



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: MITIGATION ROLE OF AFRICAN INLAND CHURCH IN UASIN GISHU COUNTY, KENYA

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### Article History

Received: 01.02.2024

Accepted: 24.02.2024

Published: 11.03.2024

**Abstract:** Domestic violence is abusive behavior perpetrated by one's partner in a relationship. Women across the world have been exposed to different forms of domestic violence (DV) according to various studies done. In Kenya, it is reported that almost half of the female population has directly or indirectly experienced domestic violence. It affects the psychological state of the abused party as well as their physical well-being, and in some cases, it leads to death. Uasin Gishu County, particularly Soy Sub-County, has witnessed a significant surge in gender-based violence (GBV) cases over recent years. The community, predominantly composed of the Kalenjin community, with over 75% adhering to the African Inland Church (AIC) Christian faith, forms a substantial and representative sample for this research. This article is an extraction of the thesis on domestic violence. It aimed to assess the ongoing prevalence of domestic violence against women, with a specific focus on the role of the clergy within the African Inland Church (AIC) in addressing these issues. The study employed a stratified sampling method to categorize the population, followed by a combination of simple random and purposive sampling techniques to select interviewees. Data collection involved questionnaire interviews, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs). Qualitative data analysis utilized Excel to identify leading themes. Quantitative data analysis, conducted using SPSS 2.0 software, employed descriptive and inferential statistics, presented through tables and figures. The study found that the church's coping mechanisms might not completely resolve the issue, as the clergy are not well prepared to handle it. The study recommended that comprehensive training for clergy and church leaders to effectively address domestic violence, accompanied by the establishment of frameworks or guidelines within the church.

**Keywords:** Christian faith, Church, Clergy, Domestic Violence.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a serious vice affecting many people in the society. Domestic violence refers to a breach of one's liberty, security, dignity, equality, physical or mental integrity and the fundamental rights of life based on gender (United Nations Kenya, 2015). It is a violent act based on gender and which may result in physical, psychological or sexual injury to either party in a marriage (Qureshi, 2019). Violence refers to the deliberate use of force physically which can be actual or threatened, against self, an individual or a number of people which can lead to psychological trauma, severe injury and eventually loss of life (WHO, 2014). The Bible, on which the Christian faith is anchored, teaches that husbands and wives should treat each other with mutual love and respect and that violence and abuse should not be accepted. As a Bible-believing church, the doctrines of AIC recognize equality, respect for life, and sanctity in marriage (Mumo, 1997). Women in the church who are victims of domestic violence tend to exhibit deviations in behavior, in some cases drifting to substance abuse, developing suicidal thoughts, and becoming inactive physically, thus affecting their health mentally, physically and psychologically (Ondicho, 2018). It is not enough to establish counseling services that can be used to manage the effect of this vice in the church.

This article will focus on factors contributing to persistence of domestic violence against women in African Inland Church in Soy Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County as well as evaluate specific roles that the clergy play to effectively curb or manage this type of violence against women within the confinements of AIC church. The outset accounts of creation state that a man and a woman were both created in the image and likeness of God. Likewise, a man and a woman should look forward to attaining eternity that will make them both equal before the throne of God. In Christ, a man and a woman are the same in the eye of God (Genesis 1:27, New King James Version). Acts of violence against one gender disrupts the good relationship that God established between human beings during creation. (Kroeger and Nason-Clark 2010) asserts that religions guide personal and institutional realities affecting human life, enabling people to eliminate vices in the society. Churches provide a platform for the clergy to interpret the Bible and offer guidance on the prevalence of social justice-injustice. Despite the general expectations that the church should be in the forefront in fighting the vice, the reality on the ground is different (Ondicho, 2018). This has partly been attributed to lack of awareness among the church leaders who may not fully understand the nature and scope of domestic violence or may not recognize it as a serious problem in their own communities. Without adequate

education and awareness, it may be difficult for the church to identify and address cases of domestic violence.

(Olwambula 2014) further highlights that domestic violence is often surrounded by feelings of shame and stigma, which hinders the victims from seeking help as well as acting as an obstacle for the church to provide the necessary support. The church may need to work extra hard to create a safe and welcoming environment where victims can feel comfortable seeking help. In addition, some church leaders may be hesitant to openly condemn domestic violence for fear of offending or alienating members of their congregation who hold more conservative or patriarchal views. However, the inability to deal with the vice openly and firmly may ultimately result in more damage, despite the view that the church has a responsibility to promote justice and compassion for all members of their community. GBV comes in different forms which can include threats, physical aggression, emotional abuse, sexual neglect as well as financial deprivation (Siemieniuk, Krentz, Gish, Gill, & STDs, 2010). Studies indicate widely that women across all spheres of life are regularly exposed to most forms of domestic violence and that up to 80% of all DV is committed against women by persons that they have intimate relationship with (Ashraf, Abrar-ul-Haq & Ashraf, 2017; Pallitto et al., 2013). According to a recent statistic, 40–70 % of murder committed against women is by their loved ones. This vice is not only limited to a country or persons of social-economic stratum, since the statistics indicated that 15 % are from Japan and 61 % are from rural Kenya (WHO, 2015). It further notes that children who witness it annually are between 3.3 million and 10 million (WHO, 2006). To access direct medical services after DV, one needs approximately \$4.1 billion (Hussein, 2012). Sadly, DV affects women from all status in life. However, those who are likely to experience it more are those from low economic status than their male counterparts (Owusu Adjah & Agbemafla, 2016). Females are the majority of victims who experience detrimental effects on their lives compared to men and boys are also affected by domestic violence, (Barisua Ernest Nwidag, 2015; Black & Black, 2007; Carmo, Grams, Magalhães, & Medicine, 2011). Domestic Violence hinders the achievement of the goal of national development and its objectives as portrayed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), United Nation (UN) and the Kenya's Vision 2030. According to (Adibelli, Sümen and Teskereci 2021), during the Covid period, the number of women killed by their partners in Iran and other Asian countries went up to 935 in 2019 as compared to 104 in 2017 and this means that the anger manifested by the male gender increased during controlled movement. This position was not any better in earlier years because Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, (2006) while quoting a report by the UN Secretary General that covered various in-country studies, indicated that 10 to 70% of women had experienced DV.

The recognition of women's rights in the recent past has slightly reduced the vice. Studies conducted shows that the percentage of women affected is 29% in Canada, 34% in Egypt, 35% in New Zealand, 21% in Switzerland and 22% in United States respectively. Approximately 95% of the cases of domestic violence are perpetrated against women although statistics vary slightly (WHO, 2006). Approximately 32% of women in the middle east were physically abused in 1997 as reported (Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002). This report observed that violence against the girl child and women, both at work and at home had taken

different trends and dimensions which forms a threat to development socially and economically. Intimate partner violence (IPV) in sub-Saharan Africa is seen to be very high with a prevalence of 36% above the global average (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts., 2006). In Africa, majority of women experience intimate partner violence for lifetime (45.6%) and sexual assault (11.9%) compared to women from other parts of the world (García-Moreno et al., 2019). However, there has been opposing positions advanced which through the studies carried out in Africa indicate that both women and men are victims as well as perpetrators (Muluneh, Stulz, Francis, & Agho, 2020). The prevalence of cultural beliefs and traditions have been seen to promote patriarchal traditions where men have hierarchical roles in marriage and sexual relationships (Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger, & masculinities, 2015). The vice of violence against women is also prevalent in Kenya as evidenced by different police reports and studies across the country. In Kenya, 14 % of women between 15-19 reported to have been subjected to sexual violence and 38% of them have encountered physical violence. According to statistics carried out in 2013, it indicates that the Kenya Police Service received 3,596 cases of defilement. Out of these, 913 reported to have been subjected to rape, 242 of the cases were incest and 124 of them had been sodomized (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2014). In addition, 39% of women and girls were reported to have experienced physical violence according to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey of 2008–2009. Further, the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) revealed that 14% of women have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime, 45% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have encountered physical violence from the time they were 15 years and 20 % of them reported to have experienced violence 12 months before the survey was carried out. The report also reveals that 39% of women aged between 15-49 years who had been abused are said to have reported that the perpetrators were their intimate partners (KDHS, 2014). As indicated by (Akumu and Auma, Pamela, 2016), other than Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), 78.3% of women in the larger Uasin Gishu County are psychologically abused (Olwambula, 2014).

According to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) Report of 2014 (women & IRC, 2014), 87% of the women in Uasin Gishu County who had taken part in the survey had experienced various forms of abuse from their loved ones. Most of those abused argued that their vulnerability to violence was determined by their gender and were subjected to rape and FGM. The family has been equated to a sanctuary where individuals seek comfort and affection. However, in other cases it is in the family where the risk thrives and leads to dangerous forms of violence (Hussein, 2012; Khan, 2000; Sharma, 2015). Family is a social institution where a man and a woman depend on one another for emotional, physical, and financial support although violence against women is still regarded as a private family matter in Kenyan communities (Chepkwony, 2016). The role of the church as outlined in the Holy Bible is concerned with the holistic well-being of the people in the society but not limited to spiritual wellbeing (Omulokoli, 1995). When Paul advice husbands to love their wives as Jesus Christ loved the Church according to Ephesians 5:25, he is discouraging any vice that can harm the wife physically or emotionally. Despite religious teachings advocating for harmonious relationship between husband and wife, cases of DV are still experienced in churches today. This is contrary to the general expectation that Christian families ought

to be secure and peaceful as spelled out in the beatitudes (Mathew 5: 3 -12)(Babu & Kusuma 2017) acknowledge that DV is widespread and rooted in the inequality in terms of power and ownership of materials between women and men and institutionalized through societal and governmental laws, policies, and norms which prefer men and offer denial to women. Most of the reported cases emanate from rural areas and informal settlements in urban areas. Common to all these settlements is the lack of adequate access to professional advice and education on how to avoid acts of violence against women. In most instances, affected women experience chronic physical and psychological problems that directly affect the family's economic status and children's social life (Campbell, 2002). With inadequate professional guidance in rural areas, it is expected that religious institutions take up the role of ensuring people are guided to live within the Biblical guidelines which recognize absolute respect to man or woman as equal creatures.

Kenya is a highly Christian community hence majority of its population are guided by Christian teachings as stipulated in the Bible (Mwiti, Nderitu & Wambugu, 2015). An estimated 80% of the Kenyan religious landscape is made of the Christian population, 11% comprises the Muslims and the remaining 9% made of minor religious communities of the Hindu, Sikhs, and the Baha's. As a result, the 80% are expected to be guided by the Christian values as stipulated in the teachings and doctrines of the Bible. Apparently, the Biblical religious values that foster sanctity to life and equality between men and women as stipulated in Genesis 1:27 (New King James Version), seem to have been ignored. Overemphasis on customary African laws not only immobilizes the victims of DV even when in church, but also encourages the perpetrators inadvertently. Domestic violence is woven into the fabric of society. For instance, women from Christian set-ups feel shy to seek professional advice from counsellors sharing the same religious doctrines due to fear of intimidation or creating a perception that they are disrespectful to their spouses. As a result, affected Christian women seek guidance from other secular and cultural counsellors. Approaches used by religious, secular, and cultural counsellors lead to conflicting advice on how to approach DV. Secular counsellors emphasize on the application of the law and advice victims to take legal action against perpetrators. On the other hand, spiritual counsellors emphasize on the Biblical teachings on forgiveness while cultural counsellors emphasize on the importance of Maintaining the status quo: to keep the family. This in turn hinders the delivery of assistance to the affected women in the Kenyan society on issues of DV (Shannon-Lewy & Dull, 2005). There is limited understanding on the significance of a victim's religious beliefs from the secular sources attributing the abuse to her religion (Horton, 1988).

### 1.1. Role of the Church in Addressing Domestic Violence

Historically, religious communities have viewed domestic violence either as inconsequential or as a matter confined to familial boundaries that's best left as a personal issue. However, empirical data contradicts this perception, showing that the prevalence of domestic violence within religious communities aligns with that in the broader population (Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002). The church assumes a pivotal and prophetic role in addressing violence by actively condemning it. The concept of breaking the silence involves fostering open discussions about acts of violence,

explicitly recognizing and categorizing them as transgressions against divine principles (Fortune & Marshall, 2002). The idea that the church holds exclusive authority to combat domestic violence, as mentioned in Ephesians 6:13, has led to situations where violence might be seen as acceptable, resulting in ambiguity regarding the responsibilities of faith-based organizations like churches.

Research demonstrates that people often turn to the clergy as primary sources of guidance for family difficulties and domestic abuse concerns (Bowker, Maurer, & Therapy, 1987; Rotunda, Williamson, & Penfold, 2004). Clergy members are acknowledged for significantly contributing to counseling their parishioners (Shannon-Lewy, Dull, & Behaviour, 2005). The author argues that clergy members and other church leaders play a crucial role in directing attention and allocating resources to address domestic violence issues. Members of the clergy are often regarded as individuals who possess qualities like integrity, approachability, and compassion. Moreover, those deeply committed to their religious beliefs might view the clergy as an ideal source of support due to their understanding of ethical and spiritual principles (Zust, Flicek Opdahl, Moses, Schubert & Timmerman, 2021). According to (Moran *et al.* 2005), research indicates that clergy frequently encounter marital challenges in their counselling roles. The literature acknowledges that some of the religious teachings and members of the clergy have both promoted and hindered the establishment of non-violence in relationships. Scholars like (Fortune and Enger 2005) and (Rotunda *et al.* 2004) contend that religious communities convey values and belief systems through texts, traditions, teachings, and doctrines. Balancing the preservation of a marital bond with safeguarding victims of domestic abuse from their partners presents an ethical dilemma for the clergy (Levitt & Ware, 2006).

K'Ahenda's (2008) study suggests that the church should adopt a comprehensive approach encompassing immediate and long-term measures to effectively advance justice. In the short term, ensuring the safety of victims and their families is crucial, alongside holding perpetrators accountable for their actions. The author proposes that this can begin with active listening and validating victims' stories, followed by referring family members to appropriate authorities for swift aid and comprehensive therapeutic interventions. Advisers should prioritize viewing marriage as an institution serving the well-being of all, individual growth, and spiritual enrichment. It's important to recognize that abusive families are harmful entities causing physical, emotional, and spiritual devastation to all members, including both the victim and perpetrator. Pastors must acknowledge that saving such marriages can't rely solely on increased prayer, patience, or sacrifices made by victims. It requires substantial transformation from the abuser's side (Lehan, 1989).

## 2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The area chosen for the study is Soy Sub-County in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, and the unit of the study was the African Inland Church within the sub-county. The study targeted selected groups of AIC members. Women of reproductive ages, between 15-49 years and above, married or ever been married and members of the clergy residing within Soy Sub- County, Uasin Gishu County. A total of 269

respondents were sampled for interviews within the AIC church in Soy Sub-County. These included church leaders and members of the sampled African Inland Churches in Soy Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County. Stratified sampling was first applied to categorize the population, and then simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were applied to select the respondents. This study employed questionnaires, KIIs and FGDs schedules, laddering questions, and audio and video recordings to collect data that was used to assess knowledge, perception, and prevalence of DV in Soy Sub County, Uasin Gishu County. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS statistical software version 22. For qualitative data gathered from the KIIs, FGDs, and open-ended questions in the questionnaires, interview notes were transcribed and the various trends in the data noted. A qualitative data checklist was then developed using an Excel sheet.

### 3.0. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 3.1. Role of Clergy in Dealing with Issues of Domestic Violence in Africa Inland Church

The study established that the clergy were concerned about domestic violence within the church. This is evidenced by the findings showing that 90% of the clergy had been approached by church members to help address domestic violence cases. This shows there is awareness of domestic violence in both the church and the wider community. Due to the rising incidences of domestic violence among their members, a majority of church elders and pastors (58%) indicated that they had initiated counseling sessions for the affected church members. Additionally, in response to receiving complaints, the church had been considering conducting counseling sessions on domestic violence for free. It is also observable that the clergy and church elders view domestic violence as being contrary to the teachings of their faith, viewing it as sinful and a violation of human dignity and rights.

#### Understanding the Perception of Clergy on What Constitutes Domestic Violence

In order to understand the perception of the clergy on domestic violence, the Likert scale rating was used as follows: 1 – Agree; 2 –Disagree; 3 – Don’t know.

**Table 1 : Perception of Clergy on Domestic Violence**

<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don’t know</b>
A partner has a right to prevent his wife from going to church	4.0	94.4	1.6
Wife beating is a criminal offence that requires direct prosecution in court of law	95.5	4.5	0
Wife beating is okay when it does not cause physical harm	3.6	96.4	0
It is okay to forgive the perpetrator of violence	90.7	6.3	3
The clergy can help solve domestic violence in homes	90.1	6	3.9
Domestic violence against women happens because women nag, criticize, and are stubborn to their husbands	24.2	71.6	4.2
Men are justified to apply reasonable force when their wives refuse to follow their instructions	3.2	94.3	4.5

From the findings of Table 1, it is observable that a significant majority of clergy agree with the statements that wife beating is a criminal offence that necessitates direct prosecution in a court of law, (95.5%), it is acceptable to forgive the perpetrator of violence (90.7%), and that clergy can play a role in addressing domestic violence within homes (90.1%). Conversely, a majority of clergy disagree with the statements that a partner has the right to prevent his wife from attending church (94.4%), domestic violence against women occurs due to their nagging, criticism, and stubbornness (71.6%), wife beating is okay (96.4), men are justified to apply reasonable force when their wives refuse to follow their instructions (94.3), direct prosecution in a court of law (95.5%), it is acceptable to forgive the perpetrator of violence (90.7%), and that clergy can play a role in addressing domestic violence within homes (90.1%). According to the Cultural Lag Theory, the insistence of some societal teachings might also contribute to the persistence of the GBV. The Christian teachings advocate for forgiveness, and thus, when misrepresented by the perpetrators, it might result in violence against women. It is important then that the Christian teachings align with the revolving societal demands. This might explain the reason 3.2% of the church leaders believed that men are justified in using reasonable force when their wives disobey them.

#### 3.2. Actions Taken by the Clergy to Address Domestic Violence

The study sought to investigate the actions the clergy undertook to address domestic violence among the church congregants. The study went further to analyze the guidelines that inform the responses from the church to domestic violence cases.

**Table 2: Response of the Clergy on the Occurrence of Domestic Violence**

Statements	Always (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)
I refer women experiencing domestic violence to the police and other legal systems	20.6	60.2	19.2
I ask affected women to come along with their partners	61.7	36.6	1.7
I advise women to follow the example of Jesus Christ and forgive their husbands	60.3	39.5	0.2
Advice women to leave violent partners	15.9	84.1	0
I advise women to seek services from refuge homes	15.1	35.4	45.5
I ask women to do all that their husbands ask without any form of counter argument	64.3	35.7	0
Separation is inevitable when the marriage is experiencing recurrent cases of violence	21.2	33.2	45.6

From the findings of Table 2, it is evident that (20.2%) of the respondents indicated that they sometimes referred the victims of DV to the police or established justice systems, while 19.2% vowed not to have referred the victims to the police. This is a likely pointer to the fact that the abuse is regarded by some clergy as being a domestic issue that should be handled at the family level and not through existing justice systems.

Lack of referral to the justice system often leads to exacerbation of violent attacks on the vulnerable in the community. This corroborates (Saul 2011) findings where he observed that churches ought to appeal to relevant authorities both local governmental and international community to help curb the domestic violence vice. (Mahomva, Bredenkamp, Schoeman, 2020) support the research finding by stating that the clergy advocate for forgiveness, revitalization and strengthening of the family unit in spite of the damage meted to any of the parties. However, (Browning *et al.* 2000) suggests that families should not be assumed to be working in the best interest of every member. Consequently, as the clergy hold, that some form of friction is inevitable in a marriage set-up.

From the findings of Table 2, it is notable that 61.7% and 36.6% of the clergy always and sometimes, respectively, ask women to bring their partners along for counseling. It is also observable that a significant 60.3% and 39.5% of the clergy always and sometimes, respectively, advise women to follow the example of Jesus Christ and forgive their husbands as Jesus forgives the church. This finding is corroborated by (Fortune, 1991), who finds that forgiveness processes and the temptation to skew justice are great because the road to healing and restoration is long and can be time-consuming.

To avoid physical harm to women, 64.3 percent and 35.7 percent of the clergy, respectively, noted that they always and sometimes ask women to do all that their husbands demand without any form of counterargument. The analysis shows that the church uses a reconciliation approach in handling issues of domestic violence, with the majority of respondents encouraging counseling sessions for both partners.

It is also observable that 15.9% of respondents advised women to leave violent partners, while a notable 84.1% sometimes advised spouses to leave violent marriages.

In additional 15.3% and 34.5% of the clergy said that they always and sometimes advise women to seek services from refugee homes, respectively. Finally, the majority (45.6%) of the clergy never advocated for separation when marriage is experiencing recurrent cases of violence; 33.2% of the clergy sometimes advocated for separation, bringing into question the efficacy and ability of the church to handle issues of domestic violence.

The effectiveness of these methods in addressing gender-based violence varies within the context of the church. While a substantial portion of the clergy (61.7% and 36.6%) involve both partners in counseling and emphasize forgiveness, there are concerns about misinterpretations of biblical teachings regarding family matters, indicating a need for retraining. The approach of advising women to comply with their husbands' requests (64.3% and 35.7%) aims to prevent physical harm, though this may inadvertently perpetuate unequal power dynamics. While the majority prioritize counseling, a significant percentage (15.9%) advise women to leave violent partners, but the Christian faith's stance on separation or divorce under severe circumstances complicates this approach. A portion (15.3% and 34.5%) recommend seeking refuge home services, but a significant number (45.6%) never advocate separation, casting doubt on the church's overall effectiveness in handling recurring domestic violence cases.

**Church strategies to address domestic violence**

Different coping mechanisms have been initiated, especially by the church and victims of DV. In response to coping strategies, the church in Soy constituency has initiated several ways to mitigate domestic violence in the communities.



**Table 3: Interventions and strategies employed by the church to address domestic violence**

Action	Frequency	Percentage
Support programmes to encourage sharing among victims and survivors of domestic violence	16	20%
Classes, seminars and workshops to sensitize on DV	25	31.2%
Pastoral guidance and counselling for couples and survivors	17	21.3%
The church provides psychosocial support to those who are affected by domestic violence	12	15%
Awareness programmes to address DV within the church	10	12.5%

The findings of Table 3, reveals that 31.2% of clergy suggested the need to organize seminars and sensitization workshops on DV. Consequently, research established that one-fifth (20%) of the respondents said that there is a need to create support groups that will encourage victims and survivors to speak out and share their experiences so as to encourage others who might be in the same position. This agrees with the recommendation of (WHO 2010) that peer to peer support among victims of violence is a strategy that can result in reduced physical violence against women. 12.5% of respondents stated that awareness programmes within the church will contribute significantly to the prevention of domestic violence.

The results in Table 3, agree with (Ellison and Anderson 2001) who says that there are three pathways through which religious involvement may operate to address DV. These include increasing levels of social integration, increasing levels of social support, and reducing the risk of psychological problems. Further, (Bellini, Wilson and Smeddinck 2021) points out that the social support should not only be directed to the victims but also to the perpetrators through effective support from professionals for them to desist from engaging in abusive behaviors against others. These can be realized through social integration, social support, and reducing the risk of psychological issues. It is further observed that the extent of spirituality of the spouses in some cases aids in reducing domestic violence, even in situations where patriarchal culture remains prevalent. According to (Magezi and Manzanga 2021), spirituality plays an important role in reducing DV. This is found to promote empathy and compassion, irrespective of one's religion, as it emphasizes the importance of treating others with kindness and understanding.

The clergy stated that continued guidance and counseling for couples and survivors is key to addressing domestic violence. Towards the same, 21% of the respondents highlighted that the church is developing programs aimed at helping the victims of domestic violence. However, it is noted that the counseling services are mainly attended by women, with only a few of them coming along with their spouses.

(Paymar 2000) noted that sometimes counseling in marriage can subject the victim of domestic violence to danger. From this argument that counseling is not appropriate in abuse cases, Paymar asserts that this position is not true because most couples live together. He advocates for clear guidelines and policies that should be adopted to protect the victims. The church can offer support through seminars and counseling which can help alleviate the pain of the abuse and reduce tension (Banzhaf, Drabo, Grell, & agro-pastoralists in the zone of Kishi Beiga, 2000).

The extent to which clergy understand religious beliefs may help shape their course in intervening in the case of DV. These fundamentalist beliefs, in effect, have a narrower understanding of spouse abuse, which adheres to male headship and promotes the myths of domestic abuse (Neergaard, Lee, Anderson, & Gengler, 2007).

It also involves support groups, forums, or individual counseling where women receive the spiritual, physical, and legal support required to address domestic violence. The findings are in agreement with the findings of (Shannon *et al.* 2005) discovered that the majority of women in Pakistan used religion to find solace against violence.

#### 4.0. Conclusion

The study concludes that the church is in the process of developing guidelines to curb and effectively manage cases of domestic violence among its members. Counseling and support services can aid survivors in managing trauma and provide information on their legal and medical rights.

#### 5.0. Recommendations

The study therefore, recommends that the church should enhance the existing guidelines and frameworks to enable the clergy to deal with domestic violence with a more focused and unified approach. These guidelines should afford educational resources for clergy members, enabling them to better understand the complexities of domestic violence and providing appropriate guidance to the afflicted and public information.

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