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# Intimate Partner Violence against Men: A Socio-Legal Perspective of their Experiences in Mathira East Sub-County, Central Kenya

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## Abstract

*The study explores the socio-legal experiences of male victims of intimate partner violence in Mathira East Sub-County, Kenya. A qualitative approach including case narratives, Key Informant Interviews and literature review were used. The findings reveal that IPV against men is a widespread problem in Mathira East Sub-County. Men in the area habitually experience physical, psychological and sexual abuses. However, they do not seek legal redress instead use informal approaches such as reporting to local administration officials, village elders and family members. Attitude of the public and the reporting authorities towards male victims of IPV, lack of knowledge on IPV, corrupt authorities, delay of cases, and denial to counter accusations were key barriers to seeking legal redress. This study concludes that IPV against men is a rampant socio-legal problem and suggests a need to conduct research involving a large population in the area to determine the magnitude of the problem, its manifestations and impacts on the victims.*

**Keywords:** Intimate Partner Violence, Male Victims, Legal Redress, Reporting Authorities, Experiences.

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## Introduction

In the past few years, concern has been expressed about the rising incidence of IPV against men in Kenya. Although reliable national and regional data on the magnitude and prevalence of IPV against men by their partners are scarce, recurrent media reports suggest a steady rise in the number of men victimized by their female partners. A recent survey in 2015 by *Maendeleo ya Wanaume* in the counties of Nyeri and Nairobi City found that the number of men victimized by their wives had risen from 160,000 in 2009 to 460,000 in 2014. This confirms that cases of IPV against men within their homes are increasing each and every passing day. Subsequently, it is increasingly becoming evident that IPV against men within their homes is a problem of a far greater magnitude than it was imagined before. However, the problem of IPV against men is often assumed to be either non-existent or the fault of men. As a consequence, IPV against men is most commonly trivialized or taken for granted and conclusions are drawn that little can be done about it.

Traditionally, IPV has often been viewed as a tool used by men to control women. However, the emerging situation in which men are also increasingly becoming victimized has not only created great concern both locally but also internationally. While much of the IPV against men has been attributed to the changes taking place in our society such as disintegration of the extended family, women gaining greater autonomy and economic independence, there is an urgent need for an empirical research into this problem in order to determine the extent to which these factors play that role in Mathira East Sub-County.

Although IPV against men is now widely acknowledged as a serious and pervasive problem in Kenya, the issue still remains clouded in mystery. There are serious gaps in our knowledge of the issue and we are often unable to answer questions such as what causes IPV against men, what sort of intervention strategies are appropriate to deal with the problem, and what role can the legal system play in ending the violence? Besides, despite the existence of legal mechanisms of redress, the problem of IPV against men just like IPV against women still remains unabated and the perpetrators unpunished. In its bid to explore and document the socio-legal experiences of male victims of IPV in Mathira East Sub-County the study specifically answered the following questions:

1. What are the most common types of IPV that men experience in Mathira East Sub-County?
2. What forms of redress do male victims of IPV seek in Mathira East Sub-County?
3. What are the factors that hinder male victims of IPV from seeking legal redress in Mathira East Sub-County?

## Literature Review

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against men has recently emerged as an endemic social problem that permeates the lives of thousands of men and young boys across the world. In most countries and cultures, men are increasingly victimized by women with whom they have an intimate relationship (WHO, 2012). Many men also live constantly with the threat of IPV, whether physical, emotional or sexual abuse. This is actually a problem that affects all men regardless of their age, socio-economic status, colour, creed, or place of residence. IPV against men manifests itself in multiple forms including acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, and threats of such acts as well as coercion. Men are often exposed to one or a combination of these forms of violence which occur in different locations and situations, such as in the home and in the

community. IPV is alternatively called spouse abuse, battering, domestic violence, family violence or gender-based violence (GBV) (WHO, 2012).

Defined as a consistently abusive behaviour by one person against another in an intimate relationship, IPV against men is not by any chance a new phenomenon. The problem of IPV against men has long existed within the home and has been known to affect negatively both men and women. In addition, intimate partner violence (IPV) against men is less recognized in general by society than it is against women, therefore, this acts as a further block to men from speaking out. The problem has therefore gone largely unreported and unpunished (Lupri & Grandin, 2004).

According to Watson and Parsons (2005), the prevalence and frequency of intimate partner violence against men is a highly disputed matter, this is because different studies show different results for different nations and also many countries have no data at all on IPV against men. It is believed by researchers that in most countries, the actual number of male victims is likely to be far greater than what the available statistics suggest, (Ibid) the latter being a result of the high number of men who do not report their abuses to the relevant authorities. There are various reasons that have been brought forward out of the few studies which explain why most men choose not to report as compared to women. One of the reasons is that most societies generally recognize IPV against men less than that against women (Shamita, 2002). In most cultures, men are generally considered to be physically stronger than women and are therefore expected to be in the position to protect themselves from physical beatings from their female partners. Male victims of IPV are therefore often judged with contempt for allowing themselves to be beaten by their female partners which hinders them from seeking legal redress (Anant, 2012).

According to Lupri and Grandin (2004), another reason that makes male victims of IPV reluctant to report is the socio-cultural stereotype of masculinity. Most men always suffer in hiding for fear of being stigmatized by others which will therefore have their masculinity questioned. From the latter, most men will therefore not be willing to let their masculinity questioned for admitting that they are victims of IPV (Ibid). In some cultures, there is a degree of socio-cultural acceptance of female aggression whereas the aggression of men against women is generally condemned. This case is not different with communities in central Kenya, including Mathira East Sub-County. Such levels of tolerance in a culture can lead men not to look at themselves as victims and conclusively not recognizing the IPV they are experiencing as a criminal offence (Kristen & Tamar, 2008).

In Kenya, IPV against men is a glaring problem that is recognized as a criminal offence. There are a number of laws including the Sexual Offenses Act of 2006 (SOA) and the Penal Code (which has legal provisions on assault) that have been put in place to deal with the problem of IPV and both male and female victims are not only protected by the law but may choose to engage with the law following a violent offense. Despite the existence of laws and legal mechanisms to deal with IPV, the vice remains a common problem that goes on largely unpunished, unremarked, and to a certain extent, tacitly condoned by society. IPV against men in Kenya has therefore not been adequately addressed due to the lack of sufficient scientific facts on the problem.

## Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Edmund Husserl's phenomenology. Phenomenology is a school of thought that seeks to discover phenomena and bring out issues that have previously gone unnoticed or overlooked. This is made possible as its main objective is to explore the experience and meaning of phenomena. Phenomenology draws from philosophy, psychology and education. Newberry (2012) defines it as the study of a shared experience whose purpose is to understand the essence of a lived experience or phenomenon by a group or individual of people.

It concentrates on illuminating the specific and identifying phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation. Phenomenology develops an understanding of a phenomenon through the specific human experience of the phenomenon; this makes it possible to better understand that experience of being in that 'life-world'. It understands a person's experiences rather than just providing causal explanations of those experiences. Therefore, this approach does not 'break down' the experience that is being studied, rather, it provides descriptions that are rich and full and interpretations that exactly describe people's experiences in their particular world. According to Husserl (1970) phenomenological research has overlaps with other essentially qualitative approaches including ethnography, hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism. However, pure phenomenological research seeks essentially to describe rather than explain and to start from a perspective free from hypotheses or preconceptions.

Phenomenological approach is characterized by thorough gathering of 'deep' information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation, and strictly basing on the perspective of the research participant(s). Phenomenology is also known to emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. This is vital as it enables a clear understanding of the subjective experiences of people, gaining insights into their motivations and actions as well as cutting through the clutter of 'taken-for-granted' assumptions and conventional wisdom, Stan Lester (1999). The theory was useful to the study since it was helpful in providing a comprehensive description of the experiences of individuals from their own perspectives. These forms of descriptions from participants' points of view were useful in enabling the study generate rich qualitative data and draw clear conclusions on the topic.

## Methodology

The study was conducted in Mathira East Sub-County, Nyeri County-Central Kenya. This site was chosen on the basis of continuous media reports on cases of IPV against men in the study area compared to other parts of the country. The study population consisted of male victims of IPV in Mathira East Sub-County registered by the Probation Office. Purposive sampling was used to recruit the participants. This was considered the most ideal sampling procedure since it targeted only male victims of IPV who had tried to seek legal redress at any level whether formal or informal or were in the process of doing that. This sampling procedure was used to recruit 15 male victims of IPV who participated in open ended interviews. Case narratives were used as the main data collection method. Through this, fifteen male victims of IPV were interviewed. Topics asked included the forms of violence they faced, their experiences reporting the violence, their perception of justice rendered, as well as the barriers they faced while reporting the cases of violence they had faced. In addition, five key informant interviews (KII) involving two probation



officers, two social workers from the Nyeri Gender Based Violence Recovery Center (GBVRC) and one village elder who works closely with the probation and after care office in Mathira East Sub-County were interviewed. Both case narratives and key informant interviews were digitally recorded and detailed notes taken. Audio files from the case narratives and the key informant interviews were transcribed and translated where necessary. The data was then analyzed thematically and summaries made out of each set and presented in the form of arising themes.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

Ethical considerations in the study were highly observed before, during, and after the study. The study received approval from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) under protocol reference NACOSTI/P/17/75811/19624 before carrying out any data collection on human subjects. During data collection, Informed consent was sought from all the participants and only those willing to give their informed consent by signing a consent form were recruited for the study. Every effort was made to inform the participants about the project and their right to withdraw from participation, if they wished to. The study participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information that they provided and efforts were made to respect their desires and wishes. The ethical principles of anonymity and privacy for the respondents were strictly observed due to the traumatic and sensitive nature of the subject under investigation. The respondents were assured that their names will not be divulged and the information will only be used for research purposes.

## **Results**

### **1. Types of Violence Experienced by Men**

Men in the study reported to have experienced both physical and psychological violence from their female partners. Physical violence mostly comprised of battering whereas psychological violence included threat to inflicting harm, threat to take away children, denial of access to and control of family resources, denial of food, and denial of conjugal rights.

### ***2. Physical Violence/Battery***

All the male participants in this study indicated to have experienced one or more repeated episodes of physical battering perpetrated by their female partners whether married or cohabiting. Majority of the men had been physically beaten, slapped, bitten, cut with machete, and stabbed with knives by their partners. The study participants had the following to say:

She came to the house and we started quarrelling, I did not know that she was carrying a hidden knife. When I went close to her she removed the knife and stabbed me several times. (Participant 12: 26 years old).

You can see these marks on my hand; she is the one who bit me. I did not even try to fight back, so she was biting me and screaming. I was really surprised because people thought I was the one beating her. (Participant 14: 41 years old).

While men are considered to be stronger than women, they reported that they were often attacked in unexpected ways using various types of objects such as cooking stick, shoes, sticks, and knives. In addition, we noted that women prepare first to attack and then look for an opportune moment perhaps when the man is drunk, tired or sleeping before they start beating them. Flynn (1990) in his study of violence by women in relationships also found that women used items such as machetes, knives, clubs, and cooking sticks to attack men. Participants reported that the attacks were spontaneous and abrupt so as to deny them the opportunity to defend themselves.

On this day, the attack was random because I had not expected such a thing to come from her. From the look of everything I think that she had prepared and I was caught by surprise. (Participant 05: 29 years old)

Some men also reported indirect attacks, in such cases; their partners used other men to physically attack them. In addition, it was common that the men who were physically attacked by their partners were hit on specific body parts such as their genitalia. It should be noted that when hit in such parts it is easy for a man to be cornered by a woman despite his perceived physical prowess. These findings concur with previous findings by Hines (2007) that highlighted women targeting men's genitalia in physical violence.

### *3. Psychological/Emotional Violence*

Almost all men reported to have faced psychological violence in isolation or alongside physical violence. The participants reported that their partners threatened to use weapons to harm them physically especially when they were drunk or asleep. Some of them also threatened to hire thugs to beat them up. This always created anxiety due to the uncertainty of when they will be attacked.

She used to tell me that she would kill me and she knows the right time to get me. Since I take some alcohol, she used to say that she would wait until I am drunk and beat me up thoroughly. So, I used to be very careful even while sleeping, you know how to sleep with one eye open. (Participant 04: 43 years old)

Besides threats to harm, they also reported that after they had separated, their partners kept on threatening that they would come and take away their children even though culturally, children are supposed to stay in their patriarchal homes. This concurs with existing findings that women sometimes use their children to maintain power and control over their male partners even after leaving the relationship (Corbally, 2015; Drijber et al., 2013; Hines & Saudino, 2003). This is as illustrated below:

Sometimes she would threaten to take away my children from me. That is if she had any demands that I showed hesitation to meet. She would even go to the extent of going with them to their place and stay there for long and threaten never to bring them back. (Participant 02: 35 years old)

Men also reported to have been denied access/ control over proceeds from businesses that they had set up with their partners and their partners taking full charge and determining whatever happened with the proceeds. Some of these men said that they had taken loans to set up those businesses and had to look for other means of income to enable them repay the loans which took them through a lot of stress:

When I set up that business, she was the one I left in charge but due to the misunderstandings, she does not want me to move any close to the premises. I don't know where that greed came from. Now I took a loan but I cannot afford to repay because I don't have money. (Participant 11: 37 years old)

In addition, they also reported to have been denied food. Their partners cooked food for themselves and their children and denied them a share of the food. This act frustrated them and made them to eat in restaurants or at their friends' places whenever they did not have the money. During such times the participants reported to face embarrassment that tampered with their male ego. This is as one participant puts it across:

You see, sometimes she could even deny me food and therefore I used to eat in restaurants and leave her in the house to eat with the children. Sometimes I could even go to eat at my friends' place which really embarrassed me. That contributed to me leaving her. (Participant 09: 35 years old)

A part from denial of food, another tactic that was reported by the victims was denial of conjugal rights. They said that their partners would refuse to have sex with them until they met certain demands most of which were for financial benefits.

Like food, someone throwing you out of the bed because she doesn't want to sleep with you. I thought married people are supposed to sleep together and enjoy themselves. Now if she does this, whom will I sleep with? (Participant 04: 43 years old)

Barber (2008) in a study on domestic violence towards men also found out that women denied their partners sex as a way of punishing them. Just like in our study he noted that in such relationships sex always had to come with strings attached since men were supposed to meet certain demands before their partners accept to have sex with them.

#### **4. Different Forms of Redress Sought by Men**

The study participants were asked to narrate the different avenues of redress that they used in an effort to address the violence in their lives. Findings from this study show that male victims of IPV seek formal and informal avenues of redress in a bid to end the suffering they endure from IPV by their female partners. Discussions with the participants revealed that neighbors, friends and relatives are the first line of redress that abused men approach for help to address the violence meted on them by their partners. It was reported that neighbors, friends and relatives were a great source of support, comfort and help during times of crisis. However, most of them started by reporting within the nuclear

family. They reported that since they did not always want to expose matters that happen in their families, they would always wait until they were asked before they admitted that they were really facing violence.

I started by talking to my brother, you know we are very close. And I knew he would keep my matters as a secret and never tell people out there. But if things become very serious that is the point, I will tell other members of the family. You know not all will take it positively; some will start telling people out there and embarrass me. (Participant 05: 29 years old)

The participants also indicated that more often than not they sought help and redress from village and clan elders for episodes of IPV. The study found out that the village elders played fundamental roles of solving cases of violence within the domestic levels. The findings reported that most of the participants who reported their cases at this level were generally happy with the nature of help they got from the village elders.

When I reported to the village elders, I was given the right support. Leave the police alone, they cannot help you. The old man went to the extent of counseling us and at some point, the problems went down. (Participant 04: 43 years old)

Participants further reported that they sometimes sought intervention from the local administration. The local administration in the Kenyan context includes the assistant chief's office, the chief's office, and the district commissioner. In the process of legal redress, the local administration plays a fundamental role in resolving cases and advising complainants on the way forward. The findings showed that most cases reported at this level were most often referred back to the village elders or the family level.

I went to the sub-chief and then from there we went to the chief but I thought that was not a police case because I talked to the chief and told him that it should not be taken to the police. I told him that let the status quo continue so that I could get peace. I just wanted her to get a warning and stop frustrating me. (Participant 04: 43 years old)

## 5. Other Expected Legal Redress Avenues

During the study, we expected that some of the male victims would have reported their cases to the police and moved forward to court for further legal redress. However, it was very clear that most IPV cases against men rarely get to these levels. The police are often considered to be one of the most important avenues of redress for cases of IPV in the home because they not only have the power to arrest and present criminals to court for prosecution but also because of their availability all round-the-clock thus able to provide immediate remedial response than any other agency in society. However, one of the key findings of this study is that male victims of IPV rarely report their brutalization to the police for appropriate action or help. The study revealed that it is quite rare for the men to ask the police to intervene or deal with their partner's violence.

I would not wish to be back to the police station. I have had a personal experience with the police, and I did not like the way I was handled. The experience I got

made me worse than before since they didn't even bother to hear from me. (Participant 11: 37 years old)

Men would not report so easily, because, some of them go there for help and end up being the suspects. Sometimes even these police ridicule men and even send them back home to handle their matters from there. (KII: Probation officer I)

As at the time of data collection in Karatina, no active court case relating to IPV against men was being prosecuted. It is important to note however that the probation and aftercare services in most cases focus on rehabilitation of persons under their care whether or not they were walk in clients, or were referred by the court or by the police or by the local administration. From the findings of the study, it was evident that none of the participants' cases were actively handled by the police nor actively sought the intervention of the Court. In Kenya, one cannot get to court without going through the police since ordinarily the police are mandated with the investigations that form the basis of any charge being brought to court for prosecution. It was an interesting finding that the participants opted for other forms of redress as captured in the findings.

### **Factors that Hinder Men from Seeking Legal Redress**

#### ***a. Public Perception of Violence against Men as a Barrier to Seeking Legal Redress***

According to Lowenstein (2005), the world's highly patriarchal society has led to a big inequality about social problems facing men such as domestic violence in which they are victims. In Kenya, the criminal justice system will view domestic violence as family problems that should be handled at the family level hence ending up denying victims justice. Cases where men report to be victims are not taken as serious and mostly dismissed to be solved at the family level hence hindering them from seeking police intervention. In the study, some of the participants reported having been told to take their family issues back home and solve as men when they sought help from the police:

These other cases can be reported but not family matters. Because I have seen when you go to report family issues, they will tell you that those are family issues, go solve them from home and you know reporting to the police also needs money. (Participant 04: 43 years old)

Due to such types of treatment that men get from the reporting authorities, they would definitely be discouraged from reporting and better find an alternative solution or continue staying in the violent environment with the perpetrators in the recurrent violence. According to Johnson (2005) as much as domestic violence is viewed today as a serious social problem and a crime, there exists a hot debate between those people who perceive domestic violence only as violence against women with those who want to consider battered men. In fact, just like the findings of Hines et al, (2007), most people would consider that in cases where men were physically injured by their female partners it was due to self-defense by women that resulted from an argument or another physical attack by the men. This perception would make most men not to report their cases and continue staying in suffering.

Most people think that when women beat their men, it is the men who initiated the fight and therefore the attack by their female partners was a human response to defend themselves. Such thoughts make most men to be blamed for the violence they suffer. (KII: Village elder)

Most African social norms consider men as being stronger and dominating gender that does not entertain women dominance. This makes it difficult for the male victims to freely come out and say that they have experienced violence at the hands of their female partners. This results to victims being denied a free chance of seeking professional help due to the nature of their case and their highly patriarchal cultural backgrounds (Barber, 2008).

### ***b. Attitude of the Police***

Study participants reported that they could not and would not report to the police station due to the fear that the police would not believe their cases. According to them, the police are more likely to believe women than men as far as domestic violence is concerned. Similar findings by Allen-Collinson (2009), reported that very few men report to police that they have been victims of violence by their female partners due to the fear that they would not be believed and would not be considered for the support services provided even if they wished so. Corbally (2015) also reported that men's narrative of victimization is often challenged by their physical size and strength which is closely associated with their masculine identity. Unless the case is reported by the community about a man who is being violated by the female partner, then there is a higher chance of disbelief when the men report by themselves. This was also reported by the study participants:

If you took your case to the police, or to the chief and a woman reported too, whom do you think will be believed? No authority would easily believe that a woman has beaten a man. Some of us look strong and most people would think that we cannot suffer physical violence from women. (Participant 11: 37 years old)

The participants further said that they feared reporting their cases to the police because most of the time they would end up being the ones accused of battering their partners since in the event of the violence the perpetrators also end up with injuries. Sarantakos (2004) found out that women often posed threats to their male partners that they would tell the police that they were the ones who were violated. One participant reported the partner threatening to lie to the police that he was the one who had violated her if he tried to report.

She told me that there is nowhere I could go. In fact, she went ahead and said that if I go to the police, she would turn the case against me and lie that I am the one who violated her and even injure herself. She said that she knows to cry better than I do. (Participant 10: 34 years old)

Many participants of the study reported being frustrated by the way in which their cases were handled by the authorities they reported to. Police officers, the chief, and other

reporting authorities did not take their cases seriously and kept on referring them to go back and solve the issues at the family level. This made the violence they were facing to be recurring. The victims ended up losing hope with the system and chose to stay without reporting because anyway they were not likely to be listened to when they reported.

They kept on telling me to take my case back home and solve as a man. They saw no need of taking time to listen to my case yet according to me my case was just as serious as the other cases and needed attention. In my opinion they did not take it seriously. (Participant 09: 35 years old)

In a study by Pattavina et al. (2007) men reported that the police adhered to the traditional gender discourses that made them to have bias against male victims of IPV while handling their cases. Some of the police do not even believe that females can be perpetrators of violence against their male victims. Just like in this study by Pattavina et al. (2007) men in Mathira East Sub-County reported that when they reported to the police they would be addressed in a rude manner and were even blamed for not being able to control their female partners and therefore dismissed to go back and sort out their issues from home. Lockwood and Prohaska (2015) also argued that some men will be fearful to seek help from the police considering the fact that the police's response to IPV against them is largely influenced by their individual beliefs about gender roles. The case is not any different with the outcomes of this study conducted in Mathira East Sub-County. According to the key informants the police are not trained to handle cases of IPV against men and therefore handle such cases basing on their personal experiences which are highly influenced by their cultural backgrounds.

### ***c. Low Knowledge of IPV by Victims of Intimate Partner Violence***

Low knowledge of IPV also came out as one of the reasons why most men did not and do not report when they are victims. It was noted that most men only considered physical violence as violence and overlooked other forms of violence perpetrated towards them. The findings clearly reveal that men experienced verbal abuses and other forms of psychological violence yet they did not consider them as violence and therefore saw no need to report. As participants aptly stated:

Do you mean even the way she abuses me is violence? I thought it was only about fighting and beating each other. (Participant 04: 43 years old)

She only used to abuse me, deny me food, and even sometimes chase me out of the house but this was the first time she was violating me. She just changed and started beating me with objects. (Participant 11: 37 years old)

A lot of men suffer violence, especially psychological violence but the problem is that we do not notice. Even you and I would think that violence is only physical. (KII: Nyeri GBVRC)

It was also clear that the reporting authorities especially the police did not have the knowledge of dealing with cases of violence against men by their female partners. This

lack of understanding of the forms of violence, the way to solve them and the provision of the law about the same cases barred a lot of male victims from getting justice. Due to their low knowledge of the cases, the police end up dismissing the men who report and not taking the cases as serious as they do when female victims report. In addition, all men in the study expressed low knowledge on the process of seeking redress whenever they fell victim of intimate partner violence. When asked, they said that they did not know any designated place that they would seek help whenever they are violated by their female partners.

...you know what we men do; you have no idea where you can report...  
(Participant 11: 37 years old)

One of the key informants interviewed working at the Nyeri Gender Based Violence Recovery Center said that he rarely receives male clients to his center. He attributed this to the fact that they might not have been aware that they could also report to the center.

Here we receive mostly cases of violence towards women. Do I even remember the last time a man ever reported to this center? Most people even think that it is a place where women report when they are violated and maybe that is the reason why they don't come here. (KII: Nyeri GBVRC)

#### *d. Lack of Confidence with the Justice System*

The victims interviewed reported that they did not have confidence that they would get a fair trial through the criminal justice system even though they wanted their perpetrators to be punished. Following their previous experiences with other cases that they had before and did not get justice, they saw no reason to approach the same systems again for help:

This is not the first case that I am having, so if those other cases have failed, what would stop this one from failing. I have never reported to the police and gotten justice through the court. Sometimes these cases take long and waste people's time for nothing. (Participant 12: 26 years old)

They also said that corruption was one of the factors that hindered them from seeking redress. In the study some men reported that their female partners used the help of the police to violate them physically, emotionally and psychologically. In this case, the perpetrators paid the police to arrest their partners and keep them in custody for no reason, and in some instances even physically assaulted them before releasing them:

I would wish to report but I saw there was so much money needed yet I didn't have any so I just kept the problems to myself. Remember the police would have asked for some money. (Participant 11: 37 years old)

In other instances, the victims also reported the police and other authorities asking them for bribes so that they could follow up on their cases. In the event that they refused to give or lacked the money to bribe them, their cases would take long until they give up or stall completely. The following were the findings:



Sometimes it takes a lot of efforts for your files to be retrieved for hearing. Some of us are pushed to go to the extent of bribing the people at the registry to get our files out in time. (Participant 13: 27 years old)

#### ***e. Stigma Associated with IPV against Men as a Barrier***

Men reported that stigma associated with their cases hindered them from reporting. In their opinion, if people around knew that they were being battered by their female partners, they would always be referred to as battered men even if the violence stops. According to Graham-Kevan (2007) it is very difficult to get male victims of violence perpetrated by their female partners to come forward and report due to the stigma that their societies might place on them. The following were the findings:

Mostly men just keep quiet because it is shameful. Many are beaten up but for a man it's hard to report. (Participant 01: 38 years old)

You know for a man to report to the police saying he has been beaten or violated by the wife will lower his esteem so they don't report but they are there. (KII: Probation officer II)

#### **Recommendations**

The findings of this study were clear that male victims use various resources to seek help but most of the times have more negative, rather than positive experiences. Therefore, in order for the people who experience any form of IPV to be able to come out and seek help, the study suggests the need for change in a number of things. It therefore recommends: (1) Further research in form of a large-scale study incorporating both the victims and their perpetrators in IPV to get a clear understanding of the concept. (2) Training to all agencies dealing with IPV to be intensified about the various types of intimate partner violence focusing more on cases involving men as victims since there has been a lot of concentration on women before hence leaving out male victims. (3) A re-examination of the police and other reporting authorities with regard to their integrity in handling cases of intimate partner violence against men and how they respond when the victims do not meet their gendered notion of violence. (4) The empowering of the community at large and specifically men with the information on how and where to get help.

#### **Conclusion**

From the findings of this study, it is conclusive enough to say that men suffer both physical and psychological violence from their partners and that an increasing number of men are being victimized/abused by their intimate partners. Just as many other studies have found out that women mostly use psychological attacks towards their male partners, it was also confirmed in this study that men actually mostly suffer this form of violence from their partners. However, it also came out clear that as much as women may not have the physical prowess to physically attack their male partners some of them went ahead and physically attacked them. With all this violence towards men, men solve through seeking redress in various ways though most of their cases don't always end up in court. It is also

conclusive enough that violence against men is under/not reported and this could be the reason why they don't get help. The fact that most of cases of violence do not go through the police, make it impossible for most of their cases to be handled at the courts. The latter leave men with options such as handling those cases at the family level and reporting to the local administration where they may not get a lot of legal solutions. However, it is clear that cases handled at these levels meet minimal barriers and get solutions within record time unlike those that get to the courts. Lastly, barriers such as attitude of the reporting authority, corruption among the reporting authorities, cases taking long, stigma associated with being a male victim of IPV, inadequate knowledge of IPV among them and the reporting authorities came out as significant hindrances to them seeking legal redress. This could possibly contribute to the larger body of knowledge as far as IPV against men is concerned and inform policy. In sum, there is an urgent need for a large-scale study incorporating both the victims and their perpetrators in order to obtain a clear and balanced view of IPV. In light of the sample size used in this study, the findings are not generalizable beyond the number of participants however some of the issues raised and findings generated could be applicable in another context and therefore they remain valid and reliable.

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