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**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A CASE STUDY OF  
KOROGOCHO SLUM IN NAIROBI**

**BY: REBECCA MUTENDE MUTUKU**

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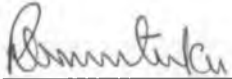
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**DECLARATION**

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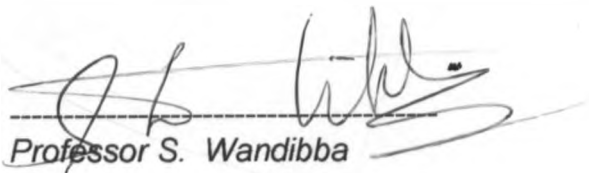


Rebecca M. Mutuku

29/10/07.

Date

*This thesis has been submitted with my approval as a University supervisor.*



Professor S. Wandibba

29/11/07

Date

## **DEDICATION**

*This thesis is dedicated to my family which stood by and encouraged me throughout my studies. They provided moral and financial support and I am greatly indebted to each one of them. May God bless them richly as they continue to trust in him.*

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>COVAW:</b>	Convention on Violence Against Women
<b>CEDAW:</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>VAW:</b>	Violence Against Women
<b>UN:</b>	United Nations
<b>ICCPR:</b>	International Convention of Civil and Political Rights
<b>FGM:</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>YWCA:</b>	Young Women's Christian Association
<b>WHO:</b>	World Health Organization
<b>NGOs:</b>	Non-governmental organizations
<b>UNICEF:</b>	United Nations Children's Fund.
<b>FVPPF:</b>	Family Violence Prevention Fund.
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based violence
<b>STDs</b>	Sexually transmitted diseases
<b>STIs</b>	Sexually Transmitted infections

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the magnitude of domestic violence and its effects especially on the women living in Kororgocho slum in Nairobi. Domestic violence is a vice that affects women globally and its effects are more or less the same everywhere in the world. The study was therefore interested in understanding why battered women do not seek redress through the available options that are at their disposal and also in examining the available support mechanisms for them.

The study did a comparative research on the magnitude of domestic violence globally, in Africa and in Kenya. This provided information on the different forms of gender-based violence meted on women around the world. Field work during data collection provided insight into the frequency of attacks on women in their own homes.

Traditionally, it is usually assumed that women are battered by their husbands/lovers because of their behavior, the way they conduct themselves or even due to their own mistakes. However, further research to the vice has shown that the issue of domestic violence lies on the power relations between men and women. Cultural beliefs and practices accompanied by the socialization women receive from childhood provide a fertile ground for them to be battered and to live as victims of domestic violence without their questioning the status quo.

The other observation is that even though the issue of domestic violence is receiving more attention among development conscious Agencies including state governments, a lot more needs to be done to rid women of this vice. This is to say that the government needs to domesticate the universal conventions like CEDAW and COVAW and be serious in punishing offenders. This will serve as a deterrent to others who would be potential batterers. Domestic violence is a violation of women's' Human Rights and should be treated as a crime and therefore punishable by law.

Though women as individuals are becoming more aware of their rights, they still need opportunities to acquire more education, income and support mechanisms if they are going to effectively challenge gender-based violence. It is difficult for them to do it alone. The state and everybody else has to be involved. After all, putting a stop to domestic violence has to be everybody's responsibility if the country will realize any meaningful and sustainable development. Domestic violence affects women socially, economically and politically. These effects have a trickle down effect on everybody else. Everybody has therefore to be involved in putting a stop to it.

## **CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Domestic violence can be described as both physical and psychological abuse by a man upon a woman in the family (home). The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2000), defines domestic violence "as the various situations which take place in the home, and which are characterized by their brutality". These are incidences amounting to physical attacks, sexual violations such as pushing, punching, spitting, kicking, hitting, choking, burning, clubbing, stabbing, throwing boiling water or acid.

The United Nations (UN) defines domestic violence as the physical or mental assault of women by their male partners (Schuler, 1993: 182). Wife assaults have only been problematised as a social priority since the universal subordination of women and the sanctity of the family as a private domain under the absolute control of the male household head and therefore beyond public scrutiny/intervention, have been widely and openly challenged in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is now clear that the family is not a very safe place for women and that there are three correlations between violence against women and their economic vulnerability (Bunch and Reily, 1994:22). Four conditions are mutually reinforcing as predictors of violence against women by their spouses. These include:

- A habit of violent interpersonal conflict resolution;
- Lack of free access to divorce by the wife;
- Male authority and control of decision making in the home; and
- Economic inequality between men and women (Schuler and Heise 1994).

Violence against women detrimentally affects their ability to gain education, earn a livelihood, develop personal relationships and enjoy fully human rights to which they are entitled.

Whether they live in the northern or southern hemisphere, in rich or poor countries, women are subjected to domestic violence that results in the deprivation of their fundamental human rights.

Domestic violence against women in Kenya should not be underrated. For example, between 1995 and 1996, men killed 55 women. This form of violence is neither confined within the family, nor within a particular country, class, race, age, religion, ethnicity or education. Rather it is a problem that cuts across all such boundaries and is a problem of international proportions. Largely due to the activism and advocacy of women in conscious organizations all over the world who have been brought into solidarity by the UN women's decade and its three conferences as well as the 1993 4th UN World Human Rights Conference, governments and international institutions have begun to seriously respond to the need to challenge this problem. The Indian struggle for women's liberation meeting passed the following resolution in 1998:

Women all over the world face specific forms of violence like rape, and other sexual forms of abuse, such as female foeticide; witch killing, dowry murders and wife beating. Such violence and the continued sense of insecurity instilled in women as a result keeps them bound to the home, economically exploited and socially suppressed. In the on-going struggle against violence in the family, society and state, we recognise that the state is one of the main perpetrators of violence by men against women in the family, the work place and the neighbourhood. For these reasons, a mass women's movement should focus its efforts both inside and outside the home (OMVEDT 1998: 7).

Domestic violence against women is seen as a manifestation of male power perpetuating the inferior position of women. It is as a result of male domination over women. It is an expression of the sexual, economic and social inequality, which exists in today's society. Violence within the family is generally accepted and tolerated. Women's social, political and economic dependence on men provides an environment favourable for their abuse.

Violence against women in general became topical internationally as a development concern during the global feminist activism as a result of the success of the 1985 Nairobi Conference which marked the end of the UN Decade for Women.

In Kenya, domestic violence against women is rampant. It is a reality that has permeated all sectors of the society as a consequence of the unequal treatment of women and men. Violence against women is both a historical and cultural phenomenon. Domestic violence cuts across all statuses of women, the rich, the poor, the educated, the uneducated, the employed, the unemployed, in urban, rural and in all ethnic communities. The men who commit violence against women are of all ages, religions, income levels, educational levels, married, single, divorced, separated and come from all ethnic communities. Violence against women will occur every where in this country at any time of the day or night. Most of the time, it goes unrecognized, unreported or under-reported and is therefore invisible. In Kenya, many societies view domestic violence on women as a personal and private affair which is promoted and accepted by cultural practices. In essence, some cultures like the Kamba and the Gikuyu tolerate it and even expect some level of physical violence in intimate relationships (Long, 1986:131).

Once a girl is married in Kenya, the bride wealth paid to her parents gives her husband assumed powers over her. She can only return to her parents if the bride wealth is repaid. This power and subordination is still culturally upheld even today.

According to Ondicho (1993:10):

The individual both female and male in Kenya exists in a state of violence, with the weakest either economically, culturally socially or otherwise bearing the brunt of the violence.

Thus, women always on the lowest end of the power continuum, experience the greatest “volume” of violence. Most of all Kenyan cultural norms condone wife- beating as a husband’s right and have generalised attitudes like:

Some women need to be beaten. A good slap will straighten her out or keep her in line; or she must have done something to provoke him, or No woman can be raped if she does not want it. Women ask for it by the way they put on, or when a woman says no she means yes ( Budish, 1991:9).

According to Ondicho (1993), among the different forms of violence against women in Kenya, domestic violence takes the lead. In traditional African societies, wife beating was acknowledged and viewed as a serious problem and though condoned by the culture to a certain extent, there were sanctions imposed on such behaviour. Violence against women is a common practice within the family which hitherto has been considered as the cornerstone of society. Given the attitudes to and beliefs in domestic violence against women, many women have no one to turn to and no place to go to. Often there is no way out. Female focused violence such as domestic violence is the result of deep-rooted systematic inequality between men and women in this country. The cause of this violence against women is deep-rooted in the patriarchal system. As observed by the UN in their report on violence against women:

The term family suggests safety and security, a private haven or shelter from the pressure and difficulties of the world outside, a place where its members are able to co-exist in security and harmony. Modern studies suggest however, that far from being a place of safety, the family can be a “cradle of violence and that much of the violence is directed at the female family members of the family (UN, 1989:14).

In the family, women become targets of abuse in their roles as mothers, daughters, sisters ex-wife or ex-lover. The perpetrators of the abuse are usually men of the family- husbands, lovers (ex) fathers, uncles or brothers.

In Kenya today, traditional socio-cultural norms and practices which served to regulate or restrain violence against women are fast disintegrating (Weir, 1977:109). This, coupled with the ever increasing gap between the poor and the rich, the educated and the uneducated, the rural and the urban and the powerful and the powerless, has led to an escalation of wife battery. Domestic violence often results in humiliation, demoralisation, severe physical injuries and low self-esteem of the woman. It robs her of her potential to effectively engage in productive, social, political or economic activities.

Since the Vienna Conference on Human Rights, the international community has come to recognise that violence against women is a human rights issue. The Vienna conference placed violence against women unequivocally on the human rights agenda. The Vienna declaration and the programme of action states, "The human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of Human Rights" (UNHCR 1993)).

The 1995 UN Decade for women conference in Nairobi identified domestic violence as an obstacle to the achievement of the decade's objectives, which were peace, equality and development. Domestic violence against women was therefore declared a major area of study, concern and research in international meetings (UN, 1989:4).

What is crucial to the total eradication of violence against women is the commitment of the government to take responsibility for the necessary social change and development that must take root at community levels to alter the public's tolerance and therefore acquiescence in violence against women. It is time that society itself removed the "obstacles that prevent bringing private violations into public accountability" (Bunch and Reily, 1994:22).

The gravity and extent of the problem of family violence are universal. Although the family is the first and the most important social institution which educates and protects its members, it can often become a place of suffering and violence. This is because domestic violence is a hidden problem.

In urban areas, domestic violence is as a result of many factors. According to Breese (1998), subsistence urbanisation occurs when a very high density of individuals live in conditions that are even worse than those in the rural areas from which they came. The concept of subsistence urbanisation evinces a situation whereby the urban dwellers lack good jobs and consequently lack access to good living conditions and other necessities of urban life. People living in these

conditions could easily be exposed to violent behaviour since they are reduced to the level of mere survival. More vulnerable to this violence are women. It can therefore be said that poor urban management is a catalyst to domestic violence.

## **I.2 Problem Statement**

The central problem of this study is the way women react to domestic violence and in particular why they do not seek redress through the available channels. Violence against women is one of the most widespread problems facing Kenyan women today. Thus, the Convention on violence Against Women (COVAW 2002) impresses upon the Government to put mechanisms in place to ensure the safety of women in both their private and public lives. It believes that if more stern measures were put in place, they would deter perpetrators of violence against women from carrying out violence on women, be it their wives, daughters or mothers. Such measures would include reviewing of laws that are not adequate in deterring further perpetuation of violence.

The question of violence is multifaceted. Violence inhibits women from freedom of movement besides the other effects. Whilst women are particularly affected by domestic violence, they are also the primary victims of rape or sexual attacks by strangers. Feeling afraid and unsafe is a situation experienced by all women whatever their age, ethnic origin or social class. According to the US Department of Justice (1998:142):

It is everyone's fundamental right to be safe in town. But for women, fear is all around.

It is not a transitory impression or a spontaneous feeling. It is deep-rooted and born of the isolation and inequality between men and women which breeds insecurity.

The fear women feel in urban areas is quite particular in that it has all to do with physical and psychological honour. In all societies of the world, women are in subordinate status. Because

physical force and violence are the last resort to keep subordinate groups in their place, women have remained victims of physical assault (Dobash and Dobash, 1979).

According to Sheffield (1994:11):

The common denominator in the underreporting of all violence against women is fear. Females have been well trained in silence and passivity. Early and sustained sex-role socialisation teaches that women are responsible for the sexual behaviour of men and women cannot be trusted. This belief functions to keep women silent about their victimisation and to keep others from believing women when they come forward.

Many countries are now treating domestic violence as a problem requiring legal action. An awareness of the effects of domestic violence is gradually becoming apparent.

According to Bunch and Shore (1988: 114):

More and more development agencies are acknowledging that unless they confront the massive and deeply entrenched problem of gender based violence, the empowerment of women will remain a hollow slogan. Sustainable human development must rest on the shared conviction that unless women and men resolve together not to tolerate violence against women in their homes and their communities, development will not be human and it will not be sustainable.

Domestic violence and the fear of it limit women's choices in all their spheres of life in every community worldwide. Domestic violence against women is usually planned and often systematic.

In Kenya, police records show that a significant proportion of criminal acts are never reported to them or not all the different forms of violence reported to them are registered by them. The questions one would then ask are: Are battered women helpless? Why do battered women choose to remain silent and continue to live with abusive husbands, partners and /or boyfriends even after being subjected to long-term severe physical, emotional and sexual abuse? Why do women not take the available options to them to get redress for the violence meted against them within their homes?



### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

#### **1.3.1 Overall objective**

To investigate the status of domestic violence against women in Korogocho slum, and why the women do not seek any redress.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

- Examine reasons why battered women do not seek redress.
- Assess the options available to battered women.
- Investigate support mechanisms that can help battered women overcome the physical and mental impacts of violence.

### **1.4 Justification of the study**

Domestic violence is a violation of women's human rights. All forms of violence against women constitute the most pervasive violation of universal human rights. Thus efforts to address this problem should be seen as a critical yardstick against which to measure overall advances in empowerment and in the promotion and enjoyment of fundamental human rights by all in the society.

Kenya is a signatory to various conventions with regard to ensuring the safety of women's human rights and their enjoyment to these rights. These include the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on Violence Against Women (COVAW), which calls for women's safety in both their private and public lives. Kenya has not domesticated these conventions into actual laws or national policies, which can be used to combat violence against women. So far there is no legislation that reflects the government's commitment to CEDAW or COVAW. Violence against women in the home can lead to death. Besides, it has physical, psychological and social consequences for women. Worldwide, it has

been estimated that violence against women is as serious cause of death and incapacity among women of reproductive age as cancer, and a greater cause of ill-health than traffic accidents and malaria combined (World Bank, 1993).

Domestic violence against women has serious impact on women's ability to participate with their peers in social and economic activities. Women are normally blamed for bringing the abuse on themselves. Social stigma surrounds women who have been abused. They have been shamed and should remain silent. According to Rao and Bloch (1993: 84), "Violence against women adversely affects women's bargaining position in marriage". Thus, there is need to carry out research that would expose the issue to the public arena and help battered women and the society as a whole to come up with mechanisms of curbing the vice.

Though recently domestic violence against women has been top agenda among development agencies, efforts to educate women on their human rights, the options available to them in case of assault within the family and the coping mechanisms they can employ to counter domestic violence have failed to yield results. These are gaps that have to be addressed for domestic violence to be curbed. The need to fill these gaps emanates from a general survey of the existing literature on women's response to domestic violence, which indicates that women are ignorant of available options to them for redress against domestic violence. The study will investigate the reasons why women do not exploit the available avenues for redress against domestic violence.

The subject of domestic violence remains sensitive among many societies. However, societies have to learn the techniques of putting this age-old practice of wife beating to an end. This study will help to contribute in availing more ideas that can help put domestic violence to an end. It will help other researchers carry out more investigations on the subject of domestic violence besides

helping women in Korogocho to realise that they have options available to them instead of staying in potentially deadly relationships.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter starts with a review of the literature that is divided into three parts. The first part examines domestic violence and its effects on women globally. The second part examines domestic violence and its effects on women in Africa, while part three looks at domestic violence and its effects on women in Kenya. After the literature review, the chapter examines the causes and effects of domestic violence on women, on their health, economic and social impact, and effects of domestic violence on society as a whole. The chapter goes further to explore the options available to women to escape domestic violence.

### **2.2 Literature Review**

#### **2.2.1 Domestic violence against women in the world**

Violence against women continues to be a global epidemic that kills tortures and maims. It is an obstacle to the achievements of equality, development and peace. It is a crucial social mechanism by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men. Domestic violence is a serious problem around the world. It is both a serious public health issue and a severe impediment to economic development. Women are victims of violence in approximately 95% of the cases of domestic violence (WHO, 1996). According to the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF 2006), one in every three women in the world has experienced sexual, physical, emotional or other abuse in her lifetime.

Domestic violence is widely recognised as multidimensional and multifaceted. Survey after survey underscores the gravity of the prevalence of domestic violence. "Latin America is one of

the world's most violent regions, at home and on the streets. Evidence suggests that Latin America and the Caribbean may be the most violent regions in the world" (World Bank, 1997:5). Over the past decades, homicide rates particularly in many of the region's urban centres have been on the increase. Between 30 and 50 % of adult women with partners are victims of psychological abuse each year, while 10-35% suffers physical violence. Due to the increasing levels of domestic violence in these regions, both domestic and social violence are moving to the forefront of the policy agendas of governments, NGOs and multilateral financial institutions (World Bank, 1997: 1284).

The World Bank report (1993), gives the following facts on domestic violence :

- In every 48 population based surveys from around the world, 10-69% of women reported being physically assaulted by an intimate male partner at some point of their lives.
- Intimate partners commit 40-70% of homicides of women worldwide.
- Around the world, one in every three women have been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in their lifetime. Most often, the abuser is a member of her own family.
- Studies suggest that 40-70% of all women who were victims of physical abuse by an intimate partner were injured at some point in their lives.
- Physical violence in intimate relationships is often accompanied by psychological abuse and it is accompanied by sexual abuse in one-third to one-half of cases.
- Emerging studies show a strong relationship between domestic violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS in the developing world.
- Domestic violence limits women's ability to access health care, and treatment for HIV/AIDS, as abusive partners often prevent women from seeking such care.

- A history of abuse puts women at increased risk of long term negative health consequences including depression, suicide, chronic pain syndromes, psychosomatic disorders and sexually transmitted diseases.
- The prevalence of women in developing countries who experience violence during pregnancy ranges from 4 to 20%.
- Women who are abused run twice the risk of miscarriage and four times the risk of having a baby that is below average weight.

The World Health Organisation report (WHO, 2006) finds domestic violence as widespread and as having serious impact on women's health. At the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2005 Geneva meeting, it was revealed that intimate partner violence is the most common form of violence in women's lives. The study reports on the enormous toll physical and sexual violence by husbands and partners has on the health and well being of women around the world and the extent to which partner violence is still largely hidden. The study was based on 24,000 women from rural and urban areas in ten countries, namely, Bangladesh, Japan, Namibia, Peru, Samoa, Brazil, Ethiopia, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand and Tanzania.

According to Dr. Lee Jong-Wood (2006), "Women are more at risk from violence at home than in the street and this has serious repercussions for women's health". It is therefore imperative to shine a spotlight on domestic violence globally and treat it as a major public health issue.

According to Dr. Charlotte Watts (2003:326), "Partner violence appears to have a similar impact on women's health and well-being regardless of where she lives, the prevalence of violence in her setting or her cultural or economic background".

The Network Women's Programme (2002), reports that a survey of 1000 women in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, found that over 89% had been abused by husbands, intimate partners or relatives.

A report by UNICEF (2000), gives the following statistics on domestic violence for three countries:

- Estonia: 29% of women aged 18-24 fear domestic violence, while 52-62% of women have experienced domestic violence according to the 1994 survey of 2,315 women.
- Poland: 60% of divorced women surveyed in 1993 have been hit at least once by their ex-husbands. 25% have reported repeated violence.
- Tajikistan: 23% of 550 women aged 18-40 reported physical abuses.

According to the study, 22.1% of all women in the United States have experienced some form of assault by an intimate partner. Each year 4.5 million physical assaults are committed against women by intimate partners. In Hong Kong, between 1998 and 2005, cases of abuse within families have tripled. Of the 719 cases reported, 500 involved serious assaults on women.

According to Human Rights Watch (1999), in Pakistan, studies on violence against women estimate that a woman is raped every two hours. Seventy to ninety per cent of women suffer some form of domestic violence. In 2002, there were at least 3,296 cases of violence against women. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) documented 895 cases of abuse against women in 2003, consisting of 260 murders and 124 cases of gang rape. Nearly 50% of women who do report rape are jailed under the Hudood Ordinances, which criminalize extramarital sexual relations including rape. These Ordinances, implemented in 1979, abolished recognition and punishment for marital rape. Pakistan has no specific legislation against domestic violence and police are reluctant to get involved in family matters. In 2002 there were 450 women murders. In the same year, Pakistan had 280 women killed and 750 injured from acid

attacks. Acid burns result in serious disfigurement and suffering which confine women to their homes, leading to social isolation and depression. Up to three women die in a day from stove burns in Pakistan, from accusations of disobedience, failure to give birth to a son, and allegations of adultery. In the past eight years, 4000 women in Islamabad were set on fire by their husbands. Many women do not survive by the time their cases go to trial and their cases are dropped. Police are often reluctant to investigate the cases since they view them as “family matters”. Officials at all levels of the criminal justice system believe domestic violence is not a matter of criminal courts.

According to Russca and Uzbekistan (1989), in Jordan police scoff at reports of domestic violence and harass women who report such violence to stop them from filing complaints. In Peru, discriminatory attitudes of law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges often consider domestic violence as a “private” matter beyond the reach of the law. This reinforces the batterer’s attempts to demean and control his victim.

According to the US Department of Justice (1994), four women die everyday in the US as a result of domestic violence. Every 15 seconds a woman is battered by a husband /a boyfriend. In addition, 572,000 assaults by intimate partners are reported to the federal officials every year. It is estimated that between 2.5 to 4million assaults occur every year. According to Gelles and Straus (1990), a half of all women will be hit at least once while married or in long-term relationships. In abusive relationships, women are victims of abuse 95% of the time. The fact is that domestic violence can happen in any type of relationship, married, heterosexual, gay, lesbian, separated or even dating. One in four women in heterosexual marital relationships will be a victim of abuse.

According to Summers (2002: 10), “recently in six Australian Jurisdictions there were 3,000 cases of domestic violence over one month”. On the other hand, Watchtower (2001: 1) reports that in one year, 14,500 Russian women were killed by their husbands and a further 56,400 were



disabled or badly injured in domestic attacks. Moreover, the number of women who say they had been beaten by their partners had soared by more than 40% in 2000.

In Japan, the number of women seeking shelter rose from 4,843 in 1995 to 6,340 in 1998. About one third said they were seeking shelter because of violent behaviour by their husbands.

According to a WHO consultation meeting on violence against women held on 5-7, February 1996 in Geneva:

- Population based quantitative studies in 40 countries indicate that 50% of women are victims of physical violence by their ex-partners and that 50-60% of these women are also sexually abused by the same men.
- An international average of 10 to 15% of women report being forced to have sex with their intimate partners.
- 40-60% of known sexual assaults within the family are committed against women regardless of religion or culture.
- 130 women worldwide have suffered from female genital mutilation (FGM) and each year, an extra 2million girls undergo this practice.

### **2.2.2 Domestic violence in Africa**

Although most African countries have signed and ratified CEDAW, there has been no political will to domesticate legislation and to outlaw domestic violence against women (Okech-Owiti et al. (1999). Violence against women is a global epidemic that affects the health and economic stability of women, their families and their communities. While domestic violence is a worldwide challenge, women in developing countries face particular challenges.

According to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, 2005), acts of violence against women happen with impunity. Governments, communities and families are not doing enough to prevent violence against women.

Most African constitutions and legal systems follow western models, based upon individual rights. Though most African countries have ratified numerous international covenants that either explicitly or implicitly interpret domestic violence as a violation of human rights, very few have domesticated these covenants to protect the rights of women. Though some of them have introduced piecemeal legal reforms, if domestic violence is a manifestation of a much larger phenomenon of gender inequality and violent treatment of women, then piecemeal legal reforms are unlikely to provide an effective remedy.

As Robin West et al. (2002) have noted, “women live their lives in relationship, in a complex web of connections rather than as individual atoms”. Hence, basing gender equality upon rights theory with its notions of individual autonomy does not help them. The conflict between the language of individual rights and a more relational notion of the self is more pronounced in the African context. It is not only that women are embedded in relationships, but also that traditional African societies are not based upon individualism. The family and her interests are considered prior to the individual. A woman’s status is a derivative one. For example, her reproductive capacity is considered “owned” by the husband’s lineage after marriage. Hence, where the notion of personal autonomy is not common, especially for women, claims of individual rights and equality may sound foreign. They are unlikely to attract the wide spread support necessary to effect social change.

Domestic violence in Africa can be termed as a pervasive gender inequality. Traditional African societies are patriarchal and the women's position was decidedly subordinate. Institutionalization of this inequality remains common in African customary law. Unless the systematic inequality between women and men is addressed, the problem of violence will persist.

Some theories of domestic violence that have been advanced by Vernellia (1999) state that the power of tradition and norms within the African culture also contribute to the widespread incidences of domestic violence. Wife battering is regarded as normal within traditional African culture. For example, in Nigeria, at the social welfare office, police officers "remind wives that Yoruba culture allows men to beat women". Other cultural explanations for domestic violence include the uneven distribution of power within traditional African marriages, the impact of polygyny, the acceptance of male promiscuity, the power of the extended family over the married couple and the issue of bridewealth, all of which underlay the widespread abuse of women.

Some observers attribute part of the blame for domestic violence to an alleged culture of violence in modern Africa. This has links to the colonial heritage when Africans were treated coercively and violently by their colonizers. Lengthy civil wars and the repressive practices of many post colonial regimes continue this culture of violence. This is particularly apparent in South Africa where there has been a dramatic post-apartheid increase in violence specifically directed at women including both rape and physical violence. The police and courts treat complaints by battered women as less serious than other assault complaints and there are no provisions of medical expertise to courts when women have been abused. According to Dorothy Thomas (1995), "South African women are not safe in their homes, their places of work or in the streets". Women who seek redress for abuse often face police officers who are indifferent or hostile medical examiners who are ill-equipped and inaccessible, prosecutors who are inexperienced and at times biased, and judges who doubt women's credibility as survivors or witnesses to violence and therefore hand down lenient sentences to those convicted of abuse. Thus, the ineffective legal

and social systems exacerbate the effects of domestic violence against South African women. It is estimated that half of the reported sex offences and assaults on women occur in private homes. A report by the University of Cape Town (2005:2-11), states that at least 4 women are killed everyday by an intimate partner.

Unremedied domestic violence denies women equality before the law and reinforces their subordinate social status. Men use domestic violence to diminish women's autonomy and sense of self-worth. States that fail to prevent and prosecute perpetrators of domestic violence treat women as second class citizens and send a clear message that violence against them is of no concern to the broader society.

Women constitute the majority of HIV/AIDS infected adults in Sub-Saharan Africa. Violations of women's rights heighten their vulnerability to AIDS. Un-remedied domestic violence, chronic abuse of women all over the world plays a critical role in exposing women to HIV/AIDS infection. Women may also face violence as a result of their being HIV positive. In Uganda, many women are infected with HIV and will eventually die because the government has failed in any meaningful way to condemn, criminalize, or prosecute violence against women in the homes. Women's economic dependence compounds their vulnerability to violence, and leaves them unable to escape from potentially deadly marriages. Domestic violence persistently restrains women's equality and sexual autonomy. They are faced with persistent societal pressure to tolerate violence, and are routinely subjected to coercion and emotional abuse from husbands. The reluctance of the state to intervene in domestic matters in the home ensures that battered women are left unaided and condemned to endless abuse. While some countries have enacted specific domestic violence legislation, weak enforcement procedures may render such laws ineffective, while other countries lack an approach to the subject altogether.

In Jamaica, domestic violence is recognised as a major social problem. In Kingston alone, there are approximately 900 murders of which 34% are in a domestic context. In 1998, a survey carried out by Hutch (1998), found that 66.7% of women in Sierra Leone had experienced physical abuse at the hands of their partners. According to Morash (1998: 337), "By the mid 1990s, attention had begun to be paid in most African countries to the wide spread problem of domestic violence. Studies about partner abuse and more formal surveys appeared in Ghana, Tanzania, and South Africa. At the same time, activist groups in Ghana, Uganda and Kenya began lobbying for the passage of domestic violence codes. Women's rights activists, notably in Zimbabwe and South Africa, established organisations that counsel abused women, offer legal assistance and provide domestic violence training to government personnel.

Although family violence receives considerably more attention today, it has been part of the family throughout history. The subordinate status of women is well known in all African societies. The history of women in most African societies has been one in which women have been victims of physical assault (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). For too many years domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women were considered to be private matters, best kept silent and in the family. Yet, gender violence in African societies, Kenya included, is as real world as any hate crime. It involves life and death issues.

However, domestic violence against women is increasingly being recognized as an obstacle to political and economic development. Although it is commonly understood as the use of force and physical violence, domestic violence also includes emotional and psychological abuse. Domestic violence enforces gender roles and is ultimately geared towards maintaining existing power relations. The range of abuses is closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. When abuses occur, they endanger the life or physical and psychological integrity of females of all ages, races and classes. Domestic violence against women is manifested in several forms, all serving the

same end, the preservation of male control over resources and power. This limits women's ability to participate in their communities as fully functioning human beings.

African governments are required by international conventions and laws to prevent, investigate and prosecute violations of bodily integrity. When a government fails to prohibit such abuse or routinely fails to respond to acts of domestic violence against women, it sends the message that such attacks are justified or at the very least will go unpunished. Such inaction is a violation of Article 26 of the International Convention of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1994). When governments fail to take the necessary steps to protect their female citizens' rights to physical integrity they are considered to be discriminating on the basis of gender. This violates the state's international obligation to guarantee equal protection before the law (Donnelly, 1993; Human Rights Watch Africa, 1995a).

The Convention on Violence against Women (COVAW) upholds women's human rights. In Africa, domestic violence is intensifying with the worsening economic situation. A woman's situation and her relationship to domestic violence changes over her life time. The family is a site of gender violence. In most African countries, patriarchy encourages gender violence. The family provides the foundation for the social construction of sexuality. In many families, a husband's use of force to discipline his wife is considered acceptable behaviour. Similarly, where female genital mutilation (FGM) is practised, the decision to subject women to it is legitimately made within the family. Patriarchy excludes women from political and economic power because it works to destroy women's consciousness of their potential as women. It is produced and reproduced by acts of gender specific violence committed within the family (Eisenstein, 1979, 1986).

Radical feminists view FGM as an extreme manifestation of patriarchy. To them, this is one of the clearest examples of how women's sexuality, as well as their reproductive and productive

capabilities is controlled by men. According to Boddy (1998), “Sudanese and Somali women request rein-fubilation because they feel naked, impure or ashamed when no longer closed”. FGM and other forms of gender violence are inseparable from any aspect of socioeconomic and political development. It helps to reinforce women’s subordination. As put by Schroeder (1994:1):

If it happens to you for racial reasons, it is a human rights violation.

If it happens to you for political reasons, it is a human rights violation.

If it happens to a woman, it is cultural.

Both wife beating and FGM exemplify how family controls female “purity” by imposing ideals of female behaviour. Socially condoned battery, reproductive coercion/control, sati, bridewealth deaths, rape and other forms of gender violence take place within the family, and are protected from external intervention because of their designation as private affairs (Levinson, 1993). Thus, the sexual relations of power are perpetuated by the silence that protects “traditional values” and the sanctity surrounding the family. Domestic violence thrives because it is treated as too traditional, too culturally sensitive to tackle, and because it belongs to the private realm.

The traditional marriage institution allows men the means by which to achieve control over women’s procreative and productive capabilities. Through marriage, men acquire rights over women and responsibilities to them. Sex roles in Kenya are affected by factors such as whether a woman can or cannot own land, manage her own income, and absent herself from her husband’s home among other factors (Guyer, 1981).

In many African societies, marriage designates women as perpetual minors whose reproductive and productive capabilities are both highly valued and jealously controlled. Thus, it is marriage and their status as wives that render women the “appropriate victims” of domestic violence aimed at reinforcing gender roles and relations.

### **2.2.3 Domestic violence in Kenya**

In Kenya, a woman's views are disregarded like those of a child, and she has to be beaten like a child to be corrected (Waynoka, 1996). Domestic violence is considered as a caring discipline. As put by Edgerton and Conant (1964:409), "Women are fools. They must be told what to do, and they must be beaten".

According to the United Nations (2005), in Kenya many women are falling victims to sexual violence. Sexual violence is increasingly prevalent and police records show that more than 2,800 cases of rape were reported in 2004. At least half of all Kenyan women have experienced violence since the age of fourteen. Kenya has no law that specifically prohibits spousal rape and wife beating is common place and often condoned in many cultures. There has also been an increase in men targeting minors for sex. In 2003, the highest number of domestic violence incidences occurred in Eastern Province (31.6%). This was followed by Central Province (26.3%). Nairobi was third (15.8%) and Rift valley was fourth (10.5%). The lowest incidences occurred in Coast (5.3%), North-Eastern (5.3%), and Western (5.3%) Provinces (Muchai, 2003: 67). In all the above cases, physical violence was the most used against women. This violence took place both in the urban as well as in the rural areas. Alcohol and drug abuse and irresponsibility were the major causes of the domestic violence.

Sex roles in Kenya are affected by factors such as whether a woman can or cannot own land, manage her own income, and absent herself from her husband's home (Guyer, 1981). A study undertaken in Kisii District in 1990 by the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) reported that 58% of women were beaten often or sometimes. According to a report by Muthengi (2005), the year 2005 alone saw fifty women reportedly killed by their partners. The report states that wife beating is rampant in Kenya, but only a few cases are reported in the local media or



authorities. Domestic violence in Kenya is commonplace with women expected to suffer in silence. According to FIDA, in 1998 “nearly sixty women were killed in domestic violence”. The report goes further to say that three in every five women in Nairobi are assaulted at home. Most victims do not seek redress.

Though there are no complete statistics on the extent of domestic violence and the effects it has on the development process, it is still a glaring problem in Kenya. Marital violence is an age-old practice, which has defied the process of social change. The nation’s response to domestic violence has been uneven. Some concern was voiced in 1968 when the commission on marriage and divorce was set up. When the Commission presented a bill to parliament on the same, which included the problem of wife beating for enactment into law, it was rejected. The male members of Parliament opposed it arguing that wife beating was a normal customary practice and that legal intervention would amount to undue interference in the domestic affairs of husband and wife.

However, in the 1990s, women’s organisations awoke societal consciousness about the social problem of domestic violence. In 1995, the 1<sup>st</sup> National Campaign Against Domestic Violence was marked. This observance has been marked annually since then and is designated “The 16 days of Activism” (Budish, 1991:39). According to the Sunday Nation of August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006, in Kwale and Taita Taveta districts of Coast Province, men are increasingly raping their young daughters in the belief that it will cure them of HIV/AIDS. In addition, women in the same Province have had to live with frequent rapes within their families over the years. Ignorant of what they need to do to protect themselves and their daughters, the women have been suffering silently. Even in cases where they have broken tradition to report the men involved, the women have watched helplessly as the suspects bribe their way out of the cells. They reckon; “how do we deal with fathers who rape their own daughters? We do not know where to go because the shame is just too great. How do we get protection from the fathers once they are released from remand?

Do we run away from our homes?” (Daily Nation, August 22<sup>nd</sup> , 2006). This shows the helplessness of women caught up in abusive relationships.

The position of women in Kenya is particularly vulnerable. Traditionally, as well as legally, their rights are restricted whilst they can be subjected to various forms of harassment and brutality at all levels of the society without guarantee of being protected by the traditional institutions or by the law. Moreover, women cannot rely on the law or law enforcement agents to protect them from domestic violence. The cultural indifference towards rape, barriers to recognising domestic violence and marital rape as illegal, and police involvement in sexual assaults have subjected women to continued suffering.

It is against this background of widespread issues of domestic violence in the world that this study will try to narrow down to, and investigate issues of domestic violence among the residents of Korogocho slum in Nairobi, Kenya.

### **2.3 Causes of domestic violence**

According to USAID (2006), causes of gender-based violence include:

- Traditional gender norms that support male superiority.
- Social norms that tolerate or even justify violence against women.
- Weak community sanctions against perpetrators.
- Poverty.
- High levels of crime and conflict in society.
- Low income or academic achievement.
- Attitudes that justify violence against women.

Gender-based violence tends to be highest in settings where social norms support gender inequality, where communities fail to punish men who use physical or sexual violence against women, and where violence against women is considered normal or justified.

Domestic violence occurs as a result of male domination over women. It is an expression of the sexual, economic and social inequality, which exists in today's society. The causes of domestic violence are complex and numerous, they include alcohol or drugs, stress, frustration and mental breakdown. Besides, social and structural elements in society would appear to carry the bulk of the causes of domestic violence. Other causes may be cultural, economic, legal, political and physical. Cultural causes include gender specific socialisation, cultural definitions of appropriate sex roles, belief in the inherent superiority of males, values that give men proprietary rights over women, notion of the family as the private sphere beyond state but under male control, fear of and control over female sexuality and changing roles of men and women as a result of the urbanization process which adversely effects women's empowerment in male dominated societies.

Economic causes include women's economic dependence on men, limited access to cash and credit, discriminatory laws and practices regarding inheritance and property rights, limited access to employment and limited access to education. Legal causes of domestic violence include lower legal status of women either by written law or by practice, laws regarding divorce, child custody, maintenance and inheritance, legal definitions of rape and domestic abuse, low levels of legal literacy of women and insensitive treatment of women by police and the judiciary. On the other hand, political causes include under - representation of women in power, politics and the media and in the legal and medical professions, violence against women not taken seriously, risk of challenge to the status quo, religious laws, and limited organisation of women as a political force, and limited participation of women in organised political systems.

Physical causes of domestic violence include basing urban planning and design on male norms and needs, neglecting the higher vulnerability and fear of crime and violence as the differing urban needs of women and as such contributing to highest risks and fears amongst women ((UNICEF, 2000).

Acts of brutality against women are a reflection of the structures underlying the prevailing sexual and economic inequality in our society. Far from being an aberration, violence within the family is generally accepted and tolerated. The abuse of women is seen as a manifestation of male power, perpetuating the inferior position of women. Women's social, political and economic dependence on men provides an environment favourable to their abuse. There is a correlation between economic difficulties and domestic violence. In houses where women have a regular income, there are less incidences of domestic violence. On the other hand, women with low or no incomes at all, experience domestic violence on a daily basis. The less financial resources the family has to meet its needs, the more susceptible it is to becoming violent. However, a woman's economic success does not necessarily guarantee her freedom from domestic violence. A jealous husband may try to control the economic resources of the household and thereby maintain his power (Pickup, 2000: 234).

The cultural aspect in a society's values, beliefs and traditions play a fundamental role in the perception and comprehension of domestic violence. On the other hand, traditionally in Kenya, it is believed that women provoke, tolerate and even appreciate a certain amount of violence from their husbands. The Kenyan society is essentially male dominated despite the fact that women work extremely hard. Productive resources belong to men. Arguments that men who abuse women have impaired masculinity as a result of growing up in a violent household do not hold much water. Girls are six times more likely to experience sexual abuse than boys, yet most sexual abuse is perpetrated by male and not female adults (Kelly et al. 1995). The processes by which witnessing violence as a child affects one's adult relationships are themselves gendered. Others see men's violence against women as being caused by external factors such as poverty, conflict, economic or political change. Gender analysis of human development shows that the root cause of domestic violence against women is not psychological damage to individuals, or external economic or political factors. Rather it lies in the unequal power relations between women and

men which ensure male dominance over women. Domestic violence against women consolidates men's political, economic and social dominance. Other factors which perpetuate domestic violence against women include house hold employment, the state, sexuality and culture (Walby, 1990:21).

Domestic violence against women is legitimized by religious instructors, schools, the church, the family, the media and women themselves. The state constructs and promotes this gender ideology.

According to Butegwa (1998), 44% of Kenyan women believe that men have a right to discipline their wives. According to Freeman (1980:19):

When control is reinforced by defence, the sex role socialization resulting from these forces helps create and maintain ideological control. Women are socialized into submissiveness, socialized to be victims. As a result, in most marriages recourse to violence is unnecessary.

For some men, domestic violence against women is a compensatory mechanism aimed at gaining some balance of control over their lives. Difficulties in meeting their responsibilities gives men good reasons for beating their wives due to stress factors. A wife's suspected adultery is another cause of violence against women. A man who beats his wife to correct her behaviour is seen to be performing an act of legitimate force just as a parent may spank a naughty child.

Social, ideological and cultural factors contribute to domestic violence against women. Violence against women is the ultimate weapon available to men wishing to assert their masculinity or to ensure continuing control over resources and decision making at all levels of society including the house hold, the market, the state and development organizations. Women who struggle to live free of violence speak of not only economic deprivation, but also of social and political dimensions including their exclusion from participation in society, their lack of self esteem and their sense that they lack autonomy. Living in poverty makes women particularly vulnerable to male violence. Women who work outside the home for pay are particularly likely to encounter such violence.

According to Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA 1994:37), poverty also determines a woman's options to resist domestic violence. It limits the choices women can make around staying in violent relationships. The political and social dimensions of women's poverty affect their ability to challenge domestic violence against them. Constraints on women's ability to make independent decisions and control resources including their own labour mean that they face severe obstacles to challenging violence against them. Women living in poverty are least able to remove themselves from violent situations. Material needs can make women vulnerable to violence. Discriminatory institutions and beliefs hinder women's access to the tangible and intangible resources that can enable them to challenge domestic violence.

## **2.4 Effects of domestic violence**

### **2.4.1 Impact on Health**

The consequences of gender-based violence include physical and mental pain, suffering, disfigurement, temporary and permanent disabilities, maiming and even death (Capelon, 1994). These can be fatal such as homicide, suicide, and AIDS-related deaths or non-fatal such as chronic pain syndromes, traumatic injury, or traumatic gynaecological fistula. Gender-based violence is a pervasive public health and human rights problem throughout the world, but the patterns and prevalence vary from place to place. Around the world, at least one woman in every three has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime (USAID, 2005). These attacks on women are aimed at robbing them of their autonomy and entrenching male hegemony in economic, political and cultural spheres (Miles, 1986). Wife battery is certainly a developmental problem if not a human rights problem. It limits the ability of women to participate in their communities to their full potential. It makes them vulnerable and provokes their fear through threats to kill, mutilate or torture.

According to Guedes (2004:42):

Gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS are inextricably linked. The experiences of violence affect the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) directly when it interferes with women's ability to negotiate condom use. Fear of violence not only hinders women's ability to propose condom use but also keeps them from voluntary HIV/AIDS counselling and testing. Furthermore, women may be at risk of violence after disclosing their HIV status to their partner, suggesting that domestic violence should be considered when formulating partner notification policies and HIV counselling.

Gender-based violence should be seen as a valid issue in its own right because it represents one of the worst violations of human rights and has a tremendous effect on women's health. Victims of violence are more likely to engage in risk behaviours such as injection drug use, which might increase their risk of exposure to HIV. Intimate partner violence has been shown to be a risk factor for STIs which, in turn, may increase the rate of HIV transmission. Victims of violence are usually unable to negotiate the use of a condom. Proposing use of a condom may increase women's risk of violence. Violence or fear of violence may keep women from HIV testing and violence may occur as a consequence of testing positive.

Gender violence and gender inequality are determining factors in women's risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. The relationship between GBV and HIV/AIDS infection are especially evident in the areas of sexual abuse of women and the positive relationship between STDs and domestic violence. According to Kishor Sunita (1998) in Nicaragua, the ratio between men and women infected with HIV/AIDS was 7:1. In 2003, it was 3:1 (WHO 2004). In the same study, it was found that 20.5% of HIV infected women reported physical abuse.

Women with HIV/AIDS are simply marginalized by women's organisations and mainstream HIV organisations as well as the Government, other groups and policy makers. Violence against women plays a crucial and devastating role in increasing the risk to women of HIV infection. It is

a key reason why women are more vulnerable to HIV infection than men. It is both a cause and a consequence of infection and as such is a driving force behind HIV/AIDS. The circumstances underlying the correlation between violence against women and HIV and AIDS are a complex weave of social, cultural and biological conditions. HIV transmission risk increases during violent or forced sex situations. Women who are beaten or dominated by their partners are much likely to become infected by HIV than women who live in non-violent households.

According to a study by Dunkle et al. (2004), in South Africa, 1366 women who attended health centres in Soweto and tested for HIV showed that 48% of them had been beaten by their partners or boyfriends. Those who were emotionally or financially dominated by their partners were 52% more likely to be infected with HIV. Power roles and dominant social expectations prevent communication, joint decision-making and negotiation for condom use. Fear of violence is an undermining factor of seeking treatment. Women may hesitate to be tested for HIV or fail to return for results because they are afraid that disclosing their HIV-positive status may result in physical violence, expulsion from their homes or social ostracisms. Studies in sub-Saharan Africa have found these fears to be well founded.

In Tanzania, a study of voluntary counselling and testing services by WHO (2002) found out that only 57% of HIV positive women reported receiving support and understanding from partners. In Botswana, during the same study, women said that they were afraid of their partners' reactions if they found that they were HIV positive. The fear had kept them from being tested, from returning for their HIV results if they were tested, from participating in prevention of mother to child transmission and treatment programme.

A woman's limited economic security may increase the likelihood of engaging in high-risk behaviour such as commercial sex work. Many economically dependent women may stay in high



risk, violent relationships. Widows too face major obstacles. Many are stripped of their property and left to struggle to support themselves and their children while they are at their weakest. These factors combined with violence or the threat of it, create an environment within which women are trapped into having unprotected sex with HIV- positive men and are unable to seek information or treatment on HIV infection and AIDS, (Human Rights Watch 2004).

Domestic violence achieves sexual expression and is significantly associated with rape. The impact of domestic violence varies widely. It has physical, psychological and social consequences. For women these are interconnected. Worldwide, it has been estimated that domestic violence against women is as serious a cause of death and incapacity among women of reproductive age as cancer, and greater cause of ill health than traffic accidents and malaria combined (World Bank, 1993). Domestic violence leads to feelings of confusion and despair, especially where the attacker is an intimate partner or a person in a relationship of trust to the victim. Women who experience physical violence from their husbands are twelve times more likely than other women to attempt suicide (Heise, 1993:56). Some studies have established that marital violence in Africa is the leading cause of female suicide (Counts, 1987: 128).

#### **2.4.2 Economic and Social Impact**

Domestic violence against women has a serious impact on women's ability to participate with their peers in social and economic activities. Women who have survived violence face rejection and suffer social stigma. Abused women are blamed for bringing it on themselves. Women, who have been abused, have been shamed and should remain silent. Domestic violence affects all kinds of relationships that a woman has with other members of her community. Marginalization of women survivors of domestic violence prevents and delays women from rebuilding their lives. It drives women into poverty by preventing them from participating in educational and economic

activities. By damaging their confidence and making them scared to venture into the public space, this often curtails their education. Lack of education limits women's income generating opportunities while lack of income makes them more vulnerable to violence. Domestic violence affects women's power to generate income. Women with formal sector employment may lose their jobs due to absenteeism resulting from the impact of the domestic violence, or the fear that others may find out in the work place. Similar concerns restrict the income generating activities of women working in the informal sector. Women may be stopped from participating in economic development projects due to threats of domestic violence.

### **2.4.3 Effect on Society**

Community norms are a critical element in the environment that allows GBV to take place.

The social costs of violence against women are enormous, ranging from stigmatisation of the individual family and isolation to temporary or chronic dependency of women on support groups or the abuser. The economic costs of the conduct to the community are vast. Beyond such calculable costs like the cost of human suffering, the ultimate cost of violence against women is the perpetuation of the societal structure that keeps women inferior and subordinate to men politically, socially and economically. Violence against women is an overwhelming moral, economic and public health burden that society cannot bear or afford to ignore.

Violence against women within a marriage places the survival of the household in jeopardy. It creates a huge burden on health and judicial systems, and hinders economic stability and growth through women's lost productivity. Future productivity is also held back as a result of the loss of children's education when they have their lives disrupted by violence against their mother. Domestic violence against women hinders their participation in development processes and constrains their ability to respond to rapid social, political or economic change. Women cannot

lend their labour or creative ideas fully when they are burdened with the physical and psychological scars of violence. Women spend a larger proportion of their earnings on household welfare than men do. However, marital violence incapacitates them from making economic decisions at the household level, and this negates the rationale for investing resources in women.

Domestic violence leads to the breakdown of trust in social relationships and to the weakening of support networks on which people's survival strategies depend. Women's participation in civil society is profoundly affected by violence and the fear of it. Violence against women reduces their self-esteem as well as trust in others (Dean, 1996:92). It strains and fragments social networks. Women often co-operate across ethnic lines, emphasize concrete achievements, and have a broader notion of social responsibility and a greater tendency towards peaceful resolutions of conflict. Domestic violence puts all this into jeopardy.

Development problems such as high fertility, poverty, hunger, illiteracy and malnutrition cannot be solved without women's full participation. Furthermore, when women continue to concern themselves with problems caused by violence, their energies are diverted from pursuing other goals even when they are involved in development projects. For example, women miss meetings because of the fear of beatings, sexual harassment or physical disabilities due to injuries inflicted on them through domestic violence. Some women decline public visibility due to shame over their injuries since society's "blame the victim" attitude does not create an environment sympathetic to them.

Violent acts against women attack their dignity as human beings and leave them vulnerable and fearful. Conditioned to undervalue their skills and abilities and paralysed by real fears of violence and retribution, women are marginalized in society and forced out of the decision making process

which shapes and determines the development of their communities. This places women in a state of dependence on men, and it is reinforced by the belief in society that men are superior and women inferior. The manifestations and causes of the violence alter their forms according to the social, cultural, economic and historical realities in which they occur. This again limits women's participation in or capacity to benefit from the development process (Ondicho, 1993:26).

## **2.5 Why women do not seek redress through the available channels**

In patriarchal societies, domestic violence is seen as a natural way of disciplining women. Due to cultural beliefs, domestic violence is confined to the intimacy and privacy of the home, to admit domestic violence within the family amounts to publicizing marital breakdown. Women try to hide the problem because they are the ones responsible for maintaining harmony within the family. Should they make the situation public, they would be stigmatized by society. The victim is therefore confronted by huge social and cultural pressure, which forces her to keep quiet. She decides not to press charges against her aggressor because she knows she will have to relive her experience within a judicial system well known for its sexism.

Within the family, there exists a differential responsibility and authority that gives the husband both the perceived right and obligation to control his wife's behaviour and justify beating her (Dobash and Dobash, 1979 : 87). Women often believe in the authority of their husbands and that it is right to consult them on everything. This defence is reinforced by the church through the marriage contract, which includes the threat of rightful control over those who disobey (Freeman, 1980:148).

A battered woman may view herself as a child that needs correcting. The victim often feels at fault and asks herself how she provoked it (Klein, 1984 :28). The deeply rooted cultural supports for domestic violence against women contribute to a cycle in which the helplessness and self blame of the victims and the inadequate response of the legal system reinforce each other (Rafter,

and Stanko, 1984 :172). Women have been socialized and conditioned to accept abuse. Such internalized beliefs like “a man is the owner of the house hold. He can do whatever he likes, women can only obey” (Edgerton and Conant, 1964:409), show the depth of women’s helplessness.

Domestic violence is not a breakdown in the social order. It is not a dysfunction to the system, but an affirmation to it. It affirms patriarchy. Domestic violence works to maintain the system. It is a behaviour that emerges out of the social relations of domination. According to Eleanor Leacock (1981:311):

Women bear the brunt psychologically and sometimes physically of frustration and anger of their menfolk, who in miserable complicity with an exploitative system, take advantage of the petty power they have been given over the women close to them. Bitter reality lies with the family, which is idealized as a retreat and sanctuary in a difficult world. What could be a centre of preparation for resistance by both sexes is so often instead a confused personal battleground, in which women have little recourse but to help create the conditions of their own oppression.

Women with the fewest independent resources and alternatives are more likely to remain in abusive relationships and fail to seek redress. This economic powerlessness makes it more difficult for women to meet their obligations under the double burden of productive and reproductive labour. Women seeking help and shelter face the stigma associated with turning to “outsiders” for help on issues related to the family. Unfortunately, in Kenya, such shelters are not many and are not known to many women experiencing domestic violence. There is need to create awareness among women about the existence of the shelters so that they can seek immediate help when the need arises. Lack of such awareness may force a woman to remain in an abusive relationship and fail to seek redress.

There are many reasons why a woman may decide to stay in an abusive relationship and not seek redress. A woman may have invested a lot in her relationship with her husband or partner. She may retain emotional attachments to him and his family. She may continue hoping for a change in his behaviour with or without counselling from family, friends or organizations. Cultural constraints against divorce and seeking redress may have tangible effects on a woman's options.

Lack of property rights, discriminatory laws governing marriage and divorce, lack of economic options for an independent livelihood all may lead a woman to dismiss the idea of seeking redress or leaving. When no safe alternative can be ensured, seeking redress or leaving can be dangerous. Finishing a relationship does not necessarily mean an end to violence, and may make a woman vulnerable to new forms of abuse. Women are at particular risk once they have announced their intentions to leave, but remain within the household. In Kenya, laws relating to land and property ownership discriminate against women and play a significant part in preventing women from seeking redress and overcoming the suffering caused by domestic violence. Women's lack of knowledge about their rights exacerbates the aggression directed towards them.

The police fail to recognize domestic violence against women as a crime and record it accordingly. The law does not support victims of violence, but rather works against them. There are many barriers to justice for women and that is why many women opt to remain silent about domestic violence. This might be due to fear of the attacker, of social taboos surrounding domestic violence or of lack of support to women survivors of domestic violence. The most common reason for not seeking redress especially where the attacker is the husband is women's fear that the attacker will retaliate and further harm them (Pickup, 2001:173).

Cultural stigma attached to domestic violence is another reason why women decide to remain in abusive relationships instead of seeking redress. Domestic violence is viewed as a woman's

failure to fulfil her roles as wife or mother, in some way. Women fear that seeking redress may damage her own family's reputation. Besides, women may not define domestic violence against them as a crime even when they feel it is wrong (WHO, 1997). The belief that domestic violence is an indicator of love makes cultures tolerate it and assume it is a normal aspect of relationships between men and women. Overwhelming feelings of humiliation prevent women from seeking help for their violence related problems because of the fear of being further humiliated both by the in-laws and the social institutions (Giller and Kabaganda, 1990:48).

Women's failure to seek redress is also due to the failure of formal institutions to provide effective protection for women. In countries like Kenya where there are no legal or social sanctions against domestic violence by an intimate partner, or where such sanctions are ineffective, women decide that it is pointless to try and seek redress. Feelings of guilt, fear, repulsion, mental blocks and aggression put women off from seeking redress. Although the physical symptoms of torture tend to lessen over time, the psychological, behavioural and social problems persist for years. Abused women find it difficult to convince the law enforcers and the judiciary that an offence has taken place. Police response to domestic violence has always been inadequate. Police are not seen to offer adequate protection to women. They underestimate the violence and dismiss some appeals for help. They are reluctant to intervene in domestic violence since they place greater value on privacy and on marriage rights than on a woman's rights to freedom of assault and fear of assault. They are unaware of sources of help and support that could be available to the women. The police attempt to mediate or counsel the parties rather than to fulfil a role of law enforcement. Police response stressing peace making rather than law enforcement often puts women off and bars them from seeking redress or reporting the crime. They handle cases of domestic violence in a dismissive manner. This makes women coil back and continue to tolerate domestic violence.

Legal separation or even divorce does not guarantee women protection from violence. Many women who are victims of domestic violence do not wish to separate from or divorce their husbands. Their priority is to end the violence in the relationship, rather than the relationship itself. A victim may shun such a relief out of shame, because divorce is culturally and socially unacceptable. Even when she wants to end the marriage, she may be faced with legal obstacles.

All the above factors force women to remain in abusive relationships without seeking redress. In cases where the burden of proof of a crime is on the woman, she will have to carry it to the satisfaction of a judicial officer. This may be difficult if such an officer believes in the concept of the sanctity of marriage or subscribes to the philosophy that a husband has the right to discipline his wife. Such treatment discourages women from seeking redress from the legal system. Since there is no effective legal response, women opt to keep quiet and continue to endure domestic violence. All levels of the legal system from the police to the judiciary have to be effective and responsive to cases of domestic violence if women will gain confidence in them and hence seek redress.

Women's economic dependency on men and the cultural value attributed to women being a "proper wife" or a good mother and loyal to the family may lead women to decide that the repercussions of seeking redress and contradicting these gender ideologies are worse than those of staying with violent husbands. Women living in poverty have limited access to formal institutions that might offer assistance in resisting domestic violence. These include health, education, social, psychological, legal and police services. Costs associated with such services deter women from seeking assistance or redress. Besides financial costs, social disapproval for having made the violence public also acts as a deterrent (Pickup, 2001:190).



Women faced with domestic violence have several options available to them. One reason why battered women do not utilize these options is due to ignorance. Due to their educational levels many women are not aware of these options. Furthermore, when violence is meted on women by intimate members of the household, they are faced with difficult decisions on how to proceed in stopping the violence.

Women seeking help from organizations outside the family usually face enormous social pressures opposing their actions. For example, women who seek professional help outside the extended family network are seen to be betraying their family and community. A woman who files a complaint with the police or runs away from her abusive husband may be ostracized from the family and the social networks on which she depends. Women's ability to act against domestic violence is constrained and there is total lack of community responsibility towards the violence. Besides, the majority of abused women are encouraged to remain with their abusers even when they seek for help. Male bias inherent in the family, the household and the community can also mitigate against women who speak out against domestic violence. If the response from the family and the community is inadequate, this can increase women's sense of helplessness, lack of control and fear. Any woman seeking for redress or help has to weigh the consequences of:

- Fear of breaking the family
- Fear of losing her children
- Fear of sacrificing her economic means of support and finding herself destitute without alternative livelihood options
- Fear of isolation from kin and neighbourhood networks
- Fear of a legal system that fails to support her and that tolerates domestic violence,
- Fear of a criminal justice system that does not effectively challenge violent men

- Fear of social tolerance of violent behaviour by men•

Fear of stigmatisation by society for her failure to live up to circumscribed ideals of womanhood

- Fear of losing her home and jeopardizing her right to future housing (Pickup, Francine 2001:157).

Where women have no money of their own and are highly invisible and vulnerable to further abuse, their ability to flee violence is severely curtailed.

## **2.6 Options available for battered women**

Avoidance and tolerance are the two most common options available to women in abusive situations. As one woman put it:

It happens a lot to people. If your husband gets annoyed, don't respond to him. Just leave him and go out. If you reply, he might beat you. So do not give him the opportunity (Green, 1999:33).

Although immediate support and intervention by kin, friends or neighbours often stops a single event of violence, in the longer term formal agencies may be an important contributing factor in resolving the problem (Sen, 1998: 44).

Interventions that plan to support women to overcome the emotional and psychological torture from domestic violence need to address women's emotional and material needs in an integrated way. Material needs may be immediate and obvious like access to shelter, legal advice and health treatment. Many women need emotional support as well. Women's other long term needs include permanent housing and independent livelihood for themselves and any dependants. This may involve vocational training, income generating opportunities or the opportunity to continue education. Other options available for battered women include:

### 2.6.1 Family and Community Structures

Relatives, friends and neighbours can provide immediate and useful support to abused women. Individuals and community level institutions can play a crucial role in intervening to stop violent events. The family and community networks should be able to offer alternatives to victims of domestic violence. When a woman seeks help from women's organizations, she is openly acknowledging her experience of domestic violence and the fact that she is challenging it. Women's organizations can offer a range of support services to address women's physical and emotional health needs for temporary and possibly long term shelter, access to the legal system or a means of making a living. By providing these services in a friendly, unassuming and supportive environment, women's organizations create conditions where women feel empowered enough to take responsibility for their own lives.

Women's organizations can be of great help to abused women because:

- They offer a climate of belief, rather than one of scepticism.
- They allow women the opportunity to talk explicitly about the abuse.
- They create a welcoming environment in which some privacy is possible.
- They do not question or judge a woman's behaviour.
- Reassure her that she is right to say that what happened was not her fault and encourage her not to blame herself.
- Check about her current safety and find out if there is anyone in her kin and friendship networks who might be supportive and offer sanctuary if necessary.
- Document what individual women tell them in case they need it later and so that other staff members will be aware of the situation if they see her in the future.
  - Offer a combination of emotional and practical support.

- Provide women with information about other options.
- Are prepared to move at a woman's pace. Just beginning to talk can be a huge step.
- Encourage women to make contacts with community support groups.
- Women's organizations adopt to rapid changes in line with women's survival strategies.
- Can play a mediation role between the victim and her family or community (Pickup, 2001:158).

### **2.6.2 Informal shelters**

These help women to free themselves from a violent situation. They include sheltering within a religious house/ convent, an orphanage, family members or friends. These seldom do not challenge the context which has placed her at risk of violence, and any solutions offered may themselves be potentially abusive. They are therefore a temporary remedy to a violent situation. However, they offer the immediate required help to a battered woman. They provide a temporary place of safety and assistance. Women's shelters are central to assistance programmes. Many of them are run by NGOs. They protect women from domestic violence by providing them with somewhere to stay for a limited period of time. They often combine this with legal and therapeutic counselling and advice for women about state benefits and employment. Shelters provide a place of refuge, and an opportunity to meet other women. They aim to provide women with immediate and friendly support, a space to discuss their options. They also increase women's access to resources and strengthen their capacity to resist future violence. Shelters provide immediate safety to women in need of such protection.

### **2.6.3 Seeking for legal help**

Women need to be aware of how the law protects them, even though; there are many barriers to justice for them. Women need to know their rights. They need to get legal advice on their rights

and the legal processes of separation and divorce, and the maintenance or custody of children. Women have legal options, but the majority are ignorant about them. Few women know that violence in the home is a crime and that they have a legal right to be protected by the police and the courts. However, customary laws bar women from accessing justice because society condones and approves domestic violence. Legal intervention can go a long way in ensuring short term safety of battered women. It can also play an educative role. Legal provisions that provide protection and sanctions against violence in the home reflect condemnation of abusive conduct.

Ending a marriage by judicial separation or divorce is a remedy for domestic violence. In systems where marriage is governed by customary law, marriages can be dissolved. However, customary divorce may not be allowed for minor cruelty or emotional abuse. Where the marriage is based on religious principles the woman may find divorce to be unavoidable. If the couple is catholic, the woman will content with judicial separation since the Catholic Church does not allow divorce. Where personal law is derived from Islam, the woman will be able to divorce her cruel husband.

General law principles that govern divorce fall into the following categories: divorce where the other party is guilty of some form of fault, e.g, abuse; divorce where the marriage has broken down irretrievably and there is evidence to show this break down; and divorce where the marriage has broken down irretrievably because the parties assert that or because they have separated for a period of time. In all these options, any woman who wishes to divorce her husband for cruelty be it physical, sexual or emotional, will have no difficulty in achieving her aim. Women require this knowledge to be able to seek for legal help if they are involved in abusive relationships especially domestic violence.

### **2.7 Supporting women to overcome mental and physical impacts of domestic violence**

Gender-based violence depends on changing community norms about gender equality and acceptability of violence against women. Communities can change violent-related attitudes and

behaviours and promote more equitable relationships between men and women. Society needs to be encouraged to prevent gender-based violence and hold perpetrators accountable rather than blame the victim. The state should provide a comprehensive service response often requiring mobilising coalitions and referral networks of service providers in the community to work together to help battered women. Societal norms should be changed to help women survivors of violence to get help from families and community services. Community programmes that have the potential to improve women's economic empowerment should be set up and should serve as a long-term strategy for preventing gender-based violence.

Community programmes which reach all parts of the community- women, men, children, youth as well as religious and traditional leaders, the police, health councils, schools, NGOs and faith based organisations need to understand the patterns and consequences of violence against women and develop their own strategies for preventing and responding to GBV. Support efforts to mobilise partnerships among community leaders, Government officials, and NGOs to address GBV at the community level are sure avenues of helping survivors of violence. Survivors of GBV need to know where to get civil society leaders and local government officials for these are essential in improving the community response to violence and helping to reduce levels of violence in the long run (USAID 2005).

The physical and medical consequences of domestic violence are immense. Women survivors of domestic violence require free and easily accessible treatment for their injuries. There is need for trained local health care workers to give victims of domestic violence emergency first aid needed after an attack. These should be stationed both in the urban and rural areas. It is necessary also for medical and therapeutic responses to be coordinated if women are to be helped both in the short and long term. Most of the physical injuries sustained by women survivors of domestic violence

are linked to psychological and emotional effects. Psychological harm takes much longer to heal than physical wounds. As one woman put it:

In fact the body mends soon enough. Only the scars remain. But the wounds inflicted upon the soul take much longer to heal. And each time I re-live these moments, they start bleeding all over again. The broken spirit has taken the longest to mend, damage to the personality the most difficult to overcome (Woman's Collection Network, 1990:176).

Counselling is crucial to survivors of domestic violence. For them to overcome the psychological trauma, they have to access counselling services. Counselling should go alongside therapy to address the psychological consequences of violence. Women who have gone through domestic violence need to be treated each as an individual with unique problems and experiences. Domestic violence destroys women's sense of attachment to others including intimate partners, friends and family. This can lead to depression with serious consequences. Support for survivors of domestic violence need to begin from a thorough analysis of the context. It has to be built on intact, supportive, social structures.

Women who have been rendered destitute by domestic violence need support to earn meaningful livelihoods. They need to be encouraged to participate in income generating activities. This will change their status within the household. An independent income can enable women to leave their abusers. Credit training and employment initiatives enhance women's access to networks, information, counselling and other social resources in order to address their interests and needs more holistically. They need long-term financial support to achieve meaningful livelihoods. Survivors of GBV need to be helped to identify existing community structures and resources that are available to them and create supportive environments for their recovery.

Education and training is a key part of promoting livelihood strategies. Education can contribute to women's confidence and self worth. This will make their bargaining position within the family and household stronger. Education increases women's ability to challenge violence. Interventions to support women survivors of domestic violence must appreciate the interrelated physical, social and emotional implications of domestic violence for women. Dissemination of information about existing services through community groups, advertising campaigns, and referral mechanisms including hotlines where the infrastructure permits can go a long way in helping women survivors of violence.

## **2.8 Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by the Marxist feminism theory. This theory sees women's subordination as a result of male dominance and economic inequality. It locates the sources of women's oppression in the structure of capitalism. It stresses the needs and rights of groups rather than the individual. The theory advocates for the unification of all oppressed groups to fight all forms of oppression rather than struggling separately. It considers capitalism, imperialism and sexism as inseparable. The theory acknowledges that the liberation of women is linked to the liberation of all oppressive social class relations. Marxist feminists locate women's oppression in their inability to participate in the public sphere. Hence their liberation will involve movement from the domestic to the public sphere. Women are viewed as a reserve labour force for capitalism yet in a male dominated society, women's housework is not perceived as work since it is not paid. However, participation of women in the public sphere does not necessarily lead to their liberation. This is because women occupy the low paid jobs when employed in the public sphere. Thus, though Marxist feminists argue that acknowledging socialism can improve the material conditions for women, it does not provide the liberation of women from men.



It is on the basis of this theory that this study will try to explore the seriousness of domestic violence against women as a social problem and point out how it affects women and society as a whole economically, politically and socially. It is the best suited theory for the research since it points out the basis for women's subordination, the causes and recommends the elimination of this subordination for society to achieve equality among all the citizens. This subordination includes oppression issues like domestic violence.

## **2.9 Hypotheses**

From the ongoing literature review on domestic violence against women, the following hypotheses were drawn:

1. The less educated a woman is, the more difficult it is for her to seek redress against domestic violence.
2. The fewer resources a woman has to challenge domestic violence, the more likely she will accept and tolerate violence against her.
3. So long as the state and the society do not view domestic violence as a crime against humanity, battered women will continue to be denied justice, in terms of their seeking for help from the police, the legal system and the society as a whole.

## **2.10 Operational Definitions of Concepts**

**Household:** A social unit comprised of those living together in the same dwelling. Those who dwell under the same roof and compose a family.

**Domestic violence:** It is the physical or mental assault of women by their male partners. It also includes emotional and psychological abuse of women by men.

**Family unit:** It is the basic unit in society having a nucleus of two or more adults living together and cooperating in the care and rearing of their own or adopted children.

**Poverty:** It is the state of one with insufficient resources. It can be absolute or relative. It is the deprivation of basic necessities. A state of destitution. It can also be denial of opportunities, services and rights.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research site**

This study was carried out in Korogocho slum in Nairobi. The slum is situated within Korogocho location in the eastern part of the city of Nairobi. Korogocho location has two sub-locations, namely, Gitathuru and Nyayo, and covers an area of 1.8 square kilometres. There are in all 22,080 households in the whole location. In 1999, the slum had a population of 159,837 people all from different ethnic backgrounds. Out of the total population, 39,090 were women while the rest were men (Republic of Kenya: 2001). The slum is mainly occupied by people of low income, most of who depend on petty businesses to earn their living. They run small-scale businesses ranging from hawking, charcoal selling, and car washing, to tailoring and retail shops.

The inhabitants live in semi-permanent houses most of which are owned by absentee landlords. Most social amenities are located outside the slum except for a few schools and dispensaries. There is just one police post and no other essential services for battered women. The slum is accessible throughout the year by road. Crime rate is high within the slum mainly due to unemployment. There are many NGOs working within the slum, and most families depend on relief services especially for food. Though the slum is an informal settlement, it holds a high proportion of the urban population and hence can offer a good analysis of domestic violence among the residents.

### **3.2 Research design**

This study was cross-sectional and to a large extent aimed at collecting qualitative data through key informant interviews with leaders within Korogocho slum. The purpose of the interviews was to ascertain the magnitude of the problem of domestic violence in the slum, how the leaders react to it and the impact of their reactions (Appendix 2).

After key informant interviews, in-depth interviews will be done using interview guides for case studies. This will include taking case studies of 80 women who have lived in abusive relationships throughout their marriages. This will be conducted through focused group discussions to obtain qualitative data and to explore further the issues that emerged during the in-depth interviews and which needed some clarification. During this phase, questions pertaining to attitudes of the study population towards domestic violence, the cultural and social institutions available in the study area and any efforts they make to address the problem of domestic violence will be asked.

The second phase of the research involved the use of a structured questionnaire to collect quantitative data. In this phase, data will be collected on such issues as age, income levels, and education levels. The research will seek to highlight the problem of domestic violence among women in Korogocho, the available options for them and the reasons why they would choose to stick to abusive relationships. Methods of data collection included interviews and field survey.

### **3.3 The universe**

The subjects of study were members of women groups some of whom have lived in abusive relationships and others who had lived in good relationships. Korogocho slum has 40 women groups each consisting of 40 members. The universe therefore consisted of 1,600 respondents. Ten (10) women groups were selected for the study out of the 40. This gave a total of four hundred members. From each group of 40, 10 women were randomly selected. This gave a total of 100 women to be interviewed (1/4) of the universe, and using purposive sampling, they were interviewed on domestic violence. Not all the members were victims of domestic violence.

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling procedure**

As already stated, the researcher purposively selected 10 women from each group. From the 10 groups therefore, this gave her 100 respondents. To these the researcher administered a structured questionnaire. This was done through purposive and simple random sampling procedures.

### **3.5 Methods of data collection**

Data was collected using structured questionnaires, a key informant interview guide and case studies. The study drew data from secondary and primary sources described below.

#### **3.5.1 Secondary data**

Documentary materials, dissertations, theses and seminar papers were reviewed. Secondary data provided a wide range of materials covering different areas and periods, which resulted in a greater scope and depth than was possible when using primary data alone. It also provided basic data on the subject of study and helped to extract relevant information regarding domestic violence. Thus, secondary data helped to analyse the issue of domestic violence against women in different countries of the world and unearthed what other researchers have found over the years concerning the same problem. Secondary data is good for comparative purposes (Herbert 1987:14). It is also accurate and reliable and provides opportunities for replication. A research finding gains more credibility if it appears in a number of studies (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996:306).

#### **3.5.2 Survey**

Field research was the primary source of data for this study. A structured questionnaire was administered to women group members. Data was collected on their opinions, attitudes, views and experiences of domestic violence. The questionnaire contained both closed and open-ended questions (Appendix 1).

### **3.5.3 Key Informant interviews**

Key informant interviews were conducted with selected leaders. These included leaders of women groups, village heads, social workers and church leaders. They provided information on the magnitude of the problem of domestic violence. They also gave the stand of the church and the community on domestic violence and what the two institutions feel the state should do to eradicate or minimise domestic violence. The interviews were conducted in English since Korogocho slum is in an urban area and leaders have some understanding of the language. A key informant interview guide was used to get data from the leaders (Appendix 2).

### **3.5.4 Case Studies**

Case studies refer to a variety of methods and techniques that are used for conducting qualitative interviews. They are used in sociological fieldwork to form an overall picture of the informant's or interviewee's life. The purpose of the interview is to describe what it is like to be this particular person, that is, the one being interviewed. The interviewee tells the story of his/her life in his or her own words. The case studies were derived from the respondents who have lived in abusive relationships throughout their married lives. Case studies gave accounts of lives completed or on going, with emphasis on the violence experienced.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Information from the questionnaires was subjected to quantitative analysis using descriptive statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme was used to analyse the data. The data was categorised, arranged, summarised and presented using tabulations, pie charts and comparative isograms. The information was then used to explain explicitly the unfolding patterns of domestic violence.

### **3.7 Ethical Issues**

For a study to be carried out smoothly, some ethical issues to be considered include: Getting a permit to conduct the research from the local administration as required by the laws of the land and assuring informants that collected information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study. The informants were made aware of the nature of the research and how their information would be utilised for their benefit and that of others. Using different names from those of real informants safeguarded the individuals' confidentiality. Informants were not coerced into participation. Rather, their participation was voluntary. Informants were also assured of their safety and that their participation in the research would not harm them in any way either by their spouses or anybody else. They were also assured of their anonymity throughout the study. This was to guarantee them privacy as they shared their experiences with the researcher.

Time spent with informants was not exploitative. The researcher ensured that informants did not incur undue loss of resources and income. The study did not expose them to risks due to their participation. The researcher also ensured that the study was fair, honest and transparent. There was no falsification or fabrication of research findings. Research findings were reported truthfully and accurately. Respect and sensitivity to culture and the people studied was core to this study. The rights of informants were respected, protected and promoted.

## CHAPTER FOUR: ASPECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN KOROGOCHO

### 4.1 Introduction

Data collected from the questionnaire was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). SPSS is a computer statistical application package especially designed to perform data analysis.

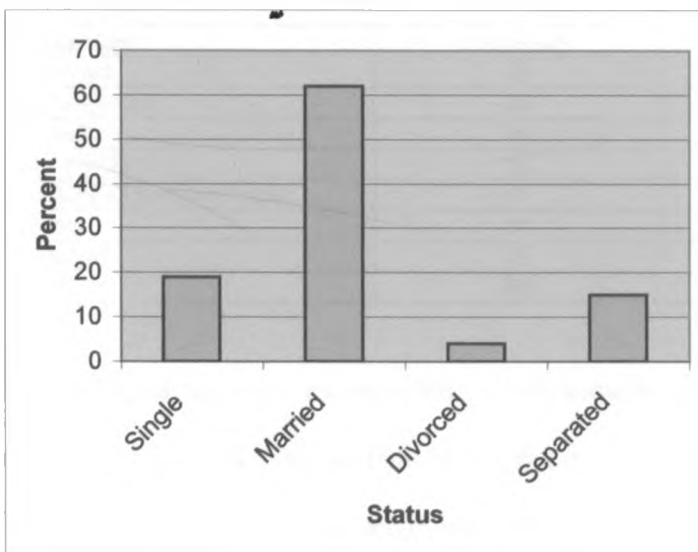
### 4.2 Background Information

The ages of the women members ranged from 18-51 years. They all came from different ethnic backgrounds as illustrated in Table 4.1 below. They all represented diverse cultural practices, beliefs and reactions to domestic violence against women.

**Table: 4.1 Respondents' ethnic groups**

Ethnic Group	Frequency	Percentage
Kikuyu	30	30.0
Luo	28	28.0
Kamba	19	19.0
Luyia	9	9.0
Somali	4	4.0
Meru	5	5.0
Borana	2	2.0
Kisii	3	3.0
Total	100	100 %

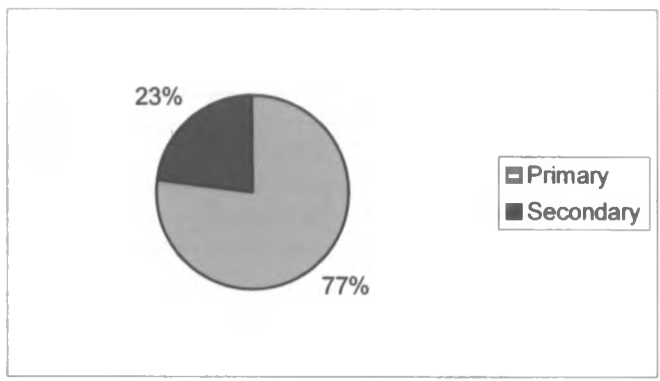
About two thirds (62) of the women were married, 4 were divorced, 15 separated while 19 were single. This is illustrated in the bar graph below (fig. 4.1).



**Fig.4.1: Marital Status of the women**



All the above women except 8 had children. Most of them had had primary level of education (77%) while 23% had had secondary education. This is illustrated by the pie chart below (Fig. 4.2).



**Fig 4.2. Educational status of the respondents**

The above figure depicts the high illiteracy levels of the women and hence their vulnerability to domestic violence since they have to depend on their husbands for their livelihoods. With such high illiteracy levels, the women cannot obtain any meaningful employment to support themselves.

Results from the survey showed that most of the women had no reliable sources of livelihood. Most were housewives who relied on their husbands for survival thus raising their vulnerability to abusive relationships. Table 4.2 below illustrates this.

**Table 4.2: Occupation of the respondents**

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	10	10.0
Self employed	24	24.0
Business	14	14.0
House Wife	32	32.0
Washing Clothes for People	9	9.0
Jobless	9	9.0
Housegirl	2	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The women interviewed were low-income earners with some recording nil income (41%). Only 2% of the women earned Kshs. 5000 and above per month. This demonstrates the poverty levels of the women and hence their vulnerability to domestic violence. This was also supported by the

fact that those who earned a substantial amount of income had their partners decide how the money should be used. This is shown below in Tables 4.3 and 4.4

**Table 4.3: Respondent's earnings**

Earnings (in Kshs)	Frequency	Percentage
None	41	41 %
500-1000	10	10 %
1001-2000	14	14 %
2001-3000	13	13 %
3001-4000	11	11 %
4001-5001	9	9 %
Above 5000	2	2 %
<b>Total</b>	100	100 %

**Table 4.4: Decision making concerning earnings**

Decision -maker	Frequency	Percentage
Myself	40	40 %
My Husband	56	56 %
The two of us together	2	2 %
Uncle	1	1 %
Father	1	1 %
<b>Total</b>	100	100 %

All the above analyses show the vulnerability of women to domestic violence. Out of the total number of women interviewed, 81% had been physically battered by their husbands (Table 4.5). Out of these, 72% were battered after disagreements. The rest were battered due to complaining/discovering that their partners were unfaithful, failing to give the man food due to un-availability and failing to have sex with their partners.

**Table 4.5: Responses to the question "Have you ever been physically battered by your husband"?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	81	81 %
No	19	19 %
<b>Total</b>	100	100 %

**Table 4.6: Respondents' reasons for being battered**

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Not Battered	4	4 %
Disagreement	72	72 %
Bad Behaviour	6	6 %
Wanted food when we didn't have	4	4 %
Wanted money	2	2 %
Drinking too much and coming home late	4	4 %
Refusing to have sex with him	1	1 %
Discovering he was unfaithful	7	7 %
<b>Total</b>	100	100 %

The outcome of the above violence was clearly outlined by the respondents with 96% of the women admitting to having received physical injuries as a result of the battering. The nature of the injuries sustained were bruises, broken bones and swellings. About 70% had received bruises, 17% broken bones and 29% had swellings (Table 4.7). Some of the respondents had suffered from more than one type of injury.

**Table 4.7: Nature of injuries sustained**

<b>Nature of injuries</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Bruises	69	69 %
Broken	17	17 %
Swellings	29	29 %

### **4.3. Reactions of the respondents to domestic violence**

The reaction of the women to the above violence was demonstrated by frequent escapes from their partners, with 54% of the women reporting to have run away from their partners after the assault while 34% just kept quiet. One respondent said she reported the attack to her parents while 11% reported the attack to the police (Table 4.8). A majority (5%) of those who reported the attack to the police said that the police were rude while 3% said that the police were indifferent. Of the reported cases, 3% were not recorded and out of the recorded ones only 3% arrests were made (Tables 4.9 & 4.10). Those arrested were later released without any charges being preferred against them. 40% of the women reported to have sought help from relatives, friends and their families (Table 4.11), while 24% sought help from their pastors and one woman from the Imam. All said that they had received comfort or support as a result. Only 7 of the women had sought counselling services and they reported to have been taught how to handle the stress arising from domestic violence.

**Table 4.8: Respondents' action after attack**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Run away/escaped	54	54 %
Fought back	7	7 %
Kept quiet	34	34 %
Reported to his parents	1	1 %
<b>Total</b>	96	96 %

**Table 4.9: Police attitude to the respondents' complaint**

Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
Bad	1	1 %
Good	2	2 %
Rude	5	5 %
Indifferent	3	3 %
Total	11	11 %

**Table 4.10 Police action to the respondents' complaint**

Action	Frequency	Percentage
Recorded the crime	5	5 %
Refused to record	3	3 %
Arrested him	3	3 %
Total	11	11 %

**Table 4.11: Respondents' alternatives for help**

Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Family	13	13 %
Friends	14	14 %
Relatives	12	12 %
Neighbours	1	1 %
Total	40	40 %

#### 4.4 Duration of the respondents' marriages

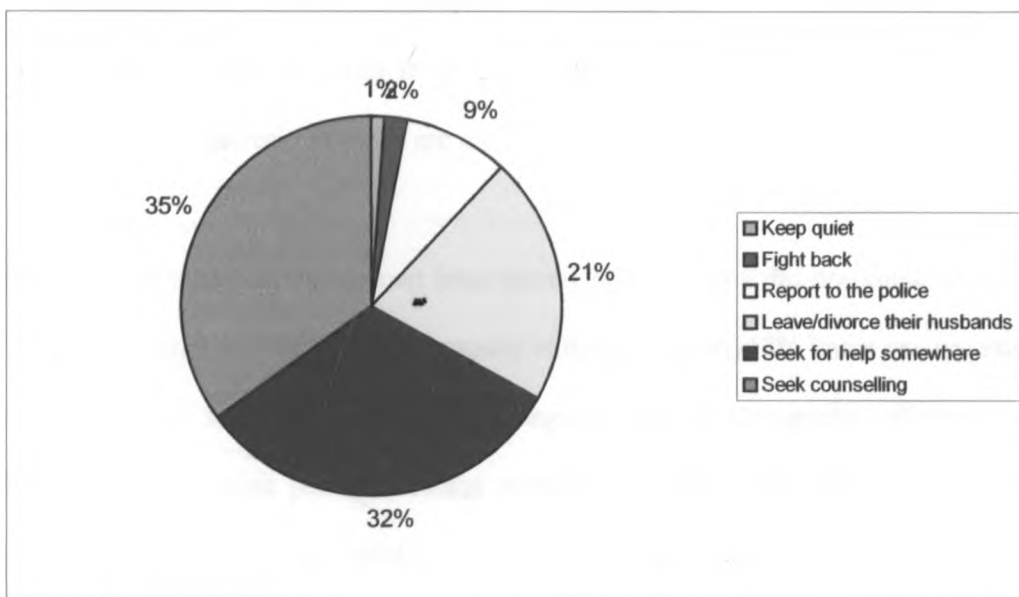
About two fifths (38) of the women interviewed had lived with their husbands for 4-6 years, while 16% had lived with their partners for 2-3 years. A quarter had been married for 7 years and above and 2% had been married for 0-1 year while 19% were unmarried. When asked whether they had ever left their partners as a result of being battered, 38% said yes. Out of these 24% had been separated from their partners for one year, 11% for 2-3 years, while 4% had been separated for 4-6 years. Only one woman (1%) reported to have been separated from her partner for more than 7 years.

When asked about how they felt about divorce, 34% believed that a legal divorce would help remedy the situation whereas 47% said they did not think or believe a legal divorce would offer any remedy. Those who preferred legal divorce said that they did so because they believed it would deter would-be batterers, would scare partners from battering their spouses that it would

have the best results, and that justice would be done. Those who did not prefer legal divorce gave their reasons as fear of other people getting to know their problems (7%), not having money for legal proceedings (16%), cultural beliefs and practices (13%), love for the partner (6%), for the sake of the children (4%), and being an orphan and therefore having no where else to go after the divorce.

#### 4.5 Options available to battered women

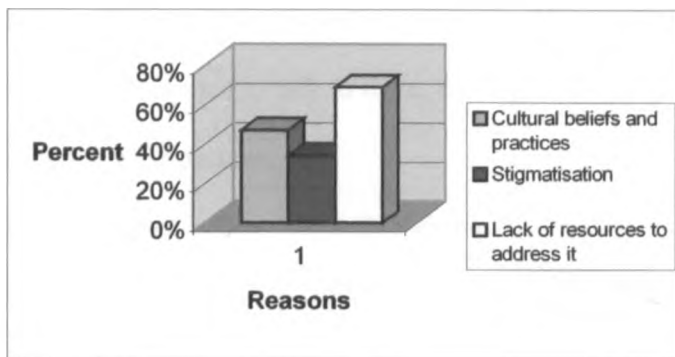
The advice given by the women for victims of domestic violence was as follows: one woman said they should just keep quiet, 2 said they should fight back, 9 said they should report the cases to the police, 21 preferred divorce, 32 said victims of domestic violence should seek help elsewhere while 35 felt that battered women should seek counselling services. The pie chart (Fig. 4.3) below illustrates this.



**Figure 4.3: Responses on what battered women should do**

The women had deferring opinions as to why they think battered women choose to continue staying with their abusive partners. Forty-seven per cent (47%) said it was due to cultural

practices and beliefs, 34% due to stigmatisation, and 69% said it was due to lack of resources and means to address the issue (Fig. 4.4).



**Fig. 4.4: Reasons why battered women decide to stay with their abusive partners**

Eight –three of the women studied felt that domestic violence should be treated like any other crime and should be punishable by the law while 17% said it should not be treated as a crime. Those who preferred it being treated as a crime said so because it causes trauma and it is illegal. Those who felt that it should not be treated as a crime said so because they believed that it would lead to separation. When asked about the effects of domestic violence, the women admitted that those who are negatively affected are mostly children.

Eight –two per cent of the women interviewed said that they did not know of any organisations that offer women protection from domestic violence and only 18% knew one organisation - FIDA. All the women said that there were no organisations in Korogocho offering battered women protection. Forty–nine per cent of the women expressed willingness to seek help from such organisations if they were available in Korogocho. They said they would do so because they had heard that such organisations give assistance and also educate and offer counselling to victims of domestic violence.

The most common form of abuse encountered by these women was mostly physical with 62 reporting to have been physically assaulted. Other forms of abuse were emotional (11%), psychological (4%) while 3% admitted to have been sexually assaulted. Of these, 32% did nothing to stop the violence, 17% ran away from their partners, 2% got divorced, 6% reported their partners to their relatives, 16% opted to talk to them, 2% reported to the Imam, 3% reported to the police and 2% reported to their pastors.

**Table: 4.12: Respondents' actions to stop the violence**

<b>Respondents' Actions</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Nothing	32	40 %
Run away	17	21 %
Divorced him	2	2 %
Reported him to his relatives	6	7 %
Talked to him	16	20 %
Reported him to Imam	2	2 %
Reported him to police	3	3 %
Reported him to the pastor	2	2 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100 %</b>

The consequences of the above actions showed that 3 women had their partners jailed, one said that the battering stopped, 7 said that their partners were slowly changing and that they were not being battered everyday while 50 reported no change in their relationships (Table 4:13).

**Table: 4.13: Results of the respondents' actions**

<b>Results</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No change	50	62 %
I am not being battered	19	23 %
He is changing slowly	7	8 %
Stopped battering me	1	1.3 %
He was jailed	3	3.8 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>

When asked about some of the constraints they faced in trying to stop the violence, 50 of the women said that they were economically dependent on their partners and that they had no money of their own to depend on. Another 4 reported of stigmatisation (being laughed at), while 13 talked of men feeling that they are above women, 20 blamed alcohol since their partners are addicted to it, and 7 blamed cultural practices and beliefs. This is shown in the Table 4:14 below.

**Table: 4.14: Constraints faced by respondents in stopping domestic violence**

Constraints	Frequency	Percentage
Stigmatisation/people laugh at battered women	4	5 %
Lack of money/economic dependency on him	50	62 %
Men feeling that they are above women	13	16.3 %
He is addicted to alcohol	2	2.5 %
Cultural practices	4	5 %
No response	7	8.8 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100 %</b>

All the women interviewed would advocate for a society that is free of domestic violence. More than half (58) of the women said that the Government's response/effort in stopping domestic violence against women was bad, 20 felt that it was fair while one did not know whether it was good or bad. Most of the women (66) said that women's knowledge of domestic violence as a crime was very low, 3 felt it was moderate, 2 felt it was high while 9 felt that women had no knowledge at all that domestic violence is a crime. Table 4:15 summarises these responses.

**Table: 4.15: Respondents' evaluation of Government's efforts to stop domestic violence**

Evaluation	Frequency	Percentage
Good	1	1.3 %
Bad	58	72.5 %
Fair	20	25 %
Don't know	1	1.3 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Domestic violence was a common occurrence in Korogocho with 64% of the women reporting that they knew other women who are victims of the vice. When asked if the women provoked their own battering; 56% felt that women do not provoke their own battering, 20% felt that sometimes women provoke their own battering while 4% said that women are to blame.

On actions to be taken by battered women, 45% felt that battered women should seek help from their relatives, clergy or a shelter home, 15% advocated getting a lawyer or legal aid, 13% felt that women should preserve their relationships with their partners at all costs while 7% said that victims of domestic violence should call the police any time they were battered. Table 4:16 below illustrates this.



**Table: 4.16: Opinions of what battered women should do**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Call the Police	7	8.8 %
Preserve the relationship at all costs	13	16.3 %
Get a lawyer/legal aid	15	18.8 %
Seek help from relatives/clergy/shelter home	45	56.3 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100 %</b>

When asked about their opinion on what should be done to abusers, 51% said that batterers should be referred for counselling, 22% said that the batterers should be legally restrained or jailed while 7% advocated for batterers to be legally prevented from coming home. Their responses are captured in Table 4:17 below.

**Table 4.17: what should be done to a batterer?**

<b>What should be done</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Legally restrained/jailed	22	27.5 %
Legally prevented from coming home	7	8.8 %
Referred for counselling	51	63.8 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100 %</b>

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

From the foregoing research findings, it is evidently clear that most married women in Korogocho live in abusive relationships. The women are caught up in a web of factors, which impede their escape. These include poverty, illiteracy, cultural practices and beliefs and lack of supportive social systems. All these limit their options for escape from domestic violence and forces them to accept the violence as a norm. Support mechanisms that can be employed to help battered women are rare, expensive and almost unknown to the women in Korogocho. Such mechanisms would include shelter homes, legal advice / actions and condemnation of violence against women by the community and the state.

### **5.2 Cultural beliefs and practices**

The case studies indicated that stigmatisation is one of the reasons that force them to tolerate domestic violence. Fear of being laughed at by the society, being seen as a failure and being blamed for making private matters public restrict their actions. Societal demands of being a proper wife restrict women's reactions to domestic violence and severely limit their options. By doing nothing to criminalize domestic violence against women, the state and the community help to perpetuate domestic violence and further limit women's actions in response to the violence. Cultural beliefs and practices can be said to be the most limiting factors to women's escape from domestic violence. Although 33 of the women interviewed admitted having contemplated divorce to escape from the continued stress of domestic violence, fear of blame by the society held them back. Out of the total number interviewed (100), fifty four (54) of the women said they had no intentions of leaving their husbands irrespective of the suffering they were undergoing in their

own homes because they had no where else to go and because they depended on their husbands for survival.

### **5.3 Social systems**

Data collected from case studies and key informants showed that there is no significant social-institutional support for victims of domestic violence within Korogocho slum. Ninety-six per cent (96%) of the women in the case studies reported having no knowledge of any organisations within the study area that assists victims of domestic violence. Only one woman mentioned FIDA, which helps battered women but is not located in Korogocho. She also reported of FIDA as being looked at in a negative way by community members since they believe it breaks people's families. Lack of such social institutions leaves women feeling helpless and confused.

### **5.4 Leaders' opinions**

Information gathered from opinion leaders showed that domestic violence was a common occurrence in Korogocho with more than ten cases reported to them in a month. These were church leaders, social workers, village elders, leaders of women groups and one health worker. All of them reported that they were aware of the existence of domestic violence against women in Korogocho. When asked how they felt about it, they said that they felt hurt, some advised the women to call the police, while others visited the families to understand the cause of the problem and tried to find a solution.

When asked about the mechanisms they use within their institutions to address the issue of domestic violence, the leaders gave the following answers: - some of them said that they just counsel the parties, others said they only listen to the parties while others try to empower the victims of domestic violence through advocacy campaigns.

When asked whether women were to blame for the violence meted on them in their own homes, some said yes while others answered no. They also said that men battered their wives because they (men) are unfaithful and unable to provide for their families. Men are frustrated and vent their anger on women. Most men are drunkards and do not listen to their wives. They also said that issues should be investigated properly before blaming any one and that men and women are equal and none is above the other. Those who said women are to blame for the violence meted on them said that women are battered because they do not want to submit to their husbands, that sometimes women are the trouble makers and that forced marriages to people they do not like causes domestic violence against the women. Most of the leaders said that domestic violence against women should be outlawed while some said it should not be outlawed because it helps men keep their authority in the home. Those who said that domestic violence should be outlawed felt that the issue should be treated like any other criminal offence with a jail term and that judgement should be based on the nature of the violence.

Those who advocated for domestic violence not to be treated as a criminal offence said that cases should be reported to the police and that couples should be helped to understand each other and be prayed for to get saved. When asked why they think women do not seek redress or use the available mechanisms against domestic violence, some of them said that women are not aware of the available options for them, others said that women feared retaliation from their husbands, while some said that women lacked resources to address the issue and cited cultural practices and fear of being stigmatised.

## **5.5 Discussion**

In conclusion, therefore, violence against women can be said to be widespread and systematic, pervading all societies and cultures. Gender inequality expressed in relations of power that systematically undermine, restrict and deny women's life choices and chances is maintained by

social and cultural institutions, beliefs and by fear. From the above analysis of domestic violence it is clear that domestic violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their Human Rights and fundamental freedoms. The long-standing failure to protect and promote those rights and freedoms in the case of domestic violence against women is therefore a matter of concern to all in society –nationally and globally- and should be addressed.

There are many factors which hinder women from seeking redress against domestic violence. Among them is poverty. Poverty determines women's options to resist violence. It causes the abuse women face, and limits the choices they can make around staying in violent relationships. The political and social dimensions of women's poverty constraints their ability to make independent decisions and control resources. This makes them face severe obstacles in challenging violence from a husband or other family members. Their economic dependency on men, and the cultural value attributed to women being "a proper wife" or "a good mother" and loyal to the family may lead women to decide the repercussions of contradicting these gender ideologies are worse than those of staying with violent husbands. (Pickup 2002:26)

Moreover, women living in poverty tend to have limited access to formal institutions that might offer assistance in resisting violence. They may be deterred from going to such institutions because of the costs associated with such action or the social disapproval for having made the violence public. This is exacerbated by the divisions in social policy that in most countries mean that women's issues such as violence are separated from policies on health, education and housing.

Women who live in poverty are therefore most exposed and least able to remove themselves from violent situations. Material needs make women vulnerable to violence. Furthermore, discriminatory institutions and beliefs hinder women's access to tangible and intangible resources

that allow them to challenge domestic violence. It is not only economic factors that hinder women from freeing themselves from violent situations and relations, but also the powerful norms sanctioned by the community and state institutions. All these factors shape women's control over their options through constraining their access to resources and their own actions and behaviour.

While power relations between men and women are unequal, they are not static or monolithic. They are constantly adapting and responding to social, economic and political factors. The fact that violence against women is a political issue means it is impossible to end it through development interventions that focus narrowly on economic needs. Women face a web of gender-specific social, political and ideological constraints that prevent them from achieving violence-free lives. Ending violence against women in their homes is in women's practical and strategic gender interests.

As already discussed in this paper, violence against women is a barrier to national development and to the development of social capital. It should therefore be a priority issue for the government to address. Domestic violence against women is widespread, systematic and prevalent in all societies and cultures.

Education and conscious rising only achieve their purpose when gender violence becomes an issue of vital importance to people's lives. Mobilisation can only take place when people are willing to act and people take action only when something is important to them. The educational process of making gender violence relevant to people essentially does three things:- It challenges people at the individual level to re-examine and change their own views and behaviours; it builds a larger pool of people seeking solutions; and it creates a base of political support that functions to create pressure for change at the structural level. Thus, the key to success in any strategy, both

short and long-term is making gender violence an issue of critical importance to everyone; women, men, the public, institutions and the state (Schuler, 1992:20).

Domestic violence is an outcome of unequal power relations between men and women. Men use violence to achieve and consolidate power over women. Men collectively benefit from women's fear of violence. The implicit aim is the perpetuation of women's subordination.

Women are acutely aware of the possibility that their challenges to men's domination of the household, community, market and state may lead to violent reprisals. They are also aware that challenging violence against women involves a fundamental questioning of the dynamics of power in their societies. Empowerment has to be generated by the women it is meant to serve. Women need to recognise and develop a sense of power within themselves to be able to challenge and free themselves from domestic violence. There is need therefore to challenge Human Rights laws from women's perspective.

According to a study done in Kibera slum by Ondicho (1993), domestic violence is a vice that takes the lead in all traditional African societies and cuts across every social strata. Ondicho's findings in Kibera on domestic violence can be compared to the findings in this research in that the most common abuse faced by women is physical assault, and women have very limited or no options to escape from domestic violence. The contributing factors are the same, and include poverty, illiteracy, lack of social support mechanisms and cultural factors.

The challenge to all in ending domestic violence against women is however complicated, difficult and entails tackling some of the most deeply entrenched beliefs in human society. It is a long-term project and requires commitment and dedication to continue even when results seem elusive and hard to demonstrate. Stakeholders advocating an end to domestic violence must keep faith with

the millions of women who are subjected to all kinds of torture in their own homes just because they were born female. It is clear from the complex and wide-ranging nature of the problem of domestic violence that no single organisation will be able to achieve significant results in reducing or eradicating domestic violence against women on its own. Broad alliances are needed in order to tackle the problem from all sides. These should include service providers, counsellors, health workers, professionals, lawyers, educationists, campaigners, NGOs, women's organisations and the media.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

Though GBV is a well known vice that pervades all social strata all over the world, most women suffer in silence. This is mainly due to cultural beliefs, poverty, lack of resources or weak and unsupportive community structures, discriminatory laws governing marriage and divorce, social stigma, their economic dependency on men as well as their ignorance of their rights. Due to their low levels of education, most women believe that their husbands have a right to beat them. They do not know that they have available options, which can save them from abusive relationships. However, options such as the community shelters or women's organisations or even the law demand a lot of courage for a woman to understand and to rescue from them. It demands a lot of courage and knowledge to venture into the public sphere with your private affairs. Due to cultural constraints, a majority of women decline to seek redress from the available options. Fear of repercussions as a result of seeking redress acts as a further deterrence for women. All the above render abused women helpless and force them to remain in abusive relationships.

Though there are options available to women experiencing GBV, these are few, and unknown to most women. For example family and community shelters offer only temporary remedies to women's suffering. They do not have long-term solutions to survivors of domestic violence. It is unfortunate that the police, who are the law enforcers in any country, do not take/see domestic



violence as an issue affecting the whole community, and hence tend to take a mediator's role rather than enforcing the law.

Gender based violence has serious health consequences which in most cases can lead to death. Being culturally disempowered, with low educational levels and having no independent income of their own, survivors of GBV face a very hopeless situation which forces them to remain in abusive relationships. The threat of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is real among women who live in abusive relationships.

Since society measures its norms according to men's norms, survivors of GBV are left with nobody to turn to once their social networks have been broken through violence. Their poverty levels become a vicious circle for them and their dependants, since they are not able to participate in the economic adventures with the rest of the community members. The fear inflicted on them leaves them inactive and dormant and unable to utilise their full potential. Due to the privacy accorded to domestic violence, survivors prefer to live a life of isolation from the rest of society to avoid stigmatisation. This response to GBV renders them more vulnerable. They are confronted by too much pressure, which forces them to keep quiet and to remain in abusive relationships. Many women continue to hope that a positive change will somehow take place in their relationships.

However, it is important for abused women to be aware of the existence of shelter homes where they can get temporary accommodation when the need arises. Here, a woman is able to recollect herself from the pain and trauma and to plan ahead. Community structures are a useful support to women faced with violence. Family members, friends, and /or neighbours can be of help in times of an attack. Since community structures are usually supportive and reassuring, survivors of GBV are bound to get relief and support before they become self-reliant. Information provided in these

structures helps abused women to open up and talk about their problems and therefore take GBV out of the privacy of the home to the public arena. This will help to deter batterers and would be barterers. Emotional and financial support offered by these community structures help survivors of GBV to recollect themselves quickly and to plan their live afresh. Because the law does not protect women who are faced with domestic violence, many victims shy away from taking their spouses to court, for fear of embarrassment and social stigmatisation.

Since it is therefore evident that many women are trapped in abusive relationships, and are not able to free themselves from the violence, it is the duty of everyone to advocate for a society that is free of GBV. The society has a responsibility in ending GBV. Leaders need to advocate for a society which is free of violence, instead of their being perpetrators. Community programmes should focus n everybody's needs including the needs of women suffering from GBV. Communities should partner with development agencies to advocate for a zero tolerance of GBV. Education and training on matters of GBV is very crucial to women so that they can know that violence is a crime like any other and is punishable by law. They also need to be aware of their rights, and their entitlements. The study therefore concludes that education, resources- financial or any other- are crucial elements in liberating women from abusive relationships. Besides, the society and the state have to step up and put up remedial measures to address the issue of GBV. Without their intervention, GBV will continue to have its toll on women.

## **5.7 Recommendations**

Since GBV is an abuse of human rights and is universally believed to have political weight, the following points need to be considered when putting up interventions to help survivors of gender-based violence.

- Development interventions should be designed in partnership with the women they are intended to benefit.

- The community should play a vital role in challenging male violence.
- Members of the community should give paramount importance to the safety of survivors of violence.
- There is need for awareness creation to the public about GBV.
- The legal system needs to be reformed to be sensitive to women's plight as far as GBV is concerned.
- Strategies should be developed by both the government, NGOs and women's organisations to offer training and support to state officials to build awareness and change attitudes on GBV.
- Specific women's police stations staffed with multi-disciplinary female teams should be set up and equipped to ensure that the needs of survivors are met.
- The state should train community para-legal workers to help in handling survivors of GBV.
- The media should be encouraged to develop balanced and non-stereotyped portrayals of women.
- Popular education should be used to challenge assumptions about GBV.

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### Appendix 1: Structured Questionnaire

#### Introduction.

Rebecca M. Mutuku from the University of Nairobi is conducting this research as part of her M.A. studies in gender and development. The data collected will help bring to the limelight the problem of domestic violence against women in Kenya. It is my sincere hope that the shared information will help women to realize that they have ways of escaping from the violence meted on them within their homes. This questionnaire was written specifically for women who have been physically abused by their husbands/lovers/fathers/ brothers/uncles. I therefore request to be allowed to proceed with administering the questionnaire to the respondents.

#### Please circle/indicate/fill in the appropriate answer:

##### A. PERSONAL DATA:

1. Age .....
2. Ethnic group: - a) Gikuyu b) Luo c) Kamba d) Other (please specify) .....
3. Marital status: - a). Single b) Married c) Divorced d) Separated
4. Total Number of children.....
5. How many boys.....
6. How many girls .....
7. What is your highest level of education? a) Primary b). Secondary c) College d) University
8. What is your occupation? -----
9. How much do you earn per mnth?
 

a) Kshs 500-1000	b). Kshs. 1001- 2000	c). Kshs. 2001-3000
d. Kshs 3001-4000	e. Kshs 4001-5000	f.) Above Kshs 5000
10. Do you operate a bank account? a) Yes b) No.
11. Who decides how the money will be used? .....

12. Do you work outside your home? a) Yes b) No

**B: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE QUESTIONS**

13. Have you ever been physically battered by your

- a. Husband? i) Yes ii) No
- b. Boyfriend? i) Yes ii) No
- c. Lover? i) Yes ii) No
- d. Father? i) Yes ii) No
- e. Uncle? i) Yes ii) No

14. What reasons did he/they have for battering you?  
-----

15. Have you ever received any physical injuries from the physical assault? a) Yes b) No

16. If yes, which ones? a) Bruises b) Broken bones c) Swellings

17. What did you do after the assault/ attack?.....

18. Did you report the attack to the police? a) Yes b) No

19. What was their response? -----

20. What did the police do? a) Came b) Recorded the crime c) Refused to record  
d) Arrested him e) Other (Please specify) .....

21. Did you seek help from your family/friends/relatives? a) Yes b) No

22. If yes, from whom did you seek help?

- a) Family b) Friends c) Relatives d) Other (Please specify) .....

23. Did you share your suffering with anybody else? a) Yes b) No

24. If yes with whom? a) Pastor b) Friends c) Family members

- d) Others (Please specify) .....

25. What help did you get from the person you shared with? -----

26. Have you ever seen a counsellor after an attack? a) Yes b) No

27. If yes, did the counselling help you at all? a) Yes b) No

28. If yes, how did it help you? -----

29. How long have you lived with your husband?

- a) 0-1 year b) 2-3 years c) 4-6 years d) 7 years and above

30. Have you ever left him? a) Yes b) No
31. If yes, for how long were you separated?  
 a) 0-1 year b) 2-3 years c) 4-6 years d) 7 years and above
32. Have you ever contemplated leaving/divorcing your husband? a) Yes b) No
33. Have you ever thought of instituting a legal divorce against your husband? a) Yes b) No
34. Do you think legal divorce will help your situation? a) Yes b) No
35. If yes, how? a). Justice will be done b). It will scare partner from battering spouse  
 c) It has the best result d) Other (Please specify) .....
36. If no, why?  
 a) I fear people knowing my problem b) I don't have money  
 c) Cultural practices and beliefs d) Other (Please specify) .....
37. What do you think battered women should do to escape (prevent) domestic violence?  
 .....
38. Why do you think battered women keep quiet or continue to stay with their abusive husbands?-----
39. Do you think your husband has a right to beat you? a) Yes b) No
40. Do you think domestic violence should be treated like any other crime a) Yes b) No
41. If yes, why? -----
42. If no, why? -----
43. Do you think domestic violence affects anybody else apart from yourself? a) Yes b) No.
44. If yes, who? -----
45. Do you know of any organizations that offer women protection from domestic violence?  
 a) Yes b) No
46. If yes, which ones do you know?  
 .....
47. Are there such organizations within Korogocho? a) Yes b) No

48. Would you be willing to seek for help from such organizations?    a) Yes                      b) No

49. If yes, why? .....

50. If no, why? -----

**APPENDIX 2: CASE STUDIES**

Please give as much detail as you can

1. For how long have you lived in an abusive marriage?.....
2. What is the most common form of abuse that you encounter in your relationship?
3. What have you done to stop the abuse?  
.....
4. Have your actions yielded any results? Explain your answer.
5. What are some of the constraints you face in trying to stop the violence meted on you?  
.....
6. Would you advocate for a society that is free of domestic violence? Explain your answer.  
.....
7. How do you evaluate the government’s efforts in stopping domestic violence against women?
8. How do you rate women’s knowledge of domestic violence as a crime?
9. Do you think women provoke their own battering?
10. What action should battered women should take?
11. In your opinion, what should be done to a batterer?-----

### APPENDIX 3: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Please circle/indicate/fill in the appropriate answer.

#### A. Personal information.

1. Name.....
2. Age.....
3. Name of your Church/Women group/Village/Organization.....
4. Are you aware that domestic violence is a problem within Korogocho?
5. What is normally your response whenever a case of domestic violence is reported to you?  
.....  
.....
6. On average, how many cases are reported to you within a month as a leader?  
.....
7. What mechanisms do you have within your institution to address the issue of domestic violence?  
.....
8. Do you think women are to blame for the violence they get in their homes?  
.....
9. Do you think domestic violence should be outlawed in Kenya?  
If yes, what punishment would you recommend to be meted on offenders?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
If No, what recommendations would you give to battered women?.....
10. Why do you think, from your experience, women do not seek redress or use the mechanisms available against domestic violence?  
.....  
.....
11. What advice would you give to the state/couples/communities as far as the issue of domestic violence is concerned?.....  
.....