

**THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP IN COMBATING GENDER – BASED
VIOLENCE IN VHEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

By

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DECLARATION

I Mokgonyana K.V declare that **THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP IN COMBATING GENDER – BASED VIOLENCE IN VHEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

is my own work, which has never been submitted for any academic research or study in any institution of higher learning, and all the sources used or quoted in this research have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Mokgonyana, KV

Signature

19/09/2024

Date

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The strength, wisdom and will to complete this study is owed to God Almighty, through whom, all impossible things are possible. The assistance, support and guidance of my supervisor, Dr. E. Zwane, assisted me to complete this journey with ease. I am very much thankful for that.

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My sincere thanks to my proofreader, VT Bvuma, for editing my study.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who assisted me to complete this journey and all participants in the research. May God the Almighty bless them all and increase the number of their days in the land of the living.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my husband, Silas Makwena Mokgonyana, my family of eight children, whom I consider to be God's shooting arrows. Furthermore, I would like to dedicate this study to my late father, Moses Mokgodi Choshane, who would have been very proud to see me complete this study.

ABSTRACT

The study explores the role of Traditional Leaders in combating Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Vhembe District in Limpopo Province. The qualitative research approach was applied in this study to investigate how Traditional Leaders are fighting GBV in the areas where they have authority. A structured questionnaire was distributed to the targeted respondents, to get their knowledge and understanding regarding how traditional leaders are combating GBV in their communities. The sample size was 16 respondents. Data for this study were analysed through thematic analysis. The study found that traditional leaders have a significant influence on the community in encouraging them to fight the pandemic of GBV. The study also revealed that there is a weak working relationship between government departments and the House of Traditional Leaders in the fight against Gender – Based Violence. Moreover, Traditional Leaders are faced with challenges on the funding of programmes that are geared towards combating GBV in their communities.

Ten out of eleven traditional leaders had collaborative relations with Non-Profit Organisations that assist victims of GBV. The research also revealed that Traditional Leaders are not much involved in government processes for planning of programmes, budget allocation and projects implementation. Based on these research findings, the study proposed strategies aimed at harmonizing the relations between government and traditional leaders in the fight against GBV. The study further proposes joint planning of government, traditional leaders and other stakeholders in adopting strategies that will lead to increased and sustained efforts to fight GBV in communities and particularly in Vhembe District. Based on the study findings, it became evident that traditional leaders still possess sustained authority over their communities, and they are relevant in leading the fight against GBV, in collaboration with the government and other stakeholders.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This study examined the role of traditional leadership in combating gender-based violence in Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo Province. Traditional Leadership is and has always been the guardian of culture and customary practices. Importance is still placed on traditional authorities, that it is viewed as a historical artefact that holds culture and customary laws together to govern its own communities. Magaloni, Díaz-Cayeros and Ruiz-Euler (2019) put a persuasive argument that when the modern democratic government is unable to improve people's lives significantly due to bureaucratic governance systems to deliver services, societies often revisit the traditional leadership relic to provide alternative solutions and other effective forms of governance. This argument further plays the relevance and the importance of traditional leadership in the provision of solutions to societal ills and challenges such a Gender – Based Violence(GBV).

The development of customary and cultural laws to regulate the governing of the society is at the command of the traditional leaders. In fact, the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act 3 of 2019 unpacked clearly the roles and functions of the local traditional leadership, that it must guide the local government or the metropolitan municipality on matters applicable to customary law, customs, traditional leadership and the traditional communities within such a municipality.

Furthermore, the local traditional leadership is responsible for the establishment of by-laws that impact on communities. This implies that the existence of the traditional leadership in the establishment of customary laws and by – laws to regulate and guide the behaviour and conduct of the society is of pivotal importance. The traditional leadership is the custodian of customary laws and by – laws that can contribute significantly to address numerous social ills such as Gender – Based Violence (GBV).

The scourge of Gender Based Violence is the greatest hindrance of social cohesion, peace, stability, moral fibre and nation building. The Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act 3 of 2019, section 36 (1) states that significant powers of the National House of Traditional Leaders, amongst others, is to cooperate with the provincial houses to promote social cohesion, nation building, preservation of the moral fibre, culture and traditions of communities and most importantly social well-being and welfare of communities. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a type of violence against any gender, that disturbs peace, security, and cohesion in a society. Asante, Fenny, Dzudzor, Chadha, et al. (2019) expatiate that gender-based violence limit women's contribution as social actors in the society and affects social cohesion within the communities. The role of traditional authorities in curbing this form of violence is therefore of key importance.

Gender-based violence (GBV) perpetrated on women is extensively recognized as a critical public health problem and an infringement of human rights (Sabri, Sellke, Smudde, Bourey, et al., 2023). Globally, the occurrence of violence perpetrated on women estimates that roughly one (01) in three(03) women reported to having experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner during their lifetime, a data that has remained unchanged over the past decade(World Health Organisation report on Violence Against Women Inter-Agency Working Group on Estimation and Data ,2021).

The South African Police Service quarterly statistics recorded categories of gender-based violence in the third quarter of 2023 where 1 356 cases that include sexual offences, rape, attempted sexual offence and contact sexual offence were reported (2023/24 SAPS Third Quarter Crime Statistics,2023) . Govender (2023) states that Gender – Based Violence in South Africa is deeply entrenched in families, workplaces, and in cultures and traditions. This therefore leads to the consideration of the significant role of traditional leadership in curbing and preventing gender-based violence in the society from the root of culture and tradition.

Limpopo Province is almost entirely rural; as such it is not exempt from the rising scourge of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). There are two-hundred and one (201)

registered traditional leaders in the province who govern over 80% of the population in Limpopo (CoGHSTA Annual Performance Plan, 2022-2023). This implies that most of the communities in Limpopo are under the rulership of traditional authorities where customary law and cultural practice are used to drive and regulate the affairs of the society. The argument is therefore ensuing that, if the customary law and culture are assisting to build the moral fibre of the society, then gender-based violence was not supposed to be prevalent in Limpopo Province, particularly Vhembe District, which is deeply rooted in culture and traditional customs.

Vhembe is a district in Limpopo where it is predominantly occupied by the Venda speaking people called Vhavenda. Matshidze, (2013) gives an important connotation about the significance of a place of a woman in the Venda culture and the respect given unto her. The “makhadzi” is defined as a father’s senior sister in traditional leadership among the Venda speaking people (Matshidze,2013). He further states that in accordance with the Venda culture the makhadzi plays an important part in the institution of traditional leadership and takes critical decisions in the family and in communities as the traditional ceremonial leader. It is evident that the culture of Vhavenda speaking people has high respect and consideration of the role of the woman in the family and in traditional governance structures.

This further supports by Takawira-Matwaya(2024)that makhadzis(women) are esteemed highly among the Venda people as guardians of religious, cultural and traditional knowledge and as a significant resource to the family and community. Given the analysis above, there should not be any occurrences of gender-based violence against women in Vhembe District given the traditional and cultural customs of a respect for women. This study therefore questions the role that traditional leadership plays in instilling these virtues in the society.

The South African Police Services released the 2021 first quarter GBV statistics, which has revealed an increase in violence, notably sexual assault, rape, sexual offences, and murder against the vulnerable population of the society, who often are women and

children. The statistics also revealed that the province had a 97.6% increase in sexual offences and a total of 1 075 sexual assaults. Furthermore, there were 899 rape cases (representing a 98% rise), 102 sexual attack cases which is 88.9%, sixty attempted sexual offences that accumulated 106.9% and fourteen cases of contact sexual offences (2021/22 SAPS First Quarter Crime Statistics). In Vhembe District Municipality, the total number of sexual offences in Thohoyandou Police Station, was seventy – two (72) cases, reported in the second quarter of 2022/2023 (2022/23 SAPS Second Quarter Crime Statistics). Thohoyandou Police Station also ranks in the top five (5) in the Top thirty police stations in the country that have reported sexual offences (2022/23 SAPS Second Quarter Crime statistics). As Limpopo is 80% rural, it is genuinely concerning that Gender – Based Violence takes place even in communities where traditional laws and customs are respected and observed.

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Bonilla-Algovia, Rivas-Rivero, & Vazquez (2020) reported that GBV is on the rise in South Africa such that crime statistics of the second – quarter of 2023/2024, the country registered a total of 14 401 assaults, 10 516 cases of rapes and 1 514 cases of attempted murder against women. Furthermore, Gould (2016) stated that a total of 827 children were horrifically killed in South Africa in 2012/13. In the same year, 2,266 were raped and 141,130 were victims of attempted murder, assault with Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH) and common assault.

Moreover, violence against the most vulnerable members of the society, which are women and girls, threatens the peace and stability of the country and negatively affects the “Social Cohesion and Safer Communities” goal, which is a priority of the South African Government sixth administration. Gender Based Violence is defined as any form of violence perpetrated against a person due to their biological sex, gender identity or expression, or their adherence to socially defined expectations of what it means to be man or woman, boy or girl Bloom (2008) describes GBV as violence that takes place as a result of the inherent role expectations associated with each gender, taking into

consideration the unequal power between the two male and female in a specific society. Due to the rampant escalation of statistics of gender-based violence, the President of South Africa, Mr. Ramaphosa, signed the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence, which its primary purpose is to address the horrendous prevalence of violence against women in the country. The plan broadly describes GBV as physical, verbal, psychological and sexual abuse meted out against any member of society in a private home or public space, which might lead to denial of peace, security, human rights, economic opportunities, and social spaces in the country.

In the present study, focus is on violence against females and children who are the vulnerable members of the societies, and those mostly affected by gender inequality. Gender inequality is most evident in the traditional set-up of a community where Traditional Leadership is in governance. Goddess Bvukutwa(2014), a Zimbabwean Gender Equality Activist, states that it has always been a societal norm that women and girls are faced with discrimination from the home set-up, where a male child was considered better than the mother and other female siblings and counterparts. In Nigeria, the Yoruba people regard their preference of the male child has as an approved and justifiable cultural phenomenon, as male children are seen as future heirs who will ensure continuity of the family name (Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020).

Brosi, Rolling, Gaffney & Kitch, (2020), concur and add that women are said to have the status of minors, to be unable to own property, including land on their own and are further excluded from inheritance of property. Given all the discriminatory actions against women and girls, the violent actions that men perpetrate against the female gender are easy to understand, as men are regarded as having physical, emotional, economic, and sexual superiority over women.

Doss and Meinzen-Dick (2020) also emphasise that women's land rights are gradually seen as significant, for reasons of gender equity and promotion of economic growth and development of women for purposes of reduction of poverty. Women who are economically empowered , tend to rely very less on men, and therefore there is a very

rare opportunity of the door on gender – based violence to open in the women’s life. It is therefore that in this case, the Traditional Authority , being the custodian of customary law and cultural practices, can be in a position of influencing the laws to ensure that women in the society are also regarded as key role players in the socio – economic status of the communities by possession economic power such as property ownership.

This study therefore investigated the pivotal role played by traditional leaders in eliminating Gender-Based Violence in society, where the institution oversees customary and cultural laws. GBV is increasing at an alarming rate in Vhembe District, in Limpopo Province, and has an immense potential of threatening peace, stability, the livelihood of its people, economic growth, and basic human rights. The visibility of the role played by traditional leadership to combat this pandemic is questioned as the institution is the custodian of customary and cultural laws that shape the moral fibre of society.

1.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The challenges faced by traditional authorities in rooting out GBV in communities they are leading worsens the problem. According to Creswell (2013) in the Research and Evaluator Manager at KwaZulu-Natal Department of Social Development, shows that about 80% of female living in the rural areas of South Africa were in abusive relationships. Dlamini also led a discussion, hosted by the KZNCGTAD (KwaZulu Natal Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Department), on the importance of preventing Gender-Based Violence(GBV) by traditional authorities. Most victims of GBV are those who reside in rural areas governed by traditional authorities.

Despite legislative and policy measures introduced by government, violence against women and children remains a serious challenge in South Africa (Balogun, Owoaje, & Fawole, 2012). Studies indicate that females and girl child continue to be more vulnerable in democratic South Africa (Abdullahi, Cusairi, & Abdullah, 2017). Furthermore, Beyene, Chojenta, Reba, Melka & Loxton (2019) mention that almost half of South African women have experience violence that either perpetrated by their

partners or relatives. It is further mentioned that across the globe three-quarters men have committed violence against women (Beyene, Chojenta, Reba, Melka & Loxton, 2019). Gender based violence affects all societies including Vhembe District in Limpopo Province.

This study focused also on the high level of violence against women and children in the democratic South Africa where governance structures of traditional authorities are empowered by the legislation to govern their communities. It is of high concern that Boohoo(2015) reported that , globally, women are being murdered either by current or ex-intimate male partner, with a proportion of 8.8 per 100 000 females (Boohoo, 2015) In South Africa, most of domestic violence cases have been reported at Vhembe District in Limpopo Province. For instance, the district alone had 2 553 GBV cases in the first quarter of 2012 according to Limpopo Provincial Department of Social Development (2012). In 2021, Real Men Foundation, based at Vhembe District in Limpopo, reported the prevalence of GBV in the district. Thohoyandou has also been confirmed as a hot spot for contact crimes (Alexander & Associates. 2021).

The South African Police Service Annual Crime statistic released from April 2020 to March 2023, listed Thohoyandou , a police station in Vhembe District as third (03) in the Top 30 list of police stations in the country with a high number of sexual offences cases (SAPS Annual Crime statistics, 2023). Thohoyandou Police station registered a total number of 277 sexual offence cases in 2014 which increased to 301 in 2023, which translates into an increase of 7,9%. The graphical illustration below depicts the increase in sexual offences recorded in Thohoyandou Police Station since 2014 :

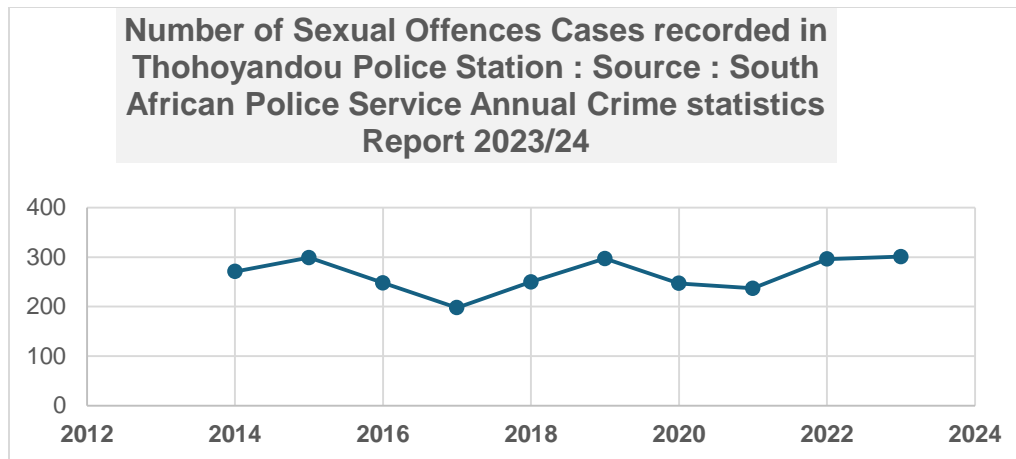


Figure 1.1 Source : SAPS Annual Crime Statistics : <https://www.saps.gov.za/services>

In the graphical illustration above, it is very clear that the cases of GBV in Thohoyandou Police Station have been increasing over the years such that the station comes third after Inanda in Kwa- Zulu Natal which recorded 366 cases and Lusikisiki in Eastern Cape which recorded 320. The increase in GBV cases in Vhembe District propelled Justice Minister Lamola to open a sexual offences court in Sibasa, outside Thohoyandou (Anon, 2018). Alexander & Associates (2021) Vhembe districts courts are also finding it difficult to deal with the high rate of GVB cases. They further stated that the district alone is able to register about 13 000 cases of gender-based violence. These cases range from sexual assault, domestic violence among partners, murder case as well as physical attack.

Gender activist, Rinae Sengani, believes that the GBV court recently opened in Vhembe will help the National Prosecuting Authority and government to prioritise sexual cases (Beyene, Chojenta, Reba, Melka & Loxton, 2019). According to Abdullahi, Cusairi & Abdullah (2017) one of the gender activist blamed government for failing dismally to protect those who are bisexual or not identified as straight. Moreover, the voice of the victims on the understanding of GBV is an important topic that can help raise awareness, empathy, and action against this problem.

Beyene, Chojenta, Reba, Melka & Loxton (2019) state that traditional authorities are not doing much to fight Gender-Based Violence or leading campaigns that are geared towards combating the horrific pandemic that affects the most vulnerable citizens of

society, namely, women and children. However, (Boohoo, 2015) argues that although traditional leaders are much knowledgeable about SGBV and HIV, they do not have the resources to combat this pandemic. The Population Council and Ubuntu Institute found that traditional leaders believe that GBV against women and children is un-African, and any person conducting such act must be punished (Anon. 2018).

The Annual Report of 2020/21 by Co-operative Governance, Housing and Traditional Affairs Department in Limpopo, provides an account for the number of GBV campaigns. It shows that only three of them were implemented against four planned campaigns (CoGTA.gov.za, 2020). The implemented campaigns were congested in one quarter of the year, whereas they had planned for them to be spread throughout all the quarters of the year. The above evidence show that 201 traditional authorities are unable to lead with confidence in preventing GBV in their communities.

The four planned targets of GBV campaigns supports the enthusiasm of the traditional authorities to fight GBV however is unsatisfactory. This poor commitment of traditional authorities in the fight against Gender Based Violence has its roots from patriarchy, with a longheld belief system that promotes the dominance and supremacy of men. The non-implementation of traditional laws, customs and values by traditional leadership institution to change the behaviour of society against the ill-treatment, abuse of women and children is disheartening.

Gender Based Violence in areas that are under the traditional governance should not be occurring at all if traditional laws and customs that are geared towards promotion of peace, security and social cohesion were being enforced by traditional leaders. This topic of interest emanates from gender-based violence cases that are reported to the South African Police Services (SAPS) at Sibasa Police Station in Vhembe District. The reporting of a high number of cases shows an extraordinary level of violence against women around the area and the failure of traditional leaders in combating Gender – Based Violence (GBV).

1.3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Aim of the Study

This study aims to investigate the role of Traditional Leadership in combating gender – based violence in Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo Province.

1.3.2. Objectives of the study

- To investigate the role of Traditional Leadership in combating Gender-Based Violence in Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo Province.
- To explore the challenges faced by Traditional Leaders in combating Gender – Based Violence.
- To recommend necessary strategies to promote the role of Traditional Leadership and Governance in the prevention of Gender-Based Violence

1.4. THE SCOPE OF STUDY

Dominance of traditional leaders at rural areas connects one-third of the South African population. This study is focused on the role of traditional governance in combating gender – based violence. The geographical scope of this study is Vhembe District in Limpopo Province. Theoretically, the role of traditional leaders in combating gender – based violence against women and children will be covered in the study.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This proposed research investigates the role of traditional leaders in combating gender – based violence amongst women and children in Limpopo province. It also provides a better understanding of the crucial role played by traditional authorities in influencing or

fighting this pandemic (Gender Based Violence) through traditional customs, by – laws and cultural practices, particularly among females in rural areas. The study will assist the traditional leaders as custodians of customary law, by – laws and traditional practices to use them in changing and shaping the behaviour of the society and most importantly in instilling law and order in communities.

The study will also assist policy makers to improve existing policies that seek to address and combat gender – based violence in South Africa. Additionally, provinces, municipal structures, SAPS ,nongovernmental organisations and community policing forums will be assisted on how to deal with gender-based violence especially against women and children. Furthermore, the study aims to produce new insights on violence against women in the area of study. It intends to inform violence prevention initiatives, explore community narratives about their exposure to violence against women to gain insight into the understanding of the causes and effects of violence in their communities. Finally, the study seeks to add to the existing body of knowledge on the role played by traditional leaders in combating the GBV in communities.

1.6 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Terminology and Key Concepts

In the context of this study, it is imperative to explain certain basic and fundamental terms, so that whoever reads this research may understand it. The following key words are used throughout this study: traditional leadership, gender – based violence, customs, patriarchy, customary law and traditional leadership and governance. The basic terms used in this study require clarification, to facilitate a better understanding of the research and the background to this investigation.

Traditional leadership: Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act 3 of 2019 defines Traditional Leadership as the customary establishments that practiced by traditional communities. The Act singles out a traditional leader as any person who, in terms of

customary law of the traditional community concerned, holds a traditional leadership position. The Law Insider dictionary provides a simple definition of traditional leadership, by stating that it is the institution or structure established in terms of customary law or customs, or customary systems or procedures of governance, recognises, utilized, or practiced by traditional communities.

Denzin & Lincoln, (2011) define traditional leadership as the leadership exercised by traditional leaders, such as Kings, Queens, Chiefs and Headmen (Ersoy & Yildiz, 2011). The White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance (Field, Onah, Van Heyningen, & Honikman, 2018) emphasizes that traditional leadership is a creature of custom and conducts customary functions. This implies that customary laws, functions, and traditions reside with traditional leaders.

Gender – Based Violence (GBV): refers to a form of violence targeting a person based on the gender of an individual including combinations of sexual, physical, and emotional violence (Mittal & Singh,2020).

Muluneh, Stulz, Francis et.al (2020) also defines gender-based violence as an act that results in physical, sexual, or mental injury or grief to women, including threats of such acts, pressure or deprivation of liberty, whether taking place in public or in private life

Customs: Grove, Moodley, McNaughton-Reyes, Martin, Foshee, & Maman, (2015) defines custom as a traditional way of behaving and of doing something that is specific to a particular community, place, or time; it is things done habitually.

Patriarchy: patriarchy is a social supremacy that empowers man than women in societies especially in rural communities. Additionally, patriarchy is a social system in which women are been exploited and oppressed (Heron, Eisma & Browne, 2022).

Customary law: The traditional leadership is the custodian of customary law as it dates back to the origin of traditional authority. The laws are used to govern the community. Heydarikhayat, Ghanbarzahi, Shahkaramzahi, Sabagh, & Rohani (2022) describe

customary law as system that existed during the time of immemorial and that manifests from day-to-day cultural activities (Kimuna, Tenkorang, & Djamba, 2018).

Traditional leadership and Authority: the existence of traditional governance in rural populations by a traditional authority's institution is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and confirmed by the Traditional And Khoi-San Leadership Act 3 of 2019.

1.7. OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The research encompasses five chapters, explicitly orientation to the study, literature review (Patriarchy as an enabler of Gender-Based Violence, the Traditional authorities and Patriarchy, and the relevance of Traditional Leaders and Governance in Gender – Based Violence), methodology, findings and discussions, conclusion, and recommendations.

The first chapter provided an outline of the introductory section of this dissertation. It outlines aim, objectives of the study, background, and scope to the study. It also serves as the introductory part for all chapters in the dissertation. The next chapter deals with the literature review and theoretical framework.

Chapter Two reviews existing literature on the role of traditional leadership and the challenges faced by them in combating Gender – Based Violence. It also considers other studies conducted on these variables. In addition, the chapter reviews how traditional leaders can play their part in eradicating the pandemic of GBV and further outlines the theoretical framework that frames the study. The theoretical framework for this research is based on the Marxist Feminist Theory and Radical Feminist Theory, that drives the study to research holistically on the relationship between culture , patriarchy

and Gender – Based Violence. The theories given present an interesting linkage of the concepts that lead to the elevation of traditional leadership governance as a central place in combating GBV.

This Chapter Three describes the research process. The chapter offers a detailed account of how the research was conducted. It provides some understandings into the research approach, research design, sampling method, data collection techniques and data analysis techniques used in the study. It also details the data collection methods used.

This Chapter Four analysis data, interpretation data, and discuss findings of the study. The results generated from the research interviews are presented and interpreted in this chapter.

This Chapter Five contains the conclusion of the research. The chapter concludes the study, by restating the research objectives and providing the outcomes of the data analysis process. This is done in terms of analysing how traditional leaders can eradicate gender-based violence. Finally, the chapter provides the recommendations of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter review existing literature on traditional leadership in combating GBV and provide theoretical basis for the research. Topics that are covered in the literature review include an overview of traditional leadership, patriarchy as an enabler of GBV, the traditional headship and patriarchy and relevance of traditional authorities and domination in Gender – Based Violence. Although there have been a few studies that have examined the link between traditional leadership and gender-based violence, none has focused specifically on role of traditional leaders in combating gender-based violence.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP

As in accordance with the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act 3 of 2019 , traditional authority body is one of the oldest organisations in South Africa and is also recognised by the South African constitution. Additionally, position of traditional leadership is determined by customary law and is much inherited. Traditional houses are influential in rural societies in southern Africa and play a key role in advocating and driving social mobilisation initiatives that address HIV and AIDS, mental health, and gender-based violence (Mboh, 2021).

The South African Government has established National House of Traditional Leadership through Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act no. 3 of 2019. The National House consists of senior traditional leaders elected by each provincial house in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The institution is recognized in South Africa and their role is crucial in addressing social ills in societies including gender-based violence. The Act provides that the role of the National House of Traditional Leaders is

to cooperate with the Provincial Houses in bringing peace, stability and social cohesion in communities and furthermore in promoting equality and advancing gender representation.

It is therefore argued that the traditional leaders, through the organised institution of the National House that have responsibilities that are provided in the Act, the leaders have power to influence, make decisions and lead their communities to a more progressive, peaceful and cohesive society that is free from gender – based violence. The fact that communities in Limpopo, in particular Vhembe District are still experiencing cases of gender-based violence, is clear evidence that the role of the traditional leaders is still very minimal in changing the societal behaviour.

To localise the formal structure of the traditional leadership, and to bring decision – making power closer to communities, the Traditional and Khoisan Leadership Act, sections 36, 49 and 50, give provision of the establishment of the National House, Provincial House and Local House of Traditional Leaders. All houses are responsible to oversee nation building, allow peace and cohesiveness in communities and also advise the national, provincial and local government on matters in relation to custom, culture and traditional practices. Both the Provincial and Local Houses of Traditional Leaders are established to advise the local and district municipalities on matters pertaining to customary law within the municipal area (Tlou.,2020). This implies that the power of the traditional leaders does not only rest at the national level only, but it cascades down to the local level where decisions and influence on law can be made. Therefore, the role of traditional leaders in combating gender-based violence cannot be underrated as the local chiefs or kings are closest to their communities.

2.3. THE CONCEPT, GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

This section presents a context within which GBV is understood in the country. The three forms of GBV identified are sexual assault, sexual violence, and domestic violence. GBV can be understood through following approaches of feminist and socio-political approach, Systems Theory, psychoanalytic approach, Sociological Theory,

Social Learning Approach, and Biological and Psychobiological approach (Legg & Pietrangelo, 2018). Li, Carracher & Bird, (2020) suggests that GBV is happening because of the interaction of personal, relationship, communal and societal factors. Moreover, (Lutgendorf, 2019) mention that GBV is a term that refers to the interpersonal conflict that occurs when power imbalances exist among males and female. In the above definition both the men and women may be victims of GBV. However, based on statistics, females and girl child are the main victims of GBV (Martins-Monteverde, Baes, Reisdorfer, Padovan, Tofoli & Juruena, 2019). Furthermore, GBV takes different forms, such as sexual violence, sexual assault, and Sexual violence, domestic violence. Below are the definitions of these forms of GBV.

Moono, Thankian, Menon, Mwaba & Menon, (2020) mention that Sexual violence is any sexual act; effort to obtain a sexual act, or act directed against a person's sexuality using pressure, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim. It takes the form of intimate assault, forced prostitution, exploitation, and human trafficking (Mittal & Singh, 2020). South African Criminal Law on Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act, 2007 provides a broad and detailed definition of sexual assault to include all non-sexual activity from massaging to diffusion and compliant includes efforts at penetration by the genital organs of one person or any object into the anus, mouth, or genital organs of another person.

Domestic violence referred to as Intimate IPV, is defined as physical attack, sexual, emotional, verbal, and emotional abuse. This includes bullying; provocation; aggravation; loss to property; entry into the plaintiff's residence without consent, or any other controlling or abusive behaviour towards the complainant; where such conduct harms, or may cause harm to the safety, health, or wellbeing of the complainant (DVA, 1998).

2.4. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

GBV continues to dominate the concerns because it is estimated that GBV still affects every aspect of the society and workplace around the world (Mshweshwe, 2020). According to Muche, Adekunle, & Arowojolu (2017) GBV, in its several practices, is

well-known in societies worldwide and it does not discriminate against class, race, age, religion, or nation. For instance, Muluneh, Stulz, Francis, & Agho (2020) projected that about 35% of female across the globe experience physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives.

In 2021, almost 1 in 3 women (30%) aged fifteen or older were fatalities of physical and sexual violence by a masculine intimate or non-intimate partner. According to (Abrahams, Mathews, Lombard, Martin, & Jewkes, 2017) GBV affects between 10% and 70% of women globally. Furthermore, GBV is globally acknowledged as the most common form of violence, with overwhelming consequences for victims and the entire society (Auteri, 2019). Consequences, GBV negatively impact both men and women psychologically (Bonilla-Algovia, Rivas-Rivero, & Vazquez, 2020). Notably, for men and women, unbalanced power relations account for its occurrence, worsening inequalities between genders and reinforcing patriarchy in communities.

2.5. AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The majority of African countries have similar trends on GBV issues. Moreover, there is acknowledgement that GBV situations might vary from country to country in Africa. For instance, in Zambia, a third of all female and young girls have experienced physical or emotional violence, of which 17% have experienced sexual violence (Bonilla-Algovia, Rivas-Rivero, & Vazquez, 2020). The above justifies the 2021 third quarter GBV statistics released by the Zambian police, that 16,301 women, representing almost 79.4%, and 4,239 males which account to 20.6%, were abused during the period under review nationally (Bradbury-Jones, & Isham, 2020). In Ethiopia, 76.5% of all the women were victims of violence in their lives. Meanwhile, 56.9% had been subjected to sexual and physical abuse (Brosi, Rolling, Gaffney & Kitch, 2020). Moreover, in Nigeria, there are also increased cases of GBV, about (33%) of women are beaten while pregnant. In most cases, the abuse relates to economic, sexual, physical and emotional abuse, mainly by intimate partners.

In Namibia, a study by WHO (World Health Organization) (Grove & Gray, 2018) showed that from 2018 about one-third of Namibian females (31%) were involved with an ex-intimate partner, experience either physical or sexual abuse caused by men. Meanwhile, a 2017 survey conducted by LAC (Legal Assistance Centre) on GBV in Namibia confirmed alarming statistics at least 1 in 7 female (14%) and 1 in 12 men (8%) experienced GBV. The survey further indicated that (36%) around one-third of female in Namibia had experienced physical violence attributed to their partners. These females ranged in age from 15-49 years (Grove, Moodley, McNaughton-Reyes, Martin, Foshee & Maman, 2015). When comparing the statistics from WHO (2016) and LAC (2017), there was an increase of approximately 5% in the number of women who experienced GBV.

The prevalence of GBV harms the lives of victims and their close family members. In addition, it erodes Namibia's human resources, which could contribute to the developmental projects of the country (Heron, Eisma & Browne, 2022). Despite the effects of GBV on the livelihoods, for instance, lack of self-esteem, and value that affects one's contribution to the community members in Outjo Kunene region and the role that traditional leaders can play, GBV still happens at an accelerated rate (Heydarikhayat, Ghanbarzehi, Shahkaramzehi, Sabagh, & Rohani, 2022). In terms of the cause of GBV, customary law, alcohol and drug abuse are cited as significant contributors to GBV in Namibia

Furthermore, in South Africa, crime statistics of first three months in 2022 show a terrible picture of violence against females and children especially a girl child. The statistics show that females remain vulnerable to GBV. According to statistics SA 13,799 sexual offences were reported to the South African Police Services (SAPS), of which 10,818 were cases of rape and sexual offence (Statistics SA, 2022). In most cases, the abuse of GBV relates to economic, sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, mainly by intimate partners. The cause is attributed to the high number of GBV cases associated to overdependence, marriages, customary practices and drug abuse and other substances (Kimuna, Tenkorang, & Djamba, 2018).

2.6. COMPARATIVES ANALYSIS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

GBV affects all countries globally; however, countries like Lebanon, Liberia, and Canada are less impacted. This is because they have programmes that empower women and invest in them (Legg & Pietrangelo, 2018). At the same time, countries like the United States of America (USA), Afghanistan, Somalia and Republic of South Africa are presumed to have experienced the worst GBV cases (Li, Carracher, & Bird, 2020). Globally, women are victims of GBV, while there are small prospects of men suffering from the GBV. GBV comes in various forms, ranging from domestic physical and emotional abuse, rape, female infanticide, forced trafficking, and sexual harassment (Lutgendorf, 2019). In addition to the above, in some African countries, GBV still manifests itself through child marriages and some of the cultural practices of male masculinity.

In African countries, both globally, continentally, regional, and nationally, GBV transcends its confinement to encroaches to workplaces, police holdings cells, prison facilities, public and private institutions, and various public spaces (Martins-Monteverde, Baes, Reisdorfer, Padovan, Tofoli, & Juruena, 2019). The effects of GBV seem to affect women more than men, as women are vulnerable members of society due to the stereotypes associated with masculinity. As GBV cuts across the globe, concerted efforts to address the problem are being made even more than ever before. This explains why investigating role of traditional leadership on GBV prevention was so essential. It is because traditional leaders are important custodians of community affairs practice, especially in South Africa (Moono, Thankian, Menon, Mwaba & Menon, 2020).

Countries such as Liberia have adopted the best practices that distinguish how to address the scourge of GBV. For instance, traditional and religious leaders have been undergoing training in addressing GBV. These are initiatives which are not employed by other countries, including South Africa (Mittal & Singh, 2020). In a country like El Salvador, child marriage was abolished because it promoted GBV, where the child does not have a say over the husband (Mshweshwe, 2020). This strategy seems to have

been working, as there is a plausible drop in GBV cases in El Salvador. In Honduras, one of the strategies involved is the involvement of men and boys in awareness campaigns on GBV; since they are, in most cases, the perpetrators. Their involvement must alter somewhat their behaviour towards violent conduct, especially targeted at women and girls (Moono, Thankian, Menon, Mwaba & Menon, 2020). These strategies could also be applied to South Africa because, thus far, they have not been adopted.

2.7. THE CHALLENGES FACED BY TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN COMBATING GENDER – BASED VIOLENCE.

In the new democracy, traditional leaders face the problem of inadequate leadership, especially from government. It is argued that they lack skilled personnel to run their programmes and projects in the best and most efficient way possible (Muche, Adekunle & Arowojolu, 2017). According to Muluneh, Stulz, Francis & Agho (2020), traditional leaders tend to perpetuate negative gender stereotypes, which go against the values of combating GBV. The inadequate leadership is attributed to the fact that during the transition, the top tier of political leaders joined national and provincial offices, leaving the traditional groups struggling to find leaders who can better formulate policies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Furthermore, Ersoy & Yildiz (2011) argues that those who assumed government offices lacked the experience to lobby for the interests of the traditional groups they once represented. These dynamics contributed to traditional houses finding difficulties in establishing suitable relationships with government, to effect change in their areas of work.

Traditional institutions have struggled to establish suitable ways of collaborating with government representatives whilst maintaining their autonomy and independence. It is argued that once an organisation converts to state agency, it loses its abilities to engage and critic state on less institutionalised forms of social change (Field, Onah, Van Heyningen, & Honikman, 2018). However, independent traditional houses are also in jeopardy, due to the political, legal, and financial repercussions they face after challenging state policies (Grove & Gray, 2018). Furthermore, Grove, Moodley,

McNaughton-Reyes, Martin, Foshee, & Maman (2015) warn against a top-down approach by South African traditional institutions, as they deal with the government, as it limits their involvement in the planning and implementation of projects (Mittal & Singh, 2020).

According to (Mittal & Singh, 2020) traditional leaders feel state does not empower them to respond positively to issues of SGBV. However, (Mshweshwe, 2020) mention that there were capacity building conferences where sixty (60) traditional leaders trained on the impact of Gender Based-Violence across their communities. Justice Department and NPA (National Prosecuting Authority) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL) in order to assist each other on the pandemic of GBV. All eight provinces in South African have Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, apart from the Western Cape. The aim is to capacitate the house with clear vision on how to combat the issue of Gender-Based Violence.

Muche, Adekunle, & Arowojolu (2017), mention that traditional leaders need funds to be deployed to them. Notably, they want to be highly involved in the drawing up of budget and management of it. For instances, they want to be informed on programmes that have potential to train and empower women and how to inform victims about court procedures. Funds are of outmost importance for the survival of traditional institutions. However, these houses continue to face challenges when securing the financial resources needed to run their activities. In a study done by Ward and Vann (2002) on GBV in refugee camps, they found that a common limitation to humanitarian relief is not lack of strategies but inadequate means to implement them.

The funding shortages are exacerbated by the fact that traditional houses greatly depend on the government for funding. Mshweshwe (2020) states that in recent times international donor funding used to go directly to traditional houses and now it is directed to government. Furthermore, it is argued that the mechanism through which the funding is disbursed is not fully developed, and at times it does not reach the recipients (Muche, Adekunle, & Arowojolu, 2017). According to Muluneh, Stulz, Francis & Agho, (2020) lack of transparency and consistency result in the mismanagement of funds

directed towards fighting GBV. Mittal & Singh, (2020) cite an example where funds dedicated to the fight against HIV/AIDs were not used. These funds could have been helpful, especially because of the identified link between HIV and GBV (Auteri, 2019).

Donor funding to traditional institutions is also limited, which reduces the amount of funds available for these houses to carry out their activities. When donors started channelling funds through government, it increased competition for the funding among service providers. It is said that the government preferred funding smaller Christian Based Organisations (CBOs) that provides services at relatively cheaper prices, compared to funding traditional authority (Abdullahi, Cusairi & Abdullah, 2017). Furthermore, international funding usually comes with demands which may not be aligned to the mission and goals of the traditional institutions; this limits the extent of control of power over programmes and projects.

The houses ought to accept funding from donors whose values and principles are aligned to theirs, as accepting funding may come with certain conditions that may hinder the progress of promoting culture and beliefs (Achieng, 2015). Funding from the private sector and domestic donors has also been declining over the years. It is argued that in the post- 2008 global recession; traditional institutions have noticed reduced funding from the private sector (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). For example, in 2014, out of the 6 billion rand from CSI, only 6% was given to fund strategies of victims of violence and abuse (Alexander & Associates, 2021).

Traditional institutions engage in several methods while combating GBV, and some involve the inclusion of men in the strategies carried out. This approach, however, is contentious, and its benefits have not been adequately documented (Amodio, & Giorgio 2014), which leaves these houses to question the appropriateness of involving men in these strategies, especially for projects that are feminist oriented. The approach has been popular, as funders are motivated to fund organisations that work with both men and women (Anon, 2018). However, Asante, Fenny, Dzudzor, Chadha, Scriver, Ballantine & Duvury (2019) argue that traditional houses, like other institutions, often reflect unequal power relations in their ideologies, resource allocation patterns, and

practices that favour men in communities where they work. Therefore, the trend of working with men victims and male perpetrators, while an important effort, can be a form of victimization, as resources are shifted from most survivors of GBV who are women (Balogun, Owoaje, & Fawole, 2012).

Furthermore, in terms of the methods used, traditional houses face a challenge while carrying out GBV related research. In instances where the methods of collecting and disseminating information are not properly designed, and ethical guidelines are not adequately followed, data becomes less reliable. According to Bello & Olutola (2016), it is difficult to quantify abuse, especially emotional and economic abuse. Therefore, GBV is often synonymous to physical or sexual abuse. This may create difficulty in assessing the extent of the problem, resulting in failure to adequately implement the strategies needed to combat GBV (Berger, 2014).

2.8. ROLE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP IN COMBATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Many communities were governed by traditional leaders even before colonization and modern government institutions (Beyene, Chojenta, Roba, Melka, & Loxton, 2019). The responsibilities and functions of traditional leaders included, among others, promoting peace and order in modern South Africa. These responsibilities are still retained to a more considerable extent (Beyene, Chojenta, Reba, Melka, & Loxton, 2019). It is widely observable in South Africa today that, to appreciate traditional leaders in maintaining peace in the country, the government of Republic (South Africa) enacted the Traditional Authorities Act, as mentioned already. Further, the chief in all communities is on the government's payroll and receives free vehicles and petrol to run the community's affairs. Therefore, when looking at promoting peace, one would not claim that there is peace in the community if there is still an escalation in the number of GBV cases.

To this end, it could be mentioned here that in addressing GBV, traditional leaders, still have more to do. Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee (2006) note that traditional leaders have

unique powers and capacity to influence the behaviour of their subjects. The above narratives can also be understood comprehensively when Bloom's (2008) findings on GBV noted that the reason that traditional leaders engage with several stakeholders such as Non-Governmental Organisations [NGOs], prominent civil society members, business partners and others, are crucial in advocating for a GBV-free society.

Their influence is more prevalent than that of the government of the day. This notion could be informed by the fact that subject matters live in the communities governed by traditional leaders, and their presence is felt more than that of the government. In this way, and as a result of cultural practices, contravening the Chief's order is considered a severe offence and carries heavy punishment. It might be more appropriate to indicate in this study that traditional leaders have more influence to compel their subjects to reframe GBV practices.

It was noted by Boohoo (2015) that traditional leaders' role might also include recommending a review of bylaws and customary laws, with support from subjects, and ensuring that the recommended rules which may include awareness campaigns, are often sensitive. Furthermore, conducting these very important actions from this, the process of revising clauses that perpetuate the discrimination of other genders may be actual practice and serves as a proactive strategy to change public thinking about GBV in general and its effects on human survival.

Several decades ago, prevention and reducing the escalation of GBV were mainly known to be the responsibility of the police organisation. However, presently, it is the duty of everyone, including traditional leaders (Bromley, Dockery, Fenton, Nhlema, Smith, Tolhurst & Theobald, 2006). Such understanding and practices could be premised on the fact that police were entrusted with the responsibility of citizen safety. However, this notion has lost its relevancy in the 21st century, where community members are aware that the police as an organisation that cannot address crimes alone but need the assistance of community leaders and members (Calandra, Stork & Gilluard, 2013). Today, it is valuable to research role of traditional leadership in fighting

GBV in South Africa. This is because traditional leaders greatly influence their followers and subject. It is within this understanding that the study is premised. Globally, GBV in its numerous systems is widespread in society's worldwide (Chaudhry, 2015). For instance, the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2013 projected about 35% of female experience physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives.

Globally, in 2021 it was found that 1 in 3 women (30%) and girls fifteen years of age or older were physically violated, or victims of sexual violence by a male intimate and non-intimate partner, according to Heron, Eisma, & Browne (2022). Gender-Based Violence (GBV) affects between 10 and 70% of the women worldwide (De Vos, 2013). A similar trend is observed in Africa, where it is widely recognised that GBV affects humankind across the continent, and the need for all stakeholders, including traditional leaders, to take a prominent stance is now more urgent (Dunne, Humphreys & Leach, 2021). In the case of Namibia, the research by the WHO (World Health Organization) (Eaton, 2019) revealed that from 2018, one-third (31%) of Namibian females experienced sexual abuse caused by men.

Feltwell, Vines, Salt, Blythe, Kirman, Barnett, Brooker, & Lawson (2017) argue that traditional norms and beliefs ought to be among the leading causes of GBV, especially when men are regarded as superior to women. Such thinking further accounts for abuse because the women's prominent role in any sort of relationship is confined to a small extent to the act of being submissive. However, it's evident that traditional leadership play a vital role of educating the community to abandon practices such as norms and beliefs that promote GBV (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

The Ministry of Cooperatives Governance and Traditional Affairs(COGTA) in South Africa , has been proactive and progressive in stablishing the Department of Traditional Affairs whose core mission is to provide a national traditional affairs governance system in support of cooperative governance for an improved quality of life of South Africans (Approved – DTA- 2023 – 24 -Annual Performance Plan ,2023). In the annual plans of the Traditional Affairs Department , there are plans to support the Houses of Traditional

Leaders at a National , Provincial and Local level to address the scourge of gender - based violence at all levels of societies. The Department formulated an indicator that will obligate the provinces to support , coordinate and intervene in areas where there is a scourge of gender-based violence. In 2022/23, and 2023/2024 the Department budgeted for the number of interventions implemented to reduce the gender-based violence in traditional leadership communities (Approved – DTA- 2023 – 24 -Annual Performance Plan ,2023).

Furthermore , the Department budgeted for the thirty – two (32) trainings and capacity building programmes of traditional leaders on matters of gender-based violence in 2023/24 and an increased forty (40) trainings to be implemented in 2024/25 financial years. These trainings are meant to assist the traditional leaders to have capacity in intervening on matters of GBV in their communities with an aim of reducing and preventing the incidences.

Given the content above, it is evident that the South African government of today is giving support to the established houses of traditional houses with funding , institutional support , resources and working tools to address GBV in their communities. Therefore , the argument of lack of funding and capacity by the traditional leaders as argued by other scholars, is not convincing for the increased GBV cases in rural areas and in particular in Vhembe District , Limpopo. It is evident that traditional leaders are supported financially and institutionally to address the scourge of gender-based violence in their communities. The question of inadequate funding of the work of gender-based violence interventions and campaigns by traditional leaders, as budgeted and planned by the Department, cannot also be ignored.

2.9. PATRIARCHY AS AN ENABLER OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The African cultural beliefs and customs give life to a patriarchal system, which in simple terms promotes male-dominance. Flick (2015) describes patriarchy as a system in which male supremacy thrives. The London Feminist Network, in their research, emphasizes that a patriarchal system is symbolized by unequal gender power relations

that exist in the current times and existed historically (Gould, 2016). These unequal gender power relations have led to women being automatically oppressed, disregarded, and disadvantaged. Furthermore, (Hagg & Kanyane, 2013) concur that violence against females and girls is traced back to nature and characteristics of a patriarchal society, where unequal authority between men and females exists (Hashemnezhad, 2015).

In Africa, many of the countries still have long-held cultural beliefs that drive their societies. However, these beliefs and culture promote the supremacy of men. Makama cites that in Nigeria, a woman is seen as an ever-available entity for prostitution, forced marriage, and a non-entity in the society who does not have economic power and is unable to make decisions (Makama, 2013). He further states that the disregard of the standing of women in the society has reduced an ordinary woman to an inferior entity (Makama, 2013). This culture of seeing a female or a young girl as mere infidels and second – class citizens deepen the root of GBV, as it is perceived as normal and cultural. Delano concurs by stating that in Uganda 46% of the women were affected by constant and regular physical abuse. The figures for other African countries were as follows: 60% for Tanzanian females, (42%) for Kenyan, and (40%) for Republic of Zambia. In Nigeria alone, 81% of the females reported being subjected to sexual abuse by their husbands (Delano, 2017).

Relation to studies made by scholars above, the African culture value system is a fertile ground for Gender-Based Violence. Matshabaphala (2017) emphasises that in Africa, submission by women to the male counterpart is a societal expectation and it is an unreservedly accepted norm. This is so as most are unable to isolate the African culture from a system that inhibits African women from being fully emancipated (Mboh, ,2021).The Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence researched broadly on the root cause of GBV and concluded its deep roots are traced back to culture (Shembe, 2014).The Institute further affirms that the identity of a nation holds their cultural beliefs, historical traditions, struggles, achievements, and triumphs, which give rise to pride, resilience and belonging of a nation or community (Mantshi, Saiqa & Dlamini, 2010).

The good traditional value system of a community should give birth a society that has a strong moral fibre system, that will enable it to live in peace, harmony and cohesively. Traditional leaders are the ones who uphold traditional values, cultural systems, and customs, to exercise authority and harmony in their communities. As a result, the traditional laws that they uphold are in a way linked to promotion of Gender-Based Violence directly or indirectly. Hence this research calls for an inspection of traditional leader's role, who still uphold traditions customs that perpetuate Gender-Based Violence and their commitment to combating it.

2.10. TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND PATRIARCHY

The traditional leadership system is the most common and known form of governance which traces back to history. In every society there is a leader. The nations that existed back in history also had leaders that regulated their movement from one area to another, their hunting and simply by living next to each other as a community. Brosi, Rolling, Gaffney & Kitch, (2020) opine that African people were not exposed to any other form of governance except for traditional leadership. Further emphasis is on the fact that traditional authority is the bedrock of African communities as stated by Bradbury-Jones & Isham (2020). These researchers contend that traditional leaders are the nucleus system that holds the member of their communities together. Before a member of a society knows a local government representative, being a Ward Councillor, that member is exposed to the ruling of a traditional leader first (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2011).

In South Africa, the administration and governance of communities by traditional leadership were legislated by the Native Administrative Act (1927), which regulated the traditional leadership institution and the Black Authorities Act (1951), which also gave traditional authorities powers to regulate tribal land to become a self – governed homeland.

This is a clear indication that traditional authorities have been in presence for many years. Being old as it is, it also has some traces in the old traditional system of its formation, which was influenced by traditions and culture. Godess Bvukutwa, a women's rights activist and author in Zimbabwe states that one cannot separate patriarchy from the African culture, as it is deeply entrenched in the "norms, values and customs" of the continent (Ersoy, & Yildiz, 2011). A typical example is made by Perrin, (Marsh, Clough, Desgropes, Phaniel, Abdi, 2019) that in sub-Saharan Africa, the superiority of the man is visible wherein he is referred to as lord over the female. Sapkota, Bhattarai, Baral & Pokharel (2016) further confirm the superiority of African men above African women, whereby when men are born, they are already elevated in the homes and in the society at large, and it starts where even a boy child is esteemed above a female child.

In the study by Saunders, Sim, Kingstone, Baker, Waterfield, Bartlam (2018), a boy initiate who underwent a traditional male circumcision, stated that he could not share the emotional and painful experiences with his mother, as they were prohibited from doing so. He further stated that the power of men over women is emphasised and backed up by traditional customs practiced in the society. The emphasis on male dominance and masculinity is part of the society and it is normalised by the traditional customs and beliefs. In other words, traditional male circumcision grants men the supremacy that they are far superior to women, as they had undergone traditional circumcision, which women do not know about. This gives the traditionally circumcised men a mentality that they are more powerful than women and are a dominant and controlling gender over women.

Palmer et.al (2020) further affirms that men who have undergone traditional circumcision were taught that they should be the ones who make decisions about sex with women, when and how it should happen. They are also taught that women must be ready for sexual intercourse and not complain or have issues, as they (men) have been through traditional circumcision (Smith, 2019). The explicit statements made by the former initiate about the teachings in the traditional circumcision schools exacerbate

patriarchy, male dominance, and gruesome women abuse. These are the traditional cultures and practices that encourage Gender – Based Violence in the societies.

Smith (2020), states that in the South African Black cultures, women are not allowed to take part in the traditional male circumcision. This exclusion can be used as a tool for exacerbating patriarchy in a society where men assume a supremacy role as heads of the families and hold the power, while women are left out in power decision-making processes in their homes and communities. This implies that men can demand sexual interactions from women at any time and will not care whether the women are or not. If they are not, in many cases it leads to gruesome physical abuse, rape and even murder. Traditional circumcision schools take place in the villages that are under traditional leaders.

This implies that the traditional leaders are influential in both the practice and teachings taking place in traditional circumcision schools. In the study made by Palmer and other scholars, they found that the teaching and practices in the initiation schools perpetuated a patriarchal society that promotes male power and dominance over women. It can be concluded that the circumcision schools that the traditional leaders oversee are the root-cause of patriarchy and, more specifically, Gender-Based Violence.

In 2022/23 financial year, the Department of Traditional Affairs, which regulates the affairs of the traditional leaders, made a funding provision to conduct campaigns to inspect, monitor and formulate the customs and local policies in relation to the Customary Initiation Act (Approved – DTA- 2023 – 24 -Annual Performance Plan ,2023). This funding and institutional support creates an enabling environment for traditional leaders to influence customs, policies and teachings in initiation schools that can be transformed and used to shape the lives of young boys and men to develop a level of conscious about the cruelty of gender – based violence on women and children. The argument emerging, is that, if initiation schools are regulated and funded in the

country , the pandemic of gender – based violence should be prevented and reduced to a zero – tolerance.

2.11. THE RELEVANCE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE IN GENDER – BASED VIOLENCE

Sichimba, Nakazwe, & Phiri, (2020) wrote that the core of pre-colonial African history and its traditions rest within the traditional leadership institution. Therefore, the inherited pre-colonial history, and the patriarchal traditional beliefs of male masculinity, should be changed by the Traditional Leadership, as they are embedded in their long – held historical beliefs in combating Gender – Based Violence. Traditional leadership is more relevant in making policy change or policy shift in reducing and preventing the scourge of GBV.

Civil societies still believe and trust in traditional leadership governance. In fact, it is the only form of governance they know from history. In rural areas such, as in Limpopo Province, the institution is seen by community members as an independent, and a respected, dignified institution, which upholds gender justice and rich cultural rights and heritage (Smith, 2019).

Though establishment of Traditional houses has been proven been rooted in patriarchal beliefs, Ray opines that since its existence, the institution was a beacon of hope to its people and preserved the treasured African 'history, rich heritage and culture, laws, customs and values, religion, and communal governance (South African Government, 2021). The institution remained relevant for rural areas of South Africa, as it preserved the history that people know, their identity, heritage, customs, values and treasured culture. It remains evident that traditional leadership has significant influence in communities and has the power and ability to restore law and order. It is also common knowledge that Gender-Based Violence will not thrive where there is law, order, respect for life and reconnection of fairness.

The South African Government (2021) mention that Gender-based Violence on females in violate many provisions in South African Constitution. These rights include the following: freedom from public and private violence; equality of gender; human dignity for all; freedom from slavery, servitude, and forced labor; privacy; freedom of association; freedom of movement and residence; access to social security, health care, food, and water; and access to the courts (Anon, 2018). Furthermore, the goal of South Africa's introduction of the Domestic Violence Act (1998) was to provide women with protection from harm by requiring law enforcement agencies to do their utmost job to protect south Africans especially women and girl child.

Additionally, traditional leaders are powerful in the majority of southern African rural communities and are essential in promoting and directing social mobilization campaigns against sexual gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS and other issues. According to Tracy (2021), traditional leaders have always been significant figures in the lives of majority of African people, particularly those in rural areas where GBV is more common and often goes unpunished.

The Limpopo Houses of Traditional Leaders, Act (Act 5, 2005) also provides for the formulation of the structures of traditional authorities at all government structures including regional and local ranks. According to Act, provincial houses have powers to influence the provincial legislation that is related to changing and formulation of customary laws that can contribute to peace,harmony,social cohesion and rural development of their communities. The formulated structures at both the provincial and local level have significant powers and responsibilities to provide guide or recommendations at legislature of Limpopo on relation of traditional laws and customs governing traditional authorities and other indigenous laws.

The authorities and duties of traditional leadership in Provincial Legislature is to influence policies and legislation for the well-being of their communities. A legislation framework to combat and prevent GBV at Limpopo Province can be formulated and influenced by traditional leaders through the Act, that gives them power to play the role of addressing the challenges of violence against women and children. Additionally, Act

have established local traditional leaders' houses in every district of Limpopo province, to ensure that communities have access to leaders who can influence the formulation of laws, regulations and acts. It remains a wonder that social ills such as violence against women and children still exist, when laws can be pronounced at a local level by authorities that are given legislative power to do so.

In Zambia, a five year strategy on prevention of Gender – Based Violence (GBV) was developed in 2018, in collaboration with Traditional Leaders (Tsai, Tomlinson, Comulada & Rotheram-Borus, 2016). The Traditional Leaders Engagement Strategy (2018 – 2022) developed in Zambia is a strategy that supports the relevance of the Traditional Leaders in fighting GBV (Wanger, 2020). The strategy has been explicit and without compromise, by stating that the custodians of the destructive social and gender customs identified channels that give rise to GBV in the Zambian society.

Traditional rulers are influential agents at community level, therefore they are well-placed to be change agents in fighting GBV. Traditional authorities are probable to impose customary laws that are in-line with constitution (Tsai, Tomlinson, Comulada & Rotheram-Borus, 2016). Furthermore, traditional leaders must contribute to development of constitutional laws in their societies, to maintain law and order. In addition, kings look after customary land for the benefits of the populace. Additionally, they oversee customary rituals during which they address their subjects with proclamations regarding customs and culture. These topics cover a range of people who preserve tradition, including families, men females, young girls and boys as well as traditional initiators. Traditional authorities can thus directly advocate for better legal provisions and resources allocation for enhanced service delivery that will support and prevent HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) GBV, and teenage pregnancy.

Furthermore, kings are advisors to state, through the House of traditional leadership. Therefore, chiefs can use their influence to develop by-laws to address GBV and other subjects in their areas. Roles of the traditional leadership at Zambia explicitly emphasises the power they possess in combating Gender-Based Violence. The

establishment of the chiefdom Gender-Based Violence Secretariat, a local coordination structure intended to coordinate the response and prevention of Gender-Based Violence at Chiefdom level, represents one of the nation's most notable achievements. In order to mobilize efforts to address GBV, local community stakeholders and various services providers established the Chiefdom GBV secretariat, which is a prototype of the one stop centre at the Chiefdom level.

In 2011, traditional leaders from the six SADC(South African Development Community) countries, including South Africa, gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa and adopted strategies and resolutions on the fight against HIV, Gender – Based Violence and other harmful cultural practices at community and national level. The strategies and resolutions were documented in a book named *“Traditional Leaders on the Frontline Addressing Harmful Cultural Practices to Reduce Gender-based Violence and HIV in southern Africa”*. This book brings out the practical and inspiring role that traditional authorities can play in waging a war against GBV at southern Africa.

The importance of the traditional leaders in the fight against GBV is clearly articulated in the book written. The book also emphasises that the traditional leaders have the power to advise parliament on matters of customary law through established institutions such as House of Traditional Leadership (SAfAIDS_Addressing_Harmful_Cultural_Practices). The affirmation role of traditional leadership in the book is brought uncompromisingly to the fore, that they should implement practical resolutions taken with zeal to end the GBV that has translated itself as a monster in communities.

With the passage of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders Act, 2005 (Act 5 of 2005), governance of traditional leadership are formally acknowledged in the province of Limpopo. Regarding to traditional councils, indigenous law or traditions, and the customs of traditional communities within the province, this Act grants the Provincial Traditional House the authority to advise and make recommendations to Provincial Government (<https://repository.up.ac.za>). The Act allow for the establishment of five (5) District Traditional Houses to govern traditional councils in the five established

districts of Limpopo, namely, Capricorn, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Vhembe, and Waterberg. This implies that every district in the province is governed alongside the local government sphere. This is the government that is near to the people, that can have a positive influence on its communities in the fight against Gender-Based Violence.

2.12 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In the literature review section, publications on GBV in relation to role of traditional leadership in curbing the scourge of GBV are discussed based on the study's research objectives. Further, a comprehensive literature review was also discussed during the actual implementation of the research project. From the literature reviewed, it can be noted that although there have been previous studies in South Africa on GBV, there have not been any in the selected study area. There is still a dearth of studies on the subject matter; hence the need for this research to compare findings of the present study to other studies in different settings.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents research methodologies used. Qualitative research method and thematic analysis were applied to assist in collecting the data from the field and ensuring that thematic tool assists in analysing and organising the qualitative data into themes. This study focused on role of traditional leaders in fighting gender-based violence in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province. In addition, the chapter highlighted study sampling procedure and data collection process, as well as data analysis. Furthermore, all the relevant research quality criteria are discussed before the chapter concludes with a presentation of ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research is a collection of techniques and protocols used to measure and examine the variables listed in the research problems. The type of study is defined by the study design. The study examines traditional leader's contributions to the fight against gender-based violence. In order to investigate the perspectives of the traditional leaders at Vhembe District Limpopo Province, this study adopted the qualitative research method. These leaders provided crucial information that aided in examining their role in preventing GBV. This method was considered the most appropriate for this study.

As in accordance with Adam et al., (2007:10), qualitative research methods aim at exploring perceptions of the social actors, which is the goal of this study. The study was designed to investigate the impact of gender-based violence in societies and individuals on social media platform. Moreover, the qualitative method allows the researcher to examine the properties, values, needs or characteristics that distinguish individuals, groups, communities, organization, events and settings or messages (Muswede, 2009:11).

3.3 RESEARCH METHOD

Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee (2006:43), the qualitative research paradigm uses qualifying words or descriptions to record aspects of the world. It is all about explaining properties, values, and attributes of a certain concept as they are, and verbal description is used to emphasise the significant aspects of a study or inquiry (Patton, 2002:41). Wimmer and Dominick (2014:20) argue that qualitative research is beneficial in spotting enthusiasms in participants, which are related to individual's behaviour. The term qualitative research usually reminds us of data collection process without the use of any statistical or mathematical operation.

Qualitative data gives us the "why" behind a response; we get to know people's experiences, we get a deeper understanding of the research question. The goal of qualitative research, according to Hancock, Ockleford, and Windridge (2009), is to create explanations for social phenomena. According to Maree (2012), qualitative research aims to gather rich descriptive data about a particular phenomenon in order to better understand what is being observed or studied, rather than always confirming theories. The use of the qualitative approach in the study was also justified because it follows strict rules and procedures, which only deal with facts (ibid). The survey method was used because an interview was employed to collect data (Ponto, 2015). This approach was found to be relevant in this study because study sought to investigate role of traditional leaders in combating gender-based violence among their communities. This approach helped in providing profound and relevant answers to the research problem under study (Rahman, 2017).

3.4 Population and Sampling Procedures

3.4.1 Population

According to Walliman (2018:218), a population means the universe of phenomena that a hypothesis seeks to explain. Population plays an important the role in assisting the researcher to conduct sample selection, as it includes specified elements and sampling units (Gerring, 2012: 75). The population were eleven (11) registered

traditional leaders in Vhembe District including (01) traditional leader who sit in the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, employees responsible for coordination of traditional leaders in the Department of Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements & Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) and employees in the Department of Social Development, who are responsible for Gender -Based Violence programmes at provincial level in Vhembe District. The district shares its borders with the neighbouring countries; namely, Zimbabwe and Botswana in the Northwest and Mozambique in the East. Its population is 1.3 million, according to the 2016 Stats SA Community Survey. Vhembe District has a total of eleven (11) traditional leaders (Vhembe District Municipality, IDP 2021/22). The purposive technique was used to come up with small group who served as a sample.

Vhembe district was chosen because it covers both urban and rural areas. Furthermore, the district constitutes 43 percentage of Limpopo Province (STATSSA, Census 2011). In addition, the district was chosen based on the following differences: inequality between the working class, differences in the standard of living and level of education among the chosen areas. The researcher also found the selected area appropriate to investigate the role of traditional leaders in combating gender-based violence among communities. Finally, no research of a similar nature has previously been conducted in the above-mentioned district.

3.4.2 Sampling Technique

The study purposefully sampled eleven (11) traditional authorities in Vhembe District and including one (1) traditional leader directly serving in Provincial House of Traditional Leaders in Limpopo Province. A total of two (2) officials, responsible for coordination of traditional leaders, was drawn from COGHSTA at provincial and district levels. In the Social Development Department, a total of two (2) officials, responsible for the coordination of Gender -Based Violence programmes, were selected to participate in the study at both district and provincial levels.

Sampling was conducted in such a manner that the participants sampled were knowledgeable, willing to participate, available and able to communicate their experiences in the current research. Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) state that when purposeful sampling is done, identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are knowledgeable or experienced with a phenomenon of interest is important. This type of sampling can be done by creating a questionnaire and distributing it to the targeted group. The technique ensured that relevant and well-informed participants were sampled.

3.5 Data Collection

Data collection involves the use of relevant instruments and methods or processes to gather the research data from the sample population. A data collection instrument is a resource that researchers use to gather information from the available population in relation to the study (Lim, Osman, Salahuddin, Romle & Abdullah, 2016). According to Berger (2014), data collection involves tools and techniques that are utilised to gather information to address the proposed research problem. In collecting data from the participants in the current study, an interview method was used. An interview is an important data gathering technique involving verbal communication between the researcher and the subjects (Mathers, Fox, & Hunn, 2000). Interaction with the participants through interviews also allowed the researcher to obtain the experiences, knowledge and perceptions of the traditional leaders and government employees.

Furthermore, interview allowed researcher to interpret and analyse the data collected. The use of the interview to collect data was the most appropriate method also because it is not restrictive but rather open. The conducted interviews were one - on – one, which were physical. The reason for the direct interview, with one participant at a time, was to obtain clear descriptions of experiences, knowledge and perceptions of the participants

3.6 Data Analysis

Analysis of collected data was undertaken to define what data could be discarded and what ought to be saved for the actual research data analysis (Brynard, Hanekom & Brynard, 2014). In the current study, thematic analysis method was used to analyse the qualitative data. This method necessitates probing across a set of data, to make the findings and provide outcomes of repeated patterns (Braun and Clarke 2006). Use of thematic data – analysis in the current study was important because the research depended more on own knowledge, content, social and individual experiences of the traditional leaders and government officials.

It was therefore important to use thematic data analysis in the current study, to obtain meaningful and useful results. The significance of thematic analysis method is also to ensure that credible and insightful information is obtained from the participants (Kiger and Vapio(2020). In this study, data analysis collected from the traditional authorities was rigorously analysed and interpreted in a thoughtful manner, to ensure outcomes that will assist in developing strategies and policy frameworks of traditional authorities to combat Gender-Based Violence.

3.6 Quality Criteria

Every research needs to be trusted. Research that has been conducted in a competent and ethical manner will be fully trusted by readers and scholars and will have the potential to be used in future (Heigham and Croker,2009).The current study addresses sensitive societal subjects, which are strong cultural beliefs that might be contributing to GBV, violence against women and children, as well the role played by the traditional leadership who are in power in their jurisdiction. In order for the study not to be questioned, given its sensitive nature, the following measures of trustworthiness, as elaborated by Guba (1981), were applied when the research was conducted.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba argue that a research study has to be credible and objective, in order to be trusted(Lincoln and Guba,1986). Furthermore , the outcome of the study has to be

credible and realistic. The findings should be intergrated with the situtaion on the ground, in order to validate the truthfulness of research. The causes of GBV in Limpopo, the rising figures of GBV and how the Traditional Leaders are responding to the situation on the ground, have to be linked with the outcome of the research.

Transferability

Transferability describes the process of putting into practice results of the study in one situation, link it with new uniform situation. Current study, the findings should be in such a manner that they assist Limpopo Province, in particular the traditional leaders and government employees, to transfer the findings to policy and strategy developemnt, to prevent Gender – Based Violence.

Dependability

Scholars define dependability as the consistency and reliability of the data obtained from the participants , the processes used in the research and allowing an audit to critique the research conducted (Sandelowski 1986, Polit et al. 2006, Streubert 2007). The findings of this study should be subjected to a critical analysis by other scholars and auditors, to ensure that the study and information contained is dependable and reliable. Reliable and dependable information that satisfied the standards of a critical analysis or an audit, can be used for future crafting of policies and strategy development, to combat Gender – Based Violence. Reliable findings are truthful findings.

Confirmability

The concept of confirmability in qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity (Shenton,2003). Objectivity was maintained when gathering data from the participants. It is of pivotal importance to listen attentively to the narrations by the participans, so that the correct information is obtained without bias. Information that is objective is reliable and can be trusted by the user and reader.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Hlabane (2014) states that an ethical consideration is concern with researcher been ethically responsible, to protecting the rights and welfare of the participants in research. Moreover, (McQuail, 2010) indicates that ethics can be methods for deciding how to act and for analysing complex problems or issues. Sudha and Sheena (2017) offer the moral principle commonly adhered to by researchers as follows; provide the individuals being studied with free choice, to protect their right to privacy and let their participation in the research be beneficial to them, rather than harm them. However, Wimmer and Dominick (2014) recommend that permission to conduct research, voluntary participation of the respondents; informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, should be followed by mass media researchers, to avoid ethical dilemmas.

3.7.1 Permission

This researcher first got endorsement by the University of Limpopo's Research Ethics Committee (TREC), which grants ethical clearance or approval before the commencement of the research.

3.7.2 Informed Consent

Participant involvement in this research was strictly on voluntary basis and personal consent. They were also asked to read, understand, and sign a consent form before participating in the study. The form included the title of the study, its purpose, significance, and procedures followed by the respondents and the researcher.

3.7.3 Respect for Human Dignity

The researcher ensured that participants' rights were respected. Furthermore, the researcher did not expose participants to any harm, whether physical, emotional, or psychologically. Their dignity was not compromised, and collected data, which was used for the purposes of this research only.

3.7.4 Confidentiality

The researcher did not reveal respondents' names, to ensure their personal identities were not disclosed. This is because some people may use their participation in the study against them. Moreover, the researcher treated the collected data with high confidentiality, and the results of the study were presented in such a way that the respondents remain unidentifiable. To guarantee confidentiality, the participants were not required to disclose their names. They were assigned codes, instead of using their real names. When there was a need to identify the participants, they were named according to their district such as VDP-VDP1 (with VDP referring to Vhembe District Participant 1).

3.7.5 Plagiarism

Plagiarism was avoided by ensuring that the entire literature or information source used in the study was acknowledged by means of citation and references, as well as through paraphrasing of the information accessed from other writers. The Turnitin anti-plagiarism software was also used to keep the similarity test to the required minimal level.

3.8 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter outlines the research techniques applied in the current study, along with the ethical guidelines and quality standards that were adhered to. For this study, the qualitative research approach was chosen. Additionally, the researcher provided an explanation and justification for the methods' selection and discussed how they would help the study achieve its goals. The current research accomplishment was guided by a research methodology that benefited both science and philosophy. The study's conclusions are presented, and data analysis is covered in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Babbie & Mouton, (2001) applying deductive and inductive logic to the research is represented by data analysis and interpretation. Conversely, Creswell, (2014) asserted that the interpretivist approach, which draws conclusions from the data collected, is more dependent on participant's experience of the action being studied. The researcher embarked on qualitative research. The researcher analyses the data gathered from the participants in this chapter. According to Kothari (2014), the process of analysing data can be untidy, unclear and time-consuming, however it can also be creative and fascinating. Data analysis's purpose is to apply structure to a vast amount of data in order to draw broad conclusions that can be presented in research report.

Additionally, Babbie & Mouton (2001), it is imperative to read the researcher's interviews transcripts in their entirety to obtain a comprehensive understanding and segment the data into significant units based on the participants' words. Data analysis was done using thematic analysis. This is due to the fact that it makes it simple to summarize, classify, and recognise any patterns or themes that may surface (Creswell, 2014). The use of thematic analysis in this study was appropriate since it allowed researcher to gain a detailed understanding of data provided by respondents. Reading, coding, and classifying the data made sure that the information was read for analysis. The researcher went through the responses carefully and repeatedly for an in-depth understanding of what the participants were trying to convey.

4.2. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

There were two sections of data. The participants' demographic data was provided in the first set of data. Topics that are essential to participants' roles in presenting gender-based violence (GBV) at Vhembe District were addressed in the second section. Themes were used to analyse the data. These themes that have been identified align with the study's objectives and are derived from the information shared by the participants. Only portion of the quotes have been included in the analysis, despite the transcripts having been examined in their entirety. The general findings of the data analysis have been validated and signified by presenting direct quotes from the data transcribed.

4.2.1. Demographic information of the participants

The section deals with an analysis of the demographic characteristics of the participants. The questionnaire first part solicited the participants' general demographic information (Institutions, gender, area of residence and district municipality). All the participants were South African citizens and out of the fifteen participants, seven were females and eight were males. The participants were all from Vhembe District; Eleven traditional leaders, one Department of Social Development worker (Provincial), one *CoGHSTA* (Co-operative Governance worker, one Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs) worker and two district-level officials from the Department of Social Development, Vhembe District. Participants were all holders of a matric certificate; with nine having an undergraduate degree and two holding postgraduate degrees.

The participants can all be said to be literate, as they were all able to read, write and had adequate education regarding roles that are played by traditional leaders in combating GBV across Vhembe District. The most interesting part about Gender Based-Violence (GBV) from participants is those traditional authorities knowledgeable and work closely with state officials and other government agencies to support the empowerment of women in their societies. Furthermore, they are involved in engagement of men, and helped sensitize communities about GBV. Mabunda (2020)

reported that women traditional authorities are a key access point at community level, to provide and share information on GBV. Consequently, they strengthen prevention and responses to child sexual assault cases.

4.3. SECTION B: TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' KNOWLEDGE OF GENDER BASED-VIOLENCE

The participants were asked to elaborate their understanding of GBV. All participants mentioned traditional leadership and government officials play crucial roles in addressing and combating gender-based violence (GBV). However, their level of knowledge and understanding of GBV can vary, depending on various factors, including cultural context, education, and awareness campaigns. In many societies, traditional leaders are respected figures, who hold influential positions within their communities. Their knowledge and understanding of GBV may be influenced by cultural norms, customs, and traditional practices. In some cases, these norms and practices perpetuate gender inequality which contributes to the prevalence of GBV. However, it is significant to note that traditional leaders can also be a force for positive change, by challenging harmful practices and promoting gender equality.

Furthermore, nearly all traditional house of leadership defined GBV as any form of abuse or violence directed towards females, children, and occasionally to young men. It can take several forms, including emotional violence brought on by the state of the economy, physical violence and sexual violence as a result of alcohol. Majority of victims of GBV are females, based on the views of Traditional Leaders. Additionally, traditional authorities also complained that the definition on Sexual Gender Based Violence typically applies to women and not men, and they appeared to know little about Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) against boys, such as sodomy.

Government officials, on the other hand, are responsible for developing and implementing policies and legislation to address GBV. Their level of knowledge and understanding of GBV can vary, depending on their training, expertise, and personal

commitment to the issue. Furthermore, some government officials may have a deep understanding of the complexities of GBV and the best practices for prevention and response. They may have also received training on gender equality, human rights, and the impacts of GBV on individuals and communities. Such officials are often instrumental in advocating for policy reforms and allocating resources for GBV prevention and support services.

However, it is important to acknowledge that there may also be government officials who lack sufficient knowledge or may hold biases that hinder effective responses to GBV. In such cases, there is a need for continuous education and training programs, to enhance their understanding of GBV and its various forms which including domestic violence, sexual assault, and harmful traditional practices.

4.4. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE CASES

Although traditional leaders acknowledged the progress, they were making in the fight against GBV, they still found it difficult to eradicate the widespread of this second pandemic' as described by President Ramaphosa. District records showed an average of 120 new cases of domestic abuse every month. Several cases were female who being physically abuse, emotionally and verbally abused by their partners. These cases increased during the festive season. Additionally, in the previous two months (August and September 2023), about five women in Vhembe had been killed in domestic violence incidents, with the most recent case being that of a 37-year-old from Muledzhi village, outside Tshilamba, who had been murdered by her husband at their home. The following traditional leaders shared their views on how GBV is destroying families and communities.

Vhembe District Participant 1 (VDP1): *“We are concerned about the increase in cases of rapes and abuse against women and girl children.”*

VDP4: *“There has been an increase in incidents of GBV, with Miluwani, Tswinga, Mbilwi villages and the Makwarela Township being the hotspots. Looking at the levels of violence perpetuated against women, we realise that we still have a long way to go. Recently, this area ranked among the top three areas countrywide in terms of rape and violence.”*

VDP7: *“It is concerning that so many women report cases of violence, but later withdraw them. This means we will not be able to solve the problem of GBV, and we cannot assist women, as we would like to. For this reason, we see an increase in incidents of GBV in areas like Thohoyandou.”*

Given that one in three females between age 15 and 49 reported having experienced violence and that that one in four had reported a case in a traditional courtroom or with the police. This indicates that gender-based violence is a significant issue. Perrin et al. (2019) and Sapkota et al (2016), two studies by the World Health Organisation, report that between 15 and 71% of married females had experienced GBV. The problem of violence against women is a widespread and intricate health issues. Additionally, it has a major effect on the morbidity and mortality of women worldwide (Christian Aid Ireland Learning Paper, 2018; Mittal & Singh, 2020; Muluneh et al.2020). This assertion is supported by World Bank (2019) report, which state that 35% of women worldwide have been victims of emotional abuse, a form of gender-based violence.

Participants were asked whether Gender Based Violence cases formally reported to their traditional council/tribal authority and how many had been reported in the previous six months. Ten participants indicated that they had received 72 cases of GBV and managed to solve 28 that were minor. Moreover, that was because traditional leaders believed their communities’ SGBV cases needed more attention than they could provide. This was in spite of the capacity-building workshops that followed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2010 by the National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL), the Justice Department, and National Prosecuting Authority, wherein sixty traditional leaders received training on gender-based violence. This is also beside the provision of capacity building programmes that are implemented on a quarterly basis as

in accordance to the Annual Performance Plans of the provincial and national departments.

When asked how they resolved GBV cases, seven traditional leaders mentioned that they facilitated dialogue between victim, the perpetrator, and their families, to reach a resolution that is acceptable to all parties. They recommended reconciliation, restitution, or community-based punishment, as a means of resolving conflict. Three of them indicated that they applied customary laws and sanctions to address GBV cases. These laws can differ between communities but are generally based on the community's traditional values and practices. Sanctions may include fines, public shaming, community service or other forms of restitution. One traditional leader indicated that he referred GBV cases to formal legal authorities if they believed the situation required some intervention. This was done to ensure that the legal rights of the victim are protected, and that the perpetrator faces appropriate legal consequences.

VDP1: *“Depending on how serious the offense was, offenders used to have to pay a fine of three to four cows. Higher court systems are typically referred to handle cases which are complex to Traditional council, such as those in which the evidence is inconclusive or non-existent but the case has been reported and an allegation made. However, since 2010, GBV cases have been treated as serious crime for which offenders must face harsh punishment.”*

VDP6: *“A woman is not supposed to be abused or beaten in our African culture. It's not African at all. Women are respected in our culture. However, if an act is committed, we play the role of mediator or arbitrator, we do this to resolve conflicts and reach resolution”.*

Participants were asked how they provided support to victims of Gender Based Violence. Eight traditional leaders mentioned that their areas had an NPO that supports victims of GBV. Furthermore, three of them said that building trust required admitting the survivor's credibility. A culture of disbelief and victim-blaming surrounds sexual

assault on a global scale, which contributes to the inadequate handling of the global crisis.

VDP5: *“Addressing GBV is an obligation of all peace-loving men and women, government institutions, traditional authority structures, non-governmental organisations and private sector. However, suppose there is a strong commitment that is borne out of mutual sharing of resources, exchanges of knowledge and experiences, and continued enactment of laws that promote gender sensitivity. In that case, the problem of GBV could be amicably addressed.”*

The above account was further shared by **VD10**, who asserted that: *There must be unity of all stakeholders to plan strategically for the future and mobilize all available technology to find the means and ways to address GBV.*

In addition, **VD2**, **VD7**, **VD 3** and **VD11** identified the need to advance communication among the vital participants in GBV.

Furthermore, almost half of the participants, **VD2**, **VD3**, **VD6**, **VD9**, **VD 10** and **VD11**, believed that adequate support is required to eradicate incidents of GBV.

VDP11: *“Support in all facets is required. This may include supporting awareness GBV programmes in Vhembe District, availing resources, presenting expertise on a matter concerning GBV, support from the community and support of both the perpetrators and victims of GBV.”*

Apart from **VD1** and **VD8**, all participants suggested an increase in terms of GBV awareness.

“For as long as there are still cases reported on GBV, traditional leaders and other stakeholders should not stop sensitizing people through awareness campaigns on the effects of GBV”.

“In promoting awareness, the government or private sector can look at introducing female social clubs (associations) that could advocate for a peaceful and violent free society in all areas at Vhembe” [VDP3] noted.

VDP2: *“I suggest that it is time now for the business community to participants in the combating against Gender-Based Violence; this could be via adverts, shop stickers and holding events to increase awareness of GBV. I also think that the council of traditional authority during our annual meeting should always include the GBV issue, among other vital issues”.*

VDP9: *“I believe that GBV awareness should be the responsibility of everyone in the society, even though the government and traditional authority may have the lead, as they have great influence on the people”.*

4.5. CAUSES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Respondents highlighted several factors that cause GBV, such as poverty, abuse of older women for their pension money, and men who are unable to provide for their families and become violent, as a way to compensate for their feelings of low self-worth. However, the belief that women bring violence on themselves was concerning wearing mini-skirts; abusing alcohol and drugs; refusing their partners their conjugal rights; and lack of respect of customary laws, were some examples given.

Respondents cited a number of causes of gender-based violence, including financial hardship, the exploitation of elderly women for their person funds, and men turn to violence to make up for their lack of ability to support their families. Concerning examples of the belief that women bring violence upon themselves included wearing miniskirts, misusing drugs and alcohol, belief their partners their marital rights, and disregarding customary laws.

VDP9: *“Numbers obstacles, such as widespread poverty, ingrained patriarchal cultural attitudes, and a lack of state action in the implementation of laws, are major contributors to South Africa’s problem of gender-based violence.*”

VDP6: *“Additional cultural influences include the socialization of gender, normative expectations of femininity and masculinity, gender stereotypes and prejudice, the understanding of the family as a private domain governed by men and the widespread acceptance of violence as a part of public life.”*

Respondents, when asked if African traditional customs and culture lead to a patriarchal society which promotes male dominance over women, all indicated that it is a myth which must be eradicated from everyone’s mind because it undermines the customs and values of African people. Ten participants argued that every culture has its traditions about the significance of the home and its safety.

4.6. INITIATION SCHOOLS FOR BOTH MEN AND WOMEN

According to the participants, being a man meant that one had attended an initiation school and undergone circumcision. Before participating in the programmes, the boys believed that a boy who had not attended this school was not man enough. Evidence showed that culture played a crucial role in defining a boy as a man.

VDP11: *“boys attend initiation schools so that they can become better men and take care of their wives.”*

Participants mentioned that it is a civic responsibility for men to provide for women and children and to protect the women from GBV. The participants had the following to say;

VDP4: *“Being a man is very special in the community because we protect women from abuse and violence.”*

The researcher asked respondents if they have any programmes /strategies that will combat gender – based violence. They all mentioned that the root cause of any type of violence is illiteracy.

VDP2: *“Educate the people. We need to educate people to stop abuse and victim-blaming. Not only that, we need to make people aware of the steps they can take and the consequences of gender based violence. We can also join community-based victim support initiatives. Also, we can be volunteers and spread the message.”*

Eight of them thought that the emphasis should be shifted from viewing females and other groups subjected to gender base violence as victims to viewing them as survivors, actors and change agents, with a particular emphasis on the agency and empowerment of women and girls. Furthermore, considering the close connection between GBV and sexual and reproductive health, six participants stated that initiatives to promote these rights are essential for preventing GBV. Among these initiatives are those that support and defend women’s autonomy and freedom of choice in matters pertaining to their sexuality, such as HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning options and sexual and reproductive health. The following was said by the participants:

VDP5: *“The Men Speak Out initiative has been implemented in an effort to encourage young men and their communities to critically consider inflexible standards associated with masculinity. It consists of community campaigns, group education exercises and an assessment model : to gauge how the programs affect attitudes regarding gender.”*

VDP1: *“We have a project in my village that demonstrates the value of women’s organizations, group efforts, and voice in presenting violence as well as promoting peace and the development of states. Men and women participated in the so called community based dialogue groups that were formed by the project. Community cohesion has resulted from these, initially among the groups and subsequently among the families and female participants. These programs also constructively address issues of gender equality such as GGv and barriers to women’s political participation. Additionally, the dialogue groups have been successful in altering discriminatory norms*

and behaviours such as men views on women attending school, women's participation in public spaces and decisions made about household budgets.”

Due to their (traditional leaders) power, closeness to the populace, and primary responsibility for upholding traditions and customs derived from the constitution, traditional leaders have a crucial role to play. Participants also noted that in order to guarantee that gender equality and equity are a reality in the lives of females and girls, leaders throughout the continent have a big part to play in pursuing appropriate legal action. Additionally, they have to take the initiative in fostering a social consensus that recognizes the importance of female's right and their ultimate protection for the advancement of humanity. As a nation and district, we must go beyond frameworks from laws and policies and instead focus on effective implementation based on fresh on eradicating GBV in all of its manifestations.

4.7. PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT

The participants clarified that the GBV Officer supports operations and efforts to fulfil the UUNHCR's (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) mandate and associated obligations on GBV prevention, risk mitigation, responses based on policy and guidance when asked to elaborate on the responsibilities of the GBV Officer in Limpopo Province. The GBV officer additionally offers age -appropriate, specialized support and care for adolescents, male and female child survivors of GBV including case management and counselling, as well as direct support and care for adult survivors of GBV. The Department of Social Development participant said the following:

VDP12: *“Typically, we urge victims of abuse to get in touch with us right away because we think that dialogue can save lives. Before it is too late, couples in abusive relationships ought to go to family counselling.”*

The Department of Social Development oversees the Gender- Based Violence Command Centre (GBVCC). The centre runs nationwide call centre that is open seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Social workers employed by the facility handle call taking and referrals. In order to run the centre and provide services to victims of gender-based

violence, 48 social work agents, 8 social work supervisors, 4 quality assures and 1 centre manager are employed. The department of social development developed and established the National Emergency Response Team (NERT) to test a nationwide rapid response strategy for the provision of psychosocial services in the wake of traumatic incidents. This team is intended to supplement the GBVCC's telephone trauma counselling program. Following the first three days of rapid response, the provincial DSD assumes control.

VDP12: *“The GBVCC work to ensure that efficient coordination is necessary to provide victims of GBV with improved protection, support and long-lasting solutions. In order to effectively address GBV, cooperation and efficient coordination improve response times, cut down on red tape, guarantee that standards are fulfilled, and raise accountability to impacted populations.”*

The researcher asked what the current statistics of GBV in the district and province were, and was informed that in the fourth quarter of 2023 there were 279 cases of gender based violence and femicide in Vhembe District alone. This indicated that 77% of women in Limpopo had experienced some form of gender-based violence in their lifetime, including partner and non-partner violence (Office of the Premier, 2023). Moreover, the Province recorded more 1 082 in the second quarter of 2023. About half of the men (48%) admitted to perpetrating GBV at least once in their lifetime.

.Majority of violence happened in close relationships and was primary emotional abuse, which is a type of abuse that is rarely addressed. In addition, 31% of the female participants reported experiencing emotional violence, whereas 36% of the male participants reported engaging in emotional intimate partner violence (IPV) at some point in their lives. However, there were other forms of intimate violence that both men and women committed and experienced, such as economic, sexual and physical abuse. Nearly 25% of women and 25% of men, respectively, reported having experienced or perpetrates physical intimate partner violence. 14% of men and 13% of women had experienced economic intimate violence. One in five (21%) said they had

experienced abuse at least once while pregnant. Both men and women reported numerous instances of physical or sexual IPV in the majority of cases.

Furthermore, the province with the biggest problem with GBV is Limpopo Province. The primary problems are the frequent assault cases in Vhembe District Municipality; the area with the highest number of reported GBV cases is the Thohoyandou policing area.

VDP13: *“GBV in Vhembe district is a serious problem; for instance, it is the only district that has a sexual offences court in Limpopo Province.”*

The Limpopo government has programmes such as IMBIZOs, that deal with GBV as a pandemic that affect chiefs, councillors, ward committees, and communities at large. Moreover, government has been training traditional leadership on how to deal with GBV cases in their areas. However, due to lack of resources, much needs to be done, as programmes that exist are not adequate. VDP13 emphasised that more police officers that specialize in GBV cases are needed. Furthermore, the province still lacks sufficient competence when it comes to assessing and managing of women experiencing GBV.

When asked how government involves the traditional leaders in Gender – Based Violence and whether they have a budget for programmes of Gender – Based Violence, the respondent from Department of Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) mentioned that there is good cooperation between the entities. However, conventional leaders’ believed the system had disempowered them. Moreover, traditional leaders are never given funding, which make it challenging for them to carry out community programs. Traditional leaders are also helpless because of the haziness surrounding the functions of government agencies like the courts and police. Traditional leaders do, however, bear some of the blame for how their perception is shaped.

As a result, there are conflicts between traditional leaders who are not part of the government and the administrative branch of local government. This conflict is said to result from the local government’s decision to carry out projects without consulting the traditional leaders because they are then seen as barriers to implementation, traditional

leaders have a negative effect on the provision of services. To ease any tension, traditional leaders support the creation of operational guidelines and better ties with the government on a structural level.

The Limpopo Government has a local, district and provincial traditional house of leaders and when participants were asked if there are collaborative programmes between government and traditional leaders, they stated that traditional leaders had suggested that there should be stronger ties between themselves, government and the court systems/magistrates, for better referrals and so that cases are managed more effectively.

VDP14: *“there appears to be shaky relationship in these communities between traditional leaders and the government. Traditional leaders, for instance, believes that outside programs were unsuccessful. Government sponsored workshops are typically held in remote locations and the use of English alienates participants. Furthermore, because of the format of the workshops, members do not contribute as much , which deters sincere engagement”*

According to the participants, continuous capacity building with traditional leaders is necessary for their future involvement in order for them to handle SGBV cases based on merit rather than on their own beliefs and attitudes. Traditional leaders may be better equipped to respond to community-level interventions and cascade knowledge once they have reached a certain level of confidence and skill. The traditional leaders stated that their favourite kind of training was interactive workshops.

Participants also said that in order for traditional leaders to keep up the fight against GBV, resources needed to be provided to them, or at the very least, they needed to be actively involved in budget management from the planning phase all the way through to implementation and assessment. Women’s empowerment, educating potential victims, educating victims about court systems, and upholding customary laws that enforce discipline were a few of the subjects covered in the training.

4.9. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In this chapter, the researcher presented, interpreted, and discussed the data derived from the questionnaire administered among the selected traditional leadership from Limpopo Province, specifically in Vhembe District. The next chapter presents the conclusion, based on the analysis of study findings from Chapter 4. It also proffers some recommendations and practical implications and provides the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the results, based on objectives of study. Further presents recommendations and outlines proposed solutions to research problem and conclusions drawn from the findings. This is the final chapter, where aim and study objectives are answered. This study was mainly motivated by high level of GBV cases that are ever growing. The results show the important role that traditional leadership has in combating gender-based violence.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Study found a strong relationship between roles played by traditional leadership and addressed effect of GBV at Vhembe District. Literature showed that GBV is a global problem; as such, concerted efforts are required in relation to a GBV free society. To a more considerable extent, literature correlated with findings of this current study.

In terms of gender, there were 8 males and 7 female's participants that took part in present study, as illustrated already as key informants. The key informant category included traditional leaders, GBV officers from CoGHSTA and the Department of Social Development. Apart from being key informants, these stakeholders were all knowledgeable about gender-based violence.

Findings regarding each of the objectives are discussed below:

This study's first empirical objective was to investigate role played by traditional leadership in combating Gender-Based Violence. Numerous researchers have posed the question and revealed that traditional leadership play a significant role in preventing

GBV. Moreover, findings obtained from the current study revealed the role of traditional leaders in preventing GBV; it comes out clearly that traditional leaders have a significant influence at the community level in advocating for a peaceful and GBV free society. Secondly, above underpinning is fundamental because traditional leaders in Vhembe are the guardians of the tradition and culture of populaces. Therefore, they preside over local people; for this reason, the conduct of people is aligned with customs and traditions.

This study also revealed that both traditional leaders and government officials has an adequate understanding of GBV. However, their respective understanding of GBV varies, depending on factors such as cultural context, education and awareness campaigns. Mabunda (2020) also found that traditional leaders' understanding of GBV is mostly influenced by cultural norms, customs, and traditional practices. This sometimes may perpetuate gender inequality among communities. Additionally, it was revealed that traditional leaders argue that any GBV against, females, and young girls impacts society negatively. Notably, most of them did not believe that men can also be abused.

The study also found that government officials need training, in order to combat GBV, especially those holding biases that hinder effective responses to GBV. During the analysis of collected data, it was found that GBV is a pandemic in, Limpopo Province especially at Vhembe District. For instance, Limpopo Province Premier's office 4th Quarter gender based violence and femicide report (2023) shows that Thohoyandou police station alone can have up to 120 cases at a time, with 8 cases of rape and 13 common assault cases. Moreover, it was found that out of 872 victims of GVB, 335 are women and children from Vhembe District (Limpopo Province Office the Premier 4th Quarter GBV and Femicide Report, 2023).

Above finding shows that GBV is high, as most participants argued that 1 in 3 female aged 15 to 49 experience attacks, and around 1 in 4 females have opened a case at a police station or a traditional court. Additionally, Vhembe is the only district that has a sexual offence court in Limpopo Province. The study also found that majority of

traditional leadership still finds difficult to deal with GBV cases. However, they refer difficult cases to the police and formal courts, for adjudication.

The findings also show that most traditional leaders solve GBV through dialogue between victim, the perpetrator and families, to reach a resolution that is acceptable to all parties involved. It also found that some traditional leaders refer all GBV cases to legal authorities to ensure the rights of the victim are protected and that perpetrator faces legal consequences.

Evidence from the study revealed that poverty, alcohol abuse, drug abuse and low esteem among men who cannot provide for families use violence as a way to compensate their insecurities. The study also found that it is still important for a man to attend initiation schools and undergoing circumcision because this school teaches men to treat women fairly. Evidence shows that culture plays a crucial role in describing a boy as a man.

Furthermore, this study found that campaigns and educational programmes on gender-based violence, through traditional court services, Faith Based Organisations and Women's Leadership Centres, were seen as the normal methods used to stop GBV in Vhembe District. Moreover, Traditional Leaders' involvement includes GBV awareness campaigns, conducted during the community meetings. The study also revealed traditional leadership are more involved in prevention of GBV through traditional courts hearings, in Vhembe.

The second objective related to challenges faced by traditional leadership in combating GBV revealed that traditional leaders felt disempowered by government. This was due to funding that was never directed to them, which make it hard for Traditional Leaders to implement programmes in their societies. Additionally, traditional leaders argue that there is no clarity on their role and that is caused by government structures (police and the justice system) which render them powerless. Nevertheless, they did take some responsibility and accountability for the role played in how they are perceived. The study

also found that traditional authorities feel they are not fully capacitated to respond to SGBV cases in their societies. Regardless of capacity building conferences where more 60 customary leaders were trained on GBV after the sign of a Memorandum of Understanding between the National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL), Department of Justice and the National Prosecuting Authority.

The study revealed that traditional leaders allude to the need for state, local administration and societies to respect Traditional Authorities and recognize their power, and this could only happen when there is strong relationship among all the stakeholders. Moreover, it was revealed that there are tensions between municipalities at a managerial level and traditional leaders, who are outside of government. This tension is due to lack of consultation by local government when implementing projects which effectively bypass traditional councils. This impact service delivery negatively, as traditional authorities are then perceived as obstacles to implementation. At a structural level, traditional leaders advocate for improved relations with government and development of operational guidelines, to mitigate any tension.

Evidence also found that traditional leaders indicated that poor relations between themselves (Traditional Leaders) and the court systems make it difficult to referrals, and cases to be managed more efficiently. Despite this, the role of traditional authorities in the fight against Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and HIV and AIDS in southern Africa has remained limited. It was also found that traditional leaders are not aggressively involved in the administration of funds from the development stage to implementation and evaluation stage.

This third primary research objective related to strategies to promote role of traditional authorities and governance in the prevention of Gender-Based Violence. It was found that institutional capacity of traditional establishments needs to be enhanced through partnerships with organisations such as the Department of Justice (DOJ) and South African Police Services (SAPS). The partnerships will enable the solidification of traditional courts. Furthermore, the study found that training on sexual reproductive

health (SRH), Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), Sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) and access to services, human rights and governance, is required, and connecting these themes to sociocultural settings is significant. Traditional authorities serving in traditional courts, in particular, need to be competent, to increase their understanding of Gender-Based Violence, access to services and to fight the stigma around this GBV pandemic.

Equally important, traditional house ought to subsidise to the current South African policies on GBV, by enforcing compliance, because they hold an absolute position in society with a significant influence on the behaviour of their subjects within their jurisdiction. To this end, traditional leaders contribute significantly to addressing GBV in society. It was also found that it is imperative for stringent measures to be meted out to those who practice GBV in the community. This will ensure that people refrain from GBV. In addition, concerted efforts from all the stakeholders are required. In this way, traditional leaders can become the apex of compliance in advocating for a GBV free society, thereby promoting peace, social cohesion and nation building.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the research objectives, the following recommendations are made:

- There is a need for Traditional Leaders to be more proactively involved in gender-based violence matters.
- The established traditional GBV secretariat structure and Traditional Council committee can drive activities at the community level. Meanwhile, the traditional council committee could direct and coordinate GBV referral and prevention activities.

- There should be a collaboration and a working relation amongst the Traditional Council Committee and the South African Police Services and the local municipality.
- The Traditional Authority should participate in the Integrated Development Plan of the Local and District municipalities to influence budget allocation for local gender – based violence educational programmes.
- Traditional Authorities should partner with local Churches to instill the moral fiber in communities through educational programmes.
- Traditional Authorities should influence policy change and custom practice to be gender sensitive and responsive to gender-based violence challenges.
- Promoting awareness campaign and training on GBV in communities in Vhembe District could help to eradicate GBV.
- Customary sanctions should be revisited and applied if they are not contravening the provisions of the South Africa constitution..

5.4 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following area may be further researched:

- A similar academic study to the current research could be conducted in other regions, using a larger sample. The results of such studies could be used for the comparative purpose, to determine the link and relationship among the findings. The broader perspective from different regions would be appropriate to make a claim for possible amendments to laws that promote inequality among men and female in the South Africa society.

- The role of stakeholders in addressing GBV government and NGOs need to be revisited at Vhembe District, Limpopo Province South Africa.

5.5. CONCLUSION

These recommendations and summary of the study are presented in this chapter. Furthermore, areas for future research were also presented. It can be concluded that the study's purpose was achieved. There are notable deductions drawn from study: This study concludes that there is a significant role that can be played by the Traditional Leaders in combating gender- based violence in their communities. The gazetting of the Traditional and Khoi - San Leadership Act of 2019, elevated the role and importance of the Traditional Leaders in the society. The traditional Leadership is still of great relevance in the today's democratic era. This is a form of local government that is very close to its populace and furthermore that holds the traditions, customs and culture of its people together. The Traditional Leaders still hold respect among communities due to their virtue of being of royal blood and also of being the custodian of tradition and culture.

Culture is the heritage of every human being. Every human being has a deeper hunger of knowing and understanding his roots and belonging. Traditional Authority is a living symbol of the roots and beginning of most mankind. It is therefore of great importance, that the command and voice of the traditional leadership on matters of Gender Based Violence should be heard and be recognised. The command and authority of the Traditional Leadership will assist in alleviating gender-based violence from its root cause of patriarchy , social ills and inequality .

With regard to the first objective, this was aimed at assessing role of traditional leaders in combating GBV at Vhembe District. The study found that Traditional Leaders fight Gender-Based Violence (GBV) with limited resources at their disposal. In these findings, it can be seen that this study's first and second research objectives were achieved. The second objective relates to major challenges faced by Traditional Leadership in

combating GBV. This study revealed some of the difficulties faced by Traditional Leaders to combat gender-based violence which include, lack of state action in the legal implementation of policies, as well as lack of effective policies. The third primary research objective related to strategies to promote role of traditional leadership and governance in deterrence of GBV revealed there are some strategies traditional leaders can use, including GBV awareness campaigns, conducted during council meetings, to eradicate GBV.

5.6. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study population was made up of Black males and females from Vhembe District; as such the results of the study can be a representation of the Black communities of South Africa. Therefore, future research can be conducted across race and class. Furthermore, the study focused on Vhembe District, due to constraints of time and resources: the researcher was obliged to focus only on the abovementioned area. Therefore, the study results cannot be generalized among all neighbouring communities. It is only limited to Vhembe District.

5.7 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter analysed collected data from the participants. It also highlighted what Traditional Leaders can do to influence policy and custom laws in their local traditional space to combat Gender Based Violence and other social ills identified in this study. Moreover, the Traditional Authorities can be empowered with the capacity building programmes provided by government to eradicate societal ills, but more importantly to promote social cohesion, law and order in communities.

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Appendixes

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

My name is Mokgonyana Kgathane Veronica. I am a researcher from the University of Limpopo. The aim of this study is to investigate the role of traditional leaders and governance in combating Gender -Based Violence in Limpopo Province. An Interview guide will be used to collect data. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from it at any time without providing any reason. All information will be treated as confidential. Please do not print your name or other detail on this questionnaire.

For any enquiries kindly contact me on 072 4000 827 and 082 064 8839

Statement concerning participation in a Research Project:

Name of Study: The Role of Traditional Leadership and Governance in combating Gender – Based Violence in Limpopo Province

Participant:

1. I have been fully informed on the aim and objectives of the Research Project and was provided the opportunity to ask questions and given adequate time to rethink the issue.
2. The aim and objectives of the Research Project are sufficiently clear to me, and I have not been pressurized to participate in any way.
3. I am fully being made aware that the information obtained from me is confidential and will only be used in the Research Project, in future publications and will not be linked to me directly.
4. I am aware that interviews will be conducted with me physically and /or virtually. I consent that my name will not be revealed if I do not grant permission to the researcher. I understand that participation in this Research Study is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw from it at any time and without supplying reasons.

This will have no influence at my workplace, community, or any other institution I am linked to.

5. I acknowledge that this Research Study has been approved by the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee of the University of Limpopo.

I hereby give consent to participate in this Research Study.

Signed at on the of 20.....

Name of Consenter/Volunteer or Guardian	Signature
Name of Witness	Signature

Statement by the Researcher

_____ I provided verbal and/or written information regarding this Study. I agree to answer any future questions concerning the Study as best as I am able. I will adhere to the approved protocol.

Full Names and Surname	Signature	Date

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

**UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS**

Name of Research Project:

The Role of Traditional Leadership and Governance in combating Gender – Based Violence in Limpopo Province

RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Category of Participant/s: Traditional Leaders

Name of Participant:.....

Institution:

Contact details:.....

Gender:

Area of residence:District Municipality.....

- 6. Briefly elaborate your understanding of Gender – Based Violence?

- 7. How rampant are the cases of Gender – Based Violence in your area of jurisdiction?

- 8. Are Gender – Based Violence cases formally reported in your traditional council/tribal authority? If they are, how many were reported in the last six (6) months?

- 9. How are Gender – Based Violence cases resolved in your traditional council / tribal authority?

10. Elaborate on how you give support to victims of Gender – Based Violence.
11. What do you think are the contributing factors to Gender – Based violence in your area?
12. Do you think that the African traditional customs and culture lead to a patriarchal society which promotes male dominance over women? If so, do you think that this norm will lead to Gender – Based Violence?
13. It is believed that traditional male initiation schools promote male domination and masculinity, which perpetuate disregard of women in the society. How can you make male traditional initiation schools vehicles to change male behaviour towards women?
14. Do you have any programmes /strategies that will combat gender – based violence in your area?
15. What is your overall idea of combating Gender – Based Violence in Limpopo as traditional leader?
16. Briefly elaborate your responsibilities of your office as a coordinator (official responsible) for GBV of Gender – Based Violence in Limpopo Provincial Government?
17. What are the current statistics of GBV according for the five Districts of Limpopo Province?
18. Name the programmes that Limpopo Government is implementing to reduce Gender – Based Violence and elaborate whether they are adequate or not?

19. How do you involve the traditional leaders in Gender – Based Violence? Do they have a budget for programmes of Gender – Based Violence?

20. The Limpopo Government has a provincial, district and local traditional house of leaders. Do you have collaborative programmes with them? If yes, are they effective? If not, how would you involve them in future?

21. What will be your overall recommendations for combating GBV using traditional leadership in Limpopo?

Signature of Participant

Signed at on the of 20.....

Signature of Researcher

Signed at on the of 20.....

APPENDIX C: FOROMO YA TŠHUPO YA KWANO

YUNIBESITHI YA LIMPOPO FOROMO YA TŠHUPO YA KWANO

Setatamente sa go tšea karolo ka gare ga Projeke ya Nyakišišo:

Karolo ye e ralokwago ke Magoši a se Legae le pušo ya bona go thibela tlhokofatšo ya bong: Profentshe ya Limpopo

22. Ke ile ka botšwa le go hlalosešwa ka botlalo Projeke ye ya Nyakišišo ka ba ka fiwa nako ya go kgotsofatša go botšiša dipotšišo mo ke sa kwešišego le go ba le nako ya go ikgopola ka go tšea karolo mo projekeng ye.

23. Maikemišetso a projeke ye , a beilwe go nna gabotse , e bile ga se ka gapeletšwa go tšea karolo ka gare ga dinyakišišo tše.

24. Ke hlaloseditšwe ka botlalo gore dipolelo ka moka tše di tšwago go nna , e tla ba sephiri, gomme e tla šomišetšwa feela ka gare ga projeke ye le ka gare ga dipampiri tšeo di sa tloga ngwalwa , tša tšweletšwa mabapi le dinyakišišo tše. Tše di tla bego di ngwadilwe ka gare ga projeke di etšwa go nna , ke kwešišitše gore di ka se amanywe felo le nna.

25. Ke na le kwišišo ye e feletšego ya gore ke tlo boledišwa mabapi le projeke ye ya nyakišišo ka mokgwa wa go ba le kopano ya poledišano ka sebele goba le ka maleatlana a di khomphuthara. Ke tseba gabotse gore maina a ka, a ka se šomišwe felo ntle le tumelelo ya ka. Ke kwešiša gabotse gore ga ke gapeletšwe go tšea karolo ka gare ga projeke ye , e bile nka tlogela go tšea karolo ka gare go yona ntle le go fa mabaka.

26. Go tšea karolo ka gare ga projeke ye, le go se tšee karolo, go ka se amane felo le mošomo wa ka , setšhaba se ke amanago le sona , le mafelo ka moka a nka bego ke amana le ona.

27. Ke amogela gore Projeke ye ya Nyakišišo, e filwe tumelelo ke ba lekgotla la dinyakišišo la Turfloop Research Ethics Committee Yunibesithing ya Limpopo.

Ka fao, ke dumela go tšea karolo ka gare ga Projeke ye ya Nyakišišo

Go saennwe ka Letsatsi la la kgwedi ya 20.....

Leina la motšeakarolo / goba moemedi wa motšeakarolo	Mosaeno
Leina la tthatse	Mosaeno

Setatamente sa Monyakišiši

Ke ikana go re ke file tšhedimošo ka moka mabapi le nyakišišo ye. Ke dumela gape le go re ke tla araba ka moka dipotšišo tše di ka go tšwelela mabapi le nyakišišo ye. Ke ikana go re ke tla sepela ka melao ka moka ya projeke ye. Go ya ka moo e filwego ka gona.

Maina ka botlalo le sefane	Mosaeno	Tšhupamabaka

APPENDIX D: DIPOTŠIŠO TŠA MOTŠEAKAROLO PROJEKENG

<p style="text-align: center;">YUNIBESITHI YA LIMPOPO DIPOTŠIŠO TŠA MOTŠEAKAROLO PROJEKENG YA NYAKIŠIŠO</p>

Leina la Projeke:

Karolo ye e ralokwago ke Magoši a se Legae le pušo ya bona go thibela tlhokofatšo ya bong: Profentshe ya Limpopo

DIPOTŠIŠO TSA POLEDIŠANO:

Karolo ya Batšeakarolo: Magoši a setšo

Leina la motšeakarolo :.....

Lefapha:

Dinomoro tša kgokaganyo:.....

Bong:

Lefelo :Masepala wa selete.....

28. Ka boripana hlalosa kwišišo ya gago ya tlhokofatšo goba tlhoriso ya bong?

29. Naa tlhokofatšo ya bong e tseneletše bjang nageng ye o bušago go yona?

30. Naa ditiragalo tša tlhokofatšo ya bong di a begwa mošate naa? Ge e ba di a begwa, ke tše kae tše di begilwego kgwedding tše tshela tše di fetilego?

31. Melato goba ditiragalo tša ditlhokofatso tša bong di rarollwa bjang kgorong ya lena ya mošate ?
32. Hlalosa ka mokgwa wo o fago batšwa-sehlabelo ba ditlhokofatso tša bong thekgo .
33. Ke dintlha dife tše o nagago gore ke ditšhutšhumetšo tša go hlokofatšwa ga bong nageng ya gago?
34. A o gopola gore setšo le meeno e tliša kgodišo ya banna le kgatelelo ya basadi ? Ge go le bjalo , a o gopola gore seo ke sona se tlišago tlhokofatšo ya bong , kudu kudu basadi ?
35. Go na le tshepho ya gore koma ya banna e godiša maatla a go fetelela a banna godimo ga basadi mo setšhabeng. Ke ka mokgwa mang wo koma e kago go šomišwa go thibela le go fediša tlhokofatšo ya basadi ?
36. Mo bogošing bja lena , a le na le mananeo goba maano ao le ka a šomišago go thibela le go fediša tlhokofatšo ya bong?
37. Ala dikgopolo tše o nago le tšona go fediša le go thibela tlhokofatšo ya bong ka mo profinseng ya Limpopo?

Mosaeno wa Motšeakarolo

Lefelo la mosaenoletšatšikgwedi.....
.....ngwaga

Mosaeno wa Monyakišiši

Lefelo la mosaenoletšatšikgwedi.....
.....ngwaga

Leina la Projeke:

Karolo ye e ralokwago ke Magoši a se Legae le pušo ya bona go thibela tlhokofatšo ya bong: Profentshe ya Limpopo

DIPOTŠIŠO TSA POLEDIŠANO:

Karolo ya Batšeakarolo: Bašomi ba mmušo

Leina la motšeakarolo :.....

Lefapha:

Dinomoro tša kgokaganyo:.....

Bong:

Lefelo :Masepala wa selete.....

38. Ka boripana , hlalosa maikarabelo mošomong wa gago wa go raloka karolo ya gago ya go thibela tlhokofatšo ya bong profenseng ya Limpopo .

39. Efa dipalopalo tša tlhokofatšo ya bong go ya ka dilete ka moka tša Limpopo.

40. Efa ka botlalo mananeo a a diragatšago ke mmušo go thibela tlhokofatšo ya bong ebile o hlalose gore a lekane goba ga se a lekane naa?

41. Ke mokgwa mang wo le o šomišago go akaretša Magoši ka gare ga mananeo a mmušo a go lwantšha tlhokofatšo ya bong ? A go na le mašeleng a go thuša Magoši ka mananeo a ?

42. Limpopo e na le ntlo ya Magoši maemong a province , a selete le a mmušo wa selegae. A mmušo wa province o na le mananeo a a lego gona a go akaretša ntlo ya Magoši ka moka go thibela tlhokofatšo ya bong? Ge e ba mananeo a

gona , a kgona go thibela bohlola bjo ? Ge go se bjalo, go ka kgonega bjang gore Magoši a šomišwe ka gare ga mananeo a ?

43.Ke mekgwa efe le ka e šomišago le le mmušo go somiša Magoši go thibela tlhokofatšo ya bong ka mo profenseng ya Limpopo ?

Mosaeno wa Motšeakarolo

Lefelo la mosaenoletšatšikgwedi.....

.....ngwaga

Mosaeno wa Monyakišiši

Lefelo la mosaenoletšatšikgwedi.....

.....ngwaga