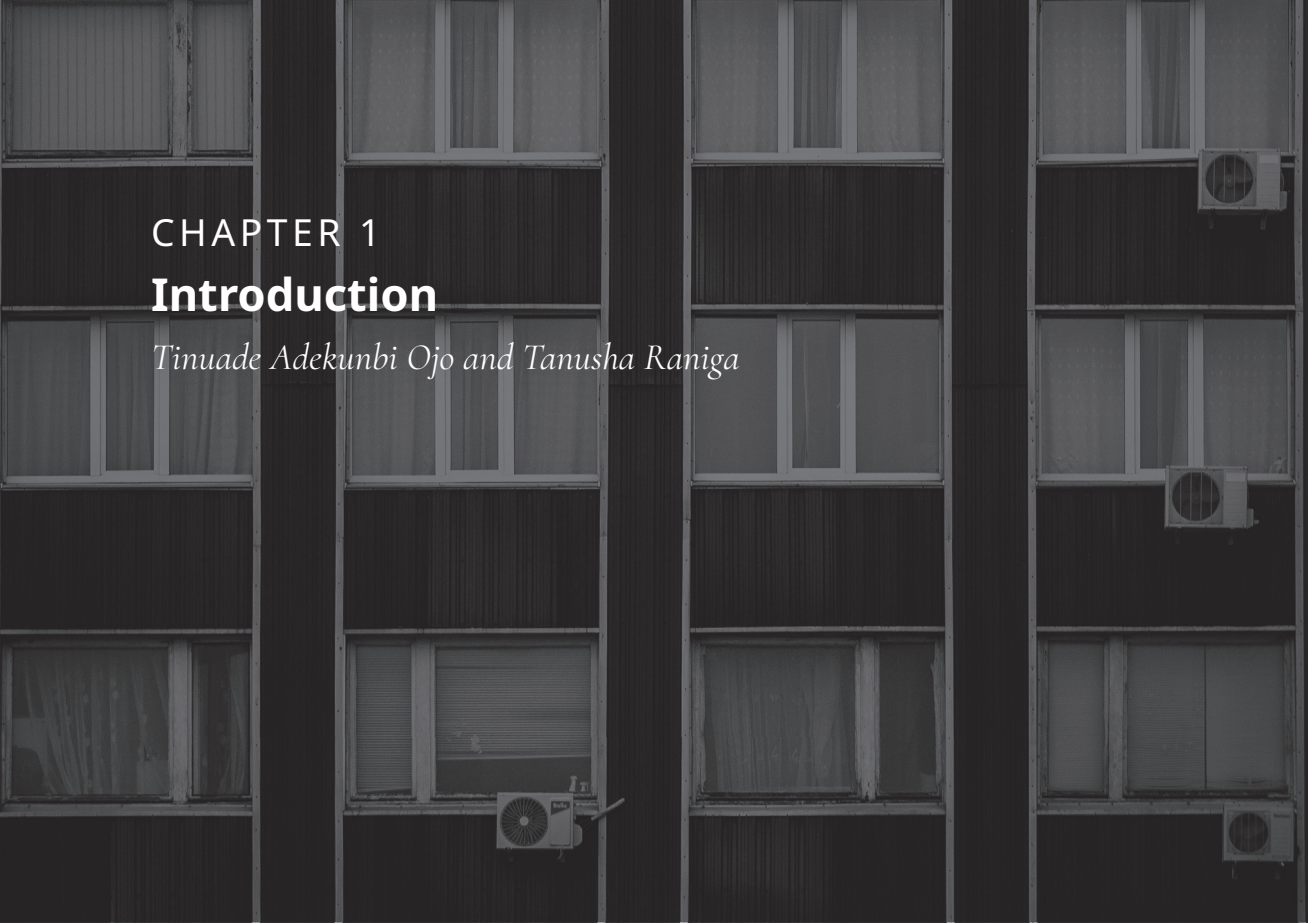




CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Tinuade Adekunbi Ojo and Tanusha Raniga

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of gender-based violence (GBV) in African contexts, with South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria, as well as other African countries, serving as case studies. It delves into the prevalence of GBV in these countries, contributing factors, and responses to the issue. The chapter highlights a comparative insight into the nuances of GBV in African country settings. Hence the chapter showcases a comparative analysis by synthesising the key findings and providing a detailed overview of GBV in Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa. Through this structure, the chapter unravels the complexities of GBV within African societies by emphasising the importance of tailored interventions and policy reforms to combat GBV effectively. The findings reveal that these countries are struggling to address GBV. Although GBV can be directed towards both men and women, most victims are women. Gender-role expectations and unequal power relationships between men and women are the underlying factors that contribute to the problem. The authors suggest that increasing GBV education and awareness through school curricula, community-based programmes, and media campaigns can challenge societal norms and raise consciousness about this social development challenge.

Furthermore, strengthening psychosocial support services for survivors, including therapeutic counselling, access to legal aid, the establishment of protective shelters, and the implementation of economic empowerment programmes, can provide novel solutions for survivors to seek help and break free from abusive situations.

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated and amplified existing disparities within nations and across global boundaries. A stark reminder of the deep interconnectedness of the world's human population (Dlamini, 2021). Gender-based violence, stemming from gender inequalities and detrimental masculine norms, has been declared a second pandemic in contemporary times across societies to varying degrees. The resolution demands commitment and intervention, such as the global response against COVID-19. Amidst the extensive government-imposed lockdowns in reaction to the pandemic, there was a significant upsurge in instances of GBV (UN Women, 2016). Proactive measures aimed at safeguarding marginalised groups, particularly women and girls, from the concurrent crisis of GBV are urgently needed. The intersection of societal marginalisation and discrimination has left specific groups of women notably vulnerable to the dual challenges posed by GBV and the COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing these intersecting global social development and health challenges is crucial to eradicating gender inequality (Dlamini, 2021). The purpose of this chapter is to unravel the complexities of GBV within African countries, highlighting the importance of tailored interventions and policy reforms to combat GBV effectively. This chapter adopted qualitative secondary research, which begins with the gender construct, gender-based violence in Africa and factors contributing to GBV in African countries. The chapter concludes with a call for increasing education and awareness about GBV through the school curriculum, community-based programmes and media campaigns that can challenge societal norms and raise consciousness about this social development issue. Additionally, this chapter sheds light on the effectiveness and shortcomings of interventions, policies, and legal frameworks aimed at curbing GBV within the case-study African nations. It emphasises the need for culturally sensitive, context-specific approaches to address GBV and advocates for gender equality and human rights.

Gender-based violence represents a significant global public health and social development challenge, imposing substantial barriers to human well-being,

particularly in developing nations (Muluneh et al., 2020). Its repercussions extend beyond individual health, significantly impacting the psychosocial and economic well-being of women and their children (García-Moreno & Pallitto, 2013; Raniga, 2022). GBV transcends geographic borders, race, class and gender, exhibiting diverse manifestations and frequencies across cultural, socio-economic, and religious spectrums, evident in both the Global North and South (USAID et al., 2010; World Bank Group, 2019). Often described as a ‘silent epidemic’ or an obscured facet, GBV remains largely underreported due to the multifaceted barriers victims experience (WHO & Pan American Health Organization, 2012). These barriers encompass fear of social stigma, financial constraints, limited awareness of available support services, apprehension of reprisal, inadequate law enforcement response, and the normalisation of violence within society. Consequently, this underreporting complicates accurate assessments of GBV prevalence (Palermo et al., 2014).

Estimates reveal that roughly 30% of women have encountered some form of GBV since the age of 15 (García-Moreno & Pallitto, 2013). A multi-country study conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) among women of reproductive age found varying prevalence rates of intimate partner violence (IPV), ranging from 15% in urban settings in Japan to a staggering 71% in provincial areas in Ethiopia (García-Moreno & Pallitto, 2013). Evidence highlights the disproportionate prevalence of this issue in developing nations, particularly in regions with lower socio-economic status and restricted educational access, as seen in SSA countries (Abrahams et al., 2014; Zellers & Zellers, 2018).

The fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women, striving for global freedom from IPV by 2030 while acknowledging the entrenched nature and profound impacts of GBV (Raniga, 2023). Achieving Goal 5 demands comprehensive efforts from social development practitioners and stakeholders worldwide (García-Moreno & Amin, 2016). Accurate comprehension of GBV prevalence is essential for governmental and non-governmental organisations to craft pertinent and effective policies and transformative intervention responses.

Despite the magnitude of this challenge, the bulk of available empirical evidence predominantly focuses on developed nations, with scant evidence concentrated on African nations (García-Moreno & Pallitto, 2013; Palermo et al., 2014). Relying solely on evidence from developed contexts for devising preventive and mitigative strategies poses significant limitations (Palermo et al., 2014). Furthermore, studies focusing on SSA countries have largely been limited to localised investigations within specific provinces or districts, potentially inflating

estimated GBV prevalence rates (García-Moreno et al., 2006). These localised studies lack generalisability to wider populations, leading many SSA nations to overlook the eradication of GBV as a critical human rights violation with profound immediate and long-term consequences (Uthman et al., 2009). Consequently, there remains a dearth of comprehensive studies systematically examining various forms of GBV among women aged 15 to 19 years in SSA countries beyond these localised inquiries.

Gender as a construct

Gender is a social construct that distinguishes people based on roles, behaviours, identities, and expectations that society and culture associate with being male or female. It is a social and psychological construct that can vary across cultures and over time. Gender has historically been conceptualised in terms of a binary, what it means to be a woman and a man, and the related stereotypical behaviours, norms, and expectations conceptualised by society (Muehlenhard & Peterson, 2011; Raniga & Makolomakwe, 2024). Gender is how people identify themselves and, most importantly, how they interact with the rest of society. Gender also influences how governmental institutions engage with people and formulate policies (Ibourk & Elouaourti, 2023). Gender is an inherently hierarchical conception and has evolved in the past three decades to recognise the LGBTQIA+ community. However, for the purpose of this chapter, the authors make conscious reference to the deep-seated inequalities that women have had to endure across the social, political, and economic spheres of life and society.

Over the years, gender has shaped distinctive roles and responsibilities in society, with men often holding dominant roles in various institutions (Daly & Reed, 2022). The world was constructed to grant men decision-making positions and power for centuries. This led to the treatment of all other genders as second-class citizens, especially women, who were denied access to education and the ability to work, vote, and own land and property. Most African states have worked diligently over the years to address issues of gender stereotypes and gender inequality, recognising that economies cannot grow and prosper without resolving these issues (Daly & Reed, 2022).

However, despite the efforts made to date, women and children remain some of the most vulnerable and ill-treated citizens in the world. Gender inequality has had the most impact on women because they are locked out of opportunities for empowerment (UNICEF, 2023). Women live under the

harshest circumstances and are impacted more frequently by changing variables such as economic crises or war, and social and economic exclusion (Upadhyay, 2020). Data suggest that women are victims of some of the most violent crimes in society, but their issues are condemned to the slowest response rates by governments (UNICEF, 2020). In Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa, some of the most violent places for women and children to live, violence against women is a norm and a daily occurrence. In South Africa, in particular, a notable common phenomenon in gender-based violence cases is the lack of urgency on the part of governmental institutions and policymakers to address this urgent issue.

Gender-based violence in Africa

Gender-based violence (GBV) encompasses various forms of violence directed at an individual based on their gender, predominantly affecting women and girls but also impacting men and boys. This violence is rooted in societal norms, power imbalances, and discrimination based on gender (Graaff, 2021). It includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm inflicted upon individuals due to their gender identity. GBV is a pervasive issue globally, taking multifaceted forms and persisting across cultural, social, and economic contexts (Graaff, 2021). The scope of GBV extends beyond individual acts of violence, encompassing systemic and structural inequalities that perpetuate and normalise such behaviours (Fawole, 2014). It involves domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and femicide that violate human rights and hinder individual and societal well-being (Weis & Haldane, 2018).

Understanding and addressing GBV in African countries is crucial due to the prevalence and multifaceted nature of this social development issue (Abebe et al., 2021). African societies are not homogeneous and grapple with diverse cultural and socio-economic effects of colonialism and political landscapes that intersect with gender dynamics, contributing to the perpetuation of GBV (Graaff, 2021). The study of GBV in Africa offers insights into the complexities of its manifestations, which are rooted in historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors unique to the continent. Examining GBV in Africa offers an opportunity to unravel the interplay between tradition, modernity, and socio-political transformations that shape gender relations.

This chapter comprehensively explores gender-based violence in African contexts, specifically focusing on Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa

as case studies. It delves into the prevalence, contributing factors, and responses to GBV in these countries, aiming to offer comparative insights into the nuances of GBV within diverse African settings. Furthermore, the authors unpack the complexities of GBV within these African nation-states, emphasising the importance of tailored interventions and policy reforms to combat GBV effectively. The trends and factors contributing to GBV in these four countries differ greatly in their socio-economic and cultural contexts.

Gender-based violence in Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa is at an all-time high due to different cultural norms and traditions, intersecting with class and race. It is characterised by the physical, sexual, mental, and economic abuse of a person, usually women and children (UN Women, 2016). Africa still faces issues of female genital mutilation, abductions, and child marriages (Pirtle, 2023). Gender-based violence is a social development issue that affects all parts of social life and exists on a spectrum, from harmful internalised stereotypes and ways of thinking to aggressive crimes like trafficking, murder, mutilation, and everything in between (Pirtle, 2023). Gender-based violence robs women of dignity and a sense of safety in their communities, requiring immediate action from governments (Nabukeera, 2021).

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought the world to a stand still, forcing everyone to be confined to their homes for roughly a year (Belkacemi, 2022). The drastic measures of lockdown regulations, minimal social contact, and the compulsory use of masks were the most effective solutions to reducing the spread of the coronavirus. Across various nation-states around the globe, the lockdown policies were a difficult reality to accept (Altman, 2020). There were several reasons why the lockdown policy was seen as harmful, but the biggest concern women's groups and activists had with the lockdown policies was the lack of gender sensitivity and the increased risks to women's safety. Most activists were of the view that COVID-19 policies lacked a gendered perspective. The lockdown policy alone doubled the number of cases of gender-based violence in South Africa, and activists believe that the numbers could be higher if reporting were more efficient.

Types of GBV

Gender-based violence (GBV) encompasses various forms of violence directed at individuals based on their gender identity. Understanding these types of violence is crucial to addressing and combating this widespread social problem.

Physical violence

Physical violence manifests as any form of bodily harm or injury inflicted on an individual (Jurka et al., 2020). It includes a spectrum of actions ranging from physical assault, such as beating, hitting, and kicking, to more severe cases involving the use of weapons, resulting in severe physical harm or even death. The impact of physical violence extends beyond immediate injuries, often leading to long-term health consequences and psychological trauma for the survivor (Jurka et al., 2020).

Sexual violence

This involves non-consensual sexual acts or behaviours forced upon an individual (Brown & Walklate, 2011). This category encompasses a range of offences, including rape, sexual assault, forced prostitution, and coerced sexual activities. The consequences of sexual violence are multifaceted, encompassing physical injuries, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, and severe emotional distress, undermining the survivor's mental well-being and sense of safety (Brown & Walklate, 2011).

Psychological and emotional violence

This form of violence targets an individual's mental and emotional well-being. It includes a range of behaviours, such as intimidation, threats, verbal abuse, humiliation, and manipulation, aimed at exerting control or inflicting emotional harm (Cairo, 2020). Psychological violence can have profound and lasting effects, leading to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and a sense of powerlessness, impacting the survivor's overall quality of life (Cairo, 2020).

Economic violence

This involves controlling an individual's financial resources, restricting access to financial support, or sabotaging economic independence (Postmus et al., 2020). By exerting control over finances, perpetrators perpetuate dependency and vulnerability and hinder the survivor's ability to seek help or escape the abusive situation. This form of violence often traps individuals in abusive relationships, making it difficult for them to break free (Postmus et al., 2020).

Harmful traditional practices

Harmful traditional practices encompass cultural actions that cause physical or psychological harm, primarily affecting women and girls (John et al., 2021).

Practices like female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, honour killings, and other culturally sanctioned acts perpetuate gender inequality and reinforce power imbalances. These practices have profound societal implications, posing significant risks to the physical and mental well-being of the affected individuals (John et al., 2021).

Addressing GBV requires comprehensive legal, social, and cultural strategies. Effective interventions that involve legislative measures, awareness campaigns, community engagement, and providing support services for survivors are required. Moreover, addressing the root causes of gender inequality and challenging societal norms that perpetuate violence is crucial to preventing and eradicating GBV. Understanding the multifaceted nature of GBV is fundamental to developing novel solutions, transformative interventions and much-needed resources to protect individuals and communities from the scourge of gender-based violence. Creating a safer and more equitable society for all genders requires a concerted effort from various stakeholders, including governments, civil society organisations, communities, and social development practitioners.

Prevalence and incidence rates in Africa

Africa faces significant challenges related to GBV. The rates vary across regions and countries due to diverse socio-cultural contexts, making it challenging to obtain precise statistics (Keen et al., 2020). However, several studies and reports provide insights into the prevalence.

Gender-based violence (GBV) in Africa is a complex and pervasive issue, encompassing various forms of violence that significantly impact individuals and communities (John et al., 2021). Understanding the prevalence and incidence rates across different themes of GBV is crucial to addressing and mitigating this widespread social development problem. Studies indicate a distressing prevalence of domestic violence in Africa, particularly against women. Research estimates that a substantial percentage of women have encountered physical or sexual violence from intimate partners. In some countries, prevalence rates range from 25% to 50% or even higher (WHO, 2021b). However, these statistics might not fully encapsulate the extent of the issue due to underreporting and cultural factors that normalise such violence within intimate relationships (WHO, 2021a).

Furthermore, incidence rates of sexual violence, including rape and assault, remain alarmingly high in various African countries (Dartnall &

Jewkes, 2013). Conflict-affected and post-conflict regions often witness a surge in incidents of sexual violence, exacerbating an already grave situation. These regions become hotspots for sexual violence due to breakdowns in societal structures, impunity, and the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013). Despite efforts to address this issue, comprehensive data collection and reporting mechanisms are often hindered by social stigma and fear of reprisal.

Moreover, prevalence rates of harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilation (FGM) vary significantly across African countries and regions. Some areas report shockingly high rates, with estimates reaching up to 140 million among women and girls (UNICEF, 2022). Furthermore, a total of 130 million girl-child marriages have been reported, with more than 40 million girl and women survivors of both practices. (UNICEF, 2022). The persistence of such practices is rooted in cultural norms and societal expectations, making them challenging to eradicate despite advocacy efforts and legal prohibitions.

In addition, the underreporting of GBV remains a significant challenge in Africa. Various factors contribute to this issue, including social stigma surrounding victims of violence, fear of reprisal from perpetrators, inadequate legal frameworks to protect survivors, and a societal acceptance of violence against women (Palermo et al., 2014). The normalisation of GBV within communities and the lack of trust in law enforcement or judicial systems further deters survivors from reporting incidents, leading to a significant gap between actual incidents and reported cases (Palermo et al., 2014).

Addressing the prevalence and underreporting of GBV in Africa necessitates multifaceted approaches (Cullen, 2020). Strengthening legal frameworks, enhancing support services for survivors, fostering community awareness and education, and challenging cultural norms that perpetuate violence are critical steps. It's imperative to prioritise survivor-centred approaches, psychosocial support, and awareness campaigns to encourage reporting through safe and confidential channels and provide comprehensive support systems to break the cycle of violence. Additionally, efforts should focus on collecting accurate and comprehensive data to effectively inform policies, interventions, the disbursement of funds, and resource allocation. Collaborative efforts involving governments, civil society organisations, communities, and international agencies are essential to combat GBV effectively in Africa and create safer environments for all individuals.

Factors contributing to GBV in African countries

GBV in African countries is a complex issue deeply rooted in socio-cultural, economic, and political factors (Graaff, 2021). Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires comprehensive strategies that involve legislative reforms, community engagement, education, psychosocial support, and empowerment initiatives tailored to local contexts. Understanding the types, prevalence, and contributing factors of GBV is crucial in formulating effective interventions aimed at eradicating this pervasive human rights violation. The prevalence of GBV in African countries is a multifaceted issue stemming from interconnected factors deeply ingrained within societal institutional structures. Understanding these factors is pivotal in comprehending the complexities and devising effective strategies to combat this pervasive problem.

Societal structures in many African countries are underpinned by deeply ingrained patriarchal norms that prioritise male dominance and control. These norms perpetuate power imbalances and contribute significantly to GBV (Sharoni & Klocke, 2019). Traditional gender roles often relegate women to subordinate positions, fostering an environment where violence against them is normalised and justified.

In addition, economic inequalities, poverty, and unequal access to education and resources exacerbate vulnerabilities, particularly for women and marginalised groups (Raniga, 2022). Limited economic opportunities force women into situations where they are financially dependent on others, increasing their susceptibility to violence and exploitation (Salawu et al., 2022). Another challenge is the weak implementation and enforcement of laws protecting against GBV, which creates an environment of impunity for perpetrators. Despite the existence of legal frameworks, inadequacies in law enforcement, insufficient training of officials, and a lack of access to justice prevent effective prosecution and deter survivors from seeking legal redress.

As argued earlier, traditional practices, cultural beliefs, and societal attitudes that normalise violence against women exacerbate the prevalence of GBV. Practices such as early and forced marriages, FGM and the perpetuation of gender stereotypes contribute to cultures where violence against women is accepted or justified (UNICEF, 2022). Furthermore, countries experiencing civil strife, conflict, and political instability tend to witness an increase in incidents of GBV (Salawu et al., 2022). Violence against women becomes pervasive, and perpetrators operate with impunity due to the collapse of societal structures,

the erosion of justice systems and, human rights, and the prioritisation of power and dominance (UNICEF, 2022).

Addressing the prevalence of GBV in African countries necessitates a comprehensive approach that tackles these interlinked factors. Efforts should focus on challenging patriarchal norms by promoting gender equality, empowering women economically, and providing education to change societal attitudes towards these binary gender roles and violence. Moreover, strengthening legal frameworks and law enforcement mechanisms, ensuring access to justice for survivors, and providing psychosocial support services are crucial steps. Culturally sensitive interventions that engage individuals, groups and communities, challenge harmful practices, and advocate for gender-equitable norms are essential for shifting societal attitudes that reinforce acceptance and perpetuation of GBV. In conflict-affected regions, interventions should prioritise protection mechanisms for women and girls, including safe spaces, psychosocial support, and efforts to prevent sexual violence as a weapon of war. Collaborative efforts involving governments, civil society organisations, communities, and international bodies are essential to effectively address the multifaceted nature of GBV in African countries. This chapter provides insight the legislative frameworks, policies and interventions adopted by the governments of Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa.

Overview of GBV in African countries

Nigeria

Nigeria grapples with a significant prevalence of GBV, impacting the lives of women and girls across the country. This multifaceted issue encompasses various forms, such as physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence, as well as harmful traditional practices (Obagboye & James, 2022). Studies indicate high rates of domestic violence, with a substantial number of women experiencing physical or sexual abuse from intimate partners (Obagboye, 2021). Sexual violence, including rape and assault, remains prevalent and often underreported due to stigma, fear, and a lack of support mechanisms. Harmful traditional practices persist, including FGM, forced marriage, and honour-related violence (Obagboye & James, 2022). GBV continues to increase, largely due to underreporting, which is noted as one of the persistent challenges that stems from patriarchy embedded in societal norms, fear of repercussions, and inadequate support systems for victims

(Obagboye, 2021). As a result, reported statistics likely underestimate the true prevalence of GBV (Obagboye, 2021).

Several factors contribute to GBV in Nigeria and other African nations, including socio-economic factors involving economic disparities, poverty, and limited access to resources. Women's economic dependency often exacerbates their vulnerability to violence. Cultural norms, deeply ingrained in male hegemony, perpetuate gender inequality and reinforce unequal power dynamics. It has been found that cultural practices often condone or justify violence against women, contributing to the perpetuation of GBV. In terms of legal framework, Nigeria has legislation addressing GBV, including the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2015. However, challenges persist in enforcing these laws due to inadequate implementation, weak judicial systems, and limited access to justice for victims (Izzi & Umunna, 2020).

The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) of 2015 criminalises various forms of GBV and provides protection for victims (Izzi & Umunna, 2020). Additionally, the National Gender Policy aims to promote gender equality and address GBV through advocacy and awareness programmes. However, with the multi-ethnic, cultural and religious nature of Nigeria, it is challenging to address women's issues. In terms of non-governmental interventions, several non-governmental organisations play a pivotal role in addressing GBV in Nigeria. Organisations such as the Women's Consortium of Nigeria, Project Alert on Violence Against Women, and Stand to End Rape (STER) engage in advocacy, awareness campaigns, victim support services, and policy advocacy to combat GBV (Izzi & Umunna, 2020).

In Nigeria, GBV is a complex issue influenced by various socio-cultural, economic, and legal factors. While governmental efforts are in place, through legislation and policies, enforcement and implementation challenges persist. For instance, the multi-ethnic, -religious, and culturally diverse nature of Nigeria makes law enforcement particularly challenging. Non-governmental organisations significantly contribute to addressing GBV through advocacy, support services, and community engagement. Tackling GBV in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach involving strengthened legal enforcement, socio-cultural reforms, economic empowerment, and robust support systems for victims.

Kenya

According to Decker et al. (2022), GBV prevalence in Kenya precedes the advent of COVID-19. Statistically, approximately 27.2% of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) between the ages of 15 and 24 were reported to have

experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) within the preceding 12 months (Decker et al., 2022). Like its African counterparts, COVID-19 seems to have intensified GBV in Kenya, resulting in women experiencing a heightened sense of insecurity in their own homes. Reports received indicated a significant surge in domestic violence hotline calls, with a staggering 100% increase observed between February and June 2020 (Decker et al., 2022).

Recent research has also highlighted deteriorating relationship quality due to COVID-19 restrictions, which has increased the risk of IPV. Notably, our study stands as the first examination of GBV experiences among AGYW during the COVID-19 era in Kenya, shedding light on the prevalence and nature of violence within this demographic group. For instance, in Kenya, the prevalence of GBV is deeply rooted in socio-cultural norms, inequalities, and a lack of effective legal enforcement mechanisms. Socio-economic disparities, patriarchal structures, and inadequate access to education and economic opportunities contribute to the perpetuation of GBV across various strata of society.

It is essential to note that efforts to combat GBV in Kenya necessitate a comprehensive approach that encompasses societal transformation, legislative reforms, and robust support systems. Due to weak legislation, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has been supporting Kenya in reforming the police, developing robust conflict management structures, and building the capacities of institutions working around these issues. Enhancing awareness, promoting gender equality, strengthening legal frameworks, and providing accessible support services are crucial in addressing the country's multifaceted challenges posed by GBV.

The societal pressures at play often lead to the stigmatisation and shaming of young individuals involved in premarital relationships, particularly those of a sexual nature, further impeding their ability to seek assistance. Decker et al. (2022) report on research reflecting a significant rise in public awareness and normalisation of support services during the COVID-19 pandemic. As awareness and utilisation of local support systems continue to grow, there is a pressing need to communicate their accessibility to adolescent girls and young women while overcoming potential barriers to care, such as stigma.

The global and Kenyan recognition of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic has opened a policy window for meaningful prevention and response. The 2010 Constitution of Kenya safeguards the rights of women, men, boys and girls and empowers Kenyans whose freedoms have been infringed upon to take such matters to court. Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta pledged an unprecedented

investment of US\$23 million by 2022, with an additional US\$50 million by 2026, to address GBV (Decker et al., 2022). Furthermore, the government established a policy framework to combat GBV comprehensively, outlining strategies for prevention, protection, and support services for survivors. The policy addresses root causes, promotes gender equality, and ensures justice for victims (John et al., 2021). Consequently, the government established specialised units within police stations dedicated to handling GBV cases. These units offer specialised training to law enforcement officers, improving their response to GBV cases. Additionally, they provide a safe space for survivors to report incidents and receive immediate assistance.

While these governmental initiatives signify progress in addressing GBV, challenges persist in effectively implementing and enforcing these policies. Issues such as resource constraints, insufficient training and funding, and gaps in coordination among agencies hinder the full realisation of the impact of these interventions. In addition, non-governmental organisations such as the Gender Violence Recovery Centre (GVRC) and the Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW) have provided support services for GBV survivors. They offer counselling, medical support, legal aid, and rehabilitation programmes for survivors. The GVRC also conducts outreach programmes to raise GBV awareness and promote prevention strategies. At the same time, COVAW has actively engaged in advocacy, research, and community-based interventions to combat GBV. Despite commendable efforts from governmental and non-governmental institutions, sustained commitment, resource allocation, and stronger collaboration among stakeholders are crucial to effectively addressing the complex and pervasive issue of GBV in Kenya.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia also faces a considerable challenge concerning GBV, encompassing various forms such as physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence. GBV is prevalent across the country's diverse socio-economic, cultural, and geographic contexts (Muche et al., 2017). The aftermath of the conflict that erupted in Ethiopia's Tigray region in November 2020 stemmed from longstanding tensions between the federal government and the regional administration of Tigray and was characterised by particularly dire levels of GBV (Fisseha et al., 2023). The Tigray conflict precipitated a significant humanitarian crisis in which initial reports have highlighted that Tigrayan women and girls have been subjected to systematic and deliberate war-related sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (Fisseha et al., 2023). These atrocious acts include severe

violence, such as gang rapes and the insertion of foreign objects into victims' reproductive organs. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), between November 2020 and June 2021, 2,204 survivors sought healthcare services for sexual violence across Tigray (Fisseha et al., 2023). This figure is likely an underestimation due to various factors, including limited access to healthcare, fear of stigma among victims, and the non-functionality of many health facilities. The conflict has resulted in the destruction or uncertain status of approximately 70% of health institutions, significantly impeding healthcare provision. However, the government provided protection and psychosocial support to women, such as counselling services.

In Ethiopia, approximately 68% of married women disclosed experiencing some form of physical or sexual violence perpetrated by their husbands or partners (Muche et al., 2021). Despite showing a decline from the observed rate in 2004, which stood at 81%, the prevalence of violence remained notably high. Various studies conducted across different regions of Ethiopia consistently report alarmingly high rates of gender-based violence, with prevalence figures ranging from 31% to 76.5% in different parts of the country (Muche et al., 2017).

Economic disparities, poverty, and limited access to resources contribute significantly to the vulnerability of women and girls to GBV in Ethiopia. Lack of economic empowerment and financial dependency on perpetrators exacerbate the cycle of violence and hinder survivors' ability to seek help or escape abusive situations (Fisseha et al., 2023). In addition, deeply entrenched patriarchal norms and societal attitudes perpetuate gender inequalities in Ethiopia, where traditional gender roles and beliefs often justify the subjugation and mistreatment of women, reinforcing power imbalances and normalising violence against them.

However, Ethiopia has legislation against GBV, including the Criminal Code and Family Law, that aims at protecting victims and prosecuting perpetrators (Salemot & Birhanu, 2021). However, challenges in implementation, enforcement, and access to justice persist due to factors such as limited resources, inadequate legal literacy, and societal stigmatisation. The Ethiopian government has implemented policies and laws addressing GBV, such as the National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices. Specialised units within law enforcement agencies and legal aid services support survivors and aim to prosecute offenders (Salemot & Birhanu, 2021).

Non-governmental organisations, such as the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) and the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE), are actively engaged in legal aid, conducting awareness campaigns, and offering support services to survivors (Feyissa, 2020). The NGOs focus

on preventing GBV, supporting victims, advocating for change, and engaging with the community. Addressing the human rights abuses that continue to occur against women in Ethiopia is particularly complex. Women leaders and civil society organisations must be proactive to prevent GBV, as there is always a breakdown in social support systems, making it difficult to access lifesaving gender-based violence response services during and after a conflict in Ethiopia.

South Africa

In the realm of reported rape and sexual violence, South Africa continues to occupy a leading position in international rankings. These deeply entrenched patterns of sexual violence trace their roots to the historical legacies of oppression perpetuated by colonialism, apartheid, and the Cold War (Enaifoghe et al., 2021). Notably, these distressing trends persisted even after the transition to democracy in 1994. In fact, in the last three decades, concerns have remained that the prevalence of gender-based violence might be on the rise due to a reactionary response against the constitutionally mandated gender equality of South African women.

Like numerous countries worldwide during its time, Apartheid South Africa harboured pronounced gender inequalities alongside legislatively enforced racial disparities. Efforts towards achieving gender parity in South Africa since 1994 have involved significant legislative strides affirming women's rights and equality. For instance, the Constitution's Bill of Rights explicitly prohibits gender-based discrimination, guaranteeing equal access to rights for all individuals. However, contemporary statistics paint a starkly contrasting reality. A 2022 report by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) highlights persistent and substantial gender disparities, emphasising that "there are still worrying disparities in the situation and circumstances of women and men" (StatsSA, 2022). Hence, despite legislative endeavours, gender inequality remains pervasive across all demographic groups in South Africa.

The persistently alarming and unacceptable rate of abuse, violations, and even fatalities among women in South Africa remains a cause for grave concern. Tragically, during the pandemic many fell victim to violence at the hands of individuals they knew, trusted and with whom they often had close relationships (Ndlovu et al., 2021). It is important to note that the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Act was not operational during the pandemic. This act was signed into law on 24 May, 2024 (LawLibrary, 2024). Recent reporting over a three-month period

revealed a notable double-digit percentage surge in murder, attempted murder, and assault causing grievous bodily harm (GBH) against women (LawLibrary, 2024). Shockingly, over 13,000 women were subjected to assault with the intent to cause severe harm between July and September 2022 (SAPS, 2022). During this reporting period, 1,277 women became victims of attempted murder, and the lives of 989 women were tragically cut short (SAPS, 2022).

Suggestions have been made that certain cultures within South Africa exhibit more prevalent gender inequality (Madiba & Ngwenya, 2017). However, various scholars have observed that this issue transcends national cultural and racial lines (Pirtle, 2023). Gender roles are highly structured and unequal across all South African cultural traditions (Pirtle, 2023). Madiba and Ngwenya (2017) add that patriarchy represents the only genuinely non-racial institution in South Africa. Given the link between gender inequality and violence in several studies, the entrenched culture of gender disparity across diverse population groups might significantly contribute to the high prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in the country. The convergence of hypermasculine ideologies, endorsing the degradation of women with severe gender inequalities, potentially offers insights into the pervasive nature of men's perpetration of violence against women in South Africa.

The South African government has implemented policies and laws aimed at combating GBV. Specialised units within law enforcement agencies, shelters, and helplines provide support services to survivors (Nyagumbo, 2021). However, challenges persist in the effective implementation and enforcement of these measures. Prominent NGOs which operate in South Africa have focused on GBV prevention, victim support, advocacy, and community engagement. Organisations like People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) and Sonke Gender Justice actively engage in awareness campaigns, legal aid, and survivor support services (Tinker, 2019). There is a need for everyone to act to safeguard against this type of abuse.

Comparative statistics on GBV rates

According to the WHO, globally, about 1 in 3 women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner in their lifetime (WHO, 2011a). In South Africa, recent surveys suggest alarmingly high rates of violence against women, with nearly 51% of women reporting some form of violence by an intimate partner (Enaifoghe et al.,

2021). In Ethiopia, approximately 20% to 60% of women have reported experiencing intimate partner violence during their lifetime (Agenagnew et al., 2020). Kenya faces substantial challenges, with approximately 45% of women aged 15–49 having experienced either physical or sexual violence (Harper et al., 2021). Nigeria reports rates of approximately 30% of women who have encountered at least one form of GBV since the age of 15 (Muluneh et al., 2020).

Shared patterns and unique challenges across countries in Africa

Economic disparities, cultural norms, and legal frameworks contribute significantly to the perpetuation of GBV across these countries. Societal norms often normalise violence against women, hindering reporting and perpetuating cycles of abuse. Although in place, legal frameworks face challenges in implementation and enforcement, leading to barriers for survivors seeking justice and support. South Africa faces significant challenges, with high rates of sexual violence and deeply entrenched cultural norms perpetuating violence. Kenya grapples with GBV stemming from socio-economic disparities and traditional practices such as female genital mutilation. Ethiopia contends with harmful traditional practices, including child marriage, and low reporting rates due to cultural barriers. Nigeria encounters challenges in reporting due to stigma, legal gaps, and a lack of access to support services, particularly in rural areas.

Successes and failures of interventions in countries

In terms of successes, the governmental efforts, such as specialised units and legislation against GBV, demonstrate progress in acknowledging and addressing the issue. NGOs play a crucial role in providing psychosocial support services and legal aid, raising awareness about GBV, and contributing to the empowerment of survivors and community engagement.

Challenges persist in implementing and enforcing legislation due to resource constraints, systemic inefficiencies, and cultural norms. Underreporting remains a significant hurdle, often due to societal stigma, fear of retaliation, and mistrust in the legal system, which hinders accurate measurements and effective interventions. While many African countries have legislation against GBV, challenges persist in effectively implementing and enforcing these laws.

Weak legal systems, lack of resources, and gaps in law enforcement contribute to creating conditions of impunity for perpetrators. Furthermore, economic disparities and poverty exacerbate the vulnerability of women to GBV. Limited access to resources and economic empowerment interventions hinders survivors from seeking help or escaping abusive situations, thus perpetuating cycles of violence.

Opportunities for improvement and prospects for change

To mitigate GBV in these countries, increasing GBV education and awareness through school curricula, community-based programmes, and media campaigns can challenge societal norms and raise consciousness of the issue. Strengthening support services for survivors, including counselling, legal aid, shelters, and economic empowerment programmes, can also provide avenues for survivors to seek help and break free from abusive situations.

It is important to improve the implementation and enforcement of existing laws against GBV by enhancing law enforcement training, establishing specialised courts, and ensuring access to justice for survivors by bringing perpetrators to account. Several international organisations play a pivotal role in funding initiatives, conducting research, and advocating for policy reforms to address GBV. They offer crucial support to local NGOs and governmental agencies in combating GBV. Collaborative partnerships between international organisations, local governments, NGOs, and communities are also essential for developing holistic approaches to address GBV. Sharing resources, expertise, and best practices can amplify impact. International organisations can also contribute by providing capacity-building initiatives, training programmes, and technical assistance to strengthen local responses to GBV, fostering sustainable interventions.

Structure of the book

Social Constructions of Gender-Based Violence in African Countries presents the assumptions, narratives, and institutions that underpin the key concepts on issues surrounding gender-based violence in Africa. Per the 2011 South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) report on Violence Against Indigenous, Minority, and Minority Groups, the prevalence of violence against women is a social development concern among numerous indigenous communities in post-colonial societies (SAHRC, 2011). Minority and indigenous statuses are

acknowledged as exacerbating factors in instances of violence against women by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The African Women's Development and Communication Network's 2010 report on the 54th Commission on the Status of Women emphasises the urgency of addressing the manifold forms of discrimination and marginalisation experienced by specific groups of women in the development, planning, and oversight of laws, policies, and programmes aimed at achieving gender equality (Likimani, 2010). It also underscores the necessity to develop novel solutions to comprehensively tackle the violations and challenges faced by rural, indigenous, older women, ethnic minorities, and individuals with disabilities.

The themes identified in this book guide the compilation of laws and policies implemented by African governments that adhere to international human rights standards, aimed at guaranteeing both men and women the unfettered and equal enjoyment of their human rights without encountering any form of discrimination. These encompass rights such as access to healthcare, education, social work services, political engagement, economic prosperity, and freedom from all types of violence.

The book delineates the directives geared towards upholding and advocating for the human rights of every individual within a country, with a specific emphasis on the international context, relevant agreements, treaties pertinent to gender-based violence, and the legislative and policy frameworks within Africa, especially South Africa. Some of the laws and associated interventions mentioned herein are aligned with the Constitution of South Africa, seeking to prevent and address gender discrimination and gender-based violence. To ensure equitable treatment for all women, governmental and civil society institutions have been established to shield women from any form of discrimination (Botes, 2018).

The comprehensive details provided regarding each international commitment mirror the national commitments, underscoring an environment conducive to regulating and responding to gender-based violence for all citizens within the country. This alignment signifies the supportive and regulatory frameworks available to combat gender-based violence in a holistic manner.

The book begins with the opening chapter by Tinuade Ojo and Tanusha Raniga, which sets the tone and provides an overview of the book's concepts and structure. In the chapter, the authors present an overview of GBV in Africa with a cross-country approach comprising Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa. The selection of the countries was based on their population rates and high GBV prevalence. The other contributors in this book explored different countries and the policy implications of GBV in Africa.

Chapter 2 presents Akeju and Ololuniyi's study of the rise in economic gender-based violence in West African countries, recognising the role played by women's empowerment in survivor recovery. It examines the factors that prevent women from accessing empowerment and protecting themselves from violence, while presenting evidence that supports initiatives offering women economic opportunities and improved financial security. It provides evidence that women's empowerment can strengthen women's voices and decision-making power in addressing economic gender norms and reducing women's vulnerabilities and risks of experiencing any form of gender-based violence.

In Chapter 3, Cecy Balogun analyses the complex contestations facing gender-based civil society organisations, the types of violations they are exposed to, and the strategies they employ to circumvent the contestation of the spaces in which they operate. The study was conducted in Nigeria, and data were collected using survey questionnaires and key informant interviews. The findings showed that there are contestations in the civic spaces of gender-based civil society organisations that limit their scope of operations, and most of them suffer discrimination, harassment, and legislative restrictions. Balogun concludes that to enhance the development activities of gender-based civil society organisations that are targeted towards improving the rights of women and girls, ensuring a protective and conducive environment is paramount.

In Chapter 4 Roya and Moffat examine the coverage of gender-based violence in Zimbabwe during the COVID-19 era in *NewsDay*, an independent daily newspaper. The chapter sampled three articles from each of the three years under study to facilitate an in-depth analysis of how women in a developing country like Zimbabwe endure more challenges brought by COVID-19 due to their race, ethnicity, economic status, religion, education (or lack thereof), among other forms of identification. The aim is to contribute to government and stakeholder efforts to increase access to information among marginalised groups, especially rural black women. The authors argue that empowering women by providing computers and other technological devices, improving network connectivity, and resolving electricity supply challenges will significantly enhance women's access to information and service delivery. The authors recommend stricter laws and penalties for all perpetrators and all forms of GBV in the justice system.

In Chapter 5, Mrubula-Ngwenya and Maluleke discuss how rural men experience violence and how they cope with it. This qualitative chapter employed a phenomenological research design whereby a prominent South African Police Service (SAPS) official, with ten years of experience, served as a key informant, alongside local male participants who sat for key informant interviews. A

systematic review was adopted to analyse grey literature studies, aided by the hegemonic masculinity theory on this subject. To ensure the trustworthiness of the empirical findings, Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) and the Critical Appraisal Skill Programme (CASP) were employed, and conventional and seminal literature studies were reviewed.

Shahana Rasool assesses South Africa's progress on gender equality post democracy in Chapter 6. According to Rasool, action from the women's movement in South Africa has ensured official gender equality in post-apartheid developments. Descriptive representation, the development of policy and legislation, and women's policy institutions contributed to the progress of official gender equality. However, whether official gender equality translates into transformative gender equality is unclear. In this chapter, the author considers various social issues, such as care work, education, gender-based violence, poverty, and inequality, to explore gender equality progress in South Africa. The chapter notes that, whilst some gains have been made 25 years post democracy, more needs to be done to move towards transformative gender equality. Rasool argues that an independent women's movement is critical to pushing for transformative gender equality since the processes and practices embedded in various institutions still perpetuate patriarchy and gender inequality.

In Chapter 7, Ruth Zuma analyses the occurrence of gender-based violence against women and young girls during lockdown in South Africa, suggesting potential intervention strategies. She argues that COVID-19 led many countries to experience dramatic changes to daily life, resulting in economic decline, loss of lives, social instability, and an increase in cases of GBV. Empirical research presented in this chapter reveals that during lockdown, women and young girls were subjected to different forms of violence by their male counterparts, such as physical assaults, sexual violence, psychological abuse and financial abuse. The reported cases of sexual violence during COVID-19 show that the country is in a crisis and requires stringent intervention strategies that seek to address the scourge of gender-based violence. This chapter adopts a narrative enquiry on GBV occurrence amongst women and young girls during lockdown in South Africa. Findings reveal that the COVID-19 lockdown strategies increased women and young girls' vulnerability to motivated offenders. They endured physical assault, rape, and threats by their male counterparts and had no place to seek refuge, prompting them to continue sharing private space with their offenders. The study locates a gap between what the policy articulates, and the implementation of programmes intended to reduce and finally end GBV.

Chapter 8 sees Dorcas Ettang explore the intersection of xenophobia and

sexual and gender-based violence experienced by migrant women in South Africa. Sexual and gender-based violence against women is not unique to Africa but is a global social development challenge. Migrant women bring another dynamic to this issue as victims of sexual and gender-based violence while in transit to and from their host communities. This chapter looks within South Africa's borders and explores the experiences and narratives of migrant women within the context of xenophobia. The chapter utilises document analysis to scrutinise and examine policies and reports from key migration organisations that share the personal narratives and experiences of female migrants. The chapter engages in critical reflections on discourses around human rights, national security, ethical territoriality, and intersectionality as they relate to women migrants. The study concludes that acknowledging and including the perspectives of migrant women, harnessing the value and contribution of civil society organisations, concerted efforts on education and awareness, increased prosecution to ensure accountability, and the empowerment of migrant women are vital in protecting them.

In Chapter 9, Koliswa Matebese-Notshulwana and Ruth Zuma argue that gender-based violence and femicide (GBV+F) have become a global pandemic, and it is indisputable that they are among the major social ills affecting the world. According to these authors, South Africa is one of the countries most affected by this pandemic. For instance, there is a broad consensus that the justice system in South Africa is failing women and children in dealing with GBV. Despite human rights activist organisations condemning the prevalence of GBV among women and children, South Africa continues to suffer the scourge. The chapter used qualitative methodology and desktop research to access available secondary material.

Chapter 10 presents Linda Naidoo's investigation of violence against women, specifically how it manifests in the lives of minority Indian women in the flat dwelling area of Westcliff, Chatsworth, their experiences and perceptions of victim support efforts. A mixed-methods approach with a bias towards qualitative research was employed, using an online survey and in-depth interviews with women from the Westcliff community. The author highlights that violence against women is widespread and remains the most irrefutable form of human rights violation. It is not limited to domestic violence, taking many forms, such as sexual and psychological abuse, forced prostitution, and femicide. One of the most common forms of violence against women is interpersonal violence, which can be sexual and/or physical assault that happens between family members, acquaintances, or an intimate partner.

Women are still generally socialised into traditional roles of taking care of the 'home' in most African cultures and are discouraged from active participation in politics, which is seen as the preserve of men. Since the advent of democracy in the country in 1994, female representation in South African politics has risen markedly, culminating in the establishment of a multi-party parliamentary women's caucus. In the final chapter, Zainab Monisola Olaitan proposes reimagining the parliamentary women's caucus as a social movement for addressing gender-based violence and femicide (GBV+F) in South Africa. The study was qualitative, and data were gathered from secondary sources, while it utilised the technique of content analysis to analyse the data gathered.

Conclusion

This book presents and deliberates the social constructions of gender-based violence from the life experiences and perspectives of women in various African countries and adopts a mixed-methods desk research approach, amalgamating primary and secondary data, to delineate the influence of gender-responsive budgeting on the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender justice on the continent. Across its chapters, the book offers an analysis of the efficacy of various African states' strategies, delving into lessons that can be gleaned to mitigate gender-based violence and integrate gender-sensitive practices across different levels of societal institutions and structures. These insights cater to the unique and heterogeneous African economies, whether thriving or facing challenges, offering pathways to augment or adopt social development interventions aimed at fostering novel solutions to gender-based violence response.

Gender-based violence against women is defined and explained based on the experiences prevalent in African countries, namely South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and other West African countries. The forms of gender-based violence and the impact it has on the psychological, social and economic functioning of women at all stages of the life cycle form the conceptual underpinning of these chapters. The discussions of the contributing authors provide insight into the overall impact that gender-based violence has on every facet of society; human rights abuses and failures of governments and their health systems are highlighted. Finally, interventions, legislation and policy suggestions are put forth, especially for the four primary case-study African countries.

The book uncovers the milestones in international agreements and provides an overview of the policies and legislation that exist in South Africa, Zimbabwe,

Nigeria and other ECOWAS countries to challenge the violations of justice and human rights that women are subjected to. The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals and African Agenda 2063 condemn any form of violence against women and children. Both institutions believe violence against women and girls is a pervasive human rights violation rooted in centuries of gender inequality and discrimination, unequal power relations, and harmful social norms evident in all societies on the globe. Gender-based violence not only claims thousands of victims every year but is also a threat to building socially functioning and economically prosperous states. The international community unanimously agrees that urgent action needs to be taken to improve gender justice and the standard of living for all women across the world. While some milestones have been reached, more urgent concerns must still be addressed, such as ensuring that every victim gets access to psychosocial support, treatment and care as well as justice and that perpetrators are held to account for their atrocious actions. Most importantly, increased awareness and education must be provided to improve public understanding of all types of gender-related hostilities towards women and girls. This will go a long way in building better prevention strategies and legislation that ensure that the response to gender-based violence is proactive rather than merely retroactive.

This book also deliberates the role of civil society and looks at other spheres outside of government, such as aid institutions and their roles in helping the state. Non-governmental institutions are essential because of the unique reach they have among the most vulnerable in society, such as refugees, displaced women, women of colour, gender-non-conforming persons, sex workers, and trafficking victims. Non-governmental institutions play a critical role in filling the gaps in social work service delivery where the government would have little to no information. Research institutions are also important stakeholders in presenting new empirical data, novel assessments, and interventions to deal with GBV victims. With the rise of femicide, deep research and analysis need to be conducted to understand the complex relations between women and men, the individual roles men played during the COVID-19 pandemic, and finally, the attitude and behaviour towards women in patriarchal societies.

Women's rights and advocacy groups in Africa have criticised African governments for their lack of initiative and attention to women's issues, such as women's medical rights and gender-based violence. Activists and civil rights groups argue that policies enacted in the public sector have triggered pushback and situations where women's health and reproductive rights have

been ignored, including labour protections while working during the COVID-19 pandemic. Activists criticised the lockdown policies and the danger that women were in for long periods of time. It was during the COVID-19 pandemic that society could fully understand the deficiency or lack of responses by human service professionals and stakeholders who uniquely deal with gender-based violence.

Gender representation in top management and leadership positions in government has never been more urgent for gender justice for women. According to the United Nations, the representation of women in positions of power and decision-making remains below parity. Only 47% of the data required to track progress on SDG 5 are currently available, rendering women and girls invisible (UN Women, 2022). This level of representation cannot be achieved if women are not empowered to play active roles or be leaders in their communities.

This book highlights the cycle of gender-based violence and how different institutions, both local and international, have sought to address these issues. The unique impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on these social development challenges and the social protection policies introduced to counter the pandemic are given attention in this book. The contributions of the authors are of critical importance, as they will assist human service professionals, scholars, government officials, and various social development and health stakeholders in re-evaluating existing policies and formulating new policies to mitigate GBV against women. The deliberations in this book will also provide leaders, policymakers, researchers, and students in African countries insight into the importance of adopting transformative and effective strategies to aid victim empowerment on the continent.

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