

The Incidence of Domestic Violence Against Women and Children: An Analysis of Reported Cases Within the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (Dovvsu) At The Asokwa Police Station in Kumasi-Ghana

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Abstract

The incidence of domestic violence is a source of great worry to society at large. Victims are suffering while perpetrators seem to be enjoying the act. While children and women are been abused at homes and domestic settings, authorities responsible to protect and safeguard themselves show gross reluctant in their operations and measures to help victims of domestic violence. This is an act serious violation of human right calls for empirical investigation on reported cases of domestic violence against women with the domestic violence and victims support unit at the Asokwa Police station in Kumasi-Ghana. The study sought to identify the major causes of domestic violence at victims' home, the effects of domestic violence on women and children and ways to curb domestic violence against women and children. The study adopted a case study design where data was collected through questionnaire and victims' records on reported domestic violence. The study revealed that domestic violence has negative effects on victims as respondents indicated that they suffered from injuries, guilt, anger, depression/anxiety, shyness, nightmares, disruptiveness, irritability, and problems getting along with others. The study found that children who experience domestic violence perform poor in schools and experience vicarious trauma, show signs of exaggerated startle response, hyper-vigilance, nightmares, and intrusive thoughts. The

study recommended that law enforcement authority such as the police should victims by ensuring that perpetrators are given the right punishment to serve as deterrence for future offenders.

Key Words: Domestic Violence, Women, Children, Police, Perpetrators

1. Introduction and background of the study

Domestic violence is a growing epidemic in Ghana (Marcia, 2008). Our entire society is beginning to feel its effects. In the past, domestic violence has been mislabeled as a family matter (Dwamena-Aboagye, 2014). Consequently, communities and law enforcement agency like the police have played a minimal role in prevention and intervention. Today as a society, we are more informed. We now understand that batterers and victims come from all races, genders, socioeconomic classes, ages, religious affiliations and environmental backgrounds (Dobash and Dobash, 2012). Domestic violence affects every member of the family, including the women and children. Family violence creates a home environment where children live in constant fear (Conte and Gelles, 2010).

Statistics show that over 3 million children and 2.7 million women witness violence globally in their home each year (Ackerman and Pickering, 2009). Those who see and hear violence in the home suffer physically and emotionally (Barnett, 2010). "Families under stress produce children who constantly live in stress, if a spouse is being abused and there are children in the home, the children are affected by the abuse as well" (Ackerman and Pickering, 2009). In the United State, domestic violence is common among family (Brenda, 2013). The National Violence Against Women Survey estimates that approximately 25% women in developed countries are raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner every year (Bohn and Holz, 2012). In the Africa continent, domestic violence is biggest threat to Africa's women and children (Oppon, 2012). Violence against women and children is a widespread problem in sub-Saharan Africa (Wood and Jewkes, 2007). Surveys conducted in sub-Saharan Africa reveal that 46 percent of Ugandan women, 60 percent of Tanzanian women, 42 percent of Kenyan women, and 40 percent of Zambian women report regular physical abuse (Odunjinrin, 2013). In a Nigerian survey, 81 percent of married women report being verbally or physically abused by their husbands. Forty-six percent report being abused in the presence of their children (Clifton, 2012).

The situation of domestic violence against women and children is not quite different in Ghana. Abuse and violence are serious problems that transcend ethnic, religious, economic, social and regional line in Ghana (Oppon, 2012). Domestic violence in Ghana is frequently directed toward females, children and youth, who lack the economic and social status to resist or avoid it (Ankomah, 2006). The World Bank estimates that rape and domestic abuse account for 5 percent of healthy years of life lost to women of reproductive age in developing countries including Ghana (World Bank's Report 2012).

Information from the domestic violence and victim support unit (DOVVSU), of the Ghana police service shows that domestic violence is commonplace in the countries (DOVVSU Report, 2016). This study therefore sought to investigate the problem of domestic violence against women and children using reported cases at the Asokwa police station of Ghana police service in Kumasi.

1.1 Problem of study

Domestic violence against women and children is a major problem in Ghana (Boateng, 2011). Despite the “Domestic Violence Act”, 2007 in Ghana to protect victims of domestic violence, women and children still suffer from all form of violence and abuse at home. Prohibition of domestic violence as indicated by the “Domestic Violence Act”, 2007, states among other things that “a person in a domestic relationship shall not engage in domestic violence”. “A person in a domestic relationship who engages in domestic violence commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than five hundred penalty units or to a term of imprisonment of not more than two years or to both” (Domestic Violence Act, 2007, Act 732). In spite of this act, women and children still suffer from violence in domestic relationship. One is tempted ask; why domestic violence in domestic relationship given this act existence? Is the act only a law in paper but not in practice? Are perpetrators of domestic violence been punished for their crimes? Domestic violence is problems are reported at the domestic violence and victims support unit (DOVVSU) under the Ghana police service. This study sought to come out with an empirical data on reported cases of domestic violence against women and children within the Asokwa police station in Kumasi-Ghana.

1.2 Research Objectives

The study looked incidence of domestic violence against women and children using reported cases at the Asokwa police station in the Kumasi Metropolis in Ghana.

The study specifically sought to:

1. Identify the major causes of domestic violence against women and children at home.
2. Find the effects of domestic violence on women and children and;
3. Suggest ways that law enforcement authorities could adopt to curb domestic violence against women and children within the study area.

1.3 Research questions

1. Why do perpetrators still commit domestic violence against women in domestic relationship regardless of the Domestic Violence Act, 2007?
2. What are the effects on domestic violence on children and women who experience domestic violence?
3. What can be done by authorities to reduce domestic violence against women and children?

1.4 Importance of the study

Researches have shown that police officers and other law enforcement agencies responding to calls of domestic violence are more likely to blame the survivor for the abuse than perpetrators. They are also less likely to charge the perpetrator with a crime when the survivor is women and children who suffer at the hand of family relatives just to maintain family bonds (Stewart, and Maddren, 2007). This study provided the police service with more knowledge of the actual causes of domestic violence women and children as dealt with victims who could share their experience with the researchers who they felt were acting in the best interest of the victims.

1.5 Literature review and theoretical perspective of the study

Domestic violence, also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence, dating abuse, and intimate partner violence (IPV), is a pattern of behavior which involves the abuse by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, cohabitation, dating or within the family (Shipway, 2014).

According to the Domestic Violence Act”, 2007, Act 732, of Ghana, Domestic violence refers to all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim. Domestic violence means engaging in the following within the context of a previous or existing domestic relationship:

(a) an act under the Criminal Code 1960 (Act 29) which constitutes a threat or harm to a person under that Act;

(b) specific acts, threats to commit, or acts likely to result in (i) physical abuse, namely physical assault or use of physical force against another person including the forcible confinement or detention of another person and the deprivation of another person of access to adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, rest, or subjecting another person to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;(ii) sexual abuse, namely the forceful engagement of another person in a sexual contact which includes sexual conduct that abuses, humiliates or degrades the other person or otherwise violates another person's sexual integrity or a sexual contact by a person aware of being infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or any other sexually transmitted disease with another person without that other person being given prior information of the infection; (iii) economic abuse, namely the deprivation or threatened deprivation of economic or financial resources which a person is entitled to by law, the disposition or threatened disposition of moveable or immovable property in which another person has a material interest and hiding or hindering the use of property or damaging or destroying property in which another person has a material interest; and (iv) emotional, verbal or psychological abuse namely any conduct that makes another person feel constantly unhappy, miserable, humiliated, ridiculed, afraid, jittery or depressed or to feel inadequate or worthless;

(c) harassment including sexual harassment and intimidation by inducing fear in another person; and

(d) behaviour or conduct that in any way

(i) harms or may harm another person,

(ii) endangers the safety, health or well-being of another person,

(iii) undermines another person's privacy, integrity or security, or

(iv) detracts or is likely to detract from another person's dignity and worth as a human being (Domestic Violence Act 2007, Act 732).

Domestic violence could be in the form of physical abuse such as battering, physical attacks or aggressive behavior sexual abuse (Stanford, 2009). It can also be in the form of forced sexual intercourse, unwanted sexual activity (WHO, 2008). Domestic violence also includes psychological and emotional abuse which

involves; psychological battering: constant verbal abuse, harassment, excessive possessiveness, isolating the victim from friends and family, deprivation of physical and economic resources, and destruction of personal property (Oklahoma, 2008), as well as economic abuse which may involve preventing a spouse from resource acquisition, limiting the amount of resources to use by the victim, or by exploiting economic resources of the victim (Brewster, 2013).

1.6.1 Theoretical Perspective

To better understand domestic violence, the study adopted a number of theoretical underpinning. First, we considered that power and control by Goetz and Gupta (1996). In abusive relationships, violence is posited to arise out of a need for power and control of one partner over the other. An abuser will use various tactics of abuse (e.g., physical, verbal, emotional, sexual or financial) in order to establish and maintain control over the partner. Abusers' efforts to dominate their partners have been attributed to low self-esteem or feelings of inadequacy, unresolved childhood conflicts, the stress of poverty, hostility and resentment toward women (misogyny), hostility and resentment toward men (misandry), personality disorders, genetic tendencies and sociocultural influences, among other possible causative factors. Most authorities seem to agree that abusive personalities result from a combination of several factors, to varying degrees.

Domestic violence may start when one partner feels the need to control and dominate the other. Feel inferior to the other partner in education and socioeconomic background. Abusers may feel this need to control their partner because of low self-esteem, extreme jealousy, difficulties in regulating anger and other strong emotions (Jyoti, 2006).

We considered the social learning theory by Albert Bandura, 1971. Social learning theory suggests that people learn from observing and modeling after others' behavior. With positive reinforcement, the behavior continues. If one observes violent behavior, one is more likely to imitate it. If there are no negative consequences (e. g. victim accepts the violence, with submission), then the behavior will likely continue. Often, violence is transmitted from generation to generation in a cyclical manner (Hotaling et al 2006).

Some scholars equally argued that domestic may also be as a result do social stress. Stress may be increased when a person is living in a family situation, with increased pressures. Social stresses, due to inadequate finances or other such problems in a family may further increase tension (Gelles, 2007). Violence is not always caused by stress, but may be one way that some people respond to stress (Aneshensel, 2012). Families and couples in poverty may be more likely to experience domestic violence, due to increased stress and conflicts about finances and other aspects and this may have nothing to do with learning (Jewkes, 2012). Some speculate that poverty may hinder a man's ability to live up to his idea of "successful manhood", thus he fears losing honor and respect. Theory suggests that when he is unable to economically support his wife, and maintain control, he may turn to misogyny, substance abuse, and crime as ways to express masculinity (Jewkes, 2012).

1.6 Research methodology

The research adopted a case study design where data was collected mainly through closed and open-ended questionnaires. The researchers specifically examined cases within the Asokwa Police Station to gain an

in-depth and comprehensive view on the problem of domestic violence and its effects on victims. Records of the victims both women and children were examined. The researchers employed both primary and secondary data for the study. Secondary data was collected from the Asokwa Police Station on victims' records on domestic violence cases. The primary data was obtained directly from the respondents. The study adopted stratified and simple random sampling technique to select thirty (30) respondents out of 71 reported cases that were currently under investigation at the domestic violence and victims support unit (DOVVSU) at the Asokwa Police Station-Kumasi; Ghana and five (5) police personal at the DOVVSU. Quantitative approach was adopted to analyze the field data. To ensure that the respondents are protected from any harm, the respondents were made to take part in the study voluntarily and their personal identities were kept confidential. A major challenge of the study was its inability to include male victims.

1.7 Result of study

The study findings looked at the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, causes of domestic violence against women and children, the effects of domestic violence on women and children and; ways that law enforcement authorities adopt to curb domestic violence against women and children.

1.8.1 Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

The study first looked at the respondents' socio-demographic profile. This was done to provide the study with information upon which major conclusion and deduction could be reached. Key socio-demographic variables discussed in this section included; age group, educational background, religious affiliation, occupation, place of residence, and number of times respondents had suffered from domestic violence. Concerning the age of the respondents, majority of the respondents who reported cases at the unit were in the ages of 26-35 year, below 15 years and 36 -45 years. This means that these age groups were the most dominant age for respondents who suffered domestic violence. It was also established that children at age 10 or less suffer from domestic violence. Majority of the respondent had primary education. This means that majority of the victims of domestic violence who participated in the study had only primary education. It implies that people with low educational background suffer from domestic violence. This could be attributed to the fact that perpetrators feel that they will be have any idea regarding their right and possible may not have any knowledge in respect to reporting cases to the DOVVSU. It was also established that children at age 10 or less suffer from domestic violence. Investigating into the respondents' religious background, the study found that 16.7% (5) of the respondents were Christians, 60% (18) of the respondents were from the Islamic faith, and 23.3% (7) of the respondents were traditional believers. Majority of the respondents were Muslims. Majority of the respondents were unemployed. This means that people have not employment and do not earn income are more likely to be victims of domestic violence. The high number of victims being unemployed also means that perpetrators commit violence against these people because they cannot take care of themselves and might even have to rely on the perpetrators for help which leads to violence. As to the number of times respondents have suffered violence, 3.3% (1) of the respondents said once, 26.7% (8) of them suffered violence on two occasions, 10% (3) of the respondents had experience domestic violence on three times, 6.7% (2) of the respondents had suffered violence in their

various house on four times, 36.5% (11) of the respondents said that they had been violated on five times, whilst 16.7% (5) of the respondents said they had experienced violence on six or more occasions. The detailed information on the respondents' socio- demographic profile is provided in table 1.1 below;

Table 1.1 Respondents' socio-demographic profile

Variables	Categories	Frequency N=30	Percentage (100%)
Respondents' age range	Below 15 years	9	30.0
	16-25 years	5	16.7
	26-35 years	11	36.7
	36-45 years	7	23.4
	46 years and more	5	16.7
Respondents' educational level	No education	8	26.7
	Primary school	9	30.0
	Junior high school	6	20.0
	Secondary school	5	16.7
	Tertiary education	2	6.7
Respondents' Religious affiliation	Christian	5	16.7
	Muslim	18	60.0
	Traditional	7	23.3
Occupation	Unemployed	13	43.3
	Government workers	8	26.7
	Self-employed	3	10.0
	Private organization	6	20.0
Place of residence	Rented single room	5	16.7
	Family house	11	36.7
	Own house	4	13.3
	Self-contained apartment	5	16.7
	Wooden structure	5	16.7
Number of times respondents experience violence	One	1	3.3
	Two	8	26.7
	Three	3	10.0
	Four	2	6.7
	Five	11	36.7
	Six and more	5	16.7

Source: Field Data, 2016

1.8.2 Type of domestic violence victims experience and the causes of domestic violence against women and children

Exploring into the types of violence victims experienced, the study established from respondents' cases available at the DOVVSU at the police that some common types of domestic violence the respondents suffered from include physical assault, insulting, neglect, beating, sexual abuse, harassment, financial abuse, non-provision of feeding money for victims, threat to kill victims, attempted murder, deprivation or threatened deprivation of food for victims and emotional abuse. Majority of the respondents had reported to the unit on several occasion of domestic violence. This means that victims after reporting to the unit were more likely to experience domestic violence again. The study found cases of individuals who had reported

on many times which questioning the need for reporting abuse cases as victims continue to suffer similar cases over and over.

The study found that majority of the respondents indicated that social and cultural factors have kept women and children particularly vulnerable to the violence directed at them. This recorded a high average 4.82, which means most of the respondents agreed that culture of the victims and perpetrators accounted for domestic violence against women and children the most. An unequal power relation between men and women recorded the second average of 4.65 as the major cause of domestic violence at home, which also implied that most of the respondents strongly agree that unequal power relation between men and women is the major cause of domestic violence at home. The respondents indicated that unequal power relation between men and women is the major cause of domestic violence at home. Equally, majority of the respondents agreed that that lack of economic resources underpins children and women’s vulnerability to violence and their difficulty in extricating themselves from a violent relationship with recorded an average of 4.21. The study further revealed that psychiatric disorders are risk factors accounting for domestic violence in the home. This means that perpetrators of domestic violence suffer from psychiatric disorder. The study against established that poverty, drug abuse and drunkenness, ignorance, miscommunication, disrespect and hatred are some of the common cited reasons for domestic violence. Table 1.2 depicts the detailed information on the causes of domestic violence against women and children.

Table 1.2 below shows the descriptive statistics for causes of domestic violence against women and children. As can be seen, the factors with the highest average were considered by most victims as the majority causes of domestic violence. It was observed that all the listed factors had their standard deviation below one, indicating a consistency in respondents’ response. The standard errors of the various factors also show the same consistency in agreement from the respondents.

Table 1.2 Descriptive Statistics for major causes of domestic violence against women and children

	N	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	Rank
Social and cultural factors	30	4.82	.552	.528	1 st
Unequal power relation	30	4.65	.232	.650	2 nd
Lack of economic resources	30	4.12	.076	.757	3 rd
Psychiatric disorders	30	4.08	.062	.816	4 th
Poverty	30	4.01	.057	.875	5 th
Drug abuse and drunkenness	30	3.84	.246	.456	6 th
Ignorance	30	3.51	.642	.673	7 th
Hatred	30	3.42	.345	.213	8 th

Miscommunication	30	3.11	.034	.342	9 th
Disrespect	30	2.81	.025	.615	10 th

Source: Field Data, 2016

1.8.3 Effects of domestic violence on women and children

Pertaining to the effects of domestic violence, the study found that majority of the agreed that women and children who suffer from domestic violence find it difficult relating with family and friends which recorded the highest average of 4.71. This was followed by physical injuries and health implication of domestic violence which recorded an average of 4.59. The study found that women and children who suffer from domestic violence have physical injuries and health problems. This means that victims of domestic violence have health problems. Emotional effect of domestic violence on victims recorded third with an average of 4.34. The victims agreed that domestic violence can have emotional effect on them. The study further established that some effects of domestic violence children include psychological effects and post-traumatic with an average of 4.29, stress disorder with an average of 4.17, low of self-esteem which recorded a mean of 4.11 and financial problems which recorded an average of 4.01. Others effects of domestic violence against women and children included bruises, broken bones, head injuries, lacerations, psychological/mental health issues and chronic physical health problems.

The study further examined cases as recorded by the DOVVSU and established that most victims of domestic violence reports showed the following common effects of domestic violence on women and children as recorded by the police. “domestic violence creates fears on children and some long term effects on a child who comes from an abusive household, or have been abused themselves are guilt, anger, depression/anxiety, shyness, nightmares, disruptiveness, irritability, and problems getting along with others. Domestic violence victims recorded within the police unit showed health problems including injuries on women and children, poor education for children, experience vicarious trauma, signs of exaggerated startle response, hyper-vigilance, nightmares, and intrusive thoughts, developmental problems on children and poor social relations with peer and even with the abusers. The data in table 1.3 showed that effects of domestic violence on women and children.

Table 1.3 Descriptive Statistics for effects of domestic violence against women and children

	N	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	Rank
Difficult relating with family and friends	30	4.71	.371	.243	1 st
Physical injuries and health implications	30	4.59	.456	.429	2 nd
Emotional effect	30	4.34	.163	.573	3 rd
Psychological effects and post-traumatic	30	4.29	.173	.297	4 th
Stress disorder	30	4.17	.496	.783	5 th
Low of self-esteem	30	4.11	.528	.351	6 th
Financial problems	30	4.01	.583	.548	7 th
Bruises	30	3.12	.452	.213	8 th

Broken bones	30	3.09	.319	.429	9 th
Head injuries and lacerations	30	2.34	.302	.392	10 th
Psychological/mental health issues	30	2.27	.017	.017	11 th
Chronic physical health problems	30	2.14	.601	.349	12 th

Source: Field Data, 2016

1.8.4 Ways to curb domestic violence against women and children

Pertaining to the measures to help curb domestic violence, respondents stated a number of factors as possible ways to help curb domestic violence. Some of the recommend factors from the respondents include; there should be counseling for perpetrators to help them change their behavior, victims should be treated well when they report case to DOVVSU, and they should always get fair treatment of their cases, there should be care laws and law enforce body, such as Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) to come to the aid of victims, perpetrators should be several punished; there should heavy fine on abuser and perpetrators or domestic violence, family should be educated on the effects of domestic violence on children and victims.

Table 1.4 Respondents’ views on curbing domestic violence against women and children

Ways to reduce domestic violence	Frequency	Percent
There should be counseling for perpetrators to help them change their behaviour	3	10.0
Victims should be treated well when they report case to DOVVSU, and they should always get fair treatment of their cases	7	23.3
There should be care laws and law enforce body, such as Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit to come to the aid of victims	6	20.0
Perpetrators should be several punished, there should heavy fine on abuser and perpetrators or domestic violence	8	26.7
Family should be educated on the effects of domestic violence on children and victims.	5	16.7
No responses	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2016

1.8 Discussion of results

The study established that some common types of domestic violence the respondents suffered from include insults, neglect, beating, sexual abuse, financial abuse and emotional abuse. This confirmed the findings by Stanford and Mowry (2009) that some common violence at home include sexual abuse, physical abuse and economic abuse. This study has found more forms of domestic violence experience by women and children such as; harassment, financial abuse, non-provision of feeding money for victims, threat to kill victims, attempted murder, deprivation or threatened deprivation of food for victims and emotional abuse.

The study found that social and cultural factors, unequal power relation, lack of economic resources, psychiatric disorders, poverty, drug abuse and drunkenness, ignorance, hatred, miscommunication and disrespect were the topic most factors that account for domestic violence against women and children. The

revealed in factors such as poverty, drug abuse and drunkenness, ignorance, miscommunication, disrespect and hatred as factors that lead to domestic violence confirmed the views of Heise, (2004). Barnett (2010) also noted that some factors contributing to domestic violence include; unequal power relations include: socioeconomic forces, the family institution where power relations are enforced, fear of and control over female sexuality, belief in the inherent superiority of males, and legislation and cultural sanctions that have traditionally denied women and children an independent legal and social status. This is more in line with this study finding on social and cultural factors as being the major causes of domestic violence against women and children.

One major focus of the study was to establish the effects of domestic violence on women and children. Baker et al, (2012) noted that children exposed to domestic violence at infancy often experience an inability to bond and form secure attachments, often resulting in intensified startle reactions and an inhibited sense of exploration and play. According to Bermann, (2014), children may portray a wide range of reactions to the exposure of domestic violence in their home. Bruises, broken bones, injuries, and internal bleeding are some of the acute effects of a domestic violence incident that require medical attention and hospitalization (Jones, 1997). This study found that some of the effects of domestic violence on women and children included; difficult relating with family and friends, physical injuries and health implications, emotional effect, psychological effects and post-traumatic, stress disorder, low self-esteem, financial problems, bruises, broken bones, head injuries and lacerations, psychological/mental health issues and chronic physical health problems. The study found that women and children who suffer from domestic violence have physical health problems. This means that victims of domestic violence have health problems. This confirmed the views of (Heise, 2004), that assaults result in injuries ranging from bruises and fractures to chronic disabilities such as partial or total loss of hearing or vision, and burns may lead to disfigurement. The medical complications resulting from domestic violence can range from hemorrhage and sterility to severe psychological trauma (Heise, 2004). This study has established that domestic violence has far negative effects on victims' health, social life and moral being. This confirmed the views of Horan (2017) that domestic violence has emotional effects on victims. The study finding was also in line with the views of Berry, (2008) that major consequences of domestic violence victimization include psychological/mental health issues and chronic physical health problems. The respondents suggested some measures such as counseling for perpetrators, fair treatment of victims' cases by the police, laws to aid victims, severe punishment for perpetrators and education on the effects of domestic violence on women and children as ways to reduce the incidence of domestic violence.

1.10 Recommendations

Based on the study findings the following recommendations are suggested; the results of the study on the current state of domestic violence against women and children highlight the need for crucial action by a wide range of actors from local authorities and community leaders to national government.

In the first place, domestic violence is a problem that needs a preventive approach to address. Society and public awareness of domestic violence must be intensified through the media for the general public to know

about domestic violence and its effects on the development of women and children. There should be advocacy campaigns for institutions mandated to deal with violence.

Secondly the research recommends that programmes to sensitize children and adults about their rights in general should also be designed and introduced in the study area. Sensitization programmes for children and women should provide them with the necessary information and the basic skills necessary for their safety and well-being.

Thirdly, without hard data and systematic information on violence, not much can be done to address gender violence. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs should compile statistics and regularly provide updates so that information on the prevalence of various forms of violence against women will be regularly available for advocacy and policy formulation by Government, International Agencies, National and Local Organizations. Such data would also serve as sources of basic information on gender violence for measuring the effectiveness of interventions and for the analysis of trends.

There should be policies implementation against domestic violence. The Criminal Code, The Children Act, District bye laws and National laws on domestic violence should be enforced by relevant authorities in collaboration with the local communities.

The research further recommends that institutions should be strengthened to fight against domestic violence. Parents, community opinion leaders and institutions such as police, district assembly, health workers, teachers etc. identified as first point of contact when women and children are abused should be trained on how to identify and handle such forms of abuse cases. They should know cases that fall under their domain of work and those that should be referred to appropriate agencies to be addressed effectively. Institutions mandated to provide services to victims of domestic violence, such as the District Assembly, Department of Social Welfare, Police Service, Health centers, etc. at the district and community levels should be facilitated and supported with the relevant material resources in prevention and handling of the cases.

The research also recommends that there should be programmes to reduce poverty in household level to help reduce domestic violence. Programmes aimed at alleviating household poverty in the district should be extended to cover many more households. There should be rapid implementation of the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) programme to cover households that are distressed to allow parents earn income and provide the basic needs of their children in order to protect vulnerable children from domestic abused.

1.11 Conclusion

The study was carried out to investigate into the causes of domestic violence, effects of domestic violence and some measures to help curb the problem of domestic violence. The study established that domestic violence is as a result of ignorant, hurt, poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, illiteracy, and lack of law enforcement against perpetrators of domestic violence. Some causes of domestic violence included social and cultural factors, unequal power relation, lack of economic resources, psychiatric disorders, poverty, drug abuse and drunkenness, ignorance, hatred, miscommunication and disrespect were the top most factors that account for domestic violence against women and children. Domestic violence creates fears on

women and children. The study concluded that some effects of domestic violence included difficult relating with family and friends, physical injuries and health implications, emotional effect, psychological effects and post-traumatic, stress disorder, low of self-esteem, financial problems, bruises, broken bones, head injuries and lacerations, psychological/mental health issues and chronic physical health problems. It was concluded that necessary measures should be put in place to curb domestic violence. The study found that there should be law to punish perpetrators of domestic violence and counseling for perpetrators.

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