



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE
IN
LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT PROJECT

RESEARCH UNIT


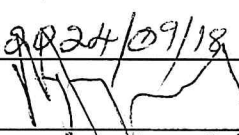

2024/2025

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OFFICIAL SIGN-OFF

The Department of Transport and Community Safety, under the guidance of Hon. S.V. Mathye and Head of Department, Mr. M.S. Matjena, facilitated the research project on Factors contributing to Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) in Limpopo province, taking into account all relevant policies, legislation, and mandates.

Therefore, under the direction of Mr. M.S. Matjena, Head of Department, and Hon. S.V. Mathye, MEC, the Provincial Secretariat for Police Service (PSPS) directorate will assist key internal and external stakeholders in putting the research recommendations into practice.

Submitted by	Ms. Nhlane-Mthimkulu M.A Chief Director: Provincial Secretariat for Police Service	Signature:	
		Date:	2024/09/18
Recommended by	Mr. Matjena M.S Accounting Officer	Signature	
		Date	23/09/2024
Approved by	Hon. S.V Mathye Executive Authority	Signature:	
		Date:	05/10/24

General comments:

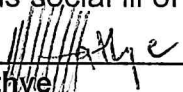
EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Gender-based violence and femicide has been declared by President Cyril Ramaphosa as the second pandemic after Covid-19. The increase in gender-based violence and femicide in Limpopo Province therefore needs to be taken seriously. The loss of lives caused by gender-based violence and femicide cannot be ignored.

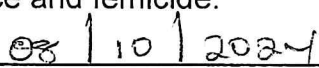
GBVF is said to be aggravated by low income, financial pressure, loss of employment, cheating by partners -both male and female, interim and final protection orders. The withdrawal of GBVF cases by complainants, tolerance of gender-based violence in relationships as well as scarcity of basic household resources, also seem to contribute to the scourge. Polygamous relationships, polyandrous relationships, and relationship entitlement add to the problem. Religious factors such as lack of proper church legislation and policies, misuse of headmanship roles in society and in the religious domain, misinterpretation of women roles in the society and church denominations, disagreements in the performance of religious rituals and responding to ancestral callings are some of the triggers.

To reduce these levels of crime and violence against vulnerable groups, there is a need for integrated and collaborative efforts amongst key stakeholders such as the JCPS cluster and the community policing structures (CPF's and CSF's). Reviewing the laws regarding the release of offenders on bail and parole may be some of the measures that could assist. The general lack of psychologists, non-payment and reduction of stipends for Victim Support Centre volunteers and practitioners heightens the situation.

The National Development Plan 2030 (NDP) puts a responsibility on government to develop and implement measures towards building safer communities. The province cannot continue grieving for the women, men and children whose lives are taken too soon by criminals. I therefore implore all role players to take an active part in preventing and combating this social ill of gender-based violence and femicide.



Hon. S.V. Mathye
MEC for Transport and Community Safety



Date:

ACCOUNTING OFFICER STATEMENT


Based on the violent nature through which many women and children lose their lives, the significance of conducting evidence-based research in gender-based violence and femicide by the Department of Transport and Community Safety cannot be over-emphasized.

The Gender-Based Violence and Femicide National Strategic Plan (GBVF NSP) 2020 “sets out to provide a cohesive strategic framework to guide the national response to the hyper endemic GBVF crisis in which South Africa finds itself”. By taking a leaf out of the GBVF NSP, the Province may greatly benefit by developing a responsive strategy to fight this pandemic of gender-based violence and femicide.

Furthermore, the Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy (ICVPS) 2020 aims to promote the implementation thereof in an integrated, developmental, collaborative, knowledge and evidence-based approach to the prevention of crime and violence in South Africa.

The Department will continue to work jointly with the South African Police Service and Justice, Crime Prevention and Security cluster departments to ensure compliance with Domestic Violence Act as an effort to eradicate gender-based violence and femicide.

The research results of this project will contribute towards providing provincial policymakers with insight and new knowledge to develop a GBVF response strategy, effective awareness campaigns and community engagements that will make an impact in the fight against these horrendous acts meted against vulnerable groups.



Mr. M.S. Matjena
HOD. Transport and Community Safety

23/01/2024

Date:

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CPF	:	Community Policing Forum
CSF	:	Community Safety Forum
DSD	:	Department of Social Development
DCS	:	Department of Correctional Service
DSAC	:	Department of Sport, Arts and Culture
FCS	:	Family Violence, Child Protection, and Sexual Offences
GBV	:	Gender-based violence
GBVF	:	Gender-based Violence and Femicide
GBVF NSP	:	Gender-based Violence and Femicide National Strategic Plan
JCPS	:	Justice Crime Prevention and Security cluster
ICVPS	:	Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy
IPF	:	Intimate Partner Femicide
NPA	:	National prosecuting authority
NIPF	:	Non-Intimate Partner Femicide
LDTCS	:	Limpopo Department of Transport and Community Safety
LPREC	:	Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee
PSPS	:	Provincial Secretariat for Police Service
TCA	:	Thematic Content Analysis
SAPS	:	South African Police Service
VEP	:	Victim Empowerment Program
VSC	:	Victim Support Centre

ABSTRACT

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global pandemic experienced by both female and male counterparts in Limpopo Province (Thobejane, 2019; Selowa, Baloyi, & Chueng, 2022). This study aimed to understand socio-economic, psycho-social, environmental, and historical factors to identify events that may have triggered GBVF, and explore a strategy to assist in responding to GBVF.

About 150 participants were interviewed, with a sample comprising of police officers, victims and suspects. In addition, 600 GBVF documents were reviewed with a sample comprising of police dockets, incidence reports, victim support service reports, and protection orders.

The findings of the study suggest that socio-economic (low income, financial pressure, loss of employment), Psycho-social factors (cheating from both sides (male and female), protection order and withdrawal of GBVF case by applicant); environmental factors (climate change, deterioration of intimate relationships, scarcity of basic household resources and tolerating intimate violence in marriage and relationships), historical/cultural factors (polygamous relationship, polyandrous relationship and relationship entitlement), religious factors (lack of proper church legislation and policies), misinterpretation of headmanship in society and religious domains, misinterpretation of women's roles in society and religious domains) as the factors influencing GBVF.

The study has heightened the urgency for policymakers to develop a response GBVF prevention strategy that considers the factors that influence GBVF. This suggests that the response to GBVF prevention strategies in Limpopo could be a valuable conceptual tool to guide future interventions that are aimed at addressing GBVF in South Africa. The study has elucidated the urgency for policymakers to develop an evidence-based awareness campaign programme that are considerate of the factors contributing to GBVF.

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and Background

Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) is a global pandemic experienced by both female and male counterparts in Limpopo Province (Thobejane, 2019; Selowa, Baloyi, & Chueng, 2022). The World Health Organization (2021) estimated that women worldwide experience gender-based violence and femicide, such as spousal violence, battering, forced marriage, sexual abuse and dowry-related sexual harassment. Marital rape, intimidation, stalking, threats to hurt the person or their loved ones, humiliation, female genital cutting were also gender-based violence experienced by women (World Health Organization, 2021). Women were also experiencing gender-based violence, such as violence related to exploitation, trafficking, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, economic abuse, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, forced abortion, abuse in pregnancy, coercive use of contraception, female infanticide, and pre-natal sex selection (World Health Organization, 2021).

Marizka (2023) said GBVF is far too common in South Africa, anyone can be a victim, regardless of race, age, economic status, or cultural background. These types of crime happen in the context of intimate partner violence, which is considered the most common form of gender-based violence and femicide. They mostly occurred in residences known by both perpetrators and victims, public places (these include streets, open fields, recreational centers, parks, parking areas, and abandoned buildings); educational institutions (Schools, universities, colleges, and daycare facilities); liquor outlets (shebeen, tavern, pub, night club, and bottle store); public transport premises (bus stop, taxi rank, railway track/station); hotels, guest houses, BnB, and holiday resorts (Limpopo Provincial Government, 2022).

Substance abuse, financial problems, bullying, power, unhealthy relationships, and ending a relationship were found to have motivated GBVF among females (Marizka, 2023; Koketso, 2022). Selowa, Baloyi, and Chueng (2022) find infidelity, unemployment, lack of trust or insecurities, physical abuse, stigma, emotional abuse, financial abuse,

family separations, and friend separations as the main factors contributing to GBV among young males. Studies by previous authors recommended that different stakeholders must assist in minimizing GBV, and future research on the GBV phenomenon must be conducted.

1.2 Problem statement

Abuse and killing of women in South Africa have become a pandemic and Limpopo province is no exception. Although the Eastern Cape has emerged as the leading province with cases of gender-based violence (GBV). The Eastern Cape unfortunately is the province that has more than twice the national rate. About 22,000 women were killed in 2017 compared to 14,000 in KwaZulu-Natal. Limpopo doesn't have as many cases, but the number is still higher than the global average (Nkosi, 2022).

Until recently, not much research has focused on exploring multiple factors associated with GBV. These include, among other socio-economic, psycho-social, environmental, and historical factors. It is on this basis that the department in the present study seeks to understand factors contributing towards gender-based violence in Limpopo province to unearth deeper insights on this scourge.

Despite the efforts made by the Department of Transport and Community Safety's annual campaigns on 16-Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, the alarming reports on these cases make this study essential. For example, Letsitele police are searching for a 26-year-old man in connection with the rape of his 16-year-old sister that occurred at Babanana village, Limpopo. The incident happened on 21 September 2023, at around 10pm. (IOL News, 2023).

In another incident, a 34-year-old traffic officer was arrested in connection with the murder of a woman whose body was found dumped under a bridge at Chuenespoort in Limpopo, along the R37 road, on 17 August 2023. She was found with a gunshot wound to the abdomen. A 34-year-old traffic officer was arrested on Thursday after police investigations linked him to the murder. He was charged with murder, defeating the ends of justice, and unlawful possession of a firearm and ammunition.

The findings will assist the provincial government in the development of the GBVF research agenda for optimal sharing of existing and emerging evidence. The debriefing of the findings or outcome of the study will be through a research seminar, Limpopo Research Forum, multiple-stakeholder engagement, or workshops facilitated by the research technical team. This information will assist in reviewing and analyzing existing evidence to update the repository and research agenda.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to explore the factors associated with gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) in Limpopo Province.

1.4 Key objectives

- To understand socio-economic, psycho-social, environmental, and historical factors contributing to GBVF
- To identify events that may trigger GBVF
- To explore a strategy to assist in responding to GBVF

1.5 Research questions

- What are socio-economic, psycho-social, environmental, and historical factors contributing towards gender-based violence and femicide?
- What are the events that may trigger GBVF?
- What are the strategies, guidelines, and policies in place to address GBVF?

1.6 Definition of concepts

- **Gender-based violence:** Gender-based violence is defined as violence directed against a person (male or female) because of that person's gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately. This crime includes physical harm, sexual harm, psychological harm, economic harm, and domestic violence against women, men, or children living in the same household. While women and girls

suffer from GBV, men and boys are also suffering from this crime (European Commission, 2022).

- **Femicide:** Femicide violence is defined as an intentional killing with a gender-related motivation. It may be driven by stereotyped gender roles, discrimination towards women and girls, unequal power relations between women and men, or harmful social norms (UN Women, 2022).
- **Multiple trajectories:** Multiple trajectories are defined as routes through life that direct a person towards criminal behaviour quicker and at a higher rate than others (StudyCom, 2022)
- **Socio-economic:** Social and economic factors include factors such as income, education, employment, community safety and social support. The choices that are available in a community are impacted by social and economic factors. These choices include our abilities to afford medical care and housing and to manage stress (<https://www.cni-intyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/rnwnty-health-rankingsmodel/health-factors/social-econmir.-fartors>)
- **Psycho-social:** Psychosocial factors are characteristics or facets that influence an individual psychologically and/or socially. Such factors can describe individuals in relation to their social environment and how these affect physical and mental health. Psycho-social factors include protective psychosocial resources and psychological risk factors. Psycho-social resources in the social environment include social networks and social support. Central among psychological resources are coping ability or mastery, sense of coherence, and self-esteem. Psychological risk factors include vital exhaustion, depressiveness, hopelessness, and hostility (Kristin T, • Evalill N, Karin F, Pontus H, Mats L, Marie L, and Margareta K. (2020).
- **Environmental factors:** Environmental factors, as related to genetics, refers to exposures to substances (such as pesticides or industrial waste) where we live or work, behaviors (such as smoking or poor diet) that can increase an individual's risk of disease or stressful situations (such as racism). Genetic studies often take environmental factors into consideration, as these exposures can increase an individual's risk of genetic damage or disease (Hutter, 2023)

- **Historical factors:** Historical factors include past ecological and evolutionary circumstances that may have influenced present-day microbial diversity, such as dispersal and past environmental conditions (Hanson, Muller, Loy, Clelia, Appel and Jorgensen, 2019).
- **Intimate partner violence:** Refers to behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours (WHO, 2021).

1.7 Significance of the study

The study will help in the development of GBVF research databases and information systems that can be accessed by all service providers and implementers of various interventions. The provincial government will gain more knowledge and insight of the GBVF activities around the province, which will contribute towards the development of new policies, strategies and perspectives in dealing with GBVF. It will also allow the provincial government to improve on the existing awareness campaigns for gender-based violence and femicide.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction and background

Gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most severe challenges confronting South African society (Rikhotso, 2022). The South African Police Service (2022) crime statistics recorded that some of the highest crime incidents happen around police precincts. These include Thohoyandou, Seshego, Mankweng, Westernberg, Lebowakgomo, Vuwani, Giyani, Mahwelereng, Musina, Levubu, Ritavi, Nebo, Matlala, Bolobedu, Waterval, Siloam, Malamulele, Sekgosese, Bela-bela, Mokwakwala and Hlanganani. In 2021, GBVF assault-related crime experienced by 724 women, and 899 were raped. In 2021, 1444 rape cases were reported between October and December. In 2022, assault-related grievances body harm (AGBH) was experienced by 776 women, 227 women experienced domestic violence, and 894 women were raped. In 2022, South African Police Service recorded 1204 sexual offences and 1198 rape cases between October and December 2022. 267 rape suspects were arrested.

Several studies on the phenomenon of gender-based violence and femicide have been conducted internationally and nationally with the aim of understanding the incidence of gender-based violence and femicide and determining precipitating factors associated with the incidence of GBVF. Furthermore, research has been conducted with the aim of exploring the psychological impact of gender-based violence, effect of gender-based violence, and the experiences of young males on gender-based violence (Thobejane, 2019; Rikhotso, 2022; Selowa, Baloyi & Chueng 2022). These studies on gender-based violence and femicide were recommended by previous researchers and were used as the baseline to understand gender-based violence and femicide.

2.2 Contextual factors associated with gender-based violence and related homicides perpetrated by partners and in-laws: A study of women survivors in India

Gender based violence (GBV) is a significant public health concern for women globally, including countries such as India. The researchers investigated factors related to GBV and GBV-related homicides perpetrated by both husbands and in-laws using a qualitative

approach. Data were collected from 27 women in India. Analysis revealed factors at the societal/cultural, community, relationship and individual levels. Findings highlight the need for culturally appropriate risk assessment and safety planning procedures, as well as policies and programs across different ecological levels to reduce risk for GBV and GBV-related homicides (Bushra, S & Young, 2022).

2.3 Factors contributing to physical gender-based violence reported at Ndola central hospital & Zambia: Case study

A case-control study was conducted at Ndola Central Hospital Casualty Department, to determine socio-demographic factors associated with gender-based violence (GBV). The study was conducted from December 2015 to July 2016. A sample size of 85 cases and 85 controls was calculated after a pilot study of 30 cases and 30 controls was conducted. Out of the pilot study 60% of people who drink alcohol reported that they experienced GBV- physical assault while 40% of people who drink alcohol reported that they did not experience GBV- physical assault. Based on these outcomes the sample size was calculated using Stat. Calc in Epi-Info version 7 with the power at 80%. The adjusted odds ratio of alcohol drinking increases the likelihood of GBV- physical assault by 2.25 times. Those living in high-density areas are 2.23 times more at risk of GBV physical assault. Females are 2.27 times at risk of GBV physical assault unlike males (Ngonga,2017).

The dependant (outcome) variable is GBV physical assault. The independent (predictor) variables are alcohol abuse, income level, area of residence, and gender. These were chosen because these are some of the risk factors of GBV-physical according to the literature. Out of the 179 patients who participated in the study, 93(52%) reported to have experienced GBV physical assault regardless of age. More females 67 (68.4%) experienced GBV physical assault than males 26 (32.1%). More than 2/3 of those who reported alcohol drinking 51 (69.9%) experienced GBV-physical assault and only 40 (40.0%) among those who did not report the outcome. Those from high density 82 (56.9%) reported having experienced more GBV physical assault compared to 5 (23.8%) of those from low density areas (Ngonga,2017)

There is a need for healthy lifestyles to be encouraged such as control of alcohol consumption to reduce GBV– physical assault due to alcohol intake. Sensitization

campaigns and educational programmes seek to be intensified to address factors that make females more prone to GBV-physical assault than males. Living in a high-density area is a risk factor for GBV- physical assault as compared to living in a low-density area. Therefore (Ngonga, 2017) recommended that, more sensitization programs should be put in place at a societal level to reduce GBV–physical assault in such communities (Ngonga,2017)

2.4 “We are responsible for the violence and prevention is up to us”: a qualitative study of perceived risk factors for gender-based violence among Ethiopian university students

There is a high prevalence of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) victimization among young Ethiopian women, including in universities, where female enrolment is low but growing. Understanding factors contributing to GBV in this context and students’ perspectives on gender, relationships, and interpersonal violence is essential to creating effective interventions to prevent GBV and support female students’ rights and well-being.

In-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with male and female students (male IDI $n = 36$, female IDI $n = 34$, male FGD $n = 18$, female FGD $n = 19$) and faculty and staff (FGD $n = 19$) at two Ethiopian universities. Audio recordings were transcribed and translated into English. Transcripts were coded thematically to identify key factors contributing to GBV and provide narratives of students’ experiences.

GBV against female students was a salient issue, including narrative accounts of harassment, intimidation, and physical and sexual violence on the university campuses and the towns in which they are located. Reported risks for GBV included receiving academic support from male peers having a negative self-concept, belief in stereotypical gender expectations, and engaging in transactional sex and/or substance use. While students recognized these risk factors, they also suggested GBV may be the result of females’ “improper” behavior, attire, use of males for personal gain. GBV is a serious issue in these two Ethiopian universities, creating a tenuous learning environment for female students. Programs are needed to address areas of vulnerability and negative attitudes toward female students to decrease female victimization (Kaufman, Williams, Marea, Fentaye, Gebretsadic, Yedenekal, 2019).

2.5 Gender-based violence in South Africa

The pervasiveness of gender-based violence (GBV) against women and children constitutes the most severe expression of discrimination and dehumanization of women and children in South Africa. Even before the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic came, domestic violence was already one of the greatest human rights violations. Women for centuries suffered different forms of violation and continue to struggle in subtle forms in the 21st century. This article investigates the socio-cultural theories, narrative reflections and COVID-19 pandemic challenges associated with the prevalence of GBV in South Africa (Buqa, 2022)

The article argues that patriarchal culture, religion, gender norms, lockdown and violence in South Africa perpetuate gender-based abuse. Therefore, the article unfolds this research through a literature review and narrative approach which is used to allow the co-researchers to share their stories. The article embarks on socio-cultural, the scourge of GBV, the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, qualitative interviews, theological reflections and concludes by suggesting future possibilities to fight GBV. Contribution: This article contributes to an understanding that "*abafazi nabantwana baphefumla ngenxeba*" [women and children are breathing through the wound] amid the global COVID-19 pandemic. It discusses the prevalence of GBV, the intersection of religious cultural effects, social sciences, gender inequality and the continued oppression of women and children (Buqa, 2022).

2.6 Gender-based violence in some Pentecostal churches-A South African Study

One of the most devastating practices to be normalized in modern times is gender-based violence. Women and girls in South Africa can no longer enjoy the freedom that was promised by the country's Freedom Charter during the dawn of democracy. Rape, killing and other forms of female persecution have become common practices, and the most worrying part of this, is that the perpetrators of this violence seem to enjoy more freedom than their victims. Unfortunately, this kind of violence is no longer a secular issue but something that is now encountered in religious circles, places in which most people would hope to be sheltered and protected. The article investigates these kinds of violence within the parameters of religious institutions, specifically Pentecostal churches, and makes

some suggestions as to what kind of approaches is needed to eliminate this pandemic. This article uses a desktop/secondary approach to gather data and to reach the conclusions made as a basis for the argument (Ndlovu, Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Baloyi, 2024).

2.7 Factors contributing to physical gender violence among married women in Arumeru district Arusha region

The study was to assess the factors contributing to physical gender violence among married women in Arumeru, Arusha region. It was conducted to mainly focus and promote gender equality to marginalized communities and women through mainstreaming, thus contribute to PGV reduction. Physical Gender Violence is a worldwide public problem which cuts across all ages, classes, cultures and nationalities. The determinants occur at the individual, community and societal levels within all social, economic, religious and cultural groups. The evaluation employed both quantitative and qualitative as mixed methods for data collection. The methods used to collect data included questionnaire, interview guide and document review. A non-probability purposive sampling was used to select PGV clients, stakeholders and key informants. In probability sampling, every individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected as a subject for the research which guarantees that the selection process is completely randomized and unbiased.

The approach was a formative process evaluation aimed to explore information on PGV preventive services provided and challenges encountered by the program. The study revealed that most of the respondents (90%) of the women involved in the study reported to be forced to be married from their family. The study found that (71%) of the participants responded that alcohol consumption affected men and lead to physical violence. It was concluded that participants are aware of services provided by the programmes; however, socio-cultural, economic and related factors influence physical gender among married women. It is recommended that institutions should facilitate a policy dialogue on the social, health, and economic consequences of PGV on the sustainable development of a society (Rugimbana, 2019).

2.8 Factors contributing to gender-based violence among patients attending outpatient department at China-Uganda friendship hospital, Naguru.

Gender Based Violence is experienced in different forms by different individuals which could be physical, psychological, sexual, economic, or sexual abuse. Studies have shown that GBV is a public health concern globally and it's associated with both psychological and physical consequences. The main objective of the study was to determine factors contributing to gender-based violence among patients attending OPD at Naguru Hospital from June to July 2016. As my methodology, a descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in Naguru Outpatient department. Simple random sampling was carried out and a total of 371 participants were selected. Data was collected through interviewing participants who met the inclusion criteria using a structured questionnaire after coming out of the doctor's examination room.

The findings showed that the rate of GBV is still high. 64.4% of the study participants experienced GBV and only 35.6% reported to have never experienced GBV and of those who had experienced GBV 43.7% had experienced physical abuse, 24% sexual abuse, 12.7% psychological abuse, and 19.7% other forms of abuse. Married partners were more likely to experience GBV and the most common cause of violence was alcohol. The study findings showed that the prevalence of GBV was still high. Most women who experienced GBV did not act, and it was attributed to fear and lack of financial support. For the respondents who acted, they reported to family members and religious leaders. The government should come up with a law that limits alcohol abuse because most cases of violence are caused by alcohol abuse. Policy makers should plan for possible interventions for the primary prevention of GBV which also include educating and sensitizing couples on the effects of GBV (Basemera, 2016)

2.9 Provincial femicide rates in South Africa

The 2017 femicide rates for the provinces are presented in Table 2. The Eastern Cape reported higher rates (compared to the national rates) for all types of femicide. KwaZulu-Natal had higher overall femicide and intimate partner femicide rates compared to national and the other provinces.

The two provinces with the lowest overall femicide rates were Limpopo and Mpumalanga which were significantly lower than the overall South African femicide rate. Mpumalanga also had the lowest Non-Intimate Partner Femicide (NIPF) rate while Limpopo had the lowest Intimate Partner Femicide (IPF) rate.

Table 2: 2017 femicide rates across South African provinces

	Femicide	Intimate partner femicide	Non-intimate partner femicide
South Africa	11.2 (10.2; 12.2)	4.8 (4.2; 5.3)	4.4 (3.8; 4.9)
Western Cape	12.3 (6.1; 18.4)	4.9 (2.6; 7.3)	4.8 (2.4; 7.3)
Eastern Cape	22.3 (11.3; 33.3)	8.0 (3.9; 12.0)	10.0 (4.7; 15.3)
Northern Cape	11.0 (2.3; 20.0)	6.2 (1.0; 11.3)	3.1 (0.5; 5.4)
Free State	12.9 (6.1; 19.7)	5.9 (2.6; 9.2)	4.8 (2.2; 7.4)
KwaZulu-Natal	14.0 (8.4; 19.6)	5.8 (3.4; 8.3)	5.5 (3.2; 7.7)
North West	7.7 (3.3; 12.1)	3.7 (1.5; 5.9)	2.6 (0.9; 4.3)
Gauteng	8.1 (3.3; 13.0)	3.9 (1.5; 6.3)	2.7 (1.2; 4.2)
Mpumalanga	5.7 (2.8; 8.6)	3.0 (1.3; 4.7)	2.0 (0.9; 3.0)
Limpopo	4.9 (2.0; 7.9)	2.4 (0.8; 3.9)	2.4 (0.9; 3.9)

2.10 Decline in femicide in South Africa

Femicide rates is considered the best statistic for comparison across the study years because population growth is taken into account in calculating rates. Table 1 presents the estimated femicide rates across the three studies. The overall femicide rate of women 14 years and older in 2017 declined to 11.2 /100 000 population which is less than half the estimated rate for 1999 of 24.7/100 000 (see Table 1). Similarly, the intimate-partner femicide rate halved from 9.1/100 000 in 1999 to 4.6/100 000 in 2017. An even larger decline is seen for NIPF over the 18 years from 11.5/100 00 to 4.5/100 000 in 2017.

Key findings: A consistent decline in all forms of femicide is seen across the 18 years (1999-2017). When compare the proportion of IPF and NIPF, we see intimate partner

femicide remains the leading cause of murder of women in South Africa. (Figure 3). As in 2009, had one case of a woman killed by a female intimate partner.

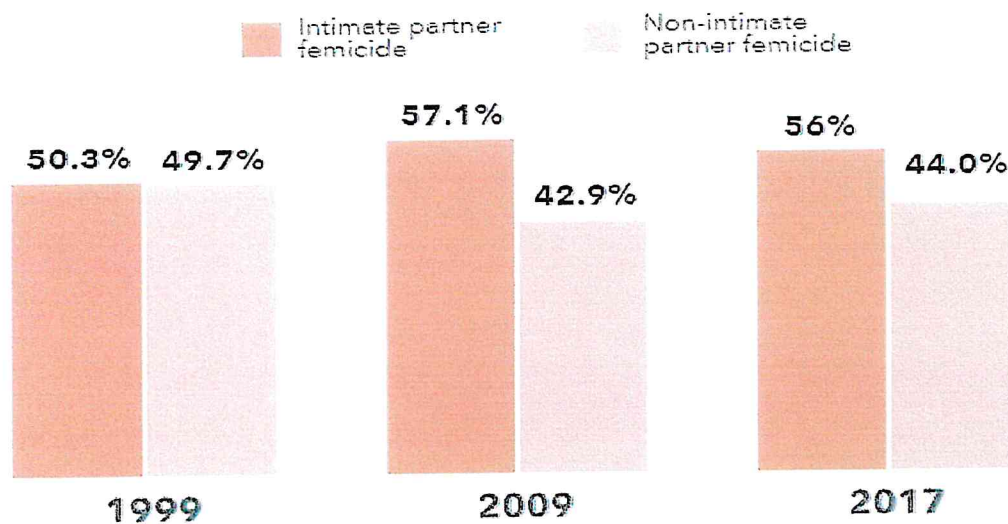


Figure 3: Distribution of intimate partner femicide and non-intimate partner femicide among cases with perpetrator information: 1999-2017

In 2017 the mean age of all femicide was 37 years (interquartile range 26-51). Women murdered by intimate partners were younger (mean age 30 years: interquartile range: 24-37) than those murdered by non-intimate partners (mean age 35 years: interquartile range: 26-54). (Naeemah, Shibe, Bianca, Esnat, Asiphe, Carl, Shanaaz, Gérard, Lorna, Tirhani, Tholsie, Thobeka, Mabhida, Leane, Nwabisa, Richard, Jeanine, Ntsele, & Rachel, 2022).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study was qualitative in nature. Qualitative research uses several techniques including interviews, focus groups, document analysis, and observation (Moser and Korstjens, 2017). Interviews may be unstructured, with open-ended questions on a topic and the interviewer adapts to the responses. Structured interviews have a predetermined number of questions that every participant is asked. It is usually on one and is appropriate for sensitive topics or topics needing an in-depth exploration. Researchers can be participant observers to share the experiences of the subject or non-participant or detached observers (Moser and Korstjens, 2017).

3.2 Research design

In the present study, qualitative research design was used. Interviews and document analysis methods were employed.

3.3 Setting

The study was conducted in Limpopo Province, South Africa. Limpopo province is comprised of urban areas (towns and suburbs) managed by the local government and rural communities managed by traditional leaders (chiefs). The study was conducted in five district municipalities, namely, Capricorn, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Vhembe, and Waterberg district municipalities.

3.4 Population

The population for the study was cases of gender-based violence and femicide that occurred in Limpopo province from January 2018 to December 2023 as guided by SAPS crime statistics. The population is derived from five district municipalities, namely, Capricorn, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Vhembe, and Waterberg district municipalities.

3.5 Sampling procedure

For the purpose of this study, purposive snowball sampling was used as a sampling technique to obtain gender-based violence and femicide cases, potential participants,

and documents related to GBVF. Snowball sampling refers to a random sample of individual drawn from finite (Goodman, 1961). The purposeful sample consisted of gender-based violence and femicide cases used in the study. Through this procedure, male and female violence linked to gender-based violence were identified. 25 cases (05 cases per district) of gender-based violence and femicide, comprised of primary victims, were selected for analysis in this study. The sample for this study was drawn from Limpopo Province. Snowball sampling (also known as chain referral) was used as a sampling technique to get potential participants and GBVF documents for the present study registered on the SAPS gender-based violence and femicide register. 50 Police officials, 50 perpetrators, and 50 victims were engaged as potential participants in the study.

3.6 Data collection

In this study, the researcher gathered information about gender-based violence and femicide to answer research questions. The data of this study was from in-depth interviews with participants focusing on the socio-economic, psycho-social, environmental, historical religious, and structural factors contributing towards gender-based violence and femicide. 150 participants were interviewed at the SAPS. Data collected from 10 police officials, 10 perpetrators, and 10 victims. 30 per district (Capricorn, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Vhembe, and Waterberg). In addition, 600 GBVF documents (that is, 30 police dockets, 30 police incidence reports, 30 victim support service reports, and 30 protection orders) were reviewed as part of data collection. 120 per district (Capricorn, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Vhembe, and Waterberg).

3.7 Data analysis

The study followed an inductive approach. An inductive research approach refers to collecting data that is relevant to the topic of interest. Once a substantial amount of data has been collected, the researcher then takes a breather from data collection, stepping back to get a bird's eye view of the data. At this stage, the researcher looks for patterns in the data, working to develop a theory that could explain those patterns. Thus, when researchers take an inductive approach, they start with a set of observations and move

from those experiences to a more general set of propositions about those experiences, i.e., they move from data to theory, or from the specific to the general (Sheppard, November 06, 2023). For in-depth interviews and document review, the researcher used thematic content analysis (TCA) to identify the patterns of meaning across the dataset that provide an answer to the research objectives being addressed. Thematic Content Analysis steps recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed. These include familiarizing oneself with data and coding, searching for themes, reviewing, and refining themes, and producing the report.

3.8 Ethical consideration

3.8.1 Permission to access and review reports.

Ethical clearance was sought and obtained from the Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC). In addition, the study was approved by the Executive Authority of the Limpopo Department of Transport and Community Safety (LDTCS).

3.8.2 Voluntary participation and informed consent

Interviews and document review were conducted. The participants were informed about the nature of the study and that their participation and revelation of GBVF survivors and perpetrators were voluntary. Furthermore, care was taken to ensure that participants fully understood why they were recruited for the study. This helped the participants to acquaint themselves with the study and at the same time assisted them in making informed decisions as to whether to participate in the study. Participants were at liberty to withdraw their participation at any given time if they were no longer willing to participate.

Participants were not willing to sign informed consent forms but agreed verbally and were willing to participate in the study. The researcher respected the participants' choice and participants were not forced to sign informed consent. All potential informants participated until the end of the interviews. No one withdrew from the interview session. The number of all participants was 150. Data collection was not translated into the local languages of the province. However, the researcher interviewed participants in their local language as she is based in Limpopo province.

3.8.3 Respect and Dignity.

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic under investigation, it was possible that participants might refuse to participate in the study at the time of the interview as the truth of gender-based violence and femicide began to take hold. The researcher further respected the integrity of GBVF survivors and perpetrators. Therefore, what the participants did not want to be revealed is not revealed in the research report.

3.8.4 Privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality

A safeguard of the study participants' privacy and confidentiality was assured in the way that their confidential biographic information and case docket numbers would not be disclosed without the written permission of the interviewees.

3.8.5 Risk/harm.

Before the commencement of the study, the researcher informed the participants that the study would be of no immediate or direct benefit to them, meaning that there would be no incentives given to them. However, the victims may feel empowered and a sense of restoration through sharing their painful experiences. Moreover, the results of the study could benefit the broader society by certainly reducing and preventing GBVF.

3.8.6 Financial implication

The Research and Policing Policy Directorate's operational expenditure budget within the Department of Transport and Community Safety was utilized throughout the process of data collection in the form of subsistence and travel claims by the researcher.

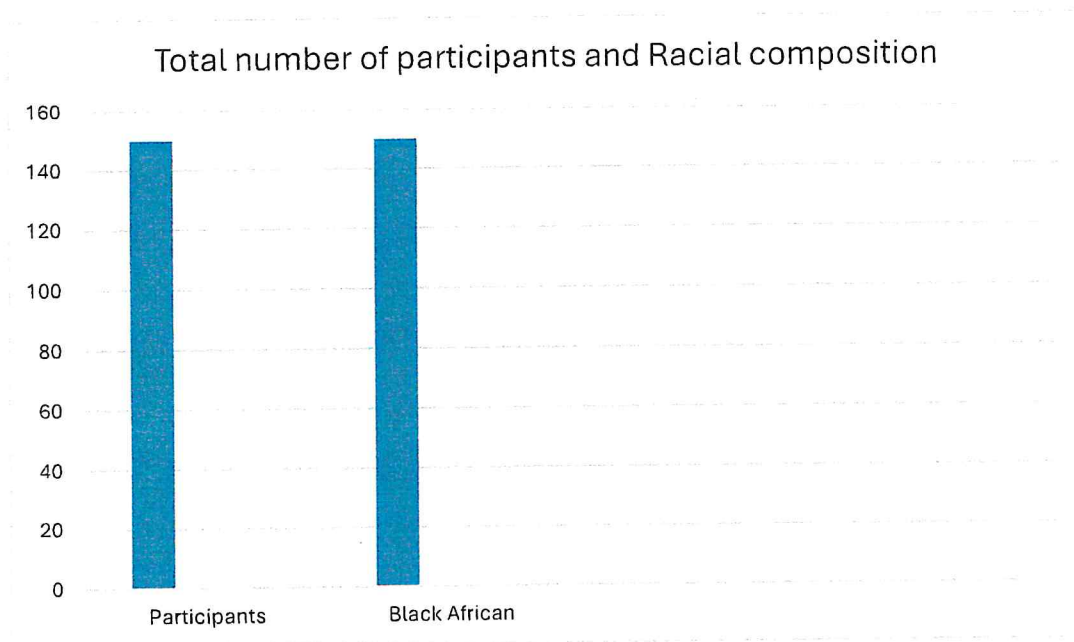
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

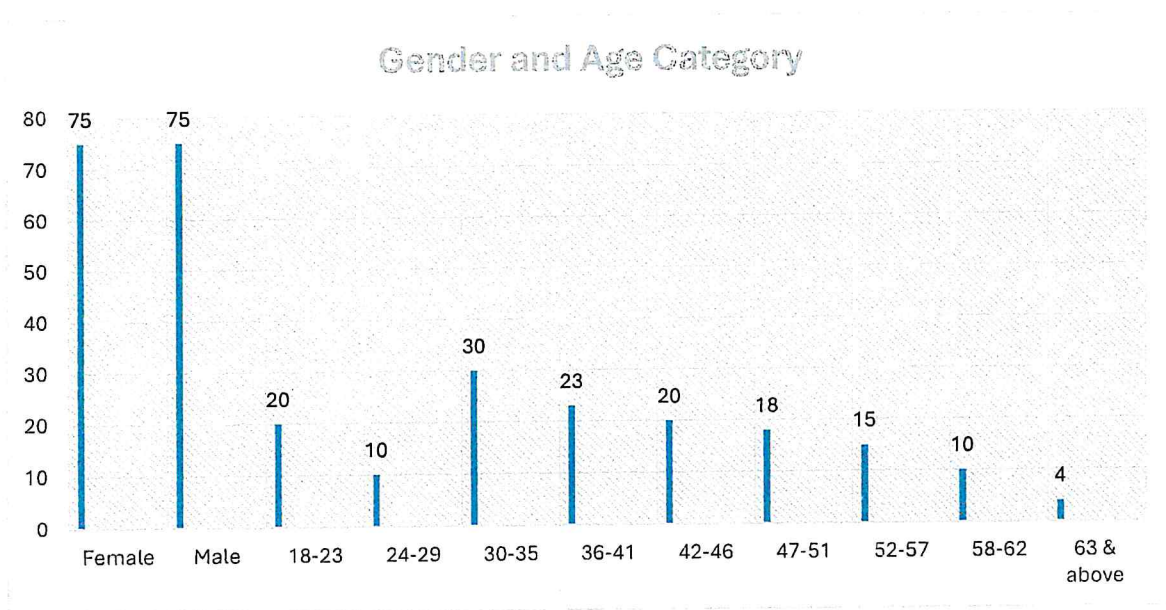
4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the study. These include demographic details of participants and reviewed archival records, factors contributing to gender-based violence and femicide, events triggered gender-based violence and strategies to assist in responding to gender-based violence and femicide.

4.2 Demographic details of participants

The study comprised of 150 participants. The gender distribution of participants was 75 males and 75 females. Age category 18-23 comprised of 20 participants; the age category 24-29 comprised of 10 participants; age category 30-35 comprised of 30 participants; age 36-41 comprised of 23 participants; age category 42-46 comprised of 20 participants; age category 47- 51 comprised of 18 participants; age category 52-57 comprised of 15 participants; age category 58-62 comprised of 10 participants and the last age category 63 and above comprised of 4 participants. In terms of the racial composition, 150 of the participants were Black African. With regards to nationality, 150 of participants were South African citizens.





4.3 Factors contributing to gender-based violence and femicide

Gender-based violence and femicide are prevalent issues that affect individuals of all genders (male and female), ages, education, and the working class. Factors contributing to GBVF include socio-economic, psycho-social, environmental, historical/cultural, religious, legislation, and difficulties in departments and victim support centres.

4.3.1 Socio-economic

Socioeconomic factors were reported as root causes of gender-based violence and femicide. The focus was on the challenges that hindered the economy of intimate partners. Sub-themes drawn from the socioeconomic factors are low income, financial pressure, and loss of employment. The ICVPS recognises that socio-economic contributors to the risks associated with crime and violence go far beyond the scope of the mandate of the South African Police Service (SAPS), and includes a multiplicity of risk factors, which must be addressed collaboratively by all stakeholders.¹

- a) **Low income:** The participants and archival records reported that low income influenced gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). These include those in which intimate partners were found to have been receiving child support grants, social relief

¹ Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy, 2022

grant for COVID-19, disability, and old age because of the low employment rate, particularly those who have formal education. Low income influences individual character and behavior across different groups and causes them to assert their frustration and confusion through gender-based violence and femicide. Individuals with low incomes more likely to lack a basic residential area. These adverse conditions were found to have led to criminal behavior such as gender-based violence and femicide.

- b) **Financial pressure:** The participants and archival records reported that financial pressure influenced gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). These include those in which intimate partners were found to have been indebted because of the high basic living costs such as transport, electricity, and nutritious food. These were said to promote gambling, excessive use of credit cards, and loans (Matshonisa) for both men and women. This financial pressure can also cause them to assert their frustration and confusion through gender-based violence and femicide.
- c) **Loss of employment:** The participants and archival records reported that socio-economic factors influenced gender-based violence and femicide. These include those in which both male and female partners lost employment because of COVID-19, short-term employment, and the poor economy in South Africa.

4.3.2 Psycho-social factors

Psycho-social factors were reported as root causes of gender-based violence and femicide. The focus was on the psychological factors and surrounding social environment that influence their physical reaction, mental wellness, and ability to function. Sub-themes drawn from the psycho-social factors are cheating from both sides (male and female partners), protection orders, and withdrawal of GBVF cases by the applicant or complainant.

- a) **Cheating from both sides (male and female):** The participants and archival records reported that cheating influenced gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). These include those in which both male and female partners have been cheated on in their intimate relationships. Cheating can cause immediate, short-

term pain and long-term damage that can be difficult to repair. People who are cheated on in a relationship experience higher depression, higher anxiety, low self-esteem, delusion, and hallucinations. This cause them to assert their frustration and confusion through gender-based violence and femicide.

- b) *Protection order:*** The participants and archival records reported that protection orders influenced gender-based violence and femicide. A protection order was found to cause immediate, short-term pain and long-term damage that were difficult to repair. The applicant who files an affidavit and applies for protection against their partner or loved one, experienced lower support from family members (children's, parents, in-laws, aunts, cousins, and uncles), friends, co-workers, and the community at large. They were insulted and disrespected by their loved ones. These cause them to assert their anger, anxiety, jealousy, and stress through gender-based violence and femicide.

In addition, the respondents, who was served with a protection order were insulted by applicants referring to their private parts. The applicants also withhold or refuse sex in their relationship. Sexual rejection damages or ruins the relationship increases infidelity, and multiple partners to heal emotional wounds and meet sexual satisfaction. These cause them to assert their post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety through gender-based violence.

- c) *Withdrawal of GBVF case by applicant/complainant:*** The participants and archival records indicated that the withdrawal of GBVF cases by the applicant or complainant influenced gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). These include those in which a male or female partner rapped and experienced excessive assault (beaten by clinger first, open hands, sjambok), partially burned, stabbed (knife, panga, garden tools), or strangled. GBVF cases were withdrawn because the matter between intimate partners was discussed and solved amicably. They agreed to forgive each other and withdraw the GBVF case. The complainant or applicant who withdraws GBVF cases experienced post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety because of repeated exposure to GBVF. These cause

them to assert their post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety through gender-based violence and femicide.

4.3.3 Environmental factors

Environmental factors were reported as root causes of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). The focus was on the external factors that influence gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). Sub-themes drawn from the environmental factors are climate change, the deterioration of intimate relationships, the scarcity of basic household resources, and tolerating gender-based violence:

- a) ***Climate change***: The participants and archival records indicated that climate change influenced gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). These include those male and female partners who experienced food and financial insecurity because of the drought. These increase unplanned motherhood and fatherhood by trying to cover basic living costs through child support grants. It also increases the risk of child marriage, forced marriage, and arranged marriage, trying to reduce the number of people in the household living on a limited income. It also exposed intimate partners (male and female) to stress-based violence. These cause them to assert their frustration, confusion, and anxiety through gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF).
- b) ***Deterioration of intimate relationships***: The participants and archival records indicated that deterioration in intimate relationships influenced gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). The focus was on male and female intimate partners who avoid each other and spend less time together. These increase unhappiness, threatening behavior, harassment through Facebook and other social media, shaming behavior, separation, bullying, and a lack of emotional and sexual connection in intimate relationships. These cause them to assert their frustration, confusion, and anxiety through gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF).

- c) **Scarcity of basic household resources:** The participants and archival records showed that the scarcity of basic household resources influenced gender-based violence (GBVF). The focus was on intimate partners who lack basic household resources to survive and thrive in their intimate relationships. The scarcity of social determinants like food, housing, and employment was found to have increased girlfriend allowance, submitting to an abusive partner, forced sex, family conflict, fighting for a child support grant, boyfriend allowance, and wife allowance. These cause them to assert their frustration, confusion, and anxiety through gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) as a means of reinforcing privileges and control over resources.
- d) **Tolerating intimate violence in marriage and relationships:** The participants and archival records indicated that tolerating intimate violence in marriage or relationships influenced gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). The focus was on male and female partners who tolerate intimate violence in their relationship or marriage because of an unplanned pregnancy or child, and those who stayed in a relationship to protect their children's inheritance. Tolerating intimate violence increases jealousy, disrespect, aggressive behavior, insulting behavior, poor communication, threatening, using children to fight relationship battles, and withholding sex to punish intimate partners. This causes them to assert their frustration, confusion, and anxiety through gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) as a means of reinforcing privileges.

4.3.4 Historical/cultural factors

Historical/cultural factors were reported as root causes of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). The focus was on the societal attitudes, beliefs, norms, or values that influence gender-based violence and femicide. Subthemes drawn from the historical/cultural factors are polygamous relationships, polyandry relationships, and relationship entitlement.

- a) ***Polygamous relationship:*** The participants and archival records reported that polyandry relationships influenced gender-based violence and femicide. The focus was on men dating or marrying several women simultaneously. This includes the fact that men act as monogamous but socially polygamous. The maintenance of polygamy relationships is attributed to direct benefits such as emotional support and sexual satisfaction. Polygamy was found to have increased conflict between partners/wives, inequality, lower social interaction, economic status of women, negative health outcomes, and a potential feeling of jealousy. These cause them to assert their frustration, confusion, and anxiety through gender-based violence and femicide as a means of reinforcing privileges.
- b) ***Polyandrous relationship:*** The participants and archival records reported that polyandry relationships influenced gender-based violence and femicide. The focus was on women dating several men simultaneously. This includes the fact that women act as monogamous but socially polyandry. The maintenance of women's polyandry is attributed to direct benefits such as emotional support and sexual satisfaction. Polyandry relationship increases conflict between partners, negative health outcomes, and a potential feeling of jealousy. These cause them to assert their frustration, confusion, and anxiety through gender-based violence and femicide as a means of reinforcing privileges.
- c) ***Relationship entitlement:*** The participants and archival records showed that relationship entitlement influenced gender-based violence and femicide. The focus was on male and female partners who believe or have expectations that they deserve certain privileges or benefits from their partners because they pay lobola, earn better salaries, have flourishing businesses, have children, are married, and are highly educated. When they feel disproportionately entitled, they firmly believe their intimate partner owes them those privileges or benefits they did not rightfully earn. Entitlement habits increase jealousy, disrespect, aggressive behavior, insulting behavior, poor communication, and threats, using children to fight relationship battles, and withholding sex to punish intimate partners.

4.3.5 Religious factors

Religious factors were reported as root causes of gender-based violence and femicide. The focus was on the religious practices and beliefs that influence gender-based violence and femicide. Sub-themes drawn from the religious factors are lack of proper church legislation and policies, misuse of the headmanship in society and religious domain, misinterpretation of women role in society, religious domain and disagreement in performing religious rituals and ancestral calling.

- a) ***Lack of proper church legislation and policies:*** The participants and archival records indicated that a lack of proper church legislation and policies influenced gender-based violence and femicide. The focus was on legislation and policies that control and monitor religious institutions that operate in South Africa. In South Africa, there are many independent churches run by both South Africans and foreign nationals. The lack of effective regulations in the religious sector has resulted in their behaviour, not being accountable to anyone. Men who are leaders within these religious institutions are highly feared and regarded as superior, while women are regarded as inferior to men. This causes gender problems and creates a sense of abusing the congregation psychologically, socially, financially, sexually, and emotionally. When women refuse to be inferior to men, they are regarded as disrespectful.

b) Misinterpretation of headmanship in society and religious domain: The participants and archival records showed that misuse of man's divine position in the family influenced gender-based violence and femicide. The focus was on the misuse of the role of husbands and fathers as the heads of the household. Traditionally, men's gender revolves around characteristics such as dominance, assertiveness, and strength. These increase inequality in the distribution of power and resources between men and women, and excessive control and power, leading to gender-based violence and femicide.

c) *Misinterpretation of women's roles in society and religious domain:* The participants and archival records reported that misuse of the roles of women in society and the religious domain influenced gender-based violence and femicide. Traditionally, women are seen as caregivers, nurturers, homemakers, and helpers. This makes women feel powerless and trapped in a gloomy prison where it seems impossible to break free. Feelings of misinterpretation of women's roles may lead to emotional, psychological, physical, low self-esteem, mental, and spiritual pain. The feeling of being misinterpreted may fuel anxiety, confusion, and aggressive behavior.

d) *Disagreement in performing religious rituals:* The participants and archival records reported that disagreement in performing church rituals influenced gender-based violence and femicide. The focus was on the use of holy salt, oil, sand, newspapers, and water. Having differences in the uses of holy salt, oil, sand, newspapers, and water by partners/spouses is regarded as disrespectful. Ignoring partner boundaries was found to have increased partner-blaming.

d) *Ancestral callings:* The participants and archival records reported that ancestral calling influenced gender-based violence and femicide. The focus was on *Sangomas*, who participated in the killing and mutilation of human body parts as a sacrificial act in the sense of appraising ancestors, drinking blood, obtaining body parts for *Muti* to protect their business, and getting rich quickly. These cause them to assert their frustration through gender-based violence and femicide.

4.3.6 Legislation and difficulties in departments and victim support center.

Legislation and difficulties in departments and victim support centers were reported as root causes of gender-based violence and femicide. Sub-themes drawn from the legislation and difficulties in departments include shortage of human resources and vehicles within the South African Police Service, bail applications and postponements of cases, release of accused on parole, lack of psychologists, and non-payment/reduction of stipends for volunteers.

- a) **Shortage of human resources and vehicles in the South African Police Service:** The participants and archival records reported that a shortage of human resources and vehicles specifically for domestic violence influenced GBVF. Coordinator responsible for GBV are overloaded because they are expected to coordinate other social crime initiatives such as school safety and community policing forums. He or she is also expected to serve a protection order and attend court related to GBVF. These increased burnouts, confusion, and sick leave among the police members.
- b) **Granting of bail and postponement of cases by the Department of Justice/NPA/Court:** The participants and archival records reported that legislation related to bail applications and the release of the accused by bail influenced gender-based violence and femicide. This makes the respondents misuse their power and continue threatening the complainants. Furthermore, the postponement of GBVF cases several times also influences GBVF because the abuser continues to abuse complainants while waiting for trial. These made the complainants and witnesses lose interest and fail to attend the court case.
- c) **Release of the accused on parole by the Department of Correctional:** The participants and archival records reported that legislation related to the release of the accused on parole influenced gender-based violence and femicide. The findings highlighted that the abuser released on parole continues to abuse the complainant and failed to do community service. Instead, they spend time at the tavern drinking and smoking. After drinking, they go back home late and commit the same crime. The Department of Correctional Service parole officer also failed to monitor respondents' behaviour when released by parole.
- d) **Shortage of psychologists in the Department of Health:** The participants and archival records reported that a shortage of psychologists to analyze the minds of GBVF complainants and accused influenced gender-based violence and femicide. Findings highlighted that GBVF starts in the mind before the actual act. Therefore, psychologists can assist in analyzing the psychological and behavioral characteristics of complainants and respondents, such as gas lighting. Gas lighting refers to manipulative complainants who act like victims

of GBVF while they are the ones who caused the GBVF. The finding revealed that most of the complainants who acted like victims were found to be the perpetrators of GBVF.

e) *Non-payment and reduction of stipends for VSC volunteers/practitioners:*

The participants and archival records showed that the reduction of stipends for volunteers or practitioners influenced GBVF. Stipends were reduced from R2500-00 to R1200-00 per quarter. This makes the volunteers lose the courage to assist GBVF complainants and respondents. Sometimes they fail to go to work because they do not have money for transportation or food.

Furthermore, a lack of toilets, bathrooms, and accommodation within the victim support centers influences GBVF. Shortage of toilets and baths or showers causes second victimization. The victims walk a distance from the support center to the toilet. Another challenge is a lack of accommodation. During the night, police are forced to locate victims' parents or close relatives to accommodate them. It is a challenge because some of the victims' parents or family members are in other provinces or countries like Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Botswana. If they fail to locate their close relatives, volunteers are forced to accommodate them in their homes, which is a risk.

4.4 Events that trigger gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF)

4.4.1 Alcohol and substance abuse

The participants and archival records indicated that excessive use of alcohol, substances, and drugs triggered gender-based violence and femicide. The focus was on women and men whose partners were regularly drunk and smoked substances and drugs. Excessive use of alcohol, substances, and drugs increases bullying and communication breakdown. Communication breakdown can lead to walk away/absent intimate partner syndrome. This is caused by a lack of open and honest dialogue between intimate partners about their needs, concerns, and feelings. This leads to divorce, separations, sexual

dissatisfaction, forced sex, mood swings when criticized, being impatient, financial problems, and bullying.

4.4.2 Lack of communication

The participants and archival records reported that a lack of communication triggered gender-based violence and femicide. Lack of communication leads to misunderstandings and confusion between partners.

4.4.3 Referring to intimate partner as “bitch”

The participants and archival records reported that referring to a person as “bitch” triggered gender-based violence and femicide. Bitch means unpleasant or disliked woman. With regard to a man, the word bitch seems to be used to suggest that he is somehow weak sexually whilst for a woman it may suggest that she is a prostitute. This leads to a lack of respect between intimate partners, limiting conversations, and always talking badly about each other. It also makes them assert their frustration, confusion, and anxiety through gender-based violence and femicide as a means of reinforcing privileges.

4.4.4 Using genital-related words.

The participants and archival records reported that using genital-related words when insulting an intimate partner triggered gender-based violence and femicide. Genital-related words are viewed as private and intimate; calling them openly may be inappropriate, shameful, and naughty and provocative.

4.5. Strategies to assist in responding to Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

4.5.1 Community engagements

The participants and archival records reported that community engagements assist in responding to gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). Community engagement is important in mobilizing knowledge related to multiple factors influencing GBVF. Raising community engagement is found to be important when reviewing policies, as

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The factors contributing to gender-based violence and femicide in Limpopo province are an inspirational study. In reality, it is heartbreaking and devastating when intimate partners' relationships end through GBVF. However, this study inspires the dedication of the study participants and the GBVF records archivists.

The study highlighted socio-economic (that is, low income, financial pressure, loss of employment), psychosocial (cheating from both sides, male and female, interim and final protection order, withdrawal of GBVF cases by applicant), and environmental factors (climate change, deterioration of intimate relationships, scarcity of basic household resources, tolerating gender-based violence in relationships), historical/cultural (polygamous relationship, polyandry relationship, and relationship entitlement), religious (lack of proper church legislation and policies, misuse of headmen-ship in society and religious domain, misinterpretation of women roles in society and religious domain, disagreement on performing religious rituals and ancestral callings), legislation and difficulties in departments and victim support centres (shortage of human resources and vehicles, release of accused by bail and postponement of cases, release of accused by parole, lack of psychologists and non-payment/reduction of stipends for VSP volunteers)

The study also highlighted the possible triggers of gender-based violence as alcohol and substance abuse, lack of communication, referring to intimate partners as BITCH, and insulting intimate partners by referring to their private parts). The study also highlighted the strategies to assist in responding to gender-based violence and femicide such as community engagements, response gender-based violence strategies, and effective community forums specifically for GBVF—women-for-change and men-for-change).

It is evident from the results that the factors contributing to GBVF are so complex that there is a need for a comprehensive intervention provincial strategy, to help curb this violence that is directed to the most vulnerable groups of society.

5.2 Limitations of the study

Although the results of this study provide useful information about factors contributing towards gender-based violence and femicide, there are a few limitations that should be highlighted. Firstly, victims and perpetrators' feelings of shame and guilt about disclosing sensitive information about femicide may have affected the results of the study.

Secondly, the stigma attached to GBVF may have prevented the participants from talking openly and provided few useful details about femicide.

5.3 Recommendations

- There is an urgent need for the development of provincial response strategy that would consider factors and events influencing GBVF which would be a valuable conceptual tool to guide future interventions that are aimed at addressing GBVF in the province as well as the country in general.
- The study calls for policymakers to develop an evidence-based awareness campaign program that would address GBVF in a more effective way.
- The study further calls for further studies to examine the effects of gender-based violence and femicide in communities by involving surviving family members who lost their loved ones through GBVF.

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