

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**EXPLORING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: PERSPECTIVES OF WOMEN  
VICTIMS AND DOVVSU OFFICIALS IN THE EFFUTU MUNICIPALITY**

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central sunburst with a flame-like shape at its center. Below the sunburst is a stylized 'U' and 'E' intertwined. A banner at the bottom of the emblem contains the motto 'EDUCATION FOR SERVICE'.

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**A thesis submitted to the school of graduate studies in  
partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of  
the degree of Master of Philosophy  
(Social Studies Education)**

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## DECLARATION

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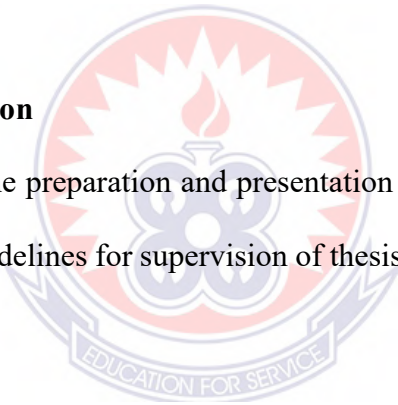
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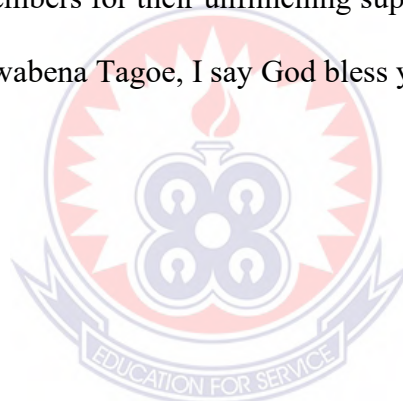
## DEDICATION

To my mother, Mrs. Mary Korkor Sakyi, and my children Jeddidah Adwoa Dansoah Tagoe, El-Zoe Ekua Botwe Tagoe and Noella Awura Ekua Korlekuor Tagoe.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

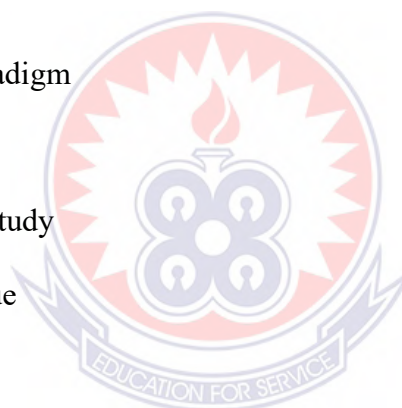
My first thanks go to the Almighty God for how far He has brought me. My sincere thanks go to Professor Lucy Effehe Attom, Dean of Faculty of Social Science Education, UEW for taking her time to read through my work and to make necessary corrections and recommendations. In fact her advice has brought about the success of this thesis. I say God bless you richly. I would also like to thank the DOVVSU officials in the Effutu Municipality for their support in making this work possible. I would like to thank all my participants who availed themselves for this thesis. I would like to thank Mrs. Joyce Siaw for her advice and encouragement. I say God bless you. Finally, I would like to thank all my family members for their unflinching support in kind and in cash. To my husband, Rev. Isaac Kwabena Tagoe, I say God bless you richly.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABBREVIATIONS	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	9
1.3 Purpose of the Study	12
1.4 Research Objectives	12
1.5 Research Questions	13
1.6 Significance of the Study	13
1.7 Delimitation	14
1.8 Organisation of the study	14
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1 Introduction	16
2.2 Theoretical Framework	16
2.3. Domestic Violence	23
2.4 Causes of Domestic Violence	27

2.5 Types of Domestic Violence	37
2.6 History of the Domestic violence Act (732) and the State of Women in Ghana	47
2.7 The State of Women in Ghana and Women Rights challenges	50
2.8 National Human Right Institutions (NHRIs)	51
2.9 The Challenges institutions face in addressing Domestic Violence cases in Ghana	53
2.10 Challenges of the implementation of the Domestic Violence ACT 732	54
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>58</b>
3.1 Introduction	58
3.2 Research Paradigm	58
3.2.1 Interpretivist Paradigm	58
3.4 Research Design	59
3.5 Population of the Study	60
3.6 Sampling Technique	60
3.7 Sampling Size	62
3.8 Data Collection Procedures	63
3.9 Data Analysis	64
3.10 Ethical Considerations	65
3.11 Chapter Summary	66
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>67</b>
4.1 Introduction	67
4.2 Demographic Statistics of the Participants	67
4.3 Knowledge about DOVVSU	68
4.4 Forms of Domestic violence	69



4.5 Causes of Domestic Violence	70
4.6 The role of DOVVSU	74
4.6.2 Victim Assistance Programmes and Material Assistance	74
4.6.3 Victims and Perpetrators Counselling	76
4.6.4 Medical Care of Victims	77
4.7 Implementation of the domestic violence act by DOVVSU officials	79
4.8 Challenges of DOVVSU in implementing the domestic violence Act (732)	81
4.9 Effects of the Challenges on Women Victims of Domestic Violence	86
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND</b>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>90</b>
5.1 Introduction	90
5.2 Summary	90
5.2.1 Summary of Major Findings	90
5.3 Conclusion	93
5.4 Recommendations	93
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>APPENDIX A</b>	<b>110</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1: Policies adopted by African countries to curb issues of violence against women	48



## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
Figure 1: Workflow Diagram for Thesis	15
Figure 2: Social-Ecological Model	20



## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AG</b>	Attorney-General
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>DEVAW</b>	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women
<b>DOVVSU</b>	Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service
<b>DV</b>	Domestic Violence
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GNA</b>	Ghana News Agency
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>MOWAC</b>	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
<b>NHRIs</b>	National Human Right Institutions
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Development Fund for Women
<b>VAWG</b>	Violence Against Women and Girls
<b>WAJU</b>	Women And Juvenile Unit of the Ghana Police Service
<b>WiLDAF</b>	Women in Law and Development in Africa
<b>WISE</b>	Women Initiative for Self Empowerment
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation

## ABSTRACT

Domestic violence is one of the violence affecting women in the world. In order to deal with this canker, the Domestic Violence Act 732 was passed in Ghana. The study was designed to explore the perspectives of women victims of domestic violence and Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) officials in the Effutu municipality. The study was conducted qualitatively with a sample size of 20, which was made up of 15 women victims and 5 DOVVSU officials. Participants were sampled using the convenient, snowballing and purposive sampling techniques. Interview sessions were used to collect data, which was then analyzed thematically using the research questions. The study revealed that physical abuse, such as rape and beating, is the main form of violence experienced by victims. It was also revealed that drugs, religion, and culture are the causes of violence against women. The study again revealed that victims needed some basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, medical treatment, economic assistance, and justice. The study also revealed that DOVVSU officials are faced with challenges such as a lack of expertise, insufficient logistics, and delays. The study concluded that most victims lose interest in visiting DOVVSU because their religious leaders discourage them, with some women also seeing it as a waste of time and also a reminder of their pain.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Violence as a phenomenon has been in existence since the beginning of the world. A brotherly dispute between Cain and Abel was one of the earliest recorded incidents of violence (Genesis chapter 4). The world has since experienced forms of violence. Consider the dark ages to the renaissance era, the bulk of knights and some mediaeval troops used force and violent actions to topple indigents and others. These mediaeval warriors craved power, possession of property, status, and the acquisition of wealth (Sharma & Borah, 2020). It is well-known that violence is notoriously difficult to characterise. As a result, many authors choose to portray violence rather than explain it. Violence is defined as any act that involves force or compulsion to cause bodily or psychological harm to another person (Gulati & Kelly, 2020). Women are sometimes victims of violence. Violence against women is "any act of gender-based violence that causes or is likely to cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, regardless of whether the act occurs in public or private life" (Leslie & Wilson, 2020). Violence is about restraining one's own might in order to subdue or dominate others. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. It can occur within a range of relationships including couples who are married, living together or dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels.

According to Koirala and Chuemchit (2020), violence may be harmful to an individual and consists of certain explicit behaviours that have a psychological effect on the

victim. Violence is a continuous process comprised of several strands (Verlien, 2020). Sexual harassment and intimidation occur in all cultures and circumstances; rape and assault occur in the community; and sexual, emotional, and physical violence occur in the family. As Garcia-Moreno and Oyekenmi point out, states legitimise other forms of violence, including racism, war, and police brutality. State-inflicted violence against persons or groups can take the following forms: i. Depriving indigenous people of their land; ii. Preventing other people (particularly minority groups) from practising their harmless traditions on the grounds of inferiority; iii. Restricting people's freedom of movement or mobility (for example, the witches camp at Gambaga in northern Ghana); iv. Arbitrary arrest and detention without the right to defence and completely isolated from the rest of the world, and/or flagrantly violated (Dennis-Antwi & Dapaah, 2010). On the basis of gender identity, many forms of violence are experienced by women, including sexual violence, women trafficking, dowry-related deaths, female genital mutilation or cutting, and harmful traditional practises (Dennis-Antwi & Dapaah, 2010).

According to a UNICEF research published in 2000, women in certain districts of Nepal are compelled to engage in unlawful sex trade in order to feed their families. For example, in India and Thailand, men coerce their wives or female family members into commercial sex labour (Dery & Diedong, 2014). Similar incidents have occurred in some parts of Ghana, Togo and Benin, where girls have been given to shrine priests. They marry these priests in exchange for spiritual protection for male members of their families who have transgressed the gods. A trokosi girl may be kept for life by a trokosi priest (Martinez, 2011). Another method in which women are assaulted in Middle Eastern and Asian areas is through honour killings. Honour murders are the execution or assassination of women for the sole purpose of justifying and preserving family

values. Honour killings have been reported in a number of countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Turkey, and Bangladesh. A woman may be killed for a number of reasons, including premarital sexual or nonsexual relationships, rape, suspected or real adultery, and preferring or marrying a man hated by the lady's family (Owusu, 2016). While female genital mutilation is becoming more prevalent in areas of the world where it is practised, survivors are prevented and forbidden from speaking about it (Owusu, 2016). Victims of violence frequently include individuals and minority groups. These minority groups include indigenous peoples, migrant women, refugee women, women in conflict zones, women in detention, women with impairments, and elderly women (WHO, 1996, Amnesty International, 2000).

At some point in their life, one in every three women, or around 35% of women, may experience some kind of physical or sexual abuse as a result of intimate or non-partner violence (WHO, 2017). Each minute, almost 20 people in the United States endure physical abuse at the hands of a significant other, totalling more than ten million individuals in a single year (National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, 2010). In Ghana, one in every three women has experienced domestic abuse from a past or current husband (Mensah-Allah & Osei-Afful, 2017). This enduring issue has also become an internal one for many Ghanaian women in a variety of sectors, as a result of patriarchal, cultural, social, and institutional control and pressures that lead many Ghanaian women to remain silent and obedient in their marriages (Owusu, 2016). These crimes are disproportionately perpetrated against women and manifest as physical, sexual, psychological, or social abuse.

Brown (2018) maintains that domestic violence is an ubiquitous societal issue that impacts individuals on a global scale. Domestic violence against women has been a

source of concern and urgency for a long period of time. The issue of violence against women and girls is a major one. Worldwide, particularly in Africa, violence against women and girls is everywhere, regardless of culture, economic level, or ethnic background. Domestic violence, human trafficking, rape, and damaging practises such as child marriage and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) are all forms of violence. It can occur at any time and in any location (Institute of Development Studies, 2016). Even though sexual and gender-based violence may affect anybody, male or female of any age, women and girls are the principal victims of sexual and gender-based violence (Action Aid Ghana, n. d.). Domestic violence is described as any act or behaviour that causes a danger of physical, sexual, economic, or emotional (verbal/psychological) abuse or a combination of these in a domestic relationship, regardless of the perpetrator's gender (Domestic Violence Act, 2007).

According to Mensah-Allah and Osei-Afful (2017), domestic violence happens regardless of race, gender, or ethnic background. Domestic violence violates fundamental human rights and is a significant policy issue on a global scale. Over the course of their lives, up to 70% of women globally have been beaten, coerced into sex, or exposed to other types of abuse (UNIFEM, 2011).

Globally, about 736 million women have experienced abuse at least once in their lifetime. In Ghana, 6% of women aged 15 – 49 have experienced violence within 12 months. Worldwide, 75% of women are subjected to emotional abuse and controlling behaviour. (GSS, 2022). Men are also victims of domestic violence. However, statistics on the prevalence of domestic violence at the national level are few.

Domestic abuse has immediate and devastating consequences, including physical injuries, mental health problems, and a general sense of unease. Additionally, it has

long-lasting and far-reaching repercussions, such as persistent inequalities between men and women, which inhibit women and girls from attaining their full potential. Domestic abuse survivors have long-term deterioration in physical and mental health, an increased risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and reduced educational and career chances. Additionally, they have a reduced likelihood of having a college degree, a lower salary, and a lower rate of production. When gender imbalances become established, these consequences affect women and men and their families, communities, and wider civilizations. Domestic Violence (DV) is frequently referred to as “Intimate Partner Violence (IPV),” indicating that perpetrators can be men or women; nonetheless, male abusers are more likely to multiply than female perpetrators, resulting in female victims being more prevalent than male victims (Nevada Network against Domestic Violence, 2010).

Domestic violence is not a new phenomenon in Ghana or Africa in general, and cannot be considered as a western idea of imposition (Burril et al., 2010). Domestic abuse came to Ghana’s notice in the 1990s due to a combination of international, regional, and national pressure and contemporary events. In March 1995, the network of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) met in Togo to propose the formation of an African charter on Human and People’s Rights that would include a section on women’s rights. While the charter was not finalised until 2003, discussions about women’s rights – including protection from abuse – were already taking place at regional gatherings. This, combined with the September 1995 Beijing Conference, which produced the Beijing Platform for Action, a document outlining specific steps governments should take to end violence against women (VAW), provided a springboard for women groups in Ghana to advocate for domestic violence policy change (Fallon & Aunio, 2010). The participants at the Beijing conference committed

to preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls; ensuring equal access to and treatment of women and men in education and health care; enhancing women's sexual and reproductive health and education; and promoting and protecting the human rights of all women and girls (UN,1995). Ghana ratified the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Types of Discrimination Against Women) of the United Nations on July 17, 1980, in order to combat all forms of violence, discrimination, and human rights breaches that jeopardise a woman's security, freedom, privacy, and dignity.

The domestic Abuse Act (732) was drawn from CEDAW to offer extra legal protection to victims of domestic violence and to criminalise any acts that come under the bill's definition of domestic violence and its different expressions. Although Ghana's domestic violence laws have been strengthened to make any act of violence against a woman punishable, cultural factors continue to contribute to the country's high prevalence of domestic abuse.

The Ghanaian government enacted the Domestic Violence Act (Act 732) in February 2007 following several years of advocacy by civil society and women's rights organisations. The National Policy and Plan of Action (NPPOA) was drafted in 2008. The NPPOA developed a plan for implementing the Domestic Violence Act, coordinated by the Domestic Violence Secretariat, a component of the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MoGCSP) (Institute of Development Studies, 2016).

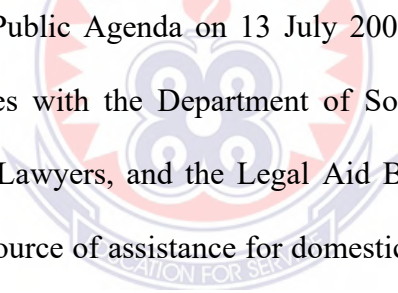
Since the mid-1990s, nations worldwide have made a determined effort to develop ways for putting an end to activities that violate women's rights (Darkwah & Prah, 2016). To address the concerns of society's marginalized groups, democratic countries established

human rights institutes. One of the entities designed to address these issues is the National Human Rights Entities (NHRIs). Matshekga (2002) describes these NHRIs as self-contained groups of organisations charged with the exclusive responsibility of promoting and defending individual and collective human rights. According to Murray (2007), the United Nations (UN) defines NHRI as an entity established by a government through a constitution, legislation, or decree with the explicit purpose of promoting and safeguarding human rights.

The UN, however, passed the Paris Principles in 1993 in an attempt to re-energize development and preservation of human rights. These Principles serve as a guide for all human rights institutions and as a benchmark for their performance. It has been unanimously accepted that no NHRI would be considered if it does not adhere to the Paris Principles' mandate. According to the Principles, NHRIs play a critical role at the local level "in promoting and maintaining human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as in educating the public about such rights and freedoms" (Paris Principles, 1993). While NHRIs cannot address every negative event that occurs within and outside the country, they are expected to address the majority of political, economic, and social issues, as this is their mandate and reason for existence; and protecting women's fundamental human rights should be treated with the utmost urgency (Murray, 2007). Ghana blazed the way in several ways with its pioneering domestic violence legislation, which recognises different forms of economic abuse and takes a broader perspective of access to justice than other countries, allowing for mediation through alternative dispute resolution procedures.

The Domestic Violence Act 732, enacted by Parliament in 2007, creates a comprehensive legal framework for preventing and combatting domestic assault by

criminalising various forms of physical and sexual violence, economic and psychological abuse, and intimidation in intimate relationships (IDS, GSS & Associates, 2016). Despite this one-of-a-kind legislative endeavour, the outcomes of this study show that further work is necessary to ensure that laws are embraced and understood by a broader population. In October 1998, Ghana established the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), previously known as the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) (Action Aid Ghana n. d.). DOVVSU provides counselling in schools, churches, and markets around the country on crime prevention, takes complaints, offers free services to the public, notifies victims of their complaint and investigation, and refers victims for counselling and medical care (Action Aid Ghana, n. d.).



An item published in Public Agenda on 13 July 2009 indicated that the DOVVSU participates on activities with the Department of Social Welfare, the International Federation of Women Lawyers, and the Legal Aid Board, According to the report, DOVVSU is the only source of assistance for domestic violence victims and provides free services seven days a week to victims, including shelters, counselling programmes, and legal and medical advice (Public Agenda, 2009). DOVVSU assists individuals who have been victimised by fraud, physical assault, sexual abuse, or child neglect. According to the United Nations Secretary-database, the DOVVSU unit is a “important avenue” for victims of domestic violence (UN, 2009).

The DOVVSU strategic plan aims to protect, prevent, and prosecute crimes against society’s most vulnerable people. Additionally, DOVVSU is engaged in an advocacy campaign aiming at educating the public about the significance of acting “responsibly” to “avoid environments that breed domestic violence.”

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The ramifications of violence against women and girls are far-reaching. As a result, women and girls need to get the highest possible degree of protection and security from their governments. Because many victims of domestic violence live in constant fear. The institutions charged with their protection must be constructed and maintained in such a manner that their safety is maximised. Over a hundred nations have implemented domestic abuse legislation since the 1990s in response to global calls for action. Mexico and Ghana are two such countries. On the other hand, Mexico and Ghana have taken quite disparate ways to establishing similar laws (Policy Brief - Domestic Violence).

However, the efforts of NHRIs and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) to combat human rights violations and domestic violence around the world, notably in Africa, have fostered a desire in many governments to establish standards that bind and protect women's fundamental rights (Mtshali, 2010). For instance, Ghana's 2007 Domestic Violence Act (Act 732) criminalises violence against women.

Ghana has made significant progress in negotiating, ratifying, and implementing a number of international agreements strengthening democracy and citizen rights. However, Ghana's domestic record is less impressive in terms of implementing specific human rights legislation than her international ratification record. Although the state's commitment to protecting its citizens extends to the home sphere, domestic violence was mostly ignored in Ghana until the late 1990s. While African governments have mostly eradicated constitutional and legal hurdles to women's equality, Mama (2000) observes that they have maintained a "deafening silence" on the issue of gender-based violence.

The state's dilemma is aggravated by the absence of the required tools to fight the problem. According to a study conducted by The Ark Foundation, a legal and human rights organisation, violence against women and children is unacceptably frequent in Ghana. Apart from the statistics, preliminary findings from the Baseline survey show that services supporting victims with their problems encounter additional significant challenges (Ark Foundation, 2007). The report identifies several impediments to resolving domestic violence cases, including insufficient services, particularly for rural residents; insufficient documentation of cases; insufficient tracking of victims/survivors referred to other services; difficulties recruiting and retaining police officers; logistical constraints and low pay for service providers, particularly police; insufficient training and inadequate capacity of police to respond to such cases and corruption.

According to Darkwah and Prah (2016), few scholars have explored survivors of domestic violence abuses' experiences and perceptions on the 2007 Domestic Violence Act, Act 732, and the extent to which its provisions ensure women's rights. Domestic violence continues to be an issue for women throughout Africa and Ghana. As a result, individuals and states should not be happy with the idea that human rights violations have ceased just due to the lack of development (Mtshali, 2010). Concerns about women's rights violations have persisted since time immemorial and have either gotten worse or made little progress. The difficulties women confront, preserving their rights remains a crucial concern. It is assumed that global, continental, subcontinental, and state-level organisations continue to exist to address the challenges women face. In any case, more has to be done to ensure that women's fundamental rights are not taken for granted (Murray, 2007).

According to Zaney (2011), the situation appears to indicate that DOVVSU is struggling to adhere to structured or established procedures, which include (knowing what to follow; understanding why it should be followed; and knowing when and how to follow), in order to assist in successfully resolving reported cases of domestic violence. Additionally, it seems the Unit lacks workers with the requisite knowledge, abilities, and training to help in resolving domestic violence situations reported; and packages or programmes that are effective at attaining the services provided's intended results. According to a Joy news report published on November 25, 2011, the DOVVSU lacks the necessary personnel, resources, and financing to help in resolving emerging concerns; and has difficulty satisfying victims' mental and physical needs. This further complicates the challenge of addressing domestic violence situations effectively (Bekoe, September, 2011).

Furthermore, Darkwah and Prah (2016) state that "decrees ensuring the full implementation of Ghana's Domestic Violence Act have not yet been enacted." According to a Policy Brief on Domestic Violence, Ghana is one of the six countries in West Africa and twenty in Sub-Saharan Africa that have domestic violence legislation. Although the Act was enacted in 2007, no decrees ensuring its full implementation have been issued; as a result, the statute remains inactive.

Despite the fact that domestic violence is prohibited in Ghana, research indicates that women continue to be assaulted and prosecuting perpetrators is exceedingly difficult. Ghanaian men, like many others, want to avoid being taught on how to mend their relationships and most likely, to avoid being reported if they are abusive to their partner. This serves as a reminder of why many domestic violence incidents go unreported to law enforcement, resulting in tragic fatalities. Additionally, some victims may be

concerned that if they report the violence, a professional, such as a police officer, would not believe them or will inform them that this is a family issue that must be settled between her and her partner (Cantalupo, 2010). Again, due to the lengthy pace of prosecution in domestic abuse cases, many victims are discouraged from cooperating with prosecutors and reporting assaults.

Additionally, research conducted by Action Aid Ghana discovered that DOVVSUs do not provide adequate safe spaces for victims and survivors of domestic abuse due to underfunding and a counsellor shortage (ActionAid Ghana, n. d.). There has been little studies on implementing the Domestic Violence Act (732) in Ghana. Most of the existing literature on domestic violence in Ghana (Bekoe, September 2011; Adu-Gyamfi, 2014; Adjah, 2016) focus on challenges faced by victims in accessing justice, causes of domestic violence, and determinants of domestic violence against women in Ghana. It appears that there has not been a systematic study exploring domestic violence and DOVVSU services in the Effutu Municipality.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

This study aimed to explore domestic violence and DOVVSU services in the Effutu Municipality.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The following objectives guided the study;

1. Ascertain the forms of domestic violence experienced by women victims in the Effutu Municipality.
2. Examine the services of DOVVSU given to women victims of domestic violence in the Effutu Municipality.

3. Examine the challenges faced by DOVVSU officials and victims at DOVVSU unit in the Effutu Municipality.
4. Identify how the challenges affects women victims in the Effutu Municipality.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following questions

1. What forms of domestic violence are experienced by women victims in the Effutu Municipality?
2. What services do victims receive at DOVVSU units in the Effutu Municipality?
3. What are the challenges faced by DOVVSU in providing services to victims in the Effutu Municipality?
4. How has the challenges affected women victims in the Effutu Municipality?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study shed light on the many kinds of abuse perpetrated against women who are victims of domestic violence. It also highlighted the difficulties encountered by DOVVSU in carrying out their responsibilities. Additionally, it details how the work of the organisations responsible for assisting victims of domestic abuse in the Effutu Municipality should be effectively resourced to ensure effective victim rehabilitation. The study's findings would also benefit government agencies developing policy on domestic violence and anybody interested in women's empowerment. The study findings would provide space for academics to write on a variety of topics related to domestic abuse. The study findings would further provide evidence on the state of domestic violence in the Effutu Municipality and encourage the government to raise awareness and provide necessary support to institutions responsible for rehabilitating victims of domestic violence.

## **1.7 Delimitation**

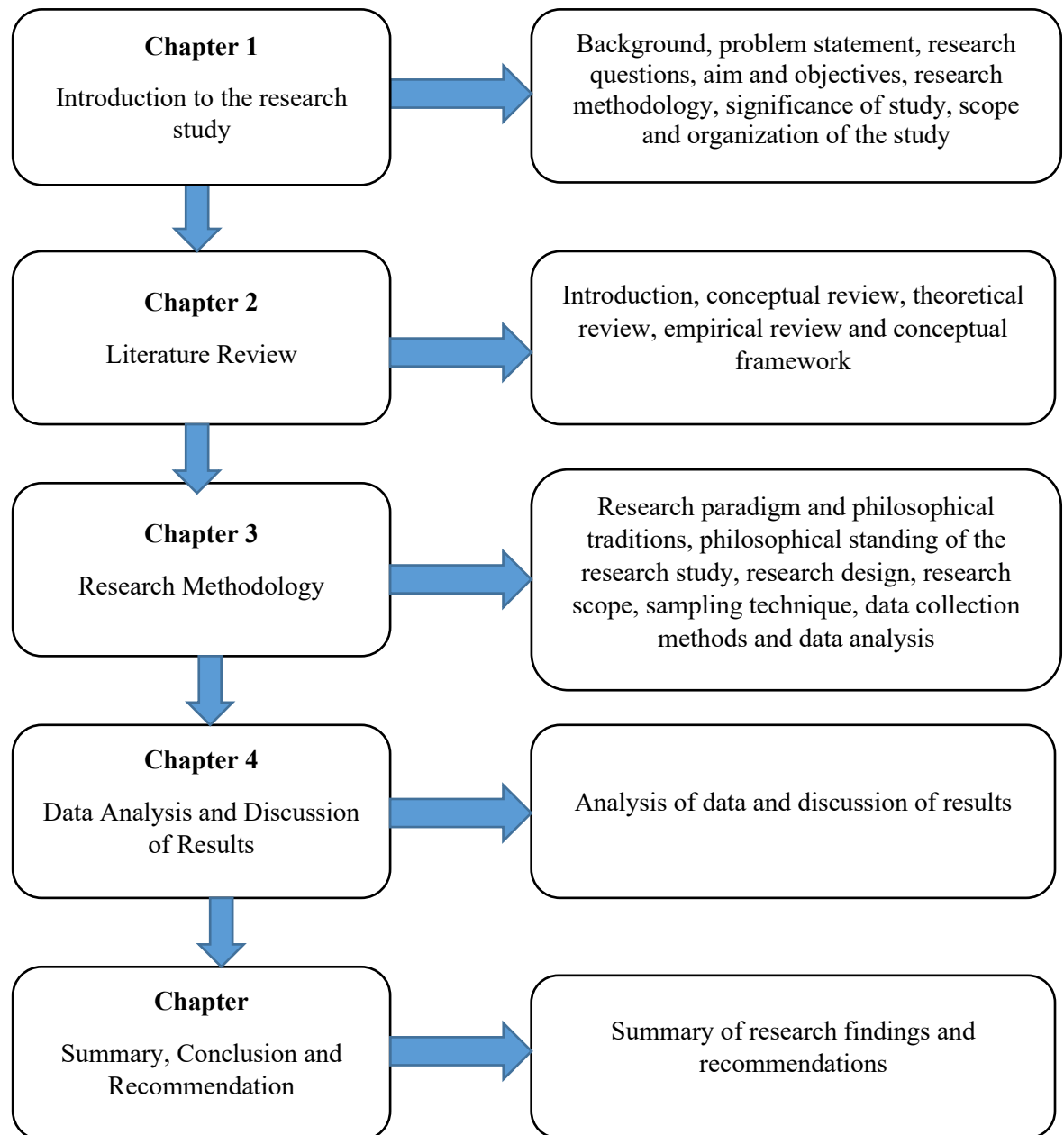
The study was conducted in Winneba in the Effutu Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana. The Effutu Municipality covers a total land area of 95 square kilometres. It is located between 516 and 20.18N. The municipality lies between Gomoa East to western, northern and eastern flanks on the southern flanks of the Gulf of Guinea. Winneba is its administrative capital. The main agricultural activity in the Municipality is fishing.

Winneba was selected because of its low economic prospect. The socio ecological model proposes that violence is prevalent in societies where there is low economic prospect (Jewkes, 2002). The study, therefore, covered people in the Effutu Municipality. It included women victims of domestic violence and officers from DOVVSU. Women were included because Cantalupo (2010) suggests that despite the implementation of the domestic violence 732, women continue to experience violence.

## **1.8 Organisation of the study**

The thesis was presented in five main chapters. The Chapter One of the study leads the reader to the background of the study, the problem statement, purpose and objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and research delimitation. Chapter Two involves the literature review. This chapter considers the conceptual review, theoretical review, empirical review and the development of a conceptual framework for the study. Chapter Three discusses the methodology which was used in achieving the research objectives. The chapter provides details of the research philosophy, population and sample size, sampling technique, main research strategy and design, data source, methods for data collection and data analysis. Chapter Four covers the analysis and discussion of the data collected. This chapter presents the results

of the data collected with the survey instrument and discusses the findings arising out of the study by situating it in the context of current and authoritative related studies. Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusion and recommendation based on the findings. The workflow diagram for the study is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Workflow Diagram for Thesis**

Source: Author's Construct with ideas from UEW Master's thesis rules and guidelines

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical review of the literature on DOVVSU's role in defending women's rights, taking into account the divergent views expressed by various authors on how cases are handled and resolved. It examines the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and their operations in terms of protecting women's rights, serving as a benchmark for the DOVVSU's procedures; the state of domestic violence in Ghana; the protection of women's rights in Ghana; and the DOVVSU's procedures for discharging its duties, addressing the specific needs of victims and education, providing specific training to officials.

#### 2.2 Theoretical Framework

Scholars have produced a variety of hypotheses to explain why humans act in certain ways and why certain events occur concurrently in various places of the world. Theories are guesses about how events occur. According to Venable (2006), a theory is a proclamation of fact established by humanity for application in the realms of practise (where human actions are driven by knowledge) and theory (where scholars prove or disprove traditional knowledge and develop a new knowledge known as theories). Both the social and natural sciences require hypotheses; they enable growth in both fields of study via the formulation and testing of theories. Additionally, Venable (2006) believes that a theoretical framework establishes the study's foundations; it aids in categorising the topic's primary and intervening variables; it aids in predicting the types of relationships that exist between the primary and intervening variables; and it aids in directing the study's direction.

This work was structured within the theory of victims, the feminist theory and the socio-ecological theories which was propounded by (Fattah, 1991), Tandon (2008) and CDC (2019).

### **2.2.1 The Theory of Victims**

Victimological theories were not developed by criminologists or sociologists but rather by poets and novelists. The first systematic treatment of victims of crimes appeared in 1948 (Fattah, 2000). The first person to coin the term victimology was an American psychiatrist, Frederick Wertham in 1949 when he used it in his book *The show of violence* where he emphasized the importance for a science of violence. Proponents like Von Hentig believe that victims also contribute to their own victimization (Fattah, 1991).

According to the theory of victims, domestic violence may be discussed in two ways. The first premise is the susceptibility of an individual to victimisation or abuse. This term encompasses all conceivable or expected risk factors for domestic violence. Natarajan (2002) listed many of them as follows: disconnection from a woman's supporting social network, domestic ineptitude, infertility, and unemployment. When these characteristics are present in a woman's life, she is more likely to depend on her spouse or family, making her more vulnerable to emotional or physical domestic violence. The culturally valid victim is the second victim-logical idea. This relies on cultural norms to excuse, rationalise, and neutralise domestic violence, allowing husbands to batter their wives. For instance, Ofei-Aboagye claims that in some regions of Ghana, physically assaulting a wife is a man's means of instilling discipline in her (teaching her a lesson), and other women are forbidden from openly expressing compassion for these women (Ofei-Aboagye 1994).

According to Nguyen (2005), physical abuse of a woman is also considered acceptable in several regions of Asia. In this line, young people in Africa and Asia develop the erroneous belief that physical violence, particularly towards women, is an acceptable practise. Culturally ingrained customs have been used to justify violence against women to the point that they are now considered the norm. While these factors are changing in major cities and towns, the same cannot be said for smaller towns and villages.

### **2.2.2 The Feminist Theory**

With the development of the active political movement for women in the 1970s, this ideology began to take shape. Tandon (2008) states that the key aims of this theory are to explain why women are oppressed on the basis of race, class, and gender and to develop ways for fixing this issue. Scholars suggest that domestic violence, may be described as male dominance over females in and out of the home. To add to domestic violence, rape, female infanticide, and sexual assault are all forms of abuse directed at females; and a recurring theme throughout is power and gender (Reddy, 2007). Theorists argue for feminism's direction, a movement that pushes for total equality between men and women in all aspects of life (Ofei-Aboagye, 1994). Domestic violence, they assert, happens as a result of patriarchy and a gendered social structure's effects on our communities.

Additionally, feminists work to eradicate patriarchal dominance and women's exploitation in all interactions (Ofei-Aboagye, 1994). According to feminists, violence is the image created by society's unequal power allocation between men and women (Ofei-Aboagye, 1994). When it comes to domestic violence, feminists say that it is necessary to define it in a way that increases awareness and sheds light on diverse

violent behaviours (Giddens, 2006). Domestic violence, they claim, is founded in male supremacy and the patriarchal structure of the culture, which places a premium on male dominance over females; and that domestic violence is a kind of systemic oppression (Giddens, 2006).

Cook (2012) contends that domestic violence is associated with systems and institutions in which males are superior to females, men exercise dominance over women, and females are dependent on males. Women are economically reliant on men, which means they have little or no possibility of escaping violent abuse; men also possess more physical strength, enabling them to dominate women (Cook, 2012). Domestic violence is basically a male-female problem. Social hierarchy is determined by gender. According to Reddy (2007), feminists regard any act of violence against a woman (whether rape or other type of sexual assault) as a means of exerting power over women. Men are trained to be authoritative, dominating, strong, and superior, whereas women are taught to be timid, passive, weak, and inferior (Reddy, 2007).

However, feminist theory has come under scrutiny from scholars such as Paymar (1994) as cited in (Yalley & Olutayo, 2020), who asserts that women are disproportionately responsible for domestic violence. He asserts that males are not mad enough to rise up and begin killing women, especially in this generation, where the majority of people marry against their will. He argues that women become victims of domestic violence when they urge their spouses to turn to violence as a last resort to resolve issues; and that women's behaviour contributes to the stress that males experience until they ultimately erupt in a violent fury (Yalley & Olutayo, 2020). While Yalley and Olutayo (2020) remark maybe correct, it does not imply that one should turn to violence in response to provocation. Feminist theory calls for changes to the laws that control

marriage, divorce, inheritance, child support, and reproductive rights. If these improvements fail in a male-dominated culture, public education about gender equality and domestic violence will be necessary. There should be attempts to end male economic and social dominance; this should include the backing of women-owned enterprises and women's education on the need for self-sufficiency.

### **2.2.3 The Social-Ecological Model as a Framework for Preventive Action**

In an ideal world, it would be preferable to prevent violence before it occurs, which requires an understanding of the factors that contribute to it. The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2019) proposes a paradigm (social-ecological model) to better understand and prevent violence. According to this theory, there is a connection between the individual, the relationship, the community, and the societal forces. This understanding will aid in knowing the causes that force individuals to the forefront of violence or insulate them from witnessing it (CDC, 2019).

Additionally, the framework defines a transverse action to be carried out throughout the model's several stages over a corresponding time span. This method is more likely to contribute to long-term conflict prevention than other unilateral intervention measure (Jewkes, 2002).



**Figure 2: Social-Ecological Model**

### **2.2.3.1 Individual**

This is the first step toward a culture free of violence. It highlights personal characteristics (as proposed by individual rights theorists) that increase an individual's risk of seeing or engaging in violent behaviour (Jewkes, 2002). These characteristics might be personal or biological in origin and include an individual's age, education level, substance usage rate, income level, and history of domestic violence (Hidrobo & Fernald, 2013; Shuib et al., 2013). According to the Institute of Development Studies, it comprises the use of both formal and informal programmes to help individuals manage and prevent domestic violence (2004).

At this level, the emphasis is on supporting behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs that contribute to violence prevention while avoiding those that contribute to violence (CDC, 2019). Methods such as education and life skills training may be applied. This is crucial since DOVVSU is a government institution that interacts with other organisations to aid persons in preventing and overcoming domestic violence.

### **2.2.3.2 Relationships**

This is the second stage of the framework, in which household relationships are analysed to determine which ones increase the likelihood of seeing or perpetrating violence (Jewkes, 2002). According to Osirim (2003), people's behaviours are impacted by their interactions with others and the experiences that emerge from such relationships. Domestic violence perpetrators have witnessed or been victims of domestic abuse directed (WHO, 2017). At this level, preventive strategies include conflict resolution programmes such as family-focused prevention; mentor-mentee connections; peer review programmes; and programmes that strengthen problem-solving abilities (CDC, 2019; Institute of Development Studies, 2004). DOVVSU, in

partnership with other organisations such as the Ark Foundation, Plan Ghana, and the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), organises educational programmes for victims of domestic abuse and their families, particularly children, to encourage and empower victims.

### **2.2.3.3 Community**

This level considers the locations and settings inside society where social interactions occur (Heise, 1998) as cited in (Mantey, 2019). It comprises houses, schools, religious organisations, and enterprises; each of these contexts has specific characteristics that may predispose persons to be abusers or victims (Jewkes, 2002). Domestic violence is more likely to occur in areas with limited economic prospects, where disadvantaged people cluster, where the neighbourhood is socially disorganised, where domestic difficulties are prevalent, and where community engagement is minimal. Positive change in the physical and social environment at this level can prevent such violence. This involves encouraging participation in community events, improving economic options in the nearby neighbourhood, expediting the housing process, and making solid educational and commercial policy decisions. Furthermore, Devereux and SabatesWheeler (2004) propose that community protection strategies avoid economic vulnerabilities and structural and social vulnerabilities.

### **2.2.3.4 Societal**

This last level examines the socio-cultural factors that justify physical violence as the exclusive means of resolving conflicts. It examines social ideas and cultural practices that foster violence and other structural disparities in education, health, and economics that lead to the escalation of inequality ratios between groups in society (CDC, 2019). Domestic abuse may be tolerated in society as a result of the entire socialisation process

during early childhood, when corporal punishment became the sole method used by parents and teachers at home and school (Lansford & Dodge, 2008); witnessing physical abuse at home (Abrahams & Jewkes, 2005; Brookmeyer et al., 2005); and media exposure to physical abuse (Johnson et.al, 2002). At the moment, addressing social norms that excuse aggressiveness and physical abuse may reduce domestic violence.

This may be performed through the mainstream media, including the internet, television, radio, newspapers, and magazines. The media, via the use of a variety of campaign strategies, has the potential to impact social norms successfully (Johnson et.al, 2002).

In a nut shell, the above theories were used to explain why domestic violence occur. Thus, domestic violence occur due to victims own characteristics, patriarchy and male dominance and systemic failure. Again, the theories were used to explain why Winneba was used as the setting for the study. Also, the theories guided in the analyses of data and its interpretation.

### **2.3. Domestic Violence**

According to the American psychological association domestic violence is defined as a parttern of abusive behaviors including a wide range of physical, sexual, and psychological maltreatment used by one person in an intimate relationship against another to gain power unfairly or maintain the person's misuse of power, control, and authority (Rakovec – Felser, 2014).

Notably, Nevada Attorney General (2011) defines it as a violent crime committed against another individual during an intimate connection. It is described by actions of

aggressiveness, coercion, and dominance directed at influencing the behaviour of another individual” (Nevada Attorney General, 2011). Domestic violence is broadly defined as any act that poses a threat or harm to an individual and is likely to result in one of the following: physical maltreatment (physical assault or a proclivity to use physical strength against another person, which includes forcibly detaining, denying another individual basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter, or torturing an individual); sexual abuse (forcing an individual to engage in sexual intercourse that is not consensual); and psychological maltreatment. Domestic violence is broad and encompasses all forms of abuse and coercive behaviour perpetrated by a boyfriend or fiancé, past or current spouse that result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm (WHO, 2013). These forms of abuse contribute to the gender disparity (UNFPA, 2007).

According to Morrish, Horsman, and Hofer (2002), violence is pervasive, and in order to comprehend the many manifestations of violence, one must see it holistically. Additionally, these scholars argued that all forms of violence compound one another in a person's experience. For example, a woman may become susceptible as a result of one type of violence (emotional abuse), which results in another type of violence (economic abuse). Additionally, each new act of aggression has a greater impact and exacerbates the initial violation. Dodd, Nicholas, Povey, and Allison (2004) established the prevalence of repeated violations and that 44% of all women who experience domestic violence are victims of many incidents. Domestic violence, they claimed, is the single offence with the highest rate of re-victimization or violation.

Domestic abuse or violence against women has historically been considered as a recurrent occurrence in gender relationships. Feminist study of violence against women demonstrates how violence reflects women's subordinate character, as shown in violent

acts against women (Roopnarain, 2006). Additionally, Roopnarain (2006) claimed that adopting violent behaviour inside the family is socially sanctioned and viewed as respectable in connection to particular roles.

According to a 2013 international poll, more than 35% of women worldwide are/have been victims of sexual or physical assault (Garca-Moreno et al., 2013). Additionally, Stockl et al. (2013) report that intimate partners are responsible for one in every seven manslaughters and one-third of all female murders worldwide. Domestic violence victims face a slew of health and economic problems in addition to gender imbalances. These include psychological and mental disorders; sexually transmitted diseases such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV); limited maintenance opportunities; and decreased income and productivity (Moosa, 2012).

Ghana is not without its shortcomings when it comes to domestic abuse. According to the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre, one in every three women in Ghana is a victim of domestic violence; three in ten women confess to having been raped in marriage; and 27% of women have been psychologically abused, which includes property destruction, verbal abuse, and threats (Coker-Appiah & Cusack, 1999; Ajayi & Soyinka-Airewele, 2018). Furthermore, the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) showed in 2008 that 38% of women aged 15–49 who had previously been married have experienced psychological, physical, or sexual violence at some point in their life (DHS, 2008).

In general, society has elevated marriage to a necessary position, and women are subject to males; this has resulted in the secrecy surrounding marriage and domestic affairs, ensuring that men's acts cannot be contested (Ampofo, 2008). Nevertheless, much of the 1990s study on domestic abuse in Africa began in Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, and

South Africa, motivated by the efforts of activists who assisted in the passage of domestic violence legislation (Hodgson, 2002; Schneider, 2008). Ghana has made significant efforts to eradicate domestic abuse over the last several decades (IDS, 2016). Ghana's initial legal effort to eradicate domestic abuse was a reflection of the international campaign for women's rights, which includes the CEDAW, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), and the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa; combined with years of support from other international bodies, numerous women's rights organisations, and major civil society organisations (CSOs) (Cook, 2011). According to IDS et al. (2016), the Ghanaian government enacted legislation protecting women's rights and criminalising VAWG. Several of these pieces of legislation include the 1992 Constitution's prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender; the 1998 Criminal Code Amendment Act, which amended the 1960 Criminal Code Act and abolished sacramental slavery; and legal amendments to prohibit FGM, child abuse, and widowhood rights. Additionally, Act 732, the DV Act, was passed in 2007. (IDS et.al, 2016).

Violence against women is defined as “all acts committed against women that cause or threaten to cause them physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm, including the threat to commit such acts; or to impose arbitrary restrictions on or deprivation of fundamental freedoms in private or public life during peacetime and armed conflicts or times of war” (Protocol on the Rights of Women, 2003, Article 1 (j)). It is defined by the United Nations General Assembly (1993) as “any act of gender-based violence that causes or is likely to cause physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether committed in public or private life.” According to Prügl and True (2014), violence against women can occur as a result of an act committed by an individual or a state.

Rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, coercion in the reproductive process, female infanticide, prenatal sex selection, and obstetric violence are only a few of the crimes “committed by individuals.” And the state is accountable for the following: forced sterilisations and abortions, wartime rape, sexual assault, and enslavement resulting from combat” ‘. Sexual, physical, and psychological violence against women and girls (VAWG) can occur in both peace and wartime households, schools, and workplaces (Hossain & Welchman, 2005).

#### **2.4 Causes of Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence is often based on men's poverty and illiteracy. This statement, however, has been debunked, as domestic violence happens at all levels of society, whether wealthy or impoverished (Keltosová, 2002; Morrish, Horsman, & Hofer, 2002). Additionally, they argued that domestic violence affects women from all socioeconomic strata and ethnic groups. Jackson's (2007) findings also appear to indicate that domestic violence is prevalent among women in the middle and higher echelons of society. Keltosová stated that one possible explanation for the frequency of domestic abuse among impoverished women is that it is much easier to conceal violence when the abuser is wealthy or his circle of acquaintances includes prominent members of society. The available research does not support the concept that uneducated or impoverished individuals are more prone to mistreat their wives or spouses than educated or wealthy individuals (Asiedu, 2016b). On the contrary, Keltosová (2002) found that around half of all men who conduct violence against women had a college degree. As a result, one may argue that the incidence of domestic violence appears to grow with income and education level. Domestic violence is also considered to be caused by alcohol and drug abuse. While alcohol and drugs have historically been connected with domestic violence, they do not always cause the violence. Sixty-two

percent of 336 convicted domestic violence offenders consumed alcohol, and 48 percent of offenders were alcohol dependent (Gilcrist, Johnson, Takriti, Weston, Beech & Kebbell, 2003). Numerous husbands who batter their spouses are not alcoholics. Men who drink and physically abuse their wives frequently do not beat up strangers, parents, or bosses, but direct their aggression exclusively against their personal partners (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2004; Keltosová, 2002; Morrish, Horsman, & Hofer, 2002).

According to Women's Aid study, abusers who have a history of drinking or drug use are more likely to blame the alcohol or drugs for their behaviour. However, blaming anything else does not absolve abusers of responsibility for their conduct. Additionally, it emphasised that there can never be a shift in responsibility for domestic violence and that the reasons of domestic violence are more complex than just being the consequence of alcohol or substance abuse. Domestic violence and substance misuse must be treated independently and as distinct from one another (Asiedu, 2016b). On the other side, abused women may turn to drink or drugs in order to conceal or conceal their abuse (as a way of evasion) (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2004).

Another myth concerning domestic violence worth debunking is the belief that women who have been abused never leave their abusers and that when they do, they wind up in comparable or worse situations (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2004; Keltosová, 2002). Keltosová continued by stating that women who are victims of domestic violence cannot simply leave an abusive intimate partner or relationship even if their lives are threatened, because leaving does not ensure that the abuse would cease. On the contrary, a British crime study of 338 women found that while the majority of women who left violent spouses did not face more violence, 37% said that violations

continued. 18% of individuals who fled their abusers continued to face victimisation through stalking and other types of intimidation. Almost 7% of individuals who departed reported that their transgressions greatly increased after they ceased living with their romantic partners (Walby & Allen, 2004). Indeed, the time period between when an abused woman decides to leave an abusive relationship and one year after her departure is frequently seen as the most dangerous for the woman and her dependents (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2004). Humphreys and Thiara (2002) found that 76% of 400 respondents had dealt with post-separation violence. 76% of women reported chronic verbal and emotional abuse, with 41% reporting life-threatening intimidation directed at themselves or their dependents. Additionally, they allege that 23% were exposed to physical violence and 6% to sexual assault (Humphreys & Thiara, 2002).

Keltosová (2002) asserts that battered women have several justifiable grounds for remaining in a violent relationship. These encompass, but are not limited to, social, economic, and cultural dimensions. According to Osei-Tutu and Ampadu (2017), any justifications women give for remaining with violent spouses are legitimate. For example, virtually often when a woman is forced to flee from a violent household, she lacks proper housing (shelter), lacks the cash to sustain herself and her dependents, feels ashamed about her maltreatment, and blames the results on herself. Again, she feared being singled out for blame and accusations by her friends, family, and community (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2004). For example, having to respond to the inquiry, "What did you do to deserve to be beaten?" When women find themselves in situations such as these, they are powerless to make choices that will lead to isolation. Additionally, an abused woman may be unwilling to seek help or may reject all forms of aid totally as a result of the abuse-induced poor self-esteem (Women's Aid Federation

of England, 2004; Keltosová, 2002). According to Natarajan (2002), if a female divorces or separates from her husband and returns to her parents' house as a result of marital discord, this is regarded a highly disgraceful behaviour that brings dishonour to her parents' family.

This alleged despicable deed obstructs any of her siblings from marrying. Additionally, leaving her husband's house is a perilous journey and sufficient justification for her to be murdered or subjected to additional violence. According to a YouGov (2004) study of over 400 women, 52% of respondents claimed that they would be extremely uncomfortable and humiliated to tell their acquaintances about their abuse, while 59% would not discuss or talk about the abuse with relatives. This is because the lady was afraid her violent spouse would carry out his threats to hurt her, her dependents, friends, and relatives (Humphreys & Thiara, 2002). As a result, battered women were the only ones who could accurately determine whether it was safe to flee their attackers (Lees, 2000).

Women should be supported and/or provided with safe choices to enable them to make decisions for themselves and others who rely on them. Women who are abused require financial assistance, shelter, transportation, continual police protection, legal aid, and, most importantly, emotional support or counselling in order to leave their abusive homes (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2004). When abused women are unsure of these or are unable to provide for them, they are unwilling to leave the violent relationship. Some women also seek assistance from close family members or friends, and the kind of the assistance these individuals provide facilitates their decision-making (YouGov, 2004). According to YouGov (2004), whichever of the relationship choice an abused woman takes with her abuser, the support and safe alternatives she receives

must contribute to her overall safety. Women must have continual care throughout the period they are still living with their abuser. If assistance becomes conditional on her leaving or quitting, she may recoil and continue to suffer unnecessarily from abuse.

Another popular fallacy regarding domestic violence is that an abused woman frequently abandons her spouse. Contrary to popular perceptions of battered women as weak and powerless, women who remain in abusive relationships frequently depart and take active actions to limit their victimisation as well as establish procedures to safeguard their dependents (Osei-Tutu & Ampadu, 2017). According to a Women's Aid research, women cohabiting with violent men or leaving violent relationships suggest that they seek an end to their violence and are continuously attempting to protect themselves from it.

Additionally, they may engage in a variety of ways in response to the violence. They adopt a variety of strategies, including changing their own behaviour. For example, avoiding particular circumstances or pleasing the abuser by agreeing with his requests and, in certain cases, providing the abuser presents or gifts (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2004). According to Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, and Lewis (2000), the women sought outside assistance to deal with their violence in their research. Considering this, one could claim that these women were neither helpless nor hopeless. Despite the detrimental consequences of living with violent males, the majority of women have significant strengths and retained good perceptions of themselves.

In the 1970s, it was believed that men who beat their spouses suffered from a mental disease that could be treated with medicine (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2004; Keltosová, 2002). However, these studies discovered that the behaviour of domestic violence perpetrators did not match the characteristics of those with mental conditions.

This is because aggressive guys often abuse only their intimate companions (women). In comparison, individuals suffering from mental diseases are unable to choose whom to violate or to confine their aggressive behaviour to their personal partners.

Several older studies classified abused women as mentally unstable or sick. However, it was discovered that the results of these previous investigations were skewed. This was because the investigations focused only on women who were confined to mental institutes or hospitals. Then, rather than being probed about the source of their spouses' illness, the aggressive males were interrogated. This gave them carte blanche to trash the accounts of women who had been victimised in psychiatric institutes or hospitals. Indeed, a sizable proportion of abused women do not have any mental disease. Additionally, it was observed that many of the battered women hospitalised were misdiagnosed due to a lack of education and awareness about the physical and mental consequences of domestic violence (Zorza, 2002).

According to a 2004 study conducted by the Women's Aid Federation of England, the great majority of persons with mental health difficulties do not abuse others. However, a small percentage of persons who suffer from a mental condition may exhibit abusive behaviour. However, this may not always correspond to their mental health situation. Again, suppose an abuser selects carefully when and where to abuse an intimate partner. In that case, they have a high level of awareness or awareness of their conduct (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2004).

Men, it is believed, are also victims of domestic abuse. However, research indicates that women are victims of domestic violence in 95 percent of cases and that globally, at least one-third of women have been physically abused, coerced into sex, or abused in other ways, most frequently by a husband or another male family member (Women's

Aid Federation of England, 2004; Keltosová, 2002). According to New Zealand research, 37% of 961 women who experienced domestic violence reported being physically attacked by partners, 15% by father or stepfather, 11% by brother or stepbrother, 4% by mother or stepmother, and 3% by other family members (Kazantzis et al, 2000).

When women commit acts of violence against males, it is mostly to protect themselves. It is claimed that complaints of female-on-male violence are frequently exaggerated because aggressive males make charges against their partners to avoid or minimise their own guilt (Women's Aid Federation of England, 2004; Keltosová, 2002). Additionally, males who have actually experienced domestic abuse have a greater number of options available to them to help them exit abusive situations than women do (Osei-Tutu & Ampadu, 2017).

Between one in four and half of all women worldwide suffer some sort of intimate relationship abuse (Violence Manual, 2003).

Domestic violence victims remain silent about their abuse because of humiliation, fear of being blamed, or fear of being victimised again by the abuser (Keltosová, 2002). Additionally, males who assault women are perceived to do so because they have lost control of their rage and are angry and stressed out due to their unemployment. On the other hand, domestic violence has been established to be deliberate behaviour, and abusive males are not out of control.

Their aggression is deliberately directed against certain individuals and locations (Dobash et al., 2000; YouGov, 2004; and Women's Aid Federation of England, 2003). Abusers frequently self-regulate their abusive behaviour. They typically abuse their

spouses in private or in the privacy of their own homes, attempting to conceal any outward symptoms of abuse or proof. Additionally, violent guys exercise caution in their manner of abuse selection. Some ruin their partners' belongings, while others threaten their children (Keltosová, 2002). Additionally, studies reveal that some abusive males may seem gentlemanly and collected despite being violent (YouGov, 2004). Domestic abuse cannot be ascribed to unemployment or poverty, as it spans across all cultures and socioeconomic classes.

Another myth worth debunking is the belief that domestic violence occurs primarily in villages and distant rural locations and that victims like being assaulted (Richard, Letchford & Stratton, 2008). Domestic violence, however, has been observed in rural and urban populations alike. Domestic abuse is a global issue (WHO, 2002). Domestic violence victims are desperate for the assault to stop. As a result, they employ a variety of measures to ensure their survival and the protection of their dependents, including reporting to or contacting the authorities, as well as soliciting aid from family members and friends (Dutton, 1994). The preceding section examined several myths used to justify violence against women in civilizations and gave data that diluted and rendered such myths worthless. Over time, these myths have infiltrated diverse societies and belief systems and become accepted as reality. Acceptance of these beliefs promotes women's inferiority to males while ensuring men's power over women.

Appiah (2013) study established that the majority of women did not seek their spouses' agreement before travelling. This, however, was in reference to short travels, not extensive miles. Additionally, it was discovered that the decision to have sex is frequently mutual. This was surprising, as male requests came first, while female initiation came last. Further investigation reveals that the males send the signals and the

females reply, but when the females fail to respond positively, sexual rape results in sexual assault. While the traditional role of women in the kitchen has not changed, the study demonstrates that men are beginning to see the need of assisting their spouses in the kitchen in light of difficult economic circumstances and multiple duties imposed on women. Domestic violence happens within the confines of intimate relationships. Among the most significant findings was that women considered domestic violence as a natural occurrence that did not require public awareness (Appiah, 2013). The term "violence" was used to refer to those severe occurrences that resulted in damage. Pushing, choking, petty insults, and enforcing decisions on partners were also not viewed as acts of violence or abuse. These were viewed as natural occurrences and a necessary part of the growth of marriages and relationships. Abuse was not reported, which aided in the establishment of the domestic violence canker. This development has been reinforced because women believe this is how they were raised and ingrained in their worldview. Domestic financial difficulties became the primary source of tension and consequent abuse. This was a result of women's excessive reliance on their male relationships and males' outright stinginess toward their lovers. Domestic abuse has been attributed to the irresponsibility of the majority of males. Normalization exacerbates the situation. The premise that underpins this study is valid, as it has been demonstrated that women do not disclose domestic violence abuse to the police, let alone expect law enforcement organisations to respond appropriately. They may only notify when their life is gravely endangered, not even when they suspect it will be jeopardised (Appiah, 2013).

Appiah's (2013) study discovered no rise in female partner abuse in the studied area. It became clear that women's primary method of physical abuse against their boyfriends was choking. Males often committed the most heinous acts of violence on their female

spouses. The study's findings indicate that women in the study region do not disclose incidences of domestic violence abuse not because they have never been abused, but because it is not in their best interests to do so. Again, their spouses' abuse was deemed inconsequential and did not warrant reporting to the police since they could manage it themselves. The procedure for resolving dispute was by conciliation and compromise, and occasionally by opting not to comment or touch the problematic item again (Ajayi & Soyinka-Airewele, 2018). The study's findings indicate that the majority of women were ignorant of the domestic violence statute. Those that were aware of the measure had a cursory understanding and were unaware of what the bill sought to do for the majority of women. Among the effects they anticipate from the law is compensation for battered women. Additionally, women expected their boyfriends to apologise. This data indicates that the majority of women were not willing for their boyfriends to be imprisoned if guilty of such abuse. This is explained by their desire to avoid seeing their partners imprisoned, regardless of the magnitude of the suffering they may have caused their female companions.

According to Dery and Diedong (2014), males are less likely to commit acts of violence in the region under certain circumstances: the most prevalent forms of violence were psychological, physical, and sexual. The findings of this study suggest that in order to fully understand domestic violence against women in Ghana's Upper West Region, we should examine several socio-demographic variables, including couples' unemployment; alcohol use; Islam or traditional religious affiliation; rural residence; and a woman's husband's lack of appreciation for her due to embedded internalisation of gender roles differentiation. It was recognised that women in the Upper West Region are prone to experience domestic abuse regardless of their work status, education level, or professional position. What is likely to vary is the sort of domestic violence suffered

by various types of women. Women with a greater level of education and social position have been recognised as being at a lower risk of physical and sexual assault, yet they are not immune to psychological abuse. The study's findings cannot be extended to all men and women in Ghana because it focused exclusively on domestic violence among married couples. The connection between these sociodemographic characteristics and domestic violence derives from the gendered manner in which these variables manifest themselves in Ghana's Upper West Region. In such a patriarchal culture, and as defined by gender roles, traditional customs and religious beliefs favour males by allowing them to transfer their duties and miseries to women, mostly through violence (Dery & Diedong, 2014). Further research might be more nuanced by using a more representative sample from all ten regions of Ghana, more feminist ethnographic approaches, and longitudinal designs to gather more in-depth information-rich views on the complex processes of domestic violence. A more comprehensive investigation of the association between domestic violence and education might be conducted, given the current study indicates that education greatly reduces domestic violence.

## **2.5 Types of Domestic Violence**

At least one-third of women worldwide have been physically assaulted, coerced into sex, or mistreated in other ways, most frequently by someone close to them (Violence Manual, 2003). Morrish, Horsman, and Hofer (2002) claimed that violence exists everywhere and manifests itself in a variety of ways. The many types of violence are interconnected and influence every area of a woman's life. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna recognised that many types of violence against women and girls exist.

### **2.5.1 Physical Abuse**

The term "physical abuse" refers to the act of physically injuring another person (Mills, 2008). The most obvious form of domestic violence is physical assault, which is also the most lethal (Violence Manual, 2003). Physical abuse typically begins with little disagreements, ranging from a gentle nudge during an argument to a woman's hand being grabbed forcibly. 2003 Manual on Violence. However, the abuse (battering) grows more severe over time, becomes frequent, and occasionally results in the lady dying from her injuries (Walby & Allen, 2004; Coomaraswamy, 2000; Violence Manual, 2003).

Physical abuse can take the form of striking any part of the woman, shoving, strangling, squeezing, and hair pulling, as well as scorching with fire or hot materials and restraint (Human Rights Watch, 1998). For example, a Human Rights Watch poll discovered that a sizable number of women had endured repeated physical attacks at the hands of their spouses or intimate partners while living in refugee camps. Victims were assaulted with various objects, including hands, bottles, shoes, rods, and cutlasses. Several of these women need medical treatment for their injuries at clinics and hospitals. Human Rights Watch interviewed women who had scars on their bodies, lacerations on their bodies, or shattered body parts such as fingers, teeth, or toes (Human Rights Watch, 1998). According to Sam (1999), one in every three Ghanaian women has been assaulted physically. For instance, Ofei-Aboagye claims that in some regions of Ghana, physically assaulting a wife is a man's means of instilling discipline in her (teaching her a lesson), and other women are forbidden from openly expressing compassion for these women. These damaged women should learn to be submissive within their culture.

Certain Ghanaian customs and traditions allow males to impose or employ some sort of punishment (physical abuse) on their wives as necessary to maintain harmony in their families (Ofei-Aboagye 1994). Women are socialised to view physical and mental violence as a reserved prerogative of men as a result of this history. Additionally, certain cultural concepts in some nations legitimise certain forms of violence against women. According to Coomaraswamy (2000), religious and historical traditions have historically sanctioned wife whipping. The concept of males possessing women has been used to justify wife abuse. This is shown in males who manage family wealth and property, which instantly vests them with the authority to make and reverse choices. This effectively results in male dominance and control over female bodies and sexuality. Again, another ancient practise that sanctioned physical violence against women was the seventeenth-century British common law, which purportedly enabled husbands to beat their wives on the condition that the cane used was not larger than the husband's thumb (Garcia-Moreno, 1999).

### **2.5.2 Sexual Abuse / Marital Abuse**

Sexual abuse is described as any sexual activity that occurs without consent and may involve unwanted touching, coerced sex or rape, purposeful infliction of pain during sex, and documenting sexual interactions (CEDAW, 1979). Additionally, it may be characterised as coercing a victim into having sex against their will and/or coercing someone into doing sexual actions that violate their religious convictions (WHO, 2013). Threats to coerce the victim into submission or use a range of emotional abuse techniques to get the victim to consent to unwanted sexual practices out of fear or shame (Human Rights Watch, 1999). Again, victim yield to unwelcome sexual advances when abusers threaten them with physical assault, desertion, or some other form of punishment (Violence Manual, 2003). Sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to,

the following: excessive jealousy, the use of sexually derogatory terms, sexual criticism, coerced sexual activity (vaginal, anal, or oral), coerced undressing, withholding sex and affection, coerced sexual activity following physical assault, coerced sexual activity while tired or sick, and coerced sexual activity while tired or sick (Coomaraswamy, 2000). CEDAW (1979) states that regardless of the form or manner in which sex happens, whether by physical strength, financial or emotional ties, or manipulation, every sexual act that occurs without mutual consent is a sexual violation.

According to a United Nations Population Fund report (2000), forced sex and other types of sexual violence are on the rise, although many rape incidents go unreported due to the stigma associated with them. Additionally, the research said that estimates of the percentage of recorded rape incidents varied from less than 3% in South Africa to little over 16% in the United States.

Male partners avoiding sexual touch or encounters with their partners is another kind of sexual abuse (Mills, 2008). According to Mills, sexual denial demoralises women, increasing their likelihood of engaging in degrading sexual activities to appease their spouses. As a result, Mills asserts that women's value is diminished.

When victims spouses forces sex on them, they becomes confused about whether or not they have been "really raped," and the majority of abusers are unaware of this reality as well. For example, there appears to be an unspoken universal consensus that when rape occurs outside the house by an unknown individual, rape has occurred and is therefore wrong (Morrish, Horsman & Hofer, 2002). However, when rape occurs inside marriages or cohabiting couples, none of the parties would generally choose to mark it as a criminal conduct or crime (Human Rights Watch, 1998).

Once a woman consents to marry a man, the husband is presumed to have limitless access to her body (Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, 1996). Additionally, the report states that marital rape is a deliberate act committed to punish, frightening, and controlling women's identity and behaviour. When wives are raped, they accept responsibility for the abuse (Coomaraswamy, 2000).

This blaming is intensified further by the abuser's explanations, particularly when no apparent physical injury occurred or could be detected immediately (Human Rights Watch, 1998). This circumstance presents many men with an excellent chance to deny using force to obtain sex from their spouses or committing rape. This makes it extremely difficult for women to sue males for rape because most legislation demands proof of rape. However, marriage is a contract established on the basis of mutual love, respect, and regard. Each partner has a right to their own body, and while considering each individual's sexual needs is natural, pushing sex or forcing sexual actions is not a display of love, but a deliberate breach of the trust that underpins marriage (Violence Manual, 2003 and Coomaraswamy, 2000). For example, in nations with legislation prohibiting marital rape, between 10% and 15% of women report being raped by intimate partners (Heise, Pitanguy & Germaine, 1994). According to Violence Manual (2003), between 12 and 25% of women have been subjected to some kind of forced sex by an intimate partner or ex-partner, citing several population-based research.

### **2.5.3 Threats/Verbal Abuse**

abusers who mistreat victims also threaten to dominate them further (Violence Manual, 2003). Threats have been shown to be just as destructive as physical assault (Walby & Allen, 2004 & Violence Manual, 2003). Abusers frequently demonstrate their intent to

injure or their capacity to carry out threats by hitting walls or furniture, kicking pets, or engaging in other aggressive behaviours.

While threats are frequently used in conjunction with physical abuse, they are also frequently used in conjunction with emotional/psychological abuse. Typically, abusers threaten to take away the children, injure a dependant, flee, or commit suicide (Violence Manual, 2003). Threats, whether physical, sexual, or emotional, are used by abusers to maintain ultimate control over their victims by creating fear and guaranteeing obedience with their instructions and demands. Human Rights Watch, 1999 & 1998; Violence Manual, 2003; Coomaraswamy, 2000; and Coomaraswamy, 2000).

Verbal abuse is when a victim is subjected to severe and genuine insults and humiliations. (Violence Manual, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 1999; Human Rights Watch, 1998). Verbal abuse has a detrimental effect on the self-esteem and self-concept of victims. These are accomplished by the abuser downplaying the victim's aspirations, beliefs, and values (Human Rights Watch, 1999 & 1998). Verbal abuse includes yelling or shouting, using insulting or humiliating comments in private or public, addressing the victim by name, laughing at or mocking her, and sending rude or unpleasant notes.

#### **2.5.4 Financial Abuse**

Financial abuse may take a variety of forms, ranging from the abuser withholding all monies from the victim to making them fully accountable for all finances while engaging in irresponsible money management. (Violence Manual, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 1999 & 1998). Again, the abuser attempts to entangle the victim financially or completely pushes housekeeping tasks onto the them, while simultaneously denying the victim employment chances or impeding their ability to work (Tolman & Rosen, 2001; Coomaraswamy, 2000; Human Rights Watch, 1999 & 1998; Sachs, 1999). Financial

abuse includes preventing the victim from obtaining or maintaining employment, failing to account for any funds spent, denying victim access to their cheque book, bank account, and other financial assets, requesting the victim to perform unwanted sexual acts for money, and refusing to allow money to be spent on the children or on victim (Violence Manual, 2003).

### **2.5.5 Emotional/Psychological Abuse/ Isolation**

Psychological abuse refers to the repeated commission of damaging and overt nonphysical acts against an intimate partner, child, or dependent adult. It include the use of threats against the a victim or her dependents, the restriction of the victim's liberty, and the deliberate destabilisation or isolation of them. Abuse and violations of any kind are crippling. However, because emotional or psychological abuse is subtle and intangible, it is more difficult to identify and report than other forms of abuse (Mills, 2008; WHO, 1999).

Since emotional abuse is typically difficult to detect, and the victimised frequently is unaware of their abuse. According to Ofei-aboagye (1994) as cited in (Adomako Ampofo, 2008), when a victim is sexually harassed or physically assaulted, they have certain rights and legal remedies; but, when they are mentally abused, those rights and legal recourse are often eroded. Coomaraswamy (2000) found a strong correlation between domestic violence and suicide when investigating violence against women in the family. This, she observes, is supported by research conducted in the United States, Fige, Papua New Guinea, Peru, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Coomaraswamy reiterates that a woman who has experienced domestic abuse is more likely (12 times) to attempt suicide than a woman who has not experienced domestic violence. For example, in the United States, 35 to 40% of mistreated women had attempted suicide

at least once. According to the WHO, men dominate and/or restrict women's behaviours and social interactions by limiting their family and social activities and involvement, by demanding to know her whereabouts at all times and on all occasions, by blaming or making comments implying unfaithfulness, and by expressing extreme jealousy, among other things (WHO, 2013).

Isolation is another technique used by abusers to inflict emotional or psychological harm. This occurs when abusers exert control over whom women may meet or speak with, where they can and cannot go, who they can speak with or shake hands with, and what they can and cannot do with or without him (Violence Manual, 2003 and Human Rights Watch, 1999 & 1998). According to the WHO, male partners attempt to control and/or limit their female partners' behaviours and social interactions by limiting social and family interactions, insisting on knowing her whereabouts at all times, expressing suspicion or jealousy, becoming angry when the woman is social (especially speaking with another man), and requiring permission for medical care (WHO, 2013).

Abusers explain their dominance over victims by claiming that their controlling behaviour is motivated by their profound care for them or by a desire to ensure their safety when they are out (Human Rights Watch, 1998 & 1999). This behaviour enables the abuser to justify his isolation techniques, although in reality, they believe that every relationship, whether familial, friend, or professional, has the potential to undermine their control and drive their partner away (Coomaraswamy, 2000). Isolation has the effect of making victims feel extremely alone and eventually increasing their reliance on the abuser (Human Rights Watch, 1999 & 1998). Isolation tactics include frequent monitoring of female partners, accusing them of unfaithfulness, relocating to remote areas with limited public transportation and no telephone access, forbidding female

partners from leaving the house without their company, demanding facts about all the woman's actions and conversations, preventing the woman from working, and blaming all friends and family members (Violence Manual, 2003).

#### **2.5.6 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)/Trokosi/Witch Camps**

FGM may be deemed a harmful practise under Article 5 of the Protocol on the Rights of Women and Article 21 of the African Children's Charter. Harmful practises are defined as "any behaviour, attitude, or practise that is detrimental to women and girls' fundamental rights, such as their right to life, health, dignity, education, and physical integrity" (Art 5, Protocol on the Rights of Women, 2003). FGM is a procedure in which an entire or a portion of the clitoris of a girl between the ages of 4 and 12 is removed by older women using instruments such as scissors, broken bottles, and stones to preserve her virginity and transform her into a marriage candidate (Wheeler, 2003).

This procedure has a long-term effect on the victim in terms of childbirth and sexual activity; and it also constitutes a blatant violation of the victim's civil and political rights, including the right to life, dignity, bodily integrity, and privacy (Mtshali, 2010). FGM is now a criminal offence under the 1998 Criminal Code Amendment Act (Art 69B, Criminal Code Amendment Act, 2012). While official agencies assert that FGM has dropped, several NGOs assert that it continues to be practised in Ghana and that victim ages are significantly lower than they were previously (Mtshali, 2010). According to these NGOs, parents sought a different choice since their children were being informed in school about FGM. As a result, they have resorted to FGM prior to the child reaching school-age. This development necessitates a concerted effort on the part of communities to put a stop to the practise (Wheeler, 2003).

In essence, "trokosi" means "wife to the gods," and it is predominantly practised among the Ewes in Ghana (Mtshali, 2010). It is a sort of slavery that results in sexual assault and a practise that puts human rights and culture at odds. In this case, a young virgin is offered to the priest of the gods as a wife in exchange for atonement for crimes done by a current relative or forebears. The girls are compelled to work in the shrines for the priest; when they give birth, it is not the priest who is responsible, but the gods (Asiedu, 2016a). Clearly, trokosi violates the victims' socioeconomic, civil, and political rights. A discriminating conduct that results in women's exploitation and maltreatment. It results in domestic violence and violations of one's rights to education, health, and sexuality (Mtshali, 2010).

Additionally, trokosi is a criminal offence under the Criminal Code Amendment Act of 1998 (Article 314A (1), Criminal Code Amendment Act, 1998). Both government institutions, such as the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and DOVVSU, have informed the majority of the country's populations about the adverse consequences of trokosi and the human rights implications. Despite this, trokosi continues to exist in the majority of rural villages, indicating a lack of enforcement of legislation criminalising the crime. The majority of communities remain oblivious to the problem out of fear of upsetting the gods, which makes apprehending the perpetrators of the deed extremely difficult (Mtshali, 2010).

According to Doku and Asante (2015), in most societies with a high level of superstition, it is common to see persons marginalised as witches; the majority of these victims are older women. These witches are compelled to congregate at a certain location in order to find peace with one another. The majority of these camps are located in Ghana's northern region (Mtshali, 2010). This practise violates the Protocol on the

Rights of Women since women living in these camps experience obstacles such as lack of access to community amenities, prompting them to seek them out in neighbouring communities. Camp owners occasionally exploit these women, who force the women to farm, gather firewood, manually quarry stones in the scorching tropical heat, and travel great distances to obtain water (Teye-Topey 1999). According to Ghana's Constitution (Articles 15(1) and (2), 13(1), 14(1), 17(2), 26(2), and 21), the victims' socioeconomic, civil, and political rights are being infringed (1g). They include the right to human dignity; the right to life, personal liberty; the right not to be discriminated against; the right not to be subjected to cruel or harmful cultural practises; and the right to mobility within Ghana (Mtshali, 2010). According to a 2008 CHRAJ assessment, the law directing the criminalization of such actions is insufficient, and hence the government should increase the application of victim protection legislation.

## **2.6 History of the Domestic violence Act (732) and the State of Women in Ghana**

Agbitor (2012) maintain that the incidence of domestic violence in Ghana and certain African countries is rampant and has an overwhelming effect on its victims and the society at large. Many African countries have come up with laws that will help address domestic violence, defend victims and discipline offenders (Darkwah & Prah, 2016).

Below is a table of major policies that African countries adopted to curb the issue of violence against women.

**Table 1: Policies adopted by African countries to curb issues of violence against women**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Policy</b>
1981	African charter on Human and People's Rights.
1994	The African Platform for Action on women – Dakar Declaration. “violation women's right is violation of human rights,
1995	The protocol to the African charter on human and people's rights of women in Africa – encouraged states to implement laws to eradicate violence against women.
1999	The African Commission on Human and People's Rights recruited a special Rapporteur on rights of women who had authority to assist as the centre for women right protection.
2004	African – Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and women's empowerment even though domestic violence was not the focus, it was a major step.
2007	The African Commission on Human and People's rights – Resolution III for victims of sexual violence (women and girls will have to be cured and compensated.

Source: IDS et al, 2016

As a means of addressing Domestic violence, Ghana as a nation has contributed to national and international legal interventions and campaigns to push for women's rights to be acknowledged and protected. These actions resulted in the Government of Ghana enacting several national laws to protect women's rights and outlaw violence against women and girls. These include a provision in the 1992 Constitution that prohibited discrimination based on sex; the 1998 Criminal Code Amendment Act; and legal amendments criminalising certain harmful traditional practices, such as widowhood rites (1984), FGM (1995) and child abuse (1998) (action aid Ghana, n.d.).

Below are the policies and conditions that circulated the implementation of the domestic violence act (732) of Ghana. In the year 1999 the International Federation of

Women Lawyers, FIDA Ghana made an efforts to push the domestic violence bill as a private member's Bill in Parliament. In the year 2001 a draft bill is submitted to the Attorney General's (AG's) department for consideration. The Bill then became a Government Bill in 2002. In 2003 The Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs, MOWAC, under the Hon. Gladys Asmah was tasked by government as the Ministry sponsor the Bill, supported by the then Minister of Justice, Paapa Owusu-Ankomah. The AG's department prepared a second draft.

The then Minister for Women and Children's Affairs, Hon. Gladys Asmah mobilises resources from the United Nations System and MOWAC undertakes outreach and consultative programmes on the Draft Bill in four regions, namely Brong Ahafo, Western, Upper East and Northern Regions, with the launching done in Koforidua in the Eastern Region.

In 2005 MOWAC was tasked by Cabinet to cover the rest of the country and the second phase of the sensitisation and consultative programmes visits to the remaining six regions, namely the Volta, Upper West, Eastern, Central, Greater-Accra and Ashanti Regions.

In 2006, the Hon. Esther Obeng Dapaah, a member of parliament, noted important shortcomings of the existing legislation, namely the criminal code, for dealing with domestic violence, including the fact that the law does not provide compensation for the victim or counselling for the victim and abuser.

In 2006 the Bill was introduced in parliament and referred to two committees for comment: the joint committee on gender and children, and the committee on

constitutional, legal and parliamentary affairs. In 2007 (February 21): the domestic violence bill was passed (Adu-Gyamerah, 2007).

## **2.7 The State of Women in Ghana and Women Rights challenges**

The purpose of this review is to assist the researcher in connecting the causes and prevention of domestic violence as advocated by theorists to their theoretical framework. Individual rights-based theories ascribe domestic violence to the institutions and structures that underpin them. Domestic violence is viewed as a result of male-female inequality by feminist theorists (Tandon, 2008; Ofei-Aboagye, 1994; Cook, 2012; Reddy, 2007); and by socio-cultural theorists who believe that domestic violence is tolerated due to traditions and norms (Thomas & Beasley, 1993; Tsikata, 1993; Hidrobo & Fernald, 2013; Shuib et al., 2013; Zakae et al., 2016). Clearly, knowing the status of women in Ghana enables the researcher to make connections between the findings and theory and literature.

According to the Ghana Statistical Service's 2021 Population and Housing Census report, Ghana has a total population of 30,832,019. according to the Housing Census (PHC). Males make up 12,024,845 (49%) of the population, while females make up 12,633,978 (51%). Greater Accra has a population of around 4,010,054 individuals, 1,938,225 of whom are male. According to GSS (2010), the highest proportion of males are married, followed by male heads of home, married men, men in consensual relationships, males who have separated, widowers, and those who have divorced (GSS, 2010). When it comes to ethnic groupings, the Akan have the most men per capita, followed by the Mole-Dagbani, Ewes, and Ga-Dangme. Additionally, Pentecostals/Charismatics have the biggest percentage of the male total population, followed by Muslims, Protestants, Catholics, other Christians, atheists, and

traditionalists. On the other hand, Males are employed at a rate of 71.4 percent (GSS, 2016). Greater Accra accounts for 801,925 of this total (GSS, 2015).

In general, women's rights have unquestionably advanced in Ghana throughout the years. Despite this, they continue to confront obstacles that prevent them from enjoying complete independence; as a result, their civil, political, and socioeconomic liberties are jeopardised (Mtshali, 2010). This is due to the insufficiency of law enforcement measures that contribute to the eradication of activities that violate women's rights (Murray, 2007). According to Mtshali (2010), the Ghanaian constitution guarantees the right to promote and safeguard women's interests, implying that women's fundamental rights would be readily preserved. According to GSS (2010), women account for around 51% of the country's population. While women outnumber males in terms of numbers, they remain a minority in all other areas, including human rights (Mtshali, 2010).

Numerous academic studies have been conducted on practises affecting women's freedom, but four remain persistent: female genital mutilation (FGM), Trokosi, Witch Camps, and domestic abuse against women (Mtshali, 2010). Due of the impossibility of detailing all of the issues confronting women in this work, the four practises will be covered briefly. Given the study's primary focus on DOVVSU, which has a primary purpose to address domestic violence, domestic violence against women in Ghana will be covered in length later in the work.

## **2.8 National Human Right Institutions (NHRIs)**

There is a strong correlation between NHRIs and safeguarding women's rights. This is because when they are properly applied, behaviours and ideas that violate women's rights may be successfully removed (Mtshali, 2010). According to the Paris Principles

(1993), an NHRI's legitimacy will be questioned if it fails to adhere to the Paris Principles' requirements. Because NHRIs are well-known both locally and internationally, they have a higher chance of promoting and safeguarding women's rights in accordance with their mandate. Additionally, their semi-formal character enables them to maintain a balance of relationships between government and non-governmental organisations (Mtshali, 2010). NHRIs cannot be considered non-governmental organisations (NGOs) due to their semi-official nature; they cannot be considered government agencies due to their mandate to serve as a check on government operations (Murray 2007). In keeping with the above, Murray (2007) argues that NHRIs, as official organisations charged with the special responsibility of protecting human rights, are in the best position to influence government choices and are hence expected to be devoid of active party politics. Additionally, if the components of NHRIs are effectively applied, women's rights can be adequately maintained throughout Africa. NHRIs add a new level of responsibility and facilitate the formation of a new constitutional order, which human rights defenders champion (Matshekga, 2002).

These institutions have the ability to sway government and non-governmental bodies about the implementation of laws protecting women's rights. To assure the quality of their work, NHRIs must exercise further vigilance. While NHRIs will not be able to address every issue that arises in society, the significance of protecting women's rights cannot be overstated due to the economic, social, and political obligations put on them (Murray, 2007).

However, governments around the world, particularly in Africa, confront significant difficulties in creating and sustaining competent and independent national human rights

agencies (Matshekga, 2002). Additionally, Matshekga (2002) contends that bureaucratic and executive choices readily control NHRIs; hence, their success is contingent on their legal and financial freedom and their ability to decide on appointment and firing methods. Similarly, Murray (2007, p.195) states that "NHRIs as an official organisation charged with the protection of human rights...are in a unique position to influence politicians and public workers, therefore ensuring a certain level of expertise...free of any politically biased approach."

## **2.9 The Challenges institutions face in addressing Domestic Violence cases in Ghana**

Ghana has established a number of institutional mechanisms to protect girls and women from violence, including a Domestic Violence Special Unit within the Ghana Police Service, a Domestic Violence Secretariat within the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MoGCSP), and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). Despite the existence of several laws and policies, major gaps in their implementation and enforcement persist, as does a lack of awareness about how to promote women's and girls' rights. date unknown (action assistance Ghana). DOVVSU refers to the institution in Ghana responsible for prosecuting domestic abuse crimes (Asiedu, 2016).

According to an Action Aid Ghana survey, victims are denied privacy at DOVVSU offices. Domestic Violence reports are investigated and documented prior to being referred to the DOVVSU. The complainant's privacy is almost likely violated at the moment of reporting (Mantey, 2019). DOVVSU employees are unable to follow each casualty for medical assessment due to inadequate resources. DOVVSU personnel accompany victims to hospitals only in the most extreme cases. DOVVSU offices are

in need of secure storage for exhibits and evidence obtained at crime scenes. DOVVSU employees usually rely on public or private forms of transportation to do their work because of absence of official vehicles. There are no shelters for adult domestic abuse victims. The survey revealed challenges confronting DOVVSU which included limited resources allocated to DOVVSU offices, Limited staffing, inferior office space, a scarcity of required office equipment, ageing and insufficient office furniture, a scarcity of automobiles, a scarcity of office storage facilities, and a scarcity of operational budget (Dery & Diedong, 2014).

### **2.10 Challenges of the implementation of the Domestic Violence ACT 732**

The Domestic Violence Act is a comprehensive piece of legislation that incorporates a strong definition of domestic ties and a broad definition of violence. While the Act was enacted in 2007, the Legislative Instrument establishing criteria for its implementation took effect in 2017 after its enactment. This delay has impeded police officers, DOVVSU officials, and prosecutors in adopting and executing the laws, affecting survivors' capacity to apply the law and give meaning to the Domestic Violence Act via court decisions.

Although the state's commitment to protecting its citizens extends to the home sphere, domestic violence was mostly ignored in Ghana until the late 1990s. While African governments have mostly eradicated constitutional and legal hurdles to women's equality, Mama (2000) observes that they have maintained a "deafening silence" on the issue of gender-based violence (Mama, 2000). The state's dilemma is aggravated by the absence of the required tools to fight the problem. According to a research issued by The Ark Foundation, a nonprofit organisation dedicated to legal and human rights.

In Ghana, violence against women and children remains at an unbearable level. Apart from the numbers, preliminary findings from the Baseline survey show that services aiding victims/survivors with their difficulties encounter multiple significant barriers (Ark Foundation, 2007). The report identifies several impediments to resolving domestic violence cases, including insufficient services, particularly for rural residents; insufficient documentation of cases; insufficient tracking of victims/survivors referred to other services; difficulties recruiting and retaining police officers; logistical constraints and low pay for service providers, particularly police; insufficient training and capacity to respond among police; and corruption. In response to the rising number of charges of abuse and violence against women and children, the government established the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) of the Police Service in 1998, which was later renamed the Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) in 2003.

Initially based in Accra and Kumasi, WAJU offices spread to all regions by 2002, with professional psychologists and counsellors providing free counselling in most regional offices/units, according to their website. Additionally, regional divisions are supposed to be staffed with social workers who specialise in non-maintenance, custody, and marital concerns.

According to their website, DOVVSU also provides free services to members of the public, including informing victims about their cases and providing facts about the investigations. Additionally, it promises to direct victims to community-based medical treatment, counselling, and support programmes. DOVVSU gives crime prevention information in schools, churches, and marketplaces as a community service. Nonetheless, according to study performed in 2004 in two regional capitals, including

Accra, survivors of violence said that obtaining assistance was time consuming, costly, and unpleasant at best.

At worst, survivors were sceptical, even cynical, of the police's competence and willingness to prosecute crimes, either because they were aware of the police's resource constraints or because they were said to solicit bribes (Adomako Ampofo, Awotwi & Dwamena-Aboagye, 2005). However, it must be recognised that police personnel work in hazardous environments. They usually have to pursue cases on their own cost, and they are not immune to the temptation to drop charges, particularly in small, close-knit towns. Similarly, until the Domestic Abuse Act of 2007 was established, police officers lacked direction on how to respond to domestic abuse, leaving them with significant discretion over how to classify an offence and whether to refer victims for medical care or other aid. In 2003, Elisabeth Mills Robertson, then the Deputy Inspector General of Police, admitted that while the majority of victims report domestic abuse offences to the police, the majority do not receive the appropriate response.

Even prior to the Domestic Violence Act's passage, courts were generally available to address specific acts of gender-based violence; however, they were constrained by delays in the justice system, inefficient investigative processes, and the fact that not all judges and magistrates were conversant with human rights approaches or sensitive to gender issues. According to Netright (2004), family tribunals are often male-dominated and demonstrate a high level of gender insensitivity, resulting in biased decisions on domestic abuse against women (Netright 2004). Female legal professionals have limited seats on the Supreme Court, and the full impact of Ghana's first female Chief Justice's appointment in 2007 is still unknown. The courts are usually unwilling to assist survivors of domestic violence as a result of a tight boundary between the public and

private spheres: the widespread notion that private or personal concerns should not be settled by public law enforcement and judicial institutions. According to one Ghanaian court, "punishing a man for hitting or shoving his wife is un-Ghanaian" (Ghanaian Chronicle, 2004). Thus, even if women avoid the police, they may be unwilling to seek assistance from unfavourable courts. On the other hand, courts face a number of challenges that jeopardise their efficacy. In 2003, a Supreme Court judge, Justice Brobbey, recognised that administering justice in domestic violence cases presents a number of difficulties. He said that the Attorney- General's office sometimes take a long time to adopt recommendations. The judge added, that this is exacerbated by the fact that several cases are assigned to a single prosecutor, even though the law stipulates plainly that a case should be dismissed if the prosecutor fails to appear in court and offers no convincing excuse.

Numerous institutions have been formed in Ghana to address domestic violence, but their usefulness is limited by their capacity and other practical restrictions (Mitchell, 2011). Among the challenges include a lack of initial and continuous staff training, the slow pace of the courts, and a scarcity of specialised support services such as counselling, emergency shelters, legal advice, and medical treatment (Action aid Ghana, n.d).

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

The chapter deals with the methodology of the study. Sub-headings to be discussed are Research paradigm, research approach, research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, trustworthiness, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

#### 3.2 Research Paradigm

The term “research paradigms” is described by Mertens (2012) as philosophical frameworks that specify assumptions about ethics, reality, knowledge, and systematic investigation. Our worldview, the conceptual frameworks in which we strive to comprehend the world, an epistemological position, and shared beliefs” are all examples of paradigms (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016, p. 51). Thus, paradigms allow a researcher to better justify the position taken in comparison to other options, rather than focusing on the researcher’s philosophical knowledge or capacity to reflect on a particular philosophical decision. There are mainly three paradigms namely positivist, interpretivist, and critical realism (Haigh & Withell, 2020). With regards to the study the researcher is an interpretivist.

##### 3.2.1 Interpretivist Paradigm

The interpretative study aims to discover individuals' context and meaning on a social occurrence (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Interpretative research extends beyond what can be seen or seen in the context of social phenomena, focusing on the subjective meanings people give to their behaviours, and therefore interpreting and comprehending the reasons for such acts (Tualaulelei & McFall-McCaffery, 2019). In essence, knowledge

without the researcher is implausible since the researcher's experiences may aid in the study's direction. Furthermore, the participants' and researcher's perceptions may alter as a consequence of their interactions throughout the study (Rapport & Braithwaite, 2018).

Intepretivism suits instrumental case study as it prioritizes participants experiences.

### **3.3 Research Approach**

This study utilised a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is characterised by an interpretative and naturalistic approach to its subject. This means that qualitative researchers observe events in their natural environments, aiming to make sense of or interpret them in terms of the meanings attached to them by individuals (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Qualitative research entails collecting data through interviews, diaries, and recorded voice samples, among other methods. Data analysis is the process of identifying relevant themes and patterns within large amounts of data. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research is viable when the researcher wishes to 'analyse and explore the topics under inquiry in ways that are not easily accommodated within the prevailing (quantitative) research paradigm'. Qualitative research has the ability to provide a wealth of data and contribute significantly to our knowledge of a phenomena (Creswell & Luketic, 2017).

### **3.4 Research Design**

MacMillan and Schumacher (2001) define it as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s). Wiebe (2017) asserts that a research design is an overarching approach chosen to combine the various components of the study consistently and logically, meaning that the research issues are successfully addressed; it is the model for data collection, evaluation, and review.

The instrumental case study was used for the study. An instrumental case study examines a particular case to gain insight into a broader issue (Hassan, 2024). The instrumental case study design was appropriate for the study since the researcher used Effutu municipality as a tool to explore the perspectives of women victims and DOVVSU officials regarding domestic violence. Thus, the Effutu Municipality served as an instrument to provide insight into national challenges in the Domestic Violence Act enforcement such as resource shortages and cultural barriers to reporting . The design aligns with qualitative goals using thematic analysis for thick description.

### **3.5 Population of the Study**

The study focused on female victims of domestic violence aged 18 to 60 who utilised or continue to use the services of Effutu Municipal DOVVSU between 2010 and 2020 and specific DOVVSU specialists responsible for domestic abuse victims. This demography was utilised to aid the researcher in critically examining DOVVSU's position in protecting women's rights across a varied client base, including both young and old. Additionally, this is to select a few selected area staff members.

### **3.6 Sampling Technique**

Employing a sample strategy that is appropriate for the study is critical since it directs the work's efficacy and efficiency (Tripathy & Tripathy, 2015). To assist in determining the appropriate sampling methodology, Walliman (2017) defines probability and non-probability sampling as the two primary sampling strategies. Probability sampling entails picking samples randomly from a population, whereas non-probability sampling entails selecting cases precisely from a population (Walliman, 2017).

In light of the topic and the population type, the researcher used non-probability sampling approaches such as purposive, convenient and snowball sampling. Nayak and

Singh (2015) discuss purposive, convenient, and snowball sampling with an emphasis on non-probability sampling. According to them, convenient sampling entails selecting a sample from a segment of the population that is close enough, accessible, and available; snowball sampling entails researchers recruiting participants through referrals for the research; and purposive sampling entails the investigator using his or her own discretion to select the sample based on his or her knowledge of the population (Nayak & Singh, 2015). Similarly, Kathori (2004) contends that the researcher's personal preferences determine the purposive sampling selection criteria.

The five DOVVSU employees were chosen using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, as defined by Neuman (2007) and Agbitor (2012), can be employed in situations where the researcher employs preference to pick a sample for specific reasons (these reasons can be viewed in 3 instances). To begin, a researcher may pick samples with a great deal of information. Additionally, the researcher may want to select individuals from groups. Additionally, when the researcher desires to learn about distinct types of occurrences in order to conduct an in-depth examination.

Similarly, with the assistance of DOVVSU officials, convenient and snowball sampling were utilised to choose the 20 female victims. This is because DOVVSU victims knew the victims who reported their cases, and victims who were available and accessible and connected the researcher with additional accessible victims. Thus, purposive, convenience, and snowball sampling enabled the researcher to select volunteers with a greater grasp of the subject under inquiry. Purposive and snowballing targets information rich cases over instrumentally case designs thereby dealing with victims and staff with direct domestic violence experience.

### 3.7 Sampling Size

Borrego et al. (2009) propose that efforts should concentrate on a small segment of the whole population to fully appreciate a particular occurrence's complexities. Choosing a sample size in qualitative research, on the other hand, is more difficult owing to the absence of a well-defined theory to follow (Nayak & Singh, 2015). In such cases, Kothari (2004) thinks that sample size selection should be guided by the following factors: the problem being addressed by the study; the research purpose; and the degree to which the kind and reliability of the data gathered are critical to the research. Twenty-five (25) participants were chosen, including five (5) DOVVSU employees: a Station Officer, a Desk Officer, an Investigator, a Unit Prosecutor, and a Police Officer; Twenty (20) female domestic violence victims between the ages of 18 and 60 years who have used or continue to use the DOVVSU's services in Effutu Municipality. The researcher chose 18 years since the 1992 constitution of Ghana allows an individual to be engaged in marriage and as a result can experience Intimate Partner Violence. The Children's Act (560), for instance, sets 18 years as the minimum age for marriage. This sample was chosen for a variety of reasons, including the characteristics and knowledge of the population sampled and the nature and goal of the study (Kothari, 2004). Again 25 participants were selected due to saturation. Saturation occurs when, after a certain number of responses to the same question, no new data are identified. The researcher observed that after around 15-20 responses of participants became apparent (i.e., they become consistent with one another) and no new patterns was observed.

Malterud et al. (2016) argue in favour of it, stating that the more critical the data in the sample, the fewer participants are necessary. The concept states that the sample size required to get adequate information power is defined by the study's objective, sample specificity, utility of a recognised theory, and communication efficiency.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedures**

Permission was sought from the participants utilising an introduction letter from University Education, Winneba. Two days after the day of submitting the authorization letter the researcher visited the participants to decide on the date and time for the interviews. Having gained authorization, arrangements were made to conduct the interviews on the agreed date.

Female victims were the first to be sampled for the interviews. Semi-structured interview guide were used for data collection. Questions were largely asked using English language. However, Twi language was used in situations where participants were illiterate. These languages led in assuring adequate understanding of the interview questions by all the participants.

In order to minimise boredom, the interviews took about 45 minutes for each of the participants. The first 5 minutes of the interview period were used to create rapport. Participants were given comparable questions and probes were used as appropriate to ensure clarity. Field notes were taken in the form of scrawled notes while the interview proceeds. Jotted notes were taken by the researchers in conditions where she cannot compose a thorough set of notes. Likewise, audio recordings of the interviews were done after obtaining permission from participants.

Research participants and the researcher had their body temperatures taken upon arrival at the venue for the interview because of COVID -19 outbreak. Everyone was provided with hand sanitizers to sanitize their hands during the period. Also, disposable nose masks were worn by everyone within the premises at all times during the interview. A social distancing of 6 feets was ensured during the interview session

### **3.8.1 Trustworthiness**

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility audio recordings were played aloud to participants for confirmation to ensure the interviews' reliability. Additionally, to confirm the interviews, complete reports from the research were supplied. Transferability was assured by ensuring that the findings are presented in such a way that they aid in better comprehending the study. Confirmability is achieved by ensuring that the study's conclusions correspond to the respondents' genuine experiences as opposed to the researcher.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

Data were examined in relation with the themes that emerged from the research questions. The researcher read through all the interview responses supplied by participants multiple times in order to establish familiarity with the data. the process started with “Initial noting” of probable themes and documented; consequently, each topic was coded. The themes were documented as headings on a blank page of paper and verbatim instances from the text were typed beneath each of the headings. From time to time, data judged to be in support of the specified themes were noted and positioned under the appropriate title headings. New themes were also raised from later transcripts were evaluated against previous transcripts and any congruent material from earlier transcripts were noted at the right-hand margin under the relevant theme title.

After each transcript had been read and coded, the coded portions were transcribed under the proper theme categories. Each theme was explored using the code to define the theme more explicitly. Comparisons were done across the themes and this allowed for the discovery of super-ordinate themes, which appeared to unite previously unrelated material. All such themes found were evaluated against original transcripts to

make sense in terms of the integrity of the single participant. For the sake of confidentiality pseudonyms were used to identify the participants.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

Informed consent was sought from participants after explaining what the study entails and assured of their safety. Participants were assured that they are free to withdraw from the study at any point in time. Confidentiality was ensured by protecting the identity of research participants through pseudonyms, conducting interviews in an area that can ensure privacy and free from public scrutiny. Data collected from the interview sessions were stored on the researcher's personal laptop and protected with a password. Back up were stored on google drive, which was also protected with a password.

#### **3.10.1 Positionality**

Positionality refers to the position a researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study (Savin-Badin & Major, 2013). positionality in research describes how the identity of the researcher influences the study, the potential biases as well as the researcher's understanding and outlook of the world. Holmes (2020) maintain that positionality is mostly seen in three (3) areas; (the topic under investigation, the research participants; and the research design, context and process). For the sake of this study, the researcher positioned herself as an outsider. This means that the researcher is not from Winneba and has also not reported domestic violence through DOVVSU. In order to ensure neutrality the researcher used a semi-structured interview guide with open ended questions to allow the participants to express their views freely without any interference from the researcher.

### **3.11 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discusses the instrument for data collection, processes of data collection and analysis. Interview guide was used for data gathering . The researcher utilized qualitative techniques to minimize bias and guarantee consistency with the data. Furthermore, the researcher completed the data collecting exercise with 25. The researcher spent about 45 minutes with each participant.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. Data was gathered and arranged based on the themes of the research questions. The findings are presented based on the study. The researcher collected data from 25 participants, including 5 DOVVSU employees (the Station Officer, one Desk Officer, one Investigator, one Prosecutor, and one Police Officer) and 20 female domestic violence victims aged 18 to 60 years. The sociodemographic characteristics of the participants were presented first followed by the data obtained from participants.

#### 4.2 Demographic Statistics of the Participants

Three (3) of the five DOVVSU staff were female and 2 were male, which is consistent with the UNFPA's position that it is vital to consider the gender of professionals who interact directly with victims when seeking to properly address domestic violence (UNFPA, 2010). Additionally, 20 female victims aged 18 to 60 were questioned. Three (3) were aged between 18-20, 13 were aged between 21-45, and 4 were aged between 46-60. The youngest age group consisted of individuals aged 18 to 21, while the oldest were individuals aged 46 to 60, 10 of these 20 victims were married, 5 are in a consensual union, 2 are divorced, 2 are separated, and 1 is widowed.

Again, the victims' economic status was as follows: 12 were employed and 8 were unemployed; 9 were traders, 6 were students, 2 were housewives, 1 was a nurse, 1 was a teacher, and 1 was a banker. Among their religious legacies are the following: Participants include 6 traditionalists, 4 Pentecostals, 4 Protestants, 3 Catholics, and 3 Muslims. Seven (7) were Akan, 6 were Ewe, 4 were Ga-Dangme, and 3 were Mole-

Dagbani, according to their ethnic origins. Their educational background indicated 9 individuals with formal education (up to the degree level), 7 individuals with little literacy, and 4 individuals with no formal education.

#### **4.3 Knowledge about DOVVSU**

When asked how they found about DOVVSU and what inspired them to patronise, 9 participants indicated that they went to police stations to report and were persuaded to go to DOVVSU. Others faced opposition from family members and friends prior to their complaint to officials of DOVVSU. Few victims were aware of DOVVSU and proceeded directly there.

Additionally, 7 of the participants who were victims expressed that other victims directed them to DOVVSU. Others indicated that their motivation sprang from the fear of dying because of their inactions. Few participants were motivated to act as a result of their children's knowledge about DOVVSU and encouragement to report. The majority of the participants claimed that they obtained the confidence to address their fears after visiting the Unit. According to the data gathered, seven respondents learnt about the DOVVSU via past victims. Five of the participants became aware of the Unit through family members and other close relatives who voiced concern about their situation. The Police Service referred four to the Unit in response to complaints of domestic abuse. Four respondents claimed that they were made aware of DOVVSU through their children's school. Participant 2 puts it:

*My eight-year-old daughter learnt about DOVVSU in class and requested an explanation from my seventeen-year-old eldest daughter (interview data, 2022).*

#### 4.4 Forms of Domestic violence

The findings revealed that the majority of participants came to the DOVVSU as a result of various forms of abuse perpetrated by their partners and other relationships. A woman stated that she engaged her husband about his extramarital affair and this culminated in the mistreatment of her children and herself. The finding indicated that domestic violence did not negatively affect spouses but also children within the family. Participants said they were subjected to a various forms of abuse by their husbands and other family members.

Verbal abuse was the most often reported kind of abuse, affecting 18 of the 20 participants. Twelve participants had been victims of physical abuse, which resulted in hospitalisation with bruises to the face. Ten participants reported that their husbands denied them their rights in the marital home, including the ability to work, travel to visit relatives, and receive visitors from relatives. Eight participants reported being raped on many times by their abusers. Sharing her experience participant 3 said,

*He slept with me every day, including throughout my period, and he threatened to physically assault me if I objected ( interview data, 2022).*

Participant 4 also had this to say,

*My boyfriend beats me every now and then upon every little mistake I commit. He will never take any explanation from me (Interview data, 2022).*

This finding aligns with Fattah's (1991) cultural victim premise in which abusers normalize beatings as "discipline" (eg, teaching a lesson), thereby echoing Ghanaian norms where victims accept abuse as inherent, increasing susceptibility.

According to statistics, partners got aggressive when they began to exhibit authority and assertiveness signs. A sixty-year-old widow expressed regret that "when my late

husband was ill, many accused me of witchcraft and blamed me for his illness.” Following his husband’s demise, his relatives took his whole estate. She came to DOVVSU following because her family wanted to evict her from the house where she was residing. A spouse may vent his fury on his children as a result of whatever their mother did. The male of the home may decide to stop caring for the children because of and his rage at his wife. Numerous children have been raped or attempted to be raped in a variety of homes. This is in agreement with Roopnarain (2006) study that suggested that domestic abuse or violence against women has historically been considered a recurrent occurrence in gender relationships.

#### **4.5 Causes of Domestic Violence**

To better understand the victims’ needs, the researcher asked more about the causes of domestic violence from both victims and Unit personnel. Domestic violence, participants assert, is caused by individuals’ decisions and personalities, Ghanaian culture and religious beliefs, and the country’s patriarchal nature.

According to the research, domestic violence is mostly caused by people’s personalities and choices. Each of the five authorities emphasised the person’s importance in determining domestic abuse. They stated that a person’s worldview influences their behaviour and decisions. Domestic violence is a violation of a person’s fundamental rights. The bulk of these criminals are survivors who could not obtain mental health therapy.

According to one official,

*some people are primarily into drugs, which causes them to abuse the victims; some people are older than the victims, which causes them to feel insecure; some people have either a high or low level of education, which causes them to feel either too good or not good enough for the victims; and some people are*

*unemployed or have a low income, which causes them to react as a result of stress or hard work (Participant 24, interview data 2022).*

This finding confirms the first premise of the theory of victims which states that certain characteristics such as age, income level educational level etc make an individual vulnerable to violence. In addition to this the first level of the socio-ecological theory which is the individual aligns itself with this finding where some of the abusers are into drugs.

Furthermore, the majority of victims believed that religion and culture are to blamed for domestic violence's prevalence in society. Fourteen (14) victims stated that their religious leaders encouraged them against presenting spousal violence as a domestic concern. This finding echoes the cultural victim role of abuse thereby allowing religious leaders to frame domestic violence as a family matter which should only be discussed in the four walls of the home. Again, it confirms the third level of the socio-ecological theory which is the community where religion and culture discourages victims from reporting issues of abuse.

According to participant 6,

*our church leaders mostly encourage us to keep our family lives and the tragedies that transpire inside them privately, preventing us from seeking solutions from others. (interview data 2022)*

She added:

*My presiding elder told me to keep my marital problems to myself since every marriage has its own challenges(interview data, 2022).*

Participant 5, another victim stated that because religious beliefs prevent dating, individuals are compelled to marry before obtaining even the most basic information about their spouses, resulting in harsh domestic circumstances (interview data, 2022).

Domestic abuse occurs as a result of culture and custom, six victims asserted. According to a participant,

*my culture believes that a kid is a member of her mother's family and that nephews inherit from their uncles; so, why would fathers go to the bother of caring for children who would eventually join another family?*

As a result, as children get older, they develop resentment. Three victims stated that the majority of cultures believe that the most effective method to reprimand someone is to strike them, and hence they get beaten up for the tiniest mistake.

According to participant 9, a victim,

*other cultures believe that strong men may consume enormous amounts of alcohol, which drives the majority of males to drink more than necessary, causing them to behave improperly toward others, particularly while drunk (interview data, 2022).*

According to Kofman and Garfin (2020) because aggressiveness is not prevalent in all cultures, one may be certain of being largely free of some types of aggressive behaviour and that these civilizations seldom display interpersonal violence and destructiveness. In this way, while human beings have a natural proclivity for violence, aggression can only reveal itself when culture is used to justify the display of aggression.

Domestic abuse, according to a Unit official assert, is a product of society. Two other female authorities commented that our environment is male-dominated, with males projected and women kept in the shadows.

*How can you expect anything otherwise in a male-dominated world where guys usually triumph?" (Participant 24, Interview data 2022).*

Additionally, one of the officials stated:

*The culture has constructed itself so that a woman's success is conditional on a man's success and that women must make bodily sacrifices to rise. Male dominance has positioned women as inferior to men, resulting in society's misappropriation of the authority conferred upon them" (interview data, 2022).*

This finding is in line with Cook (2012) assertion that domestic violence is associated with systems and institutions in which males are superior to females, men exercise dominance over women, and females are dependent on males. Women are economically reliant on men, which means they have little or no possibility of escaping violent abuse; men also possess more physical strength, enabling them to dominate women.

*Frequently, women are abused as a result of society's commodification of sex and dominance," a male official stated. "Until gender imbalance is addressed, domestic violence will remain a contentious problem (Participant 22, interview data, 2022).*

In agreement with Nguyen (2005), physical abuse of a woman is also considered acceptable in several regions of Asia. In this line, young people in Africa and Asia develop the erroneous belief that physical violence, particularly towards women, is an acceptable practise. Culturally ingrained customs have been used to justify violence against women to the point that they are now considered the norm. While these factors are changing in major cities and towns, the same cannot be said for smaller towns and villages.

The above findings affirms the position of the socio-ecological model that states that violence is likely to occur in a community like religious organizations that predispose a person to be a victim of violence. The last level of the theory which talks about society also confirms this findings that cultural practices and structures also foster violence. Thus, violence may be tolerated as a result of the entire socialisation process. In

addition to this, the feminist theory confirms this that women are mostly abused because of male dominance in the society.

#### **4.6 The role of DOVVSU**

##### **4.6.1 The need of victims**

When victims were asked to describe their needs, they stated that they required basic assistance such as food, clothing, and shelter, as well as additional assistance such as medical and mental treatment, economic assistance, legal aid, and justice, as well as education and counselling on issues relating to domestic violence. They emphasised that abusers should be educated and counselled about the legal ramifications of domestic violence. Across the board, victims requested that basic needs be prioritised. The following are a few excerpts from the participants' responses. Limited programmes and material assistance as a result of insufficient funding and management as specified by the DVA (Act 732).

*We need basic necessities such as food and shelter. We mostly go back to our abusers because of what to eat and where to lay our heads. If these needs are met why will we go back to our abusers again? We will never go (participant 19, interview data).*

##### **4.6.2 Victim Assistance Programmes and Material Assistance**

The DVA (Act 732) establishes a Domestic Abuse Fund to assist victims of domestic violence. This Fund is meant to assist victims financially with basic necessities. DOVVSU is obliged to raise awareness about domestic abuse through the organisation of programmes. Victims who reported their problem at DOVVSU stated that they received little assistance from the Unit. And they indicated that this drove them back to the perpetrators since they have no one else to rely on. Consequently, a habit of recurrent maltreatment develops. Each of the twenty victims voiced dissatisfaction with

the Unit's failure to assist them with basic necessities. Ten of the victims reported that they received less money than they expected from their partners despite being promised money to feed themselves and their children. Sharing her experience participant 17 a victim who was interviewed said,

*The staff at DOVVSU assured me that they would convince my partner to give me money, but after everything, the tribunal ordered him to pay my children and myself one-hundred Ghana cedis (GHC 100.00) every month. This is insufficient for us (Interview data, 2022).*

Additionally, eight victims stated that they returned to offenders for assistance, and this increased their vulnerability.

Participant 14, a young victim shared her experience and stated:

*They make money promises but do not keep them, ". After I reported my partner, they stated that they would assist me in raising enough money to maintain myself, but my relationship remained unchanged because I continue to rely on my partner" (Interview data, 2022).*

The above comments shows that the unit is not able to keep to the promises they make to victims in its entirety.

Officials from DOVVSU were questioned about the programmes they used to raise awareness and how they fulfilled victims' basic and material requirements. The findings revealed that the officials do not support victims because of inadequate funding and logistics. Three officials indicated that awareness campaigns are limited due to a lack of funding and resources. Additionally, despite DVA's request for help, no resources have been given for basic and material support to victims. Two officials said, since the Unit began providing assistance to children in 2012, it has been encountering difficulties.

During one of the discussions, an official at DOVVSU said:

*at times, the police are forced to support victims with their own money. As a result of insufficient resource, the majority of our victims revert to the perpetrators, perpetuating the assault cycle” (Interview data, 2022).*

The finding is in line with a study conducted by Agbitor (2012). His study revealed that no material or financial resources was given to victims even in a case which led to the imprisonment of spouses (abuser). Again, officials from DOVVSU are unable to provide all the needs of victims thereby exposing most of them to recurrent abuse. The vulnerability of victims to abuse emanates from victims continuous dependence on abusers and weakened support systems. This confirms the first theory of victims which suggests that certain characteristics such as age and unemployment increases a person’s susceptibility to violence. Since many victims were unable to meet certain basic needs they remained in their abusive relationships.

#### **4.6.3 Victims and Perpetrators Counselling**

The Unit officials indicated that, the majority of victims present minor cases that frequently require only mediation. They further revealed that most counselling sessions are restricted to work stress and critical situations because of inadequate personnel. Victims claimed that they were only referred to counselling sessions after they experienced emotional distress. Issues were raised about training sessions for victims and their families. Both victims and authorities provided similar views. They stated that there were no programmes assisting victims’ families in their recovery, and that the Act did not adequately address victim needs. According to the officials, this is one of the reasons why reported domestic abuse situations are not adequately addressed. Nineteen (19) victims stated that perpetrators were merely arrested and that neither their children nor other family members received counselling.

*All they did was to arrest my spouse and tell me to go for counselling,” a victim complained. How about my children? How will they cope with their mother’s*

*therapy and their father's imprisonment? (Participant 10, Interview data, 2022).*

The Unit's officials acknowledged this and said there are no programmes for victims and families, despite the fact that families need psychosocial support in the form of counselling.

One official during an interview session had this to say:

*Where is the logistics for such a programme? ". To be honest, there are no such programmes for victims' families, despite victims receiving counselling. The majority of victims were referred to psychologists at other organisations that collaborate with us, such as WISE. Implementing the DVA is really challenging (Participant 25, Interview data, 2022).*

#### **4.6.4 Medical Care of Victims**

Victims are expected to have free access to medical care and housing under the DVA (Act 732). Data were collected to determine whether victims medical care and housing and the extent to which these needs were addressed. Officials and victims stated that the majority of victims were required to pay for the endorsement of the police form and medical care. It was revealed that 5% of victims get free medical attention . The authorities noted that hospitals were hesitant to assist since the State had not maintained processes to ensure to adhere the DVA (Act 732) provision on health delivery. This, according to the victims, prevented some of them from pursuing the matter further. Two authorities further revealed that less than 5% of victims receive free medical treatment.

*An official stated,*

*Free medical care is a concept that exists in principle but not in practise. We must write to the hospitals directly, but the formalities involved are cumbersome" (Participant 23, Interview data, 2022).*

This findings confirms the socio-ecological theory where structural barriers such as weak enforcement of the domestic violence Act(732) and inadequate financing

normalise violence. The findings again reveals that domestic violence cannot be solved using a single intervention but require multi-level responses.

#### **4.6.5 Provision of Shelter**

When asked to identify shelter as a necessary requirement, the five authorities and ten of the victims said that it was vital. Additionally, they highlighted that victims have been sent to stay with the children in the Osu Shelter Home for Abused Children after the DVA's enactment.

Eight victims claimed that they were not provided with housing and were forced to return home to be abused again.

One of the victims stated that;

*they said that they were unable to provide me with lodging and that I should go to a friend's house to stay for the night." My relatives live far away from Winneba, and there was no way I could travel that night with the little money I had. How could I leave him with my seven-year-old daughter and four-year-old son? I had nowhere else to go; my only alternative was to return to him, and that night he beat me up as if I was a robber (Interview data, 2022).*

Two Unit officials stated that housing is a significant concern for the Unit. The Osu Shelter Home is overcrowded, and sometimes the staff simply refuses to take female adult victims. WISE also has a shelter, but victims from the Unit are seldom welcomed there, and even when they are, victims are given a 24-hour deadline to leave.

The above finding reveals that DOVVSU lacks the necessary tools needed to assist victims completely. This finding confirms a survey conducted by Action aid Ghana (n.d) that there are inadequate shelters in the country and the existing ones are also inefficient.

The above findings affirm the position of the theory of victims which states that certain characteristics of a person may make her susceptible to violence. The finding also reveals that meeting the needs of victims will prevent violence. This finding supports the first level of the socio-ecological model which states that supporting behaviors of victims and abusers may prevent violence.

#### **4.7 Implementation of the domestic violence act by DOVVSU officials**

Officials from the Unit were questioned about the skills required to work for the Unit and the procedures they follow with victims. They added that victims are interviewed at various levels by Unit officials, and that officials do not require any specific skills to work for the Unit. Except for a few counsellors, the majority of them acquire experiences on the job training. The researcher asked the five officials about their perspectives concerning on on-the-job training. They explained that this is not the best option because the following skills are required: effective listening, writing, and interviewing abilities; gender sensitization and interpersonal relationship abilities; effective communication, mediation, negotiation, and investigative abilities; and knowledge on conflict resolution and management.

Participant 6, a victim stated:

*DOVVSU is a unique unit that demands unique talents, but, regrettably, these severe issues are overlooked by the administration” (Interview data, 2022).*

Three participants contended that excellent communication skills are required for engaging with complainants or victims in a case. Two participants indicated that while officials can get experience on the job, it is necessary for staff to obtain some expertise prior to recruitment. Acquiring experience on learn-as-you-go basis takes a longer period of time. Although all the officials agreed that the Unit required specialised

employees, the majority of officials are semi-specialized. Thus, officials must be knowledgeable about both crime and conflict related issues.

Eighteen of victims claimed that the processes involved are lengthy and difficult, requiring a significant amount of time. Delay in the entire process cause them to lose trust in the Unit. They added that the reason provided to explain delay in the process was that the majority of authorities are engaged in other endeavours.

a victims had this to say:

*When you come here, it is as though you are bored. They are going to make you spend the entire day here. The person in charge will either arrive in the afternoon or in the evening (Participant 2, Interview data, 2022).*

Participant 2 added:

*Even though I want my spouse to be punished, this entire procedure seems like a waste of time and energy” ( Interview data, 2022).*

Six of the victim participants expressed dissatisfaction with the attitude of the DOVVSU officials toward work. Several Unit officials were tardy to work and occasionally did not pay attention to complainants. Additionally, four victims reported that the Unit’s officials interaction with victims is normally strained. It was noted that the Unit provided inadequate victim service, which occasionally discouraged complainants from accessing the Unit. Five victims expressed dissatisfaction with the Unit’s communication with them.

A victim noted that one could spend nearly an entire day at the Unit just to be informed that the officer assigned to the case is unavailable. According to victims, one must sometimes join a lengthy queue before being attended to, even though some urgent cases.

Another victim shared her sentiments and said:

*There is no established sequence of attendance at the DOVVSU Unit. They simply appear and begin to mention names. One must wait patiently for her name to be called before she may be attended to (Participant 4, Interview data, 2022).*

#### **4.8 Challenges of DOVVSU in implementing the domestic violence Act (732)**

When authorities were questioned about the length of time and delay, they replied that resources to expedite the entire process were unavailable. Four out of the five officials said that the Unit took longer time to deal with a matter than expected. Insufficient logistics were recognised as a significant impediment to the Unit's effective and efficient operation. Another obstacle to the Unit's functioning was inadequate staff. According to one official, the number of cases received during a given period did not correlate to the number of officials employed by the Unit.

A unit official of DOVVSU remarked:

*Look at the number of victims here and compare that to the personnel available," (Interview data, 2022).*

Another official contended that

*because logistics and resources are lacking, our task is lengthy and time consuming. (Participant 24, interview data).*

Officials expressed concern that the Unit lacks the funding and resources necessary to carry out its mission effectively. According to Unit officials, their difficulties stem from lack of funding and logistics. The domestic violence assistance fund was designed to ensure the successful settlement of domestic abuse issues. This was to aid victims in meeting their needs and to support organisations that assist victims of domestic abuse. One could challenge the independence of DOVVSU as an National Human Right Institution (NHRI) under this clause because the state supports it, but OHCHR (2010)

noted that if states pay independent entities such as courts and auditors general, then a DOVVSU as an NHRI can be independent.

The locations where funds may be collected are specified in section 29 of the DVA (Act 732). They include contributions from people and other public and private organisations, money appropriated by the legislature, and other monies approved by the Minister of Finance. One of the officials said “Will it be disorderly to inquire as to why a state institution authorised by law to have a full-time support staff dedicated to assisting victims lacks funds? At the moment, the GPS is their sole source of assistance. How did section 29 of the Act fare in the interim?”

Not only does this situation contradict the DVA’s (Act 732) provisions, it also contradicts the views of UNICEF Innocent Research Centre (2000) Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department (2007) and Bott et al. (2005), who argue strongly that adequate funding should be made available to government agencies that assist victims of domestic violence when the need arises. The Unit is currently unable to satisfy victims’ demands due to the existing circumstances.

When authorities and clients were questioned about how victims were referred for counselling, both stated that it was up to the official’s discretion. According to the clients, they received counselling only when officials deemed it necessary, and often not until they were emotionally damaged. As a result of this approach, some individuals received no counselling at all.

Under this theme, it is possible to infer that officials’ use of informal counselling methods prohibits clients from having their needs satisfied. This refutes the argument that personnel working with DOVVSU, including counsellors, should adhere to rules

necessary to fulfil victims' needs and that counselling methods should be in the victims' best interests.

Officials acknowledged this, stating that not all problems require counselling. Two officials expressed concern that some victims come to report minor difficulties that may be resolved at home. Three of the DOVVSU officials indicated that counselling became the best option when they determined that customers were emotionally unstable.

An official stated:

*During sessions where victims have emotional breakdown, we simply recommend them for counselling and resume from where we left off after they recover. (Participant 21, Interview data, 2022).*

Officials of DOVVSU and victims of domestic violence were questioned about some of the difficulties inherent in the process of meeting victims' requests in relation to the provisions in the DVA (Act 732), the majority of victims were unaware of its existence. While officials had little knowledge. Officials claimed that there were no provisions to assist in enforcing the DVA (Act 732), and the lack of job descriptions for officials generated uncertainty, making the work difficult.

According to four out of five officials, the DVA (Act 732) does not designate particular tasks to officials. Additionally, they do not adhere to the DVA (Act 732) on a daily basis, despite the fact that they are aware of it.

participant 22, an officials lamented.:

*Prior to and during the foundation of the DVA (Act 732), the tasks of officials were not defined, and as a result, everyone performs what they believe is best. It is the equivalent as handing someone a phone without a handbook. Victim complaints are resolved by the station officer (Interview data, 2022).*

Eighteen (18) victims stated that they were unaware of the DVA (Act 732) existence.

Two victims who were aware of it perceived the DVA (Act 732) just as a paper.

Participant 2 remarked:

*I have no idea what the DVA (Act 732) is, and it is irrelevant to me,” a victim remarked. All I want is for our marriage to improve (Interview data, 2022).*

One of the victims who do not know the provisions in the DVA (Act732) said:

*I do not believe you expect the DVA to operate in this nation, (Participant 7, Interview data, 2022).*

Officials noted that when most employees acquire skills on the job, they are moved and they are succeeded by new staff, therefore initiating another cycle of inexperienced ones. Officials indicated that the Unit’s operations are being delayed as a result of the country’s bureaucratic processes. Due to the district courts’ lack of authority to hear sexual abuse matters, they were sent to the Attorney General’s office, resulting in delays. Courts suffered delays as a result of certain lawyers’ inability to appear.

All authorities expressed dissatisfaction with the delays in staff transfers and bureaucratic processes. Two officials indicated that they received no response for years when cases were sent out. Three said that the Unit had lost its competence as a result of such incidents.

Participant 23 an official said:

*....and while the case remained at the court for around two to three years, the victim lost interest in the case and abandoned it (Interview data, 2022).*

Some of the officials claimed that the Unit lacked the funding and resources necessary to carry out its mandate effectively. Three out of five officials felt that the Unit’s funding was insufficient for the number of victims who report their cases.

One official stated:

*Our office is too small and if two policemen are responding to separate persons, privacy would be compromised. We have few cars and this makes simple and rapid access to cases extremely challenging. Additionally, we do not get funding to conduct the Unit's day-to-day operations resulting in officials using their own money for the majority of expenses (participant 21, Interview data, 2022).*

According to staff and victims, the Unit had complainants from various ethnic groups, who spoke a variety of languages, making communication extremely difficult. Additionally, they stated that religious and cultural factors complicated matters considerably.

Officials from the Units noted that religious and cultural interpretations of life difficulties make their job complicated. Four authorities claimed that, the majority of incidents of abuse were viewed as a passing phase in people's life because of religious and cultural beliefs. According to an official, "for cultural and religious reasons, victims return to culprits who failed to satisfy their requirements". Many people in Ghana believe that they have to do their best to preserve marriages, and religious beliefs suggest that divorce is a sin.

Additionally, one official indicated that language barrier is a hurdle. According to him, the majority of victims come from diverse ethnic backgrounds so communication is affected by language barriers, and the majority of translators either underestimate or overstate the seriousness of the situation.

Both victims and officials were questioned about some of the difficulties inherent in the process of meeting client requests.

This finding reveals that the Unit lacks employees with the necessary expertise, skills, and training to assist in resolving domestic violence situations reported. They are unable to offer programmes that are effective in achieving the targeted outcomes of services given. The following themes were examined: insufficient knowledge about the DVA (Act 732) and a lack of legislation to adequately execute it; staff changes and system delays; insufficient funding and resources, cultural and religious interference, and language barrier.

The findings are consistent with Zaney's (2011) argument that DOVVSU appears to be struggling with adhering to structured or established procedures, which include knowing what to follow; understanding why it should be followed; and knowing when and how to follow in order to assist in successfully resolving reported cases of domestic violence.

#### **4.9 Effects of the Challenges on Women Victims of Domestic Violence**

Victims corroborated this by stating that their religious and cultural ideals largely clash with their desire to travel to the Unit. Fifteen victims reported that their religious leaders urged them to see instances of violence as family matters and that they need not to report their spouses.

A victim had this to say,

*My pastor told me not to allow a third person to hear my marital issue. This continues to ring in my ear every now and then and had prevented me from discussing what I'm going through with anyone (Participant 5, interview data).*

This finding reveals how women who are victims of domestic violence face challenges due to their religious and cultural beliefs. Some victims mentioned that their religious leaders advised them not to report the violence inflicted by their spouses, as they see it as a family matter that should be kept private. For example, one victim mentioned that

her pastor told her not to involve anyone else in her marital issues, which made her hesitant to seek help or talk about her situation with others.

The finding highlights how some women may feel conflicted between their religious or cultural beliefs and their desire to seek help or escape from an abusive relationship. It shows how these beliefs can sometimes prevent them from getting the support they need to address the domestic violence they are experiencing.

Overall, this text sheds light on the challenges that women victims of domestic violence may face when their religious or cultural ideals clash with their need for help and support. It emphasizes the importance of providing resources and assistance to these women, regardless of any conflicting beliefs that may exist.

This finding confirms the view of the socio-ecological model which states that certain characteristics of an individual in a community like his affiliation religious organizations predispose an individual to be a victim of violence.

Additionally, 7 victims expressed dissatisfaction with the requirement that someone listen to them before they could describe their situation to the interviewers, claiming that it gives them the impression that their concerns are not taken seriously.

Officials and victims were questioned on the processes involved in resolving reported cases as part of this objective. The following views were expressed: Officials complained about being assigned to and removed from the Unit without regard for their requisite abilities, forcing them to learn on the job (Learn-as-you-go).

Victims expressed dissatisfaction with the lengthy and time-consuming processes, which merely served to postpone the overall process.

Victims also complained about being subjected to a series of repeated interviews with various authorities, which felt as though the same procedure was being repeated indefinitely without progress.

Victims also expressed dissatisfaction with the procedures for obtaining a counsellor and the type of counselling.

Another victim stated:

*My husband sexually abused me and molested my daughter. I have been recounting this case to every official I have encountered in this Unit but they keep on postponing the case. How is this considered a treatment? It simply adds to my injuries (Participant 9, Interview data, 2022).*

A teenage victim also added,

*It felt as though I went there to reopen my sores; if this is what is going to happen, we will not return. (Participant 7, 2022).*

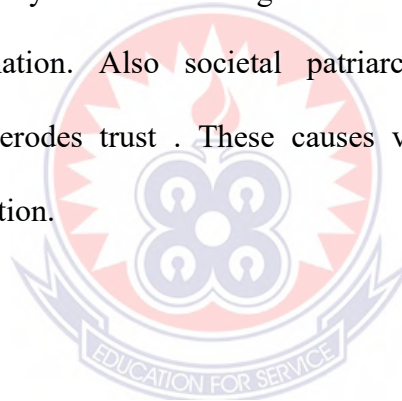
Three out of five Unit officials stated that the entire process of continuous repetition is painful. According to an official, “since they are forced to repeat their experiences, they leave here more miserable than when they arrived, which is not healthy.” (interview data2022).

Each of the 20 victims expressed dissatisfaction with the counselling procedure. Two victims noted that one’s capacity to be counselled was contingent on the official’s subjective feelings. Eight claimed that one had to bribe officials before being referred for counselling. Ten individuals stated that they were required to collapse in front of officials before being admitted for counselling. According to a 19 -year-old victim,

*I came to report a case to the officials on the day I was abused. They told me to come the following day. I came the following day but nobody attended to me from the morning I reported till late afternoon. I became very hungry and fainted. It was after this that I was called to come for counselling (Participant 14, interview data 22).*

This finding reveals that most victims are disappointed in DOVVSU as an institution because of its inefficiency in handling their cases. They see going to DOVVSU to report their cases as a “necessary evil” because of the bad experiences they go through. This is in line with Adomako Ampofo et al (2005) who maintain that survivors of domestic violence doubt the police's competence and willingness to prosecute crimes, either because they were aware of the police's resource challenges or they were said to solicit bribes.

In addition to the above, the findings confirms the victim theory which highlights that due to dalays and language barriers victims are isolated and discouraged from reporting. Again, the feminist theory reveals that religious interference silences women thereby resulting in subordination. Also societal patriarchy, community religion and organisational delays erodes trust . These causes victims to loose confidence in DOVVSU as an institution.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the study's summary, conclusions, and recommendations. Suggestions for further study were also given in this chapter.

#### 5.2 Summary

The study's main purpose was to evaluate how the domestic violence act (732) is implemented in the Effutu Municipality. Precisely, the study sought to examine the forms of violence experienced by women victims of domestic violence in the Effutu Municipality, identify the challenges against the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act 732 in the Effutu Municipality and assess how the challenges of victims affects women in the Effutu Municipality. The study was qualitative. Twenty-five participants made up of 20 victims and 5 DOVVSU officials were sampled for the study. Interview guide was used to gather the data. The researcher utilized qualitative techniques to provide indepth and thick description of the experiences of DOVVSU officials and victims of violence in relation to the domestic violence Act (732).

##### 5.2.1 Summary of Major Findings

To gain a better understanding of the forms of violence against women in the Effutu Municipality, the implementation of the domestic violence Act and victims' needs, the reasons of domestic violence were examined from both the perspectives of victims and Unit officials. Domestic violence was proven to be a product of people's choices and their personalities, Ghanaian culture and religious beliefs, and the patriarchal culture of society.

The DVA was used to examine the victims' requirements and the extent to which their needs were met from both the victims' and authorities' perspectives (Act 732). The findings indicated that there are limited programmes and material support for victims due to a lack of funds and resources. However, the DVA (Act 732) has made provision for victims, and their families have limited access to counselling and educational sessions, contrary to what the DVA (Act 732) suggests; victims pay for police forms to be endorsed as well as medical treatment; and there are no shelter for adult victims, requiring the Department of Social Welfare to provide them.

Again, the findings indicated that victims required basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and additional services such as medical and mental health treatment, economic assistance, legal aid, justice, and education and counselling on domestic violence-related issues.

Following the establishment of the DVA (Act 732), it was discovered that many of the document's provisions are difficult to enforce because the Unit is unable to organise programmes and provide material assistance to female adult victims, as stated in objective one of the domestic violence fund established by the DVA (Act 732). The majority of clients pay for the endorsement of the police form and medical treatment. Less than 5 percent of victims get medical attention.

Additionally, the findings contradict the following: the UNICEF Research Centre's (2000) recommendation that institutions provide intervention programmes that teach victims how to manage their businesses and finances, thereby reducing the threat of domestic violence; and the 2008 UN Guidelines for GBV Interventions, as well as the Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department's (2007) recommendation that victims, particularly those who have been abused, should receive special attention.

The findings indicated the following: officials are assigned to and removed from the Unit without regard for essential abilities, forcing them to learn on the job (Learn as-you-go); procedures are lengthy and time-consuming, delaying the overall process; and procedures are lengthy and time-consuming. Victims are subjected to a series of recurrent interviews with various officials, creating the impression that the same process is being repeated indefinitely without result; the officers determine the procedures for obtaining a counsellor and the nature of counselling was determined by how emotionally broken the victim was.

The findings contradict the 2008 United Nations Guidelines on Gender-Based Violence Interventions, which state that authorities who assist victims of domestic abuse must embrace procedures that help mitigate the trauma associated with domestic violence. Additionally, it contradicts the DVA (Act, 732), which states that police personnel are required by law to respond swiftly to domestic abuse victim reports.

The findings indicate that the following skills are critical, as they are lacking among Unit officials: effective listening, writing, and interviewing abilities; gender sensitization and interpersonal relationship abilities; effective communication, mediation, negotiation, and investigative abilities; and a wealth of knowledge regarding resolving and managing conflict.

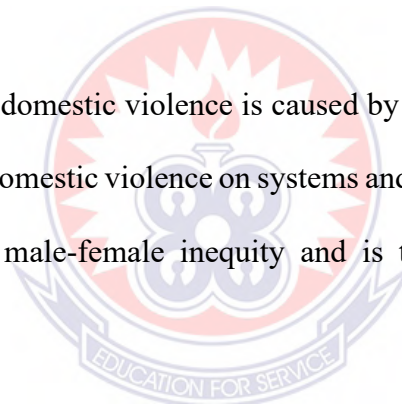
The findings indicate that the Unit lacks personnel with the necessary knowledge, skills, and training to assist in resolving domestic violence cases reported; and that there are no packages or programmes in place to ensure that services provided produce the desired results. The following themes were realised: insufficient information about the DVA (Act 732) and a lack of laws to properly implement it; personnel changes and

system delays; insufficient funds and resources; cultural and religious interference and language barrier.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the Unit has failed to incorporate the DVA (Act 732) into its processes, jeopardising its capacity to fulfil its mandate efficiently. DOVVSU is having difficulty carrying out its basic purpose of protecting victims of domestic abuse. The DOVVSU method of addressing victims' needs is ineffective, and the regulations governing the entire operation are poorly enforced. The DOVVSU issues may be overcome by ensuring that all stakeholders play their roles effectively.

The findings reinforce domestic violence is caused by individual traits and culture, on the other hand, blame domestic violence on systems and institutions. Domestic violence occurs as a result of male-female inequity and is tolerated due to traditions and conventions.



### **5.4 Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made from the findings of the study.

1. DOVVSU should engage in many outreach projects by educating the populace through official and informal programming to help eliminate domestic violence. In order to assist preserve the rights of women, the Unit is supposed to educate the general public in the Effutu Municipality on what domestic violence comprises, the varieties and the necessity to do away with behaviour that contradicts what is mentioned in the DVA (Act 732).
2. DOVVSU and NGO's should employ preventive methods including fostering behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that contribute in preventing violence; and

avoiding behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that encourage violence. Also, there is the need to question socio-cultural norms that support aggression and physical abuse might aid in reducing domestic violence.

3. DOVVSU should use the mass media to transmit messages of positive societal ideals with the intention of educating the populace on violence and its effects through their outreach programmes.
4. Government agencies should hire only qualified personnel who receive ongoing training to support victims. Officials and agencies operating in domestic abuse victims' sites should react immediately to avoid significant repercussions and delays.
5. Additionally, officials should assist and protect victims as soon as reports are made; interview victims, offenders, and witnesses, record their statements and provide them with a copy as needed. assist victims with health care and housing, even if this means reclaiming victims' property from perpetrators; educate victims about their rights, how to preserve evidence, and the availability of other services; must adopt practises that help reduces the trauma associated with domestic violence; must follow guidelines necessary to address victims' needs; and counselling procedures must be in the best interests of the victims. These will enable the officials to realign their practices to their mandate and provisions of the DVA (Act 732).
6. Traditional leaders and opinion leaders should examine cultural norms that promote violence and structural imbalances in education, health, and economics in the context of violence prevention. These imbalances contribute to the escalation of inequality among groups within the society.

7. Notwithstanding the challenges of DOVVSU, victims should continue to report their cases at the DOVVSU in order to seek the needed help before issues gets out of hand.



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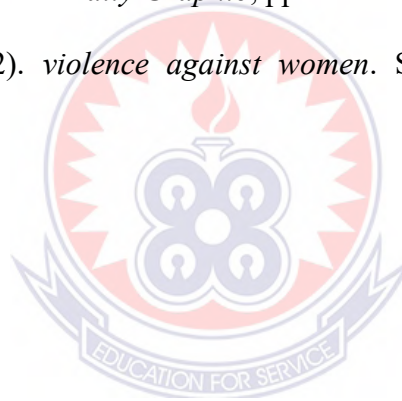
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**APPENDIX A**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DOVVSU OFFICERS**

**GENDER:**

**AGE:**

1. What forms of violence do victims report at your Unit?
2. As a member of DOVVSU staff, what are some of the Unit's victims' needs?
3. How are victims' needs fulfilled when they are identified?
4. Victims' needs vary; to what extent are they satisfied, and how does the Unit guarantee that victims' unique needs are met?
5. Given that the primary goal of DOVVSU is to eradicate domestic violence, what are some of the mechanisms in place to do this?
6. In general, what kind of cases are recorded at the DOVVSU unit?
7. What procedures does the DOVVSU staff use when responding to reported cases?
8. Are the processes utilised to assist victims varied depending on the nature of the case?
9. Is there any mechanism in place to guarantee that officials and victims behave professionally?
10. What assessment mechanisms are used to assess employee performance, and how frequently do they occur?
11. In general, what difficulties do you encounter when doing your duties?

12. What are some of the factors that prevent the Unit from accomplishing its primary objective?
13. What can be done to solve the aforementioned issues?



## APPENDIX B

### UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

#### SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

#### DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR VICTIMS

#### **GENDER:**

#### **AGE:**

1. Are you now visiting the DOVVSU Unit or have you previously visited the Unit?
2. What prompted your visit to the DOVVSU Unit?
3. How did you become aware about DOVVSU?
4. In your opinion, what causes domestic violence? How can domestic violence be eradicated?
5. What are/were some of the requests you communicated to the Unit?
6. Were they able to satisfactorily satisfy these needs?
7. How did the unit provide you with any domestic violence education?
8. How likely is it that the concerns you raised will resurface?
9. What were some of the procedures that the Unit's officials put you through?
10. How successful was the procedure in resolving your concerns?
11. Do you believe that something might have been done better?
12. In your opinion, do you think that the complete process should be expanded with additional procedure?
13. How would you characterise the staff's degree of professionalism when doing their duties?

14. Were there any difficulties that the officials encountered while addressing your case?
15. What were some of the challenges you encountered at the Unit
16. How has these challenges affected you?

