
FORMS AND CAUSES OF VIOLENCE WOMEN PERPETRATE AGAINST THEMSELVES IN WINNEBA IN THE EFFUTU MUNICIPALITY OF GHANA

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ABSTRACT: *This study sought to examine violence against women in Winneba in the Effutu Municipality, Ghana, with the focus on females being victims as well as perpetrators of violence. The study ascertained the forms and causative factors of violence against women. The ecological model and the social learning theory were adopted for the study. Qualitative research approach was employed with a focus on phenomenological research design for the study. A total of seventeen (17) participants constituted the sample size. The participants were selected using purposive and snowballing sampling techniques. Semi-structured interview guide was used to obtain the data. The study revealed that unequal power relations, suspicion of adultery, being a victim of violence during childhood, are the reasons why women employ various forms of violence against women in Winneba while poverty and single parenting made other women sufferers of such violence. Based on these findings, the study recommended that stakeholders such as Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) should formulate policies and organise programmes that can address risk factors associated with violence at domestic, community and societal levels. Religious groups and non-governmental organisations in Winneba in the Effutu Municipality should organise women empowerment programmes with the intention of reducing women's dependency on other people which will at the long run reduce violence against women.*

KEYWORDS: Causes, Effutu municipality, forms, Ghana, perpetrators, violence, women

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is common and worldwide problem happening in every nation and social group. In the world over, one out of every three women has been beaten, forced into sex, or otherwise ill-treated in her lifetime, most often by somebody who is familiar, including family members, a superior in the workplace or a co-worker (Heise, Ellsberg & Gottemoeller, 2002). Regarding the recognition of human rights abuse globally, violence against women has been dubbed the most pervasive yet minimally acknowledged (WHO, 2013). Consequently, the Second World Conference on Human Rights, held in 1993 in Vienna, prioritized this issue which jeopardizes the lives, integrity, and independence of women (Fulu & Warner, 2018). Violence against women is a global threat that is becoming more prevalent. It is one of the most common human rights violations and a public health issue (WHO, 2013).

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, adopted in 1993, gave a thorough exposition of the notion. It declared that violence against women encompasses all acts of

violence that causes or is likely to cause sexual, physical or psychological damage or suffering to women, as well as threats of committing such acts, compulsion, or subjective denial of liberty, whether in public or private life (United Nations, 1993).

Violence against women (VAW) can take various forms and is experienced differently by women and girls around the world, but all forms have gender inequality as the fundamental factor. Sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, sexual abuse and traditional practices such as forced and/or early marriage, female genital mutilation, honour murders, widow inheritance cause distress and characterize the various forms of VAW which occur in different cultures, countries, and regions. Violence against women happens at home and outside the home. Such violence not only arises at the household level and in the community, but also occurs at national level from time to time, it is meted by the state through strategies or the activities of some agents of the state including the police, soldiers or immigration authorities (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015).

Women are exposed to violence in all cultures and across all socioeconomic groups. According to WHO estimates, about one-third of women globally have suffered abuse by an intimate partner, either physically or sexually. In WHO-specified high-income countries, the prevalence is lowest (23%) and peaks in the African and Southeast Asian countries, recording 46% and 40%, respectively (WHO, 2014). Records further indicate that in America, 30% females experience intimate partner violence while 27% of females in Europe and Western Pacific go through it. The statistics further revealed that seven percent (7%) of females have been sexually abused by someone who is not a partner, and Central and southern Africa have the highest estimates of 21% and 17%, respectively, while South Asia has the lowest (3 percent) (WHO, 2014).

Ghana is not exempted from the global issue of violence against women. According to researchers and victim activists, one out of every three females in Ghana tends to have experienced a type of violence against women such as physical, economic, emotional, and sexual violence (Ajayi & Soyinka-Airewele, 2018). Many women have made reports concerning emotional abuse, such as verbal abuse, threats and property destruction and these could be linked to dominance and exploitative mechanisms worsened by patriarchal ideals (Adjah & Agbemafle, 2016; Cusack & Manuh, 2009). In Ghana, issues related to patriarchy frequently lead to violence against women, preserving a structure of male domination and subordination of women. According to Tsikata and Kerr (2000), socio-cultural practices and the process of socialisation reinforce that women consent to these practices and disparities that perpetuate their submissiveness. Tsikata and Kerr further indicated that in traditional set up in Ghana, men were considered heads of households and breadwinners, primarily with the responsibility of ensuring the wellbeing of all the members of the household. Roles and responsibilities of women as prime caretakers and frame takers have evolved with time, and most Ghanaian women contribute significantly to the income of their families, yet, violence against them keeps increasing. Bowman (2003) notes that sexual harassment is widespread in Ghana, despite the fact that it is not frequently recognised or reported, owing to definitional issues, traditional issues, and the difficulties of proving it. Bowman further adds that non-sexual violence is also widespread in Ghana and occurs in many forms. According to him, cultural practices such as widowhood rites, child betrothal, child marriage, female genital mutilation, the banishing of suspected female witches among others perpetuate violence especially against women. According to the Domestic and Health

survey conducted in Ghana in 2008, 38.7% of the women aged 15 to 49 had experienced physical, emotional or sexual violence perpetrated by a male partner at least once in their lives (The Ghana Statistical Service as cited by Ajayi & Soyinka-Airewele, 2018).

Over the last few years, violence against women has changed from being regarded as a cloistered or familial issue to being recognized as public health issue with substantial effects for victims' overall well-being and health (Krantz, 2002). A study by WHO in 2002 revealed that violence is the basis of increased death rate among people aged 15 to 44 years old around the world, making it a public health concern (WHO, 2002). Violence against women is not only an infringement on human rights, but a costly impediment to the country's development and progress (Sida, 2015). Violence against women is a universal health problem that transcends economic status, age, religion, culture and sexual positioning. Violence against women is a major impediment to achieving equal justice, poses a threat to democratic development and public health, and is a critical barrier to achieving sustainable development, economic growth and peace. This is a key roadblock to attaining long-term economic growth, equality and peace. If females are not safe, they cannot be full citizens nor fully contribute their quota to the development of their societies. Violence against women undermines efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as it obstructs poverty alleviation initiative and has intergenerational implications. It also makes it more difficult for women to utilize their reproductive rights, which has major ramifications for both mother and child health.

Over the years, whenever violence against women is raised, women are seen as victims while men are always the perpetrators. As a result, studies on violence against women focus on females as victims and males as perpetrators. This perspective, as conferred by Afari (2017), shaped various attitudes and reactions to violence as a social delinquency, evolving from government's policy to campaigns by feminist groups. Most people have difficulty in believing whether females are capable of committing acts of violence (Hines, Brown & Dunning, 2007). Men have mostly been the perpetrators of violence against women (VAW), whereas women have been victims. Consequently, in resolving violence against women the focus had always been on men. Women also commit acts of violence against other women in some instances. This study looked at violence against women, focusing on women as the principal culprits and victims in Winneba, Effutu Municipality. According to Medie (2019), whilst women are inexplicably the victims of gender-based violence, they commit acts of violence both inside and outside the home. Some women engage in intimate partner violence within the home. Women's enactment of violence is not just directed toward men but sometimes to their fellow women. There are authentic stories around the globe on women who have been assaulted by other women. One of such instances is a case that occurred in Savanna Region in Ghana where a 90-year-old woman was beaten to death by some women including her granddaughter with reason being that she has been indicted of witchcraft (Duodu, 2020). Additionally, data obtained from the DOVVSU revealed that a number of cases involving women as perpetrators of various forms of violence against other women have been reported in Winneba.

Studies have shown that, women's use of violence is not limited to the private space such as the home but extends to the public domain. Women have provided material and other kinds of support to armed groups. For example, Nuba women supported soldiers of the Sudan People's Liberation Army with food and water during the conflict in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan between 1986 and 2005. Women have also

participated in violence by joining armed groups. In Zimbabwe, female fighters fought alongside men in the country's anti-colonial war for independence. However, women's participation in violence has often been ignored and underestimated in the academic literature and in practice (Medie, 2019). A paradigm shift is required to decrease and ultimately eliminate VAW. Thus, it is essential to emphasize prevention and the direct involvement of both men and women, victims and perpetrators without which there can be no lasting change. This study therefore seeks to fill a gap in existing literature on forms and causes of violence perpetrated by women against other fellow females. As a result, the study sought to address the following research questions: (1) what forms of violence do women perpetrate against their fellow women in Winneba in the Effutu Municipality? And (2) Why do women perpetrate violence against women in Winneba in the Effutu Municipality? The study was delimited to women who are victims or perpetrators of violence against women. The study was further delimited to Winneba, the municipal capital of the Effutu Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES AND FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence is the use of force to control another person or other people. Violence can include physical, emotional, social or economic abuse, coercion, or pressure. Violence can be open, in the form of a physical assault or threatening someone with a weapon; it can also be more hidden, in the form of intimidation, threats or other forms of psychological or social pressure. It is the deliberate use of physical energy or power, threatened or real, against oneself, other person, or against a group of people or community, that can lead to or has a high propensity of resulting in injury, death, emotional harm, under development or deprivation (WHO, 2002). Violence is "an act carried out with the intention or perceived intention of physically hurting another person" (Kuenyehia, 2000, p. 6). Internationally, violence resulted in the deaths of an estimated 1.28 million persons in 2013. In Africa, it is estimated that 60.9 people die a violent death out of every 100,000 people each year (WHO, 2020).

United Nations posits that the term violence against women denotes any behaviour related to gender-based violence that creates, or is likely to lead to physical, sexual or psychological damage or misery to women, including intimidations associated with such acts, compulsion or arbitrary denial of liberty, whether it is happening in public or in private domain (United Nations, 1993). United Nations, (1993, p. 2) further declares:

Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following: (a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation. (b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking of women and forced prostitution.

Terry (2014) avows that violence against women is a broad term used to capture aggressive acts directed towards women, which consists of many forms of violence with the most commonly known forms of

abuse being psychological, sexual, and physical. Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE, 2013) maintains that violence against women is any damaging act or threat meted out to a person because of her sexual orientation or gender identity. It comprises physical, sexual and emotional abuse, compulsion, denial of liberty and financial deprivation whether occurring in public or private spheres. Thus, violence against women is any act of physical, psychological, sexual, social or economic violence directed at women.

Violence against women remains as an expression of unequal power relations between males and females. The disparity in power relations is deeply ingrained in various cultures in virtually all facet of life; females are openly or covertly regarded as being inferior to males. Power inequality is closely connected to financial dependence, economic insecurity and societal expectations of men and women (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015; Adzahlie-Mensah, Golo, & Attom, 2016). World-wide statistics on violence against women indicate that on average, 35% of females have been either physically and/or sexually abused by a person who is an intimate companion or not a close companion (WHO, 2013). Similarly, a study in Ghana by Ajayi and Soyinka-Airewele (2018), found out that one out of every three females in Ghana has suffered violence in diverse form, including physical, economic, psychological and sexual violence. Similarly, Medie (2019) in her study found that, 38.7 per cent of females who have ever married and are aged between fifteen and forty-nine in Ghana revealed that they have experienced either sexual, physical, or psychological violence, or all of these three acts.

Violence against women has been identified to be one of the common human rights violations, denying women equity, protection, dignity, equality, their right to enjoy autonomy and self-worth (Solanke, Amoo & Idowu, 2018). According to WHO (2002) females are particularly vulnerable to certain forms of violence given their subordinate status within families and communities. These include rituals relating to their reproductive functions, such as FGM or initiation rites. Violence makes an early appearance in women's intimate and sexual relationships. A report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) indicates that over 50% of ever-married girls have been victims of intimate partner violence (IPV), with the highest rates in Equatorial Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Zimbabwe and Cameroon (United Nations Women, 2018).

Civil society and governments around the world have accepted that VAW is a violation of basic human rights and a global policy concern. In recognition of this, "eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres" is one of the targets against which Sustainable Development Goal number 5, aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls will be measured (UN, 2017). To further underscore the importance of tackling VAW, the "elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls" was chosen as the evaluation theme at the 60th Session of the United Nation's (UN) Commission on the Status of Women in March 2016 (United Nations Women, 2018).

Violence against women can take various forms and is experienced differently by women and girls around the world. According to the WHO (2002) report on Violence and Health, violence appears in different forms and circumstances and involves distinct kinds of violent acts against women. According to the report, some of the recurrent forms of violence that are experienced by women include sexual violence,

physical violence, psychological violence, economic violence and harmful traditional practices. According to Population Council (2008), sexual violence means any sexual act, effort to get a sexual act, unwelcome sexual remarks and advances, or acts that include trafficking of women for their sexuality, the use of intimidation, threats of injury or physical force, by someone irrespective of the relationship to the survivor. It occurs in any setting including but not restricted to household or workplace. The 2007 Domestic Violence Act of Ghana defined sexual violence to encompass any forceful encounter that leads to sexual contact or sexual related activities which abuses, embarrasses or degrades someone or otherwise violates somebody's sexual integrity. Heise et al. (2002) assert that sexual advances and abuse also arise as persistent feature of female experience in the world over. To Heise et al. (2002), forced sexual interaction can happen at any time in a female's life and includes an array of behaviours, from aggressive sexual assault to nonphysical forms of inducement that compel females to be involved in sexual related activities reluctantly. Heise et al. (2002) further argue that the touchstone of coercion is that a woman lacks choice and faces severe physical or social consequences if she opposes sexual advances. Sexual violence can occur in various types of relationships and locations.

Physical violence is another type of violence committed against women. This type of violence suffered by women is the most palpable and difficult to hide, as it leaves marks that affect the physical appearance of victims. WHO (2017) recognise physical violence as the deliberate use of physical strength to cause harm or injury and it has the potential of even leading to the death of the victims. According to Fulu and Heise (2014), physical violence is the premeditated use of physical energy to cause body damage, pain, or infirmity. The severity of the bodily harm ranges from slight tissue damage, fractured bones to lasting injury and death. Fulu and Heise (2014), maintains that acts of physical violence include slapping, shoving, pushing, punching, hitting, beating, scratching, hair pulling, strangling, biting, grabbing, shaking, spitting, kicking, burning, throwing, body part twisting, compelling people to take an unwanted substance. It also includes restraining a woman to prevent her from seeking medical treatment or other help; and using household objects such as knife to hit or stab a woman and the use of arms like guns. The 2007 Domestic Violence Act of Ghana defined physical violence to embrace physical abuse, namely physical assault or use of physical strength to hurt another person including forcible detention or confinement of someone and the denial of access to adequate sustenance, water, clothing, accommodation, relaxation, or exposing someone to pain or torture, insensitive or undignified treatment or punishment.

Violence can also be perpetuated in psychological and emotional ways. This type of violence is more intricate to detect, as the impact on the victims are sometimes more difficult to observe and prove. This kind of violence is most often endured or tolerated and usually occurs prior to or concurrently with other kinds of violence that are committed against females. WHO (2017), explained psychological violence as an action or set of actions that directly blight the woman's psychological integrity. Acts of psychological violence include intimidation and harm against people or somebody close to the person. It also entails words or actions, harassment at the work place, humiliation and insults, comments meant to undermine a person's sense of self-worth and self-esteem. The use of children by a violent intimate partner to control or hurt the other partner (e.g. through attacking a child, forcing children to watch attacks against their mother, threatening to take children away, or kidnapping the child) constitute violence against women. The 2007 Domestic Violence Act of Ghana defined emotional violence as any act that affects someone's feelings thereby making the person always sad, dejected, humiliated, mocked, frightened, worried or

depressed or to feel pathetic or worthless. Harassment in the form of sexual pestering and intimidation by instilling fear in a person also constitute this form of violence. Reasonable number of females have also revealed that they have experienced emotional abuse such as intimidations, verbal abuse and destruction of possessions because of power relation structures (Adjah & Agbemaflle, 2016; Cusack & Manuh, 2009). A study by Institute for Development Studies, Ghana Statistical Service and Associates (2016), revealed that psychological violence was the common form of violence experienced by women and men across Ghana. In their study they found out that about half of the participants (48 per cent of women) experienced an act of psychological violence at least once in their lifetime.

Not all, there is socio-economic violence which can be both a means to make the victim more vulnerable to other forms of violence, but can also be the reason why other forms of violence are inflicted (WHO, 2005). Saravanan (2000) asserts that this is the discrimination or deprivation of opportunities, services, segregation, and unequal access to education, health assistance or remunerated employment and denial of assets rights. Social exclusion based on sexual orientation can lead to the denial of access to services, social benefits, enjoyment of political, communal, economic, cultural rights, imposition of unlawful penalties, unfair practices or physical and emotional harm and acceptance of discriminatory acts. According to Saravanan (2000), this form of violence may be perpetrated by family members, society, institutions, organizations and government actors. Obstructive statutory practice is another type of socio-economic violence which leads to denial of access to civil, social, economic, cultural and political rights. Key perpetrators are usually the woman's family, community, institutions and the State. According to the 2007 Domestic Violence Act, economic abuse encompasses the deprivation or threatened denial of economic resources which is entitled to a person by law. It also comprises disposition or threatened disposition of moveable or permanent property in which someone has a material interest.

Literature have shown that women experience various forms of violence, be it physical, psychological or sexual across the various stages of their lives. Some of these forms of violence are not only perpetrated by men against women but women against other women as well. There are factors that account for violence against women. Five main sets of factors have historically been used to define the causes of violence against women: male aggression, individual psychological factors, sociological factors, poverty and the prevalence of culture of violence (Bowman, 2000).

Another causative factor of violence against women is unequal power and gender relations. Gender-based discrimination against women and inequality of power and resources are the sources of violence against females (Fulu & Heise, 2014; Adzahlie-Mensah, Golo, & Attom, 2016). International agreements recognize that violence against women is associated with the use and abuse of authority and control in familial and societal spheres and is basically linked with gender categorisations that underline and perpetuate such violence (United Nations, 2013). There is general agreement that the root causes of violence against females include unequal power relations among genders and discrimination against females. However, gender inequality differs from country to country and it is context specific (Ngaaso & Attom, 2011; Our Watch, 2015). In almost all societies around the world, men have greater access to power, status, opportunities, and resources than women and people of other genders (World Economic Forum, 2014). Many societies support male dominance and that men can control their wives' behaviour.

Male dominance produces an opportunity that grant power to men and further necessitates relegation of women to the background (Kakar & Poggendorf-Kakar, 2009).

There is also the issue of patriarchal norms. Patriarchy is understood as those structural relations and cultural constructs that take advantage of the idea of the masculine gender ruling and regulating the existence of others (Rydstrøm, 2010; Ngaaso & Attom, 2011). Several theories have suggested patriarchy as a validation for the pervasiveness of violence against females, whereby violence is a way in which men exercise control over females (Eswaran & Malthotra, 2011). Many studies agree on some factors that increase the likelihood that a man can abuse his partner. In the Ghanaian context women are socialise to be submissive, respectful, subservient, empathetic, sympathetic and caring. On the other hand, men are trained to have masculine features such as assertiveness, aggressiveness, authority and leadership. According to Qayum and Ray (2010), the more the gendered characteristics of masculinity is fused by the man, the more likely the female encounter violence by default.

Socio-economic status and education levels also account for violence against women. Although violence against women affects everyone, existing literature indicates that the incidence of violence against women is usually connected with low income and wealth levels (Bobonis, Gonzalez-Brenes, & Castro, 2013). Education levels are also typically associated with pervasiveness of violence against women. Panda and Agarwal (2005) reported that in many of the countries, they analysed the prevalence of violence against women and the findings revealed decreased with rising education levels in Zambia, Peru, Thailand and Tanzania. The prevalence of violence at domestic level was lower only among women with education levels above secondary school. This may mean that, at advanced levels of education, women are equipped to bargain sovereignty and control of resources within their marriage or families. On the contrary, Institute of Development Studies et al. (2016) argued that women with no education were generally between 0.5 and 2.5 times less likely to go through domestic violence than women with some level of education. This result may be due to the fact that women and men with more education may also be more likely to report domestic violence, as emphasized in previous studies conducted internationally and in Ghana. A study by IDS et al., (2016) revealed that in Ghana low asset levels were found to be strong determinants of psychological and economic violence among women, but high asset levels were associated with higher levels of social and sexual violence among men. Tensions and fights over money or property were found to be leading determinants of various forms of domestic violence across all regions.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

In studying the factors that leads to violence against women, most studies have focused on how men take advantage of social, cultural, economic and historical factors to exploit and abuse women. However, there is the need to deliberate on these factors from the perspective of both women and men taking into consideration the various factors at the various levels of the ecological model. This research adopted ecological model in exploring the forms and causes of violence by women against other women in Winneba in the Effutu Municipality. This study adopted the ecological model and the social learning theory with the aim of studying and getting to understand why some women perpetrate violence against other women and what makes some women victims of violence committed by women.

The ecological model propounded by Heise in 1998 is based on view that no single factor can describe why some people or groups are predisposed to interpersonal violence, while others are exempted from it. The model views interpersonal violence as the product of interaction among several factors at four levels. These levels include; the individual, the relationship, the community, and the society (Heise, 1998). Thus, the model looks at how several factors at various levels interact to cause interpersonal violence, be it in the home, community, work place or even in the nation. The ecological model focuses on violence as a consequence of factors interacting among its distinct levels. These factors work together to protect one from violence or make one more exposed to it. Understanding these interacting factors help to identify the causal agents of the phenomenon and ways to advance in violence prevention and specific interventions. Thus, the model helps to understand the fact that no one factor really accounts for people committing violence against each other. It therefore, helped in examining what causes women to perpetrate violence against other women in Winneba.

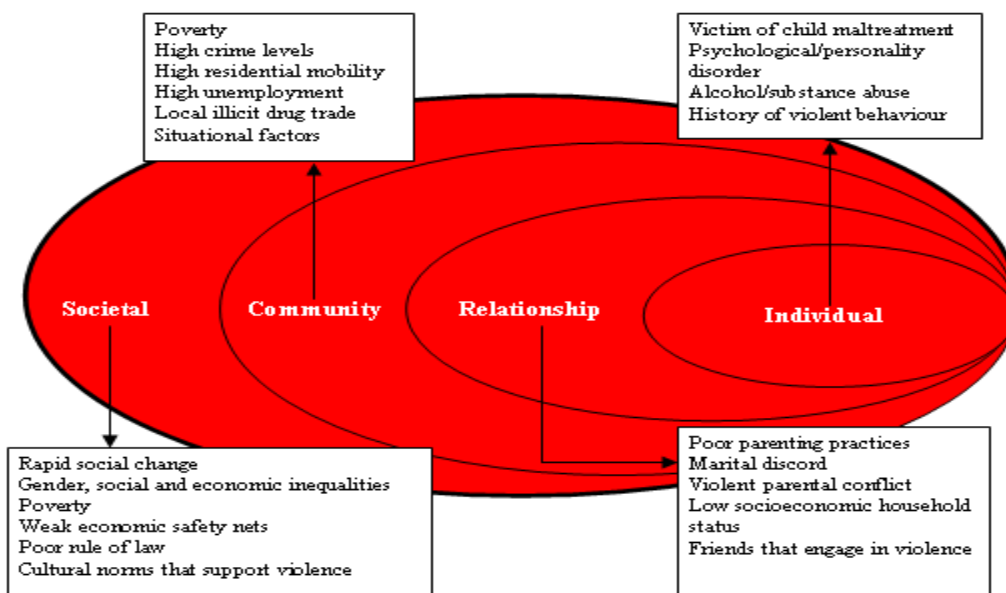


Figure 1: Ecological model

Source: Heise (1998).

The ecological model, as illustrated in the figure 1 is classified into four levels. This makes it possible to analyse the factors influencing people's behaviour and factors increasing the possibilities of people turning into victims or perpetrators of violent acts.

The first level makes out biological, individual characteristics and personal historical factors that increase risk of perpetration or victimization. These factors comprise antecedent of victim of child abuse, harmful use of alcohol and drugs, background of aggressive or self-devaluation behaviours, mental or personality disorders and substance abuse. Thus, an individual who experienced or witnessed child abuse, violence in the home, have history of violent behavioural, personality disorders is likely to be a perpetrator of violence when he or she becomes an adult. This affects the development and behaviour of women who come from abusive homes and make them likely to be perpetrators of violence against women.

Also, the second level includes closer relations, such as those between married couples and cronies, other household members and friends. Risk factors at this level include poor parenting, low socio-economic household status, and violent friends. Thus, having friends and relatives who indulge in or incite violent acts can increase the risk that one will suffer or execute violence. It also helps to explain factors such as unequal power relations, socio-economic status and educational levels as sources of violence against women.

Moreover, the third level looks at the community contexts where social relations are constructed, such as schools, work places and neighbourhoods. The nature of the environment plays a crucial role to determine whether people become victims or perpetrators of violence. This implies that, a community characterized by risk factors such a rise in unemployment, traditional gender norm such as patriarchal norms, illicit drug abuse, high residential mobility and high crime levels has possibility of contributing to violence against women and vice versa.

The fourth level considers general factors related to the structure of society. These factors contribute to create a climate that incites or inhibits violence, such as the possibility of obtaining arms due to social and cultural standards. Other factors include poverty, rapid social change, cultural beliefs that support violence, gender, social and economic inequalities. This level also includes other factors, such as sanitary, economic, educative and social policies, which contribute to reduce or uphold economic or social disparities among groups. At the societal level studies around the world have found that violence against women is most common where gender roles are strictly categorised and imposed and where the notion of masculinity is connected to toughness, male reputation and dominance. Other cultural norms linked to abuse are acceptance of physical chastisement of women and children, tolerance of violence as avenue of interpersonal disputes settlement, and the belief that men have control over women (Heise et al., 2002). It illustrates how factors at different levels reinforce or modify each other. Thus, for example, the probability that a person with an aggressive behaviour will act violently in a family or community that is used to solving conflicts through violence is higher than if he is in a more peaceful environment. Hence, women who are abusive are likely to perpetrate violence against women or use violence to resolve conflict that arises between them and other women when they find themselves in such environment.

The social learning theory was propounded by Albert Bandura in 1963. The social learning theory describes the phenomenon of violence as the outcome of generational transmission of violence. It integrates behavioural and cognitive theories of learning in order to provide a complete model that could explain the wide range of learning experiences that could happen in the real world (Bandura, 1963). The social learning theory highlights the nature versus nurture controversy (Viano, 1992). It states that aggression and violence are learned conduct that can be transmitted from one generation to the other. These aggression and violence occur within particular social contexts, such as home where alcohol or drug abuse is dominant. Social learning theory suggests that violence is learned through observation and imitation. Thus, the fundamental argument of this theory is that physical violence among family members offers likely model for the child to acquire aggressive conduct, as well as for the suitability of such behaviour in the family context. This theory also recommends that a violent upbringing may reinforce signs of violent deeds not only by exposing people to violence but by teaching endorsement for the usage of violence. Consequently, children may be nurtured to accept that violence is essential and effective machinery for attaining behavioural modification in family and close relationship (Simons, 1998).

METHODOLOGY

This study was guided by the critical paradigm. The proponents of the critical paradigm purport that social reality is better understood when researchers take into consideration the socio-political and historical dynamics which restricts the actions and notions of individuals and groups within a society (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). According to Johnson (2018), critical paradigm assumes that there is a reality that is acceptable and this reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender-based forces that have changed over time into societal structures that are taken to be normal or valid. This paradigm was considered suitable because it aims at exploring the forms and causes of violence as injustice in society. According to Kivunya and Kuyini (2017), this paradigm when used in research seeks to address social, economic and political issues which lead to social oppression, inequalities and power struggle at whatever levels these might occur. It was in this context that the critical research paradigm was adopted for the study.

This study employed the qualitative research approach to address the study objectives. This study further adopted the phenomenological design as a guide for the collection of data to answer the research questions. Phenomenology is a design to qualitative study that emphasises the commonality of a existed experience within a particular social group (Creswell, 2013). The design was used to explore the forms and experiences of females who have suffered violence from women as well as women who have perpetrated violence against other women in Winneba.

For the purpose of this study, the population included women in the Winneba Township of the Effutu Municipality. The target population comprised all women who perpetrate violence against other women in the Winneba Township and women who have fallen victims to such violence. The accessible population included victims who have reported cases of violence against women to Winneba DOVVSU of the Ghana Police Service and those identified through snowballing.

According to Patton (2002), the adoption of a sampling strategy is influenced strongly by a research problem and the types of research objectives and questions. This study employed purposive and snowballing sampling strategies in selecting the participants. According to Creswell, (2008, p. 214) “the standard used in choosing participants and sites in purposive sampling is whether they are information rich.” The participants share certain similarities regarding experience, perspective, or viewpoint (Kusi, 2012). In this study, some of the participants were judged to have had shared experiences and were thus located and selected. The purposive sampling technique was adopted because it helped in selecting the most suitable candidates for the study. The snowballing technique was used to select some of the participants. Thus, the researchers with the help of some participants located others. The snowballing technique was used as it is cost effective and also made it easier to identify participants.

A sample size of twelve (12) women who are victims of violence against women, three women who are perpetrators of violence against women and two (2) personnel at Winneba DOVVSU were selected for the study. A total of seventeen (17) participants were selected for the study. This sample size was considered adequate for the purpose of phenomenological study such as the context in which this study was conducted. The small number enabled the researchers to get in-depth understanding of the phenomenon at the point of saturation.

Semi structured interview guide was the main instrument for data collection. This instrument was used because of “the flexibility and freedom involved, which helped unearth detailed, relevant as well as sensitive information through probing” (Kusi, 2012, p. 48). The data collected through the interview was analysed using emerging themes and patterns. With this the researchers transcribed the data, coded it and organized the data to generate themes. According to Chetty, Hendren and Katz (2016), thematic analysis can both present experiences, meaning and the real-life circumstances of participants. They further underscore, thematic analysis can be used to assess the effects of those experiences, procedures and realities functioning within society.

With the issue of trustworthiness of data, approaches to measure the authenticity of a study such as credibility, that is, the validity of the findings, confirmability, that is, the objectivity of the researchers, while carrying out the research, transferability, that is, the applicability of the findings in other contexts and dependability, that is, the reliability of the findings at another time were highly ensured. Ethically, measures were taken to respect and protect the rights of participants and other parties associated with the study. As violence against women is an issue that is particularly personal and sensitive it became important to be conducted with respect to those involved. Anonymity and confidentiality of respondents were ensured. Participants were also assured of protection of their identity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section starts with the demographic characteristics of participants followed by data presentation and discussion of the emerging themes from interviews conducted based on the two research questions. The first theme deals with the forms of violence perpetrated by women against women in Winneba, while the second theme looks at the reasons why women become victims or committers of violence against other women in Winneba.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the participants include occupation and level of education of the participants. Majority of the respondents' level of education was J.H.S/Middle school certificate and secondary school level of education, whilst only one (1) out of the seventeen (17) had tertiary education. The data shows that all the victims have had some level of education. However, most of them had lower levels of education affirming the literature that support the assertion that the probability of experiencing violence was high with lower levels of education but decreased as the level of education increased. This could be due to the fact the more informed a person is about her right, hence, the ability to defend one's self as well as increased one's ability to engage in meaningful economic activity to earn reasonable income. These results were consistent with findings from Demographic and Health Survey data on Ghana which revealed that women who had attained SHS education or higher were less likely to approve domestic violence against women compared to women with lower or no education (GSS., 2009).

Educational level of perpetrators depicts that most of them have low level of education. Majority of them had primary education, whilst one of them had J.H.S education. This shows that women with low levels of education have high probability of using violence to solve problems. This implies that there was higher rate of violence in families with low education level. The finding also supports the views of Wilkinson and Pickett that 'people who are well educated get more income, are usually satisfied with their job, are likely to be gainfully employed, more likely to be healthy, less likely to be criminals...' (2010, p. 103).

The study also looked at the participants' employment status and the findings revealed that majority of the participants were unemployed, whilst few were self-employed. The unemployed included students. Those who are unemployed depend on others for survival, hence increasing the probability of them being abused by those they depend on. These results were consistent with findings from previous studies which concluded that in families where there is poverty, violence is likely to occur due to stress and struggle to make a living. They also observed that low income and poverty in general are risk factors for victimization and abuse (García-Moreno et al., 2005).

Findings of employment level of perpetrators revealed that most of the participants were working. This implies that most perpetrators have access to resources and hence control over other women. Some perpetrators take advantage of this to abuse those who depend on them. On the contrary, one perpetrator was unemployed. The response from the unemployed perpetrator showed that she had engaged in violence with other women because she wants to protect her marriage.

Forms of Violence Perpetrated against Women in Winneba

In the quest to achieve the first objective, questions were designed to solicit for the views of participants. Data gathered from participants revealed various forms of violence. The themes that emerged were physical violence, psychological and emotional violence, and socio-economic violence.

Physical violence

The findings revealed that women suffered various kinds of physical violence in Winneba. The findings indicate that women do not only suffer physical violence but also perpetrate physical violence against

women. For instance, P1, a 16-year-old girl who suffered physical violence from her guardian narrated her ordeal. She indicated:

She beats me almost every day. I remember one day she beat me to a point she felt she was fed up with the beatings and told me if not for God that she feared, she would have held my head and hit it against a tree. Beatings and insults became part of my everyday life (Field interview data, 2020).

Similarly, P2 a 17-year-old girl who is abused physically by her guardian shared her experience and said:

She gets angry over trivial issues and beat me mercilessly with anything her hands get hold of such as cane, stick, ladle, belt, brooms and others. Sometimes, she kicks me with her leg or ask me lie down, then she steps on me (Field interview data, 2020).

P14, a 42-year-old woman and perpetrator of violence affirmed this and said:

The woman and her daughter (rival) started abusing me verbally but I kept mute. I entered my kitchen, boiled water and added pepper. I came out and poured the mixture of hot water and pepper on them. The hot water with pepper landed on my rival's face (pregnant woman) and her mother's hand (Field interview data, 2020).

Also, P9, a 48-year-old woman who was engaged in violence with her sister lamented:

The next thing she did was to hold my head and bit my lower lip off and also bit my fingers and removed my finger nails. Those around started shouting for help (Field interview data, 2020).

The responses from the participants showed that girls and women were abused physically by other women in Winneba in the Effutu Municipality. This was confirmed by P17, one of the personnel at Winneba DOVVSU. According to her, some women in Winneba abuse others physically when there is misunderstanding between them. These women perpetrate acts which constitute physical assaults such as beating, fighting, hitting each other with object, slapping, pulling of hair, burning and the use of threats against other women. It is rather unfortunate that women can display such character to cause harm to other people. This finding affirms the findings made by Ghana Family Life and Health Survey (2015). They found that in Ghana, the most pervasive forms of physical violence experienced by women over their lifetime include being slapped, beaten or being hit by thrown objects. According to Ghana Family Life and Health Survey, this form of violence affected 32.7% of women. They further maintained that the incidence of physical violence occurs across different population groups and characteristics.

Psychological and emotional violence

One of the sub-themes that emerged from the findings was psychological and emotional violence. It is the most common form of violence experienced and perpetrated by women in Winneba. The participants shared their experiences of this form of violence.

P1 who suffered psychological and emotional violence shared her experience and said:

She abused me verbally. She insulted me often and disgraced me in the public. She talked ill of me to others. She went to the extent of removing my pants in public because she felt I

have gone to have sex because I delayed in returning from an errand. This made me feel very bad. (Field interview data, 2020).

In another instance P6, an 18-year-old girl who was abused by her guardian indicated:

She used to insult me and my parents. She told me “The one who gives birth to the fool does not suffer as the one who trains her”. It was one of the insults I will never forget for the rest of my life. She complained about me to others to an extent that she once went to church, during the testimony time, she went forward and told the whole congregation to support her with prayers for God to take her burden off her shoulders (referring to me). In fact, that day I wept at church and I was emotionally traumatized (Field interview data, 2020).

From the findings, it can be deduced that psychological and emotional violence is common occurrence against women in Winneba. The perpetrators use harsh and degrading words against other women with the aim of making one feel bad and worthless. The result was also affirmed by P17, she averred that the most common among the cases of violence that are reported to the unit is emotional violence which includes incineration, character defamation and insults. She indicated:

Whenever they have issues, they mostly want people to know that they are good in violating others. They made sure they used harsh words against their fellow women to humiliate them (Field interview data, 2020).

This finding supports a study conducted by Institute of Development Studies et al., in 2016 which found that psychological violence was the most common type of violence experienced by women across Ghana. In their study they found out that about half of the respondents (48 per cent of women) experienced an act of psychological violence at least once in their lifetime. Large numbers of women also indicated experiences of psychological abuse, including threats, insults and destruction of property, all possibly linked to structures of domination and exploitation (Adjah & Agbemafle, 2016; Cusack & Manuh, 2009). Psychological and emotional violence do not leave scars on victims' body consequently, it is sometimes difficult to get evidence. However, enduring them is painful as they may lead to mental torture and depression. Victims are normally left in dilemma whether to talk about such experiences or not and this leaves them in constant mental battle.

Socio-economic violence

The findings revealed that socio-economic violence as one of the violence women are subjected to in Winneba. The data disclosed that women perpetrate this form of violence against other women who are under their care in Winneba. This claim is evident in the experiences they shared. For instance, P3 a 28-year-old woman and a victim who was learning a trade shared her experience and said:

When I am going to work, I am given 70p for feeding but that amount is not enough. This made life unbearable for me and affected my studies negatively. With regards to this issue of economic abuse, most often I do not get money to buy my personal needs including sanitary pad. I don't want to engage in any deviant behaviour so most often I seek for assistance from friends. When I'm very hungry and there is no food for me in the house, I go to my friend's house in the name of visit but to look for something to eat (Field interview data, 2020)

Also, P4 who was subjected to economic violence by her guardian indicated:

When I am going to school, she does not give me money or food unless her husband is around. (Field interview data, 2020).

According to the women who are living with or have lived with other women, they were subjected to economic hardship. Most of them complained that their guardians do not give them money when they going to school; others complained they are not allowed to go to school and they are used by their guardians to make money. Additionally, they complained they are not provided with their basic needs such as food, sanitary pad and panties. Saravanan (2000) asserts that economic violence is the discrimination or denial of opportunities, services, exclusion, denial of access to education, health assistance or remunerated employment and denial of property rights.

In other instances, victims were subjected to social violence by their perpetrators. For instance, P13, a 28-year-old woman who was abused by her landlady stated:

Most often, by the time I return from work in the evening, the main door is already locked. I have to knock for hours before she would come and open the door and even with that she would be murmuring. I am not able to go for evening church service because she locks the main door by 7:00 pm. Also, when my friends and relatives come around to visit me, she complains. This made me feel embarrassed in the presence of my visitors. For this reason, I don't allow people to visit me in the house (Field interview data, 2020).

Similarly, P8 who is also a victim of social violence affirmed:

My guardian denied me my freedom of worship. She prevented me from going to church without any reason but always loaded me with house work. She attends church every Sunday. She does not allow me to visit my friends. She makes sure she gives me so much work so that I wouldn't have time to go out (Field interview data, 2020).

These views expressed by the victims give credence to the fact that they were restricted and were unable to socialise with people as expected. They feel they have been isolated from friends and social activities. The 2007 Domestic Violence Act defined social violence to entail acts of controlling behaviour, such as preventing someone from seeing friends or family; stopping someone from leaving the house; requiring to know where someone is at all times; stalking; spreading false information, videos or photos without permission.

Reasons Associated with Violence against Women in Winneba

The second objective examines the reasons why women perpetrate violence against other women. Two major themes emerged, namely; factors that cause women to perpetrate violence and factors that make women victims of violence. The following were identified as the factors that cause women to perpetrate violence against other women;

Unequal power relations and unequal access to resources were seen as factors causing violence against women in Winneba. This was more evident among the women who depended on their guardians for their basic needs. Most of these women came to stay with the guardians because their parents did not have the resources to cater for them. Their guardian who mostly were well to do than their parent, use this

opportunity to abuse them. These girls however, endured the violence they suffered because they had no alternative. On the other hand, it was also revealed that some women use their power to abuse their subordinates. This assertion was spelt out clearly by participants. For example, P3 indicated:

I only had to endure the violence I suffered. My mother is a single parent. My father is not working and not ready to cater for us (Field interview data, 2020).

P7 also shared her experience and said:

I went to stay with my guardian because we were having financial challenge at home. Although, both parents were alive, my father is irresponsible. It is my mother who is struggling to take care of us. When I went there, I had completed S. H. S. My parents did not have the means to support me further my education. The agreement was to stay with her for five (5) years then she will help me. When I went to stay with my guardian, I experienced at least one form of abuse every day from her and her children (Field interview data, 2020).

In another instance, P12 explained the violence she experienced from her madam at work. She stated:

I had an issue with my madam at work. I was learning a trade from her. Anytime she comes to work and something has gone wrong, she wouldn't ask who is responsible. She would rather hit my fingers with comb till they became red or blood oozed out. Apart from this, she insults me and often humiliates me in the presence of customers (Field interview data, 2020).

This was confirmed by P17. According to P17 unequal power relation and access to resources were factors responsible for violence against women in Winneba. P17 purports that some women gave out their children to live with other women because they owed them. These children were mostly abused but because the parents did not have the money, they allowed the children to suffer in the hands of their guardian. Thus, women who had power and access to resources took advantage of their situation and abused other women. This finding supports the findings by Afari (2017) that women who satisfy their need for power have an impact on, or control over their counterparts. In Afari's study, it was revealed that out of the 20 participants, 9(45%) agreed that women show off their power and control men in marriage or relationship, while 8(40%) strongly agreed. Out of the total participants, only 3(15%) disagreed. This shows that women by nature can be violent as men. According to Swart (2001), the commonest cause of domestic violence among women in Nairobi is misunderstandings resulting from money matters.

On the contrary, Fulu and Heise (2014) noted that violence against women is often rooted in women's lack of power in relationships and in society relative to men. They considered women being victims of violence. From the findings of this current study and other related literature, this inequality of power relations and resources is not only between men and women but among women as well. Thus, all women do not have equal access to resources hence resource distribution and power relations vary among them. Consequently, some of the women who have power and control over resources victimise the disadvantaged ones. International agreements recognize that violence against women is characterized by the use and abuse of power and control in public and private spheres (United Nations, 2013). Additionally, other factors combine to protect some women. For example, when women have authority and power outside the family, rates of abuse in intimate partnerships are less (Heise et al., 2002).

Also, influence of alcohol was seen as one of the contributing factors to violence among women. Some of participants claimed that their actions were due to the influence of alcoholic beverages. For instance, P15, a 32-year-old woman who perpetrated violence against her neighbour stated:

That day I went for a naming ceremony and I took some alcohol. It wasn't deliberate that I wanted to hurt her. I think I did that because I was drunk (Field interview data, 2020).

During the interview with P17, she confirmed that some of the perpetrators who reported claimed that they acted the way they did because they were drunk. She further explained that when the women attend social gatherings such as funerals, marriage and naming ceremonies they get drunk. This drunkenness sometimes results in violence. She said:

We have had a number of cases where the perpetrator in each of them will tell you "I was drunk". Sometimes, the victims themselves are drunk which make it possible for them to be abused. With the influence of alcohol, trivial issues can trigger violence (Field interview data, 2020).

From the data gathered, drinking of alcoholic beverage is seen as contributing factor to violence. Humphreys et al. (2005) in a related study also perceives alcohol and drug use contribute to violence. Alcohol is thought to decrease self-consciousness, obscure judgment and blight ability to construe social cues.

On the contrary, a part of the finding could not show a direct link between alcohol consumption and violence. According to some of the participants, although their guardian or perpetrator drinks, they do not abuse them when they are drunk. This view was expressed by P7. She explained that although her guardian drinks, she does not act violent when drunk neither does she abuse her. She stated:

My guardian drinks, she mostly drinks Guinness and other foreign alcoholic drinks on Fridays in the evening. After drinking she goes to her room to rest. I don't remember any instance where she abused me because she was drunk (Field interview data, 2020).

However, establishing connections between alcohol and violence are complex. Research on social anthropology suggests that alcohol drinking provides connections between violence and drinking and are socially learnt (Afari, 2017). Mitchell (2003) suggests that alcohol and drugs do not necessarily cause abuse as it is believed, but it serves as an excuse for perpetrators to blame alcohol or drug use as causing abusive reactions. In another research by Institute of Development Studies et al. (2016), that results do not indicate a causal relationship between alcohol consumption and violence but strongly suggest that the risks of violence incidence increases when alcohol consumption is high. This current finding on alcohol use is in line with the assertion of the ecological model by Heise 1998, which states that personal factors such as influence of alcohol can incite a person to cause violence or even be a victim of violence.

Additionally, suspicion of infidelity accounted for violence against women. Some of the women are co-habiting and they feel unsecured in their relationship and are often suspicious of their husbands. Their husbands also feel they have the right to marry more than one woman since Ghanaian culture permit it. However, for religious and personal reasons, most of the men prefer to engage in extra-marital affairs at the blind side of their wives. Their wives often use violence as a means of protecting their 'so-called'

marriage. They end up abusing other women in the process. P1, a victim of violence against women shared her experience and said:

During Bible discussions at home, her husband always commended me for my insightful contribution. The woman became suspicious of me and her husband. Meanwhile there was nothing between us. The woman developed hatred for me and started maltreating me. She has always suspected her husband to be a womanizer (Field interview data, 2020).

Similarly, P4 shared similar sentiments and said:

My guardian quarrels with persons who are free with her husband because she suspects him of womanizing. She likes to use violence to tackle every problem. Sometimes, she fights with her husband and destroy some of their belongings like Television set, bowls and others. She fights with some of the members of the community (Field interview data, 2020).

From the submissions it can be seen that some of these accusations made by the women were false. This was confirmed by P17, she pointed out that false accusation is common phenomenon among women in Winneba. She indicated that there are a number of cases of that nature reported to the DOVVSU unit. A woman will be fighting another because she feels her husband is being taken away from her. She gave this instance:

I remember there was a case where a wife picked a woman's mobile phone number from her husband's phone and called the person and abused her verbally. As if that was not enough, she traced her residence and went there to abuse her in her house. She called her names such as husband snatcher, prostitute which is character defamation and also humiliated her in public which is an emotional abuse and offensive conduct. The issue was then reported to the station by the victim. I had wanted to take the case to court but the perpetrator came with her family to plead with us for the issue to be settled amicably at the unit (Field interview data, 2020).

In other instances, the allegations made by the women were true. For example, P11 explained:

I was informed by my husband's co-worker that my husband was having an extra marital affair with a client. His fiancée had five children with different men. When I asked my husband about it, he denied. Later, I got to know that the woman is pregnant for my husband but when I asked, he denied again. I kept mute because I didn't want to have issues with my husband but he later confessed (Field interview data, 2020).

The assertion was confirmed by P14 who tried using violence to protect her marriage lamented that:

I have fought with a number of women in the name of protecting my marriage. I have been to court once, reported to the police station four consecutive times. I remember at least eight women I have abused in an attempt to protect my marriage. All my efforts proved futile. I ended up developing medical complications. I was then advised by the doctor to stop worrying or else I may lose my life. When I ask him, he does not deny it, he tells me he goes into agreement with the women before they start the relationship. He makes it known to them that he is married. It hurts so much to hear this from your husband but I cannot complain because I am not working. I and my children depend on him for

everything. He does not want me to work. In fact, my husband is a serious womanizer (Field interview data, 2020).

This finding is in line with the assertion of Fowler and Wade (2002). Fowler and Wade maintain that infidelity contributes largely to violence perpetrated by women against men and women. Some men allegedly cheat on their wives with their wives' friends and even house girls. They make their wives bitter and angry.

The responses from participants further identified witnessing violence as a contributing factor to violence against women in Winneba. One of the reasons why women are violent towards other women is the fact that they themselves are witnessing or have witnessed violence in their childhood or even as adults. For instance; P2 who was suffering from her guardian shared her experience:

Whenever she is beating me, she tells me her mother hate nonsense so she also does not tolerate nonsense. She talks about how the mother beat them when they go wrong. According to her, she has taken after her mother. She brags about it to others, how she feels satisfied when she disciplines us using violence (Field interview data, 2020).

In other instances, girls abused other girls and women because they witnessed how their mothers were engaged in violence with other women. P7, a 20-year-old woman who experienced violence from a woman and her eight years old twin daughters shared her ordeal. She lamented:

Anytime the children complained about me not acting according to their wish she abused me in their presence. She tells me always that even if I do not want to obey her wish, she does not care but for her children I should do everything they want for them. Because of this, the children often abuse me. The children insult me and insult my parents as well. They talk to me anyhow and command me around like a robot (Field interview data, 2020).

P15 a 32-year-old woman who was engaged in violence with another explained how the daughter of her opponent joined the fight. In her narration she said:

While I was fighting with one of the women the others were looking on hoping that the woman would beat me. Her daughter joined in the fight when she noticed I was beating her mother. I threw my hand and it hit her daughter's eye. Her eye swelled up and they reported me to the police (Field interview data, 2020)

The finding shows that some women are violent because they witness the violence perpetrated by their mothers. This finding supports the views of the proponents of the social learning theory. The social learning theory states that aggression and violence are learned behaviour that can be passed on from one generation to the other. Social learning theory posits that violence is learned through observation. The basic contention of this view is that physical aggression between family members provides likely model for the learning of aggressive behaviour, as well as for the appropriateness of such behaviour within the family (Bandura, 1963). This theory maintains that offenders are not born with the impulse to engage violent acts but rather offenders learn to engage in violent acts by observing others (Siegel, 2005).

In a related study by Afari (2017) she found that women who assault their husbands also had dominant and aggressive parents, who engaged in domestic violence. This finding supports Arriaga and Foshee (2004) finding that when individuals have experience with parents who were violent toward one another, there is an increased likelihood of perpetrating violence to their partners in the future. They continue to

say that the concept of witnessing parental abuse and causing intimate partner violence later is a trend found throughout violence literature.

Another cause of violence against women that emerged from the responses of the women was jealousy. This view was predominantly upheld by victims. For example, P2 a victim of violence had this to say:

She abused me out of jealousy. My guardian is fat woman, who complains about her size and how it has affected her beauty. I mostly want to look neat but whenever I dress and wore something nice, she begins to complain. When people give me their used clothing, she gets furious and insults me and throw the cloths away (Field interview data, 2020).

In the same vein, P9 whose lower lip and finger were bitten off by her sister stated:

When my sister was questioned why she did that to me? She said I am her younger sister and had taken her glory. She does not understand the reason why I am prospering than her. My own sister was jealous of me and abused me despite the fact that I was taking care of her and her children. She had the notion that when she kills me, she will inherit my property (Field interview data, 2020).

This was affirmed by P17, she made it known that ‘jealousy’ is also a contributing factor to the phenomenon. According to her, she cannot really tell what is wrong with them. Sometimes, because of jealousy they gossip about each other or incinerate each other which end up in violence.

Marital challenges were identified as one of the reasons that made women perpetrators of violence. The findings revealed that most of the women who abused their foster daughters were having challenges in their marriages. Most of them were abused by their husbands, others were divorced. It was noticed that the challenges these women were having in their marriages made them emotionally unstable hence the little mistake committed by their foster daughter or other women triggers violence.

P5 shared her experience and purported:

I notice she was having marital problem with her husband who is my brother. She normally complained that my brother was not taking good care of her and he also brought her sister to add up to her burden. I get worried but I have no alternative (Field interview data, 2020).

P14 a perpetrator of violence said:

My husband was abusing me because I wasn't working. He asked me to be a house wife. I couldn't complain about his actions because he was taking care for my children and I. The only option left for me was to engage in violence with any women who try to meddle in my marriage. I am abused by husband because of these women. So, when I get the opportunity, I make sure I don't spare them (Field interview data, 2020).

From the data, some women abuse others because they themselves were abused by others. This finding supports the assertion of the ecological model by Heise 1998, which states that personal factors such as being a victim of abuse can cause someone to perpetrate violence. Also, Pizzey as cited in Afari (2016) has long recognized that there are women involved in emotionally or physically violent relationships that express and enact disturbance beyond the acceptable scope of distress. Such individuals, urged on by feelings of bitterness and acrimony, behave in a manner that is destructive to themselves as well as to some of the family members, making an already bad

family situation worse. These women have been described as ‘family terrorists.’ Such women often become even more violent as their partner try to break away.

Views expressed by respondents in relation to marital problem as a cause of violence, they argued that they perpetrate violence against other women because of the actions of their husbands. According to them their husbands spend their money on their ‘side chicks’ and neglect them and their children. P11 shared her experience and said:

I asked my husband to give me money but he told me he doesn't have money but I later found out that he had gone for loan to open a shop for his fiancée meanwhile I have been doing all forms of menial jobs to support the family financially. Initially, I didn't want to ask him about the money he gave to the woman but later I decided to ask him. He got furious and abused me. Anyway, I am grateful to God his fiancée shop caught fire and was burned into ashes (Field interview data, 2020).

P14 a perpetrator of violence reiterated:

When I asked my husband about it, he told me he went into a three months contract with the woman and that he has paid her for her services. What hurts me most is that my husband has never given me that amount of money since we got married (Field interview data, 2020).

P14 further lamented that the most annoying part of this whole experience is that, her husband ‘side chicks’ normally tells her that they are not as foolish as she is. She has decided to wore a ring and stay with one man and that its pays to be a ‘side chick’ than to be a wife.

This claim was confirmed by P16. According to the Officer, another leading factor that cause violence against women in Winneba is rivalry. Most of the men especially in the villages and along the coast give birth with more than one woman. They normally reject the first one and stay with the other woman, especially their second wife. When this happens, the first wife feels cheated and dejected. They normally go to the residence of second wife to insult and threaten her. This finding was further confirmed by P17, speaking with this officer, she indicated the inheritance system (matrilineal) has influence the men in the performance of their responsibility as fathers. She said:

A man was reported to the unit over neglect of her family and that he was caring for his girlfriend. When I questioned the man, he asked me whether I have ever seen a cock followed by chicks. And that the children are the assets of the woman so it is her responsibility to cater for them (Field interview data, 2020).

This finding is in support of the assertion made by Fowler and Wade (2006). Fowler and Wade (2002) maintains that women abuse their husbands and other women because some men just run away from their responsibility like paying school fees for their children and upkeep having spent money elsewhere. In a related study by IDS et al. (2016) they emphasize that the failure of men to provide for their family is a major cause of conflict within families. According to Institute of Development Studies et al. (2016), the failure of men to provide adequate economic resources for the family causes women to become abusive. The finding showed that single parenting is one of the factors that majority of the women who were victims of violence from their guardian revealed. Most of them were catered for single headedly by their mothers.

Their fathers had either neglected them for other women or they were in the house but unwilling and unable to cater for their children. This result was obvious from the responses of the participants.

P1 a victim of violence lamented:

I have lived with eight different women since my childhood. I went to live with these women because my mother was a single parent and a trader. She could not support all of us financially. I did not know my biological father personally and my step fathers were not ready to support me. I have suffered various forms of violence from these women (Field interview data, 2020).

P3 shared her sentiments and said:

I came to stay with my guardian when I completed J.H.S. My mother is a single parent. I have four siblings. My mother single headedly catered for us. When I completed J.H.S, I stayed in the house for four years because my mother didn't have the money for me to further my education. I later came to stay with my guardian in Winneba (Field interview data, 2020).

P17 affirmed the situation and stated:

Single parenting, either with or without the presence of the father is a contributing factor to violence in Winneba. Some of the men do not take responsibility of their children because of the matrilineal system of inheritance. They claim the children are the property of the mother so it is the responsibility of the mother to cater for them. Most of these women are engaged in economic activities that earn them insufficient income. They end up giving their children out to their friends, relatives and even strangers outside Winneba to live with them. However, some of these children end up being abused by their guardian (Field interview data, 2020).

The views from the participants imply that single parenting is a factor accounting for women being victims of violence in Winneba. In other views expressed by participants indicated that, poverty is one of the factors that make women victim of violence in Winneba. This view was widely expressed by the participants, as exemplified in the following statement:

P7 a victim of violence shared her experience and said:

I went to stay with my guardian because we were having financial challenge at home. Although both parents are alive, my father is irresponsible, it is my mother who is struggling to take care of nine (9) of us. When I went there, I had completed S. H. S but my parents do not have the money to further my education. The agreement was to stay with my guardian for five (5) years then she will help me (Field interview data, 2020).

In the same vein P6, stated: *I went to stay with her because we were many in the family and my parents could not cater for us (Field interview data, 2020).*

Speaking with P16, he expressed his view and said:

Poverty is one of the factors responsible for violence among the women in Winneba. People buy things on credit and when it is time for payment it leads to violence among them. Others also borrow money from their neighbours and when it time for repayment it becomes an issue that leads to violence. Poverty is one of the core reasons why some women give out their children to live with other women. These children are mostly abused but because the parents don't have the means they allow the children to suffer under their guardian (Field interview data, 2020).

The findings revealed poverty as one of the factors that makes women victims of violence. This is similar to the notion of Fedler and Tanzer (2000) that economic and social factors such as low wages, unemployment, lack of economic resources and inadequate housing augment women's vulnerability and contribute to violence against them. Correspondingly, a study by Institute of Development Studies et al. (2016) has shown that in Ghana low asset levels were found to be strong determinants of psychological and economic violence against women. In their study they found out that women and men in households with lower levels of assets were more likely than individuals in higher asset quintiles to have experienced physical, psychological and economic violence. Similarly, the fourth level of the Heise ecological model suggests that a community characterized by risk factors such as poverty and unemployment have possibility of contributing to violence.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women perpetrate various forms of violence against women in Winneba. The common types of violence against women included physical, emotional, psychological and socio-economic violence. The main form of physical violence entails beating, fighting, slapping, dragging of hair, burning and the use of, or threats to use object or weapon against others. Emotional or psychological violence was the commonest and most prevalent violence perpetrated against women by women. This includes using abusive words that make people feel bad and intimidated, using harsh and degrading words against each other, insults and humiliation with the aim of making one feel bad and worthless. The economic violence from women perpetrators against their fellow women encompasses denial of food and money, their guardian preventing them from going to school and engaging them in economic activities to make money.

Women perpetrators of violence mostly took advantage of factors such as unequal power relations and access to resources to abuse women who were vulnerable. Additionally, alcohol consumption, suspicion of infidelity, marital problems, jealousy and witnessing violence cause perpetrators to abuse victims. Among the conditions that made some women vulnerable to violence included poverty, single parenthood and rivalry.

In order to curtail the menace of violence against women, holistic approaches are suggested by looking at women as possible perpetrators and victims. Hence, the following recommendations are made for DOVVSU, CHRAJ, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Social Welfare, NCCE and the government. First of all, in order to address the phenomenon of violence against women by women, there is the need for stakeholders such as DOVVSU, CHRAJ to understand the factors that cause women to perpetrate violence against women considering the four levels of the ecological model. Thus, individual, relationship, community and societal factors that cause women to be either victims or perpetrators of violence against women. This will help stakeholders to understand the factors that put people at risk of

violence or protect them from experiencing or perpetrating violence and hence, make policies to address these factors.

Secondly, to help prevent violence against women by women, it is necessary that stakeholders act across the multiple levels of the model at the same time. For instance, at the individual level, specific approaches such as conflict resolution, life skill training and social-emotional learning can be given to help women to avoid the use of violence against women in and outside the home in Winneba in the Effutu Municipality. Also, the second level which is close relationship, stakeholders can roll out parenting and family focused prevention programmes and problem-solving skills that help promote healthy relationship in the family and prevent women from being victims or perpetrators of violence either now or in the future and also help address factors such as single parenting, suspicion of infidelity and marital challenges which cause women to perpetrate violence against women in Winneba. Furthermore, at the community level in addressing factors such as poverty, the Department of Social Welfare, the Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Protection can plan and execute programmes that would empower women financially and reduce the potential of them becoming victims of violence against women. Additionally, at the societal level, efforts can be made to manage factors such as unequal power relations and access to resources and poverty by strengthening household financial security, education and employment opportunities for women in Winneba. Religious and non-governmental organisations within the communities in Winneba in the Effutu Municipality should embark on women empowerment programmes that will help reduce women dependency on others which will in turn help reduce violence against women.

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