

**A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF  
BLACK WOMEN IN VIOLENT RELATIONSHIPS**

**THESIS**

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement  
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**by**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is a qualitative exploration of black women experiences in violent relationships.

The study was conducted at Masimanyane Women Support Centre in East London. As a qualitative exploratory study, in-depth interviews were conducted and a sample of ten abused women was utilized.

A study of related literature has been made to focus on the existing literature concerning abuse on black women. Various theories have been explored, various feminist views were discussed and the existing legal system, nationally and internationally was looked into.

The findings suggest that black women are abused by their partners. Alcohol abuse, failing to support the children and extra marital relationships have been cited as some of the reasons. Women in abusive relationships in this study sustained physical as well as emotional abuse. The professional networks assisted these women to some extent. However, there is an indication of a dire need for training, interdisciplinary approach and a legal system that prohibits further abuse by male partners.

Various recommendations have been postulated. The researcher indicated that there is a need for empowering programs for the abused, rehabilitative program for the abuser, and an effective legal system to prevent further abuse on women.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to all women irrespective of color, who are in abusive relationships.

May the Lord give you strength.

**SPEAK OUT!**

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1. THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH**

#### **1.1 REASONS FOR THE CHOICE OF TOPIC**

A great deal of attention has been given to domestic violence in South Africa, but perhaps not in the context of the African culture. The researcher was of the opinion that domestic violence within Xhosa speaking women warranted investigation. The problem sought to be explored by the study can simply be stated as - violence within relationships has an impact on African Women who are abused.

It has been difficult for the researcher to establish reliable figures or estimates of the number of African Women who are abused, because previous research, particularly on this topic could not be established.

The researcher was of the opinion that although there was legislation to address the issue of battery, the Prevention of Family Violence Act of 1993, which does provide legal protection of women, was not well publicized, more especially among rural women and disadvantaged communities. Therefore, most women from these communities are still ignorant of its existence (Fedler 1996:2).

There is also a great need in professional literature in South Africa for a deeper understanding of the experiences of battered women. Cultural factors such as gender relations and family systems placed these women in a situation both different from and similar to, that of her white counterparts.

It was likely that simple application of theory generated from studies of white women was insufficient when working with black women. This study aimed to begin the process of letting the voice of black battered women be heard, even if from afar at the moment.

## **1.2 DEFINITION**

Violence has frequently been used interchangeably with the term aggression. While violence refers to a physical act, aggression referred to any malevolent act that was intended to hurt another person (Straus & Gelles 1990:21).

This research defined violence as an act carried out with the intention or perceived intention of causing physical pain or injury to another person. The situation could range from slight pain, as in a slap, to murder. Usually the situations have a high potential for injuring the person being hit. Mostly, punches, kicks, bites, choking, beatings, shootings, stabbing or attempted shootings and stabbing could be used (Gelles & Cornell 1990:22).

## **1.3 THE GOALS OF THE RESEARCH**

The goals of the researcher were to explore with African women:

- § The emergence and continuation of violence;
- § The experiences of being abused by one's partner, the nature, meaning and the impact of the event;
- § The aftermath and how they felt after the battering;

- § The social network and how this gave or withheld support during the crisis around battering;
- § And how in the opinion of the victim, the law and justice system could make a real contribution to the lives of battered women.

#### **1.4 ANTICIPATED VALUE OF THE FINDINGS**

- § The Researcher wanted to find an effective way in which helping professionals could offer meaningful support services to abused women. This was done by gaining a better understanding of the battery, and ramification of the abusive relationships.
- § The feminist view of the legacy of patriarchy also contributed to a better understanding of cultural expectations and male dominance of black women. This study would contribute to feminist literature.
- § Based on the findings, the researcher would also make recommendations to involve organizations about the comprehensive services that could be offered and by whom.
- § There will also be dissemination of findings through appropriate professional and public media.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

##### **1.5.1 Scope of the Investigation**

This was a qualitative study as, “qualitative assessment methods give clinicians access to a client’s meaning systems, frame of reference,

personal beliefs, cognitive schemes, values, cultural realities, and personal motivations” (Franklin & Jordan 1995:281).

The researcher interviewed ten people. Contact and arrangements were made with Masimanyane Women Support Center for Abused Women in East London, to ensure the availability of willing participants. These were detailed in-depth case study types of interviews.

The relational outcropping method of sampling was used in this study. The available subjects were found in the same site (Lee 1993:69). The Director for the Masimanyane Women Support Center was utilized as an intermediary, and this assisted the researcher in initiating trusting relationships with the subjects (Lee 1993:113).

The researcher was also aware that by definition, one was automatically excluding social isolated and solitary participants from the sample. There was also no guarantee that a sample selected from those found in a particular setting, Masimanyane Women Support Center in this case, were representative of a wider population of interest to the researcher. (Lee 1993:69). However the respondents were accessible to the researcher and the Women Support Center was a feasible source for obtaining a sample, at minimal cost to the researcher.

This was not inappropriate in an exploratory study of the experience of black women in violent relationships. (Further details of the design and methodology are dealt with in Chapter 4).

### 1.5.2 Research Tools

The study was comprised of in-depth interview with the subjects. Respondents were allowed to describe activities in words, which are familiar to them (Sudman & Bradburn in Lee 1993:102) in their home language.

Through the in-depth interviews, the researcher was able to produce more valid information as such interviews provided means of getting beyond surface appearances to permit greater sensitivity to words the meaning context surrounding informant utterances (Lee 1993: 104).

Therefore, in order for the researcher to establish the nature and experiences of the battered women, the themes covered incorporated the following:

- § The nature of your relationship at the time;
- § Your feelings when the abusive lifestyle emerged and continued;
- § The actual battering;
- § Your feelings afterwards, immediately, and presently;
- § Did you get any type of assistance from the relatives, community?
- § Did you have any form of protection, justice from the law?
- § What form of assistance was useful, and what was not?
- § What would have helped?
- § What are future plans?

“Telling another person about those aspects of one’s self which are in some way intimate or personally discrediting ..., confessing in other words, was difficult (Lee 1993:98). When the researcher had the

interviews, by mutual arrangement, privacy, confidentiality and a non-condemning atmosphere did prevail.

The information gained in each interview did refine the process. As the researcher was relatively inexperienced, the interview techniques and strategies were rehearsed prior to the study.

### **1.5.3 Analysis of Data**

The interviews were taped and transcribed. Since the subjects were black women, the interviews were conducted in Xhosa and this had to be translated into English. The researcher had already made contact with the Xhosa Dictionary Project Coordinator at Fort Hare to arrange for translation.

In keeping with the qualitative data, the analysis looked for shared themes and understanding. As the subjects were also asked about what form of assistance was useful and what was not, this aided with the production of findings.

## **1.6 LIMITATIONS IN RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

The relational outcropping method of sampling used in this study excluded any other solitary participants from the sample. The researcher anticipated the study to be reliable and valid, although (subjective), for the specific sample, but conclusions could not be drawn about all women in a wider population who have been battered in abusive relationships.

The researcher focused on the content of the interview, and since the researcher protected the identities of participants, the disclosure took place in a non-censoring atmosphere. It is within this framework that the researcher could lead the participants to confront, in a fundamental way, experiences which were deep, personally threatening and potentially painful (Lee 1993: 98). The researcher assured that appropriate support was available for these women immediately after the interview.

## **1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

By assuring anonymity, the subject's interest, well being and identity were protected. This was likely to increase the accuracy of responses (Rubin & Babbie 1989: 53). By ensuring confidentiality, the researcher was able to identify the respondents but essentially promised not to disclose so publicly. Since the subjects were discussing personal and painful experiences, where necessary the subjects were encouraged to seek counseling and were referred to appropriate resources. It was envisaged that their presence and involvement in the Women Support Center would act as an existing and ongoing support. The researcher paid careful attention to gaining full and informed consent prior to undertaking the research.

This research, although it constitutes a small proportion and a self-selected sample, does not represent the whole population. However, the information could be utilized for further research.

### **1.7.1 Scope and Limitations**

An in-depth discussion is outlined in chapter 4 and only a resume will be given at this state.

### **1.7.2 Time Span of Study**

The research study was undertaken between February to October 1997.

## **1.8 ORGANIZATION OF STUDY**

Chapter 2 of this study is the literature review, which gives a summary of theoretical background pertinent to the study,

Chapter 3, gives a summary of the existing legal preventative measures in South Africa and internationally,

Chapter 4, describe the procedures employed in carrying out the research,

Chapter 5 is the presentation of results and discussions of findings in the research study,

Chapter 6 deals with recommendations and conclusions.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the theoretical background of the exploration of the experiences of black women in violent relationships. This includes the diverse past and present thinking of various theories, about the attributory factors that lead to battery.

Although, South Africa has an infamous reputation for high levels of political violence, a more common and more endemic form of violence in this country, to which relatively little attention has been paid to, is that of domestic violence within Xhosa speaking women. However, despite the proliferation of community based and non-governmental organizations over the past decade, organizations focusing on violence against black African women have been notably rare (Vetten 1994:1).

South Africa has not generated strong anti-rape or shelter movements, comparative to those in Europe and North America. However a national movement against gender oppression is now being built and violence against women is high on the list of the movement priorities. For example, POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse), Rape Crises in Cape Town, African National Congress Women Liberation Movement are some of the movements advocating for change for all women in South Africa (Addendum a 1997:17).

## 2.2 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In 1992, 20 135 murders were reported to the South African Police. Placing it at a murder rate of approximately 50 people per 100 000, that is, 5,5 times higher than that of the U.S.A's average for the same year (Simpson 1993:4).

Literature also states that when men are murdered, they are usually killed by acquaintances and strangers and only occasionally by a male or female intimate partner. Women by contrast, are more likely to be murdered by male intimates and less frequently by strangers (Vetten 1994:3).

The researcher is therefore, of the opinion that, women are more vulnerable to be injured and murdered by their intimate partners as compared to their male partners.

Furthermore, the fact that the Family Violence Act No. 133 of 1993 was not applicable in the homelands, escalated the alienation of black women from the criminal justice system. Police pilot projects addressing violence against women are frequently implemented in urban areas such as Pretoria, Durban, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth, but not in rural remote areas (Addendum b 1997:4).

## 2.3 VARIOUS THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Various theories have tried to discuss the past and present thinking, concerning the causes of battering and the following views can be discussed:

### 2.3.1 **Sociological Theorists**

These theorists made an effort of finding the ranks of violence in the culture at large, down to the family. This view is reiterated by the radical feminists who argue that men benefit from their power over women in every way, from ego-satisfaction to economic and domestic exploitation, sexual domination and political power (McKay 1994:346).

### 2.3.2 **Learning Theorists**

Learning theorists believe that both perpetration and acceptance of physical and psychological abuse is nothing else but a conditional and learned behavioral factors or situations of helplessness. These situations may be due to childhood factors that include witnessing or experiencing battering, sexual abuse, molestation, health problems or chronic illness, stereo-typical sex-roles and rigid traditionality (Walker 1984, 1989 in Gilliard 1992:4).

Gelles and Cornell (1990:16) reject this postulate as deterministic but further articulate that people who experience abuse are more likely, but not pre-programmed, to become violent adults.

### 2.3.3 **Black Feminism**

The term “Black Feminism” simply refers to black female critics who analyze the works of black female writers from a feminist political perspective. The terminology can also apply to criticism written by a male from a feministic or political perspective and/or a book that is written by black women, or any writings by women (Collins 1991:21).

Black feminists locate the problems of black women within the parameters of three kinds of oppression, that is, gender, race and class. At the gender level, women irrespective of color are viewed as the reproducers and consumers in a society, where their roles focus, in procreation and maintaining the household. At the race level, black women are seen as inferior beings. At the class level, black women suffer from lower levels of education and lack of employment opportunities. There are few alternative employment opportunities for quite a number of black South African women with few employable skills because of inadequate education (Nodle 1991:211-212).

The researcher is of the opinion that many of black women, because of their lower levels of education, when and if compared to white women, may mostly be employable as domestic laborers. This may also explain why they endure abusive relationships. Contributory factors may be low sources of income, unemployment and economic dependency on their partners.

Given the triple yoke of oppression, black South African women find themselves mostly employed by white South African women who never really question their reasons for employing black domestic workers. To the extent that some “have assumed this as a right” (Nolde 1991:212).

The researcher is of the opinion that black women, being less skilled, may be exploited as domestic workers, in a vicious circles of ignorance about their rights and their conditions of service. Hence they may be exploitable. Prolonged absence from their homes may lead to lack of

parental control on children, in turn cause estranged family relationships which may cause fights between these women and their partners.

This triple oppression model is also voiced by the Combahee River Collective, which is a black feminist grouping, who contend that, “the sexual politics under patriarchy is as persuasive in black women’s lives as per the politics of class and race. We also find it difficult to separate race from class, from sex oppression, because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously (Combahee River Collective 1989:205).

However, Gelles and Cornell (1990:15) state that family violence is not confined to the lower class as there have been numerous cases worldwide of reported violence and abuse even among those who are not viewed as the “low class”.

Black women are also prone to sexual violence or rape by their partners. Such women are twice victimized. First, the actual rape victimizes the women. Secondly, they are victimized by family members who want to keep this as a “secret”, by the community members, who do not believe the women when they tell their story, and by social institutions such as the criminal justice system which “some how believe that rape victims are responsible for their own situation and “have to legally prove that they have been really raped” (Collins 1991:188).

Even though current statistics indicated that black women are more likely to be victimized than white women are. Black women are less likely to report their rapes, less likely to have their cases come to trial, less likely to have their trials result in convictions, and less likely to seek counseling, and other support services (Collins 1991:188).

Literature also suggests that African-American women are aware of their lack of protection, hence they mostly resist rapists more than any other groups. However, there is also a rare involvement of African women from anti-rape movements, consequently, this also foster silence among black women. The rare involvement of African women in these movements can also be interpreted as that African women live with the untenable position of putting up with abusive black men in defense of an exclusive black unity (Collins 1991:179).

However, the researcher is of the opinion, that even in South Africa, presently, black women are “letting their voices be heard about their violent relationships.” Also, “rape will always be rape” and being silent about it, has nothing to do with “black unity” per se , but has everything to do with male dominance inherent in black culture, gender stereo-types and ignorance.

#### 2.4 **WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND THE IMPACT OF ABUSE**

Basically everybody possess certain basic human rights. The rights belong to everyone, including the abused, the children and their partners. In order for the abused women to change old patterns of abuse and victimization, into a new pattern of controlling their own lives, they need to understand and accept these rights.

Goodman, Fallon and Gelles (1995:26) cited the following Rights:

Your Bill of Rights

- You have the right to be you.
- You have the right to be yourself first.

- You have the right to be safe.
- You have the right to love and be loved.
- You have the right to be treated with respect.
- You have the right to be human - not Perfect.
- You have the right to be angry and protest if you are treated unfairly or abusively by anyone.
- You have the right to your own privacy.
- You have the right to have your own opinion, to express them, and to be taken seriously.
- You have the right to earn and control your own money.
- You have the right to ask questions about anything that affects your life.
- You have the right to make decisions that affect you.
- You have the right to grow and change (and that includes changing your mind about certain issues).
- You have the right to say No.
- You have the right not to be responsible for other adults' problems.
- You have the right not to be liked by everyone.
- You have the right to control your own life, and to change it, if you are not happy with it, as it is.

Having cited the above mentioned rights, the authors are of the opinion that, it is never the fault of the victim to be abused, but it is 100% the responsibility and choice of the abuser (Goodman et al 1995:28). Abusers usually use physical abuse, which involves the use of any physical act in order to harm, frighten and gain control over the abused. Through severe physical abuse, battered women suffer severe injuries leading to emergency medical care. At times physical contact is used that aims to frighten, to control, like, shoving pushing the abused down, preventing the

woman from moving by holding, and breaking or damaging objects around the victim (Goodman et al 1995:28).

Through these life-threatening episodes, the abused can also find herself in situations, where the abuser blocks her movements. The abuser, at times can lock up the women in a room, and/or out of the house. The abused woman can also be denied to sleep by forcibly being kept awake. At times, the abused woman finds herself in a life threatening and frightening situation. Where, the abuser throws objects at or near the woman, pushes, hits, slaps, pulls hair, bites, twists her arm, punches, chokes, burns, kicks, throws her down the stairs, and or uses a weapon against her (Goodman et al 1995:28).

However, most abused women find that emotionally they are hurt, and this “hurts” far more than physical abuse, leaving deeper wounds that take much longer to heal. Like physical abuse, emotional abuse is the use of a coercive method to exercise control over another person. “It belittles and demeans through continuous verbal manipulation, unpredictable erratic behavior, game playing, and fear, which keeps the victim always off balance (Goodman et al 1995:28).

Through abuse, the woman finds herself in a demeaning position. This can also amount to brain washing where the victim is made to believe that she is loosing her mind, and can no longer identify reality, intimidation, isolation, threats and economic control (Goodman et al 1995:28). Through exposure to violent relationships, a woman does not only lose self-esteem but also her sense of reality. The researcher is of the opinion that, this may, in a way explain why the women endure violence for a long period of time and why they stay.

Abused women, at times find themselves in situations where their partners would not either admit to having a problem or seek professional help. The abusers when faced with “facts” about their abusive relationship some have ready excuses like attributing their abusive reactions to things like alcohol and others. However, alcohol does not cause abuse, but merely lowers the abuser’s inhibitions to do what he wants to do. Use of alcohol or other substance abuse is just an excuse (Goodman et al 1995:39).

## 2.5 THE CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS HUMAN ABUSE

The researcher is of the opinion that cultural values are also attributory factors to victimization of both black and white women.

Viano (1992:4) states that, the foundation of many patterns of abuse of the “weak” that is, children, women, the elderly, the mentally retarded, is an indication of acceptance of violence in our societies. Since women are regarded as “weak” they are dominated by males who enforce compliance and solve conflicts through physical and emotional abuse.

Black and white women also share the inferior status of being regarded as subordinates, whilst men are perceived as being superior, therefore, have (male) power over the female. This in turn contributes to the probability of women becoming the target of abuse.

### 2.5.1 Gender Stereotypes Towards Abuse

We know that from the moment a child is born, the first question is “What is it”. The answer will be mapped out in one or another way. “For it is on the evidence of the first glimpse of a naked, newly born that two quite different paths through life are determined (Mosse 1993:2).

It is through gender identity that one world and its practice are divided. Literature indicates that, the relationship between male and female bodies is problematic. Different cultures attach certain expectations to each male and female sex. These expectations become complex and actually produce some gender roles, such as those of mother. In her explanation of the radical feminist position Firestone (1979) in McKay (1994:347) maintains that women are handicapped by their biology. The interdependence between mother and child and male member either father or son has been found in every society. However, patriarchy is confirmed through socialization. It results in the sexual class system in which men assume positions of power and domination and women position of subordination. She points out that patriarchy is a violence that is practiced by male dominance over women. She links sexual violence to wife abuse. (McKay 1994:347).

Gerber in Adler & Denmark (1995:155) links such violence with a variety of factors, such as social, economic, familial and physiological. The authors also states that, gender, stereotyped personality traits, play a role in fostering and perpetuating men’s violence towards women. Through gender-stereotypes, men are assumed to be masculine and women to be feminine. Both sexes are pressured to conform to them.

In conforming to these cultural expectations, men and women are also indirectly perpetuating traditional relationships between these sexes. Consequently men have more power than women. The researcher is also of the opinion that through cultural expectations, black women are always taught to keep “secrets of the household” and to “shield” or cover-up whatever is seen as a taboo to the family and must never divulge it to anybody outside the domain of their household. Hence, even when abuse emanates, black women are likely to keep it as a secret and would not seek professional help outside their domain.

Even when violence emanates between a woman and her partner, this is usually viewed in isolation and is never associated with the cultural roots from which it originates. In traditional relationships between the sexes, men exercise more power than women, through persuasion and influence. Depending on mutual responsiveness from both sexes, men can also exercise power through the use of violence, coercion and control (Alder & Denmark 1995:148).

The researcher is of the opinion, that the different everyday life rules, which are enacted by men and women also, lead to stereotypes about gender. For instance, boys are expected to play with cars, not to cry and show emotions, because they must maintain masculinity and portray control and power. Meanwhile, girls, are expected to play with dolls, must be “feminine”, they must clean, cook and do domestic house chores whilst the boys are playing “cowboys” outside (Sached 1992:43).

Through these culturally different expectations, later in life, they most manifest themselves into chauvinism, power and control in men, and femininity, fragile housewives and baby rearing in women. These cultural

expectations exist in both black and white cultures with special emphasis on patriarchy or male dominance on women (McKay 1994:346). However, it has been noted with interest that in African households, daughters-in-law are expected to work ever harder within the household. They also hold a low-status (Bozalek in De La Rey Duncan Shefer & Van Niekerk 1997:10).

“If power is one of the crucial dimensions in gender stereotyping, it would be expected that marital violence, a form of power involving coercion and control, would also account for gender stereotyping (Alder & Denmark 1995:1448). Therefore, when violence occurs in a relationship, a husband or male partner in order to establish and maintain his power over the wife or woman generally carries it out. Since women are perceived as less powerful victims of violence and men are the more powerful aggressors, women are perceived as weak and men strong. Ironically, in a case of a violent woman, traditionally she is perceived as having personality attributes of a “typical male” or “tom-boy” and the abused men as having characteristics that are “typical female” (Adler & Denmark 1995:48).

The women, due to their low-status, carry the most household chores. They make sure that family members have food, they care for adults with higher level of dependency. They sometimes have to give up work, to look after a dependent or dying child or ill adult. Women usually are regarded as inferior to their male partners who are assumed to be the heads of family. The patriarchal system is practical within, African system and societies are socialized into it (Bozalek in De La Rey et al 1997:10).

### 2.5.2 Women as a Minority

One of the major ways, in which people can be labeled as subordinates, is to consider them as a minority. Minority can be defined, as “a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment and who therefore, regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination (Viano 1992:5).

The researcher is of the opinion that Black and White women have been treated as minors for quite a long time. The new South African Constitution has addressed the imbalances of the past and views both male and female equal partners in front of the law. Women as minority have also less power and ability to control their own destiny, hence in black culture women, still have less decision-making powers. For instance, in Black culture, women are prohibited from making decisions in issues concerning their own son's circumstances, and are prohibited from visiting their sons whilst they are in circumcision schools.

Professionally, occupationally, educationally and economically, that is, “incomewise”, women have little access to careers that embody the concept of power and authority. Hence, the researcher is of the opinion that, because of these discriminatory factors, women who are in abusive relationships find it difficult to leave, because of economic dependency on their male partners (Viano 1992:6).

### 2.5.3 Women as Sexual Objects

Women are also regarded as sex objects that have to “serve” and “please” man. They are expected to be basically submissive, compliant, nurturing and as sex objects to be conquered by dominating and overpowering men. Hence, women who are repeatedly raped in marriage seldom complain or find it difficult to prove it legally (Viano 1992:6).

The researcher is of the opinion that the “payment of lobola” prior to marriage or during negotiations between the two black families, might have changed in its meaning of forming bonds between the bride and the bridegroom families, to that of ownership. Since the man has “paid” for the woman, he feels he has the right to control, manipulate, ill treat and abuse the women as he basically feels that he “owns” her.

Viano (1992:6) is of the opinion that both in black and white communities, sexual violence is under reported, trivialized by society and serve to control women’s lives. Some women irrespective of color experience date rapes, rape in marriage, sexual harassment, sexual mutilation and physical and emotional abuse. Violence against women manifests the low status of women in society.

### 2.5.4 Compulsive Masculinity

Women in contemporary society are targets of enmity and dislike. This may be due in part to their growing stature and independence. This elicits violent reaction on men who perceive these changes as a direct threat to their superior positions (Viano 1992:7).

The researcher is of the opinion that through the efforts of women movements, like the Gender Task Force in South Africa, including the South African Constitution, women will and have been afforded equal opportunities. Affirmative and empowerment action to address the imbalances of the past will afford equal opportunities in every sphere of life, indiscriminately.

Radliff (1997:1) also attributes the dislike and the creation of inferiority complex of males towards women, to compulsive masculinity. The aggression of men against women, be it physical or emotional, can be perceived as being instrumental and intentional, because the abuser also emerges in a stronger position relative to that of the other party in the interaction (Viano 1992:6).

#### 2.5.5 **Subtle Victimization**

Although the society focuses on violence of women by their male partners, research in this field focuses on victimization, distorted values, and beliefs that support them. There are values; beliefs that are embedded in both black and white cultures for instance, in female prostitution, males pay women for sexual favors. They may even trade drugs, for sex and shelter (Weiner 1996:97).

“There is also a widespread of exploitation of the female body in commercials and advertisements, no matter what item is offered for sale... all create and manifest a climate, in which victimizers express in blunt, absent, and intensified manners what society at large beliefs and practices in a more subtle or carefully camouflaged manner” (Viano 1992:7).

The researcher is of the opinion that although violence is abhorred by all societies, at times abuse is legitimized, depending on the values of that society. It can therefore be perceived as either provocative or defensive. But ironically, it is always culturally acceptable.

## 2.6 THE THEORY OF THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Walker (1979) in Goodman et al (1995:29) states that most women who are victims of abuse report that the abuse pattern usually occurs as a cycle. The cycle of abuse is comprised of three phases, that is, tension rising, the abusive episode and honeymoon period, and it can be discussed as follows:-

### 2.6.1 The Tension Rising Phase

The tension rising phase is comprised of stress rising to the highest level between the partners, to the extent that it explodes into an abusive episode. This abusive episode can either be physical, emotional, sexual or embrace all these three components (Goodman et al 1995:29). Usually the abuser puts blame on the victim for provoking the abuse and will start by accusing her of some shortcoming or behavior. For instance, the male partner may accuse the woman for being a lazy housewife, being promiscuous, being too thin or fat, and so forth. These real or imagined accusations always “cause” the abuser to react abusively (Goodman et al 1995:30).

Although one is aware that even healthy relationships have periods of disagreements and anger. However, “no one has a right to abuse his partner emotionally, physically or sexually .. no matter what he does or says it is the abuser, and he alone, who chooses to be abusive and who is

responsible for his own choices and actions” (Goodman et al 1995:30).

### 2.6.2 **Abusive Episode and Honeymoon Period**

This theory also indicates that there are episodes of violence that are followed by a honeymoon period. Many battered women live for these periods and still love their partners. Most of the victims are also taught that they deserve the beatings and thus the problem is theirs, not the attackers. Violence and love can therefore co-exist in a household or relationship because people grow up learning that it is acceptable to hit the people we love (Gelles & Cornell 1990:20).

Through profuse apologies, promising never to do it again, declaring his love, crying, threatening suicide if she leave him. The woman will find herself faced with persuasive reactions of the abuser and she may ultimately find herself, “believing” that it will never happen again and have hopes of love and peace, only to find the cycle beginning again.

## 2.7 **THE ACTUAL INCIDENCE OF VIOLENCE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP.**

### 2.7.1 **Women in Violent Relationships: Why they stay**

People may find it not understandable, why many women remain after the first occurrence of violence. It is the loving respite or honeymoon period that often maintains women in these relationships as they may still love their partners, live in hope, while others are so emotionally beaten by the abuser, that they are unable to marshal the resources to leave (Walker 1979 in Hyden 1994:9). The positive aspects of the relationship may make

the woman to feel the relationship to be worth preserving, she may lack economic independence, she may want a father for her children, she may believe the man when he promises he will never hit her again (Walker 1979 in Hyden 1994:9).

If she is beaten again, some people are more inclined to believe that the woman is masochistic, unmotivated or just plain foolish (Hoff 1990:33). However, some women suffer from extreme shame and humiliation and subsequently a feeling of alteration. Writers also saw the root of the problem, being from cultural attitudes about women (Gelles & Cornell 1990:40). For instance, under Roman-Dutch Law, which is the common law of most Southern African countries, cohabitation does not give rise to any obligations between the parties. The woman is not legally entitled to be supported by the partner or to an equitable distribution of property at the end of the relationship or cohabitation. Hence some black women find it difficult to leave a violent relationship, even most systems of customary law adopt the same attitude. This situation usually disadvantages black women. When they leave the relationship, they usually lack resources that men have to buy or rent houses, and have limited access to the employment market (Armstrong 1992:51).

The researcher agrees with Truniger that there are seven factors that cause women to stay, that is:

- § they have negative concepts;
- § they believe their partners would reform;
- § there is economic hardship;
- § they have children who need support;

- § they doubt that they can get along alone;
- § they believe divorces are stigmatized;
- § and, it is difficult for women with children to get support (Truniger 1971 in Gelles & Cornell 1990:7).

There may also be a physical threat and/or danger faced by a woman who threatens or attempts to leave a violent relationship.

In South Africa, this problem of black women in violent relationships has not received media coverage it needs. Little attention has been paid in the development of an indigenous theoretical formulation of this problem (Segel & Labe 1990:251). However, this factor, does not relate to black women only but also to wider society's attitudes and views about women.

In large part, the reasons for staying are embedded in traditional views about marriage, relationships, family, and the interpretation of violence is still a private rather than public issue (Hoff 1990:54-55).

### **2.7.2 From Victim to Survivor - How they left**

The beatings that these women suffer in their relationships destroy their hopes for marriage, and family relations to be sustainable.

Their accounts also reveal that some men often forced themselves sexually on them. Generally, many such women espoused several traditional values regarding a wife's role. Including the notion that sex is a duty a wife owed to her husband. It is not surprising that these women could not even start to interpret coerced sex by their partners as rape (Hoff 1990:58).

There is a popular folklore about marital conflict situations, that suggest that women want to achieve reconciliation by “talking about the problem” while men wanted to resolve conflict by “making love”, instead of apologizing (Dobash & Dobash 1979 in Hoff 1990:58-60).

Loyd Vogelmann, Director of Wits University Study of Violence, was also concerned about the society’s attitude towards women, which allowed them to be battered and raped, as “society has turned women into objects”, he said. As such, they belonged to men, they were to be there to satisfy male needs. And if one regarded someone as an object, somewhat less than human, one reduced them as people (Grant 1989:71).

However, battering usually produces a crisis in which either the woman accepts that she is vulnerable to violence, or she resolves it by learning to suffer the consequent situation. This is usually a serious decision on a battered woman who has either to leave the violent relationship and/or avoid killing either herself or her mate. At times, the abuser will show remorse and persuade the partner for reconciliation, as an aftermath (Hyden 1994:128).

### 2.7.3 **The Aftermath**

The abuser after a violent episode usually finds some “excuses” and “justifications” for his actions. Justification can be defined “as accounts in which one accepts responsibility for the act in question, but denies the prerogative qualities as so cite with it (Hyden 1994:128).

Excuses on the other hand, “are accounts, in which one admits that the act in question is bad, but denies responsibility, since the act instead of being undertaken entirely voluntarily, was committed under some kind of compulsion, accident or biological drive” (Hyden 1994:128).

The researcher is of the opinion that, although the abuser usually admits to his involvement in the violent incident, he usually disclaims responsibility by finding excuses for his misbehavior. In some situations, the woman finds herself in a position whereby the abuser will start blaming the woman, for instance, for provoking him or will claim to have been drunk and may have many other excuses. The abuser at times denies that he is abusing his partner, but would rather claim that he had a “fight” with the woman. “Fight” is characterized by reciprocity, and the position of perpetrator and victim are not clearly defined in a pattern of dominance versus subordination. The man usually repudiates the act and will have excuses for his “fight”. For example, the man will blame his partner for being a dissatisfactory housewife, hence the “fight” (Hyden 1994:133).

However, after serious violence, it is usually the man who seeks contact with the woman, as an aftermath. The woman will seek medical attention for her sustained injuries and the abuser usually subjugates himself to them. The abuser usually pleads with the woman and pressures her for reconciliation. The author is of the opinion that, it seems that these men desperately need their wives or partners, not necessarily to save their marriages, or relationships but rather to save their own life ego. They see their partners as the only persons who can give them absolution, after they have committed a “lawful act” that they will have to “live with for a long time” (Hyden 1994:134).

With regard to less serious violent acts, the man will regard the act as a “fight” and will persuade the woman to disregard the “use of violence”, will ask for forgiveness and promise a better future.

The researcher is of the opinion that, it is through these “promises” and “persuasive acts” that the woman usually accepts to reconcile, only to find that the cycle of violence starts again. This also explains why it takes longer for most women to leave their violent relationships or seek any professional help to curb the abuse. The abused woman can also find assistance from external social resources like family, friends, neighbors and other community members. Others seek professional help from social workers, magistrates, shelters and other crisis centers.

## 2.8 **THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN VIOLENT RELATIONSHIPS.**

### 2.8.1 **Social Networks For the Abused Women**

Personal efforts are usually not sufficient to enable an abused woman to escape her mate’s violence, but formal assistance corresponding to the nature of the problem is necessary (Hoff 1990:81).

For this study, social networks include family, friends, priests, employers, self-help groups, or any one else significant to the woman, “those you count on” (Hoff 1990:83). Because of the history of research on violence against women and public debate on the topic, and because battered women usually seek support both from natural and institutional resources.

Here a social network refers to any one the woman significantly relates to and who can actually or potentially be called on for help (Hoff 1990:83).

Although social networks are necessary, at times they can either be destructive or supportive. By destructive, one means that relatives and friends reject the abused woman and may shift the blame to her as the victim. For example, it is customary amongst the black people that labola must be paid before any women or girl can go and stay with a male partner, because when there is trouble in the relationship, it is usually easy to approach the elders of the family with the problem who will then take the matter to a tribal court.

But if the relationship did not follow the expected norm of the society, family members may shift the blame from the man to the woman, because they feel she has disgraced the family by co-habiting, therefore, she must bear the brunt as she does not have any legal standing even in the customary law (Armstrong 1993:57).

The researcher is also of the opinion that, at times most victims feel hopeless, and thus helpless ... even with social networks existing. At times they have little knowledge and experience about other existing formal networks, more especially black women from remote rural areas and disadvantaged communities. This can create a problem for all abused women, who may find themselves destitute, frightened and homeless. This clearly portrays how ignorance about available support services, can put all the abused in a most disadvantaged situation, and how complex relationships between family member's good intentions and their dismay and confusion about help, may lead to attitude barriers to help. This also

emphasizes the fact that abused women may find themselves facing the assumption that they were primary responsible for being in their problems.

### 2.8.2 Formal Networks

Responses of formal network members to the plight of these women usually varies from positive to less positive.

Whilst there may have been positive responses from individual, institutional representatives like counselors, doctors, priests, nurses, social workers and others, description of police responses vary, although most are assumed negative. This attitude is not peculiar to South African Police. In Britain and America police also are said to be uncomfortable about getting involved in cases involving assaulted women. A major problem for the police is that abused women often become reluctant to press charges of assault for fear of retaliation. The police become furious and irritated when charges are withdrawn. However, the public prosecutors have the right to decide whether the cases could be withdrawn or not. In the case of pressing charges, the woman becomes a state witness and the case became a state case (Grant 1989:75).

This is a most critical situation, for a woman who thinks only that man is a meal ticket for her children. If the partner is ultimately imprisoned, she may still suffer.

In South Africa there are court interdicts in which the man is ordered by the court not to assault the woman. There is also a peace order, which the magistrate may issue, that orders the man not to disturb peace and if he

does, he is subject to pay a liable fine (Grant 1989:75-76). However, battering is still rife in South Africa.

## 2.9 **SAFETY OF THE ABUSED WOMEN**

Removing a woman and children from an abusive relationship is a major priority. Although there are various shelters and support centers in South Africa, they are minimal. One can cite, Rape Crisis in Cape Town, People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) in Johannesburg, Masimanyane Women Support Centre in East London and Ilitha Women Support Centre at Ezibeleni Location near Queenstown.

The shelters and support centers have long waiting lists, the resources and funding are limited and they live under the constant threat of closure.

Welfare and various church organizations run crisis or emergency centres, for instance, in Cecilia Makiwane Hospital at Mdantsane in the Eastern Cape, there is a center unit for battered people (Grant 1989:76).

Batterers often threaten to burn down shelters. Others try to gain access to their victims. Pat Anderson suggests that high security emergency shelters must be provided with guards and alarms (Grant 1989:76).

## 2.10 **CONCLUSION**

Women abuse amongst African women is still rife in South Africa. However, the present South African Constitution is trying to address this problem. Women still fear to “talk” about the problem and regard it as a “family secret”. Through various anti-violence movements like People Opposing Women Abuse and the others, the matter is receiving immediate and urgent attention even from various structures like the society and the police. However, lack of shelters and support centers remain a problem for the South African Women both black and white, and this needs an immediate address from the government and relevant structures within the communities.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the legal implications both in South Africa and internationally to try and address the use of women abuse in relationships. Battered women are often similar to other victims of violence crime, in that they require the perpetrator to stop their conduct. They need to pay dues for their crimes committed and to compensate victims for the injuries sustained as a result of their criminal conduct (Hart in Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:98). The convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), was the instrument that was used to claim human and social rights of women. So far there are 23 General recommendations relating to critical issues like gender based violence, aids and others (Khan 1997:4).

### **3.2 GENERAL BARRIER TRENDS TO VICTIM PARTICIPATION IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Battered women have varied interests during their participation in a justice system. At times, they may need privacy or anonymity, during the prosecution system. The researcher is of the opinion that, this becomes controversial, because the criminal justice system values public accountability. The abused women, sometimes, need a justice system that will protect them as victims but have sentences for the perpetrators (Hart in Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:99).

Although battered women's experience should be recognized as unique. They can also have some commonalties with other victims of crimes. The following commonalties can be cited:

- like other victims of violent crime, battered women fear retaliation;
- there is fear that the perpetrators may seek reprisal when victims participate in prosecution;
- the abused women may likely resist participation in prosecution.
- most of the battered women have sustained injuries at the hands of the batterer. Some have been held hostage, whilst some are economically dependent on the defendant during the pendency of prosecution and potentially thereafter;
- they are, therefore, likely to be at a high risk for retaliatory violence;
- unlike, the victims of violent crime, who are not in a relationship with the defendant, and are not living with the defendant;
- some of the abused women, even share parenthood with the defendant, and are compelled to continue to keep contact, because of shared parenthood;
- battered women are exposed to dangerous risks and they can be killed, when attempting to seek legal redress or when leaving an abusive relationship;
- however, most victims of crime, are not integrally interconnected with criminal assailant (Hart in Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:100).

The researcher is of the opinion that, these battered women find themselves in a confusing state, they want justice, yet they love or once loved their partners, but also fear retaliation.

“A batterer may, in fact, escalate his violence to coerce a battered woman into “reconciliation”, to retaliate for the battered woman’s participation in the prosecution process, or to coerce her into seeking termination of the prosecution. If the batterer cannot “recapture” the battered woman as his ally, he may seek retribution for her desertion and for disloyalty in exposing him to criminal consequences” (Hart in Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:100).

The researcher is of the opinion that this may explain, the reason why the abused women, stay in a relationship in spite of enduring physical beatings. They may be unwilling to face the risk of the unknown. That a prosecution could further endanger rather than protect.

### 3.3 **THE ATTITUDE OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM TOWARDS THE BATTERED WOMEN**

#### 3.3.1 **The Police**

There are various arguments that have been put forward, concerning the attitude of police, and their minimal response and police intervention. The following can be cited, as possible:

- n That women become disillusioned by police response and may believe there are few options for protection.
- n Police officers themselves become frustrated by “domestics” and categorize them as hopeless calls.
- n The general impression and folklore about police response is widespread enough to deter women from seeking police assistance.

- n By not arresting the male, police give the batterer, indirectly, a message that it is okay to batter.
- n Women who choose to file charges most immediately become “experts” in the maze of the criminal justice system.
- n Women who choose to file charges must be able to withstand threats, coercion on the part of the batterer in order to continue with prosecution.
- n Without immediate response to a battering the best time to inform a man of his unacceptable behavior is lost (Hanmer Radford & Stanko 1989:48-49).

The researcher is of the opinion that the police should lay criminal charges against a spouse or partner when there is reasonable or probable grounds that an assault has occurred. Future and present violence may be stopped. The abused woman will also be reassured that she did in fact experience criminal violence.

Through arrest, the violent man, is removed from the situation of violence and held against his will, or at times, overnight. This may serve as a deterrent, hence, the consensus opinion points to arrest, as the best solution to “simple” battering situations. Arrest, is also a means of resolving a disruption, and it does fit neatly within the ideology of crime control and protection of the public (Hanmer Radford & Stanko 1989:50-51).

### 3.3.2 **The Criminal Justice System**

Unlike other victims of violent crime the prosecutor, judges, parole staff and others often view battered women, as “responsible” for the crimes

committed against them. “Responsible” in the sense that battered women are believed to have “provoked” the perpetrator into violence. There is also a belief that battered women have the power to avoid the criminal assault through accommodating the perpetrator’s demands. However, the other victims of crime are not readily seen as being culpable for the crimes that have been inflicted on them (Hart in Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:101).

The researcher is of the opinion that, a justice system, at times, portrays a victim-blaming attitude. Battered women are perceived as “worthless victims” who are causing unnecessary high case loads for prosecution with trivial family matters.

Due to this attitude, the police may fail to arrest or file incident reports. The prosecutors may delay charging, require substantial corporation, or impose fees on the abused (Ford 1991 in Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:101).

Simultaneously, the perpetrator, of domestic violence may blame his victim for his conduct. He may claim that the woman “provoked” him so profoundly, that his crimes need to be excused or pardoned. In this way, the batterer tries to justify his violent behavior. However, in turn, the battered woman may find, accusing herself as an option. She may believe that she should have been smarter, perhaps, more careful, and could have figured out a way to prevent the violence or should have been more courageous and found a way to safely leave the relationship. This self-blame may lead the abused to believe that it is not fair to arrest and prosecute the perpetrator (Hart in Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:101)

### 3.3.3 Victim Reluctance and Resistance to the Prosecution of Battered

Unlike many victims of assault by strangers, victims of domestic violence may be reluctant witnesses or may be assured to be so. There are many reasons for this and Hart in Buzawa & Buzawa (1996:102-103) cites the following:-

- n** Black women from rural areas may have no transportation or fare and thus may find it impossible to arrange for multiple trips to the courthouse.
- n** Due to their poor and minimal financial resources, they may find participation in prosecution costly, and may be reluctant to proceed.
- n** When serious assaults are trivialized and changed to misdemeanors, victims of domestic violence may feel that the effort is not worth it, and the costs and risks involved in prosecutions outweigh the potential consequences for assailants.
- n** The delays and postponement of the case may be discouraging.
- n** Women with school going age children, may find it inconvenient to have proper child care, for all court appearances outside school hours.
- n** Seriously injured battered women, may find employers unwilling to accommodate court appearances, after they have been considerate about many medical appointments at times including hospitalization.
- n** A battered woman who is residing in a mortgage bond house, which is paid by the perpetrator, may face eviction if she prosecutes.
- n** Other battered women may feel that through prosecution, they will be abandoned by their community support system, like the in-laws, the church, ethnic groups and others.

n Battered women may be reluctant to expose the fathers of their children to public accountability, especially when their older children have an attitude towards the criminal justice system.

n Others are fearful, that through prosecution the fathers who are the breadwinner will ultimately be arrested and this could wreak economic ruin on their families (Hart In Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:102-103).

### 3.3.4 **Strategies That Can Be Utilized to Facilitate Victim Participation**

Although there are potential barriers that prohibit participation in the criminal process, many battered women and justice system personnel have found that these obstacles can be eliminated. There are various strategies that have been formulated to facilitate the informed, protected and committed participation of battered women. Hart In Buzawa & Buzawa (1996:104-113) mentioned the following strategies:

- A.
  - That the police should respond to domestic violence calls. They should notify the victims of the availability of a shelter, support service center, including the telephone numbers or any other available services within the community.
  - The police should inform the victim of domestic violence about the Prevention of the Family Violence Act, which could include:
    - a) Orders restraining the abuser from further acts of abuse;

- b) An order directing the abuser to leave the abused woman household;
  - c) An order preventing the abuser from entering the residence, school, business or place of employment;
  - d) An order, awarding the abused woman or the other parent temporary custody or temporary visitation with the child or children;
  - e) An order, directing the abuser to pay support, to the battered woman and the minor children, provided the abuser has a legal obligation to do so (Hart In Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:124).
- B. - Another strategy to enhance victim participation is articulated in the statute of the Victim “Bill of Rights” that:
- a) In the pre-sentence report, included must be information concerning the effect of the crime that has been committed by the defendant on the victim. That may include physical, and/or psychological harm or financial loss suffered by the victim.
  - b) To have restitution order, as a condition of probation whenever feasible (Hart in Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:104).
- C. - Another strategy is the statutory mandate for victim-witness service funding. The abuse woman can be provided with protection service’s that include the following:-

- a) Information concerning financial assistance and other social services that are available as a result of being a victim of crime.
- b) Notification could be sent to the battered woman earlier, to inform that the court proceedings to which they have been subpoenaed will not go on as scheduled. This will save the abused an unnecessary trips to court.
- c) Protection from harm and threats of harm that will arise out of the abuser's cooperation with law enforcement and prosecution efforts.
- d) A secure waiting area during court proceedings that does not require that the abused, be in close proximity to defendants, families and friends of the defendants.
- e) The battered women could also be notified about the date on which there will be final disposition of the case (Hart in Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:105).
- f) Systems should also be developed, that will assist to assess the potential lethality of the defendants.
- g) The justice department should periodically evaluate the continuing threat that the defendant poses on the victim and to other family members.
- h) The police should advocate for a cash bail that is attached with specific protection conditions on release.
- i) When a victim seeks to maintain a confidentially undisclosed address, the police and prosecutor should carefully safeguard any contact information and delete any reference to an address on materials, that will be disclosed to the public and defense counsel (Hart in Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:107).

The researcher is of the opinions that, battered women, are in dire need of support from family and friends during this ordeal. The employers also should play a significant and supportive role during this period. However, the criminal justice system should refer battered women to domestic violence program such as, safety planning, counseling, legal aids and the others.

However, the general strategies that have been outlined here, can be used to engage and protect battered women as victims and witnesses. Through these strategies the criminal justice system will be able to secure success of prosecution and mostly the perpetrator's accountability (Hart in Buzawa & Buzawa 1996:113).

#### 3.4 **THE EXISTING LEGAL PREVENTATIVE MEASURES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The Newave Conference held on the 17 and 18 October 1995, had the following recommendations based on domestic violence.

- n There is need to develop a national police protocol to standardize the processing of domestic violence cases and the handling of victims of domestic violence, with more consistency in police response to the problem.
- n There could be a lobby at National and Provincial level around changes to domestic violence legislation. Research the subject of domestic violence internationally and look at foreign legislation and comparative models.

- n Legislation could provide for compensation orders and/or victim reparation where there was damage to person or property. Also, provision could be made for the enforcement mechanisms to enforce payment.
- n Legislation should make provision for the automatic revocation of a fire arm or weapon license, where such weapon has been used to threaten the victim of domestic violence.
- n Magistrates should be authorized to grant automatic maintenance orders in respect of minor children from all abusive parent.
- n There is a need for a National Resource directory.
- n A need for a networking magazine.
- n Increased education and awareness arising campaigns about the course of criminal justice system and existing resource centers.
- n Information be disseminated and even circulated into the rural areas concerning battering and domestic violence.
- n Innovate for therapy/treatment in addition to punishment for the abuser.
- n Take recommendations to a National Conference.

### 3.5 **BEIJING CONFERENCE**

During the Beijing Women's Conference, it was reported that battery in South Africa was alarmingly high, and police estimated that only 2,8% of rapes were reported in South Africa.

Based on this, about 966 000 rapes were committed in 1993. It was also estimated that a female person was raped almost every minute and that rape and sexual abuse were not included in SAP's definition of serious crime (Payun 1995:17).

The shortage of state funded shelters for abused women, and that the state does not provide funding for shelters ran by private organizations may also contribute to women to be unable to leave the violent relationship.

The plan of action was for the government to provide well funded shelters, as well as medical, psychological and other counseling services, freely or at low cost legal aid. The government could also promote research concerning domestic violence. Research findings should be widely disseminated.

### 3.6 **THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION**

In South Africa, the Human Rights Watch/Africa (1995:2) states that, although reliable national statistics are not readily available, both domestic violence and sexual assault are prevalent.

Rape Crisis (in Human Rights 1995:45) estimated in 1992 that one in three women was assaulted by a male partner, while the Women's Bureau estimated that one in four were abused.

The Advice Desk for abused women puts the estimate of regular violence at one in six. The organizations of People Opposing Women Abuse and Coordinate Action for Battered women also estimated one in six (Human Rights Watch/Africa 1995:45).

The need for a national committee dealing with women abuse, was also highlighted during the convention on Domestic violence with the theme "Heal the Family" held at Unisa in September 1994. The interim

committee appointed since then, has been working towards the goal for implementing networks between the numerous groups working with abused women. This committee is also involving the government both at national and regional level. They also coordinate all role players into a working partnership with the objective of prevention and eradication of all forms of violence and abuse against women (Career Success 1995:31).

### **3.6.1 Prevention of Family Violence Act No. 133 of 1993**

The Prevention of Family Violence Act no. 133 of 1993, was adopted as a means of giving recourse to the multitude of women and children irrespective of color, who find themselves trapped in destructive and abusive families and relationships (The Prevention of Family Violence Act 33/1993).

The Act is gender-neutral and family violence is sometimes perpetrated by women against their partners, children and elders, however, the reality is that women and children are most often victims of abuse at the hands of their husband/partner or father (Du Plessis 1996:4).

The Act, provides for the granting of interdicts with regard to family violence. An obligation to report cases of suspected ill-treatment of children, and that, a husband can be convicted of the rape of his wife, and for matters connected therewith (Supplementary Issue No. 27:111).

The Act also provides for the granting of interdicts with regard to family violence, or court orders, to protect women and children from abuse. The Act makes the process cheaper and quicker than in the past.

It provides for the execution of warrants of arrest, subject to the provisions of Section 2(3), a warrant of arrest issued and suspended in terms of Section 2(2) may be executed by a peace officer as defined in Section 1 of the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act no. 5 of 1977), upon receipt of an affidavit in which it is stated that the respondent has breached any of the conditions contained in the order contemplated in Section 2(2) (Supplementary Issue No. 27:113).

This Act also insists that the ill-treatment of children be reported immediately to either a police official or Commissioner of Child Welfare or a social worker as referred to in Section 1 of the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act no. 74 of 1983). The Act states that a husband may be convicted of the rape of his wife (Supplementary Issue no. 27:113).

Though the Act became effective on the 2 December 1993, a study done by POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse) which looked into the deaths of women in Johannesburg magisterial district during 1994 found that 25% of all deaths were homicides cases and that in 41% of those cases the women were killed by their partners or the partners were the main suspect (Vetten 1994 in Du Plessis 1996:8).

The Child Protection Unit (CPU) of the South African Police Services handled more than 28 000 cases of violence and abuse against children in 1995 alone. Of those 28 000 cases, more than half were violations of a sexual nature ranging from rape, sodomy, incest and indecent assault. The CPU found that the vast majority of the perpetrators were male and that most of the crimes were committed in the child's home (Media, June 1996 in Du Plessis 1996:11).

These statistics did not reflect the numbers of African Women in abusive relationships, however, they indicated that the Act has not been effective as it was meant to be, but why?

Felder (1994:1) believes that the failure of the Act was due to the following factors:

- n** the Act was not well-publicized, and that most black women from rural areas and disadvantaged communities are ignorant of its existence, and only the affluent are knowledgeable about it.
- n** the black woman in a disadvantaged community may be far away from the resources like the magistrates offices and other helping resources, and lack of transportation might be an inhibiting factor.
- n** since abuse happens in the home between partners, this causes problems because both are protected from state intervention under the individuals right to privacy.
- n** the victim can be the most misunderstood of complainants because she loves and fears her abuser. She seems fickle because she will lay a charge and then withdraw it because she feels partly responsible.
- n** women also faced the problem of unsympathetic policemen, indifferent magistrates and hardened defense counsel.
- n** the Act did not provide for partners in gay relationships.

Having looked at the Prevention of Family Violence Act No. 133 of 1993, the researcher focused the discussion on the experiences of women in abusive relationships.

### 3.7 INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND STATISTICS ON VIOLENCE

International policy makers have at last committed themselves to ending gender warfare, through educational campaigns, task force and commission reports (Australian Law Reform Commission 1993; Canadian Panel on Violence against women 1993, Constitutional amendments Brazilian Constitution 1988 and other law reforms, governments around the globe are now also taking conscious steps to eliminate the effects of intimate violence in the family (Mills 1996:261).

This has been a century legacy whereby the subordinate status of women, contributed to violence being the ultimate source to keep them in their place. For example, a Roman husband could chastise, divorce or kill his wife for adultery, drunkenness and attending public games, activities he is engaged in daily (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, in Gelles and Cornell 1990:28).

In the codification of English common law in 1768, a husband had the right to “physically chastise” an errant wife provided the stick was no thicker than his thumb, thus the “rule of thumb” was born (Gelles & Cornell 1990:28).

Battery by a spouse or lover is the single most common reason for women entering hospital emergency rooms, exceeding childbirth, car accidents, muggings and all other medical emergencies. Studies have found that 22 percent to 35 percent of women who are attended at hospital emergency departments are victims of abuse (Randall 1990 in Mills 1996:261).

Furthermore, in 1993, 27% of all violence against women was committed by intimates, that is, their lovers or ex-lovers (U.S Department of Justice 1994 in Mills 1996:262).

### 3.8 **EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING LEGAL INTERVENTIONS**

There have been many legal attempts to punish perpetrators of violence. These legal responses, include police procedures designed to increase the effectiveness of Civil Protection Order, and a numerous other options for prosecuting batterers, including most notably mandating arrest (Mills 1996:263).

### 3.9 **INTERNATIONAL INNOVATIONS IN LEGAL INTERVENTION**

Several innovations that do not rely exclusively and solely on criminal legal strategies have been implemented. They also incorporate alternative social work methods, which responds to the problem of domestic violence.

#### 3.9.1 **U.S Approaches**

Hawaii has developed a unified criminal and civil court that adjudicates woman and child abuse, divorce, and juvenile delinquency matters in one forum. This unified court approach is perceived by some as a model for administering a more therapeutic justice. However, there are arguments that reveal that spouse abuse in one proceeding might affect a woman's credibility in another family matter, such as child custody, especially when

it is adjudicated by the same court (Unified Courts 1993 in Mills 1996:264).

### 3.9.2 DADE County Court - Florida

A dedicated Domestic Violent Court was launched in 1992. It focused exclusively on issues of woman and child abuse and provided only criminal strategies which also incorporated some social work methods. The goals of the court were to stop the violence, protect the victim and her children, make the offender accountable and make treatment available as needed.

This court was subsequently challenged on constitutional grounds that it systematically discriminated against criminal defendants charged with battering (A.G.V Lederman 1994 in Mills 1996:264).

### 3.9.3 Duluth Minnesota

Duluth Minnesota had a comprehensive program that used both criminal and therapeutic models. Police were instructed to arrest batterers immediately. The representatives from battered women's shelters, and treatment programs were dispatched to talk with the parties involved in battery immediately after arrest. Batterers were often ordered to undergo treatment as an alternative to serving time in prisons (Randal 1991 in Mills 1996:264).

Researchers who evaluated this program, came with results that indicated that conviction rates significantly increased, number of women filing for protection order tripled, number of batterers brought back into court for

failure to comply with Civil or Criminal court orders rose tenfold (Randal 1991 in Mills 1996:264).

#### 3.9.4 **Sao Paulo Brazil**

The State offered another approach of drawing women into the legal system. It was also the first nation in the world to target domestic violence through national constitution in 1988, and police prohibited “violence in the sphere of their relations”. 41 women staffed police stations, including female investigators and jail keepers were dedicated solely to crimes against women.

Officers investigated women’s reports of assault, battery, and sex crimes, and social workers helped with non legal needs. Since the institution of these programs in Brazil, complaints of woman have risen (Eluf 1992 in Mills 1996:264).

Though the above programs indicate positive responses towards violence in relationships, research still revealed an even more responsive approach to domestic violence which considered legal interventionist policies from an entirely new perspective was needed to reduce the occurrence of woman abuse (Littleton 1993 in Mills 1996:263).

### 3.10 A NEW PARADIGM FOR JUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND INTERNATIONALLY

#### 3.10.1 A Post Modern Approach

For many battered women, violence is confusing, and the abrupt removal of the batterer is even more confusing.

Mills (1996) is of the opinion that women require above all else, time and institutional response to problems (Mills 1996:265). The aforementioned writer proposes that:

- n A multifaceted and multi-deliberative legal and social work system that responds to the survivors needs, must be flexible.
- n This would assist a woman to distinguish in her mind between violence and healthful expressions of intimacy.
- n Interventions for battered women, both legal and otherwise, should reflect a post-modern social work theory, that provides time and fluidity necessary for self guided resolution.
- n Through this effort, affected women would be able to acknowledge, reconsider and re-evaluate meaning of the trauma, in a more flexible time frame within a supportive environment.
- n A Domestic Violence Commission have to be set, to acknowledge the shifting uncertainty of the survivor as she grapples with a multitude of conflicting loyalties.
- n A reflective social work oriented model should be designed, to reach battered women who are, prevented from seeking legal assistance due to financial, emotional and cultural features of an abusive relationship.

- n Women should file domestic violence complaints in an informal but confidential and private settings, potentially with social workers at hospital emergency rooms, in women-ran police stations, on hot lines and legal service offices.
- n Depending on the assistance needed, a woman would have a choice of financial assistance, whether welfare or alimony, or assistance with government benefits such as child care and housing.
- n Judges and magistrates should be trained in handling complexities of adjudicating these cases.
- n The commission should also empower a battered woman who would design for herself a course of action that she felt would eradicate violence from her life.
- n This approach would emphasize the clinical reality and rich social work tradition to treat a client in a fluid situation of her relationship, who is uncertain and has emotional and cultural loyalties, be afforded a safe and non-judgmental space in which to explore these issue (Mills 1996 265-266).

### 3.11 CONCLUSION

The field of violence on African women in relationships and on women battering generally is under theorized and poorly researched in South Africa. There is no systematic clearly formulated policy for the establishment of resources and services at either local or national level (Segel & Labe 1990:281).

However, the key element of the new dispensation in South Africa is a formal commitment to gender as well as racial equality (Humans Rights Watch/Africa 1995:1).

Article 9(3) of the Bill of Rights states that the State “may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996).

Having cited the various opinions and various global strategies, the governments around the globe should strive for innovative transnational legal strategies that explore fully their potential global effectiveness.

A non judgmental approach to the problem of domestic violence, be adopted, and the empowering of survivors be emphasized. In this way, the survivor of a battery should be able to confront and transcend violent life experiences and explore the emotional, financial as well as cultural loyalties to which we all, to some degree or another, feel bound (Mills 1996:267).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the major components of the study, which included the research design, research methodology, ethical considerations, the sampling procedure, tools of data collection, analysis of data and the limitation of the study.

The other factors, which are background to the study, are the objectives of the study, and the anticipated values of the research, as well as the literature review which were discussed in chapter one and two.

The researcher, has utilized the interpretive approach to establish a coherent and inclusive account of the events and culture from the point of view of those being researched ( Bryman & Burgess 1994:4-6).

### **4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design can be viewed, as a plan which includes every aspect of a proposed research study, from the conceptualization of the problem through to the dissemination of the findings ( Grinnel 1988:219). This research has utilized an exploratory study using a qualitative method. The goal being:

- § to explore a relatively unknown research area;
- § to gain new insights into the phenomenon;
- § and to determine priorities for future research (Mouton & Marais 1990:43).

It is through the exploratory study design, that the researcher was able to build a foundation of general ideas which can be explored at a later stage. The qualitative method also gave the researcher access to a client's meaning systems, frame of reference, personal beliefs, cognitive schemes, values, cultural realities and personal motivations (Franklin & Jordan 1995:281). It was also through the use of a qualitative method which is holistic, open-ended, individualistic, ideographic and process oriented, that the researcher was able to discover subjective human reality. There was also a discovery of the client's own personal construct, unique world view and context (Franklin & Jordan 1995:282).

The researcher was interested in exploring the experiences of black African women in violent relationships. The researcher was not concerned with the causality or testing of a hypothesis. However, due to the feminist movement of the last few years in Sweden and elsewhere, women's experience of men's violence has turned from an unspeakable reality to a conceptualized social problem (Hyden 1994:90).

The researcher is of the opinion that, limited research has been conducted on abuse amongst black African women in South Africa. Therefore, the researcher found an exploratory design more appropriate to use. "The idea of an exploratory study is to explore - nothing more - nothing less" (Grinnel 1988:225).

#### 4.3 **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Human beings when they participate in a research, they tend to react in various forms. For instance, some may resist to be interviewed, supply inaccurate information, wilfulness, deliberately misinforming the researcher and other (Mouton & Marais 1990:76). The researcher had used the following measures to limit these reactive phenomenon.

#### 4.4 **ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

The researcher was introduced by intermediators to the interviewees. The Director (Counselling Services) of Masimanyane Women Support Centre in East London, introduced the researcher to the social worker and lay- $\frac{1}{4}$ counsellor. They in turn introduced the researcher to the interviewees. Lee (1993:113) states that where the interviewer has been introduced to the interviewee by an intermediary. "A sufficiently high level of trust may be present for a single interview to suffice ... but also because the single interview is less demanding on the respondents themselves" (Lee 1993:113-114).

This worked well, as the women rather felt at ease to talk about their experience in their abuse relationships. The researcher is of the opinion that, women were willing to talk to a woman researcher, even if they had some initial anxieties about the purpose of the research. The intermediators also assisted in forming a trusting relationship and a rapport (Finch in Hammersley 1993:167).

Lee (1993:98) states that privacy, confidentiality and a non-condemnatory attitude are important in providing a framework of trust. It is within this framework, that the respondents were able to confront, in a fundamental way, issues which were deep, personally, threatening and potentially painful.

The interviews were also conducted in the interviewees own home setting. This may have led to the interviewees feeling quite comfortable. Finch in Hammersley (1993:169) states that a friendly female interviewer, walking into the interviewees situation, with time to listen and guarantees of confidentiality, finds it easy to get women to talk.

The researcher also decided to describe in detail at the outset, the topic of the interview. The researcher was of the opinion that although abuse was a sensitive topic, once trust has been established, consent became implicit (Lee 1993:103).

The researcher ensured that after each and every interview, a lay counsellor would be within reach. This was to ensure that therapeutic support would be available to the respondents (Lee 1993:106).

The researcher conducted one-off interviews. Brannen in Lee (1993:112-113) states that respondents do not fear a one-off interview, as the parts with the interviewers may not likely to ever cross again. This is also essential to ensure trust and anonymity. However Simmel in Lee (1993:113) views that, the stranger (researcher) often receives the most surprising openness - confidence which at times have a character of being confessional and possibly would be carefully withheld from a more closely related person.

#### 4.5 **THE SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

The population was made up of all abused women who were utilizing the services of the Masimanyane Women Support Centre in East London.

##### 4.5.1 **The Sample**

The relational outcropping method of sampling was convenient for the researcher, as the available ten black women as subjects that were interviewed, were found in the same site which was the Masimanyane Women Support Centre (Lee 1993:69). The researcher was also aware that by definition, one was automatically excluding social isolates and solitary participants from the sample. There was also no guarantee that a sample selected from those found in a particular setting, Masimanyane Support Centre in this case, was representative of a wider population of interest to the researcher (Lee 1993:69). However, the respondents were accessible to the researcher and the support centre was a feasible source for obtaining a sample with minimal cost to the researcher.

#### 4.6 **THE INSTRUMENTS/RESEARCH TOOLS**

The type of measuring instrument, used in this study, for the collection of data, was comprised of in-depth interview schedule, which was tape-recorded in Xhosa language, later transcribed and translated into English.

The interview schedule was comprised of four main themes with probes that were later utilized for an in-depth. In-depth interviews provide means of getting beyond surface appearances and permit greater sensitivity to the meaning context surrounding informant utterances (Lee 1993:104). The four main themes featured:

- a) Personal Details
- b) History of violence and the actual form of incidents
- c) Sources of support
- d) Available resources.

The interview schedule was designed by the researcher and was not tested.

The interviews were administered by the researcher, and questions were in Xhosa, to ensure that the respondents understood the questions. The interview was tape-recorded and later transcribed. Transcripts of recorded talk, gives a detailed transcript of conversation, and overcome the tendency of transcribers to "tidy up" the "messy" features of natural conversation (Silverman 1993:117). The interview schedule and a detailed transcriptions offer an appendix which provides a detailed description of the experiences of black women in abusive relationships (Silverman 1993:117).

The researcher has included ten transcriptions that are included as appendix. See attached Appendix 1 and 2.

The researcher transcribed and translated all ten interviews to ensure and maintain confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents.

The Xhosa Dictionary Project co-ordinator at the University of Fort Hare, assisted the researcher with the translation of certain Xhosa concepts which were transcribed from tape-recordings to English. The reason being that the researcher encountered difficulties in interpreting and translating some of the Xhosa concepts into English. The researcher transcribed and translate all ten to ensure and maintain confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents.

#### 4.7 ANALYSIS OF DATA

To begin the data analysis, the researcher organized the material from one theme or concept of all the interviews.

Themes offer descriptions of how people do or should behave. Themes provides explanation for how or why things happen. Consequently, when the researcher heard a theme, it was useful to check which ones went together (Rubin & Rubin 1995:234).

With tape-recorded interviews, the researcher was able to analyze the exact words that were used. An interpretive approach was applied. This approach seeks to establish a coherent and inclusive account of events and culture from the point of view of those being researched (Bryman & Burgess 1994:6).

As the data collected from the interviews was collated, it was also organized into themes that ranged from the general to the specific. The variables that were analyzed, were the respondents reasons for emergence of violence in the relationships, staying in an abusive relationship, as well as the form of assistance that was useful and which was not. This assisted with the production of findings.

The interview schedule was conceptualized in such a way that responses could be elicited as narrative descriptions. In keeping with the qualitative data, the analysis looked for shared themes and understanding. Mouton & Marais (1990:103-104) stated that, analysis is understood to mean the resolution of a complex whole into parts, it has a interpretative dimension of explanation in the social sciences. Although the eventual interpretation presents an indication of the manner in which the events may be understood,

as a process of resolution, it is relatively easily accomplished when an existing theory is used as a frame of reference. The data in this study was eventually interpreted, with the backup of an existing theory as a frame of reference (Mouton & Marais 1990:103-104).

#### 4.8 **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Limitations within the study were noted at various levels, and can be summarized as follows:

- § The researcher study/project was expensive. The researcher had to travel to various areas of East London and surrounding areas and informal settlement areas, to be able to interview the respondents. The respondents were all utilizing services at Masimanyane Women Support Service Centre. At times, it was difficult to finance cover cost for travelling to the homes of the respondents.
- § Although being a black female researcher, may have made it easier to gain trust and openness on the respondents. The African Xhosa culture socialize one for shyness. Consequently, the researcher initially found it difficult to probe deeper into the experiences of abuse. As this could be interpreted as a sign of being "disrespectful, curious." Xhosa culture socialize one "not to ask to many questions" (*Umgqadabekweni, intlonipho*) meaning curiosity into other people's affairs and showing of respect.
- § The researcher most of the time, used terminology like "sisi, Mama" meaning Sister/Sis, Mom/Mother when addressing the respondents. This according to Xhosa culture, was to indicate that the respondent because they were black and the researcher was also black, both are related in terms of race and colour, that "black-sisterhood". At times "sister" was

used as a sign of respect, because of the age difference between the researcher and the respondent. Hence, at times, the respondents were called "Mom." The African Xhosa culture, warrants that one should acknowledge the elderly, acknowledge the ranks according to age. This is to show respect and indication that one acknowledges the respondent's age, that is, the respondent can be old enough to be one's mother.

- § This in a way was a limitation, as the researcher, acknowledging the emotions with which the respondents told their stories, restrained one, to probe further and deeper, due to socialization into shyness (Sached 1992:44).
- § As an inexperienced researcher, the first interviews, was emotionally draining, both for the interviewer and the interviewee. The researcher had an obligation to protect the confidences disclosed and emotions aroused and expressed. A lay-counsellor gave support after each interview.
- § The interview schedule was initially drawn in English and then translated in Xhosa. The first question which asked the respondent "please tell me about yourself". To a Xhosa speaking person, it warranted the respondent to start by tracing the "family roots" or "family tree" one would start with the "clan" name, the origination of the family, fore fathers, the marital status, the clan, name of the in-laws, their origin, and would immediately jump to the actual incident of violence. This indicated the difference in "culture" as to the white person, the question was concise and straight forward. The researcher refined the process as the interviews continued, but still find the responses elicited a lot of information and contributed into jumps in the interview schedule.
- § The African Xhosa culture in this aspect also requires that as an African woman one has to respect "the clan, the roots, the origin of another black family." Through this, one is able to discover "blood-relatives" in terms of clan-names and areas of origin that is, *Umkhaya*, meaning we come

from the same area or village, in terms of *isiduko*, meaning we share the same "clan-name", therefore we are "blood" relatives. The researcher cited this as a limitation, as immediately one is a "blood relative, home-girl" one should acknowledge that and this could either contribute to openness or strain the rapport relationship that existed between the researcher and the respondent.

- § The one-off character of the interviews in this study, had a disadvantage as the researcher could not be utilized as a source of help or support to the respondents.
- § The sample of ten respondents, was not fully representative, the interview schedule could not be pretested, as it dealt with a sensitive topic but the process was refined as the interviews continued. The sample, was therefore, not fully representative and excluded any other solidarity participants from the sample. The findings, cannot be generalized, but could be utilized for further researcher.
- § The translation and transcribing of the interviews was expensive and time consuming as the researcher was a part-time student.

#### 4.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher has reported on the methods employed for collecting data. The study being exploratory and qualitative, has utilized in-depth interviews, with a sample of ten black women in abusive relationships. an interview schedule (Annexure 3) was used, fact to face interviews were held. The interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed. The transcripts which were in Xhosa were translated to English.

In spite of being an inexperienced researcher, with problems encountered, the experience of doing field work on black women in violent relationships, and having a privilege of having them share their experiences was enriching.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This Chapter will review and discuss four major themes of the respondent's interviews and how they relate to the literature. Rubin & Rubin (1995:234) states that, themes provide explanations for how or why things happen. They also offer descriptions of how people do or should behave.

The primary purpose is being able to identify and have the respondents' assist in identifying the various type of formal and informal services that are available to assist the African women in abusive relationships. The goals of the formal (professional) and informal (personal network) is to assist women in abusive relationships, through various social, legal and counseling services. It is through these services that an individual can be assisted to make a decision based on an informed choice.

The following is an outline that includes each main theme and the material that explains the subject matter in a form of prompts.

#### **A. Personal Details of the woman and partner**

§ Age (man and woman)

§ Marital Status

§ Employment (man and woman)

- § Number of children
- § The type of relationship prior abuse

#### B. History of Violence

- § How did it start
- § What triggered the abuse
- § How long has it been going on
- § When did it stop/leave

#### C. Source of Support

- § What kind of support that one need during battery
- § which services were helpful
- § Who gave support within the community during abuse
  - Example 1 - Friend
  - Example 2 - Neighbor
  - Example 3 - Relative

#### D. Available Resources

- § Sources of information about the available resources
  - Example 1 - Through friends
  - Example 2 - Pamphlets
  - Example 3 - Radio-talk shows
  - Example 4 - Social workers
- § What can be done to improve services for black battered women

§ Evidence: improvement of legal system

§ Magistrate

§ Police

§ Court

§ Example: improve welfare services

improve medical services

nursing services

psychological services

The findings are answers to the interview schedule. The interview schedule is attached as Appendix 1. The sample set was made up of ten respondents and all references will come from this ten.

The researcher used pseudonyms for her respondents to preserve their anonymity (Hall & Hall 1996:197).

No percentages were used, as the sample was small and the percentages might be misleading. Hall & Hall (1996:194) state that within a small sample, raw figures should be given rather than percentages, as they can be misleading. For example, to talk of twenty percent of the sample holding a particular view can sound very impressive, whereas if you sample is only five, one may be talking about just one person.

The aim of the research project focused on a qualitative exploration of Black women in violent relationships. The researcher needed to examine new interests as the subject of the study was relatively uncharted.

The structure followed the framework of the interviews, using the questions as headings.

## 5.2 DISCUSSION

### 5.2.1 Personal Details

- a) **Since we are meeting for the first time, can you please tell me about yourself.**

Table 1 - Data Matrix

RESPONDENTS	PSEUDONYMS	AGE	MARITAL STATUS	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	EMPLOYMENT
1	Pumla	38	Married but in separation	5	Unemployed
2	Linda	42	Divorced	4	Employed
3	Lydia	29	Married	2	Employed
4	Nomsa	38	Married	4	Employed
5	Ayanda	30	Not married	2	Employed
6	Thoko	28	Married	3	Unemployed
7	Busi	42	Married	4	Employed
8	Zuki	44	Married	3	Unemployed
9	Ncumisa	30	Not married	2	Employed
10	Pinkie	34	Married	4	Unemployed

From Table 1, the researcher used the matrix, as it is particularly valuable, where the researcher has interviewed a number of people in depth. The matrix allows the pool of information to work cooperatively (Hall & Hall 1996:202-203).

It is of interest to note that only four of the women are unemployed, which would normally, suggests economic dependence. Such dependence would

be in line with what McKay (1994:362) refers to as subordination. However, those women who were employed were poorly paid, doing part-time jobs, except for one who held a professional type of work which would not allow real economic independence. Thus, this sample could be viewed as subordinate at least in terms of economic independence.

However, the data also indicates that some of the women although they were in some form of employment, sustained the abusive relationship. McKay (1994:352-353) argues that women who enter the labor market, are usually given poorly paid, part time, low-status job. It is, therefore, assumed, that this tendency leads to financial dependence of women to their partners, as they are marginal wage earners who also provide free services as housewives. Nolde (1991:208) also states that African women, who are entrenched in a role of subservience, lack in any expectation of opportunities of achievement, advancement or independence, that they would mostly find it difficult to develop beyond the function of reproduction and domestic work.

Due to low levels of education, some of these women in the study are unable to get better paying jobs. The low wage, which they earn, does not enable them to be financially independent. The roles that men and women are expected to fulfill in society also play a part in creating the potential for male violence against women. Women as housewives are not paid, and their spouses are expected to be providers. As head of their homes, men have expect to be supporting their families financially (De la rey et al 1997:172).

Some of the battered women may have no income due to lack of a job and money. These abused women may also sometimes fear having to work

for the first time. Since they are unskilled they assume that they will be offered low wages and may suffer another form of abuse from their boss or co-workers (De Sousa 1991:22).

The researcher also noted that when the question “tell me about yourself” was posed, seven women started with their historical background, that is, where they came from, their clan names, and would actually “jump” to the actual incident of violence. The researcher is of the opinion that the seven of the subjects in this study, attached importance to their clan names, family history and or family tree and also acknowledged their roots.

This study indicates that African women attach value to their heritage. The ‘jump’ to the actual incident of violence, may be due to the fact that they want to express their violent experiences that tend to be common ground of sharing oppression. De la rey et al (1997:85) states that it is important for the abused women to acknowledge what emerges as a notion of a complex intersection of oppression and identities, in which different oppressions ‘overlap’, interconnect in the construction of each other, and may also contradict each other in certain instances (De la rey et al 1997:85).

**b) Can you please tell me, how would you describe your partner?**

**Table 2 - Data Matrix**

PARTNER	PSEUDONYMS	AGE	EMPLOYMENT	HABITS
1	Thabo	46	Employed	Abuse Alcohol
2	Lizo	48	Employed	Abuse Alcohol
3	Litha	33	Employed	Abuse Alcohol
4	Zola	42	Unemployed	Abuse Alcohol
5	Bantu	35	Employed	Abuse Alcohol
6	Langa	33	Employed	Abuse Alcohol
7	Bongo	48	Employed	Abuse Alcohol
8	Sizwe	48	Employed	Abuse Alcohol
9	Solile	35	Employed	Abuse Alcohol
10	Lunga	37	Employed	Abuse Alcohol

The researcher used pseudonyms on both Data Matrix Table 1 and 2. Hall & Hall (1996:197) advise it necessary to use pseudonyms for one's informants to preserve their anonymity. The informants were also given a name, rather than being referred to as "Subject A" or "Subject B", which turns them into objects (Hall & Hall 1996:197)).

However from the sample, nine of the male partners were employed and only one was unemployed.

De la rey et al (1997:174) states that the pressure on men to be successful in the outside world may impact on their family lives. For instance, if a man feels inferior at work, or is not achieving in his practical life, he may feel angry, hurt, and frustrated. This may lead him to resort to display physical force, from which he regains some control and his sense of power (or balances) (De la rey et al 1997:174).

Sikhitha (1997:12) states that, due to the low literacy rate, particularly for black women, they have fewer employment opportunities, lack marketable skills, and find it difficult if not impossible to make ends meet without the husband's income.

Truniger (1971) in Gelles & Cornell (1990:70) also claim that women in violent relationships, believe that their partners will reform. There is economic hardship and they have children who need financial support.

### 5.2.2 History of Violence

- a) **Can you please explain to me, how long has the battery been going on?**

The period of battery amongst the respondents ranged from two years to five years respectively.

Pumla, Nomsa, Thoko, Zuki and Pinkie experienced battery for a period of one year respectively. Whereas, Lydia and Ayanda experienced abuse for three years respectively. Busi was in an abusive relationship for four years, Linda for five years and Ncumisa for two years.

De Sousa (1991:22) states that a woman in a violent relationship for various reasons, may regard battering as having been caused by her and may believe in “untruths” like “I asked for it” ... Friends may ask a woman to stay “for the sake of the children”, neighbors may say she is a bad wife and mother if she leaves (De Sousa 1991:22).

When the women were asked about what triggered violence?

All ten women claimed that their partners were always under the influence of liquor when the battery occurred. The study indicated different reactions that were expressed by the male partners when drunk. For instance, Pumla, Ayanda and Linda’s partners had girlfriends, and this attributed to arguments that would lead to abuse. Pumla’s partner would even take groceries from his family home to his girlfriend. However, Nomsa, Thoko and Busi, experienced abuse because their partners would

come home drunk during month-ends and refused to financially support their children. Whereas, Zuki, Ncumisa and Pinkie's partners would come home drunk and start accusing the women of having boyfriends. This would lead to arguments that led to battering. Lydia and Linda also claimed that whilst their partners were drunk, they would start swearing at the children, and this led to arguments that led to the women being beaten by the partner.

De Sousa (1991:14) states that the batterer uses money to punish the wife on woman by using and spending money on himself and in some cases to his lovers and only gives a woman small amount. Then he would expect her to do more than she possibly can.

The ten respondents also claimed their partners would swear at them when drunk and would ultimately physically beat them. The physical beatings resulted for instance in Linda sustaining a "blue eye" and swollen body. Ayanda also suffered a "swollen eye". Whereas Pinkie's physical beatings resulted her in sustaining swollen eyes, body scars and injuries.

Goodman et al (1995:28) states that abusers usually use physical abuse in order to harm, frighten and gain control over the abused. It is also through the severe physical abuse that battered women suffer severe injuries leading to emergency medical care.

It is also of interest to note that according to the study, all respondents claimed that the abuse occurred when their partners were drunk. Goodman et al (1995:39) is of the opinion that alcohol does not cause abuse, but merely lowers the abuser's inhibitions to do what he wants to do and use alcohol or other substance abuse as an excuse.

**b) When the respondents were asked, how did their partners behave after battering?**

The study indicated different responses from the male partners. For instance, Pumla and Pinkie claimed that their partners would get drunk the following day and one could see that the partner was prepared to initiate for another fight. Linda, Ayanda, Zuki, Ncumisa's partners showed remorse as an aftermath, and would plead for forgiveness. The respondents would accept the apologies only to find that later, violence will recur. Hoff (1990:44) is of the opinion that, when a man hits a woman, she is shocked. The man would be remorseful and promises never to do it again, she believes him, acts on the basis of her commitment to make the relationship or marriage work, and stays with the partner. Although, there is sincerity in his promise not to hit her again at an unconscious level, the fact that she stays with him despite the violence, symbolizes indirectly to him a "license" to repeat the violence. Thus, the stage is set for repeated episodes of chronic violence.

The study also indicated that Lydia and Thoko's partners showed signs of regret but they could still see that their partners were prepared to initiate violence again. Nomsa's partner as an aftermath, would sleep the whole day, and would refuse to talk to anybody. The study reiterates Dobash & Dobash (1970) in Hoff (1990:58-60) who states that women want to achieve reconciliation by "talking about the problem" while men wanted to resolved conflict by "making love" instead of apologizing.

Busi's partner never showed any remorse and he would start blaming her, for making him lose his temper and provoking him to anger and hence

physical beating. Gelles and Cornell (1990:20) indicate that most of the victims are also taught that they deserve the beatings. The abuser also put a blame on the victim for provoking the abuse (Goodman et al 1995:29).

### 5.2.3 Sources of Support

**a) Can you please tell me, about what kind of help did you need during battery?**

All respondents sought different kinds of professional services and got different kind of help. Pumla, Linda, Lydia, Thoko, Busi all approached the police during battery requesting them to come to rescue, but were refused. The police refused to arrest their partners, claiming, that it was a private matter between “two lovers” therefore, they did not want to interfere. Hoff (1990:102) states that, there is common knowledge from violent men, that police will support them rather than the battered woman. Police also viewed abuse as a family problem and could not help. Literature has also highlighted that some of the battered women are not only reluctant to file reports with the police but also too often have not sought any kinds of help or delayed seeking help until long after the abuse began (Mills 1996:262). The study also indicated that Pinkie and Zuki never reported the assaults and physical beatings to the police. However, Nomsa, Ayanda and Ncumisa got assistance from the police. Nomsa’s partner was taken to court, Ayanda’s partner was arrested for one day and released the following day, and Ncumisa's partner was released with a warning.

Mills (1996:263) states that the police are more likely than in the past to arrest the perpetrator when the victim is visibly injured or when there is a

probable cause to believe that a crime was committed. The women's account of their success with formal networks can be interpreted further by drawing on the accounts of help received from the social workers. Pumla, Lydia, Nomsa, Ayanda, Thoko, Zuki and Ncumisa's partners were called in by the social workers respectively. Joint interviews were conducted. Pumla's partner became aggressive during the session and kicked the social worker's office chairs. Pumla was advised to seek further help from the police and there was no follow-up on the case by the social workers. Lydia's partner during the joint interview, was cooperative and made promises that he would stop drinking and abusing the woman. There is no indication of further involvement of a social worker as a follow-up of this case. Nomsa, after an interview session with a social worker, was referred to Masimanyane Women Support Centre for further assistance. Ayanda's partner was involved in a therapy session with the social worker. Thoko, Ncumisa and Zuki and their partners were called into a joint interview session. The partners claimed that they were usually drunk during abuse, and the cases were referred to the Magistrate or Justice Department for assistance. This is consistent with the literature which says, a multifaceted and multi deliver active and social work systems that respond to the survivor's need for flexibility are necessary to help the woman to work through her abuse experience (Mills 1996:265).

Linda, Busi and Pinkie never sought assistance from their local social workers offices. This might be due perhaps to cultural barriers and norms of family honor amongst black women that influence battered women's decisions to silently endure abusive relationships (Rimonte 1991 in Mills 1996:263).

It is interesting to note that although all ten respondents were physically beaten by their partners, only Lydia sought help from the local health

clinic because she had injuries as her partner used an axe. Ncumisa also received medical help from the local hospital as she had lost some of her teeth during the abuse. This reiterates Hyden (1994:134), statement, that some women usually sought medical attention for their sustained injuries. However, the study also indicates that, some still view abuse as a "family secret", and maintain the family honor, hence they never sought help (Mills 1996:263).

**b) “Having gone through this experience, can you please explain to me, who gave you support from the community. during this threatening period?”**

Pumla, Lydia, Ayanda, Thoko, Ncumisa were assisted by their neighbors. The assistance ranged from overnight stays, provision with food, money and safety was provided for the abused women with her children.

Nine of the respondents also reported the abuse to their own parents. Pumla, Linda, Lydia, Ayanda, Thoko, Busi as well as Pinkie, all sought help from their parents. The parents provided temporary accommodation for the respondents, including their children. Tribunal meetings were called in order to address the issue of physical abuse and the respective partners were called in to be reprimanded according to customary law. The major role of the parents was to reconcile the couple, provide advise and assist them to work out their indifference.

Seven of the respondents also sought assistance from their in-laws. Pumla, Linda and Pinkie, were not assisted by their in-laws, Pumla’s in-laws did not want to be involved in their affair. Linda’s mother-in-law did not reconcile the couple, and Pinkie’s in-laws sided with their son.

However, Lydia, Nomsa, Thoko and Zuki were assisted by their in-laws. Tribunal meetings were called, the couple were called in for an intensive interview. The partners were reprimanded and the couples were reconciled.

Linda and Busi also sought help from their sisters who gave them some advice and were supportive during this period of abuse. Nomsa, Ayanda, Ncumisa and Pinkie also sought help from their friends. Pinkie was also the only one who sought help from her brother, who in turn advised her to leave the abusive partner. Linda and Nomsa were also the only respondents that sought advice and support from the church. For this study the social network members were a natural source of support that included, family, friends, clergy and anyone else significant to the woman. “Those you count on” social support also included material, social and cultural requisites for avoiding a crisis (Hoff 1990:82).

**c) Please tell me about the legal people, what kind of help did you get from them?**

Eight of the respondents approached their local police for assistance. Pumla, Linda, Lydia, Thoko, Busi, were never assisted by the police. The police refused to accept their cases. The study also indicated that Nomsa, Ayanda, Ncumisa were provided with some form of assistance by the police. Nomsa’s case was taken to court, Ayanda’s partner was arrested for only one day and was released the following day and Ncumisa’s partner was released with a warning. The study also indicated that Zuki and Pinkie never sought any help from the police. Hoff (1990:143) states that the feminists argues that assaults against women should be treated as criminal offenses rather than as a “private” squabble to be defused or

mediated. The mandatory arrest also raises questions about the victim's civil rights, as the woman is deprived of her choice in pressing charges against her partner or husband. This may imply that the victims are not knowledgeable, capable agents.

This study also confirms, Mills (1996:262) argument that battered women not only show reluctance to file reports with the police, but also too often do not seek any kind of help or delay seeking help until long after the abuse began.

All ten respondents got some form of assistance from the Department of Justice. Pumla, through the assistance of the legal aid office, got a court interdict, and a maintenance order from the Magistrate. Lydia, Thoko, Busi, Zuki, Ncumisa were also assisted with the issuing of a maintenance order by a Magistrate. Nomsa and Pinkie's partner were also issued with a court interdict that prohibit their partners from abusing them. Linda and Ayanda's partners when brought in court, were acquitted and issued with a warning against abuse by the magistrate. It is worth noting that although the respondents suffered some form of physical injuries and some were assaulted by their partners, they never pressed criminal charges towards their partners. The primary reason may be that, nearly every criminal intervention, including the most innovative ones, potentially subjects the batterer to incarceration. The battered women who are emotionally, financially and culturally entangled in their abusive relationship may feel alienated from a criminal oriented system that is flexible in catering to their needs. These needs may or may not involve arresting, prosecuting or incarcerating their abusers. The abused women may also have conflicting loyalties, which are generated by the trauma of intimate violence (Mills 1996:264).

However, abuse within relationships is notoriously under reported Often out of fear, at times shame. Generally it is under recognized by family and health practitioners (Vetten 1995:18).

d) **During battery, did you know of the existence of the Family Violence Act and what it entails.**

Although the abused women indicated that they received some form of assistance from various professional workers, it is interesting to note that Pumla, Lydia, Thoko, Zola, Ncumisa never knew about the existence of the Act. Linda only learnt about the act after she got a divorce. Pinkie and Pumla never knew about the Act, it was never explained to them, but both of them were granted with a court interdict. Nomsa was informed by the Magistrate about the Family Violence Act and it assisted her with the granting of a court interdict. Ayanda was informed by the social workers about the Family Violence Act. Busi was told about the Act by the social worker at Masimanyane Women Crisis Centre.

The study indicates that according to Fedler (1994:2-3) the Family Violence Act no. 133 of 1993 is not well publicized, some women, even in rural areas, are ignorant about its existence. Women also face the problem of unsympathetic policemen, indifferent Magistrates, and hardened defense council. Magistrates in their ignorance also tend to refer the cases for mediation or counseling. Access remains the option of the privilege few. The Act does not deal with maintenance.

The study has indicated that the majority of the respondents were ignorant about the Act. Although the study indicates its application in some of the respondents, it was never fully explained to them.

Mckendrick & Hoffman (1990:254) state that at the present, South Africa is notoriously violent. However, there is harsh disrespect of human well being. This is embedded in the very structure of laws and practices, which govern human relations in this country.

#### 5.2.4 Available Resources

- a) **Since shelters are not usually publicized, tell me, how did you come to know about the Masimanyane Women Support Center?**

All the respondents received some form of assistance from the Masimanyane Women Support Centre. Pumla, and Thoko were advised by their neighbors about the Center. Linda, Zuki and Ncumisa were referred and advised by a friend to seek assistance at the support center. Lydia although informed by the friend, was also advised by her family to go and seek assistance at the support center. Nomsa and Ayanda were referred by the social workers to the center. Pinkie got a pamphlet from a friend that was issued at Masimanyane Support Center. Busi got the information about the center from a radio talk show.

Sideris, Nsimbini and Maseko (1997:1) states that Women's Crisis Center are established to provide counseling and legal information and support to survivors of family violence and to do advocacy and community education against sexual violence. The study indicates that Linda, Lydia, Ayanda, Thoko, Busi and Zuki received counseling from the center and were helped as well as with legally charging their partners for financial support for their children. Pumla, Nomsa and Pinkie were provided with

counseling. They were also assisted with legal charging their partners at the Magistrate Court for children maintenance. They were also assisted by the center with the processing and obtaining a court interdict against their partners. Ncumisa although she received counseling services and was assisted with laying charges for the children's support, she was also assisted with the process of laying charges towards her partner at the police station for physical assaults.

Dobash & Dobash (1992:219-220) stated that, the power and success of the therapeutic ideology today, is based on the premise that major route to individual improvement and a reasonable life is through counseling and therapy administered by professionals and para-professionals. Findings also corresponds with, Grant (1989:76) who acknowledges the existence of welfare and various church organizations that run crisis or emergency centers. These units also assist the battered women in how best to handle their abusive situations. However, Hoff (1990:153-154) contends that in the centers and shelters, abused women obtain support and assistance, as there is always someone to talk to, staff or another woman- staff give information when needed - support from other woman - finding more information about dealing with stressful situations and with children - letting the woman be herself.

### **5.2.5 Services for Black Battered Women**

- a) **Can you please explain to me, what do you think can be done to improve services to black battered women.**

This section elicited a great deal of response. This may be due to the fact that the respondents received little assistance from some of the formal networks.

#### **5.2.5.1 Police**

Pumla, Lydia, Thoko and Pinki are of the opinion that the police should be properly trained on how to handle cases of abuse. However, Nomsa, Ayanda, Busi, Zuki, Ncumisa as well as Linda stated that, the police need to attend cases of abuse seriously and with sensitivity. Ayanda also states that arrests should be made, as it is through neglecting of abuse cases that can result to deaths and femicide within these relationships. Thoko also mentioned that the police also need to be taught about the Family Violence Act as this can be of assistance during the abuse crisis.

Newave Conference (17-18 October 1995:1) reiterates that, the police protocol - there is need to develop a national police protocol to standardize the processing of domestic violence cases and the handling of victims of domestic violence. There should also be more consistency in police responses to problems. Police should also be empowered to remove the abuser from the scene of domestic violence, even if there are no immediate grounds for arrest.

#### 5.2.5.2 The Department of Justice

Research findings states that, Pumla, Lydia, Ayanda, Thoko, Busi as well as Zuki are of the opinion that the Magistrates must assist by ensuring that abusive partners are sued for child support and that they regularly pay for the maintenance. Lydia also states that the Magistrates should issue garnishee orders that will ensure monthly deductions from the partner's salaries. This can ensure regular payments for child support.

Newave Conference (17-18 October 1995:2) states that Magistrates should be authorized to grant automatic maintenance orders in respect of minor children when an abusive parents is evicted from the home.

#### 5.2.5.3 The Social Workers

Pumla, Lydia, Ncumisa and Linda, stated that social workers should make follow-ups and do home visits for clients in abusive relationships. Ayanda, Thoko and Pinkie are of the opinion that social workers should take the cases of abuse seriously and report them to the police. Pinkie also stated that social workers should explain to the abused client about the Family Violence Act.

Adams 1987 in Moshesh-Peta (1993:34) lists some of the difficulties that are encountered by the social welfare agencies in South Africa, when it comes to dealing with the problem of women abuse. The following can be cited:

- Inadequate academic training of social workers;
- Welfare agencies are understaffed and have heavy case loads;

- No grants are available for abused women;
- Women face legal disadvantages in child custody proceedings if they should leave their children, even temporarily.

McKendrick & Hoffman (1990:260) also mention that professional interventions in the area of wife abuse do not take place in a vacuum. Social workers in South Africa operate within the ideological concept of patriarchy and residual welfare system. These factors may delay the urgent intervention.

McKendrick & Hoffman (1990:270) argue that although social workers view abuse as an individual issue rather than a broad social problem. They do assist the abused woman to restore herself worth and to regain self confidence. However, there is a need to use methods other than casework.

Group work, “is useful because it enables one skilled counselor to reach and support many women, than during individual counseling (De Sousa 1991:35).

Social workers that are concerned with wife battering need to work with related professionals and client constituents to lobby for a system of criminal justice and forceful authority that genuinely protect women (McKendrick & Hoffman 1990:271).

Sikhitha (1997:14) states that the practitioner should conduct a lethality assessment with the battered woman and should insure that the woman is fully informed of her shelter, legal and welfare options. However, it will be through networking groups, that communities will be encouraged “to take an active role against battering” (De Sousa 1991:100).

#### 5.2.5.4 Crisis Centers and Shelters

Pumla is of the opinion that a shelter should be provided, for her to stay with her children as the husband has stopped paying the children maintenance and has also stopped the payment of the mortgage bond and she could be evicted any time from the house.

Lydia believes that the Masimanyane Crisis Center needs its physical structure to be extended to provide even more other abused women with accommodation. Linda and Nomsa, stated that, shelters, crisis centers and places of safety should be built in rural places. They believe that presently these centers are based in predominantly urban areas and townships. Most people from rural areas cannot afford to travel to these centers due to lack of funds. Linda also suggested that crisis centers should be built for the abused to cater for each unit/zone in black townships.

Dobash & Dobash (1992:60-61) state that the refuge centers often serve as a haven for women in distress, a place of respite or a last chance to escape oppressive or dangerous circumstances and/or a haven for those that are escaping cruel fathers or husbands or those without means of support.

#### 5.2.5.5 The Church

Lydia, Nomsa, Ncumisa, Pinkie as well as Linda believe that the Pastors should preach about family violence during their church service sermons. Linda believes that most people attend church services. Pinkie is of the opinion that Young Women Christian Movement could assist with awareness programs to curb domestic violence. Whereas, Linda believes

that Women Support Groups could be formed within the church and through other women's movements like Christian Women's League that will assist with awareness campaigns and also with the formation of support groups for battered.

An institute for Contextual Theology (1990:13-14) contends that the church must continue to take action inside and outside of the church itself against any form of violence, racism, discrimination or injustice. Encouragement and help like this from the churches would give our people some reason to face the future with hope. God in Jesus Christ being our hope.

#### 5.2.5.6 **Nurses and Doctors**

Ayanda suggests that nurses in clinics should report cases of abuse to the police, as matter of course. Thoko states that private doctors should cooperate with the abused and should also report those cases to the police.

Dobash & Dobash 1979 in Moshesh-Peta (1993:26-27) state that doctors may try and treat symptoms such as depression, anxiety and physical injuries and provide drugs for the emotional ones. Walker 1978 in Moshehsh-Peta (1993:27) comments that some women are too ashamed or frightened to confide in-family doctors. They prefer the anonymity of a large hospital emergency room. Some doctors do not question battered women about their physical injuries because they do not want to be involved in the court cases. Nevertheless, the doctors and nurses should not down play seriousness of the situation but should be compassionate to follow up the cases.

#### 5.2.5.7 Community Forums

Busi and Ncumisa claim that the Community Forums within the black residential areas, should use structures like the local residence committees for intervention during abuse. These structures should hold tribunal courts for the batterers, as they are readily and easily available within black communities.

#### 5.2.5.8 Unemployed Fathers

Zuki and Pinkie are of the opinion that the government should assist the families with unemployed battered women with a provision of a welfare maintenance grant. This would assist towards the education, and maintenance of those children from abusive relationships.

#### 5.2.5.9 Treatment/Therapy

Linda and Pinkie believe that the abusive partners should be sent for treatment and family therapy. Linda also cited the use of psychologists for therapy and counseling services. Dobash & Dobash (1992:215) state that there are thousands of para-professional counselors, therapeutically oriented clergy and other non-professional counselors, that offer various forms of therapy and counseling.

#### 5.2.5.10 Books and Story Publications

Linda cited that black women should be encouraged to tell and write stories and books about their experiences in abusive relationships. This

may help as their partners and men will be able to read and see how women in abusive relationships feel.

### 5.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the main themes that have emerged from the interviews and how this related to the literature.

The study indicates that the respondents endured physical as well as the emotional pain through their abusive partners. Some of the respondents have indicated that the batterer would swear at them, “by calling their names and shouting at them” (De Sousa 1991:14).

Some of the women indicated that their partners showed remorse after battery and some did not. Nevertheless, they stayed in these abusive relationships. Their period of enduring abuse ranged from one year to five years. The study indicated that the respondents stayed in these abusive relationships because they “love” their partners, they believed that they could change their personal circumstances and poor promises after they reconciled with them after battering. They believed violence would stop, some were unemployed and needed a shelter for their children. McKendrick & Hoffman (1990:258) states that the cycle of violence confuses battered woman. As after an acute or chronic battery the batterer shows regret and may even promise to seek help if the women demands so.

The findings of this study also indicate that all partners abused alcohol and/or would claim to be drunk during the abuse. Hyden in Riesman (1994:106), states that excessive use of alcohol is the key element in the

dynamics of wife battering, although it is debatable whether the male became violent because he is drunk, or whether he drank to reduce his inhibitions against violent behavior.

The study also indicated that personal networks like neighbors, family members, friends and relatives were the pillar of support for these black women within their communities.

The study showed that professional helpers although they provided assistance at times failed to be of meaningful help. The findings indicate a need for training and empowerment. Professional helpers also need skills on how best to handle these clients and/or cases of abuse. Naidoo (1992:87) states that battered women often seek legal and judicial services for assistance. They are unable to afford a lawyer or others are not aware of free legal aid services. Community education or awareness campaigns are still needed to assist black women in abusive relationships.

The prevention of Family Violence Act No. 133 of 1993 needs to be publicized within black communities and disadvantaged communities. In rural areas awareness programs and public lectures on domestic violence, and what the Family Violence Act entails need to be clearly explained to the level of understanding of everybody.

There is also a need for more shelters, more crisis centers to curb further abuse. These resource centers need to be built also in rural and disadvantaged areas where they could easily be accessible to black communities. A multi-disciplinary team would be of assistance in forming a one stop-over resource centers within these communities.

The respondents also indicated a need for a sensitive legal system, trained police officers and sensitive magistrates to the challenge of abuse. The findings also state that social workers should make follow-up home visit to monitor the abusive relationships. Doctors and nurses should notice and refer the cases of assault to the police. The church as an available resource within black communities should play a major role in “preaching” about abuse. Treatment and family therapy should be afforded both to the batterer, the battered and children in these relationships. Counseling can be provided by both professional and para-professionals that are skilled and sensitive to cases of abuse.

African women should be encouraged to utilize community structures, like support groups for the batterers and the battered.

Their voices need to be heard. They must be encouraged to tell their stories. To share their experiences of abuse and write books which could also be read. Abusive partners need to be enlightened about the pain that their loved ones endure during battery.

However, Vetten described South Africa’s history of domestic violence as a record of “cruelty, indifference and neglect, occasionally punctuated by “brief flashes of social and legal reforms (Vetten in Gifford 1998:12).

The next chapter will draw conclusions from these findings and also make recommendations.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Having taken into consideration the findings as outlined in the previous chapter, the following recommendations which are preventive in nature are suggested as follows:

##### **6.1.1 Prevalence of Violence on Black African Women**

The female population of South Africa is 15 507 390 of whom 75 percent are black (Addendum b 1997:3). Since violence against women is increasingly recognized as a crime and a violation of the human rights of women, the following suggestions are put forward:

- n** The state has committed itself to ensure the protection of women rights, and since South Africa is also a member of the community of nations, it must be committed to international human rights law and standards;
- n** The agencies that provide support services for all victims of gender-based violence, must provide a warm, receptive and sensitive environment with specially trained multi-disciplinary workers in rehabilitation and counseling services;
- n** The National Network on violence against women should use the trains, taxi-ranks and taxi drivers to disseminate information on violence against women and to inform the public about existing support services within the respective communities.

- n The various women organizations like, African National Congress Women's League, should strive for raising solidarity among South African women and launch more awareness programs nation wide to fight against women and child abuse.
- n The Media Committee like the South African Broadcasting Corporation, should promote programs on radios, television, newspapers, videos that provide negative coverage against women abuse.

### **6.1.2 The Legal System**

- n Police Stations, mainly in black areas must consist of trained Police men and women in crimes against women.
- n The Police must be well-conversant with the Family Violence Act, and what it entails and apply it relevantly.
- n The criminal justice system need to develop more of a supportive environment to motivate victims of crimes for reporting purposes.
- n Community policing, and witness protection schemes should be established and implemented.
- n The abused should be afforded a fair trial and justice must be done.

### **6.1.3 Women Support Centers and Shelters**

- n "One-Stop" multi-disciplinary service centers should be established in the disadvantaged and rural areas.
- n One-Stop service centers should provide medical counseling and psychological care. The abused should be accessible to the district surgeons in the centers.
- n Shelters should be established in rural areas, to assist abused women when they seek refuge.

n More women support Groups should be established, as they can be mobilized to improve the treatment of women victims within the communities and criminal justice systems.

#### **6.1.4 Programs for the Abuser**

n Rehabilitative programs should be enforced on the abusers. This can be done through the penal system which may refer the batterers for rehabilitation instead of imprisonment in some cases.

n Men involvement in awareness programs of crime against women must be initiated and supported.

n Men should be educated about the effects of both physical and emotional abuse.

#### **6.1.5 Programs for the Abused Women**

n The Prevention of Family Violence Act No. 133 of 1993 must be accessible to all sectors of the communities.

n The Act must be reviewed so as to accommodate those women who are unemployed, those who do not have a source of income, therefore, cannot afford the sheriff's fee.

n Support groups which are comprised of victims of crimes on women should be established and sustained.

n Educative programs on women and child abused should be initiated through awareness campaigns, school dramas, puppet shows, public address and through various existing women's organizations.

### **6.1.6 The Community Action Programs**

- n** The National Networks should be established both at national and provincial level to combat violence against women.
- n** To break the silence of women victims, the communities need to establish organizations and support centers for sharing experiences.
- n** Police training under the victim support scheme of the National Crime Prevention Strategy must also be extended to the Eastern Cape (Addendum a 1997:12).
- n** Non-governmental organizations should establish one-stop crisis centers that are located near black township and squatter camps. This will enable victims to receive help of Police Officers, welfare officers, doctors, nurses and psychologists in the same location.
- n** Community organizations should empower rural women by initiating economic independence projects and by raising their self-confidence and be aware of their rights.
- n** Through adult basic education programs, black women would receive skills training to lessen the level of illiteracy. Sewing groups, pottery, cooking, computer literacy, and basic education will empower women to become self-employed and viable to open labor market.
- n** It is through these efforts that women will obtain economic independence, as employment can be a source of empowerment for the abused women.
- n** There should be allocation of adequate funding within the government budget and mobilization of community resources for activities related to the elimination of violence against women.
- n** There should be a provision of telephone-crisis services, individual face to face counseling, legal advise and referrals. This can be achieved by

establishing more satellite branches of POWA in black townships. POWA is one of the most active and renowned South African non-governmental organization dealing with women victims of violence, POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse) is presently based in Johannesburg (Addendum a 1997:12).

- n Through these satellites POWA branches within the Eastern Cape region, workshops for prevention and educative purposes should be provided.
- n The NGO's should also provide court support programs where the abused women should be prepared for court proceedings by explaining the role of the magistrates and inter alia, through role plays.
- n Welfare organizations like NICRO (The National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders), should provide within the disadvantaged communities programs dealing with the rehabilitation of perpetrators.
- n Through the provision of social service visits to offenders in prisons, the families that have been exposed to battery will be assisted with the resocialization program after the sentence have been served so as to build reconstruction services to the whole family.

### **6.1.7 Gender Units**

- n The Department of Health and Welfare should develop in consultation with women's organizations, gender units and centers dealing with gender-violence.
- n The Health and Welfare departments should also display information on judicial and medic-legal resources and facilities that are available within the Eastern Cape Region.

- n** Service providers need also be aware of the traditional problem-solving mechanism and customary practices that are inherent within black communities. They should be aware of their modus operandi, be able to work with these structures without compromising the human rights and status of women.
- n** There should also be an adoption of appropriate measures, especially in the field of education, to change social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women. These will assist in the elimination of prejudices, customary practices and all other practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of sexes and on stereotyped roles for men and women.
- n** There should be mobilization of local communities to use gender-sensitive traditional and innovative methods of conflict resolution.
- n** The media must be encouraged to examine the impact of gender role stereotypes, including of commercial advertisements, which foster gender-based violence and inequalities, with a view of eliminating these negative images.
- n** It is through these educational and informative programs about violence against women, that will stimulate public debates and encourage awareness on these issues.
- n** The gender units could also work with governments, employers, trade unions, community and youth organizations, NGO's, in developing programs and procedures to eliminate sexual harassment, and other forms of violence against women.
- n** The unit should develop and provide counseling healing and support program for girls, and young women who have been involved in abusive relationships.
- n** The various role-players to combat abuse should also work in conjunction with existing traditional healers institutions. As most

African women irrespective of their level of literacy, tap on these existing resource centers when they are faced with personal and/or family problems, like abuse, incest, unemployment and other related issues.

- n** A trans-cultural therapy should be developed by both professional and para professional role players in order to assist with the issues of family abuse.
- n** There should be a gender violence call upon the South African government to address the cultural acceptance of gender-based violence as well as economic dependency, political, social and cultural disempowerment that render women vulnerable to violence and encumber their capacity to escape it (Cook 1994:143).

#### 6.1.8 **The Church**

- n** The church organizations should provide support and spiritual healing to people and families who are abused.
- n** Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), should provide support, spiritual healing and/or para-professional service to victims of abuse.
- n** Young Men Christian Association (UDODANA) should play a vital role by providing awareness programs on child and women abuse. They could also provide a “confession” scenario, spiritual healing, family counseling and individual face to face counseling to the batterers.
- n** The Mother’s Union (UMANYANO) should provide a counseling and a therapeutic atmosphere to the abused women. It is through these church services and awareness programs that will enable black women to open up and speak publicly and share their experiences of abuse.
- n** The Sunday schools, could be utilized, in educating the youth, children about love, about christianity, about peace within our families and

communities. It is through these sermons, and role plays, that children will respect each other without gender-stereotypes. The children will be able to talk about abuse within their families, let their small voices be heard, and be provided with love, hope and spiritual healing.

n The pastors should utilize the church by providing relevant sermons that propagates against abuse within the family. Through love and peace sermons, families will be afforded spiritually. As the Bible says (1 Corinthians 13:4-13, New International Version of the Holy Bible):

Love is patient, love is kind...  
it is not rude..., it is not easily  
angered it keeps no records of wrongs.  
Every relationship is suppose to be based  
on faith, hope and love. But the greatest  
of these is love.

## 6.2 **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This research was carried out on as an exploratory research. However, the researcher has succeeded in highlighting some of the dilemmas and painful experiences that African women are faced with in violent relationships.

### 6.2.1 **The Human Rights of Women**

One major factor that could be focused on is on how human rights for women can be recognized and protected. “For when the violation of

women's rights is not tolerated and often condoned in the home, on the streets, in the media and in war, then children learn early that the human rights of any group can be violated with impunity. If the human rights of women - half of humanity - are belittled, then all human rights are undermined (Bunch 1997:1).

### 6.2.2 **Social Work Indigenous Theory**

Another area that has potential for further research is to focus on the derivation of a social worker indigenous theory that will be relevant in explicating the abuse of African women.

### 6.2.3 **Black Women Writings**

It would also be of interest to hear the voices of African women, through folklore stories, writings and documenting their battering experiences. Through publicly sharing these experiences, communities will be informed and possibly support services for both batterers and the abused will be established and expanded on the disadvantaged communities (Nolde 1991:217).

### 6.2.4 **Gender-Related Research**

Focus on gender-related research, data and statistics on the incidence of violence against women, may assist in putting appropriate programs in place and to monitor resulting changes.

### 6.3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the researcher found shared themes regarding the battering experiences of African women in violent relationships. The researcher is of the opinion that women abuse is rife among the African women, and is still treated with secrecy within a culture that is of patriarchal system, with male dominance and subordination of women as a way of life.

Although the sample population of the study was small and the findings not generalisable, the importance of these findings can neither be overlooked nor disregarded. Women abuse on African woman is also a challenge to future social work practices in South Africa.

As an exploratory research project the study has highlighted certain factors some of which need further attention.

This study has also managed to focus on the experiences of African women in violent relationship, but what about the side of the story of the abuser?

If violence is the opposite of love, what is then love? Does love have to manifest itself in violence? Will violence ever stop? Will violated women ever find solutions to help themselves in their situation? Do they rely on government intervention strategies? Are the intervention strategies and policies effective? These are some of the questions, that the researcher think, need further investigation.

However, although this study does not come up with ready solutions. The researcher appreciates the confidences that were shared with the respondents, with the hope that, these confidences will make the researcher to dwell even more deeper into the ramifications and dynamics of violence on women. Through this effort, one may be able to come up with constructive intervention strategies, policies and social work indigenous theory. As more women SPEAK OUT realization of the aforementioned aspiration, will be manifested.

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## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Kindly be informed that the interview will be conducted with confidentiality, in a non-censorious environment, and you will be informed about the results as a participant and as a research unit.

Your anonymity is also assured.

	<b>THEMES</b>	<b>PROMPTS</b>
1. PERSONAL DETAILS	<p>Since we are meeting for the first time, can you please tell me about yourself?</p> <p>Can you please tell me, how would you describe your partner?</p>	<p>Age - woman man</p> <p>Marital status employment</p> <p>Children Relationship</p>
2.HISTORY OF VIOLENCE	<p>Can you please explain to me, how long has the battery been going on?</p> <p>When did it actually stop?</p>	<p>Start Trigger Leaving the abusive Relationship The Aftermath</p>
3.SOURCES OF SUPPORT	<p>Can you please tell me, about what kind of help did you need during battery?</p> <p>Having gone through this experience, can you please explain to me, who gave you support from the community, during this threatening period?</p>	<p>Professional Service Effectiveness Service for the batterer.</p> <p>Personal Network Friends Family Neighbors</p>

	Please tell me about the legal people, what kind of help did you get from them?	Family Violence Act The Police The Magistrate
4.AVAILABLE RESOURCES	<p>Since support centers are not usually publicized, tell me, how did you come to know about the Masimanyane Woman Support Center?</p> <p>Can you explain to me, what do you think can be done to improve services to battered women?</p>	<p>Sources of information.</p> <p>Legal system Police Welfare Services Medical Services Nursing Services Psychological Serv. Shelters</p>

Thank you very much for sharing your experience with me, is there anything else that you would like to say?

**THANK YOU**

## **CASE HISTORY 1**

### **PUMLA**

Pumla is 38 and has five children. She is married but is in separation to the husband. She is unemployed. The husband Thabo is 46 years old and is working.

**a) Can you please explain to me, how long has the battery been going on?**

I can explain by saying, I am married, but I have an unhappy relationship. I am being abused by my husband. He is also abusing the children (pause). This abuse started in 1994, by physically beating us, chasing us out of the house. Even when we bought groceries, he would take it to his girlfriend. During that time, he evacuated us from the house. He then stayed with his girlfriend in our house.

**b) The description of your husband and the nature or your relationship at the time.**

My husband is 46 years old and was a fine person at first. This abuse started in 1994. He did not want his children and their mother. He took his clothes from the house. The first thing that he took was the TV set and video machine. When he took the TV, we fought. I got the TV but the video machine was never returned even to date.

**c) How did the battery stop?**

It stopped when we got separated. We separated in August 1995.

**d) Your husband's behavior the day or after the physical abuse**

Even on the following day, he would wake up looking the same, he would get drunk, but you could see that he wasn't "that" drunk, but is still prepared to do "anything that will lead us to fight and lead us not to sleep in the house.

**e) What help did you need during battery?**

The only help that I sought for, was that I went to Masimanyane (Women Support Centre). That is where I got help and things got better. When I went there, he started contributing some money, which he never contributed before.

I also went to Mr. Xosa (pseudonym). He said he was going to call him. When I went there again, he told me he never came.

**f) What is the role of Mr. Xosa?**

Mr. Xosa is the Head of the Police, he is not a station commander. I used to go to the police station, but I eventually stopped, because I saw that I won't be getting assistance, because he also works there (the husband).

They would tell me (the police) when I went to report him at work, that “Where have I ever seen a policeman being arrested?!”

**g) Support within the community (Personal Network)**

People who were and are still of assistance to me, are my neighbors. Even last year my children were bought Christmas clothes by them. They even bought food for us. Even now, they take care of us. At my home, my relatives wanted me to come back home. But I knew that I couldn't because there are lots of other children at home, and even mine are quite a lot. We will end up quarreling there at home because of my children. My in-laws were never concerned about our fights with my husband.

Even when I go to visit my in-laws, I would find my husband there with his girlfriend. Therefore, it is clear, that she is acceptable. The only assistance I got was from Masimanyane. I got a pamphlet from a neighbor, who also gave me money to go there.

**h) Have you ever been told about the Prevention of the Family Violence Act.**

I have not as yet met anybody, who explained it to me. I have just met with the Magistrate, through the assistance of Masimanyane. My husband was not making regular payments (maintenance). I went to Magistrate's office for advice, the Magistrate then sent out the police to go and fetch him, so he would explain why he did not contribute the money. I was also evacuated from the house by my husband, he then stayed with his girlfriend. I then went to the Magistrate office. I was advised to go and seek for a lawyer. I then went to Miss Ned (pseudonym) (i.e. legal aid

office) in Bisho. After discussions with Miss Ned, I was told that on the following Tuesday, I must go and wait at the Police Station. A truck is going to come and fetch me there with my five children. We were then taken to the house and the police told them that they should evacuate, as I got a court interdict from Bisho.

**i) What could be done to improve services for battered women?**

Personally, I feel, if a person's money could be deducted from his salary for the payment of maintenance, that will prevent arguments. But as long as that person brings contributions by himself, he will only contribute, when he feels he wants to. I don't have any hope for assistance from the police. I did also go to the social workers. My husband was called in. he became rude, kicking chairs and refusing to talk. The social workers told me to go back home and stay with "them". I told them, "he will kill me" if I can go and stay". The only help that I am looking forward to is that of Masimanyane. "My husband has also stopped paying for the house bond, he says he won't pay for the house, in which he is not staying. I am still staying here just because there is nobody who has come to say, 'I should leave, so that he could stay', I wish I could get a place of my own, so that I could stay with my children."

## **CASE HISTORY 2**

### **Linda**

Linda is 42 and has four children. She is divorced and is employed. The husband Lizo is 48 years old and is employed. Linda was born in the rural area, in the Transkei and has been married to the Amabhele clan. She belongs to the Radebe clan.

**a) Can you please explain to me, how long has the battery been going on?**

My husband started beating me in 1990. I can remember, it was after the birth of my second child. My husband used to beat me using his fists and sometimes his hands. It would be worse when he was drunk, he would be shouting at me, beat me, use vulgar language and would sometimes push and kick the door if locked. I remember one day, when he pushed the door and it broke and I had to buy another one. He sometimes would beat me to an extent that I had “blue-eyes”, and it would be difficult for me to go to work, and I was working as a nurse.

**b) The description of your husband and the nature of your relationship at the time.**

My husband is a quiet and nice person, when he is not drunk, in so much that many people in my location, took time to accept that he could sometimes beat me. Although he is a teacher, he behaves like an ‘animal’ when he is drunk. He would shout at the children, calling them “witches”. When I try to defend my children, he would start beating me. I can say,

we stayed happily with my husband for three years, but things changed after the birth of my second child. As from then, we never lived happily. He did not beat me everyday, but only when he was drunk. At times he would beat me to an extent of having back pains. It would become worse during the end of the month, when I would be asking for money to buy food and clothes for the children. He would tell me that he has no money. He would shout at me when I asked for school fees. At times he would even push me in front of the children.

**c) How did the battery stop**

I use to leave him, and go to my parent's home. But, he kept on coming to persuade me to go back to our house. My parents also told me, that marriage is always like that and I have to go back to my husband. But when I discovered that my husband was having an extra-marital affair in the same area we were staying in. This caused conflict in our marriage. I then decided to go back to my parent's house, he pleaded me for forgiveness. Even at home they asked me to leave him. In 1995 I decided to leave him, because this kept going on.

**d) Your husband's behavior the day or after the physical abuse**

He would be regretful, and would ask me to forgive him, for his wrong doings. I would feel sorry for him. One could see that he was really sorry. But later on, he would start getting drunk and the beating will start again. In 1995. I decided to leave with the children and find a place of my own. I left him with everything including the house. I just took my clothes and those of the children. That was in 1995. In 1996 I then decided to file for a divorce.

**e) What help did you need during battery?**

Talking to other people about my problem helped. I agree that my parents and family used to help me, but I was helped most by my friends. My sisters were also of great assistance. They used to tell him that they would also beat him, if he continues to ill treat me. I also reported my husband at the Magistrates office, and he was called and reprimanded. But what helped me most was the divorce. But the very divorce caused me problems, because I could not stop thinking about it, to an extent I thought of discussing the whole issue with a psychologist. Bit I didn't have money, because at work we have no medical aid. Even at church during Mother's Union meetings, I would talk about my problem. I used also to go to the police. They used to tell me that I should forgive him. They also told me that they do not deal with cases of "husband and wife". I went to them many a times, they told me that they don't want to be involved in "lovers quarrels" because "they fight today and love each other tomorrow" and that the police were fed up with such things.

**f) Have you ever been told about the Family Violence Act during the abuse?**

I just heard about that recently after the divorce with my husband I heard about it from other women. During our times it was not there, I don't think the very act was existing because I never heard about it.

**g) Support within the community (Personal Network)**

My family and his mother discussed the issue and my husband was called and reprimanded by both families.

**h) How did you come to know about the women support center?**

I was told by a friend who also got assistance from Masimanyane. She advised me to go there for assistance, because I was always thinking about the battering episode and this depressed me. When I got there, I was able to talk about my problem. Even now, I have heard about a similar place at Cecilia Makiwane Hospital.

**i) What could be done to improve services for battered women?**

The Police would get training in all police stations instead of telling us that they don't accept cases for lovers. They should be taught how to take statements. This could help. The court interdict is now also of great assistance, because I can see even man get scared of it. because even when men beat us, they are dependent on us. I even left mine with our house, other women will never do that. The issue of interdict scares them now. Even at Masimanyane, the way in which they converse with us, makes you feel at ease. 'People don't laugh at you'. They give us some advice. You know sisi, you feel so acceptable! I was even offered a cup of tea when I first came there.

Unlike in the hospital, nurses are tired, and overworked. They at times shout at you and are rushing to take patients into the doctors examination rooms. They even shout at you in front of other people. But here at the

center you get an individual attention. But what concerns me most, is that these centers should also be available in rural areas. As I know quite a number of people who are abused by their partners. Not all people are able to come to this center. It would be much better if each unit at Mdanstane, like Unit 1,2 and 3 and so on, could have their own centers. Some other people don't even have taxi-fare to go to these centers. Even in the church, I know of certain women who are abused by their partners, but are afraid to speak out. If in the church, even the pastors could assist by preparing sermons on family violence, this could help. The social worker should conduct home visits to families who complain about abuse. Group of women to support each other could help, like the women's League, Zenzele group, Sewing Groups and others.

Shelters should also be built, but it must not be places where people should stay for a very long time. People should pay for violence and abuse to stop. I also heard about the efforts of men to stop abuse. There was a march in Bloemfontein on the 22 November 1997. I am grateful to meet people like you, this will also encourage other women to write stories, books and share their experience about abuse .. may be this would help.

### **CASE HISTORY 3**

#### **LYDIA**

Lydia is 29 years old and has two children. She is married and she is working. The husband Litha is 33 years and he is also working.

**a) Can you please tell me about yourself?**

I am a married woman with two children. I was born in Tsholomnqa Emakhumeni (clan name). I am married to uJola (clan name), who originally come from Stutterheim.

**b) Can you please explain to me, how long has the battery been going on?**

My husband started beating me in 1994. We used to stay together before we got married. He likes drinking (alcohol) and when he is drunk he used to misbehave but not to the extent of beating me. This beating started after the birth of our first child, 1994. He would beat me and I had to run to the neighbors with the child.

In many cases our conflict would be caused by money matters. He likes complaining that I am misusing his money. He would give me his money when he is still in his sober senses, but when he gets drunk, he would demand his money back and by that time I would have used it to buy groceries for the family. I used to get so scared and nervous, because I know that he would start swearing at me, and the children would start to cry. When I try to explain to him what I have done with the money, he shoved me, slapped and kicked me in the body and at my face. At times

he would beat the children because they usually cried when arguments started.

**c) How would you describe your husband?**

He is that type of a person who doesn't get to bed and sleep when he is drunk. Instead he would beat me together with my children.

**d) How did the partner behave after battering?**

He would sometimes show signs of regret although, one could still see signs of "silliness". At times he would plead for forgiveness. I would accept his apologies only to find later, that he will start provoking me. I remember one day, his friends came into our house, and he insisted that I should give him money that he gave me to buy food for the children. You know, he wanted to buy liquor for his friends. When I tried to reason with him, he slapped me in front of them and forcefully took the money from my purse.

**e) What kind of help did you need during battery?**

I was advised by my neighbor to go and report my problem to the social workers. The social worker wrote a letter calling me and my husband to come to the office. The social worker wanted to find out what makes him to become a problem when he is drunk. He refused to attend the first appointment, they wrote him a second letter. He then went to the social worker and apologized for misbehaving claiming that he was under the influence of liquor. When he started beating me again, I went to the police. The Police didn't care about my problems, instead they told me to

go back to the social workers, the police told me that this was a private matter between “two lovers” and they did not want to interfere.

**f) What kind of support did you get from the community?**

I used to run to my neighbor who was quite an old lady. She would call my husband, tried to reason with him. But when I saw he “did not” want to listen, I then decided to report him to his parents. They also tried their best to reason with him, but he continued beating me when he was drunk. It was then that I decided to go home (parent’s home). My parents arranged for a family meeting. Even when his parents were there at the meeting, but they could not reach a solution, because the real problem was for my husband to stop drinking. I left him in 1996.

**g) Were you told about the existence of Prevention of the Family Violence Act?**

No, I never heard anything about that. I was only told by my family and neighbors about Masimanyane. That it was a place where I could get help. I got advice on how to handle the problem of abuse. I was advised to go to the magistrate’s office for children support. They also told me that my husband could get help from the hospital for his drinking problem. They also accompanied me to the Magistrates office. My husband is now receiving treatment from the hospital and is paying child support.

**h) What can be done to improve services to black battered women?**

The police should be trained on how best to handle our cases, because they neglect our cases. Besides, I wish that social workers could sometimes visit our families. The Magistrates office should have ways of making the money (maintenance) to be deducted from our husband's salaries because you don't have money to move up and down and to maintain the children. Places like Masimanyane need to be extended (building) because there is a lot of help that we are getting there. There should be temporal places for staying so that we don't become frustrated with the children. It is one of the reasons that make us tolerate the bad things done by our husbands to us. We are afraid of not having a place to stay and money for buying food for our children. I would like that during church gatherings, places that can be of help be announced, so that people don't get "confused" including the children when times of crisis come.

## **CASE HISTORY 4**

### **NOMSA**

Nomsa is 38, married with four children. She is also employed. The husband, Zola, is 42 and is not working.

#### **a) Can you please tell me about yourself?**

I live here at Tsholomnqa, but I am working in East London. I am working as a domestic worker. The white woman I am working for advised me to divorce my husband, because of the way he was abusing me.

#### **b) How long has the battery been going on?**

It started in 1995. We usually start fighting after he has been given his wages from the contractors (building) during fort nights. He does not bring money home, yet he knows that “there is little that I am earning from my work”. He would find the children crying because they are hungry. When I ask for money from him, he would not reply, but I could notice that he was drunk. He would start swearing at me that is when conflict would start!

I reported my problem to the white woman I am working for and she advised me to leave my husband in the house. So I left in 1996.

**c) How would you described your husband?**

When we first met, with my husband, he was a very nice person and was working in Johannesburg. But he was retrenched, and had to get a job with the building contractors. I should think that my being experiencing physical beatings started then because he was drinking too much, as he was not working.” Although he is not working full time, he gets piece jobs from the contractors and gets paid fortnightly.

**d) How did the partner behave after battery?**

He would sleep for the whole day and would refuse to speak to anybody. But if I ask about the money again, he would shout at me even if he is not drunk. But the whole thing started when he failed to bring money home.

**e) What kind of help did you need during battery?**

My boss, advised me to go and ask for assistance from the social workers. To go and report my problem to the police. Indeed, I went to the police. They referred me to the Magistrate’s office. The social workers sent me to a place called Masimanyane. My husband was given a paper by the Magistrate. It was written in English and was telling him to stop beating me. But the social worker told me that the choice was mine. I could go to a safe place together with my children or to divorce my husband. But they explained all these options to and how to start the whole procedure.

**f) What kind of support did you get from the community?**

He has his family here, I did report him several times but all that did not help. I do not want to tell lies, his parents used to call him and have serious talks with him. Even my friends at church, I used to present my problems to them. I do not have any parents, they both died. I have only an elder and a younger sister and my aunt works in Johannesburg.

**g) Were you told about the existence of the Prevention of the Family Violence Act?**

They told me about it, “but people like us, who are not well educated can easily forget”. Because my husband was beating me so much, I even had a scar in one of my breasts. But at Masimanyane Centre, we were assisted on how to handle our problems. We are empowered at Masimanyane because I was advised to apply for children maintenance at the Magistrates office. However, there is little that I am getting out of the money that he is working for. My children are staying with a relative and I have to support them.

**h) What can be done to improve services for black battered women?**

I would advise that even in places, rural like this, should have safety homes, or else there should be more places like Masimanyane. So that, people like me who are abused by their partners can know where to go for help.

I wish also to suggest that the police, and the church gatherings, should talk about the way black women are being handled by their partners. These women also have a right to live. I just want to thank you and the people of Masimanyane for having empathy with us.

## **CASE HISTORY 5**

### **AYANDA**

Ayanda is 30, not married and has two children. She is also working and co-habiting with her partner. Bantu, is 35 years and is working.

**a) Can you please explain to me, how long has the battery been going on?**

He started changing his behavior by January 1993, after the birth of my first child. According to our plans were supposed to have been married by December, the previous year. I could see that he was totally changed. He started having other love affairs. He did not bring any money at home, which thing he used to do. He also started to be angry with me, when I queried things at the house. He first beat me with his fist on my eye, and I had a “blue-eye”. The squabble continued when he was drunk and would end up with physical beating, which caused blue scars on my body. I then left him in 1996.

**b) How can you describe your partner?**

When I first met him, he was not drinking liquor. But he started to abuse liquor, he then continued drinking more and more. He continued his beatings more especially when he was drunk. My body was full of scars.

**c) How did your partner behave after battering?**

He used to apologize on the following day and would defend his behavior by saying that he was drunk and under the influence of liquor. I would accept his apologies because I loved him.

**d) What kind of help did you need during battery?**

I went to report to the Police so that he could be arrested. What I discovered was that he would be arrested today, only to be released the following day. I went to report him to the social workers. I even went to report him at the Magistrates office, because he would go and fetch me by “force” at my common home when I ran there for safety. The police used to reprimand him after that he would apologize. The social workers tried to talk to him but he would still continue with the abuse.

**e) What kind of support did you receive from the community?**

I used to run to my neighbors or to my home but because my father has died he used to come and force me to go back to his place. I told his sister who was not staying far from us and I also told his mother who is staying down at Bhongo. I was fed-up with him, and him beating me, because he was beating me almost everyday. I, therefore decided to go to my sister’s friend whom he did not know. My sister’s friend was working as a domestic worker in East London. It was not only myself who was affected by this, my children also were victims because I was moving up and down with them.

**f) Were you told about the existence of the Prevention of Family Violence Act?**

I heard about it when I went to see the social workers. They explained it to my boyfriend, they also explained it to me. But there is something that the act did for me.

**g) How did you come to know about Masimanyane Women Support Center?**

I heard about this place from the social workers. I then decided to go and seek assistance.

**h) What can be done to improve services for black battered women?**

I would advise that black women must ask for help whilst the abuse is still starting. They must not live on the hope that their partners will change. Our partners should stop abusing us. The women, I would suggest that, they should go and ask for support from the social workers. They should report the case to the nurses at the clinics and should not hide anything from them. The police should take our cases seriously unlike what I experienced, when my partner would be arrested in the morning, in the afternoon - he is out. If they do it that way, then our partners will kill us. If the Magistrate can apply the Act, this abuse can come on an end. If they consider this act seriously, then our partners will know that we are protected. Social workers must form awareness campaigns together with the people from the centers. Through these services Social workers are able to empower black women. But what I think is important now, it is to get support from other people.

## **CASE HISTORY 6**

### **THOKO**

Thoko is 28 with three children. She is unemployed. The husband Langa is 33 years old and is working.

#### **a) Can you please tell me, how long has the battery been going on?**

This started in 1995. My husband would come home drunk. Because of his aggressive behavior, we knew that at any time he could start a fight. He used to be stubborn and would not listen to anybody's opinions except his own. In 1996 he started to physically beat me. He would not listen to me, and he did not maintain the family you could not query a thing, he like to pick up an argument that would end' up to a fight.

#### **b) How can you describe your partner?**

He was a good person when I first met him. we could discuss pertinent issues within the house. Even when we had problems we could discuss them peacefully without involving our parents. He was a very loving person.

#### **c) How did your partner behave after the battery?**

He would ask for forgiveness, and promise not to hit me again. He would get drunk ad start a fight.

**d) What kind of help did you need during battery?**

I went to the social workers to report the matter. He would be reprimanded. He would pretend to be sorry, but at the end of the week, when he gets paid the fights will start. I decided to go to the police. They refused to be involved in my case. They told me that women are usually persuaded by their husband and would come and close the case. The police only advised me to go to the social workers. The social worker told my husband that he must contribute towards the maintenance of the children and we were then referred to the Magistrates office. A maintenance order was issued for my partner at the Magistrates office and partner at the Magistrates office and he was warned against battering me.

**e) What kind of support did you receive from the community?**

My friends and relatives were very supportive. I used to go and discuss my problems with them. The elderly people would call him into a tribunal court and the matter would be discussed. He always apologized when reprimanded and we would be reconciled. But when he gets drunk again he would start insulting me and would even tell me that my friends are my “teachers”. They are influential in my life, and they are the one’s who are breaking our relationship. The neighbor was always there for me. They would give me and the children overnight accommodation, food and at times taxi fare when things were bad at home. They gave me a shoulder to cry on. My partner would shout at them and would blame them for interfering in our relationship. My neighbors really had hard times because of my abusive partner.

**f) Were you told about the existence of the Family Violence Act?**

Somebody did mention the Act to me. But because I am illiterate I could not understand how the Act was suppose to be used. It is even worse, I could not even discuss the Act with him as he never wanted to listen to anything that I said.

**g) How did you come to know about Masimanyane Women Support Center?**

My neighbor invited me one day and introduced to her sister who had a similar problem and was assisted at the Masimanyane. After discussing my problem with them, she advised me to go with her to the center. That's how I got to the center.

**h) What can be done to improve services for black battered women?**

The police should be educated about the Family Violence Act, because they seem to think that our problems of abuse are problems of lovers. Through their negative attitude we find ourselves without protection. The medical practitioner also need to assist us in the procedure of processing the medical forms, which are used as court records during the hearing of our abuse case. The justice Department should play its role and not always refer us to the social workers when we have problems. They must also assist us with the maintenance order.

## **CASE HISTORY 7**

### **BUSI**

Busi is 42 years old and she is married and has four children. She is also working. Her partner, Brongo is 48 years old and is employed. Busi originally comes from a rural area. She is married to a Tola family (clan name) and she is a Bhele (clan name).

#### **a) Can you please tell me, how long has the battery been going on?**

We have been staying together for quite a number of years and we had good relations. He started to abuse alcohol, especially during weekends, and we would fight and he would beat me and pretend the following day as if he could not remember it. He even once beat me to an extent I had “eighteen stitches” on my head. That is when I decided to divorce him. It was worse after he got his salary, he would go and get drunk, you could not question anything, otherwise it will end up in beating. The ten year old child even said to me that “we have to go to the grandfather’s home and stay because his father would kill me.” I would not tolerate to stay with a person who beat me everyday because I would not know what would happen if I die.

#### **b) How would you describe your partner?**

My husband is a good person. We had a good relationship for a number of years. But things changed when he started to abuse alcohol.

**c) How did your partner behave the day after the battering?**

He would pretend as if he cannot remember what happened the previous day, and claim that he was drunk. Now that we are in separation, he usually ask the children to come and visit him and they come back from him without any complaints.

**d) What kind of help did you need during battery?**

When I got head injuries, I went to the local clinic and was transferred to a hospital. The staff at the hospital wanted me to report the case to the police. He was going to be arrested for using an axe on my head. But when I got to the police station I decided to go back home and forgive him.

**e) What kind of help did you get from the community?**

The neighbor also helped me, because they would hear my younger child crying whilst my husband is beating me. They would come and persuade him to stop beating me. I also went to report the matter to my family, my sister told me to make a decision as she was worried that I might get killed. I even went to the local residence committee to report him. A tribunal court was called and he was reprimanded. After some time the whole situation started, he got drunk and we would quarrel and he will end up beating me. I then decided there and then, to pack my things and I left with my children. The children are relieved now, because whenever I was beaten, they would be holding unto my clothes, crying.

**f) How did you come to know about the Masimanyane Women Support Center?**

I heard about the place in a radio talk show. I then decided to go and ask for assistance as I was abuse by my partner. They help me, because I had talks with them about my problem and they also gave me some advise and they were supportive.

**g) Have you been told about the existence of the Prevention of the Family Violence Act?**

They told me about the Act and how it helps at the center.

**h) What can be done to improve services for black battered women?**

The Residence Committees should talk to our husbands about abuse, so that we can stay in harmony. Because in our community, these are the first people we talked to about our problems. They are the people who refer your cases to the police. The Magistrates office should assist us, with the maintenance order.

## **CASE HISTORY 8**

### **ZUKI**

Zuki is 44 years old, married with three children. She is unemployed, the partner, Sizwe is 48 years old and is working.

#### **a) Can you please tell me how long has the battering been going on?**

I cannot remember the exact time, what I know is that it was in 1995. He would come home drunk, find me relaxing at home, he would start the conflict through a trivial thing. He would not listen to me when I try to reason with him. He prefers to be the only person to talk. For instance, he would sometimes arrive late at home, and it might happen that some of his friends came to see him earlier on, and I would have forgotten to tell him. He would shout at me, at times in front of his friends. At times he would beat me in front of his friends. They could not even stop him, because they were also afraid of him. I think, he likes beating me even if there is not much that I have done.

#### **b) How would you describe your partner?**

My husband is quite a nice person. But when he is drunk he becomes a nuisance. He can be stubborn at times, he shouts at me even in front of friends.

**c) How did your partner behave after the battering?**

He would look ashamed, try make jokes with me, and ask for forgiveness. But as I have said, he can be quite a nice person. But becomes aggressive when he is drunk.

**d) What kind of help did you need during battery?**

The only place that helped me, was at Masimanyane Centre. I was advised by a friend who was assisted by the center. When I got there, I was taken to a social worker where we discussed my problem. The social worker accompanied me to the Justice department. The Magistrate office helped me with child support.

**e) What kind of support did you get from the community?**

The neighbors are still helping me a lot. They talked to my husband, and reprimanded him. I even reported him to his parents, who told me that they would come and talk to their son and they never did. But my sister-in-law who stays quite near my place has been very helpful at times. I run to her place and lock myself in. she has been very supportive and now that I receive help at the center, I know how to control the situation and I am still seeing my partner, but I don't know, maybe I will come back to him for the sake of the children, they need a home.

**f) Have you been told about the existence of the Prevention of Family Violence Act?**

No. what is that all about? I mean what Act. Nobody told me anything.

**g) What can be done to improve services for black battered women?**

The Magistrates office should continue helping us with the maintenance order. The police should assist us and protect us. The government should provide us with the grants. These grants will help our children. I am referring to unemployed father and at time both the mother and the father are unemployed. Under these conditions we ask for whatever type of assistance that the government can provide.

## **CASE HISTORY 9**

### **NCUMISA**

Ncumisa is 30. She is not married and has two children. She is also working. The partner, Zolile, is 35 years old and is employed. Ncumisa was born in a rural area, uMamsukwini (clan name) and her boyfriend is a Jola (clan name).

#### **a) Can you please tell me how long has the battery been going on?**

I can say that I am staying with my boyfriend and we have two children. This started in 1994, he started accusing me of having a boyfriend. He would come home drunk from the shebeens and he would start a quarrel with these allegations. One time I got fed up and I went to fetch the person whom he was accusing me of having an affair with, to prove my innocence. This guy came and told him that he never proposed love to me. After that he complained that whilst he is away from the house, I am sleeping around. What makes me angry about this, all these accusations starts at the end of the month, when he gets paid, then he would start accusing me of having a boyfriend. I have asked him many times to leave me with my children after all the house belongs to me. He refuses and claims that I want him to leave because of this other boyfriend. He started to beat me. At one time, he physically beat me until I lost four of my front teeth.

**b) How should you describe your partner?**

He is a nice person if not drunk. But when he is drunk, he would not listen to anything that I discuss with him. I even went to report him to my brother, who accompanied me to go and talk to him. At least he seemed to be changing from his behavior but he is very jealous and always feels that I have a boyfriend.

**c) How did your partner behave the day after the battering?**

He will show remorse, plead for forgiveness. But most of all he is very possessive. He always looks at other male friends suspiciously when they talk to me. I would forgive him, feel sorry for him, but I could not take in anymore, when he broke my teeth.

**d) What kind of help did you need during battery?**

I used to go to the police to report the assault. At one point he was arrested for one day and was released the following day with a warning. The day I broke my teeth I was taken to the hospital. After the doctor has treated me, he referred me to the social worker. The social worker referred me to the police and to the Magistrates office. The Police took a statement but I felt sorry for him. I did not want him to be arrested but only to be warned. At the Magistrates office I was assisted with the maintenance order.

**e) What kind of help did you get from the community?**

I went to report him to his family. They told him that if he continues to misbehave and fail to support the children, he must rather take his belongings from my house and leave. The neighbors were always there for me, that's why I am still alive even today.

**f) How did you come to know about the Masimanyane Women Support Center?**

A friend of mine advised me to go to Masimanyane Center. The social worker accompanied me to the police station and to the Magistrates office. That is how I managed to get the money for support, hence, my children are still schooling today. They also spoke to my boyfriend, but after that he is less aggressive.

**g) Have you been told about the existence of the Prevention of Family Violence Act?**

No, I never heard about it.

**h) What can be done to improve services for black battered women?**

The police need to look at our problems and must stop saying that they do not want to interfere with problems of lovers. Social workers need to visit our homes to see that our children are well taken care of. The pastors should visit us, pray for us and talk to our partners about the way they handle us. The "comrades" i.e. community forum need to talk to our partners and warn them against abuse.

## **CASE HISTORY 10**

### **PINKIE**

Pinkie is 34 old years. She is married with four children and she is unemployed. The partner, Langa, is 37 years old and he is working.

#### **a) Can you tell me how long has the battery going on?**

I do not know where to start. But I met my husband when we were still in school. we come from the same village in the rural areas. I got pregnant, and later on we got married. When I was pregnant with my fourth child, he started to have an extra marital affair. He would not sleep at home. During weekends I would last see him on Friday morning when he goes to work and then see him on Sunday evenings. He would come home drunk. I was so young, and so confused I did not know how to handle this problem. One night when I confronted him about this behavior, she slapped and kicked me. I was so shocked and disappointed, I never expected such reaction from him. The most hurting part was the verbal insults that troubled me, because that is also the year that my father and my brother died in a tragic accident. I could not tell anybody about my problem, I was so ashamed. People and friends started to notice, because he was moving publicly with his girlfriend busy entertaining her. The most depressing thing, I was not working, with young children and a baby. At times, I would cry throughout the night and pray that God should just take me, maybe if I die I will rest in peace. My main concern was my kids. I remember one day, he came early from work, I was not expecting him, food was not ready. He kicked a row and started kicking me, I was so scared of him, and the children were also screaming. He then took a bread

knife as I was trying to prepare food for him and tried to cut my throat. I managed to grab the knife but it cut through my fingers. He used to beat me, at times I would lose consciousness. One day after he physically beat me, he banged me on the wall, I cannot remember what happened after that, but the only thing that I recall when I woke up, was that my clothes were wet. Apparently, I fainted my oldest child poured a bucket of cold water to revive me. You know, my kids were crying, they thought I was dead, and my husband just left me lying on the floor. He did not care. The kids were so scared. What made me cry, was not the injuries that I have sustained, but was the small voices that pleaded to me to leave for grandmother's place, because they feared that when he comes back, he might kill me. I felt I could not take it anymore, no matter how much I loved him. I could not allow to die and leave my children with a useless father like him.

**b) How would you describe your partner?**

He was a very loving person, very polite and a gentleman. But what surprises me is the manner in which he could pretend. Behind all that politeness, he was very cruel, short tempered and he could use vulgar language as if he was reading all the insults from a book. But in front of the public eye he was a perfect gentleman and respectable person.

**c) How did your partner behave the day after the battery?**

He would sleep all day long, and he used to keep so quiet, because we feared him. My children would stay in their room, away from him. You know, I used to have palpitations. But he would pretend as if nothing happened, no explanation, no remorse, nothing. He expected me to

behave normally and even laugh at his jokes. I have never seen such cruelty. At some other incidents he would apologize and claim to have been drunk. When things were normal he was so loving, I would forgive him, I believed that maybe he will change.

**d) What kind of help did you need during battery?**

I do not know. This was just like a bad dream. I think most of all, I need a person to confide in. I never sought any professional help. I was so ashamed. But I became ill, suffering from palpitations, sleeplessness and continuous headaches. I went to see my family doctor, he knew about my problem but he never interfered. I was diagnosed with Hypertension caused by stress. My second child started to show aggressive behavior at school, and we were called by the teacher. My husband refused to attend the meeting. The doctor referred me to a social worker. The social worker was very supportive, she told me that I must make a decision about my life and the future. But how could I. I did not have a source of income, how will I take care of my children, where will I stay, with whom? During church service I used to cry and pray to God to give me strength and answers to my problems. I could not confide to anyone, because my husband was well respected even in the church.

**e) What kind of help did you receive from the community?**

I kept my problem as a secret. I was so ashamed. Until one time, he hit me with an ashtray and had to go to the doctor and came back with stitches. The stitches were itching and I needed somebody to help me, to clean up the wound. I went to my neighbor's house and asked for her assistance. I told her the whole story. You know, I cried as I was relating

this story. She could not help it, but cry with me. After helping me, she phoned a friend, who told me about the Center and after that I had a confidante. At one stage I reported the matter to my in-laws. They told me that they did not want to be involved as my husband was a very aggressive person and short-tempered. My mother and brother pleaded with me to come home and leave my husband, but I could not make a decision. However, on the day when he banged my head against the wall, I took a taxi and went straight to my mother. She phoned a friend with a truck. They accompanied me to the house and I took everything that belonged to me and never looked back.

**f) How did you come to know about the Masimanyane Women Support Center?**

From my neighbor. She phoned a friend who later came and gave me a pamphlet. I got money from my friend and then I went to the center. I was so warmly welcomed. I met other women who were also abused by their partners, we held talks, shared our experiences. But most of all the love and support and advice have made me a better woman. I still love my husband very much, he visits the children, and he is paying maintenance, but I cannot trust him anymore. He has let me down in so many ways. What I can never understand, is the hatred that he used to portray when physically beating me, the verbal insults and the cruelty. I do not believe he can ever change, and I feel I should have left him earlier and not waited until I have four children.

**g) Have you been told about the existence of the Prevention of Family Violence Act?**

No, but even if I would have heard about it, I was afraid of having him arrested. I did not have money. Mostly, I did not want to make him hate me more or me lose him.

**h) What can be done to improve services for black battered women?**

We need mostly places where we could go and talk about our problems freely. We need more support centers. We need shelters or safety houses where we could run with our kids to and be freely accommodated. We need support from the community structures, like our families, friends, in-laws and relatives. We need a shoulder to cry on. The church should provide such a service, because most of us are regular church goers. Public awareness programs that condemns abuse, even n radios. The doctors should advise us on how to handle our abuse problems. But mostly, I feel much better now that I am at Masimanyane, I am still looking for a job, and I know one day I will be able to get on. But most of all, my family has been very supportive, they help me with the kids and their father is paying maintenance.