



Influence of Economic Dependency on the Prevalence of Gender Based Violence in the Kuria Community in Kuria East Sub County, Migori County - Kenya

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Abstract: Gender-Based Violence (GBV) continues to remain prevalent in sections of our society despite increased awareness on human rights and legislations against GBV. GBV has life-threatening, long-term, and traumatic effects on victims, families, and the society. This study sought to explore the influence of economic dependency on the prevalence of gender based violence in the Kuria community in Kuria East Sub County, Migori County – Kenya. Conflict Theory guided the study. Mixed Method approach together with descriptive and Sequential Exploratory Designs were employed to guide on the data collection and analysis. The target population comprised of community leaders, health care service providers, rescue centers, pre-selected women and girls and administration officers with a sample size of 400 respondents, identified by stratified random sampling technique using the Yamane formula. Data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitatively, data was analyzed using statistical techniques with the help of SPSS v.27 and thematically using narration for the qualitative data. Data was presented using tables, graphs, charts and verbatim. The research findings revealed that socio-economic factors indeed predispose victims to GBV by undermining their autonomy, shrouded in illiteracy, backward cultures, and disdain for divorce. The study further established that: Economic Dependency recorded a strong positive correlation; $R = 0.541$ ($P = 0.000$, $P < 0.05$). In conclusion, GBV proves to still be masked in a culture of silence, surrounded by stigma but its consequences are rather loud. The study proves that crisis intervention is still ineffective thus requires reinforcement; recommending interventions like multi-agency collaboration, legal reparation, support structures and strengthened health systems.

Key words: *Economic dependency, Gender based violence, prevalence*

1.1 Study background

Gender-based violence is a thorny issue facing many communities on the global front. The World Bank World Health Organization, (2020) points out that around 35% of women globally have experienced either physical or sexual GBV of some sort. In the United States of America, an estimated 1 in every 4 women are said to experience domestic violence during their lifetime. Gender-Based Violence can be defined as harmful acts directed at individuals due to their gender and is ingrained in harmful norms, gender inequality, and power abuse. Explaining further, GBV violates human rights and is also a life-threatening health and safety matter which often results in both physical and psychological harm on the GBV victim. Gender-based violence affects both men and women, with women seemingly suffering more cases of GBV (UNHRC, 2023). GBV is a broader term that comprises of sexual assault, domestic and intimate partner violence, as well as human trafficking. In Europe, 25% of women are indicated to have at some point in their lifetime experienced either physical and or sexual violence by an intimate partner. As regards the perpetrators, 80% were male, while 6% were female. Obviously, GBV is an issue that affects all genders and ages but with different dynamics (Gust et al., 2018). While most of the gender violence cases involve physical and sexual violence, most victims also suffer psychologically, emotionally, economically, while suffering efficacy and self-esteem issues.

The violence is occasioned by fights, physical assault, coercion, sexual assault, and deprivation of resources and opportunities (Kaladelfos et al., 2014). The economic dependency approach focuses on how poverty affects women's lives by creating situations, forcing them into abusive marriages due to financial issues (Muluneh, et al., 2020). Women from poor backgrounds face a higher risk of GBV because they are cut out from accessing education and or job opportunities that would liberate them, allowing them to make ends meet. GBV victims who cannot afford medical services may not receive adequate medical care. Economic dependency and financial power dynamics within families may propagate the prevalence of GBV. A partner with less income or who is dependent on their significant other may not have the freedom of leaving an abusive relationship. For example, some men who depend on their wives suffer untold humiliation and emotional abuse from their wives due to their lesser incomes (Fry, et al., 2019). Economically dependent women in abusive relationships often leads to financial power dynamics within the family because the abuser often takes advantage of the partner's financial needs thus increasing their control. Economic dependency is also linked to financial power dynamics because abusers may use their partners' financial situation as an excuse to control them. For example, a husband who does not earn much could use that situation as an excuse to abuse his wife. Financial power dynamics are also important because they can affect a partner's decisions on leaving or staying in an abusive relationship. A woman who is financially dependent on her husband may feel pressurized to remain in that abusive relationship from fear of losing all her financial resources, were she to leave. Financial dependence also increases a woman's risk of experiencing physical violence. Spouses who are financially dependent on their significant others experience more physical violence than their counterparts who are not financially dependent (Edwards, et al., 2021). According to Aura (2018), Kenya has had massive reforms that have helped reduce GBV-based violence; however, there is still much to be desired.

The cultural practices of a community can influence its attitudes towards women, including their value and worth as individuals. In some communities, traditional teachings that emphasize the inferiority of women have been used to justify violence against them. African cultural practices like FGM, child marriages, and wife-beating might perpetuate the vice of GBV. Social norms reinforce gender stereotypes which also contribute substantially to the prevalence of GBV. A good example is how, men

are expected to be superior and women, inferior thus contributing to GBV in society. It is important for society to address how gender roles are perpetuated through social norms so that all people can be treated equally, their gender identities and or sexual orientations notwithstanding (Dlamini, 2021).

Society suffers when a group of the community is temporarily incapacitated due to GBV (Nkaabu, 2019). The WHO suggests that for every three women globally, one of them is believed to have experienced either physical or sexual violence. Compared to the West, Africa scores poorly on human rights and GBV. Cultural and religious nuances and outdated cultural practices are significant factors causing the high levels of GBV and abuse of human rights against men, women, and girls around the continent. Some practices like child marriages, patriarchy, and FGM also contribute to GBV Africa. There are no official statistics, but experts believe that at least 50% of all African women have been abused by their husbands or other male relatives (Perrin, et al., 2019). Like other African countries, Kenya has its fair share of GBV. The Corona pandemic further exacerbated the GBV issue (John, et al., 2021). Most communities in Kenya, like the Kuria, are patriarchal.

This, coupled with poverty and limited access to education has led to higher rates of domestic violence. The Kuria community has a tradition where elders settle disputes within the community. If a woman wanted to report her husband for domestic violence, she would have to go through these elders, who would have to get permission from her husband to welcome her into their midst (Buard, et al., 2013). This practice is gradually being phased out by modern ways of thinking and new approaches to justice, which seek to give more power back to the victims themselves and ensure that perpetrators are brought to book. The Kuria people in Kenya are predominantly a pastoral and farming community. They mainly follow Christianity as their religion, but also practice traditional rituals like circumcision, FGM, marriage ceremonies, the burial of the dead, etc. The Kuria people are further known for their music and dances, performed during special occasions like weddings or funerals. On GBV, administrative, law enforcement and legal interventions in isolation cannot holistically tackle the GBV menace without fully understanding dynamics of the Kuria communities, geographical impediments, the effects of access to resources, poverty levels, awareness levels, religion, and traditional practices on the incidence of GBV against men, women and girls among the Kuria people (Shako and Kalsi, 2019).

1.2: Statement of the Problem

GBV being a grave legal, social, and human rights issue facing many men, women, and girls in Kenya, it is notable that Western Kenya, including the former Nyanza and Western provinces leads in GBV cases in Kenya with Migori, Vihiga, and Busia counties topping by over 50% prevalence rates (Morris, et al., 2020). Statistics suggest that almost 20% of the population have sadly been subjected to FGM, further suggesting rates as high as 94% in Northeastern Kenya. The most notable contributing factors include power dynamics, gender norms, and conflict. However, due to the uniqueness of the Kuria community from Migori and its socioeconomic dynamics, this study sought to explore how various economic factors, exclusive to Kuria East affect GBV prevalence. The findings sought to inform future interventions aiming to reduce GBV in this community. This research was therefore necessitated by the fact that most of the previous research conducted on GBV in Kenya largely focused on its general effects, rather than individualized economic causal factors, and the exceptionality of specified communities. While most research has been focused on literacy levels and culture, this study explored the various economic factors on the prevalence of GBV among the Kuria people. Despite a host of policies, civic education and action programs aimed at alleviating GBV being undertaken globally, this study research seeks to contribute to the discourse and limited evidence on GBV by addressing facilitators and barriers to the death of GBV. This necessitates a study to examine how economic

dependency amongst the Kuria people in Kuria East affect the prevalence of GBV. The findings of this research study are aimed at helping to develop possible solutions addressing GBV within the community.

1.3 Research Objective

This study sought to explore the influence of economic dependency on the prevalence of gender based violence in the Kuria Community in Kuria East Sub County, Migori County.

1.4 Justification of the Study

Understanding the economic factors influencing the prevalence of GBV among marginalized communities is crucial in developing interventions uniquely customized to offer solutions, empowerment while boosting access to awareness, education, and health service by the community. While the effects of gender-based violence including loss of life, physical and emotional harm, and poor quality of life have been demonstrated in various studies, with possible solutions developed; women in Kuria communities continue to suffer and the prevalence of GBV against a few men, women, and girls is still quite high. It is based on the existing gap that this research seeks to address.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research study resolves to contribute to the development of literature on economic issues affecting various Kenyan communities in GBV. Analyzing the influence of economic factors in contributing to the prevalence of GBV in a marginalized region sought to help provide actionable recommendations for community driven change and reduction of prevalence rates. The study sought to help improve awareness on the prevalence of GBV, thereby promoting community advocacy for ending GBV in Kuria East and various parts of Kenya. The results of the study seek to benefit the Kuria community members and county administration, as well as NGOs on the prevalence and the economic causal factors, thereby allowing policy formulation and increased awareness.

1.6 Literature review

This section presents the theoretical and empirical review guiding this study.

1.6.1 Theoretical review

Conflict Theory

The ‘Conflict Theory’, first developed by Karl Marx in 1848, suggests that the state of perpetual conflict of society results from the competition for scarce resources. Its macro level approach in describing the society as made up of various social classes, divergent interests, power influences, social stratum, and their effects thereof, in the distribution of resources in that society. In this study, the theory indicated that society members had to compete for social resources and thereby created social classes, dependency, and power structures within society. Economic, political, and social inequalities within society often lead to violence. Different societal groups are faced with different levels of aggression based on their race, gender, tribe, or ethnicity, while their reactions were based on the prevailing economic, political, and social inequalities, social mobility, legitimacy of those in power, and resource allocation. Gumprowicz, when expounding Karl Max’s ideas indicated that war and conquest form the basis for civilization, whereby cultural and ethnic conflicts resulted in territories and nations being identified by the domineering point of influence that controls other groups of people (John-Kall, et al., 2010). In this research study, the Conflict Theory best described the prevalence of GBV in varied ways by providing a framework for understanding how GBV was perpetuated.

It demonstrated that men used GBV to control women and deter them from challenging male dominance while women used GBV to enforce compliance with their husbands' wishes. The theory enforced the underlying assumption that both genders are equally responsible for GBV, with both committing acts of violence and explained how gendered power dynamics were reproduced through daily interactions. In terms of domestic violence, conflict theory suggests that there are two types of conflict: "power" and "control". Power refers to people seeking control over others through coercion and force while control refers to people trying to gain power over others by restricting their ability to act and make decisions. Power and control being closely linked, both lead to violence against women (John-Kall, et. a., 2010). In this research study, the conflict theory indicated how dominant community members and gender subjugated over other genders or groups within the community, thereby having a monopoly on aggression against their weaker counterparts. It further examined various phenomena through the social lens, suggesting the natural attraction between humans and conflict. This theory provided a macro view of the society, apportioning it into different clusters that allowed easier scrutiny of interactions.

1.6.2 Review of Empirical Studies

Economic Dependency and the Prevalence of Gender Based Violence

Whereas economic dependency may be a crucial factor in fueling gender based violence in our society today, gender-based violence itself can also contribute to women becoming economically dependent on their partner. Some of the existing socio-economic factors predisposing women to GDV vulnerabilities may include but not limited to:- lower wages, very low or no child-care benefits, or benefits being tied to the income tax of the wage-earning male partner. Cameron and Tedds, (2021) postulate that GBV does not simply occur in the context of inter-personal relationships or as the result of perpetration by 'bad men'; rather, GBV is a systemic issue that seizes upon and operates through longstanding pathologies and power dynamics—patriarchy, racism, and colonialism—rendering diverse people more vulnerable to victimization based on their identity. Strategies, policies, and programs focused on ensuring victims and survivors can achieve economic security seek form a vital component of any serious plan to address GBV. They consider economic security to be a state in which criteria for financial security, stability, and continuity are fulfilled, and conceive of basic income as a class of policies that share principles of simplicity, respect, economic security, and social inclusion. However, economic independence cannot ensure reduction of GBV rates on its own.

Poverty puts women at risk for abuse because they often depend on their partners for financial support. They may also be more dependent on their partners because they cannot afford childcare or other services without their help. Women who work part time or as temporary workers are less likely to report workplace sexual harassment. Precarious employment can also limit a woman's ability to leave an abusive relationship if her partner threatens her job prospects. Women in low-income households in the US are more likely to experience violence than those with higher incomes. They are also more likely to live in unsafe neighborhoods and have fewer resources to move out or get help (Erez and Harper, 2018). In households where money is tight in US and most European countries, women are more likely to stay in violent relationships as leaving might mean homelessness.

Economic abuse can prevent women from leaving abusive relationships. They may be unable to work; their wages may be controlled, or they may be prevented from studying or working. Being the main reason why women remain put in abusive relationships. High dependency rates among women, due to

factors such as caring responsibilities and income inequality, further entrench women's powerlessness and financial dependence on male partners (Nicolson, 2019). Economic resources are very important in the decision to stay or leave a violent relationship for women in the West. It determines if services such as housing and legal aid are available. It also influences whether the woman feels able to leave the relationship without losing everything. Without any economic resources, women may feel they cannot afford to leave a violent partner. This is especially true of those women who are financially dependent on their partners and have little access to employment opportunities. Women's financial independence has a positive impact on their physical safety and emotional well-being (Wirtz, et al., 2018).

Economic self-sufficiency can also improve women's confidence and ability to determine their own destinies, including deciding when and how to end abusive relationships. Economic resources, such as income and assets, provide options for women to leave violent relationships and access safety. Conversely, a lack of economic resources can increase a woman's dependence on her partner, which in turn increases her vulnerability to violence (Rono, 2023). The wealth of GBV victims and the economic power dynamics also contribute to GBV. Poor victims in Africa are usually dependent on their perpetrators. Family wealth is important because it is typically a key source of security in times of crises such as GBV. In addition, family wealth influences who makes the decisions within the household.

Because intra-household allocation is determined by power relations, the level of wealth of an individual or a household determines the extent to which they have power to influence allocation decisions. A distinction can therefore be made between financial (cash and financial investments) and material assets (physical objects). The relative importance of each type differs from one country to another, different social classes, households, and individuals. Family resources also matter when it comes to reporting GBV incidents. If victims are economically dependent on their spouses or violent partners, they may be less likely to report violence due to fear of losing access to financial support, housing and other necessities required for survival (Wirtz, et al., 2018). From an economic standpoint, lack of power and control over decisions is particularly problematic and could lead to violence from lack of security and financial stability. Wealth distribution within households is another major issue influencing the risk of domestic violence. Within Africa there tends to be unequal distribution of income between men and women in households. The gender pay gap suggests that most women earn less than men therefore translating to less control over household finances; in turn increasing their vulnerability to abuse (McIlwaine, 2013). Allocation of resources among family members, especially between men and women, often influences GBV occurrence. The 'best case scenario' is where a woman has her own income, and in situations where both husband and wife have jobs, suggesting that economically empowered women are therefore less likely to experience domestic violence (Nicolson, 2019). Allocation of household resources affect GBV occurrence in Kenya. The perpetrator withholds money or food as punishment or for personal gains. Women and girls economically dependent on their partners or families find it difficult to leave violent relationships as they lack access to resources and anywhere else to go (Chaudhuri, 2018).

In most cases, the dynamics of family wealth and allocation are central to domestic violence. The distribution of resources within a family is uneven and often based on gender roles. Men oversee access to and control over resources, while women's role is perceived as that of household managers who provide for their husbands and children. This power imbalance makes women vulnerable to varying forms of abuse. Many GBV survivors also face challenges in accessing economic resources after they leave their abusers. For instance, property transferred during marriage under customary laws

is deemed as joint property and returned to the husband upon divorce or separation. This normally leaves many survivors without assets upon which they can depend after separation (Mshweshwe, 2020). Lack of economic resources and dependence on the male partner is the main reason why women remain in violent relationships. In domestic violence cases, control and economic abuse often begins before physical abuse.

Research shows that financial control is a common tool in coercive control, used by abusers to threaten and intimidate their victims. The consequences are huge, with many women unable to leave abusive relationships due to their lack of financial independence (Morrison et al., 2007). Women who are economically dependent on their partners often feel limited by choice, forcing them to stay in violent relationships because they lack the financial means to leave it or are afraid of not being able to support themselves or their children if they did. Women in low-income households and those without private health insurance are less likely to report IPV than women in higher income households with private health insurance (Chaudhuri, 2018).

1.7 Research methodology

The study adopted a mixed method which involved survey and fact-finding inquiry. A sequential exploratory and descriptive research designs were found to be appropriate and relevant in data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Site Description : The study was conducted in Kuria East sub-county, of Migori County. Migori County is located in the former Nyanza Province in western parts of Kenya. The sub-county has 4 wards including Bukira East, Getambwega, Getong'anya, and Gokeharaka. The sub-county has an altitude of 1,400m above sea level, with undulating hills and a few stretches of flat land. It has a population of 93,229 people as per the 2019 census. The Kuria people are predominantly a pastoral and farming community, who now grow maize, beans and cassava as food crops and coffee, tobacco, and maize as cash crops. Kuria's are mostly of Christian faith, with a few still practicing African religious practices and some other few being Muslims. The Kuria people have various customs. Some of them include circumcision for both sexes. The Kuria have an unusual marriage custom where two women can be married, so that a woman who cannot have her own children can still have a family. Polygamy was common until recently, the only barrier being a man's wealth.

Study Population and Target Population: A target population is a group of individuals or participants having specific attributes of interest and relevance for the research of which the research data are to make inferences (Asiamah et. al., 2018). This is the population for which the findings of the study can be generalised. This is the entire group of people, individuals or objects the researcher has chosen to study. This is the group of people to whom the study results applied. The study population comprised people who meet the operational definition of the target population (Vonk, 2019). The population of Kuria East sub-county from the last Census data released by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2020 show was at 96,872 people, with 46,969 being male 49,894 being female. A target population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the focus of scientific query (Patten et. al., 2018). Usually, the description of the population and the common binding characteristic of its members are similar. For this study, the target population included community leaders, health care providers, rescue centers, pre-selected men, women, and girls as well as administration officers while the study population shall be a representative of all the groups.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: The sample is a representative of the population, and it allows inferences derived from the sample to be made back to the population of interest (Halperin, et al., 2020). The study employed stratified random sampling, whereby population was divided into homogenous subgroups and simple random samples taken from each sub-group. The researcher then used the Yamane sample formula to come up with a sample size.

Yamane Formula; $n = N/(1+N(e)^2)$, Margin of Error= 0.05

The total population in Kuria East= 96,872 people

$$n = 96,872 / [1 + 96,872 \times 0.05^2] \quad \text{Therefore} \quad n = 96,872 / [1 + 96,872 \times 0.0025]$$

$$n = 96,872 / [1 + 242.18] \quad \text{Therefore} \quad n = 96,872 / 243.18$$

$$n = 398.355 \text{ (approximately 400 respondents).}$$

Therefore, a sample size of 400 respondents out of the entire population of 96,872 respondents would be the lowest acceptable number at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error.

The number of respondents for every category was; women and girls $(49,894 / 96,872) \times 400 = 206$.

Extrapolating that the remaining have equal chance of representation.

$$= 400 - 206 = 194 \quad \text{Therefore} \quad 194/4 = 48.5$$

This study applied both purposive sampling and simple random sampling methods. Purposive was used to get the necessary information required by the researcher from hospitals, health care centres, and rehabilitation centres like Maberu Health Centre, Akidiva Hospital and Migori County Referral Hospital in Kuria East. The Kuria community inhabit four wards, geographically sub-divided by IEBC namely, Kegonga, Komosoko, Kombe, and Maeta. Simple Random Sampling (SRS) was carried out to give each respondent an equal chance of participation.

Sampling Frame

Table 1: Sample Size

Category	Target Population	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques
Women and Girls	49,894	206	Simple Random
Administration Officers	100	48.5	Purposive
Community Elders	100	48.5	Purposive
Health Service Providers	100	48.5	Purposive
Rescue Centers	100	48.5	Purposive
TOTAL	50,294	400	

Source: Field Data (2022)

Tools of Data Collection: This study employed the use of both secondary and primary data. Secondary data was collected using diverse literature related to the topic of study. Primary data was collected using questionnaires and interviews (in-depth and direct). **Questionnaires:** Open and closed ended questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data as well as with health care workers, administration officials, and in rescue centers. They were chosen because they offer a fast, efficient, and inexpensive means of gathering large amounts of information from sizeable sample volumes. They also prove quite effective for measuring subject behavior, preferences, intentions, attitudes, and opinions. **Interviews:** They were used to collect qualitative data especially from the survivors of GBV and other important respondents such as hospital attendants, administration officials, and community leaders. This study employed in-depth interviews with various respondents to collect qualitative data on the phenomena and to provide in-depth understanding of the issues and factors therein, nuances, and their thoughts on GBV.

1.9 Study findings

Response Rate

A total of 400 respondents were sampled to take part in the study. From this, a total of 294 participants returned the questionnaires in time for data analysis, representing a 74% response rate. According to Saunders and Bezzina (2015), a response rate of 60% and above is good enough to give a good outcome in field surveys, whereas a response rate of 70% and above is excellent in presenting a reliable illustration of the facts on the ground.

Table 2: Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Responded	294	74%
Not Responded	106	26%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Data (2022)

The results in *Table 2* highlight the response rate at 74%, therefore N = 294. The study also undertook Key Informant Interviews, where 34 participants offered their contributions to the discussion on social factors and the prevalence of GBV in Kuria East sub-county. Therefore, for Key Informant Interviews (KII) data, N=34. It is worth noting that the study utilized thematic analysis to analyze all the data from both open-ended questions, and responses for the KII data.

Economic Dependency and Prevalence of GBV

The second objective of the study was to determine the influence of the economic dependency factor on the prevalence of GBV in men, women, and girls residing in Kuria East sub-county. Respondents' feedback on the economic dependency factor in *Table 3*, computed in frequencies and means.

Table 3: Economic Dependency and Prevalence of GBV

Questions on Economic Dependency & the Prevalence of GBV	Response	Feedback	
		Frequency	Percentage
Do family economic resources and their distribution between the partners affect the prevalence of GBV in the Kuria Community in Kuria East sub-county, Migori County?	Yes	146	49.7%
	No	148	50.3%
Does family wealth affect the prevalence of GBV against women and girls in the Kuria Community in Kuria East sub-county, Migori County, Kenya?	Yes	147	50%
	No	147	50%
To what magnitude of economic dependency and family economic resources affect the prevalence of GBV against women and girls	High Effect	160	54.4%
	Moderate Effects	107	36.4%
	Low Effect	27	9.2%

Source: Field Data (2022)

The results in *Table 3* represent respondents' views on the influence of economic dependency on the prevalence of GBV. On the question of economic resources distribution amongst partners, a total of

148 (50.3%) of the respondents were convinced that it contributed to the prevalence of gender-based violence against women in Kuria East. In contrast, 146 (49.7%) were convinced that the distribution of resources amongst partners contributed to the prevalence of GBV. On the question of family wealth and its effect on the prevalence of GBV, there was a tie of 50% (147 respondents) for those who agreed that family wealth impacted the prevalence of GBV against another 50% of the respondents who were of the contrary opinion that family wealth did not influence the prevalence of GBV. The study thus establishes the existence of mixed opinions across Kuria East sub-county on the role of family wealth in enabling the prevalence of GBV. This implies that dependents who are in abusive relationships with partners who have access to family wealth are less committed to relieving their pain if they have financial security.

These statements and findings were supported by Satyen et.al, (2018) who noted with concern that economically dependent women on their spouses increase their vulnerability to violence. To add on, Wirtz et. al, (2018) posits that economic dependency on the GBV perpetrator reduces the likelihood of reporting violence for fear of losing survival necessities. The results in **Table 3** also present respondents' views on the influence of economic dependency and family resources on the prevalence of gender-based violence. This answers the question: *“To what magnitude do economic dependency and family economic resources affect the prevalence of GBV against men, women, and girls in the Kuria Community in Kuria East Sub County, Migori County, Kenya?”* Most respondents, 160 (54.4%) were convinced that economic dependency highly affects the prevalence of GBV among the Kuria Community. Further, 107 (36.4%) believed that economic dependence and family resources wield a moderate effect on the prevalence of GBV, whereas a marginal 27 (9.2%) of the respondents believed economic dependence and family resources wield low effect on the prevalence of GBV. The study establishes that the state of economic resources that are held in a family and those serving as benefactors influence the state of GBV prevalence implying that, economic inequality contributes to extending GBV prevalence if the perpetrators are economic benefactors of victims. The data computed in **Table 4** represents a thematic analysis of respondents' views on the relationship between economic dependency and the prevalence of GBV.

Table 4: Views on Economic Dependency and GBV Prevalence

Magnitude of Economic Dependency and GBV Prevalence	Frequency	Percentage
Economic dependency makes it difficult for GBV victims to quit abusive relationships as they are fully reliant on their abusers for economic wellbeing	51	17.3%
In a GBV situation where cohabiting partners have young children and are economically dependent on the perpetrator, the GBV victim often chooses to endure violence to secure their children's future.	104	35.4%
GBV victims who are cohabiting with their abusers have limited options in situations where the abuser is the sole economic well-being provider	34	11.6%
GBV victims who are solely reliant on financial and economic support from their abusers often harbor hopes in the future thus making them endure abuse.	48	16.3%
GBV victims who are independent of their abusers, harbor feelings of shame and fear for starting a new life where they must struggle on their own to survive any financial hurdles thus opting to endure the abuse in the long term.	57	19.4%
Total	294	100.0%

Source: Field Data (2022)

The results from the above present respondents' views on the views of economic dependency and family resources on the prevalence of GBV. A number of the respondents, 104 (35.4%) were of the opinion that: *"In a GBV situation where cohabiting partners have young children and are economically dependent on the perpetrator, the GBV victim often chooses to endure the violence so as to preserve their children's economic security."* 57 (19.4%) of the respondents opined that: *"GBV victims who are independent of their abusers harbor feelings of shame and fear for starting a new life where they have to struggle on their own finances to survive thus opting to endure the abuse in long term."* A total of 51 (17.3%) of the respondents believed: *"Economic dependency makes it difficult for GBV victims to quit abusive relationships as they are fully reliant on their abusers for economic wellbeing."* The above findings were in line with the works of Erez and Harper (2018) who posited that, the link between poverty and domestic violence has been well established in studies of community samples from the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Further, 48 (16.3%) of the respondents believed: *"GBV victims who are solely reliant financial and economic well-being on their abusers often harbor hopes in the future thus making them endure the abuse."* Finally, 34 (11.6%) of the respondents submitted that: *"GBV victims who are cohabiting with their abusers have limited options in situations where the abuser is the sole economic provider."* The study further establishes that there exist diverse perspectives on the role of financial security in relationships in cases of economic dependency and exposure to partner and gender violence. The study also views the aspect of intimate partner violence as more prevalent in relationships where abusers are largely the sole providers. These statements and findings aligned with previous findings from Dlamini (2021) who suggested that in the US & Europe, GBV is occasioned by economic dependency on men due to a lack of economic resources, decreased opportunities for education and employment, and other factors limiting women's independence. Further, on wealth distribution, the gender pay gap suggests that women earn less, therefore, translating to increased vulnerability to abuse (McIlwaine, 2013). This further suggested that a low income is positively related to physical and psychological abuse toward spouses.

Family income and economic capacity on prevalence of violence in Kuria East

The researcher sought respondent's insights on family income and economic capacity on prevalence of violence in Kuria East.

Table 5: Family Income and Economic Capacity on Prevalence of GBV

Family Income and Economic Capacity on Prevalence of GBV	Frequency	Percentage
Cases where the benefactor is violent, dependents often endure the abuse as they are rendered powerless from fear of losing financial support and present comfort	14	41.2%
In marriages where women are housewives with children, even when faced with assault, violence, and abuse by their husbands, in most cases they opt to overlook the scenario and chose to stay for the financial support and economic certainty for their children	11	32.3%
Wealthy perpetrators often have their way when charged in courts of law as they use wealth to corrupt the criminal justice system and disregard repercussions for their actions	9	26.5%
Total	34	100.0%

Source: Field Data (2022)

On the question of family income and economic capacity and prevalence of GBV, 14 informants submitted that; *“In cases where benefactor is violent, the dependents have to endure the violence and abuse as are powerless to fight back due fear of losing financial support and present comfort”*. Further, 11 informants submitted that; *“In marriages where women are housewives with children, even when faced with assault, violence and abuse by their husbands, in most cases they opt to overlook the scenario and chose to stay for the financial support and economic certainty for their children”*. Finally, 9 informants submitted that; *“Individuals who are wealthy and violent towards women, they often have their way when charged in courts of law as they use wealth in the corrupt criminal justice system to defeat justice, thus never care about repercussions for their actions as they can always get away with it, thus continuing cycle of violence”*. From the data, economic dependency still has deep running roots in the GBV situation of Kuria East sub-county.

Correlation between Social Factors and the Prevalence of GBV

Table 6: *Correlation between Social Factors and the Prevalence of GBV*

Correlations		Religion	Economic Dependency	Cultural Practices	Literacy Levels	Prevalence of GBV
Religion	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	294				
Economic Dependency	Pearson Correlation	.035	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.553				
	N	294	294			
Cultural Practices	Pearson Correlation	.017	-.002	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.766	.976			
	N	294	294	294		
Literacy Levels	Pearson Correlation	.210	.023	.091	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.693	.119		
	N	294	294	294	294	
Prevalence of GBV	Pearson Correlation	.575	.541	.436	.618	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	294	294	294	294	294

Source: Field data, 2022

The study sought to find out the correlation analysis between social factors; notably religion, economic dependency, cultural practices, and literacy levels on the prevalence of GBV in Kuria East. The study establishes that; Religion and prevalence of GBV records a strong positive correlation, $R = 0.575$ ($P = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$). Also, economic dependency and prevalence of GBV records, $R = 0.541$ ($P = 0.000$, $P < 0.05$) which imply existence of high correlation between economic dependency and prevalence of GBV. In addition, cultural practices versus prevalence of GBV recorded; $R=0.436$ ($P=0.000$, $P < 0.05$) which indicated moderate correlation between cultural practices and GBV. Finally, literacy level versus prevalence of GBV, records; $R = 0.618$ ($P = 0.000$, $P < 0.05$), which indicates a strong positive correlation between literacy levels and prevalence of GBV. The results imply existence of association between religion factor, economic dependency, cultural practices, literacy levels and the prevalence of GBV in Kuria East Sub-County.

1.10 Conclusion

This community based cross-sectional study concluded that GBV largely undermines the autonomy of victims because it still seems to be shrouded in a culture of silence, probably due to the stigma and fear surrounding it. Economic dependency was found to be a leading cause to gender based violence among the married people in Kuria community. The consequences are however not so silent, going per health center records of reproductive health issues like fistula, unwanted pregnancies, and unsafe abortions, STIs and worst-case scenario, death. Counselling for GBV victims is critical in averting mental health issues like PTSD, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. ‘Cognitive Behavioral Therapy’ (CBT) could also be adapted as a treatment option especially for those victims of intimate partner violence or sexual GBV. The study has also proven that crisis intervention is not yet very effective and needs further support moving forward. The study revealed increasing community efforts on awareness creation about GBV, through public workshops in villages and rural areas where experts in GBV offer insights on the importance of shunning practices that enable occurrence of GBV by exposing its consequences in destruction of family structure and future lives of victims and their families.

1.11 Recommendations

After exploring the influence of economic dependency on the prevalence of GBV, the study recommended some intervention measures:

- a) The Government of Kenya, work together with NGOs both local and international to create social empowerment programs to alter the societal mindset on GBV and invoke change on perceptions of backward traditions, condemning the act and encouraging the victims to seek help anytime they are faced with any form of abuse and violence, and embracing GBV victims and acclimatizing them back into the society. Recognizing and giving accolades to grass root networks that support GBV survivors sends a strong message to the public regarding the government’s stance on matters GBV.
- b) The community should avoid overreliance on foundations and international charitable organizations and instead focus on well-equipping and training the local based NGOs and CBOs financially, technically and on sensitive matters (child protection, case, and funds management as well as reporting frameworks). Corporate agencies are also another great avenue for acquiring funds through their CSR projects. These serve as a buffer to the organization and cushion them against emergency or recurring expenses to ensure service continuity and less cash flow problems.
- c) Optimization of community outreach programs by religious institutions to include surveillance and rescue of GBV victims who are entrapped and powerless to escape their present violent predicament due to numerous factors.
- d) Increasingly engaging the youth and female gender on economic activities contributes to their independence and by extension, financial freedom.

- e) Creation of recovery programs and support structures within care centers where GBV victims can be offered sufficient psychosocial support and empowerment enables them to chart new livelihoods for themselves, with a futuristic mindset.
- f) Boosting literacy levels in rural areas through expansion of government budget for enhancing capacity development and skills growth, empowers the entire society with sustainable knowledge on the socio-economic front.

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