

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

**THE ROLE OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS SUPPORT UNIT
(DOVVSU) IN THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN GHANA: A CASE
STUDY OF THE ACCRA REGIONAL UNIT.**

BY

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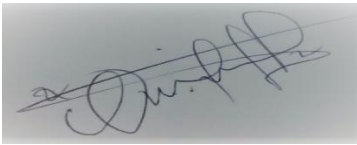
**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN
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DECLARATION

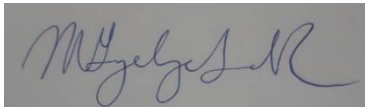
I, Osei Philomina, certify that this study apart from the quoted and referenced works is my original study conducted under the supervision of the undersigned towards the award of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE. I am fully responsible for any error or limitation that may be identified in the study.



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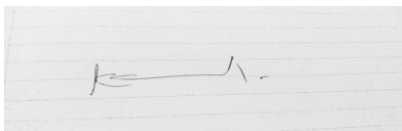
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ABSTRACT

The quest to address issues affecting women has always been the concern of many states, organisations and individual across the globe. These concerned groups have come together to establish national human rights institutions (NHRIs) to help address the issues that affect women. These NHRIs get their mandate from the Paris Principles, and any NHRI who fails to do so will not be regarded as one. DOVVSU as a NHRIs is expected to act like one. The 2007 Domestic Violence Act (Act 732) launched the Victims of Domestic Violence Support Fund (assisted by voluntary contributions and Parliament), to assist DOVVSU with issues of rehabilitation and provide victims with the necessary support. The work sought to identify the role DOVVSU played in protecting the Rights of Women in Ghana, using the Accra Regional DOVVSU as a case study. This was done by examining: people's knowledge about DOVVSU; the causes of domestic violence; addressing the needs of victims; techniques used in addressing reported cases; the challenges faced while addressing these needs. The study employed the purposive sampling, convenient sampling and snowball sampling method due to its qualitative nature. Primary data was collected through personal interviews, and secondary data were retrieved from journal articles, newspapers and reports.

The findings revealed that the DOVVSU is deficient when it comes to conducting outreach programmes, which causes low public awareness among victims. Also, domestic violence is as a result of people's personality and choices, religious and cultural beliefs, and the patriarchal nature of the society. Victims also explained that they needed basic supports like food, clothing and shelter; and other things like medical and mental treatment, economic, legal aid and justice, and education and counselling on matters that relate to domestic violence. In addition, the study suggests preventive measures like promoting behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that aid in preventing violence; and preventing behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that promote violence.

DEDICATION

The study is dedicated to the Faithful Lord for His continuous provision and protection throughout my life and during the duration of the program. Also, I dedicate this to my parents: Mr. Richard Osei and Mrs. Victoria Osei for their continuous support and guidance in my life. Lastly, I dedicate the work to the Osei family.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	African Children's Charter
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
ACHPR	African Court on Human and People's Rights
AWDF	African Women's Development Fund
CDC	Centre for Disease Control
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CRC	UN Covenant on the Rights of the Child
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DEVAW	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
DV	Domestic Violence
DVA	Domestic Violence Act
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence

GHANAP	Ghanaian Action Plan
GPRS	Ghanaian Poverty Reduction Strategy
GPS	Ghana Police Service
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
GVSSN	Gender Violence Survivors' Support Network
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICCPR	UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
NANHRI	Network of African National Human Rights Institutions
NETRIGHT	Network for Women's Rights
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRIs	National Human Rights Institutions
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PHC	Population and Housing Census
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMTDP	Ghanaian Sector Medium-Term Development Plan
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UN	United Nations

UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VAWG	Violence against Women and Girls
WAJU	Women and Juvenile Unit
WHO	World Health Organisation
WISE	Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

Since the mid-1990s, there has been an aggregate exertion over the globe by nations to think of approaches to put an end to the activities that hurt the rights of females (Darkwah & Prah, 2016). To resolve the concerns of the marginalized groups in society, democratic countries set up institutions to address their human rights concerns. Part of the institutions set up to address these concerns is the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). These NHRIs according to Matshekga (2002), are autonomous group of organisations with the sole mandate of promoting and protecting individual and collective human rights. According to Murray (2007, p.3), the United Nations (UN) identifies any NHRI as “a body established by a government through the constitution, or the law or decree, with the specific functions of promotion and protection of human rights”.

However, the UN while attempting to energize the advancement and insurance of the privileges of people embraced the Paris Principles in 1993. These Principles spell out the activities of and serve as a yardstick for all human rights institutions. Universally, it has been accepted that any NHRI that does not adhere to the mandate of the Paris Principles, will not be regarded as such. According to the Principles, NHRIs are very substantial locally, “in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and in developing and enhancing public awareness of those rights and freedoms” (Paris Principles, 1993). Even though NHRIs cannot address all the bad things that happen within and outside the country; it is expected of them to address most issues when it comes to political, economic and social situations because this is where and why they were created; and protecting the fundamental human Rights of Women should be treated with utmost urgency (Murray, 2007).

Also, Ghana just like many other democratic countries in Africa has come up with regulations (the Domestic Violence Act) to help solve the issues of human rights abuse. Focusing more on women, the Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) was set up to help address issues of aggressive behaviour at home. Automatically, by virtue of its core mandate, the DOVVSU falls under the NHRIs and expected to go by the Paris Principles. The DOVVSU is a specific Unit under the Ghana Police Service (GPS) and was formed in 1998. It was set up with the aim of resolving the high number youngsters and female abuse. Nevertheless, between the late 2004 and early 2005, the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) was changed to present day DOVVSU which also deals with men who suffer domestic abuse. Even though the DV Act, Act 732 passed in 2007 focused on both male and female victims, a higher number of reported cases at DOVVSU are women. The DOVVSU has offices across the capital cities and districts of Ghana. According to Darkwah and Prah (2016), Ghana forms part of the twenty sub-Saharan countries and seven countries in West Africa to implement the DVA.

Moreover, the 2007 Domestic Violence Act (Act 732) stipulates that a “Victims of Domestic Violence Support Fund (assisted by voluntary contributions and Parliament)” be set up to provide financial aid for domestic violence issues. Money from this support fund is to assist DOVVSU with issues of rehabilitation and provide victims with the necessary support. Domestic violence runs through all the sectors of the society but very common amongst the poor (UNICEF, 2000). According to Agbitor (2012), in Ghana and certain African countries, the incidence of domestic violence is rampant and has an overwhelming effect on its victims and the society at large. A lot of African countries have come up with laws that will help eliminate domestic violence, defend victims and discipline offenders; out of these only Rwanda, Zambia and South Africa have yielded positive results (Darkwah & Prah, 2016). From the above statements, it can be inferred that protecting the Rights of Women have become a major concern in Africa and Ghana.

Inarguably, women's rights by default fall under human rights. Matshekga (2002) argues that women have been in the minority for many years across the globe, and this can be attributed to the fact that they are women, through cultural discrimination, masculine dominance, and sometimes religious laws. It has become very necessary and mandatory for countries across the globe to work towards safeguarding the Rights of Women and the eradication of the marginalization of women.

Africa in July 2003, adopted the Protocol on the Rights of Women which is also the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The definition given by the Protocol for "discrimination against women" is similar to the definition given by CEDAW. "Discrimination against women" implies "any distinction, exclusion or restriction or any differential treatment based on sex and whose objectives or effects compromise or destroy the recognition, enjoyment or the exercise by women, regardless of their marital status, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all spheres of life" (The Protocol on the Rights of Women, Article 1(f)).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

"Domestic Violence (DV)" is usually explained to be "Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)" which means that the perpetrators are both men and women; however, the male culprits are more probable to have increasing numbers than the female culprits, making female victims higher than male victims (Nevada Network against Domestic Violence, 2010).

However, efforts that have been made by NHRIs and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) to reduce human rights abuses and domestic violence in the world and especially in Africa, have given many states the zeal to make rules that bind and protect the fundamental privileges of women (Mtshali, 2010). An example is Ghana's 2007 Domestic Violence Act (Act 732) which stipulates violence against women as a criminal action. This is an action that was not

known to many Africans because family-related issues or domestic affairs were seen to be less of a state affair.

Darkwah and Prah (2016) assert that few scholars have researched on the experiences of victims who have survived domestic violence abuses, and the view they hold as regards the 2007 DV Act, Act 732 and how well the provisions can firmly secure the Rights of Women. Thus, the challenges associated with domestic violence still exist amongst African and Ghanaian women, therefore individuals and states should not be content with the notion that the abuse of human rights is something of the past because of the little improvement made (Mtshali, 2010).

Generally, the issues concerning women's rights violations have been there since time immemorial, and have either gotten poorer or little progress made. Hence, the protection of women's rights remains a path of great significance because of the existing problems amongst women. If bodies set up at levels like global, continental, subcontinental and state, still exist to make efforts in addressing challenges women face, then the fact still remains that there is still more to be done to prevent the basic Rights of Women being taken for granted (Murray, 2007).

Also, there exist many studies on human rights, women's rights, and domestic violence but few studies have been on the part DOVVSU plays as regards safeguarding the basic Rights of Women. According to Zaney (2011), the situation nonetheless appears that DOVVSU is faced with the problem of going by structured or laid down procedures which include (knowing what to follow; knowing why that should be followed, and when and how to follow that) to help in giving successful solution to cases of domestic violence that has been reported. In addition, the Unit lacks personnel with adequate knowledge, skills and training to help solve the issues of

domestic violence cases reported; and the lack of packages or programmes that are adequate for bringing out desired results of services provided (Zaney, 2011).

In short, DOVVSU in a way finds it difficult following the Paris Principles of 1993. According to Joy news report (November 25, 2011), the DOVVSU is deficient of adequate staff, resources, and funds to aid in resolving issues that arise; and also challenged with addressing mental and physical needs of the victims. This makes it difficult to effectively put an end to the problems of domestic violence Ghana (Joy News, November 25, 2011). Also, Darkwah and Prah (2016, p.3) argue that “however, the decrees for ensuring the full implementation of the Domestic Violence Act in Ghana are yet to be put in place”.

Against this backdrop, this work examines the performance DOVVSU since it was set up in 1998. The focus will however be on the Accra Regional Unit of DOVVSUs performance from 2005-2019. The Unit serves as the headquarters of all the branches.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The overarching aim of the study is to assess the role of DOVVSU, Accra Regional Unit to address issues of domestic violence in Ghana.

This specific objectives are as follows:

- Discuss the extent to which DOVVSU is able to practically address the needs of women inside the Accra regional operational area who suffer domestic violence.
- Assess the techniques put in place by the staff of DOVVSU to address issues of savagery against women in the region that came to their attention.
- Examine the challenges DOVVSU officials face while addressing the concerns of female victims that come to them.

1.2 Research Questions

The overarching question of this study is: “How DOVVSU is able to address the plight of Ghanaian women who have suffered domestic violence to ensure their protection? This study will concentrate more on the experiences victims have had with DOVVSU as stipulated by regulation.

Other questions for which the study looks for answers to are:

- To what extent is DOVVSU able to practically address the needs of women sufferers of domestic violence?
- What are the procedures DOVVSU used in addressing reported cases of violence against women?
- What are the major challenges DOVVSU faced while addressing the concerns of female victims?

1.4 Significance of the study

The study has a four-fold significance.

First, women still remain in the marginalized and vulnerable category. Even though significant improvement has been made when it comes to safeguarding women rights, women still remain victims of domestic abuse and violence. Accordingly, this work seeks to complement the literature on violence against women through an assessment of the performance of DOVVSU. The study anticipates that the staff of DOVVSU will develop a certain level of interest which will motivate them to keep up their game and aid them in addressing violence against women.

Second, following universal Principles (such as the Paris Principles 1993) and effectively enforcing them such that the basic Rights of Women are safeguarded is still a problem.

The study therefore emphasizes that there are still more improvement to be made by DOVVSU in safeguarding women's right.

Third, scholars like Ardayfio-Schandorf (2005), Dery and Diedong (2014), Agbitor (2012) have extensively written on issues of women rights violations and domestic abuses in Ghana. This study will supplement and expand existing literature on women right violations and domestic violence.

Fourth, the findings and recommendations will serve as a guide to policymakers and DOVVSU when it comes to the assurance of the privileges of females in Ghana and Africa. It will help DOVVSU to know the practical needs of victims and measures to take when addressing them.

1.5 Justification of the study

This study examines the role that DOVVSU plays as a Unit under the Police Service Department set up to address domestic violence issues; especially of women and children. The study discusses the Rights of Women even though DOVVSU has also added issues concerning men, the statistics of men is not as much as compared to the statistics of women.

The study was directed at the Accra Regional DOVVSU in light of the fact that it is the primary office of the Unit (built in 1998), and also due to proximity reasons. It is the most prominent Unit out of the eighty-seven (87) offices DOVVSU has across the country; it serves as headquarters for all the offices, which gives the researcher the opportunity to gather enough information on the topic. It has also recorded a very high number of domestic violence cases.

In addition, all DOVVSU offices nationwide are supposed to follow the same procedures as the headquarters; and Accra is a diverse area, recorded cases are expected to reflect the experiences of people from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Looking at the reasons given,

selecting DOVVSU will allow the researcher gather enough information on the subject area, and looking at Accra DOVVSU will grant an opportunity for the research outcomes to symbolize to a certain degree of the condition of DOVVSU countrywide.

1.6 Limitations of the study

Limitations to the study were financial constraints, and difficulty in getting respondents for interview and time. It would have been perfect to gather information from other foundations and people who deal with domestic abuses and women right issues because they work directly with DOVVSU, but regrettably, the time allocated for this study to be conducted is too small to gather information from such sources. These sources can be recommended for impending research in this area to broaden the outcomes of the study.

Furthermore, domestic violence issues are sensitive in nature, clients or victims were less willing to respond due to socio-cultural reasons. Also, the staff of DOVVSU and victims that patronize the Unit were not be fully represented. However, Neuman (2007) argues that in qualitative studies, much attention is concentrated on how minor events reflect important characteristics of the society than how the sample size is able to represent the entire population.

Moreover, officials in the Unit were not willing to give out information as regards the Unit's budget and number of personnel which made assessing the Unit's capacity to deliver a major challenge. In addition, since the Unit attends to different people from different parts of the country, language became a barrier.

1.7 Organization of the study

The study will be divided into seven chapters, with each chapter focusing on specific relevant themes. Chapter one will be the introduction of the study which will encapsulate the background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, and limitation of the study. Chapter two will be a literature review on the key concepts of the study and the relationship between them. Chapter three will be the theoretical framework. Chapter four will discuss methodology and methods of data collection. Chapter five will discuss data analysis. Chapter six will discuss the findings. Lastly, chapter seven will be a summary of research findings, conclusion and recommendations.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented a background to the study, stated the research problem, identified the questions and objectives of the study, and highlight the significance and justification of the study. In addition, it explained issues that are likely to hinder the success of the study and how to deal with them; and looked at how the research is going to be organised. The next chapter will define some terms used in the study and critically examine the literature adopted for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In reviewing the literature, the researcher gathers and makes an analysis of old information about the research theme, which helps in decision making for further research. This second chapter begins by defining some terms that are of great relevance to the study. It makes a critical analysis of the literature on the role DOVVSU plays in the protection of women's rights taking into consideration the various ideas brought out by different writers on how cases are handled and addressed. Specifically, it looks at the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and how these institutions operate as regards women's rights protection, using that as a benchmark for the procedures of DOVVSU; the state of domestic violence in Ghana; the protection of women's rights in Ghana; the procedures employed by DOVVSU while discharging its duties, addressing the specific needs of victims and education, specific training given to officials, information on challenges that affect effective delivery and other legal documents like the Paris Principles, The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), The Protocol on the Rights of Women, and the 2007 Domestic Violence Act (Act 732).

2.1 Definition of Terms

Below are the definitions of some terms used in this study:

2.1.1 Gender

Particularly, as per the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) (1997), gender is the main Principles of shaping the social order which controls the processes, production and reproduction, and consumption and distribution. Also, it is either the ideological or physical interactions that concerns men and women. According to World Health Organisation (2004), “Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles, and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed”. According to Health Canada’s gender-based policy analysis (2000), gender is the display of informally manufactured duties, relationships, individual characteristics and values, power and influences assigned by the society to differentiate both sexes. According to them, gender is relational because the roles assigned both sexes do not exist on their own, rather the roles are demarcated by relating it to another using the kind of relationship that exists between males and females, as well as men and women (Canada’s gender-based policy analysis, 2000).

From the above definitions given, the study therefore defines gender as when individuals of the two sexes (male and females) are classified based on socio-cultural differences and not genetic characteristics.

2.1.2 Women

Basically, women may refer to all individuals who possess the female gender, of which girls are included (Protocol on the Rights of Women, 2003, Article 1 (k)). Various religious groups have different interpretations of who a woman should be. For instance, according to the Quran 4: 34, “Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). So good women

are the obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah hath guarded. As for those from whom ye fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Lo! Allah is ever High, Exalted, Great”. Also according to Genesis 2: 23, a woman means that which was taken out of a man; again in 1 Corinthians 11:3, 1 Corinthians 11:8, 1 Corinthians 11:9 and 1 Peter 3:7, a woman is portrayed as a man’s responsibility (“the head of the woman is the man; but yet honour is to be shown to the wife”) and tenderness, gentleness, courtesy and no disrespect (“as unto the weaker vessel”) in Matthew 15:28 , John 2:4, John 20:13, John 20:15.

Hence, this study will define women as group of female human beings who are unmarried, married, or have been married or cohabiting.

2.1.3 Discrimination against women

Generally, discrimination against women starts when the child is born; where the gender lines are drawn to exclude women from partaking in certain activities (Wolfe, 2018). According to Kelsey (2015), women are victims of discrimination in all aspects of life across the globe, and challenges that affect their growth is more prominent at higher levels of authority (Baxter & Wright, 2000). Basically, it is the uneven treatment rendered to women on the basis that some features make them different from men (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). The CEDAW defines discrimination against women as:

“any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural,

civil or any other field” (Adopted by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 34/180 of December 1979).

Similarly, the Protocol on the Rights of Women (2003) defines it as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction or any differential treatment based on sex and whose objectives or effects compromise or destroy the recognition, enjoyment or the exercise by women, regardless of their marital status, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all spheres of life” (Article 1 (f)). According to Zarar (2017), discrimination is the partial treatment given to women and elimination of opportunities and violation of their rights.

It is significant to note that all the definitions have portrayed discrimination against women as an act that gives unfavourable treatment to women such that they lose the ability to exercise their freedom freely. However, on a different thought, Quillian (2006) believes that elements like stereotypes, prejudice and racism give people the inspiration to discriminate against others. Hence, the study defines discrimination against women as actions and barriers that hinder women from exercising their fulltime freedom.

2.1.4 Domestic relationship

“A family relationship or a relationship similar to a family relationship; a relationship in a domestic situation that exists or has existed between a complainant and a respondent and includes a relationship where the complainant is: married; living or has lived with parents or foster parents; or a house help to the respondent” (DVA (Act 732), 2007).

According to this study, a domestic relationship may be seen as the interpersonal relationship between two individuals with a common domestic way of life.

2.1.5 Domestic Violence

Significantly, it is “a violent crime committed in the context of an intimate relationship. It is characterized by acts of violence, power, and coercion intended to control another person’s behaviour” (Nevada Attorney General, 2011).

Domestic violence is largely any act which comprises a danger or mischief to an individual which is probably going to result in: physical maltreatment (physical assault or the propensity for utilizing physical strength against another person which comprise of forcefully detaining, denying the another individual the right to basic needs like food clothing and shelter, or torturing an individual); Sexual abuse (forcing an individual to engage in sexual intercourse which is made up of exploitations that makes the person less of a human); economic abuse (the threat to dispossess or dispossessing another person of monetary or money related assets the individual is qualified for by law); emotional, verbal or psychological abuse (the act of making another person feel worthless or useless all the time, and insulting another person’s dignity and self-respect); and behaving in a way that puts another person’s health and well-being in danger (DVA (Act 732), 2007).

Domestic violence is a form of abuse and forceful acts which are used by a boyfriend or fiancé, previous or current husband which harm physically, sexually or psychologically (WHO, 2013). These forms of abuse underpin the inequality existing between males and females (The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2007).

Hence, the study defines domestic violence as any act of violence or abuse used by one person against the female partner in a domestic setting.

2.1.6 Victims

A victim is defined as a person who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage, or economic loss as a result of a crime (*Canadian Department of Justice, 2016*).

According to this study, victims are all individuals who have experienced or have been harmed or injured because of aggressive behaviors at home or domestic violence.

2.1.7 Violence against women

Violence against women refers to “all acts perpetrated against women which cause or could cause them physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm, including the threat to take such acts; or to undertake the imposition of arbitrary restrictions on or deprivation of fundamental freedoms in private or public life in peacetime and during situations of armed conflicts or of war” (Protocol on the Rights of Women, 2003, Article 1 (j)).

According to the UN General Assembly (1993) it is “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”. According to Prügl and True (2014) violence against women can be an act of performed by an individual or by the state. Some of the ones “committed by individuals include: rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, reproductive coercion, female infanticide, prenatal sex selection, obstetric violence. And the ones committed by the state include: forced sterilizations and abortions, wartime rape, sexual violence and slavery during conflicts”.

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) may include sexual, physical and psychological violence; which occurs in houses, schools and workplaces during both peace and conflict times (Hossain & Welchman, 2005).

Hence, the study defines violence against women as a type of oppressive treatment against females which incorporates all demonstrations of sex-based brutality which can probably result in physical, mental, sexual and financial maltreatment.

2.1.8 Harmful Practices

Harmful practices refers to “all behaviour, attitudes and/or practices which negatively affect the fundamental Rights of Women and girls, such as their right to life, health, dignity, education and physical integrity” (Protocol on the Rights of Women, 2003, Article1 (g)). They include all forms of violence against females and children which are deeply seated in marginalisation in terms of age, sex, gender and others (Chandra-Mouli *et.al*, 2015)

According to Parker (2002), harmful practices consist of all the abuse of fundamental human rights that put women’s sexual and reproductive health in danger.

Therefore, this study will explain harmful practices to include all forms of actions that infringe on the rights of females.

2.1.9 Vulnerability

Interestingly, according to the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), “Vulnerability in this context can be defined as the diminished capacity of an individual or group to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural or man-made hazard. The concept is

relative and dynamic. Vulnerability is most often associated with poverty, but it can also arise when people are isolated, insecure and defenceless in the face of risk, shock or stress”.

Vulnerability in this study mean the possible situation where an individual is maliciously attacked, either emotionally or physically; or a situation where a person condition in life renders her the likelihood of experiencing domestic abuse.

2.1.10 Needs

According to Uca (2018), need as defined by Beatty in 1981 means the measurable discrepancy existing between a present state of affairs and a desired state of affairs as asserted either by an “owner” of need “authority” on need. In the former instance, need is described as a motivational need; in the latter instance, need is described as a prescriptive need”.

In this study needs refers to the things that can help an individual fight against domestic violence. They include sexual, mental, physical, educational and legal requirements.

2.1.11 Gender Sensitization

According to Bhowmick (2012), gender sensitization is tied in with changing conduct and imparting sympathy into the perspectives that we hold about our very own and the other sex. It helps individuals in inspecting their own frames of mind and convictions and scrutinizing the substances they thought they know. Thus individuals not just obtain new examples of conduct towards people of 'other' sex, but also refinement that empowers him/her to scrutinize his/her mentality, convictions and qualities identified with the sex concerns.

Simply put, this study explains gender sensitization as the renewing and transforming of minds and attitudes towards gender-specific concerns through the implementation of regulations, programmes, and campaigns that promote equity and balance between men and women.

2.2 Overview of the state of women in Ghana

The aim of this overview is to enable the researcher relate the causes and prevention of domestic violence as espoused by theorists in the theoretical framework. According to the individual rights-based theories are deeply seated in an individualistic point of view, the other theories attribute it to the systems and structures that form the basis of domestic violence. These theories contain feminists theorists who view domestic violence as a result of inequality between males and females (Tandon, 2008, Ofei-Aboagye, 1994, Cook, 2012 & Reddy, 2007); and socio-cultural theorists who believe that domestic violence is seen to be tolerable because of traditions and norms (Thomas & Beasley, 1993, Tsikata, 1993, Hidrobo & Fernald, 2013, Shuib et al., 2013, Zakae et al., 2016). Clearly, understanding the state of women in Ghana aids the researcher to link the findings with theory and literature.

According to the report given of Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) on the 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC), Ghana's entire population is 24,658,823. Out of which 12,024,845 (49%) are males and 12,633,978 (51%) are females. Greater Accra has about 4,010,054 people; out of which 1,938,225 are men (Table 1:1). From the table the number of males married are higher, followed by the males who are heads of household, married men, men in consensual unions, males who have separated follow, then the number men who are widowers, and finally those who have divorced (GSS, 2010). As regards the ethnic groups, out of the total population of male, the Akan have the highest number of men, followed by the Mole-Dagbani, Ewes, and Ga- Dangme.

Also, in relation to religion, out of the male total population, the Pentecostals/Charismatics have the highest number, followed by the Muslims, the Protestants, the Catholics, other Christians, people with no religion and traditionalists in that order. As regards employment status, 71.4% of males are employed (GSS, 2016, p.32). Out of this 801,925 people are in Greater Accra (GSS, 2015).

Table 1.1: Greater Accra population by age, marital status, ethnic group, religion, and employment status -male category

CATEGORY	POPULATION (Total number of males- 1,938,225)	
Age (18-60years)	1156794	
Employment status	801925	
Marital Status	Married	558,314
	Head of household	668,304
	Consensual Unions	78,241
	Separated	21,586
	Divorced	5,365
	Never been married	723,226
	Widowed	16,108
Ethnic group	Akan	742,014
	Mole-Dagbani	96,874
	Ewes	375,424
	Ga-Dangme	498,124
Religion	No religion	88,762
	Catholics	152,740

	Protestants	422,522
	Pentecostals /Charismatics	827,500
	other Christians	173,718
	Muslims	242,240
	Traditionalists	10,992
	Others	19,751

Source: Adapted from G.S.S, 2010.

In Table 1.2, Greater Accra Region has about 4,010,054 people of the total population; out of which 2,071,829 are women. Out of this unmarried women are highest, followed by married women, then the number who are heads of household, after which the number of widows follow, women in consensual unions, divorced women and those who were separated. The Akan have highest number of women, the Mole-Dagbani, then Ewes, and Ga- Dangme in that order (GSS, 2010).

Moreover, as regards religion, out of the female total population: the Pentecostals/Charismatics have the highest numbers, followed by the Protestants, the Muslims follow, the Catholics, other Christians, traditionalists, women with no religion and others, in this order. According to the 2015 labour force report 64.7% of women are employed (GSS, 2016). Out of 482415 people are in the Greater Accra Region (GSS, 2015).

Table 1.2 gives a fair idea to the researcher on the number of women who belong to certain groups in the society. This helps the researcher in knowing some of the factors that underpin domestic violence within the society. It is clear from the two tables that most of the people in Accra are highly religious and culture-oriented. Therefore most of the decisions they take will

have more of cultural and religious support. Also, the tables indicate that most of the women in Accra have strong grounds in religious and cultural beliefs.

Table 1.2: Greater Accra population by age, marital status, ethnic group, religion, and employment status -female category

CATEGORY	POPULATION (Total number of females- 2,071,829)	
Age (18-60years)	1164512	
Employment status	482415	
Marital Status	Married	607,262
	Head of household	668,304
	Consensual Unions	88,808
	Separated	48,220
	Divorced	61,397
	Never been married	656,786
	Widowed	95,599
Ethnic group	Akan	786,708
	Mole-Dagbani	103,861
	Ewes	399,908
	Ga-Dangme	558,034
Religion	No religion	47,949
	Catholics	147,706
	Protestants	422,522

	Pentecostals /Charismatics	470,015
	other Christians	185,074
	Muslims	233,257
	Traditionalists	10,053
	Others	18,756

Source: Adapted from G.S.S, 2010.

2.2.1 Women Rights Challenges in Ghana

Generally, women rights in Ghana have indisputably improved over the years. Despite this they still face challenges that make them unable to enjoy fulltime freedom; their civil, political and socio-economic freedoms are affected as a result (Mtshali, 2010). This is due to the inadequacy in law enforcement policies that helps in eradicating practices that abuse the Rights of Women (Murray, 2007). According to Mtshali (2010), the Ghana constitution affords the right to promote and protect the interests of women and so it is expected that women's basic rights are easily protected. According to GSS (2010) women form about 51% of the nation's population. Even though women are in the majority in terms of population, they are in the minority in all the other aspects including human rights (Mtshali, 2010).

A lot of academic research has been undertaken in the practices that affects the freedom of women but these four are still persistent: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Trokosi, Witch Camps and Domestic violence against women (Mtshali, 2010). Since discussing all the challenges that affect women in this work is not feasible, the four practices will be briefly discussed. Given that the main focus of the work is on DOVVSU whose core mandate is on domestic violence, domestic violence against women in Ghana will be discussed in detailed later in the work.

2.2.1a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

According to Article 5 of the Protocol on the Rights of Women and Article 21 of the African Children's Charter, FGM can be considered a harmful practice. Harmful practices are "all behaviour, attitudes and/or practices which negatively affect the fundamental Rights of Women and girls, such as their right to life, health, dignity, education and physical integrity" (Art 5, Protocol on the Rights of Women, 2003). FGM is where a whole or part of the clitoris of a girl between the ages of 4 and 12 by old women is removed with tools like scissors, broken bottles and stones; with the notion of keeping her virginity and making her a marriage material (Wheeler, 2003).

This practice causes a long term effect on the victim in term of child birth and sexual intercourse; and also a clear violation of the "civil and political rights of victims, namely, the right to life; dignity and physical integrity and privacy" (Mtshali, 2010, p. 29). FGM is confirmed a criminal act under the Criminal Code Amendment Act of 1998 (Art 69B, Criminal Code Amendment Act, 2012). Even though government institutions have indicated that FGM has declined, many NGOs have argued that it is still in practice in Ghana and the ages of victims are much lower than it was (Mtshali, 2010). According to these NGOs parents sought to adopt a different alternative since kids were being educated on FGM in school. Therefore, they have resorted to FGM before the child reaches the school going age. This development calls for communities to make it a collective effort to put an end to the practice (Wheeler, 2003).

2.2.1b Trokosi

Basically, "trokosi means wife to gods" and it mostly practiced amongst the Ewes in Ghana (Mtshali, 2010). It is a form of slavery that causes sexual violence and a practice where there

is a conflict between human rights and culture. Here, in atonement of sins committed by a current relative or forefathers, a young virgin is given to the priest of the gods as a wife until the priest declares an atonement has been made. The girls are forced to labour for the priest in the shrines; when they give birth, the priest is not responsible but the gods (Bilyeu, 1998).

Clearly, trokosi is violation of the socio-economic, civil and political rights of the victims. A discriminatory act that leads to the exploitation and the abuse of women. It leads to domestic abuse and violation of education, health and sexual rights (Mtshali, 2010).

Moreover, the practice of trokosi is a criminal act under the provisions of the Criminal Code Amendment Act of 1998 (Art 314A (1), Criminal Code Amendment Act, 1998). Both governmental agencies like the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and DOVVSU in collaboration with NGOs have educated most communities in the country about the harmful effects of trokosi and the human rights implications. That notwithstanding, trokosi still exists in most rural communities which means the implementation of laws that criminalizes the act is lacking. Most communities are indifferent about the situation because they are afraid of offending the gods too, which makes the arrest of perpetrators of the act very difficult (Mtshali, 2010).

2.2.1c Witch Camps

According to Teye-Topey (1999), in most communities where there is a high level of belief in superstition, it is easy to find see people being side-lined as witches; these victims are mostly elderly women. These witches are forced to camp themselves at a particular place to find solace with one another. Most of these camps can be seen in the Northern region of Ghana (Mtshali, 2010). This practice is against the Protocol on the Rights of Women because women in these camps face challenges such as no access to community facilities which make them look for

these facilities in other communities. These women are sometimes exploited by camp owners who “use the women for their own benefit by forcing the women to farm, gather firewood, manually quarry stones in the blazing tropical sun and walk long distances to fetch water” (Teye-Topey 1999, p. 212).

The socio-economic, civil and political rights of the victims are being violated as per the Ghanaian Constitution (Articles 15(1) and (2), 13(1), 14(1), 17(2), 26(2), 21(1g). They include the right to human dignity; life; protection of personal liberty; not be discriminated against; not to be subjected to inhuman or injurious cultural practices; and the right to freedom of movement within Ghana (Mtshali, 2010). According to the CHRAJ report of 2008, the law guiding the criminalisation of such acts is weak hence the government should strengthen the implementation of the legislations that protect victims.

2.3 National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)

There is a significant connection between NHRIs and the protection women’s rights. This is because when they are utilised well, practices and beliefs that abuse the Rights of Women can effectively be eliminated (Mtshali, 2010). According to the Paris Principles (1993), a NHRI will be questioned if it fails to comply with the mandates of the 1993 Paris Principles. NHRIs have better chances of promoting and protecting the Rights of Women as per their mandate since they are known both locally and international. They also have the advantage of maintaining a balance relationship between both government and NGOs because of their semi-formal nature (Mtshali, 2010). NHRIs cannot be seen as NGOs because they are semi-official in nature, also cannot be seen as a government agency because they are supposed to serve as a check on the activities of government (Murray 2007).

In line with the above, Murray (2007) further argues that NHRI as official bodies with the specific mandate of human rights protection are in the best position to influence decisions of government and so are supposed to be free from any active partisan politics. In addition, women's rights can be well protected in Africa, if the components of NHRIs are well utilized. NHRIs provide a fresh dimension of accountability and the establishment of a new constitutional order which is the hallmark of human rights advocates (Matshekga, 2002).

These institutions can influence decisions made by government and non-governmental agencies as regarding the implementation of laws that protects the Rights of Women. In order to ensure that that their work is well done, NHRIs must operate with extra diligence. Even though NHRIs will not be able to attend to all the things that happen in the society, the importance of women's rights protection cannot be downplayed because of the economic, social and political expectations placed on them (Murray, 2007).

However, governments all over the world especially in Africa are faced with the challenge of establishing and maintaining effective and independent national human rights institutions (Matshekga, 2002). In addition to this, Matshekga (2002) further argues that NHRIs can be easily manipulated by bureaucratic and executive decisions; thus their effectiveness is dependent on their freedom to operate legally and financially, and the freedom to decide on measures of appointments and dismissals. Similarly, in the words of Murray (2007, p.195), "NHRIs as an official body working on the protection of human rights...and are in a unique position to influence politicians and civil servants and hence guarantee a certain expertise...free from any politically partisan approach".

2.3.1 The Paris Principles and the composition of NHRIs

The significant role played by international and local instruments in the activities of NHRIs when it comes to women rights protection cannot be underestimated. According to Mtshali (2010, p.11), “these instruments should influence the domestic legislation establishing the NHRIs and be aimed at protecting women’s rights.” Basically, the Paris Principles advises the NHRIs to protect the rights and freedoms of people as provided in the document. It is very important that NHRIs pay attention to the demands of instruments like this at the local level; especially when it comes to the protection of women’s rights because they are meant to provide full protection to the Rights of Women (Mtshali, 2010).

Significantly, the Paris Principles evolved from a universal agreement between UN Member States to create institutions at the State level that will promote and protect human rights within the national confines; conforming to the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action (Chen, 1995). The Preamble of the Paris Principles states that the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action reaffirm the vital responsibilities of NHRIs, especially when it comes to the advisory roles they play (Mtshali, 2010).

However, the Principles mandate every NHRI to follow these criteria to be successful. They include: mandate and competence: a broad mandate based on universal human rights standards; autonomy from government; Independence guaranteed by statute or constitution; pluralism, including through membership and/or effective cooperation; adequate resources; and adequate powers of investigation (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 2010) .

2.3.1a. the Criteria the Paris Principles Mandate

According to Hucker (1997) the Principles provide under the first criterion-Mandate and competence that, “a national institution shall be given as broad a mandate as possible, which shall be clearly set forth in a constitutional or legislative text, specifying its composition and its sphere of competence.” In order to fully safeguard human rights, an all-inclusive action should be taken to protect them; this protection is fuelled by a change in attitude. This all-inclusive technique to rights protection underpins universality and interdependence Principles of human rights, which is broadly linked to the mandates of NHRIs (OHCHR, 2010).

In line with the above, NHRIs that acquire their authority or mandate from international agreements and tackle all issues of human rights that link with indivisibility, universality and the interdependence Principles of human rights are regarded as the excellent model (Mtshali, 2010). On the other hand, some NHRIs have their mandates restricted to civil and political rights, which limit their authority to investigate issues of all rights. Some NHRIs focus of particular groups within the society like women and children, their mandate to investigate is limited to issues of discrimination; with all these limitations, they still have to adhere to the Paris Principles (Mtshali, 2010).

Furthermore, under the second criterion- pluralism, OHCHR (2010) argues that the Principles provide that:

“the composition of the national institution..., whether by means of an election or otherwise, shall be established... to ensure the pluralist representation of the social forces (of civilian society)..., particularly by powers which will enable effective cooperation to be established with, or through the presence of, representatives of: (a) non-governmental organizations responsible for human rights and efforts to combat racial discrimination, trade unions, concerned social and professional organizations, for example, associations of lawyers,

doctors, journalists and eminent scientists; (b) trends in philosophical or religious thought; (c) universities and qualified experts; (d) parliament; (e) government departments”(Paris Principles, Resolution 18/134 of 20 December 1993).

It is vital to note that the representatives of NHRIs should ensure gender balance. A body that helps in human rights protection is supposed to show sign that reflects the Principles they are propagating. People tend believe in an institution that abide by their own Principles in public, thereby becoming an example for others (Mtshali 2010).

Surprisingly, the Paris Principles focus less attention on gender balance as an element for considering in the structure of any NHRI. This is because gender inequality has been an issue across the globe, so making gender balance a minimum requirement is something one would expect but the Principles only stipulate that the selection of members should be in the pluralist form (Murray 2007).

Moreover, the last criterion is under the Principles is autonomy and independence. According to the Principles, the NHRIs are supposed to have enough funds to support their activities such that they will be independent from government influence. For any institution to be successful, it has to be fully independent. According to Pohjolainen (2006), all NHRIs are supposed to be established by the constitution and enforce its obligation “by acting as guardians, experts and teachers of human rights”. However, no matter the extent to which a NHRI matches up to the Paris Principles, it will not be effective if it is not regarded as an independent body. For the NHRI to be independent it involves: “the mandate of members should be established by “an official act which shall establish the specific duration of the mandate” since a stable mandate is a precondition for independence; membership should be renewable, subject to the need for pluralism” (OHCHR 2010, p. 39). In addition, under the Paris Principles’ methods of operation:

“(a) Freely consider any questions falling within its competence, whether they are submitted by the Government or taken up by it without referral to a higher authority, on the proposal of its members or of any petitioner, (b) Hear any person and obtain any information and any documents necessary for assessing situations falling within its competence; (c) Address public opinion directly or through any press organ, particularly in order to publicize its opinions and recommendations; (d) Meet on a regular basis and whenever necessary in the presence of all its members after they have been duly concerned; (e) Establish working groups from among its members as necessary, and set up local or regional sections to assist it in discharging its functions” (Paris Principles, Resolution 18/134 of 20 December 1993).

In spite of the above, independence and autonomy are probably a very significant Principles but can also be argued to be the most contradictory Principles (OHCHR, 2010). Most of the NHRIs are State-funded which makes their independence questionable. NHRIs can be seen as “autonomous quasi-governmental or statutory institutions with human rights in their mandate” (Koo & Ramirez, 2009). However, states also fund independent bodies like the courts and supreme audit agencies (OHCHR, 2010).

Hence, the NHRIs are expected to have a broader mandate in the constitution because of the requirements established by the Paris Principles. Even though such a broader mandate should comprise of is not clearly stated in the Principles, the general idea is that the mandate should help NHRIs gather enough competence to operate within the State (Mtshali, 2010). The Paris Principles explain that the mandate of any NHRI should give it enough authority to gather reports and proposals; also assess recommendations and opinions necessary for the protection of human rights (Mtshali, 2010).

In addition, what is necessary for this work is the responsibility of any NHRI to: report on the abuse of women rights and human rights; educate and implement women and human rights; and create awareness with the purpose of eradicating women rights violations.

2.4 Protection of Women's Rights and Instruments that protect them

The 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) defines human rights as "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards each other in a spirit of brotherhood" (Article 1). Women's rights fall under the general mandate of human rights. According to Molokomme (1998), women's rights is a course and a model via which the acknowledgement of the fundamental human Rights of Women are fully activated. This concept stands for a platform where the concerns of women are identified and realized (Kuenyehia, 2000). Arguing further, Kuenyehia (2000) posits that the mechanisms through which women's rights are activated are through international treaties and conferences.

According to Ampofo (2008) and Bunch (1990), universal human rights are seen as free from discrimination in terms of sex, because women were not involved in outlining the entire concept of human rights. In addition, "international human rights law effectively exclude many acts of non-state actors, and those that take place in the private sphere, especially in the family. Thus the numerous violations which are committed against women in their communities, their workplaces, and in their own families are excluded from the operation of international human rights" (Kuenyehia, 2000, p. 2).

In Africa, women have taken a collective action to advocate for the issues that concern women. According to Steady (2006), it has its roots in "indigenous mechanisms of female mobilisation and cooperation; the historical experiences of colonisation; and the present reality of corporate

globalisation”. “African women’s collective activism today focuses on challenging exploitative development policies, advocating for more democratic institutions and peace; facilitating access to resources for poor and rural women, and promoting formal and informal education” (Ampofo, 2008, p. 397).

According to Ampofo (2008), the African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF) introduced the first feminists’ forum in Africa. This forum connected over 100 people from Africa and the Diaspora in Accra in 2006 to discuss feminism in Africa. A charter of feminists Principles was adopted, which “.....sets out collective values that we hold as key to our work and to our lives as African feminists. It charts the change we wish to see in our communities, and also how this change is to be achieved. In addition it spells out our individual and collective responsibilities to the movement and to one another within the movement” (AWDF, 2006).

During the Forum local plans of actions were initiated, leading to the 2007 Ghana’s National Feminists Forum. “With the return to a more open form of government in 2000, civil society has come alive again, seeking to actively engage with the state around issues of citizenship, and women are an active part of this process” (Ampofo, 2008, p.400).

Significantly, Mtshali (2010) states that there are tools that protect the Rights of Women both locally and internationally. These instruments include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), UN Covenant on the Rights of the Child (CRC) at international level; at the regional level, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Children’s Charter) and the Protocol on the Rights of Women; at the local level, the Ghanaian Constitution and the Domestic Violence Act (Act 732).

Furthermore, the influence of these instruments is dependent on the ratification by States; and in the case of a dualist State, the domestication of these instruments (Mtsahli, 2010). The CEDAW is seen as an all-inclusive tool for protecting the Rights of Women, because it addresses the problems of women in public and private spheres (Kuenyehia, 2000).

Moreover, Ghana in ensuring that women's rights are protected has encouraged NHRIs like DOVVSU and CHRAJ to apply the Principles of human rights found in the Ghanaian constitution and international human rights documents (Mtshali, 2010). In addition, Ogada (2007) explains that the Principles of the CEDAW, the ICCPR, and the CRC bound the actions of these NHRIs because Ghana has ratified them. At the continent level, Ghana has ratified the ACC (African Children's Charter) and the Protocol on the Rights of Women. Ghana has also incorporated the CEDAW into the DVA (Domestic Violence Act); moreover, in accordance with Article 33 (5) of the Ghanaian Constitution, which gives courts the mandate of protecting rights that are not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution but are "inherent in democracy and are for the freedom and dignity of man", the Principles under these human rights instruments can be enforced.

Also, DOVVSU is obliged to ensure the protection of women's rights in Ghana, and to ensure that the Principles and aims of those objectives are achieved because Ghana forms a party to these international and regional instruments (Mtshali, 2010).

2.5 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence constitutes one of the popular kind of gender-based abuse across the globe. Women abuse within the domestic domain became incorporated in international laws in the 1970s, when there was an increase in awareness by feminists groups within the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) (Dobash & Dobash, 1977). This issue of domestic violence

became international law in 1993 by the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) which stipulates gender-based violence as a violation of human rights (DEVAW, Resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993).

Likewise, this attracted the interest of individuals, States and international bodies. According to Africa (2010) and Yodanis (2004), theories of feminism that considered violence against women as one different from that of men, influenced the 1993 DEVAW which mapped out three spaces where domestic violence takes place which includes: “in the family (including marital rape, sexual abuse, female genital mutilation and dowry-related violence); in the community (including rape, sexual harassment and sex trafficking); and by the State (all forms of violence that are condoned or perpetrated by state actors)” (IDS *et.al*, 2016, p. 21).

As a matter of fact, according to Cantalupo *et.al* (2006), the approval of the DEVAW and the establishment of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women by the United Nations is a clear indication that the people around the world agree that domestic abuse represent a total hinders to the Rights of Women. The DEVAW views "violence against women constitutes a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and impairs or nullifies their enjoyment of those rights and freedoms." (DEVAW, Resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993). In the same light, the CEDAW views discrimination against women as an inclusion of gender-based violence which is the type pointed at women by virtue of them being women, which has a disproportionate effect on women (Cantalupo *et.al*, 2006). Hunnicutt (2009) and IDS *et.al* (2015) posit that contemporary studies in specific areas of gender and sexuality have proved that women and children, and a few men suffer domestic violence in almost all countries across the globe.

According to international survey, over 35% of women in the world have are/ have been victims of either sexual or/and physical violence (García-Moreno et al., 2013). Also, according to

Stockl et al. (2013), intimate partners executed one out of seven manslaughters and one-third of all female homicides in the world. Victims of domestic violence after suffering all sort of gender imbalance, also suffer health and economic problems like psychological and mental disorders; sexually transmitted sicknesses such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV); limited maintenance opportunities; as well as lower income and productivity (Moosa, 2012).

States across the globe have come to a consensus that VAWG which includes domestic violence is an international policy concern and a clear abuse of fundamental human rights (IDS *et.al*, 2016). In view of this, Sustainable Development Goal number 5 which is targeted at attaining gender equality and all women and girls empowerment will be assessed by various factors of which the “eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres” is one of them (IDS *et.al*, 2016, p. 20).

The table below gives a timeline of major policies related to domestic and gender-based violence internationally. It indicates the progress international documents concerning domestic and gender-based violence have made so far.

Table 2.1: Timeline of major policies related to domestic and gender-based violence (International).

Year	Policy
1948	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1966	•International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights •International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights
1982	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

1993	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women – complete Principles in international laws to protect women from gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual violence.
1995	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action -Conference Report from Fourth World Conference on Women (insisted on member States to give a five-year progress report the condition of women and girls).
2000	UN Resolution 55/68 -Elimination of all forms of violence (GBV inclusive).
2003	UN Resolution 58/185 – research on every type of abuse against girls and women.
2004	UN Resolution 18/147 Elimination of Domestic Violence Against Women – For the first time domestic violence was treated different from the others.
2006	UN Resolution 61/143 –techniques to eradicate violence against women was intensified.
2008	UN Resolution 7/24 -Elimination of Violence Against Women.
2009	•UN Resolution 11/2 – methods to eradicate violence against women was hastened. •UN Resolution 12/17 -Elimination of discrimination against women.

Source: Adapted from IDS *et.al*, 2016.

2.5.1 Domestic Violence in Ghana

Ghana is no saint when it comes to issues of domestic violence. According to the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre, one out of every three women in Ghana is a victim of domestic violence; three out of ten women confess to have experience marital rape;

and 27% of women have been abused psychologically which includes property destruction, verbal abuse and threats (Coker-Appiah & Cusack, 1999; Ajayi & Soyinka-Airewele, 2018). In addition, the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) reported in 2008 that 38% of women between 15- 49 years who have been married before have either suffered psychological, physical or sexual violence at certain times in their lives (DHS, 2008).

Generally, the society has made marriage an essential status, and women are subordinate to men; this has led to the practices within marriage and domestic affairs private so actions of men cannot be challenged. (Ampofo, 2008). Nonetheless, inspired by the works of activists who helped in the implementation of domestic violence legislations, many of the research on domestic violence in Africa in the 1990s started in Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, and South Africa (Hodgson, 2002; Schneider, 2008).

The table below gives a timeline of major policies related to domestic and gender-based violence continentally. It indicates the progress Africa has made concerning domestic and gender-based violence.

Table 2.2: Timeline of major policies related to domestic and gender-based violence (Regional).

Year	Policy
1981	The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
1994	The African Platform for Action on Women -Dakar Declaration -"violation of women's rights is violation of human rights".
1995	The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa – encouraged States to implement laws to eradicate violence against women.

1999	The African Commission on Human and People's Rights recruited a Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women who had the authority to assist as the centre for women's rights protection.
2004	African Union -Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment- even though domestic violence was not the focus, it was a major step.
2007	The African Commission on Human and People's Rights -Resolution 111 –for victims of sexual violence (women and girls) to have the right to be cured and compensated.

Source: Adapted from IDS *et.al*, 2016.

In this regard, Ghana has made efforts in recent decades to eliminate the issues of domestic abuse (IDS *et.al*, 2016). The earliest legal effort Ghana made towards the eradication of domestic abuse was a reflection of the international aggression for women's rights which includes: the CEDAW, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), and the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa; coupled with many years of support from other international bodies, many women's rights agencies, and major civil society organisations (CSOs) (Cook, 2011). According to IDS *et.al* (2016), this led to the enactment of laws by the Ghanaian government to protect the Rights of Women and criminalized VAWG in the country. Some of these legislations include: the prohibition of discrimination based on sex under the 1992 Constitution; the 1998 Criminal Code Amendment Act, which amended the 1960 Criminal Code Act and eradicated sacramental slavery; and legal amendments to abolish FGM, child abuse and widowhood rights. And in 2007 the DV Act, Act 732 was enacted (IDS *et.al*, 2016).

The table below gives a timeline of major policies related to domestic and gender-based violence locally. It indicates the progress Ghana has made concerning domestic and gender-based violence.

Table 2.3: Timeline of major policies related to domestic and gender-based violence (National).

Year	Policy
1992	Republic of Ghana Constitution –it made equality for women a priority, even though violence against women and domestic violence was not included.
1994	Republic of Ghana Criminal Code Article 69A –it criminalised FGM. makes female genital mutilation a second-degree felony
2003	•Ghanaian Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) – it called for the need to implement the Domestic Violence Act. •Ghanaian Strategic Implementation Plan –it called for the “mainstreaming of gender issues”, reorganisation of the “women's machinery” and monitoring of policies that affect children and women.
2007	Republic of Ghana Domestic Violence Act.
2010	•GHANAP 1325 -the Ghanaian Action Plan for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 (women, peace, security). It did not talk about domestic violence but encouraged the adoption of pre-existing strategies to protect women in times of conflict and GBV. •Ghanaian Sector Medium-Term Development Plan (SMTDP) –it encouraged the education of women as regards their fundamental human rights.

	•Ghanaian Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) –it regarded the DVA as a remedy to discrimination against women.
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Source: Adapted from IDS *et.al*, 2016.

2.5.1a The 2007 Domestic Violence Act (Act 732)

Notably, the origin of the Act began with the works of Coker-Appiah and Cusack in 1999 in a publication by the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (Gender Centre), which was on violence against women and children. This was followed by the collaboration between the Gender Centre, the Ark Foundation and Women’s Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE), which increased public awareness of domestic violence and empowered other groups like the Network for Women’s Rights (NETRIGHT), the Sister’s Keepers, the Violence against Women and Children’s Practitioners Network, the Gender Violence Survivors’ Support Network (GVSSN), and others. According to Amoakohene (2004) and NETRIGHT (2012), many NGOs, CSOs and other groups like the Ghana branch of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Ghana), were the ones which started responding to domestic violence issues in Ghana. These groups worked together to modify preconceived ideas and unhealthy values within the society which forms the basis of domestic abuse (IDS *et.al*, 2016).

Moreover, media publicity on enacting the Domestic Violence Bill into an Act was very high in the 1990s, and this according to Amoakohene (2004) led to the formation the then WAJU, now DOVVSU of the Ghana Police in 1998. Ghana in early 2002 experienced a higher level of female homicide, and through the efforts of the media, CSOs organised mass action to support the discussion about violence against women.

At last, after all the years of debates, Ampofo (2008) explains that the Parliament of Ghana enacted the Domestic Violence Bill (had been before Parliament since 2003) into an Act which

was passed on 27th February 2007. Similarly, in the words of Manuh (2007, p.1) “process leading to the passage of the law involved not only the introduction of new legislation, but also confronting a social system that tolerates various forms of violence against women and girls, especially in the context of gender relations and in the domestic sphere”.

Comparably, IDS *et.al* (2016) note that Ghana’s laws on domestic violence encompasses a wider perspective because it approaches these issues of domestic violence in a culture-sensitive way. They believe that:

“First, the 2007 Domestic Violence Act allows for mediation by alternative dispute resolution methods. Second, the definition of domestic violence used in Act 732 does not include reference to a specific sex. Third, the Act acknowledges that perpetrators and survivors do not have to be married or related by blood ties, and applies to live-in household staff too. Fourth, the definition of domestic violence includes various forms of economic abuse, in addition to more conventional definitions of sexual and physical violence” (IDS *et.al*, 2016, p.24).

The DV Act, Act 732 also describes what domestic violence should entail and provides a complete framework for preventing domestic violence. Most importantly, it has made certain actions like physically, sexually, economically, psychologically exploiting, and intimidating and harassing people within the domestic domain a criminal one (Osei-Tutu & Ampadu, 2017).

Interestingly, that year the Ghana Police recorded a lot of people reporting perpetrators. This gave birth to the WAJU which was later changed to DOVVSU (in accordance with the DVA), because of the realization that domestic violence affect many others apart from women who are mostly in the majority (Osei-Tutu & Ampadu, 2017).

2.5.2 The Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU).

After the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732), the DOVVSU was established to enforce the Act (IDS *et.al*, 2016). Prior to its establishment, the DOVVSU was known as the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU); a special Unit within the GPS formed in 1998 to address issues of violence against children and women. The Unit was further extended to other regions in 2002. However, the WAJU used legislations that already existed to protect their victims. These laws were “the Criminal Code, 1960 (Act 29) and its amendments, Children’s Act, 1998 (Act 560) and Intestate Succession Law, 1985(PNDCL 111)” (Agbitor, 2012, p. 2).

Moreover, the Unit was mandated to “investigate all female and children related offences, to handle cases involving domestic violence, to handle cases of child abuse and child delinquency, to prosecute all such cases where necessary and any other functions as may be directed by the Inspector General of Police” (Agbitor, 2012, p. 3). Also, according to the DOVVSU (2018), the Unit changed its name between 2004 and 2005 because its mandate changed from addressing the concerns of women and children to include men, hence the DOVVSU. Again, the Unit has the backing of international, regional and local documents and legislations which makes their work more reliable (Agbitor, 2012).

To fully understand the role DOVVSU plays in the protection of women’s rights in Ghana, it is necessary to review the literature based on the objectives. This will entail addressing the needs of victims, knowing the techniques used in addressing reported cases, and challenges faced by officials of the Unit.

2.5.2a. Addressing the needs of victims

It is significant that victims are adequately protected to avoid re-victimisation. According to Agbitor (2012, p.18), the needs of victims are both immediate and continuing. They include “Health, shelter, education, material and economic support, counselling and rehabilitation/reintegration needs of victims”. As stated earlier, the DV Act, Act 732 stipulates that a support fund for victims be created to support victims. Section 29 of the Act outlines where funds can be collected from. The sources include: donations from individuals and other public and private organisations, approved budget from parliament, and other funds approved by the Minister of Finance. These needs will be discussed briefly below.

Firstly, material and economic support is very vital when it comes to addressing the needs of victims. Victims have higher vulnerability risk, if they depend on the offenders for survival (Agbitor, 2012). The Spain Organic Act on Integrated Measures against Gender Based Violence states that, victims of gender violence will enjoy a unique form of aid where there is the lack of material or economic resource, this will go a long way to ensure they enjoy life too. Thus, these victims are encouraged to join programmes that will supplement them professionally, where some amount of money will be given to them to enable them stay independently (Office of Head of State, 2004). Clearly, objective one (1) of the domestic violence fund launched by the DV Act, Act 732 was to assist victims with monetary and material support. However, this has not been achieved as indicated by Ghana’s National Domestic Violence Policy and National Plan of Action in 2008.

Secondly, the provision of healthcare is very essential when it comes to protecting the victims of domestic abuse. The structure of the healthcare is such that victims of abuse can easily be identified and referred to for other services if the need arises. Unfortunately, many victims are unable to access the quality healthcare (Office of Head of State, 2004). The UNICEF Innocent Research Centre in 2000 explains that giving training assistance to health workers will actually

enable them identify women who are easily being abused. The centre further argues that the training should not be done separately from what they already do but should be incorporated into the session they have already.

In addition to the above, the DV Act, Act 732, Section 8 describes the health needs of victims and how they are addressed. To begin with, in assisting victims of abuse, a medical support should be given to them with access to free medical care in any health facility. Also, during emergency cases the victim should be given medical assistance while informing the police about the situation. Victims' health needs will be easily addressed if the provision in the Act are effectively enforced (Agbitor, 2012).

Thirdly, shelter is a basic requirement when it comes to protecting victims of domestic abuse. When a case is reported victims are supposed to know of accommodation services they may get and the staff in-charge will have to provide their details to the homes (Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department, 2007). Most NGOs in Africa are unable to provide victims with accommodation, instead they tend to provide mental, social and legal aid. Governments are cooperating with NGOs to give support services to shelter homes (UNICEF Innocent Research Centre, 2000).

Also, the Domestic Violence Fund aims at providing training for personnel at shelter homes and giving accommodation to domestic violence victims to ensure rehabilitation and reintegration (DV Act, Act 732, Section 29 & 30). The Ghana National Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in 2010 explains that there is only one government shelter home in the country. Only two NGOs, that is, the WISE and Ark foundation are providing shelter homes for victims as indicated by Ghana's National Domestic Violence Policy and National Plan of Action in 2008.

Fourthly, there is the need is counselling and education. Offenders of the act of domestic violence should be forced to engage in counselling and education sessions (Minnesota

Research Department, 2007). According to Agbitor (2012, p.21) “The standards for domestic abuse counselling and educational programs must require offenders and abusing parties to attend a minimum of twenty-four (24) sessions or thirty-six (36) hours of programming, unless a probation officer has recommended fewer sessions. Said services must be provided in a group setting, unless the offender or abusing party would be inappropriate in such a setting. There must be separate sessions for male and female participants”. According to the Minnesota Research Department (2007), personnel of the programme should be restricted when it comes to referrals; to insist the offenders in completing the program (exhibiting the qualities learnt at the programme) before the couple can be advised to seek marriage counselling.

Deducing from the above, the needs of victims can be addressed if DOVVSU collaborates well with other organisation both State organisations and civil society organisations to effectively implement the DV Act, Act 732 , as suggested in the National Domestic Violence Policy and National Plan of Action in 2008.

2.5.2b. Techniques used in addressing reported cases

Institutions that protect human rights must work according to legal Principles that are clearly stated in the constitution in order to safeguard its legitimacy (Murray 2007). Mtshali (2010) argues that the responsibilities of DOVVSU as mandated by the DV Act, Act 732 can be grouped into two: to promote and prevent, and to protect and enforce. DOVVSU has the permission to investigate cases of domestic violence to ensure that the Rights of Women are protected. According to Mtshali (2010, p.16) “The ability to be able to lay a complaint against any person, private enterprise or other institution, offers greater protection of women’s rights”. The Unit also has the mandate to educate and create awareness on domestic violence issues and happenings; investigate and undertake research on domestic violence issues; monitor and

enforce laws in places where domestic violence has a higher occurrence possibility (DOVVSU, 2018).

Furthermore, the UN has also provided Guidelines for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence (UN, 2008). According to the guidelines, groups of agencies should be formed to establish and coordinate a plan of action which comprises of a strategy to ensure that all stakeholders enforce preventive measures; a strategy for creating Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should be made part of the plan of action. It also explains that institutions can formulate internal policies based on their own GBV initiatives. SOPs are “specific procedures and agreements among organisations that reflect the plan of action and individual organisations’ roles and responsibilities” (Agbitor, 2012, p.11). Issues relating to ethics confidentiality and safety are stated in the SOP. Stakeholders and participants endorse the procedures to show that they are committed to the matters raised (UN, 2008).

In Ghana, the DV Act, Act 732 provides guidelines to deal with issues of domestic violence. It mentions that to report a case, one must file a complaint with the police, which can be done by the victim, a friend or a relative. As a way of intervening, authorities like advocates of human rights, the police, members of the press, medical personnel and social welfare officials, must also file a complaint in situations where victims are children or are unsure or afraid to secure their interests. Also, someone who is dead can be represented by a relative, a friend or an authority (DV Act, Act 732, section 6).

In addition, police officers are mandated by the Act to: assist and protect victims as and when reports are made; interview victims, offenders and witnesses, put their statements on record and provide them with a copy when the need arises; assist victims with health care and accommodation, even if it requires retrieving properties of victims from perpetrators; educate victims on their rights, how to preserve evidence, and the availability of other services (DV Act, Act 732, section 7 & 8). Provision of enough data on the techniques being used and the

effects of the techniques being on victims are important when it comes to addressing the needs of victims. When processes are not clear and action plans are not well-defined, intervention measures become less effective (Agbitor, 2012).

Moreover, the arguments above suggests that one method is common when it comes to addressing domestic violence, that is respecting the rights of victims by using ways that protect their interest.

2.5.2c. Challenges faced by officials of the Unit

Many people are less educated on their right so requesting for support from human rights agencies becomes a big issue, this hinders them from seeking health care and legal aid (Agbitor, 2012). The ability to interpret documents and its processes lead to superfluous delay of victims (Njovana & Watts 1996). The inadequate referral methods is a major issue because of the penalties that come with connecting the police and medical personnel; this may result in victims having second thoughts sake of the fear of suffering the consequences themselves or their perpetrators suffering it (WHO, 2004).

Also, another challenge is the judicial and legal structure, these sectors are very vital when it comes to the eradication of GBV (United Nations General Assembly (UN-GA), 2006). According to Bott et al. (2005), the experience of personnel within the judicial sector helps in addressing domestic violence issues, thus, encouraging victims to report. Unfortunately, that does not happen in Ghana. Similarly, Agbitor (2012) believes that there so many obstacles that interfere in addressing the justice and legal needs of victims. It contains: low level of publicity when it comes to the number of health and legal aid available for victims; low level of confidence in legal enforcement agencies; lack of clarity as regards the guidelines within the documents; inadequate training sessions for the police and judiciary; higher level dismissals

within the police services; and other practices that prevent women from seeking assistance, like women being detained to ensure protection (Betron & Doggett, 2006).

Furthermore, stereotypes that come with the duties of women and men, and the nature of domestic violence in the society also hinder the needs of victims from being addressed (Pelser et al., 2005). According to Keesbury et al. (2006), the judicial sector focuses more on ensuring that offenders are punished than ensuring that victims are safe. Due to the fact that psychological and legal aids are scarce, victims may lose the zeal to continue seeking for help. According to the World Bank (2006) and Guedes et al. (2002), many female victims prefer the legal mechanisms that make them feel more secure.

Moreover, culture and society are another challenge. Communities play an important role when it comes to the prevention of domestic violence (WHO, 2005). According to Raising Voices (2003), victims may possibly confide in relatives and friends than in official institutions, which makes the social setting more important when it comes to addressing the issues of domestic violence. However, the patriarchal nature of the society makes addressing these issues difficult. Morrell (2002) believes that there is a belief that males have more power than females and so they are supposed to make it reflect in their relationships. The society has accepted violence against women, which challenges the goal of addressing these issues (Boonzaier, 2005).

2.6 Conclusion

This second chapter began by defining some terms that are of great relevance to the study. It reviewed literature on the role DOVVSU plays in the protection of women's rights, and considered the various ideas brought out by different writers on how cases are handled and addressed. Specifically, it looked at the state of women, women rights challenges in Ghana; National Human Rights Institutions NHRIs, how these institutions operate as regards women's

right protection, and used that as a benchmark for the procedures of DOVVSU; the state of domestic violence in Ghana; the protection of women's rights in Ghana; the procedures employed by DOVVSU while discharging its duties, addressing the specific needs of victims and education, information on the challenges that affect effective delivery and other legal documents like the Paris Principles, the CEDAW, the Protocol on the Rights of Women, and the 2007 DVA (ACT 732).

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the study takes a critical look at the theories that form the basis for the research. Scholars have come up with various theories to explain why people behave the way they do and why some things happen at different places in the world at the same time. Theories are suggestions that describe the way events happen. According to Venable (2006), a theory is a statement of fact established by human kind to be used in the world of practice (where human actions are based on their knowledge); and in the world of theory (where scholars prove or disprove traditional knowledge and develop a new knowledge known as theories). Theories are necessary in both the social and natural sciences; they give these fields of study room to advance through developing and testing of theories. Also, Venable (2006) believes that theoretical framework forms the fundamentals of a research; aids in categorising main variables and intervening variables of the topic; aids in prediction the forms of relationships that exists between the main variables and intervening variables; assists in guiding the direction of the study.

3.1 Theories of Domestic Violence

The assumptions of this research is built on the knowledge that choosing to search for assistance, and the nature of the service given are dependent on both victims and staff' perception about what causes domestic violence. It is difficult to find any society that has not been confronted with issues such as physical violence and domestic abuse. Deeds associated with domestic abuse and physical violence vary in terms of appearance and character, in different countries, societies and cultures; but men everywhere have behaved in a way that can

be seen as domestic violence (Kelly & Kelly, 1979). Particularly, Jackson (2007) argues that researchers have made attempts in identifying the causes associated with domestic violence and have come up with theories to give explanations on the causes of domestic violence.

Also, each of the theories offers a diverse angle through which domestic violence can be viewed. In this work however, the feminist theory, the individual rights-based theory and socio-cultural explanations used in describing the foundations of domestic violence are discussed; and the social ecological approach will be adopted to explain how best violence can be prevented. Each of these theories will support and fill the gap where the other falls short.

Whereas the individual rights-based theories are deeply seated in an individualistic point of view, the other theories attribute it the systems and structures that form the basis of domestic violence. These theories contain feminist theorists who view domestic violence as a result of inequality between males and females; and socio-cultural theorists who believe that domestic violence is seen to be tolerable because of traditions and norms. This work adopts the feminist theory and gives the reason for the adoption of, and the application of the theory. The general assumptions of the feminist theory are in the paragraphs below:

3.1.1. The Feminists Theory

This theory emerged in the 1970s when the active political movement for women began. According to Tandon (2008), the main objectives of this theory are to understand why women are being oppressed when it comes to race, class, and gender; and how to address this problem. Theorists believe that domestic violence can be seen to be the oppression of female by male within and outside the home. To add up to domestic violence, rape, female infanticide and sexual assault forms part of abuse against females; and running through this power and gender is a common feature (Reddy, 2007). Theorists believe in the course of feminism which is a

movement that calls for full-time equality between females and males in all aspects (Ofei-Aboagye, 1994). They believe that domestic violence happens because our societies suffer from the effects associated with patriarchy and the gendered social structure.

Moreover, the efforts of feminists are geared towards putting an end to patriarchal dominance and exploitation of women in all relationships (Ofei-Aboagye, 1994). Feminists believe that violence is the image created by the uneven balance of power between men and women in the society (Ofei-Aboagye, 1994). In addressing issues of domestic violence, feminists have proposed that it is important to define it in such a way that it creates awareness and brings various violent behaviours to light (Giddens, 2006). According to them, challenges of domestic violence are buried within the heart of male supremacy as well as the patriarchal nature of the society where male dominance over the female is a big issue; and that domestic violence is part of systemic oppression (Giddens, 2006).

Also, Cook (2012) believes the theory posits that domestic violence has to do with the systems and structures where males have superiority over females, there is dominance of men over women and dependency of females over males. Women depend on men a lot economically which gives them little or no opportunity to escape from violent abuses; and also men have greater physical strength which gives them the opportunity to dominate over women (Cook, 2012).

Explicitly, the basic factor underpinning domestic violence is gender. The social order is determined by gender. Reddy (2007) argues that to the feminists any act of violence against a women (being it rape or any other sexual assault) as a means of controlling women. The society is taught to ascribe authority, dominance, strength and superiority to men while ascribing timidity, passivity, weakness and inferiority to women (Reddy, 2007).

However, the feminist theory has been criticised by scholars like Paymar (1994), who believes that women contribute a lot to domestic violence. According to him, men are not mad dogs to get up and start abusing women, especially in this generation that most people marry out of their own will. He argues that women are victims of domestic violence because they provoke their partners into using the last resort which is violence to control situations; and that women's behaviour contribute to the tension built up in men until they eventually explode in a violent rage (Paymar, 1994). Even though what Paymar (1994) said may be true, it does not mean one should resort to violence when provoked.

3.1.1a. Application of the feminists theory

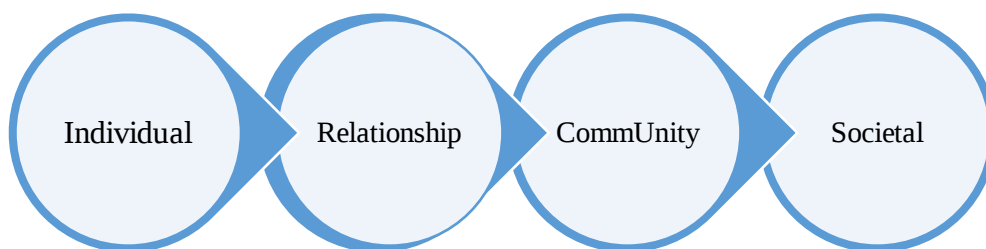
The feminist theory suggests law reforms in marriage, divorce, inheritance child maintenance and reproductive rights. In case these reforms fail in a male dominated society, then educating the public on gender equality and what domestic violence is would be necessary. There should be movements to remove the male's economic and social dominance; which should include promoting women-owned firms, and educating the women on the need to be independent.

Relating this to the research, all actions considered domestic violence is stated in the 2007 DVA, and this gives DOVVSU the mandate to address issues of domestic violence. Here, the DOVVSU takes the legal action on domestic violence cases by convicting offenders and educating victims. In collaboration with other organisations like the Ark Foundation, Plan Ghana, and the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), DOVVSU tries to meet the economic needs of victims. Empowering women economically will help remove the male economic dominance. Victims are in a superior position to fight domestic violence which comes from economic dependence, when they are economically empowered.

3.2 The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention

Ideally, it is better to prevent violence before it begins, which requires knowledge of the factors underpinning it. The Centre for Disease Control (CDC) proposes a model (social-ecological model) to give a better understanding of violence and how to prevent it. According to this model, there is a connection between individual, relationship, community and factors within the society (Figure 3.1). Knowledge of this will aid in understanding the elements that either put people at the forefront of violence or prevents people from witnessing it (CDC, 2019). Also, the framework prescribes an action to be taken transversely in various stages of the model at a similar period. This method is in a better state to help prevent conflict as time goes on than other solo intervention measures (Jewkes, 2002).

3.1 The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention



3.2.1 Individual

This is the first step of violence prevention. It outlines individual characteristics (as espoused by the individual rights based theorists) that increase the probability of the person witnessing violence or behaving in a violent manner (Jewkes, 2002). These characteristics may be either personal or biological which include age, level of education, rate of substance intake, level of income, and history as regards domestic violence (Hidrobo & Fernald, 2013; Shuib et al., 2013). According to the Institute of Development Studies (2004), it involves the use of both formal and informal programmes to aid people in managing and preventing domestic violence.

At this level, preventive emphasis is on measures that promote behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that aid in preventing violence; and preventing behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that promote violence (CDC, 2019). Methods may include education and life skills training. This level is important to the study because DOVVSU is a state institution that works hand-in-hand with other institutions to help people avoid and overcome domestic violence.

3.2.2 Relationship

This is the second stage of the framework, which assesses domestic relationships and determines the ones that increase the likelihood of witnessing violence or committing violence (Jewkes, 2002). According to Osirim (2003), people's behaviours are shaped by the relationship with other people and the experiences that come out of it. People who engage in domestic violence have either be exposed to domestic violence against their mothers or their siblings (WHO, 2017).

At this stage, preventive approaches include conflict reduction programmes like family-focused preventive programmes; mentor-mentee relationship programmes; peer review

programmes; and foster problem solving skills (CDC, 2019; Institute of Development Studies, 2004). DOVVSU together with other institutions like the Ark Foundation, Plan Ghana, and the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) organise programmes that educate people who suffer domestic abuse and their families, specifically, children, which give the victims some sort of encouragement and empowerment.

3.2.3 CommUnity

This stage takes into consideration locations and settings within the society, where social interactions take place (Heise, 1998). It includes homes, schools, religious places, and workplaces; these settings contain certain characteristics that can make perpetrators or victims of abuse (Jewkes, 2002). According to CDC (2019), domestic violence has a greater risk in areas where economic opportunities are diminished; where the place is concentrated by poor people; where the vicinity is socially disorganized; where there is higher level of domestic disorders; and the participation in communal activities is low.

Prevention method at this level is a positive change in the environment, both physically and socially. This includes encouraging participation in communal activities; increasing opportunities economically in the vicinity; improving the process when it comes to housing; and making good policy decisions within schools and workplaces. Also, Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004), assert that community protection mechanisms should not only be based on avoiding vulnerabilities economically but also structural and social vulnerabilities.

3.2.4 Societal

This last level determines the elements in the society that validates physical abuse as the only means in resolving conflicts. It concentrates on societal values and cultural norms that

encourage violence, and other structural imbalance in education, health and economics; which helps in deepening inequality ratios amongst groups within the society (CDC, 2019).

The society tolerating domestic abuse may have a connection with the entire socialization process during early childhood, where corporal punishment became the only mechanism both parents and teachers used both at home and school (Lansford & Dodge, 2008); observing physical abuse at home (Abrahams & Jewkes, 2005; Brookmeyer *et.al*, 2005) and in the media (Johnson *et.al*, 2002).

At this stage challenging socio-cultural norms that validate violence and physical abuse can help in reducing domestic violence. This can be done through the use of the mass media conveying messages of positive social values through the internet, television, radio, newspapers and magazines. Through the use of different campaign strategies, the media can effectively transform socio-cultural norms (Johnson *et.al*, 2002).

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter explains the theoretical framework that underpins the study, and how the theories help and explain the event under study. The feminist theory help in understanding what the causes of domestic violence are, and how best it can be resolved. Also, the study adopts the CDC's socio-ecological framework that offers a similar but slightly different explanation as regards the causes of domestic violence and suggests an effective method of resolving it. The next chapter of this research deals with at the methodological approach used in investigating the study it explains the procedures to be followed to help resolve the research problem.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

Research methodology helps the researcher to make a theoretical analysis of the study while giving him or her the opportunity to determine how the validity and reliability the entire work. To conduct a research means to embark on “scientific investigation” (Kothari 2004, p.1). The approaches used in research methodology may vary subject to the nature and aims of research being undertaken. Kothari (2004) further argues that the methodology of a research gives direction to the study such that it helps in determining which procedures and instruments to use. Similarly, Walliman (2017), he argues that research methodology involves the usage of instruments that are required to make the conduct of a research possible.

Qualitative (employing words in analysis), quantitative (employing numbers in analysis) and mixed methods (employing both quantitative and qualitative in analysis) are the three types of research plan (Creswell, 2009). A researcher doing a quantitative analysis seeks to answer the explanatory problem “how” while a researcher doing a qualitative analysis seeks to answer the exploratory problem “why” (Biggam, 2015). However, in quantitative analysis, the study focuses more on measuring variables as numbers; and a mixed method analysis has to do with using both close-ended and open-ended interview questions (Creswell, 2009; Morgan, 2013).

In addition, Creswell (2009) believes that qualitative analysis is done to explore events that describe why human beings behave or reason in a particular manner. Similar to this assertion is that of Kothari (2004), who also believes that qualitative analysis is done to subjectively assess people’s perception and opinion about specific things, by taking a closer look at the factors that make them behave and think that way. In this chapter, the type of methodology for

this research work will be discussed paying particular attention to the research design, sample size, the target population, sample size, place of information gathering, tools for gathering information and ethical issues to consider when undertaking the research.

4.1 Research Design

Generally, having a research design is very important because it aids in: sticking to the objectives of the research; allocating time for the study; determining the total cost involved; and knowing the sources from which data can be collected (Kothari, 2004). According to Raj (1992), research design is the amount of data to be collected in the research; the entire process of identifying, collecting and analysing data to meet the main objective of the research. In line with this is the assertion that a research design is a strategic process of making conclusions from a broader perspective to a comprehensive way of collecting and analysing data (Creswell, 2009). In addition, Bryman (2016) and Biggam (2015) believe that research design is how a researcher decides to empirically conduct a study; either through qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods.

However, this study adopts a qualitative case study design (under qualitative research method) as espoused by (Creswell 1994 & 2009). This technique according to Nayak and Singh (2015), gives the researcher the opportunity to understand the attitude of a particular group (knowing why they behave the way they do), and also grants the ability to collect an in-depth information for the study (getting a perfect picture of the entire situation). In addition, using case study enables a researcher to acquire a genuine report of an individual's subjective feelings (internal struggles, pressures and inspiration) that guides his or her attitude towards certain events (Kothari, 2004).

Simply put, the reason for utilising a case study design under qualitative studies to gather information on the role of DOVVSU in the protection of women's rights is based on the notion that the research focuses on an organization as a case for investigation; thus this strategy assisted the research in getting information from people who are experienced.

Also, domestic violence issues are sensitive in nature, so it will be very difficult for victims to talk about their experiences. The use of casual and adaptable strategies in gathering evidence from victims and clients of DOVVSU was very important due to the fact that issues of such nature are delicate. As expressed by Creswell (1994 & 2009) and Jewkes et al. (2000), this work employs descriptive research in dealing with the issues involved, as well as collected information that would be helpful in finding solutions to the identified issues when practiced.

4.1.1 Data Collection Method

A quality research involves knowing and outlining the problem, drawing the research plan and deciding on a method through which information would be gathered (which involves using primary information only, secondary information or using both which is often acceptable) (Kothari, 2004). Similarly, Biggam (2015) believes there is no sole method of collecting data, thus, a researcher may want to use more than one method. This work employed the two sources of data (primary and secondary).

4.1.2 Primary and Secondary Sources of Data

Basically, primary data is gathering information from immediate or direct sources, making use of strategies like interviews and surveys. It is gathered from first-hand sources by putting in mind the objectives of the research. In view of that, Kothari (2004) posits that primary data is

the one gathered all over again from a source that is seen to be unique in character. The aim of study necessitated the use of first-hand information from people who have much experience in the subject area. Here, the researcher adopted a qualitative method of primary data by designing and conducting semi-structured interview guides through field interviews (see appendices). With this, primary data is collected from victims of domestic abuse who have been visiting or have visited, and officials of the Unit.

In contrast with primary data, secondary data is information gathered from other people's observations, experiments or research. Likewise, secondary data is one that have already collected, analysed and discussed (Walliman, 2017). Here, secondary data is gathered by extensively reviewing written papers (books, research works, articles, and journals) which are important to the topic.

Ordinarily, researchers may commence a study by using secondary data which enables researchers to get enough time to form questions and increase the knowledge they have in the issues at hand before using primary data which is more expensive and time-consuming (Creswell, 2009).

4.1.3 Population and Sampling Technique

A study population is an aggregate of cases in a study which may include specific people, situations or instruments or items (Tripathy & Tripathy, 2015). In the same vein, Kothari (2004) believes that a population to be studied may include all the instruments necessary for making a research.

In light of the above, the study targeted a population of female victims of Domestic Violence with ages between 18 years to 60 years who have engaged or are still engaging the services of the Accra Regional DOVVSU between 2005 and 2019, and some employees of DOVVSU in-

charge of victims of domestic abuse. The study adopted this demography to aid the researcher to critically examine the part DOOVSU plays in the protection of women's rights across a wide range of their clients by including both the young and the old. This is also to capture some selected employees of the regional area.

4.1.4 Sampling Technique

A sampling technique defines the means by which a population sample is acquired. Employing a sampling technique that is suitable for the study is important because it guides the effectiveness and efficiency of the work (Tripathy & Tripathy, 2015). However, to understand the method of sampling to use, Walliman (2017) explains probability and non-probability sampling to be the two core sampling techniques. According to him, probability sampling involves randomly selecting cases from a population while probability sampling involves specifically selecting cases from a population (Walliman, 2017).

Looking at the topic and the type of population involved, the researcher adopted the convenient, purposive and snowball sampling methods under the non-probability sampling. With particular attention to non-probability sampling, Nayak and Singh (2015) explain convenient, purposive and snowball sampling. According to them, convenient sampling involves drawing sample from a section of population who are close enough, accessible and available; snowball sampling involves participants of a research engaging people to participate in the research; purposive sampling is where the investigator uses his or her own discretion to select the sample based on his knowledge of the population (Nayak & Singh, 2015). In a like manner, Kathori (2004) argues that the selection criteria for purposive sampling is based on the researcher's own preference.

Correspondingly, convenient and snowball sampling was used in selecting the 20 female victims with the help of DOVVSU staff. This is because clients of DOVVSU knew other clients; and clients who were available and are accessible linked the researcher to other clients who were accessible.

Moreover, purposive sampling was used in selecting the 5 staff of DOVVSU. The researcher selected specific participants who were suitable to give the data necessary for the research; based on the insight and judgement the researcher had about the study population. As per Neuman (2007) and Agbitor (2012), purposive sampling can be used in circumstances where the researcher uses preference to select a sample due to particular reasons (these reasons can be viewed in 3 instances). To begin with, a researcher may prefer to select cases that has a lot of information. Also, the researcher may prefer to choose specific participants from shrouded populations. In addition, when the researcher prefers to know unique kind of events for an in-depth analysis. Thus, purposive sampling, convenient sampling and snowball sampling gave the researcher the opportunity to choose participants who have a better understanding of the topic under investigation.

4.1.5 Sample Size

Specifically for qualitative studies, Borrego et al (2009) espouse that in order to understand the details of a particular event, activities should centre on a minor group of the entire population. However, selection of a sample size in qualitative studies is a more tedious work due to the absence of a fixed principle to go by (Nayak & Singh, 2015). In that case Kothari (2004) believes that this makes the decision of selecting a sample size reliant on: the problem the research is trying to resolve; the aim of the research; and how necessary the nature and reliability of the data gathered is for the research. In all twenty-five (25) participants were

selected which include five (5) employees of DOVVSU to be specific: the Station Officer, one Desk Officer, one Investigator, one Prosecutor of the Unit, and one Police officer; Twenty (20) female victims of domestic violence between the ages of 18 years and 60 years have utilized or are still utilizing the services of DOVVSU (Accra Regional Unit).

The selection of this sample was based on certain reflections such as the characteristics and knowledge of population sample; nature and aims of the study; and the funds available for the study (Kothari, 2004). For this reason, the selection of the above sample size is justified by the “concept of information power for qualitative studies”, which controls sufficient sample size for qualitative studies. It was recommended by Malterud *et al* (2016), who argue that the more pertinent the information the sample holds, the lower the number of participants needed. The concept proposes that the sample size with adequate information power relies upon the: purpose of the study; sample particularity; utility of a recognized theory; and efficiency of communication.

4.1.6 Research Instruments

In-depth Interviews: The researcher employed in-depth interviews (guided by Neuman’s opinion on in-depth interviews) to collect the primary data; where information was either written or recorded with a voice recorder. According to Neuman (2007), in-depth interviews are ideal for gathering information from people with specific kind of history, subjective perceptions and understandings; predominantly, when discovering emotionally subtle matters. Interestingly, Kothari (2004) believes that in-depth interviews involve the introduction of a verbal energy to elicit a verbal response. Again, Morgan (2013) argues that in-depth interviews enable the gathering information on a wide range of issues that are connected to the topic. This method gives room for face-to-face and telephone interviews (Kothari, 2004).

In view of the foregoing, the study employed this method to allow participants to give their diverse opinions and views about the topic. This was done through face-to-face discussions and telephone conversations where these information were documented and recorded through a voice recorder. The study employed in-depth interviews in gathering facts from 20 people who have suffered domestic abuse and have either new clients or old clients of the Unit. This helped the participants to talk openly and flexibly about their issues; it also gave the researcher to explore more on the subject.

Semi- structured Interviews: Scholars like Nayak and Singh (2015) and Biggam (2015) have acknowledged structured (in which the researcher asks participants fixed set of questions in manner to ensure enough concentration); semi-structured (where the researcher asks questions based on relevant points listed on the interview guide); and unstructured interviews (where participants express their own opinions based on the subject on board). However, the study adopted semi-structured interview to gather primary data from the five (5) staff of DOVVSU; because they are experts who have adequate knowledge in dealing with clients. Information received from them gave the researcher the opportunity to ask further questions for clarification.

Participant Observation: this method gave the researcher the opportunity to carefully: observe the behaviour of officials towards clients; the time and type of attention given to each client; and procedures and issues that come up while dealing with issues.

4.2 Ethics

Considering ethical issues gave the researcher the opportunity to know the acceptable and unacceptable things while gathering data. They also help in minimising human rights violations of participants that came up while conducting this research.

Referencing: to avoid any form of plagiarism, all sources of secondary data (literatures) were appropriately recognized.

Agreement: The objective of the study was clarified to people whose consent to participate willingly in this research was sought before they did. Also, approval to use voice recorders was sought. A detailed agreement form was provided by the researcher for participants who wished to endorse as a proof in case of unexpected situations.

Privacy: The principles of privacy of participants was adhered to while conducting the research. The identities of participants who wanted to be anonymous were not be revealed. Instead, the researcher used either “key informant”, “staff” or “client of the Unit” to distinguish between data collected from staff and data collected from victims at Accra Regional DOVVSU.

4.3 Data Handling and Analysis

Biggam (2015) and Creswell (2009) believe that after gathering of data the next thing to prepare for is analysis. According to Creswell (1994 & 2009), the purpose of analysing data is to make meaning out of all the information gathered. Similarly, Kothari (2004) posits that an analysed data is a summary of the information gathered that gives answers to the research questions. In view of that, information gathered was transcribed and modified. Information gathered was grouped under the subjects that reflects the objectives of the study. In addition, as per Raj (1992), the researcher adopted qualitative content analysis to determine how the different procedures relate. Moreover, Zhang and Wildemuth (2016) believe that using this approach enables the researcher to present a social event subjectively yet scientifically. However, a disadvantage of the qualitative content analysis is that important information may be lost due to the categorisation.

4.4 Alternative Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research

Researchers in both qualitative and quantitative research keep debating about the reliability and validity of a research. Significantly, even though reliability and validity are no given truths, it has become the standard measurements for level of confidence in research (Judd et al, 1991).

However, according to Agbitor (2012), researchers have come to a consensus that the benchmark in reliability and validity that is mostly used in quantitative analysis to identify the how well the findings can be generalised which cannot automatically be applied in qualitative research. In qualitative analysis, generalisation relates the sample size to the entire population. With that qualitative researchers have resorted to supplementary methods of reliability and validity due to the smaller sample size in qualitative research (Agbitor, 2012).

This suggests that qualitative researchers apply alternative methods such as making an analysis between events in the context of the research, and that same event at another setting to increase the generalisation of the results of the research to a certain extent. Researchers that use this method have the ability to know the particular people and places they studied which tell us something about social relations in other setting. The analogies and comparisons provide a means of generalising beyond the particular” (Judd *et.al*, 1991: 315-316). It is important to gather information both empirically and theoretically to determine the similarities between the study and conditions elsewhere. By so doing, the researcher is able to portray to readers that anything proven to be true and practicable within DOVVSU in the sample is likely to be practicable with any other DOVVSU with similar conditions.

According to Judd et al (1991) a study that involves people in actual life situations happens to give the study an external validity even though it is not automatic. How valid a qualitative research is reliant on the logic employed while understanding and concluding findings; the quantity of data that supports ones understanding; and how well the understandings can be used

to explain actual situations (Mc Neil, 1996). The results gets a fairly high external validity rating, if others can relate the findings to situations similar to that of the sample.

It is therefore that obtaining classical reliability and validity in both qualitative and quantitative research is difficult. However, it does not mean issues of such should be completely forgotten but rather, it still remains the benchmark for measuring research outcomes. In contemporary research, what is important is how well efforts made give the findings of a research credibility, and not the issue of following traditional or modern opinions of validity and reliability. In spite of that, qualitative analysis is to do contemporary generalization than classical analysis (Mc Neil, 1996). Given similar situations, the study may be used to generalise DOVVSU outlets nationwide in Ghana if victims' exhibit comparable features and all the Units apply comparable practice methodologies. The researcher employs qualitative triangulation to ensure that problems are observed from the viewpoint of the staff of the Unit, and that of the clients, data as well as the researcher's comments.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the type of methodology and its significance to the research have been discussed. The manner in which data was collected, the instruments and the medium via which the information gathered as well as, the ethical issues taken into consideration have been highlighted. The subsequent section of the study will submit the information gathered through qualitative means; and this is going to be done under various subjects.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter, the researcher presents the findings collected through qualitative interview and makes an analysis of them. Information was collected based on the following: knowledge about DOVVSU; the causes of domestic violence; addressing the needs of victims; techniques used in addressing reported cases; challenges faced while addressing these needs. The Chapter relates the findings to various objectives in the introduction and literature review, and tries to match data gathered with theory. The researcher gathered data through personal interviews from twenty-five (25) respondents which included five (5) employees of DOVVSU (the Station Officer, one Desk Officer, one Investigator, one Prosecutor of the Unit, and one Police officer); twenty (20) female victims of domestic violence between the ages of 18 years and 60 years.

It starts by describing the socio-demographic features of participants, presents the data by describing the interviews conducted on both clients and personnel of DOVVSU and concludes with observations made during the gathering of information.

5.1 Socio-demographic and economic features of participants

Out of the five staff of DOVVSU, three (3) were females and two (2) males, which falls in line with the assertion of the UNFPA that in trying to effectively address domestic violence, it is important to consider the gender of staff who works directly with the victims (UNFPA, 2010). The age distribution of the staff was not of importance to the research. Their religious and ethnic group status was not a priority since staff are supposed to be professional, putting their cultural and religious biases.

Also, as regards the victims, twenty (20) female clients between the ages of 18 and 60 years of the Unit were interviewed. As regards their age, three (3) of them were between eighteen to twenty years (18-20), thirteen (13) were between twenty-one to forty-five years (21-45), and four (4) were between forty-six to sixty years (46-60). The lowest age group was between 18 to 21 years and the highest was between 46 to 60 years.

Furthermore, the marital status of these twenty (20) clients include: ten (10) married people, five (5) people in consensual union, two (2) people are separated, two (2) are divorced, and one (1) widowed.

In addition, for their economic status, the clients were made up of: twelve (12) workers and eight (8) unemployed; there were nine (9) traders, six (6) students, two (2) housewives, one (1) nurse, one (1) teacher, and one (1) banker.

Their religious background include: six (6) traditionalists, four (4) Pentecostals, four (4) Protestants, three (3) Catholics, and three (3) Muslims.

Their ethnic background revealed that, seven (7) were Akan, six (6) were Ewe, four (4) Ga-Dangme, and three (3) Mole-Dagbani.

Again, their educational background reflected, nine (9) people with formal education (up to the degree level), seven (7) semi-literates, and four (4) with no formal education.

5.2 Knowledge about DOVVSU and Motivation

When clients were asked about how they got to know about DOVVSU and where their motivation to patronise came from, about half of them admitted they went to other stations to report and they were asked to go to DOVVSU. For others, family members and friends made the complaints before they could come. Only a few of them had knowledge about DOVVSU and went there directly.

In addition, some clients explained that they got inspired by other clients they knew. Others also explained that their motivation came from the fear of not doing anything and dying in the end. Others were motivated by their children who learnt about DOVVSU in school. Most of them explained that they gathered some confidence to face their fears after visiting the Unit. Data gathered showed that 7 respondents, heard about DOVVSU from other clients which have previously accessed the Unit. Five respondents heard about the Unit through family and other relations, who showed concerned to their state. Four were referred to the Unit by the Police Service, after they reported domestic violence related cases to the Police. Four respondents asserted that they heard of DOVVSU from their school children. A respondent stated that:

“My eight-year-old daughter heard about DOVVSU in class and told my eldest daughter who is seventeen years to explain it to me” (Fieldwork, 2019).

Most respondents visited the Unit after they have suffered various forms of abuse from their partners and other relations. A wife stated that her confrontation on her husband’s extramarital affair led to abuse of her children and herself.

Data gathered showed that wives were not only the victim of domestic violence, rather children in a marriage also suffered as well. Respondents indicated that they have experienced various forms of abuse from their husbands and other relations. The most common abused recorded was verbal abused, 18 out of the 20 victimized respondents have suffered from it. Twelve respondents had suffered from physical abuse which resulted in them being hospitalised with facial bruises. Ten respondents stated that, virtually their human rights were taken from them in the marital homes, since their husbands stopped them from working, going out to visit relatives and relatives visiting them. Eight respondents accused their abuser of raping them on various occasions. A respondent stated:

“He slept with me every day including during my menses and when I complained, he will physical abuse me” (Fieldwork, 2019).

Data shows that husbands became abusive when they started showing signs of being controlling and assertive. A sixty-year-old widow said bitterly that: “they accused me of being a witch, when my late husband got ill and blamed me for his illness.” The family subsequently took away all the properties after the death of his husband. She visited DOVVSU when the family tried to take away the house, she was living in. A husband may vent his anger on his children due to something their mother did. The man of the house may stop paying or caring for the children and their fees as a result of his anger for his wife. Some children have suffered from rape and attempted rape in various homes.

5.3 Causes of Domestic Violence

In order to know more about the needs of the victims, the researcher probed further to ask about what the causes of domestic violence were from both the victims and officials of the Unit. The respondents indicated that domestic violence has to do with the kind of choices people make and their personality, Ghanaian culture and religious beliefs, and patriarchal nature of the society.

Data shows that the people’s personalities and choices are the major causes of domestic violence. All five of the officials argued that domestic violence has a lot to do with the person. They explained that the actions and decisions people make or take are underpinned by how they view the world. Domestic violence violates the basic rights of people. Most of these perpetrators of this act are mostly those who experienced it themselves and could not get the opportunity to be mentally treated. One official stated that “some people are mostly into drugs so they tend to abuse the victims; some people are older than victims so feel insecure; some people have either high level or low of education, so feel either too good for the victims or not

good enough for them; unemployed or receives lower income so react as a results of stress or hard work” (Fieldwork, 2019).

In addition, most victims explained that religion and culture are to blame for domestic violence occurrences in the society. Fourteen clients indicated that their religious leaders suggested that issues of domestic violence should be treated as a domestic affair. A client argued that, “They mostly encourage us to keep our family lives and the things that happen within our families’ private, this prevents us from going ahead to seek solutions from others” (Fieldwork, 2019). Another client added that religious teachings frown on dating so people are pushed to marry people before they get to know even a little about their spouses which lands them in domestic relationships full of abuse.

Six clients stated that domestic violence occurs because of culture and tradition. A client noted that, “my culture believes that a child belongs to her mother’s family and nephews are the ones who inherit from their uncles so why will fathers take the pain of looking after kids who will go to another family, this makes the children very bitter when they grow up” (Fieldwork, 2019). Three clients indicated that most of the cultures believe that the best way to correct a person is through beating them, and so they get beaten up at the slightest mistake. A client added that, “other cultures believe strong men can take lots of alcohol which makes most men drink more than necessary causing them to misbehave towards others, especially when they are drunk” (R 5, 2019).

Officials of the Unit indicated that domestic violence is something created by the society. Two female officials stated that that the society we live in is a male dominant one, and everything about men is projected and things about women are done in the shadows. One of the female officials added that, “what do you expect in a male dominant society where men win all the time? The society has made is such that a woman’s success is dependent on a man, and when

a woman get to a higher level she must have sacrificed her body to get there. Male dominance has made women inferior to men, which leads to the abuse of the power society has given them. (Fieldwork, 2019). A male official added that, “Women are often abused because the society has made women objects of sex and control, and until gender inequality is resolved, domestic violence will still be a topic for serious discussion” (Fieldwork, 2019).

5.4 Addressing the needs of victims (Objective One)

This objective to find out what the needs of the victims were, whether they were met or not, and if they were, the degree to which these needs were met. Also, it aimed at finding out from the officials of the Unit what the needs of the victims were, and the degree to which these victims got their needs met with reference to the DVA (Act 732).

When victims were requested to tell their needs, they explained that they needed basic support like food, clothing and shelter; and other things like medical and mental treatment, economic, legal aid and justice, and education and counselling on matter that relates to domestic violence. They added that education and counselling should be given to perpetrators of the legal implications associated with domestic violence. In all, victims asked for basic supports to come before the others. Below are few pointers of the comments from the respondents.

- ❖ Limited programmes and material support due to inadequate funds and management as mandated by the DVA (Act 732).
- ❖ Limited access to counselling session and educational sessions for victims and their families as suggested by the DVA (Act 732).
- ❖ Victims had to pay for the police forms to get endorsed as well as getting medical treatment.

- ❖ No shelter homes for adult victims, therefore the Department of Social Welfare Osu Shelter for Abused Children supports some of the women victims of domestic violence.

5.4.1 Programmes and material support for victims

The DVA (Act 732) stipulates the establishment of a Domestic Violence Fund to support victims of violence. This Fund is intended to support victims in the form of finance and basic materials. DOVVSU is mandated according its website in 2018 to create awareness about domestic violence by organising programmes. Clients of the Unit pointed out that they hardly got support from the Unit which led them back to perpetrators because they do not have other people apart from them to depend on. This leads to a pattern of repetitive abuse.

All the twenty clients expressed their disappointments in the Unit's inability to assist them with certain basic needs. Ten of the clients indicated that after being promised money to feed themselves and their kids, they ended up receiving less than what they were expecting from their partners. A client stated that "The people at DOVVSU told me that they will get him to give me money but after everything, the tribunal made him give my children and I sixty-five Ghana cedis (GHC 65.00) a month. This is not enough for us" (Fieldwork, 2019).

Eight clients also said that they ended up going back to offenders again for support which increased their level of vulnerability. A young client added that, "they give you money promises but do not fulfil them. After I reported my partner they said they were going to help me raise some money to support myself but my relationship is still the same because I still have to fall on my partner" (Fieldwork, 2019).

Officials of the Unit were requested to explain the programmes they engaged in creating awareness, and how the basic and material needs of victims were met. Data shows that officials were unable to assist victims because there were no funds and logistics available to help in

assisting clients. Three officials explained that awareness programmes are restricted because they do not have enough funds and resources. Also, even though the DVA calls for the assistance of victims, no resources have been allocated to provide the basic and material assistance to the clients. Two officials added that after the Unit provided support for kids in 2012 it started facing challenges. An official complained that, “sometimes officers have to support clients with their own money. As a result of inadequate support, most of our clients depend on the offenders again, causing a cycle of assault” (Fieldwork, 2019).

5.4.2 Counselling and education for victims and perpetrators

According to the officials of the Unit, most of the victims come with trivial issues and often need just mediation. As a result of lack of staff, access to most of the counselling sessions are limited to very critical cases due to work overload. Victims also admitted that they were only referred to counselling sessions, when they broke down emotionally. And when they were asked whether there were training sessions for victims and their families, the response from clients and the officials were the similar. They all indicated that there were no programmes to help victims and their families to recover, and the Act does not effectively respond to the victim’s needs. Officials complained that this has been one of the reasons why reported domestic violence cases are not effectively addressed.

Nineteen clients explained that offenders were only arrested and did not undergo counselling, neither did their children and other family members. A client stated that “all they did was to arrest my husband, and asked me to go for counselling? What about my kids? How will they be able to live with the fact that their mother is going for a therapy and their father is in jail? (Fieldwork, 2019).

Officials of the Unit confirmed this by arguing that there are no programmes for victims and their families even though this should not be the case. An official indicated that: “Where are the logistics for such a programme? Honestly, there are no programmes like that for victims and their families, even though victims have psychosocial sessions. Most of the clients referred to psychologists in other organisations that work with us like the WISE and SWD. Simply put, it is difficult implementing the DVA. (Fieldwork, 2019).

5.4.3 Medical treatment and Shelter homes

According to the DVA (Act 732), victims are supposed to have free access to medical care and shelter. Data collected under this objective sought to find out whether victims were receiving the medical attention and shelter, and the extent to which these needs were met. Both the Officials and the clients responded that most of the clients were made to pay for the endorsement of the police form and medical treatment (only less than 5% of victims get medical attention). The officials indicated that the hospitals were unwilling to help because they explained that the State had not kept mechanisms in place to make the DVA (Act 732) feasible. According to the clients, this prevented some victims from going further with the case. In identifying shelter as a necessary need, most officials and clients replied that it was a critical one. They further noted that there were no shelter homes for victims since the enactment of the DVA, but rather they were made to squat with the children at the Osu Shelter Home for Abused Children.

Eleven of the clients explained that that they had been asked to leave because they did not have money to pay bills. Eight clients indicated that they were not given accommodation so they had to go back home to be beaten again. A client indicated that, “they said that there was no way they could give me accommodation, and that I should find a friend’s place to stay for the

night. My relatives are far away from Accra and there was no way I could go back to my hometown that night, with what money? How could I leave my 7 year old daughter and 4 year old son with him? I have nowhere to go, the only option left was to go back to him and that night he beat me up like a thief” (Fieldwork, 2019).

Two officials of the Unit confirmed that accommodation is a key challenge for the Unit. The Osu Shelter Home gets choked and sometimes the staff at the shelter simply refuse to admit female adult victims, WISE has a shelter but hardly do clients from the Unit get accepted there, and even when ever they do a deadline of 24 hours is given for victims to leave. Two other officials explained that less than 5% of the clients get free medical care. An official added that, “the free medical care is in theory, and not in practice. We have to write to the hospitals ourselves but processes involved take a long time” (Fieldwork, 2019).

5.5 Techniques used in addressing reported cases (Objective Two)

Under this Objective officials and clients were asked about the processes involved in resolving reported cases. The following are some of the responses:

- ❖ Officials complained about getting posted to and out of the Unit without considering any required skills, and so they had to learn on the job (Learn-as-you-go).
- ❖ Clients complained about the long and time-taking processes that only delayed the entire processes.
- ❖ Clients also complained about having to go through series of recurrent interviews with different officials which felt like the same process is being repeated over and over again without any progress.
- ❖ Clients also complained about the procedures involved in getting a counsellor and the nature of counselling.

5.5.1 The learn-as-you-go technique

Officials of the Unit were asked about the processes they take victims through and the skills needed to work under the Unit. They explained that victims go through levels of interviews with different officials of the Unit; and that officials do not require any special skill to work under the Unit. With the exception of some of the counsellors, most of them learn and develop the skills on the job. The researcher probed further to ask the 5 officials about the views on learning on the job. They explained that it is not the best because the following skills are critically needed: effective listening, writing and interviewing skills; skills in gender sensitization and interpersonal relationships; good communication, mediation, negotiation and investigative skills; and a lot of knowledge in resolving and managing conflict. One of the clients argued that: “It is a special Unit that requires special skills but it is unfortunate that it is these serious things that are ignored by the administration” (Fieldwork, 2019).

Three respondents argued that effective communication skills is needed in order to be able to communicate with complaints or victims of a case. Two respondents explained that even though officials are able to acquire experience through learning on the job, there is the need for personnel to gain some form of skills before recruitment, since it takes longer time to acquire knowledge on the learn-as-you-go basis.

“.....With the exception of myself and two others most of the officials here get the skills on the job. This is bad because without enough skills on board, the work becomes difficult for the few skilled. Most of the people here know more about criminal stuff and not conflict”

(Fieldwork, 2019).

Almost all the officials agreed that the Unit requires specialised personnel, however, most of the officials recruited are semi-specialised individuals. It is therefore imperative for officials to have knowledge in both crime and conflict.

5.5.2 Long, time-consuming and delayed procedures

About 95% of the clients complained that the processes involved are long and complex, and that it takes a lot of time which delays the entire process and thereby making them lose confidence in the Unit. They explained that the reason given them was that most of the officials are working on other things hence the delay. One of the clients stated that:

When you come here, it is as if you have nothing else to do. They will make you waste all the day here. It is either the person in-charge will come in the afternoon or in the evening (Fieldwork, 2019). Another client added that, “even though I want my partner to be punished, this whole process feels like a waste of time and energy” (Fieldwork, 2019).

Six of the client respondents complained about the Unit’s officials’ attitude towards work. Some officials of the Unit were not punctual at work and sometimes they did not pay full attention to complaints by clients. Four clients also stated that the Unit has a bad official-to-client relationship. It was observed that the Unit had a poor client service which sometimes dissuade clients from using the Unit. Five clients lamented about the bad communication relationship that existed between the Unit and clients. A client stated that, one can spend virtually the whole day at the Unit only to be told the officer who was in-charge of the case was unavailable. According to clients, one had to join a long queue before one will be attended to, even though some of the cases are emergencies. A client stated:

“There is no order of attendance at the Unit. They just come and start mentioning names. One has to patiently wait for her name before she can be attended to” (Fieldwork, 2019).

When officials were asked about the time and delay, they stated that resources were unavailable to speed up the entire process. Four out of five officials acknowledged that the Unit took a longer time in processing or dealing with a case. Inadequate logistics were cited as a major hindrance to the effective and efficient work of the Unit. Another challenge to the work of the Unit was inadequate personnel. One official complained that the number of cases received in a period did not correspond to the number of officials working at the Unit. An official complained that:

“Look at the number of clients here and tally it with the staff available, it not our fault” (Fieldwork, 2019). Another argued that the logistics and resources are not there, so it makes our work long and time consuming” (Fieldwork, 2019).

5.5.4 Series of recurrent interviews

Most of the clients complained that they had to repeat their stories every day to each of the officials that attended to them all over again. These cases were sensitive and they made them breakdown emotionally over and over again.

Sixteen of the client respondents complained about the uncomfortable interview process. Twelve of the clients indicated that they went back home with open wounds. Four explained they wanted to skip the whole interview process. A client stated that, “My husband sexually abused me and molested my daughter. After I reported this case, I having been repeating it to all the officials I met. How is this a treatment? It just adds up to my injuries” (Fieldwork, 2019).

A young client added that, “.....It felt I went there to open up my sores all over again, if this what is going to happen, we will not come here again.....” (Fieldwork, 2019).

Three out of five officials of the Unit admitted that this whole process of constant repetition is a traumatic one. An official expressed that, “.....because they are made to tell their stories over and over again, they leave here more depressed than they came, which is not good.....” (Fieldwork, 2019).

5.5.5 Counselling procedures

When officials and clients were asked about how victims were referred for counselling, they both explained that it was at the discretion of the official. According to the clients, they only got counselling when the officials felt there was a need for it, and sometimes until they were emotional broken, they would not get. This process resulted in some clients not getting counselling at all.

All twenty clients complained about the counselling processes. Two clients explained that one’s ability to be counselled was dependent on the subjective feeling of the official on duty. Eight indicated that one had to either bribe the officials before she got referred for counselling. Ten clients revealed that they had to breakdown in front of officials before they were referred for counselling. A 20 year old client said that, “.....they will make you go counselling when they get to realise you have reached an inch to murder, suicide or getting.....” (Fieldwork, 2019).

Officials confirmed this by indicating that not all the issues demand counselling. Two officials complained that some clients only come to report trivial issues that can be settled at home. Three officials explained that when they felt the clients are unable to stabilise emotionally, counselling became the best option. An official expressed that, “.....during sessions where

clients breakdown emotionally, we just refer them for counselling and continue from where we stop after they get better....” (Fieldwork, 2019).

5.6 Challenges faced by officials of the Unit (Objective Three)

Both clients and officials were asked about some of the challenges that affect the process addressing the needs of clients. Some of the responses include:

- ❖ Limited information on the DVA (Act 732) and lack of laws to implement it properly.
- ❖ Change of personnel and system delays.
- ❖ Inadequate funds and resources
- ❖ Cultural and religious interference, and language barrier.

5.6.1 Limited information on the DVA (Act 732) and lack of laws to implement it properly

When officials and clients were asked about the DVA (Act 732), most clients were ignorant about its existence and officials had limited information on it. Officials explained that there were no guidelines to help enforce the DVA (Act 732), and because there were no job specifications under it for officials, it created confusion which made working difficult.

Four out of five officials explained that the DVA (Act 732) did not assign specific roles to officials. In addition, the DVA (Act 732) is not something they follow every day, even though they know about it. A client reported that, “Prior to and after the establishment of the DVA (Act 732), the roles of officials were not stated, so everybody does what he or she feels it is

best. It is like giving someone a phone without a manual. Complaints from clients are decided by the Station officer” (Fieldwork, 2019).

Eighteen clients revealed that they did not know about the existence of the DVA (Act 732). Two clients who knew about it saw that the DVA (Act 732) only as document. A client stated that, “I do not know what the DVA (Act 732) is and it is none of my business. All I want is for things to change in this marriage” (fieldwork, 2019). Another client added that, “I don’t think you expect the DVA to work in this our country” (Fieldwork, 2019).

5.6.2 Change of personnel and system delays

Officials explained that after most of the staff get to learn skills on the job, they get transferred and the replacements were new to begin another cycle without skills. Officials explained that the delay in the procedures of the Unit is as a result of the bureaucratic processes involved in getting things done in the country. Due to the district courts not having the mandate to try sexual abuse cases, they were sent to the office of the Attorney General which caused delays. Delays were encountered in the courts as a result of the inability of some lawyers to be in court. This makes clients lose confidence in the Unit and its staff.

All officials complained about the delay in the transfer of personnel and bureaucratic processes. Two officials explained that when cases were sent out it took years before they received a feedback. Three officials added that the Unit had lost its competence because of situations like this. One official stated that, “.....And for about 2 to 3 years the case was still in the Attorney General’s office, the victim lost interest in the case and left.....” (Fieldwork, 2019).

5.6.3 Inadequate funds and resources.

Officials complained that the Unit does not have the funds and resources to execute their goals effectively.

Three out of five officials indicated that the funds the Unit was too small for the number of people that comes to the Unit. An official pointed that, “Our offices are small so if two officers are attending to different people, privacy will not be achieved. We have few vehicles which make easy and quick access to the location of cases very difficult. In addition, we do not get funds to run the day-to-day administration of the Unit, this results in officials using their own money for most of things” (Fieldwork, 2019).

Two of the officials added that resources made available for the Unit did not satisfy the demands made by the people who visit the Unit. “There are so many things we want to do but because we do not have funds, we cannot do them. As a result we are unable to meet the required needs of victims, which drives them back to the perpetrators thereby increasing domestic violence cases” (Fieldwork, 2019).

5.6.4 Cultural and religious interference, and language barrier

According the officials and clients, the Unit was visited by people different parts of the country, thus, they spoke different languages which made communication very difficult. Also, they added that religious and cultural influences made things very difficult.

Officials of the Units emphasized that religious and cultural interpretation of life issues made their work difficult. Four officials complained that due to religious and cultural dominance in the Ghanaian society, most of the cases of abuse were seen as a stage in people’s lives that will pass away with time. An official argued that “Due to cultural and religious reasons, clients go

back to the perpetrators which did not address their needs a problem. The society should be educated to do whatever it takes to keep marriages intact and religious teachings tells us divorce is a sin. With this people who come up to say that they are victimized by the communities and churches will no longer do so” (Fieldwork, 2019).

One official also added the language barrier as a challenge. According to him because most of the clients come from different ethnic backgrounds, communication is affected due to language differences, and also most of the interpreters either under-rated or exaggerated the level of intensity of the situation.

Clients of the Unit confirmed this by saying that their religious and cultural ideologies mostly conflict their decision to embark on a journey to the Unit. Fifteen of the clients indicated that their religious leaders encouraged them to treat cases of violence as a family affair. In addition, seven clients added that they did not like the fact that somebody had to listen to them before they explained to the interviewers, they complained it makes them feel their matters are not taken seriously.

5.6.5 Conclusion

This chapter gave an analysis of data collected under themes, which sought to answer the research questions. The data collected was analysed under the following: knowledge and motivation; the causes of domestic violence; addressing the needs of victims; techniques used in addressing reported cases; challenges faced while addressing these needs.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY FINDINGS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the data and makes inferences of them. The discussion section interconnects with the introduction (Judd *et.al*, 1991). Discussion was done under the following: knowledge about DOVVSU and motivation; causes of domestic violence; addressing the needs of victims; techniques used in addressing reported cases; and challenges faced while addressing these needs. The section relates the findings to various objectives in the introduction and literature review, and tries to match data gathered with theory. Tuckman (1972) argues that not only does the discussion section connect with the introduction, it also connects with the other chapters that come after the introduction.

Even though the sample size is small, this research has the notion that the results still provide significant insights that can help explain the connection between the role DOVVSU plays and the protection of women's rights. A discussion of the inferences made (both practically and theoretically) from the key findings is made in the concluding part of the chapter.

6.1 Knowledge about DOVVSU and Motivation

The level of education of victims in chapter five revealed that: nine (9) people were formally educated, seven (7) were semi-literates, and four (4) people had no formal education; this is likely to have a reflection in the level of education of their relatives, friends and communities (G.S.S, 2011).

Under this theme, the awareness level of DOVVSU amongst victims of domestic violence in Accra was presented. Clearly majority of them did not know much about the Unit and its

functions, and those who knew too were afraid to go and report. Data collected indicated that public awareness of the Unit in the country is very low, which falls in line with the argument of Agbitor (2012) that the DOVVSU is very deficient when it comes to conducting outreach programmes. In the quest to protect women's rights in Ghana by effectively eradicating domestic violence, continuous creation of awareness and regular education is very necessary. Educating the public regularly will alert the people to make concrete decisions when it comes to issues of domestic violence.

The findings diverge from what is on the Unit's website that, they create awareness and educate the public on issues related to domestic violence. As suggested by CDC (2019) and IDS (2004) under the theoretical framework, the use of preventive measures like educating the masses through formal and informal programmes will aid in the reduction of domestic violence. In order to help protect the rights of women, the Unit is expected to educate the entire public on what domestic violence entails, the types and the need to do away with actions that contradict what is stated in the DVA (Act 732) however, inferring from the findings under this theme, the Unit has failed to accomplish that. This concludes the inability of the Unit to protect the rights of women in Ghana.

6.2 Causes of Domestic Violence in Ghana.

In order to help solve a problem, there is the need to know what caused it. Under this theme, the causes of domestic violence was explored. The respondents indicated that domestic violence has to do with the kind of choices people make and their personality, Ghanaian culture and religious beliefs, and patriarchal nature of the society. This falls in line with the assumptions made in the theories of domestic violence in chapter three of this work.

The argument narrated by an official of the Unit reflects the assumptions made by the individual rights based theorists (Pope, 1992; Tsikata, 1993; Thomas & Beasley, 1993; Kakar, 1998; Daly & Wilson, 1998; Hidrobo & Fernald, 2013; Shuib et al., 2013; Zakae *et.al*, 2016). These theorists stress that domestic violence occur because of the fact that the fundamental human rights of women are not fully respected, where there is direct damage of physical and mental wellbeing. This has a lot to do with the individual, where the problem can be found within the person by looking at the choices, genetic behaviours, mental health, features and interests of the person. Also the argument is similar to the suggestion by the first of the social ecological framework proposed by the CDC (2019) that stresses that, in trying to prevent domestic violence, the characteristics of the person should be first looked at. This means inculcating and promoting attitudes, beliefs and morals that aid in avoiding violence and preventing it.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that family beliefs, culture and religious values underpin domestic violence in Ghana. In addition, a large version of those interviewed were Akan, Ga-Dangme, and Mole-Dagbani. They were also made up of traditionalist, Pentecostals, Protestants, Catholics, and Muslims. This is in line with table 1.2 under chapter two, which shows the majority of the women fall under the same trend of the larger population. This implies that the socialisation, principles and beliefs of victims who visit the Unit are deeply seated in culture and religion. This is because most of the people in the region are very religious and have stronger ethnic background which may influence their decisions in one way or the other.

The narration made by the respondents falls under the assumptions of cultural theorists (Bachman, 1992; Amoakohene, 2004; DeKeseredy & Perry, 2006; Hussain & Khan, 2008; Payne & Gainey, 2014). They believe that societal norms and cultural practices play an active role in moulding the attitudes of people; these norms and practices can either safeguard people

against violence or encourage the use of violence. Furthermore, they argue that groups within multicultural societies acquire and cultivate certain values via institutions that accentuate and validate the excessive use of force which is seen to be part of the culture. It is also similar to what CDC (2019) argues that cultural norms that encourage violence, and other structural imbalance in education, health and economics; which helps in deepening inequality ratios amongst groups within the society and this should be closely looked at in violence prevention.

The findings confirm the argument made by Murray (2007) that gender inequality has been an issue across the globe. They also reflect the assumptions of the feminist theorists (Ofei-Aboagye, 1994; Giddens, 2006; Cook, 2012; Reddy, 2007), who believe that violence is the image created by the uneven balance of power between men and women in the society. Society is taught to ascribe authority, dominance, strength and superiority to men while ascribing timidity, passivity, weakness and inferiority to women. In line with CDC (2019) certain societal values that encourage violence, and other structural imbalance in education, health and economics help in deepening inequality ratios amongst groups within the society and therefore should be avoided.

6.3 Addressing the needs of victims (Objective One)

Under this theme, the first objective of the study is discussed. It sought to find out the needs of victims, and the degree to which the needs were addressed from the perspective of both victims and officials. This theme made discussions based on the DV Act, Act 732. The study revealed that there were limited programmes and material support for victims due to inadequate funds and management as mandated by the DV Act, Act 732; victims and their families had limited access to counselling and educational sessions as suggested by the DV Act, Act 732; victims had to pay for the police forms to get endorsed as well as getting medical treatment; and there

was no shelter homes for adult victims which compelled the Department of Social Welfare Osu Shelter for Abused Children to support some of the women victims of Domestic violence.

Victims also explained that they needed basic support like food, clothing and shelter; and other things like medical and mental treatment, economic, legal aid and justice, and education and counselling on matters that relate to domestic violence.

6.3.1 Programmes and material support for victims

The findings revealed that 12 victims were working out of which 9 were petty traders and 3 were receiving monthly income; 8 were not working (either students or housewives). Tables 1.1 and 1.2 which demonstrate that a lot of men are working as compared to few women working. This implies that the majority of the victims who visited the Unit would need either financial or material assistance from the Unit. Both victims and officials explained that the Unit is unable to organize programmes and provide the material support for female adult victims as it was stated in the DV Act, Act 732. After the passing of the DV Act, Act 732, objective one (1) of the domestic violence fund launched by DV Act, Act 732) was to assist victims with monetary and material support. Thus, it was expected that the Unit was going to help address the needs of victims by providing material support; but the findings revealed things do not relate to the mandate of the Act.

In addition, the findings are similar to the assertion of Ghana's National Domestic Violence Policy and National Plan of Action in 2008, that victims of domestic violence are not supported materially and financially. Also, the findings confirm the statement of the Spain Organic Act on Integrated Measures against Gender Based Violence that victims of gender violence will enjoy life if they are given material or economic resources. However the lack of them make the victims miserable. This contrasts the assertion of the Act that these victims should be

encouraged to join programmes that will support them professionally, where some amount of money will be given to them to enable them stay independently (Office of Head of State, 2004).

Also, the practice departs from the recommendation given by the UNICEF Research Centre, (2000) that institutions should provide intervention programmes that will enable victims develop skills to manage their businesses and finances, which in turn reduces the threat of domestic violence. In addition, it conflicts the arguments made by the IDS (2004) that the state can effectively assist the minority groups in the society (such as preventing violence against women) by making and improving social protection legislation and programmes.

In relating the findings to the social-ecological model (stated in chapter three) and the first objective (in chapter one) that underpins this study, this condition of victims revealed by the findings is likely to worsen and lead to repetition of abuse. This is because their hunt for material support and freedom will make them reconsider their decision to move from relationships that bring them harm, since they are not getting it from the Unit. Hence, DOVVSU as a state institution is unable to address the needs of victims. It is also not capable of preventing domestic violence due to the Unit's inability to organise programmes that will help individuals avoid and manage attitudes that promote violence as suggest by the model.

6.3.2 Counselling and education for victims and perpetrators

According to the findings, victims were either people with formal education, semi-literates, and no formal education. Out of them, eleven people were either semi-literates or had no formal education; which is likely to reflect the level of education amongst their families and communities. This implies that the majority of the victims and their families will need more than just counselling but rather combine with a certain degree of education on their basic human rights and how to protect it, just as the Paris Principles mandate the NHRIs to do.

Respondents indicated that access to counselling sessions are limited to only critical cases as a result of lack of skilled staff. While officials of the Unit indicated that most of the victims come with trivial issues that often need just mediation. Victims indicated that they were only referred to counselling sessions, when they broke down emotionally. They all indicated that there were no programmes to help victims and their families to recover, and that the DV Act, Act 732 does not effectively respond to the victim's needs. Officials complained it was one of the reasons why reported domestic violence cases are not effectively addressed.

Most of the reversals in procedures of addressing domestic violence are due to lack of counselling. Issues pertaining to the type of counselling required and access to counsellors are very crucial to addressing the needs of victims. Hence, it is important for victims to get counselling from the right counsellor (professional). The findings contrast with the argument made by Agbitor (2012) that participating in gender-sensitive social protection programmes, helps in calming deficiencies in people.

Situating this in the prevention measures proposed by the social-ecological model (in Chapter three), the findings confirm the assertion that people's behaviour are shaped by their interaction with other. This reinforces the WHO (2017) study that the perpetrators of domestic violence are mostly witnesses of domestic violence against their loved ones. However, it diverges from the preventive approaches which include conflict reduction programmes like family-focused preventive programmes; mentor- mentee relationship programmes; peer review programmes; and foster problem solving skills as suggested by the model.

The findings also fall short of the recommendation by the 2008 UN Guidelines for GBV Interventions and that of Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department in 2007, that victims especially those with domestic violence trauma should be provided with enough counselling to help them deal with the psychosocial problems that come with domestic

violence. This is in contrast to the suggestion by the United Nations (2010) that a compulsory counselling should be given to victims, their family members and their perpetrators.

6.3.3 Medical treatment and Shelter homes

According to the DV Act, Act 732, victims are supposed to have free access to medical care and shelter. Data collected sought to find out whether victims were receiving the medical attention and shelter, and the extent to which these needs are met. Both the officials and the clients expressed that most of the clients are made to pay for the endorsement of the police form and medical treatment (only less than 5% of victims get medical attention). The officials indicated that the hospitals are unwilling to help because they explain that the state has not kept the mechanisms in place to make the DV Act, Act 732 feasible. According to the clients, this prevents some victims from going further with the case. As regards shelter, most officials and clients expressed that as a major need. They further expressed that there were no shelter homes for victims since the enactment of the DVA; rather they were made to squat with the children at the Osu Shelter home for Abused Children.

This finding is a clear contradiction of the DV Act, Act 732, Section 8, Section 29 & 30, which mandates the provision of access to health care and temporary shelter homes for the victims. When a case is reported, victims are supposed to know of accommodation services they may get and the staff in-charge will have to provide their details to the homes (Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department, 2007).

The findings also confirm the argument made by the Spain Organic Act on Integrated Measures against Gender Based Violence that many victims are unable to access the quality healthcare; and refute the statement made by the UNICEF Innocent Research Centre in 2000 that giving training assistance to health workers will actually enable them identify women who being

abused easily. Thus training should not be done separately from what they already do but should be incorporated into the sessions they have already gone through.

In addition, it contrasts with the opinion of Babu and Kusuma (2017) who explain the need for government institutions to work towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which incorporate: zero number of the poor and hungry, quality education, gender equality, and women empowerment, as well as quality health for women and children (Babu & Kusuma, 2017).

6.4 Techniques used in addressing reported cases (Objective two)

Officials and clients were asked about the processes involved in resolving reported cases. DOVVSU as a NHRI is mandated by section B under the method of operation to interview people and collect any information and documents to assess any case that falls within its competence.

The following were revealed: officials complained about getting posted to and out of the Unit without considering any required skills, and so they had to learn on the job (Learn-as-you-go); clients complained about the long and time-taking processes that only delayed the entire processes; they also complained about having to go through series of recurrent interviews with different officials which felt like the same process is being repeated over and over again without any progress; and they complained about the procedures involved in getting a counsellor and the nature of counselling.

6.4.1 The learn-as-you-go technique

Officials of the Unit were asked about the processes they took victims through and the skills needed to work under the Unit. They explained that victims went through levels of interviews with different officials of the Unit; and that officials do not require any special skill to work under the Unit. With the exception of some of the counsellors, most of them learnt and developed the skills on the job. The researcher probed further to ask the officials about the views on learning on the job, and they explained that it is not the best because the following skills were critically needed: effective listening, writing and interviewing skills; skills in gender sensitization and interpersonal relationships; good communication, mediation, negotiation and investigative skills; and a lot of knowledge in resolving and managing conflict.

Asking these officers to learn things this way may enable them to learn new things but will affect the quality of service delivered at the Unit. These officials may not know the type of approach to use, when and how, which may lead to cases not properly addressed. Dealing with conflict and domestic violence cases requires more than just a job, which requires lots of knowledge, skills, training, and experience.

Furthermore, DOVVSU as a NHRI does not adhere to section C of the method of operations of the Paris Principles which urge NHRIs to address the opinions of the public directly and through the media in order to relate their views and suggestions to the masses. The findings here deny the mandate of creating awareness and addressing the needs of victims indicated at the DOVVSU website. How can one educate the masses about something when he or she does not have no training about the issue in question? This means that DOVVSU has failed in addressing the challenges facing victims.

The findings oppose the claim by Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department in 2007 that only people with the necessary qualifications should be allowed to work with

victims of domestic violence. It also refutes the argument made by the UNFPA in 2003 that government agencies which provide domestic violence victims with their needs should only employ the services of skilled personnel. Similar to this assertion is that it is important to train police and judges regularly to ensure that victims of abuse are protected (Bott, 2005).

6.4.2 Long, time-consuming and delayed procedures.

As indicated earlier in Chapter five, ten of the victims were married, twelve employed; however, the rest were either separated, divorced, widowed with kids or studying. This clearly implies that majority of them have something doing either before or after appointment. Scheduling appointment with victims and delay in the processes is likely to result in a loss. About 95% of the clients explained that the processes involved are long and complex, and that it takes a lot of time which delays the entire process making them lose confidence in the Unit. They explained that the reasons given them was that most of the officials are working on other things that is why they were being delayed. When officials were asked about the time and delay, they stated that logistics were unavailable to speed up the entire process.

The findings above disputes what is stipulated in the DVA (Act, 732) which argues that police officers by rule of law are supposed to react immediately to the complaints made by domestic violence victims. The DOVVSU website reports that the Unit responds to victims as soon as they call on the Unit, this is in disagreement with what is happening on the ground.

Furthermore, the findings deny the 2008 United Nations SOPs for Prevention of and Response to GBV which calls for officials and agencies working in place of domestic violence victims to react quickly in order to avoid serious consequences and delays. It totally refutes section 7 and 8 of the DVA (Act 732) which asserts that, police officers are mandated by the Act to: assist and protect victims as and when reports are made; interview victims, offenders and

witnesses, put their statements on record and provide them with a copy when the need arises; assist victims with health care and accommodation, even if it requires retrieving properties of victims from perpetrators; educate victims on their rights, how to preserve evidence, and the availability of other services. This is a serious matter of concern because in situations where victims need urgent attention, things would be too late.

6.4.3 Series of recurrent interviews

Most of the clients complained that they had to repeat their stories every day to each of the officials that attend to them all over again. These cases are sensitive and it makes them breakdown emotionally over and over again. Some officials admitted that this whole process of constant repetition is a traumatic one.

An implication from the findings under this theme is that, victims go back home more traumatized than they came. However, if officials do not make victims repeat their stories but rather ask question for clarifications where necessary, the continuous remembrance of the traumatic experiences will be minimized.

From the literature we realize Ghana has gone through many phases to protect victims which includes adopting documents which are supposed to be employed by officials whiles working. The realities from the ground denies what is stated above because there are no legislative acts to implement them which makes officials adopt their own measures amounting to the situation above.

The findings also diverges from the assertions of the 2008 the UN Guidelines for GBV Interventions that officials attending to victims of domestic abuse must adopt practices that helps reduce trauma that comes with domestic violence.

6.4.4 Counselling procedures

When officials and clients were asked about how victims were referred for counselling, they both explained that it was at the discretion of the official. According to the clients, they only got counselling when the officials felt there was a need for it, and sometime until they were emotional broken, they would not get. This process results in some clients not getting counselling at all.

Under this theme, it can be implied that officials use informal counselling methods prevents clients from getting their needs to be fully taken care of. Simply, findings here deny the assertion that officials working with domestic violence victims including counsellors should follow guidelines necessary to address the needs of victims and counselling procedures should be in the best interest of the victims (Njovana &Watts, 1996).

6.5 Challenges faced by officials of the Unit (Objective three)

This theme forms the third objective of the study. Both clients and officials were asked about some of the challenges that affect the process addressing the needs of clients. The findings here are similar to argument by Zaney (2011) that it appears that DOVVSU is faced with the problem of going by structured or laid down procedures which include (knowing what to follow; knowing why that should be followed, and when and how to follow that) to help in giving successful solution to cases of domestic violence that has been reported. In addition, the Unit lacks personnel with adequate knowledge, skills and training to help solve the issues of domestic violence cases reported; and the lack of packages or programmes that is adequate for bringing out desired results of services provided. Under this theme, the following was realised: limited information on the DVA (Act 732) and lack of laws to implement it properly; change

of personnel and system delays; inadequate funds and resources, cultural and religious interference, and language barrier.

6.5.1 Limited information on the DVA (Act 732) and lack of laws to implement it properly.

As indicated earlier in Chapter five, victims were either people with formal education, semi-literates, and no formal education. Out of them eleven people were either semi-literates or had no formal education; which is likely to reflect the level of education amongst their relatives, families and communities. This is will affect the how these people seek and react information.

Officials and clients were asked about the DVA (Act 732), most clients were ignorant about its existence and officials had limited information on it. Officials explained that there are no laws to help enforce the DVA (Act 732), and because there no job specifications under it for officials, it creates confusion which makes working difficult. Findings here confirm the words of Darkwah and Prah (2016, p.3) who argue that “however, the decrees for ensuring the full implementation of the Domestic Violence Act in Ghana are yet to be put in place”. It is however dissimilar to the assertion of Ortiz-Barreda and Vives-Cases (2013), the laws of countries in Africa including Ghana do not give an effective and complete procedure in dealing with domestic violence issues.

According to UN-GA (2006), law implementation and the creation of safe systems to protect people who report domestic violence cases is very important when it comes to addressing issues related to GBV. The cooperation amongst state agencies who assists victims is very necessary when it resolving domestic violence concerns (Njovana & Watts, 1996; WHO, 2004). Due to inadequate support from referral agencies and the confusion associated with job specifications, the needs of victims become difficult to address. It can be inferred from the above that if there

laws defining the roles to be played by these agencies, including when and how to do so, then the needs of victims can easily be addressed.

In line with the findings under this, UN-GA, (2006) believes that victims cannot make use of legal systems when they have no knowledge about what constitutes their rights, and why, where and how to report cases. Also, inadequate fundamental knowledge about rights prevents many victims from accessing legal support (Bott *et.al*, 2005). How can one fight for something he or she does not know of? And how can an agency address something it does not have an idea it exists? If people are aware of the DVA (Act 732), what it stands for and the consequences for violating it, they will try as much as possible to do away the actions that violates it.

The actions of DOVVSU under this topic is divergent to section C of the methods of operations under the Paris principles as discussed in chapter two, which urges NHRIs to address the opinions of the public directly and through the media in order to relate their views and suggestions to the masses.

6.5.2 Change of personnel and system delays.

DOVVSU as a NHRIs can be easily manipulated by bureaucratic and executive decisions as stated by Matshekga (2002); thus they being effective is dependent on their freedom to operate legally and financially, and the freedom to decide on measures of appointments and dismissals. This freedom appoint and dismiss has led a lot transfers and reshufflings within and outside the Unit as revealed in the findings in Chapter five.

Officials explained that after most of the staffs get to learn skills on the job, they get transferred and the new crop of people will now begin another cycle without skills. Officials explained that the delay in procedures of the Unit is as a result of the bureaucratic processes involved in getting things done in the country. Due to district courts not having the mandate to try sexual

abuse cases, cases are sent to the office of the Attorney General causing so much delays. Also, delay in the prosecution of smaller cases like- the inability of lawyers to be in court. This makes clients lose confidence in the Unit and official.

The training of all officials in charge of domestic violence victims is very necessary for addressing their needs (Bott *et.al*, 2005), even though according to UN-GA (2006), reformation of policies is necessary for the resolution of the needs of victims. The reduction and prevention of GBV requires: improving the capabilities of all officials in charge of assisting victims; refining referral mechanisms; and ensuring and monitoring the inflow of funds.

According to Bott *et.al* (2005), reforming the justice sector can help reduce domestic violence by punishing offenders to serve as a deterrent to others, and also improve how victims access agencies and how the agencies respond to the call of victims. The findings imply that how cases are handled deter victims from reporting cases.

System delays can impair people from pursuing cases and obstruct the processes of addressing victims. From the findings the rate at which victims are transferred and replaced in the Unit reduces the confidence victims have in the Unit and officials, and the confidence and commitment level of officials. Since officials learn on the job, issues will become worse before officials get to know how to deal with the issue and by the time they do, they will be transferred.

6.5.3 Inadequate funds and resources.

Officials complained that the Unit does not have the funds and resources to execute their goals effectively. According to the officials of the Unit the genesis of all the problems is inadequate funds and logistics. For the effective resolution of issues pertaining to domestic violence, the domestic violence support fund was established. This was to help satisfy the needs of victims and support the agencies that assist domestic violence victims. NHRI can be seen as

“autonomous quasi-governmental or statutory institutions with human rights in their mandate” (Koo & Ramirez, 2009). Under this section one may question the independence of a DOVVSU as a NHRI because it funded by the State but OHCHR (2010) has argued that if States fund independent bodies like the courts and auditors general, then DOVVSU as NHRI can be independent.

In section 29 of the DVA (Act 732), the places where funds can be collected from are listed. They include: donations from individuals and other public and private organisation, approved money from parliament, and other funds the Minister of finance approves of. Will it be chaotic to ask why a State institution mandated by law to have a fulltime support-base to assist victims lack funds? Currently, the only support they have comes from the GPS, What then happened to section 29 of the Act?

Not only does the situation opposes the stipulations of the DVA (Act 732), it is also in divergences with the ideas of (UNICEF Innocent Research Centre, 2000; Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department, 2007; Bott *et.al*, 2005), who strongly argue that enough funding should be made available for government agencies that assist victims of domestic violence when the need arises to help them when the need arises. The current situation has rendered the Unit incapable of meeting the needs of victims.

6.5.4 Cultural and religious interference, and language barrier.

As indicated earlier in the literature review study, majority of women the women in Accra are married, followed by those in consensual unions, then by those who are widowed, then those divorced and by those separated. Also, majority of the women in Ghana are religious, who are either Muslims, Traditionalists, or belong a catholic, protestant, charismatic, or other Christian churches. Majority of the women are Akan, followed by Ga-Dangme, then Ewes and the Mole-

Dagbani. The findings revealed that most of the victims who visit the Unit belong to any of the Status above. In addition, chapter five revealed that most of the people are people with semi-formal education and no formal education at all.

This implies that most of the victims are likely to have experienced the Ghanaian traditional way of socialization; which means their way of life will be influenced by their ethnic and religious background. Information they receive is likely to have religious or ethnic backing. Their level of education, ethnic group, and religious denomination is likely to influence their general view of life, which includes how they understand and view the world.

According to the officials and clients, the Unit gets visited by people from different parts of the country, thus, they speak different languages which make communication very difficult. Also, they added that religious and cultural influences make things very difficult. According to the officials, deep-rooted family values and norms of victims becomes a problem when victims want to make domestic violence issues a family or a religious affair.

The findings indicated that traditional values and norms influence the occurrence of domestic violence in Ghana. It is also similar to what CDC (2019) argues that cultural norms that encourages violence, and other structural imbalance in education, health and economics; which helps in deepening inequality ratios amongst groups within the society should be closely looked at in violence prevention. WILDAF-Ghana (2010) argues that traditional Ghanaian men pay huge amount of money as bride price and as a result abused women find it difficult leaving their partners since it is considered an insult in most cultures.

The findings fall in line with the assumptions of cultural theorists like (Bachman, 1992; Amoakohene, 2004; DeKeseredy & Perry, 2006; Hussain & Khan, 2008; Payne & Gainey, 2014). They believe that societal norms and cultural practices play an active role in moulding the attitudes of people; these norms and practices can either safeguard people against violence

or encourage the use of violence. And argue that groups within multicultural societies acquire and cultivate certain values via institutions that accentuate and validate the excessive use of force which is seen to be part of the culture.

6.6 Chapter conclusion

This section took a closer look at the findings and discussed the major revelations that came out. Discussion was done under the following: knowledge about DOVVSU and motivation; causes of domestic violence; addressing the needs of victims; techniques used in addressing reported cases; challenges faced while addressing these needs. It critically analysed findings by relating it to the introduction, literature review, theories and objectives, thus the discussions made demonstrated how these chapters are interrelated.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of the major findings of the study is made; it draws and present a conclusion based on the major findings; and suggests ways by which the Unit can improve on the role it plays while attending to needs of the victims. In view of this, the study aimed to do the following:

- Find out the extent to which DOVVSU is able to practically address the needs of women inside the Accra regional operational area who suffer domestic violence.
- Ascertain the techniques put in place by the staffs of DOVVSU to address issues of savagery against women in the region that has been conveyed to their notice.
- Find out the challenges DOVVSU officials face while addressing the concerns of female victims that come to them.

In order to achieve this, the researcher interviewed 25 participants, which was made of 5 officials from DOVVSU, and 20 clients between 18 and 60 years of the Unit; through convenient and snowball sampling.

7.1 Summary

The findings revealed that the guidelines stipulated by the Paris Principles for NHRIs was not put into practice, neither has the mandate of the DVA (Act 732) been effectively implemented; which has threatened the Unit's ability to effectively perform its roles.

7.1.1 Summary on Victims Knowledge about DOVVSU and Motivation

This theme analysed and discussed the level of awareness among victims of domestic violence in Accra. Clearly majority of them did not know much about the Unit and its functions in the protection of the rights of victims, and those who knew too were afraid to take the initiative. Some of them got to know about the Unit through friends and families, others also knew about it but saw the need to patronise it when they felt it was necessary. Some of the clients were inspired by the testimonies of other clients. Others were motivated by their own fears of dying. In addition, the findings affirmed the assertion Agbitor (2012) that DOVVSU is very deficient when it comes to conducting outreach programmes. However, findings contradict the statement on the Unit's website that they engage in awareness programmes; and also, it is contrary to the suggestion of IDS (2004) and CDC (2019) that engaging in formal and informal programmes helps reduce domestic violence incidences.

7.1.2 Summary on the Causes of Domestic Violence

In order to know more about the needs of the victims, the causes of domestic violence were discussed from the views of both victims and officials of the Unit. It was revealed that domestic violence was as a result of the kind choices people make and their personality, Ghanaian culture and religious beliefs, and patriarchal nature of the society.

The findings reflect the assumptions made in theoretical framework by: the individual rights based theorists like (Pope, 1992; Tsikata, 1993; Thomas & Beasely, 1993; Kakar, 1998; Daly & Wilson, 1998; Hidrobo & Fernald, 2013; Shuib et al., 2013; Zakae *et.al*, 2016) who believe that domestic violence occur because the fundamental human rights of women are not fully respected, and has a lot to do with the individual characteristics; cultural theorists like (Bachman, 1992; Amoakohene, 2004; DeKeseredy & Perry, 2006; Hussain & Khan, 2008; Payne & Gainey, 2014) who believe that societal norms and cultural practices play an active

role in moulding the attitudes of people, and that these norms and practices can either safeguard people against violence or encourage the use of violence; feminist theorists such as (Ofei-Aboagye, 1994; Giddens, 2006; Cook, 2012; Reddy, 2007), who believe that violence is the image created by the uneven balance of power between men and women in the society.

In addition, findings confirm the assumption of the social-ecological model proposed by the CDC in 2019.

7.1.3 Summary on addressing the needs of victims (Objective one)

The needs of victims and the degree to which the needs were addressed from the perspective of both victims and officials were analysed and discussed based on the DVA (Act 732). The findings revealed that: there are limited programmes and material support for victims due to inadequate funds and resources as mandated by the DVA (Act 732); victims and their families have limited access to counselling session and educational sessions unlike what is suggested in the DVA (Act 732); victims pay for the police forms to get endorsed as well as getting medical treatment ; and there are no shelter homes for adult victims so the Department of Social Welfare Osu Shelter for Abused Children supports some of the women victims of Domestic violence.

The findings also revealed that victims needed basic supports like food, clothing and shelter; and other things like medical and mental treatment, economic, legal aid and justice, and education and counselling on matters that relates to domestic violence.

The findings revealed after the establishment of the DVA (Act 732), many of the stipulations under the document are difficult to enforce because: the Unit is unable to organize programmes and provide the material support for female adult victims, as it was stated in objective one of the domestic violence fund established by the DVA (Act 732); and most of the clients pay for

the endorsement of the police form and medical treatment (only less than 5% of victims get medical attention).

Also, the findings contradict the following: the recommendation given by the UNICEF Research Centre, (2000) that institutions should provide intervention programmes that will enable victims develop skills to manage their businesses and finances, which in turn reduces the threat of domestic violence; and the recommendation by the 2008 UN Guidelines for GBV Interventions and that of Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department in 2007, that victims especially those with domestic violence trauma should be provided with enough counselling to help them deal with the psychosocial problems that comes with domestic violence.

And confirms the statement by WHO (2017) that the perpetrators of domestic violence are mostly witnesses of domestic violence against their loved ones. The findings are similar to the assertion of the Ghana's National Domestic Violence Policy and National Plan of Action in 2008, that victims of domestic violence are not supported materially and financially.

7.1.4 Summary on Techniques used in addressing reported cases (Objective two)

The processes involved in resolving reported cases were analysed and discussed. DOVVSU as a NHRI is mandated by section B under the method of operation of the Paris Principles, to interview people and collect any information and documents possible to assess any case that falls within its competence. The findings revealed the following: officials are posted to and out of the Unit without considering any required skills, and so they have to learn on the job (Learn-as-you-go); the procedures are long and time-taking that delays the entire processes; Clients have series of recurrent interviews with different officials which makes them feel the same process is being repeated over and over again without any progress; the procedures involved

in getting a counsellor and the nature of counselling is dependent on how emotionally broken clients were in the view of the officers in-charge.

The findings contradict the assertion of the 2008 UN Guidelines for GBV Interventions that officials attending to victims of domestic abuse must adopt practices that helps reduce trauma that comes with domestic violence. It also contradict what is stipulated in the DVA (Act, 732) which argues that police officers by rule of law are supposed to react immediately to the complaints made by domestic violence victims.

The findings revealed that the following skills are critically needed, since they are inadequate among officials of the Unit: effective listening, writing and interviewing skills; skills in gender sensitization and interpersonal relationships; good communication, mediation, negotiation and investigative skills; and a lot of knowledge in resolving and managing conflict.

7.1.5 Summary on challenges faced by officials of the Unit (Objective three)

The findings revealed that Unit lacks personnel with adequate knowledge, skills and training to help solve the issues of domestic violence cases reported; and the lack of packages or programmes that is vital for bringing out desired results of services provided. Under this theme, the following was realised: limited information on the DVA (Act 732) and lack of laws to implement it properly; change of personnel and system delays; inadequate funds and resources, cultural and religious interference, and language barrier.

The findings confirm what Zaney (2011) asserts, it appears that DOVVSU is faced with the problem of going by structured or laid down procedures which include (knowing what to follow; knowing why that should be followed, and when and how to follow that) to help in giving successful solution to cases of domestic violence that has been reported. It also confirm the words of Darkwah and Prah (2016, p.3) that “however, the decrees for ensuring the full

implementation of the Domestic Violence Act in Ghana are yet to be put in place”; and the statement that the training of all officials in charge of domestic violence victims is very necessary for addressing their needs (Bott *et.al*, 2005).

The findings contradicts the stipulations of the DVA (Act 732), as well as the ideas of (UNICEF Innocent Research Centre, 2000; Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department, 2007; Bott *et.al*, 2005), who strongly argue that enough funding should be made available for government agencies that assist victims of domestic violence when the need arises.

7.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that the Unit has failed to adhere to the basic requirement stipulated by the Paris Principles for NHRIs, neither has it been able utilised the DVA (Act 732) in its procedures; hence threatening its ability to effectively the perform its roles. According to the implication of the findings, the DOVVSU has challenges performing its role as regards the protection of victims of domestic violence, which forms the basis of its core mandate. The technique used by the Unit to address the needs of victims is less effective, and the laws guiding the entire procedure are not well enforced. The challenges the Unit is facing can be addressed by ensuring all stakeholders play their parts well.

The findings reaffirms the theories of domestic violence (individual rights-based theory, feminist theory, and culture theory), and the social-ecological model theories. The individual rights-based believe domestic violence has to individual characteristics and human rights; feminist the culture theory blame domestic violence as something created by systems and structures. The feminist theorists view domestic violence as a result of inequality between males and females; and socio-cultural theorists believe that domestic violence is seen to be tolerable because of traditions and norms

Furthermore, the findings reaffirm the preventive measures suggested in the socio-ecological model by the CDC, which explains that there is a connection between individual, relationship, community and factors within the society; a knowledge of this will aid in understanding the elements that either put people at the forefront of violence or prevents people from witnessing it (CDC, 2019). Also, the framework prescribes an action to be taken transversely in various stages of the model at a similar period.

7.3 Recommendations

Results from findings brought out certain recommendations which can be employed government, officials of the Unit and victims. These recommendations were made by clients, officials and from inferences made from the findings. They are presented such that they reflect the objectives of the study. The study recommends the following:

This study recommends that DOVVSU engage in a lot of outreach programmes by educating the masses through formal and informal programmes to aid in reduction of domestic violence. In order to help protect the rights of women, the Unit is expected to educate the entire public on what domestic violence entails, the types and the need to do away with actions that contradicts what is stated in the DVA (Act 732).

The study suggests that preventive measures like promoting behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that aid in preventing violence; and preventing behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that promote violence. And also, challenging socio-cultural norms that validate violence and physical abuse can help in reducing domestic violence. This can be done through the use of the mass media conveying messages of positive social values through the internet, television, radio, newspapers and magazines. Also, the use of different campaign strategies, the media can effectively transform socio-cultural norms. Again, certain societal values that encourages

violence, and other structural imbalance in education, health and economics; which helps in deepening inequality ratios amongst group within the society should be avoided.

The findings recommend States to effectively assist minor groups (like preventing violence against women) by enacting and improving on social programmes; compulsory counselling should be given to victims, their family members and their perpetrators. Conflict reduction programmes like family-focused preventive programmes; mentor- mentee relationship programmes; peer review programmes; and foster problem solving skills should be created. Accommodation and health should be made available and free for victims as mandated by Section 8, 29 and 30 of the DVA (Act 732).

The findings recommend that Government agencies should employed only skilled officials, who will receive regular training to be in charge of victims. Officials and agencies working in places of domestic violence victims should react quickly in order to avoid serious consequences and delays. Officials should also: assist and protect victims as and when reports are made; interview victims, offenders and witnesses, put their statements on record and provide them with a copy when the need arises; assist victims with health care and accommodation, even if it requires retrieving properties of victims from perpetrators; educate victims on their rights, how to preserve evidence, and the availability of other services; must adopt practices that helps reduce trauma that comes with domestic violence; follow guidelines necessary to address the needs of victims; and counselling procedures should be in the best interest of the victims.

The study suggests that there should be law implementation and the creation of safe systems to protect people who report domestic violence cases. There should also be cooperation amongst State agencies who assists victims. Reformation of policies is should be made to help address the needs of victims. Also, the reduction and prevention of GBV requires: improving the capabilities of all officials in charge of assisting victims; refining referral mechanisms; and

ensuring and monitoring the inflow of funds. Again, cultural norms that encourages violence, and other structural imbalance in education, health and economics; which helps in deepening inequality ratios amongst group within the society should be closely looked at in violence prevention.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: AGREEMENT FORM

Topic

The role of DOVVSU in the protection of women's rights in Ghana; A case study of Accra regional DOVVSU.

Purpose of the Study

As a partial fulfilment of Master of Philosophy Degree in Political Science.

Relevance

Findings obtained from the research will be used by stakeholders to promote domestic violence activists thereby aiding them in providing the necessary support for victims; and also add up to existing literature on the topic.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Identity of respondents will be treated with utmost secrecy.

Participation

This exercise is voluntary and respondents can opt out if they so wish.

Authorisation

I have read this agreement form and I willingly want to participate in the study.

Respondent's Nickname

Signature

Date

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAFF OF DOVVSU

Gender:

Goal 1: Addressing the needs of victims

1. As a staff of the Unit, what are some of the needs of the victims that visit the Unit?
2. After identifying the needs of victims, how are they met?
3. The needs of victims may differ, to what extent are they met and how does the Unit ensure that specific needs of victims are met?
4. What are some of the educational programmes offered by the Unit to train victims and their families and offenders of the Unit?
5. DOVVSU's basic aim is to make domestic violence a thing of the past, what are some of the measures put in place to achieve this?

Goal 2: Techniques used in addressing reported cases

6. Generally, what are the type of cases reported at the unit?
7. What are the processes staffs of the Unit follow whiles addressing cases that have been reported?
8. Can you describe the protocol you have to follow before investigating a reported case of domestic abuse?
9. Are the procedures used for victims different from one another depending on the type of case?
10. If yes, what are the differences and how are you able to execute them?
11. Is there any instrument to ensure that professionalism exists between officials and clients?
12. What are the evaluation processes involved in checking the performance of staff and how often does it happen?

Goal 3: Challenges faced by officials of the Unit

13. Generally, what are the challenges you face while performing your duties?
14. What are some of the things that hinder the Unit from achieving its basic aim?
15. What are the things that can be done to address the issues above?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FEMALE VICTIMS WHO VISIT OR VISITED THE UNIT

Age:

Employment Status:

Marital Status:

Ethnic background:

Level of education:

1. Are you still visiting the Unit or have you visited the Unit before?
2. What motivated you to visit the Unit?
3. How did you hear about DOVVSU?
4. What do you think causes domestic violence and how best can we deal with it?

Goal 1: Addressing the needs of victims

5. What are/ were the some of the needs you presented to the Unit?
6. Were they able to address these needs to your satisfaction?
7. Did the Unit give you any education on domestic violence?
8. What are the chances of the issues you presented resurfacing?

Goal 2: Techniques used in addressing reported cases

9. What are some of the processes the officials of the Unit took you through?
10. Was this process able to address your issues?
11. Do you think something should have been done differently?
12. Do you think another procedure should be added to the entire process?
13. How would you describe the level of professionalism as regards the staff when they are executing their duties?

Goal 3: Challenges faced by officials of the Unit

14. Did you identify any challenge the officials faced whiles handling your case?
15. How best do you think they can solve it?
16. Would you continue visiting or visit the Unit again, if the need arises?