



FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF WIFE BATTERY CASES AT POLICE STATIONS: A CASE OF KITWE DISTRICT IN ZAMBIA

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the factors that contribute to the withdrawal of wife battery cases in Kitwe District at police stations using a descriptive case study. The study utilized both primary and secondary data from a sample of 42 participants and a review of 40 police case dockets of the victims. Methods of data collection included observation, interviews and focus group discussions. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis and quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study findings showed that socioeconomic, psychosocial, socio-cultural and institutional factors contributed to the withdrawal of wife battery cases.

Keywords: Wife Battery; Gender-Based Violence; Women; Police; Law Enforcement

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In its many forms, violence against women has continued to receive international recognition as a major human right and human development problem since the mid-1970s (Ondicho 2000). This is because violence against women has serious implications on social and economic development by limiting victims from participating in the development process at personal, community and national levels. Wife battery which is one form of violence against women, remains a fundamental violation of women's rights, including rights to life and security of person (Gender in Development Division 2008; Samuels et al. 2015).

Based on the evidence from the available literature, wife battery has been persistent before the nineteenth century, an era of the feminist campaign. For example, during the 1800s wife battery was extremely common and only caused outrage if it was exceptionally brutal or endangered life (Wojtczak 2009). There was a widespread belief among ordinary people globally, both males and females that it was every man's right to beat his wife so long as it was to correct her if she did anything to annoy or upset him or refused to obey his orders. A husband could subject his wife to

corporal punishment so long he did not inflict permanent injury on her (Siegel 1996; Wojtczak 2009). However, by mid-20th century, many countries in the world stopped recognizing the common-law principle which stated that a husband had the right to physically discipline an errant wife (Alokan 2013).

Violence against women in Africa, as elsewhere in the world, is a complex issue that emanates from societal inequalities between men and women. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa-UNECA (2011) stated that the subordinate status of women to men in many societies, coupled with a general acceptance of interpersonal violence as a means of resolving conflict, renders women disproportionately vulnerable to violence from all levels of society; from individual men, within the family and community.

Based on the available literature, violence against women is recognized as a serious problem in Zambia. Despite many efforts in eliminating the vice at national level, the problem has continued to escalate. For example, the records at the Victim Support Units of the Zambia Police have recorded an upward swing with 6,716 cases reported in 2008 to 12,998 in 2014 countrywide (Ministry of Gender and Child Development 2015). Among the various forms of violence against women include wife battery which is pervasive worldwide (Russell 1988; Mulenga 2010). It is against this background that the focus of this study is on wife battery. One major problem concerned with this vice, has been the withdrawal of wife battery cases at police stations by the victims with contributing factors largely unknown, resulting in low prosecutions of the perpetrators. Therefore, the main objective of the study was to determine factors that contribute to the withdrawal of wife battery cases among women at police stations in Kitwe District. The research is divided into five sections as follows: Introduction and background, methodology, findings, discussion and the conclusion with recommendations.

METHODOLOGY

This research study adopted a descriptive case study. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants for focus group discussions and key informant interviews with a sample size of 42 participants and utilized both primary and secondary sources of data. The method of non-participatory observation was employed in order to study the conduct of the police towards wife battery cases. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis while quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study was conducted in the urban area of Kitwe District which included four police stations namely: Kitwe Central, Mindolo, Wusakile, and Kitwe East, and the communities under the jurisdiction of the stations.

FINDINGS

Extent of wife battery

The respondents were asked to explain how wife battery affected women in order to determine the extent of wife battery. This was important in order to establish the extent of the problem after the literature revealed that wife battery affects women mostly physically. The findings from interviews conducted with the key informants and police officers and during focus group discussions with

women, revealed that wife battery was a big problem which affected women socially, economically, psychologically and physically. It was identified to cause physical injuries, death, and mental disorder such as depression. Additionally, it was identified to deprive a woman of her self-worth and self-esteem, causing her to lose the will to fight hence contributing less to social and economic development and leading to her increased financial dependence on the partner.

The study established that wife battery is a multifaceted problem that affected women socially, economically, psychologically and physically. This piece of information was important for this study to ascertain women's understanding of the extent of wife battery, women being the population that is directly affected by this problem.

Reasons for Withdrawal of Wife Battery Cases

In order to ascertain the reasons for withdrawal of wife battery cases, case dockets were searched in order to pick the actual reasons given by the victims of wife battery in the withdrawal statements. The reasons given were then categorized into themes.

According to the withdraw statements of the victims from the 40 case dockets, showed that twenty-four victims withdrew cases due to socioeconomic factors, six victims withdrew cases due to socio-cultural factors, six victims withdrew cases due to psychosocial factors and the other four withdrew cases due to institutional factors. The study established that most (24) of the victims of wife battery withdrew cases due to socioeconomic factors such as unemployment and lack of personal income. For example, some of the reasons advanced were that, the husband is the breadwinner and when he is in custody they did not want the children to stop going to school due to non-payment of school fees or the family to stay with hunger or the children to be poor. The study further revealed that psychosocial factors such as love and forgiveness contributed to the withdrawal of wife battery cases. Many (6) victims stated that they still loved their husbands and had forgiven them. The other six (6) victims withdrew cases due to socio-cultural factors such as family intervention where the elders of the family intervened and helped the couple to reconcile. The findings also showed that other (4) victims did not necessarily want the husbands to be jailed but have them counseled or disciplined by the police.

During interviews the police officers were asked to give reasons why women withdrew wife battery cases based on their experiences with victims of wife battery. The police officers had experience of not less than one year hence their information was valuable. All the police officers stated that most women withdraw cases because the husband is the breadwinner. The officers reported that many other victims withdraw cases because of family intervention while others they want the police to help them stop the husband from being violent so that they counsel the him.

Based on the reasons submitted by the victims and the responses from participants, the study established that socioeconomic factors such as the husband being a breadwinner of the family contributed to the withdrawal of wife battery cases. The findings further indicated that psychosocial factors such as the love the wife has for the husband contributed to the withdrawal of wife battery cases. It was also established that socio-cultural factors such as family intervention also contributed to the withdrawal of wife battery cases. Additionally, the study demonstrated that

the victims wanted the police to help them stop the violence by counseling or disciplining their husbands.

Occupation of the Victims

The findings showed that 6 victims were in formal employment, 10 were self-employed (business women) whilst 24 were not in any form of employment (neither formal nor informal). Among those in formal employment were two Teachers, two Domestic Workers, one Data Clerk and one Office Assistant. The study demonstrated that the majority of the victims of wife battery who withdrew cases were unemployed which meant that they were influenced by socioeconomic factors to withdraw the case. The data on the 16 victims with personal income through informal or formal employment showed that even those wives with personal income could be victims of wife battery. It was also established that despite having their own personal income some victims of wife battery withdrew cases due to other factors other than socioeconomic.

Public Perception of the Police

Based on the responses from the participants, it was established that the public perception of the police was that the police are partially professional in their service provision. This is because as reported by some key informants and the women that the police were sometimes helpful as they attended to the victims professionally by offering counseling and other relevant information relating to their cases, but they would not offer adequate support in terms of safety of the victims and they would ask for some money for transport to go and arrest the assailant.

Police Self-image

With regard to self-image, the police perceived themselves as being professional in their work when dealing with the victims of wife battery. However, the police officers blamed the victims for withdrawal of wife battery cases stating that the victims were so emotional and uncooperative at times. This information was important during observation of police officers to have a basis for comparison on what they said they do and what they actually do.

Police Influence on Victims

Based on the responses from the participants, it was discovered that the conduct of the police influenced the withdrawal of wife battery cases at police stations. This is because the police were reported to have failed to arrest their fellow officers who committed such offences or they had a tendency of not being available for court sessions due to various reasons or they used the language that suggested withdrawal of cases or they asked for some money from the victims.

Criminality of Wife Battery

To determine how the police officers regarded wife battery as a criminal offence, the police officers were asked how serious wife battery is as a criminal offence. All ten police officers reported that wife battery is a serious criminal offence. It was stated that it is because wife battery can cause

the death of the victim, permanent disability to the victim and promote a cycle of violence against women if not addressed.

Police Officers' Formal Training

The findings from one-on-one interviews conducted with the police officers from Victim Support Units revealed that the majority (9 out of 10) of the police officers were trained formally in GBV and only one police officer was not trained. This information was important for this study in order to determine whether the police officers were trained in GBV case management since it has a direct impact on how GBV cases are managed. The study established that the majority of the officers who worked under Victim Support Unit were formally trained in GBV and were expected to competently perform their duties.

Adequacy of the Current Law

When asked to state whether the current Zambian law is adequate to address wife battery, in response, all the 8 key informants said that the law was adequate. However, some weaknesses were cited regarding the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011 on the lack of implementation mechanism, lack of specificity for certain GBV offences and lack of penalties for GBV offences.

There was a general acceptance among the key informants that the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011 needed some inclusions of penalties for all GBV offences to make it a comprehensive GBV law.

Responding to the question, on whether the current law is adequate to address wife battery cases, seven of the ten police officers said that the law was adequate to address GBV including wife battery whilst the other three felt that the law was not adequate because it is not specific with certain GBV offences. On the other hand, two officers from the seven who said the law was adequate, they were not conversant with the contents of the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011. It must be mentioned that, the police officers who are the law enforcement officers know that law enforcement is important for all criminal offences, but it demands for the knowledge of the appropriate law to be applied. Therefore, it becomes problematic when the officer expected to apply the said law is ignorant.

Based on the responses from the participants, it was generally agreed that the current law is adequate to address wife battery cases. The study therefore demonstrated that the law enforcement officers confirmed that the current law is adequate to address wife battery. It was discovered that the police and the stakeholders wished that the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011 could have specific penalties to make it a comprehensive GBV piece of legislation.

The Need for Law Enforcement

To ascertain whether the police officers influenced withdrawal of cases, they were asked if they had ever encouraged any victim of wife battery to withdraw a case against the husband. Nine of the ten police officers refused ever encouraging any victim to withdraw the case against the husband. The officers stated reasons which were based on the police officers' call of duty and professionalism. Most of them stated that it was not their duty to encourage any victim to withdraw any case against the husband. However, only one police officer said that he has encouraged some victims to withdraw cases when there was no sufficient evidence to warrant an arrest.

When the 8 key informants were interviewed, they were asked to state reasons whether they would encourage any woman to withdraw the case against the husband. All 8 key informants said they would not encourage any woman to withdraw the case because they want justice for the woman to prevail.

The women during focus group discussions were asked if they would encourage any woman to withdraw a case against the husband, the majority of the participants said that, what would determine withdrawal of the case is how much the victim has been injured.

Based on the responses from the participants the study demonstrated that the law enforcement officers and GBV service providers were in support of law enforcement as the ideal intervention to curb wife battery. However, the women felt that the extent of the injury should determine what should be the intervention. Most of the women did not wish for any battery to be reported to the police, but only when the injury was serious. The study established that all the key informants were in support of the current law which provides for custodial sentence for the offenders of wife battery.

Challenges Faced by the Police Officers

The major challenges highlighted by the police officers were: Firstly, delayed reporting by the victims made investigations difficult due to insufficient evidence whereby the injury would have even healed at that time. Secondly, shortage of transport made it difficult for officers to move from the station to different points to gather evidence. In fact, none among the four police stations had a running vehicle specifically for Victim Support Unit programs at the time of conducting this research. Thirdly, the non-availability of shelters for the victims also made officers fail to ensure the safety of the victims. Additionally, the pressure from family members requesting the officers to help them have their relative released also hampered the work of the police. Lastly, lack of cooperation by victims whereby the victims willfully decide to be absent when their cases are supposed to be heard, as a result, the case cannot proceed without the complainant to provide evidence. Identification of the challenges was important in this study as addressing them would better police performance towards wife battery.

Findings from Observations of the Police Officers

In order to ascertain the institutional factors that contribute to the withdrawal of wife battery cases, the police officers were observed for their conduct at the work place when dealing with wife battery cases at the Victim Support Unit. Only 12 wife battery cases were observed over a period of three months at one of the four police stations. Non-participatory observation particularly focused on

the type of information they gave to the victims and how they conducted themselves based on the checklist derived from the provisions of the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011 Part II, paragraph 5 and section 7 and 8.

Police Conduct

It was observed that the police did not inform the victims of their rights as guided by the law (Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011) which states that, ‘a police officer shall inform the victim of the victim’s rights such as the right to lodge a complaint against the offender or right to request for an extract of the complaint in a language understood by the victim’. Therefore, there was failure by the police officers to inform the victims of their rights.

It was further observed that the police officers were able to advise the victim on how to obtain medical treatment because all the victims that reported battery were issued with the police medical report form to be signed by a medical officer for purposes of evidence. However, there was no emphasis on the need for the medical form to be filled in by a medical officer from a government hospital or health facility.

It was observed that the parties and witnesses to the offence were interviewed and complaints were recorded in detail as required by the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011 in a language understood by the victim. The police officers when speaking with the victims were using the local language mostly ‘Bemba’ mixed with English which most victims understood as they also responded likewise.

There was failure by the police officers to assist the victims to preserve evidence because there was no single victim that was accompanied by the police officer to the hospital or to the scene of crime during the three-month period of observation. This practice by the police officers was observed regardless of the extent of the injury of the victim. The standard practice is that the police officer shall respond promptly to an offence by ensuring that the evidence is preserved. In such circumstances, preservation of evidence should include making sure that the medical form is signed by a qualified medical officer and the scene of the crime is checked for further evidence. Instead, the officers upon the request from the victim would issue a Police call-out for the accused to come to the police station. The Victim Support Unit was on most of the days manned by three female officers and one male officer who could have shared the responsibilities. There was failure by the police to assist the victims to a place of safety even when they were concerns about the safety of the victim. The police officers only advised the victim to find somewhere to stay whilst the case was ongoing. The law provides that the police officer should ensure that the safety of the victim is assured by obtaining for the victim or advising the victim on how to obtain shelter.

The common question that the police officers were asking victims was; “Do you want your husband to go to jail for beating you?” This was observed in 8 of the 12 wife battery cases observed. The question implied that it was the victim who should decide how to proceed with the case. It is the duty of the police officer to enforce the law as well as inform the complainant of her responsibilities. The standard questions should be focused on the establishment of evidence through the facts provided.

Quantitative Data from Police Records

Forms of Wife Battery According to the GBV Crime Records

Table 1: Forms of wife battery in Kitwe District 2010-2015

OFFENCE	NO. OF CASES	PERCENTAGE (%)
Grievous Bodily Harm	16	1
Occasional Actual Bodily Harm	2040	97
Unlawful wounding	43	2
TOTAL	2099	100

Source: Zambia Police Kitwe District Police GBV Crime Registers 2010-2015

Table 1 shows the three forms of wife battery cases in Kitwe District. The common form of wife battery was occasional actual bodily harm accounting for 97 percent with the least form being grievous bodily harm accounting for one percent. The findings demonstrated that most of the victims of wife battery who reported their cases to the police had sustained a bit more serious (moderate) injuries because they were reported as Occasional Actual Bodily Harm (OABH) where injuries are categorized as moderate injuries.

Table 2: Wife battery case outcomes in Kitwe District 2010-2015

OFFENCE	REPORT ED	WITHDRA WN	PEN DING	TAKEN TO COURT
Grievous Bodily Harm	16	0	0	16
Occasional Actual Bodily Harm	2040	680	107	1253
Unlawful wounding	43	28	10	5
Total	2099	708	117	1274
Percentage (%)	100	34	5	61

Source: Zambia Police Kitwe District Police GBV Crime Registers 2010-2015

Table 2 shows reported wife battery cases and their outcomes from 2010-2015. The Table shows the total number of reported wife battery cases as 2099, with 708 cases withdrawn representing 34 percent, 117 cases pending representing 5 percent and 1274 cases taken to court representing 61 percent. The Table demonstrates that all grievous bodily harm cases were taken to court while OABH and unlawful wounding cases had some of them withdrawn at police stations. The Table shows that there was a trend of determining withdrawal of cases based on the severity of the injury since all grievous bodily harm (more severe) cases were not withdrawn but all taken to court while OABH (moderate) and unlawful wounding (mild) cases had some of them withdrawn at the police stations. The study demonstrated that the degree of injury was a determinant on the outcome of wife battery cases at the police stations.

Age of Wife Battery Victims According to Case Dockets

Table 3: Age of wife battery victims

Age Group (Years)	Number of victims
19-25	10
26-35	28
36-45	2
45 and above	0
TOTAL	40

Based on the dockets reviewed Table 3 shows that the majority of the victims of wife battery who withdrew cases were aged between 26 and 35 years with a total of 28.

DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic Factors

The findings of the study showed that the majority of the victims withdrew wife battery cases against their husbands because of socioeconomic reasons as they did not want their children to stop school or to stay with hunger if the husband was taken to jail. This was confirmed through the review of case dockets where the withdraw statements of victims were recorded. Musika (2014) stated that women have a tendency to withdraw cases if the husband is the breadwinner in the family. Similarly, Nelson (1996) stated that victims of wife battery are economically dependent on their husbands hence it is difficult for them to leave the abusive relationship. The study provided evidence to support the claims that battered women resort to withdraw wife battery cases if the husband is the breadwinner because they do not want to lose the income from their husbands if incarcerated. There were 24 out of 40 victims who indicated socioeconomic reasons for withdrawal

of cases on the withdraw statements. The socioeconomic factors were that the victims withdrew cases because the husband is a breadwinner as they were unemployed and lacked personal income. The reasons were one or all of the following; that the victims did not want to be poor or the children to stay away from school or the family to stay with hunger, if the husband is taken to jail. There was also evidence that the majority of the victims who withdrew cases were unemployed which made them economically vulnerable if they stayed alone without the husband.

Chuulu and Chileshe (2001) stated that most victims of wife battery are in a position of powerlessness and helplessness when compared with their abusers if they do not have a job which provides an income. A job provides an income for an individual and the family which can be used to make ends meet. Therefore, if a woman does not have a job which provides an income, such a woman would opt to withdraw the case against the husband who is the breadwinner.

Psychosocial Factors

The study revealed that some women withdrew wife battery cases because of the love they had for their husbands. Many of the victims on the withdraw statements withdrew cases because they loved their husbands and they had forgiven them. As Vetten (2014) stated that dealing with domestic violence is complicated because of the ideology of love that the couple has for each other. As a result, proceeding with wife battery case where the victim claims to love the husband is usually a difficult scenario for the police officers to enforce the law because of lack of cooperation by the victim, eventually the case is withdrawn.

Payne and Wermeling (2009) stated that many victims are more concerned with preventing future attempts on their life rather than vindicating the state's interest in penalizing the male abuser for breaking the law. In the same vein, Stewart (2001) stated that women want protection from the perpetrator of violence when they approach the police and not arresting the man. The statements by Payne and Wermeling (2009) and Stewart (2001) conform to the findings of the study that many victims just wanted the husbands to be disciplined or counselled by the police in order to deter them from committing such offences. It is the wish of many victims to have the husband just disciplined or counseled and not taken to jail.

Many participants from interviews and focus group discussions stated that victims do not necessarily wish that the husband be taken to jail but have them counseled so that they refrain from the violent behavior. Therefore, some of the withdraw statements submitted by the victims of wife battery were consistent with the revelations from the participants.

Ondicho (2000) stated that women were afraid of the threats made by the husband and his family members as a result; they resorted to withdrawing the cases. Some of the views of the participants in Kitwe District could not confirm that some women are more likely to withdraw cases because of fear of persecution. Fear of persecution was not submitted as one of the reasons for withdrawal of wife battery cases by the victims in the withdraw statements, hence this study could not establish that fact.

Socio-cultural Factors

Family intervention in resolving marital problems is a common cultural practice in Zambia. The findings of the study showed that many victims withdrew wife battery cases because of family intervention, as the family elders intervene to reconcile the couple. As Klomegah (2008) stated that wife battery may be attributed to cultural and to social transmission effects within the Zambian social system where the family is dominant. According to Klomegah (2008), the family members have the influence on the decisions that the victim and the assailant make about the case. The findings by Klomegah (2008) conforms to the findings of the study that many victims withdraw cases of wife battery because of family intervention which is a socio-cultural factor. Nyirenda (2005) stated that family members have been found to be consulted by the battered woman before the latter goes anywhere else. In Zambia, people have been socialized to involve the family when they have a marital dispute (Nyirenda, 2005). The common trend is that elders of the family are informed and they intervene even when a case has been reported to the police.

Although the law (Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011) recognizes family intervention or mediation in GBV cases, it must be noted that it shall not bar the investigation or prosecution of a complaint of GBV. The intervention of the family has been identified as a socio-cultural factor that contributes to the withdrawal of wife battery cases.

Institutional factors

Findings from the study on the conduct of the police conform to the revelations by Nelson (1996) that police officers who are responsible for registering and investigating wife battery cases frequently treated the victims with indifference and failed to instruct and inform the women of their responsibilities for initiating investigation procedures. The conduct by the police whereby there was failure to inform the victim of their rights was also noted among the police officers during observations in this study. The police officers failed to inform the victims of their rights as guided by the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011. The trend of the police GBV crime reports showed that the degree of the battery determined the outcome of the cases at the police stations. This was evidenced by having all grievous bodily harm (severe) cases being taken to court while those with mild to moderate injuries had some cases withdrawn at the police stations. This meant that law enforcement was based on the seriousness of the injuries in wife battery cases. The Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011 states that “aggravated in relation to GBV means, any act of GBV which causes the victim to suffer wounding or grievous bodily harm... is not to be settled out of court”.

It was observed that there was failure by the police officers to assist the victims to preserve evidence because there was no single victim that was accompanied by the police officer to the hospital as provided by law in the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011. Also, failure by the police to assist the victims to a place of safety even when there were concerns on the safety of the woman could contribute to some victims opting to withdraw the case because of the feeling of helplessness. The police are supposed to obtain or advise how to obtain shelter for the victim. Bell and Naugle (2005) noted that the feelings of powerlessness and self-blame are thought to

contribute to the development of the loss of will to fight, which may further exacerbate the victim's feelings of helplessness. This tendency by victims was also noted as some victims were lost to follow-up just as the process of the investigation began.

The conduct of the police was that of indifference and neglect, as it may discourage the victim from proceeding with the case because of lack of information, perceived police apathy in the case and exacerbate the feeling of helplessness. It is the duty of the police officer to fully explain the provisions and procedures of the law to the victim in order to promote cooperation from the victim as guided by the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011 under Section 7 and 8. The police officers on most of the cases were heard asking the victim: "Do you want your husband to go to jail for beating you?" such a question puts pressure on and shifts blame to the victim to decide what should be done to the offender, instead of the police officer enforcing the law and explaining to the victim the provisions of the law and her responsibilities as a complainant. Some participants indicated that some police officers would ask for some money for transport from the victims in order to have the perpetrator arrested.

The determinant for law enforcement for the police officer must not be the degree of the injury or the cause of the battery, but the commission of an offence. Since there is wounding in all the types of assault, there is no need for the police officers to allow for the withdrawal of wife battery cases at police stations, because doing so may escalate the problem of wife battery and may be unlawful.

Such police conduct towards wife battery cases is influenced by how police officers have been socialized that wife battery is alright if the husband is provoked or if minor injuries are inflicted. Compounding this conduct is the failure by the police officers to read the pieces of legislation such as the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011. The study discovered that 2 police officers with 17 years and 21 years' experience in dealing with GBV at the Victim Support Unit, they were not conversant with the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011, a piece of legislation which is specific with GBV cases. The lack of knowledge in GBV legislation by some long serving police officers at Victim Support Units raises serious concern as to how such officers have been handling GBV cases for the past two decades if they are not conversant with the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011, the very law they are expected to enforce.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

The study identified four major factors that contribute to the withdrawal of wife battery cases namely; socioeconomic, socio-cultural, psychosocial and institutional factors. The study revealed that most of the victims withdrew cases based on socioeconomic reasons such as unemployment and lack of personal income while many other victims withdrew wife battery cases because of psychosocial and sociocultural reasons such as the love, forgiveness and family intervention. The study also established that the conduct of the police contributed to the withdrawal of wife battery cases such as failure to preserve evidence, ensure safety of the victim, language used and determination of law enforcement based on the degree of injury.

The study revealed that the current law is adequate to address wife battery cases. However, there is need to address the implementation mechanism in order to ensure that the families and victims of wife battery fully benefit from the law that is meant to benefit and protect them. Therefore, law enforcement would be the solution to address the problem of withdrawal of wife battery cases as this would deter perpetual and would-be offenders of such crimes. This action would eventually reduce the number of wife battery cases being committed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been recommended that:

- The government should ensure that the funding incentives provided in the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011 are implemented in order to help vulnerable battered women to support themselves and their family even when the assailant is in custody.
 - The Zambia Police through the Directorate of Community Services should undertake extensive sensitization activities targeted at the younger generation for mindset change as this would serve as a preventive measure.
 - The government at district level should ensure that there is establishment of accessible shelters for the victims of wife battery to ensure the safety of victims to avoid interference with investigations from the assailants.
 - The Zambia Police command should ensure that there is continuous training of police officers under the Victim Support Unit on GBV case management so that the new police officers should be up-to-date with the current laws and trends, while the already trained are refreshed through the new training packages.
 - The government should provide transport specifically for GBV activities so as to ease the movement of officers for investigations.

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