

# MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA: A SCOPING REVIEW OF PATRIARCHAL CULTURE

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**Abstract:** Background Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a concerning issue globally with widespread prevalence in the South African context, due to both historical Apartheid and its traditional values. In addition, the socialization of gender, conventional expectations of femininity and masculinity, prejudice and gender stereotypes, the idea that the home is a private space run by men, and the general acceptance of violence as a part of public life, further create a society where GBV is rampant. Significant social, psychological, and physical impact on individuals and communities manifest as a violation of human rights. In a period where social justice is at the forefront of global policy and development work, this scoping review guided by Arksey and O'Malley aims to give a thorough overview of the scientific body of research on the following aspects in South Africa over the past ten years: men as viewed through a lens of economic power, and patriarchal culture as a social problem which South African men embody. Research, promoting legislative reforms, addressing GBV through educational programs that improve people's attitudes of violent behavior, and collaborating with political, non-governmental, and spiritual leaders are all effective ways to reduce violence against the vulnerable. Therefore, in conducting a scoping review, crucial gaps in interventions can be addressed. The framework by Arksey and O'Malley will be used to identify, select, and review relevant studies from various databases and sources. This study will make an important contribution towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) target of eliminating all forms of violence in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) by 2030.

**Keywords:** Gender-based violence, social justice, gender norms, abuse, patriarchy, South Africa

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## Introduction

The "Cautionary Rule" created a subjective legal system in 1992 in South Africa, requiring judges to consider cases involving women's rape testimony under scrutiny if they were not supported by tangible evidence or eyewitness accounts, only 53% of rape cases resulted in a conviction, compared to 86% of non-sexual assault cases (George, 2020). In addition to traditional gender inequality, crimes like intimate partner violence, domestic abuse, and sexual assault, including rape, persist in South Africa despite efforts to eradicate the systemic discrimination against women. Prior to the Prevention of Family Violence Act, 1993 (Act 11 of 1993), which declared that "a husband may be convicted of the rape of his wife," marital rape was not considered a crime in South Africa. Attacks against Black women and other instances of gender-based violence were consistently underreported. The culture of impunity that was established during apartheid is embedded in modernity, and Black women continue to be disproportionately silenced, just as it did during the apartheid era. Persistent apartheid-era perceptions that Black males are more violent and aggressive than White men endure. Black and mixed-race persons account for around 90% of the population in South Africa, with Black and mixed-race men committed 27.1% and 45.7% of all rapes, respectively, while white men committed 11.1% of all rape convictions (George, 2020).

## **Methodology**

Using the Arksey and O'Malley methodological framework (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005) to scope literature on two main aims. These are notably, to explore the extent of the gap between current GBV statistics and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (hereafter referred to as the SDGs) as well as to understand the mitigating factors that limit current interventions within a South African context. Current GBV trends will be looked at through the lens of patriarchal culture and economic power that South African men embody. According to the framework to be used, this study will follow the procedures of finding relevant studies, choosing studies, organizing, and compiling data, and summarizing and reporting the findings (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010).

### ***Aim of the study***

The aim of the study is mapping the literature overview on the impact of gender-based violence regards patriarchal culture in South Africa.

### ***Objectives of the study***

The specific research objectives are identified hereunder:

- To map out the literature overview of the impact of gender-based violence in South Africa;
- To analyses the role of a patriarchal culture in South Africa;
- To identify the gender norms, standards and economic power in South Africa;
- To investigate the gender determination gaps on gender-based violence in South Africa; and
- To provide evidence that informs practical, policy-making, research and recommend strategies for development.

### ***Research questions of the study***

The following are relevant research questions of the study.

- What literature overview impact on gender-based violence in South Africa?
- What is the role of a patriarchal culture on gender, in South Africa?
- How are gender norms, standards and economic power addressed, in South Africa?
- What are the gender gaps on gender-based violence, in South Africa?
- What practical evidence, policy-making, and research strategies could be recommended for development on gender-based violence, in South Africa?

### ***Identifying the research question (Daudt et al., 2013)***

In view of the above research questions, the information and evidence are available on the effects of economic power and South African men's patriarchal culture as societal issues leading to gender-based violence? The above are the research questions that form the focus of this scoping review based on the available data from the last ten years including crucial gaps in interventions that has been addressed.

## **Literature review**

### ***Prevalence***

Prevalence is the proportion of a population who have a specific characteristic in a given time period (NIH, 2021). In South Africa (SA) the rate at which women are killed by intimate partners in this country is five times higher than the global average. Gender-based violence (GBV), a widespread and common occurrence in SA, is deeply ingrained in homes, workplaces, cultures and traditions. In this study, prevalence is determining unequal power between genders.

### *Gender-based violence*

According to the UNF, 2022, Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global public health emergency that has plagued girls and women throughout history. It is defined as a harmful act directed at an individual based on gender. It is constant threat for girls and women around the world regardless of their age, race, or socioeconomic status. South Africa is considered to be the rape capital of the world with 10 818 rape cases reported in the first quarter of 2022 (UNF, 2022). The rate at which women are killed by intimate partners in SA is five times higher than the global average, even if initiatives such as the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence are campaigned every year, the statistics escalate. South Africa's definition of and goals towards achieving gender equality are guided by a vision of human rights which incorporates acceptance of equal and inalienable rights of all women and men. This ideal is a fundamental tenet under the Bill of Rights of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. It emerged from a long period of struggle for a democratic society that respects and promotes the rights of all its citizens irrespective of race, gender, class, age, disability, etc. (Bill of Rights, Sections 9.1 to 9.4).

### *Social justice*

Social justice means the just, fair, and equitable distribution of all opportunities, resources, benefits, privileges, and burdens in a society, group and between societies (Madonsela & Lourns, 2021). By definition, Social justice encompasses a wide range of issues and advocates for the fair treatment of all people, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or socioeconomic status. Even though the meaning of social justice varies, at least three common elements can be identified in the contemporary theories about it: a duty of the State to distribute certain vital means (such as economic, social, and cultural rights), the protection of human dignity, and affirmative actions to promote equal opportunities for everybody. In South Africa, social justice was reflected in the anti-apartheid movement, which not only called for the abolition of racial discrimination, but also for the promotion of rights for women, workers and other vulnerable people.

### *Gender norms*

Gender norms are social principles that govern the behavior of girls, boys, women, and men in society and restrict their gender identity into what is considered to be appropriate. Gender norms are neither static nor universal and change over time. Some norms are positive, for example, the norm that children shouldn't smoke. Other norms lead to inequality (Save the Children, 2023). Gender norms are ideas about how women and men should be and act. Internalised early in life, gender norms can establish a life cycle of gender socialisation and stereotyping.

Gender, like race, is socially constructed, with rights, access to resources, power, participation in public life, and is interpreted through a cultural lens (International Bank for Reconstruction and

Development/World Bank, 2001). Consequently, expectations about how women and men should behave are structured by cultures and societies and influence the way in which sexual interactions are negotiated. Gender norms and sexual scripts are not static, vary across communities and have the potential to respond to changing socio-economic and political landscape, according to social constructions (Strebel et al. 2006). The terrain of gender roles in South Africa is both complex and diverse, and gender inequalities persist at many levels in the economy, social institutions, households, and sexual partnerships.

One study of South African tertiary-level students demonstrated that violence, coercion and male control, especially in the context of sex, were assumed to be part of normal heterosexual relationships (Shefer et al. 2000). However, research demonstrates that women are beginning to challenge this view (Shefer et al. 2000, Strebel et al. 2006). Gender inequalities have been linked to higher HIV prevalence in 72 countries (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank 2001), diminished educational and economic opportunities for women and gender-related violence (World Health Organization 2005). In South Africa, gender inequalities have been associated with unprotected sex and increased risk for HIV infection among women and may fuel South Africa's HIV epidemic. HIV prevalence in South Africa is among the highest in the world (United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS 2007) and young women's disproportionate risk is reflected in incidence and prevalence (Shisana et al. 2005, Pettifor et al. 2005). In view thereof, South Africa has pushed hard for gender equity. In 2006, women comprised nearly 33% of members of Parliament, four of the nine provincial leaders were women, and the deputy president was a woman (Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2006). The reproductive health rights of women were formally enshrined in the 1996 Constitution (Sections 9 and 27), guaranteeing gender equality and access to reproductive health services for women (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

Although new gender norms may have evolved in the post-Apartheid context, the structure of persistent gender relations and ensuing power dynamics means that some women are less empowered and capable of negotiating protection with partners than others. These changes are likely to be mirrored in tertiary institution women students who grew up in the post-Apartheid period. Although they may be more likely to adopt empowering gender norms, they may still be expected by parents and partners to subscribe to traditional gender-role hierarchies that characterized their parents' generation. However, there is little information on how gender norms might shape responses to HIV prevention among the privileged population of tertiary institution students. In this paper, we present data from focus groups on the broader cultural and social contexts of gender and power structures.

### *Abuse*

Abuse is the improper usage or treatment of a thing, often to unfairly or improperly gain benefit. Abuse can come in many forms, such as: physical or verbal maltreatment, injury, assault, violation, rape, unjust practices, crimes, or other types of aggression. To these descriptions, one can also add the Kantian notion of the wrongness of using another human being as means to an end rather than as ends in themselves (McCluskey, 2000). Some sources describe abuse as "socially constructed", which means there may be more or less recognition of the suffering of a victim at different times and societies. In South Africa, any interaction or lack of interaction by a parent or caretaker which results in the non- accidental harm to the child's physical and/or developmental state, including emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect (ChildlineSA, 2023).

### *Vulnerability*

Vulnerability is a state of emotional exposure that comes with a degree of uncertainty. Learning how to be vulnerable involves a willingness to accept the emotional risk that comes from being open and willing to love and be loved (Fritscher, 2023). A fear of vulnerability is a very common fear. But once you understand this central emotional challenge, you can develop a greater appreciation for why vulnerability is worth the effort. This makes it easier to take the next step: becoming more vulnerable with the people you care about most (Boublil, 2018).

**Selection of databases to search for literature** (Abercrombie et al., 2023; Stevinson and Lawlor, 2004): Quality evidence from large, diverse cohorts is essential to explore the effects and driving factors of gender-based violence in South Africa. Therefore, the goal of the search will be to locate pertinent, peer-reviewed articles that address the research questions. To do this, a search across the following electronic databases will be conducted for relevant literature - EBSCO Host, Google Scholar, and the Unisa Institutional Repository (UnisaIR).

Based on initial coding, a descriptive analysis was used to group the themes (above objectives of the study), including identified SGBV data, described in line with the question(s) posed by this scoping review. Furthermore, pertinent topics were defined in accordance with the thematic categories to address levels of importance. Finally, each theme's findings will be summarized using qualitative descriptions, with recommendations for additional research to be made where evidence is weak.

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) state that in every study that involve the social behaviour of people, often the choice of appropriate research method becomes a bit difficult and very dynamic. Research is generally based on some underlying philosophical assumptions about what constitutes a good research. Therefore, research method is connected to how data is collected and interpreted for a particular study in any discipline. This study therefore adopted a qualitative approach and analysis of secondary data which involves acquiring information from scholarly articles, journals, books, published and unpublished research dissertations and thesis. This further compliment the use of primary data collected and gathered through the use of semi-structured questions.

### **Discussions and Results**

Five major themes were identified from our analysis: (1) mapping out the literature overview of the impact of GBV, (2) analysis of the role of a patriarchal culture, (3) identification of gender norm, standards and economic power, (4) the investigation of the gender determination gaps on GBV, and (5) the evidence provision that informs practical policy and research strategies for development. Mitigating GBV in a patriarchal culture requires inclusive research approaches and targeted interventions to empower women, promote gender equality, enhance the impact of GBV, and contribute to broader cultural development. Despite attempts by researchers to delve into this issue, the pervasive under-reporting of GBV remains a challenge. The true extent and nature of GBV in a patriarchal culture is far from over, in this context. Interpersonal support and return to traditional matriarchal practices are contributing towards key resilience processes.

### ***Literature overview of the impact of gender-based violence in South Africa***

South African government has signed various international and regional conventions to protect the rights of women and girls, as enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution, 1996. Despite these legislation and policies, such as the Domestic Violence Act, 1998, Maintenance Act, 1998, Protection from Harassment Act, 2011 and the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2012, GBV remains a major problem. The Domestic Violence Act, 1998 makes the following provisions to protect victims of domestic violence: right to apply and receive protection order; the police officer has a duty to assist the victim of domestic violence; the police officer has a duty to arrest the perpetrator of domestic violence; and the victim has a right to receive psychological and medical help (RSA, 1998). In South Africa, the implementation of this Act leaves much to be desired. The role of the police In terms of the Act, the police need to play a role of supporting the victim or arresting the perpetrator of GBV. The police are also expected to assist the victim to seek legal assistance, including obtaining a protection order and serving it on the perpetrator. It is also important for the police to refer the victim for counselling or to a shelter for safety and accommodation (Ludsin & Vetten 2005).

Literature review on the implementation of the Maintenance Act, 1998 reveals that, even though the Act has been operational for long, yet on a daily basis, women and children continue to experience problems accessing justice through the maintenance court system. The primary purpose of the Protection from Harassment Act is to provide victims of suspected harassment with an efficient solution. In general, it entails creating procedures for the timely issuance of Protection Orders to victims of harassment (2011). However, SA is favoured in terms of the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (EEA), wherein harassment is classified as a form of unfair discrimination and is prohibited on any one, or a combination of grounds of unfair discrimination. As a result, Section 10(6) of the EEA provides remedies for victims of *inter alia* sexual harassment in the workplace.

### ***Analysis of the role of a patriarchal culture in South Africa***

Subsequently, the Gender-based violence continues to be a serious concern on the SADC (South African Developing Countries) agenda. Whilst steps have been made to increase law enforcement responses and services provided to victims, levels of domestic and sexual violence in the region remain extremely high. Hence, the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the Criminal Law Act, 2012.

When one is confronted by statistics that refer to the position of women in society, and specifically in education, it is evident that patriarchy affect human life adversely. In the first instance, women have been oppressed for generations and have been kept from liberating themselves by structures of domination, designed to maintain the ideology.

In the struggle to maintain the supremacy of the fathers, women were kept in their position of subservience through measures such as less educational opportunities than men, economic dependence, physical harassment, exclusion from leading roles in education, politics, the church and society at large. It seems that the effects of patriarchy on society, gender in particular relate to a situation of perpetuated inequality. This is substantiated by a situation that is summarised in the Education and Training Policy of the African National Congress (Commission on Gender Equality, 1998:29), which identified women as part of the most neglected and marginalised group in society. Women have thus been discriminated ever against through the ideology of patriarchal society.

Patriarchy misuses power to supremacy and with regard to gender. Patriarchy can thus be described as a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women. Although patriarchy is hierarchical and men of different classes, races or ethnic groups have different places within the patriarchal system, they are simultaneously united in their shared relationship of dominance (CGE, 1998).

### ***Identification of the gender norms, standards and economic power in South Africa***

South Africa has pushed hard for gender equity. Section 9 and 12 of the Constitution, 1996 guarantees that gender equality and access to reproductive health services for women are prioritised. Hence, sexual protection to prevent the high risk of HIV infections and unintended pregnancies. In spite of Constitutional rights, the Employment Equity Act (1998), and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000), patriarchy still exists in South Africa, as social inequalities lag behind legislation.

Although new gender norms may have evolved in the post-Apartheid context, the structure of persistent gender relations and ensuing power dynamics means that some women are less empowered and capable of negotiating protection with partners than others. These changes are likely to be mirrored in tertiary institution women students. Although they may be more likely to adopt empowering gender norms, they may still be expected by parents and partners to subscribe to traditional gender-role hierarchies that characterized their parents' generation.

As highlighted above in the definitions, Gender norms are social principles that govern the behavior of girls, boys, women, and men in society and restrict their gender identity into what is considered to be appropriate. The current minimum standards of gender composition in a workplace related also to equal remuneration between women and men, flexible working arrangements, and sex-based harassment and discrimination policies. Helping women fully participate in the economy is not only growth promoting, but it also diversifies the economies, reduces income inequality, mitigates demographic shifts, and contributes to financial sector stability (Bertay, et.al., 2020). Thus, gender inequality affects real economic outcomes. Violence also has significant economic consequences. The high rate of GBV places a heavy burden on the health and criminal justice systems, as well as rendering many survivors unable to work or otherwise move freely in society.

### **Investigation of the gender determination gaps on gender-based violence in South Africa**

Although accurate statistics are difficult to obtain for many reasons (including the fact that most incidents of GBV are not reported, it is evident South Africa has particularly high rates of GBV, including VAWG and violence against LGBT people. Population-based surveys show very high levels of intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence (SV) in particular, with IPV being the most common form of violence against women:

- Whilst people of all genders perpetrate and experience intimate partner and or sexual violence, men are most often the perpetrators and women and children the victims;
- More than half of all the women murdered (56%) in 2009 were killed by an intimate male partner;

- Between 25% and 40% of South African women have experienced sexual and/or physical IPV in their lifetime;
- Just under 50% of women report having ever experienced emotional or economic abuse at the hands of their intimate partners in their lifetime;
- Prevalence estimates of rape in South Africa range between 12% and 28% of women ever reporting being raped in their lifetime;
- Between 28 and 37% of adult men report having raped a women;
- Non-partner SV is particularly common, but reporting to police is very low. One study found that one in 13 women in Gauteng had reported non-partner rape, and only one in 25 rapes had been reported to the police;
- South Africa also faces a high prevalence of gang rape;
- Most men who rape do so for the first time as teenagers and almost all men who ever rape do so by their mid-20s;
- There is limited research into rape targeting women who have sex with women. One study across four Southern African countries, including South Africa, found that 31.1% of women reported having experienced forced sex; and
- Male victims of rape are another under-studied group. One survey in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape found that 9.6% of men reported having experienced sexual victimisation by another man (Saferspaces, 2016).

These factors interact with a number of drivers, such as social norms (which may be cultural or religious), low levels of women's empowerment, lack of social support, socio-economic inequality, and substance abuse. Challenges of GBV in South Africa

On an individual level, GBV leads to psychological trauma, and can have psychological, behavioural and physical consequences for survivors. In many parts of the country, there is poor access to formal psychosocial or even medical support, which means that many survivors are unable to access the help they need.

#### ***What are the gaps in GBV prevention and response?***

Limited availability of shelters and safe spaces for women and girls. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the scarcity of shelters and safe spaces for women and girl survivors of, or at risk of, GBV. Consequently, communication mechanisms for girls and women to reach out for help may have limited coverage or accessibility. For example, hotline services may not cover the entire country while other forms of communication support, such as Skype, WhatsApp, etc. often require Internet access and connectivity. In several contexts, hotline services do not always cover the whole country.

There is a negative impact on women's access to justice, since the courts operate at reduced hours. As a result, there are limited hearings and considerable delays in processing cases. Moreover, while some courts are operating at reduced, this, implies that domestic violence cases are not prioritized by the courts.



A further concern noted that restrictive travel protocols have made it hard for pregnant women to access health services. Family planning services provided by civil society are restricted to operate during certain times, hindering access to vulnerable groups such as sex workers and survivors of domestic violence. Global supply chains for commodities have also been impacted, putting at risk the availability and accessibility of contraceptives. Women and girls living in remote areas or in refugee/IDP camps are particularly impacted by these restrictions. Similarly, there is lack of inclusion of key experts on GBV prevention and response in national COVID-19 task forces, who can make sure GBV is mainstreamed in the different sectoral responses. Limited participation of women and girls in COVID-19 decision-making processes. Data collection on GBV has proved to be challenging.

In several countries it has been difficult to collect updated and accurate information on GBV in the COVID-19 context. In other cases, data was available but not disaggregated by age or other key factors (e.g. disability, location, etc.). Mental health concerns have grown considerably since COVID-19 started. For girls and women, the impact on mental health has been significant and compounded by the violence they face, as well as other factors related to COVID-19 and its mitigation measures. Psycho-social support needs to be an integral part of responses to GBV, but this is often not the case.

### ***Evidence that informs practical, policy-making, research and recommend strategies for development***

#### *Evidence that informs practical, policymaking and research*

In 2020, the South African government launched a ten-year National Strategic Plan on Gender-based Violence and Femicide (NSP-GBVF) in addressing the problem of GBV. The plan sought to establish a comprehensive policy framework and foster a national response in coordination with civil society.

In September 2021, three new laws were passed with the aims of improving the criminal justice system's response to GBV; enhancing protection for survivors; and under Covid-19, as rates of GBV reportedly rose, resources and attention allocated to addressing the problem were diverted. The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) faced resistance and a lack of cooperation from government departments as it sought to assess the effectiveness of official efforts to counter GBV. There was a lack of clarity about who was responsible for driving the national strategic plan and its implementation was found to be patchy or non-existent. There was also a lack of transparency in relation to the use of the funds that had been allocated to implementing the plan. To prevent violence against women and their children, beliefs and behaviours that excuse, justify or condone violence and inequality need to be addressed, so that one's voice may be heard by declaring publicly that enough is enough.

The socio-cultural dictates of all groups defined women to be inferior to men and as such assigned to them the position of minors in both the public and private spheres of life. In the private sphere, women were less likely to lead in decision-making. In most interpersonal relationships men had more power. This historical legacy of patriarchy influenced essential informal and formal human relationships with a marked impact at the workplace.

The Gender Policy Framework established guidelines for South Africa as a nation to take action to remedy the historical legacy by defining new terms of reference for interacting with each other in both the private and public spheres, and by proposing and recommending an institutional framework that facilitates equal access to goods and services for both women and men. The Gender Policy

Framework proposes a process that moves away from treating gender issues as "something at the end-of-the-day" business. Often, while discussing development issues, it is presumed that gender issues can be addressed after the "hard-core issues" have been dealt with. It further attempts to ensure that the process of achieving gender equality is at the very center of the transformation process in South Africa within all the structures, institutions, policies, procedures, practices and programmes of government, its agencies and parastatals, civil society and the private sector.

### ***Challenges Facing South Africa***

South Africa is faced with many challenges. To achieve a society free of racism and sexism the country must undergo a paradigm shift with regard to how resources are allocated and how people relate to each other. The challenges facing South Africa have been translated into national priorities. All of these priorities have compelling gender dimensions which need to be addressed if the country is to advance towards Gender equality. The key challenges are:

**Gender relations:** South Africa is in a process of transition. One of the key objectives in this process is the transformation of gender relations. The challenge is to shape the broad transformation project in a way which acknowledges the centrality and compatibility of the transformation of gender relations to the broader institutional change process. This requires a fundamental review of what has come to be accepted as 'business as usual.'

**Poverty** is a major problem for women in South Africa. The systematic and socially-engineered location of women in rural areas, and the underdevelopment of infrastructure in these areas, has been directly responsible for the poor conditions under which the majority of South Africa's rural communities live. Apartheid laws, coupled with repressive customs and traditions, disempowered women in ways that will take generations to reverse. While the democratic government has established enabling legislation, it must move towards delivery to alleviate and, eventually, eradicate poverty.

**Globalization** is an emerging world challenge. It is a system of redistribution of opportunities and benefits which may enhance the economy or lead to rising inequality and aggravated poverty. The challenge for South Africa is to ensure that women benefit equally with others in society.

**HIV/AIDS** is a very serious problem in South Africa. It affects women disproportionately to men. The power imbalances between women and men in interpersonal relations contribute to this growing pandemic.

**Violence** against women remains a serious problem in South African society. The high incidence of rape cases, as well as other forms of physical and psychological abuse of women and girls, are evidence of this. The Criminal Justice and Safety and Security systems are now beginning to deal with this crisis in a gender-sensitive manner. It will continue to be a major challenge especially as it is compounded by its interrelation with poverty and HIV/AIDS.

**Access to basic needs** such as education, housing, welfare, fuel and water has also been influenced by unequal gender, race and class relations. The inequality of power between

women and men has inevitably led to the unequal sharing of resources such as information, time and income as well.

**Access to basic resources** such as water and fuel has improved since 1994 but women's control over these resources is still not satisfactory. The lack of infrastructure in the rural areas still acts as a barrier for women to gain easy access to basic resources.

**Access to employment:** Differential access to employment opportunities exists. Whilst theoretically women currently have access to a broader scope of position in the labour market, these new opportunities are accessible to a narrow pool of women who have had access to skills development, education and training. In large measure, women's employment remains either within the traditional female occupations or within the domestic and farming sectors all too often as casual workers. They are concentrated within positions which are low paying and which have high rates of turnover.

**Economic empowerment of women:** Women constitute the poorest group in South Africa and are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed. The challenge is to ensure that South Africa's macro economic strategy promotes economic growth and sufficiently addresses the differential impact of macro-economic policy on various groups of people depending on class, race, age, gender, location and disability.

**Access to land.** South Africa has embarked on an aggressive land reform and land reclamation programme. The implementation of this programme is challenged by some entrenched cultural practices such as patriarchy.

**Access to science and technology:** As described in the *Beijing+5 Report*, science and technology, as fundamental components of development, are transforming patterns of production, contributing to the creation of jobs and new ways of working, and promoting the establishment of a knowledge-based society. Given the large number of women in the workforce, South Africa must devise mechanisms for engaging women with science and technology in order to enhance their productivity and thus increase the quality of national production. Women should be actively involved in the definition, design, development, implementation and gender-impact evaluation of policies related to the economic and social changes referred to above.

**Women's access to political power** and decision-making has improved since the 1994 elections. There is a strong representation of women in the national, provincial and local legislative branches of government and in some governments departments. The challenge to political institutions is to change their culture in order to be more responsive to the needs of women politicians and of civil servants.

**Implementation of laws.** Drawing from experiences from in other parts of the world, South Africa has adopted sophisticated rights-based legislation with explicit reference to gender equality. An important challenge remains in making these rights accessible to all women by the provision of information and the development of the knowledge and skills that women require to avail themselves of the mechanisms inherent in the legal remedies.

**National Gender Machinery.** Although South Africa's National Gender Machinery is universally acknowledged to be a "best practice," the lack of skills, resources, and integrated co-ordination framework with clear lines of communication and accountability is likely to render it ineffectual. It will be unable to support cohesive programmes that can make a substantial dent on the challenges identified above.

The above challenges are interrelated. That is why the implementation and review of the strategic plan was developed in alignment with the Monitoring and Evaluation plan consistent with DPME processes to ensure full integration.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

This paper systematically reviewed evidence from the African context regarding countries' responses to sexual and gender-based violence. Previous research has illustrated that gender inequalities and place women and girls at increased risk of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse in different communities. Through a systematic review of the literature, a number of strategies employed in responding to sexual and gender-based violence have been identified. Gender-based violence has been a growing phenomenon in South Africa, wherein programmes such as the 16 days of activism on violence against women and children have been more overwhelmed, hence the prioritisation annually. In general, GBV has had a gender-related impact on African societies, mostly affecting women and female children, in addition to worsening the social and economic well-being of income earners. Globally, GBV consequently affected household economic situations, negatively. To make meaningful progress, more research is required to understand the relationship between GBV and agricultural settings, and to gain nuanced insight into the nature and impact of GBV on women primary producers in different regions and contexts.

## **Recommendations of the study**

The following recommendations are key to the development of GBV strategies.

### **Strategies for enhancing responsiveness.**

#### Training support

It is important to ensure the maintenance of human resources to respond to violence against women and children. Training and capacity-building opportunities for human resources to respond to SGBV issues, though neglected, are critical, as evidence suggests that countries which had organized training was associated with strengthened enforcement of anti-GBV laws which contributed to decreased violence against women

Collaboration between the victim support unit, social welfare, and health care providers in providing training on SGBV for health care providers to screen and give holistic care to violence victims was needed. Moreover, other additional actors require technical expertise to understand the importance of working together as sectors in enforcement and the delivery of services to survivors.

#### Status on referral and linkages systems

Literature highlighted how poor referral and linkage systems could deepen gender inequality in access to services. Strengthening monitoring of SGBV cases facilitated the early identification of survivors. This also enabled survivors to access a safe space protected by the state.

- Furthermore, reinforce outreach and awareness campaigns.
- Protection services including shelters and safety services.
- Helplines and hotlines/communication, only for GBV cases.

This will assist in the collaboration in the delivery of integrated services, including justice and treatment for survivors of GBV, as a salient but neglected aspect. Furthermore, it will provide a differing approaches to conducting sensitization and engaging broad-based stakeholders with new messages on the management and prevention of GBV against women and girls.

- Opportunities for churches to engage their congregational members in changing their practices that perpetuate GBV should be spread across the country, they can easily work closely with communities, including chiefs, to reduce the surge of GBV to eliminate patriarchy.

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