



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Department of Safety, Security & Liaison

Final Report

**Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions
Of Police towards the Victims of Domestic
Violence in Limpopo Province**

**RESEARCH UNIT
2014/2015**

FOREWORD BY MEC FOR TRANSPORT, SAFETY, SECURITY AND LIAISON

Our democratic South Africa in general and Limpopo province in particular continues to experience relative peace and stability in terms of upholding human rights. Following the progressive pieces of legislations the country is enjoying in relation to the well-being of its citizens, victims of domestic violence also deserve protection.

The Constitution guarantees that everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. The development of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 is specifically for the purpose of ensuring that domestic disputes are mediated accordingly and within the parameters of the law. It also looks at the fact that victims of domestic violence are among the most vulnerable in society.

During the 2013/14 financial year the Department through walk-ins, phone-ins, postal services, Presidential Hotline and Premier's Hotline received complaints related to the negative attitudes of police officers towards the victims of domestic violence and poor service delivery on domestic violence cases.

The observation comes at a time wherein the National Development Plan (NDP), South Africa's 2030 road-map, talks of turning police service into a professional service.

The NDP talks of demilitarising the police service because the paramilitary police does not augur well for a modern democracy and a capable developmental state. This prompted the Department of Safety, Security and Liaison to embark on a research project looking at the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of police towards victims of domestic violence.

This report provides a brief insight into the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of police towards the victims of domestic violence. Let this report be read and engage with the hope and intention of improving the relations between SAPS and members of the public in general and victims of domestic violence in particular.



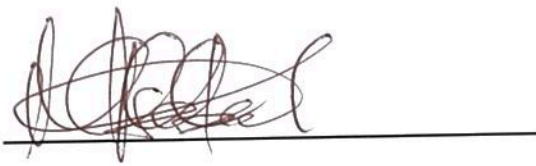
Hon. Mapula Mokaba-Phukwana

Member of Executive Council

Date: 31 March 2015

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project on knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of police towards the victims of Domestic Violence was conducted by the *Department of Safety, Security and Liaison*. All the sources that were used or quoted in this study have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and lines, positioned above a horizontal line.

Ms Tsebe NN

Head of Department

Date: 31 March 2015

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- Limpopo SAPS Provincial office for granting the department permission to interview their members.
- South African Police Service officers who participated in this research project and made this study successful.
- Civilian Oversight Branch officials in the Department of Safety, Security and Liaison for the support.

ACRONYMS

1. CSPA : Civilian Secretariat for Police Service Act No 2
of 2011
2. DSSL : Department of Safety, Security and Liaison
3. DTSSL : Department of Transport, Safety, Security and
Liaison
4. DVA : Domestic Violence Act No 116 of 2008
5. SAPS : South African Police Service

ABSTRACT

The abuse of women and children is a universal problem which occurs across economic, ethnic, religious, gender and all cultural groups. In South Africa domestic violence is a social problem but is viewed as private matter. It becomes a point of concern, especially when the department received complaints related to the attitude and perception of police officers towards the victims of domestic violence.

This prompted the Department to conduct a research project on Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions of police officers towards the victims of domestic violence in Limpopo Province. The purpose of the study was to assess the knowledge that the police officers have when handling the victims of domestic violence as per Domestic Violence Act No 116 of 2008, their attitudes and perceptions towards the victim of domestic violence.

The participants in this study were both male and female police officers aged between 20-60 years old. A total of 16 cluster stations were visited and 86 participants were interviewed using structured interview questionnaires with close ended questions.

The results of the research project revealed that the police officers have basic understanding on how to assist victims of domestic violence. The worrying trend is that even though the majority of officers have basic knowledge on how to assist victims and showed positive attitude and a positive perception in assisting the victims of domestic violence, there are few participants whose attitude and perception are negative towards the victims of Domestic Violence.

It is a fact that negative attitudes and negative perceptions of South African Police Service can become an extremely traumatic experience for the victim especially if the role players have failed in their duty to take proper and concise statements concerning the occurrence of the offence.

The research results reveal that:

- There should be strategies in place to deal with the attitudes and perceptions of the police officer must be developed and distributed to all Criminal Justice System role players.
- The strategies to deal with the attitude of complainants of domestic violence also must be developed and shared with the communities.
- Educating the communities on domestic violence and on the disadvantages of refusing to open cases against perpetrators and the withdrawal of cases for domestic violence should be reinforced.
- There is a need to recruit psychologists and psychometrics who will assist the police on how to handle victims of domestic violence.
- Accommodation for domestic violence victims is still a challenge across SAPS centres in Limpopo and that should be prioritised.
- Information on domestic violence needs to be amplified in the province to increase knowledge on domestic violence issues.

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CHAPTER 2: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background of the study

In South Africa, violence against women and children is widespread and on the increase. Domestic violence is a serious social phenomenon and has emerged as a global concern since 1970. Family violence is a pervasive and frequently lethal problem that challenges society at every level. Abuse in families has devastating effects on its victims physically, emotionally, spiritually and financially. Violence threatens the stability of the family and has a negative impact on all family members. This violence does not happen because a person is angry, it involves a process of relentlessly wearing down their partners with psychological abuse, mind games, put downs and the destruction of self-esteem and self- identity (Wikipedia 2014).

The high rate of domestic violence encouraged the South African Government to develop Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 with the realisation of Human rights, particularly, the right to equality and freedom and security of the person (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996) and the international commitments and obligations of the State towards ending violence against women and children, including obligations under the United Nations Conventions on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and children.

In 1999, the Domestic violence Act 116 of 1998 came into force to afford the victims of domestic violence a maximum protection from domestic abuse and to introduce measures which seek to ensure that the relevant organ of the state such as SAPS, give full effect to the provisions of this Act and thereby to convey that the state is committed to the elimination of domestic violence (Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998).

In addition to Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998, SAPS National Instruction 7/1999 on Domestic violence was developed to impose certain obligations on a member who receives a complaint of domestic violence and a clear direction to a member on how to respond to a complaint of domestic violence in order to comply with the obligations imposed upon him or her in terms of Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998. This implies that law enforcement plays a vital role in facilitating a sense of safety and comfort victims of domestic violence seeking Justice-System support.

1.2 Problem statement

During 2013/14 financial year the Department through walk-ins, phone-ins, postal services, Presidential hotline and Premier's Hotline received complaints related to the negative attitude of police members towards the victim of domestic violence and poor service delivery on domestic violence cases.

This prompted the Department of Safety, Security and Liaison as an oversight body of SAPS to embark on the research project looking at the

knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of the police towards the victims of domestic violence.

1.3 Aim/ objective of the study

The aims of the study are to:

- Assess the knowledge of participants on handling the victims of domestic violence
- Assess the attitude of participants towards victims of domestic violence
- Assess the perception of participants towards victims of domestic violence

1.4 Research questions

The proposed study attempted to answer the following questions:

- What knowledge do the participants have on handling the victims of domestic violence?
- What are the attitudes of participants towards victims of domestic violence?
- What are the perceptions of participants towards victims of domestic violence?

1.5 Significance of the study

It is hoped that the results of research will:

- Assist the SAPS management to develop strategies to handle domestic violence issues
- Assist SAPS management to understand the knowledge that the SAPS officials have on domestic violence issues
- Assist the SAPS decision makers to understand the attitudes and perceptions of SAPS members towards the victim of domestic violence.

1.6 Methodology

The study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Structured interview questionnaire with close ended questions were developed in simple English and used to collect data.

The questionnaire was divided into four (4) sections:

- | | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| Section A | : | Biographical information of participants such as age, gender and education qualification. |
| Section B | : | Knowledge that the participants have on domestic violence. |
| Section C | : | Attitudes of participants towards the victims of domestic violence. |
| Section D | : | Perceptions of participants towards the victims of domestic violence. |

A total of 16 cluster police stations were visited by the researcher. A total of 86 participants took part in the study. All the participants were Police officers attached to Family violence, Child Protection and Sexual offences units. Purposive sampling method was used to select participants from Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit in rural, semi-rural and urban police stations.

Before the commencement of the interview, the researcher made sure that participants were relaxed and felt confident to participate in the study. Participants were permitted to seek clarity during the interview. Tables were used to present the results of the study.

1.7 Ethical considerations

In order to get relevant participants for the research project, permission to interview participants was requested from SAPS provincial office.

Anonymity and strict confidentiality were taken into consideration. To ensure anonymity, the researcher assured that the research instrument had no provision for participants to indicate their names, identity numbers and pay numbers. To ensure confidentiality the researcher further ensured the participants that their identity would not be disclosed to any person or appear on the research report.

Furthermore, the researcher explained the purpose and the benefit of research project to the participants as well as the importance of their participation in the project. They were informed that their participation in the project was voluntary and informed consent was requested.

1.8 Definitions

1.8.1 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is traditionally associated with cases of physical violence occurring within intimate relationships and in domestic settings. It is most commonly perpetrated by a male against female partner, but it also includes violence against men. Domestic violence occurs in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships and married, de facto and separated adolescents and adults (Flood & Fergus, 2008).

1.8.2 Domestic relationship

Domestic relationship means a relationship between the complainant and respondent where they are or were married to each other in terms of any law, custom or religion or lived together in a relationship in the nature of marriage although they are or were not married to each other, they are the parents of a child or are persons who have or had parental responsibility for that child, they are family members related by consanguinity, affinity or adoption, they are or were in an engagement, dating or customary relationship, including an actual or perceived romantic, intimate or sexual relationship of any duration or they share or recently shared the same residence (Domestic Violence Act 116, 1998).

1.8.3 Respondent

Respondent means any person who is or has been in a domestic relationship with a complainant and has committed or allegedly committed an act of domestic violence against the complainant (Domestic Violence Act 116, 1998).

1.8.4 Complainant/ Victim

Complainant refers to any person who is or has been in a domestic relationship with another person and is alleged to be or to have been subjected by such other person to an act of domestic violence and includes any child in the care of the complainant (Domestic Violence Act 116, 2008).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Victims of domestic violence

Victims of domestic violence are mostly women and children. Women and children are often in great danger in places where they should be safe: within their families, streets, schools, churches and workplace environments. These are places where they face a regime of terror and violence at the hands of somebody closest to them, somebody they should trust. They are crushed, assaulted, raped, murdered and oppressed every day by somebody they love. They are unable to make their own decisions, voice their own opinions or protect themselves and their children for fear of further repercussions (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004).

Their human rights are denied and their lives are stolen from them by those who present threat of violence to them. While victims are under trauma, the person who presented the violence, most of the time they say "no one can prove that they did it, no one can notice that they are the ones who crushed, beat, raped and assaulted their loved ones, they are not guilty, they are not the ones who presented violence" because most of these incidence of violence happen in private places, where there is no police or witness (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004).

Violence against women and children continues to be a global epidemic that raises an alarm and is presented in every country, cutting across the boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity and age. Even though most of societies ignore violence against women and children and sanction them under the garb of cultural practices and norms or through misinterpretation of religious tenets, the reality is violence against women and children is violation of human rights (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004).

South Africa is viewed as one of the countries that experience a high volume of domestic violence in the world. Preller (2014) estimated that one out of every six women in South Africa is regularly assaulted by her partner. In a study conducted in 2002 by R. Jewkes, findings indicated that over 97% of black African women who were interviewed had experienced physical violence at some point. The women in the said study were from Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo (previously known as Northern Province) with a mean age of 32.

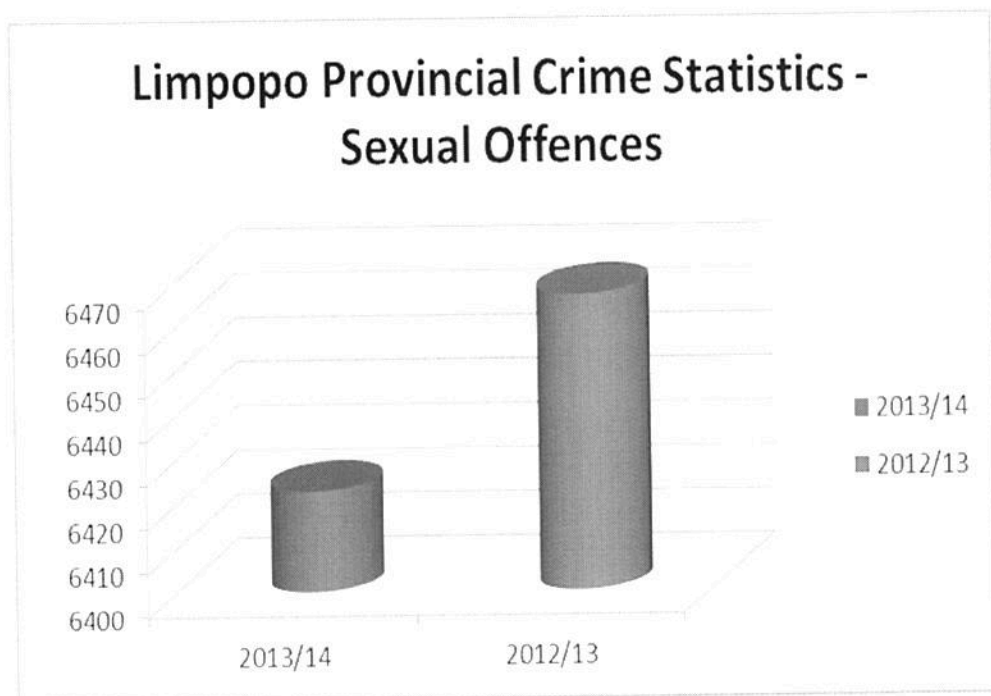
2.2 Summary of notable cases of Domestic Violence from 2013-2014 in South Africa

In 2013/14 Limpopo Provincial Crime Statistics indicates that 6423 sexual offences were opened. This figure was slightly lower than the 2012/13 one where the Crime Statistics indicated that 6 467 cases on sexual offences were opened. The decrease may be attributed to many reasons one of them being that some victims may not report such cases due to fear of stigmatization. The flashpoints police stations include; Thohoyandou, Mankweng, Seshego, Bolobedu and Mahwelereng. It emerged from the

2013/14 Limpopo provincial crime statistics that offences related to Domestic violence resulted in the combined sentence of 1 559 years. A total of 37 life imprisonment was secured and the number of years in terms of suspended sentence was 176 years and six months.

A period of 209 years was suspended upon successful prosecution. A total of R34 200 00 was acquired as a result of fines.

Graph illustration of reported cases of sexual offences in 2013/2014



In 2013 Oscar Pistorius was accused and charged with killing his girlfriend on February 14, 2013. The Blade Runner shot the 30 year old supermodel Reeva Steenkamp through the bathroom door in his home with a 9mm pistol. Oscar Pistorius who was 27 at the time of the shooting, stated that he believed it was an intruder in the bathroom, not his girlfriend after hearing the sound of the window being opened. The couple had been together since 2012 after attending an award show together (Wikipedia, 2014).

In 2013, a man has been arrested for murdering his wife in the Eastern Cape on October 03, 2013. He had an argument with his wife on Thursday and stabbed her several times. The incident happened in front of their 7 year old daughter (www.news24.com).

In 2014, a 27 year old Liberty Midlands Mall parking attendant Sindiswa Mshengu was found in a pool of blood clutching desperately after she had been stabbed in her neck on 07 July 2014 and died a few minutes later. Her alleged attacker threw himself from a bridge in an apparent attempt to take his own life. He plunged onto the freeway below and was dragged to the roadside by police as cars and trucks swerved around him. The man who allegedly stabbed her is also an employee at the mall.

The eye witness said the attacker called the victim to the door because she was working at the boom gate. She went over and he climbed out and stabbed her (www.news24.com).

The commanding officer at Masisi police station in Limpopo who is responsible for victim empowerment in 36 villages suspects that rapes in his villages are under-reported. There were 154 reported cases of domestic

violence from the middle of June to the middle of October 2013. There were only two cases of sexual assault and one case of attempted rape reported, but zero reported rapes.

The 2013/14 departmental DVA monitoring reports reveal that there is limited training on Domestic Violence Act on police members. As a result, there is no regularly updated SAPS 508B register within most police stations, which is the DVA non-compliance register kept by each station commander to record such non-compliance by police members.

2.3 Types of domestic violence

Domestic violence refers to any one or more of the following forms of conduct performed by a respondent to the complainant which consist of, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, verbal and psychological abuse, economical abuse, intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, entry into the residence of the complainants without consent where the parties do not share the same residence or any other controlling or abusive behaviour towards a complainant (Domestic Violence Act 116, 1998).

2.4 Factors that contribute to domestic violence

2.4.1 Socio-economic status

Although domestic violence occurs across income brackets, it is frequently reported by the poor who more often rely on the police for dispute resolution. Victim survey report indicates that lower-income women are, in fact, more frequently victims of domestic violence than wealthier women. Women with annual income are less likely to be the victim of domestic violence (UNICEF, 2000).

2.4.3. Repeat victimization

Children who witness or are the victims of violence may learn to believe that violence is a reasonable way to resolve conflict between people. Boys who learn that women are not to be valued or respected and who see violence directed against women are more likely to abuse women when they grow up. Girls who witness domestic violence in their families of origin are more likely to be victimized by their own husbands or boyfriends (UNICEF, 2000).

2.4.4 Alcohol

Alcohol is a significant risk factor for domestic violence, with research suggesting that women whose partners frequently consume alcohol at excessive levels are more likely to experience violence (Marcus & Braaf, 2007, Mouzos & Makkai, 2004). Alcohol can lead a person to aggression. There is a strong evidence of the relationship between heavy drinking and aggression (Wells & Graham, 2003). However, not all people who consume alcohol become violent.

One explanation for the role of alcohol in domestic violence is that the consumption of alcohol may facilitate an escalation of an incident from verbal to physical abuse because it lowers inhibitions and increases feelings of aggression (Nicholas, 2005).

Research suggests that suggests that because of its impact on aggression, the consumption of alcohol either by the offender or victim, may increase the seriousness of a domestic violence incident, the severity of injuries and

risk of death, with almost half of all intimate partner homicides found to be alcohol-related (Dearden & Payne, 2009).

2.4.5 Access to informal support networks and services

Problems of accessing important support networks or service can also increase the risk that someone will become a victim of domestic violence or continue to experience violence because they are unable to leave a violent relationship. Research suggests that more than four in five women who experience domestic violence do not contact a specialised support agency, but are more likely to contact family and friends. These informal support networks are important but they are not always able to meet the needs of victims or offenders (NCRVWC, 2009).

2.4.6 Barriers of seeking help from the formal support networks and services

There are a range of potential barriers that can prevent a victim from seeking help from service providers, such as a lack of available services, the cost or limited availability of transport, limited awareness of available services, lack of culturally appropriate services, perception that service provider will be unsympathetic or judgemental, shame or embarrassment, fear that they will not be believed, fear of the perpetrator and perception that services will not be able to offer assistance (Marcus & Braaf, 2007).

2.4.8 Situational factors

Various situational factors, while not direct causes may increase the risk of domestic violence. Some of these factors include family or relationship problems, financial problems or unemployment and recent stressful events or circumstances, such as the death of family members (Memmott et al, 2001).

2.5 Effects of domestic violence

2.5.1 Physical effects

Individuals involved in an on-going abusive relationship are more likely to have multiple injuries, repeated bruises and broken bones. They are more likely to have frequent doctor visits, frequent headaches, chronic generalized pains, pelvic pains, frequent vaginal and urinary tract infections, gastrointestinal (stomach and intestine) problems and eating disorder. They also exhibit more physical symptoms related to stress, anxiety disorder or depression. The locations of injuries in women most commonly include the head, chest, breast and arms. During pregnancy, the most common locations are the abdomen and breast (Psych Central Staff, 2014).

2.5.2 Psychological effect

Individuals involved in an on-going abusive relationship are more likely to have psychological disorder such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a diagnostic category used to describe symptoms arising from emotionally traumatic experience(s). According to the Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorders, Fourth Edition or DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 1996), the disorder presumes that the person has experienced a traumatic event involving actual or threatened death or injury to themselves or others, and where they felt fear, helplessness or horror. There are three main symptom clusters in PTSD, namely:

2.5.2.1 Intrusive cluster

Intrusions can take the form of repeated, unwanted and uncontrollable thoughts of the trauma and can include nightmares and flashbacks (American Psychiatric Association, 1996).

2.5.2.2 Avoidant cluster

These symptoms consist of the person's attempt to reduce exposure to people or places that may elicit memories of the event (or intrusive symptoms). This also involves symptoms such as social withdrawal, emotional numbing and a sense of loss of pleasure (American Psychiatric Association, 1996).

2.5.2.3 Termed hyper-arousal

Termed hyper-arousal refers to physiological signs of increased arousal, such as hyper-vigilance or increased startle response. Although these reactions are disturbing, particularly for the victim, they are considered to be normal responses to abnormal events (American Psychiatric Association, 1996).

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

3.1 Demographics information

The frequency table below presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. With regard to gender of the participants 60% were males and 40% females. The age category 20-30 comprised of 8%, 31-40 39% 41-50 of 37% and the last category 51-60 comprised 16%.

With regard to levels of education, all participants (100%) are in possession of Grade 12 qualification. With regards to post-school qualification, 5% of participants have Diplomas, 3% have Degrees while 92% of participants have no post-school qualification.

In line with the phenomenon being investigated, all participants were police between the age of 20 and 60. In terms of racial composition of the sample, 97% of participants were African and 3% White. With regard to nationality all participants (100%) were South African citizens.

Table 1: Demographics

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender of respondents		
Male	50	58%
Female	36	42%
Age of the respondents		
20-30	7	8%
31-40	38	44%
41-50	30	35%
51-60	11	13%
Qualifications of respondents		
Senior certificates	82	100%
Post qualifications		
Diploma	5	6%
Degree	5	6%
None	76	88%
Race Group		
African	82	95%
White	4	5%

3.2 Knowledge of SAPS in assisting the victims of Domestic Violence

The frequency table below presents information about the participants' level of knowledge on assisting victims of domestic violence. With regard to South African Police Service prescripts used when assisting victims of domestic violence, all participants (100%) consider Domestic Violence Act, SAPS National Instruction on domestic violence, list of assistance organization [hospitals, medical practitioners, ambulance services] as the most important guidelines when assisting victims of domestic violence.

With regard to the way a domestic violence scene is attended, 100% of participants present clear understanding that, more than one member must attend the scene of domestic violence and upon their arrival they must attempt to locate the complainants and determine whether the he/she is in danger or not. Where possible members should separate the complainant and the respondent and seize dangerous weapons / firearms.

With regard to assisting complainants at community service centres, 100% of participants understand that complainants of domestic violence have the right to approach community service centres any time irrespective of when and where the incident took place. If the complainant has laid a charge against the respondent, the member who receives the complaint must open a docket and register it for investigation.

With regard to assisting complainants to find a suitable shelter, 100% of participants were aware that they were obliged to provide complainants with the name, contact numbers and address of any organisations in the area which can be able to provide suitable shelter and relevant support such as counselling and medical treatment.

Table 2: Knowledge of SAPS in assisting the victims of domestic violence

Knowledge to assist the Victims of domestic violence	Frequency	Percentage
Legislation to be used when assisting victims of Domestic Violence Copy of Domestic Violence Act SAPS National instruction on domestic violence List of assistance organization such as hospital, medical practitioner, ambulance services is available Copy of sexual offences guideline	86	100%
Attendance of Domestic Violence scene Members must be extremely careful when responding to a scene of domestic violence and should not go alone to a scene.	86	100%

Upon the arrival on the scene members must attempt to locate the complainant and determine whether she/he is in danger		
Securing a scene of Domestic Violence Members should separate the complainant and respondent Seize any dangerous weapon/firearm and ascertain whether such firearm is licensed or not.	86	100%
General assistance to be rendered by SAPS members to assist the complainants at Community Service Centre A complainant may approach the Service Centre for assistance at any time, irrespective of when or where the incident took place Where a criminal charge is laid, members who receive complaint must open a docket and register it for investigation. Members must not avoid opening the docket by directing the complainant to counselling or conciliation services.	86	100%

<p>General assistance to be rendered by SAPS members to assist the complainants to find a suitable shelter</p> <p>Members must provide the complainants with the names, contact numbers and addresses of any organisations in the area which may be able to provide suitable shelter and relevant support or counselling service.</p> <p>At the request of the complainants, members must assist in arranging transport for the complainants to a suitable shelter and make arrangements for the complainants to receive medical treatment.</p> <p>Any assistance rendered to the complainants must be recorded on the occurrence book and in the pocket book (SAPS 206).</p>	86	100%
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3.3 Attitudes of SAPS members towards the victims of domestic violence

The frequency table below presents results about the participants' attitudes towards the victims of domestic violence. With regards to assisting complainants who experience physical abuse, sexual abuse, intimidation and harassment, all participants (100%) indicated that they assist complainants who experience physical abuse, sexual abuse, intimidation and harassment without causing secondary trauma to the victims.

With regard to assisting complainants who experience emotional, verbal and psychological abuse and any other controlling or abusive behaviour, (84%) of participants indicated that they assist victims who experience emotional, verbal and psychological and any other controlling or abusive behaviour without causing secondary trauma whilst 16% of participants indicated that it is difficult for them to assist victims who experience emotional, verbal and psychological abuse because it is difficult to prove that the person is indeed experiencing abuse.

With regard to assisting complainants who experience stalking and economic abuse, 19% of participants indicated that they can assist complainants who experience economical abuse and staking whilst 81% of participants indicated that they cannot assist complainant who experience economical abuse or stalking.

With regard to assisting complainants who experience abuse because of requesting maintenance from the father of the child, most of the participants 81% indicated that they can assist complainants who experienced domestic violence because of requesting maintenance from the father of the child whilst 19% of participants indicated that they cannot assist complainants who experience domestic violence because of requesting maintenance from the father of the child. This has to do with the negative attitudes of police officers.

With regard to assisting complainants who experience abuse because of terminating the relationship, cohabitation, unemployment and unplanned pregnancy, 79% of participants indicated that they do assist the complainants.

However 21% of participants indicated that they cannot assist complainants who experience domestic violence because of the termination of relationship, cohabitation, unemployment and unplanned pregnancy. Their reasoning is that these complaints can be sorted between the couples without involving police officers.

With regard to helping complainants who experience abuse because of the infidelity and jealous/tight controlling. A total of 77% of participants indicated that they are willing to assist complainants who experience abuse because of the infidelity and jealous/tightly controlling and 23% of participants indicated that they are not willing to assist such complainants.

With regard to complainants who experience multiple injuries, stuttering, confusion, repeated bruises, bleeding, depression, sleeping disruption and vaginal pains because of domestic violence. A total of 79% of participants indicated that they are willing to assist complainants who experience multiple injuries, stuttering, confusion, repeated bruises, bleeding, depression, sleeping disruption and vaginal pain because of domestic violence without causing secondary trauma whilst 21% of participants indicated that they are not willing to assist people with such complaints.

Table 3: Attitude of SAPS members towards the victims of domestic violence

Attitude towards the victims of domestic violence	Frequency	Percentage
Would you like to assist a complainant who is abused? Physically Sexually Intimidated Harassment Can assist	86	100%
Would you like to assist a complainant who is abused? Emotionally , verbally and psychologically Can assist Cannot assist	66 20	77% 23%
Would you like to assist a complainant who is abused? Stalking Economical abuse Can assist Cannot assist	22 64	26% 74%

<p>If you knew that the complainant experienced abuse because of the below statements would you be willing to assist?</p> <p>Reporting Child maintenance</p> <p>Can assist</p> <p>Cannot assist</p>	<p>66</p> <p>20</p>	<p>77%</p> <p>23%</p>
<p>If you knew that the complainant experienced abuse because of the below statements would you be willing to assist?</p> <p>Termination of relationship</p> <p>Cohabitation</p> <p>Unemployment</p> <p>Unplanned pregnancy</p> <p>Can assist</p> <p>Cannot assist</p>	<p>69</p> <p>17</p>	<p>80%</p> <p>20%</p>

<p>If you knew that the complainant experienced abuse because of the below statements would you be willing to assist?</p> <p>Infidelity</p> <p>Jealousy / tight controlling</p> <p>Willing</p> <p>Not willing</p>	<p>67</p> <p>19</p>	<p>78%</p> <p>22%</p>
<p>Would you be willing to assist a person having the following side effects caused by domestic violence?</p> <p>Multiplies injuries</p> <p>Stuttering</p> <p>Confusion</p> <p>Repeated bruises</p> <p>Bleeding</p> <p>Depression</p> <p>Sleeping disruption</p> <p>Vaginal pain</p> <p>Willing</p> <p>Not willing</p>	<p>71</p> <p>15</p>	<p>83%</p> <p>17%</p>

3.4 Perceptions of SAPS towards the victim of domestic violence

The frequency table below presents the results on the perceptions of police officers towards the victims of domestic violence. A total of 73% participants indicated that assisting the victims of domestic violence who experience physical abuse, emotional, verbal and psychological, sexual abuse, intimidation harassment and stalked was not a waste of government resources whilst 27% of the participants indicated that assisting victims of the abovementioned types of domestic violence was a waste of state resources because most of the complainants refuse to open cases and some withdraw cases related to domestic violence or fail to stand for the trial.

With regard to the factors that influence domestic violence, 82% of participants indicated that abuse of alcohol, infidelity, termination of relationship, jealousy and cohabitation can influence domestic violence whilst 18% of participants indicated the above factors cannot influence domestic violence.

With regard to the side effects of domestic violence, 73% of participants agreed that domestic violence can cause multiple injuries, repeated bruises, broken bone, anxiety and fear, depression, vaginal pain, bleeding, sleeping disruption, excessive crying, stuttering and confusion whilst 27% of participants disagree that domestic violence can cause such effects.

Table 4: Perceptions of SAPS members towards the victims of domestic violence

Perception of participants towards the victims of domestic violence	Frequency	Percentage
<p>It is useless and a waste of government resources to assist the victims of domestic violence such as:</p> <p>Physical abuse</p> <p>Emotional , verbal and psychological abuse</p> <p>Sexual abuse</p> <p>Economical abuse</p> <p>Intimidated</p> <p>Harassed</p> <p>Stalked</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Disagree</p>	<p>26</p> <p>60</p>	<p>30%</p> <p>70%</p>
<p>Domestic violence can be influenced by the following:</p> <p>Abuse of Alcohol and chemicals</p> <p>Infidelity</p> <p>Termination of relationship</p> <p>Jealousy/tight controlling</p> <p>Maintenance (Child support)</p> <p>Cohabitation</p>		

Agree	69	80%
Disagree	17	20%
Domestic violence can cause the following:		
Multiple injuries		
Repeated bruises		
Broken bone		
Anxiety and fear		
Depression		
Vaginal pain		
Bleeding		
Sleeping disruption		
Excessive crying		
Stuttering		
Confusion		
Agree	64	74%
Disagree	22	26%

3.5: Sources of information on domestic violence

The frequency table below presents the participant's information source used to understand domestic violence. Radio programmes, television, newspapers and magazines were identified as the main source of information to understand domestic violence issues by all 100% participants.

Table 5: Sources of domestic violence

Main sources of information on domestic violence	Frequency	Percentage
Which are the main sources of information to help you understand domestic violence?		
Most Useful	58	67%
Radio programmes		
SAPS programmes on domestic violence		
Television programmes		
Newspaper articles		
Magazine articles		
Posters		
Not useful	28	33%
Radio programmes		
SAPS programmes on domestic violence		
Television programmes		
Newspaper articles		
Magazine articles		
Posters		

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographics information of participants

There was a strong indication that employment equality within South African Police Service in Limpopo is still a problem. For example, more men participated in the study. This may be caused by the nature of police job. Police are expected to work anywhere as long as it is within the Republic of South Africa. They are not allowed to choose where they want to be placed upon completion of their training which may have an adverse bearing on their attitudes in general.

Before 1994 this arrangement was good because accommodation for the officials and their families was provided to the officials and their families by the state. But after 1994, government introduced housing allowance which led the officials looking for their own accommodation around policing precincts which is limited.

With regard to the educational qualifications, the results showed that almost all participants are in possession of Grade 12 and few of them have diplomas and degree qualifications. This may be the results of the recruitment and training strategy that South African Police Service uses to appoint police officers.

In terms of racial compositions, there was a clear indication that the majority of police officers are Africans and followed by white police officers. Before 1994 majority of police officers were white and followed by African. This may be the results of recruitment and placement strategy that South African Police Service is using to recruit and place the officers around the country.

4.2 Knowledge of SAPS members in assisting the victims of Domestic Violence

There was a strong indication that police officials in Limpopo Province have basic understanding on how to assist victims of Domestic violence. Domestic violence Act No 116 of 1998 and SAPS National Instruction 7/1999 were found to be popular prescripts informing Limpopo Police officials on how to handle victims of domestic violence.

Through the basic understanding of Domestic Violence Act No 116 of 1998 and SAPS National Instruction 7/1999, participants are able to open case dockets for domestic violence, investigate domestic violence crimes, arrest the suspects of domestic violence and present them to court for prosecution, make arrangements to obtain suitable shelter which will provide support and counselling to the victims. In terms of medical assistance, victims are transferred to hospitals for medical treatment.

This is attributed to the fact that, South African Police Service Provincial office in Limpopo as a custodian of educating police officials on South African Police prescripts is making sure that each member is familiar with all South African Police Service prescripts related to Domestic Violence. Furthermore, the Limpopo Department of Safety, Security and Liaison as an oversight body of South African Police Service in Limpopo monitors and evaluates police compliance with Domestic Violence Act No 116 of 1998.

4.3 Attitudes of SAPS members towards the victims of domestic violence

There was a strong indication that participants' actions, feelings and expression towards the victims of domestic violence are not good. For example, some prefer to assist those who are physically abused, sexually abused, intimidated and harassed only while others prefer to assist only those that are abused emotionally, psychologically and any other form of abuse.

This type of conduct is attributed to the fact that Domestic Violence Act No 116 of 1998 and SAPS National Instruction 7/1999 emphasizes much on how participants must respond to the complaints of domestic violence. For example referring the complainant to the doctor or hospital for medical treatment, support centre for counselling, open case dockets, investigate cases, arrest the suspect, attend and secure a domestic violence scene, assist complainants to find suitable shelter and submit case dockets to court for prosecution.

Although the Act is a prescriptive document its silence on how the participants must behave towards the victims of domestic violence, may be one of the contributory factors on the attitudes of police officers toward the victims of domestic violence. On the other hand, Civilian Secretariat for Police Service Act No 2 of 2011 mandates the Department of Safety, Security and Liaison to monitor and evaluate South African Police Service compliance to the Domestic Violence Act No 116 of 1998 and make recommendations to the South African Police Service on disciplinary procedures and measures with regard to non-compliance with the Domestic Violence Act No 116 of 1998.

4.4 Perceptions towards the victims of domestic violence

There was a strong indication however that even though the participants have negative attitudes towards the victims of domestic violence, they deem it right to use government resources such as cars, J88 Forms and telephones to assist the victims of domestic violence. For example participants indicated that complainants with multiple injuries, repeated bruises, broken bone, anxiety, fear, depression, vaginal pain, bleeding, sleep disruption need to be transported to hospital for medical treatment and counselling.

What was however worrying is that participants thought that suspects used various means of defence such alcohol, infidelity, termination of relationships to justify their actions. This implies that participants do not think that alcohol, infidelity, termination of relationship and cohabitation can contribute to domestic violence.

4.5 Sources of Domestic violence information

There was a strong indication that even though South African Police Service - Provincial office in Limpopo educates participants on how they should handle complaints and complainants of domestic violence as per Domestic Violence Act No116 of 1998 and National Instruction 7/1999, in addition participants find it necessary to listen to radio programmes, watch television, read newspaper and magazine articles to obtain more information about domestic violence. For example more than half of participants indicated that radio programmes, television, newspaper and magazine articles are useful to them to understand domestic violence issues.

4.6 Limitations of the study

Whilst the results of this study do provide useful information about the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of police towards the victims of domestic violence there are a number of limitations that should be highlighted.

Firstly, some of the participants were not willing to participate. This could have possibly affected the way the participants responded to the questionnaires as they may have thought the study would be used against them.

Secondly, some participants could not be available on the agreed times due to the tight schedules of their duties. This nearly resulted in not getting detailed responses. Nevertheless the researchers however ensured that the data was collected with the utmost diligence the project deserved.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research has established that Police have basic knowledge on how to assist victims of Domestic Violence. Domestic Violence Act No 116 of 1998 and SAPS National instruction 7/1999 was found to be popular prescripts informing Police on how to assist victims of domestic violence. The concern was that even though they have that basic knowledge it appeared like in every step taken forward, there are a few steps taken backward because there are some of the police officers who still have negative attitudes towards the victims of domestic violence. For example they prefer to assist those that are abused physically, sexually through intimidation and harassment and do not care about those who are psychologically, emotionally and verbally abused because they say it is difficult to prove that a person has experienced domestic violence.

In the light of this sad picture, it is therefore important to put in place measures that can change the behaviour, actions, beliefs and feelings of police towards the victims of domestic violence, not forgetting the victims' forms of behaviour, actions, beliefs on domestic violence issues, such as withdrawal of cases, refusal to open cases and refusal to go to court because they do not want the respondents to be arrested or sentenced.

These actions of complainants confuse and frustrate police officers because they need complainants' support and cooperation to arrest the suspects, investigate crime and send the dockets to magistrate court for trial. If there is no enough evidence it becomes difficult for the prosecutor and they end up

withdrawing cases pending the appearance of complainants or pending further investigation. Based on the research results, it is therefore recommend that:

- Strategies to deal with the attitude and perception of the police officer must be developed and distributed to all Criminal Justice System role players.
- Strategies to deal with the attitude of complainants of domestic violence must be developed and shared with the communities.
- The Departments of Safety, Security and Liaison and Social Development must continue to educate communities on domestic violence and on the disadvantages of refusing to open cases against perpetrators and the withdrawal of cases for domestic violence.
- South African Police Service must recruit psychologists who will assist the police on how to handle victims of domestic violence.
- South African Police Service must recruit psychometrics that will assess victims' state of mind after domestic violence experience. This will help the police to understand the behaviour of the real complainants and those who claim to be victims of domestic violence.
- Victim-friendly facilities should be established in police stations where they do not exist.
- The South African Police Service must establish resource information centres in the province. The resource information centres must be well equipped with books, newspaper, magazine and internet so that police officials will research new knowledge on domestic violence issues.

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