

# The Nature and Extent of Domestic Violence in Vihiga County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** The Kenya justice system has failed to combat domestic violence manifested as physical, sexual, psychological and emotional violence. The objective of the study was to examine the nature and extent of domestic violence in Vihiga County, Kenya. The research was informed by social and frustration-aggression theories. The study adopted qualitative and quantitative research techniques for data collection and analysis. Descriptive research design was employed to examine variables. 400 respondents comprising 338 Household heads were randomly sampled while 4 Court Officers, 4 Children Protection Officers, 41 Assistant Chiefs and 13 Police Officers purposively sampled for the study. A Closed-ended 5 point Likert Scale questionnaire, interview and FGD guide were employed for data collection. Qualitative data was thematically analyzed while quantitative data from questionnaires was analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) and Excel then presented in frequency tables, bar graphs and pie charts. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) test for validity and reliability of the research instruments was tabulated at 0.79. The findings of study showed that all forms of domestic violence incidences were prevalent among individual in family households. The study recommended Vihiga County Government to constitutionally define forms of domestic violence and restructure the legal framework and protocols combating domestic violence in Vihiga County and Kenya.

**Keywords:** Domestic violence, Aggression, Mate fighting and battering, Perpetrators, Victims of violence, Patriarchal practices, Physical violence, Psychological violence.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

According International Federation of Red Cross Recovery Centre Society [IFRCRCS] Le-Ngoc, M. (January, 2015) defined domestic violence as the use of force or power in an action or omission in any setting, threat, perceived or actual harm against oneself, another person, a group, a community that may result to death, physical injury, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation. [17] According to Johnson (2008) domestic violence is provoked by tension and emotions among family households.[11] A study by Harne (2011) show domestic violence incidences comprise slapping and throwing objects, physical attacks, intimidation, humiliation and psychological. Studies from the British Crime Survey (BCS) showed women victims experienced fear, anxiety and physical injuries than men (Harne, 2011). [7] Stockard & Mirriam (1992) observed that 25% to 50% of the women in United States were abused by partners or children in family households. [25] In Palestine (50%) of murdered women was perpetrated by men while (62%) in Canada was by husbands or domestic partners. Family violence and domestic abuse of women has become a devastating worldwide problem International Federation of Red Cross Crescent and Society [IFRCRCS] (Le-Ngoc, 2015). [17] According to Wachege (1994) physical assault, sexual, psychological molestation or harassment was detrimental on the health and well-being of the victims. [28] Inter Agency Standing Committee [ISAC] (2005) reported that rape of women by men was weapon to punish them from transgression of social or moral codes. Women and men encounter incest, gang rape, marital rape and sodomy in the society. Violence against Women Survey [VAWS] (1998) report revealed that 15% of the women and 2.1% of the men victims experience rape in their life time. [9] According to Isaksen & Aaron (1957), sexual

harassment arises in the process of exercising power in which 80% - 90% of assaults victims are children and youths. [10] Poipoi (2011) observed that in Sub-Saharan countries youths are sexually abused in homes despite government legislation to combat them. [23] Kimani (2012) recommended that African governments, civil society, private sector should help to combat GBV. [15] According to Kenya Demographic Health Survey [KDHS] (2008 – 2009), women aged 15-49 years, men, boys and girls experience physical and sexual violence in their life leading to physical and psychosocial consequences. The Kenya Police report of 2012 revealed 23140 assault offences were perpetrated between 2009 and 2010 in Western Province of Kenya. According to Murungi (2012), cultural stereotypes contributed to physical and sexual violence against women and girls. [20] In another study, Minas (1993) discovered that alcoholism and drug abuse contributed to domestic violence. [18] Nelson (2002) also observed that most assaults by women triggered a serious spousal violence in households. [21] According to a study by Capis (2012) and Atetwe (2008) alcoholism and drug abuse contribute to 22.8% of domestic violence incidences in the society. [2] [5] Murungi (2012) pointed out that wife battering was social disorder that needed intervention. [20]

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem:

Domestic violence has persistently remained prevalent among individuals in Vihiga County of Kenya. According to Caffrey & Mundy (1995) is biologically determined or learnt through cultural socialization of individuals. [4] Violence is manifested in forms of physical, psychological, trauma, emotions and frustration (Kaye, 2006). [12] Thousands of people in Vihiga County are significantly affected by domestic violence incidences each day despite law enforcement strategies employed by the County government. Insecurity is mounted due to ineffective law enforcement systems attributed to serious social problems in Vihiga (Capis, 2012); Atetwe 2008) hence sets the background to examine the nature and extent of domestic violence in Vihiga County, Kenya. [2] [5]

### 1.2 Objective of the Study:

The objective of the study was to examine the nature and extent of domestic violence in Vihiga County, Kenya

### 1.3 Theoretical Framework:

The theoretical framework was informed by frustration-aggression and socio-cultural theories.

#### 1.3.1 Frustration-aggression Theory

Frustration-aggression theory relates to the observational theory which propounds that social and environmental conditions can teach individuals to be violent. According to Feldman (1990) observational theory emphasize that people emulate the behaviour of models and the resulting consequences. [6] According to Albert Bandura learning takes place through paying attention and pursuing critical features of another person's behaviour and emulating behaviour. The theory advances that children adopt aggressive behaviour from adults they live with. According to Herslin (2000) individuals with accumulated aggression and tension resort to threats, anger, hatred, insults, punching, shooting and derogation acts. [8] Kornblum (1991) denotes that aggression that cannot be vented may lead to hostilities in the society. The theory was useful in scaling up domestic violence incidences induced by frustration and aggression among household in Vihiga County. [16] The study helped to fill the gaps on the nature and extent of domestic violence in Vihiga County, Kenya

#### 1.3.2 Socio-cultural Power Theory

Socio-cultural theory assumption shows that people's behaviour both normal and abnormal is shaped by the kind of family group, society and culture in which they live (Feldman, 1990). [6] According to this theory, the kinds of stresses and conflicts are not an unconscious process but interactions with those around the individual. The proponents of the theory show that the people who violate the rules are labelled by the society as showing abnormal behaviour that is more prevalent among certain classes than other. Poor economic times tend to be linked to general declines in psychological functioning Schizophrenia that tends to be higher among members of the lower socioeconomic classes than the more affluent groups (Feldman, 1990). [6] According to Isaksen & Aaron (1957) stated that socio-cultural power theory of male-female interaction accompanied with aggressive and sexual behaviours generate violence.[10] According to Thompson & Hicky (2002), violent crimes are most threatening and destructive to the social stability of the society. [26] The theory helped to inform variables included gender-based violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, physical violence, assault and emotional violence to generate the study findings.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design:

The descriptive (ex-post facto) research design that combined literature searching, surveying, observations, questionnaires and interviews was employed to enable the researcher identify variables to study (Amin, 2005). [1] According to Bhattacharjee (2012), descriptive research design is directed at making careful observations and detailed documentation of a phenomenon of interest. [3] Quantitative techniques were employed to analyze data from Likert Scale questionnaires and interviews then presented in frequency tables, bar graph and pie charts. Qualitative technique data from structured questionnaires, interview schedules and FGDs was thematically coded, analyzed and documented.

### 2.2 The Study Area and Population:

The study was conducted in Vihiga County of Kenya. The County has 125945 household heads of which 49000 (40.4%) are female-headed, 600 are youth headed who majorly depend on subsistence farming and micro-finance business holdings for their livelihood. KNBS (2009) statistics age distribution stood at 01-14 years (45%), 15 – 64 years (49%) and above 65 years (6%) with the youths representing 25% of the population. [13] The researcher sampled 462 respondents comprising 384 Household heads, 50 Assistant Chiefs, 4 Court officers, 20 Police Officers and 4 Children Protection Officers to participate in the study. The selection was based on the basis that sampled population was versed with the legal framework on domestic violence law enforcement. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), a target population helps the researcher to generalize the results of the study. [19]

### 2.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size:

The target population was 125,945 Household heads, 115 Assistant Chiefs, 41 Court Officers, 208 Policemen and 4 Children Protection Officers (KNBS Department: Vihiga County, 2014) totalling to a population of 126,313. Kathuri and Pals (1993) formula for sample size collection was applied on 125,945 Household heads to sample 384 Household heads. Kathuri and Pals' suggested a guide for determining a sample of a randomly chosen sample from a given finite population of N cases such that the sample proportion should be within plus or minus 0.05 of the proportion with 95% level of confidence (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). [19] The researcher applied purposive sampling on 115 Assistant Chiefs to sample 50 Assistant Chiefs whom he evenly distributed to the five sub-counties (Hamisi, Sabatia, Vihiga, Emuhaya and Luanda). According to Sekaran (2003), purposive sampling involves specific types of people who can provide the desired information because of expertise or conform to some criteria set by the researcher. [24] Judgmental sampling strategy was applied on 41 Court Officers to select 4 Court Officers from Vihiga and Hamisi Law Courts. The judgemental strategy was applied on 208 Police Officers (Vihiga County Police Commander, 2015) to sample 20 officers. Judgmental sampling involves the choice of subjects that are advantageous in providing the required information that can be generalized to the study (Sekaran, 2003). [24] A sample of 4 Children Protection Officer was purposively selected as key experts dealing with children protection in Vihiga County.

### 2.4 Data Collection and Analysis Techniques:

The researcher used secondary data from the libraries, court archives, and police crime department, Internet and the social media. The researcher adapted questionnaires, interview and FGDs guide for data collection because of their effectiveness, cheapness and reliability in gathering information from a large group within a short time (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). [19] The questionnaires were randomly administered to the 384 (192 male and 192 female) Household heads; the interview guide was administered by the researcher to 50 Assistant Chiefs, 4 Children Protection Officers, 4 Court Officers, 20 Police Officers and the FGDs to collect data on the nature and extent of domestic violence in Vihiga County. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency of the research instruments was validated at  $\alpha = 0.79$ . Quantitative from questionnaires was analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) while Qualitative analysis was applied to literature review, open-ended questionnaires, FGDs and interview schedules then documented in the report.

## 3. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Socio-demographic Information of Respondents in Vihiga County:

From the 462 respondents, 338 out of 384 (88%) Household heads, 4 out of 4 (100%) Children Protection Officers, 4 out of 4 (100%) Court Officers and 13 out of 20 (65%) Police Officer and 41 out 50 (82%) were Assistant Chiefs participated. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), a study sample of 80% was appropriate and recommended hence a sample of 400 was acceptable.

### 3.1.1 Gender of Respondents

The gender of the 400 respondents was categorized as 215 (53.75%) male and 185 (46.25%) female. In the category of household heads were 172 out of 338 (50.89%) male and 166 out of 338 (49.11%) female; of the 384 questionnaires administered 46 were not returned for analysis hence not included in the study. On Assistant Chiefs; 34 out of 41 (82.93%) were male and 7 out of 41 (17.03%) were female. The Police Officers were tabulated as 6 out of 13 (46.15%) were male while 7 out of 13 (56.85%) were female giving, 7 out of 20 respondents never participated. The Court officers had 2 out of 4 (50%) male and 2 out of 4 (50%) female while the Children Protection Officers had 1 out of 4 (25%) male and 3 out of 4 (75%) female.

### 3.1.2 Age of Respondents

The age of 400 was distributed as 20-29 years were 80 out of 400 (20%), 30-39 years, 83 out of 400 (20.75%), 40-49 years, 120 out of 400 (30%) and above 50 years were 117 out of 400 (29.25%) totalling to 400 out of 462 (86%).

### 3.1.3 Religion of the Respondents

Christian comprised of 368 out of 400 (92%), Muslims were 22 out of 400 (5.5%) while other Religions counted at 10 (2.5%). All these distributions illustrated that 400 out of 462 (86.58%) respondents represented the religious groups in the area of study.

### 3.1.4 Level of Education of Respondents

The analysis on the level of education 85 or 21.25% were degree holders, 130 or 33.25% had diplomas while 182 or 45.50% were certificate holders.

### 3.1.5 Distribution of Respondents in Vihiga County

According to the results Emuhaya had 73 out of 400 (18.25%), Luanda had 74 out of 400 (18.50%), Sabatia had 84 out of 400 (21%), Vihiga had 85 out of 400 (21.25%) while Hamisi had 84 out of 400 (21%) giving a total of 400 of those who returned the research instruments for analysis and documentation into the study. According to the findings, there was equitable distribution and response (18.25% and 21%) on the research instruments of the study in all the Sub- Counties of Vihiga County.

### 3.1.6 Marital Status of Respondents

Marital status showed 75 out of 400 (18.75%) were single, 289 out of 400 (72.25%) were married, 14 (3.5%) were separated, 10 (2.5%) were divorced while 12 or 3% were widowed. The results show the highest frequency 289 (72.25%) of the participants were married, single was tabulated at 18.75%, 3%, were widowed, 3.5% had separated.

### 3.2 Types of Domestic Violence Incidences Perpetrated in Vihiga County:

On the nature and extent of domestic violence, 338 Household heads were asked to list types of domestic violence crimes perpetrated within their communities. According to Figure 4.2.1; verbal abuse had 266 out of 338 (28.3%), physical abuse had 216 out of 338 (23.0%), sexual abuse had 136 out of 338 (14.5%), psychological abuse 128 out of 338 (13.6%), emotional abuse had 113 out of 338 (12.00%) while spiritual abuse had 81 out of 338 (8.6%). The findings significantly showed that verbal abuse (28.3%) and physical abuse (23.0%) were the most sighted forms of domestic violence offences instigated among households in Vihiga County. Sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and emotional abuse were significantly experienced among households.

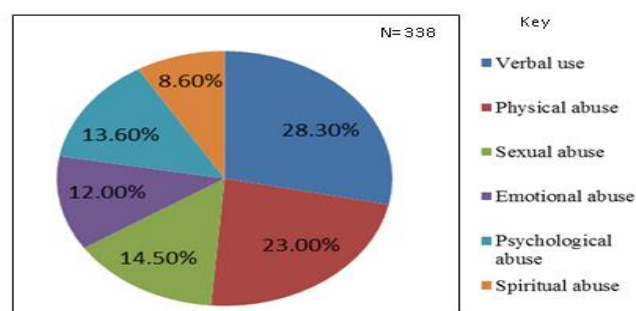


Figure 3.2: Types of Domestic Violence Perpetrated in Vihiga County (Field, 2017)

### 3.2.1 Types of Sexual Violence

According to the interview 4 out of 4 (100%) Court Officers showed that incidences of sexual violence, gender-based violence, sexual harassment, defilement, incest, assault and grievous harm offences against individuals were reported to the police for prosecution. The findings of 13 out of 13 (100%) Police Officers from five Sub Counties (Emuhaya, Luanda, Vihiga, Hamisi and Sabatia) affirmed that assault, homicide, suicide, defilement, rape, sexual harassment, incest, grievous harm, maiming, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, spousal violence and fighting offences were reported and forwarded for court prosecution in Vihiga County Courts. 4 out of 4 (100%) Children Protection Officers reported assault, defilement, incest, wife battering, rape, and child neglect offences were prosecuted in Vihiga County. The research sought to find out whether household heads encountered sexual assault in their families. The findings in Table 4.2.2 show that 49 out of 295 (16.61%) said they experienced rape, 25 out of 295 (8.47%) were raped using an object, 34 out of 295 (11.54%) said they experienced sodomy, 75 out of 295 (25.42%) said they had forced sexual intercourse, 84 out of 295 (28.47%) said they were engaged into sex when ill while 28 out of 295 (9.49%) were forced to have sex with their intimate partner among households in Vihiga County.

**Table 3.2.1: Types of Sexual Violence**

Sexual assault experienced by respondents	Responses	
	No	Percent
Rape	49	16.61%
Rape using an object	25	8.47%
Forced sex intercourse	75	25.42%
Forced sex when ill	84	28.47%
Forced sex by intimate	28	9.49%
Sodomy	34	11.54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: (Field, 2017)

According to the survey undertaken by the researcher in 2013 and 2014 in Vihiga County had 32 men were reported of rape at Luanda Police Station, Vihiga Police Station 3 men and 46 men prosecuted at Hamisi Magistrate Court. The police and the court official observed that the victims were female while male perpetrators were aged between 21 to 35 years. In accordance with the Kenya Police Annual Report of 2009 and 2010, there were 727 rape offences and 785 were reported.

### 3.2.2 Mate Fighting and Battering

The 41 out of 41 (100%) of the Assistant Chiefs interviewed reported bullying, verbal abuse, rape, sexual harassment, affray, child abuse, defilement, corporal punishment, assault, wife battering, child neglect, mobile user abuse, throwing objects victims, psychological and emotional abuse, physical abuse, intimidation, sexual abuse, marital violence, abortion, threatening texts, sexual denial, burning with a hot substance, mob injustice by In-laws and neglect of the elderly were types of domestic violence offences instigated against members of households and inhabitants in Vihiga County. According to a Sabatia Assistant Chief: Wife beating insults by women, verbal abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, intimidation, sexual harassment, interference from in-laws, neglect of the elderly and children is an issue in the region (Sabatia Assistant Chief, 2017). Another Assistant Chief from Luanda sub-county stated: Wife and husband battering, child abuse, rape and defilement were common household crimes in the Luanda (Luanda Assistant Chief, 2017). The findings from interviews by the Police Officer, Children Protection Officers, and Assistant Chiefs significantly revealed that domestic violence was a common crime perpetrated against children in households and communities in Vihiga County. The findings clearly indicate a significant manifestation of domestic violence among communities in Vihiga County. Hamisi Police Officers revealed the occurrences of many forms of domestic violence in Vihiga. One of the officers said: Household heads experience assault, verbal abuse, rape, defilement, incest, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, murder, suicide, grievous harm and maiming mainly perpetrated by men (Hamisi Police Officer, 2017). The findings of 2 out of 4 (50%) and 2 out of 4 (50%) Court Officers from Hamisi and Vihiga Principal Magistrate Courts show sexual harassment, defilement, incest, assault, grievous harm, sexual assault, and gender-based violence were prevalent among households in Vihiga County. The Vihiga Principal Magistrate said: Sexual gender-based and domestic violence offenders were common cases prosecuted at Vihiga law Courts (Vihiga Principal Magistrate, 2017). The findings from 4 out of 4 (100%) Children Protection Officers from Emuhaya, Luanda, Hamisi, Sabatia and Vihiga revealed that defilement, wife battering, rape, sexual assault, incest, child neglect are common domestic violence offences in Vihiga

County. According to the findings of the Children Protection Officers, domestic violence was manifested in the forms of defilement, wife battering, rape, sexual assault, incest, child neglect among households in Vihiga County. Most of the cases were reported for arbitration and adjudication. One Emuhaya Children Protection Officers said: We handle complex domestic violence offences from families and make referrals to courts, chiefs, FIDA and the Police (Emuhaya Children Protection Officer, 2017).

### 3.2.3 Spousal Abuse

The research sought to find out spousal abuses household heads experience in the family. According to the findings in Table 3.2.3: pushing the victim was 108 out of 597 counts (18.1%), hitting, slapping the victim was 21 out of 597 (35.8%), Kicking the victim was 83 out of 597 (13.9%), pulling the victim's hair was 42 out of 597 counts (6.9%), hitting the victim's head against the wall was 55 out of 597 counts (9.2%), using a weapon to harm the victim was 46 out 597 counts (7.7%), attempted strangulation of the victim was 27 out of 597 (4.5%) while burning the victim with a hot substance had 23 out of 597 (3.9%). According to the frequencies sexual violence is widely experienced in Vihiga County.

**Table 3.2.3: Spousal Abuse among Households**

Spousal Abuse in Households	No of	
	Counts	Percent
Pushing the victim	108	18.1%
Hitting and slapping the victim	21	35.8%
Kicking the victim	83	13.9%
Pulling the victim's hair	42	6.9%
Hitting the victim's head against the wall	55	9.2%
Using a weapon to harm the victim	46	7.7%
Attempted strangulation of the victim	27	4.5%
Burning the victim with a hot substance	23	3.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: (Field Data, 2017)

### 3.2.4 Body Parts targeted during physical assault

The research sought to find out from the household heads the parts of the body the offender targeted most during a physical assault. According to the responses in the frequency Figure 3.2.4 the findings show that the targets on the head were 144 out of 416 counts (34.6%), 137 out of 416 counts (32.9%) targeted arms and hands, 65 out of 416 counts (15.6%), targeted the legs and feet 50 out of 416 counts (12%) targeted the torso and 20 out of 416 counts (4.8%) targeted the genitals. According to the findings, most of the offenders targeted the head 34.6%, the hands and arms 32.9% while the rest of the attacks significantly affected the victims despite the low occurrences recorded. In some instances, the offenders targeted more that multiple parts of the victim's body as recorded by the frequency counts.

**Table 3.2.4: Body Parts Targeted during Physical Violence**

Part of the Body Targeted by Offender	Frequency	Per cent
Head	144	34.6%
Torso	50	12.0%
Arms and hands	137	32.9%
Legs and feet	65	15.6%
Genitals	20	4.8%
Total	416	100%

Source: (Field Data, 2017)

### 3.3 Time of Domestic Violence Perpetration:

The researcher sought to find out from household heads when sexual violence takes place in the family. According to figure 4.3; 90 out of 327 (27.5%) strongly disagreed that sexual violence takes place during day, 48 out of 327 (14.7%) disagreed, 54 out of 327 (16.5%) were neutral on the construct while 62 out of 327 (21.6%) strongly agreed and 73 out of 327 (22.3%) agreed that sexual violence takes place at daytime. According to the results, most of the household heads

disagreed that sexual violence takes place at daytime with a total frequency of 90 (27.5%) and 48 (14.7%) respectively. According to these findings, most of the domestic violence crimes were not perpetrated at daytime implying that most household members were engaged elsewhere away from the homestead.

**Table 3.3: Time of Domestic Violence Perpetration**

Occurrences of Domestic Violence	SA	A	N	D	SD	TOTAL
Family violence incidences takes place during day	19.0%	22.3%	16.5%	14.7%	27.5%	100%
	62	73	54	48	90	327
Family violence incidences takes place at night	54.8%	20.6%	11.8%	3.6%	9.1%	100%
	181	68	39	12	30	330

Source: (Field Data, 2017)

### 3.3.1: Frequency of Sexual Abuses Experiences among Households

The research sought to find out how frequent they experienced sexual assault in the family. According to findings of the household heads in table 3.3.1; 59 out of 332 (17.8%) were frequently assaulted, 90 out of 332 (26.6%) were assaulted fewer times, 183 out of 332 (54.1%) reported none while 6 out of 332 (1.8%) never gave frequencies on sexual assault experienced. The findings show individuals generally experience sexual assault in households. The findings significantly indicate domestic violence exists in Vihiga County. The frequencies listed by the household respondents cannot be ignored despite the variations in occurrences and percentages.

**Table 3.3.1: Frequency of Sexual Abuses Experiences among Household Heads**

Sexual Abuses among household heads	Valid Percentage	Percent	Cumulative per cent
Several times	59	17.8%	17.8%
Few times	90	27.1%	44.9%
None	183	55.1%	100.0%
Total	332	100.0%	
Missing counts	6		
Total	338		

Field Data, 2017

The study sought to examine whether family violence takes place at night. The results from the household heads show 181 out of 330 (54.8%) strongly agreed that family violence takes place at night, 68 out of 330 (20.6 %) agreed, 39 out of 330(11.8 %) were neutral, 12 out of 330(3.6%) while those who strongly disagreed were 30 out of 330 (9.1%) out of a total of 338 questionnaires returned from the field for analysis. Table 3.3.1 show 54.8% and 20.6% (75.4%) agreed that family violence takes place at night. We can clearly deduce that most family violence significantly takes place amongst the households at night. The findings from the 13 out of 13 (100%) Police Officers and 4 out of 4 (100%) Court officers reported that most of the rape victims were coerced, raped at night in dark places and during a burglary. The perpetrator armed with clubs, hatchets, spears, knives, machetes and other weapons heavily instigate violence in the community. One of the Luanda Assistant Chiefs said: Perpetration of domestic violence is a closed-door family event mainly perpetrated at night compared to daytime occurrences.

### 3.4 Perpetrators of Domestic Violence:

According to Poipoi (2011), gender-based violence is usually propagated by men towards women. [23] Gender violence touches every social relationship and every sphere of humanity. Philomena (2009) stipulates that traditional anthropological studies of kinship and family are patriarchal, male-based ignoring and misrepresenting matriarchal roles of women. [22]

#### 3.4.1. Men as Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

The researcher asked the household heads whether men perpetrate domestic violence in Vihiga County. According to the analysis in table 4.4.0 illustrated that 143 out of 322 (44.4%) strongly agreed and 83 out of 322 (25.8%) agreed that men were perpetrators of domestic violence in households. 39 out of 322 (12.1%) were neutral, 23 out of 322 (7.1%) disagreed while 34 out of 322 (10.6%) strongly disagreed that men were perpetrators of domestic violence among households. According to the findings, 1 out of 2 individuals in incidences of domestic violence was perpetrated by men.

From the analysis, that those who agreed and strongly agreed (223 or 70.2%) was significant as compared to (57 or 17.7%) of the total responses on the male perpetration of domestic violence among individuals in the household. The findings show male's patriarchal power dominance over women and children in families and the society in general. The assistant chiefs showed 23 out of 41 (56.1%) affirmed that men are perpetrators of domestic violence while 18 (43.9%) neither remained neutral nor disagreed that men perpetrated domestic violence in Vihiga County. A Sabatia Assistant Chief said: Men have assumed power over their spouse and children hence violate the human rights accord (Sabatia Assistant Chief, 2017).

Court Officers frequencies show 3 out of 4 (75%) from Vihiga and Hamisi Principal Magistrate Courts ranked men as perpetrators while 1 out of 4 (25%) remained neutral on the construct significantly showing men perpetrate domestic violence in families. The Magistrates being the custodians of social justice and domestic violence law enforcement acknowledged the presence of male violence knowledge in Vihiga County. The findings from Children Protection Officers revealed that 3 out of 4 (75%) illustrated male perpetration of domestic violence in Vihiga County, 1 out of 4 were neutral on the construct. The officers have the mandate of handling cases on violence against children in the study area. From the analysis 1 out of 4 (25%), Children Protection Officers remained neutral on the construct. The results illustrate that 3 out of 4 (75%) clearly reveal that children and other family members are subjected to male violence. The Police Officer's results illustrated that 9 out of 13 (69.23%) acknowledged men as perpetrators of domestic violence in Vihiga County while 4 out of 13 (30.77%) disagreed that men are perpetrators of domestic violence in the family. The frequencies and percentages of the police 9 (69.23%) are higher compared to 4 (30.75%) hence significantly illustrate that male violence is experienced among individuals in households of Vihiga County.

The frequencies from household heads, 226 (70.2%) accumulative, Assistant Chiefs 23 (56.1%), Court officers 3 (75%), Children Protection Officers 3 (75%) and Police Officers 9 (69.23%) are comparatively high as compared to the respondents who disagreed. The frequencies significantly show that domestic violence was majorly perpetrated by men in Vihiga County. In relation to the survey carried out in the period, 2008 and 2014 on domestic violence 32 men reported in Luanda Police Station were prosecuted for rape; Vihiga Police Station had 49 men prosecuted. One of the Police Officer from Vihiga Police Station said: Females were sexually assaulted by males aged between 21 to 35 years who perform the acts of violence under the influence of alcohol and drugs locally available in communities in Vihiga County (Vihiga Police Officer, 2017).

### 3.4.2 Women as Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

The results in table 4.4.0 of the household heads on whether women were perpetrators of domestic violence in Vihiga County; 74 out of 321 (23.1%) strongly agreed and 64 out of 321 (19.9%) agreed that women perpetrated domestic violence among individuals in households while 63 out of 321 (19.6%) were neutral, 45 out of 321 (14.0%) disagreed and 75 out of 321 (23.4%) strongly disagreed that women perpetrated domestic violence among individual household members. The results show clearly that women significantly perpetrated domestic violence against their male counterparts and children in Vihiga County. The percentages of 74 (23.1%) and 63 (19.9%) totalling to 138 (43%) and those who remained neutral 63 (19.6%) count for the presence of domestic violence among households compared to 45 (14%) and 75 (23.1%) who disagreed on the women perpetrating domestic violence against households in Vihiga County.

The finding from the interviews show the Assistant Chiefs had 19 out of 41 (46.34%) that women perpetrated domestic violence among the households while 22 out of 41 (53.66%) stated that women hardly perpetrated domestic violence against household individuals in the area of study. According to the results, the perpetration of domestic violence has a low rating as compared to their male counterparts. The finding from the Court Officer showed 1 out of 4 (25%) said women perpetrated domestic violence among households which was significantly low compared to 3 out of 4 (75%) who said women hardly perpetrate domestic violence among households in Vihiga County. The Court Officers being the custodians of the law on domestic violence stated that women are the most victims than men. The findings from the Police Officers show 2 out of 13 (15.35%) stated that women perpetrated domestic violence in Vihiga County. The rest of the Police respondents 11 out of 13 (84.85%) stated that women are barely involved in the perpetration of domestic violence in the family households in the study region.

The household heads were asked whether both men and women instigate domestic violence. According to the findings in Table 4.4.0: 127 out 330 (38.5%) household heads strongly agreed and 97 out of 330 (29.4%) agreed that both men and women instigated domestic violence. Out of the total responses, 56 out of 330 (17%) were neutral or uncertain on the



construct while 23 out of 330(7%) disagreed and 8.5% strongly disagreed that both men and women instigated violence among households in Vihiga County. The accumulative frequencies of the household heads that strongly agreed and agreed were 280 (67.9%). This was significant that both men and women instigate domestic violence against the household individuals in Vihiga County. In Table 4.4.0 23 out of 41 (56.9%) Assistant Chiefs said both men and women instigated domestic violence in family households while 19 out of 41 (43.1%) disagreed. Hamisi and Vihiga Principal Magistrate Courts 3 out of 4 Court Officers (75%) said both men and women instigate domestic violence while 1 out of 4 (25%) disagreed that both genders instigated domestic violence in the household. Interviews data show 4 out of 4 (100%) Children Protection Officers, 9 out of 13 (69.23%) Police Officers accepted that both men and women were perpetrators of domestic violence while 4 out of 13 (30.73%) Police Officers were naive on the question. According to the frequencies of the household heads, assistant chiefs, court officers, children protection officers and the police officers, it was significant that both men and women were perpetrators of domestic violence as show in Vihiga County.

### 3.4.3 Children as Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

The household heads were asked whether children take part in perpetrating domestic violence. The results in table 3.4.1 show 63 out of 327 (19.4%) and 62 out of 327 (19.1%) strongly agreed and agreed, 53 out of 327 (16.3%) were neutral, 56 out of 327 (17.2%) disagreed while 93 out of 327 (28.0%) strongly disagreed that children take part in perpetrating family violence in Vihiga County. According to the response, those who strongly agreed and agreed totalled to 125 (38.5%) and 53 (16.3%) which significantly show children generally perpetrate domestic violence in families in Vihiga County. A total of 149 (45.2%) disagreed and strongly disagreed has some significance as children are considered to be impartial in cases of domestic violence in households

**Table 3.4.1: Domestic Violence Perpetrators in Vihiga County**

Domestic Violence	SA	A	N	D	SD
Men majorly perpetrate domestic violence among the households	44.4%	25.8%	12.1%	7.1%	10.6%
	143	83	39	23	34
Women perpetrate domestic violence among the households	23.1%	19.9%	19.6%	14.4%	23.4%
	74	64	63	45	75
Both men and women perpetrate domestic violence in households	38.5%	29.4%	17.0%	7.7%	8.2%
	127	97	56	23	27
Children take part in perpetrating domestic violence	19.4%	19.1%	16.3%	17.2%	28.0%
	63	62	53	56	93

Source: (Field Data, 2017)

### 3.5 Victims of Domestic Violence:

According to Zastrow & Browler (1994), victims of domestic violence need support and counselling to break the trauma in addition to enhancing decision-making at all levels of the conflict. Domestic violence affects the entire individuals in the family hence prompt law enforcement strategies on the victims in Vihiga County.

#### 3.5.1 Men as Victims of Domestic Violence in Vihiga County

On whether men are victims of domestic violence in the family; the findings in table 4.5.0 from the household heads show that 91 out of 328 (27.7%) strongly agreed that men are victims of domestic violence, 46 out of 328 (14.0%) agreed, 55 out of 328(16.8%) were neutral, 64 out of 328 (19.5%) disagreed while 72 out of 328 (22.0%) strongly disagreed. According to the general analysis, it was reported that 124 out of 328 (41.7%) of the responses fall between agreed and strongly agreed that men are victims of domestic violence. The total frequency of household heads 138 out of 321 (43%) strongly agreed and agreed that men are victims of domestic violence. It is therefore significant that men are subjected to violence by their female counterparts.

#### 3.5.2 Women as Victims of Domestic Violence in Vihiga County

According to table 4.5.0: 149 out of 325 (67%) household heads strongly agreed, 69 out of 325 (21.2%), agreed that women are victims of domestic violence in Vihiga County while 36 out of 325 (11.1%) remained neutral, 33 out of 325 (10.2%) disagreed and 38 out of 325 (11.7%) strongly disagreed that women are victims of domestic violence. The results significantly show women are victims of domestic violence 218 out of 325 (67%) agreed and strongly agreed compared to 107 out of 325 (41.7%) were neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed on the construct.

### 3.5.3 Children as Victims of Domestic Violence in Vihiga County:

The results in table 3.5.1 below show 141 household heads out of 323 (43.7%) strongly agreed, 120 out of 323 (37.2%) agreed, 34 out of 323 (10.5%) were neutral, 13 out of 323 (4.0%) disagreed while 15 out of 323 (4.6%) strongly disagreed that Children are at times subjected to domestic violence by parent. The analysis of the households who strongly agreed and agreed on the construct show 261 out of 323 (80.95%) stated that children face domestic violence in Vihiga County. The figures significantly illustrate that children are prime victims of domestic violence conflicts.

**Table 3.5.1: Victims of Domestic Violence**

Victims of Domestic Violence	SA	A	N	D	SD
Men are victims of domestic violence in the family	27.7%	14.0%	16.8%	19.5%	22.0%
	91	46	55	64	72
Women are victims of domestic violence	45.8%	21.2%	11.1%	10.2%	11.7%
	149	69	36	33	38
Children are at times subjected to domestic violence in families setups	43.7%	37.2%	10.5%	4.0%	4.6%
	141	120	34	13	15

Source: (Field Data, 2017)

### 3.6 Availability of Weapons for Instigating Domestic Violence:

The household heads were asked to whether the perpetrators used weapons during domestic violence. According to the findings on table 3.6; 107 out of 317 (33.8%) household heads strongly agreed that weapons were used during violence, 78 out of 317 (24.6%) agreed, 62 out of 317 (19.6%) were uncertain, 33 out of 317 (10.4%) disagreed while 37 out of 317 (11.7%) strongly disagreed that weapons were used to instigate. According to the findings, a total of 185 (58.4%) agreed and strongly agreed that weapons were used in perpetrating domestic violence among households in Vihiga County. In this study, there was also the category of 62 (19.6%) who were neutral on the use of weapons in perpetrating domestic violence whose counts lie on either side of the response to the construct.

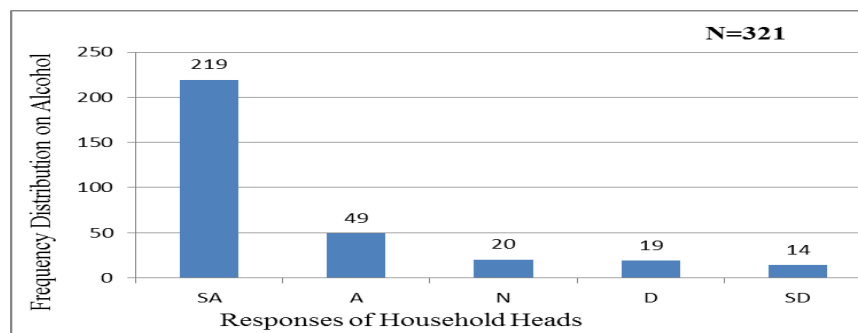
**Table 4.6.1: Availability of Weapons for Perpetrating Domestic violence**

Weapons used to perpetrate domestic violence	SA	A	N	D	SD
The perpetrators use weapons in instigating domestic violence	33.8%	24.6%	19.6%	10.4%	11.7%
	107	78	62	33	37

Source: (Field data, 2017)

#### 3.6.1 Availability of Alcohol

The findings on alcoholism in Figure 3.6.1: show 219 out of 321 (68.4%) of household heads strongly agreed that alcoholism contributed to domestic violence, 49 out of 321 (19.2 %) agreed, 20 out of 321 (5.3%) were neutral on the influence of alcoholism on household violence. In the same response, 19 out of 321 (2.5 %) while 14 out of 321 (4.0 %) disagreed that alcoholism influenced domestic violence in Vihiga County. According to the household heads, a total of 87.6% (68.4% and 19.2%) agreed and strongly agreed that alcoholism majorly influenced domestic violence among households in Vihiga County. In this aspect, we have a category of the households who were neutral 20 (5.3%) while 33 (7.1%) disagreed and strongly disagreed alcoholism does not influence domestic violence among households in Vihiga County.



**Figure 3.6.1: Frequency on Availability of Alcohol (Field Data, 2017)**

### 3.6.2 Availability of Drugs

The findings on whether drug abusers contribute to domestic violence among the household heads. Figure 3.6.2 show 221 out of 324 (68.2%) household heads strongly agreed that drug abusers contributed to domestic violence, 49 out of 324 (15.1%) agreed, 21 out of 324 (6.5%) were neutral, 19 out of 324 (5.9%) and 14 out of 324 (4.0%) disagreed that drug abuse contributed to domestic violence. According to the results of the study, it is significant that drug abuse was a key contributor to domestic violence offences in Vihiga County. The finding of those who agreed and strongly agreed (270 or 83.3%) was an indication of a high level of domestic violence in families of drug abusers and addicts.

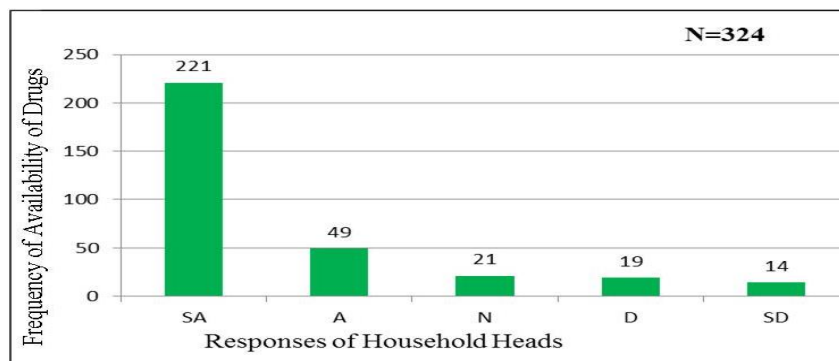


Figure 3.6.2: Frequency on Availability of Drugs (Field Data, 2017)

### 3.6.3 Aggression amongst Individuals

The findings on whether aggression contributed to domestic violence reveal that most of the violent incidences involved spousal aggression. According to table 3.6.3: 113 out of 336 (33.5%) household heads strongly agreed that men are aggressive to their spouses, 83 out of 336 (24.8%) agreed, 65 out of 336 (19.4%) were neutral while 37 out of 336 (11.0%) disagreed and 36 out of 336 strongly disagreed that men are aggressive to their spouses. The frequencies with strongly agree and agree gives a total of 196 (58.3%) clearly show that aggression contributes to domestic violence among households in Vihiga County. The household heads were also asked whether women aggressiveness generated family violence. According to the findings in table 4.6.4: 181 out of 330 (54.8%) strongly agreed, 68 out of 330 (21%) agreed that aggressive women generate violence in the family. 39 out of 330 (11.8%), 12 out of 330 (3.6%) disagreed and 30 out of 330 (9.1%) respectively. The results show aggressive women spark domestic violence against household members in Vihiga County. According to the household heads aggression by intimate partners contributes to domestic violence. Most of domestic violence cases turn out to be police cases such as arson, assault, defilement and murder. Sabatia Assistant Chief stated that women instigate violence to their husbands (Sabatia Assistant Chief, 2017). Another Sabatia Assistant Chief added that spouses cause bodily harm to one another, threatens, abuses or cause psychological torture or emotional abuse (Sabatia chief, 2017). Sabatia Children Protection Officer (2017) added that some men are wife batterers whenever misunderstandings arise. The interview with a Hamisi police Officer reveals that during the violence women and children are the prime victims. In most communities women and children are the most vulnerable. Hamisi & Vihiga Police Officer conceded that: In some cases women punish their husbands on matters of indifference during decision making in the household (Hamisi and Vihiga Police Officer, 2017). A Sabatia Assistant Chief said: Male perpetrators are dangerous persons to everyone including the police. At times both gender batter each other following domestic differences (Vihiga Assistant Chief, 2017). Stress among household individuals was cited to trigger aggression among spouses and children leading to domestic violent incidences. FGDs acknowledged that men and women who indulge in alcoholism and drug abuse exhibit aggressive behaviours that spark family violence in the communities in Vihiga County. On FGD respondents said: Aggressive parents assault, practice incest as well as rape against each other and even subject children to domestic violence (FGD, 2017). One Luanda Assistant Chief cited: Some degree of disrespect and anger is unleashed to spouses. Husbands who are stressed project to their household members to release stress and anger (Luanda Assistant Chief, 2017). Pride was also cited as a contributor to domestic violence in Vihiga County. A Sabatia Assistant Chief said: Violence originates when spouses feel inferior due to disparity in income. The one with more income intimidates the other hence spark disagreement and physical violence among individuals within the households (Sabatia Assistant Chief, 2017).

The household heads were asked whether people with property hardly instigate family violence. The result in table 3.6.3; show 46 out of 313 (14.7%) strongly agreed 35 out of 313 (11.2%) agreed that people with property hardly instigate

domestic violence while 58 out of 313 (18.5%) remained neutral, 61 out of 313 (19.5%) disagreed and 113 out of 313 (36.1%) strongly disagreed that families with property hardly instigate in family violence in Vihiga County. According to the findings, 174 out of 313 (55.6) disagreed and strongly disagreed that people with property hardly instigate domestic violence in Vihiga County. The results of the household heads who disagreed had higher frequency 174 (55.6%) compared to 139 (44.4%) cumulatively remained neutral and agreed significantly alluding to the fact that domestic violence across cuts all levels of class among households.

**Table 3.6.3 Frequencies on Aggression against Individuals**

Occurrences Aggression against Individuals	SA	A	N	D	SD	TOTAL
Aggressive men commit domestic violence offences	33.5%	24.8%	19.6%	11.0%	11.3%	100%
	113	83	66	37	38	337
Aggressive women commit domestic violence offences	54.8%	21%	11.8%	3.6%	9.1%	100%
	181	68	39	12	30	330
People with property hardly instigate family violence	14.7%	11.2%	18.5%	19.5%	36.1%	100%
	46	35	58	61	113	313

Source: (Field Data, 2017)

### 3.6.4 Level of Education of individuals in Households

On the level of education of the household individuals; the findings show illiteracy as a factor in escalating domestic violence. Sabatia Assistant Chief stated that less educated household members physically coerce spouse and children while the educated ones go by consensus (Sabatia Assistant Chief, 2017). According to Sabatia Assistant Chief uneducated family individuals believe that a man has a right to beat his wife (Sabatia Assistant Chief, 2017). The report from the FGDs significantly showed that most family violence was due ideological differences and intolerance by family members. The respondents attributed this factor to illiteracy that caused misunderstandings and frequent violent conflicts in households. According to Vihiga court officer (2017) those who have higher education are aware that violence does not solve conflicts but fan them while the illiterate engage more in domestic violence in households. The findings show that majority of household members in Vihiga County are ignorant of domestic violence laws.

### 3.6.5 Patriarchal Practices among Households

On whether patriarchal practices contributed to domestic violence; the findings from the Assistant chiefs, the Police officers, Court Officers and Children Protection Officers show retrogressive cultural practices helped to instigate domestic violence in Vihiga County. According to Hamisi Police Officer; Retrogressive cultural practices press down women from reporting violations by male counter parts amongst the households (Hamisi Police Officer, 2017). One of the Assistant Chiefs from Vihiga stated: Domestic violence is influenced by culture and traditions of a given people (Vihiga Assistant Chief, 2017). According to Vihiga Court Magistrate women are raped and sexually molested by their husbands with the households in Vihiga County (Vihiga Court Magistrate, 2017). Luanda Assistant Chief said: women spouses suffer psychological trauma and temperament due traditional cultural practices that insubordinates them in society (Luanda Assistant Chief, 2017). In some cases domestic violence involves family next of kin hence hinder the evidence for court proceedings and prosecution of the offenders. According to table 3.6.5: 76 out of 338 (22.5%) household heads strongly agreed, 76 out of 338 (22.5%) agreed that cultural practices help to fun domestic violence. 55 out of 338 (16.3%) were neutral, . 55 out of 338 (16.3%) disagreed while 76 out of 338 (22.5%) strongly disagreed on the construct. The frequencies of those who agreed 152 (45%) reflect that cultural practices enshrined in patriarchy contribute to domestic violence.

**Table 3.6.5: Frequencies on Patriarchal Practices among Households**

Household heads response	Total	SA	A	N	D	SD
Household heads cultural practices contributed to domestic violence in family	338	76	76	55	55	76

Source: (Field Data, 2017)

### 3.6.6 Inequitable Distribution of Resources

Poverty was cited as one of the factors causing domestic violence among households in Vihiga County. Assistant from Sabatia Sub-County reiterated that economic status of individuals dictates the way domestic violence is instigated in communities (Sabatia Assistant Chief, 2017). According to Vihiga Court Magistrate poor families are compromised by perpetrators due to poverty. She stated that financial challenges compel poor families to indulge in domestic strife and violence (Sabatia Assistant Chief, 2017). Table 3.6.6 show 133 out of 317 (42.0%) of household heads strongly agreed and 77 out of 317 (24.3%) agreed that inequitable distribution of resources influenced family violence while 41 out of 317 (12.9%) remained neutral, 34 out of 317 (10.7%) disagreed and 32 out of 317 (10.1%) strongly disagreed that inequitable distribution of resources influenced family violence in Vihiga County. According to the findings 210 out of 317 (66.3%) agreed that inequitable distribution of resources influenced family violence. The results significantly show the scramble for resource allocation generated domestic violence in families.

**Table 3.6.6: Inequitable Distribution of Resources**

Possession of Property	Total	SA	A	N	D	SD
Equitable distribution of property help to reduce domestic violence	311	34.4%	31.2%	13.2%	10.6%	10.6%
Inequitable distribution of resources influence family violence	317	42.0%	24.3%	12.9%	10.7%	10.1%
		133	77	41	34	32

Source: Field Data, 2017

## 4. CONCLUSION

The frequencies show verbal abuse was at 28.3%, physical abuse (13.6%), emotional abuse (12%), spiritual abuse (8.6%), while sexual abuse was at 23%, physical violence was rated as pushing 18.1%, hitting and slapping 35.18%, kicking 13.9%, pulling the hair 6.9%, hitting the head against the wall 9.2%, using a weapon 7.7%, strangulation 4.5%, burning with a hot substance 3.9%. The study reveals that most of the perpetrators targeted the head 34.6%, arms and hands 32.9%, torso 12% and genital was 4.8%. According to the respondents, domestic violence occurrences are instigated at night with 75.4% mainly by females, male and children. The findings also showed that traditional practices, culture, educational background, gender role, income levels, poverty, availability of weapons, availability of alcohol and availability of drug were key factors influencing domestic violence in the study area. The Court Officers reported sexual violence, gender-based violence, sexual harassment, defilement, assault, grievous harm, murder, homicide, rape, incest and maiming were common among households in Vihiga County. The police reported affray, corporal punishment, child abuse, wife battering and child neglect. Children Protection Officers from the five sub-counties of Vihiga County reported sexual harassment, defilement, incest, assault, grievous harm, rape, child and elderly neglect, sexual assault, gender-based violence were prevalent in Vihiga County. The results show domestic violence incidences was significantly experienced among household heads in Vihiga County.

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