

**A REFLECTION ON THE COPING MECHANISMS OF ABUSED FEMALE BREADWINNERS  
IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO, SOUTH AFRICA**

**BY**

**LEO MUNYARADZI CHIMERI**

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PROMOTER : Dr R Tshifhumulo (University of Venda)  
CO-PROMOTER : Dr M.H Mukwevho (University of Venda)  
CO-PROMOTER : Dr G.M Lekganyane (University of Venda)  
CO-PROMOTER : Dr P Matshidze (University of Venda)

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## DECLARATION

I, **Leo Munyaradzi Chimeri**, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for any degree at any other university or institution. The thesis does not contain other persons' writing unless specifically acknowledged and referenced accordingly.

Chimeri L.M (Student): .....

Date: .....

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore and understand the circumstances, which influence abused female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and to model coping strategies for their plight. The study was qualitative in nature and an explorative case study design of abused married female breadwinners who had reported cases at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) trauma centers in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa was used. A critical case purposive sample was used to draw a cross-sectional sample of 12 participants from a total population of 1800 female breadwinners who reported cases between 2010 and 2015. The data collection methods were; in-depth interviews, focus group discussions from the same participants and key informants' interviews from three TVEP female managers. The three data collection techniques ensured triangulation for more complete and well-validated outcomes of the study. The data analysis method was the Van Mann. The study found out that a plethora of circumstances that involves the following; culture, the desire to take care of children, culture, religion, social needs, social status and entrapment influences abused married female breadwinners to stay in abusive marriages. As a result, they are forced to devise some coping strategies that include; problem solving strategies, reporting to the police, protection orders, seeking refuge, alcohol abuse and dependence, counselling, religious intervention, social support to cope with their plight. Establishing the reasons was critical in coming up with intervention methods that may help to curb abuse and coping strategies that may assist them in their plight.

**Keywords:** Breadwinner, Abuse, Married, Equality, Equity, Coping Mechanisms

## DEDICATION

- My mother, Ms Martha Jekwa for your everlasting love, support and belief in me always. You are my pillar of strength and your love keeps me going.
- My father, Mr Enos C Chimeri for believing in me and giving me every opportunity possible to make the most of my education.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BWS	Battered Woman Syndrome
BPD	Borderline Personality Disorder
BCS	British Crime Survey
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
EPZ	Export Processing Zones.
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
NEA-BPD	National Education Alliance for Borderline
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RPC	Research Publications Committee
TVEP	Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme
SGBV	Sexual and gender based violence
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for international Development
USBLS	US Bereau of Labour Statistics,
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund

UN

United Nations

ZTVA

Zero Tolerance Village Alliance

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

Female married breadwinners face a plethora of challenging circumstances in their lives. One of their major challenges is abuse by their husbands. Giles and Sims (2013) state that spousal abuse is one of the problems that affects millions of women every day worldwide. According to the United Nations Report (2013), many married women suffer abuse from their husbands, resulting in death. According to the report, intimate partners commit thirty-five percent of women abuse worldwide, and thirty-eight percent of these result in the death of the woman. The World Health Organisation (2014) reports that twenty-three percent of women in England were victims of physical abuse by their husband. Figures that have been reported for other countries are: Mexico (twenty-three percent), Nicaragua (twenty-two percent), Lima, Peru (twenty-three percent), Canada (eight percent), Scotland (fourteen percent), Finland (six percent), Switzerland (twelve percent) and the United States of America (eight percent), (WHO, 2000). The United Nations Children Fund (2014) reports that in Africa, intimate partner violence statistics are as follows; Kenya (forty-two percent), Uganda (forty-one percent) and Zimbabwe (thirty-two percent). The statistics by People Opposing Women Abuse in South Africa (2012) indicate that either a boyfriend or husband beats one in every five women, every week.

Oyediran and Isuego-Abanihe (2010) assert that every six hours in South Africa, an intimate partner kills a woman. This evidence is indicative of the fact that women are not safe within the comfort of their own homes. Contrary to the highlighted negative statistics, some female breadwinners choose to stay in their marriages, thereby risking their lives, health and social wellbeing (Sommer, 2014). Rodriguez and Richardson (2007) argue that a simple assumption is that any reasonable individual would attempt to avoid future victimisation by leaving an abusive husband. What is surprising is the fact that about forty percent of the women who seek help at spouse abuse shelters or organisations, return to live with their partner (Giles and Sims, 2013). Other studies (Snyder and Fruchtman; 2011; Hilberman and Munson, 2008); Hulin and Dragow, 2010) concur that more than forty percent women return to their abusive husbands.

This shows that marriage to some women is very important in their life, despite carrying the risk of severe injury or death. According to Kalmus and Straus (2012), income is the strongest predictor of women leaving or staying in the marriage. Financial dependency on the husband by a wife was the primary reason influencing women not to leave their traditional marriage (Hetling and Born, 2015). The advent of democracy and equity laws in South Africa has ushered in an era of access to opportunities and resources by all. The enactment of Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 and the Gender Equality Act of 1996 tries to redress the gender gap between women and men (Government Gazette, 2016). Ever since the promulgation of the Acts, gender gaps in labour force participation and earnings have narrowed, with many women earning competitive salaries (Goldin, 2009).

Drago, Black and Wooden (2015) state that the advent of female breadwinning is a new phenomenon, which dilutes the system of patriarchy and the gendered division of labour within the household and workplace. Hence, the notion whereby men serve as the sole providers of the family whilst women are confined to household work, no longer suffices. A study conducted by Stube (2008), cited the desire to take care of children together with their husband, as reason enough compelling women to stay in the marriage. Other issues cited by Silver and Ellard (2011), are social needs such as love, a stronger commitment to marriage and gender roles. All these reasons are normal activities in traditional marriage and patriarchal society. In the current dispensation in South Africa, the rights of each citizen are enshrined in the Bill of Rights. No one should suffer or be subjected to harm in the name of love in public or private life. However, it was strange to find female married breadwinners staying in their abusive marriages. It was therefore imperative for this study to understand the circumstances and reasons that make female married breadwinners withstand their husbands' relentless abusive behaviours, despite the futility and potential fatality. Hence, reflecting on the coping of abused female married breadwinners and exploring the circumstances of the marriage could help to curb or reduce the prevalence of abuse in marriages.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

The abuse of married women by the very intimate partner they live with is prevalent in South Africa (Sommer, 2014). In many instances, the abuse results in the death of the wife by the

husband. Besides, many women are becoming breadwinners in their marriage not because of loss of a husband through death or divorce, but rather because of the husband being unemployed. The advent of married females becoming breadwinners is not unique, but what is strange is to find women experiencing domestic violence and continuing to stay with their life partners, regardless of negative outcomes such as injuries and death. Still, financial independence on the part of women alone does not seem to influence abused married breadwinners to leave their abusive husbands. Women continue to stay in some marriages that do not guarantee mindset change in the abuser, nor safety in the future. Hence, this study explores the circumstances that make married female breadwinners stay in their nuptials, regardless of the risk of injuries and death. The study offers methods of interventions that may help to curb the problem of married female breadwinner abuse in marriages.

### **1.3 Aims of the study**

The aim of the study is to explore and understand the circumstances, which influence abused married female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts, and to model coping strategies for their plight.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The following objectives guided the study;

- 1.4.1.** To explore the context and circumstances that make abused female breadwinners stay in their marriages.
- 1.4.2.** To reflect on the coping mechanisms of abused married female breadwinners.
- 1.4.3.** To develop intervention methods that could assist in their coping strategies.

## 1.5 Research questions

This study used the following research questions:

- 1.5.1. What are the circumstances that make abused married female breadwinners stay in their marriages?
- 1.5.2. What are the coping mechanisms employed by abused married female breadwinners?
- 1.5.3. Which intervention methods could apply to help abused married female breadwinners?

## 1.6 Justification of the study

The study provides a crucial platform for understanding circumstances, views, experiences and the coping mechanisms of abused married female breadwinners in relation to their situations in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo province of South Africa. This enabled the researcher to establish circumstances behind married female breadwinner's choice to stay or leave abusive marriages, which are beyond financial dependence on men as stated by researchers such as Lyon (2012), and Kalmus and Straus (2012). Establishing the reasons was critical in coming up with methods and coping strategies that may help to reduce and prevent abuse of married female breadwinners. The study also brings a different knowledge dimension regarding the reasons leading to the incessant occurrence of violence against women in the Vhembe District of Limpopo province, South Africa.

## 1.7 Definition of operational terms

**Breadwinner:** the relative contribution of male and female partners to the household budget, which refers to who earns most of the income in the paid labour market (Warren and Hindelang, 2009). In the context of this study, the breadwinner is either a married man or woman who earns more than what his or her partner earns.

**Coping Mechanisms:** the conscious efforts to regulate or to control emotion, cognition, behaviour, physiology and the environment in response to stressful events or circumstances (Compas, Smith and Saltzman, 2011). In the context of this study, coping mechanisms are conscious efforts of abused female breadwinners to control emotion, cognition, behaviour, physiology and their environment in response to abusive behaviours of their husbands in the marriage.

**Equality:** refers to women having the same opportunities in life as men, for instance, equality of access to education and employment, which does not necessarily lead to equality of outcomes. According to the United Nations (2016), equality is the cornerstone of every democratic society that aspires to social justice and human rights (Reeves and Baden, 2011). In the context of this study, gender equality means equal opportunities for both men and women.

**Equity:** denotes equivalence in life outcomes for both women and men, recognising their unique needs and interests and requiring a redistribution of power and resources (Reeves and Baden, 2011). In the context of this study, gender equity means that there is a redistribution of power and economic resources that has led to women being female breadwinners or earning more than their husbands in marriages.

**Married:** refers to female breadwinners who are in a civil marriage as stipulated by the Marriage Act Number 25 of 1961 (Government Gazette, 2016). The state grants a husband and wife legal recognition through documentation of a marriage certificate of the marriage irrespective of religious or cultural affiliation, in accordance with marriage laws of South Africa.

**Spousal abuse:** a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviours, including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion that intimate partners use against each other in a domestic setting, such as in marriage or cohabitation (Goode, 2011). In the context of this study, spousal abuse means married female breadwinners abused by their husbands.

## 1.8 Delimitations of the study

The study was limited to married female breadwinners abused by their husbands and who have reported their cases at the Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment (TVEP) trauma centres. The study focused on abused female breadwinners in marriage only in line with the aim of the study, which sought to explore and understand the circumstances, which influence abused female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and assist them in finding a solution to their plight. The Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) is a non-government organisation that provides prevention and support services related to sexual and gender-based violence (SBGV) and HIV and AIDS. In the year 1997, TVEP was established. The study was limited to TVEP participants because it offered a large pool of abused female breadwinners' cases. According to the Department of Social Development, (2017), TVEP is one of the few not-for-profit organisation in South Africa that opens its trauma centres 24 hours a day and 365 days of a calendar year.

## 1.9 Overview of chapters

**Chapter 1: Introduction:** focuses on the background, significance of the study, problem statement, objectives, and definition of concepts, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. The circumstances that make abused female breadwinners stay in marriage were exposed.

**Chapter 2, Literature Review:** focuses on past and present literature that dealt with the phenomenon under study. More so, the literature reviewed enabled the researcher to plot, define the research topic and validate the research questions. In addition, there is a discussion of the adopted theoretical framework.

**Chapter 3, Methodology:** covers the methodology which comprises the research approach, research design, description of the study area, study population, data collection methods and data analysis techniques.

**Chapter 4, Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation:** presents the empirical findings and an analysis of the data in relation to the circumstances that make abused female breadwinners stay in abusive marriages.

**Chapter 5, Conclusion and Recommendations:** covers policy recommendations and general conclusions derived from the research. Future directions and possible recommendations of the study follow this.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

The chapter reviews related literature about the circumstances which influence abused married female breadwinners' tendencies to stay in nuptial contracts and the coping strategies for their plight. The theoretical framework focused on the Habermas's (2012) Communicative action theory, to explain the circumstances and coping strategies that abused female breadwinners may employ to survive their predicament. Given that women abuse has existed since the cradle of humankind, there was a need to understanding the magnitude of women abuse problem, circumstances and coping strategies that women have employed in the past and present in the journey of emancipation from all forms of abuse in the society. Therefore, the history of women abuse discussed delves into theoretical underpinnings and the coping strategies that enable them to survive their predicament.

#### 2.2 Revisiting historical abusive behaviour towards women

The history of women is a chronicle of abuse over the centuries. According to Moore (2009) women remained the property of their husbands during the ancient Roman society. Moore (2009) notes that the early Roman law could even permit wife battering or divorce especially when it ruins the men's honour or poses danger to men's property rights. Men considered physical assaults towards women as private matters. There was no public scrutiny of women abuse (Moore, 2009). The fact that husbands had the right to chastisement, while wives did not have the right showed that the ancient Roman society treated men and women unfairly. The point that wives faced the death penalty for offenses such as adultery and drinking wine, while husbands were not punished at all for committing adultery or drinking wine evidence this.

Although England became the champion of advocating women's rights in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, beforehand women abuse marred its history. According to Moore (2009), the common law in England before 19<sup>th</sup> century gave a man the right to beat his wife in the interest of maintaining family discipline. The phrase rule of thumb referred to English common law, which allowed a

husband to beat his wife if he used a stick that was no bigger than his thumb (Moore, 2009). The common law stipulated that women were inferior to men. Under the common law, a woman had no legal existence apart from her husband and her husband owned and controlled her (Barnett, Miller-Perrin and Perrin, 2013). Furthermore, women also had no property rights, even as widows. Okun (2011) states that the prominent alternative roles for women were those of priests, prostitutes or concubines. In the period between 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, men could beat their wives with the tolerance and approval of the community. They could do so in public without fear of interference by others. Some norms did develop during this period against the use of sharp or crushing weapons, against violence during pregnancy and against assaults on sensitive organs (Moore, 2009).

Nevertheless, the husband who violated such norms rarely faced stronger sanctions than an expression of disapproval. Rough music was the usual English form of expressing disapproval for women abuse. It was in practice until at least 1862 (Okun, 2011). In the United States of America, in 1824 the Supreme Court of Mississippi also acknowledged a husband's right to beat his wife (Moore, 2009). This was the same in Maryland, North Carolina and Massachusetts. It was only at the end of the nineteenth century that courts began changing their decisions. The courts were no longer supporting a husband's right to beat his wife. The State of Maryland was the first to outlaw wife beating in 1883 after the courts of Alabama and Massachusetts overturned the right to chastise wives in 1871 (Okun, 2011).

According to Humm (2015), in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, women often did not work outside the home. However, the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914 and World War 2 in 1939 changed that notion that women should not work outside the home. World War 1 and 2 gave a woman the opportunity to work outside the home because there was conscription of young men into the army in Europe and America. When the war ended in 1945, many women remained in the workplace, but some returned to work at home thereby financially depending on their husbands (Humm, 2015). However, the abolishment of all forms of abuse was in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was through successful lobbying by women's rights activists and the gaining of women rights to vote in elections. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to Dobash (2014), there was much legal, political, economic and ideological support against abuse of women by their husbands and partners. There was no recognition of the legal right of a man to use physical force against his wife in most western countries. Nonetheless, the legacy of patriarchy continued to produce the conditions and relationships that led to a man's use of force against a female partner. Moral order still supported patriarchal dominance, which underpinned the marital hierarchy (Dobash,

2014). In Africa, abuse of women exists in the form of culture that promotes patriarchy. There is an expectation of married female breadwinners to subordinate to men because of the traditional perception that men are the head of the family (Brown-Miller, 2012). In traditional societies, there is acceptance of wife battering because of a man's right to inflict physical punishment on his wife. Cultural justifications for violence usually follow from traditional philosophies of the proper roles of men and women (Saine, 2012). According to Dobash (2014), men who beat their wives are living up to the qualities taught when growing up such aggressiveness, male dominance and female subordination.

In South Africa, major differences have shaped the lives of women from various racial backgrounds because it is made of many different races and ethnic tribes. However, despite the racial backgrounds, South African patriarchal society has always been present as a non-racial institution in all communities (Frenkel, 2008). A very good example of the existence of political policies of the apartheid era is a gendered migrant labour system. African women were retained as migrant domestic workers in whites' leafy suburbs far from their families or be housewives engaging in agriculture in small pieces of land and whilst depending on their male migrants to send wages home from their workplaces (Seidman, 2013). However, the advent of democracy in 1994 led to changes and formulating of policies such as the Gender Equality Act of 1996, which promotes gender equality and equity.

Walker (2010) states that the purpose of the gender equality policies is to enable women to escape patriarchy through increased personal autonomy and financial independence against the traditionally male-dominated society. This led to a new phenomenon of female breadwinning in South Africa. Therefore, the historical background of women abuse reflects that abuse have long existed and it has been entrenched in the society. As a result, history is still repeating it's self in that despite the emancipation of women in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, female breadwinners still stick to abusive marriages making use of strange strategies to cope up with abusive tendencies of their husbands. History shows that abuse of women is socially constructed and socially represented. This may mean that the circumstances that make women stay in abusive marriages are also socially constructed and ingrained in women, which makes it difficult for them to separate from their husband but instead devise coping mechanisms to survive abusive marriages. The circumstances and coping strategies may also be historically and socially constructed given that from tender age girls are taught to be submissive which is another way of teaching them to cope up with any abusive behaviour that a man can subject them to. Having said that, the onus is on the following write up to discuss the theoretical underpinnings from

various scholars that try to conceptualise the circumstances and coping strategies that make abused female breadwinners to stick to their marriages.

## **2. 3 Theoretical framework**

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the theoretical framework of the study. The Communicative action theory promulgated by Habermas in 1981 forms the theoretical framework of the study (Habermass, 2012). The researcher applied Habermas's theory of Communicative action to conceptualise the circumstances that influences abused married female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and the coping strategies to their plight. Worth noting is that, there are multiple explanations for women abuse and various theories that are not mutually exclusive. However, for the purposes of this study Habermas's theory of Communicative action was the ideal theory to point out some inconsistencies, gaps, and difficulties in female breadwinner's causation, circumstances and the coping strategies that influence them to stick in their abusive marriages.

### **2.3.1 Theory of communicative action**

The Habermas's theory of Communicative action (2012) is made up of the lifeworld and the system world. The lifeworld is the collective beliefs, morals and customs that emanates from the straight interaction that takes place in day-to-day life in dissimilar social groups that involve families and communities. An application of the Theory of Communicative Action to the context of this study informs that through the lifeworld, the norms and values of a society may influence abused female breadwinners to stay in their marriages and come up with coping strategies to survive their plight. Habermas (2012) argues that in the lifeworld, communication competence is about not only producing grammatical sentences but it also makes people relate to the world and the appropriateness of shared values and norms of the people in the society. The lifeworld forms are the basis of the patriarchal dominance of women by men.

On the other hand, Habermas's Theory of Communicative World indicates that the system world are social actions that are functionally coordinated through non-linguistic means in the society

such as the state, bureaucratic and formally organised systems such as policies like Gender Equality Act of 1996 (Government Gazette, 2016)

An application of the Theory of Communicative World, informs that policies that promote gender equality in the system world enables women to escape patriarchy through increased personal autonomy and financial independence against the traditionally male-dominated society which can make it easier for them to walk away from abusive marriages unlike when they are financially dependent on men (Walker, 2010). However, these policies do not necessarily make abused female breadwinners to leave their husband because the lifeworld influences them to stay in nuptial contracts and assist them in finding a solution to their plight. For the system world to function there must be what Habermas called the system integration. The system integration coordinates the activities that take place in the society such as lobbying against abuse female breadwinners abuse by NGO's such as (TVEP). As a result, the system world protects and enables coping strategies for abused female breadwinners' measures such as; reporting domestic violence cases to the police, application of protection orders against abusive husbands and trauma counselling from non-governmental organisations such as TVEP to cope up with abuse effects of abuse in marriages (Tavares and Oliveira, 2017).

Therefore, the Theory of Communicative World in the context of this study equates to a circle with overlapping aspects of the lifeworld and system world. The lifeworld and system world influences abused female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and assist them in finding coping strategies to their plight. The social system made up of the lifeworld revolves around aspects such as a culture that traps women inside through influencing their knowledge and in turn facilitates coping strategies to survive their predicament. Therefore, Habermas Theory of the Communicative world provides the ideal theoretical framework to explain and comprehend circumstances that influences abused female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and assist them in finding coping strategies to their plight.

### **2.3.2 Feminist theories**

Although Habermas's theory of Communicative action underpins the theoretical framework of the study, the feminist theory also leads to better understanding female breadwinners' abuse and the circumstances that influence them to stay in their marriages. The Feminist theories as

propagated by Dobash (2014) denotes how societies foster patriarchal family structures in which men are expected to have power over women which influences female breadwinners to stay in abusive marriages. Moore (2010) alludes to socially construction of gender relationships in the society on whether one is a man or a woman. The feminist theory focuses on the affinity existing resulting from patriarchy, traditional beliefs and abusive conduct towards women (Mullender, 2016). Several cultural contributes to the growing incidence and social tolerance towards the abuse of women. According to Dobash (2014), the historical tradition of patriarchal supremacy over women authorised a permissible level of abuse against women. Dobash (2014) further explains that men are socialised to perceive their partners as their property and they continue expounding that the abuse of women is just one of a variety of forms of control that men try to exercise over women.

Bart and Moran (2014) argue that men believe they are justified in beating their wives. The reason being that it was an acceptable norm of the society. Feminists emphasize that maltreatment of women is just one of a variety of tools designed to control intimate partners that men employ to exercise dominance over women (Conway, 2013). Individually addressing men violence towards women is a mammoth task. The reason being the need to focus on women's traditional and societal roles within their families and in the community, as women are to an ever-growing extent subjected to control by men within a culture that is designed to benefit and meet the needs of men (Conway, 2013). Dangor, Hoof and Scott (2015) argue that South African society is extremely patriarchal in nature and is still constrained within the limits of so-called male supremacy and the legacy of apartheid. Patriarchy defines the way in which the acceptance of male dominance within a society is a significant factor, which contributes towards the continued acceptance of women abuse. Thus, this form of abuse is intrinsically rooted within the social context of South African society. Although the feminist theories contribute to the understanding of circumstances that influences abused female breadwinners to stay in marriages, they cannot make the basis for the theoretical framework of the study because of the weaknesses associated with them. The major weakness of the Feminist theories that they have built on an ideological foundation that is anti-male.

As a result, it alienates man in intervention measures that target to curb abuse of female breadwinners. Berkowitz (2003) argues that effective intervention measures against abuse must also include men since they are the major perpetrators of abuse of female breadwinners. Another shortcoming of feminist theories is that they do not recognise increasing economic and educational achievement of women in the modern-day world which has led to female

breadwinning phenomena. Hence, the researcher used Habermas's Theory of Communicative action as the ideal theoretical foundation of the study.

### **2.3.3 Interfamilial resource theory**

Goode (2011) propagated the Interfamilial Resource Theory. The theory posits that persons with the most resources hold the most power and therefore can command a certain level of force over the others (Goode, 2011). Blood and Wolfe (2010) conceptualises abuse of women as a resource much like material resources of the world. Threats or use of violence used as a tool to acquire or gain obedience and compliance in the absence of material resources. These resources can be economic, material, social, personal, or familial among others, but the person with the most resources often does not feel the need to use force (Blood and Wolfe, 2010). Rather, when other resources are constrained or limited, violence becomes a resource used to gain control or additional force. Someone who lacks sufficient resources to hold the most power also uses violence (Blood and Wolfe, 2010). As a result, it is structural violence but applied often to the familial level. Demo and Edwards (2014), posits that husband who earns less than their wives have a higher probability to use violence against their wives. This is in contrast with men who earn more than their wives do.

Plenty of studies to mention a few by Hoffman, Demo and Edwards (2014); Hotaling and Sugarman (2010); McCall and Shields (2013) are in support of the Interfamilial Resource Theory. However, worth noting is that the Interfamilial Resource Theory only conceptualises abuse of women as a resource much like material resources of the world without considering other aspects beyond material resources that may lead to abuse of female breadwinners. Therefore, Interfamilial Resource Theory strength is on effects or influence of material resources on abuse of female breadwinners and the weakness it is that it does not consider other aspects such as culture or the context in which abuse of female breadwinners take place. Thus, for the purposes of this study, Interfamilial Resource Theory is not ideal to be the theoretical framework of the study because of the mentioned weaknesses.

### 2.3.4 Ecological theory

One of the most prominent theories behind the abuse of female breadwinners is the Ecological Theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner (2013) who argued that a person's behaviour and development resulted from interactions among several systems that comprises of microsystems, mesosystems, ecosystems, macro-systems and chronosystem. The ecological Theory applied to female breadwinner's abuse attends to the interactions among the system levels. The microsystem refers to individual factors such as biology, history of witnessing or experiencing abuse in the family, general demographics such as age, sex, education, mental health status and substance use. According to Jewkes (2012), wife-battering cases that are associated with drug and alcohol abuse are more serious and more dangerous than situations not involving drugs and alcohol. Brecklin and Ullman (2012) in their study found strong links between alcohol and drug abuse and occurrence of abuse of female breadwinners in marriages. Applying the Ecological Theory' microsystem to the study, alcohol abuse is one of the major causes of abuse and at the same time abused female breadwinners use it as a coping mechanism to stick to abusive marriages (Jones, 2012).

The Ecological Theory's mesosystem is the interactions between the individuals and their close relationships such as abusive husbands with their wives (Bronfenbrenner, 2013). Furthermore, the exosystem pertains to the community contexts for the individual that comprises of schools, places of work, neighbourhoods that they grew up in or where they stay. Macrosystems are societal structures such as the norms and beliefs about violence, masculinity factors, gender roles, racism in the society. The last one is chronosystem. It involves the patterns of environmental events and transitions in life sociohistorical circumstances or conditions (White, 2009). Under the chronosystem, the person has no control over what happens to them in their environment. However, events that happen to them tend to affect them indirectly, for example, the death of a husband that may later contribute to the abuse of the widow by other men (White, 2009). Applying the context of the chronosystem to this study, abused married female breadwinners have no control over socialisation and patriarchy that existed in the society since time immemorial. Jasinski and Williams (2008), notes that men are socialised to use and show aggressive behaviour in the society and this may be one of the factors that influence abuse of married female breadwinners. The ecological Theory has been widely applied in violence research, particularly in the areas of adolescent violence, violence against women, victimisation experiences of female partners and to some extent, elderly abuse. One of the major strength of

this Ecological Theory is that it enables identification of violence at all levels against female breadwinners in the society, which helps in designing better prevention strategies to curb abuse.

Applying Ecological system to the context of the study, it can be postulated that the microsystem or individual factors, mesosystem or interactions between individuals, and the macro system such as norms and beliefs causes abuses and may make abused female breadwinners stick in their abusive marriages. However, the weakness of the ecological system is that it is strong in outlining the causes of abuse of female breadwinners in the society and offers little concerning circumstances that make abused female breadwinners stay in abusive marriages and devise coping mechanisms against abuse. Thus, for the purposes of the study Habermas's Theory of Communicative World makes the ideal theoretical framework of the study. Before reflecting on the circumstances and coping strategies of abused female breadwinners in marriage, there is a need to consider how South Africa's legislation and policies related to abuse of female breadwinners. An analysis of existing policies and legislation concerning abuse of women helps in better understanding of how the government is trying to protect women abuse and to scrutinise the loopholes and shortcomings in the existing legislation against abuse of women in South Africa

## **2.4 Policies and legislation against abuse of women**

Given the historical segregation and discrimination of women in all spheres of the society, the United Nations took it upon itself to encourage members' states to abolish discrimination and abuse of women in all its forms. Before 1990, legal systems and public policy frameworks have often overlooked the crises of violence against women. In failing to protect the rights and well-being of survivors or punish perpetrators, many reflect social biases tolerating violence (United Nations Women, 2017). Abuse of women had often been private matters that are outside justice. However, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Act Number 19 of 1992 in protected women from all forms of abuse in the international law. States were required to ensure laws that provide adequate protection from all kinds of violence in the family and society. Given that South Africa is one of the member states of the United Nations, it passed policies and legislation against abuse of women in accordance to the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Domestic Violence Act, no 116 passed into law in 1998 (Government Gazette, 1998).

The Domestic Violence Act (No: 116 of 1998) broadened the definition of domestic violence, as it is not restricted to married couples. It obliges the police to help battered women, including explaining to her the rights, she has under the law, finding her a safe place to stay and helping her to get medical attention if necessary. It also gives the police more power to arrest the batterer and includes provision for the batterer to continue to support his family financially. Although laws and legislation against abuse of women in South Africa have provided the foundation for a coordinated and comprehensive approach to violence against women, implementation is still lagging and there are many loopholes in the laws.

Curran and Bonthuys (2015) argue that one of the weaknesses of the Domestic Violence Act is that it does not make a provision for the issuing of protection orders in traditional courts. Abuse of women in rural areas continues to exist. The reason being the application of customary law in wife abuse problems instead of the Domestic Violence Act itself (Curran and Bonthuys, 2015). Govender (2013) notes that police officers are not effective in dealing with women abuse cases because of poor statements that they take when women who have abused report cases. Govender (2013) criticism of the way police handles women abuse cases is supported by a newspaper article whereby Fikile Mbalula, the former Minister of Police stated that between hundred to five hundred cases of women and girls report that police are not taking up their cases that they report at police stations (Sunday Times 29 October 2017:10).

Prinsloo (2007) said that the discriminatory attitude of police officers was a deterrent in reporting cases of domestic violence. However, there are some positive results outlined in the enacted South African laws and policies, which led to a rise in female breadwinning. The Gender Equality Act of 1996 has led to gender equality in the labour market and this has a positive impact on female breadwinning. Walker (2010) states that the Gender Equality Act of 1996 has enabled women to escape patriarchy through increased personal autonomy and financial independence against the traditionally male-dominated society. This led to a new phenomenon of female breadwinning in South Africa. Therefore, there is need to conceptualise the trends of female breadwinning in the world and its impact on the marriage institutions, which may be resulting in some instance abuse of female breadwinners.

## 2.5 Trends of female breadwinners in the world

According to the International Labour Organisation (2016), the percentage of females who were the only or the primary breadwinner in marriages relative to men from 2006-2016 was fifty-three percent. Female labour participation has increased worldwide. This is evidenced by Latin America and the Caribbean whereby the female labour force participation rate rose between 2006–2016, from forty-six percent to fifty-two percent, while in the Middle East it rose from twenty-five percent to thirty-three percent. In developed countries, rates rose slightly, from fifty-one percent to fifty-three percent (Floro, Maria and Miles, 2016). A typical example is in the United States of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK). In the US, wives' earnings were equivalent to their husband's earnings in twenty-four percent of couples by 2009, more than double the proportion by nine percent in 2000 (Raley, Mattingly and Bianchi, 2010). In the UK, the female earnings share has increased since the mid-1990s, especially among mothers, whose median contribution to couple's earnings rose to thirty-seven-percent by 2010 (Ben-Galim and Thompson , 2013). Of all the first world countries, Australia is a perfect example that shows a trend of women usurping men in the labour market. For much of the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Australia's wage setting system based on a gendered waged system whereby men earned twice than the women rate.

The presumption that men had sole responsibility for families' financial needs formed basis of it (Nolan, 2013). Therefore, this led to Australia having a stronger culture of male breadwinning than any other developed countries (Baxter and Hewitt, 2013). However, by the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Australia's breadwinning trend changed since men's breadwinning status was under threat from women. Ryan and Conlon (2015) characterised Australian women as gentle invaders who were gradually usurping men in the labour market. In Africa, the gender wage gap between female and males has closed significantly. A study from Ethiopia and Uganda in the early 1990s showed women earning sixty to seventy-five percent of male wages (Appleton, Hoddinott and Krishnan, 2015). In South Africa, there has been a huge change in the education of the girl child. Tertiary education especially universities remained male-dominated institutions until in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The rate of University enrolment for male students and the rate of completion of degrees was very high than for female students. However, things have changed in Universities. The coming of the millennium saw the enrolling of more women in many universities across in South Africa (Vincent-Lancrin, 2008).

According to Lutz, Cuaresma and Abbasi-Shavazi (2010), in South Africa, there is a high rate of women enrolment and completion rates of women that means that currently women are outnumbering men in universities and they are successfully completing their degrees on record time. For the first time in history, there is a reversal of gender gap in education and an increase in female breadwinners in families. This has led to a change in a traditional marriage set up and the gender division of labour in the household. Before delving into the effects or impact of female breadwinning on the set up of the family, there is need to understand the traditional roles of men and women in the family to assess the impact that female breadwinning has made in the modern-day family set up.

## **2.6 Men's traditional family work**

According to Strong and Cohen (2015), a men's role as the head of the family had a traditional role that is different from the new phenomenon of female breadwinning that is rife in the twenty-first century. The husband's traditional role as a provider of the whole family has been perhaps his most fundamental role in marriage. Arrighi and Maume (2010) note that, "It is the activity in which they spend most of their time and depend on most for their identity". Depending on the nature of the job, man would spend day and night at work to provide for the family. In the traditional setup, what determined a good man was being able to provide for the family. That is what used to define a good husband and a good father (Arrighi and Maume, 2010). In contrast, a bad husband was one who fails to provide for the family. Even the man's family would brand the man a failure because of his inability to live up to the expectations held for good husbands and good fathers (Strong and Cohen, 2015).

In the traditional model, the role of men was provision and maintenance of household work. Household maintenance work comprised of doing physical tasks such repairing broken property and construction work in the compound. The aforementioned tasks were consistent with perceived male norms (Strong and Cohen, 2015). Even though men at times would contribute to household and childcare work to help their wives, their contribution was usually overlooked in terms of the total amount of work that they would have done. The reason being the perceiving of their role as helping their wife's duties and not assuming the equal and full responsibility of doing household chores. However, worth noting is the fact that some man can assume equal household and childcare work especially those who are not traditionally oriented but have

democratic views about family work (Greenstein, 2015). In addition, in some circumstances, men are forced to do equal household and childcare work for example when the wife is sick and there no one to cook. Nevertheless, they will be complaining when doing the household chores (Strong and Cohen, 2015). However, worth noting is the fact that some man can assume equal household and childcare work especially those who are not traditionally oriented but have egalitarian or democratic views about family work (Greenstein, 2015). However, it is not a problem if both wife and husband share a traditional gender ideology. Traditional gender ideology means that traditional beliefs about what a husband and a wife should contribute to paid work and family work (Strong and Cohen, 2015). Therefore, it would be a normal thing for a man not to do household work because both spouses have traditional gender ideology. Although the traditional model of man as the provider of the family still exists, the position of women in paid work and earnings have changed. Many households have female breadwinners, which is in total contrast with the traditional model whereby the man is the provider of the family. Therefore, the traditional role for men was provision and maintenance of household work.

## **2.7 Women's traditional family work**

Women and men's traditional work in the society is different. Even though in the modern-day world, most women have more employment opportunities, neither traditional women nor their husbands regard employment as a women's primary role in the family (Coontz, 2016). Strong and Cohen (2015) postulate that women are now contributing more than forty percent of family income in families whereby both the husband and the wife are working. It is interesting to note that even though both spouses work they still do not regard employment as a women's fundamental role (Strong and Cohen, 2015). For couples that have strong gender ideologies, although the women's incomes contribute to a good standard of living, they are not duty bound to provide. Despite going to work, men expect female breadwinners to perform household and childcare tasks such as cooking, cleaning and taking care of the children (Thompson and Walker, 2016). It does not matter whether a woman is a chief executive officer of a big company or the president of a country; working does not guarantee equality in doing the household task. Men expected them to do household chores.

Women's family work is considerably more varied and demanding than that of men (Strong and Cohen, 2015). The reason being the variety of household chores and duties such as taking care

of children, accompanying them to school, whilst men do few tasks such as cutting the grass or fix a broken machine. According to Brayfield (2012), women's family work ranges from housekeeping to childcare, maintaining family relationships to organising recreation, socialising children, cooking and managing the family finances. Although, family work is too much and can be overwhelming to women, ironically, family work is often invisible even to the women who do most of it (Brayfield, 2012). Worth noting is that it seems invisible because of underappreciation of the work they do by their husbands.

According to Oakley (2015), there are four primary aspects of the homemaker role. The first aspect is the classification of women as complete homemakers. The second aspect is classification as economically dependent on man in everything. The third aspect is non-working status given to women. The fourth aspect is classification as female breadwinners of the family because they are financially independent. Oakley (2015) argues that the complete homemakers who stay at home are dissatisfied with household work. They perceive it to be routine, monotonous, unpleasant, unappreciated, and unstimulating since they will be doing the same thing day and night repeatedly. Although doing household chores may be displeasing, Strong and Cohen (2015) note that women like some aspects of the role of staying at home. Staying at home and doing household chores gives women some degree of autonomy for example young ladies may find increasing pleasure as they experience a sense of mastery over cooking, entertaining, or taking care of happy children (Strong and Cohen, 2015). Furthermore, not going to work give them ample time to relax and a chance for networking with other women such as friends, neighbours, or relatives which they may share many of their responsibilities with. In networking with those around, it would give them a chance to discuss ideas and feelings and give one another support in the neighbourhood. They may share tasks as well as problems.

According to Bird and Ross (2013), full-time male house workers do not do all the exclusive domestic work like homemakers. In place of calling themselves househusbands, they identify themselves as retired, unemployed, laid off, or disabled (Bird and Ross, 2013). Increasingly, if they have children at home, they may call themselves "stay-at-home dads" (Smith, 2009). Therefore, it shows that there is a difference between women and men traditional household work. Women who work face an overwhelming task of trying to balance household task and paid work. After examining the husband and wife's traditional roles in the family, there is a need to reflect on how abused married female breadwinners balance work and doing household chores.

## **2.8 Balancing of career and household chores**

Whether society is ready to accept it or not, female breadwinning is a new phenomenon that needs to be embraced (Strong and Cohen, 2015). Female breadwinners need support, encouragement and appreciation for their achievements because of the segregation they have been through in the economic, political and social arenas in the society. Knox and Schacht (2015) indicate that female breadwinners are overwhelmed with working and at the same time doing household tasks expected from them by the husband and society. According to Strong and Cohen (2015), it is stressful and overwhelming for female breadwinners because society has not pursued ways to alleviate the resulting work and family conflict that comes with being a female breadwinner. Workplaces that are not flexible for a woman, inadequate access to quality childcare and above all lack of equality in doing household work and childcare between the husband and wife exacerbate stress and conflict (Knox and Schacht, 2015).

It can be summed up that the three prominent social needs in female breadwinners are the following; redefining gender roles to eliminate role overload for women, providing adequate child care facilities for working parents, restructuring the workplace to recognise the special needs of parents and families. The coping strategies for these female breadwinners and women who are working full time include reorganising the family system and re-evaluating household expectations (Strong, 2015). In the end, the objective for female breadwinners can be to manage their family relationships and their paid work to achieve a reasonable balance that allows their families to thrive rather than merely survive. Achieving such, the balance will continue to be a struggle until society and workplace adapt to the needs of married female breadwinners in the society.

## **2.9 Circumstances or factors that make women stay in abusive marriages**

Although female breadwinners work hard for their families, their husbands subject them to abuse. Abuse in the hands of their husbands may lead to death and severe health complications, yet it is surprising they chose to risk their lives by remaining in their marriages. They stick to their marriages despite their financial independence. A plethora of circumstances discussed in the upcoming section influences them to stick to their marriages.

### 2.9.1 Religions and cultural orthodoxies

According to Richards (2014), abuse of married female breadwinners is rife in many communities in the world and it takes different forms within specific forms. What is more flabbergasting is that sometimes family members of the wife batterer such as mothers, sisters, aunts and uncles may encourage or initiate the abuse of the wife the abuse (Choudry, 2009). The whole extended family may even team up against the wife. Some cultural orthodoxies and religions invoke bible verses and cultural norms to justify female breadwinners' abuse. A good example is that the Bible and Koran altogether contain some verses and scripts used or quoted to justify violence. Ironically, they also have verses or scripts that condemns violence (Mama, 2009). Therefore, this gives an advantage to an abuser that they can be able to invoke some Bible verses to abuse women and justify it when the truth is that violence against female breadwinners is wrong. There is no justification for it.

As a result, of these religions and cultural orthodoxies, it discourages abused married female breadwinners from looking out for help because they will be afraid of prosecution. In addition, they may be discouraged to seek support because of fear of condemnation by their families (Erez, 2012; Raj and Silverman, 2013). According to Choudry (2006), some communities do not take the abuse of married female breadwinners as a serious crime against women. As a result, female breadwinners who divorce their husbands because of abuse face dishonour and rejection by their family members and their communities (Choudry, 2006). A study in the Western Isles of Scotland by MacNeil (2014) shows that some close rural and secluded communities have strong cultural and religious norms that place much value on family privacy and non-interference. They attach considerable social shame to domestic violence, perceiving it to arise through victims 'failing' in exercising family responsibilities. Therefore, societal cultural beliefs may influence married female breadwinners to stay in abusive marriages.

### **2.9.2 Having children**

Female breadwinners may stay in abusive marriages because they will be having children with their husbands. According Walby and Allen (2004), abused married female breadwinners with children are vulnerable to continued abuse in the marriage. The main reason being that they are less likely to divorce the husband because there are children involved. In most cases, they often return to these violent marriages even after trying to divorce their husbands. The main reason why they return is that divorce has disruptive effects on their children such as changing schools and the neighbourhood they will be staying. The bigger the family and number of children, is the more female breadwinners are at risk of abuse. Walby and Allen (2004) found out that there is a strong association between having many children and greater risk of abuse. A research by British Crime Survey (2012), found out that the presence of many children in marriage almost doubles the risk for female breadwinners abuse. The reason is that it lowers their chances of divorcing their husbands because of the presence of children.

To female breadwinners who are more than thirty years of age, the risk of abuse was three times higher than for those women without children (Mirrlees and Black, 2009). According to Stanko, Hale, Lucraft, (2008), some local studies report victimisation rates over twice as high for women with children than those women without children. Although having children is a blessing, unfortunately for some married female breadwinners, having children is highly associated with husband's abuse (Richardson, Coid and Petruckevitch, 2012). Nevertheless, evidence suggests this could well be a consequence rather than a cause of abuse (Jewkes, 2002). Therefore, having children in relationships may lead to married female breadwinners to stay in abusive marriages.

### **2.9.3 Pregnancy**

Pregnancy is a factor that may make female breadwinners stay in marriages. According to Mezey and Bewley (2015), the risk of battering of female breadwinners is too high during pregnancy and the neonatal period. The health of both mother and child will be at stake. Falling pregnant, it is a good thing for married female breadwinners and the family, but it may also be a risk of abuse. Evidence suggests there is an increased risk that wife battering can start when a

female breadwinner is pregnant (Mezey and Bewley (2015). It even gets worse to female breadwinners who have a history of abuse before they fall pregnant. According to Stanko *et al.*, (2008), victimisation rates for women who are pregnant are two and half times as high to women who are pregnant. However, estimation of prevalence of domestic violence amongst pregnant women varies significantly according to whether routine screening for wife battering takes place and the kind of the method used (Mezey and Bewley, 2015). A big study in England at London Hospitals found out that two and a half percent of all pregnant women reported that their husbands had battered them during their current pregnancy. According to Rodgers (2014) in both England and Canadian studies, forty percent of women were battered during pregnancy said that the abuse started after they become pregnant. It is surprising in the study that being pregnant in the past year was highly associated with abuse within the past year (Richardson *et al.*, 2012). In addition, it becomes worse for those women who have a history of abuse in marriage before falling pregnant because violence intensifies during and after pregnancy (Department of Health, 2009)

According to Mezey and Bewley (2015), the probability of female breadwinners who have experienced abuse in the preceding year to experience it in their current pregnancy is ten times more. Physical assaults are dangerous to pregnant women it may lead to serious injuries. The most come kind of assault on pregnant women by abusers is a blow to the abdomen. Mezey and Bewley (2015) study found out that a blow in the abdomen hit one in every three abused women. Dobash (2014) states that half of the abusive men who attended a Scottish perpetrator programme stated that they kicked or punched their pregnant wives in the stomach. According to Richards (2014), five percent all wife battering cases reported to the London metropolitan police in a three-month period comprised of a pregnant victim. Dobash (2009) states that most of the stillbirth occurring before or shortly after giving birth to a child were homicides by partners. According to Campbell (2012), the probability of killing of pregnant abused women is four times higher than in women who are not pregnant. The above evidence indicates that pregnancy can be a risk factor for pregnant women. However, for female breadwinners, they may choose to stay with their abusive partners because they will be pregnant and expecting to start a family with them. Therefore, pregnancy may be one of the circumstances that can make female breadwinners stay in abusive marriages.

#### **2.9.4 Fear of separation**

Female breadwinners may stay in abusive marriages because of fear of separation. According to Walby and Myhill, (2011), an England research survey found out that separation is a high-risk factor for wife battering. Even though separation with a wife batterer liberates female breadwinners from being beaten, however to some woman the opposite it is true. Separation from the abuser may mean that escalation of violence. According to Riggs, Caulfield and Street, (2012) and Kimmel, (2013), an abusive men breakdown if their wives leave them for being abusive because they would have lost the control that they always enjoyed while they were still married. Therefore, the perceived threat abandonment may increase efforts to regain and maintain control by fear-inducing abuse because they do not want to be alone. Consequently, they will do whatever it takes to threaten female breadwinners (Riggs, Caulfield, Street, 2000, Kimmel 2002). Furthermore, married female breadwinners are at an increased risk of sexual assault when they leave their abusive husbands (Bergen, 2015). In England, twenty-two percent of married female breadwinners who had divorced their abusive husbands were victims of sexual assault. In the survey, sexual assault was highly associated with being divorced within the last twelve month (Richardson, Coid and Petruckevitch, 2012). Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine from these research findings the extent to which physical violence preceded a woman's decision leave their abusive husband. Therefore, fear of separation may make female breadwinners stick to their abusive marriages.

#### **2.9.5 Entrapment**

Entrapment is a strategy used by abusive husbands to make married female breadwinners stay in the marriage. There is a significant difference between stranger violence and violence from a husband. The difference is that abusive husband can successfully and effectively form and maintain a relationship that can last for a long-term due to both entrapment and control (Lowe and Sarah, 2011). Even though the wife abusers source of success in maintaining control over his wives remains unsettled, abusive men create an emotional connection with their victim. Lowe and Sarah (2011) state that they use a variety of tactics to entrap married female breadwinners. This emotional connection and entrapment are what makes abused female breadwinner to stick around despite the abuse. Even though all abusive marriages are different

and unique, an abusive husband behaviour typically cycles through various stages (Conner, Cerulli and Caine, 2014). The “cycle of violence” describes these patterns of behaviour. The cycle of violence model postulates that the abusive marriage follows a three-stage pattern: tension building, explosion, and the honeymoon phase (Conner *et al.*, 2014). Although not all abusive marriages follow a precise cycle, abusive men use different abusive and loving tactics to terrorise and entrap their female breadwinners (Lowe and Sarah, 2011). Therefore, the reason why married female breadwinners cannot walk away from abusive marriages, it is because their husbands entrap them.

### **2.9.6 Isolation**

According to Anderson (2011), married female breadwinners living in rural areas such as Thohoyandou villages may find it difficult to leave their marriages due to lack of information and access to women empowerment programmes in their villages. Walby and Myhill (2011) noted that female breadwinners who live in rural areas are more at risk than those who live in towns and major cities. The reason being that women in towns have greater access to empowerment programmes. As a result, it may be easy for abuse married female breadwinners to divorce their husbands than those in rural areas. Anderson (2011) notes that the probability of married female breadwinner in town to divorce their husband is high than those in rural areas. According to MacNeil, Stradling and Bethune (2017) when social isolation goes together with geographical isolation in tight-knit, remote communities it may lead to continued violence of married female breadwinners by men.

Jewkes (2012) postulates that abused married female breadwinners need social support to help in coping with abuse. According to Walby and Myhill (2011), there is an interconnection of poverty to the social isolation of women in remote communities. The social isolation may both be as a contributor to and a consequence repetitive abuse of women repeatedly. As result, this minimises the chances of leaving the abusive marriage (Walby and Myhill, 2011). However, few studies have managed to explore the link between social isolation and poverty such as studies by; Hotaling and Sugarman (2010); Anderson (2011). Furthermore, Goodman and Kocot (2013) found out that shortage of emotional and psychological support from family, friends are significant factors that determine whether female breadwinners can remain in their abusive marriages. Furthermore, emotional and psychological support determines whether abused

married female breadwinners can co-operate with the prosecution of their abusive men after reporting them. Support of abused married female breadwinners is very important because lack of support may lead to the withdrawal of cases. It may also lead to failure to give the necessary evidence needed for the prosecution of the abusive men. The British Crime Survey (BCS) in 2012 found out that woman who did not have friends or relatives to accommodate them overnight after physical assault were notably more likely to experience continued abuse by their husbands because they have nowhere to go (Walby and Allen, 2012). Therefore, isolation of abused female breadwinner in a remote area makes them stay in abusive marriages. Furthermore, some abused married female breadwinners stay in abusive marriages because of some barriers to disclosure.

## **2.10 Barriers to disclosure and help seeking**

According to Goodman and Kocot (2013), many women in abusive marriages are afraid of seeking help from the people around or help from victim empowerment organisation such as Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme. They are also afraid to report abuse to the police. The factors that make married female breadwinners stay in abusive marriages influences their decisions not to seek help from outsiders and the police. Numerous stages and processes of coping reflect abused married female breadwinners transition. Goodman and Kocot (2013) note abused married female breadwinners may privately seek help because they would want to keep the abuse to themselves. The abuse can only become public if it intensifies and become severe. However, privately seeking help do little in changing the behaviour of the abusive husband. It does not do much in challenging the abusive husband's tendencies (Goodman and Kocot, 2013). Anderson (2011) states that the problem is that married female breadwinner's view abuse as a personal problem. As a result, it acts as a barrier from seeking help. Community and perpetrator denial, as well as fear of retaliation and socially ostracisation, reinforce the perception of married female breadwinners' abuse as a personal problem (Goodman and Kocot, 2013). All these factors dissuade many abused married female breadwinners to confide in other people and seeking help from victim empowerment organisations such as Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (WHO, 2016).

Many surveys in England shows that most abused women keep the abuse to themselves. They do not tell or share with anyone about it. This is evidenced by the British Crime Survey (BCS) in

2012, which found out that four in ten women did not tell anyone about their worst ever experience of abuse. (Mirrlees and Black, 2012). The British Crime Survey (2012) found out that woman sexually abused by their husbands do not report that those sexually assaulted strangers (Mirrlees and Black, 2012). In a Surrey community survey, only one in three abused women confides to someone about the abuse (Dominy and Radford, 2013). The main reason cited was that they were too ashamed to tell anyone and felt that it was a private matter to keep to themselves. Some of the abused women thought it was not serious enough to trouble others. They felt that people would not understand and they were afraid of repercussions if they tell them (Dominy and Radford, 2013). However, abused married female breadwinners who chose to disclose, would likely disclose relatives and friends who are very close to them. Dominy and Radford (2013) found out that some married female breadwinners get some negative responses from friends and family they disclose. This means that disclosing to them is not helpful and it makes them not to disclose further.

A study by Nicholson, O'Keeffe, Brenard, Powell., *et al* (2013) found out that lack of confidence makes abused female breadwinners not to report cases to the police. Other reasons found in the study where, feeling sorry for the abuser and lack of trust in the police (Nicholson *et al.*, 2013). Many international studies and in England repeatedly shows that only a tiny proportion of abused married female breadwinners report to police. A considerable amount of abuse related cases other people such as neighbour's report them to police. Henderson (2013) states that neighbours call the police to report abuse when they hear the noise of physical fights. In the British Crime Survey (BSC) (2012), only eight percent of abused women reported to police. On the other hand, the percentage of abuse cases reported by people other than the abused married female breadwinners was twelve percent (Mirrlees and Black, 2012). This shows that social support is very important in reporting of married female breadwinners' abuse in the community. Mirrlees and Black (2012) argues that the statistics of the number of abused married female breadwinners reporting to police is not the true reflection of the actual number of abused married breadwinners in marriages. Walby and Allen (2012) note that younger women who are under the age of twenty-five and those in households with above average income were not likely to report to police when they are abused by their partners. Abused women weigh the advantages and disadvantages of seeking help from police.

According to a survey by Felson and Messner (2010) in the USA, the main reason for abused women to call the police is for self-protection. Self-protection means that they call the police so that they can stop the incident or get protection from the police in future physical assaults.

Furthermore, the survey found out that, fear of reprisal, concerns about privacy and the consequences of an arrest for the abusive husbands deters abused married female breadwinners women from calling the police. A significant proportion of abused married female breadwinners report to police because of fear of retaliation from the abusive husband (Patterson, 2013). A study in England about victim intimidation reported in the British Crime Survey validates abused married female breadwinners are concerned about further abuse and retaliation if they involve the police (Tarling, Dowds and Budd, 2013). Thirty-eight percent of abused married female breadwinners reported further violence or intimidation in the aftermath of a physical assault incident. Moreover, rates of intimidation were over twice as high when the offence had been reported to the police that when the abuse has not been reported (Tarling *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, failure of disclosure and help-seeking makes married female breadwinners stick in abusive marriages.

## 2.11 The cycle of violence

How violence occurs in abused married female breadwinners homes is vital to analyse. This will show the process of how it occurs and help in understanding the coping mechanisms that abused married female breadwinners devise to cope with their plight. According to Walker (2010), abuse of married female breadwinners has a cycle that it follows. This cycle or pattern of abuse is called the Cycle of abuse (Walker, 2010). The Cycle abuse involves three stages. According to Walker (2010), the first stage it is characterised by tension building and subjects the victim to emotional and minor physical trauma. The married female breadwinners usually or most of the time minimises the danger that comes with the situation or tension building (Dutton and Painter, 2010). In addition, female breadwinners may place the blame on themselves. The second stage is characterised by the actual physical assault or sexual assault by the husband or even both. The third and final stage of the cycle of abuse is characterised by the pleasing phase. On the pleasing phase, the husband will show some huge efforts to make amends to the abused wife through material gifts (Walker, 2010). For example, the abusive husband may buy gifts such as expensive perfumes to make amends with the abused married female breadwinner. The whole point will be to display warmth and affectionate.

The pleasing phase makes it difficult for the married female breadwinners to leave their abusive husband. The reason being the display of warmth and affectionate which woo female

breadwinners to stay in the marriage. The affectionate and gifts please abused married female breadwinners because they will be finally receiving the love that they desire. Thus, abused married female breadwinners would greatly welcome the pleasing stage or the honeymoon stage. They will accept the apology of the abusive husband. However, the cycle typically escalates in both frequency and severity of the married female breadwinners' abuse. Seventy-five percent of abused married female breadwinners after reporting abuse do not leave their husbands but they go back to them. According to Tellez, Robinson and Russell (2009), there is a need for earlier intervention measures to disrupt the cycle of abuse to reduce the effects of abuse. Having knowledge and an understanding of the cycle of violence would go a long way in helping abused married female breadwinners. It also helps professionals, family and friends who may be in the same predicament. In addition, the cycle of violence helps in understanding the reasons why female breadwinners continue to stick to their abusive marriages. It also helps abused married female breadwinners to see how the cycle begins to appear normal in their lives and take action against it.

Rice (2011) discussed the dynamics of abused married female breadwinners with the concept of traumatic bonding. This concept is important because it explains invested time and energy in a long-term abusive marriage. Strong emotional connections develop between the married female breadwinner and the abusive husband. Bronfenbrenner (2013) states that there is a correlation between long-term marriages and the need to protect the abuser. The expressed concern for the abuser, which can be categorised as an ongoing emotional connection makes punishing the abuser unacceptable and inappropriate (Beaulaurier, 2013). Married abused female breadwinners may refuse to break the abusive marriage due to emotional loyalty to the husband. These emotional ties develop due to the imbalance of power between the batterer and the victim (female breadwinner) because the treatment is intermittently good and bad (Dutton and Painter, 2010).

As the abuser gains more power, the abused married female breadwinner feels worse about herself. As a result, she became less able to protect herself. In that state, abused married female breadwinner will not be competent enough to do good decision-making. Consequently, abused married female breadwinner becomes increasingly dependent on the abusive husband. Therefore, the abused married female breadwinners may be more inclined to uphold the emotional connection for fear of the responsibility of breaking up the family and ruining the abusive husband reputation. Another key factor in traumatic bonding is the intermittent and unpredictable abuse. While this may seem counterintuitive, an increase in positive behaviour s

such as attention, gifts, and promises offset the abuse. The abused individual feels relief that the abuse has ended. Thus, there is an intermittent reinforcement for the behaviour, which is difficult to extinguish and serves instead to strengthen the bond between the abused female breadwinner and the abusive husband (Dutton and Painter, 2010).

In addition, the approach and avoidance concept is another insight into the dynamics of abusive marriages. The mix of pros, such as love and economic support and cons, such as fear and humiliation, present in the abusive marriage leads to ambivalence on the part of the abused married female breadwinner (Barnett, Miller and Perrin, 2013). The abused married female breadwinners are likely to approach the positives in the marriage and avoid the negatives. This point is interesting to note, as many older female breadwinners who experience abuse do not identify as being abused (Zink, Fisher and Pabst *et al.*, 2013). This struggle between wanting to keep the marriage and wanting to remain safe makes it difficult to decide whether to leave or stay in the marriage (Rice, 2011). Older abused married female breadwinner may have suffered much longer than their younger counterparts may. Bronfenbrenner (2013) stated that older abused married female breadwinners express the development of inertia over the course of a long, abusive marriage that often solidified a pattern of abuse and victimisation. The following write up is the processes and coping mechanisms that abused female breadwinners devise to survive abusive marriages.

## **2.12 Processes and coping mechanisms of surviving abusive marriages**

Married female breadwinners subjected to abuse by their husbands have managed to establish some coping strategies to stick to their marriages. A surplus of qualitative studies such as studies by Kelly (2013) and Bergen (2015) gives different accounts of samples of abused married female breadwinners. These studies have managed to pick out common threads and themes in their descriptions of the processes and coping strategies that abused married female breadwinners make use of to survive in their abusive marriages. The common threads and themes comprise the following; periods of denial, self-blame, disengagement and recovery. Abused married female breadwinners move through and between various stages in the process of coming up with the abuse from their husbands. These various stages differ in their duration and intensity according to the social, psychological, cultural and economic resources available to the abused married female breadwinners and to the behaviour of abusive men. The stages

that they go through commonly include; overlooking early violence for the sake of the marriage, enduring by stifling of self and careful monitoring of the partner's behaviour, immobilisation and demoralisation in the face of increasing, unpredictable violence, defining the abuse as unacceptable and intolerable, resistance, moving out of the house and recovering from the trauma (Bergen, 2015).

### **2.12.1 Discounting early violence**

According to Kearney (2011), there are some naturally and culturally characteristics and valued ideas of women's loving behaviour and nature that makes women sustain themselves in abusive marriages and relationships. A good example of these qualities is loyalty, accepting disappointments, home-building, making sacrifices for others and coming up with strategies to fix problems. No matter how bad or severe a marriage may become abusive, abused married female breadwinners always try to come up with a strategy to fix it. These qualities make women stand in marriage for better or for worse. They uphold the vows they make in front of the pastor at weddings. In the genesis of abuse or the initial stages, women do not believe the abuse at all. They will be in disbelief and they may dismiss the abusive act as an abnormal accident that should not have happened. Bergen (2015) notes that abused married female breadwinners with a history of alcohol abuse it take time to realise their husbands' abusive behaviour. However, Kearney (2011) begs to differ by postulating that not all the women take time to realise that their husbands are abusing them.

Kearney (2011) argues that economically independent married female breadwinners can sustain themselves may end the marriage in the preliminary stages of abuse, unlike economically dependent women. According to Kearney (2011), women who are independent, they hold a less self-sacrificing view of love in marriages unlike women economically dependent on men. To a certain extent it's true and the argument holds water, but this study critically argues, that, although there is some degree of truth in it Kearney (2011) analysis that economically independent female breadwinners quit abusive marriage early, why is it that there are some financially independence female breadwinner who does not leave their abusive husbands? It means that there are some other reasons that are beyond financial independence that makes abused married female breadwinners to stick to their marriages. Therefore, there are a lot of issues, reasons or circumstances that are at play that makes women stay in abusive

marriages. Furthermore, abused married female breadwinners cope up with abusive husbands through stifling themselves and monitoring the abuser's behaviour.

### **2.12.2 Coping by stifling self and monitoring the abuser's behaviour**

When women realise that abuse it is a day-to-day thing, they develop coping strategies to copy up with abuse since the frequency of the abuse will be on a regular basis. One of the prominent coping strategies that abused married female breadwinners is to take each day as it comes. This means that abused married female breadwinners will try to enjoy the good times with the abusive husband and forget about the bad side of the abusive husband (Kelly, 2013). Unhappily, abused married female breadwinners often preserve hope for marriage improvement by trying to find rational explanations for the abusive behaviour by the husband. One of the rational explanations that abused married female breadwinners gives may include self-blame. They will be blaming themselves for the abuse. It is unfair on their side because they should not blame themselves for the abusive behaviour of the husband because they are the victims and not the perpetrators of abuse. Furthermore, another coping strategy abused married female breadwinners use is changing their behaviour to suit what their abusive behaviour wants them to be.

This often involves submerging or suppressing aspects of self, such as emotional responses, performing or doing tasks that they do not want, or giving up valued aspects of their self-identity, for example, family ties and relationships with their friends or cultural membership (Kearney, 2011 and Kelly, 2013). On the other side of the coin, abused married female breadwinners unwilling to suppress themselves in this way chose to take a different route. They would not try to make sense of the violence, rationalise it, justify it or try to sugar coat it but they put an end to the abusive marriage (Kearney, 2011). Therefore, most of abused married female breadwinners stick to their marriages not as passive recipients of abuse because they adopt an active approach. Adopting an active approach in the context of this study means that abused married female breadwinners adopt some strategies that enable them to cope up with the abuse that they suffer at the hands of their husbands (Kelly, 2013). Adopting of active approach by devising coping strategies also involves mechanisms that protect themselves and their children from their abusive husbands. It involves safety planning such as hiding key documents or weapons away from the abusive husband (Kelly, 2013).

Furthermore, the coping strategies of abused married female breadwinners comprise of monitoring and appeasement of the husband. The monitoring and appeasement strategies help to control or minimise the risk of abuse by the husband (Kearney, 2011). Many abused women are constantly watchful for signs of looming or violence that may befall them. Therefore, abused married female breadwinners behave in ways that minimise the risk of provoking their abusive husband. They minimise abuse by agreeing to the abusive husband's demands and trying to manipulate situations to prevent abuse (Kearney 2011; Kelly 2013). In addition, abused married female breadwinners limit their physical and emotional injuries by avoiding physical resistance when being attacked by the husband (Bergen, 2015). Sometimes it is not because they may not be capable to fight back, run or to call for help but they know that trying to fight back may worsen the physical assault. Thus, the best way of coping with abuse is to avoid resisting the process of physical assaults. Moreover, another coping mechanism of abused married female breadwinners has psychologically disassociated themselves from physical assault experience (Bergen, 2015). They try to take it easy and not to think about it so that they can save themselves from the stress and trauma that may befall them if they do not disassociate themselves from the abusive experiences. Therefore, abused married female breadwinners cope up with abuse through stifling themselves and monitoring the abuser's behaviour.

### **2.12.3 Immobilisation and demoralisation**

Abuse of married female breadwinners by their husband's starts as a single incident. Abused married female breadwinners meet the single incident with disbelief because they will not be expecting it. However, as times go on, it becomes a habit and unpredictable. At any given time, the married female breadwinners can be physically assaulted (Kearney, 2011). To the abusive husband, a habit is hard to control whilst on the side of abused married female breadwinner it will be beyond their control and hard for them to avoid. This results in the demoralisation of the abused married female breadwinner. This demoralisation leads to depression, which tends to grow in proportion to the frequency and intensity of the abuse (Kearney, 2011). Although they suffer from depression because of the abuse, they tend to cope up with the abuse. For starters, abused married female breadwinners may doubt their perceptions of reality and come to trust their partner's definitions of the situation (Bergen, 2015).

Usually, they come to trust their abusive husband's definitions of the abusive situation without asking others or getting perspectives from other people around like friends and family. As a result, they adopt the abusive husband's definition of the abusive situation as reality isolated from other's perspectives and validations (Bergen, 2015). Other abused married female breadwinners cope up with the abusive situation by drinking alcohol or taking over the counter drugs not prescribed by a physician. Negative ways of coping with abuse such as alcohol abuse tend to blur their perceptions of the marriage. In other words, abused married female breadwinners become emotionally numb (Kearney 2011, Bergen 2015, Kelly, 2013). The problem is that when abused married female breadwinners are debilitated by terror, subjugation, isolation and partner control, they may accept abuse as not as bad as the likely effects of leaving the husband.

This makes them resort to developing skills in minimising the abuse or making excuses for the husband to justify his abusive husband (Kearney, 2011). They would also try to protect and hide the bad behaviour of their husband from the childhood friends and family. The reason why they hide is to avoid outside interference from friends and family (Bergen 2015). They will be afraid that family and friends may interfere by reporting the abuse to the police or advising them to divorce the abusive husband. Therefore, immobilisation and demoralisation are one of the coping mechanisms of abused female breadwinners in marriage.

#### **2.12.4 Redefining the marriage**

After abused married female breadwinners realise that abuse it is now a reality and they are stuck with an abusive husband, they begin the process of redefining the abusive marriage. According to Kearney (2011), the important process of re-defining the marriage can be sudden if friends or family intervenes to stop it. Unintentional exposure and disclosure of the abuse in the marriage may be because of escalation severity and brutality by the husband. The violence may not even be only on the wife, but it may even extend to the people around such as children or interfering friends. All these aspects may culminate in an internal accumulation of hurt and disenchantment that may finally lead to abused married female breadwinners reporting to the police (Kearney 2011, Bergen 2015). Therefore, redefining the marriage is one of the coping mechanisms of abused female breadwinners.

### 2.12.5 Resistance and disengagement

After redefining the marriage, abused female breadwinners start to see the light. They start to view and redefine abuse. At this stage, submission and self-sacrifice may be unacceptable (Bergen, 2015). This leads to the realisation that they do not deserve abuse and they become intolerant. The people around them including friends and extended family may also help them to realise that they do not deserve abuse. As a result, they become angry and use strategies of resistance such as fighting back during physical assaults (Kelly, 2015). In addition, they start a process of emotional and physical disengagement from the marriage. Furthermore, abused married female breadwinners at this stage refuse to meet some of the abusive husband's demands and instructions. Whilst at this stage, they will be in a process of leaving, escaping and finding out about other options. Married female breadwinners will be making or re-making supportive relationships through using formal helping networks. This stage is also associated with spending time outside the home or pursuing personal goals such as enrolling for a certificate in their favourite discipline (Bergen, 2015).

All these strategies of resistance against abusive men such as disengagement from the relationship and engagement with others make it possible for women to build up the psychological, social resources and instrumental skills to contemplate, attempt and succeed in surviving outside the marriage (Kearney, 2011). However, it is not easy for abused married female breadwinners to disengage themselves from their marriage. First trying to recover from abuse trauma is not easy for them. After a long period of being abused, it is not easy to redefine themselves since they would have identified themselves with the abuser for a long time, for example, using the husband's surname (Kearney, 2011). Married female breadwinners abused by their husbands stick to their marriages because they are scared to start over new relationships in their lives. The emotional connection to their abusive husbands must not be underrated. Furthermore, another aspect of great concern to abused married female breadwinners is the vengefulness from the abusive husband. They would be scared that the abusive husband may try to revenge in the worst possible ways which may put them in danger (Kearney, 2011). In addition, divorce, especially in the case where there are children, comes with some custody battles of who should take care of the children and the visiting arrangement of the other partner. It proves to be very difficult for abused married female breadwinners to deal with all kinds of these situations.

Moreover, battling for the custody of children also brings with it a legacy of ongoing hurt and disturbance that affects abused married female breadwinners and the children. Custody battles put children in the spotlight. Griffing (2013) notes that it is a difficult situation, which calls for utmost protection of children from the abusive husband. Ironically, some abused married female breadwinners who divorce their husband get into another abusive marriage (Kearney, 2011). In some cases, the new husband will be more abusive than the first one. This creates difficulties in trying to cope up with a new abusive marriage that is worse than the previous one. Therefore, after comparing the two marriages, some abused married female breadwinners will return to the first abusive marriage (Kearney, 2011). Other abused married female breadwinners buy time to stay in an abusive marriage to make sure that their strength resources are adequate for leaving permanently (Kearney, 2011). Therefore, resistance and disengagement make abused married female breadwinners to cope with their marriage.

#### **2.12.6 Recovery**

After the resistance and disengagement stage, abused married female breadwinners undergo the recovery stage. On this stage, abused married female breadwinners who are strong chose to walk away from their marriages and whilst others chose to stick to their marriages. Married abused female breadwinners who divorce their husbands may realise growth in their sense of self (Burke, 2012). They can begin to appreciate their own potential in undertaking any career of their interest. The sense of confidence to undertake a career of their interest surpasses the emotional pain of leaving the abusive husband (Kearney, 2011). One of the most important aspects is help from friends and family to cope up with their emotional pain and grief for leaving the abusive husband. Support from friends and family is important because it counters self-destructive processes that may arise from the abuse the female breadwinner suffered (Burke, 2012). Therefore, recovery is one of the coping mechanisms that abused female breadwinners use to cope up with marriage. Furthermore, the following write up discusses the stages in which abused married female breadwinner chose to stick to their marriage.

### 2.12.7 Decision-making stage of ending the marriage

After all the processes and stages of coping with an abusive marriage, married female breadwinners will finally decide on whether to stay or divorce the husband. According to Fleury (2015), fears of increased or continuing violence triggered by separation are for real because evidence indicates that for many abused married female breadwinners violence may continue even after separating from the abusive husband. However, worth noting is the fact that ending a marriage is difficult for the abused married female breadwinner. Some of them find it hard to move on after breaking up with their husband. After some period or after trying to move on with some other partners they end up returning to the abusive husband. Griffing (2013) notes that abused married female breadwinners leave and return a couple of times before finally deciding to break up with their abusive husband for good. Worth noting is that ending, an abusive marriage may be a process and not a one-off event. Therefore, leaving and returning to the abusive husband can be understandable since it is a process. The 2012 British Crime Survey (BCS) found out that four in ten abused married female breadwinners moved out after the worst incident of abuse (Walby and Allen, 2012). After the worst incident, the abuse married female breadwinners decided to divorce for good from their abusive husband. Most of these women who decide to leave their abusive husbands went to stay with their family of friends. However, as stated earlier half of the women who were abused went back home to their abused husband after a couple of days (Walby and Allen, 2012).

According to Griffing (2013), a study of occupants of a USA women's refugee camp found out that one in three of women who left homes of their abusive husbands and return, did so at least five times. Another explanation given for abused married female breadwinners to return to an abusive husband is to give a warning signal to the abusive husband. They leave for a brief period to show that they are reluctant to tolerate further violence and to lever some change from the abusive husband. Anderson (2011) explained further by stating that abused married female breadwinners may return to their abusive husbands, despite an initial intention to leave for good. Another reason may be lack of necessary support from friends and family to leave permanently.

Studies by Griffing (2013); Rodgers (2014); Gondolf and Fisher (2014) cites that abused married female breadwinners continuing emotional attachment to the abuser makes them stay in abusive marriages. A wish to give the marriage another chance is also one of the reasons that influences abused married female breadwinners to stay in marriages. The influence comes

from the abusive husband's expressions of remorse and promises to stop the abusive behaviour. These are among the most frequently cited reasons for abused married female breadwinner returning to their abusive husbands.

According to Griffing (2013) in a study of USA refuge occupants, abused women cited emotional attachment as a reason for returning to an abusive marriage in the past. A Canadian Violence against Women Survey (VAWS) in 2014 found the probability of abused married female breadwinners to return to their abusive husband was high if the abusive husband receives counselling from a shrink, marriage counsellor or a pastor (Rodgers, 2014). In addition, a study by Gondolf and Fisher (2014) about domestic violence amongst shelter residents found out that the best predictor of a woman's probability of returning to a previously abusive marriage was based on whether the abusive husband enrolls on a treatment programme for the abusive behaviour or not. The results evidence that over half of those women whose abusive husbands enrolled for treatment programmes for abusive behaviour planned to return to them, compared to less than one in five abused women whose abusive husbands had not enrolled on treatment programmes for abusive behaviour.

Economic and social factors make abused married female breadwinners to stay in their marriages. Lack of transport and childcare assistance makes female breadwinners stay in abusive marriages. Griffing (2013) states that some abused married female breadwinners stay in abusive marriages because they do not have alternative housing from friends or family to accommodate them. Overall, these findings indicate that abused married female breadwinners who had not fully appreciated the difficulties they would experience through the breaking up process and who were unprepared for the feelings which would arise, were more vulnerable to returning to their abusive husband (Griffing, 2013). If the separation process becomes difficult or if the going gets tough they succumb to the difficulties and give in by going back to the abusive husband.

Although returning to the abusive husband may seem to be a solution to the difficulties they would be facing in the separation process, worth noting is that returning to an abusive husband is a risky strategy. It may be a dangerous strategy because leaving the abusive husband in the first place may invoke a punitive response from the abusive husband (Rodgers, 2014). A study by Anderson (2011) in the USA revealed that abused married female breadwinners who temporarily leave their abusive husband consequently suffered more abuse than those who never left their husbands. The final stage or process is ending the marriage with the husband.

According to Kearney (2011), the more abused married female breadwinner is practical and psychological prepared for independence and for surviving difficulties that may come from it, it is the more likely they are going to leave the marriage for good. Despite the challenges that abused married female breadwinners face, many of them do eventually separate from their abusive husbands. Although it is difficult for them to separate from abusive husbands, it is also a proven point that it is possible to separate from them. Internationally, the averages number of years that a woman may stay in an abusive marriage or relationship it is six years (WHO, 2016). However, younger than older woman are likely to leave the marriage sooner or before six years than older women (WHO, 2016)

Walby and Allen (2012) state that separation is the only way that abused married female breadwinners can stop their husband's abusive behaviour. Fleury (2015) points out that married female breadwinner's abuse prominently features amongst the reason why women want divorce from their husbands. Factors that are associated to permanent separation are violence severe enough to trigger the realisation that the abusive husband is not going to change, noticeable adverse effects on the children and emotional and logistical support from family and friends (Fleury, 2015, WHO, 2016). Therefore, the decision-making stage is a very important phase because it determines whether abused married female breadwinners stay in the abusive marriage or walks away. However, this study focused on abused female breadwinners who chose to stay in marriages than those who divorce their husbands.

### **2.13 Battered woman syndrome**

One of the reasons or a contributory factor that makes abused female breadwinners to stay in abusive marriages is because of Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS). Walker (2010) put forward the term Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS). It refers to a set of different psychological and behavioural symptoms that result from lengthy exposure to situations of battering by the husband. Walker (2010) conducted his study for a period of four years and conducted interviews with 435 women in Colorado, United States of America (USA). The entire woman he interviewed for the study were at the time victims of abuse by their husbands. The aim of conducting the interviews was to testing two specific theories about women abuse that involves the following; Cycle theory of battering and Learned Helplessness Theory (Walker, 2010).

According to Walker (2010), Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS) is a pattern of signs and symptoms, for example, fear and perceived an inability to escape or quit the marriage, appearing in physically and psychologically abused by their husbands over a prolonged period. Married female breadwinners battered for a long time end up developing a sense of learned helplessness. Thus, married female breadwinners begin to believe that they deserve the abuse and they become powerless to stop the abuse. According to Starburg (2016), BWS helped a lot to go against the notion that abused married female breadwinners deserve battering. The reason being that Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS) managed to explain how abused married female breadwinners are unable to speak out about abuse or get help from organisations like Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) because they would have developed learned helplessness.

It is so sad to note that married female breadwinners who stay in abusive marriages experience a lot of psychological distress. They accept responsibility for being beaten. Walker (2010) states that abused married female breadwinners believe in the traditional male and female role stereotype. The traditional role stereotype perceives the husband to be more superior to the married female breadwinner. Sullivan and Coltrane (2008) note that abused married female breadwinners does not want to seek help because of the view that abuse is a private family matter that needs concealing. Married abused female breadwinners show the following symptoms; hyper-arousal and high levels of anxiety, avoidance behaviour and emotional numbing which may be expressed as depression, body image distortion and sexual intimacy problems (Walker, 2010).

Hyperarousal is a specific cluster of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms that some people with PTSD experience. As indicated by the name, hyperarousal is a result of heightened or hyper anxiety and altered arousal responses and includes symptoms such as; having a tough time falling or staying asleep, feeling more irritable or having outbursts of anger, having difficulty concentrating, hypervigilance, feeling constantly on guard and ready to act if threatened, being jumpy or easily startled (Tull, 2016). A link or association between Battered Woman Syndrome and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is commonly justified claiming many victims of violent abuse shows symptoms that can be compared to those shown by the people who would have encountered some other traumatic life experience, for example, people who would have been incarcerated in a war prison (Craven, 2016). According to Walker (2009), abused women who have Battered Woman Syndrome, shows avoidance behaviour and emotional numbing usually expressed as depression and dissociation. The abused female

breadwinners also have a distortion of the image of their body and have issues with sexual intimacy.

There are similarities between Battered Woman Syndrome and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The following symptoms can be identified by both conditions; hyperarousal and high level of anxiety and avoidance behaviour and emotional numbing, intrusive recollection of the trauma, depression, dissociation, minimisation, repression, and denial, while the additional three criteria groups are present in violent abuse between a husband and wife or couples in a relationship (Walker, 2009). In addition, disturbances in interpersonal relationships, on top of physical violence and sexual abuse, are some of the strategies that the abuser uses to manipulate abused married female breadwinners. Some other strategies that are used by female breadwinners batterers are; isolation of the victim, following the strict rules of the abuser's rules, sexual degradation, jealousy, unpredictability and direct and indirect threats of use of more violence to the victim which may even include threatening the victim's family and all the children in the family (Starburg, 2016). The isolation of abused married female breadwinners includes controlling behaviour to ensure that they do not contact anyone. Men who are abusive even goes to the extent of locking married female breadwinners in the house and confiscate their phones because they want to remain in control (Starburg, 2016). Therefore, exposure to abuse for a long time leads to learned helplessness or Battered women syndrome, which makes abused married female breadwinners to stick to their marriages.

## **2.14 Knowledge gap**

Literature is flooded with studies and statistics of abuse of women in the world. This is evidenced by abuse of women literature and statistics in the following studies; Hilberman and Munson (2008); Giles and Sims, (2013) and Sommer (2014). However, most of the studies and literature focuses on abuse of women in general and not specifically married female breadwinners. They do not profile the female status in the home and society as shown in Oyediran and Isuego-Abanihe (2010). As a result, there is a gap in knowledge of profiling of abuse of married female breadwinners in marriage. As noted by Goldin (2009), the main reason why there is a gap of knowledge in the study of abuse of female breadwinners it is because abuse of female breadwinners is a new phenomenon. The reason being that historically women were disadvantaged in labour participation and families relied on men as the sole breadwinners

of the family. However, the advent of democracy for example in 1994 in South Africa and the changing gender climate allows more women to earn salaries that are on a par with those of men. South Africa adopted the Domestic Violence 116 of 1998 and the Gender Equality Act of 1996, which tries to redress the gender gap between women and men (Government Gazette, 2016). As a result, this has led to a new phenomenon of female breadwinning, which is under-researched.

In addition, another knowledge gap that exists in domestic violence literature is that most of the literature and studies suggest that the most common reason why women stick in abusive marriages, it is because they are financially dependent on men. Lyon (2002) argues that lack of access to income and other resources is one of the most prominent reasons why women stick in their marriages. However, despite this assertion, many abused married female breadwinners stay in abusive marriages as reflected by Hulin and Drasgow (2010) study. Moreover, another gap that this study sought to fill was that although there are many studies about abuse of women, only a few studies have focused on married female breadwinners who residing in Vhembe District where Venda, Sepedi and Shangani culture is dominant. Worth noting is the fact that domestic violence is geographically oriented, depending on the place and culture of the people where it takes place. The context of domestic violence amongst for example white women in first world countries and a black woman from developing countries may not be the same. The same applies to cultures. The context of abuse to Venda women may not be the same with the context of abuse amongst the Zulu women because of difference in culture and beliefs.

Therefore, abuse of married female breadwinners may not be universally generalised since there are different cultures and social perspectives in the world. Therefore, this study sought to fill the gap about abuse of married female breadwinner within the contest of the Venda and Shangani culture in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa. In this study, a reflection of abused married female breadwinners was within the Venda, Sepedi and Tsonga culture, since they are the dominant cultural groups in Vhembe District. As a result, it adds more knowledge about the role that the Venda, Sepedi and Shangani culture plays in abuse of female married breadwinners in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province of South Africa. Therefore, the study sought to fill the following gaps; lack of profiling of abused married female breadwinners and the dearth of circumstances that make abused married female breadwinners to stay in abusive marriages. In addition, the coping mechanism used by abused female breadwinners to cope with their plight in their marriages. Identifying reasons why abused married female breadwinners stay in their marriages and exploring the coping mechanisms that

help them cope with their plight may help in closing the knowledge gap and help in designing intervention methods that may help curb abuse of married female breadwinners.

## **2.15 Summary**

In summation, Theory of Communicative Action by Habermas (2012) formed the theoretical framework of the study. It put forward the conflict between the lifeworld and the system world, which helps to explain the abuse of married female breadwinners, circumstances that make them stay in their marriages and the coping mechanisms that enable them to deal with their plight. The chapter has discussed Empowerment Theory, Resource Theory and Feminist Theories in detail. These theories give different perspectives in understanding the reasons and circumstance behind the abuse of married female breadwinners, which was valuable to the study. The chapter also discussed trends of abused married female breadwinners. In addition, the impact of female breadwinning on the family set up was unravelled. There was also discussion in detail of the circumstances that make abused married female breadwinners to stay in marriage their marriages. The following chapter discusses the methodology of the study.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

The section introduces the research methodology of how the researcher conducted the study. Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2013) refer to research methodology as a description of the specific techniques employed, the specific measuring instruments utilised and the specific series of activities conducted in making the measurement. The following aspects were discussed in this chapter; the research design, nature of the study, population and location of the study, sampling procedure, data collection method, data analysis and ethical considerations.

#### 3.2 Nature of the study

The study was qualitative in nature. Bless Higson-Smith and Kagee (2013) states that qualitative research is a study conducted using a range of qualifying words and descriptions to record and investigate aspects or social reality. According to Burns and Grove (2010), qualitative research refers to inductive, holistic, emic, subjective and process-oriented methods used to understand, interpret, describe and develop a theory of phenomena or setting. It is a systematic, subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning. Qualitative research is mostly associated with words, language and experiences rather than measurements, statistics and numerical figures. Researchers who use qualitative research adapt a person-centred and holistic perspective to understand the human experience, without focusing on specific concepts. The original context of the experience is unique, and rich knowledge and insight can be generated in depth to present a lively picture of the participants' reality and social context (Creswell, 2009).

These events and circumstances are important to the researcher. As a result, the researcher wanted to understand the first-hand experience of abused female breadwinners in marriage. The researcher examined the abused married female breadwinners experience from their point

of view in order to interpret the abused female breadwinners' words. This provided the researcher with in-depth descriptions from the narrative data gathered from the participants, to interpret, portray their experiences and to generate empathetic and experiential understanding. Therefore, the study was qualitative in nature to gather in-depth information concerning circumstances which influence abused female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and the coping strategies that assist them in finding a solution to their plight. To this effect, the researcher managed to get in-depth information and understanding of the circumstances and coping strategies that assist married female breadwinners to find a solution to their plight.

### **3.3 Research design**

The study used exploratory case study research design. According to Yin (2014), exploratory case study design is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon or case in depth and within its real-life context focusing on a case or a limited number of cases and place or community. The need for such a study could arise from a lack of information in a new area of interest and most frequently though, one must be familiar with a situation to formulate a problem or develop a hypothesis (Bless *et al.*, 2013). As a result, this study used exploratory case study research design because of lack of information about the circumstances that make abused married female breadwinners to stick to their marriages and the coping mechanisms they employ to cope up with their plight. The circumstances and coping mechanisms differ depending on different factors such as cultures, beliefs and economic development in a given area. Therefore, this study was an explorative case study of Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TEVP) clients in Vhembe District of Limpopo. The study focused on abused married female breadwinners who reported their cases to TVEP trauma centers and who stay in Vhembe District of Limpopo province of South Africa.

### **3.4 Study area**

The study area or research setting is the specific place where the data is collected (Burns and Groves, 2010). As shown in Appendix L, Vhembe District Municipality is in the northern part of the Limpopo Province. It shares borders with Zimbabwe and Botswana in the north-west and

Mozambique in the south-east through the Kruger National Park. The Limpopo River valley forms the border between the district and its international neighbours. The district includes the Transvaal and areas that were previously under Venda and Gazankulu Bantustan's administration. It is comprised of four local municipalities: Musina, Thulamela, Makhado and Collins Chabane (Limpopo District Profile, 2017). The district municipal offices are located in the town of Thohoyandou. It covers a geographical area that is predominantly rural. It is a legendary cultural hub and a catalyst for agricultural and tourism development. Vhembe District has a total population of 1 302 113 with fifty-three percent females and forty-seven percent males (Limpopo District Profile, 2017).

The main languages spoken are Tshivenda (sixty –nine percent) and Xitsonga (twenty-seven percent), Sesotho sa Lebowa (two percent) and Africans (one percent) (Limpopo District Profile, 2017). For the purposes of this study, data collection took place at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) situated in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province of South Africa. The rationale for choosing TVEP is that it offered a large pool of abused married female breadwinners. TVEP is the only non-governmental organisation in South Africa that opens its trauma centres 24 hours a day and 365 days of a calendar year to abused married female breadwinners (Limpopo District Profile, 2017). In addition, proximity and convenience enthused the researcher to choose TVEP. Its location served time to find the participants around Vhembe District of Limpopo. Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) is a not-for –profit organisation that provides prevention and support services related to Sexual and gender-based violence (SBGV) and HIV/AIDS. In 1997, the Community Policing Forum (CPF) and the South African Police Service (SAPS) set up TVEP.

In 2002, TVEP formally registered as a not-for-profit organisation. Fiona Nicholson was the programme director. TVEP runs two trauma centres in the Vhembe District of Limpopo based at Donald Fraser and Tshilidzini hospitals. TVEP head offices are located in Sibasa. It is a former capital town of the Venda homeland. When Venda became independent in 1979, the capital city moved from Sibasa to Thohoyandou (Limpopo District Profile, 2017). The name Sibasa came from a Venda Chief called Tshivhase. Therefore, TVEP provided an ideal non-governmental organisation for data collection of abused married female breadwinners in the Vhembe District of Limpopo province, South Africa.

### 3.5 Population of the study

According to Bless *et al.*, (2013), the population is a collection of objects, events, or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011) also defines a population as the totality of persons, events, organisations units, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned. Accessible population is the group of people or objects that are available to the researcher for a study (Polit and Beck, 2009). This study's accessible population were abused married female breadwinners who reported their cases at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme's (TVEP) trauma centres based at Donald Fraser and Tshilidzini hospitals in the Vhembe District of Limpopo. In between 2010 and 2015, 1800 abused married female breadwinners reported cases at TVEP trauma centres. The rationale for choosing population from 2010 up to 2015 was to ascertain the prevalence and trend of abused married female breadwinner's circumstances in a six-year period.

The six-year period assisted in determining the circumstances, which influence abused female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and the coping mechanism that helps them to cope with their plight. Therefore, the population of the study was 1800 abused married female breadwinners. Polit and Beck (2009) note that eligibility criteria specify the characteristics that people in the population must possess to be included in the study. The eligibility criteria were that participants were supposed to be married female breadwinners who reported abuse cases at TVEP's trauma centres at Donald Fraser and Tshilidzini hospitals between 2010 and 2015. TVEP's trauma centres at Donald Fraser and Tshilidzini hospitals were chosen because they are the only trauma centres in South Africa that open 24 hours a day and the whole 365 days of a calendar year to abused married female breadwinners (Limpopo District Profile, 2017).

### 3.6 Sampling

According to Burns and Grove (2010), a sample is a part or fraction of a whole, or a subset of a larger set, selected by the researcher to participate in a research study. Creswell defines a sample as a subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for generalising of the target population (Creswell, 2009). In addition, Bless *et al.*, (2013), states that a sample refers is a small part or quantity intended to show what the whole is like.

Qualitative sampling methods make use of non-probability sampling techniques. According to Unrau, Gabor and Grinnell (2007), each unit in non-probability does not have a chance of selection and the odds of selecting a sample are unknown because the researcher does not know the population size. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that qualitative researchers seek out individuals, groups and settings where the specific processes are mostly going to take place or occur. Although sampling use is rife in qualitative studies, it is less structured and less strictly applied than in the case of quantitative research (Burns and Grove, 2010). This difference arises from the methods of qualitative data collection such as observation and interviewing, which are unstructured. They focus on gathering in-depth information from participants of the study (Babbie and Mouton, 2010).

Creswell (2009) states that there are no rules for sample size in qualitative research, but sample size depends on what the research wants to know, the purpose of the qualitative study, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with the resources at the disposal of the researcher. For the purposes of this study, the researcher used purposive sampling method. According to Maree (2007), purposive sampling is a method of sampling with a specific purpose in mind and where the researcher knows the population units or elements to be included in the sample. Purposive sampling involves a critical case method and a stratified sampling method. The researcher used the critical case method. A critical case is a type of purpose sampling method that involves selecting a small number of important cases to yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge (Patton and Quinn, 2015). The critical case purposive sampling method involved the selection of the most highly serious abused married female breadwinner's cases from 2010 up to 2015. The critical case purposive sample was limited to a population of 1800 reported cases at TVEP between 2010 up to 2015. Critical case cross-sectional sample of 12 abused married female breadwinner was used in the study. Normal sample size would have been 6 participants as stipulated by Creswell (2017) and Morse (2009) because the goal of qualitative researchers should be the attainment of saturation. However, a critical case cross-sectional sample of two-abused married female breadwinner, who reported cases at TVEP each year from 2010 up to 2015 was drawn to make a total sample of 12 participants.

The six-year critical case cross-sectional sample used aimed at ascertaining the prevalence and trend of abuse married female breadwinners during the six-year period. The six-year period assisted in determining the circumstances, which influence abused female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and assist them in finding a solution to their plight. The scope of the study

was small because the majority of the population of the study not in a civil marriage as stipulated by the Marriage Act Number 25 of 1961 (Government Gazette, 2016). They were traditionally married and some of the participants were cohabiting with their partners. Therefore, they did not fall under the sample criteria of abused female breadwinners in a civil marriage.

Furthermore, a focus group purposive sample came up with three focus groups discussions of four participants from the twelve participants who had participated in the interview. The rationale for using the same participants from the interviews was to explore more information from the same participants through assessing divergence or convergence between their individual views in the group and observation of responses of participants in the groups. The three groups of four participants enabled the researcher not only to consider participants own experiences in interviews, but also the way participants negotiated these experiences with others. Burns and Grove (2010) state that focus group discussions allows the researcher to explore topics that have appeared in the analysis of the interviews and to illuminate areas that seem yet to have a point of view without consensus.

Thus, focus group discussions offered the researcher a perfect platform to explore themes that in-depth interviews revealed and enabled assessment of the themes in the groups. Therefore, focus group discussions complemented the weakness of in-depth interviews. In addition, the study made use of key informant purposive sampling. According to Marlow (2005), key informant sampling relies on people in the community identified as experts in the field of interest. As a result, the sampling frame was limited to female managers with women abuse expertise working at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). The key informants of the study were three female managers. The purpose of interviewing key informants was to gather in-depth information about circumstance and coping mechanisms of married female breadwinners from a professional point of view because they deal with abused married female breadwinners on a daily basis. Therefore, the study employed in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews for triangulation, which enabled complete and well-validated results and outcomes of the study.

### **3.7 Data collection methods**

Data collection methods are procedures specifying techniques utilised in conducting a research study (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Burns and Groves (2010) define data collection method as a clear

and accurate systematic gathering of information that closely relates to the research purpose, objectives, question or hypothesis of the study. The first data collection method that used was secondary data sources such as articles, journals and theories. According to Kothari (2009), secondary data is information collected previously for some other research purpose. The data may be available in written, typed or in electronic forms. Denzin and Lincoln (2005), states that secondary data analysis is a formal and systematic qualitative method of obtaining data, which involves selection of relevant documents to analyse in-depth narrative. As a result, the researcher used secondary data sources that comprised of the following; books, journals, articles, legislation, newspaper reports and scholarly materials from the internet. The second data collection method that used was primary data. According to Kothari (2009), primary data is original information collected by a researcher specifically for a research study through various methods such as interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews Thus, the researcher used qualitative primary data collection techniques that involves; in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

### **3.8.1 In-depth interviews**

The researcher used in-depth interviews to gather data. According to Maree (2007), an interview is a dialogue or conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn about the views, ideas, opinions, experiences, and behaviours of the participants. The aim of qualitative interviews is to see the world through the eyes of the participants and they can be a valuable source of information if used correctly. The study made use of an in-depth interview guide to ask questions from the participants (see Appendix B). Maree (2007) states that an in-depth interviews guide helps a researcher to conduct qualitative research by interviewing a small number of participants about the research topic. Therefore, the researcher made use of an in-depth interview guide to solicit the circumstances influencing abused married female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and the coping mechanism that helps them cope with their plight. The in-depth interview guide enabled the acquisition of rich in-depth information and ideas.

During the in-depth interviews, the level of questioning varied to fit the context of what the participants were saying and understanding. The researcher made follow up questions and deeply interrogated participants on specific issues raised in the interviews. Before conducting

the in-depth interviews, the researcher went through 1800 case files of abused married female breadwinners with the help of Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) Victim Advocate or Buddy System. A Victim Advocate or “Buddy System” is a woman who welcomes TVEP’s clients who report domestic violence cases. Only the woman who welcomes a client remains the client’s contact, or “buddy”, for the duration of the criminal case, thus avoiding the danger of re-traumatisation by having to interact with different peoples. A Victim Advocate knows the sexual assault protocols and the provision of HIV/AIDS counselling and testing. Therefore, with the help of the Victim Advocate, the researcher drew a purposive sample of two participants each year from 2010 up to the year 2015. Thus, the total sample size was 12 abused married female breadwinners.

A six-year successive cross-sectional sample aimed to find the prevalence and trend of abused married female breadwinners in Vhembe District between 2010 and 2015. There was no problem in gaining access to the Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) counselling room and neither was there any problems regarding trust. The researcher gained access to the TVEP counselling room through permission letter issued by Fiona Nicholson, the Programme Director of TVEP (see Appendix M). In addition, the researcher had University of Venda ethics clearance certificate to conduct the study (see Appendix N). The researcher, with the help of the Victim Advocate, called the participants to inform them about the study and asked them if they could participate in the study. Thereafter, the researcher arranged interviews with the participants in the presence of two research assistance, TVEP in-house counsellor and Victim Advocate at TVEP counselling room during the participants’ convenient time. The research was sensitive in nature, so interviews occurred inside the TVEP counselling rooms to enable them access to counselling services and facilities.

The Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme’s (TVEP) in-house counsellor was available for counselling participants when needed. In fact, before starting the interviews, the TVEP in-house counsellor conducted an assessment counselling session to prepare the participants for the interview and to determine the psychological risk that they may experience on doing the interviews. Two University of Venda (UNIVEN) research assistants and the TVEP Victim Advocate who helped the researcher in identifying and calling participants were also helping in the interviews. Before each interview, the researcher explained to each participant the ethical considerations and rights of the participants that need to be observed such as; voluntary participation, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, before and during the interviews. Thereafter, the researcher asked the participant to sign the consent form and to find out if the

researcher can record the interview process. Thus, observing all ethical considerations required. The researcher also took notes on a note-pad during the interviewing process regarding non-verbal responses, such as gestures, smiles, and frowns, which carry information that supplement or even sometimes contradict the verbal responses. Burns and Groves (2010) posit that working in the field with real people entails an understanding of how they make sense of their world through multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic. Humanistic methods focus on talking with people, listening to them, observing their physical behaviours, clothing, decorations and space, and reading them. During the in-depth interviews, the researcher likewise observed participants very closely. Talking and listening to the participants as they narrated their stories generated the researcher's imagination and understanding of their experiences and circumstances to stay in nuptial contracts.

According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2009), observing non-verbal responses helps the researcher to understand and consciously share participants' beliefs, values and emotions as far as circumstances allow in the interview. The non-verbal responses enabled the researcher to understand how abused married female breadwinners make sense of their world and how they manage to cope with their plight. Some participants could not understand the questions asked in English. Therefore, the researcher made use of three guidelines in Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sesotho sa Lebowa (see Appendix C). Fortunately, the TVEP Victim Advocate was multilingual and helped with translating the questions into the participants' different languages that comprised of Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sesotho sa Lebowa. The interview sessions with each participant lasted between 45 minutes to an hour. Lastly, the researcher informed participants of the follow-up group discussion to complete the data collection process.

### **3.8.2 Focus group discussions**

Burns and Groves (2010) define a focus group as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. According to Morgan (2009), focus groups are a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. The study used focus group discussions to collect data from the same participants. The rationale for conducting focus group discussions was to complement the weaknesses of in-depth interviews to enable yielding of

complete and well-validated results. Duggleby (2005) states in-depth interviews may not yield all desirable information because that individual might be reluctant to give information face to face, unlike when they are interacting with a Focus group discussion. Thus, to complement the weakness of in-depth interviews, the researcher conducted focus group discussion to explore more information from participants through assessing divergence or convergence between their individual views in the group, stimulation of ideas in a group and observation of responses of participants in the groups. The reason for choosing the same participants was to solicit more information and observe participants behaviour in their respective groups. Unlike, in individual interviews, focus group discussions create a conducive and informal environment for participants to open about their experiences and circumstances.

According to Morgan (2009), focus group discussions create a sense of belonging to a group, which can increase the participants' sense of cohesiveness and help them to feel safe to share information. In addition, Duggleby (2005) denotes that interactions that occur among the participants can yield important data, can create the possibility for more spontaneous responses and can provide a setting where the participants can discuss personal problems and provide workable solutions. Burns and Groves (2010) state that focus group discussions allows the researcher to explore topics that have appeared in the analysis of the interviews and to illuminate areas that seem yet to have a point of view without consensus. Thus, focus group discussions offered the researcher a perfect platform to explore themes that individual interviews revealed and enabled assessment of how participants agree and disagree with in-depth interviews themes in the groups. The focus group discussions took place in Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) boardroom. The boardroom had enough space to accommodate 12 participants, divided into three groups of four participants.

After explaining to the participant the ethical considerations and rights of the participants, they signed a consent form. The participants gave consent to the researcher to record the focus group discussions. The focus group discussions time frame was one hour with a ten minutes break after the first thirty minutes. The researcher addressed the purpose of conducting the focus group discussions and introduced the co-facilitators. They comprised of; two research assistants from the University of Venda. The research assistant's job was helping with co-facilitating. Given the sensitive nature of the study, the TVEP's in-house Counsellor task was to help with counselling in the event of participant's breakdown. The TVEP's Victim advocate job was to help with language translation since he is multi-lingual. The researcher-initiated an icebreaker that enabled participants to introduce themselves. The icebreaker helped create a

relaxed and friendly environment. The researcher cut small pieces of paper labelled from number one to twelve and mixed them in a container. The entire twelve participants picked one small piece of paper from the container and revealed their number. Three groups emerged from the activity. The first group emerged from first four participants who picked odd numbers. The second group prevailed from first four participants who picked an odd number. The remaining four participants formed group three. Thus, the breakdown of twelve participants into three groups took place in an unbiased and transparent way. The focus group discussions commenced making use of the guideline. The focus group discussions guideline had four versions of different languages namely; English, Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sesotho sa Lebowa (see Appendix H). The reason being that some of the participants struggled to express themselves in English. Given that the TVEP Victim advocate was multilingual, he helped with translating and interpreting the questions were participants were facing difficulties. The focus group discussions guideline helped to keep the discussions on track and on time. During the focus group discussions, the researcher was able to deal tactfully with outspoken group members and made sure that every participant opinion mattered. After one hour, there was data saturation and all questions had been. The researcher wind-up the group discussions and thanked the participants for coming.

### **3.8.3 Key informants interviews**

Finally, yet importantly, the last stage of data collection process was interviewing key informants of the study. This was necessary and very important because it enabled the researcher to gather views of experts on abuse of married female breadwinners in Vhembe District of Limpopo province, South Africa. This enabled an assessment and comparing of the data gathered from different viewpoints. The researcher was able to produce complete and well-validated results and outcomes of the study. Marlow (2005) states that Key informants are people in the community identified as a specialist in the field of interest of the researcher. As a result, three female managers from Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) where chosen as key informants for the study. The job description of the three managers is; Trauma centres manager, HIV/AIDS project manager and Empowerment Manager. The manager's selection was through purposive sampling. The key informant's selection criteria were female managers working Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). The interviews took place in the comfort of their offices for a period of forty-five to one hour. Key

informants' inputs were helpful because all three female managers were also breadwinners in their families. Thereafter, the data collection process was completed. The researcher managed to conduct in-depth interviews, focus group discussion and key informant's interviews. These three different data collection techniques enabled triangulation of data, which enabled complete and well-validated data concerning the circumstances that influenced abused married female breadwinners to stay in marriages and the coping mechanisms they employ to find a solution to their plight.

### 3.9 Data analysis

De Vos *et al.*, (2011) defines data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. According to Patton and Quinn (2015), qualitative analysis transforms data into findings by reducing the volume of raw information, selecting significance from trivial, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence or meaning of what the data reveal. The researcher analysed the in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews data through themes. The Van Manne's method was used to analyse the data. The researcher undertook the following steps to analyse data:

- (a) The researcher listened to transcripts and notes made, read through and acquire meaning from the information, and re-occurring themes.
- (b) Given that some of the interviews were in Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sesotho sa Lebowa, the researcher made use of a translator. The interviews were translated into English
- (c) The researcher searched for alternative explanations for the emerging themes from the data and then wrote a report.
- (d) The researcher repeatedly read through data to understand the emerging theme.
- (e) The relationship amongst the themes was looked at and to check if the same accounts were not repeated.
- (f) From the themes generated, the data were presented in line with the themes.

Van Manne's method of data analyses was applied to the in-depth interviews data, focus group discussions and key informants' interviews. The findings were assessed, compared and contrasted to achieve well-validated findings of the study.

### **3.10. Reliability and validity**

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2004), 'the validity of a measurement instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. On the other hand, Babbie and Mouton (2010) define reliability as the ability of an instrument to measure the same variable more than once and produce the same results or outcomes. The researcher used methodological triangulation of qualitative techniques to improve validity and reliability. There was a triangulation of results from in-depth interviews, focus groups discussions from the same participants and key informant interviews. Patton and Quinn (2015) state that if conclusions from different qualitative methods concur or are the same it means that validity of the study is established. Hence, the researcher triangulated in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, key informants' interviews and document analysis. This added depth to the results, which would not have been possible using a single strategy. As a result, it ensured well-validated results and outcomes of the study.

Burns and Groves (2010) postulated that triangulation of mixed qualitative methods findings allows for complete knowledge through uncovering significant insights that a single research design may overlook or miss completely. Therefore, the researcher ensured validity through triangulation of qualitative techniques that comprised of; in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, key informants and document analysis. Furthermore, the researcher ensured against bias in interviews by allowing free flow of information and emotional responses, unlike close-ended questions, which are fixed. In conducting focus group discussions, the researcher guarded against bias. One form of ensuring credibility entails honest participants (Lincoln and Guba, 2014). To ensure that the participants are honest, only those participants genuinely willing to take part in and prepared to offer data towards research freely, have been involved and encouraged to be honest. The researcher clearly indicated that no right or wrong answer to the questions existed and each participant approached had the opportunity to refuse.

### **3.10.1 Transferability**

To ensure that the study is transferable, the study methodology and results are well detailed and described for transfer purposes to other similar researches. Burns and Groves (2010) postulate that for a study to be transferable, researchers must supply a highly detailed description of their research situation and methods. Transferability invites researchers of research to make connections between elements of a study and their own experience. Researchers note the specifics of the research situation and compare them to the specifics of an environment or situation with which they are familiar (Burns and Groves, 2010). If there are enough similarities between the two situations, readers may be able to infer that the results of the research would be the same or similar in their own situation.

### **3.10.2 Conformability**

The researcher ensured conformability by reviewing the findings of the study through replaying the recordings and re-reading responses of the participants. Thus, ensuring accuracy giving of findings of the study and the true reflection of the views of the participants. Conformability refers to the point to which the results are the product focus of the research study and not of the biases of the researcher (Babbie and Mouton, 2010). In other words, it refers to the objectivity or neutrality of the data. Thus, ascertained through checks and balances on whether the data is relevant and meaningful. Confirmability ensures that the data is the true reflection of what the participants have said, and it should not be a reflection of the researchers' perspectives, views, beliefs, image interpretation and experience when interpreting the data.

### **3.10.3 Neutrality**

Nachmias (2014) refers to neutrality as not supporting either side or being impartial in conducting a research study. It means that the researcher should not take sides when carrying out the research. Therefore, to ensure neutrality, the findings of the study influenced by the participants and not by the researcher's bias, interest and motivation during all the interviewing

processes. In carrying out the study and compiling the findings, the researcher kept the duty of good faith and reported the findings without any attachments of the feelings of the research.

#### **3.10.4 Training of research assistants**

To ensure quality data collection processes, the research made use of two Masters Students from University of Venda's (UNIVEN) School of human and social sciences, one Victim advocate from Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) called a 'Buddy' and The TVEPS in-house trauma counsellor. The in-house counsellor's job description was to offer a counselling session that assess and determine participant's psychological risk of doing the interviews and to prevent re-traumatisation. Counselling services were on standby if the need arises during and after the interview. The reason being that the researcher had an obligation to ensure that participants remained unharmed during and after the interviews. A buddy or Victim Advocate or "Buddy System" is women who welcome TVEP's clients who report domestic violence cases. Only the woman who welcomes a client remains as the client's contact, or "buddy", for the duration of the criminal case, thus avoiding the danger of re-traumatisation by having to interact with many different people. A buddy or Victim Advocate are trained in sexual assault protocols and the provision of HIV/AIDS counselling and testing. The researcher conducted two training sessions for two research assistants, one TVEP victim advocate and the in-house counsellor. Practical demonstration sessions ensure competence and mastery before the commencement of the data collection processes.

#### **3.11 The University of Venda research ethics**

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) policy research ethics was adhered to throughout the study in each and every step of the way which involved research techniques, policy, procedures and ethical guidelines. The researcher was cleared and issued an ethics clearance certificate by the UNIVEN's Ethics Committee to conduct the research study (see Appendix N). The researcher presented and submitted the research proposal to the University of Venda Higher Degrees Committee (UHDC). It scrutinises all proposals for conducting human research under the

auspices of the institution. The UHDC involves a panel of lecturers who scrutinise research proposal before approval. This board, which is made up of scholars and researchers across a broad range of disciplines, checks proposed research studies to ensure that the procedures are not unduly harmful to participants, that appropriate procedure is followed to obtain participants' informed consent and that participants' privacy and anonymity are assured.

In line with UNIVEN's Ethics Committee requirements to conduct a research study, the researcher got permission to conduct the study at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). The researcher was cleared and issued a formal letter by the TVEP Programme Director, Fiona Nicholson to conduct the study at TVEP's two trauma centres at Tshilidzini and Donald Fraser hospital and to have access to TVEP's data and the head office (see Appendix M). Therefore, having permission to conduct the study at TVEP was fundamental and very helpful because of great availability of data and participants because it is the only non-organisation in South Africa that opens its trauma centres to abused married female breadwinners 24 hours a day and 365 days of a calendar year. Worth noting is the fact that, abuse of married female breadwinners is a very difficult subject to research on because of difficulties in accessing participants. The reason being that abuse of married female breadwinners is a very personal and sensitive subject. As a result, to have a room full of the abused married female is a mammoth task given that most of them do not report cases. Therefore, the researcher managed to get the much-needed permission to conduct the study at TVEP in line with the UNIVEN's Ethics Committee requirements.

### **3.11.2 Ethical consideration**

De Vos *et al.*, (2011) describe ethics as a set of moral principles which are widely accepted and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the correct conduct towards experimental subjects or respondents. Ethics are about conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group and is generally a matter of agreement among the members of a group of individuals (Babbie and Mouton, 2010).

### **3.11.2.1 Principle of respect**

The researcher ensured the principle of respect by treating participants with courtesy, respect and asked for informed consent. The researcher considered participants choices and decisions without obstructing them. The principle of Respect for persons recognises participants or people as autonomous agents and requires observation of their choices. Gostin (2014) stipulates that for participants or persons who are not fully autonomous, the principle of respect for persons requires protection from risks and adverse consequences of research and even sometimes excluded from research.

### **3.11.2.2 Principle of beneficence**

The researcher ensured principle of beneficence by not exposing participants to harm. Given the sensitive nature of the study, which may lead to breaking down or re-traumatisation, some intervention measures were put in place to prevent possible harm to participants. The Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) in-house counsellor conducted an assessment counselling session to determine the psychological risk placed on doing the interviews. This helped to prevent possible harm and to prepare the participants for the in-depth interviews. During the interviews, the TVEPs in-house Counsellor was available for counselling participants when deemed necessary. According to Gostin (2014), beneficence (do well) and non-maleficence (do no harm) are complementary ethical principles that impose affirmative duties on researchers to maximise any benefits for subjects and minimize any risks. Thus, researchers must go beyond mere respect for a person's choices. The researcher was vigilant to ensure that the participants received all possible benefits and avoid all possible harms from participating in the research. The participants may also benefit from the methods or strategies that the researcher wanted to develop that may help to solve the problem of female breadwinners.

### **3.11.2.3 Principle of justice**

The researcher ensured the principle of justice by ensuring the equal treatment of participants regardless of their ethnicity, creed or beliefs. The Principle of Justice requires the equal

treatment of human beings unless there is a strong ethical justification for treating them differently (Gostin, 2014). Thus, the distribution of benefits and burdens in research should be equitable. Therefore, treatment of participants was equal and fair throughout the study.

#### **3.11.2.4 Privacy and confidentiality**

Privacy and confidentiality were ensured using the pseudo name and not the real names the analysis of data. After the analysis, original data was stored in a safe place. The destruction of the original data took place after the completion of the study. Privacy is defined as the right that one must determine the time, extend and general circumstances under which personal information will be shared or withheld from others (Burns and Grove, 2010). De Vos (2011) describes privacy as the means to keep to oneself that which is normally not intended for others to observe or to analyse. Confidentiality means the continuation of privacy which refers to an agreement between two people that limit others access to confidential information (De Vos, 2011).

#### **3.11.2.4 Referencing**

The researcher reported his findings in a complete and honest manner, without distortion of the truth or misrepresentation thereof. The researcher did not fabricate data to support his conclusions, and acknowledged all sources, to avoid plagiarism or academic shoplifting. In that regard, all the work of other scholars or authors used in this thesis was properly referenced in accordance to the University of Venda human and social sciences approved style. Moreover, some of the sources used in this thesis were collected from newspaper articles, journals, books and the internet. These were also referenced as such.

### 3.12 Summary

This chapter has explored qualitative research techniques methods. Furthermore, the chapter has outlined in detail the population, study area setting and sampling techniques that were used in the study. It has also dealt with qualitative data collection tools namely; in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interview. The chapter highlighted the strength and weaknesses of each data collection tools and how they complement each other. The administering of these tools in collecting data was aimed at producing quality and valid results. Triangulation of qualitative tools and process was conducted to enable the researcher to produce complete and well-validated results and outcomes of the study. This chapter also assessed the research ethics which the researcher rigorously observed during the data collection processes and after. The next chapter provides the data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the findings from qualitative techniques that comprised of; in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants' interviews

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 deals with the presentation of data obtained from the interviewed participants about the coping mechanisms of abused married female breadwinners in the Vhembe district of Limpopo province, South Africa. The data gathered in the interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews was presented and analysed. The chapter includes the following sections: demographic profile of participants; presentation of data and analysis of data. Firstly, the presentation of demographic information was in table form. The last part is the presentation and analysis of data on the circumstances and the coping strategies that assist abused married female breadwinners in their plight.

#### 4.2 Demographic Information

**Table 4.1 Demographic Information of the Participants**

Pseudo Name	Year the Case was Reported	Age	Years in Marriage	Level Of Education	Village
Participant One	2010	54	12	Certificate	Vhufuli
Participant Two	2010	46	10	Bachelor's Degree	Ha-Makhuvha
Participant Three	2011	37	9	Honour's Degree	Tshituni
Participant Four	2011	53	11	Diploma	Mbilwi
Participant Five	2012	33	8	Diploma	Matangari

Participant Six	2012	43	9	Bachelor's degree	Maungani
Participant Seven	2013	40	9	Certificate	Mbahe
Participant Eight	2013	36	8	Master's degree	Tshisaulu
Participant Nine	2014	33	7	Honour's Degree	Tshitereke
Participant Ten	2014	29	6	Honour's Degree	Duthuni
Participant Eleven	2015	25	7	Diploma	Ha-Makhuvha
Participant Twelve	2015	28	5	Bachelor's Degree	Lufule

Twelve abused married female breadwinners participated in the interviews and focus group discussions. The participants came from eleven different villages of Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa. The participants reported domestic violence cases at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) trauma centres at Tshildzini and Donald Frazer hospital between 2010 and 2015. The twelve participants were aged between twenty-five to fifty-four years. The abused married female breadwinners' longevity of marriages was between five to twelve years. The lowest qualification of the participants was a certificate and the highest was a master's degree. Moreover, three TVEP female managers participated in the key informant interviews and their job description was as follows, Manager of Trauma Centre, HIV/AIDS project manager and Empowerment Manager.

## 4.3 Presentation of Data

### 4.3.1. The responses of abused married female breadwinners on the nature of abuse

This section addresses the responses of abused married female breadwinners' concerning the nature of abuse. The nature of abuse involves the frequency, magnitude and the types of abuse that abused married female breadwinners' experienced in their marriages. This enables understanding of how often abuse occurs and the level of abuse that married female breadwinners experience in their marriages. As a result, the upcoming questions enquired participants about the nature of abuse in their marriage.

#### 4.3.1.1 What are the types of abuse that you have experienced in your marriage?

**Participant One** had this to say, *“My husband beats me and insult me a lot. Sometimes he can take my bankcard and squander all the money alone, come back home drunk and beat me.*

**Participant Two** said that, *“The man I married beats me a lot and he always shouts at me. He shouts and says disrespectful words that even a person who is passing by the roadside can hear it.*

**Participant Three** stated that, *“I think I am subjected to all kinds of abuse, physical abuse and verbal abuse, psychological and economic abuse. Sometimes my husband just takes all the money and go to the bar and drink. If he finds money in the house, he takes it and goes to drink with his friends. If I ask him, he can beat me and shout at me”.*

**Participant Four** had this to say, *“My husband beats me and even harass me in front of the people. I remember when we were coming from the mall. He insulted me in the taxi and I was embarrassed. He undressed me through insults in front of everyone and I felt like I was not wearing anything. Usually, he beats me when he is drunk and then the next morning he will tell me that he is sorry and regrets it”.*

**Participant Five** said that, *“If I would show you my back, it is full of some scars of being abused. I have been abused physically, psychological, emotional and economically. Some of the ways*

*he abuses me if I think of it, it makes me cry. When he is drunk, he can pick anything to hit me and demands to sleep with me”*

**Participant Six** said that, *“I have been beaten so many times and treated like dirt. I have been beaten, shouted at and humiliated in front of my children. Imagine how disrespectful and embarrassing it is”.*

**Participant Seven** said that, *“My son, my husband beats me and shout at me whenever he is angry. He also forces to sleep with me, even when I will be tired and just wanting to sleep”.*

**Participant Eight** had this to say, *“My husband verbally and physically abuse me. He also economically abuse me because sometimes when I want to buy something he hides the money and my bank cards”.*

**Participant Nine** stated that, *“I have been subjected to physical abuse, verbal and emotional abuse especially when he is drunk. I can say he is very abusive when he is drunk. He even forces me to sleep with him when he is drunk”.*

**Participant Ten** said that, *“About types of abuse, what can I really say? The father of my kids beats me. He shouts at me and makes me cry most of the time. It was better during the early days but now it is worse”.*

**Participant Eleven** said that, *“I would like to think that I have been subjected to all kind of abuse by my husband. He verbally, physically, emotionally and economically abuse me. Sometimes he goes out with his friends and drinks all the money in our savings account and at the end of the month we would not be having anything to eat”.*

**Participant Twelve** said that, *“My husband always physically, verbally and psychologically abuse me. When he comes back home drunk, he demands to sleep with me even though I would not be in the mood.*

### **Analysis of participants’ responses on types of abuse**

The response of the participants to the interview question shows that participants suffer from a different kind of abuse. The types of abuse that participants experience involves the following; physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, economic and sexual abuse. The most common type

of abuse as revealed by the participant's inputs is verbal and physical abuse. All twelve participants suffer from verbal and physical abuse in their marriages. The influencing factor behind the verbal and physical abuse is alcohol abuse as revealed by Participant one, Participant three, Participant four, Participant five and Participant nine. The response of participants in the interviews shows that the third type of abuse is economic abuse. Five participants indicated that they suffer from economic abuse from their husbands. Only three participants indicated suffering from sexual abuse. Two participants are sexual abuse when their husbands are drunk. Therefore, married female breadwinners revealed suffering from physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, economic and sexual abuse.

#### 4.3.1.2 How often does your husband abuse you?

**Participant One** had this to say, *“He beat and shout at me drunk most of the time when he is drunk. He normally drinks every weekend, so I can say he beats me once or twice every weekend”*.

**Participant Two** said that:

*“It depends on his moods but I can say he abuse me maybe three or four times per month”*.

**Participant Three** stated that, *“My husband abuse me many times. It's hard to say but it's usually when he is drunk or when he is stressed but ever since the Pastor prayed for my marriage, it is better now”*

**Participant Four** had this to say, *“Per week I can say he abuse me once or twice depending on whether he drinks beer or not or whether we have an argument or not”*.

**Participant Five** said that, *“It difficult to say how many times because I don't keep a record of it but all I can say is that it is several times maybe five times a month”*

**Participant Six** said that, *“I can roughly say he beats me three to four times a month”*.

**Participant Seven** said that, *“He is abusive when he is angry. Each time he gets angry, it will be a sure case that he will abuse me. I can say he abuse me maybe three or four times a month”*.

**Participant Eight** had this to say, *“It is hard to say how many times he abuse me but he economically abuses me usually every month when I get paid that is when he can take my bank card and hide it”*.

**Participant Nine** said that, *“It is very rare for my husband not to abuse me when he is drunk. So I can say once or twice a week he abuses me when he drinks on weekends”*.

**Participant Ten** said that, *“He beats and shout at me about three to four times a week”*.

**Participant Eleven** said that, *“Usually when he is drunk he beats me. So I can say two or three times a week”*.

**Participant Twelve** said that, *“I am not sure because I have never counted but I think three or four times in a month”*.

### **Analysis of participants’ responses on the frequency of abuse**

The participants gave varied answers concerning the frequency of abuse in their marriage. Worth noting is that the majority of participants were not sure. They indicated that they do not usually keep track of the number of times their husband abuse them. However, four participants indicated that their husband abuses them three up to four times per month. Three abused married female breadwinners revealed that they are abuse once or twice every week. They outlined that contributory factor to being abused is that their husband drinks alcohol on weekends. This shows that alcohol abuse plays a pivotal role in the frequency of abuse in married female breadwinners’ abuse. Other factors that influence the frequency of abuse is moods, conflicts and anger as pointed out by Participant seven. Therefore, the frequency of abuse varies. The participants revealed that factors that involve alcohol abuse, mood swings and anger determine the frequency of abuse in their marriage.

#### 4.3.1.3 How can you describe the intensity or pattern of abuse ever since you got married?

**Participant One** had this to say, *“In the early days of marriage, he was not abusive. He started being abusive after about 2 years in our marriage and I opened a domestic violence case against him at TVEP (Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme) in 2010. They helped me to get a protection order against him and he stopped to be abusive for a while. After some few months, he started to be abusive again especially when he is drunk”*.

**Participant Two** said that: *“It is very hard to say from the early days of our marriage because we were staying with his parents. The abuse became too much when we started staying together and now he is still abusive depending on his mood”*.

**Participant Three** stated that: *“He used to be a sweet loving man when we got married until he started hanging out with drunkards. Ever since he started drinking, he has always been abusing me. Thus, I reported him to the police and they referred me to TVEP (Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme) in 2011 for counselling but he continued beating me. In fact, the abuse becomes too much because he said he is not scared of the police and that the protection order I took against him is nothing but a piece of paper”*.

**Participant Four** had this to say, *“In the early years of marriage my husband was not abusive. He started to be abusive after he lost his job and started engaging in drinking beer with his friends and I had to seek a protection order against him”*.

**Participant Five** said that, *“My husband was abusive even before we got married and I agreed to his marriage proposal thinking that he will change. The abuse became worse until I reported him to the Police who referred me to TVEP. Now it is better he no longer abuse me like what he used to do”*.

**Participant Six** said that, *“I can say nothing has really changed about his abusive behaviour starting from the years I have been married to him up to now. In the early days, he would wake up moody and angry with me for nothing. I was shocked the first time he beat me because I had done nothing wrong at all. It was just a simple argument and the next thing he was clapping me. As a result, that is the reason I had to take a protection order against him in 2012 because I was afraid that he may kill me”*.

**Participant Seven** said that, *“It has always been the same case of being abused from the early days of marriage. They say a leopard doesn’t change its spots, I guess that’s the befitting description of my husband’s abusive behaviour”*.

**Participant Eight** had this to say, *“My husband abusive behaviour was better when we got married but it intensified when I got a promotion at work and started earning more money than him. I reported him at TVEP and they advised me to take a protection order against him. After taking the protection order his abusive behaviour it is no longer too much”*.

**Participant Nine** stated that verbatim, *“My husband is very abusive and he has always been abusive. At TVEP, they helped me to get a protection order but he has always been violating the protection order since 2014. When I try to go to the police to report him for contravening the protection order, he becomes all sweet and caring. He would promise me that he will change but after some time he abuses me again”*

**Participant Ten** said, *“Sometimes the abuse is too much sometimes it’s not, but in the early days he was a gentleman until he started drinking alcohol. I do not remember him ever abusing me before we got married, so alcohol influenced him to be abusive”*

**Participant Eleven** said, *“Abuse became worse in my marriage after I gave birth to our firstborn. However, after getting a protection order against him it lessened”*.

**Participant Twelve** said, *“He has always been abusive even when we were dating. I thought he will change over time but he didn’t but after I seek a protection order his abusive behaviour is no longer too much”*.

### **Analysis of participants’ responses on intensity or pattern of abuse ever since abused female breadwinners got married.**

Five abused married female breadwinners revealed that the pattern of abuse started during the early days of marriage. Participant five stated that she agreed to her husband’s marriage proposal thinking that he would change his abusive behaviour, but he never changed. Participant seven compared her husband behaviour to a leopard, which does not change its spots. This shows that the pattern of abuse in five participants’ marriage has been consistent before and after marriage. Due to the intensity of the abuse, participants opened domestic

violence cases against their husband at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). Seven participants sought a protection order as a way of protecting themselves and deterring husband's abusive behaviour.

As a result, five of the participants revealed that the intensity and severity of the abusive decreased. On the other hand, two participants revealed that the intensity and severity of abuse increased because their husbands were not afraid to violate the terms of the protection order. Furthermore, four participants revealed a pattern of abuse started later or after a number of years in their marriage. This shows that the number of years spends in a marriage may lead to abuse of married female breadwinners. The participants managed to pinpoint the influencing factors behind their husbands' abuse. Three participants revealed that alcohol abuse influenced their husband to be abusive. Participant eleven mentioned that her husband became abusive after giving birth to the couple's first child. This shows that factors such as alcohol abuse, the number of years spend in the marriage, having children and economic factors such as loss of a job may lead to intensity and pattern of abuse in abused female breadwinner's marriages.

#### **4.3.2 The responses of abused married female breadwinners on the causes of abuse**

This section addresses the responses of abused female breadwinners' about the causes of abuse in their marriages. Unravelling the causes of abuse helps in understanding the factors and circumstances that lead to the occurrence of abuse in abused female breadwinners' marriage. As a result, the upcoming questions enquired participants about the causes of abuse.

##### **4.3.2.1 What are the causes or the reasons behind your husbands' abusive behaviour?**

**Participant One** had this to say, "*The main cause of the abusive behaviour of my husband is alcohol abuse. When he is drunk, he usually beats me. He also thinks that culturally there is nothing wrong with beating me because he paid tshede ya mamalo (lobola). Ever since he married me, he treats me as if I am his property. Maybe he also takes advantage of the fact that we have been married for twelve years and that I am getting old, so there is nothing much I can do to it*".

**Participant Two** said, *“I feel like he abuses me because he is not working and I am the one who is going to work. He sometimes shouts saying that you think that you are special because you have a nice job. I will prove you that it is nothing. My husband also tells me that he is a traditional Venda man so he can do whatever he feels like doing as the head of the family. To him, there is nothing wrong with beating me because his father used to beat his mother when he grew up”.*

**Participant Three** stated that, *“Money contributes to my husband abusive behaviour. He is not working, so most of the time we fight about money. He hides the money and takes the bankcard every month to go and drink beer with his friends. He believes as the head of the family he must control everything and that I must take his orders because he paid lobola. When I object he says that I am disrespecting him and he beats me to show his power”*

**Participant Four** had this to say, *“My husband lost his job. This led to stress and as a result, he started drinking beer. That is when he became abusive. I think losing a job bruised his ego as the man of the house and he started taking his stress on me. He would say that culturally a man is supposed to provide for his family and not to be taken care of by a woman, so losing a job really affected him”*

**Participant Five** said that, *“I cannot point to one cause of abuse in marriage because there are many. Firstly, I would say alcohol abuse and the influence of culture. My husband also grew up with a stepfather who used to abuse his mother so I think he is taking after his stepfather. So it is very hard to point out one root cause behind my husband abusive behaviour”*

**Participant Six** said that, *“My husband does not see anything wrong with beating me because he paid tshelade ya mamalo (lobola). He says that it is a way of disciplining my kids and me since he is the man of the house He says that it is according to our norms and values that the man of the house must discipline the family. He can be so moody and stressed and I think it also makes him be abusive”.*

**Participant Seven** said that, *“I think my husband is abusive because naturally, he thinks that man is superior to women. He always wants to be on top of everything. He always wants to control me and win every argument in the house. If things do not go his way, it usually culminates in a physical assault. I think his parents raised him like that. He grew up witnessing violence in his family. To him battering me is normal”*

**Participant Eight** had this to say, *“My husband is abusive because of our culture which permits a man to beat women. On top of that, he drinks beer. When he is drunk, he is very violent. Another thing is that he now take me for granted. We have been married for nine years so he knows that even if he can beat me, I cannot go anywhere”*.

**Participant Nine** stated that, *“My husband is a drunkard and very abusive. If he can stop drinking beer then I think most of the abuse can stop. He also thinks that a man has a cultural right to beat their woman because they pay lobola. He always says that when he grew up his father used to beat his mother, so I should not complain because it is normal for a man to beat a wife”*.

**Participant Ten** said that, *“They are many things that cause him to be abusive. We fight a lot about his girlfriends, Sometimes when I check his phone and ask whom it is he shouts at me and beats me. He believes a traditional Venda man can do what he wants and even propose and women he wants. He said that he grew up in a polygamous family, so his father and grandfather had many women and they would beat their wives to discipline them”*.

**Participant Eleven** said that, *“Alcohol abuse is the first major cause. He is very abusive when he is drunk. Sometimes he can even have some nights out especially around paydays with his girlfriends. When I ask about it, he beats me and shouts at me saying he is the man of the house and he paid lobola for me. He also does not like it when I use the social network. He is jealousy when my men call on my phone or texts me some message. One day he clapped me after a male colleague send me a message on Facebook after we had attended a workshop together. He was just telling me that he safely arrived, so he got angry because of that. My husband likes drinking beer and having many girlfriends”*.

**Participant Twelve** said that, *“My husband beats me out of frustration because he has been trying to look for a stable job but he cannot find one. He is only happy when he will be doing piece jobs. When sited at home without doing anything, my husband will be moody and abusive. Most of the time he will drink beer with his friends and chase after young girls. Sometimes we have conflicts when those girls call and text him. When I confront him he can become physical and say that he is the man of the house so he can associate with whoever he wants”*.

## **Analysis of participants responses on the causes of abused married female breadwinners**

An analysis of the participants' transcript reveals that culture is the root cause of abuse of female breadwinners in marriage. All twelve participants revealed that cultural practices such as *lobola* (bride price) lead to abuse in their marriage. As narrated by Participant six, men view themselves as superior to women due to patriarchal tendencies. This gives men the right to discipline female breadwinner through battering. Worth noting is that four participants revealed that they believe that their husband abusive behaviour may have been influenced by growing up witnessing violence against women in their families. Participant two articulated that her husband sees nothing wrong with beating her because his father used to beat his mother when he grew up. This shows the influence of patriarchy on abuse of married female breadwinners.

Another cause of abuse is unemployment. Five participants revealed that their husbands are unemployed and they take out their stress on them through battering them. Worth noting is that five husbands of the participants are unemployed, whilst the other seven earn less money than the abused married female breadwinners earn. As a result, lack of job opportunities leads to stress and low self-esteem, which culminates, into abuse of married female breadwinners. Participants cited conflicts about the use of money in the family as one of the causes of abuse.

Three participants revealed that social network causes abuse in their marriages. The problem arises from conflicts that arise from social network texts messages that culminate into abuse of married female breadwinners. Furthermore, some married female breadwinners cited infidelity as one of the causes of abuse were husbands are involved in extra-marital affairs. Participant ten revealed that her husband attacks her verbally and physically each time she tries to ask about his extra-marital affairs.

### **4.3.3 The responses of abused married female breadwinners on the consequences of abuse**

This section addresses the responses of abused female breadwinners' about the consequences of abuse in their marriages. In order to reflect on the circumstances and coping mechanism of abused female breadwinners, there is need to understand first how abuse affects female

breadwinners in their marriages. An understanding of the effects of abuse on female breadwinners can help in reflecting on the circumstances and coping mechanisms of female breadwinners in dealing with abuse. It is through exposure to the effects of abuse that married female breadwinner's device coping mechanism against abuse. As a result, the upcoming questions enquired participants about the consequences of abuse.

#### 4.3.3.1 What are the consequences of abuse in your marriage?

**Participant One** had this to say: *My body is full of bruises from physical assaults. This scar on my hand he hit me with a cooking stick. His abusive behaviour makes me stress a lot and I used to lose weight when he started his abusive behaviour. We are always broke each month because he squanders money on beer. So sometimes we really face financial problems because spend money on beer”.*

**Participant Two** said that, *“I lost our second child because of his abusive behaviour. He was always beating me and stressing me. I end up having a miscarriage. I was so depressed after that on several times I thought of committing suicide. I have some injuries all over my body, as a result, the way he beats me”.*

**Participant Three** stated that, *“I lost one of my side teeth after my husband hit me with his bare fist. I was so hurt and it was one of the worst moments of my life. Imagine losing your teeth after being beaten by your husband. Afterwards, I was having some nightmares and I would struggle to sleep because of that incident. I feel isolated and lonely sometimes. The reason being that my husband doesn't want my family and friends to visit. He is afraid that if I get close to them I will expose his abusive behaviour to them”*

**Participant Four** had this to say, *“The way my husband shouts at me it affects me psychologically. Sometimes if I think of it, I get depressed and lose all the confidence. He makes me feel like I am stupid and I cry sometimes when I am alone. One day I went to work with a black eye after he had hit me in my right eye. I was so shy to go to work. When he ran out of money to buy beer he goes around borrowing money. This creates financial problems for us because month-end I would have to pay back the money”.*

**Participant Five** said that, *“Sometimes I feel some pains in my private parts because my husband forces me to sleep with him when he is drunk. In order to cope up with stress, I also started drinking alcohol. I do not drink a lot but I just get tipsy so that I can overcome depression. If I do not do that, I may even end up committing suicide because sometimes I have suicidal thoughts. Abuse has led to many scars on my back. He puts me through a lot ordeal”*

**Participant Six** said that, *“He shouts at me and beats me in front of the children. Imagine being un-dressed down in front of the children. It hurts me deeply and stresses me a lot. My friends are even afraid to visit me because of his abusive behaviour. He is uncontrollable when he starts shouting and beating me”*

**Participant Seven** said that, *“I am always stressed because of what my husband puts me through. Sometimes I feel like taking my life, but I cannot because my children need me. I have to be strong for myself and for them. My husband battered me many times in front of my children. I even lost our first born because I had a miscarriage because he used to beat me when I was pregnant”*

**Participant Eight** had this to say, *“My husband once beat me with a broom when I took time to open the door after coming home at four o’clock in the morning. I twisted my ankle when I was running away from him. I went to the hospital and they put a plaster on my ankle. I was using crutches to walk for one month. I really struggled because I have few friends who came to help and support me. The reason being that my husband does not want me to have many friends for fear that they may influence me to leave him because of his abusive behaviour”*

**Participant Nine** stated that, *“My husband sexually abuse me especially when he is drunk. In 2013, he infected me with an STI. After I got treatment, I asked him to use protection but he refused. He said that condoms are for unmarried couples. He is very abusive and I have some scars that evidence it”*

**Participant Ten** said that, “

*“Sometimes I struggle to sleep and when I sleep, I have nightmares. One day I had a nightmare. I dreamt of my husband stabbing me with a knife. The way he beat me, I am scared that one day he may kill me. When it becomes too much I drink beer to ease my stress because it is very difficult for me to cope up with the ordeal. The habit of drinking beer I took after him because he is a drunkard. Some months he spends all the money on beer and we end up struggling for money to buy food”*

**Participant Eleven** said that, *“We struggle some months because of my husband drinking habits. Another time he even borrowed money from some loan sharks to drink beer and I had to pay it back with interest. He is abusive and jealousy. He isolates me from my family and friends. He does not like my friends to visit me and sometimes he confiscate my phone. The reason is that he did not want me to be on the social network because he is jealous and possessive. I feel so lonely when he confiscate my phone because I will not be having access to talk to my friends and confide in them about my problems. It stresses me a lot”*

**Participant Twelve** said that, *“We had an argument on a Saturday when he was drunk and he took a mug and hit me on the forehead, I bled profusely and my neighbours had to rush me to the hospital. His abusive tendencies stress me a lot. It affects me psychologically and affects my self-confidence. He makes me feel like I am a worthless person. Sometimes I feel so sad and have suicidal thoughts”*.

### **Analysis of participants responses on the consequences of abused married female breadwinners.**

The oral transcripts revealed that all twelve participants suffered from injuries inflicted by physical assaults from their husbands. In some instance, the physical assaults were severe that they end up being hospitalised for example; Participant eight spent one-month using crutches to walk after a physical assault. All the participants revealed that abuse at the hands of their husbands leads to post-traumatic stress. The post-traumatic stress affects them in different ways. Some abused female breadwinners struggle to sleep, feel lonely, break down in tears and some have nightmares as in the case of Participant ten. Abused female breadwinners revealed that some of the verbal and physical attacks occur in front of their children. This has short and long-term effects on the well-being of the children. The reason is that it stresses the children and predispose them to violence when they become adults. Three participants revealed that abuse at the hands of their husbands’ leads to psychological effects such as low self-esteem and it makes them feel like they are worthless. As a result, some abused female breadwinners contemplate suicide as articulated by three participants.

Four participants revealed that abuse predisposes them to gynaecological problems. Participant two and Participant seven revealed that they had miscarriages because of abusive behaviours of their husbands. Abused married female breadwinners are at the risk of contracting Sexual

Transmitted Diseases (STI) and HIV/AIDS. Participant nine revealed that her husband was involved in extra-marital affairs and he infected her with STI. After getting treatment, the husband sexually abused her by refusing to use condoms citing that condoms are for unmarried couples. This shows that abused married female breadwinners are at the risk of contracting STI and HIV/AIDS. Four abused married female breadwinners revealed that their abusive husband isolates and cut their social ties with their friends and family. As a result, they feel isolated and cut off from their friends and family. Four participants revealed that abuse leads to financial problems in their marriage because their husband spends money on beer. Participant eleven divulged that her husband went to loan sharks to borrow money to buy beer, which led to financial constraints. Furthermore, two abused female breadwinners revealed that they consume alcohol as a way of coping with the ordeal that they suffer at the hands of their husbands. Worth noting is that alcohol abuse is both a cause and a coping strategy against abuse.

#### **4.3.4 The responses of abused married female breadwinners on the challenges that they face in their marriages**

In order to reflect on the circumstance and coping mechanism of abused female breadwinners, there is need to understand the challenges that female breadwinners face in their marriages. Without a doubt, there are challenges that female breadwinners face given the fact that they try to balance career and doing household task expected of them by their husband. An understanding of the challenges abused female breadwinners face in their marriage help in reflecting on the coping mechanisms that help them cope with their plight. As a result, the upcoming question enquired participants about challenges that abused female breadwinners face in their marriages.

##### **4.3.4.1 What are the challenges that you face in your abusive marriage?**

**Participant One** said that, *“Going to work and being the lady of the house is very difficult. It is never easy to try to balance the two. It is very tough to take care of the family, clean and cook after a long day of work”*.

**Participant Two** said that, *“I am a healthcare worker. Sometimes when I am on duty, I start work at seven o’clock in the morning and finish at seven o’clock in the evening. This means that I have to wake up at four o’clock in the morning before everyone wakes up and prepare food and breakfast for my family, so it is very hectic my work schedule and doing household chores”*.

**Participant Three** said that, *“The domestic chores are overwhelming. Although my husband is not working, he doesn’t help me with domestic chores and he also doesn’t like me to hire a maid because he says it is a waste of money and he doesn’t like food cooked by a maid because he says, he married me not a maid, so it should be my job to cook for him”*.

**Participant Four** said that, *“Sometimes my husband help me with cooking and cleaning but not always. Therefore, I am the one who does most of the domestic chores. So it is a challenge balancing work and household chores”*.

**Participant Five** said that, *“My husbands refuse to help me with household chores because he says that it is embarrassing for a man to do household chores. Therefore, I cook, clean and take care of children alone. He said a true Venda does not cook or clean but it is the job of women”*

**Participant Six** stated that, *“I have two kids. It is hard to take care of them and going to work at the same time. I used to have a house cleaner but now I cannot afford because my money is not enough. So I have to do everything by myself”*

**Participant Seven** said that, *“I wish if gender equality exist. I just hear it in news but in my marriage, it does not exist. It is overwhelming to be a breadwinner and at the same time take care of the family”*.

**Participant Eight** had this to say, *“My husband does not help me when it comes to domestic chores. You know the one month that I had a plaster and using crutches, he was not helping me with anything. I had to do house chores on my own and it was difficult”*

**Participant Nine** said that, *“Before getting married, I used to think that marriage is a bed of roses but no I was wrong. Marriage life is full of challenges. It takes a very strong woman to be breadwinners and mother of the house. What I have learnt over the years that I have been with my husband is to be strong. Imagine, I am the one who works for the family, cleans the house but on top of that he beats me. He does not help me at all. That is so unfair”*

**Participant Ten** stated that, *“Being a female breadwinner has a good side that you be working and making money but it also has disadvantages. You got work and when you come back, domestic chores will be waiting for you. So that is the boring part of going to work”*

**Participant Eleven** stated that, *“In the early days of marriage my husband used to be helpful but as years go by he stopped helping me. Therefore, after work, I rush home to cook, clean and take care of the children. It is a lot of work to do but I cannot complain. I just have to be strong be strong”*.

**Participant Twelve** had this to say, *“The biggest challenge it is balancing between work pressures and taking care of my family. It is hard because my husband is not helpful. He believes it is the job of a woman to do all house chores alone”*.

### **Analysis of participants’ responses to the challenges that abused female breadwinners face in their marriages**

Abused female breadwinners revealed that they face a challenge of balancing between work and domestic chores at home. Although some of their husbands do not go to work, they do not help them with their domestic chores. Only two participants indicated that sometimes their husband helps them with the household. Worth noting is that their husband does not help them fulltime but it once or twice in a while. This means that the abused married female breadwinners do the majority of the work. The problem is that the villages where participants come from are patriarchal in nature. This is revealed by Participant five who said that her husband does not help because he believes that he is a true Venda man who does not do domestic chores. This shows that men do not believe in gender equality or sharing of duties in the home. This proves to be a big challenge to abused married female breadwinners. The reason is that they go to work and are also expected to do domestic chores at home without the help of their husband.

#### **4.3.5 The responses of abused female breadwinners on the circumstances that make them stay in their marriages**

This section addresses the responses of abused married female breadwinners’ about the circumstances that influence them to stay in their marriages. This enables exploring and understanding the circumstances that influences abused female breadwinners to stay in marriage despite being financially independent. As a result, the upcoming question probed the circumstances that make abused female breadwinners stay in their marriage.

#### 4.3.5.1 What are the circumstances that make you stay your abusive marriages?

**Participant One** said that, *“I have never heard of it in my village that a woman can divorce a husband. In my culture, a man is the one who is supposed to leave the wife not the other way round. The elders would not agree to that and it is not easy as people they may think. In my culture, they say - a woman’s burial place is her marital home. In my culture, it means under no circumstances should a married woman return to her parents. All marital problems like abuse. She is supposed to bear all the burdens including abuse by the husband. I also have three kids now with him and these kids need a father and a mother in their life. I do not want them to grow without parents like the same way I grew up. Therefore, it is better if I stick in my marriage for the sake of my children. All my life I have worked hard for my family, and I can’t walk away from my marriage and lose half of the things that I have acquired and start over”*.

**Participant 2** said that, *“I went to an initiation school. They taught us how to treat a husband and to be strong in the face of hardships in marriage. They taught us that a husband is the head of the family so I cannot divorce him because he is beating me. I might be financially independent but having a husband and family completes me. I don’t want to break up with my husband, then tomorrow I go to Home Affairs to change my surname, who know it can be a cycle that can go on, and on until I have five husbands. Each time that I threaten to leave my husband, he begs me to stay and promises to change. I always give him a chance but he does not change”*

**Participant 3** said that, *“The way I love my husband is so unconditional and I don’t think I can love another man the way I love him. My friends’ think that I am crazy or that maybe he gave a love portion. That is why my husband does not want them to visit because he thinks they will influence me to think of leaving him. It is against my culture for me to leave my husband. It is a taboo in Venda culture for a woman to divorce a husband. Ever since we were young, we have never heard about it of a woman who divorces a husband. I do not want to be the first women in my area to do that. It is unheard of”*.

**Participant Four** said that, *“I had a white wedding and married in the community of property eleven years ago. This means if I decide to divorce him, I stand to lose half of everything that we have yet I am the one who has been the breadwinner. Therefore, if we break up, I am the one who is going to lose. We got married in the church so it is against my religious beliefs to divorce him. Another reason why I stick to my marriage is that of my children. I love my children*

*and I cannot break up with the father of my kids. It may bring some negative changes to my children such changing schools and neighbourhoods, which is not a good thing when raising children. I may have all the money to take care of them and be a single parent but that won't be good enough because I want a complete family".*

**Participant Five** said that, *"I have left our marital homes twice because of his abusive behaviour. He always follows me to apologise, spoil me and convinces me that he would change. Therefore, I would end up feeling sorry for him and I would go back to him. When I left him, my father told me to go back to him. He said divorce was impossible because he paid lobola. He said I should not start trouble for nothing because I am a married man"*

**Participant Six** said that, *"My husband may be abusive but I do not think I should walk away from him because we have children together. They are all innocent and deserve the love of both parents. My husband sometimes mock me that even if I want to divorce him no man can accept me with two kids already, so I am stuck with him. I was also born in a traditional family, which follows culture. In my culture, a wife does not dump a husband because he is the head of the family who can discipline his wife and children. So no matter how abusive my husband is stick to the marriage".*

**Participant Seven** said that, *"I cannot break up with my husband because I love him and I can't imagine life without him and also I can't imagine myself getting married to another man or sleeping with another man beside him. On top of that, it is against my culture to leave my husband. I do not see the moral decency in breaking up with my husband. Socially I think it is not the right thing to do. The reason is that you tend to lose respect in the society if you are not married and worse if you divorce your husband. There is respect that comes from being a married woman and I don't want to lose that"*

**Participant Eight** stated that, *"This thing of breaking up with my husband it makes me lose dignity in the village. It does not make sense that I can be successful in my profession and be a failure in my marriage. Even though my husband is abusive, we also have our good moments. There are moments that he shows that he loves me and I love him too. Therefore, I cannot just throw away the love that we share just because his abusive. Another reason that makes me stick in my marriage is culture. I am scared that if I divorce him my family may disown me. Maybe in western culture, it is easy but in our Venda traditional culture, it is not that easy.*

**Participant Nine** said that, *"It is hard to break up with my husband because of my children. I love them and I want what is best for them and want them to have a brighter future in life.*

*Another problem is that it is not only up to me because a lot of people and including both families are involved culturally in my marriage. They say marriage it is not only a bond between two people but it is a bond between two families or a relationship between two families. So my family won't accept that especially my fathers will tell me to go back to my husband".*

**Participant Ten** said that, *"In my church, it is forbidden by our pastor to divorce once u get married. Our pastors believe that prayer solves everything, so he has been praying for my marriage. Another problem is that my family, especially, my father would not accept the divorce because of our culture. Divorcing him, this may hurt me more than staying in the marriage. I do not want to go to court to fight custody for our children. I cannot bear the thought of my children being raised by another woman"*

**Participant 11** had this to say, *"Even though my husband is abusive, the last thing I would want is to divorce him, lose half of my property and leave our beautiful house to him and his mistress or small house. Therefore, I do not want that. Another reason is my cultural beliefs and religious belief do not allow me to divorce a husband. Marriage is sacred. It is not something that I can just walk away from any time I want"*.

**Participant 12** stated that, *"Although my husband is abusive, it is hard to leave him. When sober my husband is loving and caring. It would be so hard to believe that he is abusive when he is in a good mood. Another reason that makes me not to walk away from my marriage it is my religious beliefs. The bible says that a husband and a wife should not divorce no matter what circumstance, only death should separate them"*.

### **Analysis of participants' responses to the circumstances that make abused female breadwinners stay in their marriages.**

Abused married female breadwinners revealed a plethora of circumstances that makes them stick to their marriages. This is despite the fact that their husbands abuse them. All participants of the study revealed they stick to their marriages because of the influence of culture. In the traditional African culture, a man marries a woman and pay lobola. As a result, it makes it difficult for the woman to divorce the husband. Participant one narrated that in the Venda culture a man is the one who is supposed to leave the wife not the other way round. Therefore, the influence of culture makes abused married female breadwinners to stick to their marriages.

Abused female breadwinners revealed that desire to take care of their children make them stay in their marriage. They do not want their children to grow up with a single parent. Participant ten revealed that she did not want to fight custody for custody of her children in the event of divorcing her husband. This shows that abused female breadwinners stick to their marriages so that they can protect and take care of their children.

Abused married female breadwinners revealed that their religious beliefs influence them to stick to their marriages. The marriage institution is sacred in different religion such as Christianity. This means that the marriage ceremony involves a Pastor who administers the vows that a husband and wife exchange in front of the congregation. As a result, abused female breadwinners took vows that bind them until death separated them. Divorce is not an option. Besides the need to keep the vows, Pastors believes in prayer to solve all marital problems of couples. Participants ten revealed that her Pastor believes that prayer solves her husbands' abusive behaviour. As a result, divorcing her husband is not justified because prayer will solve the husbands' abusive behaviour. Abused married female breadwinners stay in their marriages because of social needs such as love, intimacy, affectionate and attachment. Six participants revealed that they stay in their marriages because they love their husband despite the ordeal of abuse. Participant Seven revealed that she loves her husband and she cannot imagine life without him. Love is complex and it cannot be quantified but worth noting is that it is very important in marriages. Love precedes the marriage.

The binding force that brought abused married female breadwinners with their husband it is love. As a result, love can be a powerful force that makes abused female breadwinners to stick in their marriages. Participant Three revealed that she unconditionally love her husband even though he is abusive. Therefore, social needs such as love influences abused female breadwinners to stick to their marriages. The desire to keep a social status that comes with being married makes abused female breadwinners to stick to their marriages. Consideration of marriage as a success in the society makes abused female breadwinners to stick in their marriages. Participant Two revealed that being financially independent is not enough because a husband completes her. Having a husband and a successful career makes abused female breadwinners to feel complete. Participants seven revealed that a wife loses respect in the society if she divorce. The reason is that there is respect that comes from being a married woman. Worth noting is that the abused female breadwinners contribute more money to their marriage than their husband does. Therefore, in the event of a divorce, they stand to lose more than their husbands do. Abused female breadwinners stay in marriages because of entrapment

by their abusive husbands. Five participants revealed that their husband becomes cunning and persuasive each time that they threaten to leave them. They pretend to be loving and caring as a way of dissuading them from divorcing them. Participant five revealed that her husband apologises, spoil her and convinces her that he would change after she had left their marital home. In the end, she felt sorry for him and went back to their marital home. Thus, husbands entrap abused female breadwinners to stick in their marriages.

#### **4.3.6. The responses of abused married female breadwinners on the coping strategies against abuse**

This section addresses the responses of abused married female breadwinners' on the coping strategies against abuse. The coping strategies assist abused female breadwinners in finding a solution to their plight and stay in nuptial contracts. As a result, the upcoming question enquired abused married female breadwinners about the coping strategies that help them find a solution to their plights.

##### **4.3.6.1 What are your coping mechanisms or how do you cope up with living with an abusive husband?**

**Participant One** said that, *“Reporting to Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) helped me to cope with his abusive behaviour. Like I said before, they helped me to get a protection order against him and gave me counselling. I do not know how I was going to carry on in the marriage without their help. Now I cope very well because of the counselling and they are always willing to help when I need counselling. I am also happy because happy that I have friends and family who I can talk to when I am having problems in my marriage. They are really my shoulder to lean on. To cope up with the economic abuse by my husband, I do stokvel with other women in the village. Stokvel enables me to make extra money for back up because my husband squanders money on alcohol. Some months he takes my bankcards and spent money on alcohol and gambling at Khoroni Casino. So, I need to make extra money to supplement my salary”*

**Participant Two** had this to say, *“The day I reported him to TVEP he was beating me around ten pm and I run to take the car keys in the dining room, went to the garage and drive to TVEP trauma centre at Tshilidzini. When it gets worse I always run away and come back when he has calmed down. I also believe in prayer and God to intervene in my marriage. We have women session at church every Wednesday and sometimes we do home visits to women who will be having some marital problems. The women from church have visited me three times at my house to pray for me. Life is full of challenges and so is marriage. So sometimes no matter how things can become bad in this marriage I just try to be positive and put a smile on my face and say everything is going to be alright”.*

**Participant Three** said that, *“It is not easy to cope up with an abusive husband. I really have to be strong to stay with him. I reported him to the police, they referred me to TVEP in 2011 for counselling, and they helped me to apply for a protection order. It did not help much because he continued to beat me. He said he is not scared of the police and that the protection order is just a piece of paper. It made me be depressed a lot. After realising that his abusive behaviour got worse, turned to God for solutions. My pastor counselled me and prayed for his abusive behaviour to stop. Ever since the Pastor prayed for me, things are better. He is no longer much abusive except maybe when he drinks beer too much”.*

**Participant Four** said that, *“The best way of showing my husband that I don’t like his abusive behaviour it is by acting out in silence. My action will speak louder than words because talking will lead to more abuse. Sometimes it can be as if you are adding paraffin to fire. So the best way I just keep quiet or stop doing things that I always do to him like not cooking and just buying take always. The counselling that I got at TVEP helps me to cope up with his abusive behaviour. I have a big yard so I engage myself in gardening to ease my stress and make some extra cash from selling vegetables. My husband drinks a lot and he is careless with money I make extra money through selling vegetables”.*

**Participant Five**, had this to say, *“Sometimes I drink alcohol just to cope up with the abuse that I suffer at the hands of my husband. In life sometimes drinking down your sorrows works. It may not be a good way of coping with stress but it helps a lot. If I do not I may end up committing suicide because sometimes I have suicide thoughts. My neighbours and friends are a good support system and I can always rely and depend on them. Whenever I ever I need to talk to them about the problems I face in my marriage they are always available to me. Sometimes when my husband physically attacks me, I scream and call the neighbours for help. They always come to my rescue”.*

**Participant Six** stated that, *“Dealing with my abusive husband is too much. Sometimes I run away from home and go to stay with my auntie because it can be too much. If I can go to my auntie’s place, I can breathe for some time and refresh a bit and usually when I do that he follows me and begs me to come back home so we can solve our issues. I also cope up by threatening my husband. He always gets scared when I tell him that I will report him for being abusive. This other day he followed me all the way to the police to stop me from opening a case. He is scared to go to prison. I only reported him to TVEP but I did not open a case. They gave me counselling. They told me that I was free to open a case or apply for protection order but I chose not to. I don’t want him to go to prison”.*

**Participant Seven** had this to say, *“I cope with my abusive husband by running away with my children to my friends or the family when the abuse becomes too much. I always try to protect my children from his abusive behaviour. I do not want them to witness abuse because it is bad for them. I reported him to TVEP and they helped me with applying for a protection order against. So now he is no longer too abusive because he is scared to rot in jail”.*

**Participant Eight** said that, *“In the early years of his abusive behaviour, I used to fight back him until he would beat me into submission. Now I only fight back when my life is in danger like this other day he wanted to beat me with a cooking stick, I rushed to take a broomstick, and I told him to back off. He stopped after because he was afraid that I would hurt him with a broom. However, his abusive behaviour became too much and I reported him to TVEP. I took a protection order against my husband after he had badly injured me on my ankle. I felt a sense of protection because he became scared to beat me. However, he becomes more verbally abusive than ever before because he was afraid beat me for fear of violating the protection order. So it really helped because he is no longer physically abusive”.*

**Participant Nine** had this to say, *“I have a diary that I keep in my room and my husband does not know about it, because of each time, we have a conflict or he abuses me a write it down including the time and date. After writing everything that would have happened, I also pour out how I feel about everything. This helps me to understand him better and reflect on his abusive behaviour. It also helps me to avoid conflict that may lead to his abusive behaviour. I also reported him at TVEP and they help me with applying for a protection order. Therefore, the intensity of abuse is better because of fear to go to prison. I am on the committee of African National Congress (ANC). Therefore, I take part in ANC activities especially during the time of elections. It keeps me busy than worrying about my abuse”.*

**Participant Ten** had this to say, *“I have run away from home several times to go to my friend’s house because of his abusive behaviour. I will not be just seeking attention but I would have had enough. After running away, he comes to apologise. Therefore, it gives me time to breathe. I am a strong woman I know but I am also human sometimes I reach a breaking point. I realised that most of the time that my husband abuse me, he will be drunk, so sometimes to cope up with the stress I would also drink beer because sometimes the stress can be too much”*.

**Participant Eleven** said that, *“Although my husband doesn’t like me to be on the social network, it entertains me and helps me to get over my stress after my husband’s abuses me. I also have family and friends groups where we share the problems that we face in our marriages and we help each other. I am also happy that now he is afraid of beating me because I reported him to TVEP and they helped me with applying for a court order. I also told my church Pastor and he prays for me. I joined my church choir. Taking part in the church choir it entertains me and helps me to get over the stress that my husband put me through”*.

**Participant Twelve** said that, *“I reported my husband to the Police and they took me to TVEP trauma centre. They provided counselling services to me. Even now when the abuse gets too much, I always go there for counselling and I am free to call their numbers. This helps me to cope up with the abuse. Through the counselling sessions, I am able to express how I feel about my marriage. This makes me feel better after the counselling sessions. I also play stokvel with the women in my area. Sometimes we have parties and go for groceries shopping at Spar in Thohoyandou. I enjoy their company and I tend to forget about my problems when I am with my stokvel women. I also put my entire problems before God. I go to church and I believe that God will answer all my prayers. The devil he is a liar he will not win. I believe my husband will stop being abusive”*.

### **Analysis of participants’ responses on the coping strategies that helps abused married female breadwinners to stick to their marriages.**

Abused married female breadwinners revealed some of the strategies that make them stay in their marriages. All the participants revealed that they report to Police or Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) when the abuse intensifies. Seven participants indicated that they took protection order against their abusive husbands to protect themselves. Participant Eight revealed that she felt a sense of protection after applying for a protection because her

husband scared to beat her. He was afraid of violating the protection order and go to prison. This shows that abused married female breadwinners make use of protection order to cope with abuse. Abused married female breadwinners revealed that they make use of counselling to cope up with abusive tendencies of their husbands. All participants received counselling at TVEP trauma centres. Participant Twelve revealed that the counselling sessions made her feel better because she was able to express how I feel about my marriage and they are always available when she needs counselling.

Abused married female breadwinners revealed that they seek religious intervention to cope up with abuse. They believe in God and the powers of Pastors that they can solve their marital problems. Participants two revealed that she believes in prayer and divine intervention to stop the abusive behaviour of their husband. This means that abusive husband draws strength and hope on divine intervention with enable them to cope with their plight. Abused married female breadwinners revealed that they make use of social support as a coping strategy against abuse. They get social support from their family, friends and neighbours when abuse become too much to bear. Abused married female breadwinners find refugee from their family, friends and neighbours during and after physical assaults by their husbands. Participant Seven revealed that she cope with abuse by running away her children to her friends and family.

This shows that abused female breadwinners try to protect their children from witnessing the abusive behaviour of their children. Witnessing of abuse by children may have short and long-term effects. The children may abuse their spouses when they become adults. Abused married female breadwinners make use of the social network as a coping strategy against abuse. Participant eleven revealed that social network entertains and helps her to get over stress from the abusive husband. Abused married female breadwinners revealed that they engage in some financial schemes to cope up with the economic abuse by their husband. Participant One revealed that she joined stokvel with other women to make extra money because her husband squanders her salary on alcohol. These economic activities help them to supplement their budget or else they may struggle with necessities. Abused married female breadwinners engage themselves in some activities that keep them busy and relieve stress. Participant eleven revealed that she joined church choir and it helps her to relieve stress. Two participants revealed that they take alcohol as a way of coping with their stress. Participant Five revealed that sometimes drink alcohol as a way of coping up with her plight. Worth noting is that drinking alcohol is an unhealthy way of coping with stress. Abused married female breadwinners engage in problem solving techniques to cope up with their plight. The problem solving techniques help

them to understand, adjust, accommodate copy, reflect, accommodate and cope up with abusive tendencies of their husbands.

They devise techniques that try to diffuse and avoid conflicts that may lead to abuse. Participant Nine revealed that she writes the abusive tendencies of her husband in a diary. It makes her feel better and enables her to reflect on his behaviour. Abused married female breadwinners make use of passive resistance to cope with abusive behaviours of their husbands. Participant Four revealed that she acts out in silence by stop doing things that she always does like cooking. This makes the abusive husband realise that she does not like his abusive behaviour. Abused married female breadwinners also cope up with abuse through aggressive resistance. Aggressive resistance mean that they retaliate when their husband physically assaults them. Participant Eight revealed that she fights back when her life is in danger. She said that one day the husband wanted to hit her with a cooking stick and she rushed to take a broomstick and he stopped for fear of being beaten. Therefore, abused married female breadwinners devise a variety of coping strategies to cope up with their plight.

#### **4.3.7 The responses of abused married female breadwinners on the intervention measures against abuse.**

This section addresses the responses of abused married female breadwinners' on the intervention measures against abuse. One of the objectives of the study was to find out about the methods or intervention measures that prevent and solve the problem of female breadwinners' abuse. Intervention measures may help abused female breadwinners to deal and cope with abuse in their marriage. Understanding intervention methods could assist in their coping strategies and curb prevalence of abuse in their marriages. As a result, the upcoming questions enquired participants about the intervention measures against abuse.

#### 4.3.7.1. What do you think are the intervention strategies to curb abuse in abused female breadwinners' marriages?

**Participant One** said that, *“Women need more information about abuse and gender equality. We live in the villages. Not everyone who has access to TV or reads English. My husband is not educated and he even struggles to write good English. Therefore, I think he lacks information about women abuse and equality. He is too cultural. Therefore, there is a need for organisations like TVEP to continue educating the villages about abuse. My husband started to understand the abuse after I took a protection order against him. At TVEP, they gave me some pamphlets about abuse written in Venda. After that, he started to understand better about abuse and he felt bad about his behaviour”*

**Participant Two** said that, *“I think there must be some community work or income generation activities for unemployed husbands of female breadwinners. My husband takes his frustration of not finding a job for me. If he was having a job, I think he would not be very abusive. My pastor at church always says that idle hands are a devils workshop. Therefore, my husband's hands idle hands that is why he beats. If his hands were useful on something, he would not do that. My husband also lacks knowledge about women abuse. I also lacked knowledge about abuse. It took me a lot of courage to report my husband to TVEP about his abusive behaviour because I was scared about what will happen to me after reporting. After reporting at TVEP and spending a night at their trauma centre, they helped me with applying for a protection order. They explained to me about my rights. If other abused female breadwinners can know about protection order and their right I am sure they will report more about abuse”.*

**Participant Three** said that, *“My husband is abusive and even if I tell him to go for counselling he refuses. I wish he were there when they were counselling me. This was going to make him see what I go through when he abused me. I think it is high time we must have women as Chiefs in the community. If we have women Chief it will send, a strong message and men may stop to abuse us. My husband always says women are not good rulers and men should always on top of everything. His mind is very wrong, so there is a need for things to change because man does not understand. Gender equality should be promoted in the community and it will help to reduce abuse of women”.*

**Participant Four** stated that, *“NGO’s like TVEP helps a lot in reducing women abuse in the communities. If we can have much organisation like TVEP then I think that more men would know that it is wrong to abuse women because some men they don’t see anything wrong with beating a woman. There must be banishment of limitation of beer banned in my village. The reason being most men who abuse alcohol beat their women. A good example is my husband. Therefore, if there were no beer he would not be abusive like the way he is”.*

**Participant Five** said that, *“In my village, there is a lady who opened an abuse case against her husband and when the husband was realised on bail, he went home and killed her. So sometimes reporting a case or nor reporting, women do not feel much protected by the law or police. I also had my reservations about reporting my husband to TVEP but now I know it is a good thing. I now know my rights so I am no longer scared. So women need encouragement to do that because most of them do not know about it.”*

**Participant Six** said that, *“I have attended many events organised by TVEP such as the fun days, whereby they were teaching about women abuse and testing for HIV/AIDS, everyone who attended was given a t-shirt. Programmes like this are good because it helped my community to know about the abuse of women and the right of women. During those days, everyone was talking about women abuse in the community. For some time my husband was ashamed to beat me. So if this kind of programmes can be one more often it may help to change the abusive tendencies of men”.*

**Participant Seven** said that, *“It seems like most women in my village they do not have knowledge about their rights. I have been fortunate that I reported a case at TVEP, got counselling and educated about my rights as women. I have also been able to attend TVEP campaigns and fun days. I got a t-shirt and got for HIV-AIDS. Therefore, if this kind of things continues in my village it will have an impact. My husband will change as time goes by”.*

**Participant Eight** said that, *“My community is a very traditional and we look up to Musanda (Chief) for guidance and he is the one who rules this area. People listen to Musanda and I am sure men can listen to him if he can denounce women abuse in the community because most men in this village think that it is a normal thing to beat a woman. Therefore, if chiefs continue to be involved in the workshop it may help. The last time TVEP workshops were in my village the Chief was there and he addressed us about women violence. My husband even said next time if TVEP comes back with the Chief he may attend”.*

**Participant Nine** had this to say, *“Women are scared to report their husband about abuse. I was also scared to report him. I admit it. After reporting, I realised that it is not as difficult as it seems and a protection order can be protective. The abuse lessened after, so the community needs to know about all these things to curb abuse”*.

**Participant Ten** stated that, *“Alcohol abuse must be discouraged to end abuse in marriages. If there was a way to reduce or even stop selling alcohol in my village, I would appreciate it. My husband would not be abusive to the way he is if there is no alcohol. So the community must come up with ways if possible to stop the abuse of alcohol”*.

**Participant Eleven** had this to say, *“I think we need more organisations like Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). It is far from where I stay. If it was in my village then I think my husband was not going to abuse me the way he does. They must also have programmes that target men and only talking about abuse in general. If they target man I think it can work better”*.

**Participant Twelve** stated that, *“I always tell my husband to come with me each time when there are workshops in the community with regards to topics like abuse but he doesn’t want. He gives me all different kinds of excuses. It pains me because the reason why I will be asking him, it will be so that he can know what experts say about abuse, maybe it may make him change his abusive tendencies”*.

### **Analysis of responses to the intervention measures against abused married female breadwinners.**

Abused married female breadwinners revealed intervention measures that may help to curb abuse in marriage. All abused married female breadwinners’ revealed that there is a need for more information dissemination about abuse and gender equality in the community. Participants revealed that villages are remote places and some people do not have access to media platforms such as Television. Abused married female breadwinner’s indicated that some men are not educated and hold strong beliefs about their culture. As a result, they do not see anything wrong with abusing female breadwinners. Participant One revealed that her husband is cultural uneducated men, who struggle to write proper English. Therefore, there is a need for more information dissemination by the government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) on abuse in the villages. Few NGO’s deals with abuse in their villages. Access and proximity to NGO’s may help to curb abuse of married female breadwinners in the community.

These organisations such as TVEP may help to educate and change men's attitude towards violence against female breadwinners. Participants revealed that there is a need to involve a man in programs that target abuse of women. Abused female married breadwinners believe that, if men can participate in women abuse problems, it would help to change their attitude. Participant Three revealed that she wished her husband to attend counselling sessions with her. This shows that there must be mandatory counselling and rehabilitation for abusive men. This may help to curb abuse of married female breadwinners

Participants highlighted that Musanda (Chiefs) must be more involved in abused married female breadwinners' initiatives because people listen to them in the community. Participant Eight revealed that if the Chief denounce women abuse in the community, men would listen. The reason is that most men in this village think that it is a normal thing to beat a woman. Therefore, if a Chief denounce it and lead by example, men will stop being abusive. Participant three suggested that there must be women Chiefs. This would help to propel the position of women in the community dominated by men. Therefore, there is need to promote gender equality. Giving women position of authority in the villages may help in promoting gender equality. Abused married female breadwinners suggested that there must be some unemployed community work for men that keeps them busy. The community work will help in solving unemployment problems in the community. It will keep men busy when their women would be at work rather than spending the whole day at home drinking beer. Participant Two revealed that her husband takes his frustration of not finding a job for me. If he was having a job, she thinks he would not be very abusive. Abused married female breadwinners revealed that there must be a measure that regulates alcohol abuse in the community. They revealed that most of the abuse occurs when their husbands were drunk. Therefore, regulating alcohol abuse in the community may go a long way in curbing abuse of married female breadwinners.

#### **4.4.1 Response of abused female breadwinners in focus group discussions**

This section addresses the responses of abused married female breadwinners' in three different focus group discussions. The focus group discussions were made up of four members per group. The purpose of conducting focus group discussions was to solicit more information and observe participants behaviour in their respective groups. Unlike, in individual interviews, Focus group discussions create a conducive and informal environment for participants to open up

about their experiences and circumstances. The focus group discussions allowed the researcher to explore topics that had appeared in the analysis of the interviews and to illuminate areas that seem yet to have a point of view without consensus. Thus, focus group discussions offered the researcher a perfect platform to explore themes that individual interviews revealed. It enabled assessment and observation of participants' behaviour in their respective groups. As a result, the upcoming questions enquired abuse married female breadwinners in three focus group discussions

#### **4.4.1.1 What are the types of abuse that you have experienced in your marriage?**

**Group One Discussion:** Participants revealed that they have suffered from the following kinds of abuse; verbal, physical, psychological, economic and sexual abuse at different points in time. Three of the four participants in the group exhibited injuries and scars that are still visible from physical assaults. All four participants revealed that most physical assaults took place when their husbands were drunk.

**Group Two Discussion:** Participants were emotional in pointing out the types of abuse that they face. Three of the four participants cried when they were narrating how their husbands beat and shout at them. All four participants revealed that they suffer from physical, verbal, economic, psychological and sexual abuse.

**Group Three Discussion:** The most dominating theme in-group three was sexual abuse. The researcher discovered that even though two participants' experienced sexual abuse they were not aware of it. Participant's responses reflected that they did not understand sexual abuse and the different context it exists in the society even amongst married couples. Besides sexual abuse, they all revealed that they suffer from physical, verbal, psychological and economic abuse especially when their husbands are drunk.

## **Analysis of responses in focus group discussions concerning the types of abuse that they face in their marriages.**

The focus group discussions revealed that abused married female breadwinners suffer from physical abuse, verbal abuse, psychological abuse and economic abuse. The participants in the three groups were emotional in narrating the different kinds of abuse that they suffer. In all the groups, participants revealed that most of the physical and verbal abuse occurred when their husbands were drunk. Furthermore, in-group three participants revealed that their husbands also sexually abuse them when they are drunk. Participant's responses in-group three reflected lack of not understanding of sexual abuse and the different context it occurs. For that reason, abused married female breadwinners' lacks knowledge about sexual abuse. As a result, sexual abuse was rampant in participants' marriages but some they do not know it because of lack of knowledge. Therefore, focus group discussions revealed that abused married female breadwinners suffer from physical, verbal, psychological and economic abuse

### **4.4.1.2 How often does your husband abuse you?**

**Group One Discussion:** Three of the four participants in the group revealed that their husbands abuse them when they are drunk. Abused married female breadwinners revealed that abuse usually occurs on weekends when their husbands are drunk. Participants cited alcohol abuse as the major determining factor of abuse frequency in their marriages. One out of the four participants indicated that abuse three to four times a month depending on the mood of the husband.

**Group Two Discussion:** Two out of the four abused married female breadwinners revealed that it is difficult to predict how often their husbands abuse them. The reason is that it depends on their mood, stress levels and the kind of conflicts that they have in their marriage. Two participants revealed that their husbands are abusive when drunk abused. They mentioned that abuse occurs at least two to three times a week.

**Group Three Discussion:** The focus group discussion revealed three out of four abused female breadwinners in the group experience abuse every weekend. They said abuse is intense especially the payday weekends when money will be available. When money is available, their

husband squanders it on alcohol. One participant said that her husband squanders the money on girls and alcohol. One out of four participants suffers three times a month. She said that her husband could even take more than a month without abusing her depending on his moods.

### **Analysis of responses in focus group discussions concerning the frequency of abuse in their marriages.**

The responses of participants in focus group discussions revealed that frequency of abuse was not static. A plethora of factors determines it. One of the major factor cited was alcohol abuse. Participants in the groups revealed that frequency of abuse was high when their husbands were drunk. Group three participants revealed that abuse was high on weekends. The reason being that their husbands usually drink on weekends. Other reasons that focus groups participants revealed are; mood, stress levels and different kind of conflicts that occurs in their marriages. Thus, it is difficult to give a fixed number of times abuse occurs in a week or month because it depends on the aforementioned factors. However, worth noting was that married female breadwinners abuse depends on the level of alcohol abuse, stress levels, moods and the different kinds of conflict that they have in their marriages.

#### **4.4.1.3 How can you describe the intensity or pattern of abuse ever since you got married?**

**Group One Discussion:** The focus group discussion revealed two out of four abused female breadwinners husbands started to be abusive before they were married. They revealed that they thought that their abusive behaviour would stop once they get married but it even got worse. The abusive behaviour intensified; hence, they reported them to the police and Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). They both took protection orders against their husband because they were afraid that they might kill them. However, two participants indicated that abuse started after a few years in the marriage. One participant said it started after they had their first-born. The other participant revealed that abuse started when her husband lost her job and he started drinking beer.

**Group Two Discussion:** Three participants revealed that their husband started to be abusive when they were still dating. They said that they saw the signs of abusive behaviour in their husband but they ignored it. The reason being that love blinded by love. Two participants even claimed that they regret marrying their abusive husband. They wish they had quit the relationship before they got married because they were seeing the signs. One out of four participants revealed that her husband started abusing her when they moved out of the parents' house. She said that in the early days her husband was not abusive because they were staying with his parents.

**Group Three Discussion:** Two out of four participants indicated that the abusive behaviour of their husband started after they were married for some years. They revealed that their husband started to be, moody and taking them for granted. It was something that they were not doing before. They felt like they were now taking them for granted. One participant indicated that his abusive behaviour started after some years of marriage because he was now having extramarital affairs. However, the participants' revealed that they managed to open domestic violence cases with Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). Both participants' revealed that intensity of abuse lessened after applying for a protection order. The other two participants revealed that their husband started abusing them from the early days of their marriage. Abused female breadwinners revealed that their husband started revealing their true abusive nature starting from the early days of their marriage. They said the intensity of the abuse has been constant since the early days of marriage.

### **Analysis of responses in focus group discussions concerning intensity or pattern of abuse ever since participants got married.**

The responses of the participants in focus group discussions revealed that the pattern of abuse took three forms. The first pattern of abuse started during dating and before marriage. Participants revealed that they saw the signs of abusive nature of their husbands but they married them thinking that they would change as years go by. The second pattern of abuse started in the early years of marriage and the third pattern of abuse started some years after the marriage. Participants revealed that their husband started to take them for granted after marrying them, which culminated in abuse. Other reasons cited for abuse in the early years of marriage and some years after are; loss of job, stress, moods, unfaithfulness, alcohol abuse

and having children. Although, the response of participants showed three different patterns of abuse, worth noting was that the severity of abuse in their marriages intensified. As a result, abused married female breadwinners reported their husbands to police and Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). Two participants in-group three revealed that they even took protection orders against their husband. Therefore, the pattern and intensification of abuse according to participants' responses shows that abuse starts as one incident. As time goes by, the abuse intensifies and become severe which leads to reporting. Therefore, abused married female breadwinners need to report abuse in the early stages before it intensifies and become severe so that they cannot expose themselves to the negative effects.

#### **4. 4.1.4. What are the causes or the reasons behind your husbands' abusive behaviour?**

**Group One Discussion:** In-group one discussions culture was dominating in the discussions. Participants revealed that their husbands are cultural and it contributes to their abusive tendencies. A participant pointed out that extended family members also contribute to their abusive behaviour because they influence them and encourage them to uphold abusive tendencies such as encouraging men to beat their women as a disciplinary measure. Three out of four women indicated that their husbands feel threatened by the fact that they are the breadwinners of the family. Three out of four women said that they feel proud that they are financially independent. They feel that if they were financially dependent on their husbands the severity of abuse would even have been worse. The age factor was revealed in-group the discussions. Three participants of the study revealed how their marriages were rosy in the early and how their husband turned to be abusive with passing time. Only one participant indicated that her husband was abusive even in the early years of their relationship and marriage but she thought that she will change as time goes by. Three participants out of four said that the use of social network might lead to abuse. However, one participant said that she is not on a social network and it is complicated for her to use. Two out of four participants revealed that their husbands grew up witnessing violence and they believe it rubbed upon them. All the participants concurred they must protect their children in their marriages from witnessing their husband's behaviour because it may also affect them when they grow up. All four participants in the group opined that unfaithfulness in marriage sowed the seeds of conflicts and abuse in marriage. One participant said that their husband was unfaithful and it led to many conflicts in their marriage.

**Group Two Discussion:** Abused married female breadwinners pointed out that culture influences their husband to abuse them. They revealed that it is very hard for their husbands to do away with the cultural practices since they have been born and bred in it. However, participants also note that the times have changed and cultural practices should change. Two participants out of four were not sure whether their husbands have lack of self-confidence or not due to the reason that they are the family breadwinners. However, the other two participants highlighted that their husbands always feel challenged and threatened by the fact that they are the breadwinners of the family. Three out of four participants narrated how their husbands have changed with time ever since they have been married and indicated that abuse became severe in their marriages as years go by. One participant said that old age has led to more abuse that emanates from intimacy issues that have to do with reaching menopause. All the four participants of the study revealed that the use of social network in marriage contributes to abuse by their husbands. Two participants said that they do not have access to their husbands' phones because if they touch it their husbands shout or beat them.

Two out of four participants indicated that their husbands grew up in families where physical assaults and verbal abuse was rampant. One participant indicated that even though her husband said he never witnessed violence in childhood, she believes that witnessing violence in childhood may lead abusive behaviour in future. All four participants pointed out that infidelity leads to many problems in marriage including abuse. Two participants out of four participants revealed that their husbands are unfaithful.

**Group Three Discussion:** Participants revealed in-group discussions that culture is one of the root cause of abuse in their marriages. All four participants in the group revealed that culture influences their husbands to abuse them. Participants revealed that the way that their husbands shout and complain indicates that they feel threatened because they are not working and not providing much to the upkeep of the family. All four participants revealed that men take advantage of the age or the number of years that they have spent in the marriage. The participants revealed that the more years they spent in the marriage it is the more their husbands become abusive. All the four participants of the study concurred that the use of social network in marriage contributes to abuse by their husbands. They said that desisting from social network might prevent some of the abuse that occurs in marriage. One participant out of four indicated that they husbands revealed that they witnessed abuse when they grew up. The other three participants concurred that witnessing violence when one is a child leads to abusive behaviour. Participants in the group three highlighted that the issue of extra-marital affairs as a

contributory factor to abuse in their marriages. One participant in the group revealed that her husband was involved in extra-marital affairs.

### **Analysis of responses in focus group discussions regarding the causes behind the abusive behaviour of married female breadwinners' husbands.**

The participant's inputs in focus group discussions revealed a plethora of causes or the reasons behind married female breadwinners' abuse. Culture and alcohol were the prominent causes of abuse of married female breadwinners. All participants in the group discussions revealed that the traditional Venda culture influences their husbands to be abusive. However, group two participants voiced times have changed. Therefore, promotion of gender equality helps to do away with cultural practices that influence abuse of female breadwinners. Participants in the focus group discussion revealed that their husbands are abusive when they are drunk. The responses of participants in focus group discussions revealed that men feel challenged and threatened by the fact that their wives are breadwinners of the family. Other reasons cited as the causes of abuse involves the following; growing up witnessing violence, age, social network and infidelity.

#### **4.4.1.5 What are the consequences of abuse in your marriage?**

**Group One Discussion:** All four participants in the group indicated that they have all been injured at one point in time by their husbands. All four participants in the group revealed that they suffer from post-traumatic stress and depression. One participant carried when she was narrating how she lost weight because of stress and bad eating habits that emanated from abuse by the husband. Two participants revealed that sometimes they drink alcohol to cope up with the post-traumatic stress that they face. All four participants in the group stated that abuse leads to gynaecological problems. One participant out of the group narrated that his husband infected him with a Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STI), which caused severe bleeding. One participant revealed that she suffered a miscarriage because of stress and physical assaults by her husband. Two participants out of four revealed that they have contemplated about

committing suicide whilst the remaining two participants said that they could never think of committing suicide because they do not want to die and leave their children without a mother.

**Group Two Discussion:** Participant in the group take turns to show some injuries that their husbands inflicted on their body. They were emotional when they were showing each other's injuries on their bodies. The participants revealed that they suffer from post-traumatic stress and depression. Two participants out of four were emotional and they even shed tears when they were explaining how depressed they are because of abusive behaviour of their husbands. Abused married female breadwinners revealed that physical assaults lead to gynaecological problems. One participant indicated that she had suffered a miscarriage because of physical assault by her husband. Three out of four participants in the group said that at one point in time they thought of committing suicide because they could not bear their husbands' abusive behaviour anymore.

**Group Three Discussion:** Participants in the group said that their husband has injured them all. One participant narrated her ordeal when she twisted her ankle and spent one-month using clutches. All four participants in the group revealed that they suffer from post-traumatic stress and depression because of their husbands' abusive behaviour. In the third group, all four participants indicated that their husbands expose them to the risk of gynaecological problems and STI's, HIV/AIDS given the fact that their husbands are unfaithful. One participant revealed that even though her husband is unfaithful he refuses to use a condom. This predisposes her to the risk of STI's. Two out of four participants indicated that they value their life. Despite the abuse they suffer, they said that they could never contemplate committing suicide. However, the remaining two said that living with an abusive husband it is hard to the extent that sometimes they think of committing suicide.

### **Analysis of responses in focus group discussions regarding the consequences of abuse of married female breadwinners.**

The response of participants in the three focus group discussions revealed that there are many consequences associated with abuse of married female breadwinners. All participants of the study revealed that physical assault by their husbands leads to injuries. Participants took turns to show some injuries sustained after battering by their husbands. In the focus group

discussions, participants revealed that they suffer from post-traumatic stress. The post-traumatic stress leads to depression, lack of sleep, eating disorders and some participants even contemplate suicide. In order to cope with the depression, two participants revealed that they drink alcohol. This shows that alcohol abuse is both a cause of abuse and a consequence of abuse because the abused married female breadwinners drink it to cope with abuse. Participants revealed that their husband predisposes them to the risk of gynaecological problems and STI's, HIV/AIDS given the fact that some of their husbands are unfaithful and they do not want to use protection. Other causes of abuse cited in focus group discussions involve the following; gynaecological problems, social isolation and financial problems.

#### **4.4.1.6 What are the challenges that you face in your abusive marriage?**

**Group One Discussion:** Abused married female breadwinners indicated that their main challenge in the marriage is balancing between career and domestic chores. Three out of four participants in the group indicated that they do all the household chores and their husbands do not help them at all. Only one participant indicated that her husband helps her with household chores when she is sick or once in a while.

**Group Two Discussion:** Participants in the group indicated that their husbands do not help them with household chores at all. One participant indicated that her husband does not even want her to use the services of a domestic worker because he expects her to do everything because he paid lobola for her.

**Group Three Discussion:** All participants in the study indicated that their husbands do not help them with cooking and cleaning the house and they find it difficult to balance between work and household chores.

#### **Analysis of responses in focus group discussions regarding challenges that abused married female breadwinners faces in their marriage.**

The response of participants in the three focus group discussions revealed that abused married female breadwinners' major challenge was to balance between work and domestic chores. In the focus group discussions, only one participant revealed that sometimes her husband helps

her with doing domestic chores. This shows that going to work and doing household chores overwhelms abused married female breadwinners. Abused married female breadwinners revealed that it was not easy for them and their husband need to help them in doing domestic chores.

#### **4.4.1.7 What are the circumstances that make you stay in your abusive marriages?**

**Group One Discussion:** All four participants in the group indicated that their families are cultural so it is hard for them to divorce them because of the cultural implications that come with being married. Three out of four participants in the group said that desire to take care of their children influences than to stay in their abusive marriages. However, one participant said that her children are all grown up and having their own families so, she does not stick in her marriage because of desire to take care of children but for other reasons like social needs. Three participants out of four said that getting married has a social status that's related to it that they would not want to lose, whilst one participant said that she doesn't stay in the marriage because of social status because her husband is already an embarrassment in the community because he is a drunkard. Social needs theme generated many interesting discussions from participants. Three participants indicated that their husbands emotionally and sexually satisfy them that they would not want to break up and be with any other man. One participant indicated that sexual satisfaction is no longer a big factor because she has reached menopause and no longer that much sexually active. Three out of four participants indicated that they do not want to lose half of the property that they have acquired with their husbands. Only one participant said that she does not care much about property because they do not have a lot of property and they do not even have a house but they rent. Three out of four participants indicated that they stay in abusive marriages because of their religious beliefs. However, one participant indicated that she is a traditionalist and does not believe in religion, so she stays in the marriage for some other reasons like social needs. Three out of four participants indicated that their husband always tries to apologise and do nice things to them after each time that they abuse them and because of that, it makes them forgive them. Only one participant said that her husband is unapologetic about his abusive behaviour.

**Group Two Discussion:** All four participants indicated that they come from traditional family backgrounds who believe in strong cultural bonds of families, which makes it hard for them to

leave their husband despite the abuse that they subject them to. All four participants in the group revealed that one of the reasons they stay in the abusive marriage is a desire to take care of their children. One participant indicated that she did not want to fight custody battles with the husband so it is best not to divorce him. All four participants pointed out that they have a social pride of being married to their spouse that they would not want to lose in the event of divorce. One participant said that society perceives divorcee as a failure and the people in the community call women who break up with their husband names. Three out of four indicated that they love their husband and that they do not want to end their marriages. However, one participant indicated that she has stopped loving the husband because of his abusive behaviour but she is staying in the marriage for some other reasons like culture and desire to take care of her children.

Two out of four participants revealed that property is a major worry when they think of divorcing their husbands, so they would rather stay with their abusive husband to avoid losing some of their property. The other two participants said that they do not care much about material stuff but they stick in their marriages for some other reasons like the desire to take care of children. All four participants indicated that religion influences them to stay in abusive marriages. One participant said that she is a chairlady at church so she does not want to embarrass herself and go against church beliefs by divorcing her husband. Participants in the group indicated that their husbands tend to be very charming and loving to abused female breadwinners that even sometimes when they try to leave them they end up staying in the marriage.

**Group Three Discussion:** Two out of four participants indicated that they value their life more than they can ever contemplate about suicide despite being abused whilst the remaining two said that living with an abusive husband it is hard to the extent that sometimes they think of committing suicide. Three out of four participants revealed that their priorities having a complete family with their children and husband than to be further apart. One participant said that divorce affects the children's well-being, school performance and upbringing so it is better to stick to their marriages for stability. Participants revealed that they already feel attached to their husbands and relatives, for example, using their husband's surnames. They would not want to lose their husbands surname because of the pride and status that comes with it. Participants in the group indicated that despite abuse by their husbands, they truly love them.

Therefore, because of that love that they have for them, they feel that it is better for them to stick in their abusive marriages and work things out than breaking up with them. Two out of four

participants in the group indicated that since they are the breadwinners in their marriages they stand to lose more in the event of a divorce so it is better to stick in their marriages. The other two participants indicated that they do not have a lot of property so they are not afraid of losing any property. All four participants in the study indicated that they believe in religion and their pastors do not permit them to break up with their husbands. Three out of four participants indicated that sometimes their husbands try to apologise and make up for abusing them and they always promise to change. Only one participant indicated that his husband does not show remorse at all for his abusive behaviour.

### **Analysis of responses in focus group discussions regarding the circumstances that make abused married female breadwinners to stick to their marriages.**

In focus group discussions, married female breadwinners revealed a plethora of circumstances that makes them stick to abusive marriages. Chief amongst them was the influence of culture. All participants in the three groups revealed that they come from traditional patriarchal families who believe in cultural practices such as payment of lobola. For this reason, families expect abused married female breadwinners to stick to their marriage despite the abuse. Culture does not permit married breadwinners to divorce their husbands. Two participants in the focus group discussions revealed that property is a major worry when they think of divorcing their husbands. For that reason, they would rather stay with their abusive husband to avoid losing some of their property. Furthermore, the desire to take care of their children makes abused married female to stick to their marriages. The focus group discussions revealed that abused married female breadwinners stick to their marriages because of social status and social needs. Participants revealed that they love their husband despite their abusive tendencies. They feel attached and a sense of belonging which they would not want to lose in the event of divorcing. Participants' revealed religion influences them to stick to their marriages. Their religious beliefs and pastors from their churches do not permit them to divorce their wives but to solve their marital problems through prayer.

#### 4.4.4.8 What are your coping mechanisms or how do you cope up with living an abusive husband?

**Group One Discussion:** Three out of four participants indicated that their husbands are scared of the police. They do not want their wives to report them to the police or TVEP. However, one participant in the group said that her husband is not scared police because he has connections with people in high places who will release him. Two out of four participants indicated they have taken protection orders against their husbands and the incidence of abuse lessened after. Two out of the four participants indicated that they have never take a protection order against their husbands. Three participants out of four said that at some point in their marriage they have run away from their marital home to seek refuge because of their abusive husbands' behaviours. Only one participant indicated that she has never run away from home. Only one participant out of four participants indicated that she drinks alcohol as a way of coping with abusive behaviour of her husband. The other three participants have never drunk alcohol. All four out of four participants revealed that counselling helps them to cope up with the abusive behaviours of their husbands. Three out of four participants revealed that they seek religious intervention from God and their pastors to cope up with abusive behaviour of their husbands. One participant indicated that she is a traditionalist who does not seek religious intervention. Three out of four participants indicated that they confide in their friends, family about abuse and sometimes their neighbours would intervene when being physically assaulted by their husbands. One of the participants said that where she stays it's isolated; hence, there are no nearby neighbours or people to socialise with them. Three out of four participants indicate that they devise problem-solving techniques to deal with their husband's behaviour such as reflecting on their actions or writing down their behaviours in a diary, which will help to prevent future conflicts.

**Group Two Discussion:** Participants in the group indicated that their husbands are afraid of police intervention because they are afraid of going to jail. Three out of four participants have indicated that they took protection orders against their husband. The reason being fear of death in the hands of their hand's husbands. Only one participant revealed that she did not take a protection order against her husband. Two participants out of four participants revealed that they have temporarily run away from their abusive husbands, On the other hand, two participants indicated that they have never run away from home because they are even scared that it would make the abuse worse. Two out of four participants indicated that they drink alcohol as a way of coping with abusive behaviour of their husbands. However, the remaining

participants do not drink alcohol as a coping strategy. All participants in the study revealed that they have been attending counselling sessions and it has really helped them to cope with abusive behaviours of their husbands.

In-group two discussions, all four abused married female breadwinners revealed that they engage themselves in stokvel to make extra money to cope with economic abuse by their husbands. Two participants revealed they also engage in gardening work to make extra money from selling vegetables. However, two participants reveal that they do not have a space to do gardening in their yard. All four participants of the study revealed that they believe in religious intervention and that they always pray for their husbands to stop their abusive behaviours. Two out of four participants revealed that they have a good social support of the family; friends and neighbours who help them cope up with the effects of their abusive husband. The other two participants indicated that their families are supportive and they always tell them that they must solve their own marital problems. Three of the four participants revealed that they are still positive about their marriages and they think that their husbands may change. One participant indicated that she has lost hope in the belief that their husband will change but she has accepted he is abusive.

**Group Three Discussion:** All participants in the study indicated that their being reported to the police scares their husbands a lot, so sometimes it makes them stop beating them. All participants in the study indicated that they took protection orders against their husband to be safe from the abusive behaviour of their husbands. All participants in the study indicated that they have run away from home to seek refuge because the abuse by their husbands in their marital homes had become too much to bear. All four participants in the group said that they have never drunk alcohol because they do not see it as a positive way of coping with abusive tendencies of their husbands. All participants of the study narrated how counselling has assisted them in coping with their plight. One participant said that she had lost weight before counselling but gained weight after going for counselling sessions.

The religious intervention was one of the coping mechanisms that abused female breadwinners use. They said that they put all their problems before God to solve them. All four participants of the study indicated that they have a good supportive system of family, friends and neighbours in their community. Three participants of the group indicated that they engage in recreational activities such as singing and playing stokvel to keep themselves busy and cope up with stress. Three out of four participants in the group revealed that they make use of social network to cope

up with stress and socialise with their family, friends and neighbours. All four participants of the group revealed that they engage in peaceful protest against their husband's abusive tendencies like being moody or ignoring them. Three out of the four participants indicated that sometimes they hit back in defence when their husbands will be physically assaulting them.

### **Analysis of responses in focus group discussions regarding the circumstances**

The focus group discussions revealed that abused married female breadwinners devise a plethora of coping mechanisms, which enables them to cope with their plight. The responses reveal that abused married female breadwinners cope with abuse by reporting to police and taking protection orders against their husbands. As a result, it reduces the intensity of abuse and protects female breadwinners from further abuse. Abused married female breadwinners cope with abuse through counselling at the Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). The counselling helps them to cope with post-traumatic stress that they suffer. The focus group discussions revealed that participants seek religious intervention to cope with abuse. Their pastors pray for them and give them counselling to cope with abusive behaviour of their husbands. Other coping mechanisms cited by abused married female breadwinners in focus group discussions comprises the following; seeking refuge, alcohol abuse and dependence, problem solving strategies, social support, supplement income, recreational activities and finance generating schemes. Therefore, abused married female breadwinners makes use of the aforementioned coping strategies to cope with their plight.

#### **4.4.4.9 What do you think are the intervention strategies to curb abuse in abused female breadwinners' marriages?**

**Group One Discussion:** Participants in the group revealed that men must also be involved in domestic violence initiatives because it seems it is only women who take part in programmes against women abuse in the community. All four participants revealed that they were scared to report abuse to TVEP or the police beforehand. Abused married female breadwinners revealed that people lack the knowledge about abuse in their villages. All four participants in the group indicated that they did not have full knowledge before they reported abuse to the police and

Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). They said that women and men in the villages need to be taught more about abuse.

**Group 2 Discussion:** Two participants out of four revealed that they are scared to open police case against their husband because they think that the law will not protect them and that they will not be arrested. They said that even after getting protection orders against their husband they still feel not fully protected by the law. Abused married breadwinners revealed that there is a need for more Non-governmental Organisation such as Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) that teaches about abuse. They said that men will be scared and ashamed if the Non-governmental Organisation were situated in the village. Abused female breadwinners revealed that men feel superior in their communities than women. They revealed that there is need to empower women and give them leadership positions in the community. One participant suggested that women must be given chances to be Chiefs it may be a testimony that women can also do what man can do. Participants outlined that Chiefs also play an important role against in the fight against breadwinners' abuse. Two participants revealed that the presence of a Chief on one of TVEP's campaign against abuse had an impact on their husband. Their husband realised that gravity of abuse when the Chief denounced abuse at the campaign.

**Group 3 Discussion:** All four of the participants in the group revealed that there is a lack of information in their villages concerning the rights of woman. Participants pointed out the need for more NGO's that deals with abuse for more information dissemination. Abused female breadwinners revealed that there is a need for compulsory counselling of man. All four participants revealed that their husbands did not take them seriously when they came back from counselling at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme. Abused married female breadwinners revealed that if their abusive husbands are coerced to attend counselling sessions they will know how it is affecting them and the gravity of their abuse. They said that it is one of the ways that can make them take responsibility for their abusive behaviour and take some positive step to change their behaviour. Abused married female breadwinners also said that there is a need for some community employs a man and keep them busy. Three participants revealed that they believe that lack of unemployment makes their husband take their frustrations and stress on them. Abused married female breadwinners said that if there are some jobs in their community it will keep a man busy and also stop them from drinking alcohol. All participants revealed that their husband abuse alcohol. They revealed that their husband beat them when their drunk. Abused married female breadwinners suggested that there must be a way of regulating the sale of alcohol in the village to stop them from drinking. They pointed out

that regulating alcohol sale may go a long way in preventing abuse of married female breadwinners.

#### **Analysis of responses in focus group discussions concerning intervention measures against abuse of married female breadwinners**

In focus group discussions, participants suggested a plethora of intervention measure that may help to curb abuse of married female breadwinners. The responses in focus group discussions revealed that there is a need to involve men in the fight against abuse. Participants revealed that they wish if their abusive husbands can be counselled and in woman programs against abuse. Abused married female breadwinners revealed that there is a need for more organisations in the communities and information dissemination about abuse. The reason is that women in the villages lack knowledge about abuse and their rights. Other intervention measures suggested by abused married female breadwinners in focus group discussions involves the following; application of women abuse laws and policies , gender equality and use of traditional, social support and change of social attitudes and perceptions.

#### **4.5.1 Response of Key informants concerning abuse of married female breadwinners**

This section addresses the responses of key informants of the study. The key informants comprise of three managers from Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). Their position in TVEP management team are; Manager of Trauma Centres, HIV/AIDS project manager and Empowerment Manager. They are all female managers. The purpose of choosing these three female managers was to gather in-depth information about abuse married female breadwinners from a professional point of view since it is their speciality at TVEP. Key informants' inputs were helpful because all three female managers were also breadwinners in their families. As a result, the upcoming questions probed three Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) female managers about abuse of married female breadwinners.

#### 4.5.1.1. How do you help abused married female breadwinners or what are the processes involved when they report abuse to you trauma centres?

**Key Informant One** said that *“The process is a chain of events. The abused married breadwinners can go to the police station or maybe walk to the police to report. We are always on the radio talking about abuse, so some abused woman call the police from their villages and they take them to our trauma centre. We are in protocol with the police. Any domestic violence case Police do not entertain but they just ferry the victim to our trauma centres. In the trauma centres at Tshilidzini and Donald Frazer hospital, the abused married female breadwinners are welcome by our Victim Advocate. The Victim Advocate became the friend of the abused married female breadwinners until finalisation of the case. The Victim Advocates also accompanies the victims to the court to give them moral support. We call it the buddy system.*

*So, the Victim Advocate will open a register and fill it. After that, the Victim Advocate will ascertain what the problem of the abused married female breadwinners is and what made them visit our trauma centre. Then the client will explain everything. If it is a domestic violence issue, the victim advocate will take the Domestic Violence Profile and take all the details. In a domestic violence case, the law says the victims’ rights are paramount. Therefore, the Victim advocates what the victim really wants us to do. We ask them whether they want the abusive man to be arrested. We ask whether they want to open a criminal case. There are those domestic violence cases where the abuser, is violent or he has a gun and wants to kill the victim. That is when the abused married female breadwinners can stay at the trauma centre until the abusive husband is arrested or we can get another alternative accommodation for the abused married female breadwinners. If the abused married female breadwinners want us to open a criminal case, we call the police and they come and open a docket. We then tell the police that the abusive husband is dangerous or he has a gun. Then they will go and arrest him. After arresting the abuser, the police would communicate with the trauma centre and then the victim can go home because it would be safe. Thereafter, the victim and the abusive husband will meet in court. Then the abusive husband is tried in court and sent to the prison. Finally, the abused female breadwinners will be free. When we open a criminal case, the docket should go to court within forty-eight hours or two days because it will urgent.*

*If the abused married female breadwinner opts for a protection order, the Victim Advocate will write her a referral letter to the Thohoyandou Magistrate Office Number ninety-seven. It is a protection order office. That is the office for administration of protection orders. That is where*

*she is given a protection order. The abusive husband will be given a copy to sign and the abused woman will also be given a copy to sign. If the husband violates the protection order, he is then arrested. The husband will be arrested for contravening the terms of the protection order. So that is when a criminal case is instituted. The husband will go for a trial in court. If he is arrested it can be three to five years depending on the severity of abuse. Some cases are suspended depending on the severity of the case and they can serve whilst at home. The magistrate might say I am giving the abusive husband three years, wholly suspended for five years. It means that the husband might serve whilst at home.*

*However, it will be on condition that they don't have to abuse the female breadwinner in five years. If the husband abuses her within five years, he will be sent to prison at Matatshe. The reason being that they would have revoked the terms of the sections. Committing the same offence is a problem. Previous conviction counts in court. Usually, for domestic violence eighty –five percent of the cases get protection orders. Then we will get a protection order report and then we right in the profile. But if the abuse is severe we will continue to monitor the case. In each and every court in Vhembe District, we have a court monitor. The court monitor will be checking for any malpractices in court. If there are malpractices we write a report that the case was not handled well. We are friends of the court. Therefore, that is the that we do at Thohoyandou Victim empowerment programme (TVEP) when an abused married female breadwinner reports a case”*

**Key informant Two** had this to say, *“When abused married female breadwinners come to our trauma centres they are first met by a Victim Advocate. The Victim Advocate will help them throughout the process. The Victim advocate will open a Domestic Violence Profile that captures all the information the abused married breadwinner. They after they would ask what the abuse married breadwinners would want. They have many options to choose. They can open a criminal case, apply for a protection order or get medication or counselling services. There also cases whereby victims do not want to open cases because of various reasons. Like now I have given Mannea my assistant to cases whereby the victim said that I don't want to open a case. The first case the victim was saying she cannot open a case against her husband because he is the father of her kids. The second case victim was raped. Therefore, she said she doesn't want people to know about it but want medical attention and counselling services. On sexual abuse cases, if it's a child under the age of sixteen years, the child does not have the power to say no in terms of the law. The Victim Advocate should make sure that a case is opened.*

*Thereafter, the Victim Advocate will call for a Doctors medical attention. The doctors will examine the raped victims and take samples for DNA testing. We are in protocol with the hospital. If a rape case comes to our trauma centre the Doctor must attend to the rape victim within thirty minutes. If thirty minutes elapse without a Doctor attending to a victim we take it to a higher authority. That is why we have best services in the country. So the victims can go to see our trauma counsellor. If it is very severe they see a psychologist. So we have all specialist in the same room. Beforehand, it used to be a long process but now we do it under one roof. .We say all the services are under one roof at our trauma centres at Tshilidzini and Donald Fraser hospital. All the services are under one roof because psychological services are there, medical services are there, social work services are there, counselling services are there, and legal services are there. So once the victim comes to our trauma centre we do everything. In a rape case, the victim will be given Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent HIV/AIDS.*

*Thereafter, if it is during the day we give the victim transport money to go home. If it is during the night the police will accompany the victim home. Remember our trauma centres are open for 24hours a day. Some they can stay overnight at our trauma centres because we also provide accommodation to our clients. So, in the end, it depends on the choice of the abused female breadwinner. After a period of three days, our Victim Advocate will visit the victim to administer and check if the victim is adhering to the Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) medication. The second home visit will be after 28 days. So we do two home visits”.*

**Key Informant Three** had this to say, *“There are two ways, the first one either abused married women came straight to our trauma at Tshilidzini or Donald Frazer Hospital. The second way is that abused women came with the police to our trauma centres. We harmoniously work with the police. The protocol is that when police are called by a woman who is abused, they do not take her to the police station. They come with the abused woman at our trauma centre. Our trauma centres are a one way stop with everything and all the professionals that deals with abuse. We have our own in-house trauma counsellor and Victim advocate. We also work with Tshilidzini and Donald Fraser hospitals Social workers, psychologist, nurses and doctors especially in the case of those women who have been raped. So when an abused woman come with the police, she is received by our Victim Advocate at the trauma centre. The Victim advocate will fill the register and the Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) Client intake form. The TVEP client intake form consists of the following sections, demographic information, services and referrals, network contacts, a summary of incident and plan of action. After filing the form, we ask the abused women on the plan of action we should take. If she wants to open a criminal*

*case we call the police to come and open a docket. If the abused woman wants to apply for a protection order we wrote them a reference later for a protection order. If they want medical attention and counselling we help them with that. That is how we help abused married female breadwinners at our trauma centres at Tshilidzini and Donald Fraser hospital”*

### **Analysis of Key Informants inputs with regards to processes they take to help abused married female breadwinners**

The key informants narrated the processes they take to help abused married female breadwinners at Tshilidzini and Donald Frazer Hospital. The Key informants revealed that Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) work closely with the police, hospitals professionals, the judges and the correctional services. The abused married female breadwinners might go straight to the trauma centre to get the services. However, the certain protocol is taken when the abused married female breadwinners first report the case to the Police. The Police would ferry the abused female breadwinner to TVEP’s trauma centres at Tshilidzini and Donald Frazer Hospital. At the trauma centre, the abused married female breadwinners will be welcomed by a Victim Advocate. The Victim Advocate would work on the abused female breadwinners’ case until its finalisation. The Victim Advocates would also accompany the abused female breadwinner to the court to give moral support and also do some home visits. The purpose of the home visits is to monitor the situation or whether there are any changes in the abusive behaviour of the husband. In the case of a rape case of a married female breadwinner, the Victim Advocate would do three home visits. The home visits would be to administer and check adherence to Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) medication after three days, twenty-eight days and three months.

At the trauma centre, the Victim Advocate opens a TVEP Domestic Violence Profile which captures the following details; demographic information, services and referrals, network contacts, a summary of incident and plan of action. Thereafter, the Victim Advocate would ascertain the problem of the abused married female breadwinners and help her. The choice of the abused female breadwinners is of paramount importance. They have many options to choose. They can choose to open a criminal case, apply for a protection order or get medication or counselling services. If the abused married female breadwinner chose to open a criminal case, the Victim Advocate would call the police to come and open a docket. Police would make

an arrest and the docket should go to court within forty-eight since it's an urgent matter. Thereafter, the abusive husband would go to court and be tried by the Magistrate.

The Key informant One revealed that, if an abused female breadwinner chose to apply for a protection order, the Victim Advocate would give them a reference letter to the Thohoyandou Magistrate Office Number ninety-seven. Contravention of the protection order by the husband of abused married female breadwinners would lead to the arrest of the husband. Thereafter, the husband would be tried in court by the judge. The key informant revealed that it depends on the severity of the abuse. The abusive husband may be sentenced to three to five years at Matatshe Prison. The magistrate might also give the abusive husband three years, wholly suspended for five years. It means that the husband might serve whilst at home on condition that they don't abuse the married female breadwinners within five years. Key Informant One revealed that eighty-five percent of married female breadwinners opt to apply for protection orders than to a criminal case. However, some abused married female breadwinners opt for medical attention and counselling services only. Key informant two revealed some abused married female breadwinners would not want to open cases against their husband. Other abuse married female breadwinners would not want to open cases because they would not want people to know about because of the nature of abuse especially those ones that are sexually assaulted. As a result, they end up getting medical assistance and counselling services. Therefore, TVEP respects the choices of abused female breadwinners and advocates for the rights of the abused married female so that justice can be served to them.

#### **4.5.1.2. What are the types of abuse reported by female married breadwinners at your trauma centres?**

**Key Informant One** said that, *"We receive over hundred and fifty cases of abuse per month and many cases go unreported. The most common type of abuse that our client's report is physical and verbal abuse. Many of the women come here bleeding from cuts sustained during assaults by their husbands. In addition, women report other forms of abuse such as being denied money by their husband, emotional, psychological abuse and sexual abuse especially the fact that most married men do not want to use a condom"*.

**Key Informant Two** had this to say, *"We deal with all different types of abuse such as physical, psychological, verbal, emotional, economic and sexual abuse at this organisation. It is very easy*

*to rush to point out physical and verbal abuse as the most common type but personally, I believe that psychological abuse is more dangerous than all the other types of abuse. The experience I have had here, working with women tells me that men psychologically abuse women to the extent that they lose all their confidence and make them feel useless. That is very dangerous”.*

**Key Informant Three** stated that, *“Female breadwinners suffers from all different kinds of abuse mostly physical, verbal, psychological, emotional, sexual and economic abuse. One kind of abuse that is unique to female breadwinners is economic abuse. You find out that in most situations their husbands are not working and they abuse female breadwinner’s salaries on things like alcohol and girlfriends”.*

#### **Analysis of Key informants inputs concerning types of abuse reported by abused married female breadwinners**

The Key informant interviews revealed that at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) trauma centres they receive over hundred and fifty cases of abused married female breadwinners. Key informant one stated many cases goes unreported. All the three Key informants revealed that abused married female breadwinners experience the following types of abuse; physical, psychological, verbal, economic and sexual abuse. The key informants revealed that the most common type of abuse reported by abused married female breadwinners is verbal and physical abuse. However, Key informant two pointed out that the most dangerous type of abuse it is psychological abuse because it makes abused female breadwinners to feel worthless.

##### **4.5.1.3. What do you think are the causes or the reasons behind the abuse of female breadwinners by their husbands?**

**Key Informant One** said that, *“Although we live in a democratic and modern society, the fact of the matter is that we are in Vhembe District. If you look around you can see that this district is largely rural and it is not a big town like Johannesburg. The point that I am trying to drive home is that, the people here in Venda believe in culture. Cultural aspects of lobola payment fuels abuse of women in the society. In our culture, it’s like a woman is an object and she has no say.*

*Whether she works, she is a principal or teacher or something it's nothing to the man. She is seen as an object. So we must break that wall of culture by opening up about abuse. Culture abuses and even the set up in the family through socialisation. The way a boy and a girl is socialised is different that is where the problem is. All the domestic chores like cooking and cleaning a girl are supposed to do them. The only job for a boy is to wash the father's car and to move around with him. One of the contributing factors is that men feel threatened and less confident when their wives are breadwinners. This is far much worse if the husband is not working or if he is, earning less money compared to the wife.*

*Sometimes men end up beating their wives as a way of showing that even though they may not provide food for the family they are still the man of the house. Another cause of abuse is that men have a tendency of taking for granted their spouses because they have married them or because they have spent many years with them. These days one of the causes of abuse, divorce and even murdering of spouses is because of the social network. A simple text message may lead to violence in the family. It is unfortunate that sometimes it will even be a wrong text or stray message. Women die from physical attacks because of the social network. Therefore, indeed, the social network has led to the increase of abuse of women by men. As they say that an apple does not fall away from the tree, so is abuse. If a child grows up witnessing his father abusing his mother, there are changes that he may be abusive also. We have so many cases here whereby the husband batters a woman after finding out about the husband's girlfriend. Alcohol abuse also leads to physical and verbal attacks of abused female breadwinners. On weekends, we receive many cases of abuse because the husband will be drunk. Some men when they drink alcohol become animals that beat their wives, only to regret in the morning when they are sober”.*

**Key Informant Two** said that, *“Cultural practices leads to women's battering. A good example is payment of lobola by men, of course, looking at it from a positive point of view it is a good thing in that it brings to families together and it is a way of appreciating women. However, the problem is that man take it the other way round. Just because men paid money and cattle results in treating their wives like personal property, which is not fair at all. Therefore, it is high time that people must look closely at practices like that. Men must stop abusing their traditional privileged position. Just because they pay lobola, it does not give them the right to beat their wives. Therefore, culture influence abuse of women by men, or let me say men use culture as an excuse to beat women. Another reason that leads to abuse of female breadwinners is that*

*men seem to struggle in a situation whereby the wife is working or earning more than them, because it makes them feel like they are failures in life.*

*To make up for those inferiority feelings, they end up beating their women as a way of showing their masculinity. Abusive men are very good at hiding their abusive tendencies. They reveal their abusive behaviour when comfortable in the marriages. The new age of social network has brought good communication and it has brought many conflicts and abuse in marriages. Abusive behaviour is like a cycle in families. If ones' parents are abusive, chances are high that the children can become abusive also when they grow up. The reason being that children imitate and learn from what happens to them and parents are their immediate role models. They can grow up thinking that abuse it is normal to do family. Cheating in all forms is wrong to be it in relationships or marriage. Men are generally the major culprits of unfaithfulness but at the same time, women are also cheating these days. There are many cases where a husband kills women for cheating. So, infidelity, whether it's the man or women, is wrong and leads it contributes to abuse".*

**Key Informant Three** had this to say, *"I love my culture, but as much as I love it there a lot of things that I do not agree with especially aspects that has to do with one. I think the root cause of abuse it is patriarchy. Promotion of patriarchy it is through culture. Many African traditional cultures see a woman as inferior to men. This is unfair because it makes men to mistreat women. Lack of self-esteem leads to female breadwinner's abuse. We have had many cases whereby husbands beat their wives because they think that they may be having affairs with their bosses at work. When a wife is a breadwinner, some men feel powerless and threatened. Age or the number of years spent in marriage may contribute to true love or abuse in marriage. In some couples, it creates a strong bond whilst in other couples; as time goes by men start to take their wives for granted. The use of phones and social networks fuels abuse. I have dealt with cases whereby couples fight over phones. It is both sides. Sometimes men beat their wives if they touch or they can beat a woman for using. Exposures of children to violence may lead to abuse when they become adults. You may find out that most of these abusive men their fathers were also abusive. The issue of extra-marital affairs and small house leads to a lot of pain and abuse to female breadwinners in marriage".*

## **Analysis of the Key Informants inputs concerning the causes of abuse of married female breadwinners**

The key informant interviews revealed that the most common cause of abuse it is patriarchy promoted through culture. Key informant one said that Vhembe District of Limpopo is largely rural. This means that there are remote villages with a strong traditional and cultural background. In these villages, the society believes in the superiority of men over abused married female breadwinners. Key informant two posits that there is culture promotion through traditional practice such as lobola payment. When men pay lobola to the abused married female breadwinners, they may start to treat her as his personal property. Given that abusive men grew up in the patriarchal society, where wife battering is rampant there is a possibility that this history of abuse may influence them. The key informant interviews revealed that witnessing of family violence when one is a child might lead to abuse when they become adults. Key participant two revealed that Abusive behaviour is like a cycle in families. If ones' parents are abusive, chances are high that the children can become abusive also when they grow up. The reason being that children imitate and learn from what happens to them and parents are their immediate role models.

The key informants' interviews reviewed that lack of self-esteem leads to abuse of married female breadwinners. Key informant one revealed that men feel threatened and less confident when their wives are breadwinners. The reason is that the abuse married female breadwinner would be earning more money than the husband would or the husband would not be working at all. In order to ascertain their masculinity men end up beating abused married female breadwinners. The key informant interviews revealed that age or the number of years spent in a marriage may lead to abuse of female breadwinners. Men end up taking for granted abused female breadwinners because they would have spent many years together. The key informant's interviews revealed that social network leads to abuse of female breadwinners. Key informant one said that social network leads to conflicts, which may escalate to physical fights. Some of these physical fights many even lead to the death of abused female breadwinners. The key informant interviews revealed that infidelity leads to abuse of married female breadwinners. Key informant Two revealed that generally, man is the ones who engage in extramarital affairs. However, women are also cheating these days. Key informant two revealed that there are many cases whereby husbands kill women after finding out. Therefore, the Key informants' interviews revealed a plethora of causes of abuse of married female breadwinners by their husbands.

#### **4.5.1.4. What do you think are the consequences of abuse in female breadwinners' marriages?**

**Key Informant One** said, *“Women who are subjected to abuse suffer from many physical injuries on their body from physical assaults and in worst case scenarios they are killed by their husbands. I have a client who died. The husband shot female breadwinner and her child in Khubvi. The woman came to the trauma centre, 25th of January 2017 and applied for a protection and it was granted but the husband killed her in August 2017. So, abuse can lead to death and injuries. Post-traumatic stress is one of abuse consequence. Most of the woman when they come here for reporting and counselling they exhibit the signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress such as breaking down and hysterically carrying. We dealt with many issues of miscarriages caused by physical assaults and stress that women suffer when they are pregnant and we help them with counselling to get over the miscarriage trauma. Abuse affects women differently. Some women even end up committing suicide because of failure to handle the effects of abuse”*

**Key Informant Two** had this to say, *“Female breadwinners who are abused by their husbands suffer from all kind of injuries. It is sad that man hit a woman with bare knuckles and some objects, which is dangerous to their health. Post-traumatic stress is one of the most obvious effects that female breadwinners suffer. It is stressing to have an abusive husband. Abuse of female breadwinners is a risk for gynaecological problems such as miscarriages and STI's that can affect the chances of female breadwinners to bear children. We have had cases of women who commit suicide because of abuse. One of the reasons why we provide counselling is to avoid negative effects like suicide and help female breadwinners to cope well with negative effects of abuse.*

**Key Informant Three** stated that, *“We receive many cases of women who would have been injured by their husbands or are burnt by cooking oil or hot water. Therefore, abuse of women is dangerous to female breadwinners. One of the main reason why we have counselling services at our organisation is to offer counselling sessions for post-traumatic stress and depression to abused female breadwinners. Abuse in all its forms leads to stress and depression so there is need to help them with counselling. Gynaecological problems are some of the effects of abuse. Imagine the damage a kick in the womb can cause to a woman. So many gynaecological*

*problems can arise from abuse. Many women become suicidal because of the unbearable effects of abuse. It is so sad that some female breadwinners end their lives like that because life is too precious to be lost because of abusive behaviour of a husband”.*

### **Analysis of the Key informant's inputs on the consequences of abuse of married female breadwinners.**

Key informant interviews revealed a plethora of consequences that abused female breadwinners suffer in their marriages. All three Key informants of the study revealed that abused married female breadwinners suffer from injuries that they sustain during physical fights by their husbands. Key Informant Three revealed that at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) trauma centres they receive many cases of injured abused married female breadwinners. Some of the injuries involve burns from hot water or cooking oil. The key informants of the study revealed that abused married female breadwinners suffer from gynaecological problems. Key participant two stated that abused married female breadwinners are predisposed to the risk gynaecological problems such as miscarriages and Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STI's) by their husbands which may affect their reproduction system. The Key informants of the study revealed that abused female breadwinners are affected psychologically and some of them contemplate committing suicide. The negative effects by their husband may become unbearable to the extent that they think of taking their own lives. Key informant one revealed that one of the reasons that TVEP provides counselling is to avoid suicides and help female breadwinners to cope well with negative effects of abuse.

#### **4.5.1.5 What are the circumstances that make you stay in your abusive marriages?**

**Key Informant one** said that, *“There is a saying in Venda, which says that a woman burial place is where she is married. In the Venda culture, when a woman is married she is not supposed to or expected to divorce a husband. It is a taboo for a woman to dump a man in local traditional culture. Culture has a great influence in our traditional societies and the institution of marriage. It is really hard for abused female breadwinners to divorce their husband because of the desire to take care of their children. Women love their children and they can sacrifice and*

*compromise a lot to be with them. Once women are married to their husband, they adopt the husband's surname. This creates a sense of belonging and pride that emanates from being someone else's wife. This means that married women earn sought a status and admiration from those around and also enjoy being called by their husband surname.*

*Women who are married in community of property find it difficult sometimes to divorce their husbands because of fear of losing half of what they would have acquired more especially if they contribute a lot to the property. It is difficult for female breadwinners to divorce their abusive husbands because of some religious beliefs. Some churches they do not allow divorce and it depends on how deep female breadwinners follow their religions. From my observation here at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP), when abused female breadwinners try to open domestic violence cases or seek a protection order, their husbands beg them, soften them up and charm them to withdraw or not to open cases. They pretend to be loving and caring so that women can stop reporting them”*

**Key Informant Two** said that, *“It is hard for female breadwinners to divorce their husbands’ especially those ones who come from deep rural areas because of strong cultural background. As an organisation, we try our best to encourage a woman to leave their abusive husbands but the influence of culture seems to hold them back. Female breadwinners to some extent don’t want to break up with their husbands because of the will to take care of their children. They prioritise their strong relationship with their children than walking away from the marriage. Some female breadwinners don’t want to embarrass themselves by having successful careers with failed marriages. So they would want to be successful in both career and marriage. This means that they can rather stay in an abusive marriage than divorce. When a couple is married, to divorce it is not easy for them. The reason being that marriage is a contract, therefore some obligations such as sharing of the estate may make female breadwinners be reluctant to divorce.*

*In the western world some couples sign pre-nups because it will make things easy when couples decide to divorce. The marriage institution involves religious beliefs and some scared vows that a couple makes when getting married. These sacred vowels make it difficult for women to break up with their husbands. Abused married female breadwinners also stay in their marriages because of love. The power of love should not be underestimated. You may find out that, their husband might be the only men that they have dated and loved in their lives, so it may not be easy for them to divorce their husbands. Men pretend and play with woman hearts each*

*time they try to divorce them. They become or pretend to be loving and romantic just to change their hearts. It is called the honeymoon phase after wife battering. So, the cycle goes on and on like that, in a way abusive men traps female breadwinners in marriage”*

**Key Informant Three** said that, *“Although, we promote women rights and abused female breadwinners to leave their husbands. However, at the end of the day, the final decision belongs to the individuals and their families. It is easy to talk about women rights on television but the reality on the ground is that at the community and family level culture is still dominant. So we even have programmes at TVEP that tries to change attitudes of patriarchal communities and promote gender equality. The strong bond between mothers and their children should not be underestimated. Some female breadwinners stay in abusive marriages because they would want to take care of their children. Being married in the traditional society is seen as an achievement which comes with social status and respect. So some female breadwinners would not want to lose that social respect if they leave their husbands. When women get married they really need to be told about everything because legal marriage is a contract and the different kinds of marriage kinds of marriage. The problem is that women jump to say yes I want to marry you because of the excitement and social sense of achievement that come with it without considering the implications of getting married such as sharing property in the event of divorce. We all have religious belief or beliefs of some sought in life. Most of the female breadwinners who come here to report believe in Christianity. Some of the Christianity beliefs and values are against divorce. Women stay in the abusive marriage because men tend to be cunning and charming so that they want them. In fact, men take advantage of the fact that women are caring and have tender hearts”*

### **Analysis of Key informants interviews inputs regarding the circumstances that make abused married female breadwinners to stay in their marriages**

The key informant interviews revealed a plethora of circumstances that makes abused married female breadwinners to stay in third marriages. All the key informants revealed that the influence of culture makes abused female breadwinners to stay in their marriages. Key informant three revealed that Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) engage in campaigns that try to change attitudes of men in patriarchal communities and promote gender equality. However, the challenge is that culture is very dominant in the village. Therefore,

abused married female breadwinners stay in their abusive marriages because of the influence of culture. Key informant interviews revealed that abused married female breadwinners stick in their marriages because of the desire to take care of their children. Key informant three revealed that the strong bond between mothers and their children should not be underestimated. Some female breadwinners stay in abusive marriages because they would want to take care of their children. They refer to stick in their marriage for the sake of their children than to walk away. Abused married female breadwinners stick to their marriages because of the need to maintain a social status. Key informant one revealed that adopt in of abused married female breadwinners husband's surname creates a sense of belonging and social status that they would not want to lose in the event of a divorce. Religious beliefs influence abused married female breadwinners to stick to their marriages.

Key informant two said that the marriage institution involves religious beliefs and some scared vows that abused married female breadwinners' makes when getting married. These sacred vowels make it difficult for women to break up with their husbands. The Key informants' interviews revealed that abused married female breadwinners stick in abusive marriage's because of fear of losing their estate. Key informant Two revealed that marriage is a contract with obligations such as sharing of the estate in the event of a divorce. As a result, some abused married female breadwinners are afraid of losing estate if they divorce their husband. Key informant two revealed that abused female breadwinners need to be encouraged to sign pre-naps before getting married because it may make divorce settlement easy if the marriages break down. Key informant interviews revealed that abused female breadwinners are entrapped by their husband in their marriage. Key informant two revealed that abusive men tend to pretend to be loving and romantic just to change their hearts if abused married female breadwinners' thinks of divorcing them. It is called the honeymoon phase after wife battering. As a result, the cycle goes on like that and traps female breadwinners in marriage.

#### **4.5.1.6 What do you think are the challenges that abused female breadwinners face in their marriages?**

**Key Informant One** said that, *“being a female breadwinner it is not easy. Those ladies must be saluted. I am also speaking from experience because I am a manager working here, during the day and when I knock off at 04:30, I must rush to school to take my kids and go home to cook*

*for my family. So, it is not easy to be a breadwinner. A lady has to be strong. You really have to be a superwoman. The problem is that most abusive men believe that they do not have to help abused female breadwinners with doing household chores. The influence comes from a culture whereby men believe that a women's place is in the kitchen. This is wrong because times have changed. A woman can do everything that a man can do"*

**Key Informant Two** had this to say, *"It is hard to be female breadwinners and at the same time play the roles of a mother after work. One really need to be extra strong. It is a mammoth task for them to balance work and households chores. The abusive husband must help abused married female breadwinners. You find out that a man is not working and he expects his wife to come back from work and do everything without helping her at all. Abused married female breadwinners really need help from their husbands. The major problem is socialisation. Woman where socialised to do domestic chores whilst man to be to be strong and tough. However, things have changed. A man should cook and they should also bath their children. Men need to have dialogues which can enable them to change their minds when it comes to doing domestic chores. There must be a change of mentality. They need to be taught the importance of helping their women to do domestic chores.*

**Key Informant Three** said that, *"Female breadwinners are underappreciated and they do not get enough support from their husbands to help them, especially with household tasks. Balancing work life and cooking, cleaning the house and taking care of the children it is not easy. You find out that in some cases abusive husband would not even want their wives to hire a maid to help her. The most common excuses that abusive husbands will be giving is that they paid lobola, so they have to everything for them".*

### **Analysis of the Key Informants inputs with regards that to challenges that abused female breadwinners face in their marriage.**

All three Key informants' interviews revealed that abused female breadwinners struggle to balance between working and household chores. The reason is that their husband does not want to help them. Key Informant One revealed that abusive husband believes that a women's place in the kitchen. This is influenced by culture which believes in men superiority. Key Informant Two stated that it is a mammoth task for abused married female breadwinners to balance work and households chores. Key Informant Three pointed out that abused female

breadwinners are underappreciated by their husband. Abused married female breadwinners need support and help from their husband especially with household tasks so that they cannot strain themselves.

#### **4.5.1.7 What do you think are the coping strategies of abused married female breadwinners in marriage?**

**Key Informant One** said that, *“Reporting to police or TVEP is a strategy used by abused female breadwinners to reduce the severity of abuse in their marriages. Abusive men are cowards who are afraid to go to jail so reporting abuse it scares them off. Protection orders are used as a coping strategy by abused female breadwinners. It acts as a deterrent against abuse but the problem that it doesn’t solve the underlying problem of abuse in the marriage. The problem with a protection order it is that safety is not guaranteed. The abused married female breadwinners can still be killed by the husband. So abused female breadwinners are only safe when they walk away from their marriage or if their abusive husband is behind bars at Matatshe prison. In some cases, abused female breadwinners run away from their homes to their neighbours’, family, and friends or come to our trauma centres to report. Running away saves them from severe physical fights. Some abused female breadwinners drink alcohol to get over the abusive tendencies of their husbands, but the problem is that it is an unhealthy way of coping with stress because alcohol is hazardous to health. Counselling is one of the best ways to help abused female breadwinners to cope up with abuse. We are happy and proud that we are one of the organisations that offer counselling services to abused female breadwinner so that they can cope up with their plight.*

*Women are very prayerful. They go to church a lot than men. The reason is that church helps them to cope up with the problems that they face in life. Therefore, abusive behaviour of their husbands is one of the problems. The social system is important for abused female breadwinners. Sharing their problems with other woman makes them to female better and relieve the stress that they will be having. Woman cope up in various ways. Another way that women cope with abuse is through their actions such as keeping quiet or being moody. Some women even hit back when physically assaulted in self-defence. We have many cases whereby woman burnt their abusive husband with cooking oil in retaliation after an assault. This would be self-defence. Some they say love blinds a person and that applies perfectly to women. In the*

*name of love, they have or develop this positive thinking and hope for their husband. They would do everything to try to look positively on their marriages yet reality on the ground will be that it will be an abusive marriage. Woman cope up in various ways. Another way that women cope with abuse is through their actions such as keeping quiet or being moody. Some women even hit back when they are physically assaulted in self-defence. We have many cases whereby some abusive men are burnt by water or cooking oil after being assaulted when cooking as self-defence”*

**Key Informant Two** said that, *“Many women come here at TVEP to report domestic violence cases. We open some case files, give them referral letters to get protection orders and give them medical attention and counselling services. Unfortunately, the majority of these women do not want to open police case against their husband. They don’t want their husbands to be prosecuted. As a result, the cycle of abuse continues. The husband may stop being abusive in the short term but start over again in the long term. Protection order helps in making women feel safe from their husbands. However, the problem is that protection orders are just a temporary measure and not a permanent solution. Female breadwinners who are abused by their husbands sometimes run away from home. Running away helps them to prevent further damage and give them space to breathe and reflect on their life. By temporarily leaving some women would decide to leave their husbands for good whilst some returns.*

*Alcohol abuse can apply both ways. It is a reason behind the abuse of women yet at the same time some woman drinks it as a coping mechanism against abuse, yet I think it is not a good thing to drink alcohol to get over abuse by a husband. One of the ways that abused female breadwinners cope up with abuse is through counselling. We offer them counselling sessions here when they come to report abuse. Abused female breadwinners seek religious intervention to cope up with abuse and seek abusive behaviour change of their husbands. They put their trust in God and pastors that their prayers may change the abusive behaviour of their husbands. Women cope with their abusive husband if they have a good social support system of family, friends and neighbours. Some they make use of social networks to cope up with the effects of abuse such as stress. People say love blinds a person and that applies perfectly to women. In the name of love, they have or develop this positive thinking and hope for their husband. They would do everything to try to look positively on their marriages yet reality on the ground will be that it will be an abusive marriage. Abused married female breadwinners suffer from economic abuse. You may find out that their husband abuses alcohol and spend money on their girlfriend outside marriage. Therefore, some abused married female breadwinners face financial*

*constraints. I was surprised to find out that some of them play stockvel to supplement their financial status”*

**Key Informant Three** said that, *“Women opens and some threaten to open police cases against their husbands. This helps because it deters abusive men to commit abuse. However, the best coping strategy is to open a criminal case or applying for a protection order against an abusive husband. Protection orders have some pros and cons especially when couples are staying together. After, some women report an intensification of abuse whilst others report that abuse lessens because the husband will be scared to violate it. After getting the protection order, some abused married female breadwinners makes the mistake of protecting their husband. When the husband violates the protection order abused married female breadwinners are scared and unwilling to report for fear that their husband will go to prison. So in some instances, the protection order won’t help much because abused married female breadwinner chose not to report it. Coping with abuse it is not easy for female breadwinners. Some they run away in the middle of the physical fight to their neighbour’s place. Other abused female breadwinners run away from their marital home to come and report at our trauma centres.*

*I have worked some cases here, whereby some abused married female breadwinners’ abuse alcohol as a way of coping with the abuse that they will be facing. TVEP offers counselling sessions for all domestic violence cases at our two trauma centres at Donald Frazer and Tshildzini Hospital. The good thing is that our trauma centres are open twenty-four hours a day and three hundred and sixty-five a year. Our trauma centres are open even on public holidays. This means that we offer counselling services to abused female breadwinners at any time of the day and even on public holidays. Have you ever realised that women are the majority in attending church? The major reason is that women, in general, are at the receiving end of most marital problems and they go to church to seek solutions from God, unlike most man. So women make use of religious intervention as a coping mechanism against abuse. Like they say no man or women is an island or we are our sisters or brother’s keeper, it is true.*

*Women support each other in all different kinds of problems that they face in their marriages. They can sit down with each other, pouring their hearts out about their problems. This really helps in dealing with problems such as abuse by the husband. Woman are very strong. In abusive marriages, they do everything they can in their power to try to understand their husband's behaviours and see what they can try to do or where they can try to improve to prevent the husband's abusive behaviour. In a way, it can be called problem solving techniques.*

*Some they say love blinds a person and that applies perfectly to abused married female breadwinners. In the name of love, they have or develop this positive thinking and hope for their husband. They would do everything to try to look positively on their marriages yet reality on the ground will be that it will be an abusive marriage. Abused married female breadwinners cope with stress by engaging themselves in community activities. This helps them to cope with their abuse through interaction with other women. The most popular women activities are playing stokvel. Engaging in activities like that helps them to get over stress”.*

### **Analysis of Key informants input concerning coping strategies of abused married female breadwinners in a marriage**

The key informants revealed that there are a plethora of coping strategies that are employed by abused female breadwinners to cope with their plight. When the abusive behaviour of the husband became severe, abused female breadwinners report to the police and Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment (TVEP) trauma centres. Reporting abuse is a great way of coping with an abusive husband. At TVEP trauma centre abused married female breadwinners would decide on the course of action the TVEP, Victim Advocate should do with the husband. Abused married female breadwinners would be free to open a criminal case or apply for a protection. Key informant one state that protection orders are a good way of coping with abuse because it serves as a deterrent against committing abuse. However, the problem is that it is a temporary measure but it does not solve the underlying problem of the abusive behaviour. It does not guarantee safety because an abused married female breadwinner with a protection may still be killed by the husband. Abused married female breadwinners are only safe when the abusive husband is behind or if they divorce.

Key informant interviews revealed that abused married female breadwinners cope up with abuse through seeking refuge during and after physical fights. Key informant one revealed abused married female breadwinners run away from their abusive husband prevent harm, to get space to breath and reflect on their life. Abused married female breadwinners cope with their abuse through religious intervention. Key informant three highlighted that abused married most go to church to seek solutions from God, unlike most man. They believe that God would intervene to stop the abusive behaviour of their husbands. Key informant interviews revealed that abused female breadwinners’ make use of counselling services to cope up with abuse. Key

informant three revealed that Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) opens twenty-four hours a day and three hundred and sixty-five days per year. The trauma centres are open even during the public holiday. They offer counselling services for abuse married female breadwinners to cope with the abuse that they suffer in their marriages. Key informant Three highlighted that TVEP's trauma centres are twenty-four hours open throughout the year.

The Key informants' interviews revealed that abused female breadwinners make use of social support system to cope with abuse. Key informant two stated that abused married female breadwinners cope up with abuse through making use of good social support system of family, friends and neighbours. They also make use of social network to entertain themselves, interact with other and relieving stress of their abusive marriages. Furthermore, key informants interviews revealed that abuse female breadwinners make us of problem solving strategies to cope with abusive behaviour of their husband. Key informant three revealed that abused female breadwinners do everything in their power to try to understand their husbands' abusive behaviours. This helps them to reflect on what they can try to do prevent avoid conflicts that may lead to abuse.

Key informant One revealed abused married female breadwinners cope up with abuse through exhibiting passive-aggressive behaviours such as keeping quiet, being moody or retaliating when the husband physically attacks them. Some women hit back in self-defence when the abuse become severe. Key informant one revealed that she has dealt with some cases whereby abused married female breadwinners were burnt their abusive husband with hot water for self-defence and in retaliation. Key informant interviews revealed that abused married female breadwinners cope up with abuse through drinking beer. Key informant one stated that some abused female breadwinners drink alcohol to get over the abusive tendencies of their husbands. However, drinking beer is an unhealthy way of coming up with stress because alcohol is hazardous to health.

#### **4.5.1.8 What do you think are the intervention strategies to curb abuse in abused female breadwinners' marriages?**

**Key Informant One** said that, *“Although South Africa’s Domestic Violence Act is arguably the best in Africa, there are some loopholes when it comes to the implementation part. Some, abused married female breadwinners do not feel protected by the law and in some cases justice*

*is delayed and this makes people in the community to lose confidence in the law. There is a slackness. There are abused married female breadwinners who go there and say that the husband has contravened a protection order. You hear them saying, no open another protection order. I see that there is slackness in the implementation part of it. It should be put into practices that if an abusive husband contravenes a protection order he must be arrested. It must happen like that. If it's not happening like that then there is a problem. Abused married female breadwinners say that they are not protected and lack interest in the criminal justice system. The abusive husband who contravenes the protection order should be tried and if found guilty he should be prosecuted. As a result of their slackness, some abused female breadwinners now say that the protection order does not work. I have a client who died. The husband shot female breadwinner and her child in Khubvi. The woman came to the trauma centre, 25th of January 2017 and applied for a protection and it was granted but the husband killed her in August 2017. It is cases like this that makes the public to lose interest in the criminal justice system. So, every piece of legislation if it lacks implementation it becomes a problem.*

*I think lack of specialisation also leads to slackness in the implantation of the Domestic violence Act. There must be officers who are hands-on with domestic violence cases and protection orders. We handle more than hundred and fifty cases per month of abused married female breadwinners. Given this huge amount, there is a need for a specialised Sexual Offences and Community Affairs (SOCA) in Vhembe District. The one that is situated in Sibasa it is now a mixed court. The history is that in early 2000, the government established the specialised Sexual Offences and Community Affairs (SOCA) in Sibasa. The regional court for other crimes was periodic. It was moved from one district to another. I remember, at one time the regional court was at Dzanani for a certain period. So around 2007, the government decided that all regional cases must be tried at Sexual Offences and Community Affairs (SOCA) in Sibasa. Their justification was to avoid moving the Regional court from one place to another. Therefore, the Regional court for all cases is currently at Sexual Offences and Community Affairs (SOCA) in Sibasa. So the problem now is that we do not have specialised human resources that deals with domestic violence cases.*

*It means we don't have specialised police, specialised prosecutors specialised magistrates working only on women abuse cases. The problem of having mixed court is that they are very slow when it comes to women abuse cases. Sometimes they may even take two weeks to serve an abusive husband with the protection order to sign. That is why there is a high lack of interest in the criminal justice system because they say the protection order paper does not work.*

*Someone is good at investing stock theft and is transferred to domestic violence case obvious he won't be good and fast. Given that, the government must set up a specialised. Sexual Offences and Community Affairs in the Vhembe District to curb abuse of female breadwinners. It will also make people have confidence in the criminal justice system. If it continues like this person, will always have a high lack of interest in the criminal justice.*

**Key Informant Two** said that, *“Abuse of married female breadwinners is rampant in Vhembe district and even at the national and international level. Problem is that the domestic violence initiates targets women only and forget about me. It is surprising because the fact is that man is the major perpetrators. So if anything women abuse problems must involve both man and women. However, besides involving men in women abuse programmes, there is also need for exclusive man dialogues. Why am I saying so because men need to change their mentality with regards to women because the culture has influenced men too much? Dialogues for men only can help to change men beliefs, attitudes and perception when it comes to women. This will enable them to change their minds because it is influenced by culture. Men should be thought to change their mentality. We don't have communities in the villages were man sit down and talk. You only find that in Western countries like America. If the man in the communities can come together and have those dialogues it would help. They can be telling each other and rebuke each other for beating their wife. So here we don't have that platform where a man sits around because of pride. Even if we try to start it hear it will take time because of their pride.*

*The shift of mentality, the paradigm shift must be in all departments in government and even schools. In schools, students must be taught about abuse in life orientation class. This is hard because abuse starts in the family. You know everything it all starts in when he married. The family. If at home a child sees that my mother is being abused by my father then it is a problem because when he marries he will also abuse his wife. So it starts in the family. So in the end abuse become a national issue but it all starts with the family. With African is a line, it's a tradition that is passed from one generation to another. So abuse of married female breadwinners is a deep thing. If we don't start to teach them when they are young, our generation and the next generation will still do the same. Shoot them before they grow feathers that's what they say. Traditional leaders play a very vital role in abuse because they are the custodians of culture. If they denounce women abuse and patriarchy it helps a lot in changing community people's attitudes and perceptions towards gender-based violence and gender equality. So in each and every village we work in TVEP, ask permission of the traditional leaders and enlist their services in the fight against abuse in their communities”*

**Key Informant Three** stated that, *“Women abuse is rampant in Vhembe District and as TVEP we are trying to do our best to curb women abuse and to design intervention measures against abuse. There is also need for more organisation that advocates for the rights of women because there are only a few organisation in the District. There is a need for more information dissemination denouncing women abuse. At TVEP we do a lot of awareness campaigns that we code fun days whereby we hire celebrities such Makhadzi and Suzan Ravhuku or Thefilumbilo from the popular SABC 2 Soap Muvhango to teach the local communities about abuse of woman and HIV/AIDS. These campaigns may help to enlighten rural communities about abuse because many women in these communities they do not know their rights. Some men from these rural communities they also do not know about the rights of women and gender equality. Therefore it is important to continue to teach about abuse in the communities. Abused married female breadwinners must be screened for abuse when they go the clinic to consul or hospital. This can go a long way to curb abuse. On top of screening, there is also a need for mandatory reporting of abuse to the police or NGO’s like us TVEP. This helps because men will stop victimising female breadwinners for reporting them to police about abuse. The reason why I am saying that there is a need for screening and mandatory reporting, it is because abused married female breadwinners do not want to open up about abuse.*

*Abused married female breadwinners should leave beyond culture, they should leave beyond patriarchy and open up about abuse. Whenever we have a community gathering in the villages about abuse, women must open up about abuse so that we can help them. The Domestic violence Act put it very clear that woman should be protected and can take a protection order even when they are staying together. They should apply for a protection order when they still want to stay with their husbands before things become worse or they are hit by stress because of stress. They must open up regardless of the status that they are married. They must seek help. They should open up regardless of cultural beliefs like when you are married the bridge to go back to your parents is burnt. Those are patriarchal beliefs that influence abuse. So abused married female breadwinners must break that wall and open up about abuse. They must think of themselves of themselves before anyone and go out of the marriage. Compulsory screening and mandatory reporting to the police is needed because many cases are not reported. It will make women to open up and remove the fear of being blamed by their husbands since every woman will be subjected to screening. This will drive the message to men that the government is serious about curbing abuse. Parents should also support abused married female breadwinners. When they tell their parents that my husband is abusive, parents should take*

*them back at home. Parents must tell their abused married female breadwinners to come back home, open a case and support her.*

*Parents and relatives must support to say come and stay with me. If parents and relatives support abused married female breadwinners, they will have a way out of the abusive marriage. We talk about woman abuse all day and all sorts of intervention measures to help them but one of the most important things to do is to involve a man in women abuse initiates. Excluding men does not help at all because, women might have the knowledge but for it to work, it means they also need a man to cooperate. Excluding man, it leads to marginalisation which won't help much because men are the major perpetrators of abuse and not the other way round. As they say, it takes two to tango, so for abuse to be prevented it means two people must be involved that is female breadwinners and the husband"*

### **Analysis of Key informants input concerning intervention measures to curb abuse of married female breadwinners**

Key informants interviews revealed a plethora of intervention measure that may curb abuse of married female breadwinners. They pointed out that there must be more organisations that deal with abuse of married female breadwinners in the villages. Key informant one said that Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) handles more than one hundred and fifty cases per month. This shows that the prevalence of abuse of married female breadwinners is high, hence the need for an increase of organisations that deal with abuse. Key informant interviews revealed that there is a need for workshops and campaigns to teach the rural folk about abuse. Furthermore, the key informant interviews revealed that women do not want to open up about abuse in the community. They revealed that most abuse cases are not reported. As a result, Key informant three suggested that there must be a screening of abuse in health centres and mandatory reporting. This may prevent victimisation of abuse married female breadwinners' and encourage them to pen up. The key informant interviews revealed that traditional chiefs should play a leading role in the fight against abuse of married female breadwinners. Key informant two said that traditional leaders play a very vital role in abuse because they are the custodians of culture. If they denounce abuse of married female breadwinners it may help in changing attitude and perceptions of me. In addition, key informant

interviews revealed that men should be involved in women abuse problems to prevent marginalisation.

Key informant two revealed that involving man will enable men to take responsibility and enable cooperation. Key informant Two also suggested having exclusive men dialogues in the communities may help to curb abuse. The reason being that it will give a platform to open up about abuse and enable change of mindset, perceptions and attitudes towards abused married female breadwinners. The Key informant interviews revealed that there is lack of proper implementation of Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998. Key informant one said that abused married female breadwinners do not feel protected by the law. He said the in some cases, justice is delayed. This makes people in the community to lose confidence in the law. Key informant one revealed the slackness by the human resource personnel that deal with abused married female breadwinners cases. The major reason that he cited was lack of Sexual Offences and Community Affairs court (SOCA) in Vhembe District that deals with women abuse cases. Hence, lack of specialised personnel leads to slackness and loss of confidence in the justice system. Therefore, there is need for a court that specialises in abused married female breadwinners only.

#### **4.6 Summary**

The data obtained from the interviewed participants about the coping mechanisms of abused married female breadwinners in the Vhembe district of Limpopo, South Africa was presented. Firstly, the presentation of demographic information was in table form. Thereafter, the data from interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews were presented. The presentation involved reflecting participants inputs on all the research question the study sought to answer. Thereafter, the data were analysed to explain and interpret it to find meaning in relation to the circumstances which influence abused married female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and the coping strategies that may assist them in their plight. The study found out that abused female breadwinners experience the following types of abuse; physical, verbal, psychological, economic and sexual abuse. The circumstances that influences abused married female breadwinners to stay in their marriages involve the following; culture, desire to take care of children, social status, social needs, loss of estate, religion and entrapment. As a result, abused married female breadwinners adopts the following coping strategies to cope up with

their plight; counselling, religious intervention, problem solving strategies reporting to police or NGO's, protection order, seeking refuge, alcohol abuse and dependence. Abused married female breadwinners and Key informants suggested the following intervention measures to curb abuse; increase of organisations that deals with abuse of women, information dissemination and awareness campaigns, Involving men in fighting against women abuse, implementation of women abuse laws, women abuse specialisation courts, compulsory screening and mandatory reporting, gender equality and use of traditional leaders in the fight against abuse of married female breadwinners.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This study sought to reflect on the coping mechanisms of abused married female breadwinners in the Vhembe District of Limpopo, South Africa. In this Chapter, discussion of results, recommendations and conclusions are drawn from the study on the circumstances which influence abused married female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and coping strategies that may assist them in their plight. The findings are discussed in line with the study's three research question. The first question was about the circumstances that make abused married female breadwinners stay in nuptials. The second question was about the coping mechanisms employed by abused female breadwinners in their marriages. The last question was about the intervention methods that could apply to the abused married female breadwinner. The findings presented in the previous chapter anchors the discussion of the findings in the present chapter. The researcher describes the findings and links it with reviewed literature. In addition, the recommendations on the intervention measures that may curb the abuse of married female breadwinners in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province of South Africa are made.

#### 5.2 Overview of the study

The research was meant to reflect on the coping mechanisms of abused female breadwinners in marriages in the Vhembe District of Limpopo, South Africa. The aim of the study was to explore and understand the circumstances, which influence abused female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and to model coping strategies for their plight. As a result, this study had three objectives. The first objective was to identify the context and circumstances that makes abused married female breadwinners to stay in their marriages. The second objective was to reflect on the coping mechanisms of abused female breadwinners. The third objective was to develop intervention methods that could assist in their coping strategy. Literature was

reviewed in Chapter two and formed the theoretical framework of the research. The theoretical framework of this study was based on Habermas's (2012), Communicative Action Theory.

The study was qualitative in nature and used an exploratory case study research design, which targeted abused married female breadwinners who had reported cases at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) trauma centres at Tshilidzini and Donald Fraser hospital in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province of South Africa. The researcher drew a purposive cross-sectional sample of two-abused married female breadwinner each year from 2010 up to 2015 to make a total sample of twelve participants. The six-year cross-sectional sample aimed at ascertaining the prevalence and trend of abused married female breadwinners during the six-year period. The six-year period assisted in determining the circumstances, which influence abused female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and assist them in finding a solution to their plight. In addition, three female managers at TVEP were chosen for interviews as key informants of the study. Therefore, the data collection methods were; in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The researcher used Van Manne's method to analyse the data.

### **5.3 Overview of the study findings**

The study explored the circumstances, which influence abused married female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and coping strategies that may assist them in their plight. The findings demonstrate that abused married female breadwinners continue to stay with their husbands regardless of negative outcomes such as injuries, death and gynaecological problems. The reason that makes them stay involves the following circumstance; desire to take care of children, culture, social status, social needs, religion, entrapment and loss of estate. As a result, abused married female breadwinners adopts the following coping strategies to cope up with their plight; counselling, religious intervention, problem-solving strategies reporting to police or NGO's, protection order, seeking refuge, alcohol abuse and dependence. The findings of the study revealed that abused married female breadwinners find it difficult to balance their careers and doing domestic chores at home since their husbands expect them to do all the chores after work. Abused married female breadwinners and the key informants of the study suggested some intervention measures that may help to curb the problem of abuse of married female breadwinners in the community. Habermas's (2012), Theory of Communicative World, anchors

study findings. The theory involves the lifeworld and system world aspect that influences abused married female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and assist them in finding coping strategies to their plight. The upcoming Table 5.1 shows the questions asked from participants', themes and subthemes that emerged from the inputs of participants and from data analysis.

**Table 5.1 Overview of findings of the study**

Research Question	Themes	Sub-themes
1. What are the types of abuse that you have experienced in your marriage?	The types of abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical abuse</li> <li>• Verbal abuse</li> <li>• Emotional Abuse</li> <li>• Psychological Abuse</li> <li>• Economic Abuse</li> <li>• Sexual Abuse.</li> </ul>
2. How Often Does Your Husband Abuse You?	Frequency of Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three up to four times per month</li> <li>• Once a month</li> <li>• once or twice a week,</li> <li>• five times a month</li> </ul>
3. How can you describe the intensity or pattern of abuse ever since you got married?	Intensity and pattern of abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before marriage</li> <li>• Early days of marriage</li> <li>• Years after marriage</li> <li>• Tension building phase</li> <li>• Acute battering phase</li> <li>• Honeymoon phase.</li> </ul>
4. What are the causes or the reasons behind your husbands' abusive	Causes of Abuse of married female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Alcohol abuse</li> <li>• Self Esteem and Age</li> </ul>

behaviour?	breadwinners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Network and infidelity</li> <li>• Witnessing of Violence in Childhood</li> </ul>
5. What are the consequences of abuse in your marriage?	Consequences of Abuse of married female breadwinners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Injuries</li> <li>• Post-traumatic Stress</li> <li>• Gynaecological Problems</li> <li>• Suicidality</li> <li>• Alcohol abuse,</li> <li>• Social isolation</li> <li>• Financial Problems</li> </ul>
6. What are the challenges that you face in your abusive marriage?	Challenges faced by abused married female breadwinners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balancing between work and domestic chores</li> </ul>
7. What are the circumstances that make you stay your abusive marriages?	Circumstances that make abused married female breadwinners to stay in their marriages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Desire to Take Care of Children</li> <li>• Social Status</li> <li>• Social Needs</li> <li>• Loss of Estate</li> <li>• Religion</li> <li>• Entrapment</li> </ul>
8. What are your coping mechanisms or how do you cope up with living with an abusive husband?	Coping strategies of abused married female breadwinners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting to Police or NGO's</li> <li>• Protection Order</li> <li>• Seeking Refugee</li> <li>• Alcohol Abuse and Dependence</li> <li>• Counselling</li> <li>• Religious Intervention</li> <li>• Problem Solving Strategies</li> <li>• Social Support</li> <li>• Supplement Income</li> <li>• Recreational activities</li> <li>• Finance generating schemes</li> </ul>

<p>9. What do you think are the intervention strategies to curb abuse in abused female breadwinners' marriages?</p>	<p>The intervention measures against abuse of married female breadwinners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involving Men in Fighting Against Women Abuse</li> <li>• Application of Women Abuse Laws and Policies</li> <li>• Compulsory Screening and Mandatory Reporting</li> <li>• Increase of Organisations that Deals with Abuse of Women</li> <li>• Information Dissemination and Awareness Campaigns</li> <li>• Gender Equality and Use of Traditional Leaders</li> <li>• Social Support</li> <li>• Change of social attitudes and perceptions</li> </ul>
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## 5.4 Discussion of study findings

In this section, the researcher discusses the findings of the study presented in Chapter 4. The findings derived from inputs of twelve abused married female breadwinners, three focus group discussions and key informants interviews with three female managers from Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). The researcher links the findings of the study with reviewed literature in the upcoming sections.

### 5.4 1 Types of abuse that abused married female breadwinners face

The study found out that abused married female breadwinners suffer from the following types of abuse; physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, economic and sexual abuse. The most

common types of abuse revealed by participants are verbal and physical abuse. All twelve participants suffer from verbal and physical abuse in their marriages. The major influencing factor behind the verbal and physical abuse it is alcohol abuse as revealed by Participant one, who said that, *“My husband beats me and insult me a lot. Sometimes he can take my bank card and squander all the money alone, come back home drunk and beat me”*. The study found out that the third major type of abuse is economic abuse. Five participants indicated that they suffer from economic abuse from their husbands. Only three participants indicated that they suffer from sexual abuse. Two of the participant sexual abuse occurs when their husbands are drunk, whilst the third participant alcohol abuse is not a contributory factor. Therefore, abused married female breadwinners revealed that they suffer from physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, economic and sexual abuse in their marriages.

The physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse reflects the conflict between husbands and abused married female breadwinners in the lifeworld as stipulated by Habermas' (2012), Theory of Communicative Action. Habermas (2012) postulates that conflict emanates indirect contacts in everyday life in different social groups that include families and communities. Thus, putting Habermas' (2012), Communicative Action Theory to the context of the study, abuse of married female breadwinners arises from direct interaction with their husbands at home. It is through direct interaction that married female breadwinners are, physical, verbal, emotionally, sexually and psychologically abused by their husbands. Thus, Habermas' (2012), Theory of Communicative Action anchors the findings of the study.

Furthermore, the findings concur with Bollen, Artz, Vetten and Louw (2009), who notes that the scope of abuse of women is widespread and it comprises of physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse, as well as stalking, forced isolation in the home and other controlling behaviours. Similarly, Danis and Lee (2013) assert that the abuse of women generally occurs in the form of the following types of abuse; physical, emotional, sexual and economic. However, of all the types of abuse, verbal and physical abuse are the most common types of abuse. According to Makofane (2012), the most dangerous aspect of physical abuse is that it can be either controlled or impulsive and consists of physical assaults. It may result in many injuries to women physically assaulted such as bruises, cracked ribs or broken bones and broken teeth's.

However, Dutton and Painter (2010) argue that the most grievous type of abuse is psychological abuse because its effects are intrinsic and may last for a long time. The findings of the study are in support of Dutton (2009) argument that psychological abuse is rife amongst abused married

female breadwinners but overlooked. This argument supports excerpts from Key informant two who said, *“I believe that psychological abuse is more dangerous than all the other types of abuse. The experience I have had here, working with women tells me that men psychologically abuse women to the extent that they lose all their confidence and make them feel useless. That is very dangerous”*. This evidences the gravity of the effects of psychological abuse on female breadwinners in marriage. The findings of the study also support Dutton and Painter (2010) argument that there is an underestimation of psychological abuse effects than physical abuse. The difference between psychological abuse and physical abuse effects is on recognition. The psychological abuse effects are felt deep inside without visible or tangible indicators to show for it, unlike physical abuse.

The effects psychological abuse can even be more or less equal the same with physical abuse. Dutton and Painter (2010) note that the most grievous aspect of psychological abuse is that it is intrinsic and the effects are a long time. Effects of physical abuse such as a cut or wound can heal after some days or week but a wound deep inside the heart and in the psychological realm may last for a long time even until the end of days of a married female breadwinner. Studies by Dutton and Painter (2010) ; Sacket and Saunders (2009) proves that psychological abuse may be, more or equal the same with physical abuse effects. The big difference is that physical abuse leaves some marks such as black eyes, broken bones, swollen faces which is there for all people to see unlike psychological abuse which is intrinsic and mental. Psychological effects are not tangible but the effects are very detrimental to the health of abused married female breadwinners. As a result, psychological abuse must not be underrated when it comes to analysing the holistic effects of abuse on married female breadwinners.

Furthermore, the study found out that physical and verbal abuse occurs usually when abused married female breadwinners' husbands are drunk. Participant nine evidences this by saying, *“when he is drunk, he can pick anything to hit me and demands to sleep with me”*. This shows that alcohol abuse is one of the major causes of abuse of married female breadwinners. The findings of this study support an assertion Wallace and Roberson (2011) who notes that the abuse of alcohol is associated or linked to violent behaviour through its physiological effects that may lead to violent impulses, tendencies and inhibitions. Alcohol affects the central nervous system of a human being by releasing inhibitions, which depress brain function or suppress superego function thereby allowing the expression of rage or anger (Wallace and Roberson, 2011).

According to Bancroft (2012), describes alcohol as the risk factor that causes the abuse of women by men in the family through the fact that people learn to drink alcohol through social interaction, which indirectly may lead to intimate partner violence because they also witness intoxicated role models exhibiting violent behaviour in the family. According to Bancroft, (2012), wife battering cases that are associated with drug and alcohol abuse more serious and more dangerous than situations not involving drugs and alcohol. A study by Brecklin (2012) found strong links between alcohol and drug abuse and occurrence of wife abuse in marriages. Therefore, the findings of the study found out that alcohol abuse is one of the leading cause of abuse of married female breadwinners. As a result, there is a need to curb alcohol abuse to reduce the married female breadwinners battering.

#### **5.4.2 Frequency of abuse of married female breadwinners**

The study found that participants gave varied answers concerning the frequency of abuse in their marriage. Four participants indicated that their husband abuses them three to four times per month. Three abused married female breadwinners indicated that they are victims of abuse once or twice a week. They outlined that the major contributory factor to abuse is that their husband drinks alcohol on weekends. This shows that alcohol abuse plays a pivotal role in the frequency of abuse in married female breadwinners' abuse. Other factors that influence the frequency of abuse are moods, conflicts and anger as pointed out by Participant seven. Worth noting is that the majority of participants were not sure. They indicated that they do not usually keep track of the number of times that they are victims of abuse. Therefore, the frequency of abuse in their marriage varies. The participants revealed that factors that involve alcohol abuse, conflicts, mood swings and anger determine the frequency of abuse in their marriage. In focus group discussions, majority revealed that their husbands abuse them several times a month and most of the abuse occurs when their husbands are drunk. The finding of the study concurs with a survey by Seedat, Van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla and Ratele (2009) in Soweto.

The survey in clinics found out that sixty-eight percent of abused married female breadwinners suffered physical, verbal and psychological abuse at least three times a month usually when their husbands were drunk. The acts of abuse that they suffer comprises of physical assaults, controlling of movement, eviction from home, insults and humiliation. According to the Secretariate of the Pacific (2009), around sixty-eight percent of abused married female

breadwinners reported experiencing at least two acts of physical or sexual violence, or both by their husband when intoxicated by alcohol. Therefore, the study found out that the frequency of abuse of married female breadwinners was high when their husbands were drunk. However, to a lesser extent factor that involves alcohol abuse, conflicts, mood swings and anger determined the frequency of abuse of married female breadwinners.

### **5.4.3 The intensity and pattern of abuse of married female breadwinners**

The study found that five abused married female breadwinners revealed that the pattern of abuse started before and in the early days of marriage. Participant Twelve said that, *“He has always been abusive even when we were dating. I thought he will change over time but he didn’t but after I seek a protection order his abusive behaviour lessened”*. Participant seven even went on to compare her husband behaviour to a leopard, which does not change its spots. This shows that the pattern of abuse in five participants’ marriage has been consistent before and after marriage the marriage. Due to the intensity of the abuse, participants opened domestic violence cases against their husband at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). Seven participants seek a protection order as a way of protecting themselves and deterring their husband’s abusive behaviour.

As a result, five of the participants revealed that the intensity and severity of the abuse decreased. On the other hand, two participants revealed that the intensity and severity of abuse increased because their husbands are not afraid to violate the terms of the protection order. Furthermore, four participants revealed the pattern of abuse started later or after a number of years in their marriage. This shows that the number of years spends in a marriage may lead to abuse of female breadwinners. The participants managed to pinpoint the influencing factors behind their husbands’ abuse. Three participants revealed that alcohol abuse influenced their husband to be abusive. Participant eleven mentioned that her husband became abusive after giving birth to the couple’s first child. This shows that factors such as alcohol abuse, the number of years spend in the marriage, having children and economic factors such as loss of a job may lead to intensity and pattern of abuse in abused female breadwinner’s marriages. Therefore, the study found out that the pattern of abuse married female breadwinners started before marriage and to five participants it started after some years in the marriage. This shows that the pattern of abuse of married female breadwinners follows the cycle of violence model.

The cycle of violence model postulates that the abusive relationships go through a three-stage pattern that involves the following; tension building, acute battering phase and honeymoon phase (Conner, Cerulli and Caine , 2014). In the tension-building phase, the abused married female breadwinner tries to control the situation by pleasing the abuser, giving in or avoiding the abuse. Participant five said that, *“My husband was abusive even before we got married and I agreed to his marriage proposal thinking that he will change. The abuse became worse until I reported him to the Police who referred me to TVEP. Now it is better he no longer abuse me like what he used to do”*. This shows that in the tension building phase of the cycle of violence, Participant five agreed to the marriage proposal of her abusive husband. She agreed because she wanted to please her and she was hoping that his abusive behaviour would change after marriage. Walker (2010) states that in the acute battering phase, the tension peaks and the physical violence begins. The presence of an external event triggers it and not abused married female breadwinner’s behaviour.

As a result, the start of the battering episode is unpredictable and beyond the abused married female breadwinner control. Participant six said that, *“In the early days, he would wake up moody and angry with me for nothing. I was shocked the first tie he beat me because I had done nothing at all. It was just a simple argument and the next thing he was clapping me. As a result, that is the reason I had to take a protection order against him in 2012 because I was afraid that he might kill me”*. The excerpt shows the physical assault of Participant six doing anything wrong but it was because of the husband emotional state anchored from the tension phase. To prevent the physical assaulted, there was nothing Participant six could do. Conner, Cerulli and Caine (2014) postulate that in some cases abused married female breadwinners may unconsciously provoke the abuse, which release the tension building in abusive husband emotional states and culminates into battering. Walker (2010) states that the last phase in the pattern of abuse it is the honeymoon phase. The abusive husband expresses remorse, tries to minimise the abuse and might even blame it on the partner.

Conner, Cerulli and Caine (2014) postulate that the abusive husband exhibit loving, kind behaviour and tries to convince the abused married female that he would not do it again. Participant Nine said that, *“My husband he is abusive and he has always been abusive. At TVEP, they helped me to get a protection order but he has always been violating the protection order since 2014. When I try to go to the police to report him for contravening the protection order, he becomes all sweet and caring. He would promise me that he will change but after some time he abuses me”*. The excerpts from Participant nine concurs with the honeymoon

phase stipulated by Conner, Cerulli and Caine (2014). Abused married female breadwinners try to report their husband to police. Abusive husbands talk them out of reporting through showing affection and promising to change so that they will not report to police. This gives abused married female breadwinners hope that may be their husband will change. Thus, the pattern of abuse continues like that. Therefore, the findings of the study concur with the cycle of violence model postulated by Walker (2010).

#### **5.4.4 The causes of abuse of married female breadwinners**

The interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews revealed that there are a plethora of causes of abuse of married female breadwinners. The causes of abuse involve the following; culture, self-esteem, age, social network, witnessing of violence in childhood and infidelity. The most prominent cause of abuse was culture because all participants revealed that their husbands believe in cultural and traditional practices such as *tshedele ya mamalo* (lobola) which influences abuse of married female breadwinners. From the inputs of the participants presented in Chapter 4, the researcher broke down the inputs into sub-themes to discuss and link the causes with relevant literature. Each sub-theme concerning causes of abuse was discussed and linked with relevant literature in the upcoming sections.

##### **5.4.4.1 Culture**

An analysis of the participants' interviews reveals that culture is the root cause of abuse of female breadwinners in marriage. All twelve participants revealed that cultural practices such as *tshedele ya mamalo* (lobola) lead to abuse in their marriage. Participant six said that, *“My husband does not see anything wrong with beating me because he paid tshedele ya mamalo (lobola). He says that it is a way of disciplining my kids and me since he is the man of the house He says that it is according to our norms and values that the man of the house must discipline the family”*. This show that men see themselves as superior to abused married female breadwinners. Men believe that paying lobola gives them the right to discipline female breadwinner through battering. This is a view supported by all the three groups in focus group discussions.

According to Jasinski and Williams (2008), men are cultured to use violence to control or maintain control of married female breadwinners. Aggression can also come into effect if they are frustrated to control their wife's or spouses. In many African cultures, men and women socialisation processes are internalised when they are young and practised for the rest of their lives (Jasinski and Williams, 2008). According to Tshesane (2011), men are taught from a tender age to separate sexual desires from being loving, caring, liking and respecting which are the aspects that girls from a tender age are taught. The result of this kind of socialisation is that some men end up being aggressive and regarding women as sex objects rather than as complete human beings that need to be loved and cherished (Tshesane, 2011). Having said that, maybe in the traditional society, this kind of socialisation was ideal and relevant but in the modern-day world, this kind of socialisation is outdated for example women are breadwinners in the modern day society.

According to Murray and Graves (2012), if a husband thinks his wife is failing in her role or overstepping her boundaries, the husband may respond by using violence against her. Moore (2010) notes that husbands or wives who have very strong traditional views of the male versus female role in the family may be frustrated to the extent that they can be aggressive. Therefore, culture contributes to abuse of female breadwinners in marriage. Although, culture holds people together, indicates where people are coming from, upholds some values and define people, worth noting is that fact that culture is dynamic. Therefore, it is bound to change with time. Consequently, there is a need for some cultural roles and beliefs to change for example gender roles in the family between a wife and a husband. It is high time that culture embraces and accepts the contemporary women of modern-day notably in contrast to the traditional women who depended on men for everything. A shift or change in cultural beliefs and gender roles may help in lessening and curbing abuse in families and free women from abuse.

The theoretical framework of this study was anchors on Habermass (2011), Theory of Communicative Action. Applying this theory to the context of this study, the lifeworld reflection is on the existence of culture in the Venda, Sepedi and Shangani cultures that are dominant in Vhembe District of South Africa. Cultural beliefs amongst the Venda and Shangani people is associated with patriarchy which stipulates that men are more superior than woman which gives them the privileged to punish them through battering. Worth noting is the fact that, culture is a collective of beliefs, morals and customs that emanates from the straight interaction that takes place in day to day life in dissimilar social groups that involve families and communities. As a result, the culture of women battering passed down from one generation to another in the

traditional societies of the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. Therefore, Habermas' (2012), Communicative Action Theory forms the theoretical base of the study.

#### 5.4.4.2 Witnessing of violence in childhood

If a child grows up witnessing violence, it may influence abuse in adulthood. Findings of the study reveal that four participant's husband grew up in violent families. Participants two said that, *"My husband also told me that he is a traditional Venda man so he can do whatever he feels like doing as the head of the family. To him, there is nothing wrong with beating me because his father used to beat his mother when he grew up"*. The excerpts from Participants two shows that abused married female breadwinners' husbands do not see anything wrong with beating them because they grew up in abusive families. In focus group discussions, participants revealed if a child grows up witnessing violence, they might become abusive when they become adults. Key informant interviews reveal that witnessing of violence when one is a child leads to abuse of married female breadwinners. Key informant Two said that, *"Abusive behaviour is like a cycle in families. If ones' parents are abusive, chances are high that the children can become abusive also when they grow up. The reason being that children imitate and learn from what happens to them and parents are their immediate role models. They can grow up thinking that abuse it is a normal thing to do family"*. The excerpts from Key informant three show children can emulate their parents when they become adults. As a result, it promotes the culture of violence to run in the families. Therefore, the interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews concurs that witnessing violence in childhood may lead to abuse of married female breadwinners.

The findings support the assertion by Jewkes (2012) and Walker (2010) who notes that boys and girls learn about women abuse in upbringing. They view abuse as something that is acceptable because their fathers will be beating their mothers. Ferguson and Beaver (2009) note that if a man is born and bred in violent home, chances are high that the child may be abusive in adulthood. The reason being that the child would have learned that physical violence is an acceptable response to anger or any type of frustration in the family. According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2014), children can learn violence as a means of resolving conflicts. Men can use violence as a way of proving their manhood. Therefore, the study found out that a child growing up witnessing violence sets a wrong precedent about wife battering to

boys. It ingrains young boys with the belief that when a father beats a mother it is necessary and a normal thing to do. Chances are very high that children who witness violence may carry these negative and toxic beliefs into their childhood and marriages.

Therefore, this study found out that witnessing violence when a child is young might lead to abusive behaviour in adulthood. Furthermore, the influence of children witnessing violence is part of the lifeworld postulated by Habermass (2012) in Theory of Communicative Action. Habermas (2012) denotes that morals emanate from the straight interaction that takes place in day-to-day life in dissimilar social groups that involve families and communities. Thus, if children witness a culture of violence against women in their day-to-day interaction with the family they may grow up thinking that beating women is normal. Therefore, Habermas (2012), Communicative Theory theoretically underpins the findings of this study.

#### **5.4.4.3 Alcohol abuse**

The study found out that the second major cause of abuse is alcohol abuse. The interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews revealed that most of the verbal and physical assaults that occurred the husbands were under the influence of alcohol. Participant one said that, *“The main cause of the abusive behaviour of my husband is alcohol abuse. When he is drunk, he usually beats me”*. This shows that the frequency of abuse is high when abused married female breadwinners husbands are drunk. In focus group discussions participants of the study also revealed that alcohol abuse is a major contributor to abuse in marriages. Key informants state that most of the physical and verbal assaults occur when abused married female breadwinners are intoxicated. Key informant one said that, *“Alcohol abuse also leads to physical and verbal attacks of abused female breadwinners. On weekends, we receive many cases of abuse because the husband will be drunk. Some men when they drink alcohol become animals that beat their wives, only to regret in the morning when they are sober”*. Therefore, alcohol abuse leads to abuse of married female breadwinner’s abuse.

Wallace and Roberson (2011) note that the abuse of alcohol is associated or linked to violent behaviour through its physiological effects that may lead to violent impulses, tendencies and inhibitions. Alcohol affects the central nervous system of a human being by releasing inhibitions, which depress brain function or suppress superego function thereby allowing the expression of rage or anger (Wallace and Roberson, 2011). According to Bancroft, (2012), cases of wife

battering associated with alcohol abuse are more dangerous than situations not involving alcohol. A study by Brecklin and Ullman (2012) found strong links between alcohol and drug abuse and occurrence of wife abuse in marriages. Therefore, the findings of the study found out that alcohol abuse is one of the leading cause of abuse of female breadwinners in marriage. As a result, there is a need to curb alcohol abuse to reduce the abuse female breadwinners in marriage.

#### **5.4.4.4. Self-esteem**

The study found out that lack of self-esteem leads to abuse of married female breadwinners. Five husbands of abused married female breadwinners were unemployed and the other seven earn less money than their wives do. As a result, lack of job opportunities leads to stress and loss of self-esteem, which culminates, into abuse of married female breadwinners. Participant Four had this to say, *“My husband lost his job. This led to stress and as a result, he started drinking beer. That is when he became abusive. I think losing a job bruised his ego as the man of the house and he started taking his stress on me. He would say that culturally a man is supposed to provide for his family and not to be taken care by a woman, so losing a job really affected him”*. This shows that the loss of job of Participant four’s husband affected his self-esteem. As a result, the husband started stressing, drinking beer and abusing her. This evidences that low-self-esteem cause abuse of married female breadwinners. In focus group discussions, abused married female breadwinners reveal that their husband feels threatened by the fact that they are working or earning more money than they earn. The key informant interviews revealed that men feel challenged that their wives are breadwinners, which may lead to abuse. Key informant two said that, *“Another reason that leads to abuse of female breadwinners is that men seem to struggle in a situation whereby the wife is working or earning more than them because it makes them feel like they are failures in life. To make up for those inferiority feelings, they end up beating their women as a way of showing their masculinity”*. This shows that men abuse women as a way of ascertaining their masculinity

According to Sacket and Saunders (2009), lower self-esteem amongst men may lead to domestic violence even though the relationship or link between low self-esteem and domestic violence is ambiguous. To a lesser extent, some studies such a Hotaling and Sugarman (2010), Schumacher , Feldbau-Kohn, Smith and Heyman (2011) have found no link between low self-

esteem and married female breadwinners' abuse. In a study by Schumacher *et al.*, (2011) men who were aggressive to their wives perceived hypothetical partner-related vignettes that had a negative effect on their self-esteem unlike those who were not abusive. In trying to find the link between female breadwinners' abuse and low self-esteem, Baumeister and Dewall (2016) conclude that the evidence found did not back a link between wife battering and low self-esteem. Those studies that show weak effects are not clear when more rigorous research methodologies are used. Significantly, evidence suggests that, there is a high probability of wife battering among men with unstable high self-esteem because it would be a response to perceived belittlement or undermining of their sense of superiority.

Baumeister and Dewall (2016) note that the perceived man's superiority is susceptible to the fact that they will not be working or earning less than their wives earn. Hence, it leads to doubts regarding their masculinity. This would result in the man doubting himself, which would lead to low self-esteem. Consequently, the man will become violent to the wife to make up for the low self-esteem. In an assessment of a big group of men who had abused their spouses in four USA big cities, Gondolf and Fisher (2014) found out that a big proportion that comprises of thirty-eight percent of the whole group had antisocial or narcissistic tendencies. This suggested there is a high probability that many wife batterers have low self-esteem. Low self-esteem leads to insecurities and powerlessness. Adepoju and Opong (2014), states that retaining of traditional position of power and authority urges wife battering. However, this is rapidly fading away because modern day society allows and enables more social and economic opportunities for woman, such as equal access to education and employment. The dynamic change of the modern day society has led to the erosion of men's traditional sources and positions of power. Men feel threatened because female breadwinners are acquiring more economic and social resources in the modern day society.

Female breadwinning phenomena have upset the balance of power that was belonging men in the household. Therefore, the failure of man to meet their perceived traditional roles and responsibilities in the contemporary social and economic family setting is bringing up or has led to the rise of feelings of powerlessness. As a result, of the feelings of powerless, men use female breadwinner's abuse as a tool to affirm patriarchal social order just to prove their masculinity (Ondicho, 2010). Furthermore, according to Wallace and Roberson (2011), the main reason regarding abuse of women by men is that men need to use violence to have control over their wives. Rothman, Butchart and Cerda (2013) note that control and power are entrenched in the masculine system of men. The upbringing of men in the traditional society reveals it all. Men

are socialised to be head of the families. Whilst on the other side of the coin, socialisation of women involves being submissive to men. Men can tell women what to do. Failure to listen may warrant battering (Rothman *et al.*, 2013). According to Wallace and Roberson (2011), in a family set up where the husband and wife share equal powers in decision-making process the chances of conflict and violence are very low or next to none. This shows that man must do away with this traditional kind of beliefs and acknowledge the fact that woman and men are equal. Real men love and respect their wives or irrespective of the fact that they are working or not. Applying Habermas' Communicative Action, the feeling of powerlessness that men feel as a result earning less money creates conflict between a husband and wife, which may result in physical abuse. This exhibits the lifeworld, which denotes the day-to-day interaction of men and women in the family and the society.

#### 5.4.4.5 Age

The study found out that age or the number of years spent marriage may lead to abuse of married female breadwinners. Participant eight said that, *"When he is drunk, he is very violent. Another thing is that he now take me for granted. We have been married for nine years so he knows that even if he can beat me, I cannot go anywhere"*. The excerpt from Participant eight revealed that men take abused married female for granted because they would have been married for a number of years. As a result, they take advantage of the fact that abused married female breadwinners would not be having any other options of where they can go. The same sentiments sufficed in focus group discussions. Abused married female breadwinners revealed that sometimes they feel like they are stuck with their husband because of their age and the number of years that they have spent in the marriage. Key informant interviews revealed that age and the number of years spent in a marriage might lead to abuse depending on how a husband takes it. Key informant three said that, *"Age or the number of years spent in marriage may contribute to true love or abuse in marriage. In some couples, it creates a strong bond whilst in other couples; as time goes by men start to take their wives for granted"*. This shows that depending on an individual, some married female breadwinners husbands strengthen the bond of love as years goes by whilst other take their married female breadwinners for granted. Therefore, age or the number of years spent in marriage may be a contributor to abuse of married female breadwinners.

Rennison and Rand (2013) women over the age of fifty accounted for thirty percent of homicides committed by an abusive partner. A study by Mouton (2014) in the United States of America (USA) found out that woman who are fifty years and older reported undergoing physical and verbal abuse at a rate similar to that of younger women. Moreover, Mouton (2014) reported that out of a population of ninety-two thousand women in between the age of fifty and seventy-nine abused by their husbands, ten-thousand two hundred women have a history of abuse. According to Pillemer and Finkelhor (2008), there is a high rate of abuse of women above sixty-five years old and over. The rate of abuse of women who are aged sixty-five and over is forty-one per one thousand couples.

Fitzgerald (2009) found out that forty percent of abused women were older women above the age of fifty-five. Similarly, results of the American National Crime Victimization Survey indicated that one hundred and eighteen women who were fifty-five years of age and older experienced all various types of abuse such as physical, emotional, financial and verbal abuse over a period of nine years (Fisher and Regan 2014). Therefore, the age of women and amount of years spent in the marriage is a risk factor for abuse. Therefore, whether a woman is a breadwinner or not old age is a natural phenomenon that catches up with every human being. They cannot escape from it and actually, no one can escape from it. As a result, as married female breadwinners grow up in their marriage and spend more years with their husband, it becomes a risk factor for abuse. According to Straka and Montminy (2011), abuse of women who are fifty years and above can manifest as a continuation of the character of the abusive husband or it can start in old age. Abusive behaviour may begin in marriage in later years. Therefore, abuse of married female breadwinners may be present at the beginning of a couple's marriage, but others abusive behaviours began in later years as changes and uncertain factors such as health status played larger roles in life.

#### **5.4.4.6 Social Network**

The study found out that the use of social network leads to abuse of married female breadwinners. The problem arises from conflicts that arise from social network texts messages. The conflicts may degenerate into abuse of married female breadwinners. Participant eleven said that, *"He does not like it when I use the social network. He is jealousy when my men call on my phone or texts me some message. One day he clapped me after a male colleague send me*

*a message on Facebook after we had attended the workshop together. He was just telling me that he safely arrived, so he got angry because of that*". The excerpt from Participant eleven evidences that the use of social networks leads to abuse of married female breadwinners. Although some abused female breadwinners indicated they do not use the social network, four members of the groups revealed that they use the social network and it has led to abuse by their husbands. The key informant interviews revealed that social network leads to abuse of married female breadwinner. Key informant one said that, *"These days one of the causes of abuse, divorce and even murdering of spouses is because of the social network. A simple text message may lead to violence in the family. It is unfortunate that sometimes it will even be a wrong text or stray message and many women died because of that. So indeed, the social network has led to the increase of abuse of women by men"*. This shows that social network leads to abuse of married female breadwinners. In a worst-case scenario, it may lead to the death of abused married female breadwinners as revealed by Key informant one. Therefore, the study found out that social network leads to abuse of married female breadwinners.

Although the use of cell phones and social networks has some advantages in communication with people and the outside world between couples, it can also be a cause of disagreement in marriages. These disagreements and conflicts may culminate into abuse of married female breadwinners. The social network may invoke the feelings of jealousy in the husband if the wife is giving attention to another man on the phone. The findings of this study are in support of a Facebook study by Muise, Christofides and Desmarais (2009), which found out that there is a significant relationship between the amount of time spent on Facebook and feelings of jealousy. The study tested relational factors that contributed to "Facebook specific jealousy". It revealed Facebook use contributes to jealousy. The use of social network has led to many breaks ups and divorcees in marriage. Luscombe (2009) and Chen, (2009) evidences this in a survey of some popular press stories which found out that Facebook is involved in one out of five divorce cases. According to the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (2010), eighty-one percent of America's top divorce attorneys have seen an increase in the number of cases citing evidence from social networking sites in the last five years.

The potential negative effects of the social network warrant attention. Williams (2010) postulates that social media create increased opportunities for digital intimacy interference given their broad range and accessibility, which may lead to conflicts and abuse of married female breadwinners. This shows that the use of social networks has had a positive and negative impact on the marriage institution and social interaction of married female breadwinners. Before

the invention of social networks, there were conventional methods of communication in marriage such as the writing of love letters but these days it is all about texting and updating statuses. The advantages of conventional methods such as the writing of letters are that it limited accessibility of couples from socialising with people outside the marriage. In contrasts with the modern-day world.

Through social networks, outsiders and even strangers have access to couple's information and profiles. People can text at any time of the day even during late at night when couples their privacy. This is evidenced Participant ten said that, *"My workmate once send me a text message, It said thank you for a wonderful workshop. My husband beat me saying that it was inappropriate because it was after hours"* It is so unfortunate that the husband battered Participant ten because of a message sent by a reckless workmate after hours. This goes to show how a simple text message in marriage may lead to abuse of married female breadwinners. Participant ten's social network incidence evidence that social networks bring unnecessary conflict in marriage, which may degenerate, into physical assault. That shows the impact that social network has had on abuse and the marriage institution ever since the turn of the century unlike some decades before when the social network did not exist.

However, the social network is not all bad but it has a positive side that comes with it. Social networks can be used to curb abuse of married female breadwinners since it can offer a platform to campaign against abuse or a fast media of communication, for example, married female breadwinners can text the neighbour, friends or family that my husband is about to abuse me and they can come to rescue her. The study also found out that social networks can also be used as a social support system, for example, Facebook groups that denounce violence against married female breadwinners and give tips to curb abuse. Conclusively, juxtaposing the good side against the bad side of social networks this study maintains that social networks do more harm than damage to marriages and leads to abuse of married female breadwinners. Going forward, the truth of the matter is that social network is a modern phenomenon that improves communication among the people. Therefore, married female breadwinners need to adjust and come up with amicable solutions that prevent and minimise the damage that it may have on their marriage. Worth noting is the fact that married female breadwinners cannot in this modern day world live without the use of social network. To sum up, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews concur that the use of social network may lead to abuse of married female breadwinners in marriage.

#### **5.4.4.7 Infidelity**

The study found out that abuse marries female breadwinner's husbands are involved in extra-marital affairs. Participant ten revealed that her husband verbally and physically attacks her each time she tries to ask about his extra-marital affairs. Although the majority of men are the ones who are unfaithful, there is a minority of married women who cheat. As a result, it leads to physical assaults when the husband finds out. Worth noting is that in this study, in this study men were the ones who were unfaithful. The sexual relationship between husband and wife is an important aspect of the marital relationship. According to Dobash (2014), the promiscuous behaviour of one spouse might become the main source of marital disappointment leading to maladjustment and friction in married life.

The husband's unfaithfulness or the women's unfaithfulness often becomes the focal point of the quarrel in the family. An article by Makoni (2012) in the Herald articulated that a man killed his bride in honeymoon after discovering that all the years of courtship she was lying that she is virgin. The article shows the danger of infidelity. A wedding is a symbol of love in the society so in the context of the article it shows that, the man really loved his bride but her unfaithfulness drove him over the edge to kill her. Consequently, infidelity between married couple's leads to conflict that can culminate in abuse or even death. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that infidelity leads to abuse of female breadwinners in marriage.

#### **5.4.5 The consequences of abuse of married female breadwinners**

The study found out that there are many negative consequences associated with abuse of married female breadwinners. The consequences of abuse of married female breadwinners involve the following; injuries, post-traumatic stress, suicidality and gynaecological problems. Other negative consequences are; alcohol abuse, social isolation and financial problems. The most prominent consequences of abuse of married female breadwinners were injuries and post-traumatic stress. From the inputs of the participants presented in Chapter 4, the researcher broke down the inputs into sub-themes to discuss and link the consequences of abuse with

relevant literature. Each sub-theme concerning consequences of abuse was discussed and linked with relevant literature in the upcoming sections.

#### **5.4.5.1 Injuries**

The study revealed that abused married female breadwinners suffered from injuries inflicted by physical assaults from their husbands. In some instance, the physical assaults were severe that they end up being hospitalised. The findings concur with Mirrlees and Black (2012) surveys in England, which detail that one in two assaults on women by men results in injury. Rodgers (2014) notes that some international surveys show similar injury rates that emanate from abuse of female breadwinners by men. The 2012 British Crime Survey (BSC) found out that, three in four women were injured in the previous year and that ninety-seven percent of the participants had experienced four or more incidents in a lifetime (Walby and Allen, 2012). Campbell (2012) also notes that abuse of women by men is one of the most common causes of injury in women. Most of the signs and symptoms of abused married female breadwinners comprise the following; head, face, neck, thorax, breast and abdominal injuries. In addition to that, there is a surplus of other direct and indirect harmful effects associated with abuse of women, which comprises of; permanent disability, chronic pain syndromes such as headaches and backaches (WHO, 2016). Consequently, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that abused married female breadwinners suffer from injuries that pose a danger to their health.

#### **5.4.5.2 Post-traumatic stress**

The study found out that all participants of the study suffered from post-traumatic injuries because of the abuse that they suffer at the hands of their husband. The post-traumatic stress affects them in different ways. Some abused married female breadwinners struggle to sleep, feel lonely, break down in tears and some have nightmares. According to Jones (2012), post-traumatic stress is a normal reaction to abnormal events that involve actual or threatened death or severe injury. It involves re-experiencing traumatic events for example nightmares, flashbacks and intrusive thoughts, avoidance of trauma-related stimuli, emotional numbing and

hyperarousal such as restlessness, irritability, hypervigilance and sleeplessness. All these symptoms of post-traumatic stress are synonymous combat veterans or disaster survivor. Moreover, post-traumatic stress is also associated with torture victims. There are similarities of post-traumatic stress on abused married female breadwinners and post-traumatic stress suffered by kidnapped or prisoners of war.

Worth noting is that abused married female breadwinners report all the components of torture that are included in the Amnesty International definition (Jones, 2012). This shows similarities between victims of torture and abuse victims. Average prevalence rates for post-traumatic stress amongst married female breadwinners were sixty-four percent across eleven studies meta-analysed by Golding (2009). The study found out that victims of abuse were on average four times more likely to meet the criteria for post-traumatic stress diagnosis unlike women in general.

Worth noting is that symptom of depression and posttraumatic stress overlap. Depression symptoms detected in some studies that did not test for post-traumatic stress may indicate its presence. Many health specialists lack an adequate understanding of trauma and its effects and are prone to misdiagnosis (Jones, 2012). Conceptualising abused married female breadwinners symptoms as a normal response to traumatic stress can help victims understand links between abuse and its mental health effects and open up possibilities for intervention, thereby reducing the anxiety and sense of powerlessness arising from the trauma itself (Humphreys and Campbell, 2011). Therefore, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that abused female breadwinners suffer from post-traumatic and depression which affects their health.

#### **5.4.5.3 Gynaecological problems**

The interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews revealed that abuse of married female breadwinners predisposes them to gynaecological problems. Participant two and Participant seven revealed that they had miscarriages because of abusive behaviours of their husbands. The findings support the assertion by Bergen (2015), who notes that gynaecological problems are the most consistent and long-lasting physical health differences between female breadwinners abused by their husbands and those who are not. Unfortunately, abused married female breadwinners have been found to be three times more likely to

experience problems such as sexually transmitted diseases, vaginal bleeding and infections, fibroids, decreased sexual desire, pain during intercourse, pelvic inflammatory disease, and urinary tract infections, than women who are not abused by their husbands and partners (Bergen, 2009, Campbell 2012, WHO 2016). Worth noting is that physical assaults on women are associated with internal injuries to the women which are very dangerous. The degree or severity of the physical assault determines the extent of reproductive health problems

Campbell (2012) notes that women who experience both physical and sexual abuse have a high probability or are at greatest risk of suffering from gynaecological problems. The following studies; Bergen 2009, Campbell 2012, WHO 2016, concurs that the higher prevalence of gynaecological problems amongst abused women is likely to be linked to forced sex by the husband or partner. In a USA community sample of women who are abused by their husbands, Campbell (2012) found that women who had experienced sexual assaults from their partners reported significantly more reproductive and fertility problems than those who had only experienced physical assaults, even when demographic factors and effects due to co-occurring physical assaults were controlled.

Furthermore, there are many factors that lead to increased risk for gynaecological problems which involves the following; repetitive termination of pregnancies, high possibility that men who are abusive can have many sexual partners at the same time unwilling to use contraceptives such as condoms (Campbell, 2012). This poses a great risk to women because they can contract Sexually Transmitted Diseases or HIV/AIDS. When women try to negotiate the use of contraceptives in abusive marriages, they risk abuse. Campbell (2012) notes that abuses married female breadwinners often report that request to make use of contraceptives such as condoms frequently results in further abuse. Furthermore, abused married female breadwinners are less likely to comply with Sexually Transmitted Diseases treatment. The reason being that they are afraid to go home with the medication for fear of infidelity accusations (Schei, Eberhard-Gran and Eskild, 2009). If they have to consult at the clinic or hospital, it has to be in secret or they have to do so without the husband knowing about it. Failure to take home the medication and complying with the Sexually Transmitted Diseases medications guidelines may predispose abused married female breadwinners women to long-term gynaecological problems (Schei *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, in-depth interviews focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that abused female breadwinners suffer from gynaecological problems.

#### 5.4.5.4 Suicidality

The study finds out that abuse of married female breadwinners leads to suicidal thoughts. Abused married female breadwinners revealed that abuse at the hands of their husbands' leads to psychological effects such as low self-esteem, which makes them feel like they are worthless. As a result, some abused female breadwinners contemplate suicide. In a study by Golding (2009), the average prevalence rate for suicidal thoughts and attempts amongst abused married female breadwinners was eighteen percent across thirteen studies. Female breadwinners who are abused are on average four times more likely to be suicidal than those who are not abused (Golding, 2009). In different societies in Sweden and Papua New Guinea, there is a link or association between suicidal attempts and abuse of women (Campbell 2012; WHO 2016). A national survey Netherlands found out that the incidence and severity of abuse of married female breadwinners accounted for most of the variance in reported suicidal thoughts amongst participants of the study. Twenty-five percent of the women who experienced medium to severe violence reported thinking about committing suicide a lot compared to four percent in the no violence group who indicated that they do not think about committing suicide at all (Romkens, 1997).

Worth noting is that the risk of committing suicide is very high mostly to female breadwinners who are abused by their husbands, who at the same time suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. This is evidenced by Participant six said that, "*One day after my husband beat me I become so stressed and I thought of drinking pills. I even went to the shops to buy many panados but luckily that day my aunt came to confront my husband about his abusive behaviours*". This shows that stress is a major contributor to the thought of committing suicide. Romkens (2008) states that there is an inter-relationship between abuse of married female breadwinners, suicide thoughts and post-traumatic stress. Abuse of married female breadwinners may create a chain of mental reactions that starts with post-traumatic stress and ends in suicidal thoughts and attempts. Abused married female breadwinners, who suffer from the post-traumatic disorder, are fifteen times more likely to attempt suicide (Jones, 2012). Therefore, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews, revealed that abuse of female breadwinners in marriage predispose them to the risk of committing suicide.

#### **5.4.6 The challenges faced by abused married female breadwinners**

The interviews, focus group discussion and key informant interviews revealed that abused married female breadwinners face a challenge of balancing between work and domestic chores at home. Although some of their husbands do not go to work, they do not help married female breadwinners to do domestic chores. The findings support an assertion by Drago, Black and Wooden (2015), who notes that female breadwinners' productive and reproductive roles are often described as being 'in conflict', as women's increasing labour force participation has not automatically resulted in a fundamental change in their childcare and domestic responsibilities. The difficult circumstances that they found themselves in are rooted in the patriarchy system and the gendered division of labour within the household (Demmitt, 2013). There is a need for a change of the gendered division of labour. It is not fair on the side of women to participate in both gender roles, at least if women are working they must share or there must be a bit of some balance in doing reproductive work.

According to Thobejane and Khoza (2014), unemployed men stay at home for the whole day and do not do any household chores. At the end of the day, they expect their wives to do everything for them. According to Drago, Black and Wooden (2015), there is an urgent need for efforts to balance responsibilities between wives and husbands. This lessens abused married female breadwinners' burden. The reason being that female breadwinning phenomenon is growing at a faster pace whilst the society and men are still conservative. Despite the hard work that women do both at work and in the house, still, their husband does not give them the appreciation for their hard work and efforts. In fact, instead of helping them, they put more pressure on them and expect a lot from them, which means that they do not have time to relax or rest (Drago, Black and Wooden, 2015). Instead of being appreciated and being given the credit that they deserve for working hard to bring money for the upkeep of the family and doing household chores, it is ironic that they are not appreciated but abused.

Therefore, abused married female breadwinners face many difficult challenges. There is a need for some coping strategies and effecting of changes starting from family level, community level, national level and international level. Whether society likes it or not or whether men like it or not, female breadwinning is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed (Strong and Cohen, 2015). Married female breadwinners' marriages remain stressful today because society has not pursued ways to alleviate the resulting work and family conflict that comes with being a female breadwinner.

### **5.4.7 The circumstances that make abused married female breadwinners to stay in their marriages**

The study found out that there are circumstances that influence abused married female breadwinners to stay in their marriages. The circumstances involve the following; culture, desire to take care of children, social status, social needs, religion, entrapment and loss of estate. From the inputs of the participants presented in Chapter 4, the researcher broke down the inputs into sub-themes to discuss and link the circumstances that influence abused married female breadwinners to stay in an abusive marriage with relevant literature. Each sub-theme concerning the circumstances. Each sub-theme concerning circumstances that make abused married female breadwinners to stay in their marriage was discussed and linked with relevant literature in the upcoming sections.

#### **5.4.7.1 Culture**

The study found out that culture influences abused married female breadwinners to stay in abusive marriages. All twelve participants in the study revealed they stick to their marriages because of the influence of culture. Norms can protect against violence, but they can also support and encourage the use of it. A human being is a product of the environment and this environment shapes by society (Erez, 2012). As a result, in order to understand the reason why female breadwinners who are abused by their husband stay in an abusive marriage, there is a need to understand the female breadwinner's culture which governs her behaviour. Ncube (2010) states that in many traditional African societies' married women are subjects of men. This shows that the local traditional cultures in Vhembe District that comprises the Venda, Shangani and Sepedi culture are patriarchal in nature and believes in married female breadwinners' submissiveness. Hence, culture influences married female breadwinners to stay in their marriages despite being abused.

Extended family members' influences abused female breadwinners to stay in abusive marriage. The findings of the study are in support of Choudry (2009) who asserts that even if female breadwinners attempt to leave their abusive husbands, the extended family may have the cultural power to influence them to return to their abusive husbands. The whole extended family may even team up against the abused female breadwinners or threaten to disown them. Erez

(2012) postulates that abused married female breadwinners do not leave their husband because they fear condemnation by the family and community. They may also fail to receive the necessary validation to name their experience of victimisation by the abuser. According to Choudry (2009), some communities do not take the abuse of women as a serious crime against women. As a result, abused married female breadwinners who divorce their husbands encounter rejection by their family members and their communities (Choudry, 2009).

A study in the Western Isles of Scotland by MacNeil, (2014), shows that some close rural and secluded communities can have strong cultural and religious norms that place much value on family privacy and non-interference and attach considerable social shame to domestic violence, perceiving it to arise through victims 'failing' in exercising family responsibilities. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that culture influences abused female breadwinners to stay in abusive marriages. Worth noting is that influence of culture is encapsulated in the lifeworld of Habermas' (2012), Theory of Communicative Action. The existence of culture in the eleven villages reflects the life world. The Xitsonga, Sesotho sa Lebowa and Tshivenda, which postulate that an abused married female breadwinners' burial place is at her marital home. This means under no circumstances should an abused married female breadwinner's divorcee her husband. They must bear all the challenges that they face in their marriages. Therefore, study findings anchors in Habermas's (2012), Theory of Communicative Action.

#### **5.4.7.2 Desire to take care of children**

The study found out that the desire to take care of their children make abused married female breadwinners to stick to their marriages. They do not want their children to grow up with a single parent. According to Walby and Allen (2012), female breadwinners who have children with the men who abuse them are more vulnerable to continued abuse in the marriage. The main reason being that they are less likely to divorce the husband because there are children involved. In most cases, they often return to these violent marriages and relationships even after trying to divorce or break up with their husbands. The reason will be mainly that divorce has disruptive effects on their children, for example, changing the schools the children are attending.

Worth noting is the fact that men take advantage of the situation that their wives will not leave them because they have children together. In another way, the more women have children that is the more that the husband would abuse them. The reason being that the husband becomes complacent with the fact that the wife will not leave him because of the desire to take care of the children. So children act as a buffer or defensive shield for the man not to get divorced by the wife. This supports a research by the British Crime Survey (BSC) in 2012, which found out the presence of many children in the marriage almost doubles the risk of abuse by their husbands and it lowers their chances of divorcing their husbands (BSC, 2012). To women who are more than thirty years of age, the risk of domestic violence was three times higher than for those women without children (Mirrlees and Black, 2012). According to Stanko, Crisp, Hale and Lucraft, (2008), some local studies report victimisation rates over twice as high for female breadwinners with children than those women without children.

Although, female breadwinners stay in abusive marriages to take care of their children, worth noting is the fact female breadwinners will be exposing their children to abuse by their husband. In the end, both the mother and the children become victims of abuse. Therefore, walking away from the marriage may be a better option because it may save both the wife and children. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that desire to take of children makes abused female breadwinners to stay in marriages.

#### **5.4.7.3 Social status**

The study found out that the desire to keep a social status that comes with being married makes abused married female breadwinners to stick to their marriages. Consideration of marriage as a success in the society makes abused female breadwinners to stick in their marriages. Having a husband and a successful career makes married abused female breadwinner's feel complete. In the focus group discussions, abused married female breadwinners revealed that they savour the social status that comes with being married. Despite being financially independent, female breadwinners do not feel complete without being married. Married completes them and brings social status that they would not want to lose in the event of breaking up with their husbands. According to Lovaglia and Houser (2016), social status anchors on the prestige, honour and respect accorded to female breadwinners in marriage. Loring (2014) states that abused female

breadwinners stay in abusive marriages because they feel like separation or divorce may reflect a failure on their part. They perceive that breaking up with their husband may bring shame and embarrassment, which may erode their social status. Loring (2014) notes that it is inconceivable that society view abused married female breadwinners who divorce their husbands as failures. It is high time that society should not judge abused married female breadwinners who break up with their husbands.

#### **5.4.7.4 Social needs**

The study found out that social needs influences abused married female breadwinners to stay in their marriages. The binding force that brought abused married female breadwinners with their husband it is love. As a result, the feeling of love makes them stay with their abusive husbands. Power, Koch, Kralik and Jackson (2014) notes that abused female breadwinners have social needs such as, the need to love and be loved by the husband, sense of belonging and being attached to the husband for example being called by the husband's surname, which brings status and pride. These social needs will be more important than walking away from the marriage. According to Fraser (2015), social beliefs about relationships, marriage and motherhood typically associate women with acts of undying loyalty requiring them to commit to and work on maintaining their relationships even when they are abusive. Belief in romantic love prioritises relational maintenance above all else and suggests, "Love itself can overcome all obstacles", even abuse (Fraser, 2015). As a result, female breadwinners end up blaming themselves for the abuse that they will be suffering at the hands of their husbands.

According to Power *et al.*, (2014), female breadwinners may stay in the abusive marriage because they will be thinking that if they just try harder to work on their marriage such as to show more love then the abuse will stop because they will no longer be deserving of it. The problem is that leaving an abusive husband may be difficult for female breadwinners because the thought of existing outside an intimate relationship is often more painful than staying in an abusive one. This is because social understandings of romance frequently endorse the intimate relationship as the central reason for female breadwinners' existence (Fraser, 2015). Leaving an abusive marriage can be difficult for women because "the desire to be loved and to love romantically is pivotal to understandings of self as properly feminine subjects" (Power *et al.*, 2014). Hayes (2014) found out that women often understood their situation as just part of the

pain of being in a committed marriage. In the modern-day world, film and television equates and idealises pain and trauma in marriages, for example, many love songs, films and literature devoted to the tragedy of love such as *Romeo and Juliet* (Wood, 2011). As a result, romantic love is idealised, but so is the pain associated with it and female breadwinner's role in nurturing and maintaining a marriage. Female breadwinner's role to try harder mirrors the romantic beliefs that entreat women to take responsibility for marriage success (Wood, 2011; Fraser, 2015; Power *et al.*, 2014). Female breadwinners may accept their abuse as part of the destiny of true love and the need to maintain love in the face of all obstacles (Hayes and Jeffries, 2013)

The role of woman as the saviour of marriage is a clear theme in the cultural studies and psychological literature (Wood, 2011 and Fraser, 2015). Therefore, women stay in the abusive marriage because of romantic love. Furthermore, abused female breadwinners stay in abusive marriages because of the feeling of attachment to the husband. They do not want to lose the feelings of attachment that they will be having towards the abusive husband. At the emotional level, one key issue facing female breadwinners who separate is the presence of lingering feelings of attachment and loss around the former abusive husband. According to Eldar-Avidan and Haj-Yahia, (2010), feelings of attachment and loss in abused female breadwinners is more situational and not qualitatively different from those of other women leaving troubled nonviolent relationships. Campbell (2012) suggest that attachment issues in women who are abused by their husbands might be more appropriately viewed as a normal and expected grieving response to having lost a major attachment figure.

The problem is that abused female breadwinners when they think of leaving or are in the process of leaving, they tend to miss the positive qualities of their husband (Landenburger, 2009). However, Dutton and Painter's (2010) longitudinal data indicated that the attachment of recently separated women in their sample decreased by twenty-seven percent over a brief period of 6 months, which suggests the situational nature of the attachment. Additionally, attachment in divorcing women understood should be in terms of women's socialisation, specifically in terms of idealised, culturally prescribed gender roles as well as their access to power and resources relative to men. In qualitative interviews, battered women who had left commonly reported an ongoing attachment related to feelings about the partner himself than to the loss of a relationship with the highly valued wife-mother role (NiCarthy, 2007).

They felt great sadness in having to let go of these childhood dreams. In some abused and women not abused, the identity disruption was so keenly felt, that they reported feeling a

complete loss of their core selves requiring them to undergo a process of “identity transition” to “reconstruct a new sense of self” (DeGarmo and Kitson, 2016). In the DeGarmo and Kitson (2016) longitudinal study of divorcing and widowed women, the greater the centrality of the “coupled identity” to a woman, the greater was the psychological distress both shortly after the partner’s death or filing for divorce and one year after. Campbell (2012) found only weak or qualified support for the relationship between the valuing and defining of oneself in terms of the traditional wife or mother role and greater depression among abused women. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs social needs such as romantic love, pride, and status that comes with being married.

#### 5.4.7.5 Religion

The study found out that abused married female breadwinners stay in their marriages because of the influence of religion. Besides the need to keep the vows, Pastors believes in prayer to solve all marital problems of couples. Participants ten revealed that her Pastor believes that prayer solves her husbands’ abusive behaviour. As a result, divorcing her husband is not justified because prayer will solve the husbands’ abusive behaviour. In focus group discussions, abused married female breadwinners also revealed that religious beliefs influence them to stay in the abusive marriage. The key informants also shared the same sentiments that religious beliefs influence the abuse of married female breadwinners. Key informant three said that, *“Most of the female breadwinners who come here to report believe in Christianity. Some of the Christianity beliefs and values are against divorce”. Therefore, abused married female breadwinners are influenced by religious beliefs to stay in their marriage.* Religion has a great influence on female breadwinners and human beings in general. Worth noting is the fact that, matters that have to do with religion has to be taken seriously and not for granted.

Mbiti (2010) notes that the Supreme Being amongst Christian religion provides sustenance of all things and is older than time. Christians believe in God who is above everything else and he is the creator and can solve any marriage problems like abuse or cure all diseases, for example, congregates eating snakes or drinking paraffin to solve the problems that they face in marriage (Nemakonde, 2016). Therefore, churches and prophet healing is dominant in the modern-day world. Religion has a great influence on how people perceive marriage and divorce. The proliferation of Churches in Africa, which claim to have the power to heal any disease and deal

with any kind of social problems, is continuing. There are too many prophets, fortune-tellers, who claiming to possess spiritual powers to solve marriage problems including abuse (Nemakonde, 2016). The church that sanctions marriage and it also has the indirect influence to maintain the marriage institution to uphold marriage vows exchanged on weddings.

As a result, divorcing an abusive husband perceived as an act of evil spirit, which requires prayers. Married female breadwinners believe that pastors have supernatural power to make miracles and fix a broken marriage. This means that what the church leaders and pastors teachings influence their congregation. As a result, pastors and prophets because of the beliefs and faith invested in them by congregates, they have an indirect power to make wife's stick to their marriages despite the husband being abusive. Therefore, religious beliefs, directly and indirectly, influences abused female breadwinners to stay in their marriages depending on how deeply they follow their religion. In summation, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concur that religion makes abused female breadwinners to stay in marriages.

#### **5.4.7.6 Entrapment**

The study found out that abused married female breadwinners stay in the abusive marriage because of entrapment. The participant revealed that their husband becomes cunning and persuasive each time that they threaten to leave them. Participant Five said that, *"I have left our marital homes twice because of his abusive behaviour. He always follows me to apologise, spoil me and convinces me that he would change. Therefore, I would end up feeling sorry for him and I would go back to him"*. The excerpt show that abused married female breadwinners husband s pretend to be loving and caring as a way of dissuading them from divorcing them. As a result, abused married female breadwinners stick to the marriage hoping that the husband's abusive behaviour will change without knowing the entrapment. The focus group discussion and key informant interviews also revealed that abuse married female breadwinners stick to their marriages because of entrapment by their husbands.

After abusing female breadwinners, some man tries to compensate their bad behaviour as a way of compensating and getting back on the good terms with their wives. This is a clear way of manipulative behaviour, which is good as entrapping women in the marriage. Entrapment is a strategy that used by abusive husbands to make female breadwinners stay in abusive

relationships. There is a big difference between stranger violence and violence from a husband or partner. The difference is that abusive husband or partners are able to successfully and effectively form and maintain a relationship that can last for a long-term due to both entrapment and control (Lowe and Sarah, 2011). Even though the abusive husband's source of success or ability to draw in and maintaining control over his wives remains unsettled, it is generally accepted that abusive men create an emotional connection with their victim, as well as use a variety of tactics to entrap female breadwinners.

This emotional connection and entrapment it is what makes the abused wife or partner stick around despite the abuse. Even though all abusive relationships are different and unique, an abusive husband behaviour typically cycles through various stages. According to Conner, Cerulli and Caine (2014), the various stages that describe the patterns of behaviours is called the Cycle of violence. The Cycle of violence model postulates that the abusive relationships go through or follow a three-stage pattern: tension building, explosion, and the honeymoon phase (Conner *et al.*, 2014). Although not all abusive relationships follow a precise cycle, women abusers use different and varying degrees of abusive and loving tactics to terrorise and entrap their partners (Lowe and Sarah, 2011).

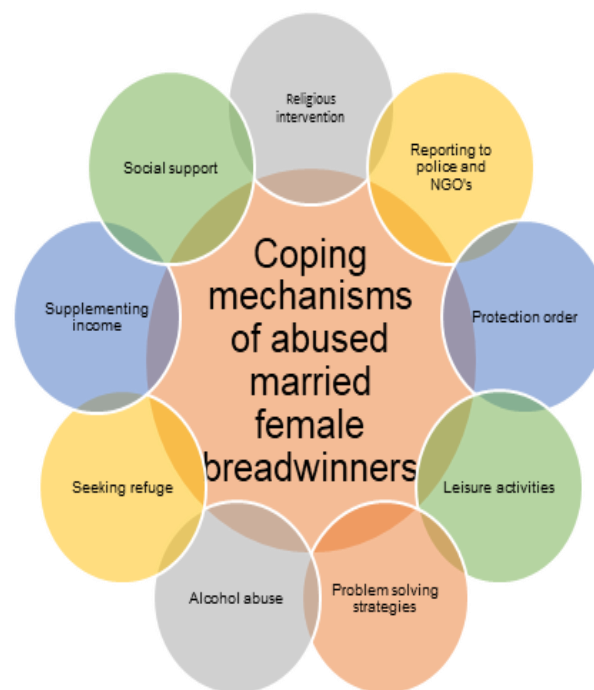
#### **5.4.7.7 Loss of estate**

The study found out that abused female breadwinners stay in their marriages because of fear of losing their estate. The desire to keep or retain the properties that they would have acquired during marriage makes abuse female breadwinners to stick to their marriages. According to Evans (2012), psychological and emotional abuse by their husbands makes them lose self-confidence in themselves and induce fear of losing their marriage estate in the event of divorce. Divorces involve a lot of conflicts and fighting and yet abused female breadwinners would not be having the psychological and emotional strength to go through all that. Engle (2012) postulates that emotional and psychological abuse in marriage is like brainwashing because it systematically wears away female breadwinners' self-confidence, sense of self-worth, trust in their own perceptions and self-concept. Given, all these factors abused female breadwinners will not have the strength to face and fight their husbands and go through all the court processes against them. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group

discussions and key informants interviews concurs that fear of loss of property makes abused female breadwinners to stay in marriages.

#### 5.4.8 Coping strategies of the abused married female breadwinner in a marriage

**Figure 5.1 Coping strategies**



The coping mechanisms are illustrated in over lapping small circle, which makes a one big circle, which keeps/entraps abused female breadwinners in marriage. These strategies moderates severity of abuse and enables female breadwinners to cope with abuse. As a result, it is very difficult for them to break through this round big chain of coping strategies that keeps them in marriage. Instead of walking away, they keep hoping for the best in their marriages, despite the futility and potential fatality. The coping strategies comprise of the following; reporting to police or NGO's, protection order, seeking refuge, alcohol abuse and dependence, counselling, religious intervention, problem solving strategies, social support, supplement income, leisure activities. The theoretical framework of the study was based on Habermas's;

(2012). A look at the aforementioned coping strategies shows that both lifeworld and system world aspects are used by abused married female breadwinners to cope up with their plight. Lifeworld aspects such as social support, religious intervention and counselling help abused married female breadwinners to cope with abuse. On the other hand, system world aspects such as reporting to police and protection orders assist abuse married female breadwinners to cope up with abuse. Therefore, the Theory of Communicative World in the context of this study equates to a circle with overlapping aspects of the lifeworld and system world. The lifeworld and system world assist abused married female breadwinners to find coping strategies to their plight. However, from the inputs of the participants presented in Chapter 4, the researcher broke down the inputs into sub-themes to discuss and link the coping strategies that enable abused married female breadwinners to cope up with their plight. The upcoming section discusses and links relevant literature with each sub-theme concerning coping strategies used by married female breadwinners to cope with their plight.

#### **5.4.8.1 Reporting to the Police or NGO's**

The study found out that when abuse become severe and intense, abused female breadwinners report their husbands to the police or NGO's. According to Zorza (2014) abuse of women is one of the most frequent types of call to law enforcement agencies and it takes about one-third of all police time. This clearly shows the high rate of abuse of women in the society. However, according to the National Coalition against Domestic Violence (2015), the abuse of women is one of the most regularly underreported crimes. Only twenty-five percent of all physical assaults, twenty percent of all rapes and fifty percent of all stalking by violent men against women reported to the police and some domestic violence support organisations. For the tiny number of cases reported to the police, on average, a woman reports after thirty-five times of physical assault by the husband before reporting.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) estimates that reported cases of rape make up three percent only and the South African Law Commission approximates that only 54,000 survivors press charges despite indications that there are nearly 1.7 million rapes per year (Britton , 2009). These discrepancies corroborate Jewkes and Abrahams' (2012) , the theory of the "iceberg of sexual coercion", which argues that multiple factors inhibit not only the reporting and prosecution of violence against women but also the recognition that an

assault has actually occurred. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that abused female breadwinners make use of reporting to the police or NGO's as a coping strategy against abuse.

#### **5.4.8.2 Protection order**

The study found out that abused married female breadwinners make use of protection orders to cope up with abuse. Seven participants indicated that they took protection order against their abusive husbands to protect themselves and make use of protection order to cope with abuse. Protection orders give a sense of protection to female breadwinners and it will be a way of scaring their abusive husband not to physically assault them or else they may report them to the police and get prosecuted. Finn (2010) notes that protection orders are the primary form of protection for abused female breadwinners in marriage. According to Grossi, Tavares and Oliveira (2008), there are a number of reasons that make abused female breadwinners seek protection orders against their husbands. Chief amongst the reason is fear of further physical assaults by the husband or threats. Another reason is the need to take some action to punish their husband and secure their rights (Grossi, Tavares and Oliveira, 2008).

Santo, Nakano and Lettiere (2010) note that seeking a protection order is determined by the severity of abuse. This leads to abused female breadwinners seeking a protection order, which enables their self-protection and reproach of the abusive husband's future conduct. According to Finn (2010), protection orders are an attractive and important alternative to the persecution of abusive husbands because they offer a broad range of protection. However, Robert, Davis and Smith (2005) criticize protection orders for failing to deter the re-abuse of abused married female breadwinners after applying for the protection. Finn (2010) notes that only a handful of studies have examined the effectiveness or the deterrent effect of a protective order without conclusive evidence to show the deterrent effects of protective orders against abusive husbands. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that abused female breadwinners make use of protection orders as a coping strategy to stay in marriages.

### **5.4.8.3 Counselling**

The study found out that abused married female breadwinners make use of counselling as a coping strategy against abuse in their marriages. According to Foa and Meadows (2016), it is of paramount importance that abused female breadwinners should receive counselling to help them to heal and cope up with all the negative effects of abuse. Female breadwinners' abuse leads to a plethora of physical, social, health and psychological effects such as depression and stress. Foa and Meadows (2016), states that in the absence of trauma counselling, negative psychological effects can persist for at least a year following sexual abuse of female breadwinners but even with counselling, up to fifty percent of abused female breadwinners retain symptoms of stress. Furthermore, abused female breadwinners have a higher probability of suffering from post-traumatic stress. It involves re-experiencing traumatic events for example nightmares, flashbacks and intrusive thoughts, avoidance of trauma-related stimuli, emotional numbing, and hyperarousal such as restlessness, irritability, hypervigilance, and sleeplessness (Jones, 2012). As a result, in order to get over all the effects of post-traumatic stress, abused female breadwinners' need counselling to heal and cope up with abusive behaviours of their husbands. All the twelve participants who took part in the study receive counselling at Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) when they reported their cases. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that abused female breadwinners abuse make use of counselling as a coping strategy to stay in their abusive marriages.

### **5.4.8.4 Seeking refugee**

The study found out that abused married female breadwinners seek refuge cope up with abuse. The findings concur with Kiribati Family Health and Support Study (2016), which found out that abused female breadwinners leave their homes for a least one night, sometimes many times, because of violence. Garcia-Moreno (2005), notes that for some female breadwinners leaving their marital homes when abuse becomes too much can be the beginning or it can be a sign that one day they will eventually leave the marriage because leaving an abusive husband is a process and not a one-time event. Loue (2001) echoes the same sentiments by stating that abused female breadwinners may leave their husbands several times and return before being

able to leave permanently. There are numerous reasons why female breadwinners stay or take a long time to leave an abusive relationship. Kirkwood (2013) asserts that female breadwinners fall into a web of emotional abuse and physical violence, which reduces the resources on which they can draw. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs abused female breadwinners make use of seeking refuge as a coping strategy to stay in marriages.

#### **5.4.8.5 Religious intervention**

The study found out that abused married female breadwinners make use of religious intervention as a coping strategy against abuse. It is human nature that when things get tough in life to be it in marriage, work life or hardships, human beings turn to the Supreme Being for guidance and deliverance. The Supreme Being can be God for Christians, Allah for Muslim and ancestors in the African traditional societies. The bottom line is that human beings in everything they do they believe that there is a supreme being or a higher power in the spirit world that has control over everything. Having said that, abused female breadwinners likewise also believe in Supreme Being as a solution of coping mechanism to the abuse they suffer in marriage. The findings of this study concur with Anderson, Renner and Danis (2012) postulation that spirituality and religion-accessing support of a spiritual nature helps female breadwinners in coping with abusive behaviour of their husbands in marriage. Spirituality and religion help abused female breadwinners to heal, grow and be mature in their marriages as time goes given the fact that the spiritual support includes a personal relationship with God. Similarly, Hodges and Cabanilla (2011) note that in some communities abused female breadwinners' women are more likely to go to a religious leader or pastor for help with their abuse. According to Gillium, Sullivan and Bybee (2006), spiritually and religious involvement in marital disputes more especially abuse seems to promote greater psychological wellness which includes a better quality of life and decreased depression for abused female breadwinners. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that abused female breadwinners abuse make use of religious intervention as a coping strategy to stay in their abusive marriages.

#### 5.4.8.6 Social support and social network

The study found out that abused married female breadwinners make use of social support and social network to cope up with abuse that they suffer in the hands of their husbands. Social support means that sometimes abused female breadwinners' neighbours, friends and family can intervene and support them socially, emotional, psychological and even physically for example neighbours coming to the rescue of female breadwinners during physical assaults by the husband. This helps a lot in preventing and reducing the intensity of physical assaults. If a neighbour hears an abused female breadwinner screaming and rushes to stop the husband it means that the abuse is prevented. This shows that the immediate people or the people that surround the female breadwinners such as neighbours, friends and family help them to cope with abuse. According to Davis (2012) and Ulrich (2015), supportive relationships are very important in helping abused female breadwinners to cope up with the abusive behaviour of their husbands. They help abused female breadwinners in developing a sense of connectedness to the people around them. The sense of connectedness is good because it gives women strength to cope up with the abusive husband behaviour and the negative effects that may come out of it such as stress and depression.

According to Garcia-Moreno (2015), the probability of abused female breadwinners to suffer from the negative effects of abuse when they have the support of family and friends is less compared to a woman who does not have any social support system. Moreover, abused female breadwinners with a good social support system are better equipped to cope with the abusive husband than those without it. However, it is not always given or obvious that the neighbours, friends and family can be supportive to abused married female breadwinners. Lu and Chen (2016) argue that, although women confide to neighbours and family members about the abuse, their responses are not always supportive. Sometimes their response invokes abused female breadwinners feelings of self-blame and shame. The most important facet is to reduce the various existing myths and social stigma surrounding abuse of female breadwinners. This enables the promotion of supportive and caring responses by people if someone they know divulges experiences of abuse. The development of social supports has the most influence on women's ability to cope in a positive way (Lu and Chen, 2016). Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that abused female breadwinners abuse make use of social support as a coping strategy to stay in their abusive marriages.

The theoretical framework of this study was based on Habermas's' (2012), Communicative Action Theory. Applying this theory to the context of this study, the use of the social network as a coping mechanism or way to deal with abuse is a true reflection of the presence of the living word as denoted by Habermass (2012). Social network enables day-to-day interaction of abused female breadwinners with their friends, family and neighbours. It is through this interaction that they share problems; give each other advice and solutions on how to cope up with abuse that they face in the hands of their husbands. Therefore, the findings of this study based on Habermass (2012), Communicative Action Theory.

#### **5.4.8.7 Alcohol abuse**

The study found out abuse married female breadwinners make use of alcohol abuse to cope up with their plight. Two participants revealed that they take alcohol as a way of coping with their stress. Participant five stated that, "Sometimes I drink alcohol just to cope up with the abuse that I suffer at the hands of my husband. In life sometimes drinking down your sorrows works. It may not be a good way of coping with stress but it helps a lot. Therefore, some abused married female breadwinners drink alcohol as a way of coping up with her plight. Worth noting is that drinking alcohol is an unhealthy way of coping with stress. In focus group discussions, all women concurred alcohol abuse is not a healthy way of coping with stress. Key informant interviews revealed that a minority of women drink alcohol to cope with abuse. Key informant one said that, "*Some abused female breadwinners drink alcohol to get over the abusive tendencies of their husbands, but the problem is that it is an unhealthy way of coping with stress because alcohol is hazardous to health*". Therefore, the study found out that abused married female breadwinners abuse alcohol to cope up with abuse.

A study by Golding (2009) revealed that average prevalence rates for alcohol abuse amongst abused married female breadwinners were nineteen percent across ten studies. Abused married female breadwinners are six times more likely to abuse alcohol unlike those who do not abuse alcohol. According to Schumacher , Feldbau-Kohn, Smith and Heyman (2011), there is a strong relationship between abuse of female breadwinner's women and alcohol abuse or dependence when violence is too much. However worth noting is the point that a clear cause and effect relationships are difficult to establish between abuse of female breadwinners by the husband and alcohol abuse or dependence (Jones, 2012). However, one study reviewed by

Campbell (2012) indicated that the abuse of female breadwinners by husband preceded alcohol abuse in most cases. The abusive husband or partner would have been drunk or abuse substance before beating or insulting the female breadwinner. One in four female breadwinners sampled in the Canadian Violence against Women Survey (VAWS) reported using drugs or medication to help them cope with abuse by their husband (Statistics Canada, 2016)

The number of women escalated to one in three for reporting emotional abuse and to nearly one in two for those who had sustained an injury during a physical assault by their husband or partner (Rodgers, 2014). This shows that female breadwinners suffer more from emotional abuse than physical abuse, which leads them to alcohol and substance abuse or dependence. Jones (2012) states that female breadwinners abused when growing up in their childhood violence there is a high probability that they may abuse alcohol in their lifetime than women who never abused alcohol in their childhood. Increased alcohol abuse by abused female breadwinners is associated with post-traumatic stress (Campbell, 2012). As a result, female breadwinners who are abused by their husband or partners may abuse alcohol and as a form of medication to get over their Post-traumatic stress. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that abused female breadwinner's abuse alcohol to cope up with abusive behaviour of their husbands.

#### **5.4.8.8 Problem solving strategies**

The study found out that abused married female breadwinners make use of problem solving strategies. The problem solving strategies involves the following, passive resistance, avoidance, passive-aggressive and retaliation. Abused married female breadwinners engage in problem solving techniques to cope up with their plight. The problem solving techniques help them to understand, adjust, accommodate copy, reflect, accommodate and cope up with abusive tendencies of their husbands. Participant nine said that, *"I have a diary that I keep in my room and my husband does not know about it. As a result, of each time we have a conflict or he abuses me a write it down including the time and date. After writing everything that would have*

*happened, I also pour out how I feel about everything. This helps me to understand him better and reflect on his abusive behaviour. It also helps me to avoid conflict that may lead to his abusive behaviour*". The quotation from Participant nine evidences that abused married female breadwinners reflects on the behaviour of the abusive husband.

After each and every episode of abuse or conflict, they write down, relive or reflect the abuse. This allows them to assess what would have gone wrong, where they can improve or ask themselves some questions pertaining to whether they should have handled the situation better or not. Reflecting on the conflict and abuse enables abused female breadwinners to avoid making their husband angry again in the future. Avoiding making their husbands angry may involve declining to engage in an argument started by husbands or leaving home, for example, going to visit friends so that they can avoid conflicts that are may culminate into physical assaults. The findings of this study support, the findings in a study by Lam Ching-yee, (2014) about the coping mechanisms of women in marriage in China. Lam Ching-yee (2014) found out that after every conflict, abused female breadwinners recreate the abusive actions again in their mind so that they can avoid future confrontations with the husband.

Abused female breadwinners make use of passive resistance to cope with abuse. Participant four said that, "*The best way of showing my husband that I don't like his abusive behaviour it is by acting out in silence. My action will speak louder than words because talking will lead to more abuse. Sometimes it can be as if you are adding paraffin to fire. So the best way I just keep quiet or stop doing things that I always do to him like not cooking and just buying takeaways*". Through passive resistance, abused married female breadwinners can demonstrate in peaceful ways that they do not like the abusive tendencies of their husbands. The findings of this study concur with Loke, Wan and Hayter (2012) who states that keeping silent, avoiding confrontation and tolerating the violence is one of the most coping strategies used by abused married female breadwinners (Loke, Wan and Hayter, 2012). Furthermore, abused married female breadwinners use aggressive resistance as a coping strategy against abuse. Aggressive resistance is a situation whereby an abused married female breadwinner retaliates in defence after a physical attack by the husband.

According to Otrar, Eksi, Dilmac and Sikin (2012), greater psychological well-being such as positive thinking and hope in abusive marriages is a great coping mechanism, which does away with stress and anxiety. Furthermore, Baez (2010) notes that constructive coping with abuse such expressing emotions, socialisation, problem-solving and support seeking from people

around such as family and friends lead to reduced anxiety and hostility. Nevertheless, avoidance-oriented coping is more harmful to individuals and lead to higher levels of dysfunction of abused female breadwinners in their marriages because they will be avoiding expressing their feelings and anger (Appelhans and Schmeck, 2014). Emotion-focused coping strategies focusing on negative emotions like self-blaming are associated with poor overall psychological health (Billings and Moos, 2004). However, abused female breadwinners who use emotion-focused coping strategies in a positive way such as positively interpreting a stressor in their life make use of adaptive coping strategy.

A cross-sectional study by Stowell, Keicolt-Glaser and Glaser (2011) about active and avoidant coping methods stress level determination on immune function found out that more active coping strategies were used by individuals experiencing higher levels of stress and lower stress situations were found to be significantly associated with more passive coping skills. The results showed that the particular stressor is a variable that facilitates the type of coping mechanism an individual can utilise in the kind of abuse the woman will be facing in the marriage. Subsequently, the participants in the study make use of positive thinking as a coping strategy against the abusive behaviour of their husbands. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that abused female breadwinners abuse make use of positive thinking and problem solving strategies to cope up with the abuse they suffer in the hands of their husbands”

#### **5.4.8.9 Recreational activities**

The study found out that abused married female breadwinners engage themselves in recreational activities to relax and cope with stress. Coleman (2013) notes that engaging abused married female breadwinner's in recreational activities help in coping with stress. Compton and Isoahola (2014) postulated that recreational activities work as a buffer against negative effects of abuse such as post-traumatic stress and depression. According to Iwasaki and Mannell (2010), two ways of coping with stress are; leisure coping beliefs and leisure coping strategies. Iwasaki and Mannell (2010) define leisure coping beliefs as abused married female breadwinners' generalised beliefs that their leisure helps them cope with stress. Leisure coping strategies are actual strategies that abused married female breadwinners use to cope with stress. There are three coping strategies. The first strategy was leisure companionship or engaging in leisure that is shared with other people. The second strategy was leisure palliative coping, which meant leisure provides a time-out that allows Bused married breadwinners to

escape stress, become refreshed and become better able to handle problems. The last strategy was leisure mood enhancement, leisure that increases positive moods or decreases negative moods (Iwasaki and Mannell, 2010). All these three strategies are helpful in making abused married female breadwinners to cope with their stress. Therefore, the study found out that abused married female breadwinners make use of recreational activities to cope with abuse.

#### 5.4.8.9 Finance generating schemes

The study found out that abused married female breadwinners engage in finance generating schemes to cope up with economic abuse by their husbands. Although abused married female breadwinners earn more money than their husband, the interviews revealed that they are subjected to economic abuse by their husbands. Abused married female breadwinners' husbands, take their salary and spend it on alcohol. Participant One said that, *"To cope up with the economic abuse by my husband, I do stokvel with other women in the village. Stokvel enables me to make extra money for back up because my husband squanders money on alcohol. Some months he takes my bankcards and spent money on alcohol and gambling at Khoroni Casino. So, I need to make extra money to supplement my salary"*. The excerpt from Participant shows that abused married female breadwinners face financial constraints due to economic abuse by their husband. As a result, they engage themselves in finance generating schemes like stockvel to supplement their salaries.

Besides making money, engaging in gardening work is an activity that can help in relieving the stress of abused married female breadwinners. In-group discussions two discussions, four abused female breadwinners revealed that they engage themselves in stockvel and two participants engage in gardening work to make extra money. However, two participants reveal that they do not have a space to do gardening in their yard. Two participants revealed that they do not engage in gardening work. Key informant interviews reveal that abused female breadwinners engage in money generating activities to supplement their budget. *Key informant two said that, "Abused married female breadwinners suffer from economic abuse. You may find out that their husband abuses alcohol and spend money on their girlfriend outside marriage. Therefore, some abused married female breadwinners face financial constraints. I was surprised to find out that some of them play stockvel to supplement their financial status"*. This shows that abused married female breadwinners make use of financial generating schemes

such as stockvel and gardening to cope up with financial abuse. According to Lukhele (2010), a stokvel is an informal group savings scheme in which members voluntarily agree to contribute a fixed amount to a common pool on a regular basis.

#### **5.4.9 Intervention measures against abuse of married female breadwinners**

The interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews revealed that there are many intervention measures that can be used to curb abuse of married female breadwinners. The emerging themes from data analysis concerning intervention measures to curb abuse of married female breadwinners are the following; involving men in fighting against women abuse, application of women abuse laws and policies, compulsory screening and mandatory reporting. The intervention measures involve; increase of organisations that deal with abuse of women, information dissemination and awareness campaigns, gender equality and use of traditional leaders, social support, change of social attitudes and perceptions. Worth noting is that the theoretical framework of the study was based on Habermas's' (2012), Communicative Action Theory. Having said that, Habermas' (2012) postulates that the system world coordinates and integrates that take place in the society. In the context of this study, the system world devises intervention measures that seek to curb abuse of married female breadwinners. A reflection of the system world is Non-governmental organisations such as TVEP that lobby and campaign against abuse of married female breadwinners around villages in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa. Therefore, the theoretical framework of the study anchors on the Habermas' (2012), Communicative Action Theory. The upcoming sections discussed and linked emerged themes from the analysis in the previous chapter with relevant literature concerning the intervention measure against abuse of married female breadwinners.

##### **5.4.9.1 Increase of organisations that deals with abuse**

The study found out that there is a need to increase organisations that deal with abuse of married female breadwinners in the community. According to Desai (2012), NGO's helps in curbing abuse of women through empowering victims, lobbying and advocating for their rights. Desai (2012) notes that NGO's lobbying and advocacy work with regards to abuse of women

encompasses amongst other things women abuse policy advocacy that seeks social change through influencing attitudes, policy and practice and seeking to reform state services that concern women. Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) is a non-government organisation that provides prevention and support services related to sexual and gender-based violence (SBGV) and HIV and AIDS in Vhembe District Limpopo Province of South Africa. TVEP runs two trauma centres based at Donald Fraser and Tshilidzini hospitals. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that there is a need to increase more organisations that deals with abuse in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa.

#### **5.4.9.2 Information dissemination and awareness campaigns**

The study found that there is a need for information dissemination and awareness campaigns against female breadwinners' abuse. The findings concur with Michau (2013), who notes that lobbying and public awareness campaigns against abuse are one of the key components of NGO's in curbing women abuse in the communities. The approach of NGO' to make use of public awareness campaigns approaches is part of prevention strategies which focus on changing the socio-cultural attitudes which underpin gender-based violence that is rampant in local communities (Michau, 2013). The use of awareness campaigns is awareness used in three key approaches to meet both strategic and practical objectives that involve the following; to try to change attitudes to gender-based violence, to encourage dialogue around the issue and to publicise services available. Awareness campaigns also involve engaging abused married female breadwinners. According to Michau (2013), NGO's awareness campaigns recognise that survivors of abuse can simultaneously be the women they want to engage with and also the intended targets of their efforts, such as those campaigns which seek to publicise the availability of services dedicated to supporting the victims of gender-based violence. Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that there is a need for information dissemination and awareness campaigns against female breadwinners' abuse in Vhembe District of Limpopo province, South Africa.

#### **5.4.9.3 Involving men in fighting against abuse**

The study found out that there is a need to involve men in intervention measures against abuse. It is through taking part in anti-abuse initiatives such as counselling that they can realise how it affects married abused female breadwinners. The reason is that men are the major perpetrators who also need counselling and rehabilitation to desist from their abusive behaviours. As a result, there is a need for man to participate in anti-female breadwinners' abuse programmes. In group discussions, abused married female breadwinners revealed that abusive men should also go for counselling so that they may stop to be abusive. The key informant interviews revealed that abusive men have to take part in anti-female breadwinners' abuse programmes to prevent alienation of men. Initiatives that do not address patriarchy and social norms to change men perceptions, attitudes and behaviour run the risk of treating symptoms rather than the underlying causes of abuse of married female breadwinners

(Berkowitz, 2010). Power and patriarchy can be best dismantled and deconstructed from within. Self-examination is essential to that process and abusive men need to see their own experiences re-enacted in that. Engaging men in intervention programs against domestic violence builds a sense of ownership and personal investment in addressing the abuse of female breadwinners. Peer motivation is also a powerful tool that can be helpful for men programmes and campaigns against abuse of female breadwinners. If men are asked to change whether as perpetrators, potential perpetrators, or in more positive prevention roles, they need to be addressed and involved and not alienated.

According to Berkowitz (2010), abusive men respond better to the use of the "right" way to do things than pointing out the "wrong" ways. Therefore, a starting point is locating and valuing what men are already doing right and connecting it to positive outcomes that relate to the reduction and prevention of abuse of women. This is evidenced by evaluation data from fifty-seven programmes engaging men and boy's which showed a sixty-three percent rate of success in achieving Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and development outcomes (Barker, Greene, Siegel, 2010). Therefore, men can play a significant role as allies and change agents in helping to end violence against female breadwinners and in promoting gender equality. The point of departure of intervention measures should be built on the exploration, understanding and determining of men perceptions regarding abuse of female breadwinners so that there can be a change from being perpetrators of domestic violence to be forerunners in the fight against it. Therefore, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews found out there is a need for man participate in intervention programmes against abuse in the community because it enables cooperation of man as active participants female

breadwinners abuse initiatives than excluding them since they are the major perpetrators of abuse.

#### **5.4.9.4 Compulsory screening and mandatory reporting of abuse**

The study found that there is a need for compulsory screening and mandatory reporting of abuse abused married female breadwinners. According to WHO (2016), there is a need for mandatory reporting of abusive men. Mandatory reporting refers to legislation passed by some countries that require individuals or designated individuals such as health care providers to report usually to the police or legal system any incident of actual or suspected domestic violence or intimate partner violence (WHO, 2016). In many countries such as the USA, mandatory reporting applies primarily to child abuse and maltreatment of minors, but there is an extension to the reporting of women abuse. Therefore, South Africa needs to adopt mandatory reporting and screening of women abuse as an intervention measure.

According to the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Report (2017), the high rate of abuse of women and the negative consequences are present in numbers to justify routine screening. Early recognition and intervention can significantly reduce the morbidity and mortality that results from the abuse of women in marriage. A woman may not initially recognise herself as “battered”; therefore, the medical professional should routinely ask all women direct specific questions about abuse (Warm Springs Health and Wellness Report, 2017). Therefore, a triangulation of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informants interviews concurs that there is a need for compulsory screening and mandatory reporting of female breadwinners’ abuse to the police.

#### **5.4.9.5 Gender equality and use of traditional leaders**

The study found out that gender equality and the use of traditional healers may help in curbing abuse of married female breadwinners. According to Mararike (2015), traditional leaders and

traditional structures are an influential force among a large majority of communities in Africa. Traditional leaders wield influence and command much respect within their communities. There is a strong link between traditional leadership and culture, with traditional leaders considered the custodians of culture from one generation to the next. At the same time, considerable evidence highlights the link between HIV and gender-based violence (GBV), and the role of harmful cultural practices in fuelling the spread of HIV and the spread of GBV. Webb-Myllynen, Eghtessadi and Chingand (2011) define custodians of culture such as traditional leaders as individuals who have been trusted to hold and transmit important knowledge about traditions and culture which are passed on from generation to generation. Dr Stephen Mallinga, Ugandan for Minister of health said, *“People listen to Kings and Cultural Leaders. We had missed this point in the fight against women abuse, HIV and AIDS. Cultural Leaders should appeal to the people to modify behaviour and save lives.”* (Webb-Myllynen, Eghtessadi and Chingand, 2011). Therefore, the qualitative techniques of the study found out that abused female breadwinners pointed out that the use of traditional leaders in the fight against abuse and gender inequality in the community is of paramount importance.

#### **5.4.9.5 Implementation of women abuse laws and policies**

The study found that implementation of women abuse laws and policies helps in curbing the abuse of married female breadwinners. Govender (2013) states that there is a need for more protection of victims of abuse and prompt handling of women abuse cases by responsible authorities. According to Curran and Bonthuys (2015), one of the weaknesses of the Domestic Violence Act is that it does not make a provision for the issuing of protection orders in traditional courts. Abuse of women in rural areas continues to exist because of customary law application to problems that arise from abusive marriage instead of the Domestic Violence Act itself (Curran and Bonthuys, 2015). Govender (2013) notes that police officers are not effective in dealing with women abuse cases because of poor statements that they take when women who have abused report cases. Therefore, study finding concurs with the need to implement laws, and policies such as the Domestic Violence Act Domestic Violence Act 86 of 1995.

### **5.5 Study Limitations**

A plethora of limitations sufficed when carrying out this study. The setting of appointments with participants was a challenge. Some participants cancelled appointments and some would arrive late for the interviews. However, the researcher would re-schedule in the unfortunate incidences of participants counselling or not showing up for the interviews. Since Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) is a non-governmental organisation and offers employment opportunities from time to time, some participants had some expectations that they that their abusive husbands were going to be offered jobs after the interviews. However, the researcher thoroughly explained that there were no job offering because it was a pure University of Venda student research with no employment strings attached.

Worth noting is the fact that this study was sensitive in nature because it has to do with abusive experiences of abused married female breadwinners. As a result, the sensitivity of the study brought some challenges. Participants of the study were very emotional in describing their lived experience of their abuse. However, knowing the sensitive nature of the study the researcher had already put some helpful measures in the event of participants breaking down or getting emotional. The TVEPs in-house Counsellor was always available for counselling participants when needed. Before starting the interviews, the TVEP in-house counsellor conducted an assessment counselling session to prepare the participants for the interview and to determine the psychological risk on doing the interviews. The researcher experienced problems with the languages that were used. Some of the participants could not understand the questions when they were asked in English, so TVEP's Victim advocate was helping in translating and interpreting languages. The interviews, focus group discussion and key informant guidelines had four different languages that involve; English, Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sesotho sa Lebowa to cater for all the languages. This enabled participants to give relevant information and express themselves in the language of their choice.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

The study found out that besides being financially independent, abused married female breadwinners stick to their marriages contrary to some held assumptions and some scholarly studies that postulate that women stay in abusive marriages because they are financially dependent on men. Factors such as the desire to take care of children, pressure from cultural beliefs and religion, commitment due to the number of years invested in a relationship and

social needs apparently account for women staying in their marriages. In addition, the study found out that abused female breadwinners face a plethora of challenges in trying to balance being a career woman and doing household chores expected from them by the husband and the society in general. In order to cope up with overwhelming domestic chores and the destructive effects of abuse they suffer from their husband, they devised a plethora of the following to thrive in abusive marriages; problem solving strategy, social support, self-defense strategy, passive-aggressive strategy and social network. The theoretical framework of the study was based on Habermas's' (2012), Communicative Action Theory.

Applying Habermas's Communicative Theory, to the context of the study, it can be postulated that the lifeworld such as cultural practices influences the abuse of female breadwinners at the same time, the system world such like legal processes enables the coping strategies that make female breadwinners find a solution to their plight. As a result, the lifeworld and system world of abused female breadwinners to a circle with overlapping circumstances and coping strategies, which influences abused female breadwinners to stay in nuptial contracts and makes it difficult for them to walk away from their marriages. In summation, financial capacity alone was not strongly associated with the agency to leave an abusive marriage and economic empowerment might not be the only strategy to reduce women abuse because an even financial independent woman stays in abusive marriages. In summation, marriage is a sacred and unique bond with many forces at play, which are beyond any financial implications and thrives on a plethora of social, psychological, emotional phenomenon that is hard to quantify. Interventions that seek to assist abused women to leave their abusers must explore the more complex social and cultural drivers if they should be successful.

## **5.7 Recommendations of the study**

The recommendations in this study are based on the findings of the study and the body of literature reviewed and presented in chapter two. This study recommends a plethora of intervention measures which may help to improve the circumstances of abused female breadwinners in marriages in the Vhembe District of Limpopo, South Africa.

### **The context and circumstances that make abused female breadwinners stay in marriages (Objective 1)**

- There should be the proper implementation of the Domestic Violence Act Domestic Violence Act 86 of 1995. The reason is that the police and criminal justice system are slow in dealing and handling abused married female breadwinners' cases. This leads to lack of high interest in the criminal justice system.
- Establishment of a specialised Sexual Offences and Community Affairs (SOCA) in the Vhembe District with specialising personnel.
- There is a need to involve reformed abusive men in the fight against abuse of married female breadwinners.
- There is a need to address patriarchy and social norms to change men perceptions, and attitudes towards female breadwinners in the community. Engaging men in intervention programs against builds a sense of ownership and personal investment in addressing the problem of abuse of married female breadwinner.

### **Reflect on the coping mechanisms of abused married female breadwinners (Objective 2)**

- There is a need of development of rehabilitation and treatment services men who abuse women. Since the study found out that one of the reasons that lead to abuse of female breadwinners is alcohol abuse, there is a need to address that. There is no better way of addressing it than rehabilitating and sending abusive men to a treatment center.
- There should be an increase in the number of organisations that provides service with regard to abuse of married female breadwinners. The service providers should comprise of a plethora of governmental and non-governmental which should provide a wider range of appropriate services to abused married female breadwinners who are abused by their husbands.

### **Intervention methods that could assist in their coping strategies (Objective 3)**

- The study recommends, the use of early interventions such as abused married female breadwinners screening test and mandatory reporting of abusive husbands. The implementation of routine screening for abused married female breadwinners in primary health care settings such as clinics can help to detect a history of abuse of women among married female breadwinners which enables identification of women who are at risk of being abused by their husbands or men. Following the screening, mandatory reporting, as well as referral to appropriate organisations, should be made to prevent the dangerous consequences for the female breadwinners who are subject to abuse.
- There is vital need to educate abused married female breadwinners about the seriousness of being abused by their husbands through various means. Society as a whole also needs to be aware of how unacceptable abuse of women is and adopt a zero-tolerance policy toward this matter. The education of abused married female breadwinners may be through some workshops in the communities of Vhembe District of Limpopo province of South Africa
- There is a need for public campaigns that try to change the social attitude of men towards female breadwinners. Public campaigns of raising community awareness against married female breadwinner's abuse may help to eliminate the cultural stigma experienced by victims of violence. It may also subsequently change the social attitudes of the public regarding abuse of women in the Vhembe District of South Africa.

## Appendix A: Informed consent

School of Human and Social Sciences

Department of African Studies- Indigenous Knowledge System

Date:

Dear participant

My name is Chimeri Leo Munyaradzi. I am a PHD student in Sociology completing a dissertation in the Department of African Studies at the University of Venda. The purpose of this study is to reflect on the coping mechanisms of abused female breadwinners face in Marriages in the Vhembe District of Limpopo, South Africa, therefore the researcher seeks to interview female breadwinners who are abused in the Vhembe District of Limpopo. The interview will take around half an hour. Your conversation will be tape-recorded to help the researcher recall your comments and to analyse the data accurately. The content of the conversation will be used only for this research study and will not be shared with others, except in summary form in the final thesis and in any publication that might result from it. There are no known benefits for participating; however, the researcher hopes that in the near future the research will be influential in amending migration policies. No costs or payments are associated with participating in the study.

### RESEARCH INFORMATION

Principal researcher: Chimeri Leo Munyaradzi

Promoter : Dr. R. Tshifhumulo

Co-Promoter : Dr. Mukwevho

Co-Promoter : Dr. G Lekganyane

Co-Promoter : Dr M Matshidze

Signature of Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

I..... have read and understood the contents of this invitation to participate in this study. I hereby confirm my voluntary consent to participate in the study.

Respondent signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B: Interview guide for in-depth interviews**

1. What are the types of abuse that you have experienced in your marriage?
2. How often does your husband abuse you?
3. How can you describe the intensity or pattern of abuse ever since you got married?
4. What are the causes or the reasons behind your husbands' abusive behaviour?
5. What are the consequences of abuse in your marriage?
6. What are the challenges that you face in your abusive marriage?
7. What are the circumstances that make you stay in your abusive marriages?
8. What are your coping mechanisms or how do you cope up with living with an abusive husband?
9. What do you think are the intervention strategies to curb abuse in abused female breadwinners' marriages?

## Appendix C: Interview guide for in-depth interviews in Tshivenda

1. Ndi dzifhio tshakha dza u tambudziwa dze vha tangana nadzo kha mbingano yavho?
2. Munna wavho u vha tambudza lungana?
3. Vha nga talutshedza hani tshiimo tsha u tambudzwa havho kha mbingano yavho?
4. Ndi zwifhio zwiitisi kana zwino ita uri muuna wavho avha tambudze?
5. Ndi a fhio masiandoitwa a u tambudzwa havho kha mbingano yavho?
6. Ndi vhufhio vhuleme he vha tangana naho kha mbingano yavho ya u tambudzwa?
7. Nyimele dzine dza ita uri vhafumakadzi vho maliwaho vha dzule kha mbingano dza u tambudzwa?
8. Ndi dzifhio ndila dza u kondelela kana vha kondelela hani u dzula na munna a no vha tambudza?
9. U vona onge ku nga endliwa yini kumbe hi wahi makungu lawa nga tirhisiwaka ku kambela kumbe ku lawula wansati loyi a nga xanisiwa loyi a nga lawawansati loyi?

## Appendix D: Interview guide for in-depth interviews in Xitsonga

1. Hi ti hi tinzaka ta minxaniso leti u nga hlangana na tona eke vukati bya wena?
2. Nuna wa wena u ku xanisa ka ngani hi xitalo ?
3. Ku xanisiwa ka wena u nga ku hlamusela njhani ku sukela loko u ngenile eka vakati bya wena ?
4. Xivangelo xa ku va nuna wa wena a ku xanisa hi xihi ?
5. Xana switandzhaku swa ku xanisiwa eka vukati bya wena hi swihi ?
6. Mintlhonthlo leyi u hlanganaka na yona eke vukati lebyo xanisiwa hi yihi ?
7. Hikokwalaho ka yini u tshama eka vakati lebyi u karhi u xanisiwa ?
8. U swi kotisa ku yini ku hanya eka vukati bya muxaka lowu u tshama ni nuna wa wena wo xanisa ?
9. U vona onge ku nga endliwa yini kumbe hi wahi makungu lawa nga tirhisiwaka ku kambela kumbe ku lawula wansati loyi a nga xanisiwa loyi a nga lawawansati loyi a nga xanisiwa loyi a nga muphamer eka vukafi byebyo ?

## Appendix E: Interview guide for in-depth interviews in Sesotho sa Lebowa

1. Na lenyalong la gago o tlhoriswa bjang,ka mohuta mang?
2. Monna wa gago o tlhorisa bokagakang mehleng?
3. O ka hlalosa bjang ka mokgwa yoo o tlhorisawago goba mohuta wa tlhlotiso sale wa nyalwa?
4. Ke eng goba ke mabaka a fe ao a dirago gore monna wa gago a be le mekgwa ya go go tlhorisa?
5. Ke dipoelo tse dife tsa tlhoriso mo lenyalong la gago?
6. Ke mathata o mafe ao o hlakanago le ona mo lenyalong la gago la tlhoriso?
7. Ke eng seo se dirago gore o dule lenyalong la gago la tlhoriso?
8. Na ke eng so se dirago goba o kgona bjang go phela le monna wa go tlhorisa?
9. O nagana gore ke tsela e bjang go lwesa le go emisa tlhoriso go basadi ba tlhoriswago ba bereka mo manyalong?

## **Appendix G: Focus group discussions guideline.**

1. What are the types of abuse that you have experienced in your marriage?
2. How often does your husband abuse you?
3. How can you describe the intensity or pattern of abuse ever since you got married?
4. What are the causes or the reasons behind your husbands' abusive behaviour?
5. What are the consequences of abuse in your marriage?
6. What are the challenges that you face in your abusive marriage?
7. What are the circumstances that make you stay in your abusive marriages?
8. What are your coping mechanisms or how do you cope up with living with an abusive husband?
9. What do you think are the intervention strategies to curb abuse in abused female breadwinners' marriages?

## Appendix H: Focus group discussions guide in Tshivenda

1. Ndi dzifhio tshakha dza u tambudziwa dze vha tangana nadzo kha mbingano yavho?
2. Munna wavho u vha tambudza lungana?
3. Vha nga talutshedza hani tshiimo tsha u tambudzwa havho kha mbingano yavho?
4. Ndi zwifhio zwiitisi kana zwino ita uri muuna wavho avha tambudze?
5. Ndi a fhio masiandoitwa a u tambudzwa havho kha mbingano yavho?
6. Ndi vhufhio vhuleme he vha tangana naho kha mbingano yavho ya u tambudzwa?
7. Nyimele dzine dza ita uri vhafumakadzi vho maliwaho vha dzule kha mbingano dza u tambudzwa.
8. Ndi dzifhio ndila dza u kondelela kana vha kondelela hani u dzula na munna a no vha tambudza?

## Appendix I: Focus group discussions guideline in Xitsonga

1. Hi ti hi tinzaka ta minxaniso leti u nga hlangana na tona eke vukati bya wena?
2. Nuna wa wena u ku xanisa ka ngani hi xitalo ?
3. Ku xanisiwa ka wena u nga ku hlamusela njhani ku sukela loko u ngenile eka vakati bya wena ?
4. Xivangelo xa ku va nuna wa wena a ku xanisa hi xihi ?
5. Xana switandzhaku swa ku xanisiwa eka vukati bya wena hi swihi ?
6. Mintlhonthlo leyi u hlanganaka na yona eke vukati lebyo xanisiwa hi yihi ?
7. Hikokwalaho ka yini u tshama eka vakati lebyi u karhi u xanisiwa ?
8. U swi kotisa ku yini ku hanya eka vukati bya muxaka lowu u tshama ni nuna wa wena wo xanisa ?
9. U vona onge ku nga endliwa yini kumbe hi wahi makungu lawa nga tirhisiwaka ku kambela kumbe ku lawula wansati loyi a nga xanisiwa loyi a nga lawawansati loyi a nga xanisiwa loyi a nga muphamer eka vukafi byebyo ?

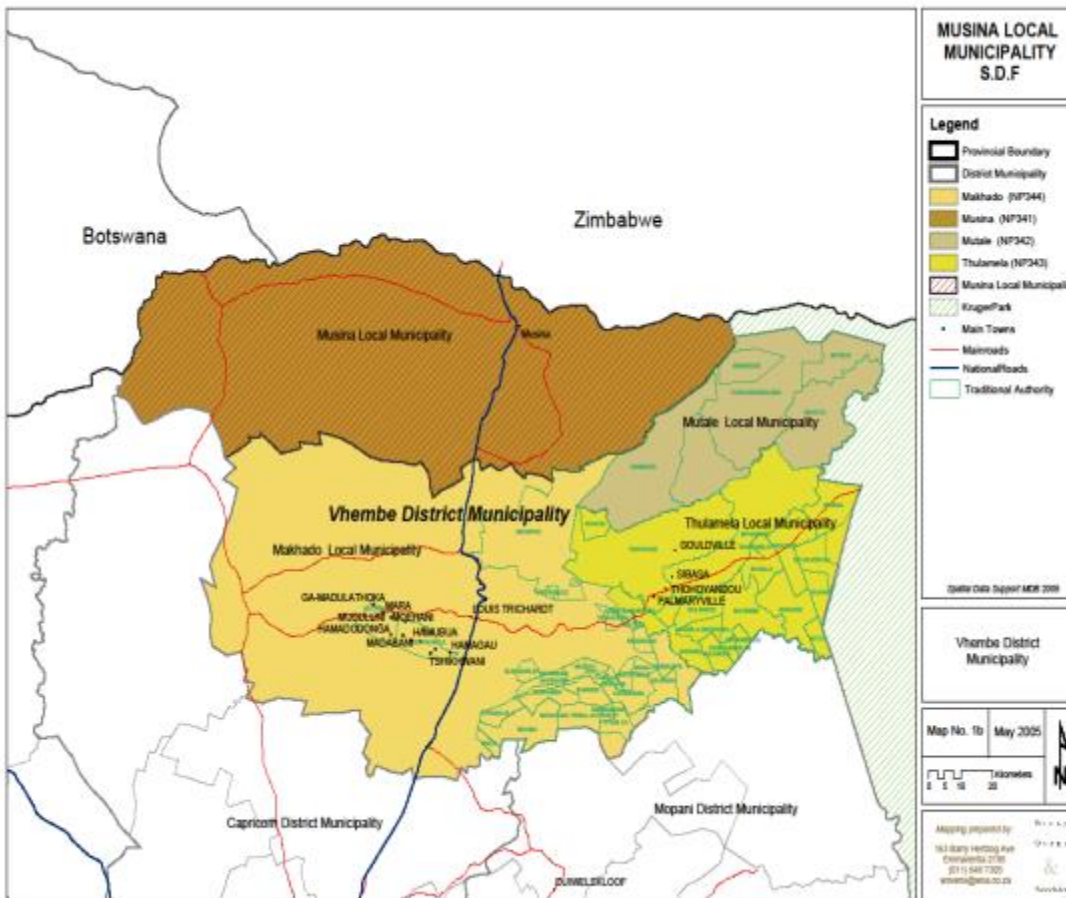
## Appendix J: Focus group discussions guideline in Sesotho sa Lebowa

1. Na lenyalong la gago o tlhoriswa bjang,ka mohuta mang?
2. Monna wa gago o tlhorisa bokagakang mehleng?
3. O ka hlalosa bjang ka mokgwa yoo o tlhorisawago goba mohuta wa tlhlotiso sale wa nyalwa?
4. Ke eng goba ke mabaka a fe ao a dirago gore monna wa gago a be le mekgwa ya go go tlhorisa?
5. Ke dipoelo tse dife tsa tlhoriso mo lenyalong la gago?
6. Ke mathata o mafe ao o hlakanago le ona mo lenyalong la gago la tlhoriso?
7. Ke eng seo se dirago gore o dule lenyalong la gago la tlhoriso?
8. Na ke eng so se dirago goba o kgona bjang go phela le monna wa go tlhorisa?
9. O nagana gore ke tsela e bjang go lwesa le go emisa tlhoriso go basadi ba tlhoriswago ba bereka mo manyalong?

## **Appendix K: Key Informants Interviews guideline**

1. How do you help abused married female breadwinners or what are the processes involved when they report abuse to you trauma centres?
2. What are the types of abuse that reported by female breadwinners at your trauma centres?
3. What do you think are the causes or the reasons behind the abuse of female breadwinners by their husbands?
4. What do you think are the consequences of abuse in female breadwinners' marriages?
5. What are the circumstances that make you stay in your abusive marriages?
6. What do you think are the challenges that abused female breadwinners face in their marriages?
7. What do you think are the coping strategies of abused married female breadwinners in marriage?
8. What do you think are the intervention strategies to curb abuse in abused female breadwinners' marriages?

## Appendix L: Vhembe District of Limpopo map



## Appendix M: Permission letter to conduct study at TVEP



### THOHOYANDOU VICTIM EMPOWERMENT TRUST

2 Old Embassy Buildings / PO Box 754, Sibasa, Limpopo 0970, South Africa

Emergency Contact:

To whom it may concern

Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) is giving permission to Chimeri Leo Munyaradzi, Student Number : 11595188, to do his University of Venda PHDA, research project about female breadwinners abuse in our organisation. He can have access to our data and two trauma centres at Tshilidzini and Donald Frazer Hospital. However, TVEP must be acknowledged at the end of the research project and any information obtained from the organisation must be treated in strict confidentiality and must be used for academic purposes only.

I hope you will find this in order

Yours sincerely



Fiona Nicholson  
Programme Director

**Appendix N: University of Venda ethical clearance**

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:  
**Mr LM Chimeri**

Student No:  
**11595188**

PROJECT TITLE: **A reflection on the coping mechanisms of abused female Bread winners in the Vhembe District of Limpopo, South Africa.**

PROJECT NO: SHSS/16/AS/06/3101

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr R Tshifhumulo	University of Venda	Promoter
Dr MH Mukwevho	University of Venda	Co-Promoter
Dr G Lekganyane	University of Venda	Co-Promoter
Dr P Matshidze	University of Venda	Co-Promoter
Mr LM Chimeri	University of Venda	Investigator - Student

ISSUED BY:  
**UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Date Considered: January 2017  
Decision by Ethical Clearance Committee Granted  
Signature of Chairperson of the Committee:   
Name of the Chairperson of the Committee: Prof. G.E. Ekosse

  
 University of Venda  
 PRIVATE BAG X5050, THOHOYANDOU, 0950, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA  
 TELEPHONE (015) 962 8504/8313 FAX (015) 962 9060  
 "A quality driven financially sustainable, rural-based Comprehensive University"

## Appendix O: Plagiarism (turnitin) certificate

Appendix P: English editing certificate

**Dr Catherine Hutchings  
Freelance Editorial Services**

51 Bathurst Road  
Kenilworth  
7708  
Cape Town  
Western Cape  
South Africa

Telephone/Fax: + 27 21 7618522  
Mobile: + 27 82 9702219  
E-mail: catherinehutchings@gmail.com

**To whom it may concern.**

**I hereby confirm that I edited  
LEO MUNYARADZI CHIMERI'S**

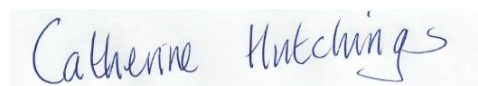
PhD thesis

Title:

**A REFLECTION ON THE COPING MECHANISMS OF ABUSED MARRIED FEMALE  
BREADWINNERS IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO, SOUTH AFRICA**

in May 2018.

I wish this student well in their endeavours.



Catherine Hutchings

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