

## Women Traditional Psychosocial Coping Mechanisms Against Domestic Violence in Zimbabwe

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### Abstract

In spite of the numerous efforts to reduce domestic violence, including a robust legal and constitutional framework, the phenomenon remains high especially among women in rural Zimbabwe. This study examined the reasons why women in rural settings in Mashonaland Central are not willing to utilize the various legal and constitutional instruments for their own protection. The study explored the traditional psychosocial coping mechanisms for women against domestic violence in Mashonaland Central Province of Zimbabwe. The study relied on Galtung's Conflict, Violence and Peace theory as the theoretical framework. The research was qualitative and employed a case study research design. Snowball sampling and purposive sampling were used to identify survivors of domestic violence and key informants. The study revealed that women are employing traditional psychosocial coping mechanisms such as silence, family support systems, religious belief systems and endurance to cope with violence. These practices are grounded in cultural and social practices purportedly aimed at preserving the family institution. The study concludes that these cultural practices have undermined the good intentions of the legal and constitutional frameworks that are in place to fight domestic violence and women abuse and recommends an approach that tries to deal with these strong cultural beliefs to make the laws effective.

**Key words:** Traditional values; Family; Culture; Psychosocial; Domestic violence; Coping mechanisms

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### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Globally, Domestic Violence has been a cause of concern. Whilst men have also been at times victims of domestic violence, it is a fact that women, more than men, have been at the receiving end of this phenomenon. Global developments from the United Nations Decade for Women, Women in Development, Gender and Development, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and various United Nations resolutions and regional and national instruments have been developed to try and address this undesirable occurrence across many communities. Mashiri and Mawire (2013, p.14) stated that the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 and the Fourth World Conference on Women, Action for Development, Equality and Peace in 1995, are two milestones that have sustained the International community's focus and moved forward the agenda on women's rights issues, as well as strides on curbing gender based violence. According to the African Union Gender Policy (2008, p.3), the global community built commitments and a momentum to gender equality and empowerment of women (GAD) in the 1990s drawing from the powerful synergies of the women movement which fueled the initiative towards gender equality for sustainable development to substitute the Women in Development Approach (WID) of the 1980s.

Governance institutions in Africa have also continued to respond to the issues of gender disparities as well as domestic violence. The crafting of the African Union Gender Policy as well as the Southern African Development Community declaration on Gender and Development all attest to the efforts towards eradicating issues mitigating against the development and empowerment of all humanity, men and women (Warioba and Luhanga, 2006, p.38). The government of Zimbabwe crafted the National Gender Policy and Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 5, p.16) of 2007 as a way of responding to the growing incidences of domestic violence in the country. All police stations in Zimbabwe now have Victim Friendly Units (VFUs) to help survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. The government also has a Ministry of Women and Youth that also aims at promoting the interests of women and youths in all spheres of life.

However, although the global community, various NGOs such as Musasa project and the government of Zimbabwe have played a pivotal role in sensitizing people on domestic violence including reporting procedures, rate of domestic violence against women still remains high in most communities. Matizha (2013, p.2) articulated that despite numerous efforts by the Government and development partners Gender Based Violence (GBV) still remains a major challenge in the country. Freedom House's World report (2014) and Refworld (2015) noted that women in Zimbabwe enjoy extensive legal protections but nevertheless societal discrimination and domestic violence against women still persist. Chiketo (2016) contended that almost half of all women in Zimbabwe suffer from GBV. Davies (2008) and Hoque, Hoque and Kader (2009) all found out that domestic violence is usually perpetrated by men.

In addition to the above, The Herald (2013, March 28) reported that about 42 percent of married women in the country have experienced sexual and physical violence by their husbands, with the highest number of cases recorded in Mashonaland Central province. The Herald, (2013, March 28) further identifies that Mashonaland Central province has the highest number of cases with about 56 percent of the women in the province having experienced abuse. This therefore indicates that domestic violence against women is rampant in Mashonaland Central. There is therefore need to explore traditional psychosocial structures in curbing off domestic violence against women thus cultural institutions should be preserved. It should be noted that traditional psychosocial coping mechanisms are being side lined in most cases as more prominence is being given to reporting to the police without focusing on the existing structures within rural communities. What therefore evokes great curiosity is the availability and effectiveness of traditional psychosocial coping mechanisms for domestic violence.

Culture and tradition are critical variables in the social life and cohesion of communities. Muzarabani District in Mashonaland Central province of Zimbabwe is one of those rural outposts where traditional values remain strong and rigid and thus policy pronouncements at the national level often find it difficult to take effect in such contexts. The war against gender-based violence has continued to gain momentum as reflected by the number of legal and institutional frameworks internationally, regionally and nationally. Nevertheless, in spite of all these efforts, there remains some cultural and social values that have blocked the total emancipation of women in society. This study focused on tradition and how some traditional psychosocial mechanisms are seemingly mitigating against the effectiveness of the institutional and legal mechanisms to end violence in all its aspects, physical, psychological or otherwise. The spotlight was on Ward 10 in Chiweshe community in Muzarabani, an area where the communities still hold profoundly to their traditional values. The study sought to examine the traditional psychosocial coping mechanisms employed by women in Ward 10, Chiweshe Village in Muzarabani District and how this tends to undermine the efforts against

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## CONCEPTUAL ASSUMPTIONS

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The study adopted the theoretical assumptions of Johan Galtung's theory of Conflict, Violence and Peace. Galtung (1969, p.168) states that, violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realization. He outlined three dimensions of violence, which include direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence. Among the three forms of violence, the most apparent form is direct or personal which entails everything from threats and psychological abuse to rape. Direct violence is personal violence because the perpetrators are persons. Galtung (1969) states that it is not strange that attention has been focused more on personal than on structural violence. Galtung, (1969) argues that direct violence is violence with a clear subject object relation is manifest because it is visible as action. He cites an example of when a man beats his wife that there is a clear case of personal violence. According to Sorensen, (2013) direct violence can be divided into verbal and physical, and violence harming the body, mind or spirit. This relates to the study as domestic violence involves verbal, psychological and physical abuse and persons perpetrate it.

Structural or indirect violence is defined as built into the person, social, or word spaces, and is unintended (Sorensen, 2013). Galtung, (1969) asserts that structural violence is silent and it is essentially static. In a static society, personal violence will be registered, whereas structural violence may be seen as about as natural as the air around us. Hence, in this sense, structural violence is

viewed as normal. In relation to the study, there are those structures within the society, which maintain certain forms of domestic violence such as family relationships, which perpetuate violence but can be viewed as normal. In categorizing structural violence, exploitation is at the center. Galtung (1978), cited in Galtung (1990) explains this as meaning that some top dogs get much more out of the interaction in the structure than others, the underdogs meaning that there will be unequal exchange. The underdogs may in fact be so underprivileged that they die from exploitation or they may be left in a permanent unwanted state of misery. In relation to the study, the top dogs are the man who perpetrates domestic violence against women and the underdogs are the women who will be the victims of domestic violence. When women are faced with domestic violence, they can be left in a permanent state of misery they will need to seek refuge from their support systems such as family where they can be encouraged on how to handle the situation.

Galtung, (1990) defines cultural violence as those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence represented by religion and ideology that can be used to justify direct or structural violence. It is important to note that there is a causal flow from cultural via structural to direct violence (Galtung, 1990). Galtung (1990) further states that the culture teaches, preaches, admonishes and blurs us into seeing exploitation as normal and natural, or into not seeing exploitation in particular. A lot has been written about all the dimensions of violence but this study was interested in investigating the cultural and social coping structures within societies and how this has undermined the legal and policy frameworks to reduce domestic violence in Zimbabwe.

## **NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE**

Zimbabwe took strides towards reducing domestic violence through the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act Chapter 5:16 of 2007, which meant to make provision for the relief and protection of victims of domestic violence. The Act provides a legal framework through defining the meaning of Domestic Violence and its scope, crime of Domestic Violence, the duties of Police officers and powers of arrest in respect of domestic violence and protection orders. The Act passed, to help women, men and children in abusive relationships through considering all forms of abuse such as sexual, economic, emotional and physical abuse. It is also important to note that Zimbabwe also took strides to curb off domestic violence as evidenced in the 2013 Constitution particularly chapter 4, Part 2, Sections 51, 52 and 53 provide for the right to dignity, personal security and freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment and all forms of violence (Zimbabwe Constitution, 2013).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Whilst there is a substantive body of literature on the causes of domestic violence, the same cannot be said of the literature on psychosocial coping mechanisms employed by survivors of domestic violence. Nyoni (2008), Arinze (2008) and Buzawa and Stark (2009) all observed and lamented the patriarchal nature of most societies in the world and how this tended to place women at the mercy of their husbands and sometimes forcing them to endure domestic violence. Women can be beaten on mere allegations of failing to prepare a proper meal for the husband, lack of respect for the in laws, dirtiness and any other flimsy reason that would have emerged at any given time.

Another factor contributing to women abuse is religion. Evan (2012) believed that the dominant religions of Christianity, Islam and Judaism all teach women to be subservient and to respect their male counterparts even in abuse. Chitando (2013) and Eisner (2013) observed that gender based violence is very prevalent in church and that it takes different forms including forced marriages, wife beating and denial of economic opportunities for women which would in turn make them more dependent on their male counterparts. Eisner (2013) goes further to lament the honour killings in Islamic religion which sacrifices women and how the Islamic religion also restricts women from participating in other social and economic activities.

Culture also provides a strong basis for the abuse of women. Kambarami (2006) and UNFPA (2008) concurred on the fact that certain cultural practices like payment of lobola (bride price) and the patriarchal nature of the African societies tend to give men power over their women counterparts. Nyamutambwe (2014) also concurred with the extant literature on domestic violence when he noted that these cultural beliefs and practices tend to treat women as second class citizens and thus 'legitimising' violence against women in many communities.

Against this background, some scholars have engaged with the question of how women cope with these adversities. Swart (2011) that women sometimes develop the capacity to endure violence and abuse to the extent that they end up normalising the abnormal. Makahamadze (2009) and Damba et al (2013) brought a cultural explanation on coping mechanisms in Zimbabwe and argued that women are cultured to view abuse as a normal routine in life and that every women even those from previous generations experience this. Swart (2011) further observed that in Kenya for example, women are not allowed to own land. This makes them economically dependent on their male counterparts. Therefore when they experience abuse they are expected to endure because they do not have any means of survival if there are problems in their marriage. Chuma and Chazovachii (2012) reinforced

the idea that women's economic dependency often sees them enduring abuse.

Women in many African societies value marriage to the extent that they are more than willing to endure an abusive marriage for as long as it gives them the dignity of being a married woman (Ayodapo 2012). Some studies have also highlighted the importance of family in providing social support to the abused women. Clark (2010) found this to be a popular strategy in Jordan and this was corroborated by Damba et al (2013) and Nyamutambwe (2014) who all found out that the Zimbabwean community thrives on family support systems to provide mediation and counselling. Ting (2010) and Gumede (2014) also drew the same conclusions in South Africa's KwaZulu Natal province.

### **Methodological Prima**

The study philosophy was informed by the interpretivist philosophy. A case study design allowed for a closer interaction with the Chiweshe community in Muzarabani District. Creswell (2004) views a case study as an examination of a bounded system over a period through detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. Entry into the research field was done at the beginning of January 2017 and ended at the end of April of the same year. The researchers used interviews, Focus Group Discussions and observations to collect data from a heterogeneous participating sample including church and community leaders, civil society organizations, women and men.

A combination of purposive sampling (Tashakkori, 2009, p.42) targeting traditional leaders and religious leaders and snowballing to reach out to survivors of domestic violence were used to establish a total sample population of thirty six participants from a target of forty participants. Purposive sampling was used to select 5 key informants such as the traditional and religious leaders who assist survivors of domestic violence within the community. The researcher targeted these people, for the reason that they are, perceived to have the information necessary in assisting this study.

Participants were clearly informed of the purpose of the study and were guaranteed of their privacy and confidentiality.

### **Findings of the Study**

The study found out that religion has been used by women as a major traditional psychosocial coping mechanism being, employed by woman against domestic violence. 22 out of 30 participants highlighted religion as a traditional psychosocial coping mechanism. A religious leader with the African Apostolic Church (AAP) highlighted that women usually congregate on Thursdays and this is termed ruwadzano (women gatherings) where they discuss issues that will be troubling them which may include domestic violence. At these gatherings, women

give each other advice and hardly do they encourage one another to approach the courts for recourse. Survivors of domestic indicated that at these women gatherings they get emotional and psychosocial support. It is important to note that a number of survivors of domestic violence indicated that victims of abuse sought refuge in apostolic sect churches such as AAP, Johanne Masowe weChishanu, Johanne Marange etc.

Another important coping mechanism is the use of family members like grandfathers and grandmothers, aunts, sisters and brothers to mediate. The approach by these elderly family members is almost the same across the communities. As the study revealed, the family members appear to encourage structural and cultural violence as they always encourage the women to always endure in the face of abuse. Divorce brings shame to the family and therefore it is better to endure abuse whilst maintaining the 'dignity' of being a married woman. Whilst family mediation can be an effective way of promoting harmonious co-existence, it becomes dysfunctional where it actively encourages women to conceal violence and to ignore the provisions of the laws of the country in fighting these.

The research also revealed that women facing domestic violence in their marriages may also look for help from traditional healers. 3 out of 30 participants highlighted consultation of traditional healers, as being employed by women survivors of domestic violence. This finding concurs, with that of Chuma and Chazovachii, (2012) who posits that women in violent relationships may also seek help from traditional healers whom they believe can be able to appease the violent spirit possessed by the aggressive husband through traditional medicine and customary rituals. Participants indicated that these traditional leaders may also give them love portions which can reduce the levels of violence and make their husbands love them more. This concurs with a finding by Nyamutambwe, (2014) in which participants indicated love portions as a coping mechanism for domestic violence. Nevertheless, in this study women said that it is not effective as they indicated that love portions expire and this can increase the domestic violence.

The research also found that women survivors of domestic violence use silence as a traditional psychosocial coping mechanism. 24 out of 30 participants indicated silence as a coping mechanism they are employing. Some survivors indicated that their relatives encouraged them to remain quiet when, abused and instead show love to their husbands regardless of ill treatment. The research found out that a woman does all her chores as a wife and care for the children acting as if nothing happened. It was indicated that the husband would have guilty conscience, which can make him apologise to his wife. A headman highlighted that:

*Tokurudzira vakadzi kuti vangonyarara uyezve nokushinga kana vasangana nemhirizhongwa. (We encourage women to remain silent and being strong when they face domestic violence).*

Survivors of domestic violence highlighted that even their tete (aunt) members encourage them to use silence as a weapon against domestic violence there by enduring their marriages. One survivor of domestic violence wrote:

*Ndongonyarara murume wangu paanondishungurudza sezvo ndakanzi natete vangu mukadzi icup yesimbi chero ikakandwa pasi haitsemuke.* (I just remain silent when my husband abuses me because my aunt told me that a woman is like a metal cup even if falls it does not break.)

The research also found that under silence there is the component of endurance which is being employed by women against domestic violence. 18 out of 30 participants indicated endurance as a traditional psychosocial coping mechanism. The participants indicated that most women just endure the marriage due to fear of leaving their children in the hands of other women because in most cases if they leave the husband can marry again. One survivor of domestic violence wrote:

*Ndongoshingirira ndiri mumba mangu nokuti ndingaendepi isu tanevana 4 Ndakangogarira vana vangu.* (I just endure the marriage because I cannot go as we have four children, am still here because of my children.)

Survivors indicated that they endure marriages due to the stigma associated with leaving a marriage. They just endure their marriages due to fear of what other people will say if they leave the marriage and some view being married as something which enables them to earn respect.

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

### Silence in Shona Marriage Tradition

One of the major coping strategy as reported by the participants is silence. There is a strong cultural orientation in the community that a 'strong' woman should not unnecessarily share her trials and tribulations with the outside community. A woman must be strong and remain silent in the face of adversity. Dodo, Nyoni and Makwerere (2012) previously researched on 'silence as an endogenous coping mechanism' focusing on survivors of political violence in Zimbabwe. Their findings resonate well with the findings of this study where women chose to be silent in spite of the comprehensive protection provided for them in the constitution of Zimbabwe and other related policy and legal instruments that are at their service. Dodo et al (2012) it is said that *kunyarara kunokunda zvese in Shona*<sup>1</sup>, meaning that maintaining silence is the best solution. The concept of silence was also alluded to by Aisyah (2014) and Gumede (2014) who found out that keeping silent

and not saying anything on domestic violence is common among survivors of domestic violence in Malaysia and South Africa respectively. Against this background, it is thus difficult to push for policy effectiveness unless if government and other important stakeholders engage in a strategy to address the issue of cultural socialization and perceptions.

Piling up of emotions can cause the individual to have psychological torture as the individual keep on being stressed due to unmet needs and a lack of platform to express one's desires. Gumede, (2014) supports the ineffectiveness of silence by stating that some victims ended up suffering from depression because of the abuse and not talking about it. Hence this shows that silence is ineffective as it can cause the individuals to suffer from psychological and mental disorders as well as depression.

### Endurance and Belief in the Sanctity of the Family

The research found out that endurance is a part of silence strategy which is being employed by women. This research found out that women are taught to endure by the people they consult such as family. The study found that women employ endurance due to fear of leaving their children in the hands of other women because in most cases if they leave the husband can marry again and this proves that endurance is effective as it enables children to grow up with both parents. The research also found out that women endure marriages due to the self-dignity. This can be supported by Ayodapo, (2012) who stated that the identity of the victim as someone's wife may be so important to her as to form the basis of her own identity as a woman, particularly in Africa marriage setting.

The finding of endurance concurs with the study undertaken by Swart, (2011) in Kiberia which reviewed endurance strategy as a coping mechanism used by Kiberian women to cope with GBV. The research corroborates with the finding of Makahamadze, (2009) who highlighted that women are expected to endure any forms of violence perpetrated against them in order to save their marriage and keep their relationships or marriages intact.

Endurance was found to be effective as it maintains the dignity of women in the community. It was also found out effective as it enables women to save their marriage and keep their relationships intact as supported by Makahamadze, (2009). However, although endurance is effective one should not turn a blind eye on the fact that it deprives women of their happiness as they sacrifice it for the sake of being married yet they will be facing domestic violence in their day to day life. Therefore, in this study endurance was found to be an effective traditional psychosocial coping mechanism as its strength outweighed its weaknesses.

<sup>1</sup> Shona is the dominant ethnic group in Zimbabwe. The Shona language is spoken by close to 80% of the Zimbabwean population although the language comprises several dialects.

## Family Support Systems

Women are viewed as part of a bigger social system i.e. the family and as such they cannot make unilateral decisions like going to the police to report on the incidences of domestic violence. They have to consult the family first and on many occasions the family will never okay the decision to use constitutional institutions to address domestic violence. The irony of it is that the women revealed that it is actually fellow women who feature prominently in family mediation efforts. The role of aunts, grandmothers and sisters is central. They view issues from the same cultural lenses and each time the mediation or support efforts are in force, the victim is often reminded of how the other ladies endured the challenges of marriage in order to keep the family together. This has a serious influence on the socialisation and decision making of the victim. The emphasis of normalising and enduring abuse means that she will have to accept this as a way of life. Ting (2010) and Nyamutambwe (2014) all noted the centrality of the family in mediating marital conflicts including abuse but both scholars did not go beyond to look at how this tends to create a vicious cycle of generational abuse and suppression of women by men and by women themselves.

Whilst Dzimbanhete (2013) and Gumede (2014) commended the effectiveness of family mediation, he did not look at the dysfunctional side. It is true that family mediation can be a good platform to mediate and address burning issues without necessarily taking them into the public domain and it is also true that it's a cost-effective approach to conflict resolution but it tends to reinforce existing inequalities. Families hardly choose the legal and judicial option even in matters involving the use of brute force especially by husbands on their wives. The study found out that most of women, including the survivors of abuse prefer to have their issues mediated by the family rather than the courts. Factors which explained this included socialisation, economic dependency and religion. Whilst this is understandable, it must be understood in the context of disempowerment. The women are agreeable because the social, religious and cultural processes in their context have not nurtured them into believing in themselves and to take charge of their lives. They would rather suffer abuse for as long as they continue to be a part of the family.

## Religious Belief Systems

Religious beliefs system is a theme that was brought out from the study. The research found that religion is being used extensively by survivors of domestic violence. This concurs with a finding by Watlington and Murphy, (2006) which found religion as playing a crucial role in assisting women to manage domestic violence. This research found that victims of abuse also consult their pastors and evangelists for prayers and counselling after facing abuse. This is supported by Gumede, (2014) who argue that some

people tell their pastors and church members and ask for prayers from them, this help them to cope with domestic violence they will be experiencing.

As evidenced in the section of presentation of data, consulting religious leaders was said to be effective as they have a counseling session with the couple which relief woman from stress. The research revealed that women congregate on Thursdays where they discuss issues troubling them which may include domestic violence and give each other advice. This is supported by Chuma and Chazovachii, (2012) who found that women congregate to do woman gatherings where there are collective views and provision of emotional and psychosocial support which help women to cope against domestic violence. In this current study, religion was found to be effective due to the fact that at these women gatherings there is provision of emotional and psychosocial support.

It is important to note that a number of survivors of domestic violence indicated that they consult Apostolic sect prophets such as those of Johanne Masowe. However, this has a negative effect as it can result in women being sexually abused by these prophets. This can be supported by Chingarande, (2016) who reported of a prophet who appeared in court for raping a woman who had sought divine intervention to him. It is critical to note that other challenges of religious beliefs systems are that they lack the component of confidentiality and religious leaders also revealed that they face difficulties in counselling a woman who has a spouse who does not go to church. Nevertheless, although religious beliefs systems face some challenges it should not be ignored that women are resorting to them as evidenced in this study and previous studies therefore showing that they are effective.

The study also noted that some victims consult the police when faced with domestic violence but the options they are given can create more problems for them for instance obtaining a restraining order for the husband who will be providing financial support for the family can create additional risk. Scholars such as Nyamutambwe, (2014) who advocate for the Domestic violence Act have noticed its weaknesses by arguing that this addresses only the physical violence in a victim's life but then does not address the economic challenges the victim must overcome to survive, psychological as well as emotional needs of the victim. This has consequently caused victims of domestic violence to resort to traditional psychosocial coping mechanisms as they are accessible, acceptable and they also save marriages and keep them intact. As indicated earlier on, victims of domestic violence prefer traditional institutions rather than formal institutions which highlight that they are effective and they have that transformative power. What therefore evokes great curiosity is whether the government will be in a position to harmonise them in their endeavour to reduce domestic violence as they are mainly preferred by women.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be concluded that tradition and social belief and value systems play a significant role in providing psychosocial support systems for women in the face of abuse. The unfortunate part is that this has inadvertently weakened efforts by the Zimbabwean government and other non-state actors in trying to end violence against women. It is evident that the traditional value system exerts more pressure on the wellbeing of the family and the community at large at the expense of individual freedoms. Women are unwilling to break away from cultural and religious orientation in order to embrace the rights and protections as guaranteed by the law. Popular cultural practices that undermine women's rights especially in marriage settings include the emphasis on silence, endurance and reliance on internal conflict resolution processes. The importance of the integrity of the family is given a higher premium than the individual human rights.

The African Apostolic traditional sects dominant in the area also play a big part in perpetuating domestic violence. The traditional churches' over-emphasis on the need for women to be acquiescent to their husbands has meant that women cannot challenge abuse. In some instances financial insecurities in the community have seen women more willing to endure abuse as they fear losing financial security. Many women are aware of the emotional and physical abuse that they are usually put through by their husbands but because they enjoy relative financial security, they are unwilling to utilise the provisions of the law to gain recourse. It can thus be concluded that there is no harmony between cultural socialisation and anti-domestic violence law enforcement mechanisms especially in rural communities in Zimbabwe. As a result effectiveness of legislative instruments has largely been undermined.

There is therefore need to seriously think of innovative ways of addressing deep-rooted cultural beliefs and practices that militate against the effectiveness of constitutional and legal instruments against domestic violence. There is need for the government and all stakeholders to develop intervention strategies that address these. A good entry point for this crusade can be provided by the Ministry of Women, Gender and Community Affairs in the country. This can be used to provide community education to address the negative cultural practices in the rural communities. The government can also partner community based Non-Governmental Organisations and United Nations Organisation Agencies to help mobilise resources so as to address this. The authorities can also target church leaders of the African Apostolic sects in rural communities as well as urban communities to address the challenges facing women.

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