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## **Intimate Partner Violence and the Faith Factor Influence: An Examination of the case of Giriama Women's Struggles, Kilifi County, Kenya (2017 –2019)**

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### **Abstract**

The research article is based on a broader research project that set out to investigate the influence of Christian teachings and biblical texts on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) among the Christian Women of Kilifi County of Kenya. Its specific focus is on how faith became a key coping strategy for women swimming in the troubled waters of IPV. Methodologically, it relied on oral interviews that were conducted among 30 women, 10 pastors, and 12 community leaders in Kilifi County. Overall, the research article argues that faith, in the larger realm of religion, is not only used to normalize IPV, but also utilized as a coping tool by victims. This further fuels a vice that is rooted in Judeo-African patriarchal ideals. Yet it has also established that some women adopted alternative strategies, outside the religious realm, so as to cope with the harsh reality surrounding them. The latter lost faith in religious approaches, and eventually adopted non-religious strategies in their endeavor to manage their circumstances. The need to revisit the idea of 'separation' and/or divorce, as a pragmatic approach for Christian women facing IPV, has been suggested as a workable strategy where need arises.

**Keywords:** Religion, Violence, Coping Strategies, intimate partner, cultural beliefs

### **1. Introduction**

This research article is centered on a research that investigated the influence of Christian teachings and biblical texts on Intimate Partner Violence on Christian Women in Kilifi County, Kenya. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines Intimate Partner Violence as the physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and controlling

conduct by an intimate partner (WHO, 2012). Some people narrowly use the term to mean episodes of sexual and psychological violence directed against women by current or ex-partners. Studies across the globe show that of all women who had been in relationships, 30% had faced Intimate Partner Violence (WHO, 2013). In Kenya, Intimate Partner Violence is a major social problem that happened in people's homes (UNFPA, 2006; UNIFEM, 2012; Ondicho, 2018). Within religious circles, Intimate Partner Violence takes the form of unquestioned submission to established values. Women are expected to remain silent, be suppressive, and obedient to men who hold power and exercise it as religious leaders (Mendoza, 2012).

Patriarchal tendencies that reinforce abuse of women in marriages are rooted in Jewish and African traditions thus not just outsprings of the current capitalistic society. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, women were expected to cope with violent marriages because they were regarded as the property of their father or husband (Kirk -Dugan, 2012:259). This notion is illustrated well in Exodus 204:17 where the woman is recorded as one of the properties of the husband. Thus, women were seen as any other property owned by men such as animals (Collins, 1972). When women were raped within the Jewish society, it was assumed that the property of the father had been violated and what was given more concern was the compensation paid to the owner of the property (woman or girl).

In the synagogue, the woman was discriminated against. She could not read the law (*Torah*). It was believed that instead of having a woman read the law, it was better to burn the Torah (law books) (Ademiluka, 2018). Not only were issues of discrimination of women found within religious spheres of life but also in other aspects of the society. For example, women could not act as witnesses in the court of law, talk to visitors or be seen in public (Robinson, 2018). Jewish community sets the stage for wife abuse. Yet we see that religion entrusts men with power, authority and greater responsibility (Gonchav, 2013). Further examples demonstrate how the Jewish culture and legal system sets the stage for IPV against women to flourish. The process of divorcing an abusive husband was so complex and legalistic that the woman could only be granted a divorce at the mercy of the abusive husband (Gonchav, 2013).

Similarly, in the African cultural context, women were regarded as part of the husband's property and by extension communal property. According to Africans, dowry payment signifies that the husband has 'purchased' the women and as such she loses her rights to the husband). This is followed by the woman dropping her name to adopt husband's one (Brockington, L. H. 1982). Because of this belief that she has been purchased through dowry, she had no option other than to find ways of coping in that marriage.

Within the African traditional religion, a man is free to marry a second wife or keep a concubine if he wishes and all the wives are expected to be faithful to their husbands (Buckelew, K. 2004). Within a family set up the roles of both the wife and the husband were well spelt out. The wife was expected to bear children and engage in domestic duties while the husband was responsible for economic activities something that gave him an upper hand in providing for the family. This is coupled with the perception within the African Traditional Religion (ATR) that violence against women is normal and accepted. These Judeo-Christian and African cultural beliefs influenced the faith of the Giriama people thus encouraging them to persevere in abusive marriages. In this research article, I focus on faith as predominantly responsible for IPV as well as a coping strategy by victims, further fueling a vice that has roots in Judeo-African patriarchal ideals. This article is not ignorant of the fact that Men battering by women, has also emerged as another dimension of IPV (Gathogo 2015), but its concern was geared towards violence against women.

Apart from this introductory section of this study is divided into five parts. The second part deals primarily with methodology. The third part presents the demographic data of the respondents and oral responses on coping strategies both religious and non-religious variables. In part four, I engage in detailed analysis and discussions of the oral responses on coping strategies of Christian women facing IPV. Although there are non-religious factors in the

management of IPV, the research article argues that faith is intricately enshrined in the vice recurrence. The last part is a conclusion based on the empirical findings and discussions.

## **2. Methodology**

The target population was women in IPV relationships. The sample size was 52 respondents which included 30 women selected through snow balling sampling method, 10 pastors selected through random sampling and 12 officers and social workers dealing with victims of IPV selected through purposive sampling. Primary data sources were oral interviews, focused group discussions and questionnaires while secondary data included: books, magazines, research articles in journals and newspapers; they were analyzed considering their usefulness in the study. Christian women were interviewed individually to collect data on IPV. More information was gathered through focus group discussions. The sampled pastors were interviewed to collect information on how Religious beliefs and African cultural practices influenced women to cope in IPV marriages. Information gathered from the questioners was used to supplement data collected from the key informants. The qualitative data was analyzed from the interview guides and focus group discussions by use of descriptive statistics where patterns or themes were identified and documented as individual voices in speech marks including the date of collection in order to ensure the validity and the accuracy of the information gathered.

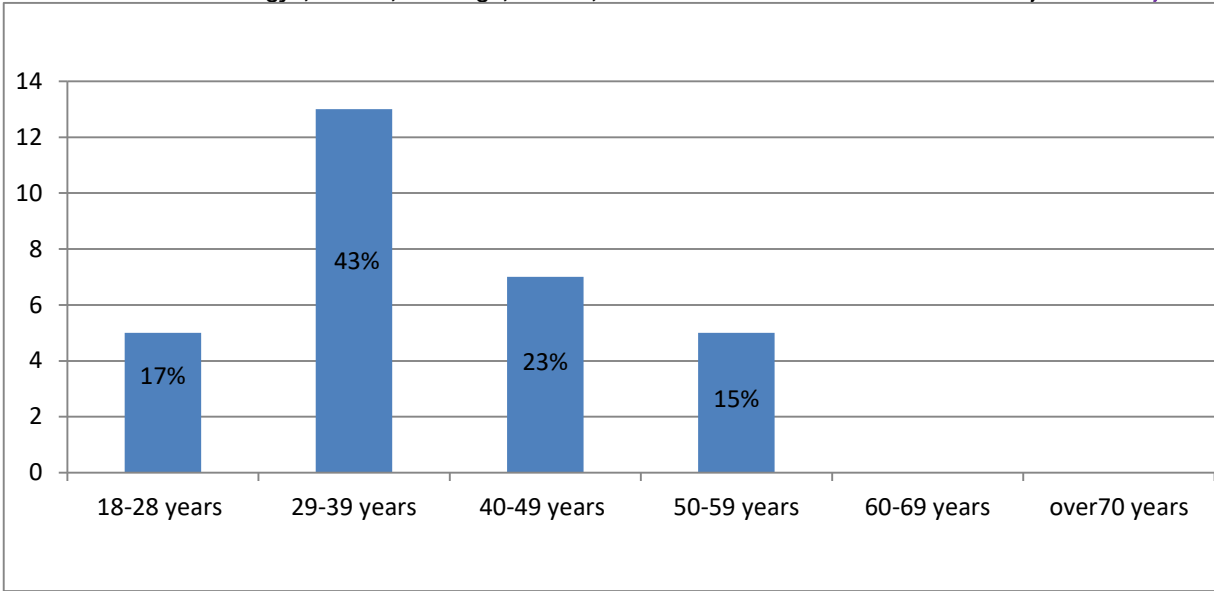
## **3. Presentation of Empirical Data**

This sub-section presents the demographic information of the respondents mainly women who have experienced IPV and statistical data on coping strategies employed by them in abusive marriages.

### **3. 1. Demographic Information of the Respondents**

Findings on demographic information of the victims of IPV are discussed as follows:

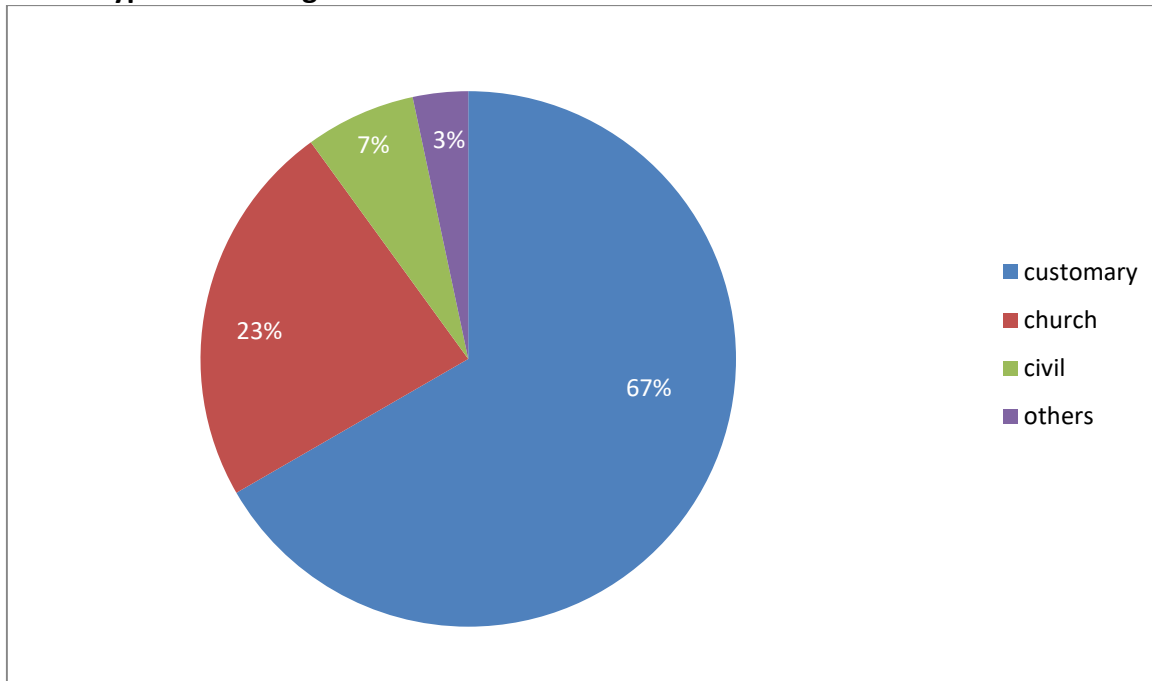
#### **3.1.1. Age of the Participants**



**Figure 3.1:**  
**Distribution of Age of Respondents**  
According to the current study as shown in figure 3.1, 43% (13 out of 30) of the interviewed women were aged between 29-39 years, 23% (7 out of 30) were aged between 40-49 years while 17% (5 out of 30) of the respondents were

aged between 18-28 years. Another 17% (5 out of 30) respondents were in the age bracket of 50-59 years. There were no respondents aged above 60 years. The results of the respondents in this study showed that young women were likely to face IPV.

### 3.1. 2. Types of marriages



**Figure 3.2. Types of Marriages**

A total of 67% (20 out 30) respondents had been married through customary procedures while 33% (10 out of 30) of the respondents had been married through church weddings, civil marriages and other forms of marriages such as come we stay or cohabiting.

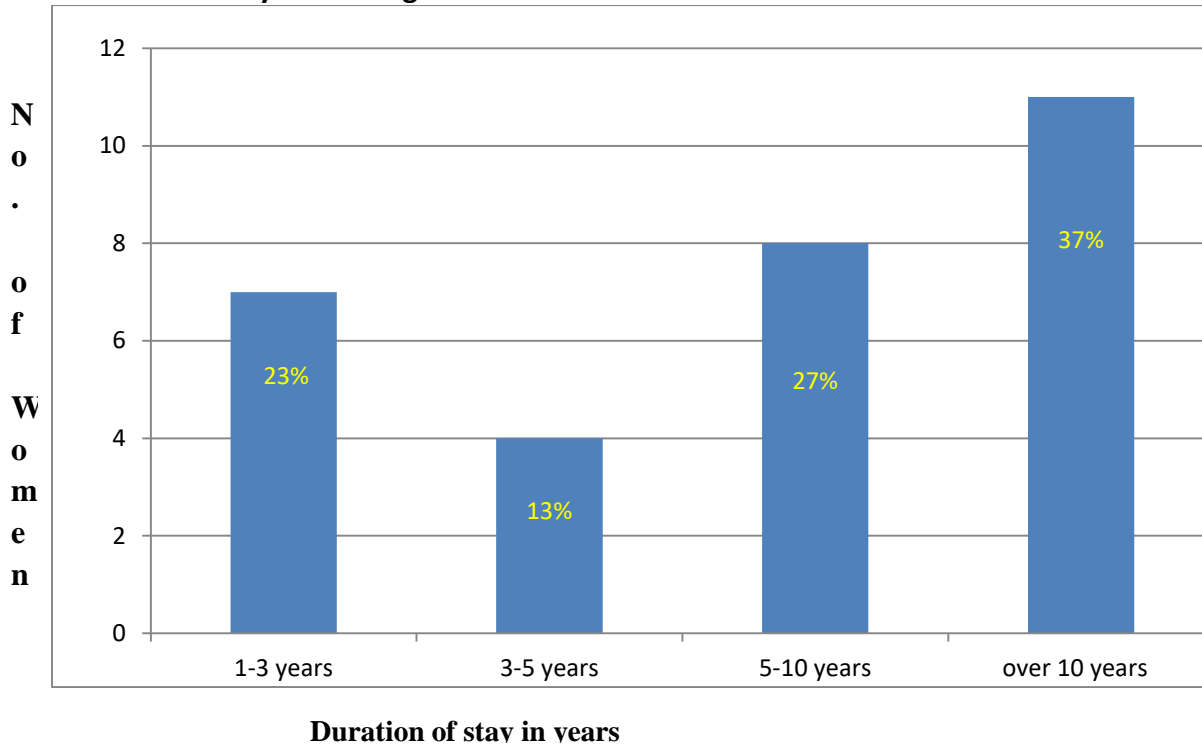
**3.1.3. Education Attainment Level**

**Table 4.1: Education Attainment Level of the Respondent**

Education level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
KCPE/ CPE	4	13
Vocational Training	5	17
Secondary	1	3
College certificate	12	40
University	8	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Sixty percent of the (20 out of 30) respondents had acquired a college certificate, diploma or/and a university degree. 16% (5 out of 30) respondents had primary and secondary schools' certificates.

**3.1.4. Duration of Stay in Marriage**



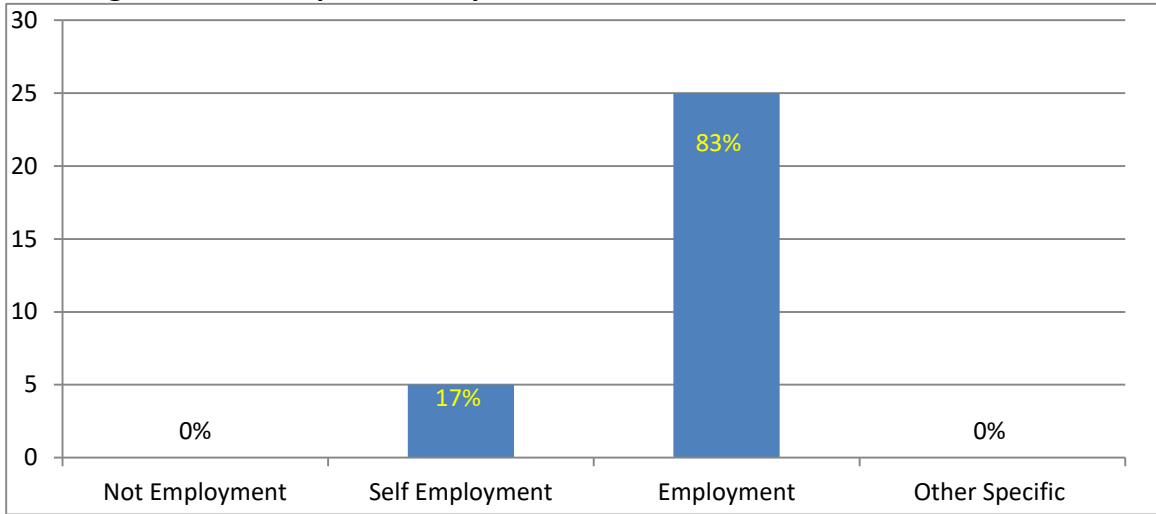
**Figure 3.3: Respondents Duration of Stay in Marriages**

Results in this study showed that 37% (11 out of 30) of the respondents had stayed in marriage for more than 10 years, 27% (8 out of 30) respondents had stayed in marriage for a period ranging from 5-10 years, 23% (7 out of 30)

women had been married for a period ranging from 1-3 years while 13% (4 out of 30) informants had been married for a period ranging from 3-5 years.

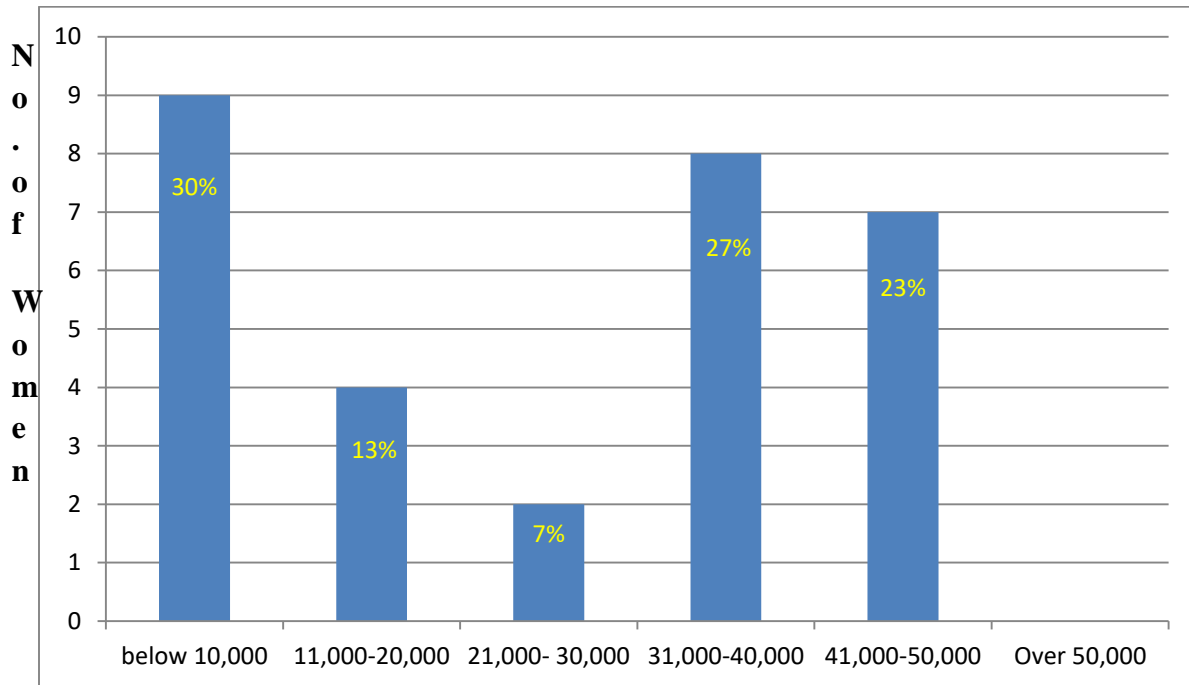
### 3.1.5. Women Occupation

Figure 3.4: Participants' Occupation



Findings on occupation showed that 83% (25 out of 30) respondents were employed and only 17% (5 out of 30) were self-employed.

### 3.1.6. Income Level of Women



Earnings in Kenyan Shillings

Figure 3.5: Income Level of the Respondents

Findings show that 30% (9 out of 30) of victims of IPV were earning below 10,000, 13% (4 out of 30) were earning between 11,000 - 20,000, 27% (8 out of 30) were earning between 30,000- 40,000, while 23% (7 out of 30) were earning between 41, 000 -50, 000.

### 3.2. Coping Strategies Applied by Christian Women Facing Intimate Partner Violence

The demographic data in section 3.1 showed that 43% (13 out of 30) victims of IPV were in the age blanket of 20-39 years. This period was associated with child bearing and investment by the couple. Women were not ready to bring up their children without their fathers because culturally it was a shame not only to the church but also to the society. This research article established that 67% (20 out of 30) of the respondents who were facing IPV had been married through cultural process. They had not undergone through pre-marital counselling. Where cases of violence broke out these women were prepared to cope and defend their marriages for the sake of their children. This research article established that 60% (20 out of 30) of the respondents who had experienced IPV had post-secondary education. This category of women were in active employment and were blamed for not being submissive to their husbands. Since this group of women knew their rights they ended up coping in their marriages. Christian women facing IPV applied various strategies to cope with their abuse marriages. This research article established that majority of women adopted religious-related coping strategies as well as non-religious factors to persevere in their relationships.

#### 3.2.1. Religious Coping Strategies

**Table 3.2 Religious Coping Strategies**

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Prayer	24	80
More love	11	37
Pastoral counseling	9	30
Preaching and teachings	5	17
Workshop and seminars	3	10
Reading and meditation	3	10
Rationalization	3	10

Though women in IPV relationships applied different strategies to cope with the abuse, majority used religious coping strategies. Data collected from the women in abusive marriages displayed in table 3.2 showed that out of the 10 most applied coping mechanisms 6 were religious- related. According to the women respondents, majority 80% (24 out of 30) applied prayer as coping strategy. The second most applied IPV coping strategy was showing more love to the abuser by 37% (11 out of 30). The findings on coping strategies go on to show that 30% (9 out of 30) women used pastoral counseling, 27% (8 out of 30) respondents were economically empowered to persevere in marriages, 17% (5 out of 30) listened to preaching and teachings from the church, 10% (3 out of 30) respondents got advice and information from workshops and seminars they attended while 10% (5 out of 30) applied rationalization as a coping strategy.

### 3.2.2. Non-Religious Coping Strategies

**Table: 3.2: Non-Religious Coping Strategies Applied by Women in IPV Relationships**

Non-Religious Coping Strategies	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Support from family and friends	17	57
African cultural practices	3	10
Low enforcement agencies	3	10
Help from social centers	3	10
Resistance	3	10
Drug and substance abuse	2	7
Extra –marital affairs	2	7
Physical distancing	2	7
Professional counseling	1	3

Statistics from this study went on to show that respondents applied non-religious strategies to cope with IPV. 57% (17 out of 30) got support from relatives and friends, 10% (3 out of 30) resisted the abuse, 10% (3 out of 30) got help from law enforcement agents such as the police, 10% (3 out of 30) got help from social centers, 10% (3 out of 30) used African traditional ways such as use of witchcraft to cope with the abuse. 7% (2 out of 30) engaged in drug and substance abuse and another 7% (2 out of 30) started extra marital affairs in order to cope with the abuse, 6 % (2 out of 30) physically distanced themselves from the abuser and 3% (1 out of 30) sought help from professional counseling as a coping strategy. In order to understand better how Christian women coped with IPV marriages each of the above strategies are examined independently.

## 4. Empirical Findings and Discussion of the Results

This research article established that women adopted both religious and non-religious coping mechanisms to IPV. The religious coping mechanism included but was not limited to prayers, seeking for pastoral counselling, and religious marital education. However, non-religious factors were associated with seeking support from family and friends, abusing drugs (alcohol), reporting to law enforcement agencies, seeking professional counseling and resistance among others. The discussion below expounds on these findings in light of secondary literature on IPV.

### 4.1. Religious Coping Strategies to IPV

#### 4.1.1. Engaging in Prayer

This study established that over 80% (20 out of 30) of the respondents applied prayer as a coping strategy. One of the Christian teaching that led women to apply prayer as a coping strategy was that on faith. Prayer creates more faith and makes the victim of IPV become optimistic that their spouses will eventually stop the violence. Thus victim of IPV were willing to persevere in their marriages through prayer. Pastors would encourage victims of IPV to pray more and have faith God will answer their prayers in the near future. Studies have shown that most women facing IPV turn to prayer which is a religious and spiritual strategy in order to cope with the abuse (Brodsky, 2000:211;



Brome et al, 2000:481; Ross, 2012:650; Braback & Guzman, 2008:1281). Most of the respondents who engaged in prayer were able to cope with the abuse. Pastor Cheptoo had this to say about prayer as a coping strategy:

I want to say that having been a pastor for over 20 years, I have come to know that there are many spiritual strategies women use in coping with the abuse; however, I have seen the power of prayer in marriages that were almost disintegrating. Today most of those marriages are standing because of the power of prayer (Pastor Cheptoo, 44 3:2:2021).

Kerubo, a woman respondent who used prayer as a strategy in coping with abusive marriage re-counted the following:

I knew my marriage was going to break but I remember that God speaks to his children through prayer. I got on my knees in prayer for 3 days fasting and on the third day I heard a voice saying; don't walk out of this marriage. Though I can't say that my husband has changed fully, but I can testify that his attitude towards me has improved (Kerubo, 16:1:2021).

Some woman respondent informed this study that they used to invite their pastors and other church members to come and pray for the abusive husband when they were away. This is what one victim, Kwamboka stated: "Since I began inviting my pastor who comes with our prayer intercessory team to pray for my husband, things have changed a lot and have seen God healing my marriage." (Kwamboka, 20:1:2021)

The above excerpts show that prayer is an important tool that has been used as a strategy to cope in IPV marriages. These findings are similar to a past study done by Potter, (2007:270) who examined the relationship between prayer and IPV in African-American societies in the USA. He concluded that black American women rely very much on prayer to bring and maintain peace in their troubled marriages.

One of the Christian teaching that led women to apply prayer as a coping strategy was that on faith. Prayer creates more faith and makes the victim of IPV become optimistic that their spouses will eventually stop the violence. Thus victim of IPV were willing to persevere in their marriages through prayer. Pastors would encourage victims of IPV to pray more and have faith God will answer their prayers in the near future. Victims of Intimate Partner Violence had been influenced by Judeo-Christian and African cultural beliefs to persevere in abusive marriages. It's important to note that women experiencing violence are not willing to approach the law enforcers until the violence becomes worse or the husband refuses to provide basic needs for the family (Statistics Canada, 2016; Bonomi et al., 2000:460). In such cases religious faith had caused women undergo suffering and in some cases some lost their lives.

#### **4.1.2. Pastoral Counseling**

About 30% (9 out of 30) of the respondents sought for pastors counselling in order to cope with in their abusive marriages. Within the Jewish and African cultures guidance was given by men who were leaders and women were expected to obey. These cultural practices influenced victims of IPV to seek for pastoral counselling from their pastors who were also spiritual leaders. Pastors encouraged women to continue being submissive and at the same time reminding them that Christian marriage is permanent and God hates divorce. Those who sought for pastoral counselling observed that perseverance in marriage formed the main teaching. An informant, Kadzo had this to say about clergy counseling:

As I had told you earlier my husband had tried to sleep with me the other way (homosexual) and was planning to walk away. However, I thank God for my pastor whom I approached and talked to both of us during a counseling session. Today I thank God that particular problem was solved (Kadzo, 19:1:2021).

Another participant who sought counseling from her pastor had this to say:

I was almost giving up in my marriage, but ever since I started attending the counseling sessions in the church, I have seen a lot of improvement in our marriage. Though I can't say we are okay 100% but I thank God, we are not where we were (Nanjala, 14:1:2021).

Pastor Sophia informed this study that counseling abused women plays a key role in influencing them to remain in their marriages. This is what she observed: "Over the years I have counseled my members who have been in abusive relationships I have seen many couples improve their relationships and to date they are still together" (Pst. Sophia, 8:2:2021).

These extracts show clearly that women who go for counseling are helped to know how to deal with their abusive husbands. As a result, a good number have remained in their marriages. Wade, Worthington and Vogel, (2007:97) too established that religious counseling is said to be very effective more so because the counselor is also a spiritual leader whom the abused woman accepts as God's representative. Since within the Jewish culture under which the Bible was written does not allow for divorce victims of IPV in this study opted to cope with the violence.

Ellisberg et al. (2015) carried out a study in the years 1990-2000 involving 5700 pastors in America on pastoral care. This research found out that 26% of the pastors would encourage an abused woman to continue submitting to the husband and trust that God give her strength to endure the violence. Both the Jewish and African culture encourage women under all cost to persevere in their marriages. This explains why a big percentage (over 90%) chose to cope with the abuse. Within the Jewish and African cultures guidance was given by men who were leaders and women were expected to obey. These cultural practices influenced victims of marital violence to increase their faith that their spouses would stop the violence. Pastors offering counselling were also spiritual leaders and as such women had faith in them.

While abused women opted for pastoral counselling because of the faith they had on their pastors this study established that professional counselling was an effective coping strategy applied by Christian women. According to a study done by Awo, Plaumann and Walter, (2010:186) which investigated positive results of mitigation program for abused women it showed that professional counseling helps women to boost their self-esteem, coping abilities and self-efficiency. Professional counseling centers offer vital information about violence, social support to the victims of abuse and helps women to overcome fear and make sober and logical decisions (Anderson, 2012:57; Bennet et al., 2004:60). Findings from this study showed the effectiveness of professional counseling. This is what pastor Musa narrated: "There was this woman whose health had deteriorated because of IPV from the husband. I introduced her to a professional counselor and 2 weeks down the line she told me she wished she had been seeing this counselor when the problem started" (Pastor Musa, 7:2:2021). The above narration shows the importance of professional counselling as opposed to pastoral counselling which relies on religious faith.

#### **4.1.3. Preaching and Teaching in the Church**

This research article has established that another strategy applied by Christian women facing IPV to cope in their marriages was listening to preaching and teachings in the church. By attending seminars and workshops victims of IPV were reminded of teachings that saw them opt to cope in their abusive marriages. Some of these teachings are: God hates divorce, women were to blame for the fall of man, marriages is permanent and man is the head of the family among others. Quantitatively, 17% (5 out of 30) of respondents attended church services where preaching and family teachings created hope in their lives and looked forward with an expectation of God changing their husbands. Pastor Kyalo who witnessed 10 husbands being transformed by the power of the word of God noted, thus:

I encourage any woman facing any form of abuse from their spouse to hold on to their faith and not to lose hope. In my ministry I have witnessed God change 10 men who were wife abusers into preachers of the Gospel (Pastor Kyalo, 6:2:2021).

The above sentiments by Pastor Kyalo were echoed by pastor Menza who narrated the following:

One of my church members who was being abused by the husband had reached a point of giving up. She came to church one Sunday and found me preaching on how a spouse can have his husband sanctified and their

children blessed. She made up her mind to persevere in her marriage and as we talk things have changed and the husband has joined the church (Pastor Menza, 10:2:2021).

Another woman subject informed this study the following: "You see me appear strong and able to stay in my marriage and think it's easy. I tell you it's not easy. What has kept me strong and optimistic is the teaching and preaching I receive every evening in the church" (Ngina, 8:1:2021).

The above narrations shows clearly that Christian teachings and preaching have helped to build the faith of many abused women and given them hope for the future and as such they are able to persevere in their marriages. Findings of this research article concur with results of a past study done by Ware et al., (2003:44) which observed that God hates divorce and as such women experiencing violence need to persevere. As women attend church services and Bible study sessions in the church, they learn a wide range of topics that encourage them to persevere in abusive marriages. Some of these teachings are: God hates divorce, women were to blame for the fall of man, marriages is permanent and man is the head of the family among others. Such teachings create strong faith to victims of violence.

This research article established that victims of marital abuse had been influenced to believe women of greater faith must forgive their spouses and reconcile with them. Such teachings of forgiveness had seen many women remain in abusive marriages where they faced unbearable suffering.

## **4.2. Non-Religious Coping Strategies to IPV**

Studies over time have identified several non-religious strategies that are used by women to cope in an abusive relationship (Bandler et al., 2010). The most commonly used non-religious coping strategies from their spouses are: wishful thinking, separation (Tobin et al, (1989:350), engaging the abuser personally and resisting the abuse (Yoshioka, & Choi, (2005:517); McDonald & Crandall, (2015:148). Others include; physical distancing (Jacobs, S. 2012), help from relatives and friends, Kaluya, (2007), help from social service centers, Farslow & Robinson, (2010:933), professional counseling, Pico-Alfonso et al., (2006) reporting to law enforcement agents, Bonomi et al (2000:463), use of drug and substance abuse, Berman et al. (1981:730), empowering women, Agarwal, (1997:33). Agarwal, (1997:33), starting extra-marital affairs (Chung et al, (2006:335)) and social-cultural strategies. In order to understand better how Christian women coped with IPV marriages each of the above non-religious strategies are examined independently below.

### **4.2.1. Support from Family and Friends**

Both the Jewish and African cultures support the narrative that man being a social being does not exist in isolation. African culture continues to support communalism. When cases of IPV broke out women sought for help from their relatives and friends. This strategy saw many victims of IPV cope with their abusive husbands since they got help from their relatives and friends. In this study more than a half of the respondents facing abuse, 57% (17 out of 30) involved family members and friends as a strategy to coping with their abusive relationships. Sample this narration from a woman respondent:

As I was telling you, I had decided to move out of my marriage. I was not sharing with my parents because in our home when you're married you are told never to come back. However, when he held a knife on me and threatened to kill me, I called my brother and the following morning he came. After sharing with him he told my parents what was happening and the following week we held a meeting with members from both sides and my husband was given a lecture. He has stopped beating me: he resorted to verbal abuses (Paroma, 28:1:2021).

According to one of the respondent pastors, majority of women suffer for a long time because they don't let others know what is happening in their lives. This pastor narrated the following to this study:

One abusive husband used to beat the wife and lock her up; he would threaten her against telling anyone about the ordeal. She sensed that things were getting out of hand and informed her parents through a close friend. The parents organized for a meeting of both families and involved the neighbors. A meeting was held where the husband was warned and she later reported that he stopped locking her up in the house and physically abusing her (Mongina, 7:1:2021).

The above admissions show that by involving family members and friends, women were able to cope with their abusive spouses. Results from previous studies agree with the findings of the current study. Kaluya, (2007) investigated the causes, management and effects of violence on women in Kitui County using a sample of 100 men and women who were facing abuse from their spouses. He established that the respondents coped with the abuse by contacting relatives, medical people, walking out of their marriage while others sought for help from witch doctors and society leaders.

However, some respondents in this current research article had contradicting views. Findings showed that 6% (2 out of 30) respondents used physical distancing as a strategy to cope with violent marriages. This is what one respondent reported: "I have known that end month is his worst time especially if all family bills are not paid for and the money is finished, I always plan to be away at the Shamba most of the times or go and remain at the shop." (Muthoni, 25:1:2021). Another respondent who suffered physical abuse whenever the husband came home drunk had this to say:

When the man is drunk, I know there are high chances of being beaten. This violence has opened my eyes. Once I serve him food I go and sleep in my daughter's room, he can't enter inside according to our culture. (Sarafina 30:1:2021).

The above citations show that by keeping distance, women can still remain in the marriage but avoid the abuse. These outcomes are in concurrence with those of a past study done by Herman, (2015) who established that personal distancing reduces experiencing stress from the abuser. Another study done by Allison, Bartholomew (2006) showed that distancing oneself from the abuser only when there are no other ways can act as a protective measure for the woman. According to this research article territoriality and distancing are important methods used by women as strategies to cope with abusive spouses. Strategy distancing has to be done physically not emotionally. Physical distancing is an important coping strategy because it gives the abuser time to absolve his anger and act sober while at the same time guaranteeing immediate safety of the victim. This strategy helped victims of IPV such as Sarafina to avoid violence from the husband. Since within the Jewish and African cultures men are responsible for disciplining their wives, women are encouraged not only to keep distance but also to show more love to the husband if violence breaks forth in their marriages.

#### **4.2.2. Use of drugs and Drug Abuse**

Though this research article established that a good number of respondents who were facing IPV used prayer as a coping strategy, we find others becoming worldly and applying strategies that are used by non-Christian women to cope with the violence. A small percentage of women participants in this research 7% (2 out of 30) used drugs and substance abuse to cope with the abuse. Sample this confession from a respondent:

I know it's bad but I had no alternative. My husband used to beat me. I asked a friend of mine for advice and she gave me something to smoke and another one to drink. Every time I took those two drugs, I felt good and forgot the beating. It became a habit. Now whether I am beaten or not I have to take those two drugs (Gesare, 2:1:2021).

Another woman respondent had this had this to say about use of drugs and excessive drinking as a coping mechanism:

As usual he would beat me when drunk or out of frustrations. Then I ask myself up to when will this behavior continue? A friend took me somewhere in another house near ours. I don't know what we were given to smoke

and eat. When I came home, I was full of strength and when my husband tried to turn violent on me. I beat him so well that he went straight to sleep (Sidi, 26:1:2021).

The above narrations show that abused women resorted to abusing drugs and excessive drinking of alcohol as a way of coping. Lazenbatt, Devaney and Gildea, (2013:31) who examined a group of 18 abused women in the UK, found that in order to cope with physical and mental violence, that they had faced, they chose to engage in excessive and incessant use of alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. However, the use of drugs can affect a person mentally; and makes one to think and reason illogically. In some cases, these women ended up being abused the more. Women facing IPV turned to drugs as a way of reducing and coping up with the effects of the violence. A study done in Sweden by Berman et al., (1988:734) showed that there is direct relationship between IPV and drug abuse. The study showed that 65% of 49 women who had received treatment because of alcoholism reported being abused by their spouses.

The above narrations on resistance and abuse of drugs calls for the church to establish a multifaceted approach to deal with IPV since religious approaches above will not be able to respond to the menace of IPV. The church needs to instill the right values that will deter abused women from engaging in strategies that are not only Godly but can also endanger their health or life.

#### **4.2.3. African Culture and Copying Mechanisms**

This research article examined how cultural beliefs and practices of the Jewish community and Africans before the 18<sup>th</sup> century influenced Giriama Christian women to cope in IPV relationships. Jewish culture was patriarchal in set up treated men as superior while women were seen as inferior. Women were seen and treated as the property of men and in case of sexually abuse, it was the father of the victim to be compensated. The effects of the abuse on the victim was of no consequence. Under such a culture it was easy for women facing IPV to opt to cope in their relationships since there was no room for divorce. The African culture was no better compared with the Jewish one in influencing victims of IPV to persevere and cope in their marriages. After paying the dowry, it was assumed that the woman had been fully compensated for and as such she was not allowed to divorce or separate. She was expected to drop her surname and acquire the name of her husband. In such a culture, when cases of IPV arose the woman had no option but to cope with the abuse.

African culture allowed men to practice polygamy. This meant that even if the husband became violent the wife assumed that she had failed in her duties and as such the husband was justified to discipline/beat her. This resulted to victims of IPV opting to cope in their marriages. Women were socialized to see violence as normal. When cases of IPV broke out the women had been influenced to accept them as normal hence cope with their spouses. Within the African cultures power and authority were placed in the hands of men. Men controlled the economy which in most cases was farming while women did domestic work. On matters of inheritance its only men who could inherit property from their father. All these cultural practices have found their way into the church where leadership is in the hands of men. When cases of IPV are reported pastors encourage the victims to persevere and cope with their marriages. They are reminded that God hates divorce and marriage is permanent. This explains why Christian women facing IPV choose to persevere in their marriages by applying diverse coping strategies.

#### **5. Conclusion**

From the outset, this research article set out to understand how Christian women, among the Giriama community, coped with IPV. It established that faith played a central role in the management of IPV as it reinforces abusive tendencies through its overemphasis on the sanctity of marriage. Thus, religious factors were predominant coping strategies among Giriama women undergoing IPV. It established that the common religious variables, adopted by women in abusive marriages, included prayers, seeking pastoral counselling, and religio-marital education in terms of Christian teachings on family and marriages. These teachings however did less to control

abuse; rather, they encouraged perseverance in marriages, sometimes with fatal consequences. Nonetheless, some women resorted to non-religious approaches which entailed seeking support from family and friends, abusing drugs (alcohol) to overcome IPV trauma, reporting to law enforcement agencies, seeking professional counseling and resistance among others. And this also applies to men who are battered by women, as the twenty-first century has also produced such cases. Nevertheless, this discussion has expounded on the findings in light of secondary literature on IPV. This research article has thus argued that both religious and non-religious approaches, adopted by Giriama Christian women, were partly influenced by the hetero-patriarchal Judeo-Christian and African cultures that domiciled women as submissive. Thus the intersection of Judeo-Christian and African cultures promoted IPV and provided alternative resolution mechanisms which were less effective in addressing IPV among the Giriama women. This research article calls for separation or divorce in cases of IPV, especially where dialogue and reconciliation fails amongst the parties involved. By recommending separation or divorce among Christian women facing IPV, this research article has adopted a pragmatic approach that factored in the interest of all parties at large.

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The researchers concedes that they are the sole authors of this research article that creatively contributes to the world of academia, and is not published, and will not be published, by any other Journal elsewhere.

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