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Understanding the Dynamics of Gender-Based Violence and its Impacts on Development in Zambia: Exploring Strategies for Prevention and Response Within Development Programs

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Abstract

This research study investigates the dynamics of gender-based violence (GBV) in Zambia and its profound impacts on development. With a sample size of fifty participants, the study explores the socio-economic and political factors contributing to GBV, including traditional gender norms, poverty, weak legal frameworks, and limited awareness. The research findings reveal the detrimental effects of GBV on critical development sectors such as health, education, and economic empowerment. GBV hampers women's access to healthcare, disrupts educational opportunities, and limits economic participation and empowerment. Additionally, the study highlights the strategies implemented within development programs in Zambia to prevent and respond to GBV. These strategies encompass legal reforms, awareness campaigns, service provision, and multi-sectoral collaboration. The key recommendations derived from the findings emphasize the need to strengthen legal frameworks, promote gender-responsive education and awareness, enhance support services for survivors, and foster multi-sectoral coordination. By understanding the complexities of GBV and implementing comprehensive strategies, this research aims to contribute to the promotion of gender equality, sustainable development, and a safer and more inclusive society in Zambia.

Keywords: GBV, Development, Gender Equality, Sustainable Development, Inclusivity

1. Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a critical global issue with severe consequences for individuals and societies alike. In Zambia, as in many other countries, GBV continues to undermine social development and impede progress towards achieving gender equality. Understanding the dynamics of GBV and its impacts on development is crucial for designing effective prevention and response strategies within development programs (Chileshe & Cabotaje, 2021) [3]. This paper aims to explore the multifaceted nature of GBV in Zambia, highlighting its far-reaching effects on various aspects of development and proposing strategies for its prevention and response. Zambia, located in Southern Africa, has made significant strides towards achieving development goals, including poverty reduction and improved health and education outcomes. However, the prevalence of GBV poses a significant challenge to the country's sustainable development efforts. GBV encompasses a range of harmful acts perpetrated against individuals, primarily women and girls, based on their gender. These acts include physical, sexual, and psychological violence, such as intimate partner violence, rape, child marriage, and harmful traditional practices (Mwape, 2021). Zambia faces high rates of GBV, with pervasive cultural norms and gender inequalities contributing to its perpetuation. According to a national survey conducted in 2017, approximately 47% of women aged 15-49 in Zambia have experienced some form of physical violence, while 25% have experienced sexual violence. GBV not only violates individuals' fundamental rights but also has far-reaching impacts on various dimensions of development. One of the key areas where GBV hampers development in Zambia is health.

Survivors of GBV often experience physical injuries, including fractures, internal injuries, and sexually transmitted infections, among others. Additionally, Chanda and Phiri (2017) [1] point out that GBV contributes to adverse mental health outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder. These health consequences not only affect individuals' overall well-being but also impose a burden on the healthcare system, diverting resources away from other essential services. Education is another domain significantly affected by GBV. Girls who experience violence are more likely to drop out of

school, leading to reduced educational attainment and limited economic opportunities. Moreover, GBV creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation within educational institutions, hindering students' ability to learn and thrive in a safe and supportive environment. This perpetuates a cycle of gender inequality and limits the potential of individuals and communities to achieve sustainable development.

Economically, GBV has detrimental effects on both individuals and the broader society. According to Mulenga and Mwansa (2020) [14] survivors often face economic barriers resulting from lost employment opportunities, decreased productivity, and increased healthcare costs. The loss of income and limited financial resources further exacerbate existing gender inequalities and perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Furthermore, the broader social and economic costs of GBV, including increased demand for social services and decreased foreign investment, have profound implications for national development. Thence, Clive, (2022) opines that addressing GBV within development programs requires a comprehensive and multisectoral approach. It is crucial to integrate prevention and response measures into various sectors, including health, education, justice, and social welfare. Prevention efforts should focus on transforming societal norms and attitudes towards gender, challenging harmful traditional practices, and promoting gender equality. Additionally, enhancing access to support services, such as counseling, legal aid, and shelters, is critical for survivors of GBV.

This paper will delve into the dynamics of GBV in Zambia, examining its impacts on health, education, and the economy. It will draw upon existing research, reports, and case studies to provide evidence-based insights. Furthermore, it will explore strategies for preventing and responding to GBV within development programs, considering both national and international best practices. By understanding the multifaceted nature of GBV and its implications, stakeholders can work towards creating a safer and more inclusive Zambia, where individuals can thrive and contribute to sustainable development.

1.2 Objectives of Study

1. To examine the socio-economic and political factors that contribute to gender-based violence (GBV) in Zambia and their implications for development outcomes.
2. To assess the impacts of gender-based violence on various development sectors in Zambia, including health, education, and economic empowerment.
3. To identify and evaluate strategies implemented within development programs in Zambia for the prevention and response to gender-based violence.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This study will adopt the Ecological Model of violence, developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), which emphasizes the multiple levels of influence on individual behavior, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, community, and societal factors.

In the context of gender-based violence and development in Zambia, the Ecological Model can provide a framework for understanding the complex interplay of various factors that contribute to GBV and its impacts on development outcomes.

1. Intrapersonal Level: This level focuses on individual characteristics, attitudes, and beliefs that may contribute to GBV. It includes examining individual factors such as gender socialization, power dynamics, and cultural norms that shape perceptions and behaviors related to violence (Jewkes, 2002).
2. Interpersonal Level: This level considers the influence of social relationships, including family dynamics, intimate partner relationships, and social networks, on GBV. It involves exploring how social interactions and power dynamics within relationships contribute to the perpetration or experience of GBV (Dunkle *et al*., 2004).
3. Community Level: This level examines the broader community and societal factors that influence GBV. It includes analyzing social norms, cultural practices, and community attitudes towards violence against women. This level also considers the availability and accessibility of support services and the role of community institutions in addressing GBV (Gupta *et al*., 2008).
4. Societal Level: This level focuses on the broader socio-political and economic structures that shape GBV. It involves analyzing gender inequalities, social and economic disparities, and the legal and policy frameworks that may enable or constrain GBV. This level also considers the influence of social movements, advocacy, and policy changes in addressing GBV at the societal level (Heise, 1998).

This framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of GBV and its impacts on development outcomes, while also informing the development of strategies for prevention and response within development programs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 A global overview of gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a serious global health, human rights, and development problem. It is a consequences of underlying gender inequalities and power imbalances, and it is a worldwide phenomenon one that cuts the bounds of geography, race, culture, class, and religion, affecting the development and advancement of individuals and their communities all over the world. Gender-based violence is preponderantly inflicted by men on women and girls although men and boys experience it too (Council of Europe, 2011; WHO, 2013). Statistics indicate that one in five women will be a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime. One in three will have been beaten, constrained into sex or otherwise abused.

Globally, rates of GBV are most elevated in developing countries, with some of the most outrageous rates in African nations. Gender based violence is a profound health problem, sapping women’s energy, compromising their physical health, and eroding their self-esteem`. In addition to causing injury, violence increases women’s long-term risk of a number of other health problems, including physical disability, drug and alcohol abuse and depression. Women who have been sexually abused also have an increased risk for unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Despite its high costs, societies around the world have established social institutions that obscure and deny abuse.

Gender based violence against women is a global and highly complex phenomenon that challenges policymakers, justice

systems, service providers, community leaders, activists, families, and individuals concerned with prevention and response of it. Globally, there is wide variation in the prevalence of GBV, both between countries and even within countries that have marked differences based on region or even neighborhood.

For more than two decades, women's advocacy groups around the world have made efforts to draw attention to the economic deprivation, physical, psychological or emotional, and sexual abuse of women and have attempted to emphasize the need for action. They have provided abused women with secured shelters, lobbied or campaigned for legal reforms, and challenged the widespread traditional attitudes and beliefs that support and tolerate violence against women or gender-based violence.

Progressively, these efforts have and are having positive results. Today, global organizations are standing in opposition and speaking out against gender-based violence. It has increasingly been recognized organizations, policy makers and other associations that gender-based violence has serious adverse consequences for women's health and advancements as well as the development process for society at large. The global prevalence of GBV is staggering. Women are affected disproportionately. Available statistics at national, multinational, and global levels set the context and make a compelling case that cannot be ignored. Economic growth projects must work to prevent GBV and respond effectively to gender-based violence to ensure that it does not undermine economic growth and human development. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimate of 35 percent of women around the world have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) or no partner sexual violence (WHO 2013).

Accessible evidence shows that intimate partner violence (IPV), domestic violence and no partner sexual violence are profoundly prevalent and documented forms of GBV that women face around the world. This type of violence affects workers, workplaces and productivity outside the home, and because of increased lost days of work or absenteeism, wages are lost. Surveys report a global range of 4% to more than 40% of populations reporting "partner violence" within the past 12 months, with higher rates for lifetime occurrence (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014; García-Moreno, *et al*. 2005; Heise and Kotsadam 2015).

It has been broadly acknowledged and accepted for many years that the causes and consequences of violence against women are rooted in gender imbalances or inequalities (García-Moreno, *et al*. 2005; United Nations Secretary General 2006) that have been established and maintained around the world in different contexts such as deeply-held social norms and values. A recent study, which statistically analyzed population data from 66 surveys in 44 countries to identify associations between various macro and micro factors, also provides evidence to this assertion (Heise and Kotsadam 2015). This exceptionally complex problem continues to challenge a various actors engaged in work to prevent and respond effectively to violence against women around the world.

Global attention to VAW/GBV has increased greatly over the past three decades, as it is regarded as an issue that does not only affect individual women, but communities and nations. United Nations (UN) international women's rights conferences supported the growth of national women's rights movements in countries around the world, and the international human rights treaties. Several global organizations like WHO, UNICEF, UN, UNESCO, World Bank, USAID and many others have championed GBV through sponsoring, financing and at times offering technical expertise.

2.2 Gender-based violence in the African Context

Generally, in Africa GBV is very much reported from sub-Saharan Africa rather than focusing in all the African countries. This is mainly attributed to the donor driven and lending programmed in sub-Saharan Africa, whose efforts targeted at poverty alleviation through improved health, education, and governance because of very high rates of HIV/AIDS (ZDHS, 2007). However, despite the scope of this problem, most available studies are limited to developed countries with limited evidence focused on SSA countries (Palermo, T.; Bleck, J.; Peterman, A., 2014). Setting Priority prevention and mitigation measures using the evidence from developed countries alone have substantial drawbacks (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). In addition, according to the study team of the WHO Multi-country Study on Women's health and domestic violence against women, studies conducted in SSA countries were focused on small-scale studies such as provinces and districts in particular countries that could overestimate the prevalence of GBV.

The small-scale studies conducted cannot be generalizable to the wider population. As a result, many SSA countries are yet to include the elimination of GBV on their policy agendas as a serious human rights violation with severe short and long-term implications (Uthman, O.A., 25 Lawoko, S. & Moradi, 2009). There have been limited studies to date that have collectively and systematically examined the prevalence of GBV in varying forms in sub-Saharan African countries, besides these small-scale studies.

Regarding explicit (sexual) violence, most of the studies from sub-Saharan Africa have focused almost exclusively on heterosexual relations and violence against girls and not much on violence against boys. Evidence reveals that the problem is mostly prominent in developing countries where socioeconomic status is low and education is limited, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries. GBV is often considered a 'tip of the iceberg or silent epidemic' as victims are hesitant to reveal their experiences of violence due to many barriers (Palermo, T.; Bleck, J. & Peterman, A., 2014; WHO, 2012). The barriers to the reporting of GBV cases that women experience include the fear of stigma and shame, financial barriers, lack of awareness of available services, lack of law enforcement action and tolerance of gender-based violence due to traditional beliefs. Subsequently, this results in underreporting and challenges in accurately measuring the prevalence of GBV (Palermo, T.; Bleck, J. & Peterman, A., 2014; WHO, 2012).

Overall, according to García-Moreno, C.; Pallitto, C. Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women. It is estimated that 30% of women have experienced at least one form of GBV In their lifetime since the age of 15.

A World Health Organization (WHO) multi-country study among women of reproductive age revealed that the overall prevalence of IPV ranged between 15% in urban areas (such as Japan) to 71% in provincial areas (such as Ethiopia).

In Africa GBV cannot be understood outside norms and cultural values. As young boys are socialized according to

established norms and are expected to adopt and operate within these beliefs, they even cope from what they see at their homes and are acquainted to the system.
(Uthman, *et al*, 2009). This has increased HIV/AID in Africa, 60% of HIV living population is women and girls and 59.6% of adult women are living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS report, 2009). However, data on gender-based violence is hard to come by as violence is in most cases under reported because of shame, stigma and fear of it spreading further. Women therefore remain silent because many societies take violence against women as an accepted and normal aspect of gender relations.

2.3 Prevalence of Gender-based violence in Zambia
United Nations stated that Zambia in particular has one of the world's highest rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) and in its 2010 periodic report for CEDAW, the Zambian government recognized that gender-based violence is an area of concern (UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs, 2010; UN, 2010). The United Nations believes that GBV affects about 43 percent of women in Zambia, or 1 in every 2 women, resulting in high economic costs to the country. Apart from affecting the lives of victims, GBV also has a trickling effect on productivity and subsequently has the potential to affect economic output.
Gender Based Violence is one of the most widespread violations of human rights, with a significant impact of physical, psychological, sexual and reproductive health. UNFPA/WAVE (2014). In Zambia, GBV has long been recognized as a problem that needed to be addressed due to the magnitude of the vice. It is a hindrance to the attainment of gender equality as well as the realization of social and economic goals of its survivors.
Zambia has shown political commitment and has made efforts both national and international level political commitment. At international level, Zambia has signed all significant international instruments and declarations including convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. However, regardless of the significant efforts in dealing with gender-based violence there are many gaps that are noticeable in the legislation, lack of reliable information as well as an absence of human resources and ability to manage cases of GBV.
The cases of GBV have continued to increase in Zambia, at the center of the violations of women and girls are the unequal or imbalanced power relations between men and women, negative cultural practices which encourage women to be subordinate to men and the sexual violence against women sexual violence against women culturally embedded. Such horrid insights call for authoritative measures as well as more workable interventions by all stakeholders including communities to collaborate to reduce these ever-escalating numbers of GBV cases and strengthen the fight against the gender-based violence. A lot of victims are usually not willing to have their cases prosecuted and stakeholders have argued that the reported cases are just a tip of the iceberg because of the tendency to remain silent because of tradition, eventually victims withdrawing their cases from Police, this is another impediment in the fight against GBV. Because of poverty, economically insecure women find it hard to have their abusers prosecuted in the courts of law. If the victim of GBV economically depends on her abusive partner, chances are high that she would keep quiet about it and endure the abuse quietly thus there is an urgent need to strengthen support structures for victims of GBV.

2.4 Effects of gender-based violence on development
The literature review in this section suggests that GBV has implications for economic growth through a complex set of mechanisms. GBV has both immediate impacts in terms of missing work, poor physical and mental health status, out of pocket expenditures for accessing services, and replacement costs. It equally has long term impacts on outcomes such as accumulation of education, skills and experience within the workforce. Gender based violence occurs at individual level in relationships, household level, at community level and in the society. It perpetuates the stereotyping of gender roles that preclude human dignity of an individual and hinders human development by affecting human health, self-esteem and livelihoods. (UNHCR, 2019 P7).
Global issues such as deepening poverty, food insecurity, high absence of education levels, HIV and Aids cannot be tended to without full dynamic investment or participation of affected population and communities and in particular women. Although much work still needs to be done to assess the impact of GBV on livelihoods, the available accessible writing and discoveries demonstrate that the burden of violence in social, economic, physical and psychological context falls on women, affecting their health, confidence, self-esteem as well as their ability to accommodate themselves and participate or contribute to in the development process. Women who are victims of gender violence are clearly robbed of their income opportunities, personal security and various other necessities of life.
The human capital effect on growth has been extensively explored in the literature. There is much evidence to suggest that education, measured by years of schooling, plays an important role in terms of promoting economic growth (Temple 1999).
Barro's pivotal paper (1991) ascertains the importance of education as a determinant of economic growth and highlights the increased effect of education on growth in developing countries as opposed to developed countries. Gender violence limits the right to education and this in turn limits the ability to being an agent of change.
Education is vital for economic development. Education is considered a key component of economic growth to Vision 2030 because it has a directly influence on entrepreneurship, a strong influence on productivity and increases employment opportunities and women empowerment. Therefore, gender-based violence is not only a violation of fundamental human rights but also an impediment to the social and economic development of communities.
The macro impacts of violence can be summarized as impacts on human capital, productivity, and welfare, which are closely interrelated with economic growth. All forms of violence affect the ability to work and affect productivity or efficiency (Duver *et al*., 2013). The impact of GBV may be considered as a negative effect on an individual's investment in wellbeing or health, decreasing productivity in the workforce as well affecting the complementary relationship between health and education and the accumulation of skills (Howitt 2005). Following the human capital framework by Becker (1967), expanding an individual's human capital will enhance their productivity, resulting in higher earnings. Thus, health can be considered as both human capital in itself and a contribution to other different types of human capital such as education.

Considering health as human capital within the productive efficiency framework, healthier workers or those who do not encounter GBV may be more productive in the work force for a number of reasons including increased stamina, better overall health and attentiveness. Thus, gender-based violence across a workforce maybe represented by an increase in inefficiency within a firm or a sector's production function and therefore, will impact GDP and economic growth negatively (Howitt 2005).

Studies point to the key role that psychological and emotional abuse and threats of violence can play in women's capacity to accomplish or maintain employment. (Logan, Shannon *et al*. 2007). It also reduces their confidence and self-esteem so much that they feel intimidated and hold back from applying for higher positions of employment. Gender based violence is subsequently associated with increased absenteeism over the long term as well as problems with concentration, job performance and execution (Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2007).

Women who are in abusive relationships tend to experience high rates of job loss and turnover and many times are forced to quit or are fired. For example, Swanberg *et al*. (2005) found that victimized women were less inclined to work full-time in the subsequent year to a GDV episode, affecting their ability to take opportunities of training or upgrading skills. GBV survivors are unable to freely engage in community projects which can improve their lives. Furthermore, domestic violence restricts women from gainful employment thereby increasing women's unemployment and reducing earnings (Panda, 2003). Impacts are mediated through the interplay of an individual's capabilities e.g. health status, stability of employment, the procurement of skills and degree of mobility. Social stigma and discrimination may prompt psychological trauma, sentiment of frailty and insufficiency to take part in productive activities and fully participate in development activities. As a result of women who have encountered gender-based violence dread venturing into public spaces, this can often restrict them from education, constraining them from increasing the value and efficiency of their knowledge and skills and limiting their income generating opportunities.

It is also devastating to note that some girls have been constrained out of school on account of defilement, rape and/or constant sexual harassment even from teachers. This blocks human development as education is key increasing economic efficiency and social consistency. Furthermore, there are others that are unable to build skills required for future endurance in light of the fact that their families have constrained them into early marriages.

The Social stigma and exclusion, job loss due to absenteeism with consequent deficit on income and increased gender imbalance may push the persons affected by gender-based violence into a descending spiral of poverty, preventing them from carrying on with a sound, healthy and noble life. In some cases, survivors of GBV are forced to drop out of school due to unplanned pregnancies leading to consequences such as low education and literacy levels. This situation limits productivity and negatively affects opportunities for employment.

Violence against girls and women hamper countries achievements of at least six of the eight United Nations Millennium Development goals (World Bank, 2014). Often accompanied by withdrawal of resources for those being abused, GBV in form of economic abuse diminishes women's access to and the utilization of assets such as education and political voice, therefore restricting their livelihood opportunities such as entering the labor market (World Bank, 2014).

The lack of assets and opportunities contribute to household poverty and thus impede the achievement Millennium Development goal (MDG1) to eradicate poverty and food insecurity. Violence and associated sexual harassment, child abuse, early marriages and other abuse against children cuts short their chances and/or parents' willingness to send them to school- in the case of early marriages, directly hindering the achievement of universal primary education (MDG2).

2.5 Gender-based violence policies and programs in Zambia

1. Enactment of the Anti GBV Act: As a first step towards the regulatory management of GBV, Zambia enacted the Anti-GBV Act in 2011 to enhance the legal framework to curb GBV in all its manifestations. The Ministry of Gender is coordinating the operationalization of the provisions of the Act with other relevant line Ministries and Government agencies and nonstate actors through the joint Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) – United Nations (UN) Programme on Gender Based Violence (2012-2016) among others.

2. Launch of the fast-track courts: One of the main challenges to curbing GBV in Zambia is delays in finishing up or concluding cases. To effectively respond to issues of GBV, the Zambian Government with support from cooperating partners launched the pilot user friendly fast track courts in Lusaka Province and Central Province (Kabwe) to explicitly assist in solving gender Based Violence (GBV) cases quickly. Due to the child and survivor-friendly courts for survivors of GBV, Zambia has been marked a pioneering nation in the fight against the scourge in the Southern African region. The GRZ-UN Joint Programme on Gender Based Violence was established to help the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) to actualize and implement the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the implementation of the Anti-GBV Act to facilitate the reduction of GBV in Zambia.

3. One Stop Centre (OSC) Approach: The idea of Coordinated Response Centers was presented by the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and supported by the Zambian Government. Coordinated response models represented a promising model for providing complete consideration and comprehensive care to survivors of GBV, offering medical, legal and psychosocial services either within one location either a hospital or a stand-alone center or even through a referral system that integrate services. In 2006, the One Stop Centers were established, the Centers incorporate a physical examination room and several interview rooms. The main focus is to enhance survivor safety and perpetrator accountability by planning and coordinating core center services, including providing prompt immediate and longer-term health care, easy access to police and legal services, and counselling services.

4. Mass Campaigns: Government, CSOs and Cooperating Partners in Zambia have been carrying out mass campaigns on behavior change in schools, communities, work places and churches to sensitize people and increase awareness in

order to reduce GBV incidents in the country. Traditional leaders have also played a major role in eliminating harmful traditional practices that contribute to GBV such as and early marriages as their voices carry a lot of weight in terms of influencing community members. These campaigns have increased demand for GBV services as more people have become aware of their rights, the consequences of GBV and the need to report cases of gender-based violence.

3. Research Methods

The basic research design employed in this study is Case study design. The type and source of data will be determined by the objectives of the study. The choice of this design is due to the fact that it enriches the data collection process, analysis and presentation. Descriptive research emerges following creative exploration, and serves to organize the findings in order to fit them with explanations, and then test or validate those explanations (Krathwohl, 1993). The researcher used a survey and field research to gather quantitative and qualitative data respectively.

3.1 Target population

Population is basically the universe of unit from which the sample is to be selected. According to Babbie (1992) a study population is the aggregation of element from which the sample elements actually selected. The target population for this study will be gender and development experts, Gender based violence advocates, Policy makers and Gender and development researchers from different parts of Zambia.

3.2 Sampling design and Sample size

For this study, the researcher will employ Purposive sampling to sample key informants. In addition, the sample will consist of fifteen (15) development practitioners, fifteen (15) Policy makers, ten (10) researchers and ten (10) Gender based violence advocates/activists. In total, the sample will comprise of fifty (50) respondents.

3.3 Data collection methods

The main instrument for data collection is the interview guide with both closed and open-ended questions covering all the variables in the study. An interview is a planned and structured conversation with specific objectives that must be achieved by the end of the interview. However, 50 research participants will be engaged in the interview and proper guidance will be offered to ensure accurate supply of primary data.

3.4 Data Analysis

The researcher will use thematic analysis as it looks at patterns of meaning in a data set. Thematic analysis takes bodies of data and groups them according to similarities in other words, themes. These themes help us make sense of the content and derive meaning from it. The data will be presented using simple descriptive statistic methods including tables, percentages, pie charts. The data collected will be computerized, sorted, edited, classified and coded. The resultant data will be entered using statistical package STATA for analysis.

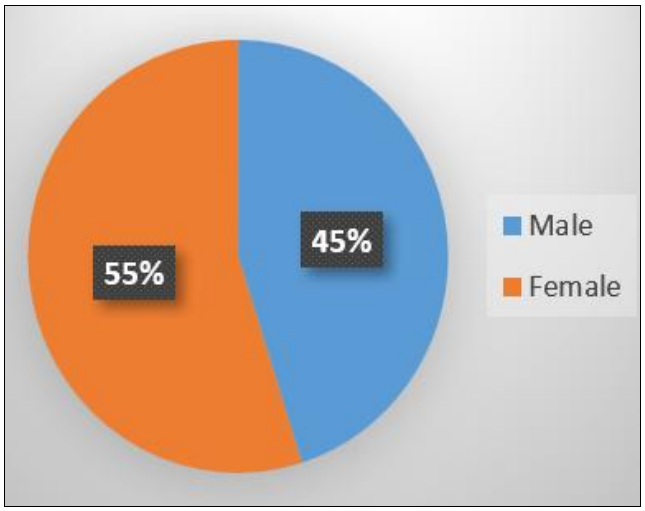
3.5 Ethical considerations

The following are some of the ethical issues to be considered in research:

Informed Consent: Putton *et al*., (2002) argues that the researcher should not persuade or coerce people to take part in the research, therefore the researcher should ensure that the respondents are well informed about the study and allow them to participate voluntarily; Confidentiality: in this study, the researcher will ensure confidentiality of the respondents by ensuring anonymity. Putton *et al* (2002) argued that it is essential to protect the identity of the person from whom you gather information since it is not possible to measure the dangers of a certain context for a given population. Therefore, the researcher will maintain a high level of confidentiality and legality.

4. Findings and Results

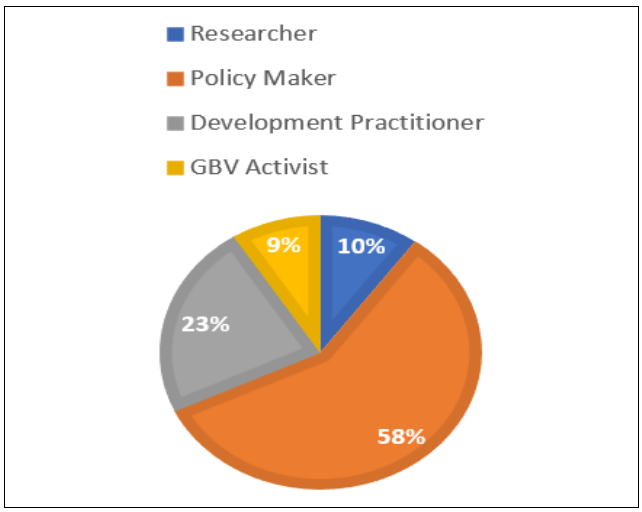
4.1 Characteristics of Respondents (Bio Data)



Source: Primary Data 2023

Fig 1.1: Gender

According to our findings on the gender of our research participants, the results show that 55% of the respondents were female and the 45% of the respondents were male. However, this shows a great improvement in inclusiveness that we have the majority of women participating in this research and men also been well represented.

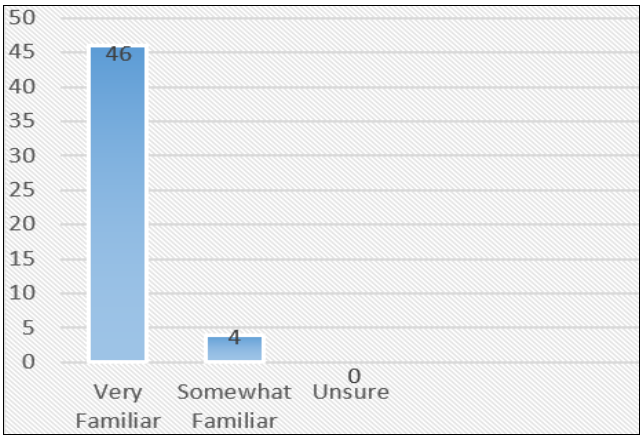


Source: Primary Data 2023

Fig 1.2: Occupation

According to our findings on the occupation of the research participants, the results show that 58% of the respondents were policy makers, 23% of the respondents were

development practitioners, 10% of the respondents were researchers and 9% of the respondents were gender-based violence advocates and activists.

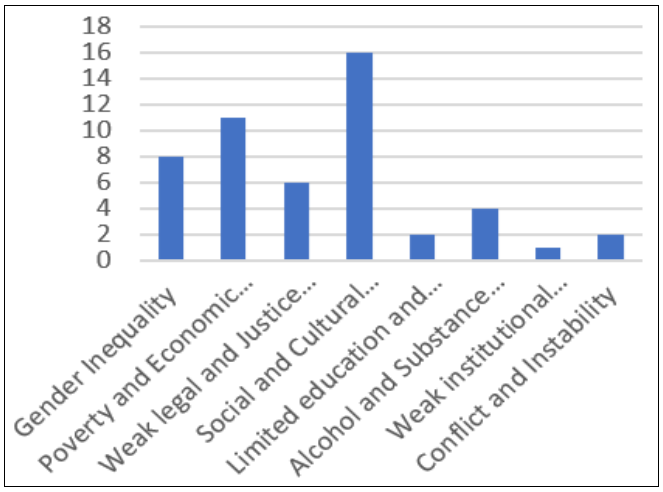


Source: Primary Data 2023

Fig 1.3: How familiar are you with the issue of gender-based violence in Zambia

According to our findings on the level of familiarity of the research participants with the issue of gender-based violence, the results show that 46 of the respondents were very familiar with the issue, then 4 of the respondents mentioned that there were somewhat familiar with the issue.

4.2 Dynamics of gender-based violence



Source: Primary Data 2023

Fig 1.4: What are the main factors contributing to the perpetuation of gender-based violence in Zambia

There are many factors that have contributed to the perpetuation of gender-based violence in Zambia today. According to our findings, our respondents laid down a number of factors. 16 of our research participants mentioned that social and cultural norms were a great contributing factor to GBV. While of our participants mentioned that poverty and economic factors were a great contributor to GBV. Then 8 of the respondents mentioned that gender inequalities were great contributing factors to GBV. Other factors pointed out by the respondents included; weak legal and Justice Systems, alcohol and substance abuse, weak institutional responses, and conflict and instability.

However, a development practitioner from Lusaka mentioned that social and cultural norms play a major role in perpetuating gender-based violence in Zambia. She hinted that:

> *"Social norms that condone violence, control, and discrimination against women and girls contribute to the perpetuation of GBV. I feel that norms surrounding masculinity, femininity, and gender roles may enforce harmful behaviors and attitudes."* (Development Practitioner, 2023).

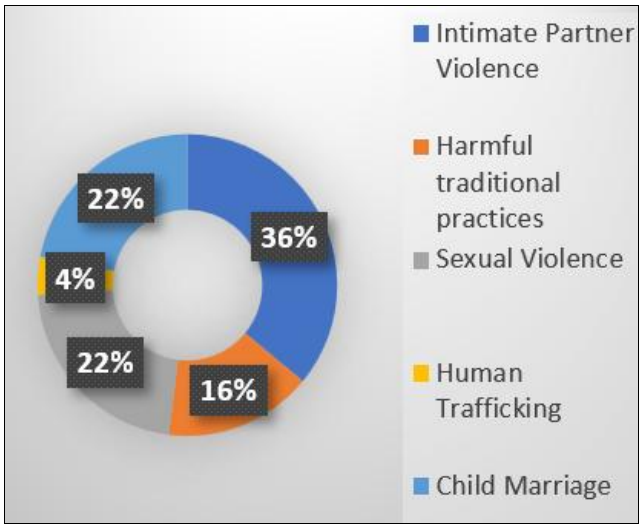
A policy maker from Lusaka added that poverty and economic factors also are a great perpetuator of gender-based violence. He explained that:

> *"I feel that socioeconomic factors, including poverty and lack of economic opportunities, can exacerbate GBV. Economic disparities especially can lead to frustration, stress, and power differentials, which can manifest as violence within intimate relationships or communities."* (Policy maker, 2023).

Furthermore, a GBV Researcher from Ndola town mentioned that another contributor to gender based violence is Weak Legal and Justice Systems. She opined that:

> *Inadequate enforcement of laws and weak justice systems contribute to the perpetuation of GBV in Zambia. Let us not forget the limited access to justice, corruption, and social acceptance of violence that has continued to discourage gender-based violence survivors from reporting incidents or seeking legal advice or remedies to help bring the perpetrators of the vice to book.* (GBV Researcher, 2023).

Therefore, addressing these contributing factors requires a comprehensive approach that includes legal reforms, awareness campaigns, education, economic empowerment, strengthening of justice systems, and collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations, and communities. It is crucial to challenge gender norms, promote gender equality, and engage men and boys as allies in preventing GBV.



Source: Primary Data 2023

Fig 1.5: How would you describe the prevalence and nature of gender-based violence in Zambia (e.g., types of violence, affected populations)

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a significant issue in Zambia, affecting various populations and occurring in multiple forms. While it is challenging to provide precise statistics, available data and research provide insight into the prevalence and nature of GBV in the country. However, in describing the prevalence and nature of gender-based violence in Zambia, our respondents pointed out the most prevalent forms of gender-based violence in Zambia. Thus, 36% of the respondents mentioned Intimate partner violence, while 22% of the respondents mentioned child marriage. Then 20% of the respondents mentioned sexual violence. 10% of the respondents mentioned harmful traditional norms and others mentioned human trafficking and vulnerable populations.

However, in explaining how one would describe the prevalence and nature of gender-based violence in Zambia today, a GBV Activist from Kabwe town explained that:

> *"Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a prevalent form of GBV in Zambia. It encompasses physical, sexual, and emotional abuse within intimate relationships. Many studies and reports from the Zambia Police Service have indicated that a significant number of Zambian women have experienced intimate partner violence at some point in their lives."* (GBV Activist, 2023).

Nevertheless, in describing the prevalence and nature of gender-based violence in Zambia today, another GBV Activist from Monse town explained that:

> *"So, you know, Zambia has a high prevalence of child marriage which exposes young girls to various forms of violence, including sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. We need to understand that child marriage not only deprives girls of their rights but also perpetuates intergenerational cycles of violence and poverty."* (GBV Activist, 2023).

Furthermore, a development practitioner from Kafue town added that:

> *"Sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault, is a grave concern in Zambia. Survivors of sexual violence face physical and psychological trauma. The perpetration of sexual violence can occur within families, communities, educational institutions, or as a weapon during conflicts."* (Development Practitioner, 2023).

In addition, a gender and human rights researcher from Lusaka pointed out that:

> *"Harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), child marriage, child inheritance, continue to affect some communities in Zambia. These practices violate the rights of women and girls and expose them to physical and psychological harm."* (Gender and Human Rights Researcher, 2023).

Therefore, it is important to note that underreporting is a common challenge in understanding the true prevalence of GBV in Zambia. Sociocultural factors, fear of stigma, lack of trust in the justice system, and limited access to support services contribute to low reporting rates. The Zambian government, civil society organizations, and international partners have been working to address GBV through various initiatives, including the enactment of legislation, establishment of support services, awareness campaigns, and capacity-building programs. However, concerted efforts are still required to eliminate GBV, change societal attitudes, and provide comprehensive support to survivors.

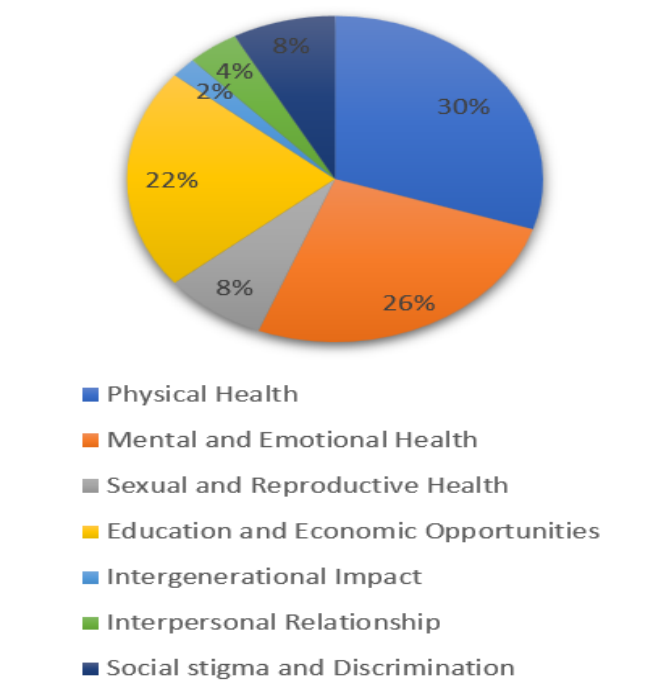
4.2.1 Cultural or traditional practices in Zambia that contribute to or perpetuate gender-based violence? If yes, please provide examples.

There are certain cultural or traditional practices in Zambia that contribute to or perpetuate gender-based violence (GBV). It is important to note that these given practices do not represent the entire Zambian culture, but they exist within specific communities or regions. The following are some of the cultural or traditional practices that were given by our research participants.

1. Icisungu: This is a traditional initiation ceremony practiced by some ethnic groups in Zambia. It involves seclusion of young girls, during which they receive education on adult responsibilities, cultural norms, and gender roles. However, in some instances, girls may experience physical or emotional abuse during the process, reinforcing power imbalances and harmful gender dynamics.
2. Wife Inheritance: In some communities, when a man dies, it is customary for his widow to be inherited by a male relative of the deceased. This practice, known as wife inheritance, can subject widows to sexual exploitation, abuse, and disempowerment.
3. Lobola (Bride Price): Lobola is a customary practice where the groom's family pays a bride price to the bride's family during marriage. While this practice itself is not inherently abusive, it can sometimes create a sense of ownership and control over women, leading to the justification of violence against them.
4. Early and Forced Marriages: Child marriage, where girls are married off before the age of 18, is prevalent in some regions of Zambia. This practice deprives girls of their rights, exposes them to various forms of violence, and perpetuates gender inequality.
5. Harmful Traditional Practices: Some harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), are practiced in certain communities. These practices involve the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, leading to physical and psychological harm.
6. Gender Norms and Expectations: Traditional gender norms and expectations in Zambia often reinforce male dominance and control over women. These norms can contribute to the normalization of violence and unequal power dynamics within relationships.

Thus, it is important to highlight that attitudes towards these practices are evolving, and efforts are being made by government institutions, civil society organizations, and communities themselves to challenge harmful practices and promote gender equality. Legal reforms, awareness campaigns, and community engagement are crucial in addressing these practices and preventing gender-based violence.

4.3 Impact of gender-based violence on development



Source: Primary Data 2023

Fig 1.6: Implications of Gender Based Violence on Health and Wellbeing of Zambians

Gender-based violence (GBV) has severe implications for the health and well-being of individuals in Zambia. Our findings indicate that Gender based violence has severe implications on physical health, sexual and reproductive health, education and economic opportunities, intergenerational impact, mental and emotional health, interpersonal relationship, social stigma and discrimination.

In explaining the severe implications of GBV, a Gender based violence advocate from Ndola mentioned that GBV has severe implications on a person's physical health. She opined that:

> *"I believe that survivors of GBV may experience various physical health consequences, including injuries, chronic pain, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), reproductive health complications, and even death. Physical violence can lead to fractures, bodily bruises, internal injuries, and other acute or long-term health issues."* (GBV Activist, 2023).

Another Gender based violence advocate from Lusaka added that Gender based violence has severe implications on a person's mental and emotional health. He explained that:

> *"GBV can have significant psychological and emotional effects on survivors. It often leads to mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal ideation. Survivors may experience low self-esteem, feelings of shame, guilt, fear, and social isolation."* (GBV Activist, 2023).

Furthermore, a researcher from Lusaka added that gender-based violence can affect the aspect pf inclusivity in accessing education and economic opportunities. He further explained that:

> *"GBV can disrupt access to education and economic opportunities. Survivors may be forced to drop out of school or miss work due to physical or emotional health consequences. This can lead to limited educational attainment, reduced job prospects, and financial instability."* (Researcher, 2023).

Thence, another researcher from Kasama town added that:

> *"The effects of GBV can extend beyond individuals and impact families and future generations. Children who witness or experience violence in their homes may suffer from trauma, emotional distress, and developmental issues, perpetuating cycles of violence."* (Researcher, 2023).

Therefore, addressing the health and well-being impacts of GBV requires a comprehensive approach that includes accessible healthcare services, mental health support, legal protection, and survivor-centered interventions. It is crucial to provide holistic support to survivors, promote gender equality, challenge harmful norms, and engage communities in prevention efforts to mitigate the adverse effects of GBV on individuals in Zambia.

4.3.2 Effects of gender-based violence on education for girls and young women

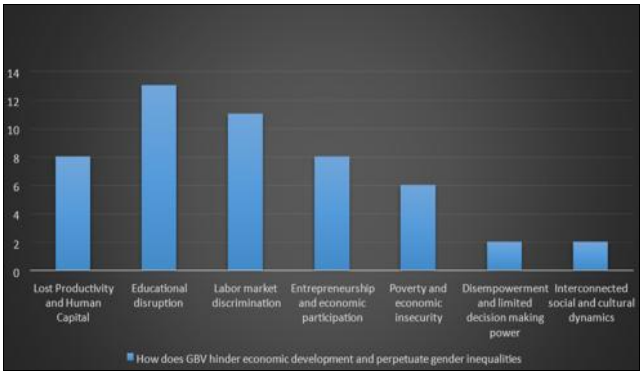
Gender-based violence (GBV) has profound effects on education, particularly for girls and young women in Zambia. Our findings from the field indicate that GBV exacerbates many effects on education for young girls and women in Zambia. Some the key effects as indicated by our respondents include:

1. School Dropout: GBV, such as sexual harassment, assault, or early marriage, can force girls to drop out of school. Fear of violence or actual experiences of violence in the school environment or during the commute to school can hinder girls' access to education and compromise their safety.
2. Limited Educational Opportunities: GBV can restrict girls' educational opportunities. Early and forced marriages, which often result in teenage pregnancies, can interrupt girls' education and limit their chances of pursuing higher education or career aspirations.
3. Disrupted School Attendance: Girls who experience GBV may face disrupted school attendance due to physical or psychological health consequences, seeking medical care, or dealing with legal processes. Absenteeism and irregular attendance can lead to educational gaps and hinder academic progress.
4. Psychological Impact: GBV can have significant psychological effects on girls and young women, impacting their mental well-being and ability to concentrate and engage in learning. Experiencing violence can lead to trauma, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, which can affect academic performance.
5. Gender Stereotypes and Discrimination: GBV reinforces gender stereotypes and discrimination, perpetuating harmful norms that devalue girls' education. Gender-based biases and unequal power dynamics within educational settings can create hostile learning environments, undermining girls' confidence and participation.
6. Negative Educational Outcomes: The effects of GBV on education can result in lower educational attainment and achievement for girls and young women. Limited access to

education and disrupted schooling contribute to an increased risk of illiteracy, limited job prospects, and perpetuation of poverty cycles.

7. Interconnected Impact: The consequences of GBV on education extend beyond individuals. Communities and societies suffer from the loss of potential talent, innovation, and contributions that girls and young women could have made through education.

Addressing the impact of GBV on education requires a multi-faceted approach. This includes implementing comprehensive school policies and safe learning environments, raising awareness about GBV and its effects, providing support services for survivors within educational settings, promoting gender equality, and empowering girls and young women to pursue their educational aspirations free from violence and discrimination. Collaboration among government institutions, civil society organizations, communities, and educators is essential to creating an enabling environment for girls' education and preventing GBV.



Source: Primary Data 2023

Fig 1.7: How does gender-based violence hinder economic development and perpetuate gender inequalities?

According to our findings on how gender-based violence hinders economic development and perpetuates gender inequalities, 13 of our respondents mentioned that GBV hinder economic development through educational disruption. Then 11 of our respondents pointed to labor market discrimination as a hindrance to economic development. Then 8 of our respondents pointed to lost productivity and human capital and entrepreneurship and economic participation as a hindrance to economic development and as a perpetuator of gender inequalities. Other respondents mentioned poverty and economic insecurity, disempowerment and limited decision-making power and interconnected social and cultural dynamics as hindrances to economic development.

In explaining how GBV hinders economic development and perpetuate gender inequalities, a policy maker from Lusaka pointed to Education disruption as a hindrance to economic development and gender equality. She explained that:

> *"GBV, particularly against girls and young women, often leads to school dropout, interrupted education, or limited access to educational opportunities. This educational disruption restricts their skill development, reduces their chances of acquiring higher paying jobs, and perpetuates gender disparities in employment and income."* (Policy maker, 2023).

A development practitioner from Lusaka mentioned that labor market discrimination is a great hindrance to economic development and perpetuates gender inequalities. She explained that:

> *"GBV reinforces gender inequalities in the labor market. Survivors of GBV, especially women, may face discrimination, lower wages, limited job opportunities, and barriers to career advancement. This perpetuates gender gaps in employment, income, and economic empowerment."* (Development Practitioner, 2023).

Nevertheless, a Researcher from Lusaka added that:

> *"GBV can discourage women from engaging in entrepreneurial activities or entering the formal workforce. Fear of violence, limited access to resources, and discriminatory practices impede women's economic participation and hinder their ability to start or grow businesses, limiting their economic independence and contribution to economic development*." (Researcher, 2023).

Furthermore, some GBV Advocates from Lusaka pointed out that poverty and economic insecurity is a major hindrance to economic development and perpetuates gender insecurities. They explained that:

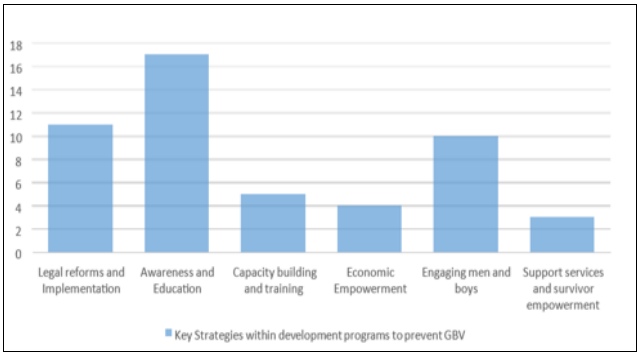
> *"GBV is both a cause and consequence of poverty. GBV can trap individuals in a cycle of poverty, as the economic consequences of violence can exacerbate their vulnerability and limit their opportunities for economic advancement. Additionally, poverty itself can increase the risk of experiencing GBV."* (GBV Advocates, 2023).

In addition, a policy maker from Livingstone added that:

> *"GBV disempowers survivors and perpetuates gender inequalities by limiting women's agency and decision-making power. The fear of violence and control by perpetrators restrict women's ability to make choices about their education, careers, finances, and other aspects of their lives."* (GBV Advocates, 2023).

Therefore, addressing GBV is crucial for promoting gender equality and achieving sustainable economic development. Efforts to prevent and respond to GBV should be integrated into broader development programs, including economic empowerment initiatives, education and skill building programs, legal reforms, social norms change campaigns, and comprehensive support services for survivors. By combating GBV and promoting gender equality, societies can create more inclusive and thriving economies for everyone.

4.4 Strategies for prevention and response



Source: Primary Data 2023

Fig 1.8: Key strategies that should be implemented within development programs to prevent gender-based violence in Zambia

According to our findings on the key strategies to be implemented within development programs to prevent GBV, our responses show that one key strategy that the respondents mostly recommended was awareness and education represented by 17 respondents. Then 11 respondents recommended legal reforms and implementation as a key strategy. Other respondents recommended engaging men and boys, economic empowerment, capacity building and training and support services and survivor empowerment as key strategies to implement in preventing gender-based violence in development programs.

In further explaining the key strategies to be implemented within development programs to prevent GBV, a Development practitioner from Lusaka pointed out Awareness and Education as a key strategy. He explained that:

> *"Promoting awareness and education about GBV is essential for prevention. Comprehensive campaigns should target communities, schools, workplaces, and media outlets to challenge harmful gender norms, promote gender equality, and educate individuals about human rights, consent, healthy relationships, and available support services."* (Development Practitioner, 2023).

Furthermore, a policy maker from Lusaka added that legal reforms and transformation is also a key strategy to preventing gender-based violence in development programs. She explained that:

> *"Strengthening and enforcing laws and policies that criminalize GBV is crucial. This involves ensuring adequate funding and resources for the justice system, establishing specialized GBV courts, and training law enforcement officers and judicial personnel to handle GBV cases effectively."* (Policy maker, 2023).

A development expert from Choma town added that economic empowerment is a key strategy to preventing gender-based violence within development programs. He explained that:

> *"Enhancing economic opportunities for women and girls is a critical strategy to prevent GBV. Development programs should focus on promoting entrepreneurship, vocational training, access to credit and resources, and eliminating discriminatory practices in the workplace, to empower women economically and reduce their vulnerability to violence."* (Development Expert, 2023).

Therefore, by implementing these strategies, development programs can contribute to preventing GBV, promoting gender equality, and creating safer and more inclusive societies in Zambia. It requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the structural, cultural, economic, and social factors that contribute to violence against women and girls.

4.4.2 What kind of support services do survivors of gender-based violence in Zambia need? How can these services be made more accessible and effective

According to our findings, survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in Zambia require a range of support services to address their immediate and long-term needs. The following are key responses obtained from the research participants during data collection in the field on key support services been provided:

1. Medical Services: Survivors need access to quality medical care, including emergency medical treatment, forensic examinations for evidence collection, treatment for injuries and infections, access to contraception, and screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.
2. Counseling and Psychosocial Support: Survivors require counseling and psychosocial support to address the emotional and psychological trauma resulting from GBV. This can include individual counseling, group therapy, trauma-informed care, and mental health support services to help survivors cope with the aftermath of violence and rebuild their lives.
3. Legal Support: Survivors need access to legal support to navigate the justice system, understand their rights, and seek justice against their perpetrators. This can include legal advice, assistance in filing police reports, support in obtaining protection orders, and representation in court proceedings.
4. Shelter and Safe Accommodation: Safe and secure shelters are essential for survivors who need temporary accommodation to escape ongoing violence and ensure their safety. Shelters should provide a supportive and confidential environment, along with basic necessities such as food, clothing, and access to healthcare and counseling services.
5. Economic Empowerment Programs: Survivors often require assistance in rebuilding their economic independence and financial stability. Economic empowerment programs can include vocational training, job placement services, access to credit and financial resources, entrepreneurship support, and income-generating opportunities.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

This section addresses some of the key or major findings of the study and briefly gives an analysis to the study. With a sample of fifty (50) research participants, the data was collected then coded and entered in Microsoft excel and was analyzed using a statistical instrument called STATA. The presentation of the discussion will be guided by the research questions in the interview guide with reference to the

literature review. Thus, the following are some of the major findings of the study;

4.5.1 What are the socio-economic and political factors that contribute to gender-based violence (GBV) in Zambia and their implications for development outcomes

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive issue worldwide, and Zambia is no exception. Several socio-economic and political factors contribute to GBV in Zambia, and understanding these factors is crucial for addressing the issue and promoting development outcomes. According to our findings, below is a discussion on the factors and their implications.

1.Traditional Gender Norms**:** Deeply entrenched traditional gender norms contribute to GBV in Zambia. Patriarchal beliefs and practices perpetuate unequal power relations between men and women, leading to the normalization of violence against women. These norms limit women's autonomy, restrict their access to resources, and reinforce harmful gender stereotypes.

Implication: GBV undermines gender equality and hampers overall development by impeding women's full participation in society, education, and the workforce. It perpetuates cycles of poverty and limits Zambia's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. Poverty and Economic Insecurity: High levels of poverty and economic inequality exacerbate GBV in Zambia. Economic hardships and limited access to resources can create tension and power imbalances within households, leading to an increased risk of violence against women. Poverty also limits women's options to escape abusive situations, trapping them in cycles of violence.

Implication: GBV has a detrimental impact on development outcomes by impeding poverty reduction efforts. Women who experience violence often face barriers in accessing education, employment, and healthcare, hindering their social and economic empowerment.

3. Weak Legal Framework and Enforcement: Inadequate legal frameworks and weak enforcement mechanisms contribute to impunity for perpetrators of GBV in Zambia. Gaps in legislation, lack of awareness, and limited access to justice services undermine the protection and support available to survivors. The absence of consequences for perpetrators perpetuates the cycle of violence.

Implication: Inadequate legal frameworks and weak enforcement hinder the elimination of GBV and hinder the overall development of the country. Addressing this issue requires strengthening the legal system, improving access to justice, and implementing comprehensive laws and policies to prevent and respond to GBV effectively.

4. Limited Awareness and Education: Limited awareness about GBV and gender equality perpetuates the problem in Zambia. Inadequate education and knowledge about women's rights, consent, and respectful relationships contribute to the perpetuation of harmful attitudes and behaviors. Gender-based violence often remains hidden and underreported due to societal stigmatization and fear of reprisals.

Implication: Enhancing awareness and education about GBV is crucial for prevention and addressing the root causes. Investing in comprehensive sexuality education, awareness campaigns, and community-based initiatives can help challenge harmful gender norms, promote gender equality, and prevent GBV.

Therefore, addressing the socio-economic and political factors contributing to GBV in Zambia is essential for sustainable development outcomes. Strategies should include legislative reforms, strengthening law enforcement, promoting women's economic empowerment, and raising awareness through education and community engagement. By addressing these factors, Zambia can create a more inclusive, equal, and violence-free society, leading to improved social and economic development for all.

4.5.2 What is the impact of gender-based violence on various development sectors in Zambia, including health, education, and economic empowerment

Gender-based violence (GBV) in Zambia has wide-ranging and detrimental impacts on various development sectors, including health, education, and economic empowerment. Our research findings highlight the following effects:

1. Health Sector:

- Physical and Psychological Health: GBV leads to severe physical injuries and long-term health consequences for survivors. It increases the risk of sexual and reproductive health issues, including unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. Survivors may also suffer from mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Healthcare Access: GBV can deter survivors from seeking medical care due to fear, stigma, and lack of support. This results in delayed or inadequate treatment, exacerbating health problems and impeding overall healthcare access.
- Inter-generational Impact: Children who witness or experience GBV suffer long-term physical and psychological consequences. This perpetuates the cycle of violence and affects their health and development outcomes.

2. Education Sector:

- School Attendance and Performance: GBV disrupts education, as girls may be forced to drop out or miss school days due to the fear of violence. The hostile school environment and the lack of safety measures contribute to a decline in girls' enrollment and educational attainment. This limits their opportunities and perpetuates gender inequalities in education.
- Academic Achievement and Future Prospects: GBV negatively impacts girls' academic performance and their ability to fully engage in learning. Limited access to education leads to reduced opportunities for employment and economic empowerment, reinforcing cycles of poverty and inequality.

3. Economic Empowerment:

- Employment and Labor Market: GBV restricts women's ability to participate fully in the workforce. Fear of violence, trauma, and limited access to education and skills development programs hinder their employment prospects. This results in women's economic marginalization, lower wages, and limited career progression.
- Entrepreneurship and Business Development: GBV acts as a barrier to women's entrepreneurial endeavors and business growth. Women who experience violence may lack the necessary resources, confidence, and support to start or expand businesses, limiting their economic empowerment and contribution to the economy.
- Poverty and Financial Independence: GBV traps

women in cycles of poverty and economic dependence. Economic abuse, such as controlling finances and denying access to resources, further exacerbates their vulnerability and restricts their ability to escape abusive situations.

Addressing GBV is crucial for unlocking the full potential of development sectors in Zambia:

- Health interventions should prioritize comprehensive healthcare services for survivors, including medical, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health support.
- Education reforms should focus on creating safe and inclusive learning environments, implementing policies to prevent and respond to GBV, and promoting gender-responsive education.
- Economic empowerment initiatives should address GBV as a barrier to women's economic participation, provide access to financial resources, and offer training and support for women entrepreneurs.

By addressing GBV comprehensively, Zambia can foster healthier communities, improve educational outcomes, and promote women's economic empowerment, leading to sustainable development and a more equal and inclusive society.

4.5.3 What are some of the strategies implemented within development programs in Zambia for the prevention and response to gender-based violence

Development programs in Zambia have implemented various strategies to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV). These strategies aim to address the underlying causes of GBV, provide support to survivors, and promote gender equality. Below are some key findings on the strategies implemented within development programs in Zambia:

1. Legal Reforms and Policy Development:
   - Strengthening Legal Frameworks: Efforts have been made to develop and strengthen laws and policies addressing GBV. These include enacting legislation criminalizing various forms of violence against women and establishing protective measures.
   - National Action Plans: Zambia has developed National Action Plans on GBV, providing a comprehensive framework for prevention, response, and support. These plans outline strategies for coordination, capacity-building, awareness-raising, and service provision.
   - Implementation of Protocols: Implementation protocols and guidelines have been established to guide law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders in responding effectively to GBV cases.
2. Awareness and Social Norms Change:
   - Community Sensitization: Programs have focused on raising awareness and sensitizing communities about GBV, its consequences, and available support services. Community engagement activities, including workshops, dialogues, and campaigns, aim to challenge harmful gender norms and promote positive attitudes and behaviors.
   - Men and Boys Engagement: Engaging men and boys is crucial for preventing GBV. Programs have targeted men and boys through initiatives such as gender equality training, promoting positive masculinity, and encouraging them to become allies in ending violence against women.
3. Service Provision and Support:
   - Safe Spaces and Shelters: Shelters and safe spaces have been established to provide temporary accommodation, counseling, and support services to survivors of GBV. These spaces offer a safe and secure environment where survivors can access medical care, legal aid, and psychosocial support.
   - Helplines and Hotlines: Helplines and hotlines have been set up to provide confidential support, advice, and information to GBV survivors. These services play a critical role in ensuring survivors have access to immediate assistance and referral pathways.
   - Training and Capacity-Building: Development programs have focused on building the capacity of service providers, including healthcare workers, law enforcement personnel, and community leaders. Training programs equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to respond effectively to GBV cases.
4. Collaboration and Multi-Sectoral Approaches:
   - Coordination Mechanisms: Multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms, such as GBV coordination committees, have been established to facilitate collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, and development partners. These mechanisms enhance information sharing, joint planning, and implementation of GBV prevention and response strategies.
   - Integration into Development Programs: GBV prevention and response have been integrated into various development programs, including health, education, and economic empowerment initiatives. This integration ensures that GBV is addressed holistically and mainstreamed across different sectors.

Evaluation and impact assessment of these strategies are essential to identify successful interventions, address challenges, and guide future programming. By implementing comprehensive strategies, Zambia can make significant progress in preventing GBV, supporting survivors, and promoting gender equality, leading to a safer and more inclusive society.

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