

THE EXPLORATORY STUDY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE
VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT
MUNICIPALITY

BY

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the
degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

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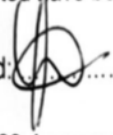
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2024

DECLARATION

I, **TAKALANI PATRICIA MUREI**, hereby declare that an exploratory study on psychosocial experiences amongst women victims of gender-based violence in Sekhukhune District Municipality is my original work that has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Signed: 

Date: 23 January 2024

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family members who have never failed to give me emotional, financial, and moral support throughout the study. I also dedicate this study to all victims who are experiencing psychosocial effects of Gender-Based Violence with the believe that they will speak out, heal emotionally and continue to provide awareness to others as a way to eradicate this scourge in our community.

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To the Almighty God for giving me the strength and wisdom to complete this research report. To God be the glory.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF ACRONYMS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND	2
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	5
1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY	6
1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	7
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	7
1.7 RATIONALE	8
1.8 SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY.....	9
1.9 DELIMITATION AND BACKGROUND OF SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT.....	9
1.10 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS	11
1.1.1 Gender.....	11
1.10.2 Gender Based Violence	11
1.10.3 Psychosocial.....	12
1.10.4 Women.....	13
1.10. Patriarchy.....	13
1.11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	13

1.12 RESEARCH PARADIGM.....	14
1.13 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	14
1.14 CHAPTER LAYOUT	15
1.15 SUMMARY	16
CHAPTER TWO	17
2.1 INTRODUCTION	17
2.2 PREVALENCE OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE GLOBALLY AND IN SOUTH AFRICA	18
2.3 THE TYPES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE LEADING TO THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERIENCES.....	19
2.4 THE NATURE OF PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERIENCES FACED BY WOMEN EXPOSED TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.....	20
2.5 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO NON-DISCLOSURE OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE TO POLICE OFFICER.....	23
2.6. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE.....	27
2.7. INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.....	29
2.8 ROLE PLAYED BY SOCIAL WOKERS INADRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.....	30
2.9 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	31
2.9.1 THE RADICAL FEMINIST THEORY.....	31
2.9.2 THE SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY.....	33
2.9.3 THE ECOLOGICAL THEORY.....	34
2.10. SUMMARY	36
CHAPTER THREE	
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	37

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM.....	37
3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH.....	37
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	37
3.5 POPULATION.....	38
3.6 SAMPLING AND SAMPLING SIZE.....	39
3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS	39
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS.....	41
3.9 QUALITY CRITERIA.....	42
3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION.....	43
3.10.1 PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY.....	44
3.10.2CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANOMITY.....	45
3.10.3INFORMED CONSENT.....	45
3.10.4 VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION.....	45
3.10.5 PROTECTION FROM HARM/BENEFICENCE.....	45
3.10.6 THE PROVISION OF DEBRIFING AND COUNSELLING SESSIONS	46
3.11. SUMMARY.....	46
CHAPTER FOUR	
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	47
4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA.....	48
4.2.1AGE RANGE AND GENDER OF WOMEN PARTICIPANTS.....	49
4.2.2 MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN PARTICIPANT.....	49
4.3 THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN EXPOSED TO GBV IN RURAL AREAS.....	50
4.3. THEME1: KNOWLEDGE ON THE TYPES OF GBV IN RURAL AREA.....	52

4.3.1. SUB THEME: TYPES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN PARTICIPANTS.....	55
4.3.1.1 “TLAISHEGO YA GO ITIA” OR “GO BETHA”/ PHYSICAL VIOLENCE.....	57
4.3.1.2 “TLAISHEGO YA TSA THOBALANO”/ SEXUAL ABUSE.....	58
4.3.1.3 “TLAISHEGO YA MASHELENG (TSHELETE)”/ FINANCIAL ABUSE.....	62
4.3.1.4 ‘TLAISHEGO YA MAIKUTLO’/EMOTIONAL ABUSE.....	65
4.4 THEME 2: PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERINCES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ON WOMEN.....	65
4.5 THEME 3: REASONS FOR WOMEN NOT REPORTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE TO JUSTICE SYSTEM.....	67
4.5.1 SUB THEME1: POOR JUSTICE SYSTEM AND SHAME “GO SWABISA” ..	69
4.5.2 SUB THEME 2: REJECTION AND STIGMATISATION.....	69
4.5.3 SUB THEME: PROTECTING BREAD WINNER.....	70
4.6 THEME 4: ROLE OF CULTURE IN PERPETUATING THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERIENCES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ON WOMEN.....	70
4.7 THEME 5: FREQUENCY OF GBV OCCURANCE ON WOMAN PARTICIPANTS.....	71
4.8THEME 6: COPING MECHANISMS FOR WOMEN EXPERIENCE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.....	71
4.8.1 SUB THEME1: THE USE OF SUBSTANCES.....	71
4.8.2 SUB THEME2: RELIGIOUS SUPPORT “CHURCH MEMBER’S SUPPORT”.....	72
4.8.3 SUB THEME 3: SHARING WITH SOMEONE.....	73
4.8.4 SUB THEME 4: SHOPPING.....	74
4.9 SUMMARY	74

CHAPTER FIVE	
5.1. INTRODUCTION.....	75
5.2. SUMMARY	75
5.2.1 PARTICIPANT KNOWLEDGE ON THE TYPES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN RURAL AREAS.....	76
5.2.2 PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERINCES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ON WOMEN.....	77
5.2.3 REASONS FOR WOMEN NOT REPORTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE TO JUSTICE SYSTEM.....	78
5.2.4 ROLE OF CULTURE IN PERPETUATING THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERIENCES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ON WOMEN.....	78
5.2.5 COPING MECHANISMS FOR WOMEN EXPERIENCE GENDER- BASED VIOLENCE.....	79
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	79
5.4 CONCLUSION.....	80
REFERENCES	81
APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY	85
APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM.....	86
APPENDIX C: DECLARATION OF CONSENT.....	87
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.....	88
APPENDIX E: NORTHERN SOTHO EDITORS LETTER.....	90
APPENDIX F: ENGLISH EDITOR’S LETTER.....	91

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSV Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

GBV Gender-Based Violence

PTSD Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

SAPS South African Police Service

SW Social Worker

UK United Kingdom

UN United Nations

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

USA United States of America

VEP Victim Empowerment Programme

WHO World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

Gender based violence in South Africa, (especially on women and young women), is increasing. There is significant increase in those women who are in relationship. However, such relations have strong correlation to the high rates of murder, rape and assault with intend to do grievous body harm, resulting in a high prevalence of women exposed to gender based violence. Social workers are mandated to provide psycho-social support to the victims of gender-based violence and their families. Alternatively, the Victim Empowerment programs Centers (VEP) implements support to victims and survivors of crimes including gender-based violence, as well as their families to deal with the impact of the incident which he/she has experience. VEP also assist victims with management of trauma and ensuring that victims are educated to identify the symptoms of post-traumatic stress as common practice in South Africa, is not without challenges. One significant challenge is the role of support systems within the community. The aim of the study was to explore the psychosocial experiences amongst women exposed to gender-based violence in rural areas of Sekhukhune District. Qualitative approach using an exploratory research design was employed. The population of the study was women who experienced gender-based violence living in rural areas of Sekhukhune District municipality who were attending Victim empowerment services at the Non- Governmental Organization. Convenience sampling was used to select ten (10) women who experienced gender-based violence. Semi-structured interviews, in-depth individual face to face interviews were used to better understand the psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence as well as the role played by the support system within the community which was analysed using thematic analysis.

Keywords: Psychosocial experiences, women, gender, gender-based violence, victim empowerment centers, patriarchy

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The scourge of gender-based violence amongst women in South Africa is a problem. A series of gender-based violence cases, including femicide, caused outrage and calls to action from various sectors of society (Mihirka & Lembeme, 2016). A series of senseless killings, assaults, rapes and cases of abuse in recent years shocked the South African nation grappling with frightening levels of violence inflicted on women. Gender-based violence does not occur only in women; men also experience it. Men also experience gender-based violence and often do not speak out their experiences due to the stigma attached to them as victims (Thobejane, Mogorosi and Luthada, 2018). Available evidence suggests that the frequency, severity and intensity of gender-based violence is greater for women than men (Ali, 2018). The study focused on the psychosocial experiences of women who have been exposed to gender-based violence.

Women who are physically abused normally have bruises, scars or sustain injuries. Therefore, there is a likelihood of staying indoors, and not reporting and hiding themselves. If it happens that someone asked them about what had transpired, they tend to tell lies or create a story to protect the abuser (CSVR, 2016). For example, women who are married yield pressure from their partners, families and community as a way of adhering to cultural norms and values of the society. In most societies, women continue to find themselves in situations where their intimate partners violate their fundamental human rights, leading to their silence due to the fear of being stigmatised, judged and blamed by the society. Some societies still believe and view the beating and humiliation of a woman as a normalised justice (Pengpid & Peltzer, 2014). Financial abuse directed towards women by their partners can lead to psychosocial dilemmas. For example, a situation wherein the breadwinner is a husband, the woman is unemployed and she depends on the husband for survival. If the husband fails to provide for the women, it can lead to societal shame and blame. This can lead to emotional frustrations to the women (WHO, 2015).

Physical and psychological abuse by intimate partners is also regarded as one of the most common forms of violence in the household. Due to adherence to cultural norms

and values, women tend not to report cases of gender-based violence. Even though when the community knows that someone is living in an abusive relationship, they keep quiet, which leads to the prevalence and frequency of gender-based violence (Nkosi & Van Der Wath, 2012).

The researcher believed that most women do not report the forms of abuse they endure in their households and socially. The abuse of women in rural communities is viewed as normal and defeats the ends of justice. Therefore, not reporting these cases is against the principles of social justice, ubuntu and the protection of fundamental human rights (WHO, 2016). The study seeks to identify the types of gender-based violence leading to psychosocial experiences, describes the nature of psychosocial experiences, find out the factors contributing to non-disclosure of GBV by women victims to police officers, as well as to identify support system for women victims of GBV in Sekhukhune District.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Gender-based violence is a global pandemic that affects women, and psychosocial and social functioning in general. It occurs in all societies, at all stages of women's life cycle and is one of the most pervasive and systematic human rights violations in the world (The World Bank, 2019).

Globally, one in three women have been coerced into sex or abuse in some way usually by someone they know. Around 736 million women worldwide have experienced at least one incidence of physical and sexual violence from a romantic or intimate partner, and 38% of murders of women are committed by their intimate partners (United Nation Women, 2022). Furthermore, with the corona virus disease, there are reports of surges in violence against women around the world in many cases of up 25% worldwide. According to the United Nations Women (2020), for every three months the lockdown continues, an additional 15 million additional cases of gender-based violence are expected globally. Less than 40% of women who experience violence report it, most of those seek help from a family or friend, and less than 10% of women seek help by going to the police.

Although there is no accurate statistics of gender-based violence for many reasons, including the fact that most incidents are not reported, it is evident that South Africa

has particularly high rates of gender-based violence, including violence against women and girls (Sundari & Lewis, 2019). According to Evans and William (2013), gender-based violence is a societal matter, which explains different conceptualisations and experiences regarding an individual's race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and various contextual factors. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2017), males were most likely to be perpetrators of gender-based violence against women and girls, who continue to be marginalised victims irrespective of their age.

South Africa is rated amongst the highest country with regards to gender-based violence, including femicide, rape and intimate partner violence (Matzopoulos, Abrahams, Bowman, Shai, Prinsloo, Salau, Bradshaw & Gray, 2019). Currently, in South Africa, reports on social and mainstream media show an increasing number of black men as perpetrators of intimate femicide compared to more than a decade ago. Evidence in a report published by the South African Police Service (SAPS) statistics which was acknowledged by the Institute for Security Studies which covers the period between 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, reveals an increase in reported gender-based violence cases compared to previous years. The number of reported sexual offences increased to 52,420 in 2018/19 from 50,108 in 2017/18, most of which were cases of rape. The rate of sexual offences increased from 88.3 per 100,000 in 2017/18 to 90.9 per 100,000 in 2018/19. Reported sexual offences in 2019/2020 again increased to 53, 293 cases.

Hundreds of women have been brutally assaulted and murdered at the hands of men in South Africa over the years. Some of these women made the headlines; others were privately mourned. Justice was served in some cases; in other cases, perpetrators are carrying on with their lives, while some cases were simply never reported (Oparinde & Mantsha, 2021).

Even though the study recognised that men can also be victims of gender-based violence, women are the most vulnerable group of gender-based violence. The psychosocial effects experienced by women exposed to gender-based violence is huge and can trigger suicidal behaviours by the victims (WHO, 2013). Women who are exposed to gender-based violence might experience psychological effects such as deep feelings of shame, powerlessness, depression, anxiety and continuous paranoia (Nkosi & Van Der Wath, 2012). The results of psychological experience faced may reach a level at which they lose interest in life. The most prevalent and severe

health problems in the country are the result of rape, intimate partner violence, childhood abuse and neglect, including HIV and sexually transmitted infections, substance abuse and mental health disorders, including depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Violence against women worldwide has been one of the most widespread violations of human rights, with almost 18% of women and girls experiencing either physical, psychological, emotional or sexual violence committed against them by either a person known to them or an intimate partner (United Nations Children's Fund/ UNICEF, 2015; WHO, 2017 as cited by Rikhotso, 2022). Women in South Africa are predominantly still under the control of men and often simply accept their situation as victims (Aphane & Mofokeng, 2018). The increasing number of gender-based violence continues to rise, resulting in a crisis of psychosocial effects. More women are left with several challenges that they have to face. The mass media is full with many accounts of women and children suffering or even losing their lives due to gender-based violence (Molosankwe, 2020). On the 2nd of December 2022, News24 reported that the latest police figures show that 10818 gender-based violence cases were reported in the first quarter of 2022. In 2020, a 52-year-old man from Ga-Phasha village in Sekhukhune District axed his three children to death, and the fourth and last born was killed with a huge stone. It was reported that the man confessed to have murdered his four children because he was suspecting that his wife was cheating on him. The same man had previously attempted to kill his wife, who survived because the bullet narrowly missed her and killed an innocent child in nearby neighbourhood. The man was arrested and charged with murder but was later released on parole. It was after his release that he then killed his own four children (Molosankwe, 2020).

The study explored psychosocial experiences that women who are exposed to gender-based violence come across to find effective ways of decreasing its rate. It is the researcher's contention that the social phenomenon of gender-based violence needs immediate and urgent attention in our communities and society as a whole. It is of outmost importance for families and communities to intervene and reduce the level of gender-based violence in South Africa. As outlined by Mhrka and Lembeme (2016), the cross-cutting and complex nature of GBV necessitates multiple stakeholder approaches involving communities, cultural and religious leaders, victims and their families, as well as educational institutions.

1.3. Problem statement

There is dearth of research on psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence in the rural areas of Sekhukhune District. Research conducted by Rikhotso (2022) outlined that at Vhembe District, women had been affected by gender-based violence in a negative way as it even affects their psychosocial well-being. Furthermore, communities, researchers and social work practitioners tend to overlook reasons for non-reporting of psychosocial experiences of victims of gender-based violence. There is a need in the rural areas of Sekhukhune District to source appropriate intervention to address the contextual psychosocial experiences amongst the victims of gender-based violence. The Department of Social Development turns a blind eye on prevention and early intervention strategies to respond to contextual psychosocial issues of gender-based violence amongst women in rural areas. The Department, rather mostly intervene when there is a serious incident of gender-based violence, yet there is a process in place to create awareness in the rural communities for prevention and early intervention stages. The Research Directorate of the Limpopo Department of Social Development has not yet well coordinated research at grassroots level to explore the psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence in the rural areas of Sekhukhune District.

There are research gaps in rural areas that address the psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence amongst women due to adherence to cultural norms, values and the normalising of non-reporting cases by women in abusive relationships in Limpopo province (Rikhotso, 2023). Furthermore, there is a need to undertake a research study on the types of gender-based violence leading to psychosocial experiences towards female victims in Sekhukhune District. An exploratory of the nature of psychosocial experiences faced by women exposed to gender-based violence still needs to be explored in Sekhukhune District. Additionally, there is a need to close the research gap to find out the reasons for the non-reporting of gender-based violence to the police in the rural areas of Sekhukhune District. It is important to assess the frequency of gender-based violence amongst non-reporting victims in rural areas of the district. Therefore, the study seeks to close the gaps mentioned above.

The unequal distribution of power between the male and female gender results in the insubordination and danger for women throughout their lives (Di Cesare, 2014). Many women especially from deep rural areas have information on where to go for help and assistance when they experience gender-based violence. Culture still plays a crucial role in the increase of gender-based violence in deep rural areas and contributes to the psychosocial experiences that women faced. Women remain silent in order to maintain a happy family as it is a cultural norm to keep family secrets. Women exposed to gender-based violence suffers psychosocial challenges which tend to frustrate them suffering from unspoken emotional, depression and physical distress turn to isolate themselves from the community. The lack of support from the family and societies also has an impact on the psychosocial functioning of women exposed to gender-based violence. The researcher believed that most women do not report the forms of abuse they endure in their households and socially. Women who have experienced gender-based violence could be at greater risk to encounter psychosocial challenges because of a lack of social support systems, emotional and health-related issues, social and legal problems, economic hardships and difficulty in dealing with stigmatisation. The trauma experienced by women exposed to gender-based violence is enormous and can trigger suicidal behaviours by the victims (WHO, 2013). Gender-based violence victims could experience psychological effects such as deep feelings of shame, powerlessness, depression, anxiety and continuous paranoia (Nkosi & Van Der Wath, 2012). In addition, the impact of psychological experiences may make women reach a level at which they generally lose interest in life. Having noted the fundamental health concerns as well as the mortality rate of gender-based violence victims, it is important to investigate the psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence. Research can assist us to understand the magnitude and psychosocial impact of the violence on female victims.

1.4. Aims of the study

It entails the broader context of the researcher's intentions and reasons for undertaking the investigation (Neuman, 2011). Furthermore, it should be clearly clarified (Shirindi, 2018). It should be aligned with the specific research questions of the study prior to gathering secondary data. Therefore, it enabled the researcher to set objectives (steps) to be achieved based on the goal of the proposed research (Shirindi, 2018). It enabled the researcher to focus on how the study is all about and

how it is undertaken (Bryman 2012:92). Furthermore, it enabled the researcher to establish the intent of the entire study that is clear, specific as well as informative with reasons of why it was conducted and accomplished (Cresswell, 2014:123). The study aimed at exploring psychosocial experiences amongst women exposed to gender-based violence in rural areas of Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

1.5. The objectives of the study

The researcher ensures that the research objectives were specific, clear and achievable (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011:116). Therefore, the researcher developed the objectives and it guided by the research design, problem statement, topic and questions. The following were the main objectives of the study.

1.5.1 To identify the types of gender-based violence leading to the psychosocial experiences amongst female victims in Sekhukhune District.

1.5.2 To determine the psychosocial effects of GBV on women victims

1.5.3 To find out the factors contributing to non-disclosure of GBV by women victims to police officers

1.5.4 To identify factors contributing to GBV amongst women in Sekhukhune

1.5.5 To identify support system for women victims of GBV in Sekhukhune District.

1.6 Research questions

The research questions are not separate aspects of investigation (Bryman, 2012). The following research questions were addressed in order to explore the psychosocial experiences of women who are exposed to gender-based violence in Sekhukhune District:

- What types of gender-based violence contribute to the psychosocial experiences of female victims in Sekhukhune District?
- What are the psychosocial effects of GBV on women victims?
- What are the factors that leads women who experienced GBV to non-disclosure?
- What are the contributing factors towards GBV among women victim in Sekhukhune District?
- What is the support system for women who experienced GBV in Sekhukhune District?

1.7 Rationale of the study

The rationale of the study was mostly based on the researcher's observation of gender-based violence in rural areas as well as the professional experiences. For a long period of time, the researcher observed the prevalence, continuous abuse and killing of women by their partners (men) who are supposed to protect them. The researcher further observed the psychosocial and emotional devastation and impact of gender-based violence among these silenced and marginalised women in rural areas. The most concern was the fact that families, community members and the criminal justice system seem to have become helpless because the scourge of gender-based violence continues on a daily basis. The researcher grew up in a village in which women were generally viewed as objects by most men, and there was no value attached to them as human beings with the same equal rights as their male counterparts. Women were violated in a public space by men and people will even say "bolaya sefebe se go" meaning kill that jezebel. There would be no one willing at the village to try to help them. At this village, it becomes a norm and culture that a woman will be publicly assaulted and humiliated by her husband or fiancé without any sense of shame, guilt or embarrassment.

The researcher's professional background as a social worker rendering the family preservation services constitute adequate justification for the feasibility of this study. The researcher is a social worker employed by the Department of Social Development in Limpopo Province. It was in this regard that the researcher was aware of women's 'reluctance' to report gender-based violence cases due to various reasons such as financial dependence, stigmatisation and the cultural role, especially in deep rural areas. The researcher believed that talking to women with first-hand experience and information will shed light into and generate in-depth understanding of their lived experiences (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015).

Therefore, the rationale, motivation, or justification of this study was based on the collective encouragement of the researcher's own observations, professional

background and the magnitude of the malice of gender-based violence in Sekhukhune District Municipality in particular.

1.8. Significance of the study

The study will benefit the Social Work profession by adding knowledge and understanding with special reference to psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence in rural areas. It will integrate skills, methodologies and theoretical frameworks with socio-cultural intervention strategies in order to address psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence amongst women in the rural areas. It will also serve as a benchmark for other scholars and researchers on psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence amongst women. It will also help the Department of Social Development to consider the relevant and important programmes that address the psychosocial experiences. Furthermore, the study will encourage Social Work practitioners who render psychosocial services to address psychosocial experiences.

The study will enable the Department of Social Development to consider developing policies and programmes of addressing psychosocial experiences towards gender-based violence amongst women in rural areas. Non-governmental organisations will also form part of the multi-disciplinary team in implementing the programme on the impact of psychosocial experiences towards gender-based violence amongst women. Social work practitioners will use the study to render programmes that youth in the rural areas are contextually grappling with in regard to substance abuse. The study will also enable social work practitioners to get insight into how gender-based violence promotes psychosocial experiences amongst women in rural areas. It will also conscientise the community as a whole about the psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence. It will help with the contextual issues faced by women in rural areas with reference to gender-based violence.

1.9 Delimitation of the study

The study was conducted at Sekhukhune District Municipality, which is located in the south-eastern part of Limpopo, which is South Africa's most northern province. The district shares boundaries with Capricorn and Mopani Districts in the north, Mpumalanga in the south and east and the Waterberg District in the west. The district was formed during the year 2000 and is one of the five district municipalities in

Limpopo Province. Largely rural in nature, the district is made up of five local municipalities, namely; Elias Motsoaledi, Ephraim Mogale, Makhuduthamaga, Fetakgomo and Tubatse, and has 117 wards with a total number of 764 villages. There are 74 traditional leaderships within the district, and has a total population of 1, 19 million, or 20% of the total population in Limpopo Province. Sekhukhune had the highest annual population growth rate in the province at 1, 2% between 2009 and 2019.

There has been a rise in unemployment in the district between 2008 and 2018. In 2018, there was a total number of 93 900 unemployed people in Sekhukhune, which is an increase of 6 360 from 87 600 in 2008, and which constitutes 28.17% of the total number of unemployed people in Limpopo Province. The main sectors of Sekhukhune District that contribute to the growth in economy in the district are agriculture, mining and community services. Mining is the biggest contributor in the economy of the district and is forecast to grow fast at an average of 5.64% annually from R12.4 billion to R16.3 billion in 2023. The sector that is estimated to grow slower is the construction sector with an average annual growth rate of 0.21%.

Sekhukhune is the smallest district in the province, and covers a total area of 13 528 km². It is a mainly rural district with approximately 740 villages. Hence, most of the gender-based violence cases occur in rural areas. The main towns in the district are Burgersfort, Steelpoort, Groblersdal, Marble Hall, Apel, June Furse, Mohlaletsi, Driekop, Penge Mine, Prakiseer, Motetema and Mosterloos. In 2018, the district population consisted of 98.71% African (1.18 million), 0.97% White (11 600), 0.14% Coloured (1 680) and 0.17% Asian (2 080) people, according to South African Local Government (2018-2021).

In 2019 there were 108 000 people employed in the district, which is an employment rate of 67, 26%. 32, 74% of these were employed in the formal sector and 48, 7% in the informal sector. In the formal economy, mining and agriculture are some of the biggest employers.

In 2018, there was a total number of 93 900 unemployed people in Sekhukhune, which is an increase of 6 360 from 87 600 in 2008. The total number of unemployed people in Sekhukhune constitutes 28.17% of the total number of unemployed people in Limpopo Province. Between 2018 and 2019, the district experienced an average

annual increase of 3.1% in the number of unemployed people, which is worse than that of Limpopo Province, which had an average annual decrease in unemployment of 1.7% (South African Local Government, 2018-2021).

1.10. Definition of concepts

1.10.1 Gender

According to Lips (2014), gender refers to the socially constructed class of expectations, norms and roles of different forms of masculinity, femininity and androgyny. Gender broadly refers to norms, values and behaviours that are associated with sex, that is, either female or male. It is also important to distinguish between gender and sex as these roles and expectations influence how gender violence is influenced by societal attitudes among men and women (Dzinavane, 2016).

Gender is a cultural and social constructed and generally accepted concept of maleness and femaleness. It defines how each group should behave and the roles each group should play in their families, the community, the workplace and the country.

1.10.2 Gender-based violence

Evans and William (2013) argue that gender-based violence (as opposed to domestic or home-based violence) relates to patterned and forceful behaviour deriving from unequal power relations as expressed and experienced differently in respect of a person's sex, religion, race, ability, sexuality and other situational factors.

Gender-based violence differs from generalised violence in that is directed at a person on the basis of gender or sexual orientation. This includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, coercion and other deprivation of liberty. The term gender-based violence is commonly used to refer to violence that affects women and girls and is at times used interchangeably to talk about violence against women and girls. Men too can be victims of gender-based violence. The study focused on women as they are more vulnerable to violence and mostly victims of gender-based violence.

1.10.3 Psychosocial

Psychosocial refers to anything that is socially related that can affect the mind or brain, the emotions, thoughts and feelings that can affect or be affected. For the purpose of

the study, psychosocial was the interrelationship of social factors, individual thoughts and behaviour (Keforilwe, 2017).

Psychosocial refers to the interrelation of social factors and individual thoughts and behaviour. It also pertains to the influence of social factors on individual mind or behaviour and to the interrelation of behavioural and social factors on an individual's mental health and behaviour.

The psychological sphere or domain encompasses such constructs as cognitive behavioural responses (e.g., satisfaction, self-esteem, self-efficacy and the locus of control) and mood status (e.g. suicidal behaviour, post-traumatic stress disorder, distress, depression, anxiety and positive effects). On the other hand, social factors encompass constructs such as education, socioeconomic status, rejection, stigmatisation, employment, family, religion, physical attributes, ethnicity, locality, changes in personal roles and status; as well as relationships with others. In this study, psychosocial factors are significant, especially because they helped in the understanding of the suffering and experiences of gender-based violence victims in both their social and psychosocial spheres.

Gellman and Turner (2013) assert that psychosocial factors relate to a combination of influences affecting an individual both in his/ her psychological and/ or social spheres. The psychological sphere or domain encompasses such constructs as cognitive behavioural responses (e.g satisfaction, self-esteem, self-efficacy and the locus of control) and mood status (e.g. distress, depression, anxiety and positive effects). On the other hand, social factors encompass constructs such as education, socioeconomic status, employment, family, religion, physical attributes, ethnicity, locality, changes in personal roles and status; as well as relationships with others. In this study, psychosocial factors are significant, especially because they help in the understanding of the suffering and experiences of GBV victims in both their social and psychological spheres.

1.10.4 Women

According to European Institute for Gender Equality (2023), a woman is defined as a person assigned a female sex at birth, or a person who defines herself as a woman.

For the purpose of the study, a woman was defined as any female victim of gender-based violence between the ages of 20 and 55 years at Sekhukhune District who had been exposed to gender-based violence and is receiving services from VEP Centres.

1.10.5 Patriarchy

Dzinavane (2016) outlined patriarchy as a socio-cultural constructed system of norms, attitudes and values designed to entrench male hegemony, attitudes and perspectives regarding the roles and values of women in the family, society and the economy. The concept of patriarchy is referred to in this study to examine the power dynamics between men and women, as well as the core reasons for women's control and subordination.

Patriarchy refers to an ideological construct and a distinct system of beliefs, values and practices reinforced by the society and culture, resulting in the unequal distribution of power relations between women and men where the latter hold power over the former and children from whom unquestionable subordination is expected.

1.11. Theoretical framework

The study was guided by the radical feminism theory in order to understand the types of gender-based violence in rural areas. Radical feminism focuses on one aspect of culture, namely, patriarchy. Radical feminism argues that men oppress women through patriarchal appropriation. Patriarchy refers to the system in which the male social group holds the power whether in the family or within the society and has control over the female social group, resulting in the total subordination of women by men. Attempts are made to highlight how patriarchy is bred through the socialisation process. Radical feminism views society as fundamental in which men dominate and oppress women (Leburu & Thekisho, 2015).

Uwadiwegwu (2015) outlined that the feminist theory advocates for the liberation of women from the oppressive patriarchal system and its values of women's subordination to abuse by men. The ideological foundations of the patriarchal society can actually be eliminated on the provision that women come into the understanding and realisation of their own values and strength (i.e. moral authority and agency) by confronting the age-old belief of male superiority (Uwadiwegwu, 2015). Patriarchy is viewed as a cultural system structure which places men at the pinnacle of power and

control, such that women ultimately occupy the periphery of marginalisation politically, socially, culturally, economically and religiously (Abdullahi, Cusairi & Abdullah, 2017).

Radical feminism sees domestic violence as having emanated from the sexual relations of power. The system of patriarchy excludes women from political and economic power and destroys the potential that they have as a group. The system manifests itself within the family where a man feels that beating his woman is his inalienable right because by so doing, he is viewed as a disciplinarian (Thobejane, 2013; Bryson, 2003).

It is generally known that men view themselves as the head of the family which, in a nutshell, creates the impression of being powerful as compared to women. There is a belief that women are not allowed to challenge men's decisions as the Head of the family. Therefore, the feminist theory enables the researcher to challenge the narrative of normalising the headship of men. Radical feminism will enable the researcher to explore ways to address the strategies of dealing with physical, emotional, psychological as well as financial abuse directed at women by men. It will enable research on why women are not reporting cases of gender-based violence in rural areas.

1.12 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a philosophical framework that research is based on. It offers a pattern of beliefs and understandings from which theories and practices of a research project operates. It is also explained by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) as it reflects the researcher's beliefs about the world that he or she lives in and wants to live in. It constitutes the abstract beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher sees the world and how he or she interprets and acts within that world. It allows the researcher to examine the methodological aspects of their research project to determine the research methods that will be used and how data will be analysed (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

This study used constructivism paradigm. This paradigm tries to 'get into the head of the subjects being studied' and to understand and interpret what the subject is thinking or the meaning s/he is making of the context. Every effort is made to understand the viewpoint of the subject being observed, rather than the viewpoint of the researcher. Emphasis is placed on understanding individuals and their interpretation of the world

around them. In this paradigm, theory does not precede research but follows it so that it is grounded on the data generated by the research act (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

Constructivists believe that there is no single reality or truth, but rather multiple realities. They devote themselves to understanding and interpreting the meaning attached to an action. For this reason, constructivists tend to use qualitative research methods such as interviews or case studies, which focus on providing different perspectives. It aims to provide the answer to “why” rather than establishing relationships between two variables. The assumption of a subjectivist epistemology means that the researcher makes meaning of their data through their own thinking and cognitive processing of data informed by their interactions with participants. The researcher will construct knowledge socially as a result of his or her personal experiences of the real life within the natural settings investigated. There is the assumption that the researcher and their subjects are engaged in interactive processes in which they intermingle, dialogue, question, listen, read, write and record research data (Michaela & Hubert, 2018).

1.13 Research methodology

The research methodology outlined the methods utilised in the research study in order to achieve the aim and objectives of the study. This includes the qualitative approach, exploratory design as well as the population and sampling method of the study. Furthermore, the data collection method, data analysis, quality criteria and ethical considerations were also presented.

1.14 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The dissertation is segmented into five chapters, which are structured as indicated below.

Chapter 1: Orientation to the Study

Chapter outlines and introduces the study in respect of its background, the rationale, research problem and significance, aims of the study, objectives and research questions, as well as the definition of key concepts.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, the theoretical framework that guides the study is presented as well as the relevant aspects and factors relating to gender-based violence, the role of culture

as a contributory factor to gender-based violence and the psychological experiences as the central phenomena of discussion.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter provides discussions on the research methodology, detailed research approach, research design, data collection, data analysis, measures of trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation

In this chapter, data is presented and analysed in conjunction with literature-based perspectives.

Chapter 5: Summary of Main Findings Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter basically summarises the major findings obtained in the previous chapter and situates these in the context of the research objectives and questions as a framework to determine the extent to which the study achieved its initial intentions as stated in Chapter 1.

1.15 SUMMARY

This chapter outlines the main units of analysis; all of which are presented in varying details in the ensuing chapters. The units of analysis presented briefly in this chapter relate to the introduction and background of the study, the research problem, purpose and objectives of the study, the research questions, the rationale of the study, the significance and delimitation of the study. The definition of key concepts, theoretical framework as well as research paradigm and chapter outline concluded the chapter.

The following chapter focused entirely on the literature review and the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERIENCES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will help to know if it will be systematic, narrative, scoping, rapid review or meta-analysis on the psychosocial experiences amongst women experienced to gender-based violence in rural areas. The review of literature familiarised and exposed the researcher to current local and global trends, practices and debates in the field of gender-based violence from multiple scholarly perspectives (Babbie & Mouton, 2012; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). The secondary materials reveal the identification of the contributions by other gender-based violence scholars, as well as any gaps that may still exist in the field of gender studies. The literature review assisted the researcher to gain an understanding of the existing research and debates relevant on psychosocial experiences of victims of gender-based violence in rural areas. The literature was established from the secondary data collection which was obtainable from various sources, including academic books, published and unpublished dissertations, scientific journals, newspapers, databases and search engines (Hammond & Wellington, 2013; Kumar, 2014).

2.2 The prevalence of gender-based violence in South Africa and globally

- **The Global Background of gender-based violence prevalence**

Gender-based violence is a violation of human rights. Nearly six out of ten women around the world suffer from some kind of violence in their lifetime, whether physical or sexual (UN Women, 2019). Although countries have been encouraged by international and regional legal entities to take steps to fight the problem, gender-based violence continues to occur worldwide in many forms, ranging from domestic violence and sexual abuse, to more severe forms such as honor killings, acid attacks and other forms of femicide. The global prevalence of gender-based violence indicates that the issue is yet to be fully tackled, which has far-reaching consequences. Studies reveal that gender-based violence leads to physical injuries, disability and death, and

victims also suffer from mental and psychological disorders (Khan, 2022). The widespread occurrence of violence against women across the globe permits urgency of scrutiny and remedial approaches (Anon, 2018). The WHO (2017) suggests that the prevalence rates of physical and sexual violence have an impact on the increase level of a public health problem and human rights violation affects more than a third (33%) of the world's female population. The under-reporting of cases constitutes a serious challenge for comparing the prevalence of gender-based violence cases among nations (UN Women, 2020).

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in late 2019, we saw a remarkable increase in global gender-based violence trends against women. Of the 87 000 women murdered globally, 58% of them died through violence meted by either an intimate partner or a known family member (United Nations Women, 2020). Meanwhile, a similar category of emergency calls in Argentina increased by 25% following the introduction of lockdown restrictions on 20 March 2020. In countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA), a significant demand for emergency shelters were also observed for the accommodation of poor victims of gender-based violence. In every country, socio-cultural, religious, and legal factors contribute to different forms of understanding and interpretations concerning violence meted out against women and children as marginalised members of society (WHO, 2017).

A review in 21 studies conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa by Akamike et al. (2019) to understand analysts and facilitators associated with gender-based violence revealed that there was a relationship between substance abuse and gender-based violence. Furthermore, in terms of age, two studies documented the age of respondents as a analyst of GBV and that younger women were likely to experience GBV compared to their older counterparts (Akamike et al., 2019). An estimated 30% of women aged 15 and older have experienced physical and sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime. A study concluded that in Sub-Saharan Africa, there was a high prevalence of GBV with greater than 50% in a review, including South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Nigeria. The findings reveal that women in African culture are expected to be submissive to their male partners as a way of showing respect. Challenging such social norms would be regarded as disrespectful.

- **The South African Context of the prevalence of gender-based violence**

Gender-based violence against women remain a scourge globally and a widespread social problem in South Africa, impacting on almost every aspect of victims' life. In South Africa gender-based violence has increased, and it demands a whole societal approach to understand and prevent it from escalating. Gender-based violence comes in different forms, namely: physical, sexual, economical, verbal, psychological abuse, intimidation, harassment as well as stalking. It can also manifest in the perpetrator damaging the property of the victims and aggressively forcing himself/herself into the house or residence of the victims (Thobejane, Mogorosi & Luthada, 2018). It exists in every community in millions of households wherever people interact. In African contexts, gender-based violence is high and occurs in different forms in every environment, including poverty-stricken families and those in the middle class.

The prevalence of gender-based violence in South Africa is high. Covid 19 and lockdown restrictions also contribute to the rise in gender-based violence in South Africa. (Dlamini, 2021; Gutura & Nunlall, 2020). During Covid 19 lockdown restrictions, the South African helpline recorded more than 120,000 calls of domestic violence during the first week of lockdown restrictions by government (Mbunge, 2020). Women were trapped in their homes with family members who abused them physically, emotionally and psychologically, and some were killed by people who were supposed to protect them (Burris 2022; Ellis & June, 2020). In South Africa, young women are brutalised almost every day by people who were once partners or who are their partners.

According to the SA Police Service third quarter crime statistics, there was an 8.1 % increase in domestic violence-related crimes in the province. More than two third of women (77%) in Limpopo have experienced some forms of gender-based violence in their lifetime, including partner and non-partner violence. About half of men (48%) admit to perpetrating gender-based violence at least once in their lifetime (Machisa & Musariri, 2013). Studies indicate that Limpopo Province was at the forefront of the prevalence of gender-based violence in South Africa (CSV, 2016). Many women almost lost their lives after being sexually assaulted in the province, including the likes of Precious Ramabulana, Dr Tshimangadzo Muofhe and many more.

2.3 The types of gender-based violence leading to the psychosocial experiences

Gender-based violence manifests in various forms in respect of its physical, sexual, psychological and economic characterisation, including the threats posed by physical and sexual violence.

- **Physical Violence**

Physical violence is the intentional use of physical force with the potential to cause death, disability, injury or harm. This form of gender-based violence involves hitting, slapping, kicking, punching, pushing and so forth. It is in this type of gender-based violence wherein the perpetrator purposeful uses bodily force abusively on the victim by means of shoving, punching, scratching, biting, pushing, throwing, shaking, grabbing, choking, slapping, burning, using weapons and bodily strength to inflict harm on the body of the other person (Giardino & Giardino, 2010; Dutton, 2011).

The perpetrators of violence usually use gestures, words, or weapons as a means of intimidation to communicate their intention to cause harm, injury and even death. As the victims are more vulnerable and powerless, physical violence is more about controlling the victim by repeating physical acts of violence (Dutton, 2011). It includes indirect physical abuse, which includes destruction of objects, the throwing objects or harming the victim. Physical violence has potential to cause harm, injury and disability to victims (Retief & Green, 2015). A study conducted by Peltezer and Pengpid (2013) revealed that women reported greater instances of physical violence. Some victims of physical violence do not consider hitting and kicking as abuse, and tend to normalise the situation and live with it without any problem.

- **Sexual Violence**

Sexual violence includes forcing one to engage in sexual acts without the other partner's consent. It includes endeavour to obtain sexual acts, unwanted sexual comments and acts to traffic regardless of the relationship to the victim in any way (WHO, 2013). This is the most common form of gender-based violence, which may involve rape, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and trafficking for sexual purposes. The perpetrators use words gestures or weapons to communicate the intent

to compel a person to engage in sex acts or abusive sexual contact when the person is either unwilling or unable to give consent (Giardino & Giardino, 2010).

- **Psychological or Emotional Violence**

Psychological or emotional abuse involves a wilful infliction of mental or emotional agony by use of threats, humiliation and other verbal or non-verbal conduct. It is often associated with a situation of power inequalities, which involves preventing the victim from seeing friends and family members, relatives and preventing them from having any social relationship and isolating them from any social contact (CSV, 2016).

Psychological or emotional abuse can include, but is not limited to, humiliating a person, controlling the actions and decisions of the person, withholding information from the person, getting annoyed if the person disagrees, deliberately doing something to make a person feel diminished (less smart), deliberately making something to make a person feels embarrassed, isolating the person from friends and family, prohibiting the person from accessing transportation or telephone, and denying access to money and other resources. Research findings outlined by Slabbert and Green (2013) reveal that women experienced emotional abuse through insults, shouting, name calling and belittling in front of their children. Emotional abuse is also characterised by degrading and humiliation (Walker, 2016); hence the emotional wounds were deeper and more painful than physical abuse.

- **Economic Violence**

Economic violence involves the intentional and non-justifiable denial of financial and other resources to the women to reinforce dependency, which may terminate in psychological damage to them (Giardino & Giardino, 2010). Particularly for poor and uneducated women, their plight and dependency may be aggravated by factors such as limited health care and employment access, low levels of education; as well as lack of proper housing amongst female victims, who are put on strict allowance, which compels them to beg money (CSV, 2016). The abusers may even go to an extent of jeopardising women's financial status by harassing them at the work place until they lose their jobs (Zastrow, 2016). The abusers may also use finances in order to control and abuse women both during and after the relationship. A study by Slabbert and Green revealed that some women do not have control over their money, as their partners control all the money in the family.

2.4 The psychosocial effect of GBV on women victims

Women who experience abuse suffer from self-isolation, and fear to commit to future relationships. Gender-based violence affects relationships with friends and members of family. Women who lack resources also make them susceptible because what they wish to do, plan to do and their reasoning capacity is restricted (Thobejane, 2019). Women who are victims of gender-based violence are more likely to have a long-term negative effect, which may include psychological stress and post-traumatic stress disorder (Rikhotso, 2022). The symptoms of psychological stress include nightmares, flashback of abuse, sleeping disorders, eating disorders, numbing and hyper arousal. Psychological trauma is also known as a result of gender-based violence. This ranges from paralysis and terror to emotional pain: a sense of denial, depression, mental disorder and sometimes suicide. These effects affect victims' lives and can cause suicidal behaviours, anxiety, depression, social dysfunction and substance abuse. Women who experience gender-based violence tend to have a high level of depression, anxiety and phobia. Women in abusive relationships tend to lose self-confidence and develop low self-esteem due to the constant words that they are told such as being useless or worthless (Rikhotso, 2022).

Women who experience gender-based violence may also be isolated from family members or have relationships with people around them (CSV, 2016). Social costs to survivors of gender-based violence include rejection, stigmatisation of sexual exploitation and severe punishment by the communities. The development and well-being of children and families is also affected. Boys who witness battery are likely to have a violent disposition and girls grow into victims. In South Africa with a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS infections, it poses vulnerability risks to women. A study conducted by Mhrka and Lembeme (2016) reveals that gender-based violence perpetuates an increase in HIV/AIDS infections in Sub-Saharan Africa as women are silenced and marginalised when it comes to negotiating the use of proper contraceptives which led women to be more vulnerable psychologically and socially.

The community also stigmatised and isolated women exposed to sexual violence. Some believe that an association with a victim of abuse may lead to harassment by the partner of the particular victim. Stigmatisation also has a negative effect on survivors in their journey of rehabilitation. The community plays an important role in shaping the achievement of rehabilitation. A study conducted by Razilani-Makatu and

Chauke (2019) states that victims of gender-based violence are faced by stigmatisation from their communities, which still view victims of gender violence as having caused their abuse in that they enjoy it and decide to stay in the relationship. The misconceptions of many people in the wider society about gender-based violence makes it difficult for its attention in all sectors of the society. Women who experienced gender-based violence felt that their neighbours did not understand what they were going through and were angry about them for staying in abusive relationships (Rikhotso, 2022).

2.5 Factors contributing to non-disclosure of GBV to the police

There are many reasons why female victims of gender-based violence do not report cases to the justice systems, especially in rural areas. Reporting abuse to the police and then later withdraw it after pressure from family members is not uncommon among South African wives: “withdrawing a charge at a later point can be seen as a way of maintaining family relations after the threat to their authority has been experienced” (Moore, 2019). There is a widespread view that the criminal justice system is inadequate. This leads women to fear that crime has somehow become normalised (Gordon & Collins, 2013).

Women who would otherwise be willing to report their abuse to someone might not want to interact with the police, who, during apartheid, were the face of brutality – and sometimes rape – and who are still widely mistrusted (Britton, 2020). A study by Mashau (2022) reveals that most victims of gender-based violence are discouraged from reporting cases in the name of protecting family units as it mostly happens within families. Family members usually encourage the wife to stay and defend the husband’s actions (Burris, 2022). The criminal justice system is inadequate and failing women in our country, which leads them to fear to report gender-based violence and normalise violence to an extent that it becomes part of their daily lives (Gordon & Collins, 2013).

- **Social norms and gender-based violence**

Social norms play a crucial role in the influence of gender-based violence against women. Some social norms condone, justify and excuse violence against women. For example, norms about the acceptability of wife beating and male control are constantly associated with the higher rate of intimate partner violence worldwide. Gender norms

that dictate men's rights to control or discipline women and norms that link male honour to female sexuality can contribute to men's violence against women (Fulu, McCook and Falb, 2017). In rural areas, women are so ill-treated to the extent that they are even humiliated and assaulted in public areas without any shame or sense of guilty. In some instances, if a husband is beating a wife, community members say "bolaya sefebe", meaning kill that jezebel. Women's reluctance to disclose their experiences of abuse may be informed by the cultural scripts by which they live (Mulaudzi, Nkhwashu & Shilubane, 2022).

- **The role of culture and non-reporting of cases in perpetuating gender-based violence**

In most African countries, the sexuality of married women is customised in the realm that the husband controls them. A study conducted by Ademiluka (2018) outlined that female single parents are not allowed to have a sexual relationship with any other man, but a man is free to have many wives as he can. In certain cultures, they still conduct virginity tests for young women yet there is no virginity test for young men. This also led to gender-based violence, which may be considered a private or personal matter in some cultures and communities (Rikhotso, 2022).

Women are treated as subjects that must put up with all types of behaviour from their husbands. They are demeaned, shamed, belittled and made to feel inferior because they believed that they should always be submissive, obedient and loyal to their husbands. Cultural institutions that support lobola, which disempowers women and reinforces violence and its acceptance, gave participants' husbands power and control over their wives. A study conducted by Mulaudzi, Nkhwashu and Shibulane (2022) reveals that women exposed to emotional abuse thought that men had every right to do whatever they liked with them because they had paid the bridal price (lobola).

In South Africa today, there are still practices such as "ukutwala" where women are abducted for the purpose of marriage. Culturally, men are regarded as heads of families and their decisions usually override those of their female counterparts. African culture gives a lot of unfettered power to men, who in turn, can sometimes act irresponsibly, manipulate women and most of all, do not believe that women can be agents of change. Women are said to be weak and to be submissive to men. It is believed that to have an impact and influence, one needs power to control women.

The same happens within family settings, wherein conflict arises from individuals who want to maintain power and control relationships (Thobejane, 2019).

Traditional gender roles also encourage women to stay silence if they experience any form of violence (Fakunmoju & Rasool, 2018). The reasons for the non-reporting of gender-based violence cases to the police by women are mostly forced by the traditional roles that they play in rural areas. Secondly, women tend not to report cases of gender-based violence due to undue influence from family members. Those who are abused do not report cases of gender-based violence by hiding and telling lies to protect the perpetrators. Women tend to keep quiet as a way of protecting themselves from societal shame and stigmatisation, and to protect their culture. Another reason of failure to report cases of gender-based violence is that masculinity is viewed as a normal way of life in the rural areas. Cultural practices dictate that women are the property of their husbands and should submit sexually to them, and their refusal to do so is often seen as justification for violence (Fakunmoju & Rasool, 2018).

Gender roles in families and the ways in which children are raised continue to play a role in which “boys are socialised to be tough and engage in aggressive and high-risk behaviour, while girls are socialised to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others” (Fakunmoju & Rasool, 2018). Many gender-based violence cases go unreported and are further entrenched within a culture of silence that makes it difficult to gather information on its magnitude and long-term impact. It is viewed as a domestic issue within most families preferring to remain silent and settling issues in private spaces and further weakening the voice of women and increasing their vulnerability. At times, young girls are urged not to report rape because of fear that the breadwinner will be incarcerated and therefore earnings and support for family will be lost. When women are confident enough to report violence to the police, it is weakened by the lack of sensitive knowledge and considerations of gender-based violence as a real issue that requires urgent attention (Dzinavane, 2016).

Women who are at the receiving end are also victimised by the dominant cultural norms which are part of the “submissive masculinities” that should be defended and advocated for. Control over women is also entrenched in economic, ideological, cultural and political structures where men are the most benefactors. Hence, their rush to act violently to those who may try to undermine their authority (Thobejane, 2019). In deep rural areas, communities still adhere to the cultural norms and values, and

they are still practising them, which leads to an increasing rate of gender-based violence. Men are still regarded as heads of the family and decision makers. In rural areas, women are oppressed and do not have anything to say in the communities as well as in their families, which leads to the high rate of gender-based violence as they are supposed to submit to their husbands in terms of culture.

- **Socio-economic factors or financial dependence on man**

Socio-economic factors play a huge role in gender-based violence (Kiss, Schraiber & Heise 2012). Men control women and are viewed as providers, which features masculinity differently. Studies have been conducted that view the man as “the provider”, giving him the power to control and have access to women’s bodies (Enaiforge et al., 2021). Most women are less likely to be financially secured, especially those from rural areas. They are likely to stay in a toxic relationship with abusive partners. Self-sufficiency would give women freedom from being depended on men’s financial support. Male unemployment is possibly the leading factor that negatively affects males and their relationships, and may even lead to aggressive behaviour (Uwadiogwu, 2015). Some men feel disempowered due to lack of financial support to their families when they lose their jobs and struggle to cope with socio-economic challenges, which then leads them to excessive use of substances and alcohol. The collective psychosocial effects induced by unemployment and the looming poverty develop, and is realisable through substance abuse as a way to aggressively repossess the lost financial authority and control. As a result, it is difficult to deal with their own problems, and end up taking out their defeat and disappointment on women through violence (McIlwaine, 2013; O’Brien et al., 2016).

When women in heterosexual relationships earn more than their male partners, their partners often feel insecure and resentful, believing that they as men should be breadwinners and control the family finances. Many men see this changing dynamic as a threat to their masculinity and power (De Langa, Mitchel & Bhana, 2021 as cited in Burris, 2022).

- **Poor justice system and Shame**

Most reported cases end up being closed by the police, who tend to have a narrow view of what constitutes an act of gender-based violence. They tend to dismiss a complaint as not fitting that definition or encourage survivors to withdraw their

complaints. “Police officials, who are not properly trained, overburdened and working under pressure, are more prone to fall back on their personal store of knowledge and stereotypes to interpret a case” (Basdeo, 2018). Many police officers choose not to pursue cases of gender-based violence as they consider it to be “a private, domestic matter” and because they see women’s sexuality as shameful (Oparinde & Matteau Matsha, 2021). These perceptions demonstrate the extreme extent to which policing in South Africa is built on patriarchy and misogyny.

When cases do make it past the initial investigation, they may be dismissed by other criminal justice officials at later stages or withdrawn by the complainant due to frustration with the process, which can take a long time (Basdeo, 2018). Survivors also frequently face revictimisation in court proceedings that do not show respect and sensitivity to their experiences (Mogale, Kovacs Burns & Richter, 2012). For example, a young woman who was gang-raped in her home in Tembisa in 2005, known in the media by the pseudonym “Buyisiwe”, had her case postponed over 23 times due to officials violating procedures, losing documents and making other administrative errors (Lake, 2018). When she did finally testify, four years after the attack, Buyisiwe was forced to recount details of her rapes and subsequent health consequences, look at exhibit pictures of the crime scene and endure an intense cross-examination (Tau, 2009). With court processes that cause so much emotional pain and trauma, it is understandable that many survivors choose not to pursue justice.

- **Rejection and Stigmatisation**

In place of formal interventions, family meetings are often used as a mechanism for dispute resolution. From a wife’s perspective, this strategy has several benefits: she can shame her husband in front of both families; she can enlist the help of family members to alter her husband’s behaviour; she can maintain loyalty to her husband and in-laws by not taking it to the authorities; and she is able to continue to survive economically (which may not be possible if she left her husband or if he went to jail). Family members usually encourage the wife to stay, and may even defend the husband’s actions, which can take an additional mental toll on someone who has already been abused. Even if the husband’s family admonishes him in the context of a family meeting, he is still likely to assault his wife again in the future. Given that reporting leads to tension within the family and the potential loss of financial security, along with women’s awareness of the unlikelihood that police will arrest their abuser,

it is unsurprising that many women who experience abuse at the hands of their husbands choose not to report it (Moore, 2019).

2.6. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

There is a link between the reasons for failure to report gender-based violence by female victims and factors contributing towards the violence. The financial dependence of a victim on their husband, and the man as “the provider” gives them power to control and have access to women’s bodies (Jewels, Morrel & Sikweyiya et al., 2012).

- **Financial or economic dependence**

The financial dependence of women on men plays a huge role as a major casual factor of gender-based violence (Randa & Mokoena, 2019). Total financial dependence by women on men mostly leads to frustrations. Many women stay in an abusive relationship due to the need for financial support (Uwadiogwu, 2015). They tend to stay in a relationship as a plan for the future and their survival. Hence, the financial dependence of women on men becomes the abusive man’s means of securing his hold on a relationship of unequal partnership.

- **Poverty and Unemployment**

Poverty and unemployment are the outmost common contributing factors leads to violence against women (Chanda, 2019). Male unemployment is an important factor that negatively affects males and their relationships, and may even lead to aggressive behaviour (Uwadiogwu, 2015). Some men feel disempowered through lack of financial support to their families when they lose their jobs and struggle to cope with socio-economic challenges, which then leads them to excessive use of substances and alcohol. The collective psychosocial effects caused by unemployment and poverty become realisable through substance abuse as a way to aggressively regain lost financial authority and control. The abusers end up taking out all their frustrations and disappointment on women by being violent because they find it difficult to deal with their own problems (O’Brien et al., 2016).

- **Substance abuse**

According to Graaff et al. (2017), there is a causal relationship between violence and substance abuse, which is well-documented in South Africa (Masiko & Xinwa, 2017).

Studies connecting alcohol consumption and intimate partner violence indicate that 45% of men and 20% of women were drinking during or prior to such episodes (Freeman & Parry, 2006). In 2016, 70% of domestic violence cases in South Africa were alcohol-related and a fifth of perpetrators arrested for rape indicated that they were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crime (Masiko & Xinwa, 2017).

Research shows that intimate-partner violence is five times higher in relationships where one or both partners abuses alcohol. Alcohol abuse among men, as well as intimate-partner violence is often a manifestation of an underlying need for power and control related to gender-based inequalities and insecurities. More recently, police records show that during the COVID-19 lockdown with alcohol sales being prohibited, gender-based violence decreased substantially. One note, for example, that rape decreased by 84% and domestic violence by 70.7% during the same periods in 2019 and 2020, respectively (South African Police Service, 2020).

2.7. Interventions to address gender-based violence

South Africa has implemented a range of comprehensive and progressive policies, laws and support systems to protect women and advance their status. The Domestic Violence Act, the Employment Equity Act, the Sexual Offences Act, the Minimum Standards for Victims of Crime, the Service Charter and the National Policy Statement for Victim Empowerment are all aimed at the elimination of GBV (Mills et al., 2015). The partnership between government, civil society and development partners in South Africa led to the formulation of the GBV Emergency Response Action Plan in mid-2019. This was followed this year by the government's approval of National Strategic

Plan to combat gender-based violence.

The plan comprises the following interventions:

- Pillar 1: Accountability, Coordination and Leadership with the main focus on strengthening accountability and architecture to adequately respond to the scourge of gender-based violence.
- Pillar 2: Prevention and rebuilding social cohesion with focus on changing norms and behaviour through high-level prevention efforts.
- Pillar 3 Justice, Safety and Protection with the aim of accessing justice for victims and survivors.

- Pillar 4 Response, Care, Support and Healing focusing on the response to victims and survivors of gender-based violence.
- Pillar 5 Economic Power with focus on prioritising interventions that facilitate economic opportunities for addressing women's economic vulnerability.

The effectiveness of this strategic plan rests on the need to learn continuously from emerging strategies and practices from those working on the ground, as gender-based violence continues to mutate into different forms (Okafor, Odeyemi & Dolapo, 2014). The Presidential summit held on 01-02 November 2023 addressed resolutions on how best South Africa can combat the increasing rate of gender-based violence.

Though the South African government has signed various international and regional conventions to protect the rights of women and girls, and passed various laws such as the 1998 Domestic Violence Act, the 2012 Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, the 1998 Maintenance Act and the 2011 Protection from Harassment Act. Despite these policies, GBV remains a major problem.

Early GBV interventions are necessary for deconstructing practices, attitudes and behaviours that constitute a threat to normal life (Sohal et al., 2012). A study conducted by Rikhotso (2021) revealed that introducing GBV as a school subject and collaboration between government and community-based civil society organisations was mooted as a viable route to thwarting the trend of gender-based violence. At school level, Life Orientation was identified as a subject through which boys in particular could be taught from an early stage to respect girls as equal human beings with the same right to live as the boys themselves (Rikhotso, 2021). Furthermore, advertorials in the mainstream and social media platforms were identified as a savvy and creative means to launch GBV intervention and education campaigns mainstream. Programmes such as "Ufelani" on DSTV focus on victims of GBV telling their stories and experience. Though it might be difficult for people living in rural areas to access such programmes as some of them might not even afford the DSTV's pay-per-view monthly subscriptions (Rikhosto, 2021).

Community ownership Change must come from within individuals and communities themselves – it cannot be imposed. Communities will need to develop strategies for mediation and sanctions. Community responsibility and ownership of solutions can be promoted by creating an open environment to discuss violence and exchange views.

Peers and leaders can be critical change agents. A conducive environment is required to support interventions such as a legal framework that provides protection and punishes perpetrators, as well as services to support those affected by GBV. Where these do not exist, community sanctions may prove effective, but in the longer term there will be need for coordination and advocacy locally and at a national level (CSRV,2016)

- **Role by health worker**

Research shows a close association between intimate partner violence during pregnancy and fetal or infant mortality, developmental abnormalities, low birth weight infants, and maternal mortality. Health services in developing countries have been slow to address gender-based violence. Health care professionals may not recognize the impact of violence on women's health or they may consider it a private, domestic matter that is not relevant to their work. Moreover, they may be ill-equipped to deal with the problem because medical and nursing education does not include it as a health concern (CSRV,2016) Health care organizations are in a key position to break the silence and offer critical care to women who might otherwise face violence and its health consequences for many years. Health professionals are often the earliest point of contact for survivors of violence. As respected members of society, they are also in a unique position to change societal attitudes by reframing violence as a health problem. The role of health services is to provide immediate medical and psychological assistance to women who have been affected by gender-based violence and to assist them in avoiding additional exposure to violence. Both of these components are essential for protecting women's health (UNW,2020)

Once violence has been detected, health care providers can provide women with the following, medical support, including attending to women's injuries and specialized care for survivors of sexual violence. According to the World Health Organization, specialized care includes emergency contraception where it is approved, provision of safe abortion services in places where abortion is not against the law, and post-exposure preventive treatment for HIV and other STIs. They render emotional support, assuring women that the abuse is not their fault and that they can receive help; documentation that can be used to access the legal system and support legal proceedings. The required information is usually spelled out in national laws and

regulations regarding violence against women; and information about and referrals to legal aid, counseling services for survivors of violence, support groups, and places of safety if women cannot return home (UNW,2020).

- **Role of the police**

In terms of the Domestic Act, the police need to play a role of supporting the victim or arresting the perpetrator of GBV. The police are also expected to assist the victim to seek legal assistance, including obtaining a protection order and serving it on the perpetrator. It is also important for the police to refer the victim for counselling or to a shelter for safety and accommodation (Ludsin & Vetten,2005). Although the Act is clear about the role of the police, studies have found that many police officers are unwilling to assist victims of GBV as they see these cases as a 'private matter between two partners/lovers' (Mathews & Abrahams ,2003; Parenzee, Artz & Moul, 2001). Police officers' inactive and negative attitudes often result in secondary victimisation, and play a crucial role in victims not reporting their cases to the police or withdrawing them once they have been reported (Mathews & Abrahams 2003; Parenzee et al. 2001; Vetten 2005). The studies concluded that the legislation is good, but these negative attitudes among some police officers discourage victims from seeking help (CVRC,2016). Furthermore, police are known for even refusing to help survivors who approach them looking for assistance in accessing services, such as finding a domestic violence shelter (Ivković et al., 2020) When GBV is reported to police, they have high levels of discretion in deciding whether to pursue complaints, which can lead to known attackers not being arrested and increased aversion to police and reporting by victims. When police leaders and detectives are committed to a case, they can choose to put significant resources towards the investigation and pursue it aggressively(Rikhotso,2021).

2.8 Role played by social workers in addressing gender-based violence

The social worker plays a huge role in addressing gender-based violence. Some activities include facilitating educational programmes to empower victims of gender-based violence. This includes practical skills training to increase victims' self-confidence and ability to challenge oppression, abuse and disempowerment (Patel, 2015). It is social workers' task to empower victims of gender- based violence. They have a very crucial role to play in addressing gender-based violence through their

prevention interventions, especially in their local areas. These interventions include counselling, safety and the protection of victims, psychosocial and community education (Kam, 2014).

Social workers seek to empower women and men to view themselves as active survivors of gender-based violence. This could be done through the strength-based approach (Patel, 2015). The social worker also provides counselling, which includes support and guidance to victims of gender-based violence (Kirst-Ashman, 2017). They work with individuals, families and groups in addressing the psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence. It is of outmost important for Social Wokers to empower women by equalise access to power and resources between genders, including by strengthening women's economic security, independence and social,

political and economic participation and decision-making in public life.and also challenge men's use of controlling behaviours in relationships and the subtle normalisation of male dominance in relationships. Moreover, they should promote women's peer support by promoting women's networks and friendships. Support women's collective advocacy and activism.

2.9. The Theoretical Frameworks

The feminist theory is discussed first, followed by relevant perspectives from other theories, namely: the social learning theory and ecological theory. Gender-based violence is an integral component of every aspect of the economic, social, daily and private lives of individuals and societies. In the home and the workplace, gender-based violence perpetuates inequalities between women and men and affects women's empowerment.

2.9.1 The Radical Feminist Theory

Radical feminism focuses on one aspect of culture, namely, patriarchy, and argues that men oppress women through patriarchal appropriation. Patriarchy refers to a system in which the male social group holds the power whether in the family or within the society and has control over the female social group, resulting in the total subordination of women. Attempts are made to highlight how patriarchy is bred through the socialisation process (Leburu & Thekisho, 2015). Radical feminism views society as fundamentally a place in which men dominate and oppress women. Uwadiogwu (2015) outlined that the feminist theory advocates for the liberation of

women from the oppressive patriarchal system. The ideological foundations of patriarchal society can actually be eliminated on the provision that women come into the understanding and realisation of their own values and strengths (i.e. moral authority and agency) by confronting the age-old belief of male superiority (Uwadiogwu, 2015). Patriarchy is viewed as a cultural system which places men at the pinnacle of power and control, such that women ultimately occupy the periphery of marginalisation politically, socially, culturally, economically and religiously (Abdullahi, Cusairi & Abdullah, 2017).

Theoretical watchword is patriarchy, or men's pervasive oppression and exploitation of women, which claims that most men have potential to use physical violence against women, including rape and murder. Radical feminism theorises the threat of violence and rape as a way of patriarchy's control of all women. It sees domestic violence as having emanated from the sexual relations of power. The system of patriarchy excludes women from political and economic power and destroys the potential that women have as a group. This system manifests itself within the family where a man feels that beating his woman is his inalienable right because by so doing, he is viewed as a disciplinarian (Thobejane, 2013; Bryson, 2003). The unequal power relations between men and women is also reinforced by the entrenched patriarchal value systems of identifying women as inferior to men, which allows things such as poverty and low status of women to prevail (Mashau, 2020).

This theory addresses issues affecting women in terms of their past, present and positive future. It is a relevant theory to the study as it is initiated on the principle that women can make substantial contributions to society. The research should actually focus on the social transformative power and essence of women with regards to gender-based violence in rural areas. The feminist theory offers a current sociological perspective for understanding violence against women. It also raises the importance of women's voices and their contributions in the community. The feminist theory also enabled the researcher to a broader understanding and insights on the dominant role of social, political and institutional structures concerning the position of women in both their families and society. The ideological foundations of patriarchal society can actually be eliminated on the provision that women come into the understanding and realisation of their own values and strengths by confronting the age-old belief of male superiority (Uwadiogwu, 2015).

The feminist theory highlights the view of patriarchy as the central causal factor of violence against women throughout human history. Patriarchy is also posited as a cultural system that places men at the pinnacle of power and control, such that women eventually inhabit the edge of marginalisation politically, socially, culturally, economically and religiously (Abdullahi, Cusairi & Abdullah, 2017).

Gender-based violence stems from gender inequality and the view of women's bodies as sexual objects and the property of the overpowering party or partner (Hearn, 2012). In this regard, masculinity is understood as a social construction, and violent behaviour is always linked to masculinity through masculine norms describing toughness, dominance and the willingness to prove one's masculinity (Peretz & Vidmar, 2021). Gender-based violence is also considered as an integral part of culturally valued masculinities. Gender-based violence against women is a growing and broad area of inquiry, encompassing aspects such as sexual victimisation, domestic violence and hate crimes, with much overlap between these categories (Peretz & Vidmar, 2021).

2.9.2 The Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory suggests that social behaviour is learned by observing and imitating the behaviour of others. In terms of this theory, people make choices based on self-reflection; but mainly the environment in which a person finds themselves influences the way they behave and learn. The social learning theory is appropriate as it is believed that most children who were exposed to gender-based violence in their childhood development tend to be perpetrators of the violence. The child who has experienced abuse, or has a caregiver who has experienced abuse may view violence as a normal part of a relationship. Childhood sexual abuse is linked to severe intimate partner violence in adulthood, including beatings, choking, being threatened with a gun or knife and being forced or manipulated into an unwanted sexual activity (Shields et al., 2020). Women who witness abuse towards their mothers at the early stage of childhood development tend to view gender-based violence as a normal way of living amongst themselves. Men who grew up observing their fathers abusing their mothers view abusing women as a normal way of sustaining and controlling their wives. Therefore, the social learning theory will help the researcher to understand how behaviour is learned, witnessed and observed. It will assist the researcher to understand that psychosocial experience is the very same path that the victims' mothers went through. The theory will enable the researcher to zoom into the

generational transitions of psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence amongst women in rural areas.

The study findings also reveal that women who report child sexual abuse and childhood exposure to intimate partner violence are at higher rate than men, while men who reported childhood exposure to child physical abuse at a higher rate than women (Shields et al., 2020). A boy-child who grows up in a dysfunctional domestic surrounding with conflict-ridden family interactions was also more likely to rival abusive and violent behaviour in their later lives. In the event of a girl child, she may emulate her mother's patterned behaviour of submissiveness, silence and not report the father's abuse (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015).

In Africa both female and male children are socialised to believe that they are not equal (Mashau, 2022). These norms signal to boys that they can do the same, especially when they see men abusing women from young age (Fakunmoju & Rassol, 2018). People emulate the behaviour they see others displaying. A young boy who grew up observing his father assaulting his mother will likely grow up thinking and believing that abusing a woman in this manner is acceptable as he has a direct experience of such behaviour from the father.

The social learning theory suggests that behaviour is learnt from the earliest stages through observations, simulations, modelling and reinforcement, as well as direct and/or indirect experiences (Cilliers, 2021). Women who do not seek help from law enforcement unintentionally strengthen the continuation of gender-based violence through their silence. Therefore, violent and unpunished behaviour that is prolonged by men towards women may be learned. Boys learn from a very young age that violence against women was tolerated because they grew up in dysfunctional and violence-prone families in which their mothers also tolerated the aggressive behaviour of their fathers (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015). Children create a mentality that confrontation and violence are modes of resolving conflict in their future relationships (Enaiforge, 2021). Children growing up in communities were mostly likely to emulate the forced control of their fathers and submissiveness of their mothers, growing with fear of reporting abuse (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015).

2.9.3 Ecological theory

The ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner in 1970 suggested that people encounter different environment thoughts in their lifespans that may influence their behaviour in varying degrees. This is one of the most accepted explanations regarding the influence of social environment on human development. The ecological model suggests studying individuals, family, community and socio-cultural ill-treatment that exposes others to vulnerabilities, while also influencing and reinforcing potential perpetrators' attitudes and perceptions of women and society at large. In this regard, the model differentiates and considers the various factors that influence violence and people's behavioural patterns. The importance of the ecological model is supported by its facilitation of understanding the link between the situational, personal and socio-cultural contexts of violence.

In such situations, boys learn from a very young age that violence against women was tolerated because they grew up in dysfunctional and violence-prone families in which their mothers also tolerated the aggressive behaviour of their fathers (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015). According to Khumalo (2013), the ecology of gender-based violence affects children, who may be the victims themselves, or witnessed the deed of domestically perpetrated violence. A study conducted by Mpani and Nsibande (2015) reveals that witnessing family violence in childhood development may have a probability that the children themselves will become either victims or perpetrators of violence at a later stage in their lives. The ecological model is categorised into four aspects, namely: the individual, causal, relational and community factors; all of which relate to the study and understanding of gender-based violence.

Aspects such as personality are cooperative to detect and determine the propensity to violence; while causal factors include, but not limited to causes of violence such as alcohol and illicit substance use and extent of immorality or perversion. The relationships or family factors are characterised by a family environment in which frequent conflict and violence occur. Community factors relate to the extent to which society and the public view and prohibit gender-based violence (Rikhotso, 2022), tolerant attitudes and weak prohibitive interventions by the community against the perpetrators of gender-based violence. A study by Pelzer and Pengpid (2013), which investigates the gender-based violence situation in Vhembe District Municipality, highlights some aspects of the ecological model. Socio-cultural factors were

responsible for the ill-treatment of women to the extent that even their humiliation and assault in public was tolerated without any shame or sense of guilt. Furthermore, the killing of women in such rural communities is reflective of entrenched patriarchal values and chauvinistic ideals. In the final analysis, children growing up in such communities were most likely to emulate the coercive hegemony of their fathers and submissiveness of their mothers (growing with the fear of reporting abuse) (Khumalo et al., 2013; Krug et al., 2002; Mpani & Nsibande, 2015).

The unwillingness of men to seek help on their mental health leads some of them to start abusing substances and alcohol as a coping mechanism for the individual problems experienced in their families and personal lives (Rikhotso, 2022). A study by Mcilwaine (2013) suggests that women whose partners abuse alcohol were more likely to become victims of domestic and/ or gender-based violence. This is because excessive alcohol consumption can lead to impaired judgment, which may lead to certain behaviours which may/are generally avoided in a sober state.

2.10 SUMMARY

Gender-based violence is a global pandemic that affects women's psychosocial and social functioning in general. It occurs in all societies, at all stages of women's life cycle and is one of the most pervasive and systematic human rights violations in the world. The theoretical framework that guides this study includes feminist theories, social learning theories and the ecological theory. The feminist theories outlined how patriarchy continues to suppress and oppress the voices of women to stand up, show their capabilities and make contributions to society in the very same way and even more than men. Feminist theorists are of the view that women are relegated to secondary citizenship due to the gender inequality that continues to thrive. The social learning theory suggests that behaviour is learnt from the earliest stages through observations, simulations, modelling and reinforcement, as well as direct and/ or indirect experiences. The ecological models provide an analytical framework in terms of which the home, community and society play a crucial role in either reducing or perpetuating violence against women. There are also social impacts such as that women who experienced gender-based violence face stigma from their family members, neighbours and the community as a whole.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is a process and a kind of tool and procedures used in undertaking a study (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). It is the study of the research process, which involves the application of a variety of standardised methods and techniques in pursuit of valid knowledge (Solomon & Draine, 2010).

3.2. Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a philosophical framework that research is based on. It offers a pattern of beliefs and understandings from which the theories and practices of the research project operate (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It is also explained by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) as it reflects the researcher's beliefs about the world that he or she lives in and wants to live in. A paradigm constitutes abstract beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher sees the world and how she interprets and acts within that world. It allows the researcher to examine the methodological aspects of their research project to determine the research methods that will be used and how the data will be analysed (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

The study used constructivists paradigm. Constructivists believe that there is no single reality or truth, but rather multiple realities (Singh & Estefane, 2018). For this reason, constructivists tend to use qualitative research methods such as interviews or case studies, which focus on providing different perspectives. It aims to provide the answer to "why" rather than establishing relationships between two variables. (Singh & Estefane, 2018). The researcher will construct knowledge socially as a result of his or her personal experiences of the real life within the natural settings investigated. There is an assumption that the researcher and their subjects are engaged in interactive processes in which they intermingle, dialogue, question, listen, read, write and record research data (Singh & Estefane, 2018).

3.3. Research approach

A research design is intended to provide an appropriate framework of a study. A very significant decision in a research design process is the choice to be made regarding a research approach since it determines how relevant information will be obtained

(Creswell & Creswell, 2019). The study used the qualitative approach, which is primarily concerned with understanding human beings' experiences in the humanistic and interpretive approach (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2018). The study benefited from qualitative research because it allowed the researcher to acquire a better understanding of the psychosocial experiences of women exposed to gender-based violence. This approach offers the study in-depth information and allows the study to explore deeper into the issues raised about the psychosocial experiences that women who are exposed to gender-based violence come across (Creswell & Creswell, 2019).

3.4. Research design

Babbie and Mouton (2012:74) define a research design as “a blue print of how you intend conducting the research”. A research design is “a plan of how to go about addressing research questions” (Msweli, 2011:58). Bryman (2012:46) argues that a research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. Msweli (2011:58) asserts that part of the plan is to specify how data is collected and analysed as well as aims and goals articulated in the problem statement. The research design also supported the researcher to focus on the logic of the research process by providing evidence required to address the research questions appropriately (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:75). The researcher utilized an exploratory research design as the purpose of exploratory research design is “to gain a broad understanding of a situation or phenomenon as little was known” (Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole, 2013:35). It also gives the researcher an opportunity to interpret data, with the intention of providing an in depth understanding of the experiences by linking various data obtained (Creswell & Creswell, 2019). The exploratory design permits the researcher to gain insight into and to comprehend the subject under investigation (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). The exploratory component of a research facilitates the investigation of social phenomena without any prior expectations by the researcher, which enables him/her to provide explanations (Creswell, 2014; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). An exploratory research design was viewed as highly beneficial for gaining all-encompassing and in-depth understanding of the deeper meanings and contexts of the psychosocial experiences of women victims of GBV In Sekhukhune District Municipality.

3.5. Population

The population of the study was defined as a set or group of all the units on which the findings of the study are to be applied. Polit and Becker (2017:249) defined population as a complete combination of cases in which the researcher is interested. The study's population is not chosen for the purpose of generalisability but to establish the kinds of individuals that are suitable to take part in the study (Polit & Becker, 2017). The population in the study comprised all the female victims of gender-based violence aged 20 to 55 years of age and residing at Fetakgomo, Tubatse, Makhuduthaga, Elias Motsoaledi and Ephraim Mogale local municipalities in Sekhukhune District Municipality, Limpopo Province. The researcher had an interest in gender-based violence in the area after observing the social challenges that were highlighted through the engagements held with social workers, community development workers, justice system officials (including police officer) and victim empowerment counsellors. The researcher chose the study location because of these engagements with social workers, community development workers as well as victim counsellors in the area about the social challenges that are taking place, such as gender-based violence, substance abuse, unemployment, child-neglect, illegal mining and gambling.

The study was conducted at non-governmental organisation (NGO) victim empowerment programme centre (VEP) that supports victims and survivors of crimes, including gender-based violence, as well as their families to deal with the impact of the incidents that they experience. The VEP also assisted victims with the management of trauma and ensuring that they are educated to identify symptoms of post-traumatic stress at Sekhukhune District. The researcher wrote letters to the NGO's centre managers requesting to conduct the study in their organisations. The population of the study included women between 20 to 55 years and victims of gender-based violence attending victim empowerment programmes at the centres.

3.6 Sampling and sampling size

The study used non-probability convenience sampling, which was selected because of its availability to the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Silverman, 2014). Convenience sampling was used to select participants from different VEP Centers. The researcher selected 10 women victims of GBV from the available

list from Victim Empowerment Centres aged between 20 to 55 years and who were receiving services from the VEP Centres in Sekhukhune District.

Sampling criteria are the range of pre-determined considerations applied by the researcher insofar as including or excluding the participants for involvement in the study (Hammond & Wellington, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Accordingly, participants are considered eligible or ineligible on the basis of their homogenous (similar/ compatible) or heterogeneous (dissimilar/ incompatible) traits when compared with those of the larger population from which they were selected. The criteria for inclusion in the study were as follows:

- Participants were female in the 20-55 years age group.
- They were residents of Fetakgomo, Tubatse, Makhuduthaga, Elias Motsoaledi and Ephraim Mogale local municipalities in Sekhukhune District in Limpopo province.
- They (20 to 55 years) had experienced gender-based violence; and have attended the services rendered by non-government organisation (Victim Empowerment Centres).
- They were willing to be interviewed.
- They participate in the study without any form of reward or compensation.

Converse to the inclusion/ eligibility criteria, the exclusion/ ineligibility criteria are premised on the standards or considerations on whose basis some prospective participants become excluded from any involvement in the study's empirical data collection processes (Denscombe, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The criteria for exclusion in the study will be:

- Any male victim of GBV residing in Fetakgomo, Tubatse, Makhuduthaga or Elias Motsoaledi local Municipality in Sekhukhune District Municipality in Limpopo Province.
- Any 20-55 years old female not resident in of Fetakgomo, Tubatse, Makhuduthaga, Elias Motsoaledi local Municipality in Sekhukhune District Municipality in Limpopo Province.
- Any female resident of Fetakgomo, Tubatse, Makhuduthaga, Elias Motsoaledi and Ephraim Mogale local Municipality in Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province,

who will not be in the 20-55 years age category and had not directly experienced gender-based violence.

3.7 Data collection methods

Data collection methods are essential to establish quality secondary data analysis (Njenga, 2017). The original data must be evaluated, meaning that the researcher must consider the issues of sampling, response rates, missing responses, as well as the issue of bias if it was addressed in the original research (Shirindi, 2018). Data collection is a process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer the research questions, test hypotheses and evaluate the findings (Kabir, 2016). The qualitative data was collected using semi-structured interviews through individual face to face interviews. A semi-structured interview was used to gain different perspectives on the subject being studied. Face-to-face interviews took place in the participants' homes, as this provides a more relaxed environment, allowing them to feel free and at ease during the interview process.

Through direct communication with participants, the researcher was able to gather information. Face to face interviews lasted for approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes with each participant. The researcher was of the view that researching sensitive issues which may be emotionally painful should be conducted using face-to-face interviews, a view maintained by Sturges and Hanrahan (2004). Face-to-face interviews allowed the researcher to observe cultural differences physically for the interviewer to provide support when the participant explains the emotional and painful experiences. Social cues such as voice, the non-verbal communications of the interviewee and termination are easily observed or done (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Opdenakker, 2006). These are important aspects that the researcher took into consideration when she opted for face to face, semi-structured interviews. All interviews were conducted in private places in order to maintain privacy and to avoid stigmatisation. The interviews were conducted using the local language with women who experienced gender-based violence regarding their psychosocial experiences towards gender-based violence and the support system received. The researcher also probed during interviews in order to obtain a deeper understanding of gender-based violence.

3.8 Data analysis

The researcher uses Thematic Content Analysis (TCA), which was exploratory presentation for qualitative data. Thematic content analysis enabled the researcher to seek for themes (Creswell, 2009). There are different methods of thematic analysis. For instance, Creswell's (2009) method of data analysis such as organising and preparing data, developing a general sense of the data, coding the data, describing and identifying themes, representing findings and interpreting the data.

Therefore, the researcher thematically transcribed data from a tape recorder onto paper following Braun and Clarke's (2006:86) guidelines, which are:

Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with your data

After gathering the data and transcribing the interviews, the researcher prepared relevant transcripts and field notes. She reviewed the transcripts several times to become familiar with the information. During this procedure, initial concepts were recorded.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

The researcher prepared a list of the original concepts before beginning to code the information and spotting some intriguing patterns. The researcher checked for re-occurring statements or issues and corroborated with the field notes. Across the full data set, this was carried out methodically. The researcher then gathered the data related to each code.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

The codes were re-evaluated and compiled into probable themes.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

Themes were analysed to determine their value before being "mapped." A "map" of analysis was created by evaluating the themes in connection with the coded extracts and the complete data set.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

The researcher refined the information and gave each theme a distinct name.

Phase 6: Producing the report

Throughout the preparation of the report, analysis was carried out to code the details of each theme.

3.9 Quality criteria

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), there are four criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) used to appraise the trustworthiness of qualitative research. Credibility refers to the extent to which the study findings are trustworthy and believable to others (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To achieve credibility, the researcher used persistent observation by identifying those characteristics and elements that are most relevant to gender-based violence. The researcher also used prolonged engagement with the participants by investing sufficient time to build trust. Kumar (2011) and Walliman (2016) describe credibility as involving the reliability of the qualitative study results from the viewpoint of the participants and not researchers. Credibility in qualitative research is measured by the degree of concordance, verification, congruence, validation and approval by those who participated in the study. The researcher enhanced the credibility of the study by developing relationships through engagements with the participants. The researcher set time aside to contact the participants at a single point before the initial interview date to explain the purpose of the study and to build trust with them. This was done to reassure them that the information that they provide is for research purposes only and that their identities will not be revealed to anybody in any way. When participants are assured that there will be no harm to them, they freely shared their psychosocial experiences of GBV. In addition, the researcher provided pre-counselling to the participants to prepare them for any eventualities during their involvement in the study such as the triggering of painful emotions.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be transferred or applied in different settings. The researcher needed to make the findings meaningful to others by describing them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Transferability implies the extent of the findings' transmutability to other contexts with different participants. Although transferability is not easily established, it is still attainable through the researcher's thorough detailing of all the research stages and processes for interested researchers to follow and duplicate as outlined by Bryman (2012), and Korstjens and Moser (2018).

The study was documented from its conceptualisation until the report writing stage, including the decisions made and their rationale throughout the execution of the study (Berg & Lune, 2012). Knowledge was shared with the participants during data collection. The study assisted social workers with contextual knowledge in order for them to respond to gender-based violence issues. This also added knowledge and value to the social work profession, who will use the study as a benchmark on the psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence amongst women in rural areas.

Dependability refers to the extent to which the findings are consistent in relation to the contexts in which they were generated. The researcher collected data until no new themes emerge. The concept of dependability concerns itself with the attainability of the same results in the event that the same study was to be repeated (Kumar, 2014; Maggie, 2013). Qualitative research supports flexibility and freedom because it might be hard to establish unless extensive and detailed records of the processes are kept for others to reproduce with the main aim of ascertaining the level of dependability (Kumar, 2014). The researcher utilised an independent coder's services to check the consistency of the findings.

The researcher asked for feedback from participants on analysis and interpretation of data. The researcher made the findings meaningful to others by exploring them. She was flexible, open towards the process and topic.

3.10. Ethical considerations

3.10.1 Permission to conduct study

The study was reviewed by the research ethics committee of the University of Venda. Bothman et al. (2010) argued that all research involving human participants in South Africa must be reviewed by research ethics committees for permission to conduct the study. The primary function of the committee is to protect both the participants and the researcher (Bothman et al., 2010:12). Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the University of Venda Research and Ethics Committee. Bothman et al. (2010:12) emphasise that permission to conduct research must be obtained from relevant institutions to recruit and screen the potential participants. Permission to conduct the study was obtained in writing from the ongoing non-government organisation rendering services to female victims of gender-based violence in

Sekhukhune District Municipality (Bothman et al., 2010:12). The researcher also obtained ethical clearance from the University of Venda.

3.10.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

The information derived from participants was treated with confidentiality. Recorded information was kept in a memory stick and kept in a lockable steel cabinet accessible only to the researcher. Data was used for the purpose of the study. The researcher used participant codes to label data instead of their real names. Anonymity refers to data collection without getting any personally identifiable information (Coffelt, 2017). Again, anonymity allows everyone to present and react to ideas without fear of being judged.

3.10.3 Informed consent.

In the study, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants and requested them to take part in the study. They were asked to sign an informed consent form indicating that they have not been forced to participate in the study. The participants were given the right not to disclose the information that they do not want to share with the researcher and were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.10.4 Voluntary Participation

Voluntary participation relates to involvement in the study on the basis of freewill and choice (Adler & Clark, 2011; Babbie & Mouton, 2012). Therefore, no person was coerced or compelled to participate in the study. Coercion constitutes an infringement on the participants' right to choose as autonomous human beings who have the capacity to make their own judgements and decisions (Adler & Clark, 2011; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2012). The researcher developed rapport with the participants before the interviews and did not employ any deceitful means to entice their involvement. Developing the rapport was necessary to establish trust and access participants' personal spaces, which was helpful in generating the impulsiveness of sharing their psychosocial experiences on gender-based violence.

3.10.5 Protection from Harm/ Beneficence

Research should be construed as an organised activity intended to 'do good' to individuals and communities as a fundamental ethical rule (Berg & Lune, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Therefore, it was the responsibility of the researcher to ensure

participants' safety from any psychological, physical or emotional harm. The researcher ensured that she arranged a safe environment for the interviews at the comfort of their homes. Gender-based violence is a sensitive issue that may evoke undesirable psychosocial memories for participants (CSV, 2016; Mkhonto et al., 2014). However, the participants were informed of the possibility of such effects before the interviews begin. The researcher mediated this concern by arranging for the availability of the area Social Worker to provide relevant psychological counselling and intervention, should the participants feel that they need the services. The participants were also advised and encouraged to use the services of the Area Social Worker when the need arises.

3.10.6 The provision of debriefing and counselling services

At the end of the study, the researcher referred participants to local Social Workers' office for debriefing and counselling sessions. The researcher also clarified any possible misconceptions which the participants might have developed during the study.

3.11. Summary

This chapter detailed the main units of research methodology and analysis associated with the research design and methodology used. The primary units of analysis focused mainly on the *people* and *processes* involved in the study. In that regard, the data collection and analysis provided a framework for the ultimate findings of the study. The trustworthiness measures and ethical considerations completed the research design and methodology of the study. The results of the in-depth interviews are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter was about data presentation, analysis and interpretation about the psychosocial experiences of women who are exposed to gender-based violence. The chapter also outlined the effective ways of decreasing the rate of gender-based violence in rural areas. The chapter presents biographical data and the educational levels of the participants. Literature to support the participants' arguments was presented to complement what they have mentioned. The themes, figures and tables of unpacking psychosocial experiences that women who are exposed to gender-based violence faced on their daily lives were presented in this chapter. The researcher applied qualitative data analysis and data was transcribed verbatim using thematic analysis by Braun and Claurke (2006:68). The researcher thematically transcribed data recorded from a memory stick onto paper following Braun and Clarke's (2006:86) guidelines, which are familiarising the researcher with data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes and producing the report.

The purpose of the study was to explore the psychosocial experiences amongst women exposed to gender-based violence in rural areas of Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province, South Africa. Based on the research purpose, the unfolding outcomes represented in this chapter are reflective of the explored lived experienced of the female victims of gender-based violence in their own words, which reverberates with the constructivist paradigm (Creswell, 2014). Themes were presented, and figures and tables were used to unpack the psychosocial experiences of women victims of gender-based violence. The independent coder's services were used to check the consistency of the findings. In its entirety, the following data analysis steps were applied as suggested by authors such as Anderson (2014) and Creswell (2014).

4.2 Biographical Data

The biographical data included the age ranges, gender and marital status of women from rural areas who were exposed to gender- based violence and experienced the psychosocial effects in their lives.

4.2.1 Age range and gender of female participants

Ages	Gender
25-30 yrs	Female
31-40yrs	Female
41-55yrs	Female

Table 1: Illustration of the age range and gender of female participants

The table above represents the age range and gender of the participants. A total number of 10 women were interviewed (see Table 1). Accordingly, 20% (N=2) of the participants were aged between 25 and 30 years and 40% (N=4) between 30 and 40 years. This was followed by 40% (N=4) of participants who were aged 40-55 years. However, the researcher's age criterion should not be interpreted as discriminating against other gender-based violence sufferers.

4.2.2 Marital status of female participants

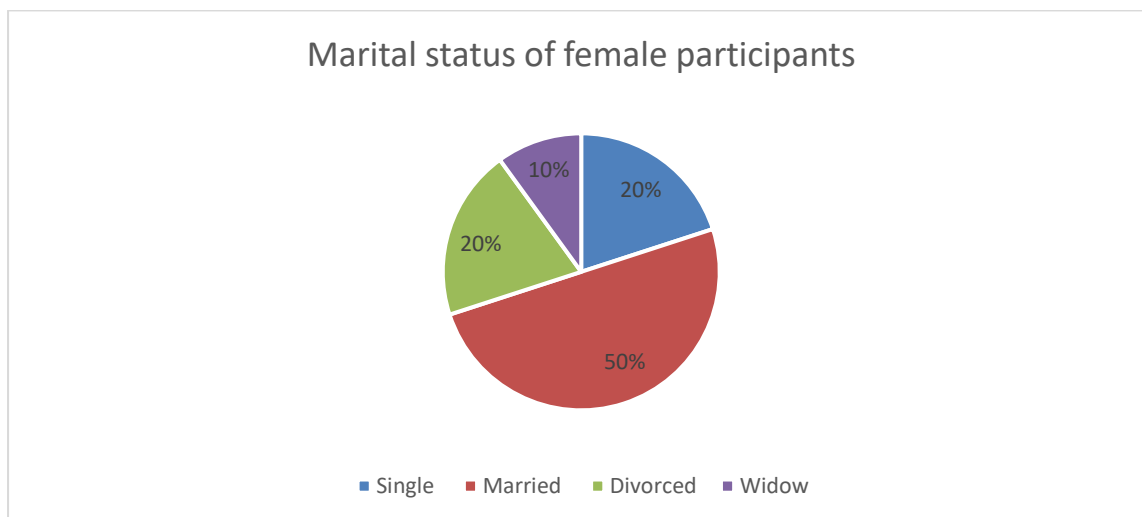


Figure 2: Marital status of female participants

Twenty percent (20%) (N=2) of women were single. A proportional number of 50% (N=5) of the participants were married women (see Figure 2) and 20%(N=2) were divorced women. A subsequent percentage of 10% (N=1) of the participants were widowed.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS STRATEGIES

Individual face to face interviews were used to collect data with women victims of GBV with psychosocial experiences. The interview schedule was written in English and translated into Sepedi for participants to be able to respond. The analysis of the interview data conducted with the selected participants was transcribed *verbatim*.

The researcher began by categorizing the codes after which she began to code the data to find the patterns in the data that answered her research questions.

The different themes that emerged from this data were used to gain a deeper understanding of psychosocial experiences of GBV of women's victim in Sekhukhune District Municipality. The researcher used face to face interviews to produce the various themes that were explored.

Themes were transcribed from the interviews with the participants. The themes enabled the researcher to present the results by discussing categories and presenting figures that depict the physical settings and diagrams indicating the framework of the study (Plano Clark, 2011:208). The themes include knowledge of gender-based violence by women in rural areas, the psychosocial experiences, reasons why women do not report gender-based violence to the justice system, the role of culture in perpetuating psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence on women and the different coping mechanisms for psychosocial experiences of women exposed to gender-based violence. There are five themes represented in tables and bar charts indicating the findings of the study. The participants were interviewed in their own language which is Sepedi. The psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence towards women were addressed through themes, sub-themes, tables and bar charts as follows:

4.3. Theme 1: Knowledge of the types of gender-based violence in rural areas

The themes discussed below were transcribed verbatim, include views outlined by the participants about the knowledge of the types of gender-based violence in rural areas of Sekhukhune District. All participants outlined the same thing about the knowledge of gender-based violence.

“Ke tlaišo ya basadi ba ba tlaišwago ke banna ka mekgwa ya go fapana. Ke ge go na le dikgogakgogano ka gae. E bonagala gantši basading ge ba thoma go botšiša balekani ba bona ka se ba sa se kwešišeng ka bona, ke mo monna a thomang go mo itia ka matsogo e le ge a sa nyake go botšišwa ke mosadi ka se a sa se kwešišeng ka yena, goba ba fapana ka mantšu, monna a nyaka go gatelela maikutlo a aosadi ka gore a se ke a bolela selo ka gore e le mosadi”. It is the abuse of women by men especially when they have differences. It mostly prevails when the woman asks her husband about something that she does not understand, then the husband becomes angry and start to beat his wife as a way of suppressing her emotions.

Gender-based violence is experienced differently by all genders irrespective of sexuality, age, race and other situational considerations. It is viewed as an umbrella terminology for any type of harm that is perpetrated against another person, especially women. It is a result of power inequalities that derive from gender roles (Evans & William, 2013; Chanda, 2019). Women in rural areas understand that gender-based violence occurs to only women and there is a need for awareness, especially in rural areas. It may be that the media has played a role in perpetrating the narrative of GBV as affecting women only because of the rarity of violence against men perpetrated by women. It is therefore important that GBV should be understood in its totality in order to avoid misconceptions (Rikhotso, 2023).

4.3.1. Sub theme: Types of gender-based violence experienced by female participants

4.3.1.1 “Tlaišo ya go itia” or “go betha”/ Physical violence

The findings revealed that physical violence also occurred to victim of gender-based violence. Most of them it happens in the form of bodily harm or assault to the victims. The findings agree with a study conducted by Slabbert & Green, (2013), which states that the perpetrator of physical violence purposeful bodily force abusively on the victim, by means of shoving, punching, scratching, biting, pushing, throwing, shaking, grabbing, choking, slapping, burning, using weapons or bodily strength to inflict harm on the body of the victim (Giardino & Giardino, 2010).

A number of participants said:” Go itia”

“*Nna monna wa ka o phela ka go itia, ka mehla ge a kwatile. Kudukudu ge a nwele madila, o rata go thoma ditaba tša morago tše di fetileng. Mo ke ilego ka mo phošetša gona*”. My husband used to beat me almost every time, especially when he is drunk. He used to start issues that we once solved, especially where I was wrong.

“*Mo motseng wa gešo bontši bja banna bo tlaiša basadi ba bona ka go ba itia. Ke yo monwe wa bona. Nna wa ka o be a mpetha mafelong a kgwedi ge a se no gola mošomong wa gawe, ge a tseba gore o swanetše go re rekela dijo. O be a etla ka gae a se sa na selo, tšhelete e fedile. Ge ke mmotša gore ga go na dijo ka mo gae, o be a thoma go befelwa ka gore tšhelete e be e fedile a rekela dijo ka lapeng le lengwe le a bego a ratana le ngwana wa ka gona wa mosetsana wa mengwaga ya ka fase kudu. Ke lona lebaka le le dirang gore a phele a se na tšhelete ge a etla ka gae mafelelo a kgwedī*”. In our area men are the ones who always abuse women by beating them. I am one of them. He used to beat me every monthend whenever I tell him that we do not have food at home. He will become angry because he knows that he does not have money anymore as he used to buy another young girl who had extra-marital affair with him and that was his reason to be broke every month end.

“*Nna ke tlaišwa ka go itiwa ge ke boa mabekeleng. Ba re ga ke tšwe mabekeleng, ke be ke ile banneng. Ge ke leka go ikarabela gore ke be ke dira eng mabekeleng, ke thoma go itiwa ka matsogo le tše dingwe tša dibetša. Mmele wa ka o tletše mabadi le bohloko*”. He used to beat me whenever I am from shopping. He had a thought that I was not from the shopping centre but I was with other men. He will start beating me using his hands and weapons. My body has many scars and it is painful.

“*Monna wa ka o phela a kwatile. Ga a nyake ke mmotšiša selo. Ge nka mmotšiša o feleletša ka go mpetha. Monna wa ka ga a nyake gore ke mmotšiše gore o tšwa kae. Ge o thoma go mmotšiša, o tla go botša gore o a mo telela, mosadi ga a botšiše monna wa gagwe selo*”. My husband is always angry. He

does not want me to ask him anything, especially where he had been. Whenever I ask him, he will beat me, saying that I am disrespecting him as a woman. I should not ask him anything.

Violence that is directed against a person on the basis of their sex or gender includes acts that inflict emotional, physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, or threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. Its scope includes psychological abuse, physical violence and sexual abuse and harassment (Mashau, 2021). The cohesion of physical abuse of women is the main form of gender-based violence (Mukanangana et al., 2014). Stove and Kiselica (2015) outlined that people who present a high level of anger were mostly engaged in the use of substances which in turn translates into more cases of physical violence. The link between experienced abuse or substance abuse and GBV have been found in numerous studies (Graff, 2017).

4.3.1.2 “Tlaišo ya tša thobalano”/ Sexual abuse

In this category, the participants shared their experience with sexual abuse. Sexual abuse can be described as any sexual act which may include endeavour to obtain sexual act, unwanted sexual comments regardless of the relationship with the victim (WHO, 2013).

Three participants experienced sexual abuse and they revealed that:

“Nna bothata bja ka bo thomile ka 2016. Monna wa ka o be a phela a etla le sephuthelwana ka pholasithiki ye nnyane a re ke sehlare sa banna. O be a phela a se tšhela ka gare ga mageu. Ge a nwele mageu a go ba le sehlare seo ba rego ke mpesu, o be a sa fologe godimo ga ka bošego ka moka a robala go feta tekano. Seo se be se direga ge a nwele mageu. Ke be ke tseba gore ka gae ga go tlo robalwa. Ge ke be ke phela ke mo kgopela gore a tlogele go nwa sehlare seo, e be e thoma go ba ntwaka gae. Ka gore ge a se a nwe o be a eba thobalana yeo e tlwaelegilego”. It started in 2016. My husband used to come with traditional concoctions which is called “mpesu” mix it with mageu. Whenever he drinks it he will be erected and demand sex the whole night. I used to plead with him to stop drinking it, but he never listened to me.

“Nna monna wa ka o phela ka bjala. Setho sa gagwe sa bonna ga se sa šoma ka gore o phela a nwele. Ge a boile madileng o ntsoša bošego a mphophola, a nkatla lebaka le letelele. Ge mogopolo wa ka o ikemišeditše go tsenela tša thobalano, ka lehlakoreng la gagwe yena setho sa gagwe sa bonna se palelwa ke go dira mošomo. Ga se sa šoma ka lebaka la madila. Ge ke kgopela gore re ye re nyake thušo, o re yena ga a na bothata. Seo se na le mengwaga ye mehlano se diragala ka lapeng ke dutše le monna ke sa hwetše thobalano”. My husband is a drunkard and his sexual organ does not function well due to his habit of drinking. Whenever he comes back from taverns, he will arouse me and when I am ready to engage in sexual activities, he does not erect. I will be waiting for him to perform as a man but he will be unable to perform in bed. This had been happening for five years and I tried to ask him to seek help but he refused.

“Nna ke nna mosadi wa lapa, monna wa ka ge a boa lefelong la go rekiša bjala o boa le basetsana ba bjaling ba go rekiša mebele a robalana le bona ka kamoreng ya rena ya go robala ke le gona ke lebeletše. Ge a fetša, o gapeletša go robala le nna. Ke rile ge ke tlo thoma go gana, ya ba ke šetše ke tsenwe ke bolwetši bjo bogolo bja HIV. Gonabjale re phela ka dihlare, ebile ge ke thoma go nagana ka yona e kweša bohloko eupša le kgatelelo ya monagano”. I am a married woman. When my husband comes back from the tavern, he comes with young girls who are sex workers and have sexual intercourse with them when I am around. After that he will also want me to have sexual intercourse with him while they are watching us. When I started to refuse having sexual intercourse, it was already late because I have been infected by HIV and currently we are on medication and it had been so stressing especially when I am around.

Findings indicate that the perpetrators used to sexually abuse their partners especially when they were drunk or used substances. This shows that there is a link between substance abuse and gender-based violence. These findings agree with Masiko & Xinwa, (2017) when they said that there is an association between gender-based violence and substance abuse. Studies connecting alcohol consumption and intimate

partner violence indicate that 45% of men and 20% of women were drinking during or prior to such episodes (Freeman & Parry, 2006). Another plausible explanation is the causal relationship between violence and substance abuse (Graaff et al., 2017). A link between experienced abuse or substance abuse and gender-based violence has been found in numerous studies, yet the reasons why these factors impact on different people in different ways is less clear. For example, it is hard to explain why substance abuse may make a man more likely to perpetrate violence, while it makes a woman more likely to be a victim (Graff et al., 2017).

Apart from the experience of gender-based violence itself being traumatic and damaging, it also results in unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, as well as long-term psychological trauma and depression (Enaifoghe et al., 2021). A study by Chibesa (2017) in Zambia confirmed that sexual violence resulted in partners being infected with sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS (Mihirka & Lembeme, 2016). Chitiga-Mabugu et al. (2014) share the same views as Mihirka and Lembeme (2016), that gender-based violence plays a role in the spread of HIV/AIDS infections in Sub-Saharan Africa because women are silenced and marginalised when it comes to negotiating the use of proper contraceptives. According to gender-based violence statistics, between 25 and 40 percent of South African women experience physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives, and between 12 and 28 percent of women report being raped (Gender-based Violence in South Africa, 2020). According to Mukanangana et al. (2014), a study conducted in Zimbabwe revealed that ninety-two percent of the participants reported being raped by their spouses. The study revealed that such form of rape took place irrespective of the age group, level of education, religion and employment status of both the victim and the perpetrator. A Zambian study by Chiesa (2017) confirmed that sexual violence also resulted in partners being infected with sexually transmitted infections.

The researcher is of the view that women who have experienced sexual abuse from their intimate partners felt indebted to fulfil the sexual demands of their husbands due to different reasons such as culture. Seven of the participants (N=7) stated their experience of sexual violence by their husbands as they believe that their husbands have power against their bodies such that they engage with them sexually even when

they were not willing to do so. The use of substance abuse especially alcohol is also a contributory factor towards sexual abuse. Three participants (N=3) experience sexual abuse due to the use of alcohol by their husbands.

4.3.1.3 “Tlaišo ya mašelang (tšhelete)”/ Financial abuse

A number of participants indicated that:

“Monna wa ka o bolawa ke go petšha dipere. Ke ka lebaka leo a phelago a se na selo. O na le dikoloto. O kolota le bomatšhonisa ka lebaka la go petšha dipere le lotto. Re phela re se na dijo ka gae. Re phela ka tšhelete ya mmušo ya bana. A dutše a šoma a na le maemo a godimo moepong wa Steelpoort. Re palelwa le go fetša moago wa diphapoši tše hlano, eupša re sa dula moagong wa diphapoši tše pedi. Ba lekile go bolela le yena ba gabo, eupša ga go na phetogo”. My husband is addicted to gambling, especially horse racing. That is why he spends most of the time broke. We are suffering. He is owing money from different people, including loan sharks because of gambling. He holds a superior post in a mine at Steelpoort but we are unable to finish our five roomed house and still residing in a two-room house.

“Tatagobana ba ka o rata basetsana, o palelwa ke go rekela bana ga gagwe diaparo ka gae le dilo tšeo ba di nyakago. Ka 2019, ngwana wa ka wa mathomo o boile Yunibesithing ya Limpopo ka lebaka la go palelwa go lefela tšhelete ya dithuto. Ke mo ke bileng ka kwa bohloko go bona ngwana a dutše mo gae go se na selo se a se dirang”. Baby daddy loves young girls. He fails to buy his own children clothing and things that they want. In 2019, my first-born child dropped out from University of Limpopo due to non-payment of tuition fees. It was painful every day seeing my child doing nothing and it caused pain in my heart.

“Nna monna wa ka o nkhweditše ka ngwana wa mosetsana ge re nyalana, ra ba le bana ba babedi, gwa diragala gore ka le lengwe la matšatši re hwetše kotsi ya sefatanaga nna le monna wa ka. Ra re go hwetša Tšhelete ya Dikotsi tša Mebileng mathatha a thoma, ngwana wa ka a thoma go ratana le tatagwe.

Go be go le boima gore ke bone ngwana wa ka a robala le tatagwe. Monna wa ka o be a eja tšhelete yela ya dikotsi tša mebileng le ngwana wa ka, a ba a tšea le yela ya ka. Ke be ke hloka le dijo a dutše a swere tšhelete ya ka. Ke thomile ke sa bolele ka yona go fihla mo ke ileng ka botša malome wa ka ka yona. Ke ge re e tlalea mo maphodiseng, ka humana thušo gona”. My husband married me with my first-born daughter who is not his biological father. So, me and my husband were involved in a car accident and we got money from Road Accident Funds (RAF). That’s where the problem started. My daughter started to have a sexual relationship with her stepfather such that she did not want to listen to me anymore. Even my husband started to show me that he does not want me anymore but he wants to be with my daughter. My husband used to spend money form RAF with my daughter, he even took all my money and utilised it. I used to suffer and even lack food by that time. I informed my uncle who assisted me by opening a case of rape to the police station. But he was never given a sentence as they said there is not enough evidence.

The research findings indicated that 75% of female participants depended on their partners for financial support, while only 25% were self-reliant (Randa & Mokoena 2019). Men remain unwilling to sacrifice their superior positions and allow women to achieve equality, which in turn contributes to the maintenance of their positions and the suppression of women through violence. (Fakunmoju & Rasool, 2018). Women tolerate abuse by their partners in exchange for economic survival (De Lange, Mitchelland Bhana, 2012; Enaifoghe et al., 2021). The continuation of traditional gender roles ensures that women are frequently financially dependent on men. While South African unemployment rates are high across both genders (30.1 percent in 2020), the rate is higher for women than for men (32.4 percent versus 28.3 percent). However, the unemployment rate for Black women is 36.5 percent and only 8.2 percent for white women (Statistics South Africa, 2021). This shocking difference means that Black women are less likely to be financially secure and thus more likely to stay with a toxic and abusive partner (Burris, 2022).

The researcher believed that women who are unable to earn a living and provide financially for their families are mostly victims of gender-based violence. Women tend

to stay in an abusive relationship due to the fact that they depend financially on their husbands.

At 76%, the participants (N= 8) had experienced financial abuse due to their dependence on their husbands. A small number of 8% (N=2) of the participants did not experience financial abuse. As attested by the participants, the findings reveal that financial abuse occurred because of their dependence on their husbands for financial support.

4.3.1.4 “Tlaišo ya maikutlo”/Emotional abuse

Other participants revealed that:

“Monna wa ka o thomile go fetoga ka morago ga gore re be le ngwana wa mathomo. Mmele wa ka o ile wa fetoga ka se sa ba le marago a go swana le a pele. A thoma go mpotša mantšu ka mmele wa ka, gomme seo se be se phela se tlaiša moya wa ka. O be a phela a mpotša gore ke ka lebaka la eng ke se na marago a go swana le a basadi ba bangwe. O be a kgona gore mola ke hlaphile a mpotša gore go no swana le ge ke sa hlapa ka gore ke befile”. My husband started to change after I gave birth to our first born child. My body started to transform and my body shape changes as well. That was then that he started to call me names that I do not have big buttocks like other women, even when I had a bath, it was still the same as I am ugly. This affected my emotions.

“Nna monna wa ka o be a mpapetša (compare) ka tsela ye ke sepelang ka yona le basadi ba bangwe. A phela a mpotša gore ke sepela o ka re ke monna. Seo o be a se bolela le ka gare ga batho. Monna wa ka o be a kgona go mpotša gore yena o a itshola ge a nyetše nna ka gore ga ke a mo swanela. O be a kgona le go ntshwantšha le mpša. Gantši o be a se na taba gore o bolela le nna go na le batho kgauswi le nna. O be a bolela le nna ka mokgwa wo a ratang ka gona. Seo se be se kweša pelo ya ka bohloko kudu. Ke feditše ke tšhaba go sepela le yena ge go na le melato”. My husband compared me with other women. He used to tell me that I walk like a male figure person. He will say that

he regrets marrying me because I do not match his physical appearance and it broke my heart such that I did not want to go with him even when there are celebrations.

“Setho sa ka sa bosadi se na le monkgo. Monna wa ka o hweditše ke dutše ke le bjalo. O be a tseba ka seno. Se se nkwešang bohloko ke ge a nwele bjala, gomme o bolela ka sona mo tseleng le bafeti-ka-tsela. O re yena o lapišitšwe ke monkgo, o botša le bana ka monkgo wa ka, o re mmagolena o a nkga. Ke lekile go ya dingakeng tša Sekgowa ke na le yena gore ke hwetše thušo, eupša go padile. Seo se nkweša bohloko ge a phela a nthoga ka sona”. My private part has a smell and it started at my early ages. When I met my husband, I informed him and he did not have any problem with it. But when he is drunk, he always told everyone in the street that my private part smells bad, he even tell my children that I have a smelling private part and he is tired. We tried to get help from doctors, but the situation never changes. It is painful for me as he used to swear at me.

4.4 Theme 2: The psychosocial effect of GBV on women victims in Sekhukhune District

Most of the participants confirmed that they experienced psychosocial suffering as a result of gender-based violence.

“Dilo tše ke hlananeng le tšona, di ile tša mphetola kudu ke phela ke se na lethabo ebile ke befetšwe. Ge ke nagana ka yona ke a befelwa, ka ikwa ke nyenyefatšwa kudu. Ke ile ka bontšha maikutlo a ka a go kwata goba go befelwa bathong kudu baagišaneng. Ga ke kgone go boledišana le batho gabotse bao ke bego ke tlwaelane le bona ka lebaka la maitshwaro a ka a go phela ke befetšwe. Tlaišo ye e dirile gore bophelo bja ka bo fetoge kudu. Go boima kudu gore ke phele le batho gabotse bjalo ka pele ka gore nako ye ntšhi ke phela ke befetšwe. Ke ile ka nwa le pharafene ke nyaka go itšeela bophelo bja ka. Ka bogolo bja Modimo, morwedi wa ka o ile a boa a etšwa sekolong ka pela, a hwetša ke hlatša, gomme a founela butiaka ba nkiša bookelong ka hwetša thušo. Go tloga letšatšing leo ga sa nka ka leka go ka ipolaya gape”.

The experience had changed me completely as I am always unhappy and always moody. Whenever I thought about it I became very angry and felt very low. I display a lot of anger towards other people such that it even ruined the relationship that I used to have with my neighbours. I am unable to approach people whom I used to have a close relationship with because of my moody behaviours. Gender-based violence had completely changed my life. It is very difficult for me to behave like I used to behave, because most of the time I am so angry. I once drank paraffin as I wanted to kill myself. By the grace of God, my daughter came back from school early that day. She found me vomiting, she called my brother and I was rushed to the hospital and got help. Since then I never did anything to harm or want to kill myself.

“Ke ile ka itshega ka legare mo matsogong a ka e le tsela ya go ntšha bohloko pelong ya ka. Ke be ke lapišitšwe ke ditlaišego tše ke bego ke kopana le tšona. Letšatši le lengwe ke ile ka ripa letsogo la ka la tšwa madi a sa eme, taba ye e ile ya bula mahlo a ka gore ga se ka swanela go ipolaya ka lebaka la motho yo mongwe. Se ke kopaneng le sona se bolaile boitshepo bja ka ka gore o be a mpotša mantšu a gore ga ke selo, ke lefeela la motho. O be a mpotša gore ga ke selo. Ke ile ka tšwela pele ke bonagatša mokgwa wa pefelo ebile ke tšhaba batho ba banna ke nagana gore banna ka moka ba a swana”. I used to cut myself on my hands with a razor as a way of releasing the pain in my heart. I was tired of all the abuse that I was going through. One day I cut my hand such that the blood was not stopping and it opened my eyes that I should not die because of another person. The experiences I encountered killed my self-esteem as a result of being told that I am useless. I also ended up developing a lot of anger and became scared of men.

“Sa mathomo se se ileng sa tla mogopolong wa ka ke go ipolaya ka gore ke bona o ka re ga ke sa na mohola goba ga ke sa le bohlokwa mo lefaseng. Monna wa ka o tšere lethabo le khutšo ya ka. Ke ile ka ikwa o ka re ge nka se be gona mo lefaseng, Modimo a gopola o tla šala ka khutšo a iketlile, a phela ka mokgwa wo a nyakang ka gona. Letšatši le lengwe ke ile ka leka go ipolaya. Ngwana wa ka o be a se gona, a ile leetong la sekolo. Monna wa ka yena o be a ile go ithutela tša mošomo wa gagwe. Ke bofile thapo ka tšwela ka ntle

kgauswi le mohlare wa manko, ke ge ke ekwa lentšu le re “o se ke wa dira ngwana wa gago o sa go hloka”. Ke ile ka tšhabela ka ngwakong, ka lla, ka se dire ka lebaka la ngwana wa ka”. I first thought of committing suicide because I felt that I was no longer adding value to anyone. My husband stole my happiness and peace. I felt that if I am no longer here on earth, he will live the life he wants without me. I did attempt to commit suicide the day when my child went on a school trip and he was attending his work training. I tied a rope and went out next to my mango tree and heard a voice saying do not do it, your child still needs you. I then run to the house and cried out loud. I did not do it for the sake of my child.

“E amile maikutlo a ka kudu, mo ke ileng ka fetša ke se sa na boitshepo ka lebaka la tlaišo ye ke kopaneng le yona. Nako ye ntši ke ntšhetša matshwenyego a ka mo baneng ba ka. Ke lwa le bana ba ka ntšha go befelwa ga ka mo baneng. Ke hlakahlakana go fihlela ke se sa tseba gore ke nna mang. Ke befelwa kudukudu. Ga ke kgone go lebala bohloko bjo monna wa ka a ntirileng bjona. E amile kgwerano ya ka le bana ba ka kudu. Ke palelwa le go dula le bona fase ra bolela bjalo ka mehleng. Sebopego sa phejane ya ka se swana kudu le sa tatagwe. Ke palelwa le go lebelelana le yena ka mahlong ka gore ba swana kudu ka sebopego. Seo se roba pelo ya ka”. It affected me emotionally. I also do not have self-esteem because of the abuse that I encountered. In most of the cases I even take out my frustration towards the children. I fight with children, taking my anger towards them. It is so frustrating such that I end up not knowing myself. I have lots of anger and it is not easy for me to forget what he has done to me (tears coming out). It also destroyed the relationship that I used to have with my children, as most of the time I am unable to spend time with them due to the anger that I have towards their father. My last born have all features of my husband; so, it is very difficult for me to have a close relationship with him and that broke my heart.

“Tše ke ilego ka kopana le tšona mo bophelo bja ka nka se tsoge ke di lebetše. Ke be ke phela ke tshwenyegile go se na yo nka boledišanang le yena ka yona. Monna wa ka o ile a nkgagantšha le batho bao ke bego ke na le setswalle le bona ebile ke ba rata, a dira gore ke se sa bona bohlokwa bja go boledišana le

bona ka mathata a ka. Nako ye ntši ke be ke e fetša ke tshwenyegile mo ke ileng ka feleletša ke enwa dihlare tša bolwetši bja madi a magolo. O ntlhakahlakantše kudu go fihlela ke se sa na boitshepo le bonna. Nako ye ntši ge ke be ke botša meloko le metswalle ka maitshwaro a monna wa ka ba be ba bona nna phošo mo lenyalong la ka. Go hloka theko ga ka go ile gwa tshwenya maikutlo a ka kudu ka feleletša ba re ke swerwe ke bolwetši bja kgatelelo ya monagano". It is the experience that I would never forget in my lifetime. I was always depressed and I did not have anyone to talk to. My husband would isolate me from people that I cared and loved about making sure that I do not see any value in socialising. Most of the time I would be stressed to a point that I ended up taking medication for high blood pressure. He destroyed me, to the extent that I lost my self-worth and identity. In most of the time whenever I told my family about my husbands' behaviour, they would blame me as if I am the causer of the problems in my marriage. The lack of family support affected me emotionally and led to my diagnosis with depression.

The study findings revealed that most women victims of gender-based violence experienced psychosocial suffering and most of them sufferees from depression, stress, humiliation and traumas. This is also supported by the study conducted in Jamaica indicate the extent of female victims' psychological and physiological suffering. Victims are more likely to suffer from depression than their counterparts who have never experienced any form of abuse from their partners (Mihirka & Lambeme, 2016). Higher risks of stress and post-traumatic stress disorder is also known as a common consequence of violence against women (WHO, 2013). A study conducted by Radzilani-Makatu and Chauke (2019) revealed that women in abusive marriages lose self-confidence and develop low self-esteem as a result of the constant criticisms intended to belittle, degrade and humiliate them. Victims of gender-based experience social stigmatisation in their communities, who ironically accuse the victims of bringing their own downfall by not leaving their toxic relationships (Radzilani-Makatu & Chauke, 2019). According to Lips (2014), the purpose of isolation is to undermine the life of the victim and to teach a sense of dependence on the abusive partner. It is evident that gender-based violence results in unwelcome psychological experiences such as suicidal thoughts, attempts to commit suicide and eventually suicide. The exposure to gender-based violence results in experiences such as stress, worries, depression,

suicidal ideation and flashbacks (Mkhonto et al., 2014). They were emotionally distressed to a point that suicide seemed to be the only plausible option (Mkhonto et al., 2014). Radzilani-Makatu and Chauke (2019) revealed that women in abusive marriages and relationships developed low self-esteem and confidence through verbal abuse as well.

The researcher believes that abusers also try to isolate their partners socially so that they do not associate with others. This results in the psychological disorder on women who experience such abuse. People tend to misunderstand the extent and effect of abuse on individuals and blaming the victims is unfruitful because it strengthens the abusers. Accusations create anti-social functioning of the victims who then prefer to withdraw socially from others, which may continue to stigmatise them. Men tend to worsen 'their' women's intentional isolation from friends and family, as a way of controlling them, their power and authority to further outpour the psychological damage on them.

This study also reveals that gender-based violence could lead to suicidal thoughts, anxiety and depression. Women who are abused by their partners usually suffer from mental health issues, which can be as severe as the physical effects of the violence meted against them. Furthermore, the participants added that gender-based violence impacted them psychologically as they feel worthless as women and their self-esteem is very low. They do not believe in themselves and are angry at themselves such that they feel shame, regret that they took time to move out and live their lives in peace and harmony.

4.5 Theme 3: Factors contribution to non-disclosure of GBV to police officers

4.5.1 Sub Theme 1: Poor justice system and shame "Go swabiša"

Other participants argued that:

"Ke be ke tšhaba go bula molato maphodiseng, ke nagana gore o tlo mpolaya ka ge maphodisa a tšea nako go nthuša. Ke ile ka bolela le mmatswale wa ka ka se se ntiragalelago. Ge ke be ke bolela le yena ka go ya go bula molato kgahlanong le monna wa ka o be a phela a mpotša gore e tlo ba hlabiša dihlolong. O be a phela a mpotša gore ga se ka swanela go bolela ditaba tša ka lapeng"

la ka le batho ba ka ntle. Ga go bonolo go bula molato kua maphodiseng". I was afraid to go and report the case to the police station. Thinking that he might end up killing me especially if it takes time for police officials to assist me. I used to share my problems with my mother-in-law and whenever I told her that I want to open a case for him, she would always say it will be an embarrassment to the family. She always said that I should not share my marriage issues with strangers. So, it makes it difficult for me to go and report the violence to police officers.

"Eeeh!! Ke ile ka ya maphodiseng a kgauswi le nna. Lephodisa leo le bego le šoma la ba bogale kudu go nna ge ke leka go bula molato. Le ile a nkgomišetša lapeng gore ke ye ke boledišane le ba bagolo go nna ka mathata a lapa la ka. E ile ya dira gore ke hloke maatla a go ka bula molato kgahlanong le monna wa ka le go tshepa gore ke tla hwetša thušo maphodiseng. Ke ile ka lemoga gore bontši bja basadi bo gatelelwa ge bo leka go ikemela ka maoto bo lwela ditokelo tša bjona ka go ya maphodiseng". Yooh! I once went to my nearest police station. The officer who was working there was so rough and harsh towards me. He/she told me that I should go home to call for a family meeting and solve the issue at home. That makes me to lose hope and trust on our justice system. I also heard that there are many women who were sent home by officials from the police station.

"Go ya go bula molato wa tlaišo maphodiseng o le mosadi go a swabiša, kudu ge molato wa gona o sa fele go ya ga bomaseterata kgafetšakgafetša. Ga sa nka ka bula molato wa tlaišo maphodiseng ka gobane ke tseba gore nka se hwetše thušo ya maleba maphodiseng a gešo. Ke kwele basadi ba bolela gore ba gomišetšwa morago malapeng a bona ge ba eya go bula molato. Le nna ke ile ka dula ka go kwa dipolelo tša bona, ke sa nyake go ba yo mongwe wa bao ba gomišwang maphodiseng". Reporting the matter to the police officers brings shame, especially when the matter has to go to court several times. I never reported the matter to the police officers because I knew that it will never make any difference in my life. I heard several times that many women are sent back by the police officers, so I did not want to be an additional person to the number of people who were ashamed by police officers.

When the victims of gender-based violence report the issue to the police, they have to decide whether to pursue complaints, which can lead to known attackers not being arrested and increased aversion to police and reporting by victims. When police leaders and detectives are committed to a case, they can choose to put significant resources towards the investigation and pursue it aggressively. Unfortunately, that commitment is often absent and police officers have other higher priorities (Britton, 2020). Most reported cases end up being closed by the police, who tend to have a narrow view of what constitutes an act of gender-based violence and are often quick to dismiss a complaint as not fitting that definition or to encourage survivors to withdraw their complaints. “Police officials, who are not properly trained, overburdened and working under pressure, are more prone to fall back on their personal store of knowledge and stereotypes to interpret a case” (Basdeo, 2018; Oparinde & Matteau Matsha, 2021). Lack of implementation of a national strategic plan (NSP) for gender-based violence also contributes to the non-reporting of cases of gender-based violence (Graff et al., 2017).

Women who are victims of sexual assault by their husbands and are married according to customary law choose not to report to the police out of loyalty to (and economic dependence on) the husband and families. Reporting abuse to the police and then later retracting it after pressure from family members is not uncommon among South African wives, “withdrawing a charge at a later point can be seen as a way of maintaining family relations after the threat to their authority has been experienced” (Moore, 2019).

In rural areas of Sekhukhune, study revealed that they still adhere to cultural norms and beliefs that even when there is violence, it should remain a family matter and resolved by the family. Eight participants (N=8) did not open a case at the police station as they did not want to be embarrassed by the police officials as they still believe that gender-based violence should be resolved within the family system. Two participants (N=2) opened a case although they later withdrew the charges against their husbands. Furthermore, they did not want to be in the statistics of people who had been traumatised by police officials.

4.5.2 Sub Theme 2: Rejection and Stigmatisation

Other participants outlined that:

“Ga go bonolo go ya go bula molato wa tlaišo maphodiseng, ka lebaka la gore batho ba tlo bolela ka wena gampe. Ke be ke tšhaba go ya go bula molato maphodiseng ka gobane monna wa ka ga a nyake ditaba tša gagwe di tsebja ke batho. Ke be ke tšhoga gape le batho ba mo motseng gore ba tlo ntebelela bjang le gore ba ka se nyake go ipatametša kgauswi le nna ka gore ke na le mathata”. It is not easy to report the abuse to police officers because people will judge you. I was afraid to go and report the matter to the police because my husband is very stubborn. He does not want other people to know our problems. I was afraid that people from my area they will talk bad about me and never want to associate themselves with me.

The sad reality is that victims are discouraged from reporting such matters to the police or are silenced in the name of protecting the family (Mashau, 2021). Marital conflict is regarded as a private matter rather than a public issue. Such a perspective intensifies gender-based violence because female victims suffer in silence, much the same way as some men justify the payment of lobola or bride price as entitlement to treat women as property or voiceless objects (Randa & Mokoena, 2019). Victims of gender-based violence experience social stigmatisation in their communities, who accuse them of bringing their own downfall by not leaving their toxic relationships (Razilani-Makatu & Chauke, 2019). Such accusations generate anti-social functioning of the victims who then prefer to withdraw socially from others, and may continue to stigmatise them. A study by Makongoza and Nduna (2017) found that women who experienced intimate partner violence were embarrassed to share their GBV problems due to fear of stigmatisation from the community, which also kept them from speaking out.

4.5.3 Sub Theme 3. Protecting breadwinners

Another participant revealed that:

“Nna ke na le bana ba seswai. Ga sa nka ka ya maphodiseng go bula molato ka lebaka la gore ke be ke tšhaba gore nna le bana ba ka re tlo hloka dijo ka gae le bana ba tlo palelwa go patela sekolong ka gore ga ke šome. Monna wa ka ke yena a šomago. Ke be ke gopola gore ge ke bula molato, ba mo swara a dula kgolegong, re tlo palelwa ke go iphediša ka mo gae. Ke be ke phela ka tlaišo le ge go be go se bose”. I have eight children and I never went to the police station to open a case against my husband. I was scared that if I open a case against him and he goes to prison, we will suffer from hunger and I will not have money to pay for my children's school fees. I stayed in a toxic marriage just because I am unemployed and could not provide for my children as my husband is a breadwinner.

Many women, especially customary wives, who are abused or raped by their husbands choose not to report to the police out of loyalty to protect the breadwinner or due to economic dependence on the husband and his family. Reporting abuse to the police and then later retracting it after pressure from family members is not uncommon among women, especially in rural areas (Graff et al., 2017). Many women withdraw charges at a later point as a way of maintaining family relations after the threat to their authority has been experienced (Moore, 2019). Given that reporting leads to tension within the family and the potential loss of financial security, along with women's awareness of the unlikelihood that police will arrest the abuser, it is unsurprising that many women who experience abuse at the hands of their husbands choose not to report them (Moore, 2019). Black women are less likely to be financially secure and thus more likely to stay with a toxic and abusive partner. There is also a higher chance of them living in communities where gender-based violence is common due to a variety of factors, such as poverty. Women stay in an abusive relationship due to the need for financial support (Uwadiogwu, 2015).

Study findings revealed that many women in Sekhukhune District are unemployed and not self-reliant. They depend on their husbands for their survival. Poverty is linked to higher rates of gender-based violence. There is a need for women empowerment, especially in rural areas around Sekhukhune District. The high rates of unemployment and financial difficulties faced by female victims strengthen their economic

dependence on their husbands. They will remain silent without realising that they are in a toxic relationship.

4.5.4 Sub Theme 4: The role of culture in perpetuating the psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence on women

A number of participants said:

“Ge ke nyalwa ke monna wa ka ke boditšwe gore ka setšo basadi ke bona ba nago le maikarabelo a go hlokomela, le go šireletša malapa a bona. Ke gopola gabotse ge makgolo wa ka yo a hlokofetšeng a re “lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi” a era gore o se ke wa tsoga o boile gape lapeng la mmago. O swanetše o hlokofalela bogadi. Go bolela nnete, ge ke nagana ka mantšu ao ba bego ba mpotša ona, ka kwa o ka re ke ile go hlabiša ba lapa la gešo dihlogong ge nka tlogela monna wa ka ka gore setšo se bolela go re ke swanetše go dula le yena ka dinako ka moka”. When I got married to my husband, I was told that culturally, women are responsible of taking care and protecting their own family. I remember very well when my late grandmother says to me “lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi” (once a woman is married, she no longer belongs to her own home), meaning that I should never come back to my family. I should die at my husband’s family. To tell the truth, whenever I thought about those words, I felt like I will be bringing shame to my family if I leave him as culturally I was expected to stay with him no matter how the situation might be.

“Setšo se tšwela pele go bapala karolo ya go tšhaiša basadi kudukudu motseng wa gešo ka gore re sa se latela. Le magoši a ka se kwe polelo ya gago. Ba tlo go botša gore o gomele gae, o ye o lokiše ditaba tša gago le ba lapa. Monna wa ka o ile a mpotša gore bjalo ka ge o le mosadi ga go na se o swanetšeng go mpotša sona. Sa gago ke go homola. Gape o ile a mpotša gore o tšwa thabeng go rutwa gore mosadi o swarwa bjang”. Culture continues to play a role on gender-based violence, especially from my village as we still adhere and obey cultural norms and values. Even traditional leaders will not even listen to your story, they will rather tell you to go home and sort your issues with your husband(s). My husband once told me that as a wife, you do not have anything

to tell me. A wife should always submit to his husband. Furthermore, he told me that he had been taught at the mountains how to treat a woman.

“Setšo se bapala karolo ka go hlohleletša tlaišo ya basadi, go ya ka tsebo ya ka ka mokgwa wo bašemane ba botšwang gore ba sware basadi bjang kudu bao ba tšwang go rutwa molao thabeng, ba fetoga go ba batlaiši. Ke bolela se ka gore tšatši ka tšatši ge ke boledišana le monna wa ka, o mptša gore ke homole, ke mosadi, mosadi ga se a swanela go bolela selo. O mpotša gore ga se wa rutwa molao ga geno le gore monna o swarwa bjang. Go ya ka yena, setšo le sona se tšea karolo go tlaisheng basadi. Ke hloile dilo tše tša setšo bjalo ka ge ke ile ka tlaishaga kudu ka lebaka la dilo tše tša sona. Setšo ga se dumelele mosadi wa go nyalwa a dira se le sela mola monna wa ka a le gare a nkiša letsogo nako ye ntši. Bomalome ba tla re o se ke wa tsoga o re swabišitše, ka setšo ge o nyetšwe o swanetše go feta maamong a go swana le a. Ge ke be ke bolela le bona ka tlaišo ye monna wa ka a bego a e dira, go be go se na yo a mphago tsebe. Ba be ba mpotša gore ke kgotlelele go tla fetoga”. Culture plays a role in perpetuating gender-based violence. To my knowledge, the way young boys are told to treat women, especially the ones who attend initiation schools from the mountains, they tend to be abusive. I am saying this because every time when I have an argument with my husband, he will always say keep quiet, women are not supposed to say anything. He will even tell me that my family did not teach me rules and how to respect men. To him, abusing me is something that even the culture condones. I hate this culture thing. I have suffered a lot in the name of culture. It does not allow a married woman to do this and that, while on the other hand my husband is busy beating me now and then. My uncles will say never embarrass us, culturally when you are married, you have to pass through those hard processes. Whenever I talked about my husband's beatings, no one wants to even hear my story. They will be telling me that I should stay, he will change.

“Go ya ka nna ka ge monna wa ka e le motho wa go homola, yo a sa tsebeng go tšweletša maikutlo a gagwe. E sa le ke thoma go dula le yena ga sa nka ka mmona a lla, ke be ke dumela gore o šomiša polelo ye e rego “monna ke nku o llela teng”, le ka nako ye mmagwe a bego a hlokofetše ga sa nka a bontšha

matshwenyego. Ke ile ka e lemoga ka morago gore mohlomongwe ke lona lebaka leo le bego le dira gore a tlaışege". For me it is different as my husband is a very quiet person, who does not know how to express his feelings. Since I stayed with him, I have never seen him crying and I believed that he was using this notion to say "men do not cry" even by the time when his mother passed away. He never showed any emotions, so I realised it later that maybe when he abuses me, it was a sign of showing emotions.

The study findings outlined that culture and gender roles in families and the ways in which children were raised continue to play an important part in contributing to gender based violence. This was supported by the study conducted by Fakunmoju and Rasool (2018) which reveals that culturally, boys are socialised to be tough and to engage in aggressive and high-risk behaviours, while females are socialised to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. The culture encourages women to stay silent when they experience rape or abuse; survivors fear to report the abuse to the justice system officials. The victims experience more and more abuse as punishment for reporting the initial incident. Culturally, it is believed that women are the property of their husbands and should submit sexually to them; their refusal to do so is often seen as a justification for violence (Fakunmoju & Rasool, 2018; Hassim, 2009). Family members use culture to encourage the wife to stay, and may even defend the husband's actions, which can take an additional mental toll on someone who has already been abused. There is a need for psychosocial services to demolish the culture of silence with regards to gender-based violence in rural areas (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015) where cultural norms and values, patriarchy and tradition are still strong (Radzilani-Makatu & Chauke, 2019).

4.7 Frequency on GBV occurrences on female participants

A number of participants revealed that:

"Nna monna wa ka o be a sa tše nako a phela a nkweša bohloko. Mafelelong a kgwedi ke be ke dutše ke tseba gore ge a boa ka gae e tlo ba ntwā. O be a emiša go nkiša letsogo tekano ya beke e tee fela, tše dingwe dibeke ke be ke phela ka dikeledi". My husband always makes me to feel the pain. Every

monthend I would know that he will beat me. It was a normal behaviour to me. He would stop abusing me for a week, other weeks I was always crying.

“Ke ile ka amogela gore nna ke phela ka go itiwa le go kwešwa bohloko. Go be go se na beke ye e ka felang a sa nkweša bohloko. Gantši ge a nwele madila o be a thoma dintwa. Ke gopola ka le lengwe la matšatši ba mo file mašeleng a mogodišano a go fihla R20000,00, a bolela mantšu a go re a ka se mphe le ge e ka ba peni godimo ga mašeleng ao ba mo fileng ona. Re ile ra fapana kudu tekano ya kgwedi ka moka ka lebaka la mašeleng ao a mogodišano. Re be re sa boledišane ka lapeng”. I accepted the situation and normalised it as I was supposed to feel the pain always. It always occurs on month end or whenever he has money. I remember there was a time wherein he received money from his stokvel, he told me that he will never give me any cent and we started fighting. We even spent the whole month without talking to each other.

The researcher is of the view that women exposed to GBV tend to normalise the ideal of the violence in their life. Regardless of the pain that their husbands might be inflicting on them psychosocially, they remain in the relationship. GBV occurs almost every day in their lives.

4.8 Theme 5: Coping mechanisms and support system for women who experience gender-based violence

4.8.1. Sub Theme1: The use of substances

The study revealed that women who had psychosocial experience of gender-based violence have different coping mechanisms. These finding agrees with O'Brien et al. (2016) with the respect that some women who experienced violence resorted to substance abuse as a coping mechanism with experience of intimate partner violence.

Another participant reveals that:

“Ke ile ka thoma o nwa mabjala. Ge ke se ka nwa ke be ekwa bohloko kudu go fihlela ke tšea sephetho sa gore ke phele ka mohlare wo motala(lebake/patše).

E ile ya ntsena mading go fihlela ke fola gabedi ka letšatši mo ke ilego ka kopana le mosadi yo mongwe wa go tšwa motseng wa gešo a mpotša gore o se ka bolaya bokamoso bja gago ka lebaka la monna. Etšwa ka gare ga lenyalo o tšwele pele ka bophelo bja gago. E ile ya ntšea nako kudu go tšea sephetho, go fihlela ke thoma go tsenela dithutwana tša batho bao ba tlaišegago re thušwa ke badirelaleago". I started drinking alcohol and whenever I am sober, I felt more and more pain. Until I decided to smoke weeds. I became addicted to it such that I used to smoke twice a day until I met a certain lady from my parent's village who said to me my daughter do not kill your future because of a man. Move out and start living your own life. It took me a while to decide until I started attending victim support programmes from my Victim Empowerment Centre.

The researcher is of the view that some victims of gender-based violence resort to substances as a way of coping with their ordeal. Substance abuse also increases the financial burden on the victims of gender-based violence as well in their family, permeating every area of their life and affecting the social functioning of the society. A study by Khumalo (2021) revealed that women who experience intimate partner violence are more likely to abuse alcohol and are more likely to neglect their children. Children who experience such violence go on to perpetrate violence as adults.

4.8.2 Sub Theme 2: Religious support "Church members support"

Other participants said that:

"Ka go ya kerekeng le dithapelo tša basadi ba kerekeng ke ile ka ba le maatla a go tšwela pele le bophelo. Thekgo ya bona ya ka mehla e ile ya ntira gore ke tie maatla gape. Le ka dithutwana tšela tša bodirelaleago (Victim Empowerment Centre), ba tloga ba nthušitše kudu. Lehono ke kgona go ema pele ga batho ka bolela ka tlaišo ya ka. Ke na le maatla ka gore ke mofenyi". Through attending church services, women's prayer gave me the strength to continue with my life. The ongoing support from the women in church made me strong again. The support I received from the Victim Empowerment Centre really assisted me a lot. Today I am able to narrate my experience with courage and strength because I have overcome.

“Go bala lentšu la Modimo ga ka, go dirile gore ke kgone go tloša bohloko bjo ke bego ke na le bjona. Ke ile ka thoma go tsenela dikopano tša basadi kerekeng kgafetšakgafetša, ka thapelo tša bona ga ke sa kwa bohloko pelong ya ka. Ke ile ka ya ka rutwa gape dikantorong tša bodirelaleago”. To deal with the pain, I read the Bible a lot as a coping mechanism. I used to attend women services more often and through their prayers, I am no longer feeling the pain like I used to do. I even attended support groups from the centre.

“Ke ile ka botša yo mongwe wa bagwera ba ka yo a ntemošitšeng gore ke ye baruting kerekeng. Ke mo ke ilego ka thoma go fola moyeng goba pelong. Moruti o ile a nkgomagatšha gape le modirelaleago dikantorong tša bona”. I told one of my friends who referred me to a pastor. That is where I started with my journey of healing. The pastor then linked me to the Victim Empowerment Centre where I received services.

Services rendered in the church are playing a huge role on the victims of gender-based violence, but mostly it is based on the type of religious group that the participants believe in. The victim empowerment centre is playing an effective role, especially on the victims of gender-based violence. The social workers from the centre are also playing a crucial role in rendering psychosocial services to the victims of gender-based violence.

4.8.3 Sub Theme 3: Sharing with someone

Other participants said that:

“Ke ile ka bitša lekgotla makga a mmalwa, eupša ga sa nka ka bona phetogo. Ke ile ka botša malome ka taba ye, gomme a tšwela pele ka maitshwaro a gagwe go fihlela ge ke eya go bolela le modirelaleago wa go šoma bookelong. Ba ile ba nthomela go ditsebi tša monagano gore di hlahlobe mogopolo wa ka. Ke bona o ka re go a nolofala letšatši ka letšatši ge ke boa ditsebing tša menagano. Bohloko bjo ke bego ke bo kwa ga bo sa swana le pele”. I called family meetings several times, but there was no change. I told his uncle and

still he continued with his behaviour until I decided to talk to the social worker from hospital who referred me to psychologists for therapeutic counselling. I can say it is getting better and better day by day. The pain I feel is no longer like the one I used to feel.

The study revealed that sharing with someone is an effective way to cope with gender-based violence, especially in rural areas of Sekhukhune District. Victims break the silence of gender-based violence by sharing their lived experiences with their friends, close relatives, colleagues etc. This works effectively as a social support to the victims of gender-based violence.

4.8.4 Sub Theme 4: Shopping.

Another participant outlined that:

“Seo se be se dira gore ke kwe ke le kaone, ke go ya mabekeleng a magolo. Seo se ile sa dira gore ke be le dikoloto tše dintši kudu tša go fapafapana. Nka bolela gore ke kolota mabekele a mantši kudu a diaparo ka lebaka la monna wa ka. Ke ile ka nyaka seo se ka dirago gore ke ikwe ke thabile ebile ke kgotsofetše pelong ya ka. Ke ile go thoma go kopana le badirelaleago ba go fapafapana ka ikwa ke le kaone kudu”. My coping strategies were through shopping, which had led me to too many debts. I can say I am owing many clothing shops because of my husband. I wanted something that will make me feel good and being loved. Since I started to attend services from the Victim Empowerment Centre, I am better.

The study revealed that some of the victims of gender-based violence resolve their issues through shopping, which also create problems for them. Though they receive therapeutic services from social workers from the centre, there is still a need for financial management training in general. This will also assist victims of gender-based violence to manage their finances and avoid being indebted. But there is also a need for every centre to have different stakeholders so that the victims of gender-based violence receive holistic services, like the other participants outlined that she is

currently in debts. There should be someone who is an expert in finance who will render services in relations to financial and debt management.

4.9 Summary

This chapter presented key findings of the research study on the basis of the data collected from participants through interviews. The data was subsequently analysed thematically to generate comprehensible meanings as evidence of the results. The data was collected from participants who met the criteria for inclusion and presented in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. The following chapter presents the overall the study and recommendations for future research

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the conclusions drawn from the study and makes recommendations that can help in supporting the psychosocial experiences faced by women towards gender-based violence. The conclusions and recommendations are consequent from five major themes discussed in chapter four. The recommendations are made for Sekhukhune District Municipality society, especially in rural areas, the Victim Empowerment Centres and future research. The researcher is of the opinion that the objectives of the study have been met and the research questions have been answered from the findings. The aim of the study was to explore and describe the psychosocial experiences amongst women exposed to gender-based violence in rural areas of Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

Based on the research questions, the main findings were developed as discussed in chapter four. The themes generated and presented findings derive from the four research questions above. A summary of the main findings is presented in the ensuing sections. The main five findings relate to the understanding of psychosocial experiences of women exposed to gender-based violence.

5.2. SUMMARY

- **Participants' knowledge of the types of gender-based violence in rural areas**

All ten participants were able to advance their understanding about the types, knowledge and experiences concerning gender-based violence, which they outlined to be any form of ill-treatment directed towards the opposite gender. Such understanding was mainly based on women. Six participants seemed to clearly understand that gender-based violence does not only happen to women, but also affect men as well. It is experienced differently by all genders irrespective of sexuality, age, race and other situational considerations, and is viewed as an umbrella terminology for any type of harm that is perpetrated against another person on the basis of their gender. It is a result of the power inequalities that derive from gender

roles (Evans & William, 2013; Chanda, 2019). The responses from the other four participants gave the impression that gender-based violence has to do with the ill-treatment directed towards women compared to men. In rural areas, there is still a lack of knowledge on the different types of gender-based violence as most of the participants know physical and sexual abuse as the main types.

The gender-based violence concept still needs to be explained to people living in rural areas. There is an undisputable knowledge gap between women who live in rural areas as compared to those in urban areas (Khumalo et al., 2013). There is a lack of understanding by some women in Sekhukhune District Municipality about gender-based violence.

- **Psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence by women**

All the participants confirmed that they experienced psychosocial suffering from gender-based violence. Participant F indicated that she separated with her husband due to lack of children and gender-based violence. She added that since she separated with her husband, she never had a suitable boyfriend as she does not trust any man. She also added that she hates male figures, as she thinks every man will behave the way her husband used to. Furthermore, she even has flashbacks of what used to transpire in her life. Whenever the man talks to her in a harsh way, she got frightened. The researcher's findings in a study conducted in Jamaica indicate the extent of female victims' psychological and physiological suffering. The victims are more likely to suffer from depression than their counterparts who have never experienced any form of abuse from their partners (Mihirka & Lambeme, 2016). The exposure to gender-based violence results in experiences such as stress, worries, depression, suicidal ideation and flashbacks (Mkhonto et al., 2014). Exposure to gender-based violence could lead to suicidal thoughts, anxiety and depression.

The social functioning is also affected in the way that they were no longer allowed to visit their loved ones, including their families. Participants outlined that their husbands isolate them from family members, friends and colleagues in order to prevent them from disclosing the violence.

- **Factors contributing to non-disclosure of GBV to police officers**

When the victims of gender-based violence report the issue to the police, they have already decided whether to pursue complaints, which can lead to known attackers not being arrested, and it increased aversion to police and reporting by victims. When police leaders and detectives are committed to a case, they can choose to put significant resources towards the investigation and pursue it aggressively. Unfortunately, this commitment is often absent, and police officers have other priorities (Britton, 2020). Most reported cases end up being closed by the police, who tend to have a narrow view of what constitutes an act of GBV and are often quick to dismiss a complaint as not fitting that definition, or to encourage survivors to withdraw their complaints. “Police officials, who are not properly trained, overburdened and working under pressure, are more prone to fall back on their personal store of knowledge and stereotypes to interpret a case” (Basdeo, 2018; Oparinde & Matteau Matsha, 2021).

Most participants argued that they did not report the violence to the justice system for different reasons, such as the unfriendliness of the SAPS officials as well as their belief in culture. Furthermore, they argued that the police officials were unable to assist them. They saw their matter as a family matter that should be discussed in a family setting.

- **The role of culture in perpetuating psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence on women**

Culture and gender roles in families and the ways in which children are raised continue to play an important part. A study conducted by Fakunmoju and Rasool (2018) reveals that culturally, boys are socialised to be tough and to engage in aggressive and high-risk behaviours, while females are socialised to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Culturally, it is believed that women are the property of their husband and should therefore submit sexually to them; their refusal to do so is often seen as a justification for violence (Fakunmoju & Rasool, 2018; Hassim, 2009). Family members use culture to encourage the wife to stay and may even defend the husband’s actions, which can take an additional mental toll on someone who has already been abused. Participant J indicated that she used to share information with her mother-in-law, who

always discouraged her from opening a case against her husband. Participant D outlined that culture also contributed to gender-based violence.

While some participants approached their families for support and intervention, others preferred to keep their gender-based violence for themselves for the sake of protecting culture. In African culture, family members are supposed to provide support, but the researcher is of the view that in-laws do not address the violence perpetrated by their own family members; they turn a blind eye on the situation.

- **Coping mechanisms for women experience gender- based violence**

Women who had psychosocial experience of gender-based violence have different coping mechanisms. A study conducted by O'Brien et al. (2016) reveals that some women resorted to substance abuse as a coping mechanism with the experience of intimate partner violence. Participant C started drinking alcohol and whenever she was sober, she felt more and more, to the extent that she even smoked weed. Prayer and support from fellow church members also appeared to be a significant coping strategy.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following:

- The researcher recommends that there should be collaborations between government and private institutions which will provide training in basic gender-based violence programmes in the form of awareness campaigns in rural areas. This will enhance the knowledge and understanding to people.
- There should also be social workers who deal with gender-based violence to render psychosocial services on a daily basis in rural areas. Social workers should be culturally sensitive and competent in rendering the services.
- Educational awareness campaigns in rural areas should always be conducted. Programmes such as Child Protection Week championed by the Department of Social Development should not be undertaken for one week only, but it should be re-rendered for the whole year as a mode of addressing serious issues such as gender-based violence.

- The victim empowerment centres should provide awareness campaigns to communities.
- Religious organisations and traditional leaders should serve as a safety net for the provision of psychosocial support, and disseminate information on gender-based violence.
- Civil society organisations should also provide information to the people as they engage with them on a daily basis; and gender-based violence issues should be discussed everywhere, including taverns, traditional gatherings, etc
- The government must use an intersectional framework when developing legislation, policies, and programs related to GBV and gender issues more broadly, taking into consideration the differing realities of women, LGBTQIA+ people, immigrants, poor people, people with disabilities, and people who fall into more than one of these categories
- The Department of Social Development should make sure that there are more social workers who will render service in rural areas by focusing on gender-based violence.
- Police officers should be trained and the SAPS should have officers who only deal with gender-based violence cases. They should be knowledgeable about these cases and there should be a specific police officer who deals with them in every police station.
- There is a need for cultural reorientation and socialisation to reduce the prevalence of gender-based violence within our communities. Traditional leaders should have a plan to change people's beliefs, attitudes and cultural norms concerning acts of gender-based violence.
- Traditional leaders should be involved to address the impact of culture on gender-based violence in rural areas, and they should be well-informed about gender-based violence issues
- The Department of Education should develop a curriculum for both primary and secondary schools that include the impact of gender-based violence in rural areas.
- Communities should serve as stakeholders to address the impact of gender-based violence in rural areas.

- Community women and men need to engage with the informal, community system first, rather than referring to the formal system. Build on this by working with the whole community taking them through the process of change.
- Community leaders should engage men as well as women; they should know that they are both stakeholders in resolving the issue. Involvement of men is important for a range of reasons, this will promote social reintegration of survivors of GBV so that women are not rejected and it will avoid a backlash from men as a way to promote sustained social change as change cannot be achieved without engaging the whole society. It will also enhance for peer pressure as men will listen to men, and leadership from men is key, and because men in the majority of cultures are key power holders without whose engagement behavioural change and adjustments in power relations is impeded.
- Services rendered by THUTHUZELA and NGO centers should be continuous and be rendered effectively with support to the victim as well as their families.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter outlined conclusions and the recommendations based on the findings of the study, which aimed at exploring the psychosocial experiences of women exposed to gender-based violence in Sekhukhune District Municipality, Limpopo Province. The main study findings revealed that women who are exposed to gender-based violence face depression, isolation, stigmatisation and suicidal thoughts as a result of its psychosocial impact. The study also found that women who are exposed to gender-based violence are isolated from their friends and families by their husbands by exercising power and control over them.

Furthermore, the study revealed that certain cultural practices still demand women's submissiveness even in matters that violate their human rights, such as the belief that a woman should never raise her concern towards her husband as it is regarded as disrespectful.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance from University

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Ms TP Murei

STUDENT NO:
11550519

PROJECT TITLE: **The exploratory study on psychosocial experiences amongst women victims of gender-based violence in Sekhukhune District Municipality Limpopo Province South Africa.**

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: **FHSSE/23/SW/04/2606**

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr MA Mabasa	UNIVEN, Social work	Supervisor
Dr NJ Budelli	UNIVEN, Social work	Co-Supervisor
Prof LD Mogorosi	UNIVEN, Social work	Co-Supervisor
Ms TP Murei	UNIVEN, Social work	Investigator – Student

Type: **Master's Research**

Risk: **Straightforward research without ethical problems (Category 2)**

Approval Period: **June 2023 – June 2024**

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following.

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
 - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project.
 - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
 - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project,
 - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
 - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
 - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions A It necessary

ISSUED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Date Considered: June 2023

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof TS Mashau

Signature




Appendix B: Consent Form

THE EXPLORATORY STUDY ON PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERIENCES AMONGST WOMEN VICTIMS OF GENDER- BASED VIOLENCE IN SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

Dear participant

My name is Takalani Patricia Murei. I am a Masters student in Social Work at the University of Venda. The research study on the exploratory study on psychosocial experiences amongst women victims of gender-based violence in sekhukhune district municipality my Masters degree programme. As part of this study, I am expected to collect data from selected participants, including you. During the data collection, the researcher would make use of an interview schedule or questionnaires.

You are kindly invited to be a participant in this study. The session would take approximately one and half hours. You are kindly requested to read and sign the informed consent provided to you. The participation in this study was voluntary and anonymous.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Murei Takalani Patricia

Masters of Social Work Candidate

University of Venda

Contact number: -----

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Declaration of consent

I,, hereby give permission to voluntarily participate in this research study with the following understanding:

Murei Takalani Patricia, a Social Worker from the University of Venda is conducting research. The research is a full requirement for Murei Takalani Patricia Masters degree in Social Work. Information will be collected by means of interview schedules or questionnaires. I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.

My rights as the participant:

- I cannot be forced to participate in this study;
- I have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time;
- I have the right to decline to answer any question (s) I am not comfortable with;
- I will remain anonymous and my name and identity would be kept from public knowledge;
- Any information I reveal during the process of this study should remain confidential, should only be used for the purposes of this research and for publication in Murei Takalani Patricia's thesis, and relevant or appropriate publications;
- I grant permission for any information I reveal during the interview process, with the understanding that data collected will remain in possession of the interviewer, Murei Takalani Patricia and his supervisor (Dr Mabasa Matimba Allan); and
- The identification particulars such as surnames and names will be kept securely safe in Murei Takalani Patricia's office and thereafter the list will be destroyed.

Signature Participant: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Interview Schedule

1. How long have you been residing at Sekhukhune District Municipality?
2. How old are you?
3. Can you please describe your educational background?
4. Can you please tell me your immediate family?
5. What is your marital status?
6. Do you have children? How many do you have?
7. Identify the nature of abuse leading to psychosocial experiences amongst women victims of gender-based violence?
8. Which type of violence commonly affects women psychosocial well-being?
9. Mention most common gender-based violence escalating in your community?
10. What is the most common type of gender-based violence in your community?
11. What are the psychosocial experiences of gender-based violence in your community?
12. What was your first-time experience to gender-based violence?
13. Can you please elaborate on your experience with gender-based violence?
14. What was the good and bad moment with your partners in a relationship?
15. What was the problems in the relationship that lead to gender-based violence?
16. Please tell me how long had you experience such problems in that relationship?
17. What was the typical arguments between you and your partner?
18. What was the worst argument you had with your partner?
19. How many times had you been exposed to gender-based violence?
20. What is the psychosocial experience you had encountered with gender- based violence?
21. What kind of support system you receive from thefamily and the community?
22. Have you ever had suicidal thoughts as a result of gender-based violence?
23. Do you think cultural norms and values play a role in gender- based violence?
24. Was your partner using alcohol or drug?
25. How did gender based violence affected your life?
26. Tell me about yourself prior before gender-based violence?
27. How do you see yourself now?

28. Did you receive any counselling after been exposed from gender-based violence?

APPENDIX : E

TO : WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

FROM : DR LE MPHASHA
NORTHERN SOTHO SECTION
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

SUBJECT : TAKALANI PATRICIA MUREI'S WORK

DATE : 11 JANUARY 2024

This note serves to confirm that I went through Chapter 4 (DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION) of the candidate's (Takalani Patricia Murei) work by editing the Northern Sotho Language to make sure that it is in order. I think I have done justice in this chapter. Even though I went through this chapter, much emphasis was on the Northern Sotho language.



Dr LE Mphasha

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APPENDIX : F ENGLISH EDITOR'S LETTER



Stand 507 Caledon Village, Cell +27794848449, Email: kubayijoe@gmail.com

23 January 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

SUBJECT: EDITING OF DISSERTATION

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled 'The exploratory study on psychosocial experiences amongst women victims of gender based violence in Sekhukhune District Municipality' by Takalani Patricia Murei has been copy-edited, and that unless further tampered with, I am content with the quality of the dissertation in terms of its adherence to editorial principles of consistency, cohesion, clarity of thought and precision. Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Kubayi Joe", is written over a faint, horizontal oval line.

Mafumisi Group