The local people in the county are predominately the Agikuyu. Majority of the residents are predominately farmers. They grow coffee and tea, as well as cash crops such as assorted vegetables, sweet potatoes, irish potatoes, beans, and maize.

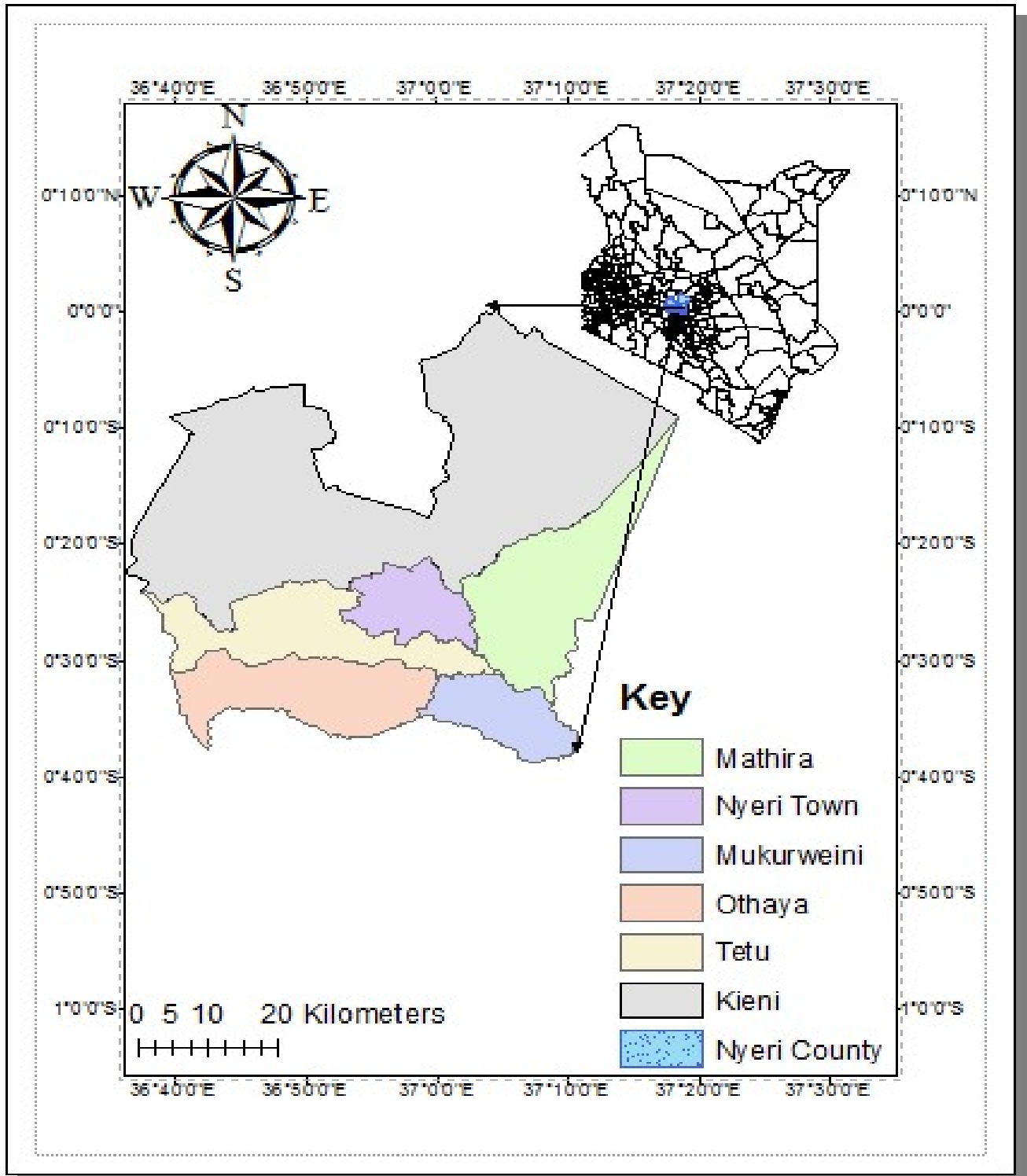


Figure 3.1: Nyeri County Map

Source: GIS, 2020

According to a Nyeri County report (2018), majority of the residents in Nyeri County are Christians. The most notable Christian denominations in the region are Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican, *Akorino*, Pentecostals, and Methodists (GoK, 2018). In addition, there are a few Muslims and Hindus especially in Major Towns such as Nyeri, Chaka, Othaya and Karatina. The community speaks the Gikuyu language, which is Bantu. Majority of those living in towns use Kiswahili. English is primarily used in the employment sector and the education system (GoK, 2018). Traditionally, the Agikuyu believed in one god known as *Ngai* (The Provider) who lives at the top of Mt Kenya (*Kirinyaga*). However, as Kershaw (1997) notes, most of the residents of the Nyeri County abandoned the traditional religion and embraced Christianity. Nonetheless, they still hold into some of their cultures, some of which contribute greatly to the increased domestic violence in the study area.

The county experiences equatorial rainfall because of its location within the highland zone of Kenya. The long rains occur from March to May while the short rains come in October to December, but occasionally this pattern is disrupted by abrupt and adverse changes in climatic conditions. The annual rainfall ranges between 1,200mm-1,600mm during the long rains and 500mm-1,500mm during the short rains. In terms of altitude, the county lies between 3,076 meters and 5,199 meters above sea level (KNBS & SID, 2013). It is very conducive for agriculture. It is among the Kenyan regions with very low temperatures, ranging between 12°C during the cold months of June and July, and 27°C in the hot months of January-March, and September-October. The county receives high precipitation throughout the year.

Nyeri County nests between the Aberdare Ranges and Mount Kenya. Thus, it has a favorable environment for agriculture, making it the main economic activity in the county. For decades, Nyeri County has been famous due to high coffee and tea production which are mainly exported. Horticultural farming has been going on in the county for decades too (KNBS, 2015). Large scale flower farmers such as Wilmar Flowers in Sagana and Mweiga Blooms in Kieni are examples of horticultural firms that have enabled the success of this crucial economic activity (GoK, 2018). Farmers are also investing in green house farming in small scale for the production of strawberry, capsicum, green pepper, courgettes and tomatoes. There are other agricultural activities that act as a source of income for the Nyeri County residents such as fish keeping and dairy farming. There are fish pods in Chinga Dam, Aguthi and Tetu areas (Mugi, 2019). Trout rearing is also done along the Gura and Chania rivers, as well as the Mt. Kenya base. Dairy farming is done on small scale basis at the homes. In addition, there are many residents who engage in retail business activities in the main towns, open air markets as well as shopping centers.

There are light industries in Nyeri County that provide employment opportunities as well as market for the local products. Some of the notable factories in the study area are Highlands Mineral Water, Mount Kenya Bottlers, Brookside Dairy and Maisha Flour Millers. Since the area produces a lot of coffee and tea, it has six tea factories which are Ragati, Iria-ini, Gitugi, Gathuthi, Chinga and Kagochi (KNBS & SID, 2013). There are various NGOs in Nyeri County that run important projects. NGOs such as NACADA, UN, DFID and USAID are involved in implementation and funding of humanitarian

assistance projects such as health, horticulture, bee keeping, environmental conservation, and other socio-economic activities that positively impact the lives of the residents.

A significant number of Nyeri County residents live in rural areas, with only 24.5% of its population residing in urban areas (Mugi, 2019). According to the office of the controller of budgets, about 24.5% of the local residents live below the poverty line compared to the national average of 47% (CoB, 2019). This makes the county among those with the lowest poverty rates in the country. Access to improved water, sanitation and electricity is relatively above national averages. CoB reports (2019) further state that 69.3% of households in Nyeri County have access to improved water and 99.6% have access to improved sanitation. These are higher than the national averages of 66.5% and 87.8% respectively (GoK, 2013). Electricity is available in 26.3% of the households compared to the 22% national average (KNBS, 2015).

In the county, 92,205 persons are wage earners thus contributing 24 per cent of the household income (GoK, 2013). They are mainly employed by the national and county governments, learning institutions and the business community. Rural self-employed persons in the county are 15,368 contributing 4 per cent of household income while urban self-employed persons are 4,444 and contribute 13 per cent of the household income (KNBS & SID, 2013). The wages are higher in urban areas than in the rural areas. The county will need to provide affordable credit for the establishment of micro enterprises to create more self-employment opportunities.

The unemployment level in the county is 17.5 per cent since out of the potential labor force of 421,298 persons, only 347,502 are employed (CoB, 2019). The dependency rate

in the county therefore stands at 51 per cent of the total population. Apart from affordable credit, there is need of establishing cottage industries to add value on farm produce and hence create more employment.

3.3 Study Population

The study population included: household heads, Sub-county Commissioners, NGO/CBO heads, National Police Service, religious leaders, assistant chiefs, victims, and village elders.

3.4 Sampling

The researcher utilized both probability and non-probability sampling procedures. Non-probability comprises of purposive sampling and convenient sampling while probability encapsulates proportionate stratified random sampling.

3.4.1 Sample Size Determination

The number of households in Nyeri County is 248, 050 (KNBS, 2019). To attain a valid and reliable sample size, the researcher used Fischer's *et al.* (1998) formula which is as follows

$$n = \frac{x^2PQ}{y^2}$$

Where n=desired Sample Size (assuming) the population will be greater than (10,000).

X = is the Standard normal Deviation set at 1.96 which corresponds to 95% confidence level

P=is the proportion in the target population estimated to have particular characteristics. If there is no reasonable estimate then it will use 50% study which therefore use (0.5) ½

Q = (1.0 – P)

Y = the degrees of accuracy desired here corresponding to the 1.96

Basing on replacement method therefore the utilization of the formula

$$n = \frac{Y^2 PQ}{(0.05)^2}$$

Y² is quite relevant

Therefore

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times \frac{1}{2}(1-\frac{1}{2})}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 (1-0.5)}{0.05^2}$$

$$= \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05 \times 0.05}$$

$$= \frac{1.96 \times 1.96 \times 0.5 \times 0.5 \times 10^6}{0.05 \times 0.05 \times 10^6}$$

$$= \frac{196 \times 196 \times 25}{25 \times 100 \times 100} = \frac{38416}{100}$$

n=384.16 ~ 384

n=384: which implies that this was: household Sample Size. This sample size was be divided by 3 to get the house hold sample size from every sub-county. So, from every sub-county, the house hold sample size will be 128 households.

The household heads, National Police Service, Business Entities, Non-Governmental Organizations/Community Based Organizations, Sub-County Commissioners, Village elders and assistant-chiefs were sampled from the respective populations and areas to afford equal participation opportunities in the study. In this case, proportionate simple random sampling, convenience, and purposive techniques were used. In this method

50%, 10% or even 30% of the particular groups were sampled, and the sample sizes were determined (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The sizes sample of the study population was 384 for the household heads, fifteen (15) National Police Service (Police Officers), twelve (12) Assistant Chiefs, twenty (20) village elders, twelve (12) Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), three (3) sub county administrators, and thirty (30) Business entities, bringing the total sample size to four hundred and seventy-six (476).

3.4.2 Sampling of Sub-counties

There are 6 sub-counties in the county namely: Nyeri Town, Othaya, Tetu, Mukurwe-ini, Mathira and Kieni West. In this case, 50% of the population gives a reliable sample. Thus, three sub-counties were selected using purposive sampling technique. Nyeri Town Sub-County was selected using purposive sampling to as majorly lie within Nyeri Town, which is an urban setup. It differs from other sub-counties which are predominantly rural. According to Mutahi (2017), Nyeri Town has a higher prevalence of domestic violence, which is highly attributed to the socio-economic status of the population. Thus, Nyeri Town was purposively selected in this study. Kieni has most of the reported cases of domestic violence (Mutahi, 2017). Kieni covers 52% of Nyeri County, and this is where most of the domestic violence cases are reported. In addition, majority of residents of Kieni moved into their current homes in the early 1990s from the other sub-counties. They were moved from their original homes in 1991 when the government was moving people from Mt. Kenya Forest to conserve the environment. They were settled in government settlement schemes in Kieni. Therefore, residents of this sub-county represented diversified views considering that they migrated from Mathira and Tetu Constituencies. There are however some residents who originally lived in the same

constituency from the beginning. Thus, Kieni sub-county gave valid views for the residents of Tetu and Mathira. From the two remaining two sub-counties, Othaya was purposively selected because it has a higher prevalence of domestic violence as compared to Mukurwe-ini. This gave a total of three sub-counties namely Kieni, Nyeri Town and Othaya.

3.4.3 Sampling of Household Heads

The research used Fischer's *et al.* (1998) formula, to sample the household heads since the study population was more than 10,000. The total study population of the household heads in Nyeri County is 201,703 and affording the application of Fischer's *et al.*, (1998) formula, which gave 384 respondents.

Kieni Sub-county has a population of 198,901, and this constitutes 47% of the entire Nyeri County Population. Nyeri Town Sub-county has a population of 140,338, which is 32% of the entire population in the county. Othaya Sub-county has a population of 91,081, which is 21% of the county population. Using stratified proportionate sampling strategy, the study sampled 47% of 384 (180) from Keini, 32% (123) from Nyeri Town, and 21% (81) from Othaya. The selection method was simple random sampling to get a pertinent sample from the study population from selected sub-counties, locations, sub-locations and villages.

3.4.4 Sampling of Village Elders and Assistant Chiefs

Since the study population is big, a tenth of the group which is 10%, according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), was sampled and their sample sizes determined. There are approximately two hundred (200) village elders in the study area, who were sampled basing on 10%, according to Mugenda (2003) giving a sample size of (20) respondents

from this population. The village elders were selected from the selected sub-counties using the simple random technique.

There are 114 sub-locations in the selected sub-counties, 59 in Kieni, 26 in Nyeri Town and 29 in Othaya (GoK, 2018). The researcher used Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) 10% sampling to determine the sample size giving a sample size of 12 assistant chiefs. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to determine the sample population.

3.4.5 Sampling of Police Officers and Sub-County Administrators

The researcher sampled five police officers from each sub-county under study. Therefore, the sample size from this population was 15 individuals. Using purposive and convenience sampling techniques, the researcher interviewed the police officers available in the police stations during the data collection date.

There is only one sub-county administrator in every sub county, and since the study was conducted in three sub-counties, the sample size was determined using census. Thus, 3 sub-county administrators were interviewed.

3.4.6 Sampling of Religious Leaders

There are approximately 300 religious leaders from the selected sub-counties. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) justify the use of 10% of the study population as a sample. In this case, the researcher sampled 10 religious leaders from each of the 3 study sub-counties. The sample population was determined using random sampling as well as convenience sampling. The sample size was thus 30 religious leaders. The researcher interviewed religious leaders.

3.4.7 Sampling of NGO's/CBO's Heads

There are six main Non-Governmental Organizations which cut across the county namely; Caritas Nyeri, World Vision, Green Belt Movement, Child Fund Kenya, Kenya Red Cross, Help Self Help Centre, and Farm Concern International. These NGOs are mainly involved in social and economic activities including provision of water in dry areas, climate change, natural resource management and agriculture, promotion of planting of trees and support for the OVCs.

The county has 14,391 social development groups out of which 4,489 are women groups, 8,564 are self-help groups, and 1,338 youth groups. The available funds for youths and women includes; Youth Enterprise Development Fund, Women Enterprise Fund, *Uwezo* funds, Poverty Eradication Funds and other funds from various financial institutions in the county. The line ministries train youth and women groups in order to equip them with entrepreneurial skills for self-employment. The county has 80 and 3,795 persons benefiting from the Cash Transfer Programmes for the persons with severe disability and aged, respectively.

The researcher used purposive sampling to determine the NGOs/CBOs for the sample population. Only organizations that deal with domestic violence were included in the study. The study selected two international NGOs, two women groups, two men welfare groups, two youth groups, two disability related organizations, and two with combined members of the society. Thus, the study interviewed 12 officials of the NGOs/CBOs using purposive sampling technique.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

This research utilized primary and secondary data sources.

3.5.1 Primary Data

Primary data refers to the information gathered or obtained directly from the respondents or the target population. There were diverse methodologies applied during data collection. These incorporated Focus Group Discussions, questionnaires, interviews, and observation. These data sources are used in the descriptive studies and survey research (Kothari 2004).

3.5.1.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are the most dependable tools for data collection in many studies. The researcher, thus, used this tool during data collection from the field. It enabled the researcher to gather not only suitable, but also reliable information in the area under study. The target population was exposed to the various questions in the questionnaire forms with no alteration of any kind to evade biasness even when given to diverse respondent groups (Kothari, 2004). The final analysis offered the researcher great and detailed information on the socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence in Nyeri County. The questionnaire data collecting tool gave in-depth information about the nature of domestic violence, the impacts the violence has to the society, and the strategies of managing domestic violence in Nyeri County. Data from household heads was collected using questionnaires (APPENDIX 2). The researchers distributed the questionnaires and gave the respondents time to fill in, then collected them for analysis.

3.5.1.2 Interview

Many researchers and scholars prefer interview as a data collection method because it simply requires preparation of questions that the interviewer will be using to interview the interviewee (Kothari, 2004; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The interviewee is expected to answer questions not by writing, but orally where the interviewer just asks and records the response. The researcher employed this tool as it is usually fast and easy to make analysis as interviews include listening where grasping various opinions from various respondents is simple. This method has a great advantage of direct contact between the researcher and the respondents (Mutai, 2000). The direct contact allows for clarification where an answer is unclear, making this method better compared to several others. The expectation is that all the questions will be answered correctly. For the purpose of this study, assistant chiefs, religious leaders, police officers, and NGOs/CBOs representatives were interviewed (APPENDIX 3).

3.5.1.3 Focus Group Discussions

This instrument was used to collect data from village elders who are expected to be well informed regarding the subject under study. The representatives of village elders were brought together from the target population. Respondents comprising of individuals with similar characteristics like age, social economic status, were placed together to form a Focus Group Discussion. This study had the respondents classified into 3 groups of 7 members. The groups were offered an opportunity to discuss the nature of domestic violence, the impacts of the GBV, and the strategies to resolve domestic violence. The groups had a suitable and convenient place such as a classroom, hall, or under a tree or the sub-chief's camp allowing for communication in the discussions. The

opinions, experiences, and reactions were shared amid each category of the selected groups. The outcome of the discussion was taken into account by the researcher for use during data analysis on the study topic to acquire a conclusion (APPENDIX 4).

3.5.1.4 Observation

The researcher applied the observation tool in data collection to give in-depth information about the nature of domestic violence in the study area, the socio-economic factors contributing to the violence and the strategies that can be used to effectively manage domestic violence in the study area (APPENDIX 5). The observation method was used by the researcher to directly source information without direct contact with the respondents by way of both observing and recording what was happening.

3.5.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected from both published and non-published documents. This included work belonging to people who have collected data and done analysis making conclusions, thus becoming ready for other researchers doing studies in the same field (Kothari 2004). The researcher read and reviewed the documents which incorporated journals, articles, books, media reports, previous masters' theses, doctoral theses, and also data available in government offices in a bid to acquire related literature on the study subject.

Table 3.1: Summary of Study Population, Sampling, and Data Collection Instruments

Population category	Population size	Sample size determination	Sampling method	Sample size	Method of data collection
Household Heads	248, 050	Fischer's <i>et al.</i> formula	- Simple random sampling	384	Questionnaires
Key Informants					
Assistant Chiefs	114	10%	Random Sampling	12	Interviews
Police officers	150	10%	- Purposive	-15	Interviews
Faith-based groups	300	10%	-Purposive	30	Interviews
Heads of NGOs and CBOs	120	10%	- Purposive	12	Interviews
Sub County Administrators	3	100%	-Census	3	Interviews
Village elders	200	10%	- Simple random	20	FGDs
TOTAL				476	

Source: Researcher, 2020

3.6 Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments

Validity and reliability are important aspects of research.

3.6.1 Validity

Validity is a significant requirement of any given research. Validity has to conform to a specific standard to be measured in reference to the quality of threshold or study specifications (Paton, 2000). This is a vital requirement of any research study. According

to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), validity means the level on which conclusions get drawn from study analysis. Additionally, validity includes the study discussing the items included in the instruments with the supervisors like lecturers from the department with an objective of establishing appropriate alterations, considering their advice, and clarification making to realize the research quality and arrive at accuracy on the subject being studied.

Fraenkel & Wallen (2000) define validity as the degree that the obtained results from data analysis represent the actual phenomenon being studied. Their argument is that prior to pretesting, there is a need to ensure validity. The authors explain that the importance of validity is improving the usefulness and appropriateness of the established findings in any given study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). It incorporates the instrument review by experts in the field to check the complexity and suitability of the study questions.

To achieve the study objective in line with the usage of instruments to get results that are valid, the researcher first trained research assistants for one week for purposes of familiarization with the study objectives, study purpose, and instruments and methods of data collection. The researcher explained the research purpose so that the research assistants comprehended the aims of the study. The precise areas they capitalized were data collection as a way of assisting the researcher to acquire valid outcomes from this study.

A pilot study was conducted to confirm the accuracy and appropriateness, and aids to do away with ambiguities and misunderstanding in the usage of research instruments. The researcher carried out a pilot study on respondents having similar characteristics with

those belonging to the area under study. The importance of piloting the study instruments was to make vital corrections and adjustments before the actual application of the instruments (Weirisma, 1985). The pilot study was carried out in Nyandarua County where similar issues of domestic violence occur many times, and the media has been reporting them (Mutahi, 2017). The most significant instruments that were used were interviews and questionnaires. The researcher administered 30 questionnaires to household heads. In addition, one FGD with 6 village elders was conducted. Also, 3 interviews were conducted with a police officer, religious leader, and assistant chiefs. The feedback from these tested instruments assisted the researcher in the elimination of any existing ambiguities in the tools of research. The objective of validity and reliability of the tested instruments was attained this avoiding failure and disappointment during the real research in the area under study.

3.6.2 Reliability

According to Neumann (2003), research reliability regards consistency of findings firmness and dependability of the analysis of data. The instruments, according to him, are trustworthy and accurate to the levels where any individual using them or subjected to similar measurements would acquire same results. The implication is that the data becomes reliable and brings out similar outcomes on different tests and occasions with same respondents. The reliability factor applies because similar findings will be found all the time.

To arrive at reliable conclusions, instrument pre-testing was done. This aided in error elimination and rectification before entering the field for data collection. Basically, findings from pilot research were analyzed prior to engaging in the exercise of data

collection. Reliability was calculated using social science statistical package. With reference to George & Mallery (2003), any correlation coefficient that is equivalent or greater than 0.6 is reliable. The questionnaire should get pre-tested with a smaller representative sample to check reliability and appropriateness prior to being presented to the selected respondents. This is done for the objective analysis of whether the given questions in the questionnaires are biased or not.

Most conveniently, findings from this pilot study was analyzed through Kuder-Richardson formula 21. $R = \frac{K(1-X)(K-X)}{(K-1)KS}$ where **R**= Reliability **K**=Number of items on the test

X= Mean of row scores from the total test **S**= Variance from row scores.

The reliability of the instruments was realized on measuring the internal consistence and a reliability coefficient of 0.69 paved a way for adopting these study tools.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), analyzing data incorporates a process of acquiring and searching for meaning to information collected by the researcher in a bid to present the same in a better and clear way to enhance understanding.

3.7.1 Quantitative Data

Data analysis was performed to reflect major components of the research discoveries for those variables that were tackled and the relation between them. SPSS version 25 was used in analyzing the quantitative data. It gave frequency distribution, means and percentages. The analyzed outcomes were presented in diagrams, percentages, tables and

graphs to give a clear knowledge on the socio-cultural dynamics influencing to domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya.

3.7.2 Qualitative Data

The researcher used thematic techniques in presenting qualitative data on the socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence in Nyeri County. The researcher collected qualitative data from key respondents stemming from focus groups, interviews, and observations. The information that was collected from the informants was edited, coded, classified, and then tabulated (Kothari, 2004), and finally analyzed through the thematic techniques. Qualitative data is mainly narrative and attempts to explain the occurrences and events of the whole study.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher and the research assistants administered the questionnaires to the selected household heads in the study area. The questionnaires were structured so that the same questions asked were in the same order and had the same wordings used among all the respondents. Questionnaire administration is a challenging task; the researcher had a team consisting of two research assistants who helped to administer the questionnaires to household heads through face-to-face method. The research team then proceeded to conduct interviews on the selected respondents. Interviews were conducted through face-to-face procedure. The team booked appointments through phone calls to avoid inconveniences in the process. The data collection ended with the FGDs, where the assistant chiefs were requested to invite 7 village elders, and the team conducted the discussions in the selected sub-locations. In order to be able to achieve a high rate of return, the team administered the questionnaires and conducted the interviews and FGDs

during the working hours. A follow up with phone calls and emails plus personal visits were exercised where necessary for further clarification.

3.9 Limitation of the Study

The researcher expected suspicion from the study population about the study's intent, and had to overcome it by cultivating a rapport and enlightening them about the study's intent. Further, the topic was very sensitive, and it was sometimes hard to get information from the respondents, especially victims of domestic violence and perpetrators. The researcher had to allow those who were not ready to participate to opt not to since participation was voluntary. The researcher employed and trained research assistants to help with data collection and ensure they understood the objectives so they would be working towards achieving them.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The Research Permit was acquired from Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) to enable the researcher to proceed with the filed study. The research permission was also sought from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The permission was in the form of a permit letter that was ethically acquired from the commission.

The researcher ensured that personal details of the respondents would not appear in the questionnaires. The implication is that it would remain anonymous by having no revelations of particulars or contacts of the various respondents. The next ethical concern was confidentiality and privacy. The researcher would not by any means reveal whole or

part of the information acquired from the target population. The researcher would keep the information with no intention of disclosing it to non-authorized individuals.

The third ethical issue is that the researcher acquired information only for study, and nothing else such as prosecution. The researcher would preserve the privacy right such that respondents wishing to get interviewed privately got considered. Those requesting for privacy would get accorded with due respect, as well as consideration. The informed consent was vital such that the recording mode was only applied if the interviewees were willing to accept the given mode. The researcher provided a consent form that respondents signed as an agreement that their photos be used in the study. The respondents who were not willing to have their photos only gave their stories anonymously. The signed consent forms are in appendix 13-15.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses the research design, study area, study population, sampling strategies, the sample size, and instruments of data collection including questionnaires, interview guides, Focus Group Discussion guides, and Observation Checklists. The chapter also discusses data presentation and analysis, validity and reliability of data collection instruments, limitations of the study and ethical considerations during the study. The next section (Chapter 4) presents the results answering the first research question of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

NATURE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN NYERI COUNTY, KENYA

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents results and discussions of the first objective of the study, which was to examine the nature of domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya. The chapter presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents as well as different parameters showing the nature of domestic violence in the study area. The parameters investigated included the incidences of domestic violence, manifestation of domestic violence, parties involved, and causes of domestic violence. The following respondents were sampled to participate in the study: 384 household heads, 12 assistant chiefs, 15 police officers, 30 business entities, 12 NGOs/CBOs, 3 Sub-county administrators, and 20 village elders, to give an overall sample population of 476 respondents. Methods of data collection used were questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and observation.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

The current section presents the demographic information of the household heads. It explains the link between demographic factors and domestic violence in Nyeri County. In this study, 384 questionnaires were distributed among household heads, and all the 384 were returned. This indicates that there was 100% response rate. Information was sought on gender, age, religion, education level, and marital status of the respondents.

4.1.1 Gender

The study sought to establish the gender of household heads who participated in the study. The respondents were asked to indicate their gender. The results are shown in Figure 4.1.

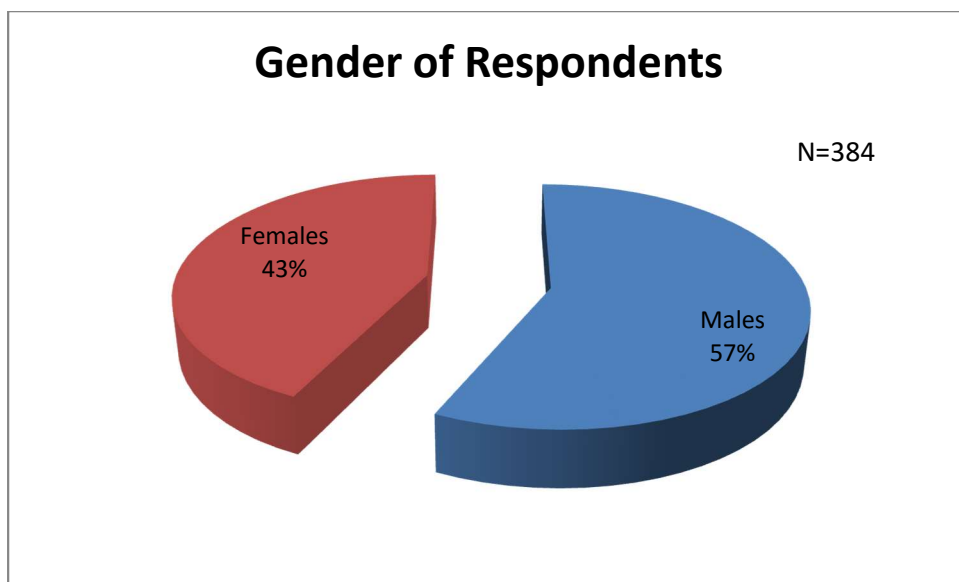


Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents

Source: Field Data, 2022

The results of the study indicate that 219 (57%) were male, while 165 (43%) were female. The results point out that majority of the households in Nyeri County is led by males, as compared to the smaller percentage of females. However, 43% is a larger percentage, considering that the study focused on household heads. In most other parts of the country, household heads are majorly men, with less than 30% headed by women. Juma (2018) conducted a study in Nyakach sub-county, and only 28% of the household heads were female. Aengwony *et al.* (2019) conducted study in Wajir County, and only 16% of the household heads were female. Thus, having 43% of household heads as women is an indication that gender disparity in household leadership is thinner in Nyeri County than other counties.

The results of the study indicate that men dominate household headship. They are the main decision makers in the homes. This is as a result of the culture of patriarchal systems that rule the African communities. According to the African cultures, a man is

the head of the family and makes all major decisions. The woman, on the other hand, is expected to deputize the husband (Mutahi, 2017). However, the aspect of matriarchal system is also present in this study. The Agikuyu community was traditionally matriarchal. Women have the greatest say in the community from time immemorial. The Wangu wa Makeri story clearly shows that there was a time in the Agikuyu community that women were the main decision makers. The women had the right to do everything that they wanted, and men were supposed to follow. In this narration, it was during colonization that men interacted with other communities and started learning that men should be the leaders. After that, they decided to impregnate all the women so that they could take over power. Nonetheless, as Muigua (2017) argues, it was not practical to have all the women impregnated. There were those women who were breastfeeding and could not get pregnant. Others were beyond the child-bearing age, and could also not get pregnant (Muigua, 2017). In this case, therefore, it was hard for men to completely take over the community.

4.1.2. Age of Household Heads

The study sought to investigate the age of household heads in Nyeri County. The results are represented in Figure 4.2.

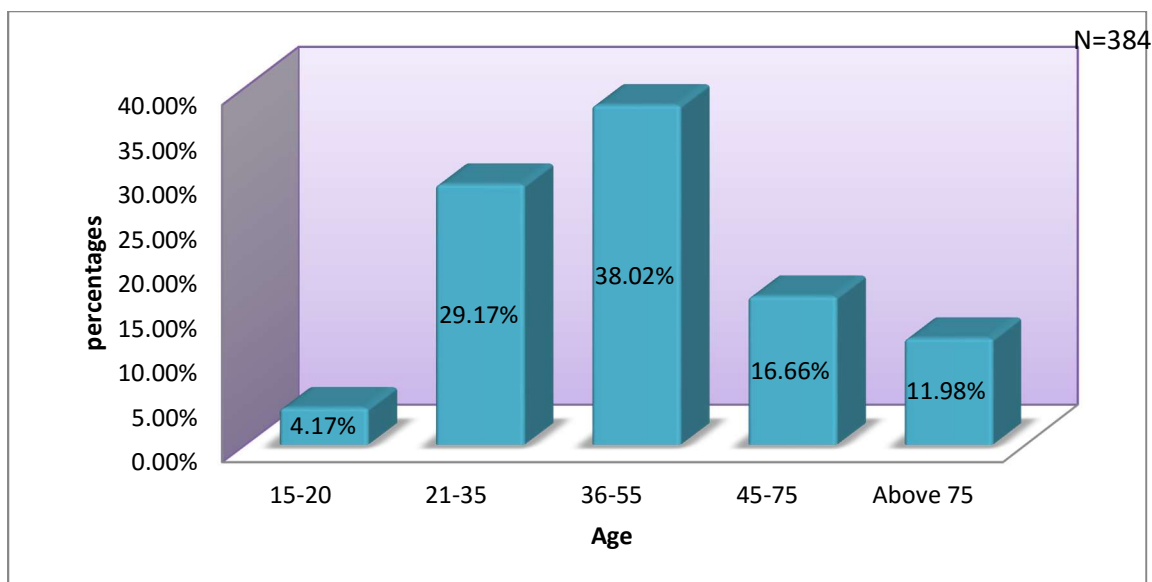


Figure 4.2: Age of Respondents in Nyeri County

Source: Field Data, 2022

The results of the study indicate that 16(4.17%) were 15-20 years, 112(29.17%) were 21-35 years, 146(38.02%) were 36-55 years, 64(16.67%) were 56-75 years, and 46(11.98%) were above 75 years. According to these results, majority of the respondents fall in to the bracket of between 36 and 55 years.

The results show that 16(4.17%) of the respondents were below 21 years. This is because most of the people in this age bracket are usually young people in school. They are still acquiring education, and are under the care of the parents. Further, the results agree with KNBS (2019) that early marriages are not rampant in Nyeri County. Most of the teenagers in Nyeri County do not run into marriages. This is greatly attributed to the cultural values in the community, as well as the average literacy level that the county enjoys. The community has for many years discouraged early marriages, and the efforts of the elders and the government has borne fruits. Consequently, the number of the young

people in this age bracket that are likely to experience domestic violence in the county is less.

The results indicate that the second highest number of respondents ranges between 21 and 36 years. This is the age where most young people get married. It is also the age that most of the young people start living an independent life. As a result, they live in their houses separate from where the parents and guardians live. Birditt, Brown, Orbuch & McIlvane (2010) point out that couples are likely to start disagreeing three to five years after marriage. It is the period the spouses start to understand each other's weakness. In most cases, it is the time the couple start experiencing the economic burden of bearing children and helping the extended family. In this case, therefore, respondents in this age bracket are important participants as they informed the study on the daily experiences in their life.

Majority of the respondents in this study are between 36 and 55 years. The results agree with KNBS (2019) that 54.8% of residents in Nyeri County are below 55 years. This is the productive age that carries the economic burden. People in this bracket have school-going children, are developing their lives in readiness for retirement. Most of the married people also fall into this bracket. Those who are not married are in intimate relationships. Consequently, this is the age bracket that experiences most of the domestic violence. In this case, the participants were important to the study as they informed the research questions.

The household heads between 56 and 75 years were 46(16.67%). The population in this age category is old enough to understand the socio-cultural dynamics influencing

domestic violence in Nyeri County. The people in this category are elderly people who have witnessed the domestic violence either in their lives, or have seen it happen to someone else. The results of the study further indicate that those above 75 years old are 46(11.98%). These are the senior citizens in the community. According to Kamide (2021), the elderly people carry the history of the people. This is the population that understands where the problem of domestic violence started, and why. Even if they are usually limited in number, this population provides crucial information that is hard to find in published sources (Kamide, 2021). Therefore, the group was very essential to the study.

4.1.3 Marital Status

The study requested the respondents to indicate their marital status. The results are shown in Figure 4.3.

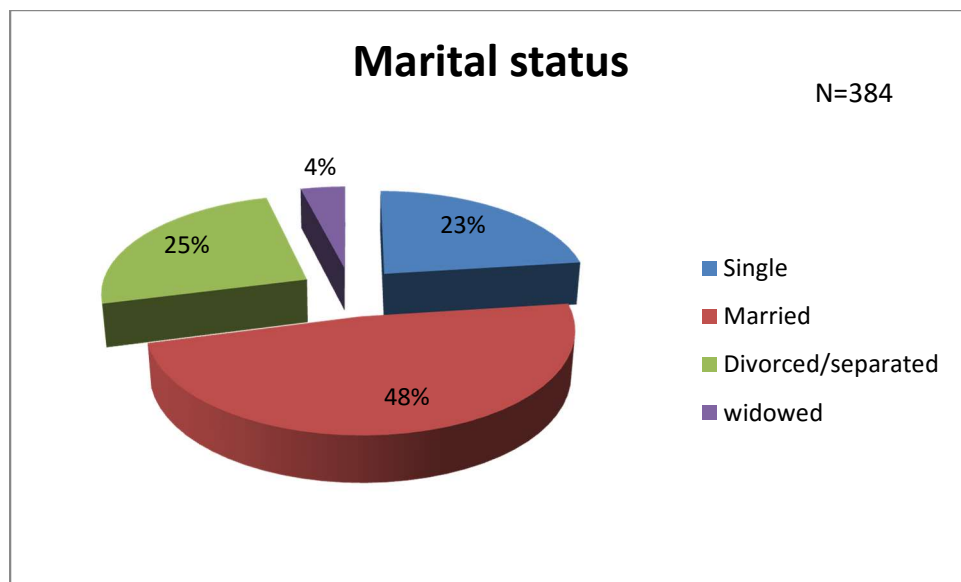


Figure 4.3: Marital Status of the Respondents in Nyeri County

Source: Field Data, 2022

The results indicate that majority of the respondents are married, with a frequency of 184(48%). The questionnaires were distributed among household heads. These are adults with families, and having 48% shows that most of the family heads are married. The main objective of the study was to examine the influence of socio-cultural dynamics on domestic violence in Nyeri County. Domestic violence focuses on violence by intimate partners or spouses. In this case therefore, having majority of the respondents in marriage set-ups is crucial as the respondents have first-hand information about what they face in their marriages on daily basis.

The number of divorced or separated household heads was also high. According to the results, 96 (25%) of the respondents had either separated or divorced with their spouses. This is an indication that the separation and divorce rate in the county is high. This is attributed to the many cases of domestic violence reported in the media. There is real, perceived, or false threat of domestic violence in the County that makes spouses feel unsafe in the hands of their partners. On the same note, 88(23%) of the household heads are single. Majority of the single respondents in this study were young. However, some were never married. Most of the women in the study area preferred never to get married as it was evident during the interviews. One of the women leaders from the CBOs had this to say:

I have been single by choice. I witnessed my mother go through unnecessary violence from my father. My grandfather went through the same. This was because my grandmother was very violent. I think my father took lessons from his parents. He decided to be beating my mother so that she does not take advantage of him, like his mother did. So, my mother could hardly sleep peacefully. Most of the nights she was out in the cold. In my own wisdom, I decided i would not get married. I got two sons

and never planned to get married. My life has been comfortable and I can by no means agree to any marriage plan (Interview with a CBO Head, 12th March, 2022).

The sentiments from this woman were also echoed by a few men during FGDs with the youth leaders. Some of the people in Nyeri County are tired of the daily happenings. The violence has been too much, and unnecessary. Thus, they feel like being single is better than being in a stressful marriage. It is unfortunate that this is becoming a trend in Nyeri County.

Further, as revealed by the findings in this study, the Nyeri women have been socialized with the belief that they are independent and they do not require to get married to be complete. Thus, they get to adulthood knowing that they only need a man to sire children with and not to settle down in marriage. As a result, they do not start any relationship with hopes of getting married. During an FGD with village elders, one lady had this to say:

My mother was a single mother, and she taught me that I do not require a man to be complete. I only want to get two kids and never get married. My mother kept telling me that marriage is not a qualification to go to heaven. It was funny, but I have come to believe it. These guys only stress you and make you a slave. I want to be a single mother (FGD with elders, 15th March, 2022).

The same argument was echoed by a women group leader who pointed out that:

I have been encouraging my three daughters to work hard and be independent. Marriages are the biggest scam that Africa has. They are only meant to oppress the woman and make her feel inferior. I spent six years in my marriage, and there is nothing to miss from it. I enjoy my life and my freedom without the so called husband (Interview with CBO head, 18th March, 2022).

The results indicate that people in the research area have a very negative perspective as far as marriage is concerned. The socialization process leaves the girls believing that they will be more successful as single parents rather than when in a marriage set up. According to Anderson *et al.* (2007), women in Africa have started to fight the oppression of women in marriage by refusing to get married. They are opting to get children and take care of them without having the legal set up that makes them live a stressful life.

4.1.4 Education Level

The study asked the respondents to indicate their level of education. The results are indicated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Level of education of respondents

Education Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Primary level	82	21.35
Secondary level	186	48.44
Tertiary level	63	16.41
University level	44	11.46
Post-graduate level	9	2.34
Total	384	100

Source: Field Data, 2022

The results of the study indicate that 82(21.35%) have primary level education. Majority of the respondents 186(48.44%) have secondary level education. In addition, a good

number of respondents 63(16.41%) have acquired tertiary level skills, while 44(11.46%) have university degrees. A small percentage 9(2.34%) have post graduate degrees.

The results of the study agree with the Nyeri County Integrated Development Plan (2018-2022) that literacy levels in the county are very high, with a rate of 91.8%. At the primary level, the completion rate stands at 89.4 per cent while retention and transition stand at 91%, and 85%, respectively. At the secondary school level, the completion rate stands at 86.2% while retention rate is 89%. Apart from tertiary institutions and universities that are in Nyeri County, there are 303 adult education classes with a gross enrolment of 1,885 males and 1,811 females (Gok, 2018).

The high literacy rates as revealed in this study act as a blessing and a curse at the same time. The Nyeri woman has been empowered through education. The results of the study agree with a study by Gitonga (2013) that Mathira constituency has always been referred to as *Mathira ya Githomo*, meaning, “Mathira of Education.” The educated and empowered woman is unlikely to entertain oppressive cultural and religious values.

During an interview with a sub-chief, he had this to say:

High education among women in Nyeri is one of the reasons there have been a lot of domestic violence. The women feel like they are equal to men, and cannot be submissive to their husbands. In fact, most of the single women in the study area pointed out that they could not obey the men in their lives, yet they were both working to bring bread on the table (Interview with a sub-chief, 9th April, 2022).

On the other hand, in as much as the literacy level fuels conflict, it is a blessing because most people are enlightened, and this makes the residents to be economically empowered.

4.1.5 Occupation of Household Heads

The study investigated the occupation of household heads. The results are shown in Figure 4.4.

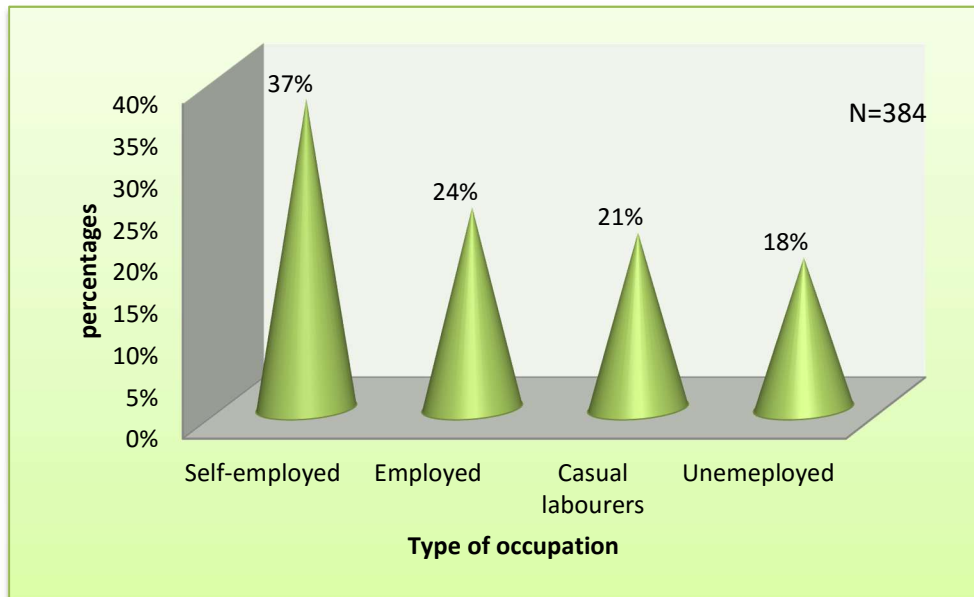


Figure 4.4: Occupation of Household Heads in Nyeri County

Source: Field data, 2022

The study sought to investigate the relationship between the household heads occupation with domestic violence in Nyeri County. The results indicated that the majority of the respondents were self-employed which represented 37% (143), the employed stood at 24%(19), casual laborers at 21%(80) and the unemployed were found to be 18%(69).

The major economic mainstay of Nyeri County was agriculture complemented by trade-related activities. These among other sectors provided employment which has seen a larger percentage of the respondents becoming self-employed. The findings of this study are reinforced by that of Muchena & Awuor (2019) who established that both the agricultural sector and trade-related activities are among the major sources of self-employment. However, despite the highest percentage of self-employed respondents, domestic violence continues to be a vice in Nyeri County. This may be attributed to

several factors among them, cultural beliefs and customs. Certain beliefs have magnified the superiority of the male gender to the detriment of the female one. This is further reinforced by the same study which found that women were still disadvantaged since they have been regarded as unequal partners in almost everything; they were being denied access to land and control despite their significance in farm labour which is a major source of self-employment. The married women were found to have limited access to land which in turn impacts their options to credit accessibility thus, contributing to their vulnerability to domestic violence.

Self-employment is not always stable, especially during hard economic times like the Post-COVID 19 period, during which this study was conducted. Businesses have collapsed and it has become hard to survive. As a result, there has been an increase in domestic violence. People are financially and emotionally struggling. Consequently, small family arguments lead to violent attacks by spouses. During FGD with village elders, one of the respondents pointed out that:

My son had a very stable boutique that had thrived for over ten years. Unfortunately, the business collapsed because of COVID 19. I have never heard my son fight with his wife. However, they started fighting after the collapse of the business as he would not provide. They lacked food and the wife blamed him for being lazy and irresponsible. My son was already very stressed for losing his source of income. So, he battled his wife very badly to the extent of being admitted (FGD with village elders, 10th March, 2022).

During an interview with police officers from National Police Service, they also argued that domestic violence increased during the COVID 19 period, especially among business persons. They pointed out that when the government announced a lockdown, most

businesses collapsed. The business owners did not have any other means of survival. There arose protractible conflicts among families with spouses blaming each other for the economic hardships the families are facing. One of the police officers said this during an interview:

Mwaka wa 2020 ndiyo tumepokea malalamishi mengi kuhusus vita za kifamilia. Naamini hizi vita zilisababishwa na hali ngumu ya kimaisha. Wakati biashara zilifungwa na watu kufutwa makazi, imekuwa ngumu kujikimu kimaisha. Kwa hivyo, mume na mke wamekuwa wakizozana sana na kulaumiana kwa sababu ya hali ngumu ya kimaisha. (In 2020 we received a lot of complaints about domestic violence. I believe that the escalating domestic violence witnessed in 2020 was mainly caused by high cost of living. Therefore, members of the families more so mother and father have been blaming each other due to inability to sustain the family.) (Interview with police officer, 26th May, 2022).

The study found that 24% of the respondents were employed. The employment opportunities came from both formal and informal sectors of Nyeri County. Such findings have been reinforced by numerous studies that have revealed that most of the residents of Nyeri County have attained the secondary level of education and a significant amount are graduates (Nyambura, 2014). This informs on the relatively high percentage of employment status. This is explained by the fact that the research was carried out in partly rural and peri-urban areas of Nyeri County with a significant number of professionals. Regarding domestic violence, it was found that certain areas of Nyeri County have presented a few cases of conflicts related to domestic issues.

The results indicate that 92(24%) of the respondents are employed. The group is stable financially. However, the COVID 19 pandemic also affected them. Most of the people

who were employed by individuals and companies were given compulsory leave during the pandemic. Thus, they did not have any means of survival, and this facilitated conflicts at their homes. Furthermore, even those who were employed were at home during data collection. They pointed out that domestic violence had increased in the area because everyone was at home. It was very easy to disagree. Further, it was noted that the study residents were stressed and could easily get agitated.

Village elders confirmed through FGDs that life has become very hard for families because of the economic crisis in the country, and that this has also been causing a lot of conflicts within families. They argued that residents had stable families and few disagreements with their spouses. However, after the disruption of the economy by the pandemic, life became difficult, and this has escalated the cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County. During the FGDs, one village elder reported that:

Our businesses are in their worst moments. We cannot get customers. Most of the customers are taking goods on loans. We are hardly making any profits. Giving our stock to customers on loans means we are making huge losses, as the loaned customers are not paying. When we get home, our spouses think we are using money on other women. My wife accused me of infidelity because I was unable to give her *chama* money. We ended up quarrelling, yet I did not have any money to give her (FGD with village elder, 8th March, 2022).

Most of the domestic squabbles largely contribute to economic abuse as well as the deprivation of financial resources which in turn intensify the vulnerability of the victims of domestic violence, especially women and young girls. However, in households where both spouses have stable sources of income and jobs, domestic violence is rare as reinforced by Muchera & Awuor (2019). This explains a significant reduction of

domestic violence in both peri-urban and urban areas of Nyeri County whose population have access to employment opportunities.

The study also found that 21% of the respondents were casual laborers. This may be attributed to the bulging population nationally, which has been entrenched in Nyeri County. Given the huge population, a significant proportion of the respondents have failed to secure decent jobs which have seen them being absorbed as casual laborers. Again, education plays a significant role, especially in rural areas where dozens of people are still struggling to attain basic education. Domestic squabbles are relatively high in households which depend on casual labour to secure their livelihood. This is explained by the fact that employment opportunities that stem from casual labour are epitomized by unreliability, harsh conditions and meager payments which cannot sustain the livelihood of most households (Nancy, 2017).

The results indicate that 80(21%) of the respondents are causal laborers. The respondents agreed that it had become hard to get causal work during the COVID 19 pandemic. Most businesses were shut down. People who would offer them jobs were given compulsory leave. Thus, there was little labor for them. Consequently, families have been fighting because of the financial struggles.

Lack of a stable source of income among households whose sources of income depend on casual labour is a recipe for violence, especially in cases where both partners are unable to meet the basic survival needs. This demonstrated that the study was conducted partly in the rural areas of Nyeri County which is regarded as the center of casual labour as well

as those that are prone to domestic violence, compared to urban areas. This was cognizant of the findings of Waithira *et al.* (2021).

Further, the study established that 18% of the respondents were employed. This is a reflection of the unemployment challenge that has bedeviled the country. Lack of employment among the respondents was found to be the highest contributor to domestic violence. A study conducted by Muchiri (2021) reveals that substance and alcohol abuse is the cause of the loss of numerous jobs in the county which in turn contributes to the highly prevalent rates of domestic violence in the county since some men have lost control over their families.

4.2 Nature of Domestic Violence in Nyeri County

The first objective of the study was to examine the nature of domestic violence in Nyeri County. The study achieved this objective by examining several parameters such as the incidence of conflicts, frequency of conflicts, manifestation, causes and consequences of the domestic violence.

4.2.1 Incidences of Domestic Violence

The respondents were requested whether they have in one way or another experienced domestic violence in their lives. The results are indicated in Figure 4.5.

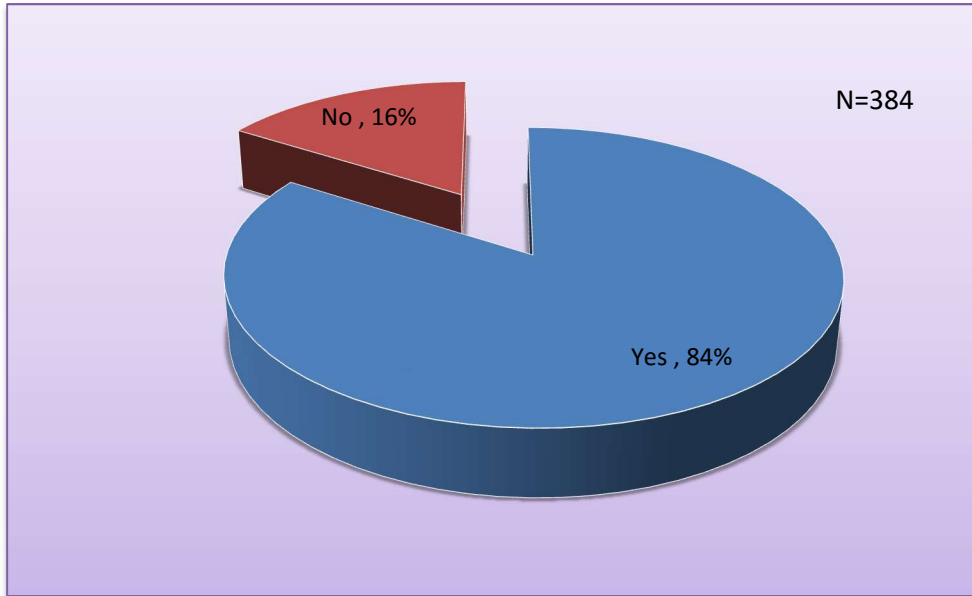


Figure 4.5: Incidence of Domestic Violence in Nyeri County

Source: Field Data, 2022

The result of the study indicated that 322 (84%) had witnessed domestic violence while 62 (16%) had not. These results reveal that a very large number of residents in the study area have in one way or another witnessed or experienced domestic violence.

Nyeri County has been on the media for a long time, with many cases of domestic violence. The results of the study agree with a final report by the Center for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) report as compiled by Muchena & Awour (2019) that domestic violence in the county has been on the rise. According to the report, the county has continuously experienced violence, especially after the media houses started to concentrate on it. Even families that had not experienced any violence have been suffering after the media made everyone look like a victim (Muchena & Awour, 2019).

In agreement with the results from the questionnaires, the other respondents during FGDS and interviews concurred with the idea that there have been incidences of domestic violence. During an interview a senior police officer had this to say:

Hapa nyeri, watu wanachapana kila siku. Kwa wastani, kila wiki ni lazima nitatue mizozo mitatu ya kifamilia. Kwa wakati mwingine, tunaweza hata tatua mizozo zaidi ya miwili kwa siku. Ni ngumu wiki ipite bila watu kuja kuripoti vita za kinyumbani (In Nyeri cases of violence are reported on daily basis. On average I solve three cases related to violence from various families. On some other times we do solve more than two cases in a day. A week hardly passes without an incident of violence being reported to us (Interview with police officer, 30th April, 2022).

Most of the respondents agree that there have been cases, and that they have been increasing in the last 10 years. During the interviews, a religious leader in Nyeri town said this:

The cases of domestic violence in our area have increased. When I was growing up, I could hardly see family members, and especially spouses fighting. Nowadays people are fighting every day. In the plot that I live, there are about three families that will fight each week. If today one family is not fighting, the other one is fighting. We can hardly sleep in peace because of these incidences. They usually come to me as a pastor with different issues. They are not members of my church, but they keep on coming to me (Interview with a religious leader, 8th March, 2022).

The results of the study indicate that the residents of Nyeri County are experiencing violence coming from intimate partners. This affects the married couples as well as those

that are in intimate relationships. The results from interviews and FGDS indicate that the cases are increasing. As Muchena & Awour (2019) note, the increase has been on the rise from the 2010s. The CREAM report (2019) attributes the rise to the mass media misconception on Nyeri, and socio-cultural and economic drivers as will be discussed in this study.

4.2.2 Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

The study sought to investigate the perpetrators of domestic violence in Nyeri County.

The respondents were asked to indicate whether the perpetrators are male or female. The results are shown in Figure 4.6.

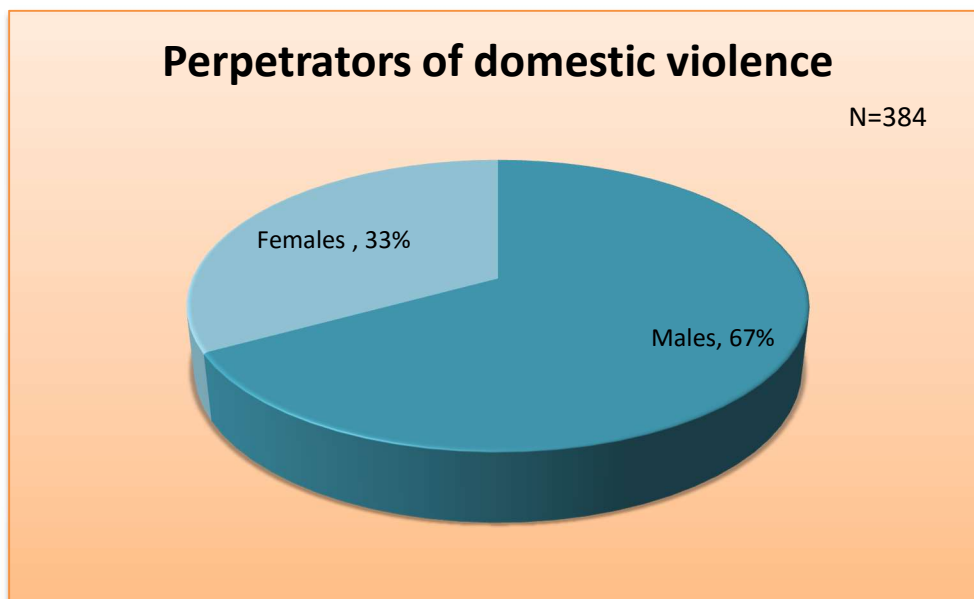


Figure 4.6: Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Nyeri County

Source: Field Data, 2022

According to Figure 4.6, 257(67%) of the perpetrators of domestic violence were males, while 127(33%) were females. The results indicate that majority of perpetrators are men.

This is in agreement with a report by NGEC (2016) that concluded that most of the women are victims of domestic violence, while men are the perpetrators.

Njoroge (2016) conducted a study in Nyeri County and found out that the media has been portraying the Nyeri woman as the key perpetrator of violence. However, the results from the field show that most women suffer greatly from the perceptions of the media. Women have for many years been oppressed and abused by their male perpetrators (Njoroge, 2016). The cases in Nyeri have not been different as most of the victims are women. During an FGD with village elders, one senior citizen had said that:

In this village, I have seen many women being battered by their husbands. In my life, I have not witnessed a man being beaten. Maybe they are beaten at night, because I have not seen any of my old friends complain that his wife has been beating him. Or maybe it is this younger generation that allows their women to beat them (Interview with village elder, 5th June 2022).

The statement by the elder was supported in another FGD where another elder indicated that:

Most of the perpetrators are men. Even if there are many stories that we, the Nyeri men are usually beaten and harassed by our wives, this is rarely the case. I remember one day my mother tried to throw a sufuria to my drunken father. What followed was a thorough beating, and she vowed never to repeat such mistakes (Interview with village elder, 6th June 2022).

Nonetheless, as indicated in Figure 4.6, a frequency of 127 which gives 33% of women as perpetrators is large. Nyeri women have been in the media for the past decade over domestic violence. The media has reported serious cases of killing and injuring the male

genitals (Njoroge, 2016). Women have gained the perception that they are stronger than men in the county, and they are daring to show their strength by using violence.

During an interview with an assistant chief, he pointed out that:

Well, there have been cases of both men and women as perpetrators. According to the reports that I get here every day, most of the victims are women. They come and explain how their husbands and boyfriends have injured them. However, I also have a few cases of men. There is a man who is beaten and denied food if he does not bring 300 shillings every day. Another one is usually denied sexual rights and comes to my office many times claiming that he is mistreated by his wife (Interview with an assistant chief, 2nd March, 2022).

These results show that both men and women are perpetrators. During the interviews, one of the sub-county commissioners pointed out that men are nowadays reporting that they have been oppressed, beaten and even denied conjugal rights. He attributed the increased number of reports to the awareness that the county has been having. According to Muchena & Awour (2019), there has been public awareness in Nyeri County on legal framework on perpetrators of GBV. During the awareness forums, men have been encouraged to report their cases, as they have the right to be protected by the law.

In Africa, the man is socialized to be strong emotionally and physically. Thus, men find it hard to report that they are being mistreated by their spouses. Most of the men who undergo violence in their homes take the secret to the grave. They suffer in silence as they do not want to show that they are weak. As Mutahi (2017) states, there might be many men in Nyeri County suffering, but they opt to keep quiet to protect their ego. This

is dangerous as many end up being depressed. The cases that are reported only come out because they are extreme (Mutahi (2017)).

4.2.3 Time When Domestic Violence Increases

To understand the extent of domestic violence, the study sought to investigate when domestic violence cases are higher. Thus, household heads were treated to an open-ended question requiring them to write when the domestic violence cases are higher than normal times. The results are discussed in this section together with responses from other key respondents.

4.2.3.1 During Coffee and Tea Bonuses

When farmers in Nyeri receive their bonuses, domestic violence tends to increase especially between the husband and wife in the house. This is mainly caused by disagreements that tend to occur while budgeting for the money received. As the head of the house, men feel that it is their mandate to manage the money and, women should wait to be given what to use. On the other hand, women feel that men are unfair as they tend to misappropriate their money luxuriously. It is worth noting that at most of the time children end up suffering when the bonuses are misused and at times they might be involved in the commotion as well. At times, the violence might escalate and lead to divorce. In an interview with a church elder it was pointed out that:

Most domestic fights in this area occur during tea and coffee bonus time. Bonuses have been a major cause of domestic violence, especially in the area where coffee and tea is mainly planted. Like here in Othaya, we recorded more than twenty-three cases of domestic violence in last week because of the mini bonus. It is interesting to note that mini-bonuses were paid on last week on Monday. Most of those conflicts were based on accusations that men in the

house are misusing money with commercial sex workers who have come from other counties to get their share. Women feel that they are the ones who will suffer after their husbands have misappropriated the funds. I found it reasonable because women and their children take part in maintaining their coffee and tea, but it is unfortunate that once the bonuses are paid they get nothing. However, men defend themselves on the ground that they are the head of the family, and therefore, their decision is final (Interview with religious leader, 8th April, 2022).

The area assistant chief agreed with the church elder on matters to do with domestic violence which tends to occur after the payment of bonuses. The assistant chief stated that:

It has been hectic for us because we have to deal with ever-escalating cases of domestic violence especially when bonuses are issued. Sometimes we even have to seek the intervention of religious leaders who play a pivotal role in eradicating and solving domestic violence. This week we have a case where a woman received a bonus and used all the money to take her mother to the hospital against the will of her husband. When the husband realized that he became violent which led to a serious injury to the woman who up today is still hospitalized. We are still expecting more such cases because most of the tea factories are still issuing bonuses to their farmers (Interview with assistant chief, 8th April, 2022).

Bonuses have been identified to be one of the causes of domestic violence not only in Nyeri but also in other counties such as Kiambu, Murang'a, Kirinyaga and Kericho. According to Muchena & Awuor (2019), in Kiambu domestic violence has been a norm when tea bonuses are shared. Most of such occurrences are caused by bonuses that are issued at a specific time in the area. The whole family takes part in their farm maintenance but when the bonuses are paid, they do not get their share, something that leads to disagreement (Muchena & Awuor, 2019). The disagreement might lead to

domestic violence which is manifested through different dimensions. Some other times, divorces might occur.

4.2.3.2 Back to School Season

There have been conflicts in the families when a lot of money is required to take children to school. As providers, men are usually under a lot of pressure, as they have to cough a lot from their pockets. In most families, both the man and the woman contribute something. As a result of the financial strain, the couple disagrees. The spouses blame each other for the financial strain. In Nyeri County where majority of the residents are farmers, conflicts have been high when children are going back to school.

In addition to that, there is a lot of confusion about the current education system in Kenya. The confusion is caused by the occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the introduction of Competence Based Curriculum (CBC). Covid-19 altered the normal academic year and in effort to cover up time lost during the quarantine period, the ministry of education tended to shorten terms. With the short academic term that means parents had a short duration of time to look for school fees. Lack of school fees led to disagreements in most of the homesteads in Nyeri County. While interviewing the Nyeri sub-county administrator it was revealed to me that:

School fee is becoming a big challenge in most families due to joblessness caused by Covid-19. We have received a big number of parents who opt to seek our intervention as they want us to support them financially so that they can afford to pay fees. On Monday I received a case where parents were fighting. When we made a follow-up in the process of trying to solve the conflict, we realized that the father has been unable to pay fees for his child. The child has been at home for a whole week and this was so stressful for the mother. The mother felt that the father was not

doing enough to provide basic things such as school fees to his children. Domestic violence related to stress that occurs during back to school is increasing (Interview with sub-county administrators, 21st March, 2022).

In an interview with the NGO leader, he echoed the words of the Nyeri sub-county administrator. The NGO leader had the following to say about back to school period:

Back to school period is so stressful for most of the parents because schools is expecting students to report back and have to pay a certain amount of money. As an NGO that works toward eradicating domestic violence, we have established that during back to school period, domestic violence tends to be rampant. Currently, we have over fifteen cases that are under investigation. We are also monitoring the health condition of the man who came home drunk and had not paid fees to his children. The woman was agitated when her man who came home drunk yet their children had not yet reported back to school. They had a fight, and the man was severely injured (Interview with NGO leader, 1st June 2022).

According to Mwangi (2017), most of the domestic violence in Nyeri is related to the inability of the parents to meet the daily needs of their children. School fees are one of those basic needs that fathers are expected to cater for. However, it is becoming difficult for them due to the high rate of unemployment. On the other hand, Nyambura (2014) notes that there is always a blaming game between the father and mother in the house when it comes to school fees payment because neither of them agrees to take that responsibility. In case one of the parents is unable to pay the fee as expected the blaming game tends to emerge and later escalates to domestic violence.

4.2.3.3 Festive Season

During the festive season like Christmas, most of families spend a lot as it is time to come together for the celebration. The expectation in every family is very high as the head of the family must provide for them. In a situation where the father cannot afford to

cater for the festive season, the woman feels like he has failed as the head of the family. During the festive season, a high number of domestic violence cases is reported due to the disagreement that occurs in families more so in relation to budgeting.

While I was interviewing a CBO leader, he outlined that:

Being the leader of a community-based organization, I can testify that there are high cases of domestic violence during the festive season. As we are talking, I am handling a case of a church elder from Chinga who was assaulted by his wife on Christmas day after he stated that he has no money facilitating the Christmas festive. It all started with an insult between the elder and his wife and later ended up being a tragic scenario that led to serious injuries. It was reported that the woman poured kerosene on her husband and set him on fire and later disappeared. The woman is still on the run even though the police are still investigating the occurrence (Interview with CBO head, May 19, 2022).

A youth leader agreed with the CBO leader on matters to do with the occurrence of domestic violence during the festive season. The youth leaders had the following to say:

As a youth leader, I have seen the pattern in which domestic violence occurs in this village. Every year, there is a tendency for domestic violence to increase during December which is the main festive season among the Nyeri residents. For example, at the beginning of the last December, I had a case where the parents of a certain boy who was to be circumcised were having a conflict. The man stated that he cannot facilitate financially the circumcision of his son until the mother proves that the son belonged to him biologically. The mother took that as a claim of infidelity on her part and she lost her control and attacked the man causing very serious injuries. Such cases are common in the region because some men are running away from their responsibilities (Interview with CBO head, May 19, 2022).

Muchena & Awuor (2019), state that the December festive seasons are critical as every family has an intention of creating memories out of it. Most important is the passage of

rites such as circumcision. Such activities come with a lot of pressure and might be the root cause of domestic violence in case parents were not prepared for it financially. On the other hand, there are men who totally fail to take their responsibilities on the ground that leaves all responsibilities to the helpless mother. Mwangi (2017) adds that even though the role of circumcising was a docket bestowed on men, most of them in Nyeri have neglected that role as they mostly spend their time in clubs drinking. Mothers are left feeling helpless as they know nothing about circumcision and in that case, they end up expressing their disappointment to their men violently. This becomes a trigger to domestic violence.

4.2.3.4 During Traditional Functions

Generally, traditional occasions are one of the pivotal aspects of African culture. Regardless of the modernity being witnessed in the current society, there are some cultural practices that are still held so dearly in the heart of many residents from Nyeri. Such cultures include dowry payments among others. It is worth noting that dowry payment is a role left to men in almost all cultural aspects in Kenya and Nyeri County is not left out. Due to the high level of poverty and the influence of western culture, most of men are no longer taking some traditions such as dowry payment seriously.

During an interview with a police officer, an elder stated the following.

Ulipaji wa mahari umefjia mno katika jamii ya leo. Kwa pande nyingine wazazi wamefanya ulipaji mahari kitega uchumi kwao. Hii inamaanisha ya kwamba kuna mgogoro unazuka baina ya mume anafaa kulipa mahari na wazazi wa msichana. Kwa mara nyingi utapata wazazi wa msichana hutumia mtoto wao kuwaitishia mahari kutoka kwa mumewe. Hili jambo huleta mgogoro baina ya bwana na mke kwenye nyumba. Tafaruku kama hii huweza

kusabaratisha jamii na kuleta vita na kisha baadae utengano. (Payment of dowry in current society has decreased while on the other hand, the in-laws have commercialized it. This creates a disagreement between men and their in-laws. In some scenarios, parents use their daughters to demand dowry from their husbands thus leading to conflict in the house. Due to this kind of pressure, some men tend to become violent, especially in situations where they cannot afford to pay dowry. Domestic violence might escalate and ends in divorce). (Interview with police officer, 2nd April, 2022).

On another occasion where a religious leader was interviewed, he pointed out that:

As a church we find it difficult to solve the cases that are related to traditions, more so on dowry payment. We have experienced domestic violence where dowry paid is not shared equally among the parents and this affects even the marriage of the young couples. A good example is a case where a dowry was paid and the father of daughter went to the nearby town and spent all of it with his friends. The mother became furious and stated that her daughter will not be married. The man as the head of the house, on the other hand, claimed that his orders are final and that her daughter must be married as planned. The man became violent and broke the hand of his wife and later chased her away. We intervened and we are still trying to sort that issue (Interview with religious leader, 18th April, 2022).

Although change is inevitable, dowry payment has become the most constant thing in modern society. Due to benefits related to dowry payment parents have made it mandatory regardless of the economic situation of the spouses (Mwangi, 2017). In a situation where one is unable to pay dowry the in-laws feel like they have been robbed and this might create a grudge not only between the parents of both sides but also between the couples. Such grudges provide a basic platform where hatred and disrespect can thrive. Lack of respect in home especially to the men prompts them to be violent.

4.2.3.5 Drought Season

In recent years drought has become a common thing in Kenya whereby it comes with a lot of suffering to families. Some parts of Nyeri County, especially Kieni Sub-county, often experiences severe drought which means individuals have to go for a long distance to get water or even food. This implies that the effort of every family member is needed during the time of drought for survival. A slight misunderstanding caused by droughts such as lack of water, pasture for the animals or even food for the family becomes a trigger to domestic violence. Just like any other male-dominated society, most of the men in Nyeri opt to assume that it is a role of a woman to prepare meals and fetch water to be used at home. On the other hand, women feel that they deserve to be assisted because everyone needs water. Such a misunderstanding becomes an epitomical point that leads to domestic violence.

In an FGD with village elders, one of them commented that:

During the time of drought, women must walk for a long distance to look for water. Some even have to carry their babies with them because they have no one to help them as men consider such roles to be related to women. Other than searching for water, women have taken the role of feeding their animals as well as preparing the meals for the family. This entire role is done by women when men are offering little or no assistance. As a result, women tend to be mean and as a way of saving themselves from the tedious role of fetching water, they might try to economize it, something that anger most of the men. This creates tension because some men in Nyeri consider orders from women as disrespect (FGD with village elders, 4 April, 2022).

In another FGD with a village elder he conquered his colleague as he stated the following:

We have had a case where domestic violence occurred between a husband and a wife as a result of what they said was the misuse of the water. The wife claimed that she has been walking for a long distance carrying a baby to search for water to be used at home while the man is in the local town passing time with other men. When the man came home, he used the water in watering some vegetables in the kitchen garden. This angered the wife and she decided to confront her husband. Luckily, neighbors came to separate them before injuries occurred. Such occurrences tend to increase every time when there is a prolonged drought (FGD with village elder, 8th March, 2022).

Nowadays, the weather pattern has become unpredictable. This means that one can tell when the drought will come thus catching most of the people unaware. When looked from the family level, this affects mostly women as they are house managers as per the African culture (Muluneh *et al.* 2019). Men become unbothered but at the same time expect women in their homes to sort everything. Women, on the other hand, are trying to pressurize men as a way of ensuring that they offer assistance to curb the impacts of drought. Nyeri men do not take such pressures lightly. Hence, they result to domestic violence.

4.2.4 Manifestation of Domestic Violence in Nyeri County

The study sought to investigate how domestic violence manifests in Nyeri County. The results are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Manifestation of Domestic Violence

Manifestation of conflicts	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree	Cumulative agreement	Rank
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	
Verbal insults	5(1%)	4(1%)	0(0%)	298(87%)	77(20%)	375 (98%)	1
Divorce/separation	10(2%)	0(0%)	271(71%)	95(25%)	95(25%)	366(96%)	2
Physical injuries	18(5%)	24(6%)	04(1%)	228(59%)	110(29%)	338 (88%)	3
Psychological Torture	20(5%)	31(8%)	11(3%)	218(57%)	104(27%)	322 (84%)	4
Financial Deprivation	34(9%)	47(12%)	12(3%)	194(51%)	97(25%)	291 (76%)	5
Sexual violence	54(14%)	77(20%)	23(6%)	130(34%)	100(26%)	230 (60%)	6
Female genital mutilation	102(27%)	86(22%)	84(22%)	44(11%)	68(18%)	112 (29%)	7

Source: Field data, 2022

4.2.4.1 Verbal Insults

Table 4.2 indicates that 298 (87%) agreed that verbal violence is the most critical manifestation of domestic violence in Nyeri County, moreover, 77(20%) of the participant strongly agreed on the same issue. Contrarily, 5(1%) participants strongly disagreed that verbal violence is the most critical manifestation of domestic violence in Nyeri County while 4 (1%) of the remaining participants disagreed.

This study well indicates that verbal insults are the main manifestation of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Additionally, the study confirms that among the most utilized verbal cues that manifest violence in Nyeri include insults and sarcasm. In an FGD with elders in Kabaru, they stressed on insults and word-calling as the main type of violence in the area. The village elders pointed out that this can be detected mostly when there is a disagreement between the couples.

One of the elders stated that:

Huku tumezoea kuskia watu wanao chumbiana wakitukanana baada ya kutokuwa na maelewano. Iwapo watu wanao tupiana maneno hawatatutua mzozo wao kwa njia ya amani ama pengine kutafuta mhusika watatu atakae waelekeza jisnsi ya kutatua mzozo wao kunauwezekano wakutokea kwa vita. Hivi majuzi tumeitwa humu kijijini mwetu kuongelesha bibi na bwana waliokuwa wakizozana kwa mda. Tulipofika kwenye familia hiyo tuliwaomba kila mtu ajieleze mwenyewe. Katika halakati hizo tulibaini ya kwamba bibi yule na bwana yake walitumia maneno mazito sana wakielekezeana lawama. Walipaza sauti mara kwa mara na kutumia maneno ya kukejeli. (As elders we are used to hearing couples insulting each other after having a little misunderstanding. In case the conflict among the couples is not solved amicably or there is no mediator to help them the situation might escalate to domestic violence. A few days ago we had been invited by certain couples to help them solve their conflict. When we reached there, we requested them to explain their problem to us as we try to find the solution. One thing I noted as they talked, is that they insulted each other and their tone changed every now and then. There was a lot of use of insults and sarcasm) (FGD with village elders, 4 April, 2022).

Verbal violence is becoming rampant among Nyeri County residents. The use of verbal violence also depends on the situation and occasion. However recently we have noticed that it might go beyond one homestead to another, especially where several couples are involved. In most of the scenarios, this form of violence is directed to men. As a way of defending themselves, men might end up confronting their wives thus leading to physical violence. In an interview with the assistant chief from Mahiga village in Othaya constituency, he said that:

Verbal violence is a common thing in this village. This form of violence can occur from anywhere especially when the couples are uncontrollable. However, the nature of verbal violence might be different depending situation that led to it or the occasion. For instance, when in public the violence might be limited by societal morals while in a house the couples are unrestricted. In most cases, women are the mastermind of verbal violence which prompts men to respond physically if the situation is not controlled (Interview with assistant chief, 9th March, 2022).

Verbal violence often leads to domestic violence because when one of the couples feels defeated verbally, they look for an option. The option readily available for couples is physical violence. In this case, both men and women are victims. In an interview with a director of one of the community-based organizations, he indicated that:

Verbal violence is the main reason why domestic violence in Nyeri County is becoming a daily thing in our community. It escalates emotions among the couples to an extent that they cannot control themselves. Some find it as the most reliable way to convey their frustration or pain in their heart to their spouses. As a way of preventing the occurrence of

domestic violence in Nyeri County, we often talk to the affected couples and from that we gather a lot of information. Out of it we have been able to establish domestic violence in Nyeri County start as a verbal violence and developing in to a different thing (Interview with CBO head, May 19, 2022).

According to Jones & Gardner (2002) to some extent verbal is one of the mechanisms used to express the inner feeling of a person. For example, through the tone, you can tell whether a person is angry, happy, anxious, or any other status of mind. In most of the scenarios, tone variation might be the major indicator where the high tone is mostly related to violence (Jones & Gardner, 2002). However, the tone is just a component of verbal insults that can be used as a criterion to determine whether an individual is violent. Graham-Bermann *et al.* (2010) agreed with Jones & Gardner (2002) in their submission that verbal insult is an indication of domestic violence. Unlike Jones & Gardner (2002), Graham-Bermann *et al.* (2010) focus on the selection of words while communicating amongst different genders. Words used will express how an individual feels about another person. Taking a man and wife as an example, there is a way they communicate when they are happy or angry. An aggressive person will use unpleasant words with the intention to hurt the other person. This is contrary to cases where communication is between nonviolent people. The selection of words used includes insults, sarcasm, and hyperbole among others.

4.2.4.2 Divorce/Separation/Isolation

The results in Table 4.2 shows that 10(2%) strongly disagree, 8(2%) disagree that domestic violence manifests in term of separation and or divorce. On the other hand, majority of the respondents, 366(96%) agreed that this is a major form of manifestation.

This is an indication that there are many cases of separation, divorce, and isolation as a result of domestic violence in the study area, making divorce/separation the second highest level of manifestation of domestic violence in Nyeri County.

The social impacts of domestic violence cut across all societal sectors ranging from the community to household levels. The blaming of the victims, loss of duties, social stigmatization, social rejection, loss of life, violation of fundamental human rights and the perpetuation of the violence as permitted by some socio-cultural norms and practices are just but a few manifestations of the grave social impacts related to violence.

Violence against individuals such as women and girls or men and boys can result in social consequences for affected individuals, their families, and communities. Social effects include shying away from the broader community, leading to failure to seek employment and education, and all this is due to lowered self-esteem. Children brought up in families who experience domestic abuse are also likely to assimilate into the norms of violence, which develops into a culture of violence. They grow up in violence which affects their self-development and causes them to lose the ability to function normally in society. The affected members of society often feel inferior or helpless and are often pushed to their limitations. Men are also victims of domestic violence, as evidenced in the report that 18% of men are said to have reported violence to the authority (Nthiana & Odhiambo, 2021). The social consequences of this violence against men include broken marriages and drug abuse such as alcoholism, which can damage the marriage relationship. Society can undermine the violated men by intimidating them and showing them how weak they are because of being beaten by a woman. Also, research indicates that in Kenya, an estimation of 2.1 million men undergo violence daily (Nthiana &

Odhiambo, 2021). This has affected their social life in such ways as making them feel inferior. For instance, men in Nyeri county have faced violence from their women, complaining that they fail to provide the basic needs for their families and deny conjugal rights to their wives, and this is due to alcoholism. Through an interview with the assistant chief, he confirmed that it is indeed true that this violence against men exists. He said that:

Valentine Mugure took a knife, stabbed his husband on the left shoulder, and cut off his private parts after asking for money from her to go on a drinking spree with friends in the early morning hours. This man has never been the same again. He cannot even sit in men *barazas* (Interview with assistant chief, 22nd May, 2022).

The above case from Nyeri shows that men experience violence leading to social consequences such as broken marriages and alcoholism. Domestic violence has also affected women and girls in Nyeri County, who face sexual harassment resulting in unwanted and premature pregnancies. The social impact of this occurrence is that teenage mothers drop out of school, thereby destroying their social life. A Sub-county administrator in Kieni said that:

Teenage pregnancies increased due to an upsurge in domestic violence, and we received reports from girls aged 12-18 years who were pregnant after running away from their homes because of domestic violence. They get married or go to stay with their male friends who end up mistreating them as they look desperate. However, many cases remained unreported because of fears that they would suffer shame and judgment from society (Interview with sub-county administrator, 5th July, 2022).

Individuals should be encouraged to report gender-based violence of any kind to the authority and not shy away from reporting the incidents. Through reporting, they get

justice and avoid being condemned by society, hence withholding their self-esteem.

During a focus group discussion, a village elder in Kabaru location indicated that:

We found a girl being harassed sexually by an older man, and he was doing the act in broad daylight near some bushes here in Ndathi. The girl was crying desperately for help when we arrived to rescue her. We called the police, who came and arrested him immediately and took him to the police station. The girl was then rushed to the hospital to receive treatment and undergo counseling, enabling her to heal psychologically and resume her social life smoothly. The man shamelessly said that he had paid dowry to the father of the girl, so he had the right to sleep with his “young” wife. The young woman dropped out of school as she could not face her agetmates after the shameful incident. Efforts to help her are still underway as she is still in the village (FGD with village elders, 8th march, 2022).

Socio-cultural norms and practices have been found to provide a haven for the perpetuation of domestic violence against women and men. However, the female gender is disproportionately affected by such violence as compared to men. Most of the patriarchal societies tend to permit some of the old-fashioned practices and beliefs in masculinity. This has culminated in the reaffirming of the inequality in sexism. This in turn has led to spiralling impacts in society. For instance, social stigmatisation and isolation that have been directed towards the victims of domestic violence, especially women, have hampered their social interactions and their inability to hold any leadership position.

A study conducted in Ghana revealed that women’s social interactions are associated with their capacity to demonstrate wisdom in their decisions. A woman who has experienced intimate partner violence was believed to have been unwise by permitting her partner to act on her or encouraging violence, thus losing respect for her. The study further found that violence against women had a profound impact on social cohesion

since it endangers the community's sense of belonging and infringes community engagement. The respondents from the study asserted that victims of violence, especially women withdrew from their various leadership positions and communal engagements and were at risk of losing their leadership status. The victims were also found to disengage in attending education facilities, visiting market places and the use of public means of transportation to avoid public stigmatization that results from the past occurrences (Alvorado *et al.* 2018).

In Nyeri County, men who have gone through GBV find it hard to report or share. An elder confessed during an FGD that he has been going through pain because his wife is very violent. She fights him and threatens to tell the entire community that the man is infertile, and that the two children the family has belong to his brother. The man rarely goes to social meetings as he has no courage to be with people. The elder stated that:

I am unable to impregnate my wife. I did not know I have that problem, until I got married and could not perform in bed. I talked to my brother and he slept with my wife, and we got our two sons. In my mind, my problem was solved; little did I know that my problems had just gotten worse. My wife harasses me and even beats me up any time she wants. She dares me to expose her and threatens to announce to the villagers that I am infertile. I am left with no option but to remain silent and suffer to eternity (FGD with village elders, 14th July, 2022).

Several studies that have been conducted in various parts of Kenya have established the increment of domestic violence incidents. The causative factors that fuel such violence according to these studies have been the unequal power relations belief, the economic burden, drugs and substance abuse, just to mention but a few. Some studies have attempted to associate domestic violence with children's general performance in schools.

From these studies, it is evidenced that there is a deep connection between domestic violence and the learning progress of children. For instance, both young girls and boys whose families have experienced such violence have recorded poor and low academic performance while in school. This has been largely attributed to the psychological torture that these children undergo. Additionally, young girls who have been victims of sexual violence tend to be demoralised and feel deserted and rarely concentrate in class.

Again, the perpetuation of domestic violence especially by the male gender more often than not makes life unbearable for women and young children. With the justification of such violence as depicted in some socio-cultural norms, women are rendered with limited if no option but to blame themselves for these violent acts. The wider consequences, according to some research, have been family breakups. The survivors of this violence prefer breaking the marriage and resort to being single. This has been supported by empirical research conducted in Kenya that linked the increment of single families with the respondents citing horrific past marriage experiences that culminated in the termination of the marriage contract. Moreover, in worse scenarios, more lives have been claimed by domestic violence, with women being disproportionately affected. Some reports have indicated high prevalence rates of femicide in Kenya, an issue which has been attributed to the perpetuation of domestic violence against women and young girls. As far as the perpetuation of conflict is concerned, some studies that have been conducted have found that children who witness or who have been victims of domestic violence such as wife battering are more likely to use violence in their adulthood as compared to the non-abused ones to assert control over their wives (Russo & Angela, 2006).

4.2.4.3. Physical Injuries

According to table 4.2, 18(5%) strongly disagree, and 24(6%) disagree that physical forms of violence do not form a large part in the manifestation of domestic violence in Nyeri Country. Most of the respondents were for the idea that domestic violence is highly manifested through acts of physical violence. The results indicate that 228(59%) agreed, and 110(26%) strongly agreed that the cases of physical violence witnessed in Nyeri county were a sign of domestic violence. However, 4(1%) of the respondents were unable to relate the issue of physical violence and domestic violence; hence they said they did not know.

The most cited definition of physical violence by researchers constitutes any act with the potential of inflicting physical injury to the victims. According to Carlson *et al.* (2020), the acts can manifest in the form of physical beatings, pushing, grapping and shoving as well as the use of lethal weapons. Whenever one hears about domestic violence, physical abuse or violence is the primary idea that flows through one's mind. Physical abuse is the typical way abusive partners use to get and keep their partners controlled. The abusers take physical actions which instill constant fear in their partners, leaving them no choice but to abide by their instructions in the same controlled environment they are subjected to. As much as it is the primary form of domestic violence known in society, it may or may not be present in an abusive relationship. Azizi *et al.* (2021) points out that if physical violence is witnessed at an early stage of a relationship, its intensity goes on increasing, thus, making it worse with time, unless something is done. There are different forms of physical abuse including punching, hitting, slapping, kicking, strangling, using threatening weapons, and denying medical treatment.

Based on the results, it is evident that physical abuse is a manifestation of cases of domestic violence in the county. In an interview with assistant chiefs, they highlighted many cases they have been dealing with relating to physical abuse. According to the assistant chiefs, young marriages suffer most since most of the people they have dealt with are from middle adulthood. The following are some remarks said by one of the assistant chiefs in an interview.

My office has handled many cases, especially by women reporting their husbands based on assaults. The young couples have been having these challenges based on the cases I have dealt with since they seem not to understand each other plus their interests well. Most of these cases come from arguments or differences in conjugal rights. Most of the men who have been brought into my office feel entitled to their women, and thus in case their wives tell them they are not ready for it, it turns out to be a fight. Sometimes the arguments get ugly since some women have scars that they will never erase (Interview with an assistant chief, 8th March, 2022).

Based on the above remarks, it is evident that physical abuse in Nyeri County is rampant. One can conclude that men in this county use physical abuse to make their wives submissive. Whenever disagreements arise, sometimes the partners use physical force to instill pain to the partners. During the interviews with CBO leaders, a woman who sells groceries happened to be a victim of physical violence. She narrated how her boyfriend used a sharp machete to chop off her hands, just because he was told by a friend that she was cheating on him. This is what she explained:

I had been in love with this man for 2 years. We were going on well, and we were planning to marry soon. Unfortunately, his friend lied to him that I was having an affair with a policeman. He became very angry. He lied to me that we should go to the

forest to pick some firewood he had fetched for me. We went with my sister, and him. In the middle of the forest, my husband to be became an animal and started to slash me with a machete. My sister tried to defend me, but it was in vain. I lost my hand, my fingers, and I was badly injured. I became unconscious, and only woke up after 3 weeks in ICU. He committed suicide the same day. My life has never been the same again (Interview with CBO leaders, 9th May, 2022).



Plate 4.1: Research Assistant with a Victim of Physical Violence in Nyeri County, Kenya

Source: Field Data, 2022

Police Officers from National Police Service also affirmed this allegation in an interview. Most of them confirmed that they had arrested many people due to cases of physical abuse. The following is a remark made by one of the police officers in the interviews.

We have indeed witnessed cases of physical abuse in this county. We get calls from different parts of our areas of jurisdiction with arrest warrants for individuals who have been harassing their partners. I recall an incident in the Majengo area when we received a call at the station around midnight for help. On reaching the scene crime, we realized that it was a neighbor who had called for help after hearing her neighbor being beaten by her husband. The husband came in drunk, and they started arguing, tones raised, and the next thing the caller heard was screams. We found the woman who was pregnant bleeding. Unfortunately, she lost the pregnancy. We learnt that it was not the first time since the woman had scars on her arms and legs, all from acts of physical abuse from her husband (Interview with a police officer, 29th May, 2022).

In addition, those in charge of significant business entities also affirmed the case of physical abuse in the community. For example, one village elder who is a local investor and owns various shops around Kamakwa center, Nyeri, confirms that he has encountered physical abuse, especially amongst his employees.

I remember when I was at one of the businesses and noted that one of my employees was late. They were all expected to report at 0800, but she was already an hour late. Once she showed up, I had to ask for an explanation of why she was late. She explained that she was in the hospital, and looking at her, there were visible bruises on her face and hands. She explained that they got into a fight with her spouse last night. This describes how serious the issue is (FGD with Village Elders, 18th May, 2022).

Most of the NGOs in Nyeri County campaign against domestic violence. These NGOs agree to the idea of Azizi *et al.* (2021) that all these victims of domestic violence have major struggles emotionally, psychologically, and mentally which affects their daily living and social interactions.

Every time you have a conversation with victims of physical abuse, they always seem to be in fear of

something. Most of them show signs of anxiety or depression, which challenges how they interact with others in the community. They live in fear of being harassed by people of the opposite gender. There is a man in our rehabilitation who looks terrified whenever a brown lady is near him. He remembers how his wife cut his fingers with a knife one evening for not coming with a packet of unga. It is a very sad situation (Interview with NGO leader, 2nd June, 2022).

Sub-county administrators also agreed that the issue of physical harassment has been there based on the reports they get from most assistant chiefs and police commissioners in their areas. Unless something is done, the sub-county administrators agreed that these cases will continue rising, and the community will continue being affected. Most people in Nyeri County have suffered from physical abuse especially from their immediate partners.

As a community, the issue of physical abuse is rampant, and needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Most court cases are related to domestic violence, and a considerable proportion is physical abuse. Most people live in abusive marriages, which affect even the productivity of Nyeri County (Interview with sub-county administrators, 21st March, 2022).

Residents of Nyeri County agreed that there have been cases of physical violence against women. This is mostly evident when the man is drunk and unable to defend himself. However, there are other cases where the women try to engage into physical fights with their spouses whenever they disagree. Village elders pointed out they have handled cases of domestic violence against men in their villages. In an FGD with elders from Kihome Village, Othaya Sub-county, they were sorry for the young couples they see daily struggling to have peaceful families. One of the village elders shared this experience.

There was an incident where a young man almost my son's age came to me for a piece of advice. He claimed

that he is married to an older woman who was used to harassing him, but the previous night, it had gotten out of hand since he was hit with a blunt object and showed me the mark on his hand. It is a pity that the issue of physical abuse affects both men and women, although women are abused more (FGD with village elders, 20th May, 2022).

The issue of domestic violence against men has been there for a long time. During an FGD with elders, one of them who was a victim of domestic violence. He pointed out that his wife would batter him any time they had an argument. The man pointed out that his wife used crude weapons to hit him, and then scream that she is being beaten. The elder stated that:

Mutimia wakwa ari mwaki wa guoterwo haraihu. Tungiahitanirie oyaga rukuno, akehitha handu na akandamura. Ndagunagwo ni gwithara. Acokaga akoiga mbuu, andu moka akoiga ni nii ndiramuhura. Ndateithekire riria andu a muhiriga mamuingatire thutha wa kuona ninguragwo. Nirio ndahikirie uyu ndinake. Kirema giki murona haha niwe watheciire na icembe. (My wife was very wicked. She would pick a crude weapon and hide, and then attack me with it. She would then scream and claim I was beating her. I was saved when my clansmen chased her away when they realized she would soon kill me. That is when I married my current wife. I got the scar you see on my face when she hit me with a folk jembe.) (FGD with a village elder, 21st May, 2022)



Plate 4.2: Research Assistant with a Male Victim of Domestic Violence in Nyeri County

Source: Field Data, 2022

From the above remarks, it is evident that even men are victims of physical abuse in their marriages. Men are not majorly in the picture in terms of physical abuse, although there are still some who are bruised by their wives, making the issue familiar across both genders in Nyeri County. Therefore, physical abuse proves that domestic violence is rampant in Nyeri County.

Survivors of domestic violence often sustain severe injuries. These victims can either be men or women. Domestic violence has been acknowledged as urgent in public health and human rights (Falschung, 2018). World governments have put up various actions to curb the issue. This has been done through implementing policies and enhancing educational programs for the public to reduce the menace of domestic violence. Death rates also increase due to domestic violence since acts such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, and psychological exploitation from perpetrators can lead to the affected individuals

succumbing to these injuries. For instance, Majengo slum in Nyeri County is prone to domestic violence due to the challenges they experience in their day-to-day lives. These challenges include poor access to proper housing, poor health facilities, poor education, and unemployment (Githaiga, 2020). According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, domestic violence involves any action that deprives an individual's freedom, and this is through inflicting injury or hurting them.

During an FGD with village elders, they linked GBV in Nyeri County to gender inequality. When either men or women rise to power or economic deprivation, this causes one gender to feel deprived and demeaned, resulting in one party harming the other. Domestic quarrels often lead to one party harming the other when they reach a point of disagreement. One of the elders said:

Many GBV cases arising in Nyeri are caused by gender inequality, where the husband or the wife feels superior to their spouses. When one fails to be submissive, one may fight due to disagreements. This may lead to death or serious health concern for one of the partners. Several GBV-related deaths have also occurred in this village, mainly instigated by alcoholism or disagreements concerning one of the spouses failing to provide for the family. Spouses batter each other and incur physical harms unnecessarily (FGD with village elders, 23rd March, 2022).

The case mentioned above is evidence of the seriousness of domestic violence in Nyeri. Additionally, other places within Nyeri County have men undergoing similar experiences, where they have succumbed to serious injuries inflicted by their wives. For instance, an interview with police officers reveals that men suffered in the hands of their women. A certain police officer said that:

We rescued a man named Kiguta from Karima, Othaya who was cut with a panga across his face after coming home drunk. The man was admitted at Nyeri Referral

Hospital and had serious injuries. Luckily, he did not succumb to the injuries but remained with permanent scars. After being discharged, he did not go back to his matrimonial home but sought refuge at his parent's home (Interview with police officer, 14th July, 2022).

There are so many cases of men dying and others sustaining injuries on their bodies in Nyeri, and it has led to the attention of social media and other non-government organizations. For Instance, Ahadi Kenya intervened for Kiguta and offered him some cash to start a business and restart his life. A village elder retells the story of Kimaru, who is thirty years old.

The victim said that the scar on his forehead resulted from an injury caused by his wife, who confronted him with a knife plus a broken bottle. He further says that he escaped death slightly because his wife would have stabbed him to death with the knife when he luckily grabbed the knife from his wife (FGD with village edlers, 10th March, 2023).

During an interview, a CBO leader, who was a victim of GBV exposed the scars in her head, explaining that the scars are still evident after undergoing GBV from her ex-boyfriend, 15 years ago. The respondent explained that:

The scars in my head remind me each day that some people are evil and malicious. My boyfriend hurt me like this because he listened to some rumors that I was cheating on him. I cannot plait my hair like other women. I cannot go without a headscarf. Apart from my hand that lacks fingers, my head is also scarred.

When collecting questionnaires from the household heads, one of the household heads had an amputated hand. She explained that the hand was cut by her fiancée who was so cruel.

He cut my hand and injured my head. I became a disabled person, yet I was born a complete woman. It was very unfair. I have never forgiven him (Household head, 5th March, 2022).

Domestic violence manifests in various forms ranging from but not limited to female genital mutilation, wife battering and assault. Kenya has experienced all these forms of violence and some if not all remain deeply rooted and are widely practised among Kenyan societies. All these forms of violence normally inflict physical pain that culminates to physical trauma and can either be minor or life-threatening and consequently leads to permanent disability or even claim lives.

Physical abuse can cause injuries to vital body organs which can in turn results in damage to body tissues. Fractures, bruises, and contusion which may stem from physical beating can lead to permanent disability which again limits the movements and the activeness of the victims in the working sphere. Among the Maasai community, men are permitted to coerce and assert their authority over women through wife-beating and the victims, particularly women are rendered with limited options but to conform to the misguided practice. Such beatings inflict physical pain and cause bruises and fractures to the victim and in extreme cases, lead to permanent disability as well as marriage breakups (New York Times, 1997).

A study conducted by Shimba and Magombola in Arumeru, Tanzania revealed that majority of the respondents have sustained injuries that stemmed from physical abuse such as beatings, burning, attacking with weapons such as knives as well as choking. Some also obtained injuries from sexual related instances such as rape and coercive intercourse. Strangling and hitting of the head on walls were also found to have left permanent marks and pains on the victims with men being the dominant perpetrators of such acts. The study further found that the men were either intimate partners of the victims or their siblings (Shimba & Magombola, 2021).

Wife battering which denotes physical beatings with fists or other objects, stabbing, whippings, and any form of husband-inflicted physical violence as well as psychological mistreatment in form of threat, intimidation, isolation, and degradation is a major form of physical violence. Husband battering refers to such mistreatment, perpetrated by the wife to the husband. According to Mbote (2000), domestic violence that is committed by men tends to cut across societies regardless of the status of age, the level of income, the level of education, and the skin colour. She goes on to assert that the repetition of these acts most of the time leads to low self-esteem, hopelessness and powerlessness in some or entire sectors of life. These are mainly experienced by the victims. In an African context, it has been contended that the question of bride-wealth exacerbates the position of women vis-à-vis battering. The contemporary trend allows the demanding high bride price has culminated in wife purchase, therefore, reducing them to “property which can be subjected to any treatment that one wishes (Mbote, 2000).

Most of this harassment goes unreported because of the victims’ fear or the inability and unwillingness to pay back the bride price by the natal family, and the need to protect the batterer who may be the sole breadwinner of the family. In some cases, the victim may decide to take the blame and assure an improved behavior next time. Other reasons may stem from the fear of being punished by the perpetrator, shame and support that come from the society as well as the desire to stabilize the family for children’s sake (Mbote, 2000).

The World Health Organization (WHO) in its 2005 report observes that woman beating is the commonest form of physical violence. For instance, it established that half of the Tanzanian women and almost three-quarters of Ethiopian women in rural areas reported

beatings by their husbands or other closest partners (WHO, 2005). Another report published by the United Nations Population Fund in 2008 asserted that the right of a husband to inflict physical injury or intimidation to his wife emanated from the firmly held beliefs. It goes on to note that even the societies where women tend to enjoy certain privileges, they are not free from slaps from their spouses. Another report by the United Nations Development Fund for Women revealed that certain cultural practices still render women submissive to their husbands and other males. The inferiority of women makes them undervalued and disrespected by their male counterparts (UNIFEM, 2003).

In some extreme cases, women are viewed as objects which often manifests in practices such as dowry payments and wife inheritance. For instance, a study conducted by the US-based Human Rights Watch in Uganda found that some families justify forceful women inheritance in the view that they contributed to the bride price. After being inherited, the women lose their material wealth. The study further found the families of the women were reluctant in repaying the dowry and the brothers to the sister if they exist, are faced with limited options but to force their sister back to her matrimonial home (Kimani, 2007). In such cases, women are physically abused and the society has normalized such actions.

The results of this study agree with a study conducted by Dickson *et al.* (2020) that gave factors such as age, the education level, the status of wealth among other factors as the justifiable factors that necessitate the Ghanaian men and women to permit wife-beating. It further revealed that physical violence in Ghana often manifests in various dimensions with slapping and attacking with sharp or blunt objects as the most common practices. It also found that the implications were quite huge and they range but are not limited to

induced abortion, injuries, ill-health conditions such as anxieties and gynecological devastations. The women were found to be the main victims and low birth weights were prominent among other factors that raised the red flag to the Ghanaian government to intervene by enacting laws to safeguard the rights of women and children (Dickson *et al*, 2020).

4.2.4.4 Psychological Torture

Table 4.2 analyses cases of psychological manifestations among the residents of Nyeri County. Based on the table, 20 (5%) strongly disagree, and 31 (8%) disagree that the issue of psychological disorders in the county manifests as domestic violence. However, most respondents believe that the problem of psychological disorders prevalent in the county manifests in domestic violence. According to the results from the questionnaires, 218 (57%) respondents agree, and 104 (27%) strongly agree with this idea. In addition, 3% of the study population posed with this question claimed not to know the issue of psychological disorders in the county concerning domestic violence.

According to the Kelly (2004), psychological abuse is a response to chronic verbal or physical aggression. Psychological manifestations are witnessed once the victims cannot tolerate the experiences they are going through in terms of domestic violence. Sometimes the victims of domestic violence find it challenging to continue being in such a relationship; hence either run or stay but are deformed entirely in terms of social interactions, mental health, and personal characteristics, among others. According to Tsirigotis & Luczak, 2018, psychological manifestations take place in different forms, such as low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, excessive fear of the oppressor's gender, and mistrust.

From the results presented in Table 4.2, it is clear that there are elements of psychological manifestation in the community, meaning that the issue of domestic violence is rampant. In an interview with the NGOs and CBOs, the study found out that psychological manifestation problems cannot be doubted. Based on the CBO members interviewed, most women in the county showed elements of psychological issues. Hence it can be concluded that most of the domestic violence victims in the county are women. The following is a statement made by an assistant director of KIGWA, a CBO in Kieni sub-county.

Women empowerment is in high demand in this county. We have noted a sequential need for help amongst women of this county based on the psychological manifestations they portray. In most of the events we have held in the community, women are always on the front line. There is this belief that men are always good leaders and women should follow. Based on our conversations with some of them, it is evident that they had been harassed to the extent that they believe they are not supposed to speak or act if their husbands or men are in the picture. Therefore, there is a need to boost the esteem of these women and make them able to stand on their ground and make good choices. Women need to be united and come up with substantive groups through which they can get funds for self-development, among others, and not only rely on their husbands. Some women in this area no longer have self-esteem. They cannot even lead in prayers in a village meeting because they are psychologically tortured (Interview with CBO leader, 28th March 2022).

Religious leaders agree with the other respondents in the study that there has been a lot of psychological issues among the victims of domestic violence. It is not easy to live with an abusive person in the same house. The spouse should be a partner, a lover and a companion. During the interviews, one pastor pointed out that:

It becomes very stressing to have the same partner as a violator of your rights. One of

the church members has become mentally ill since her husband started beating her up. She no longer has a social life. She cries a lot during the services. In fact, we had to take her to the hospital last year and she was admitted (Interview with religious leader, 18th April, 2022).

In an interview with some police officers from the national police service, they confirmed that women had been struggling with expression of issues in the community. Most of the police officers agree with the idea of Tsirigotis & Luczak, 2018, that in most cases of domestic violence, the women being beaten or harassed by their husbands are not the one who call for help. They are usually too stressed to come out and express what they go through in the hands of their spouses. One of the police officers said these remarks in the interview.

Referring to the case mentioned about the arrest we made in the Majengo area, it is not the woman who was being oppressed who called in for help but a neighbor who confessed to having heard the arguments and crying for help almost daily. Based on our investigation, it was not the first or the second time that woman was harassed by her husband. She had fresh wounds from the beatings of that night but also had other healed scars on her body, especially her neck, hands, and back. The shocking thing was that she had withheld the information concerning the harassment by her husband. One could argue that her husband had threatened her not to say anything, or she had low self-esteem to the extent that she thought the police would not have listened to her. Therefore, there is a need to address this issue of violence based on the psychological manifestations described by the events around us (Interview with a police officer, 29th May, 2022).

Assistant chiefs, sub-county administrators, and village elders agreed that men and women are going through of domestic violence in Nyeri County, and that the happenings cause psychological torture which manifests even without the victims knowing. In addition, one of the village elders raised an essential point about men in this county. He

helped the team diversify their observations and investigation, for he said many men also had psychological manifestations. According to the village elders, the men do not believe in speaking out since they fear being judged, but some are going through a lot. Some of them are harassed by their intimate partners, and since they cannot speak out for fear of being judged, they opt to suffer alone. This affects their emotional and mental states. Therefore, the issue of psychological manifestations is common in both men and women in the County, hence should be addressed in equal measures.

During FGDs, one of the village elders had this to say:

Psychologically, men who go through violence in their homes are not fine. There is one man from this village who was battered by the wife. He ended up becoming mad. Nowadays, he sleeps on the streets and talks to himself. He does not even recognize his own children. What makes me sad is how he runs away screaming whenever he meets a woman who resembles his wife. He screams and begs the “wife” not to beat him. This means that he remembers how his wife would beat him up every moment (FGD with village elders, 28th March, 2022).

Another village elder added that:

The cases of men who are becoming depressed in the village is rapidly increasing recently. A good example is one of my personal friends who happen to be an elder in the neighboring village. He was a jovial man who sometimes worked as an entertainer in various ceremonies due to his comical nature. Not long ago I noticed the change in this man’s life as he began to spend time alone and even sometimes reported being violent in his family. Consequently, he even stopped attending ceremonies or meetings involving elders. Sometimes I could hear people say how this elder had started talking to himself. Sadly, last week it was reported to me that the elder was rescued as he was trying to commit suicide on one of the trees at the back of his house. Upon interrogation, the elder stated that since his two sons joined university, he has been unable to pay their fees and provide other necessities. His wife started to insult him, telling him he is very useless. The man was

psychologically tortured as he could not meet the demands of his family, and his spouse was making it worse by insulting him. As a man of the family, he felt that he has failed and there is no need for him to exist (FGD with village elders, 28th March, 2022).

Psychological torture is worse for the elderly, especially if one spouse gets support of the children, and the other one does not. As evident during this study, men are the main victims of such cases. Children support their mothers, and let the man suffer alone. Since the woman has the support of children, she gets the guts to mistreat the man more. This tortures the man and makes him to be mentally ill. Inheritance issues are usually a main contributor of such cases.

During an interview, an assistant chief had this to say:

We are facing a crisis as a society concerning the current generation. Often, we have received cases of domestic violence in various families where the children want to be given the share of their inheritance by force. We have a man of 70 years who is currently receiving counseling and treatment in one of the local mental hospitals. The elderly man has been involved in a conflict with his children who want to displace him from his land. The man also is not in good terms with his wife and therefore he is fighting for his properties alone. Being a man, the society does not take him serious as some blame him for his inability to take control of his family. Such cases where elderly members of the society are becoming mentally ill due to the domestic violence is escalating and accurate measure are urgently needed (Interview with an assistant chief, 30th May, 2022).

Unfortunately, those who are psychologically unwell are likely to become mental health patients. Prolonged domestic violence makes them sick. They can end up perpetrating more violence or even kill their spouses and children.

During the interviews, a sub-county administrator established that:

Cases of domestic violence are worsening as most of them end up becoming tragic. When we make follow-up on some serious cases reported to us, we have established that members of the families who ends up killing each other take time to execute their missions. This means that before killing take place the violence tends to have taken longer and failed to have been solved amicably. In about one month we have buried a family of five people, a father, a mother and three children. The father who executed this heinous act left a letter which paved light to us on the reason why he decided to kill himself and his family. In the letter, he stated that as the head of the family he had no say after he lost his job. He also stated that he cannot withstand the pressure of bringing up his family. We also established that the wife has turned against her husband due to his inability to pay dowry. The man decided to kill his family because he could not imagine another man taking care of them (Interview with Sub-county administrator, 20th June, 2022).

It is widely recognized that physical, sexual, and even economic violence normally have dire consequences on one's psychological well-being. Imperatively speaking, therefore, psychological violence in most cases stems from other forms of violence. Researchers have attempted to describe psychological violence as verbal humiliation directed to one's partner and at times entail forced violence to dominate or manipulate a partner. Several researchers have collected and analyzed data on both physical and psychological violence and have found that the prevalence rates of psychological violence remain higher as compared to other forms of violence (Emeka & Elabor-Idemuda, 2017). It can manifest itself in various forms such as verbal insult, harassment, defamation, or coercion.

This form of violence tends to cut across both genders. However, the prevalent rates remain high for women. For instance, research conducted by Goodman and colleagues in

Meru, Kenya, found that a high number of women have experienced psychological violence which in turn has led to mental and emotional trauma among other underlying effects (Goodman *et al.* 2018).

In Africa, defamation, a form of psychological violence has taken roots, a situation bolstered by the advancement in technology that makes people get used to their phones and get access to platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram among others. This trend has conceived online abusers who spread and share defamatory messages against other people. In Kenya and South Africa for instance, a lot of defamatory cases have been filed in various courts. In as much as several defamatory cases have been heard and determined, many still pend thus justice remains unserved to the victims. Additionally, most African countries have legislated a series of laws to regulate defamatory offences in the form of acts of parliament, for example, the Defamatory Act of Kenya.

Victims of violence experience verbal insults and majority of victims are women and young girls. In established studies conducted by various researchers, stigmatization and verbal attacks have been directed to people living with disabilities, HIV and AIDS patients and more so the prostitutes. Such attacks normally come in form of branding of names to the victims and demeaning their social status in society. It becomes so bad when the same is directed towards an individual by the spouse. The Metropolitan Sanctuary for Children with Disability is an organization that deals with the disabled people in Nyeri County. During the interviews with one of the officials, she pointed out that psychological torture is so much among people living with disabilities. It is usually very painful because the disabled people do not have the power to fight for themselves. Their

spouses psychologically torture them and make them feel less-human. In one of her statements, the officer said that:

I became crippled at the age of 32. My husband was too bad. He kept on telling me that I was a useless woman who cannot do what other women do. The psychological torture was too much. I had to leave the marriage. I became a single mother, and I have been taking care of my son alone since 2013. My case is similar to what other disabled people are going through. Their spouses torture them because they are having some health challenges (Interview with NGO leader, 11th May 2022).

The study further found out that women who have disabled children are also psychologically tortured during a disagreement. The husbands direct the conflict towards the disabled child, and this not only tortures the wife, but also the affected child. The officer from The Metropolitan Sanctuary for Children with Disability further stated that:

It is worse when a woman has a differently abled child. Men will always mistreat women with such children and make them stressed. I am handling a case of a mother who has a cerebral palsy kid. Every time there is a simple argument in the family, the man insults her and her daughter, telling her that in their family they do not give birth to disabled children. It has been psychologically hurting to the young woman (Interview with NGO leader, 11th May 2022).

After undergoing other forms of violence such as the physical and sexual violence, victims suffer psychological torture as revealed during the study. When an individual is physically abused and becomes disabled, he lives with permanent psychological torture. During the interviews with CBO officials, one lady who owns a day care center narrated how her husband burned her after a disagreement. She was lucky she did not die, but she now lives with a disability. She explained that:

We went to take alcohol with my husband. One of his male friends tried to approach me, and my husband got very mad at me. When we went home, he poured paraffin on me, and burned me. I tried to roll on the ground, but I still got badly burned. I was saved by a neighbor who came and covered me with a wet blanket. I spent 3 years at Nyeri General Hospital, at the ICU. I have never forgiven him. I started losing my memory at that age. I am psychologically tortured every time I remember how I used to be a beautiful woman before this dangerous incidence (Interview with CBO head, 2nd June, 2022).



Plate 4.3: Research Assistant with a Victim with Burn Scars Nyeri County

Source: Field Data, 2022

Another form of psychological manifestation is harassment which has been common especially in workplaces where a husband works with the wife in a business. It could be exhibited in both physical and sexual forms. A plethora of studies and surveys have found that women are the primary targets of harassment, especially in workplaces. For instance, a cross-sectoral survey conducted by Blummel & Mulupi has asserted that women are the prime targets of sexual harassment. An average of 56% experienced verbal harassment and 38% experienced physical harassment. The study further revealed

that the underlying reasons for the thriving sexual harassment are due to inadequate policies to prevent it as well as the underreporting of the harassment by the victims owing to the fear of losing jobs or even being attacked more (Blummel & Mulupi, 2021).

In Nyeri County, this is still evident. Partners take their differences to the workplace, and this is psychologically torturing. In most cases, the partners use bad language when talking to each other at the workplace. It is humiliating to have a partner insult his wife in front of customers or employees, just because they disagreed at home.

During an FGD with the village elders, one elder who is a business owner, he had this to say.

My wife insults me in public, and mostly when we are in our shop. She knows I cannot slap her in public. Even if we disagree over small matters, she will have to humiliate me in front of my employees and our customers. There is a day a customer told me that it must be my wife usually beats me when we are at home. This was after she intimidated me because we had an argument in the morning. I have never healed; I still feel the pain to date (FGD with village elders, 10th April, 2022).

As revealed in this study, psychological manifestation is evident among most couples who have regular fights. This is an indication that verbal, physical, and sexual violence lead to psychological torture.

Domestic violence may also lead to health and psychological problems for the victims. GBV may be in the form of intimate partner violence, rape, various forms of sexual assault, and stalking. Psychological impacts associated with GBV include anxiety, mood, somatization disorders, trauma, mental disturbance, and suicidal behaviors (Sewalem & Molla, 2022). In an interview with a psychiatrist from Nyeri District Hospital, who is an

official of *Maendeleo ya Wanawake*, she explains that mental distress as an impact of GBV can be characterized by emotional suffering arising from regular combinations of depression symptoms like sadness, lost interest, hopelessness, and anxious feelings such as tension and restlessness. These forms of mental distress can accompany headaches, insomnia, and lack of energy. According to a research study by the Canadian Women's Foundation (2017), women who have experienced GBV in the form of physical violence have higher chances of experiencing major mental problems like depression. Also, 50% of the women have been treated for mental health problems.

Although men are the main perpetrators of GBV in Kenya, there has been a rise in cases of men experiencing the same in Nyeri County. A report by Nthiana & Odhiambo (2021) in the Star Newspaper revealed that 2.1 million men go through GBV daily. According to an interview with the village elders, men experience GBV through inflicted bodily harm, battering, and sexual violence. One of the elders said:

In December 2021, I witnessed a case that involved a man who had been a victim of domestic violence. According to the man, his wife would beat him even more than three times a week. The man even visited the hospital more than two times for treatment of serious injuries all over his body. Luckily, the man gathered courage and reported the matter to the elders (FGD with village elders, 5th May, 2022).

GBV in men can lead to negative outcomes such as drug abuse, alcoholism, broken marriages, and even suicide. While interviewing several assistant chiefs from Nyeri County, they raised the alarm about the rising number of suicides related to GBV in Nyeri County. They indicated that most men from the Kikuyu tribe prefer suffering and keeping silent whenever they are exposed to GBV since they believe it is taboo for a man

to be battered by a woman. This leads to mental and physical health problems, which can be serious. They also noted that women are less likely to be severely affected by health and psychological problems since they open up easily, enabling them to find help before the issue escalates. One of the assistant chiefs said:

Health and psychological problems instigated by domestic violence have become rampant. One of the nurses in my local health dispensary told me that there had been an increase in the number of people being treated for mental health issues. Upon follow-ups, it has been proved that these cases are most prevalent among married people. Men have also been committing suicide at a high rate due to mental health disorders with their failure to seek help. If you come to my office, you will find that only women report GBV issues (Interview with assistant chief, 22nd March, 2022).

It is evident that many of the cases go unreported since the male victims prefer going silent on the issue, causing them to experience emotional trauma, mental depression, confusion, lack of self-worth, mental stress, and dissatisfaction due to lack of knowledge on how to solve the problem. This is compounded by the lack of confidence to report their plight due to the embarrassment that comes along with it. One of the Caritas leaders says the following in an interview:

In our efforts to curb health and psychological problems associated with domestic violence, we advise the victims to share the problem with people they trust or the authorities. This has been part of our campaign for the last few months. Encouraging victims to come out may help them avoid fears of being stigmatized. They also become empowered and educated about their rights. If people keep silent on such serious matters, they will die of depression and suicide. The effects of GBV can also negatively affect children and close family members of the victim. For instance, if a child experiences her mother being assaulted by her father, they may develop hatred against the perpetrator. Some children even get depressed and end up running away from home (Interview with NGO official, 5th May, 2022).

Therefore, interviews with the Caritas Leader reveal that GBV can also impact the health of children exposed to violence. For instance, if children witness continuous violence between their parents, they can risk experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety.

Domestic related violence, especially sexual violence normally has profound health impacts, particularly reproductive health. Among the most affected victims are women and girls who have been sexually abused. The health consequences can either be fatal or non-fatal, psychological, or reproductive which may have significant short and long-term consequences. The manifestation of reproductive health consequences includes; unwanted or unintended pregnancies; forced or unsafe abortions; pregnancy complications; sexually transmitted infections such as HIV and AIDS. This range of consequences may be as a result of complicated factors such as the utilisation of coercive means to force the victims into these acts, and the denial and lack of reproductive rights.

A study conducted by the United Nations on AIDs (UNAID) established that violence against women, especially rape and coercive sexual intercourse, female genital mutilation, early and forced marriages, polygamy, and unwanted pregnancies, which are widely practised in the Kenyan societies were responsible for high prevalence rates of sexually transmitted infections, especially HIV. Another study also found that physical injuries culminate in critical mental and behavioural health complications such as depression, anger, self-blame, suicidal attempts, post-traumatic disorders as well as illnesses related to stress which lead to deteriorated health conditions. For instance, victims of domestic violence, especially women are more likely to experience somatic

symptoms related to depression, panic, and respiratory illnesses among others. Furthermore, unwanted pregnancy and forced abortion are also among the reproductive health problems that result from a lack of negotiating power on contraceptive use.

Some studies have shown that women that are exposed to violence, specifically young women are more likely to get involved in abortion which exposes them to infertility and risk of gynaecological disorders. Again, other studies have also established that the inability of some women to negotiate for safer sexual intercourse exposes them to the high risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (Ondicho, 2018).

Another study conducted in Ghana on the impacts of violence against women identified anxiety, depression, and insomnia as some of the related health impacts associated with domestic violence. Some respondents, especially women who were survivors of rape attested to have suffered from chronic fear and anxiety (Alvarado *et al.* 2018).

The results of this study agree with a study conducted in Arumeru, Tanzania which found that some respondents have encountered sexually transmitted infections due to sexual violence. The respondents mentioned syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia and herpes as some of the sexually related infections. To avoid societal stigmatization, the survivors of these horrific infections tended to reveal their friends and relatives as the affected people (Shimba & Magombola, 2021). This mostly happens when their spouses force them to have sexual intercourse even after realizing that they have extra-marital affairs.

During FGDs with village elders and interviews with key respondents, this study established that the victims of domestic violence usually feel depressed and sad as a result of the perpetuated towards them. The sadness of the survivors is a result of the

continued perpetration from the abusers. This is in agreement with several studies that have also found that the married women were depressed since the acts were quite severe as they were abused either physically or sexually by their husbands frequently (Shimba & Magombola, 2021).

Some studies have been preoccupied with the establishment of the magnitude of the psychological impacts that arose from wars and conflicts. From these studies, it has been found that in as much as women and men become the victims, women are disproportionately affected by these wars. For instance, Uganda experienced a series of civil wars from mid-1980 with Luwero district being one of the most affected areas. A study conducted in this district revealed that women suffered torture which manifested in the form of physical beatings, deliberate starvation, murder, burning with cigarettes, forced sex and marriages some of which were committed even at the household level with women and girls being affected disproportionately. Additionally, some of these women faced domestic violations with forced marriages and sterilisation being widely reported. With this, the study focused on the psychological impacts of this conflict on women of Luwero. From the study, 95.5 per cent of women still experience intrusive thoughts which are psychologically disturbing.

The results of this study revealed that there was increased violence against women during the COVID-19 Pandemic, following the introduction of stringent measures to curb the further spread of the pandemic such as lockdowns by governments across the world. Psychological abuse was found to be the dominant manifestation of violence against women with the perpetrators of intimate partner violence, especially men weaponizing fear and anxiety caused by the pandemic or even blocking the victims from carrying out

general routine hygiene practices such as the washing of hands. This study found out that there was a strong relationship between psychological health and COVID-19, and this mostly affected people who went through domestic violence. This is in agreement with a German survey that reported unprecedented intimate partner violence which in turn culminated in mental health burden even in the highly industrialized western countries. Another cross-sectional study conducted in the United States of America (USA) established that intimate partner violence was strongly associated with greater risks of severe depression and anxiety (Opanasenko *et al.* 2021).

4.2.4.5 Financial Deprivation

Table 4.2 demonstrates that 34(9%) of the participants strongly disagreed that financial deprivation is a major manifestation of domestic violence in Nyeri County while 47(12%) of disagreed on the same. It is only 12(3%) of the participants stated that they did not know the answer. On the other hand, 194(51%) of the participants agreed that the financial deprivation is a major manifestation of domestic violence in Nyeri County while 97(25%) of the total participants strongly agreed.

According to Li *et al.* (2019) financial deprivation is a critical indicator of domestic violence in modern society and families to be specific. Financial deprivation mainly tends to occur in a situation where the couples in marriage fail to support each other financially or in a situation where all financial responsibilities have to be carried by the father or mother in a family, because of a disagreement or a family conflict. This might lead to depression either mother or the father in the family leading to a serious commotion (Li *et al.* 2019). Novokshonova *et al.* (2019) added that economic hardship is experienced due

to the loss of jobs as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and this has also been an attribution for domestic violence.

The results of the study revealed that there are individuals who choose to deny their partners financial assistance even though they are well of economically. For example, when there is a disagreement between the parents the father of the house may refuse to buy food, pay bills, or even educate the children. In return, the mother might find her own means of getting money to cater to her family and this escalates the conflict.

The result in table 4.2 shows that domestic violence in Nyeri County is manifested through economic measures in a major way. In an interview conducted with key respondents, it was indicated that spouses have been taking economic measures as a punishment mechanism, especially after disagreements. Most of the disagreements occur when bonuses are being paid. One of the Assistant Chiefs stated that;

Wanawake wamekuwa wakilalamika ya kwamba waume zao wanakwepa majukumu ya kinyumbani haswa inapofika wakati wa kugaramia mahitaji mbalimbali. Ijapokuwa humu kijijini Othaya kuna majani chai na kahawa inayowaletea watu pesa kwa wingi, familia nyingi zinateseka kwa sababu wakati wa malipo wanandoa hukosana. Kukosana huku hutokana na kutokuwa na makubaliano baina ya baba mwenye nyumba na mama kuhusiana na jinsi ya kutumia pesa hizo. Kwa wakati mwingi wazee wa boma huenda kula raha kwa kutumia pesa hizo na kuwacha familia zao zikiteseka. Wanaume huamua kutumia malipo ya kahawa vibaya kama njia ya kuadhibu wake zao. (Most of the women in Nyeri County are complaining that most of their men are not meeting the financial need of their families. Even though Othaya constituency is rich in resources such as tea and coffee, most of

the families are still struggling to put food on the table. This is because when bonuses are paid there is always disagreement in the family between the spouses. As a way of showing dominance in the family, men opt to go to lavish places to enjoy life using the same money they received as a bonus of tea and coffee. This means that the family is left with nothing to cater for their needs, and this becomes a significant indicator of conflict which may escalate to domestic violence.) (Interview with an assistant chief, 3rd June, 2022).

Some of the men in Nyeri County are polygamous as they still hold some vital traditional African practices. There are instances where men try to make effort to marry a second wife which brings commotion between the spouses. Women refuse to accept such moves, and as a way of revenging, men might refuse to educate their children. Since some of the women in Nyeri depend on their men, children end up being uneducated since their mother cannot afford to pay fees on their own. In an FGD, an elder pointed out that;

Some of the children in Nyeri county drop out of school while in primary school or sometimes they do not even go beyond class 8. This mostly is caused by their father when they neglect their parental role or even refuse to pay high school fees as a result of parental disagreement. This might affect the children for the rest of their life since most of them become drug addicts (FGD with village elders, 25th March, 2022).

Education plays a critical role in empowering society especially economically. Those who are educated can be creative and come up with ideas on how to improve their livelihood. With education, it is possible for one to secure a meaningful job thus improving their livelihood. Therefore, it is unfortunate that spouses use economic deprivation to punish their partners, and innocent kids suffer the consequences.

Men have also been affected by financial punishment from their partners. Nyeri County is a community that was historically matriarchal. Thus, women still have a big say in decision making. Whenever a man does not have enough financial muscle, he has a probability of suffering financially when a disagreement arises. The empowered women take advantage and punish the men. During an interview with an official from KIGWA, a CBO in Kieni East sub-county, he stated that:

Men who do not have money are harassed by their wives. We are facing a case of a man who is usually denied food because he cannot provide. He lost his job during COVID 19. The wife said that when the man had a job, he was feeding other women, and should now go to them to get food. The man has been suffering and begging for food, yet his wife has a shop and a boutique. It is very shameful to see the man beg for food from neighbors. We are trying to talk to the woman to reconsider her decision and accept the man back (Interview with CBO leader, 28th March, 2022).

Domestic violence exists in both poor and rich countries. It takes many forms, which could be sexual, physical, economic, or emotional. It may happen in schools, workplaces, communities, and homes. Although no one is supposed to be faced with domestic violence, this research shows that it affects people of all genders in Nyeri County. In an interview with the Sub-county administrator for Kieni West in Nyeri County, he mentioned that men are increasingly becoming victims of domestic violence despite being the main breadwinners for most families in the Kikuyu community. Domestic violence violates human rights and should not be taken lightly due to its grave consequences. The Sub-county administrator said:

Nyeri County has been among the counties with the most domestic violence cases lately. In the past, most cases that reached our offices were about women being battered by their husbands. Nowadays, complaints are also being launched about men facing

GBV in this County. This affects our economy since men are perceived to be the main breadwinners and the heads of the family in the Kikuyu community. If this issue of domestic violence is not addressed, it will become a disaster in this country. This is not because men have started becoming victims but because it also affects society as whole. Women also suffer the most, and their cases should be taken seriously (Interview with sub-county administrator, 9th June, 2022).

Domestic violence has led to a wide range of repercussions for the economic development of the region in which it occurs. According to data by the World Bank (2022), most governments in the world lose between 1.2% and 2% of their GDP due to the loss of productivity from violence. The costs are also increasing due to the money spent on educating society about domestic violence in developing countries. Moreover, the economic well-being of families experiencing domestic violence is negatively affected. For instance, a young woman was sentenced to 30 years in jail for killing her husband in Nyeri County (Gichure, 2020). The man was the sole provider for the family and sold miraa to cater to his family's needs. In this scenario, the economic loss affected not only the family but also the revenue collected from the taxes he paid to the County Government of Nyeri. During an interview with the assistant chief in the area concerning the murder case, he said that:

The husband was the sole provider of the family. His siblings also depended on him financially since the man's parents were deceased. This will be a very big loss to the family since the man's siblings are young. The eldest is in form 2, and the youngest is in class six. This will be an extra burden to the community and the other family members since they are not well-off financially. We, therefore, call on well-wishers and the government to take the matter and help the children complete their education (Interview with assistant chief, 4th May, 2022).

As evidenced in the above case, domestic violence is a serious issue in Nyeri County. It causes serious economic impacts in the county, ranging from lost earnings, opportunity costs, diverted resources, lost tax revenue, and other costs. It also leads to significant burdens on the justice system, social services, public healthcare system, and prevention of both the perpetrator and the victim from participating in economic activities. While interviewing the *Meandeleo ya Wanaume* coordinator for Nyeri County, he said the following:

Our organization is experiencing a difficult moment. Most of the male victims of GBV are denied financial assistance by their spouses. These are people who had jobs or businesses before the COVID 19 pandemic. Their wives have turned to be animals. They even deny them basic needs such as food, just because they cannot provide today, and they have been providing since they married. It is very unfortunate (Interview with NGO leader, 3rd March, 2022).

This study agrees with most of the research findings which have found that cases of domestic violence, especially those that are perpetrated on women, have an unprecedented impact on economic growth. In the light of this, some of the studies have been focused on the cost of services and the wider economic ramifications that are as a result of depreciated productivity, output losses and meagre earnings resulting from violence. Consequently, the economic impacts of violence have not only been found to have affected the perpetrators but also the victims. The economic costs have been identified to include healthcare, justice, service costs, lost earnings, and revenues as well as second-generation losses, which imply the cost of the children who are either witnessing or are victims of the related violence as evidenced in the increment of juvenile and adulthood crimes. Domestic violence has been found to hurt the economy in two broad dimensions namely, aggregate demands and supply. The demand has been

established to be skewed towards goods and services that are closely related to violence which in turn diverts the resources from their intended use, thus culminating to lower economic growth. These results from significant burden and cost to both public and private health sectors, significantly reducing the government's expenditure on other essential sectors since the government is forced to redirect its expenditure on services to respond to and support victims and survivors of the violence. Reduced income is also experienced since the male perpetrators, more often than not, fail to provide financial assistance to their households even when they are obligated to do so (King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2017). On the other hand, in terms of the aggregate supply, reduced productivity, reduced outputs and exports, reduced investment and savings are incurred.

The economic costs of violence against women are normally cut across all sectors ranging but not limited to justice accessibility, healthcare, education, business and employment costs, household and personal costs, and education. To begin with, the justice costs of violence against women have been identified to include the costs incurred in accessing law enforcement authorities like the police, court trials, compensation and the capital costs may include the construction of the buildings for the law enforcement authorities and the institutions to mitigate the violence. In the education sector, there is a special demand for the special educational services that are associated with behavioural menace and learning disabilities, especially for the victims of violence as well as the school programs that aim at mitigating violence against girls and boys. On the household level, the economic costs incurred stem from the huge expenditures on transportation, childcare, medication and even relocations which in turn affect household consumption. Additionally, the individuals and their households tend to pay indirectly through

obtaining reduced income which may stem from time off work, reduced productivity, and quitting or loss of job promotion (Tanis *et al.* 2005).

At the global level, the economic impact of domestic violence has been widely felt. As indicated by the United Nations (UN) Women, violence against women costs the combined global economy a tune of 1.5 trillion dollars. Furthermore, the World Bank also established that violence against women could cost up to 3.7 per cent in terms of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in some countries. The pandemic period witnessed an unprecedented influx of domestic violence against women and men. This was exacerbated by the sorry economic and social conditions that together contributed to the severe abuse. The Human Rights Watch in its report faulted Kenya's government response to domestic violence, especially for its failure and exhibiting little effort to assist the survivors, especially the financial assistance (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

A survey conducted by the Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG) in Kenya revealed that businesses lose a tune of at least 5.1 billion shillings annually in terms of economic output as a result of work absenteeism related to domestic abuse. It further found that whereas the victims were met with both physical and emotional losses, the loss is more severe to the economic development in countries without adequate laws that insulate women against domestic violence as well as those countries endowed with natural resources but undermine the women in decision making especially during economic hardships (Ouedraogo & Stenzel, 2021). In Kenya, domestic violence remains one of the most pervasive and socially tolerated human rights violations. The economic devastation of domestic violence is huge despite the raft of measures that have been put in place to mitigate it. For instance, a study conducted by the National Gender and Equity

Commission (NGEC) indicates that domestic violence had a myriad of economic losses. The perpetrators and their families incur huge losses that stem from social stigmatization, out-of-court settlements, loss of time and productivity as well as incarceration (NGEC, 2016).

On the other hand, the study revealed that the survivor's economic burden stems from medical-related expenses, the reporting of the domestic violence related to the relevant legal authorities, productivity loss which may be as a result of serious or minor injuries that may arise from the physical abuse as well as productivity loss from premature mortality. All these, as found by the study culminated in wastage of resources that would have been channeled to other productive sectors to contribute to the general national economic growth and development. During the interviews, one respondent who is a leader of *Ituura* women group stated that:

We disagreed with my husband over his alcoholism. He claimed that he is the man of the house, and I should not make him feel inferior. He hit me with a jembe and broke my leg. I spent over 100,000 shillings in the hospital. We had to sell our land to cater for medical bills (Interview with CBO leader, 9th June, 2022).

Women are not the only ones who encounter costs of domestic violence. During FGDs, a village elder from Hombe village, who had a conspicuous scar on his head, explained how his wife stabbed him with a knife after argument over infidelity issues. The village elder had this to say:

You see the scar on my head? My ex-wife got angry with me after learning that I had an affair with another woman. She took a kitchen knife and hit me with it. The cut was so deep. It is unfortunate that I had to spend a whole month admitted into the hospital. The family had to sell the 2 cows we depended on to clear part of the hospital bill (FGD with village elders, 26th August, 2022).



Plate 4.4: Research Assistant with Male Respondent with a Scar that had Economic Costs

Source: Field Data, 2022

The results of the study agree with a study conducted in Ghana by Alvarado and colleagues in (2018) that violence against women poses ripple effects on the economic sector in that, apart from absenteeism that hurts the economic sector, victims of domestic violence also tend to practice presentism, that is attending to work but offering limited concentration (Alvarado *et al.* 2018). Business owners in Nyeri pointed out that women who have been having domestic issues are less productive. A similar study conducted in the United States found that intimate partner violence was costing the US more than 5.8

billion dollars annually with more than two-thirds of the same amount being channeled to medical and health care delivery (Russo & Angela, 2006).

Men have been preoccupied with how to make ends meet since time immemorial. Economic survival has been at the very heart of this noble endeavor. However, in some cases, economic survival may be curtailed by some deliberate motives to inflict economic pain. It is out of this notion that the concept of economic violence has taken roots in some researchable studies. The most agreed conception of economic violence especially among women is embedded in several dimensions such as the autonomous control of monetary assets, dismissal of women in financial decision making thus rendering them financially vulnerable, financial rationing, restriction of monetary access, property damage, meagre remuneration after work, and the discriminatory existing laws that are concerned with the property inheritance just to mention but a few (Fawole, 2008).

Africa, in general, continues to witness unprecedented economic violence prevalence owing to a variety of factors. For instance, some studies that have been conducted in the Sub-Sahara region reveal that the highest percentages of men are making financial decisions by themselves. This may be owing to the deeply rooted patriarchal culture that tends to embrace the financial might of the men at the expense of women, thus men wield financial powers compared to their female counterparts. Another belief held by men is that women lack the know-how of sustainable financial spending.

Again, there have been widely reported instances of economic abuse with the women forming a large chunk of the victims. For instance, several studies have established that most countries within the Sub-Sahara region have the highest percentage of women that

work in the informal sectors that are subjected to deplorable working conditions such as longer hours of work, lack of economic incentives, discriminatory working practices, and higher risk of poverty. Despite their hard work, their men harass them and deny them basic needs especially after a conflict.

The implications of economic violence are quite enormous and range from pervasive poverty to women disempowerment which has impeded access to independent means of survival. Consequently, poverty infringes fundamental human rights such as denial of education, food, healthcare, housing, political participation, and freedom from violence (WHO, 2002). Secondly, atmospheric tension and general nervousness due to material concern may ripple to physical violence. For instance, wife battering can be fuelled by arguments over household control. Again, it can result in discrimination and the promotion of sexual exploitation (Fowle, 2008).

4.2.4.6 Sexual Violence

Table 4.2 indicates that 54(14%) strongly disagree and 77(20%) disagree that sexual violence is not a major manifestation of domestic violence in Nyeri County. However, majority of the respondents 130(34%) agree, with 100(26%) strongly agreeing on the same statement. A small percentage of 23(6%) indicated that they do not know.

Muleneh *et al.* (2021) argues that sexual violence is one of the manifestations of domestic violence and can exist in the form of sexual harassment, child sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape, gang rape, forced pregnancy or abortion, sexual slavery, forced marriage and prostitution. As noted by several researchers, sexual violence manifests in various forms apart from rape. Sometimes, sexual violence is interlinked to sexual coercion during which the victim may be pressured into sex. For instance, some perpetrators have

employed their influence to force victims into sex. The prevailing attitudes have rendered violence a normal phenomenon of life in society. In a domestic set up, sexual violence occurs when a partner is sexually harassed because of his or her gender.

The results of the study show that domestic violence in Nyeri County manifests through sexual violence. During the FGDs with village elders, they pointed out that spouses have been facing cases of sexual molestation. This happens when a partner is forced to sleep with the partner without their consent. One of the elders said that:

Women have been complaining that their husbands are sleeping with them after a fight. They forget that sex should be voluntary. They force their wives into the act even after beating the, claiming that it is their rights to be given conjugal rights. Since women are physically weak, the men overtake them in bed and have their way. This makes the women feel intimidated (FGD with village elders, 18th March, 2022).

Sexual violence is becoming a weapon men use in the study area to oppress their wives. There have been reported cases where husbands force their wives into the act in a public area. Such violence humiliates the woman and makes her to obey what the man says to avoid a repeat of such actions in the future. During the interviews with a police officer from Ndathi police station, Kieni East constituency, he said that:

There is a day we were called upon to arrest a middle- aged man who raped his wife in public. They were having a conflict because the man wanted his wife to surrender her earning so that he could go and drink alcohol. When the woman refused, they started chasing each other on the road. When the man approached the wife, he threw her on the ground and started raping her. As he was doing the heinous act, the woman was crying bitterly trying to get out of the man, but it was in vain. The man told her that he will do that in public to shame

her, so that next time she will obey her without questioning. It was a very embarrassing moment in the village as it happened in front of children and youths. We arrested the perpetrator, but the wife refused to come to the station, and we had to release the man (Interview with police officer, 2nd April, 2022).

Similar incidents have been evident where the man sexually violates the wife in front of the children so as to make sure the woman submits to his demands. This mostly happens when the man is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Men have been using sexual molestation to force their wives to do what they want, as they know that a woman will do anything not to be sexually ashamed. During the FGDs, a village elder pointed out that:

I was called by a son of one *mzee* in my area to come and rescue the mother from sexual harassment in front of his children. I was shocked to find the man having sex with his wife when the children were watching. The family has five children. When the man started his foolish actions at the glare of his children, the elder son who was only around 15 years came looking for me. The other one who was in grade four left the room too. Unfortunately, the 3 other children remained there and I found them watching as their mother struggled to save herself from the man. I asked the man why he had to do that, and he said that his wife usually denies him conjugal rights, and that he could not take it anymore. Further, he claimed that the wife had not been serving him enough food, and he had to do that in front of the children to teach her a lesson (FGD with village elder, 18th March, 2022).

Such reports from the study area show that the residents are facing a serious challenge. Most of the respondents felt that this was the worst form of humiliation as it does not only humiliate the woman at the time of occurrence but remains a permanent scar. During the interviews, an assistant chief reported that in Mbiriri sub-location, a woman

committed suicide in 2018 because her husband slept with her in front of her two sons. She got depressed and ended up taking away her life. The chief pointed out that:

Sexual violence is evident in this area. I remember there is a young woman who committed suicide because she could not take the humiliation after her husband forced her to sleep with her in front of their sons. The boys were 6 and 8 years old. She found them narrating to their age mates the entire episode. Later, the young lads who were given the story laughed at her, and she just killed herself. It is that serious! (Interview with assistant chief, 19th March).

The results of the study indicate that men have not been left out of sexual violence. Nyeri County has been on the media screens since 2010 with many cases of domestic violence against men in the county (Mutahi, 2017). During the interviews, the respondents pointed out that they have witnessed men being harassed sexually by their partners. This mostly occurs when the men are under the influence of alcohol, or are mentally ill. During an interview with a Caritas leader, an organization that helps to uplift the vulnerable people in the society, he had this to say:

Men in Nyeri County are never safe in hands of bad women. Men are mostly harassed when they do not have the capacity to defend themselves. I remember a case I handled, where a man was harassed by his wife in public. The wife claimed that the man was very useless. She inappropriately touched his private parts and said that he cannot perform. The woman continued to say that the man was better off castrated as he has not been fulfilling his duties as the man of the house (Interview with NGO leader, 1st June 2022).

Africa, especially the Sub-Saharan region has long been considered the epicenter of domestic violence, including sexual violence. Most of the studies have been dedicated to the prevalent rates of sexual violence in most of the countries within the Sub-Saharan

region, and have exhibited a sorry picture as the studies reveal high prevalence rates. This is attributed to factors ranging from and not limited to the poor implementation of national, regional and even international instruments that seek to protect the victims of domestic violence, the patriarchal nature of some African societies in sexual relationships which favors the males to the detriment of the female counterparts remain the major factor that has perpetuated domestic violence (Muleneh, *et al.* 2021). When some men are angry, they hardly consider the woman as a partner. Rather, they perceive her as a sexual partner, and can use sex to punish her. Such men also use sexual harassment to humiliate the women as revealed by the results of this study.

A report published by the United Nations (UN) Population Fund in 2019 on domestic violence found that both the East and South African regions exhibited high rates of sexual violence against women and girls with the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Uganda, and Zimbabwe topping the list as the highest contributors of the sexual violence prevalence rates. The report further revealed that the situation has been worsened by the ongoing conflicts which have been characterized by the alleged gross violations of human rights, the continued domestic violence, substance abuse and widespread poverty as the chief drivers of sexual violence (UNFPA, 2019). In most cases, as revealed during the study, domestic violence occurs when the partners are under the influence of drugs. They violate the rights of their partners, and the society has normalized the harassment especially because of the patriarchal nature of the African society.

Research conducted by Steele *et al.* (2019) in Rustenburg District in South Africa established rape as the commonest form of sexual violence. The research revealed that rape and other forms of sexual violence are associated with education and income

disparities, equality within the intimate partnership and societal norms around patriarchy and violence. It further found that rape specifically contributed to both mental and physical health problems including unintended pregnancy, substance and alcohol abuse, and several psychological distress morbidities such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide (Steele *et al.* 2019).

Another study conducted by a group of researchers led by Kawuki Joseph established the prevalence of sexual violence to be 24.3% from a sample of 5259 Ugandan rural women. They found that the rate of sexual violence was higher in the rural setup, given the different social dynamics that accelerate domestic violence in those areas. Related to this is yet another study conducted by Kawuki and his colleagues where it was found that educational disparities, wealth status, physical beatings by husbands, decisions relating to health and the frequency of husband's drug abuse as the driving forces of sexual violence (Kawuki *et al.* 2020).

Most of the research on sexual violence has been largely dedicated to the female-gender to the detriment of the male-gender. This implies that the male-gender has been accorded little attention yet they are also victims of sexual violence. In most cases, cultural stereotypes have always buttressed the men's sexual domination in virtually all societies. This has further curtailed to a large extent the required vigour to address male sexual violence. Sexual violence against men normally takes the form of anal or verbal rape, infliction of pain to the male genitalia, forced sodomy, castration and even incest. Sadly enough, most of this violence goes unnoticed in societies because of the unwillingness of the victims to share their plight and the underreporting of these acts.

The contemporary African civilizations have been embroiled in complex conflicts that have culminated in unprecedented humanitarian crises with gross violations of the fundamental human rights widely reported in the countries that are experiencing civil conflicts. The dynamism of warfare technics has witnessed human beings being used as a weapon of war, and this has been extended to the family level. Sexual violence has been widely utilized as a weapon of war with women and young children being the most affected groups. However, men and young boys have also been rendered victims as some are being coerced to rape. The established reports have revealed the increased use of men as weapons of war in countries such as the Central Africa Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is unfortunately being practiced even in the homes.

4.2.4.7 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

According to Table 4.2, the results indicate that 102(27%) of the respondents strongly disagree that FGM manifests in conflicts, while 86(22%) disagree. Cumulatively, 29% of the respondents agree that FGM is a manifestation, with 44(11%) agreeing and 68(18%) strongly agreeing. The results indicate that 84(22%) do not know whether FGM manifests during conflicts.

The results from questionnaires indicate that majority of the responds, with a cumulative of 49% feel that FGM is not an issue in the county, and if it is there, it is not related to conflicts. This can be attributed to civilization and modernization that has taken place in the county. Most of the African countries have learned that FGM is dangerous. The government of Kenya has been working hard to make sure that every girl is safe from such oppressive and primitive practices that endanger the lives of women. As a result,

cases of FGM have reduced in most parts of the country including Nyeri County (Muthoga, 2014).

However, there are people who still believe that uncircumcised women are immature and behave like small girls. As indicated by the results from questionnaires, 29% agree that FGM is there, and is used as a weapon against women. Muthoga (2014) argues that the ideology of using FGM as a weapon during a domestic violence came up in the early 2000s, and was brought up by the *Mungiki* sect. The *mungiki* members argued that formal education was neo-colonialism, and that Africa should go back to the traditional practices and forms of education. In their argument, both boys and girls should undergo circumcision for them to graduate to adulthood. They claimed that women are failing to respect their husbands because they did not go through the transition period, which they believed should be circumcision (Wachira, 2015). As a result, they campaigned for immediate circumcision of any woman who dared disagree with her husband. Consequently, many cases of FGM have been happening in the county illegally.

The results of the study agree with a study conducted by Wachira (2015) that FGM is a manifestation of GBV in Nyeri County. It is unfortunate that women are forced to go through the illegal practice just to make them submit to their husbands. Some of the women report the cases, while others suffer in silence. During an interview with an assistant chief Ndathi sub-location, he agreed that there are men who have been deceived that circumcised women are humble and submissive. Thus, some force their wives to face the knife so that they can toe to the lane. The assistant chief said that:

I have witnessed several women being forced to go through traditional circumcision. There are two brothers in this

village who forced their wives to do the same. It was very bad as it was done at night without the consent of these women. The brothers said that their wives have become big-headed. They no longer treated them with respect, and they needed to dehorn them by circumcising them. One of the women bled very badly and had to be taken to the hospital. The women reported the case to the police, and we have an ongoing case. It is unfortunate that most women who go through such heinous acts do not even report the case. The humiliation makes them to remain in the house and do what their husbands want (Interview with assistant chief, 18th March 2022).

According to the Agikuyu culture, an adult woman who was not circumcised was referred to as *Kiriigu*. Kibicho (2006) points out that this was a shameful name that no one wanted to have. Thus, all girls would be circumcised to move to adulthood. In the modern world, women circumcision is illegal. However, men in Nyeri County have been claiming that they need to have properly “matured” women, and this will only occur if they undergo FGM (Kibicho, 2006). Such arguments arise when there is continuous domestic violence. The men start to feel like the woman did not mature properly, and that is why she is arguing with the man. During an FGD, an elder had this to say:

Circumcision was meant to act as bridge from childhood to adulthood. Most of the families in this village are forcing their women to go through it because they believe they are not mature. I was surprised the other day when an old woman came to my house and requested me to make sure all women in this village are circumcised. She believed that the women are disrespecting their husbands because they are still immature. I reminded her that such actions are illegal, and she should never think of it or encourage anyone to do it. To my surprise, she told me that she had already circumcised two of her daughters-in-law, and that they were now good wives who never argue with their husbands (FGD with village elders, 4th April, 2022).

A shocking revelation was given by a leader of a women group who pointed out that she was forced to go through FGM after her husband claimed that she was no longer

submissive. The cases have been there, and women are facing a lot of pain in silence. The respondent stated that:

Muthuri akwa arehire muruithania utuku makinduithia. Gitumi kiria aheanire ni ati ndimuiguaga, no kwiiganania nake. Mokire makinjira ndageria kurega no kunjuraga. Rucini ndamathitangire kuri borithi, nake muthuri kuma hau akinyingata. Riu nii na ciana ciakwa tuturaga buroti. (My husband brought people at night to circumcise me. He claimed that I no longer obey him. He also said that I usually behave like he is my equal. The people he came with forced me to remain silent until they are done with me, or else they would kill me. I reported the case to the police the next morning. My husband threw me out of his home.) (Interview with a CBO leader, 8th March, 2022).

The results further indicated that police officers have been recording cases of FGM in the area, a fact that is highly connected to domestic violence in the area. Most of the women who have reported the cases pointed out that they were circumcised because of a conflict with their spouse. The OCS from Ndathi police station said that most women who go through FGM are forced to do it by their husbands due to continued conflicts. During an interview, the policeman said that:

Most of the FGM cases we handle here are directly linked to GBV. Men have been spreading very dangerous rumors that women who have been mutilated are humble and obedient. This is a very dangerous trend. We have arrested several suspects and taken them to court over the same (Interview with a police officer, 14th June 2022).

Many studies have established that Africa constitutes a huge proportion of domestic violence owing to the socio-cultural and religious practices of most of the African civilizations. According to WHO (2020), FGM is normally conducted by unqualified medical personnel and normally involves the unhealthy removal of the external genitalia partially or entirely. It is also conceived as the practice perpetrated on women that causes

injuries to the female genitalia. It is very inhuman to make a woman go through such pain and health dangers just because she disagreed with her spouse.

The international community through the UN had long recognized FGM as a gross violation of human rights and is committed to finding sustainable solutions to the menace. It estimates that almost a 200million women and girls have become victims across the world with Africa securing a lion share of the cases (UN, 2019). Researchers and health practitioners have dedicated most of their studies to establishing why the prevalence of FGM is high in Africa as compared to other regions. Most of the findings agree with the results of this current study that FGM is deeply rooted in the cultural practices. The African society places the women at the mercies of men. African societies uphold the practice dearly and despite the pragmatic measures that have been mounted to tame the practice. The societal rules are made to make sure the woman obeys what the man wants, and that is why much has not been achieved in dealing with FGM.

A study done by Ahinkorah *et al.* (2020) found that FGM is connected to economic status. The economically stable women are unlikely to fall victim to the FGM, as compared to their economically underprivileged counterparts. The study again found that most of the FGM practices are deeply rooted in Sub-Sahara region and the underlying factors for its sprouting have been attributed to deep socio-cultural drivers which provide a haven for perpetration and reluctance in reporting the cases. Again, it provides an identical status that the circumcised women are highly valued and are considered to have the required conditions for inheritance in some societies (Ahinkora *et al.* 2020). Moreover, some established studies found Guinea as the country with the highest proportion of domestic violence practices while Mali constituted the country with the

same practice among girls. Similar to this, Niger was found to have the lowest FGM prevalence among women while Togo and Tanzania emerged as the countries with the lowest proportion among the girls (Ahinkora *et al.* 2020).

Another study has interlinked FGM with the social status and respectability of girls in the community. Sierra Leone was found to adhere to this finding where the uncircumcised females were believed to disrespect their husbands (Shakirat *et al.* 2020). In some FGM practicing groups, the practice has been pegged to a social and tribal distinction which in turn grants women and families, a sense of social status and value. The Arusha and the Chagga cultures fit this practice since they allow the bride price of the circumcised to be higher than the uncircumcised. Moreover, FGM is also a vague mechanism utilized to preserve the sexual dignity of the girls which is a condition for marriage in certain prominent cultures, with some cultures in Nigeria holding on to the practice. Similarly, FGM has been justified as protecting the girls' sexual emotions, leading to the preservation of their dignity and morality in society (Shakirat *et al.* 2020). It is unfortunate that some men force their women to undergo FGM after arguments, claiming that they will submit to them after the cut.

4.3 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the results of the study in line with the first objective. The first section presented the demographic features of household heads which included their gender, age, marital status, education level, and occupation. The analysis showed the relationship between these demographic features and research question. On the nature of domestic violence in Nyeri county, different parameters were presented. The results indicated that majority of the respondents have witnessed domestic violence either in

their homes or from the neighbors. Further, majority of the perpetrators were men. However, women have also been cited as perpetrators of domestic violence in the study area. Domestic violence manifests as physical injuries, verbal insults, psychological torture, female genital mutilation and economic deprivation. The next chapter (Chapter five) presents results from the second objective of the study, which was to evaluate the nexus between socio-cultural dynamics and domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE NEXUS BETWEEN SOCIO-CULTURAL DYNAMICS AND
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN NYERI COUNTY, KENYA

5.0 Introduction

This section presents a discussion of the results of the second objective of the study, which was to evaluate the nexus between socio-cultural dynamics and domestic violence in Nyeri County. Data was collected from household heads who were served with questionnaires. Also, key respondents such as assistant chiefs, National Police Service officers, religious leaders, NGOs and CBOs, and Sub-County administrators were vital in the collection of data. Data from village elders was collected using Focus Group Discussions. This chapter has the following sub-sections; the socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence and the chapter summary.

5.1 Socio-cultural Dynamics Influencing Domestic Violence in Nyeri County

The study sought to investigate the socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence in Nyeri County. Household heads were asked about the socio-cultural dynamics that they believe have been influencing domestic violence in their area, and the results are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Socio-cultural Dynamics Influencing Domestic Violence in Nyeri County, Kenya

Social Cultural Factors	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree	Cumulative Agreement	Rank	Total
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)		
Alcoholism	5(1%)	6(2%)	4(1%)	339(88%)	30(8%)	366 (96%)	1	384(100%)
Chauvinism ideology	10(3%)	5(1%)	5 (1%)	321(84%)	43(11%)	364(95%)	2	384 (100%)
Poverty and unemployment	6(2%)	13(3%)	10(2%)	194(51%)	161 (42%)	255 (93%)	3	384(100%)
Stereotypes	20(5%)	16 (4%)	12 (3%)	99(26%)	237	336 (88%)	4	384 (100%)
Change of cultural roles	8(2%)	34(9%)	9(2%)	183(48%)	150(39%)	233 (87%)	5	384(100%)
Education	24(7%)	56(15%)	7(2%)	240(63%)	48(13%)	288 (76%)	6	384(100%)
The MAU MAU impact	42(11%)	57(15%)	21(5%)	141(32%)	123(32%)	264 (64%)	7	384(100%)
Matriarchal society	74(19%)	81(21%)	23(6%)	102(27%)	104(27%)	206 (54%)	8	384(100)
Land and inheritance issues	156(41%)	92(24%)	16(4%)	32(8%)	88 (23%)	120 (31%)	9	384(100%)

Source: Field Data, 2022

5.1.1 Alcoholism

In Table 5.1, 5(1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 6 (2%) disagreed that alcoholism does not play a role in domestic violence. On the contrary, 339 (88%) agreed, and 30 (8%) strongly agreed that alcoholism is one of the significant socioeconomic reasons that causes domestic violence in Nyeri county. Only 1% of the respondents

neither approved nor denied the hypothesis. Alcoholism is ranked the highest factor that influences domestic violence in Nyeri County.

Consumption of alcohol alters the mind of the users, hence making them vulnerable to doing and saying things that they did not intend to. In simple terms, alcoholism could magnify their negative behaviors, leading to domestic violence. Therefore, alcohol could be the exact cause of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Still, it is undeniably one of the standard agitators which increase the prevalence of domestic violence in this county. People much into alcoholism may act more angrily, aggressively, or violently when under the influence of alcohol than when they are sober. This means that whenever they are drunk, it is easier for cases of domestic violence to occur.

Based on the results in Table 5.1, it is evident that a good number of the respondents acknowledge alcoholism as a major cause of domestic violence in Nyeri County. In an interview with assistant chiefs of the Ngangaririthi location, he confirmed that the rate of use of alcohol in these areas has been rising, which also causes a rise in cases of domestic violence. He stated that:

Despite the efforts that my administration is trying to put in place, the issue of alcoholism is still rampant. It is not once or twice that I have solved cases in various homesteads of problems that arise due to alcohol. In a recent case, the wife came to my office to solve an issue where the husband had drunk more than he could pay and asked the local bar owner to cut some trees on his farm. The woman was not ready to have the trees cut as this is what she wanted to use to take her son to school (Interview with chief, 29th March, 2022).

This is one of the examples of how alcoholism is ruining the families in society. The police also confirmed that they had had such experiences in the cases they solved daily.

According to police, alcoholism has become the reason why crime is committed in the community, especially domestic violence. One police officer pointed out that:

There are many instances where you find the husband has sold some of the home items to be able to cater for his drinking habits. Others sneak things from their households and sell them to satisfy their drinking urges. Recently, we were called to retrieve a motorbike belonging to a wife whose husband had sold at a loss to pay alcohol bills (Interview with police officer, 28th April, 2022).

Therefore, there is need for the issue of alcoholism in Nyeri County to be dealt with as it will continue to increase problems in most homesteads. Thanks to the NGOs who confirmed that they had started programs that are aimed at discouraging the sale and use of alcohol in Nyeri County.

We are focused on ensuring that the consumption of alcohol has reduced in Nyeri County. Many families are in pain and loss due to alcoholism since most alcoholics neglect their responsibilities, causing most of the domestic violence (Interview with NGO head, 16th June, 2022).

The sub-county administrators also claimed that they had heard this cry of alcoholism from many people in Nyeri County, and they are taking some measures to help reduce the rate of alcoholism.

People in area are taking alcohol badly, and this is the main reason they fight their partners. We are focused on opening more rehabilitation centers which will help reduce the intake of alcohol by reforming all the alcoholics. Our government is also strict on opening and closing hours of bars and ensures that all the alcoholic drinks being sold have been verified and approved by KEBS. This is because the problem alcohol has brought in the families in this county is irreversible. Many families have broken up due to alcoholism (Interview with sub-county administrator, 14th March, 2022).

It is important to note that it is not only women who suffer from the issue of alcoholism. When drunk, some men also become vulnerable and hence are harassed by their immediate spouses. This truth was unveiled in an FGD with village elders when the following comment was made.

When I go home, I must make sure I have no cash on me. This is because if I opt to take a beer on the way home, my wife will sneak into my pockets and take away all the cash I have. If I ask in the morning she denies it. Sometimes she usually slaps me or hit me with a cooking stick. Sometimes I wake up with painful joints if I take a lot of alcohol in the evening, as she fights me at night (FGD with village elders, 8th March, 2022).

In Africa, 66% of survivors of spousal maltreatment report that the culprit had been drinking at the hour of the incident(s) (Githaiga, 2020). Worldwide investigations show higher chances of domestic maltreatment assuming one of the two accomplices are reliant upon liquor. Nevertheless, despite these accursing insights, it has been resolved that rather than liquor making individuals misuse their accomplices, it is only a cross-over of two separate social issues.

Alcoholism has become a serious issue in many parts of the world. In many traditional African societies, alcoholism was practiced under different circumstances. For instance among Kenyans, alcoholism was part of celebrations during marriage, dowry, initiation ceremonies, and when a baby was born. Some communities such as the Agikuyu had set guidelines and rules regarding who would participate in alcohol consumption. However, in modern society, the consumption of alcohol has turned to be a menace in Kenya.

Although older men were the most associated with alcoholism traditionally, women and younger people have also indulged themselves in excessive alcohol consumption.

In Nyeri County, for instance, there are plenty of young men and women engaged in excessive consumption of illicit brews such as chang'aa and muratina. Alcoholism has seen a rise in domestic violence cases in Nyeri County (Githaiga, 2020). For instance, a woman from Tetu in Nyeri stabbed her husband to death in 2018 over a quarrel initiated by alcoholism (Ndubi, 2018). During the fateful event, the husband allegedly came home drunk and started confronting his wife at around 1 am. This prompted his wife to grab a kitchen knife and used it to stab her husband in the face and abdomen (Ndubi, 2018). This case indicates the severe effects of alcoholism in society as far as domestic violence is concerned. Another notable effect of alcoholism in society is that women are taking up the gender roles that were perceived to belong to men.

The results indicate that one main factor that greatly influences domestic violence in Nyeri County is the increased production of illicit brew in the region. According to Nancy (2017), the readily available illicit brew in the county is a major cause of domestic violence in the region as the men engage themselves in excessive drinking and therefore neglect their household responsibilities. This leads to frustration within families that creates an aggressive behavior resulting in fights as explained in the frustration-aggression theory.

Substance and drug abuse is one of the drivers of intimate partner violence which denotes an action by the closest partner that may cause physical, psychological or sexual violence, which may be perpetrated by either gender. Most studies have established that

domestic violence is directly or indirectly linked to alcohol consumption. For instance, a study conducted by Lydiah Mwangi in Nyeri County found that there was a high prevalence of substance abuse and intimate partner violence among men in the county. Lydiah observed that alcoholism normally interferes with a person's judgment and derails the inhibition, thus, perpetuating verbal and physical abuse (Mwangi, 2020; Kaithuru, 2015).

Prolonged exposure to alcoholism according to research has been found to make the brain adapt to the changes that are associated with alcohol, thereby making drinking the chief medium through which the addicted persons tend to deal with intimate partners, job and marriage life. Alcoholism has been found to dominate the cognitive capability of the intimate partners, their emotions and actions against the backdrop of equality of gender to cause divorce or separation. In heterosexual marriages, some studies have indicated that 3.4 per cent of females and 9.7 per cent of males are dependent on alcohol and substance abuse which according to the findings have been a threat to health, marriages and a potential cause of domestic violence. Other researchers have found that the history of alcohol consumption is interlinked to the serious risk factor for injury from domestic violence, especially among male partners. Alcoholism in parents also increases the risk of violent behaviors and abuse, especially towards children which in turn distorts their academic performance in schools and also exhibit higher incidences of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and even stress. Most researchers are in consensus that alcohol normally operates as a situational factor that can speed up the likelihood of violence by impeding inhibitions, misguided judgments and hindering a person's capability to interpret things right with the excessive consumption increasing the intimate partner

violence by providing a haven for arguments between couples which in most cases culminates in physical beatings and injuries (Silali, 2019).

5.1.2 Chauvinism Ideology

According to the results of the study as shown in Table 5.1, 10 (3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 5(1%) countered that the idea of chauvinism is one of the primary factors that influence domestic violence in this county. On the contrary, 321 (84%) agreed, and 43 (11%) strongly agreed that, indeed, the idea of chauvinism is the primary cause of domestic violence present in Nyeri county. Among all the respondents, there were 5 of them who constituted the remaining 1% who could not relate the issue of chauvinism with domestic violence cases in the county, hence claiming that they did not know. According to the results of this study, chauvinism is the second highest factor that contributes to domestic violence.

According to Rollero *et al.* 2021, chauvinism is an unreasonable belief one could develop which is full of dominance or superiority amongst a particular individual or gender. In this study, male and female chauvinism are among the main socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence in the study area. Male chauvinism is, therefore, the behavior, opinions, or attitude that men in Nyeri County have over the women they live with within this area. These men could disparage, patronize, or denigrate females since they believe that women are inferior to them. Thus, they deserve lesser treatment or attention than what is socially considered equal. Rollero *et al.* 2021 claims that male chauvinists believe they are virtuous and strong, whereas they view women as unworthy, weak, and inferior. If men have this perspective in any social setting, many domestic

violence cases will be, especially when women try to fight back and stand on their ground.

Based on the results, it is evident that most of the respondents had an idea of what male chauvinism is and the role it plays in the prevalence of domestic violence in the county. In an interview conducted with several assistant chiefs, they claimed that this is an issue that they have noted to be widespread in the community. Some men believe that a woman is not supposed to lead in any end; hence they disagree with being led by a woman. An assistant chief from Karima, Othaya Sub-county pointed out that:

Most men believe that women are second class human beings. For example, women are not supposed to have any say over the finances of a homestead. I remember an instance when a case was brought to my office after an argument between a husband and wife over splitting the tea bonus given yearly to farmers by KTDA. The wife wanted to purchase some cows, but the husband could not agree since he felt the woman was dominating. They had a fight and the woman was badly injured (interview with assistant chief, 31st March 2022).

This is an example of an instance where male chauvinism is witnessed. Men do not want to practice an idea, even if it is beneficial, simply because it comes from a woman. In an interview with some police officers in Nyeri County, they also affirmed that cases of male chauvinism are prevalent. The police officers shared their experiences with similar circumstances, illustrating that a male chauvinistic idea caused domestic violence. The following is a confession by one of the police officers.

There was a day we arrested a man over domestic violence. After listening to both parties, the husband was mad since the wife had decided to sell one of their goats to pay fees for their candidate who was in form four and had been sent home for a week plus due to lack of school fees. At this juncture, this was the right call to make since the wife was worried about their son's education, but the husband felt that the woman had no

power to make such decisions since he was the head of the family. The woman sold a goat, and the man was very mad when he came home and found the goat missing. He battered the wife until she became unconscious claiming that she had crossed her lane as a woman (Interview with police officer, 2nd May, 2022).

This is evidence that issues around male chauvinism causes domestic violence in the county. The same problem arose in an FGD with village elders. This was after one of them issued these remarks.

My wife is more effective at home in caring for the children. I do not think she can handle the business pressure we experience daily. She should just remain at home, be submissive and let me do the other activities. Furthermore, I am the head of the family, and we should not compete over the same (FGD with village elders, 31st March, 2022).

In this case, the husband has issued himself with superiority in financial matters, claiming he could do more than his wife. The same trait was seen in a meeting with other village elders. Most of them insisted that women are generally weak, and hence they cannot be expected to make tough decisions that men make. To quarrel this idea, the researcher asked about the single mothers, which is the response one of the village elders gave.

There is nothing like single motherhood. Men are allowed to be polygamous, and remarrying is permitted. There is no way women are expected to raise boys who are expected to become men tomorrow. Furthermore, woman should not make decisions. There must be a main man in their lives that help them make decisions (FGD with village elders, 1st May, 2022).

With this mindset, it is evident that such a man cannot allow his wife to make decisions. If the idea is planted in the son's mind, the concept of male chauvinism will be passed down generations, and thus the community will expect more domestic violence cases. Some NGO operatives also agreed that the issue of male chauvinism is easily seen,

especially in the community activities these NGOs stand for. An officer from Caritas Nyeri had the following to say:

The African man feels in charge of everything. Those who refuse to accept that they cannot dominate today's woman find themselves in trouble many times. They keep on disagreeing over many issues that would easily be resolved if the man can just accept that the modern woman is rational and can make decisions (Interview with NGO official, 5th May, 2022).

Chauvinism can be termed as the irrational belief in the dominance or supremacy of one's own people or group who are perceived as virtuous and strong while other groups are seen as unworthy, inferior, and weak. Therefore, male chauvinism can be described as the ideology or perception that men are superior or have more authority than women. This ideology is prominent in most African countries as well as in other continents. Male-dominated societies believe that women are just their subjects and should always be submissive (Ezebuilo, 2019). Male chauvinism displays men as the 'head' while the woman comes second as the 'neck.'

The terms 'neck' and 'head' are common, especially among the Agikuyu people of Kenya (Wanjiru & Kaburi, 2015). Their tradition holds that a man being the leader (head) of the family must be accorded all the privileges including utmost respect, submission by women, and should be obeyed by everyone in the homestead. Similarly, the Agikuyu also treat the male children as the first priority in the family (Wanjiru & Kaburi, 2015). In fact, while issuing inheritance, women are never involved at all. For instance, if the father dies, the elder son in the family assumes the leadership role even if there is an older sister in line. The tradition also held that a woman should never disagree with a man even if she is right. If that happened, the woman would be punished severely.

The Kikuyu believe that the most essential role of women in society is to take care of the husband, children and know the gender of the newborn baby. It is also worth noting that male chauvinism among the Agikuyu starts at birth (Wanjiru & Kaburi, 2015). This can be explained by the fact that a newborn boy would receive five ululations while a girl would receive four. The five ululations meant the five things that the community was praying to God for the boy. These include wealth, bravery, being a medicine man or a prophet, and a king. The four prayers for a girl meant all the aforementioned qualities except bravery. This was because brave women were feared among the Agikuyu. Boys were taught to be the sole providers of the family and were strongly discouraged from taking domestic tasks such as cooking and washing clothes.

Girls were also discouraged from taking part in male-associated tasks such as hunting. Their roles involved cooking, weeding the farm, fetching firewood, and being presentable to guests. Male chauvinism was also prevalent in Africa through how women were treated. For instance, many African communities forced women to be married by older men (Wanjiru & Kaburi, 2015). The father would find a male suitor who would pay more dowry for his daughter. This denied women the right to make decisions over their preferred lifetime partners thus displaying an aspect of forced marriages. From exploring the role of male chauvinism in African society, it can be seen as the main contributor to domestic violence, especially among the Agikuyu people (Wanjiru & Kaburi, 2015). This can be explained in an example where a girl would be forced to get into a marriage with an older man against their will. When it comes to ownership of property, women were denied the right to possess land thus contributing to women experiencing inferiority. Domestic violence can also be associated with male chauvinism since women were

oppressed in society through actions such as physical assault by their husbands, which was seen as appropriate. Additionally, forced marriage meant forced sexual relationship between the girl and the suitor, therefore, the act can be termed as sexual abuse for girls.

Graham & Kevan & Bates (2020) define female chauvinism as a form of philosophy that goes around society intending to change the contemporary life of women. This idea is mostly spread by feminists who are for the idea that women have equal rights as men; hence they should be treated equally in all aspects of social life. This is majorly experienced in business, leadership, and other social areas, which are majorly deemed to be dominated by men.

The results show that the idea of female chauvinism is also in Nyeri County, and it plays a role in the prevalence of domestic violence in the community. In an interview with religious leaders, it was evident that women had been trying to compete with men in various positions. One pastor gave his personal example and stated that:

Today, the woman feels that she is equal to the man. They do not consider their religious positions. The Bible says that the woman should submit to his husband, but nowadays they do not. My wife told me the other day that submission is not slavery. She has not been doing what I say; rather, she does what she believes is right for her. I am a man of God; I usually do not hit her. What about the people who are not born again, they must be in unnecessary conflicts and violence with their defiant wives (Interview with religious leader, 4th July, 2022).

In an FGD with the village elders, similar sentiments were made. One of them said that:

We are living in the hardest times where our women cannot obey what we say. In their view, it's the new millennium, and all people are equal. They even quote the constitution to make their points valid. It is very difficult to have a home where everyone is equal.

There is no one to give direction. A lot of conflicts arise because no one is ready to follow what the other one wants. My neighbor has a business, and the wife believes she should take control of the money. She does not want the man to touch money, claiming that the man will misuse it. I helped them resolve their disputes last week, and reminded the wife that a home has a head. It was very hard to make the woman understand that she is not equal to her husband (FGD with village elders, 10th June, 2022).

Before reaching this decision, it is evident that there were some arguments between the women and men working together. Suppose the man in the given case was not a democrat and a corporate, most probably he would be battering his wife each day.

Based on the interview with the assistant chiefs of Mbiriri and Ndathi sub locations, the idea of female chauvinism was brought out to be one of the rampant issues they deal with daily. The following is a confession from one of the assistant chiefs.

Recently I dealt with a case where a woman had come to my office to report her husband. The issue was that the husband had sold some trees and was reluctant to divide the money. The woman argued that since they owned the land, she deserved an equal share as her husband and that the husband should not control her finances (Interview with assistant chief, 18th March 2022).

If the woman did not get to the assistant chief's office first, the argument would have probably continued and escalated to physical violence, not just verbal. In an interview with the police officers from the area, they confessed that they have been dealing with a domestic violence case whose beginning point was grounded based on feminism. When asked how it happened, this was a statement issued by one of the police officers.

We have a case in court because of domestic violence. I believe the woman was severely injured by her husband after they had argued about some money. The couple had won the lottery, and the husband decided to use the money to start a business. Once the company was opened, the wife was mad at her husband because the business was registered in her husband's name, and

she expected that it should be registered with the terms of both of them since the money belonged to both. When the husband said it was not happening, the wife started dramatizing, saying she needed her share. It got too hot when the wife destroyed part of the stock, and the husband got mad and got into a physical fight with her (Interview with police officer, 3rd July, 2022).

Such statements prove that the idea of female chauvinism is causing domestic violence in most families. In an attempt to listen to what the village elders would say, they were all for the idea that women are not equal to men. Most of the village elders are men, and they hold onto the idea of male chauvinism, hence cannot agree to be controlled by a woman. The following was a statement from one of the elders from Ugachiku village in Nyeri Town Sub-County during FGDs.

Since the olden days, women were not expected to stand against men in the community. The man was responsible for the wealth and dictated who owned what and did what. I believe that is the best way for people to move on (FGD with village elders, 15th April, 2022).

The statement declined the idea of female chauvinism. The village elders are elderly, and they do not believe that things change; hence they still hold onto the belief that women are not equal to men. On the contrary, those working in NGOs are always on the front line, campaigning for gender equality. One of the NGOs spokespersons claimed that:

In every place we go, we intend to empower women. They are expected to wake up and realize they have equal opportunities as men in society; hence the girl-child should rise and claim her crown (Interview with NGO head, 14th April, 2022).

Female chauvinism refers to a belief that women are expected to have full social, economic, and political equality. Through this belief, female chauvinism includes the position where a male point of view in the society is given the first chance; hence women are given unfair treatment within that society (Lewis, 2021). Female chauvinism borrows

its ideas from feminism. The term feminism was first used in the year 1870, in France whereby the term was used to mean women's freedom. It was later used in 1882 by a leading French feminist and later the word gained adoption and was used largely in Britain followed by America in 1894. Over the years, multiple feminist ideologies have been established and they signify a variety of views and aims. For instance, during the 19th century, a type of feminist movement referred to as first wave liberal feminism was formed and its goals were aimed at seeking political and legal equality via reforms in a liberal democratic framework (Lewis, 2021). Later, radical feminism arose, with its aim of reordering the society to do away with male dominance, and this radical feminism was second-wave feminism. Since then newer forms of feminism have risen, each with their aims and goals, some have been criticized for racism, others considering only the educated, and other factors.

In the current society, majority of the societal structures are patriarchal, meaning that men dominate and make major decisions involving political, economic, and cultural decisions, leaving women out. However, most of these cases are a result of colonization by Europeans, forcing many cultures to eliminate the matrilineal societies and compelling them to adopt the Western patriarchal systems (Wanjiru & Kaburi, 2015). Feminism emphasizes that having more than half of the world's population comprising of women, social progress cannot be fulfilled without their full participation continuously. Feminism ideology focuses on how the culture treats women, and considers in what various ways culture should be different across genders (Lewis, 2021). Feminism protects the rights of groups such as cisgender, heterosexual women, not leaving out queer, transgender, and gender-expansive individuals. Other factors that are put into consideration by feminism

include race, sexuality, class, etc, mostly due to the fact that these women happen to be the most susceptible (Lewis, 2021). Regarding sexuality, women have faced multiple challenges and have been oppressed for long. This includes behavior, posture, sexual interactions, and body exposure. For patriarchal societies, men represent their role in society by being commanders and enhancing their physical presence as expected, while women are made to appear quieter and more submissive (Wanjiru & Kaburi, 2015). This condition in society makes women to be seen as a distraction to the men within their circles whenever they go against the laid down expectations.

Feminism seeks to celebrate and appreciate female sexuality. In most cultures, men have treated women as sex objects for a long period, and these cultures still entertain the thought that women must be decently dressed to avoid arousing men by fully covering their bodies (Lewis, 2021). Some societies often assume themselves as enlightened and exploit female sexuality in the mass media constantly, by advertising their nudity or scantily dressed women in televisions and movies, yet majority of these women fear breastfeeding in public domains. Based on the workforce, feminism seeks to deal with the unfairness, oppression, and discrimination that women experience in their workplaces. Unequal salaries remain persistent within the workforce and are worse when the race factor is counted (Lewis, 2021). However, data registered show that women earn less than their male colleagues. With this regard, feminism seeks to attain equal opportunities and fair treatment for women to gain similar prospects within various fields of work, and culture, and above all, equal respect in a range of roles assigned.

In the traditional African society, female chauvinism was manifested in various ways. For instance, the Agikuyu experienced some sort of female dominance during the Wangu wa

Makeri chieftainship. Wangu wa Makeri was a powerful Kikuyu chief during Kenya's colonization by the British (Wanjiru & Kaburi, 2015). The woman came to prominence after falling into a relationship with Karuri wa Gakure, a tribal chief from Murang'a. After Wangu's husband learned about it, he was awarded the chieftainship to which he declined making Wangu assume the position. The woman is known for her notoriety against taxpayers. She even utilized men as her seat during her reign showing how men had become inferior to women. Before Wangu's rule, there was a time when the community experienced a power shift from men to women. Men played subservient and subordinate roles which were seen as a derogatory tradition. Men experienced a lot of suffering alongside women practicing polyandry. According to narratives, men were able to assume their position as the dominant gender by impregnating all women at the same time (Wanjiru & Kaburi, 2015). Through feminism, domestic violence cannot be evaded as evidenced by the above experiences.

5.1.3 Poverty and Unemployment

According to Table 5.1, 6 (2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 13 (3%) disagreed that poverty and unemployment do not play a role in domestic violence in Nyeri county. In addition, 194 (51%) agreed, and 161 (42%) strongly agreed that the problem of poverty and unemployment amplifies the issue of domestic violence. 10 (2%) said that they do not know whether unemployment causes or does not cause domestic violence cases in the community. Thirdly, poverty and unemployment is ranked a third factor that leads to domestic violence.

Gateri *et al.* (2021) states poverty is the primary driver of domestic violence in the community today. Poverty is that state when an individual cannot be able to meet their

basic needs in life and hence has to depend on someone else for their survival. Unemployment accelerates this problem since one does not have any source of income; hence they have to abide by the rules set by the provider for survival. Being the provider makes one feel in power and deserves control over the other party, which could quickly turn to domestic violence.

According to Table 5.1, the issues of poverty and unemployment have been identified as a cause of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Results from interview with NGOs and other community-based organizations indicate that most women in Nyeri County are unemployed, which makes them susceptible to domestic violence since their husbands are the providers. An official from Caritas Nyeri stated that:

You will find a mother of four children does not have any source of income, hence entirely depends on her husband. Even if she is faced with various domestic disagreements, she has to be submissive since she has no income which can help her raise the children alone (Interview with NGO official, 5th May, 2022).

The above explanation explains why most women in Nyeri County still hold onto their marriages even if they are full of violence. The idea was backed up by an interview with police officers from Nyeri town who stated that:

Referring to the arrest in the Majengo area, the woman had to remain with her husband even after daily beatings since she had no other option in life. She was not employed and had children; hence she had to take the beatings for the sake of her children till we took the matter into our hands (Interview with a police officer, 29th May, 2022).

The assistance chiefs also confirmed that there are such cases in their areas of jurisdiction. According to one of the assistant chiefs, most women in Nyeri are not employed, which makes them susceptible to domestic violence.

The most significant money-making activity for many women in Nyeri County is plucking tea leaves or coffee. Averagely, such a person earns around KSH 200, which is not enough to care for their needs in this economy. Even if such a woman is harassed by her husband, she must submit (Interview with assistant chief, 3rd March, 2022).

During FGDs, some village elders seemed to have a different ideology over the same, which proved why some homesteads would live to have domestic violence. They claim that a woman should not have more money than the man, as she will not submit. In their view, it is better if the woman remains financially lower than the man. The following is a comment made by one of the elders.

If a woman is employed, they will turn up to be rude and alpha in marriage; hence men will have no peace. So it is better if the man is the breadwinner since he is assured that his wife will be submissive (FGD with village elders, 18th March, 2022).

This comment shows the perception that some men in Nyeri have over women. They use their wives' poverty and unemployment as a tool to lead the homestead. A similar idea was raised by another village elder in an FGD when the following comment was made.

Based on the women we have seen in business, if the wife has more money than their husband, they tend to be controlling and can never be submissive anymore. Therefore, it is better if men provide for them for societal balance (FGD with village elders, 18th March, 2022).

Poverty can be described as the inability to satisfy one's basic needs. To demonstrate poverty, people should first determine the constituents of basic needs. They may be termed as the resources that are necessary for human survival or the needs that replicate a community's usual standards of living (Holden *et al.* 2014). Among many people, clothing, shelter, and food are the core basic needs. Unemployment on the other hand describes a situation where people are willing to work for a living but they cannot find

jobs. Poverty and unemployment are interconnected in that, lack of employment denies individual means of providing for basic needs leading to poverty.

In Africa, most countries are developing and thus have high poverty levels due to high rates of unemployment. This has led to various unlawful practices such as criminal activities, drug abuse, prostitution, and drug trafficking. Poverty and unemployment can be a source of domestic violence in society. A study conducted by Anderberg *et al.* (2013) found out that domestic violence is accelerated by the increasing levels of unemployment and poverty. Regardless of who is experiencing poverty or unemployment, it can turn into a huge problem in various ways. For instance, there have been cases where couples quarrel over the lack of certain basic needs. It may lead to a fight between the couples since the provider may feel embarrassed and coerced.

Domestic violence arising from unemployment among men affects women the most. According to Kiggins (2021), unemployed men are likely to cause domestic violence at a higher rate. On the other hand, women without employment are more likely to become victims of domestic violence. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the rate of domestic violence rose globally since the disease affected many people's jobs which led to poverty. Job loss always leads to reduced income and in turn increases the potential time an individual spends at home. When income reduces, the poverty level rises in the household creating stress among partners thus exposing them to the threat of domestic violence (Kiggins, 2021).

Poverty and unemployment have also caused couples to kill each other and the family members due to depression in many parts of the world. Such a case was reported in an

Indian village called Odisha. Allegedly, a man killed his wife and daughter due to poverty-driven issues. The husband had argued with his wife over overwhelming medical expenses and other daily living expenses which were hard to meet due to poverty. The man got aggrieved by the issue and killed his daughter and wife with a crowbar (Parida, 2021). The incidences of poverty and unemployment instigated domestic violence does not only occur in developing nations. Various cases have been reported over the globe concerning these attacks.

The economic disparities remain one of the complex root causes of domestic violence, especially economic violence. Most societies have been dominated by the male-gender, a factor that has been buttressed by the patriarchal nature of these societies. The patriarchal ideologies have done more harm to women to an extent that they have been relegated in the economic sphere. Women have been forced to depend on their husbands to sustain their economic survival. Such dependence has made them more vulnerable to economic-related violence.

Economic inequality may manifest in the employment sector, where most women have been accorded limited access to the formal sectors, instead, they have been subjected to poor working conditions, characterized by low wages, longer working hours and risky working environment. Poverty remains one of the major factors that fuel economic inequality. For instance, it can manifest in the following ways; lack of economic resources, lack of education, and lack of financial muscles just to mention but a few. These complex factors trigger domestic violence. For instance, at the household level, lack of money may fuel family tensions which may in turn, culminate in the physical beatings by the husbands. Again, lack of economic resources may lead to forced and

early marriages among the young girls in the quest of redeeming the family from the financial burden. Lack of economic wherewithal by women has pushed some to prostitution to secure their daily livelihood. This has made them more susceptible to sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, and psychological trauma among others (Ministry of Devolution & Planning, Kenya, 2014).

Findings in this study have revealed poverty as one of the major drivers of domestic violence as well as the causative factor of the same, thus tending to determine the woman's capability to get involved in violence. It has been hindering women's ability to choose whether to stay or walk out of violent relationships. It deprives women of their ability to assert control over the essential resources and their ability to make independent and informed decisions on matters that touch the daily livelihood of the household, due to male dominance. The existing institutions and some societal beliefs have also impeded women's access to both tangible and intangible resources thus, making them more vulnerable to challenge the status quo of male domination (Mutuku, 2007).

5.1.4 Stereotypes

According to Table 5.1, 20 (5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 16 (4%) disagreed that stereotypes causes domestic violence in Nyeri county. However, 99 (26%) agreed, and 237 (62%) strongly agreed that most of the domestic violence in Nyeri town is caused by stereotypes. Only 3% of the respondents said they did not know when they were asked about these concerns.

Stereotypes are the perceptions or images painted on the residents of Nyeri as far as women are concerned. In most cases, people are judged based on the impression they are

tainted with. Across various social media platforms and media stations, there is this lousy picture is painted on Nyeri women based on some incidents in different parts of Nyeri. The few cases are generalized, and all the women in Nyeri are presented as rude, non-submissive, cunning, and have other negative beliefs about them, which plays a massive role in the issue of domestic violence.

According to Table 5.1, stereotypes play a considerable role in this county's domestic violence cases. Women seem to be more affected by these scenarios based on the statements mentioned by some women in the interview room. For example, when interviewing community-based groups, the following issue was raised by one of the women.

Everyone in society sees Nyeri women as immoral. There were a few instances in Mukurweini when we heard that some women cut their men's genitals, and they poured hot water on them in other areas. However, those are only three scenarios; hence we should not all be judged (Interview with CBO leader, 22nd March, 2022).

The issue was confirmed by religious leaders who were in for the interview. According to religious leaders, men are afraid of women in Nyeri; they already have this picture in their minds that these women are heartless. One of the pastors mentioned the following.

Nowadays, it is hard to trust any woman from Nyeri. This behavior spreads like a wave across the country, which started in Mukurweini. Once a man is drunk, they fear many things including waking up to find that their wife cut off their private parts (Interview with religious leader, 15th June, 2022).

Ideally, this is not a case that had happened to anyone in the room or someone they knew, but they all had that idea in their mind. When the police were asked about these

scenarios, they confirmed that they were there. One of the police had the following to say.

I remember after I came into Nyeri, there were incidences of women cutting off the private parts of their husbands. I remember there was one woman we were sent to arrest who was involved in such a scenario. This makes one fear women in this region, and in defense, one tries to demand their submissiveness, and if they do not submit, it becomes a battle: thus playing a part in domestic violence (Interview with police officers, 14th June, 2022).

The village elders also seemed to buy the idea of this policeman. They all seemed to be extra defensive as far as women were concerned, meaning there was something they were afraid of or were trying to protect. One of the elders had the following to say:

Looking at my age, there is nothing much I can do in case a woman tries to be against me. Since we know Nyeri women and their characters, one has to be tough from the word go so as not to give room for them to make demands (FGD with village elders, 22nd May, 2022).

Based on the image painted on these women, this statement proved that domestic violence is there. According to sub-county administrators, they agreed that they had filled many questionnaires on the issue of Nyeri women and domestic violence. One of them said that:

I remember I have filled out over five online and physical questionnaires. The world seems to have a particular perception about Nyeri women, requiring me to fill in the questionnaires to prove their thoughts are true. If such a person encounters a Nyeri woman, they may mistreat them in their defense since they believe they are harsh, increasing cases of domestic violence (Interview with sub-county administrator, 8th March, 2022).

Recently, news hitting the broadcasting stations concerning domestic violence towards men has become common in Nyeri County. The stories have been circulated in television

stations in Kenya featuring the issue of aggressive behavior at home aimed towards men by their spouses. The cases range from wives slicing their husband's faces to cutting off their husband's private parts. In many instances, cases of aggressive behavior at home have been related to men, making these new cases of violence against men exceptionally unusual. The primary explanation progressed for these cases are liquor addiction. Ladies in the Nyeri region guarantee that due to liquor addiction, men have disregarded their responsibilities. They complain that men no longer accommodate their families and neglect to satisfy their intimacy needs. Gender roles have been toppled in Nyeri County, with ladies fulfilling the role of the sole provider of the family while men engage themselves in drinking. Out of bitterness, the ladies have committed these monstrous acts towards their spouses. Cases of domestic violence towards men by ladies have been circulated by television stations in Kenya as a type of comedy. Features and content used to outline this news are usually hilarious and subsequently diminish the intensity of the issue turning it to comedy and mockery. In investigation to accounts of abusive behavior at home directed towards ladies, these accounts get almost no consideration in the TV channels hence practically ruling out a chance for intervention. Additionally, these accounts have been covered as a way of fostering a stereotype against Nyeri ladies, as these accounts are just broadcasted focusing on Nyeri County. In 2014, the Kenya demographic and health survey concluded that GBV against men is found everywhere throughout the country, although only cases from Nyeri received attention from the media houses, therefore, creating unfairness.

Some of the cases aired include that of Simon Kiguta, aged 40 years old who got an attack from his wife known as Julia Wairimu whom he had married for 12 years. It was

on 6th February in 2012 when the incident occurred at Mihuti village, Nyeri County (Herald, 2020). Citizen TV reported that the man received cut wounds from a panga on his face and body after arriving home drunk, and this was reported as the first case of husband battery to reach the media houses. Alice Njeri of Belleview in Kieni sub-county was apprehended after assaulting her husband and chopping off his private parts after disputing over money (Njorore, 2016). Daniel Kingori, the husband, received this assault on June 5th, 2015, and the news was aired by KTN. It was reported that Daniel had earned money from selling onions that he had harvested from his farm, and used it to buy alcohol at a shopping centre by the name Kiawara. On top of that, his wife discovered a packet of condoms in his pockets which led to the horrible assault. It is unfair for the media houses to only focus on the cases from Nyeri since domestic violence against men happens in other counties too. This has led to suspicion among married couples, especially if the wife hails from Nyeri County. These stereotypes have generalized Nyeri women as violent and husband batterers. It is high time that journalists become professional in their work (Muchemi, 2015). They should assess the outcomes of the stories they cover in the media since some of the procedures used to cover such stories have led to negative impacts on the family unit and the audience.

According to the founder of the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), social learning follows the following principles: observation, attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. The people living in Nyeri County learn about domestic violence by observing and imitating or copying the aggressive behaviors of their neighbors who fight in their homes. Stereotypes play a very big role in creating a violent society, and children copy from this. Before engaging in a particular observed act of domestic violence, an

individual analyzes the possible benefits and penalties that may arise and then seeks for reactions from others so as to come up with rules that they will use even in future. As a result of this, the knowledge about domestic violence is gained directly through experience, and the perpetrators equip themselves with much complex mechanisms than the specific actions they previously observed (Hoffman & Edwards, 2004). Previous studies by Sims *et al.* (1997) suggest that learning the skill of how to build relationships is an important part of development for children. The studies also indicate that adult relationships are established based on childhood relationship skills. Children are therefore the most susceptible social group to learning about domestic violence by observing and imitating the behaviors of adults in their surroundings or acts they see in the mass media. Children in Nyeri County tend to display violent behaviors later in their adulthood because they have observed other people acting violently for a long period of time and these aggressive behaviors have been modeled and negatively reinforced in them.

5.1.5 Change of Gender Roles

Table 5.1 presents the respondents' opinions on the role that change of cultural roles plays in domestic violence cases. The results indicate that 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 9% disagreed that the exchange of cultural roles plays a massive role in domestic violence cases. Moreover, 183 (48%) agreed, and 150 (39%) strongly agreed that the exchange of gender roles plays a massive role in domestic violence cases. Further, 2% of the total respondents never agreed or disagreed with the idea.

Ademiluka (2018) argues that both cultural identities and roles identify people's histories, including their traditions. Cultures are said to nourish the belonging, pride, resilience, connection, and intersectional identities between the people and their community.

Therefore, culture is one of the best tools which could be used to explain the occurrence of domestic violence in Nyeri County. African culture is known to be unequal, especially for women in the community, since men have more power and control than women.

Based on the data collected after interviewing various respondents, the issue of the exchange of cultural roles played a considerable role in the prevalence of domestic violence in the community. The village elders held a substantial belief that women were expected to be submissive to their husbands. One of the village elders alluded that:

There is massive exchange of the culture in the modern society more so in Nyeri County. This is experienced in a scenario where women tend to play the role of men and vice versa. This form of cultural roles exchange creates societal commotion. For example, some unemployed men in Nyeri are forced to stay at home and look after their children as women go to work. Such men are ridiculed by other men something that prompts them to resist this form of exchange of roles. Thus, their resistance brings commotion at home since women cannot manage to go to work and take care of the children at the same time (FGD with village elders, 9th March, 2022).

The police backed up the statement from other respondents in Nyeri County after they shared their experiences during their time in service. The police affirmed that they have dealt with many cases resulting from the exchange of societal roles. One officer said the following during an interview:

I remember a case where we arrested a man who hit his wife since he came home late and found that she had not cooked. In attempt to ask her why she had not cooked, the woman was rude to her husband, and the man was provoked and pushed her, where she fell off a hard surface and succumbed to injuries. The woman had insisted that she cannot go to work and leave the man in the house, just to find he had not done anything in that house. She claimed that since she was the one providing for the family, the man should embrace the roles of the traditional woman and do the house chores, including cooking for the family (Interview with police officer, 18th June, 2022).

One of the major attributes of a society is culture. Various communities possess various cultural aspects. A person engaged in a certain culture is expected to fulfill certain expectations. Cultural roles can therefore be defined as the tasks and activities that a particular person is expected to accomplish in society. These roles involve the predetermined set of activities allocated to each individual in a given society. Cultural roles may be based on gender, age, social, religious, political, and economic status (Chao *et al.* 2015). As the culture changes, older roles may disappear leading to new ones. Similarly, the integration of different cultures may lead to changes in roles. Africa has experienced a lot of cultural changes which was a result of western world influence that came along with colonization. Roles that were predominantly male assigned are also being assigned to women, likewise, men are also taking the roles of women in various fields. Leadership was a cultural role predominantly preserved for men in many African traditional societies as well as other cultures (Manda-Taylor *et al.* 2017).

In the traditional African set-up, women were not allowed to lead people since they were considered inefficient and unable to make sound decisions. However, there has been an increase in women leaders in modern society. It is now easy to find women leaders in almost all aspects of a community. Currently, Kenya has seen many women being elected into leadership positions since its independence. Examples of women in leadership in Kenya include Ann Waiguru (Kirinyaga County Governor), Charity Ngilu (Kitui County Governor), the late Lona Laboso (Former Bomet County Governor), Cecily Mbarire (Embu County Governor), and Susan Kihika (Governor Nakuru County). Despite women being assigned few cultural aspects of leadership, they continue to make great changes in society.

Other changes in the cultural roles involve the role of various genders in religious matters. In the past, men took the central part in carrying out religious practices in society. For instance, the Agikuyu sacred rituals were generally performed by men. They would become the prophets, medicine men, and the seers of the community at large. Some African cultures also assigned women predominantly in the role of traditional healers and seers since they believed that spiritual possession is stronger in women than men making them inferior.

However, with cultural changes, women have now taken the role of leading religious ceremonies. Women can now assume the position of pastors in churches and so on. Gender roles can also fall under cultural roles since they are predetermined by an individual's culture (Manda-Taylor *et al.* 2017). For instance, cooking, taking care of children, and washing clothes are roles mainly associated with women in many cultures. On the other hand, providing and leading the family are some of the roles assigned to men culturally. The changing world has promoted huge changes in cultural roles as men and women interchange their roles to fit in the current world. Women have taken the role of being the heads of the family when the husband is not available. Nowadays, there has been a rise in the concept of single mothers as a result of men neglecting their duties or even women refusing to get married. In this situation, women become the leaders of the family and dictate how the family will exist. Similarly, it is a normal thing nowadays to find a man cooking in the house. This has been attributed to a change in cultural ideologies. In the past, if a man was found cooking by his peers, it would be termed as being lowly and thus an embarrassment to the Age set (*riika*) members among the Agikuyu. One of the main factors that contribute to change in cultural roles is education.

In many African traditions, men were given more access to education compared to women. This made women more vulnerable since they had to adhere to cultural roles as expected by society. Fortunately, the world has changed, so has the African tradition allowing boys and girls to have equal access to education. Through this process, the educated intellectuals have continued to disregard certain practices as being meant for men and women leading to a balance in cultural roles.

According to WHO (2010) as cited from Alexander-Scott and colleagues, social and gender norms are considered to stem from the societal held beliefs on gender. They include but are not limited to man's ability to assert control over his wife or partner given his social superiority, man's mandate to instill discipline to his wife through physical beatings, the acceptance of physical violence as a normal way to resolve conflict in the relationship or marriage, and the acceptance of sexual activity and marital rape as a symbol of masculinity. All these have been associated with the high prevalence of domestic violence (Alexander-Scott *et al.* 2016).

WHO (2009) asserts that cultural and societal norms remain vital in the determination of the behavior of a person as well as violence. In as much as some norms tend to insulate against violence, the very same norms can also provide a haven for perpetuation and even trigger violence of any kind. To solidify this argument, the WHO policy brief asserts that the cultural acceptability of violence as a normal way of conflict resolution poses a potential risk for virtually all types of interpersonal violence. Some of the cultural practices that fuel domestic violence include; early and forced marriages, ideologies related to male domination, the pervasive practice of female genital mutilation, and wife inheritance (WHO, 2009; FAO, 2018).

In Kenya, women and young girls have been considered the most vulnerable group and are severely affected by certain cultural norms. For instance, the circumcision of women, commonly known as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is one of the deeply practiced traditions by some of Kenya's leading communities such as the Gusii, the Maasai, Kuria and Kamba. These communities tend to equate circumcision to a sense of sexual purity as well as a ticket for social inclusion. Some cultural practices also tend to legalize different types of violence. For example, the belief that allows masculinity to wield more powers on their female counterparts or even instil discipline through physical means render them more vulnerable to any domestic-related abuse (WHO, 2009). With this, masculinity allows men to assert control over women. The women are reduced to being passive and submissive, thus rendering them with no option but to accept violence as part of their purview. Moreover, other ideologies demand women to damage their health in the quest for meeting some standardized beauty thus inflicting physical injuries to their bodies (Mbote, 2000).

Again, some cultural practices and norms tend to encourage forced and early marriages among young girls and women. For instance, a study conducted by Gitau Tabitha and colleagues found that young women were forced into early marriages as a means of addressing issues such as abject poverty, peer pressure, and the upholding of family dignity and respect. Some communities have been unfriendly to those women who have refused to get married, have been considered undisciplined and even excluded from society. Such practices have mounted pressure on the parents to marry off their daughters even without their consent or risk them not being married at all. It has been observed that forced marriage normally provides a basis for solidifying the family, clan, and the entire

ethnic group. This has been bolstered by the firm belief that marriage is the greatest determinant of social status. Just like female genital mutilation, forced and early marriages also perpetuate domestic violence as the victims of these marriages are left with limited options but to stay even in violent and abusive relationship (Gitau, *et al.* 2016). Women in Nyeri County have fought such negative and oppressive cultures, and managed to reclaim themselves from most of these cultures. However, the fight has caused many women to get divorced as the men are yet to accept the changes. They want the traditional African girl to remain as she was.

Other cultural norms also tend to permit early marriages of girls after which the bride price is negotiated and paid to her parents, thus giving the husband the authority to assert control over her, and unless the bride price is returned, she cannot return to her parents. This implies that regardless of the oppressive nature of the marriage, she is rendered with limited options but to stay because she has been tied to the bride -price (Mutuku, 2007). As revealed during the study, most of the women in Nyeri County are opting out of intimate relationships and marriages because they are not ready to be enslaved by cultural rules. During an interview with a leader of a women social group known as Itangi-ini in Kieni sub-county, the respondent stated out that:

Life has changed so much. Things are not as they were when we were growing up. My mother was ready to submit and obey her husband even when the command was irrational. However, the societal rules are changing. My daughters and their age mates cannot be like that. My daughter often calls me complaining that she cannot cope with the demands of her husband. She surprises me when she complains of being told to do small chores like taking water to the bathroom. She feels that the man should do attend his personal chores like knowing what to wear, brushing his shoes and taking his water to the bathroom. In this village, several young marriages have also collapsed because the young generation cannot

cope with the traditional societal rules (Interview with a CBO leader, 5th March, 2022).

In another interview, another women group leader had this to say:

I left my marriage because I could no longer take the enslavement that our ancestors left for us. My husband believed that a woman should obey him without questioning. I did not understand how someone can order me around, yet we are both contributing to the family finance kitty. I had employed a house girl because as a teacher I would get home tired. My husband said he cannot be served by a house help yet he had paid my dowry. He would not even allow his clothes to be washed by the helper. I ended up quitting as this is not the life I wanted to live (Interview with CBO leader, 4th March, 2022).

With regards to the changing gender roles, gender has been considered to play a significant role in the socialization process, especially when it is associated with the aggressive nature of individuals and the community at large. Socialization on the other hand has been considered to be influenced by the patriarchal society which is largely embedded in unequal power relations between men and women. With this, women have been assigned the traits of being altruism, devotion and sensitivity with men being associated with superiority and dominance. It is against this backdrop that another problem has emerged, gender inequality. Gender norms are considered vital in reinforcing different roles and behaviours of men and women. They have become social expectations that define the right behaviour for men and women. For instance, in some societies, men are associated with taking risks and being aggressive.

The gender roles and behaviours more often than not create inequality whereby one gender feels empowered at the detriment of the other. Gender inequality has been found to intensify the risk of violence by men against women. For example, the traditionally held belief of masculine dominance makes women and girls more vulnerable to domestic

violence as well as hindering their ability to eject themselves from abusive relationships. Kenya has not been an exception since it has been marred with deeply rooted gender inequalities which according to established research have been triggered by the colonial legacy that paid little attention to the female gender as well as different Kenyan cultures and societies that have rendered relegated women in critical issues. Additionally, religion has also contributed to the further spread of gender inequality through the discriminative codes of conduct that tend to favour men over women. Gender inequality has ushered yet another phenomenon that has witnessed the changing gender roles. Severe poverty and the unprecedented unemployment crisis have seen women taking up various informal jobs that men are reluctant to perform. The income generated from these kinds of works coupled with high rates of unemployment among the male counterparts has resulted in sudden shift of roles which in turn has reshaped and threatened the ever-existing status quo of male dominance within the family set-up, which many a time causes increased domestic violence as men become reluctant in accepting the new normal (WHO, 2010; Alexander-Scott, *et al.* 2016).

The structural functionalism theory states that domestic violence may occur when there is a change of roles and responsibilities among family members or between partners. The society in general expects men to perform the instrumental roles and women to perform the expressive roles and when these gender roles and responsibilities are not maintained, conflict often occurs. Increased women empowerment and the rising level of education in Nyeri County have led to shifting of gender roles and responsibilities and therefore increased cases of domestic violence. According to a study done by Muthee, Barasa & Adeli (2019), women empowerment by the law, economic empowerment of these

women, their increasing engagement in politics, leadership, and governance, among other relative gender empowerment factors, have led to increased cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County. This is because the women in the county endeavor to take over the instrumental roles that are meant for men. This then creates fear and frustration that the woman will take the position of the man in the family and they start fighting (Muthee, Barasa & Adeli, 2019). Moreover, with the increasing level of education in the county, when the women get educated and feel more learned, they become frustrated when they do not get much recognition as they should within the household, and this results in domestic fights.

5.1.6 Education

Table 5.1 shows results from respondents who were asked to give their idea of the role that education plays in domestic violence cases in Nyeri County. According to the results, 24 (7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 56 (15%) disagreed that education does not play any role in the prevalence of domestic violence in Nyeri county. However, 240 (63%) agreed, and 48 (13%) strongly agreed that education played a vital role in the prevalence of domestic violence in the community. Also, 2% of the total respondents never agreed or disagreed that education played a role or did not play any role in causing domestic violence in Nyeri County.

According to Lloyd (2018), education plays a huge role in the development of the community. However, lack of complete education can be concluded as one of the primary reasons for the prevalence of domestic violence in Nyeri County. The current education or civilization includes educating children and other individuals through the correct education system on the dangers of domestic violence and raising awareness among the

community. Therefore, the more uneducated the community members are, the more domestic violence cases will be experienced.

Table 5.1 helps one understand education is still another major issue that is affecting the community, thus causing cases of domestic violence. In an interview with some individuals working in NGOs in Nyeri County, they claimed that there are people who do not understand the negative impacts of domestic violence. The following is a confession from one of the assistant chiefs who participated in an interview.

It is painful that we have men and women in society who do not understand the adverse effects that domestic violence has on the community. Unfortunately, in most cases of domestic violence, the children suffer the most. Some children have shown hate, especially to their fathers, for beating their mother, and some boys have grown up knowing that women should be beaten in case of arguments. Most of the men who beat their wives are not properly educated (Interview with assistant chief, 7th May, 2022).

This was a painful confession since the respondent seemed to be agonizing from that instance. The same ideology was supported by the sub-county administrators, as they claimed that statistics show the number of street children in Nyeri has increased. This is attributed to the cases of GBV, especially where the parents do not understand the value of education. When parents have continuous conflicts, children suffer, and the parents fail to take action to help their children continue with their education. One of the sub-county administrators had this to say:

There is a growing number of street children in the streets of Nyeri town and other big towns in the county. In making a follow-up, most of the children claimed that their father chased them away with their mother or their mother ran away in search of peace, then life got hard, and they ended up in the streets. They come to the streets and no one follows them up to understand their academic journey, as their parents do not know

the importance of quality education (Interview with sub-county administrators, 22nd April, 2022).

The police also supported the idea that there are many arrests in the community they have made based on domestic violence, and in most cases, the perpetrators are semi-illiterate. They feel that violence is the only solution to a conflict. In an interview with the OCS of Othaya police station, he mentioned these words.

It is sorrowful that most fighting parents do not have college or university education, and they do not know they are affecting their children's education. Since they are not learned, they do not know the value of education. Recently we arrested a young man, who was a class 6 drop-out, who had impregnated an underage. After following up on the case, the girl's father, who was also a primary school dropout, used to beat up his wife to the extent she ran to seek refuge, carrying her daughter along. When life got tough, the girl ended up dropping out of school. She sought help from her boyfriend and ended up pregnant (Interview with police officer, 18th March, 2022).

Female education is a multifaceted term that involves issues affecting education for women. This includes primary, secondary, tertiary education, etc. Women face many obstacles that bar them from entering into school, such as violence against women or rules that prohibit girls from joining schools. It is worth noting that women with little or no education experience domestic violence compared to those who have achieved a higher level of education. Education is important to women because they can acquire skills like dialogue, critical thinking, and emotional well-being. Equipped with these, they can stop domestic violence from happening and also have better control over their lives. Formal education has helped in empowering women and this shows progress and a step towards achieving gender equity (Khan & Mazhar, 2017). Also, education systems play a crucial role in determining girls' interest in various subjects, and these can

contribute to women's empowerment by the provision of equal chances to access quality education and benefit from it.

It should also be noted that lack of education to the offenders of domestic violence is a big tragedy since research shows that male partners with lower education levels than their partners are in most circumstances the domestic violence offenders compared to those partners with equal levels of education. This is supported by the fact that uneducated individuals lack proper communication skills with their partners and this could result in them taking out their anger and frustration on their partners in form of domestic violence (Lewis, 2021). In most cases in a society, the level of education of an individual is associated with their earning ability and status, and this may pose as a threat to the offender of domestic violence since they think that their partner's achievement is high above them, and to gain control over them, they often result to psychological and physical violence.

One partner may opt to pursue a higher education level and this can make the other partner see it as a threat which can also lead to domestic violence due to jealousy and fear that he or she will obtain a higher status in the society. Old customs have largely affected the advancement and status of women in society. Some women speak out their minds concerning the traditional values and say that they are interfering with and limiting their space for personal development (Khan & Mazhar, 2017). Modern women are actively involved in opposing social norms on women and they have a great yearning for social liberty. On the other hand, some women who are not empowered have little or no desire at all for social freedom and they do nothing about it, they are contented with following the traditional way of life. Research shows that women's norms that are defined culturally

should be considered if a transition from patriarchy is to occur. Education empowers women and it is the key to getting rid of outdated customs that have suppressed the desires of women.

5.1.7 The Mau Mau Impact

According to Table 5.1 42(11%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 57(15%) disagreed that the Mau Mau guerrilla war had any influence on domestic violence in the country. On the other hand, the majority 141(37%) agreed, and 123(32%) strongly agreed that it had an impact. Further, 21(5%) of the respondents were not sure whether to agree or disagree, thus they indicated they did not know.

During the colonial period, most men in Nyeri became members of MAU MAU warriors. MAU MAU was a group of men, mostly Kikuyu from various areas in the central region of Kenya whose major foundation was to advocate for violent resistance to the trials of the British government dominating Kenya. Most of the men who belonged to this group took an oath under the Kikuyu Central Association, ensuring that they remained united. The oath was also a form of brotherhood meant to hold these warriors together in the fight against the British colonial government (Presley, 1988). Most Kikuyu men in Nyeri County found themselves in the middle of the war. Most of them were taken to join the other men from other regions in central Kenya to fight against the British government. The MAU MAU guerrilla war took place in forests, majorly Mount Kenya and Aberdare ranges. These mountains acted as major hideouts for the MAU MAU warriors, hence forcing them to stay for longer durations in an attempt to plan for attacks on the British camps in the region. As a result, women in Nyeri County were left behind by their husbands to look after their families and properties thus taking the throne and making the

tough decisions that these men could have made if they were still in their homes. Women in Nyeri County were expected to discipline their children, find resources for them, educate them, and oversee marriages, among other responsibilities the Kikuyu community had designated to be performed by men. Generally, women had to play their roles as mothers and as the fathers in their families.

The results of the study found out that after the war was over and Kenya had gained its independence, the MAU MAU warriors were free to get back to their homes, and this is when they realized that exchange of roles had taken place. Unfortunately, most of them had died in the war, and those who managed to come out were old and weak. They faced a significant challenge in society in terms of gender roles since they found most of the women had already taken their place. Since childhood, most of the daughters in Nyeri County had learned that their mothers took care of them and the family; hence, they continued with the spirit and did not recognize their fathers, husbands, or brothers. MAU MAU MAU men from Nyeri County committed domestic violence to take back their place in the community. In an interview with a CBO official in Kieni sub-county, he made this statement;

When I returned from the forests, I found my family had nearly forgotten me. Yes, they knew me by name and history, but since I had stayed for long without contacting them, it made them forget me. I did not have any recent memory I shared with them, making it challenging for my children to recognize me or my place in the family. All of them believed their mother was responsible for their life, and when I ordered them, they never listened to me. Their mother had already taken control; hence they could even ignore me when I tried to make any orders in the family (Interview with a CBO head, 19th July, 2022).

The statement shares the pain of a MAU MAU warrior who returned and found his wife sitting on his throne. Children could not listen to him since they only knew about their

mother. Since the wife had been alone for a long time, she also got used to making the decisions hence she could not take any orders from her husband. As the husband tried to take back his place and control, domestic violence in Nyeri County was an inevitable occurrence. The impact is still felt today as those daughters who grew up seeing their mothers being there for families continue with their mothers' legacies making it a challenge for the men to take control at the family level. This has in turn caused domestic violence in the county. An assistant chief from Nyeri Municipality pointed out that:

In my view, domestic violence in this county took shape from the MAU MAU impact. My own father was a MAU MAU fighter. I grew up seeing my mother take care of all of us. That was the most case in almost all the homes in the village. My sisters too knew they had to be strong as mothers. Consequently, the men in my village did not learn how to be men. The girls were so empowered, whereas the men were so weak. It has been hard for the men who grew up during those MAU MAU days to behave as per the standards within which society expects men to. As a result, there have been conflicts in the families due to exchange of cultural roles that took place, and has not yet returned to normalcy (Interview with assistant chief, 2nd May, 2022).

Nyeri County is named as the epicentre of the MAU MAU resistance. The county was home to Dedan Kimathi and fellow heroes such as Stanley Mathenge, Gititi Kabutu and Waruhiu Itote. Nyeri County is therefore the home for MAU MAU memorial. During the MAU MAU guerilla war, most men went to fight in the forest. The war was continuous hence the men were away from home for a long time. This MAU MAU impact has ever since brought conflicts between men and women in Nyeri County. During this time, women were left to handle all the household responsibilities. This included raising children, tilling the land, rearing cattle among others. They took the position of the heads of families when the husbands left. Eventually, some of the men died in the forests fighting and hence did not return, some returned when they were injured and others

suffered permanent disabilities. There are those that came back when they were so weak and old to concentrate on household responsibilities. The rest were mentally affected by the disturbing events they witnessed as their counterparts were killed by the British colonizers. This turn of events made the women take and maintain the lead in their families.

Presley (2019) illustrates that the women's daily control of the food supply in their households and commerce provided them with an opportunity to create some economic independence for themselves through barter trading. The daughters consequently learned from their mothers how to be strong and take responsibility. The young women, therefore, learned to be hardworking and masculine making them handle almost every task given. The women could carry out chores that were believed to be male-dominated. They had to do this to provide for their children whom they had been left with when their husbands went to the forests to fight. This rubberstamped the notion that women can successfully run homes on their own in the absence of their husbands.

Wanjiru & Kaburi (2015) note that in this attempt to be tough and hardworking the women seemed to have lost the submissiveness they ought to have had towards their male partners. Since the woman had taken lead, it was very hard for the man to reclaim his position in the family. This made the women raised to be so independent and therefore not find reason to entertain lazy men. To date, you will find women from this region in male-dominated sectors such as construction, public transport, and security among others. When they marry, they expect their men to behave in a certain way and thus they heap so many expectations on them. When they fail to deliver the expectations, the women leave them or worse even kick them out of the relationships. The Kikuyu women had been

brought up to make them deliver. They saw their mothers singlehandedly raise them up and therefore they emulate them making them disregard men who cannot potentially deliver.

On the contrary, the boys did not have anyone to look up to and show them how to be men. The men who should have instilled in them the values of being a man in society and in the family were in the forests fighting the colonizers. The mothers could not have imparted the values to the young men the way fathers do. Therefore, a weak generation of men was created. In other instances, the children lacked some of the basic necessities, lacked opportunities to access education, and also faced harassment from colonial security personnel. The effect made the women and children feel neglected by the men. They therefore got used to living without the men's contribution and presence. When the men returned old, weak, injured, and disabled, their presence did not change the situation in most families. The women continued to play to the role of being the providers and the heads of the family taking care of every one including the husbands who returned from war.

During FGDs with village elders from Nyeri County, the study found out that some of the women felt that the husbands who returned were not good enough for them and they subjected them to humiliation. The colonial situation and the long stay at the forest had drawn men further from the traditional homes. These women felt that they were superior to the men and they could therefore control them. They acted aggressively towards them and up to date that behavior can be identified among some of the women. Some men were beaten because they could no longer defend themselves, others were denied their rights at home and others had their land and other properties forcefully taken from them.

The children also accorded more respect to the mothers since they saw the efforts they made to raise them up while the fathers were absent. The male children who had grown up in the absence of their fathers, could not take their position and stand up to women since they were brought up by women and hence had grown up knowing that women were superior. They got into relationships where they let their female partners take charge of making decisions in household matters. When they were commanded by women and harassed they could not resist because that was what they had witnessed in their parents' homes.

Presley (2019) further explains that there are women who participated in significant numbers in nearly every aspect of the war waged by the Land and Freedom Army. They engaged in the nationalist associations to improve their economic status, gain access to the political process, get more education, and regain alienated land. These women were respected and this explains how women's involvement produced a tradition of female leadership in post-MAU MAU Kenya. Gachihi (1986) further states that there are women who carried out important tasks such as smuggling vital provisions such as medicine and clothing while acting at the same time as couriers of information through many hazardous routes. These brave women could not stand to be controlled by men. They instead took power and domineered them.

5.1.8 Agikuyu Traditional Matriarchal Society

According to Table 5.1, majority of the respondents agree that the traditional matriarchal society is a major influencer of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Cumulatively, 206(54%) of the respondents agree to this notion.

Traditionally, the Kikuyu community was considered to be matriarchal. As a result, the community refers to itself as "*Nyumba ya Mumbi*," interpreted as "House of Mumbi." Mumbi is a woman's name, suitable for the Kikuyu community and its generations to identify themselves after mothers or women's names. One can comfortably name their children after their mothers in the Kikuyu community. This means that ideally, women were considered the leaders among the Kikuyu communities, Nyeri not being an exception.

Elders in Nyeri County believe that women in Kikuyu community are responsible for building up a home. It is easier for women to bring up children effectively compared to their fathers. This is evident as it is a requirement that for any man who needs to be identified as a leader among the Kikuyu community, he must be married and have children. Men who have responsible wives are respected as they have someone to take care of the generation (Wanjiru & Kaburi, 2015). Having a woman in their life, men are considered whole, meaning that a woman is an essential tool in the community. Unfortunately, the women took advantage of this and took control of the responsibilities of men; hence they tried to take back their control under *Wangu wa Makeri* mythology. According to one of the elders;

Under *Wangu wa Makeri* mythology, Nyeri men tried to regain control by impregnating their women. This skill was borrowed from

Maasai men among other communities where pregnancies were used to make women weak for them to be able to control them. Unfortunately, not all women can get pregnant at the same time. Some were already breastfeeding, and others were old enough not to get pregnant while others were barren; hence it was hard to take complete control over all women in the Kikuyu community (FGD with village elder, 9th June, 2022).

Those women who could not get pregnant remained the significant opposition that most men faced in the community. The barren, breastfeeding, and old did not listen to their husbands since they did not have something to weaken them, leading to an increase in domestic violence in Nyeri county. Another elder mentioned this:

Since some women could not be made weak and dominated by being impregnated, men decided to use other harsh means to make their women submissive. One of the ways was being harsh on them to beat them with an aim of making them submissive. If the women did not listen to the demands of their husbands, they were beaten and mistreated in various ways. However, there were those women who were brave enough to confront their husbands, reversing the cases of violence from mistreating women to challenging men in the Nyeri community. Unfortunately, the issue of men receiving assaults from women is prominent in Nyeri county since it served as the center of a matriarchal society; hence women felt more privileged and authoritative than their husbands. They were made to believe that they led and controlled the Kikuyu community since children were named after them and men who needed to be leaders were required to be married; hence they dared to face their husbands, thus accelerating domestic violence in this county (FGD with village elder, 9th June 2022).

Wanjiru & Kaburi (2015) argue that the Kikuyu Community was traditionally matriarchal. That is why the community calls itself “*Nyumba ya Mumbi*”. Even clans are named after the nine daughters of Gikuyu and Mumbi. In the Kikuyu Community children comfortably take their mother’s name as the surname if the woman is unmarried. The woman was ideally the traditional leader in the Kikuyu Community and even had the role of naming the children once they were born. The Kikuyu community was from the beginning a matriarchal one because of the reproductive role of women which gave them

the right to own the children and to establish matrilineal clans. The women, therefore, were able to wield political, social, and economic power. During that time, men took orders from women who largely practiced polyandry. The men were subordinate to women and untold suffering was caused to them during the era.

However, there occurred a power shift from the female gender to the male gender when men interacted with other communities such as the Maasai and they learned that men should be leaders and not women. Therefore, they arranged to make all women pregnant at the same time, and at that point of women's weakness men were able to seize the power and all the other values associated with women's power and authority were reversed. For instance, polygamy replaced polyandry as the source of power; women became subordinate and compliant (Wanjiru & Kaburi 2015). During an interview with an elderly man who is a leader of *Matigari ma Njirungi Men Welfare*, he had this to say on the issue:

The step that our forefathers took during *Wangu wa Makeri* era was a huge achievement for the male counterparts even though the transition did not take place 100% since some of the women were breastfeeding, others were barren, and others were beyond the child-bearing age. This means that some of the women were able to hold onto power and rule men in their limited capacities (Interview with CBO officer, 16th March, 2022).

Mugo & Wandere (2015) observes that the matriarchal elements still exist in the Kikuyu community. In agreement with this, the study found out that the Kikuyu women, unlike women from other communities, can inherit property such as land from their families and still have a lot of say in the naming of children. Village elders from Nyeri County pointed out during FGDs that some of the women remain unmarried and live in their parents'

households where they build houses and raise their children in absence of the children's fathers. One of the elders pointed out that:

The reason why this happens is that most women face disappointments from men who they sire children with. The men fail to live up to the standards the women have set and therefore they find it better to live on their own. In addition, these women were empowered through education and can make most of the decisions on their own. Decisions such as buying land and other properties have made women become independent and they do not recognize the male importance in helping them make these decisions (FGD with village elders, 24th April, 2022).

It has been argued that, unlike other Kenyan women, most Kikuyus were emancipated from the so-called social entanglements and domestic bondage long ago, and have been able to live off the liberation for several generations. To them, children belong to mothers, and in the event of separation or divorce, they take them. This has increased the rate of single parenthood in the Kikuyu community, Nyeri County being part and parcel of it.

The results of this study found out that some groups of women had emerged some years back and had started paying their own dowry in a non-formal women group called *kamweretho*. It is further stated that the *kamwerethos* were not wholly embraced by the Gikuyu community since it was seen as a target of mockery and criticism to the men who had not paid dowry for their women and they had now taken it upon themselves. The group's operations were taken as a threat to the gender role of men and therefore the council of elders, *Kiama Kia maa* had to call for its halt. An assistant chief from Mbiriri Sub-county had this to say on this issue:

Mumbi, the woman, is elevated in the community. Imagine she can even dare the man, and go pay dowry on her own. This was too ridiculous. The *kamweretho* was bad and made many men feel

inferior as the women paid their dowries. It was humiliating, and many marriages broke up (Interview with assistant chief, 8th March, 2022).

Mugo & Wandere analyzed the *Kamweretho* and concluded that women are paying their own dowry because the men in Nyeri have failed. The Kikuyu community believes that every woman should get married and pay the debt of being born a girl to the ancestors, or else, there will be traditional consequences. In this case, therefore, women decided to take up the role as the men are lost in alcohol and other drugs, and have not been paying this “debt”. Men did not take this step positively; they claim that women are overstepping their mandate.

On the same, a sub-county administrator opined that:

This tends to be one of the major reasons why most men fear marrying and living with these Nyeri women. These women seem to be so independent and the expectation they place on their men is also high. When the expectations are not met, frustrations result, making the men be kicked out of unions or them voluntarily running away. If a man does not meet the standards set, the relationship goes sour making him be denied so many rights including the right to raise their children. From the historical and anthropological information, the Kikuyu community was, and partly still is, fundamentally matriarchal meaning it was led by women, and was matrilineal, which means that it descended through mothers. Therefore, the imposition of patriarchy upon it brings so much suffering since the women feel they should retain their position (Interview with Sub-county administrator, 14th March, 2022).

Kailiti & Adams (2017) state the dominance of independent women can be traced to the *Wangu wa Makeri* era who was a headman during the colonial times. She later became a paramount chief, which was the highest position for the locals at that time in colonial Kenya. It has been said that she was the first and only female leader, appointed by the British, in the entire colonial period. *Wangu wa Makeri* was a no-nonsense woman leader

who terrorized men and didn't entertain them. She used to rule while sitting and riding on the backs of strong-built men who evaded paying taxes. These men were subjected to hard labor and acted as transport whenever Wangu wanted to visit a place within the expansive location. The fate of many depended on her whims.

Kailiti & Adams (2017) further state that, men feared meeting her in village paths because they got arrested and whipped publicly. She also made the men carry the British visitors who visited her chiefdom on their backs. In one instance, a drunk man interrupted an elders' meeting and the uncompromising administrator, *Wangu wa Makeri* forced the drunk man to kneel before the congregation of villagers. She sat on his back as she addressed a public meeting. This caused a lot of humiliation to the men and society in general. Many of the women from this region tend to draw inspiration from her. They feel that they were already liberated from oppression before the country's independence and they should not take orders from men instead they should control them.

According to the frustration-aggression theory by psychologists Dollard & Miller (1939), frustration often leads to aggression. Frustration is experienced when certain external events block someone's drive to achieve a goal. Consequently, the experience of frustration creates an aggressive drive on the individual that leads to an aggressive behavior towards the source of their frustration. The changing social structure and cultural patterns within the communities in Nyeri County are a source of frustration among the community members and aggression results as the consequence of this frustration.

Cultural norms, beliefs, and values shape the society hence culture is always a factor in conflict. Culture determines the behavior of the people and how they respond to obstacles they face in life and it therefore plays a role in ending or perpetuating violence. The culture of the people living in Nyeri County is changing. Despite that, some cultural practices still encourage conflict by supporting aggression towards others as a means to respond to the obstacles one faces. Previous studies have shown that most African communities still hold view that fathers can exercise power, which may involve violence, over other members of the household if they act against the cultural norms (Mshweshwe, 2018). Differences in beliefs between the old and new cultural norms amongst family members causes frustration as some may feel insecure and this will subsequently lead to aggression and violence. According to research done by Connell (2017), men who feel that they have lost their manhood identities tend to use violence as their only way of demonstrating masculinity. The dynamics of culture in the society have therefore caused frustrations between couples and among family members thus leading to domestic violence in Nyeri County.

5.1.9 Land and Inheritance Issues

Table 5.1 shows that 156 (41%) strongly disagree and 92 (24%) disagree that land and inheritance issues can cause domestic violence in Nyeri. On the other hand, 32 (8%) agree, and 88 (23%) strongly agree that land and inheritance issues can cause domestic violence in Nyeri. However, 16 (4%) said they did not know whether land and inheritance issues could cause domestic violence.

Land and inheritance form the basis of possessions. Therefore, if there is an issue in land and inheritance, that particular domestic violence scenario would be based on the passion

for properties. In African communities, as pointed out by Lloyd (2018), it is difficult to find men and women fighting over land and inheritance since the community have been shaped so that women are not expected to own land or other property. This idea was supported by the village elders during FGDs, and the following comment was made at some point.

Even in history, it was hard to find a lady fighting with her husband over land and possession. African men divided their land and inheritance amongst their sons since the ladies believed that they would be married; hence they belonged to those homesteads where they were married to (FGD with village elder, 8th March, 2022).

This statement proves that village elders do not believe that ladies should own land as a form of inheritance since they will find a new home when they get married. The assistant chiefs supported the same idea based on the confessions they gave.

Previously, it was infrequent to find a case where the husband and wife are arguing about land and inheritance. Most of them claims brought to my table over the same were between brothers and not between brothers and sisters (Interview with assistant chief, 17th June, 2022).

In an interview with the police officers, they claimed they had not encountered a serious issue concerning land and inheritance between spouses or brothers and sisters in Nyeri. According to the police, the cases they have dealt with seriously are between brothers. A senior police officer from Ndathi police station pointed out that:

The only instance I have been closer to solving a domestic violence case based on land and inheritance was a while ago when there was an issue between a brother and his elder sister. The sister had been married and divorced and now came back to build on her father's land, and that's why the brothers were against it since they believed that that was their inheritance (Interview with police officer, 2nd August, 2022).

However, the dynamics in the current society have dictated a different shift. As the constitution states, all children are equal, and should be treated equally by their parents.

In Nyeri County, parents are slowly embracing the shift, and this is bringing unwanted feelings among the residents. There are several cases where a family disintegrates because a woman has been given land by the father. The woman starts to utilize the land to grow crops or even constructs some commercial houses. This does not go well with the men. They feel that if a woman owns property, she will dominate them. As a result, the man demands that the woman should either reject the land or leave his home. During an interview with the assistant chief from Majengo sub-location, he had this to say on the issue:

I have seen something I had not seen in my previous years. In our community, married women never used to get inheritance from their fathers. However, things are changing. I have solved two or more cases of a husband and a wife fighting because a wife accepted a piece of land from her father. The men in the 2 cases argued that their wives should only inherit any land from them, and not their father. People should accept that culture is dynamic, and it will keep on changing, and we cannot fight change (Interview with assistant chief, 29th May, 2022).

In agreement with the assistant chief, NGO and CBO leaders point out that the dynamism in the society makes women to be heirs to their father's property. Men are uncomfortable with that, and thus create tension. Based on the information presented by some NGOs and other community-based groups, there is a need to encourage women to start possessing their property. In one of the interviews, the following concern was raised.

It is a pity to hear how men in Nyeri perceive us as ladies. According to them, we do not deserve any inheritance or land; hence, we have nothing to fight for. We should come together and register SACCOs and *chamas*, which can help us own something we can inherit (Interview with CBO leader, 23rd May, 2022).

Sub-county administrators also seemed to support the idea that it is rare for domestic violence to be initiated based on land and inheritance issues, but it is an upcoming issue

of concern that is bringing conflicts in families. One of the sub-county administrators urged Nyeri women to break the already existing perception that they do not deserve to inherit a thing by owning something.

Many women in this region believe that they have equal rights to men. Thus, whenever a man gets land and refuses to share with the woman, many conflicts arise. I have registered various groups that women from different parts of Nyeri County are using to seek help from the government. Through the funds issued through these groups, they can start their own business and purchase a part of land or other that their daughters will inherit in the future, as sons inherit from their fathers (Interview with sub-county administrator, 14th July, 2022).

Respondents in this study agreed that among the main factors that lead to domestic violence are land and inheritance issues. Matters to do with land are very sensitive in the current world we are living in. Although conflict over land and inheritance existed in the past, nowadays it's much worse. Inheritance involves property such as land being issued to dependents or the next of kin upon the demise of the owner (Rheinstein *et al.* 2021). In most African traditional societies, inheritance was very important since it determined the welfare of the heirs upon the death of their father (Mbugua, 2018). Therefore, the father was advised to leave a will that would give directions on how the property would be shared among the heirs. In many cases, women were not entitled to inheritance in many communities such as the Agikuyu (Akinola, 2018). Women were viewed as outsiders in some communities in that they would get married and become absorbed into another family thus denying them the need to inherit their father's property (Mbugua, 2018). This meant that if the owner of the property died without sons, the property would be shared among his grandsons or brothers.

Land and inheritance issues have contributed to domestic violence in ways. One of them is that it has elicited greed among the family members. Once the owner of the property dies, some members develop the need to oppress the widow and orphans by demanding a bigger share of the property. Land and inheritance are not just matters of intergenerational wealth transfer but also matters of creating conflict (Harari, 2019). Despite the existence of a will and the intestacy law of equal share of the inheritance among the heirs and they admit equal sharing principles, conflict is still likely to occur. While some properties are divisible, others may be indivisible and at the same time desired by all the beneficiaries such as a highly valued antique watch.

Challenges may arise in the process of sharing the highly prized items equally. In such a situation, questions such as the following may arise; can a valuable necklace and the family Bible be shared fairly among more than one person in the family? This is where the case of all heirs demanding an equal share arises even if the will had specified who would own what. This may cause conflict since each heir has a varying perception of being treated fairly (Chelimo, 2018). Although fairness may mean an equal share of something, it takes into consideration the various principles of being rightful or deserving. For instance, an estate may be shared fairly but fail to be equal. Depending on how being fair can be determined in various circumstances, competing definitions of fairness may be many. To avoid conflict among the heirs, the government of Kenya has enacted several provisions that help land and inheritance issues to be addressed peacefully.

5.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the results of the second objective. The results presented in this section indicate that there is a correlation between socio-cultural dynamics and domestic violence in Nyeri County. Some of the main socio-cultural factors that influence domestic violence include chauvinism, the Agikuyu matriarchal culture, Alcoholism, poverty and unemployment, stereotypes and the MAU MAU impact. The next chapter (Chapter six) presents results in line with the third objective of the study.

CHAPTER SIX
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN
NYERI COUNTY, KENYA

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents data in line with the third objective of the study, which was to assess the challenges and opportunities resulting from domestic violence in Nyeri County. Data was collected from household heads, who were served with questionnaires. Additionally, key respondents such as assistant chiefs, national police service officers, business entities, NGOs and CBOs, and Sub-County administrators actively participated in the process. Data from village elders was collected using Focus Group Discussions. This chapter has the following sub-sections; challenges of resolving domestic violence in Nyeri County, opportunities of domestic violence in Nyeri County, and chapter summary.

6.1 Challenges to Resolving Domestic Violence in Nyeri

The study sought to assess challenges that hinder successful resolution of domestic violence in the study areas. The respondents were asked to indicate the main challenges in resolving domestic disputes in Nyeri County. The results are shown in Figure 6.1.

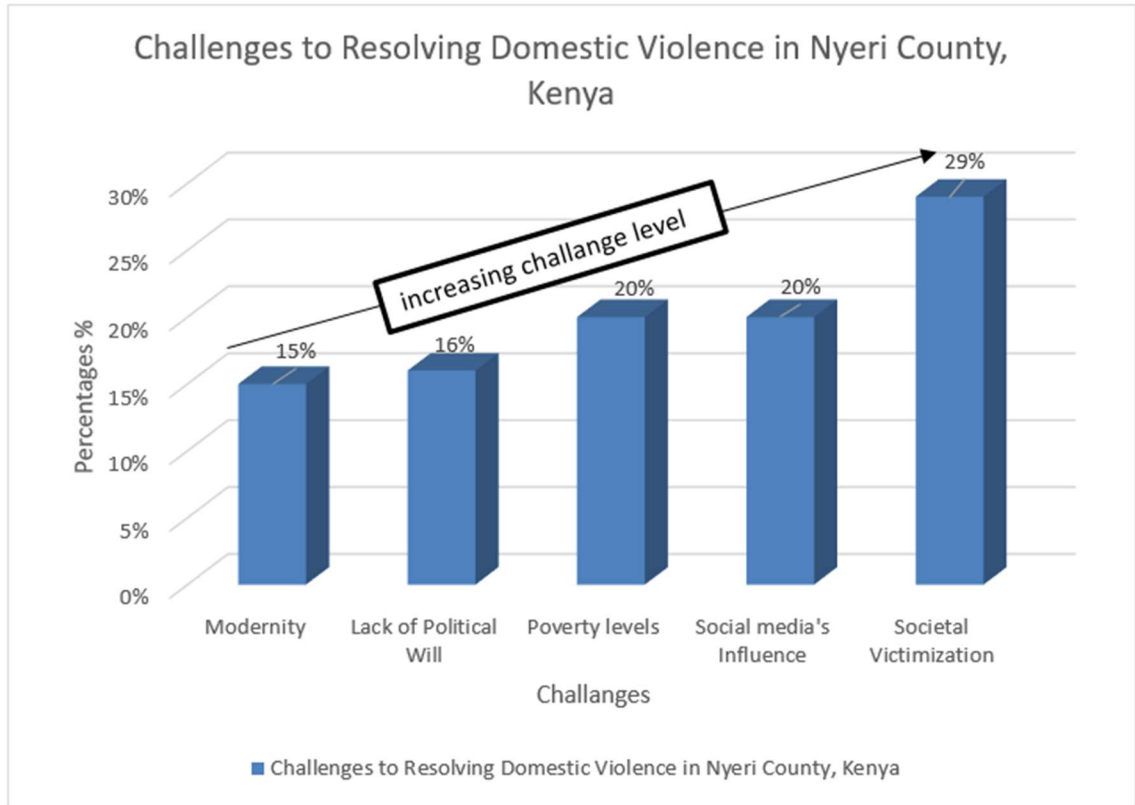


Figure 6.1: Challenges to Resolving Domestic Violence in Nyeri County, Kenya

Source: Field data, 2022

6.1.1 Lack of Political Will

Figure 6.1 shows that 61 (16%) of the respondents claimed that political will is one of the significant challenges facing the battle against domestic violence in Nyeri county. Political will is the extent of commitment key decision-makers show based on a particular solution regarding a specific social issue or problem. In this case, 21% of the respondents argued that in Nyeri County, the groups responsible for ensuring that cases of domestic violence in the county are eliminated are not as effective as expected. In an FGD with village elders, one of them mentioned that:

It is very hurting for victims of domestic violence seeing offenders walking freely in the community. At first, these

suspects are arrested by the police officers, but they are released even before being taken to court since the police accept bribes. The law makers do nothing to ensure we have the right policies in place (FGD with village elders, 8th March, 2022).

From what the elder stated, it is clear that he blamed the police forces and the law makers, claiming they have been bedeviling the process of seeking justice to the domestic violence victims. In an interview with NGOs, the same issue was raised. One of the interviewees mentioned,

There are some people in this county who are making it hard to fight the issue of domestic violence, majorly the police and the entire justice system. The system is corrupted to the extent that provided one has money, and they can be able to buy their freedom. Political will must prevail for such issues to be eradicated (Interview with NGO head, 15th July, 2022).

In addition, one of the chiefs mentioned that

It is essential for the justice system to understand that everyone depends on them for their rights to be observed. If they lack the political will to defend the constitution, these issues will continue affecting the county, generation after generation (interview with assistant chief, 2nd March, 2022).

Lack of political will has negatively impacted the fight against domestic violence in Nyeri County. According to Lunani *et al.* (2019), undemocratic and political or administrative systems fail to accomplish the intended outcome. Insufficient material resources are also an issue. Institutional hurdles, as well as interest group opposition, may also block the desired result. The magical component that allows individuals to commit to a course and make things happen is political will. If it is not present, there is stagnation or, at the absolute least, inaction. It is becoming progressively hard to complete adjustments and makeup ground as sociotechnical innovation rises in Nyeri County. This

implies that a county's financial, epistemological, and achievement of its goals is constantly changing in a rapid manner. Whatever has previously proven effective as a prototype, on the other hand, generates rigidity in that scheme, engendering a lack of willingness to alter even though the transition is regarded as interrupting how this tends to work. The most flexible and prosperous counties have trouble adapting and maintaining their competitive benefits.

County administrations lack political will, and therefore cannot oversee their security personnel in charge of homeland security. Analysis by Lunani *et al.* (209) affirms that it is not a shortage of equality legislation that is the issue. Poor leadership is the challenge. Typically, a county's leaders' democratic commitment can mobilize an entire community, secure the necessary resources, manage market forces, and commit the heft of stable federal programs to a lengthy national project. Although there are numerous examples of such dedication, it is crucial to note that the probability of the county government personnel intervening on behalf of the poor and defenseless may not always be apparent. The ruling elites' lack of interest, if not plain lack of dedication, to the well-being of the majority has been a fundamental hindrance to growth in many places. There are nearly three times as many disadvantaged households headed by women as by men. Approximately 30% of children are born into families whose basic needs are not provided. Despite these facts, the county government of Nyeri has no policy or even a "declaration" that addresses the feminization of poverty in the country.

The county administration has assigned very modest political significance to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the assessment of the Action Platform, unlike other counties. This notion is emphasized by Leburu (2015) who points out that because

women's organizations have exclusively relied on data acquired through their investigation and independent analysis. The county government's activities do not include the Women's Action Platform. The number of women in executive or leadership positions is usually tied to the location of the action. As a result, when those women leave their jobs, such efforts may halt. While many Nyeri county government departments have efforts and projects that emphasize the issue's importance, they do not represent state policy or follow an equality agenda. On the other hand, higher education does not give women a competitive advantage in the labor market, and they need more schooling than men to compete and receive comparable income. The state educational system has ensured extensive coverage and a steady rise in the average level of education of the entire population, particularly women, for many decades. The education rate for women is 2.6 %, while the knowledge rate for men is 3.6% in Nyeri County (Nyambura, 2014). Women make up a more significant percentage of students in secondary and higher education.

For order and control to be achieved in Nyeri County, there is a need for every government office responsible for the implementation of laws and policies to ensure that the members of the community obey the law. Unfortunately, many things hinder the execution of laws and policies in this county including corruption and incompetence in an office which makes it challenging for these departments to fight cases of domestic violence in the county. In an interview with NGOs and community-based associations, one of the members mentioned that.

There is a lot of corruption in the police departments. Police are expected to serve diligently per the constitution, but unfortunately, money can buy freedom nowadays. Many women in Nyeri have reported domestic violence cases, but since the suspects have money

to buy space, they move freely when their victims are grieving (Interview with NGO leader, 2nd May, 2022).

In support of this statement, village elders from the Skuta area also raised the issue of negligence and many loopholes in the said organizations. The village elders blamed the police, who did not seem to do anything to control the situation, starting from the office of chiefs and sub chiefs. One of the village elders mentioned that.

We believe that the office of chiefs and sub chiefs is expected to serve everyone in the community and reinforce the law. In case someone experiences domestic violence and reports to the chief's office, the chief has the power to call the police and other administrators. Unfortunately, in this area, the reporting to the chief is of no help since he has done nothing to deal with the issue despite the many cries from victims from every end reaching his ears (FGD with village elders, 18th May, 2022).

The leader of the *Maendeleo ya Wanaume* Nyeri branch also supported the argument that poor enforcement of laws and policies is one of the reasons why domestic violence has been rampant in Nyeri County. According to the leader;

Many offices in Nyeri County have been reported neglecting the cries of men in this county. Most individuals are affected by the notion that men are always in control; hence no man is expected to be mistreated. Nothing is done if someone reports such a case since they are said to be bluffing or asked to report serious issues. This expands the incidents of domestic violence in the county (Interview with NGO leader, 3rd March, 2022).

In Kenya, the government has made several legal efforts in addressing domestic violence. This has been facilitated by the adoption of the National Policy on domestic violence which outlines the pragmatic measures and possible objectives in responding to domestic violence. Apart from the formulation of this policy, several legal frameworks have also been enacted to tighten the grip on domestic violence. These frameworks include but are not limited to the Sexual Offence Act of 2006, the Kenyan constitution, Kenya's Penal

Code, the Counter-Trafficking in Person Act, 2010, the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act of 2015 just to mention but a few (Ministry of Devolution & National Planning, 2014).

However, despite the existence of these powerful legal instruments, the country continues to witness high prevalence rates of domestic violence which manifests in the sexual, physical and economic aspects. A factor that is largely attributed to the following underlying challenges; the Kenyan justice system lacks the prerequisite financial and legal resources to effectively respond and implement the anti-domestic violence initiatives; the uncoordinated policy framework that impedes the enforcement of legislation to address domestic violence; lack of protection of witnesses and victims which in turn make them vulnerable to imminent attacks from the perpetrators and ultimately the lack of good political will that adds to the unwillingness to prosecute perpetrators. Poor enforcement of these existing legal frameworks remains one of the causes that fuel domestic violence. Again, most of the victims of domestic violence normally shy away from reporting and sharing their plight for fear of being stigmatized and even exclusion from the larger society (National Gender & Equality Commission, 2017).

6.1.2 Societal Victimization

The presentation of data in the Figure 6.1 shows that 111 (29%) of the respondents claimed that societal victimization is a significant challenge affecting the process of resolving domestic violence issues in Nyeri county. Societal victimization is the process of targeting intended behaviours, gender or other social factors that intend to harm the individuals by affecting their social status or relations. Societal victimization takes

different forms, such as friendship manipulation, malicious gossip, social exclusion, and being looked down upon. In an interview with activists from an NGO in Nyeri, one of them mentioned that:

Societal victimization is one of the major challenges in tackling domestic violence in Nyeri. There are many people who believe that women should not own property, should not be allowed to make various decisions in the household, are expected to address a man in a particular way among other believes tied upon women as a gender. Whenever the women in this county react to this, they find themselves projecting anger to others or provoking those who victimize them thus being victims of domestic violence. Therefore, societal victimization still remains to be the major challenge in this fight (Interview with NGO head, 15th July, 2022).

The idea was also backed up by local administrators. In an interview with assistant chiefs from Nyeri central, one of them mentioned that:

Most of the cases I handle in my office entirely affect women. Women are the major victims of physical abuse, mental abuse and other forms of domestic violence, irrespective of their shape. Therefore, once society removes some of the views they have placed upon genders, the issue of domestic violence will be eliminated (Interview with assistant chief, 2nd March, 2022).

Most of these arguments seemed to favour women, but on the contrary, someone had a different opinion. In an FGD with village elders, one mentioned that

Societal victimization does not only affect women, but also men. The society believes that a man is the provider, and if not they are losers. Men who do not have money are said to have no voice in the county, making it easy for their families to turn against them. Whenever a man's right are violated in the society, and especially at home, he cannot talk about it because he is supposed to be the pillar of the family. If he dares talk about it, even children will ridicule him and call him a coward who is beaten by his wife (FGD with village elders, 8th March, 2022).

These arguments prove that societal victimization affects both genders in Nyeri County, hence should first be eliminated to fight domestic violence cases.

Victimizing some of the victims of domestic violence undermines the efforts of ending domestic violence in Nyeri County. Upon hearing about domestic abuse instances, many people wonder, "Why doesn't she just leave?" Leaving a relationship with an abusive partner is a complex and challenging endeavor. A victim must deal with a variety of concerns. The financial constraints that victims confront are one of the most significant impediments to exiting an abusive relationship (King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2017, p.1). Women who do not have financial independence are less likely to disclose romantic relationship problems and are less likely to quit a relationship. A victim's capacity to effectively leave an abusive partner depends on the support of close friends and family. However, if the complainant returns to the partnership, the same people are more likely to blame the victim and lose emotional support.

The issue of "why couldn't she simply exit?" is inextricably linked to the question of "why then does she wait?" instead of concentrating on why her spouse chose to be violent. This inquiry lays the blame on the victim for continuing with a violent partner (King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2017, p.1). The ordinary battered woman leaves seven to eight times. When women report their offenses or abandon their abuser, the brutality often does not stop. The number of violence cases increases for confident women. These violent acts can affect more than just the original victim. They can also affect the woman's offspring, acquaintances, and extended relatives. Concerns about assessing risks in aggression may persuade these women to continue the relationship for the sake of their family members.

For certain women, children are the driving force behind their decision to leave an abusive relationship and seek assistance. For several women, leaving was motivated by a desire to get a wonderful childhood for their offspring. Others saw it as a way to show that abusive and violent acts are not typical in a successful relationship. Simultaneously, the determination to maintain the family structure together can prolong receiving help (King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2017; Karanja, 2019). It's worth noting that the occurrence of actual assault has no bearing on these young people's commitment to remain in or quit a partnership. Instead, it is the encounter with other poor relationship character traits, such as psychological abuse or miscommunication that cause the marriage to end. The acknowledgment of the matter by peers and family also influences this judgment. Those whose partner is highly regarded by one's friends and family are more likely to continue the relationship. At the same time, those whose substantial other is viewed negatively by their friends and family are much more inclined to leave. If they think that there is a chance to meet someone new, youth are also more likely to leave these partnerships.

6.1.3 Modernity

In Figure 6.1 one may observe that 58 (15%) of the respondents claimed that modernity is among the significant challenges which make it hard to fight the issue of domestic violence in Nyeri county. Modernity is the evolvement of the social culture of behaviours. One of the village elders claimed that:

There is a huge difference between how things used to run traditionally and how they are currently. Initially, everyone in the community understood their roles and responsibilities when it comes to various issues affecting the community at large. Men were supposed to be the providers, and women were submissive. However, this has changed nowadays, making it challenging for one to find

balance between the two genders (FGD with village elders, 14th August, 2022).

According to this elder, he seemed to believe that in case a husband believes in the traditional responsibilities and the wife believes in modernity, they will not understand each other. This form of disagreement among the couples might be a basic point upon which domestic violence will exist. On the contrary, those working in various women's community groups in Nyeri County had a different opinion. One mentioned that:

Modernity has brought us freedom and opened our minds. We as women from Nyeri County know what to fight for, and men from this county should grant us the freedom we need. This will help reduce cases of domestic violence since we will make men aware of what they should stop doing based on our interests (Interview with a CBO leader, 5th March, 2022).

Modernity derails the efforts of ending domestic violence in Nyeri County too. The growing prominence of aggression in the sociological aspect invalidates basic assumptions about modernity's social dynamics. According to Mutahi (2017), few hypotheses which assert that conflict significantly reduces with modernization, such as Elias' civilizing process, Foucault's transformation in democratic accountability from state viciousness to sanction to collateralized debt obligations, and Wallace's dominance of physical harm by the modern nation-state, are refuted by the invention of novel types of violence. In light of these issues, pluralizing the term modernity to encompass its many and different manifestations is required when examining the connection between aggression and modernism.

In these disputes, the concept and perception of aggression are being challenged. At various times, aggression has been restricted to or relegated to other categories, most famously as weaponry of different types of power. Mutahi's (2017) analysis shows that

aggression is integrated into classifications and concepts of authority, the county government, constituency economics, and cultural emblems. Aggression is a distinct phenomenon, a quasi-kind of authority, a habit, and several social structures with cadence, rhythms, and rites. Mwangi (2017) adds that in this monograph issue of *Current Sociology*, the problems of addressing aggression in sociology are identified and resolved in a novel way. This suppression of aggression in postoperative societal debates is linked to the idea that violence decreases with modernization. Aggression has lessened in contemporary (Mwangi, 2017). The manifestations that survive are discovered on the outskirts of society, such as underprivileged folk's deviance and delinquency or the rare clashes of family members engaging in quarrels.

Economic success is relatable to reduced deprivation and high inequality, the centralization of conflict in the nation, the rise of democracy, and the internalization of social controls over emotions and expressions of violence. According to the concept, as cited by Mutahi (2017), the monopolization of violence in Nyeri County has enhanced democratic governance and the endocytosis of social norms over-emotional responses and utterances of violence. Nyambura (2014) points out that the move has also led to the centralization of violent action in the county, increased democratic governance, and the endocytosis of institutional arrangements over-emotional responses and utterances of violence (Nyambura, 2014). Critics of modernity argue that the Nyeri County modernity premise is flawed, particularly the notion that a single sort of modernity evolves linearly. Modernity, per the thesis on aggression and enlightenment, diminishes violence, yet criminality and warfare continue to be causes of conflict at Nyeri society's periphery. On the outskirts of society, the impoverished, who are experiencing poverty and inequality,

are the principal users of aggression in this strategy (Mutahi, 2017). This is criminalized aberrant behavior. Atomization, individualism, social dysfunction, unemployment, and social upheaval are modernity factors that undermine the curbing of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Crime, including violent crime, is seen as a result of social and economic inequality in the county. Those who cannot obtain goods or services through traditional means turn to illegal routes. In the views of Njoroge (2016), modernity's civilizing benefits are mediated by a rise in ego, especially management over the manifestation of violent inclinations. This results from a significant interplay of modifications in numerous social structures and personality types. According to various homicide studies, the incidence of murder has increased over time in Nyeri County. This increase has been ascribed to modernism through the influence of economic progress.

Nyeri is a contemporaneous county for it entails a local government with a monopoly on justifiable aggression in a particular region. This hegemony arose after a long era in history, during which Nyeri County government security personnel became increasingly violent (Mwangi, 2017). Since the growth of construction military technology provides an edge to those institutions that can raise the vast sums of money required, this tendency linked the state's authority to go out to conflict with the growth of the government's capacity to raise taxes. Outside of the state, smaller groups and warlords were also diminished. In historical sociology, the study of these processes has a lengthy history (King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2017). Per a similar logic, increasing democracies lessens the risk of neighbors and household members going to war with one another. Nevertheless, democrats should not go to war with one another.

Modernity in the communities living in Nyeri County poses a challenge to resolving domestic violence. There are ongoing scientific, technological, and socioeconomic changes in the society, and certain socio-cultural norms are also arising. Family violence also evolves as the society becomes more modernized. Due to the evolving digital world, the perpetrators use new technological advancements to cyberstalk their victims and create a sense of omnipresence as to exploit and control them. The evolving technologies also accelerate social learning of these acts of domestic violence by the members of the society thus leading to an intergenerational cycle of violence and increased number of cases of household conflicts in the county.

6.1.4 Social media's Influence on Domestic Violence

According to Figure 6.1, 77 (77%) of the respondents claimed that the influence of social media is one of the significant challenges facing the attempt to thoroughly eradicate the issue of domestic violence in Nyeri County. It is important to note that social media can be used positively in handling domestic violence in Nyeri County. Still, it also plays a vital role in challenging the fight if used negatively. In an interview with the police unit from Nyeri County, one of them mentioned that;

It is possible to find a woman in the social media posting how she has been gifted a big car, built a big house, or taken to retreats by her husband. Without understanding the background or the source of the funds, another woman in Nyeri may start pressuring her husband to do the same things she saw on social media for her. Unfortunately, the husband may be working in tea plantations where the income is not enough, and in losing control they may be involved in arguments which could turn into domestic violence (Interview with police officers, 4th June, 2022).

This was a one case scenario issued by a police officer concerning social media's negative role in the fight against domestic violence. The idea was supported by various elders in Nyeri County. One of them mentioned that:

It is usually very hurting getting home late and tired after a tough day, then your wife starts telling you she has seen her friend posting a certain dress, and now she needs you to purchase it for her. In case you say that you do not have money, she will be angry with you and this could easily cause domestic violence (FGD with village elders, 8th March, 2022).

To defend women who had been to a large extent criticized by men concerning being influenced by social media, one of the NGO staff mentioned that:

It is not right to say that women are influenced by social media. This is because different people in the world have different backgrounds and capabilities; hence we all cannot be equal. The best solution is effective communication in the family to solve some of these issues amicably (Interview with NGO leader, 2nd August, 2022).

However, based on the respondents, the influence of social media is one of the challenges in the fight against domestic violence in Nyeri County.

Social media has negatively impacted curbing domestic violence in Nyeri County. According to NGEC (2016), the media's portrayal of domestic abuse has boosted the appeal of top player attitudes. While previous research has looked into the link between violent press coverage and violent crime, nothing has been done to study the link between certain types of extreme media attention and systematic abuse of intimate partner violence. To fill in these gaps in the research, the current study examines the relationship between exposure to multiple kinds of pleasurable violent media and the perpetration of intimate partner violence using data from 148 inmates from the Nyeri correctional facility (Githaiga, 2020). The findings demonstrate a robust positive relationship between enjoying television violence and self-reported intimate partner abuse at the bivariate

level. On the other hand, multivariable modeling reduces this connection to negligible levels. Belief endorsement and victimization experience were the two most important predictors of intimate partner violence. The paper explores how the findings may have policy implications.

Media violence has long been connected to aggressive behavior and the commission of violent crimes, such as family abuse. According to the study, there is barely a sprinkle of evidence that shows link between broadcast violence and crime (Githaiga, 2020). Pearson's correlation is less than 0.4% in most studies in this field. There is no statistically significant link between exposure to violent acts in the media and the conduct of crimes in Nyeri County. Media coverage of television and computer games violent behavior is not a significant predictor of violent crime. Even though there is little link between media violence and violent behavior, there are traces of a moderately positive relationship between media aggressiveness and domestic violence perceptions. The media's hostility has been linked to several deviant attitudes, ranging from rape to views on domestic violence. These attitudes encourage and accept women's rape and abusive acts toward intimate relationships. The Cultivation Theory presents a theoretical explanation for the link between violent media exposure and violent criminal behavior. According to Cultivation Theory, "when people are exposed to media content or other socialization agents, they progressively adopt or acquire beliefs about the world that match with the pictures or messages they have been hearing." As a result of this, people mistake their "world reality" for "media reality," increasing the risk of violence (Njoroge, 2016). People exposed to violent media are more prone to believe that their reality is equally damaging, which increases their odds of acting aggressively. Individuals from

social conceptions associate their experiences with "media reality," causing them to believe that violence seen in the media is acceptable in real life.

The Nyeri local media's representation of domestic violence has increased the appeal of pro-violence beliefs. While earlier research has looked into the link between violent media exposure and violent crime, nothing has been done to investigate the association between specific types of damaging media exposure and intimate partner violence perpetration (Githaiga, 2020). To fill these gaps in the research, the current study examines the relationship between exposure to various forms of pleasurable violent media and the perpetration of intimate partner violence using data from 148 inmates. There is a robust positive relationship between enjoying television violence and self-reported intimate partner abuse at the bivariate level. On the other hand, multivariable modeling reduces this connection to negligible levels. Belief endorsement and victimization experience were the two most important predictors of intimate partner violence. Media violence has long been connected to aggressive behavior and committing violent crimes, such as domestic violence.

The Cultivation Theory presents a theoretical explanation for the link between violent media exposure and violent criminal behavior. According to Cultivation Theory, "when people are exposed to media content or other socialization agents, they progressively adopt or acquire beliefs about the world that match with the pictures or messages they've been hearing". At the end of the study, it is possible to analyze the impact of following up on television shows and highlighting episodes on rape myth acceptance. Soap opera viewers in Nyeri County were more inclined to believe rape myths and had an "overestimation of fake rape charges", whereas crime show viewers were less likely

(Njoroge, 2016). This demonstrates how the type of television show one watches influences how and what the county residents learn from it.

One of challenges faced in resolving domestic violence in Nyeri County is social media's influence on domestic violence. The perpetrators of domestic violence can stalk their victims and publicly harass them through social media at the touch of a button without face to face interaction. There are many ways in which the perpetrator can harass the victim, a current or former partner, through social media. One of the ways of cyber harassment is revenge pornography where the perpetrator shares sexually explicit content of the victim on the internet without the victim's consent. This poses a challenge to resolving domestic conflicts as it leads to damaging of the relationship, mental health problems and social isolation of the victims. This causes frustration, distress, paranoia, and aggressive behaviors by the victims which may further the conflict. The victims may also be depressed or even commit suicide.

6.1.5 High Poverty Levels

The presentation of data in the Figure 6.1 shows that 77 (20%) of the respondents claimed that poverty is a significant challenge affecting the process of resolving domestic violence issues in Nyeri county.

While poverty, unemployment, corruption, and economic stress do not cause domestic violence, they do raise its likelihood in Nyeri County and also hinder resolution of domestic violence. Domestic violence is more than twice as common among women who live in low-income areas than it is among women who live in more affluent places in Nyeri County (Njenga & Njoroge, 2021). Poverty affects an assailant's ability to maintain dominance and influence over an abuse survivor. Sexual assault victims who can leave a

marriage amicably and create safe, affordable homes with a way to provide for themselves rather than their spouses are more likely to avoid repeated abuse, as per scholarship and practice. Victims of domestic violence who have little or no money, especially those who have children, rarely have the resources they need to flee the violence.

Poverty disproportionately affects women and single mothers in Nyeri. Many people are unaware that poverty is a barrier when solving domestic violence in society hence do not strive to elevate their social status (Njenga & Njoroge, 2021). For example, poverty increases the harshness of the abuser in a relationship as they try to prove their dominance. Differently put, being poor confines the victim in the abuse and often lengthens whatever process she would take to flee and her impoverished confinement. Poverty and domestic abuse heighten the risks survivors face, their children, and our entire Nyeri county community. The consequences for low social-economic class in the county are worse because safety-net institutions typically overlook their specific needs. A disproportionate number of survivors from these categories are seen at Safehouse Center. Family abuse is less frequent in households with a medium to high social class and better education in Nyeri County. It is more likely to affect poorer women. Lower risk of violence has been connected to both spouses having a higher level of education in Nyeri County (Njenga & Njoroge, 2021). Educational attainment in the spouse seems to assist a person regarding their spouse kindlier and engaging lesser aggressiveness towards them owing to the better grasp of a male's social and domestic obligations. Female academic attainment is directly associated with violence. Domestic violence against women is lessened by higher schooling and better financial standing and is officially recognized by

couples. Nonetheless, alcoholism, young age, possessing lesser support networks, and unmarried and adulterous relations correlate to domestic abuse.

Battered women have a poorer socioeconomic position than quasi-women. The state contributes to domestic violence in Nyeri County. Family abuse and economic status in household income intertwine in Nyeri County (Njenga & Njoroge, 2021). Women from wealthy homes have lower rates of domestic abuse. There is no link between socioeconomic level and domestic violence among Nyeri women, contradicting the current study's findings. This positive correlation may be related to the fact that violence is frequently a reaction to economic worries since low-income families are often susceptible to pressure and strains caused by unemployment and poverty, which can emerge as hostility and violence. Poverty levels among the people living in the county have become a challenge. Previous studies have shown that poorer households experience domestic violence more than better off households. Poverty exacerbates domestic conflicts as it extends the woman's duration of exposure to abuse by the man by reducing the woman's capacity to leave the relationship. This causes frustration which leads to aggression and hence furthers conflict within the household.

6.2 Opportunities of Domestic Violence in Nyeri County, Kenya

Even if there are some challenges associated with resolving domestic violence in Nyeri County, it is important to note that opportunities are also there. In this case, there are opportunities in terms of strategies that can be applied in addressing the issues of domestic violence in Nyeri County. It is equally important to ensure that whatever strategies are implemented are ones that have been proven to be effective in preventing

the vice, revealing the root causes, and addressing cases of domestic violence that may have already taken place in the past.

The study sought to assess opportunities of domestic violence in Nyeri County. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the given parameters as possible opportunities of resolving domestic disputes in the study area. Results from 384 questionnaires are represented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Opportunities of Domestic Violence in Nyeri County

Strategy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Cumulative agreement	Rank
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
Strengthening criminal justice system	3 (1%)	6 (2%)	0 (0%)	278 (72%)	97 (25%)	375 (97%)	1
Boosting moral values	5 (1%)	4 (1%)	2 (1%)	200 (52%)	173 (45%)	373 (97%)	2
Sensitization	6 (2%)	3 (1%)	5 (1%)	197 (51%)	173 (45%)	370(97%)	3
Balanced distribution of resources	11 (3%)	6 (2%)	8 (2%)	148 (38%)	211 (55%)	359 (93%)	4
Enhancing community policies	18 (5%)	11 (3%)	4 (1%)	229 (60%)	122 (31%)	351 (91%)	5
Current media selection	12 (3%)	19 (5%)	4 (1%)	203 (53%)	146 (38%)	349 (91%)	6
Economic boost	34 (9%)	18 (4%)	6 (2%)	199 (52%)	127 (33%)	326 (85%)	7
Enactment of programs	21 (5%)	33 (9%)	5 (1%)	238 (62%)	87 (23%)	325 (85%)	8
Psychological support	98 (26%)	76 (20%)	16 (4%)	187 (48%)	7 (2%)	194 (50%)	9

Source: Field Data, 2022

6.2.1 Strengthening the Criminal Justice System

According to table 6.1, 3(1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 6(2%) disagreed with the argument that strengthening criminal justice systems is an opportunity that can help reduce cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County. On the contrary, 278 (72%) of the respondents agreed, and 97 (25%) strongly agreed that boosting and streamlining the justice systems would help curb domestic violence cases in Nyeri County.

Most of the respondents complained about the issue of corruption in the justice systems as one of the significant reasons for the permissiveness of domestic violence in Nyeri County. The problem was raised and defended well in a meeting with members from NGOs and other community-based organizations in Nyeri County. One of the CBO heads in the interview mentioned that:

It is very demoralizing to a victim of domestic violence to experience a situation where the perpetrator is arrested then after few days he is back at home. Such a woman will always be stressed and may fail to report domestic violence cases again since she knows that the justice systems will do nothing to save her from the situation. The husband may also take this to his advantage since he is aware that the justice system is corrupt; hence there is nothing much which will be done to him (Interview with CBO head, 2nd July, 2022).

The issue was also affirmed by the village elders, who also expressed their bitterness with the justice system. One of the elder particularly mentioned that;

We expect the justice system to protect Nyeri people by disciplining the offenders. However, this is not the case since as far as one has money, they will be allowed to walk free and continue with their life as if nothing happened (FGD with village elders, 8th March, 2022).

All the respondents agreed that if the justice system is streamlined, cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County will be eliminated. Moreover, the response from the participants was that people will feel encouraged to use the justice system as a way of curbing the ever-increasing domestic violence in Nyeri County as they will be sure that there will be justice at the end of the process.

Weaknesses, loopholes, and ambiguities within the criminal justice system are one of the main reasons why a significant number of domestic violence perpetrators in Nyeri County get to walk freely and most probably, end up becoming repeat offenders. For instance, sexual violence, which is one of the most extreme forms of domestic violence,

may be difficult to prove among married couples due to the stringent legal requirements (Bailey, 2010). Marital rape for instance occurs when a husband forces their wives to engage in sexual activity against their consent. However, for married couples, the legal system in many cases assumes consent thus making it difficult to prove cases of marital rape. Nyeri-based judiciary officers need to desist from making assumptions regarding consent when it comes to cases involving alleged marital rape. Instead, the officers should take an objective look at the evidence presented against them and make a judgment based on the same (Bailey, 2010). This will increase the number of women in Nyeri County willing to come forward and report cases of marital rape since they will be assured that justice will indeed be served.

Defilement is a legal term that refers to a crime where an adult engages in sexual conduct with an underage. Defilement can also constitute a form of domestic violence in cases whereby an adult family engages in violent or even alleged consensual sexual acts with a minor. In such a case, the minor cannot make such consent and this cannot be used as a defense in a court of law (Groves & Thomas, 2013). Be that as it may, the evidence threshold in defilement cases can be very high with instances where the courts may require physical evidence. In many cases of defilement, the victim is usually ashamed of the act and they are most likely to report the same days, months or even years after this form of sexual violence has occurred, especially when it involves close family members (Groves & Thomas, 2013). For this reason, it may be difficult to collect physical evidence such as DNA samples from the victim. The high evidence threshold is one of the weaknesses in the legal system that may allow perpetrators of defilement in Nyeri County to get away with their actions. Easing on the threshold of evidence and allowing

testimonies of the victims to be taken into account in cases of defilement is one of the main avenues through which the criminal justice system can be enhanced to address cases of domestic violence. This will ensure that underage victims of domestic violence can get justice for the crimes committed against them.

It is a fact that at times, the wheels of justice might tend to turn quite slow. Sometimes the speed can be described as too slow which can be a major problem when it comes to serious crimes such as domestic violence cases. This is because, when the process takes too long, it can result in further victimization thus the adage, justice delayed is justice denied (Groves & Thomas, 2013). In some cases, the perpetrator might be released on bail and spend months or even years living their lives as the process drags on. The mere fact that the perpetrator is out there free to do whatever they want can be traumatizing to the victim since they might pose potential danger to them. It is important that the courts of law in Nyeri County accord high priority to extreme domestic violence cases such as severe physical abuse, rape, and defilement so that eventually, the victim may be able to appreciate that justice has been served (Basar & Demirci, 2018).

The criminal justice system response to victims of household conflicts and cyberstalking should be strengthened and the activity should be offender-focused. The perpetrators should be arrested and dealt with accordingly by the law, and have harsh penalties imposed on them. Moreover, the victims of domestic abuse should also be followed up and safeguarded against further humiliation and control by the abusers. This will prevent the frustration and mental problems that may be caused by further physical or cyber harassment and also decrease the incidence of domestic violence in general as supported by the frustration- aggression theory that underpins the study.

6.2.2 Boosting moral values

According to table 6.1 5(1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 4(1%) disagreed that boosting moral values is one of the best opportunities of domestic violence in Nyeri county today. However, 200(52%) agreed, and 173(45%) strongly agreed that boosting the moral values among the members of Nyeri county would help deal with the issue of domestic violence. Additionally, 2(1%) of the respondents said that they did not know.

Moral values act as the guidelines which help individuals differentiate between what is right and wrong. Therefore, if society can boost the moral values amongst its members, cases of domestic violence will be eliminated. In an FGD with the village elders, one attendee mentioned that;

The major cause of domestic violence is as a result of people failing to differentiate between what is right and wrong due to lack of morals. Therefore, there should be forums set up to teach the generation what is expected of them in attempt to maintain their morality (FGD with village elders, 8th March, 2022).

NGOs and community-based associations supported the idea. In an interview with some members from an NGO based in Nyeri County, one of the members mentioned that;

Once the society upholds the morals within the community through such institutions such as religious institutions, police, courts of law and local administrations, the members of the community will understand what is expected of them, thus making it easy to differentiate between what is right and wrong as far as domestic relationships are concerned (Interview with NGO head, 19th July, 2022).

In addition, in a meeting with members of police forces in Nyeri County, one of them supported the idea by mentioning that.

Everyone is guided by a code, which helps them control their behaviours. On a communal basis, morals are what control us. Therefore, we should strive to instill the required morals among the community members since birth

so that they can go understanding and believe in those morals, and as a result, the issue of domestic violence will be eliminated with time since they will all know that it is morally wrong violating the rights of their spouses (Interview with police officer, 19th July, 2022).

One of the reasons why there has been an increase in cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County in the last decade is the fact that there has been gradual erosion of moral values among the residents of the county. Moral values determine the sense of right and wrong that an individual or society may have. For instance, just about every human being knows that it is wrong to subject another person to physical or sexual violence. Within the family setting, many domestic violence cases occur when one member of the family subjects another member to either physical or sexual violence (Hudson, 2017). The increase in the number of domestic violence cases in Nyeri County implies that there is a high possibility that, many of the people engaging in this vice might have lost their sense of right and wrong. A husband physically assaulting his wife may be doing so because they believe that they have a right to commit such an act of violence without necessarily appreciating the fact that whatever it is that they are doing is wrong and unacceptable.

Ultimately, the erosion of moral values among Nyeri County residents has served to significantly increase cases of domestic violence. This is because many of the people engaging in domestic violence do not think that they are doing anything wrong (Hudson, 2017). Some may even justify their acts claiming that they have a right to instill discipline to the victim by subjecting them to physical violence (Hudson, 2017).

In order to boost moral values, it is imperative to have an understanding of the factors that may have undermined these values. Several factors may have contributed to the erosion of moral values among the people of Nyeri County. One such factor is the

childhood background of some of the residents of the county. A good number of Nyeri county residents may have been brought up in abusive families. Some of the men may have, for instance, been brought up in families where they witnessed the fathers beating up their mothers (Aizer, 2010). They may have grown into adulthood thinking that this form of behavior is acceptable, and this is thus the reason they may end up subjecting their wives and probably other family members to domestic violence. Such individuals should be subjected to counseling that is geared towards informing that intimate partner violence is wrong, and that what they saw their parents engage in was unacceptable.

Secondly, the impact of religion in the county is also not as pronounced as it was a few decades ago. Many Kenyans, those in Nyeri County included, may identify as Christians or Muslims but most do not embrace the teachings of such religions (Aizer, 2010). This can be attributed to the hustle and bustle associated with a modern lifestyle that has seen significant number of Nyeri County urban residents shun the practice of attending church services on Sundays and instead, opting to engage in recreational activities. Encouraging people to seek guidance and counseling from religion will most likely boost moral values among residents of Nyeri County. This is because most religions, including Christianity and Islam, discourage domestic violence (Aizer, 2010). Finally, the lack of effective role models has also led to the erosion of moral values as some of the people who are considered as leaders in the country are the ones engaging in various forms of vices including domestic and sexual violence. It is therefore imperative that the individuals in leadership positions in the society including political leaders, religious leaders, and cultural celebrities are encouraged to embrace positive morals and exhibit the same in

their conduct as a way of encouraging the rest of Nyeri residents to do the same (Basar & Demirci, 2018).

6.2.3 Sensitization

In the Table 6.1, it is well depicted that 6 (2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 3 (1%) disagreed that sensitization of domestic violence will help reduce cases in Nyeri county. However, 197 (51%) of the respondents agreed, while 173 (45%) strongly agreed that sensitizing the issue of domestic violence in Nyeri county would help reduce it. Five of the respondents said that they did not know.

Sensitization of the issue of domestic violence in Nyeri County is the process of emphasizing the point so that people can see the magnitude of the problem. Based on the information recorded after an interview with members of NGOs and other community-based organizations, one major issue why domestic violence in the community is still rampant is because most people do not understand its impact or what domestic violence is. In the interview, one of the members mentioned that:

Most people think that domestic violence is physical abuse subjected to someone via physical contact such as whipping, slapping, pushing among other forms which can cause physical harm. They should be taught that there is more to this, and the effects are diverse to extents of psychological, emotional, and mental health distortion and not only physical an injury as it is expected. This will help sensitize the issue, hence more people will be concerned thus reducing domestic violence in Nyeri county on a higher degree (Interview with CBO head, 2nd July, 2022).

The point was also echoed in an interview with Nyeri police officers where one of them mentioned that;

There are many people out there who believe that since they have married someone, they own them. It is high point

they be taught how serious the issue of domestic violence is based on the Kenyan constitution. They should know if they are involved in it they risk jail terms and heavy fines (Interview with police officers, 22nd August, 2022).

The opinion from the police officer was also emphasized by one of the sub-county administrators who mentioned that;

Sensitizing the Nyeri County residents about domestic violence will ensure they understand its impacts to other members thus ensuring they take pivotal role in controlling such societal conducts. Unfortunately, people tend to take domestic violence lightly as they ignore how ignoble the conduct it is (Interview with Sub-county administrators, 2nd July, 2022).

Sensitization among residents of Nyeri is one of the effective strategies that can reduce and even hopefully, eliminate the vice of domestic violence in the county. The main goal of sensitization would be to let the residents of Nyeri County know that domestic violence is a serious vice and crime that will negatively impact the victim. The sensitive drive in the county should for instance stipulate some of the effects on the victim that this form of anti-social can result including low self-esteem, a heightened sense of insecurity, and depression (D'Ambrosi, Papakristo, & Polci, 2018). Similarly, the drive should also point to the residents of Nyeri County that a significant number of people, especially women have lost their lives as a result of being subjected to extremely violent attacks from their husbands or other male figures in their lives. Similarly, the drive should also include the fact that some men have also fallen victims to extremely violent attacks from their wives even though the number of male victims is much lower (D'Ambrosi, Papakristo, & Polci, 2018). Finally, a good sensitization drive in the county should ensure that the faces behind are also seen by encouraging some of the survivors to narrate their ordeals and the relatives of those who have lost their lives, to equally bring to life their tragic stories.

Sensitization is a very effective strategy for addressing the problem of domestic violence in Nyeri County primarily because it informs the people of the effects on the victim of the crime. Some of Nyeri residents who subject their significant others to domestic violence could be doing so simply because they do not appreciate the long-term effects that their acts may have on their victims. For instance, a parent who prescribes severe corporal punishment to their child as a way of disciplining them may not appreciate that such an act may end up making the child feel insecure for a substantial part of their lives, including their adult lives (D'Ambrosi, Papakristo, & Polci, 2018). Similarly, a husband who beats up his wife may not appreciate the fact that she may end up with serious emotional problems including depression. A proper sensitization strategy will equip potential perpetrators of domestic violence with knowledge on the effects of their intended acts and they may decide to change their ways once they appreciate the negative effects that their conduct may have on the people close to them (Haas, 2017).

Sensitization also plays a crucial role in putting a face behind the stories of domestic violence. In some cases, Nyeri residents may fail to pay too much attention to the problem as some may never have come across anyone who is a victim of domestic violence (D'Ambrosi, Papakristo, & Polci, 2018). Having such people narrate their stories will go a long way in enabling the residents to appreciate the seriousness and extent of the problem.

6.2.4 Balanced Distribution of Resources

Based on the information presented in Table 6.1, 11 (3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 6 (2%) disagreed with the idea that balancing the distribution of resources effectively reduces domestic violence in Nyeri county. However, 148 (38%)

agreed, and 211 (55%) strongly agreed that in balancing the distribution of resources in Nyeri county will help solve the domestic violence issues rampant in this county. 8 (2%) of the respondents said they did not know.

As per the research regarding domestic violence cases in Nyeri county, resources have been one of the primary reasons why these sorts of violence are witnessed. In an interview with the NGOs officers, the idea was heavily supported. Most of the interviewees agreed that it is essential for women to be allowed to have some property so that they are not solely dependent on men. One of the interviewees in this session said that:

The major reason women are harassed by their husbands is because they have no option in life in terms of resources, hence have to depend on the man for everything. As a result, the man may take advantage of this and be violent to his wife, hence leading to cases of domestic violence (Interview with NGO head, 19th July, 2022).

The idea was also supported by a police officer in one of the interviews claiming that:

Most of the domestic violence cases which we have had are majorly based on finances. The wives complain to their husbands over any form of finances for example school fees, rent and even food. In case the husbands do not have the money or they feel that the approach was not respectful, they end up being violent (Interview with police officer, 22nd March, 2022).

Based on these statements, it is evident that if women are given an opportunity through a balanced distribution of resources in the community, they will be able to own property hence reducing these cases in Nyeri County.

One of the factors that have contributed towards an increase in domestic violence cases in Nyeri County is the skewed distribution of resources. In Nyeri County, it is the men that

hold more wealth and this scenario can be attributed to a myriad of factors including tradition and culture, access to educational opportunities, and overall perception of the society (Mutahi, 2017; Mwangi, 2017). Nyeri County traditions mirror those existing in many other parts of the country whereby men are the ones who are allowed to inherit property while women are not. This implies that wealth in the county is passed down to the men and not the women. Consequently, there is a huge number of economically disenfranchised women as compared to men. Education is one of the key factors that can determine the capacity of an individual to generate wealth. Generally, most educated people have more wealth as compared to their uneducated counterparts.

Unfortunately, as pointed out by Mutahi (2017), women in Nyeri County are predisposed to various scenarios that can undermine their capacity to fully reap their education potential. For instance, a significant number of females have had to quit their education on account of early or teenage pregnancies. Some of the girls have also had to quit school because they have increased chores and responsibilities at home (Mwangi, 2016). Finally, a financially successful woman in Nyeri County is not as celebrated as a financially successful man. This is because, the overall perception is that women should be taken care of by men and thus many women have had to cede the potential to be financially independent and instead, opted to rely on the male figures in their lives.

It is very easy for an individual with resources to subjugate one who lacks the same. The fact that many men in Nyeri country are wealthier than women has resulted in the men feeling like they can dominate their female counterparts and unfortunately, some men prefer to use physical violence as a way of reaffirming their dominance (Lök, Başoğul, & Öncel, 2016). A scenario in which women in Nyeri County are facilitated and encouraged

to pursue various wealth creation solutions will most likely translate to more respect from the men which will ultimately reduce cases of domestic violence. The question therefore begs, how can women be economically empowered to reduce the overall skewness of wealth distribution in Nyeri County? One of the solutions would be a change in cultural practices that deny women the right to inherit property, especially paternal property (King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2017). Women should be accorded more or less the same inheritance rights as men. Such a practice will ensure that women can inherit wealth directly from their parents thus reducing the number of women who are one hundred percent dependent on their husbands (Njoroge, 2016) This will reduce cases of domestic violence since the men will be more respectful of the women in their lives.

An affirmative action when it comes to education will go a long way in reducing the number of girls who drop out of school for one reason or the other and ultimately end up as wives who are fully dependent on their husbands. There should be deliberate efforts to encourage more girls in Nyeri County to attend schools and those who have dropped out, should be encouraged to resume their studies. It is also important for both girls and their parents to be made to understand that teenage pregnancy should not translate to the termination of a child's education (Lök, Başoğul, & Öncel, 2016). There should be a deliberate program of ensuring that any school-going girl who falls pregnant is taken back to school so that they can complete their education and realize their full potential in life. Finally, Nyeri residents should be made to appreciate strong, powerful, and successful women to encourage more women in Nyeri County to pursue the path to financial success.

An even distribution of resources within the household will reduce frustration between the partners as both the man and the woman will carry out their gender roles and responsibilities effectively. On top of that, a balanced distribution of resources in the society is also important such that certain households will not feel deprived of resources at the benefit of others. This will reduce frustration within the households hence lowering the cases of domestic violence in the county as supported by the frustration- aggression theory.

6.2.5 Enhancing Community Policies

On the issue of the establishment of community policies as an opportunity of reducing domestic violence cases in Nyeri County, Table 6.1 shows that 18 (5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 11 (3%) disagreed that this would be an effective way of tackling the issue. On the contrary, 229 (60%) of the respondents agreed, and 122 (31%) strongly agreed that coming up with new community policies will help curb the issue of domestic violence prominent in Nyeri County. 4 of the respondents claimed they did not know.

Community policies are the interventions made concerning various societal or communal problems through the community's involvement. Developing new community policies is done by encouraging the community members' active participation in public decision-making. Therefore, coming up with unique community policies means that the residents of Nyeri County can join hands through various forums and make rules and policies which will help govern the conduct of people in this county. In an FGD with village elders in the Mucharage area, one of the village elders mentioned that:

It is important for the community to face the issue head on.
The first step is to accept that the issue is rampant in this

county, and from there one can be able to suggest the best possible ways of dealing with this issue (FGD with village elders, 12th May, 2022).

The idea was also supported by an officer from Othaya police station who in an interview said that:

There is nothing stronger than the will of the people. Therefore, the society should come together through the offices of the local administrators such as chiefs and sub-chiefs in such forums as chief *barazas* and discuss some of the policies that should be set regarding the issue. This will be effective since these policies are set by the community; hence it will be hard for someone to go against them (Interview with police officer, 12th May, 2022).

In another interview, one of the local administrators mentioned that:

New community policies will be effective in tackling this issue since every member of the community will be aware of the issue, and is aware of the repercussions if they do not abide to the new set of policies. Making the community aware of how big this issue is should be the first strategy toward ending the nightmare in Nyeri County (Interview with sub-county administrator, 12th May, 2022).

An effective policy framework can contribute significantly towards reducing the number of domestic violence cases in Nyeri County. Currently, several legal policy frameworks inform on the punishment that domestic violence offenders are subjected to; the legal sentence ranging from life in prison to a few years in prison. In some cases, the punishment given to the offenders might be extremely lenient, especially in cases of defilements where evidence gathering might be a challenge or when the offender is a first offender (Nyambura, 2014). In some cases, a convicted offender can end up spending less than five years in jail despite the seriousness of the crime. In other cases, as mentioned by

Karanja (2019), such as marital rape, the offenders may end up walking scot-free. Such lenient sentences imply that some of the victims may end up feeling that justice has not been served on account of the extremely lenient sentences passed onto the offender.

Karanja (2019) argues that it is important to have in place an improved policy framework surrounding punishment for perpetrators of domestic violence. Before implementing the policy, there should be clear objectives that inform on the policy. In the case of domestic violence, one of the main objectives should be the administration of justice (Karanja, 2019). It is important that whatever punishment is given out to the offender, the victim, and members of society, in general, should be able to appreciate that justice has indeed been served. When the punishment is seemingly too lenient, then the objective of justice will not have been achieved. In addition to administering justice, another main objective on the policy framework concerning punishment should be deterrence (Lopes, 2016). The punishment for perpetrators of domestic violence ought to be harsh enough to discourage any potential offender from engaging in violent conduct against those close to them. It is important for the relevant authorities in Nyeri County including the judiciary, the police, and society in general, to ensure that they can play their respective role towards ensuring that punishment for offenders is extremely high.

One of the reasons why a significant number of victims of domestic violence in Nyeri do not end up getting the justice they deserve is the impact of traditional culture. There are various cultural solutions including eliciting the services of clan elders that can effectively address minor cases of domestic violence such as a disagreement between siblings, spouses, or any other family members that do not give rise to physical violence. However, such cultural solutions are sometimes employed in more serious cases

including extreme physical violence, rape, and even incest. In many cases, the punishment prescribed by culture might not befit the crime. For this reason, the policy framework on punishment should ensure that perpetrators of any serious case of domestic violence are brought before a court of law and not subjected to some traditional conflict resolution mechanism that may see them walk free.

6.2.6 Current Media Selection

Table 6.1 has an articulation of how respondents viewed the impact of current media selection as an opportunity. The table shows that 12(3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 19 (5%) disagreed that current media selection could be used to reduce cases of domestic violence in Nyeri county. However, 203 (53%) of the respondents agreed, and 146 (38%) strongly agreed that current media selection could be used as an essential tool to control cases of domestic violence in Nyeri county. 4 of the members who were about 1% of the total respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the idea of current media selection as a tool to eliminate cases of domestic violence in Nyeri county. Currently, media is an essential tool when it comes to sensitizing various issues which are affecting society today. The members of an NGO based in Nyeri claimed that for the fight against domestic violence to be won, the media has to be involved. In addition, one member mentioned that:

Whatever media portrays plays a vital role towards influencing the society. Therefore, it is advisable that the media stations based in Nyeri start airing information which will encourage the residents of Nyeri County to shun domestic violence. For example, we have radio stations like Rware FM based in Nyeri which could be used to condemn domestic violence in this county (Interview with NGO head, 19th July, 2022).

Nyeri police officers also supported the idea. One of the police officers in an interview said that:

It would be good if people chose media as a tool to condemn cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Use of media is efficient since we are technologically advanced; hence it will reach many people in the county (Interview with police officer, 22nd March, 2022).

Therefore, using media, through the selected content will help reduce cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County. A sound sensitization strategy ought to be coupled with the most appropriate current media solution. This is because it is the current media in question that will pass along the intended message on the effects of domestic violence county. In Nyeri County, just as is the case with many other counties across the country, television and radio remain the most popular media outlets. However, a significant number of Nyeri County residents have embraced new media solutions such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and other emerging social media platforms (Haas, 2017). The sensitization strategy should therefore integrate elements of both traditional media platforms such as television and radio as well as the forementioned new media platforms. Such an integrated approach will ensure that the message can reach as many residents of Nyeri County as possible (Roberts & Marchais, 2018).

6.2.7 Economic Boost by Using Devolved Resources

In Table 6.1, 34 (9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 18 (4%) disagreed that boosting the economy of Nyeri county will help solve cases of domestic violence in this county. On the other hand, 199 (52%) of the individuals agreed, and 127 (33%) strongly agreed that boosting the economy of Nyeri county would help reduce cases of domestic

violence in the county. 6 (2%) of the respondents said they do not know what the effect of boosting the economy of Nyeri County will be regarding domestic violence.

Economic boost is a way of improving most people's income in Nyeri County. This idea was highly appreciated and voted for in an interview with NGOs in this county. One of the activists mentioned that;

The major reason why most of women in Nyeri County are facing domestic violence cases is because they do not have any source of income, hence depend entirely on men. In case the economy of Nyeri is boosted through various ways, more opportunities will be increased hence women will stand a chance. Whenever they are earning their own money, they will be able to stand on their ground meaning less dependence on men, hence cases of domestic violence will reduce due to financial independence (Interview with NGO head, 22nd March, 2022).

Village elders from Mucharage village supported the idea of an economic boost. One of the elders mentioned,

Nothing hurts a man than seeing he has a family but cannot provide for it. In most cases, such men will always be angry and bitter, and in case someone provokes them it is easy for them to be involved in domestic violence. Therefore, boosting the economy of Nyeri County will increase the rate of income and money flow in the county, hence reducing cases of domestic violence (FGD with village elders, 12th May, 2022).

While it is true that balanced distribution of resources can significantly reduce the number of domestic violence cases in Nyeri, such an initiative can be a lengthy one. It might take years for authorities in Nyeri County to ensure that there is finally a balance in the distribution of resources between men and women. However, an economic boost can be a much faster process of availing resources to Nyeri women thus reducing their overall

dependency on men. Economic boost in this context simply implies giving some financial resources to women to enable them to pursue investment opportunities that can improve their overall financial standing. Economic boost can be implemented through various measures but perhaps one of the most effective solutions that can benefit the women of Nyeri County would be the involvement of the county government as the main provider of funds (Ghafournia, 2017). In Nyeri County, just like is the case with many other devolved units in the country, the county government is one of the most powerful entities in terms of its access to financial resources. The importance of the devolved government can be underscored by the fact that many development projects, social welfare programs, affirmative action programs, and such important initiatives in the county are funded by the county government (Ghafournia, 2017). The county government of Nyeri is thus a tool for development as well as being a provider of solutions to various socio-economic problems that the people may be facing.

An economic boost program that is initiated by the county government of Nyeri should ostensibly seek to enhance the financial independence of women in the county. However, such a program will require a sound and practical mode of implementation. It will not be possible for the county government to give money to any woman who shows up at the county offices with a story. The ideal approach would be to issue funds to women who have sound ideas for entrepreneurship (King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2017). The women wishing to have access to these funds should come up with their individual or group business proposals. The county government will then be tasked with the responsibility of appraising the proposals and identifying those that can translate to profitable business operations (Aizer, 2010). The shortlisted proposals should then be funded on a priority

basis with the highest priority being accorded to those proposals that have good potential. Similarly, more funds should be allocated to high-priority proposals while less funds will be allocated to those proposals that can be described as average.

The women of Nyeri County are among the most enterprising people in Kenya. Most of them own and run small and medium business organizations and they use the money to support their families. However, many of these businesses are yet to realize substantial expansion mainly due to a lack of enough funds (Aizer, 2010). In many cases, women in Nyeri County rely on funds from their investment groups otherwise referred to as *chamas*. The investment groups have gone a long way in enabling a lot of women in the county to start their own businesses or boost existing ones but funds from the groups are very limited (Mwangi, 2017). In almost all *chamas*, their only source of funds is the contribution from individual members. One of the ways through which the county government can channel economic boost funds can therefore be through such investment groups. Funds from the devolved government can significantly boost the overall capacity of women investment groups enabling them to expand their businesses or even, venture into more lucrative business segments that ordinarily may be too expensive for them.

If implemented effectively, an economic boost program initiated by the devolved government in Nyeri will enhance the status of the Nyeri woman. The women will be more independent, more respected, and more engaged in the overall economic welfare of their families. Such women are less likely to be victims of domestic violence.

6.2.8 Enactment of Programs within Social Groups (churches, women groups and youth groups)

Table 6.1 shows various responses after the respondents were asked if the enactment of programs is an opportunity that can reduce cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County. According to the results, 21 (5%) strongly disagreed, and 33 (9%) disagreed that enacting programs would reduce domestic violence cases in this county. However, 238 (62%) and 87 (23%) agreed and strongly agreed with the idea. 5 (1%) of the respondents said they did not know.

Enactment of programs is the process of making some of the programs in the community legal through seeking official permissions from the necessary authorities. In this case, some of the programs run in women's groups, churches and youth groups should be enacted to perform as expected. In an interview with NGO members, one of the interviewees mentioned that:

There are many potential groups in Nyeri which can be used to reduce domestic violence cases in this county, but have not been enacted. This means that the powers of such groups are limited, hence cannot make any recommendations to the necessary authorities (Interview with NGO head, 22nd March, 2022).

The local administration also supported the idea as one of the assistant chiefs in the interview mentioned that:

There are some youth groups which have been proposed and the list of members is in my office. The primary idea of these groups is to get some loans from the government and other NGOs for them to start their own business which will keep them busy and increase their earnings, thus effectively reducing cases of domestic violence. Unfortunately, the groups have not yet been enacted, hence these youths are still hanging around, drunk and violent due to depression

and hopelessness (Interview with assistant chief, 2nd August, 2022).

In support of this statement, one of the police officers also said that;

The major cause of domestic violence is identified as poverty. People who are frustrated about their inability to provide for the basic needs may act with violence to their immediate partners thus causing cases of domestic violence. Therefore, laying the best measures possible to control poverty in the county will help reduce cases of domestic violence (Interview with police officer, 14th June, 2022).

Self-empowerment through social groups has the potential to reduce cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Social groups refer to various formations that people participate in that feature a sense of unity and the participants most often than not usually have similar objectives. The previous section has referred to women investment groups which are one of the most popular social groups not only in Nyeri County, but also in other parts of the country.

In addition to the investment groups, church groups are also popular in Nyeri County, especially among women and youth. Many people who attend the same church usually tend to have such church groups to discuss issues relating to the church, exchange advice, ideas, and discuss other issues that may affect them in their day-to-day lives. To this end, church groups are usually more generalized in terms of the agenda underpinning the group, unlike investment groups that are formed ostensibly to improve the financial status of the participants (Guerin & de Oliveira Ortolan, 2017). When it comes to youth groups, this type of social group is mainly designed to facilitate the interaction of youths in an area. In Nyeri County, several youth groups have been formed to pursue different goals and objectives. Just like church groups, youth groups are diverse concerning their purpose and objectives.

The aforementioned social groups can be very effective as an avenue for extending psychosocial support. This is because some of the members in the group may have experienced domestic violence and can offer crucial advice to any other person in the group who could be grappling with this vice. For instance, a member of a youth group may have been subjected to domestic violence by a family but somehow managed to cope with the situation without necessarily losing their sense of purpose and direction (Nyambura, 2014). Such an individual can advise anyone going through the same providing them with the best approach of dealing with the challenge.

Additionally, one of the most important mitigation measures to resolving domestic violence in Nyeri County is the enactment of programs against domestic violence within social groups such as churches, women groups and youth groups. This will help to create awareness and to sensitize the people living in the county about the types of domestic abuse that are there in the society and ways in which they can stop the abuse before it even happens. These programs also help individuals to be able to identify intimate partner abuse easily and encourage the victims to take action in order to promote social change. Furthermore, they also assist the victims in getting professional counseling and help them to get out of an abusive relationship no matter how hard that might be. Through these programs against domestic violence, more people in Nyeri County become more educated about this issue, and the whole society will therefore get to know about it through social learning as explained in the social learning theory by Bandura (1986). This will therefore result in a decline in cases of domestic violence in the county.

In the views of Karanja (2019) both church groups and youth groups can also play a key role in eliciting debate on various topics relating to domestic violence thus facilitating the

formulation of potential solutions. The groups can also be used as awareness-creation vehicles whereby members of the groups are involved in passing across messages on how to deal with domestic violence including sharing hotline numbers that victims can use.

6.2.9 Psychosocial Support

Figure 6.1 portrays that 98 (26%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 76 (20%) disagreed that psychological support would not be an effective way of solving domestic violence in Nyeri county. However, 187 (48%) of the participants agreed, and 7 (2%) strongly agreed that psychological support would help control domestic violence cases in Nyeri county. 16 (4%) of the respondents said they did not know.

There are many psychological factors that act as a catalyst for the occurrence of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Therefore, psychological and psychosocial approaches could reduce domestic violence cases in the community. This support system can be issued at the community level through support activities for the community or families. In an interview with NGOs members of Nyeri County, one of the members mentioned that:

Some of the activities which can help improve the psychological and psychosocial state of individual in Nyeri County include the provision and promotion of daily activities such as activating social networks, schooling, and age-friendly spaces (Interview with NGO head, 2nd July, 2022).

The idea was supported by local administrators as one of the assistant chiefs mentioned that:

These activities will promote social sense of safety, calming of the individual who may have violent behaviors, development of self and community efficacy and improve social connectedness. Whenever there is social cohesion in the society, it becomes easy to deal with any issue facing the community (Interview with assistant chief, 3rd March, 2022).

However, in an FGD with the village elders from Thūngūma, the idea seemed to face some of the opposition. One of the village elders mentioned that:

The major reason why the society is facing domestic violence is due to pressure of lack of finances to provide for the families, and moral deterioration causing disrespectfulness in relationship which could be provocative thus triggering domestic violence. Therefore, instead of these activities, they should be more focused on creating more jobs for our people and boost moral support, which will bring along respect and self-control in the community, especially the young couples (FGD with village elders, 12th May, 2022).

Psychosocial support refers to a mental health initiative that is designed to enable an individual to develop coping mechanisms required for them to address mental, emotional, and social challenges that may manifest in their lives. Psychosocial support is considered one of the main strategies that can substantially address the problem of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Lopes (2016) asserts that one of the main reasons why individuals engage in various forms of anti-social behavior including subjecting their better halves or close family members to domestic violence is, they lack proper internal coping mechanisms that can enable them to deal with various challenges that they may be facing in their day-to-day lives (Lopes, 2016).

One of the main reasons why people engage in domestic violence in Nyeri County is because they are experiencing emotional or social challenges in their lives. For example, a man may decide to attack his wife as a way of venting out frustrations that he may be experiencing outside the home setting (Lopes, 2016). Similarly, a woman may decide to violently attack their husband because they are frustrated and they think that the husband

may not be performing their duties at home. Finally, a parent facing emotional and social challenges may end up subjecting their child to physical violence (Lopes, 2016).

In all the aforementioned, the perpetrators of domestic violence engage in this behavior because they are unable to deal with the emotional and social challenges that they are facing. Psychosocial support will equip both perpetrators and victims with coping mechanisms that will see them deal with their issues without resorting to violent behavior. In cases of victims of domestic violence, psychosocial support will equip them with emotional coping skills that will prevent them from sinking into depression, becoming violent to other people thus extending the cycle, or engaging in other anti-social behavior such as drug and alcohol addiction.

According to Ghafournia (2017) most perpetrators of domestic violence have unresolved underlying issues. As earlier mentioned, many men engaging in domestic violence may have been raised in abusive families. Psychosocial support is one of the most effective solutions that can unearth some of the underlying issues that may prompt Nyeri residents to engage in violent behavior against their significant others or any other close member of the family. Potential perpetrators will thus be accorded an opportunity to confront the issues that they may have avoided for many years thus improving their capacity to establish and retain proper, violent-free, and loving relationships with the people that they consider dear (Ghafournia, 2017). Finally, while a professional such as a psychologist may play a key role in administering psychosocial support, other close family members must participate in the same. Such an approach will make the person feel loved and appreciated thus commencing the healing process.

Other opportunities

In open ended questions, interviews and FGDs, respondents were asked to indicate other opportunities that arose from domestic violence. The results are discussed in this section.

6.2.10 Boy-child Empowerment Initiatives

One of the significant opportunities created by the rise in domestic violence cases in Nyeri County is Boy-child Empowerment Initiatives. Boy-child empowerment initiatives are focused on empowering every boy-child in Nyeri County, saving them from humiliation and societal victimizations not only from Nyeri County alone but from the rest of the country. In an interview with NGOs and other community-based organizations, the issue of boy-child empowerment initiatives was raised to complement the occurrence of domestic violence in the county. One interviewee said that:

After the reports of how men are subjected to domestic violence in different parts of Nyeri County, either due to real-life occurrences or stereotypes about Nyeri women, most NGOs took the initiative of empowering boy-child from Nyeri County. There are associations that aim at improving these children's technical skills to be independent. This empowers them and reduces their victimization in the community (Interview with NGO head, 14th July, 2022).

Sub-county administrators also supported the idea. One of them mentioned that:

Recently, I have approved the establishment of various rehabilitation centers which are meant to see that all those men in Nyeri who were alcoholics are reformed since alcoholism was one of the major reasons why they were facing domestic violence. This is one of the effective ways of reforming them (Interview with sub-county administrators, 21st March, 2022).

The village elders further agreed with the idea. One of them said:

It is very hopeful seeing most of the youth taking part in *Kazi Mtaani*. The initiative keeps them busy. Before people raised an alarm concerning domestic violence plus alcoholism in this village, most of the young men were

loitering in the shopping centers doing nothing. The movement has been of help since I have seen many people being engaged in some activities (FGD with village elders, 8th March, 2022).

Striving domestic violence has made society completely forget about the boy child. Mistreatment of one gender while uplifting the female gender in the culture undermines fighting domestic violence in Nyeri County. Respondent informants expressed concern that the boy child was being left out of the gender schedule due to repeated campaigns to protect the girl child. According to Ngisa (2017), even when speaking to large crowds, Nyeri county social and political leaders emphasized the importance of girls' education. In focus group interactions with the kids, the females expressed concern about the boy's situation. They claim that mothers are more concerned about their daughters' whereabouts, especially in the evenings, than they are about their sons. The majority of parents believe their boys can take care of themselves and are indifferent to the activities in which they engage. When parents were concerned about the cost of tuition, some boys were asked to drop out of school so that their sisters may continue their studies. The investigation showed that the boy child is held to an unreasonably high standard of behavior, with little evidence that they can cope. Some males are given early domestic responsibilities, and they are sometimes encouraged to do so with words like "men are born to suffer."

A smaller percentage of parents and families deny the best environment for a boy child to flourish in Nyeri County. In the view of Ngisa (2017), boys in families where the father is frequently absent or drunken lack role models and parental supervision, influencing their development and behavior. In some communities, when a family unit breaks down due to divorce and the children are left with the mother, the boy child is expected to become the

family's leader. Such responsibilities frequently lead to the boy dropping out of school to assist his siblings financially. If the divorced mother remarries and relocates the children, the boy will have to deal with the additional issue of not seeing his biological father. The boy's new family rejects him in many cases, leaving him with his grandparents. The boys may become defiant and truant as a result of the stress. According to Children's Officers in the county, most people choose to adopt girls over boys when adoption is an option. As a result, the boy child cannot be reared in a family setting, and many end up in Charitable Children's Institutions.

Boy child empowerment neglect is quite evident due to a more significant percentage of drug abusers among the same gender. Drug abuse is a substantial source of concern. The bulk of those who are affected is boys. As per Ngisa (2017), some of the most often abused narcotics include bhang, heroin, cocaine, illicit brews, Khat, and tobacco. Boys in Nyeri are introduced to drugs and alcohol by their classmates at a young age. Boys are exposed to and engage in drug and alcohol addiction during rites. This affects their school attendance and, as a result, their ability to continue with school and complete their education.

6.2.11 Women's Empowerment

The idea of women empowerment also came about after various domestic violence cases had been identified as a significant social issue in Nyeri County. Women have constantly been socially victimized based on gender, vital in spreading domestic violence cases in this county. Based on a point made during an interview with various NGO members, the idea of coming together and forming various women empowerment forums was due to

the multiple cases of domestic violence reported within the county daily. The member mentioned that:

After witnessing the cases of domestic violence, especially against women, we had to come up with an idea of how women will be helped. The best idea was to come together and forming groups which would help the development of women in Nyeri County. Through these groups, women would be able to apply for loans, which in turn they would invest and eventually become financially stable. This would reduce the rate of dependence on their husbands, and equally reduce cases of domestic violence (Interview with NGO head, 14th July, 2022).

Local administrators also supported the idea and claimed they noticed the change within their respective areas of jurisdiction.

Women from different parts of the county came together and protested against the sale of alcohol. They all blamed alcohol on various issues affecting families in this county, hence measures and regulations of its sales had to be defined again (Interview with sub-county administrators, 21st March, 2022).

This is enough evidence that domestic violence cases enable women in this county to form various groups that empower them by giving them a voice that they used to call for change.

According to the study, 40% of women in Nyeri county urban centers are empowered, whereas just around half of women in rural areas are (Muthee *et al.* 2019). Women in households where the head has graduated high school are more about four times as powerful as women in homes where the household head has not finished high school. Women in households in which the director has a post-secondary degree wield more power than women in homes where the leader has not finished post-secondary schooling. In Nyeri's poorest homes, female free choice is severely curtailed. According to the

survey, approximately 7% of women in these households are likely to be empowered, versus 53% of women in the wealthiest families (Muthee *et al.* 2019). Other socioeconomic factors, such as marital status, are also important, with single and married women having much more influence than separated and bereaved women.

The Nyeri Female Empowerment Index was created using 14,000 women aged 15 to 49 who participated in the Demographic Health Survey in 2014 (NGEC, 2016). It is primarily enshrined in existing legislation and customs. The index's first study established a firm foundation for future evaluations of female empowerment in Nyeri County, using variables such as school attendance, paid employment, contraceptives, and family judgment among many other socioeconomic elements (Muthee *et al.* 2019). UN women director in a convention for women empowerment in the county sends a message that women and girls can be powerful agents of economic advancement, prosperity, and social revolution when given the same opportunities as men and boys.

6.3.12 Enabled Speaking Up

Enabling both genders to speak up is the other opportunity that cases of domestic violence bring within Nyeri County. As mentioned in the different possibilities, the circumstances allow for boy-child empowerment initiatives and women empowerment programs to be established. However, these developments are only possible after the individuals could speak up on the issues affecting them. As mentioned by the one assistant chief in an interview:

Once women in Nyeri saw that the issue of domestic violence has been rampant more than it has ever been, they had to find out what was majorly the cause. Consequently, everyone complained that alcoholism was the primary factor that played a vital role in developing this domestic violence. As a result, these women through formed

initiatives and groups, protested against the sale of *chang'aa* and other illegal breweries, which helped reduce cases of domestic violence (Interview with assistant chief, 9th March, 2022).

This means that women in this county found an opportunity of raising their voices through airing their views on the sale of alcohol in this county. Currently, they dare to point out any other issues they may be going through and can also be able to seek help since they now know the right channels to use. This was all possible after a long-time incident of domestic violence within this county. The police also affirmed this by saying that:

Currently, most individuals in the community have learned the importance of speaking out about issues they are going through. Initially, women tolerated domestic violence cases since they did not know the correct channels to use or did not understand how we would respond to them. However, after tackling the issue of alcoholism, boosting the economy, and working with local authorities to teach the signs, causes, and impacts of domestic violence, people have been able to speak out on other issues they initially lived with (Interview with police officer, 26th May, 2022).

Therefore, domestic violence cases allowed the people of Nyeri to speak out about other issues they were going through.

Domestic violence is a behavioral pattern. It is possible to acquire new skills. Any habit that may be learned can be unlearned as well. Dr. Nancy Barasa feels that addressing domestic violence should empower young people to change their behavior. Awareness-raising and psychosocial aid programs should be created in Nyeri County to assist victims, who are predominantly girls and women, in reintegrating back into society. She called upon the Nyeri County residents to recognize adolescents' value as change agents

in confronting social customs and gender stereotypes (Muthee, Barasa & Adeli, 2019). The most common way for individuals to relinquish power is to believe they don't have a right to anything. Shawnee Bigelow, as quoted by Kearns (2015) global development director at Strategic Applications International, urged all stakeholders in Africa to take action against domestic violence. He believed this should be a turning point in the community's battle against domestic violence (Kearns, 2015).

Nyeri County's domestic violence awareness program intends to recruit more partners in the future to establish the SEMA Action Alliance, whose main goal will be to advocate for the end of domestic violence, gender-equitable policies, rules, and structures that protect women and children from violence. It will also serve as a watchdog for how the media portrays violence at homes and on women and girls. This contributes to the propagation of negative stereotypes and acceptance of domestic violence (Muthee *et al.* 2019). The step serves as a practical tool for Scouts in Nyeri County to learn about domestic violence, report cases of abuse, get help when they're in trouble, and provide Scout Leaders with a way to know and act when their scouts require assistance. This helps keep the movement's ongoing efforts to keep scouts safe from harm. The application expands on the U-Report program's previous social mobilization initiatives by allowing collaboration. Future options for combining the current work with other partners to boost scouts' social effect in Kenya, Africa, and beyond will be investigated (Owens, 2011).

SEMA Mapenzi Bila Chuki is the fifth pillar of the Nyeri Domestic-Based Violence Partnership program. The post's goal is to change attitudes and prevent stereotypical

thinking about domestic violence. It also aims at facilitating behavior change by overcoming harmful gender norms and advocating for initiatives that favor equality incorporation in societies, colleges, and high schools (Muthee *et al.* 2019). The partnership program's mission is to reduce domestic violence in Nyeri County by strengthening religion and society solutions through a comprehensive and holistic prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and compliance strategy. SEMA is a consciousness and policy agenda that encourages adolescents to speak out against domestic violence in their communities. Recognizing that acquaintances and romantic partners are responsible for most domestic violence incidents, the plan "*Mapenzi Bila Chuki*" or "Love without Hate", is a tactical signal. Strategic Applications International created the SEMA App in partnership with several partners, including the Kenya Scouts Association, as part of their SEMA Youth Initiative. The SEMA App is a free mobile phone application to end domestic violence, improve domestic violence reporting, create awareness about the issue, alter legislation at all levels, and end internal feuds in domestic environments.

6.2.13 Utilization of Indigenous Mechanisms

The respondents pointed out that the indigenous mechanisms effectively solved significant domestic violence in Nyeri County. Indigenous mechanisms involve family elders, clan elders, and traditional specialists who would help tackle the issue of domestic violence at ease. During an FGD with the elders, they all agreed that indigenous mechanisms could be the best way to solve social problems. One of the elders claimed that;

Everyone in the community belongs to a certain family from a specific clan. Therefore, the family elders stand a better chance to solve any cases of domestic violence amongst their family members, and if the issue seems to be

out of their control, they can be helped by their clan leaders (FGD with village elders, 2nd March, 2022).

On the same FGD, another elder echoed that:

Elders in our community, locally referred to as “*athuri a kiama*” have since time immemorial been used to resolve domestic disputes. They usually have the heart of the community. Thus, they make fair decisions that do not oppress anyone. Thus, people have trusted them to resolve their disagreements.

Local administrators also echoed the sentiment in support of the idea of using indigenous mechanisms to resolve domestic violence. In an interview with the administrator of Nyeri south sub-county, he claimed that:

Most of the domestic issues are possible to be solved at a family and clan level instead of taking them to the courts of law or other institutions. This is because most of them result from simple misunderstandings which can easily be solved by the family and clan elders, thus maintaining the image of the family (Interview with sub-county administrator, 19th June, 2022).

The sub-county administrator, in this case, seemed to appreciate maintaining a family's reputation by solving their issues silently as a family or a clan. The courts and police also support the idea, claiming that the trio of family elders, clan elders, and traditional specialists are the best chance the community has towards solving most of the domestic violence cases that arise in the community. In an interview with one of the police officers from Karima police station, he mentioned that;

There are many issues which the court and police systems are supposed to be resolving. Therefore, not degrading any social issue, I believe that social issues such as domestic violence can best be solved through indigenous mechanisms to allow courts and police to solve other serious issues affecting national security easily and effectively (Interview with police officer, 5th July, 2022).

There are several strategies that Nyeri residents can apply in resolving the problem of domestic violence in Nyeri County, and one such strategy is the use of indigenous mechanisms. Indigenous mechanisms refer to various homegrown solutions that many African societies have been using to resolve conflicts hundreds of years before the westernization of the continent. Indigenous mechanisms can be very effective since they relate to solutions that are uniquely African and even though the continent is now modernized, many of its inhabitants still revere their traditional practice and culture (Muigua, 2017). There is therefore a high likelihood of acceptance of the solutions offered on the part of couples or conflicting family members hence underscoring the overall effectiveness of this approach (Muigua, 2017).

One indigenous approach would be the use of family elders. A family elder is mostly an individual who is highly held within the family setting, and one of advanced age. High esteem is endowed upon them by the family members. In many cases, a paternal family member such as a father or a grandfather is usually selected to be the elder and de facto leader of the family with the mandate of resolving domestic violence issues affecting any of the family members (Ndung'u, Mbaro & Okumu, nd). In some cases, a maternal figure such as the mother or grandmother can also act as an elder and have the same mandate. The elder should arrange for a sit down with both the victim and perpetrator of domestic violence. The main objective of the sit down is to offer guidance and counseling relating to what is considered acceptable behavior among family members (Ndung'u, Mbaro & Okumu, nd). The elder can also castigate the perpetrator of the violence and warn them of dire consequences if they continue engaging in violent behavior towards their partner. The family elder can also offer consolation to the aggrieved party requesting them to

forgive the perpetrator but to immediately report them in case they engage in similar behavior in the future (Ndung'u, Mbaro & Okumu, nd).

Within the indigenous Nyeri community setting, a clan elder is considered to wield higher authority as compared to other elders such as family elders. A clan refers to a collection of families that share a common lineage. The clan elder is therefore a leader who presides over several families. The elder is usually in charge of resolving family issues including domestic violence cases (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2017). Domestic violence cases that reach the clan elder should be ones that cannot be resolved at the family level by the family elder (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2017). For instance, in cases where the perpetrator is a repeat offender, the best approach to use would be to bring forward the case before a clan elder instead of using a family elder. This is because a clan elder wields more authority that can enable them to stop the action of the offender in question. The elder may use several sanctions including requiring the offender to pay restitution to the victim, punishment such as ordering the offender to work for the clan of the victim, or any other such punitive action that is prescribed by the clan (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2017).

Traditional specialists within the context of the wider African setting, including Nyeri County, are considered to have some kind of special powers. They may, for instance, be called upon to invoke the gods in times of famine so that rain would come and replenish the earth. A traditional specialist is also believed to have the power to cast spells and pronounce curses against people that are considered bad in the society (Holzinger, Kern, & Kromrey, 2017). Such beliefs in the powers of the specialist act as deterrents within many African societies so that people do not engage in anti-social behavior for the fear of being cursed by the specialists (Holzinger, Kern, & Kromrey, 2017). In Nyeri County,

such specialists may be called upon to resolve domestic violence issues by issuing threats to the perpetrator or pronouncing curses upon them. The activities of the traditional specialists will therefore compel the perpetrator to cease from any violent conduct against their partner for fear of the curse materializing.

6.2.14 Intervention of Religious Leaders

The respondents pointed out that religious leader are the opportunity to solve domestic violence issues in Nyeri County. In an interview with the Assistant chiefs, they affirmed that religious leaders stand a chance to help solve these issues rampant in the community.

Ngangarithi's assistant chief mentioned that

Nyeri people are strong believers in religion, and the largest and dominating religion in this area is Christianity. Therefore, pastors and other religious leaders have a chance to condemn domestic violence cases in the community, and most people will listen to them since they majorly are believers (Interview with religious leaders, 1st June, 2022).

Village elders also supported the idea of the assistant chief. In an FGD with the village elders, one of them raised the following concerns:

The current generation in Nyeri County cannot be compared to how we used to live in the past. Most of them lost their culture, thus they do not believe in clans and other social institutions which was upheld to the highest degree by people of our age. Since religion is the only thing that binds people together today, men of God stand a better chance in solving cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County (FGD with village elders, 22nd May, 2022).

The village elder who mentioned these words meant that one could not compare today's generations with their generation. Today's generation majorly believes in religion, whereas the older generation believes in families and clans as the most critical

institutions in the community. Therefore, in the olden days, it was possible to use clan elders and other leaders in the community to solve most issues, unlike today. The police also affirmed this, claiming that most people have greatly weakened the previously strong family bond.

Our forefathers solved family cases amongst themselves since there was respect for the elders. Currently, people seem to respect money more, leaving little chances for the younger generation to listen to the older people, hence religious leaders are the best shot at this (Interview with police officer, 5th July, 2022).

In addition to having a lot respect to their African culture, most Nyeri county residents are also highly religious. The predominant religion in the country is Christianity with Islam coming second. Both Christian and Islamic religious leaders can therefore play a significant role in resolving domestic violence issues. This is because in both religions domestic violence is discouraged. Religious leaders can therefore offer direct quotes from the Holy Books, the Bible and the Quran, to the partners as evidence to why domestic violence should never be encouraged (Ibrahim, 2018). The leaders should also explain to them that violence of any kind is a sin and the perpetrator can be punished by God for their misdoings either here on earth or in the afterlife. When it comes to Islam, the leader can also invoke the provisions of Islamic Sharia Law and prescribe sanctions and punishments to the perpetrator as deterrents (Ntuli, 2018).

Religious leaders were interviewed to understand their role in resolving domestic violence in the study area. They unanimously agreed that they have been resolving many domestic issues. Some of the churches such as Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) have constituted a permanent organ in the church to

handle conflicts among members. In the PCEA Church, there is the Justice Peace and Reconciliation Committee (JPRC) that assists members who have disputes. The Catholic Church has the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) committee which addresses oppressive cultures in the society such as domestic violence. The religious leaders agreed that they have handled many cases as people trust them because of the role they play in the society.

During the interviews, one religious leader had this to say:

The church has been proactive especially in this region. We have been handling a lot of disputes, and that is why we had to come up with a structural change. I usually spare Thursdays for personal needs of the members, and most of the needs that come are domestic issues. People are going through a lot, and we do help them whenever they come to us (Interview with religious leader, 11th August, 2022).

Religious leaders are in many cases highly trained in guidance and counseling. They may have special abilities in identifying an underlying issue by simply talking to the parties involved. In many cases, the problem of domestic violence can be linked to a major issue or challenge that affects either an individual or the entire family (Ibrahim, 2018). For instance, a violent partner may be experiencing a difficult time outside the family setting such as at the workplace. They may inadvertently end up channeling their pent-up anger towards their partner thus resulting to either verbal or physical abuse. In some cases, dire situations within the family setting such as lack of finances can also result in domestic violence whereby one partner feels frustrated with regard to their inability to provide for the family (Ibrahim, 2018). Such frustration can give way to anger and violence against the other partner. For instance, there have been cases where financially frustrated husbands have violently attacked their wives simply because they feel helpless and angry

about their inability to provide for their families. Finally, the anti-social conduct on the part of one party can result in the other party being extremely frustrated and taking out the frustration on their partner in a violent manner (Ntuli, 2018). For instance, there have been several cases where wives have violently attacked their husbands for having been engaging in too much alcohol drinking to the point of them forgetting their duties as husbands and fathers in the home setting.

Many religious leaders have adequate skills that can enable them uncover the underlying causes of violence by simply interacting with the partners. The leaders can also offer useful advice to the affected parties letting them know that whatever situation they may be facing, violent conduct against the other party can only make it worse. Moreover, religious leaders can also offer solutions to some of these problems (Ntuli, 2018). For instance, the leader can use funds from the church to support an alcoholic to attend a rehabilitation facility. Such a partner will therefore become a more productive member of the family thus fostering cohesion within the family setting and in turn eliminating the problem of domestic violence.

6.2.15 Police Intervention

Respondents believed that the courts of law and police administration give society the best chance to solve domestic violence cases. In an interview with NGOs and other community organizations, one of the officials pointed out that:

NGOs and other organizations work tirelessly to ensure that fairness and justice reign in the community. We believe that everyone has their own rights, and that is why we work closely with the courts of law and police administration to ensure that human rights have been upheld to the latter (Interview with NGO leader, 11th May, 2022).

NGOs and other community organizations believe that according to the constitution, every individual has their rights, which anyone in the community should observe. The police also affirmed the idea. In an interview with police from Mweiga police station, one of them mentioned that;

Our duty is to serve the people of Nyeri by ensuring that everyone's rights are observed, and peace and harmony prevail. In case anyone goes against this, we are committed to arresting them and take them to court for the rule of law to prevail (Interview with police officer, 12th May, 2022).

Local administrators also seemed to acknowledge that courts of law and police are the best tools which should be used to solve significant domestic violence cases in Nyeri County. In an interview, one of the senior police officers from Kieni Sub County said that:

The Kenyan constitution has issued the courts with independence to ensure that human rights are observed, and the police unit with the power to enforce law and order in the community. In cases of domestic violence in this county, one party is a victim since the offender has gone against their human rights, hence the police have the responsibility to make arrests. The offender has to be taken to the court for justice to be served. This will in turn reduce cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County (Interview with police officer, 8th August, 2022).

There are several options available to Nyeri County residents in cases of extreme domestic violence cases or repeat offenders. In such cases, the best option would be to pursue legal remedies to prevent future cases or even to prevent loss of lives. Bringing on board the courts of law and police is one of the most effective remedies for dealing with domestic violence especially for the extreme cases. There are several courts in Nyeri including the Resident Magistrate's Court and the High court of Nyeri. All these courts

have jurisdiction to hear and determine domestic violence cases. The decision of the courts is based on the various laws in the country regarding violence.

It is important to note that the laws of Kenya define violence as an act that can result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm on the other party. The courts will therefore decide based on the laws of Kenya and not necessarily rely on cultural laws and practices in doing the same (Githaiga, 2020). For this reason, one can argue that pursuing domestic violence cases using the courts and the police is a more effective approach since cultural and religious solutions may offer a leeway through which perpetrators can get away with their sins (Githaiga, 2020). For instance, a clan elder may decide to offer light sanctions to an offender simply because they may happen to be a first offender. This could be even though the partner in question may have subjected their spouse to extreme physical or sexual harm.

At times, however, it may be important for the judicial system in Nyeri to work hand in hand with other entities involved in the resolution of domestic violence cases such as the clan or family elders. This is because the elders are usually the ones on the ground and may have useful information that can assist the courts in the ruling of the case. For instance, in case where there have been previous instances of domestic violence involving the offender, the family and clan elders can offer vital information and evidence relating to the previous anti-social conduct of the culprit thus resulting in their conviction (Githaiga, 2020). Similarly, such elders may be the ones who bring to the attention of the police and eventually the judiciary, the possibility of serious cases of domestic violence that ought to be handled by both law enforcement officers and the

legal system. It is thus imperative for law enforcement and legal systems to have proper reporting frameworks that will enhance the overall collaboration between them and the elders (Githaiga, 2020).

The courts and law enforcement bodies in Nyeri County are of course part of the larger legal and judicial system in Kenya. The laws of Kenya provide that an individual is presumed innocent until that point where they are pronounced guilty by a court of law. This is a fundamental aspect of the Bill of Rights that guarantees several rights and freedoms to all Kenyan citizens. However, this provision can pose a challenge especially in cases where the suspect is released on bail pending the decision of the court (Mwayuli *et al.* 2019). They may end up committing the same offence or even subjecting the victim to a more serious violent attack. To this end, the courts and the police should play a key role in protecting the victim even as the judicial process takes its course (Mwayuli *et al.* 2019). The court can, for instance, offer a restraining order requiring the accused not to go anywhere near the victim of the violence. Similarly, the police can offer physical protection or prompt responses whenever they believe that the safety of the victim may be compromised (Mwayuli *et al.* 2019).

6.2.16 Intervention of Local Administration (Chiefs and Sub-Chiefs)

Respondents in the questionnaire claimed that local administrators were also important persons to deal with cases of domestic violence. Local administrations comprise chiefs and assistant chiefs. In an FGD with village elders from the Iriaini location, Othaya Sub-county, one mentioned that;

As an assistant chief, it is easy to note of every family in your areas of jurisdiction. This makes it easy to know what is going on throughout the community, and in case of a

domestic violence issue, they can easily note it (FGD with village elders, 18th June, 2022).

The idea was supported by individuals working in NGOs. In an interview, one of them mentioned that;

When we are going around the community doing various activities, we are always accompanied by area chiefs. We have noted that these people know most families in their areas of jurisdiction. This could make it easy for them to solve major cases since they are aware of the families, their family history, and their daily trends because they meet them daily, making it easy to solve domestic issues around their location (Interview with NGO leader, 19th June, 2022).

In addition, the police also ascertained that chiefs and sub-chiefs who form part of the local administration could easily solve domestic cases. In an interview with members of the National Police Service in Nyeri County, one of them mentioned that;

Some of the causes of domestic issues, or the effects resulting from these issues are not so serious. Therefore, the local administration should first try solving the issues at their administrative level. If they cannot find the solution, they can call us in to do our duty, where we will then take the matter to the courts of law (Interview with police officer, 12th July, 2022).

Nyeri's local administration is required to play a key role when it comes to resolving domestic violence cases in the county. The local administration mainly comprises of chiefs and sub-chiefs. Both the two community leaders do play a key role and can play an even greater role in resolving domestic violence cases in Nyeri County. Within the context of Nyeri County, chiefs and sub-chiefs are considered to be just above the level of clan and family elders (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2017). They are therefore better equipped to handle domestic violence cases that may be outside the purview of the elders on account of the nature of the violence or any other complexities that may underpin the

cases in question (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2017). In some cases, chiefs and sub-chiefs can also offer legal interpretation of various issues relating to the case in question.

The position of chiefs and sub-chiefs as part of the overall administrative framework in the county is also very important when it comes to their ability to resolve domestic violence cases in Nyeri. This is because, they can easily access the services of law enforcement officers and can use the same to ensure compliance on the part of suspected perpetrators of domestic violence cases in Nyeri (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2017). For instance, in case the chief summons a suspect and they refuse to show up, they can send the police to make an arrest and forcefully present the individual before their office. Such enhanced access to law enforcement officers and resources makes the local administration officers much more effective agents when it comes to resolution of domestic violence cases (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2017). Despite the overall effectiveness of local administration officers in resolving domestic violence cases, it is important to note that unlike judicial officers, they do not have any formal training on conflict resolution issues. Many of these officers more or less learn on the job as they resolve one case after another (Onsomu *et al.* 2015).

As much as the local administration is closely linked with the law enforcement component, the link between chiefs and sub-chiefs and the judiciary is not as strong (Onsomu *et al.* 2015). There is need for Nyeri County to put in place mechanisms such as direct communication channels between the local administration and the judiciary to facilitate closer collaboration between the two entities (Onsomu *et al.* 2015). This will make it easy for chiefs and sub-chiefs to collaborate with the courts when it comes to reporting cases of domestic violence, violation of restraining orders granted by the courts,

and the likelihood of domestic violence where such initiatives can improve the overall outcome of the domestic violence prevention strategies in Nyeri County.

According to Mugoya, Witte & Ernst (2015), one of the most important initiatives that can serve to address the issue of domestic violence is awareness creation. Many people who engage in this vice do so because they are dealing with various frustrations in their lives. However, such people need to be made aware that there are better strategies for dealing with issues that may give rise to violent behavior (Mugoya, Witte & Ernst, 2015). Similarly, some people may engage in domestic violence because they do not appreciate the serious legal ramifications that they may face on account of their violent behavior. Both chiefs and sub-chiefs are among the most visible, accessible and respected leaders in Nyeri County (Mugoya, Witte & Ernst, 2015). They can therefore play a crucial role in promoting awareness creation by educating the people of Nyeri on how to deal with stress, depression and other mental health issues that can ultimately result to violent conduct against close family members. The chiefs and sub-chiefs awareness creation strategy can also involve an element of deterrence whereby chiefs can pass the message that engaging in domestic violence can result to serious legal consequences including hefty fines and long prison sentences.

6.2.17 Community Policing

Community policing was suggested for as an effective way and an opportunity of resolving various domestic violence cases in Nyeri County. Community policing involves developing different policies that will help improve the relationship between various community members. This will effectively help solve many social problems, including domestic violence, affecting many parts of Nyeri County. NGOs and other community

organizations were the most incredible supporters of this idea. In an interview, one of them mentioned that:

The community through the respective leaderships should come up with various policies which will help control cases such as domestic violence. These policies should come from the people. Once the policies are determined, it will be easier to control various issues which are found in Nyeri County, including domestic violence (Interview with NGO leader, 14th May, 2022).

The local administrators of the area, who in this case were the assistant chiefs, also supported this idea. An assistant chief from Ndathi sub-location in Kieni Sub-county mentioned that:

It is very important for the people to come up with various rules and policies as a community. As they strive to follow the rules to the latter, it will be easy for us to solve cases of domestic violence, since the people will have understood the dos and the don'ts in their society (Interview with assistant chief, 18th March 2022).

In addition, religious leaders supported the idea. One prominent bishop mentioned:

It is possible for the community to come up with some communal policies which everyone should follow to the letter. In churches, for example, we have formed a constitution which helps us understand how we are supposed to conduct ourselves, and how we are supposed to solve any issue in case it happens to one of us. This is evident that community can also come up with some policies which will guide us, thus reducing cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County (Interview with religious leader, 11th May, 2022).

Community policing refers to initiatives that can be taken by residents of Nyeri County to ensure that the problem of domestic violence is addressed once and for all. Community policing is an effective tool that can act as deterrence and a law enforcement mechanism. First and foremost, potential perpetrators of domestic violence will hesitate from engaging in domestic violence since they know that members of the community have a

keen eye on them and are likely to report them to relevant authorities if they attack their spouses or other family members.

Domestic violence usually occurs within the context of a family setting. Most families in Nyeri have embraced a certain degree of modernity and family affairs are deemed private to the most part. For instance, one cannot easily walk into the house of a suspected perpetrator unless they have a genuine reason for doing so. To this end, community policing can address some of the challenges that come with this degree of modernity (Mugoya, Witte & Ernst, 2015). Therefore, is quite difficult for an outsider to tell with uttermost certainty that an individual or a child is being subjected to domestic or sexual violence. Most people will have their suspicion but cannot fully prove the same (Mugoya, Witte & Ernst, 2015). The main objective of community policing in Nyeri would be to encourage the residents of the county to report suspicious behavior. For instance, when a female colleague shows up for work with fresh scars on her legs claiming that she burnt herself, the other colleagues may not be in a position to tell with absolute certainty that the explanation offered is what happened. They will have their suspicions and a good community policing program encourages such people to report based on mere suspicion. It is the police that will be mandated to carry out an actual investigation that will prove whether or not the lady in question is a victim of domestic violence.

Community policing can also entail residents of Nyeri County going ahead and making a citizen's arrest in those cases where there has been a proven case of domestic violence. Sometimes, a perpetrator of domestic violence can be identified but for one reason or the other, the police may delay in making an arrest. In such a scenario, the victim may face the danger of a more sinister attack or the suspect may decide to escape (Imbrogno &

Imbrogno, 2000). Community policing can allow residents of Nyeri to arrest the individual and present them either to the police or before a court of law (Imbrogno & Imbrogno, 2000).

Finally, a proper community policing in Nyeri may entail the use of other initiatives by members of the community such as setting up a safe house for victims escaping domestic violence at home, setting up a toll free hotline through which residents of Nyeri can report cases of domestic violence, and even offering free legal services to victims who are involved in domestic violence cases.

6.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed data that answers the third research question. It has covered the challenges and opportunities of domestic violence in details. The next chapter (Chapter 7) presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations, as well as suggestion for further studies.

7.1 Summary

This study was set out to examine the socio-cultural factors influencing domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to examine the nature of domestic violence in Nyeri County, evaluate the nexus between socio-cultural dynamics and domestic violence in Nyeri County, and assess the strategies of managing domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya. The summary of the findings is as follows.

7.1.1 Nature of Domestic Violence

In line with the first objective of the study which was to examine the nature of domestic violence in Nyeri County, the study examined different parameters. On the incidence of conflicts in the study area, the results of the study indicate that 322 (84%) had witnessed domestic violence while 62 (16%) had not. These results reveal that a very large number of residents in the study area have in one way or another witnessed or experienced domestic violence. On the perpetrators of domestic violence, the results show that 4.6, 257(67%) of the perpetrators of domestic violence were males, while 127(33%) were females. The results indicate that majority of perpetrators are men.

The study sought to investigate the time when the domestic violence is on the rise in Nyeri County. The results indicated that there are increased cases during coffee and tea bonuses, during the back to school period, during the festive season, during the traditional festive season, and when the county is experiencing drought. During the coffee bonuses, men misuse the funds that the family worked hard to earn for a whole year, and this brings conflicts. When children are going back to school, there is financial strain, and this increases the probability of disputes at the family level. Traditional festive seasons such as circumcision also bring disagreements, mostly because of the change of gender roles and financial demands during these periods.

Further, the study sought to examine the manifestation of domestic violence in Nyeri County. The results indicated that cumulatively 375(98%) of the household heads agreed that conflicts manifest in a verbal manner. The verbal manifestation comes in form of insults and name calling between the partners. Physical manifestation was ranked the second, with a cumulative number of respondents 338(88%) agreeing that there is physical abuse in domestic violence cases. People are injured through beatings, stabbings, hot liquids such as water and porridge, cut with sharp objects or hit with blunt objects. In addition, 230(60%) of the respondents agreed that violence manifests in a sexual manner. This is mostly denial of conjugal rights or forcefully accessing them.

The results of the study further indicated that domestic violence manifests in terms of denial of economic assistance. According to the study 291(76%) of the respondents agreed that partners deny each other financial assistance when there is a disagreement. This affects the daily running of a family, including food, school fees and medical care among other necessities. Psychological torture is also among the major manifestation of

domestic violence in Nyeri County. Cumulatively, 322(84%) of the household heads pointed out that domestic violence is seen by the psychological status of the victims of domestic violence. Victims become mentally sick as a result of continuous violation of their rights and humiliation by their spouses. Some end up in the hospitals, with a few going completely mad and go to the streets. Social manifestation in terms of divorce and separation was also noted, with a cumulative agreement rate of 366(96%). This shows that there are many broken families as a result of domestic violence.

The results of the study revealed that there is still the practice of female genital mutilation as a way of punishing disobedient women. A small percentage 112(29%) of the respondents agreed that FGM occurs in some areas when the spouse, with support of family or friends force the woman into the practice, claiming that she will become mature and respect her husband.

7.1.2 Nexus between Socio-cultural Dynamics and Domestic Violence

In line with the second objective that was evaluating the nexus between socio-cultural dynamics and domestic violence, the study found out that there is a correlation between the two. The study sought to investigate the prevalence of socio-cultural factors influencing domestic violence in Nyeri County. The factors included male chauvinism ideology, matriarchal society, education, exchange cultural norms, alcoholism, poverty and employment and poor enforcement of laws and policies. The results indicated that 84% of the respondents agreed that male chauvinism ideology contributed to domestic violence and was fueled by the existing cultural beliefs that prioritize male domination over women. The respondents were in cognizance of the changing nature of the society and as a result, matriarchal nature of the society recorded a cumulative agreement of 54%

as they admitted that such change was gradually taking place. Similarly, the exchange of cultural norms recorded a cumulative agreement frequency of 96%. Some women have been gradually taking the roles preserved for men in the study area as revealed by the findings. This was again attributed to the gradual departure of male domination and contributed to slight reduction of domestic violence. Further, the respondents agreed that education was a game changer in the reduction of domestic violence although it was a gradual process. As a result of education, most women were being empowered though significant progresses are yet to be made. From the findings, education recorded a cumulative agreement frequency of 76% given the continued government's intervention to empower girl children through education.

The study found that alcoholism was an emerging factor that contributed to domestic violence in the study area. Some respondents admitted that they were addicted to drugs and substance abuse that made them to desert their roles, especially men. This was supported by 88% of the respondents who agreed that indeed it contributed to increased domestic violence in the study area. And since it an emerging factor, it recorded a cumulative agreement frequency of 96%. Again, poverty and employment according to 51% of the respondents contributed to intense domestic violence as they admitted that lack of employment was making people idle, stressed and as a result, they engaged in gender -based violence to reduce their anger and dissatisfaction. Poverty subjected young women to sexual exploitation as some of them were unable to secure essential needs such as sanitary pads. The study also established that failure by the government to properly enforce laws and policies was to be blamed for the high prevalence of domestic violence with 52% strongly agreeing. The findings reinforced other studies that have established

that poor enforcement of laws and policies by the relevant authorities served as a recipe for the perpetration of domestic violence.

7.1.3 Challenges and Opportunities of Domestic Violence

In line with the third objective which was assessing challenges and opportunities of domestic violence in Nyeri County. The study sought to assess the challenges that hinder successful resolution of domestic violence in the study area. The respondents were asked to indicate the main challenges in resolving domestic disputes in Nyeri County and 29% of them agreed that societal victimization was a challenge. On the other hand, each of social media's influence and poverty levels were pointed out to be a challenge by 20% of the respondents. Moreover, 16% of the household heads agreed that lack of political will was a challenge while 15% of them pointed out modernity to be a challenge. According to these findings, the major challenge that hindered successful resolution of domestic violence in Nyeri County was societal victimization. In addition to that, social media's influence and poverty levels also posed significant challenges while lack of political will and modernity were the least of challenges faced in resolving domestic violence in the study area.

On the opportunities in resolving domestic violence in Nyeri County, the study further examined opportunities arising from domestic violence. According to the results, boosting moral values is one of the opportunities, where 5(1%) of the household heads strongly disagreed, 4(1%) disagreed, 2(1%) did not know, 200(52%) agreed and 173(45%) strongly agreed. In addition to that, 3(1%) of the respondents also strongly disagreed with strengthening criminal justice system as an opportunity, where 6(2%) disagreed, none of them did not know, 278(72%) agreed and 97(25%) strongly agreed. On the opportunity of sensitization, 6(2%) household heads strongly

disagreed, 3(1%) disagreed, 5(1%) did not know, 197(51%) agreed and 173(45%) strongly agreed. On current media selection as an opportunity, 12(3%) strongly disagreed, 19(5%) disagreed, 4(1%) did not know, 203(53%) agreed and 146(38%) strongly agreed. Moreover, 11(3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed to balanced distribution of resources as an opportunity, 6(2%) disagreed, 8(2%) did not know, 148(38%) agreed and 211(55%) strongly agreed. Further, 18(5%) of the household heads also strongly disagreed on new community policies as an opportunity, 11(3%) disagreed, 4(1%) did not know, 229(60%) agreed and 122(31%) strongly agreed. On psychological support, 98(26%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 76(20%) disagreed, 16(4%) did not know, 187(48%) agreed while 7(2%) strongly agreed. On economic boost as an opportunity, 34(9%) of the household heads strongly disagreed, 18(4%) disagreed, 6(2%) did not know, 199(52%) agreed and 127(33%) strongly agreed. On the opportunity of enactment of programs, 21(5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 33(9%) disagreed, 5(1%) did not know, 238(62%) agreed and 87(23%) strongly agreed.

The respondents were further asked to suggest further opportunities. The results included boy child empowerment, enabled speaking up, women empowerment, utilization of indigenous methods, intervention of religious leaders, and community policing. These findings suggest that majority of the respondents agreed to these opportunities in reducing domestic violence in Nyeri County.

7.2 Conclusion

The study makes three conclusions in line with the specific objectives, together with a general conclusion based on the general objective.

7.2.1 Specific Conclusions

In line with the first objective, the study found out that the prevalence of domestic violence in Nyeri county is high, and thus concludes that both men and women in the

county have been subjected to pain and suffering in their families due to the violence. There is evidence of suffering in terms of physical injuries, with many victims sharing experiences of psychological torture.

In line with the second objective which was to evaluate the nexus between socio-cultural dynamics, the study concludes that the changes in people's way of life have contributed to violence in Nyeri County instead of harmony in the families as one would expect.

In line with the third objective which was to assess the challenges and opportunities of domestic violence, the study concludes that even though challenges such as lack of political will, victimization of victims and influence of social media makes the situation in Nyeri difficult, there are opportunities arising from the same, bringing hope that the situation can improve if the opportunities are well utilized.

7.2.2 Overall Conclusion

Generally, the study concludes that socio-cultural dynamics; alcoholism, chauvinism, change of gender roles, education levels, stereotypes, MAU MAU impact, and land inheritance issues influence domestic violence in Nyeri county; however, such changes in the society were expected to bring peace and harmony among families in Nyeri County, but unfortunately this is not the case.

7.3 Recommendations

In line with the first objective, it is recommended that both men and women should be empowered in Nyeri County. Empowering one gender makes the other one vulnerable, especially in a community that has been fighting over dominance between men and

women. The woman in Nyeri is more empowered by socio-cultural dynamics, and that is why the man feels endangered.

In line with the second objective, the study recommends that there should be sensitization in the study area to help people utilize the positive changes in the society such as high education levels to make a harmonious society instead of using it to fight among spouses. The society should be helped to curb dangerous dynamisms such as alcoholism so as to maintain sanity among family members.

In line with the third objective, it is recommended that the government, the civil society and the general public should work together to end domestic violence in the county as it is a major threat to human rights. Domestic violence can only be curbed in Nyeri if the society works together with the government and other stakeholders and takes the right measures.

7.4 Suggestions for Further Study

Having examined the socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence in Nyeri County, the study finds that there is need to investigate the influence of women empowerment in domestic violence in Nyeri. A study should be conducted to investigate whether women empowerment contributes to domestic violence or not.

The study found out that stereotypes are affecting families in Nyeri County negatively, thus causing a lot of violence among spouses. There is need for an elaborate study to examine the role of the media stereotypes on Nyeri County families.

Lastly, the study suggests that there is need for another study to focus on the role of religion in managing domestic violence in Nyeri County. Since the society is moving

from the traditional cultures to modern religion, then there is need to investigate how the modern religion can be used to resolve the recurring domestic violence in Nyeri County.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introductory letter

Dear Respondent,

I am a PhD. Student at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) in the department of Peace and Conflict Studies, conducting an Academic research on “**Socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya**” as a requirement of the qualification for the award. The findings of this study will contribute immensely to the strategies of enhancing management of Domestic Violence in Nyeri County. Your honest response will make you a contributor to the reduction of domestic conflicts in the in the area.

I will appreciate if you take some time to answer the questions contained in this questionnaire.

The information that will be obtained in this research is confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this research and not for any other purpose.

Yours Sincerely

Machariah Lilian

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Household Heads

A. Background information			Your answer
1	Residence (Please state in the Space provided)	
2	Ethnic Group (Please state in the Space provided)	
3	Age of household head	16-20.....1 21-35.....2 36-55.....3 56-75.....4 75 and above.....5	
4	Gender of Household Head	Male.....1 Female.....2	
5	Marital Status	Single.....1 Married.....2 Divorced/Separated.....3 Widowed.....4	
6	Religion	Christian.....1 Islam.....2 Traditional.....3 Hindu.....4 Others(Specify).....5	
7	Education	No Education.....1 Non formal Education.....2 Primary school dropout....3 Primary level.....4 Secondary School dropout.5 Secondary level.....6 Tertiary level.....7 University level.....8	
8	What your Profession (Please state in the Space provided)	

B. Nature of domestic violence in Nyeri County.

9. Have you in one way or another witnessed or experienced domestic violence?

Yes

No

10. Which type of domestic violence does this areas experience? (Tick appropriately)

Type of violence	Tick appropriately
Battering (Physical harm)	
Sexual harassment	

Verbal/insults	
Denial of resources	
Female genital mutilation	
Intimidation (psychological torture)	
Separation or divorce	
Others (Specify)	

11. Who is the main perpetrator of domestic violence in Nyeri County?

i) Menii) Women.....iii).....

12. Time When Domestic Violence Increases

.....

C. Factors contributing to domestic Violence in Nyeri County

13. To what extent do you agree with the following causes of domestic violence in this region? (Please tick where appropriate, where 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Undecided, 4=Disagree, 5= strongly disagree)

Causes of Domestic Violence	1	2	3	4	5
Alcoholism					
Stereotypes					
Poverty and employment					
Matriarchal society					
Exchange of cultural roles					
Male chauvinism ideology					
The MAU MAU impact					
Land and inheritance issues					
Education					
Others (specify)					

Section D. Challenges of managing Domestic violence in Nyeri County

14. What are the challenges of managing domestic violence in Nyeri County? (Please tick where appropriate, where 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Undecided, 4=Disagree, 5= strongly disagree)

Challenge	1	2	3	4	5
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Moderninty						
Improper government policies						
Poverty levels						
Political unwillingness						
Social media's influence						
Societal victimization						
Others(list others)						

14. What opportunities arise from the challenges?

Strategy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Cumulative agreement	Rank
	F (%)						
Sensitization							
Economic boost							
Strengthening criminal justice system							
Psychological support							
Enhancing community policies							
Current media selection							
Boosting moral values							
Enactment of programs							
Balanced distribution of resources							

Other challenges (list here).

15. Suggest remedies to some the challenges highlighted above.

Appendix 3: Key Informant Interview Guide

1. Which types of domestic conflicts are common in Nyeri County?
2. How often do they occur
3. Who is the perpetrator, is the men or the women?
4. How do the conflicts manifest?
5. What causes these conflicts?
6. What has the government done to reduce the conflicts?
7. What have the locals done to reduce the effects of these conflicts?
8. How is public awareness to reduce DM in this region?
9. Who are the main actors during DM?
10. Which equipment and tools do they use in in their response?
11. Are they properly prepared to manage the conflicts?
12. What is the level of preparedness at the county and sub-county level?
13. Are all stakeholders involved in the disaster preparedness process?
14. Does disaster preparedness include domestic violence as a disaster in the area?
15. Do you think conflict management is directly linked to humanitarian response in this region?
16. Will there be a change in the management of domestic violence if preparedness is done properly?
17. What are the challenges faced when managing domestic violence?
18. What opportunities arise for these challenges?
19. Suggest solutions/remedies that can ensure there is proper management of domestic violence in Nyeri County

Appendix 4: Focus Group Discussion Guide (Elders)

- a) Discuss the common types of domestic gender-based violence in Nyeri County.
- b) Discuss the causes of these conflicts.
- c) Explain the role the government has played in reducing GBV in the Nyeri.
- d) The local community has a role too. Discuss it.
- e) Highlight the main actors during GBV response.
- f) List the equipment and tools that the actors use in their response.
- g) Explain whether the actors are they properly prepared to handle GBV
- h) Describe your opinion on the level of preparedness at the county and sub-county level.
- i) Discuss whether all stakeholders are consulted during the management of GBV.
- j) Explain whether there will be a change in the management of GBV if preparedness is done properly.
- k) Explain the challenges faced in management of gender-based domestic violence in Nyeri County.
- l) Highlight the opportunities arise for these challenges.
- m) Suggest solutions/remedies that can ensure there is effective management of domestic gender-based violence in Nyeri County.

Appendix 5: Observation Checklist

- i. Observe any cases of domestic violence that will take place during the research period.
- ii. Observe any evidence of past domestic violence such as scars, burns, etc.
- iii. Assess how the victims respond to the violence.
- iv. Examine their coordination at the violence scene.
- v. Examine how they cooperate with other actors who join them.
- vi. Assess the challenges they face during the resolution of the conflict.

Appendix 6: Approval of Proposal from MMUST



Appendix 8: A plate showing the researcher with KIGWA CBO chairperson



Appendix 9: A plate showing the researcher conducting an interview with an assistant chief



**Appendix 10: A plate showing the researcher interviewing the chairperson of Itangi-
ini women group**



Appendix 11: Plate showing the researcher conducting an FGD with elders in Hombe Village, Kabaru Location



Appendix 12: Plate showing researcher conducting interview with a religious leader



Appendix 13: A Plate of Research Assistant conducting an interview with a police officer



Appendix 14: Signed Consent Forms

Consent Form

Introduction

You are invited to participate in Academic research on “Socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya”. The findings of this study will contribute immensely to the strategies of enhancing management of Domestic Violence in Nyeri County. Your honest response will make you a contributor to the reduction of domestic conflicts in the in the area.

I will appreciate if you take some time to answer the research. The information that will be obtained in this research is confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this research and not for any other purpose.

Purpose of the Study

The general objective of the study was to interrogate the socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya.

Potential Participants

For you to participate in this study you must fit in in the following categories, household heads, assistant chiefs, senior police officers, religious leaders, head of NGOs/CBOs, Sub-county administrators, and village elders.

Terms and Conditions

- > Participation of this study is voluntary
- > All information will remain confidential
- > Information is for academic purposes only
- > You can quit participation at your will

I will or I will not participate in this study.

For those who agree to have their photos and names used in this study, kindly sign below.

Name: Maria.....Crachira.....

ID number: 51328106.....

Signature: [Signature] Date 2/6/2022.....

Consent Form

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I will or I will not participate in this study.

For those who agree to have their photos and names used in this study, kindly sign below.

Name: KENDI JANE.....

ID number: 21062636.....

Signature:  Date 9 May 2022.....

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I will or I will not participate in this study.

For those who agree to have their photos and names used in this study, kindly sign below.

Name: Peter Murage Wahome

ID number: 20314316

Signature:  Date 21/05/2022

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I will or I will not participate in this study.

For those who agree to have their photos and names used in this study, kindly sign below.

Name: SIMON MIANO.....

ID number: 5246637.....

Signature... SM..... Date 26 AUGUST 2022.....