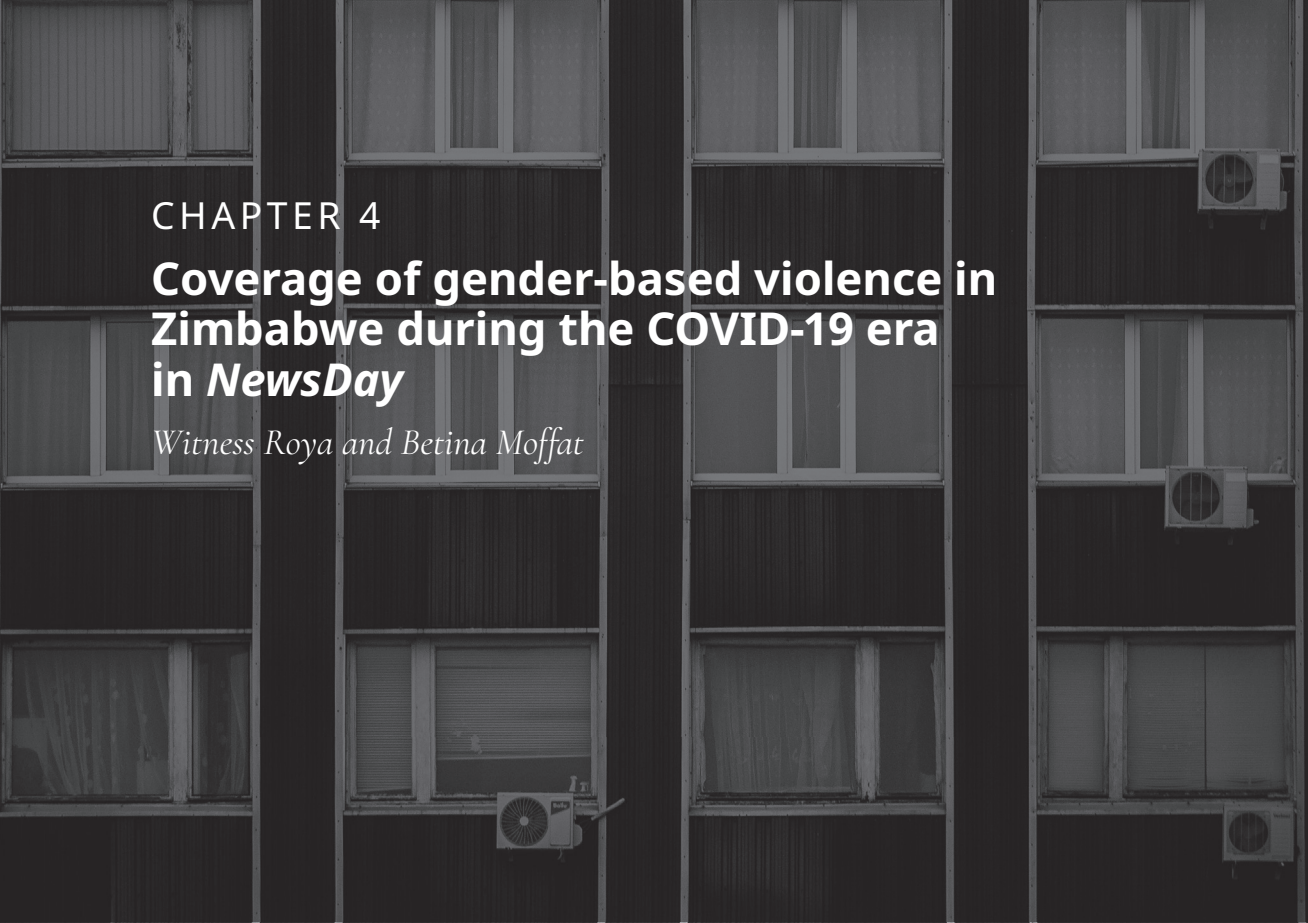




CHAPTER 4

Coverage of gender-based violence in Zimbabwe during the COVID-19 era in *NewsDay*

Witness Roya and Betina Moffat

Introduction

Saferspaces (2023) notes that violence is a global phenomenon resulting in the deaths of more than 1.6 million people each year, making it one of the leading causes of death worldwide. Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to physical or psychological harm that men and women suffer because of social expectations based on their sex and gender. Globally, women's experiences of GBV receive the most attention. Consequently, many conferences, seminars, academic programmes, and ministries have emerged as part of efforts to eradicate GBV. These forums have underscored the link between eliminating GBV against women and advancing women's empowerment, noting that limited access to education, employment, and basic health services remain persistent barriers. While progress has been made globally in improving the lives of girls and addressing the issues they face in the last three decades, the emergence of the coronavirus in 2019 accentuated these challenges. In sub-Saharan Africa, where poverty, race, ethnicity, religion, and patriarchy combine to make life more difficult for women compared to men, the situation is even worse.

The media are expected to reflect society and offer transformational solutions; social media complements traditional media such as radio, television, and newspapers by reflecting the views of a more diverse array of people. *NewsDay* was chosen for analysis because a cursory search for stories involving COVID-19 in the Zimbabwean media reveals that the paper covered the topic more than its counterparts. *NewsDay* highlighted the double impact of GBV and COVID-19 on women, together with a plethora of factors like race, ethnicity, religion and gender.

The chapter provides a brief introduction to intersectionality, the foundational theory underlying this chapter, followed by a review of the literature on the marginalisation of women. Critical discourse analysis (CDA), the method of analysis employed, is discussed through reflections on its methodology and data-gathering process. The analysis of the collected data is then presented, followed by a conclusion that highlights the chapter's major concerns, implications of findings, and recommendations.

Theoretical framework

From the Middle Ages, to the Enlightenment (also known as 'The Age of Reason') and the Elizabethan era, women endured marginalisation. The emergence of feminism as a movement and social science theory in the 19th century in Europe symbolised huge strides in the fight against patriarchy. However, women of colour later alleged that feminism represented the interests of white women, resulting in the emergence of many breakaway strands. Although black feminism sought to mainstream the challenges faced by black women in Africa, womanism opposed the adoption of the term 'feminism' because of its Western origins (Walker, 1983). African womanism, which was championed by Hudson Weems and shaped by Afrocentricity, seeks to unite black men and women worldwide because they share a history of oppression through colonialism, apartheid and slavery.

Though some scholars argue that Crenshaw did not coin the term intersectionality, what is indisputable is that she popularised the theory (Ernst & Luft, 2017) and that its genealogy includes black feminist scholars (Ernst & Luft, 2017). In 1989, Crenshaw used intersectionality to describe the interplay of factors such as gender, race, and class in prejudicing black women in court cases. Because of its holistic analysis of identity, intersectionality has become "a lived experience, an aspiration, a strategy, a way to analyse inequality, and even a movement" (Al-Faham et al., 2019, p. 248).

Crenshaw (1989) asserts that failure to acknowledge differences between women's experiences and backgrounds worsens the subordinate status of women. Bedolla (2014) emphasises the importance of considering how marginalisation and privilege intersect to shape political dynamics within and across groups. Al-Faham et al. (2019) and Hancock (2011) observe that there is a tendency among certain members of marginalised groups to emphasise their position as the most oppressed within society. Intersectionality theory argues that women of colour across the world must forge "alliances, framings, and policies to address multiple race, gender and class inequalities" (Bedolla, 2014, p. 449). Unlike African womanism, which sidelines gay people, intersectionality is receptive to a "coalition between men and women of colour" and between "straight and gay people of colour" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1299). The following section discusses how policies and different perceptions contributed to the marginalisation of women during the COVID-19 era.

Background

Gender policy and legislation in Africa

Various policies have been formulated across the African continent with the aim of establishing and maintaining equality between men and women. Article 18 of the African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981 states that the state shall ensure the elimination of discrimination against women and the protection of the rights of women and the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions. The Fourth World Conference on Women, better known as the Beijing Conference, was a landmark occasion that set targets such as making the world safe for women and calling for equal opportunities and salaries between men and women (UN Women, 2020b). The conference was so popular in Africa that, in some parts, 'Beijing' became synonymous with the fight for gender equality and equity (Manuh & Anyidoho, 2015).

The Protocol on Gender and Development was designed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in August 2008 and implemented in 2013. It sought to increase the representation of women among member states "in all structures of governance and at all levels of decision making in the public, private, and social spheres to at least 50% by 2015 (SADC, 2024). It was revised in 2016, but only 12 member countries, Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia,

Seychelles, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, added signatures to it (SADC, 2024). Four African countries, South Africa, Rwanda, Uganda, and Senegal, have the world's highest representation of female members of parliament (Okedele, 2020). The 2013 Zimbabwean constitutional amendments almost doubled female representation in parliament "from 18% in 2008 to an average of 35% in the 2013/2018 electoral cycles" (Mlilo, 2019, p.1). Nonetheless, this numerical increase has not translated to meaningful change and has been accused of benefiting politically connected people. 75% of the female MPs who were elected in 2013 on a proportional representation basis retained their seats after the 2018 elections using the same ticket (Mlilo, 2019). A study by the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) indicates that ringfencing votes resulted in "fewer women being directly elected," political parties selected few women as their candidates for the 2018 harmonised elections, and "voting for female candidates was extremely low" (Mlilo, 2019, p. 2). The study also notes that the presence of women in parliament and government does not necessarily reflect authority, as they are often appointed to serve their principals and political parties.

COVID-19 responses

Several myths circulated when COVID-19 emerged in China. One such myth that circulated in African countries was that only white, elderly people were vulnerable to the virus. Oppah Muchinguri, a senior female government official, claimed that the pandemic was God's way of punishing Western countries for imposing sanctions on Zimbabwe. However, this was debunked by the death of Zororo Makamba, the 20-year-old son of a prominent member of the ruling ZANU-PF party, James Makamba. The demise of the young broadcaster exposed the country's crumbling health system after images of Parirenyatwa Hospital, where he had been admitted, went viral. In January 2021, COVID-19 claimed the lives of four senior government officials in three weeks (Mutsaka, 2021). However, she was the only female among the quartet, a reflection of the lower rate at which women's COVID-19-related deaths were reported, compared to men.

Women have been hailed for employing more effective strategies against COVID-19 than men. A policy paper by UN Women (2020b) indicated that globally, women were at the helm of institutions delivering effective and inclusive COVID-19 responses, from the highest levels of decision-making to frontline service delivery. Garikipati and Kambhampati (2020) note that all the women in the survey were from developed countries, so they were better equipped than their counterparts from developing countries. In April

2021, when Samia Suluhu Hassan became the 10th woman to preside over an African country after succeeding John Magufuli as Tanzania's president, she immediately abandoned his denialist stance, which probably saved many lives at the height of the pandemic. There were reports that Magufuli died from COVID-19-related complications (Mtulya, 2021). Africa's first female elected president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, set a precedent when she led the successful fight against the Ebola virus, which had spread from Guinea between 2013 and 2016.

Though many countries enforced lockdowns when the pandemic peaked in 2020, the Zimbabwean government was criticised for not providing a safety net to its long-suffering citizens. However, for the 2,811,350 unemployed citizens who lived hand to mouth, this meant choosing between saving their lives (complying with restrictions) or livelihoods (working in defiance of the order), and they predictably chose the latter (Chikandiwa, 2023). Of these, 1,440,626 were female, compared to 1,370,724 males. Opposition parties accused the ZANU-PF of distributing handouts only to its supporters.

GBV and COVID-19 restrictions

COVID-19 intensified the plight of women. During lockdown, women and girls were saddled with tasks such as homeschooling and looking after sick relatives (Amnesty International, 2021). More than 600 girls aged between nine and 10 years gave birth, and over 34,000 babies were conceived by girls who were 17 and below in South Africa (Amnesty International, 2021). In Zimbabwe, more than 5,000 teenagers became pregnant by September 2020, and in most cases, the fathers denied paternity (Amnesty International, 2021). Despite the girls reporting the matter to the police, the culprits were released after their cases were mishandled. Although the government allows single mothers to attend school, stigmatisation forces many of them to drop out. Before COVID-19, there were already many child-headed families in Africa; the high COVID-19 mortality rate among elderly people only worsened the situation (Africanews, 2022).

Restrictions on movement during lockdown periods transformed homes into iron cages of male-driven abuse of women and girls (Amnesty International, 2021). A 38.5% increase in gender-based violence reports since the imposition of lockdown restrictions between April and May 2020 was noted (Amnesty International, 2021). In South Africa, cases rose by 15 times in two areas, while Zambian police recorded 4,000 incidents (Truscott, 2020). Poverty, culture, and patriarchy are some of the main drivers of gender-based

violence in South Africa (Ngwane, 2021). Taunyane-Mnguni, founder of Monitor South Africa, a non-profit organisation, attributed victims' reluctance to report cases to roadblocks and the indifference of police officers (Ngwane, 2021). Amnesty International (2021) concur that this situation was worsened by the omission of counselling and sexual reproductive health services from a list of essential services in South Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. The South African Police Minister, Bheki Cele, promised to reprimand police officers who did not treat complaints seriously and likened GBV to a disease that infects men and requires South Africans to report crimes against women (Enaifoghe et al., 2021). In an extreme case, sex workers arrested for contravening lockdown conditions accused police officers at a South African police station of raping them (Truscott, 2020). Elma Robyn Montsumi, a sex worker, mysteriously died in custody at Mowbray police station in Cape Town four days after being arrested on suspicion of drugs possession (Amnesty International, 2021, p. 326). Despite risking their lives to serve their communities, health workers were not exempt from the police's heavy-handedness. A nurse in Equatorial Guinea was harassed for complaining about the lack of oxygen at Malabo's Sampaka Hospital, a state hospital. 17 nurses were arrested in Zimbabwe for flouting lockdown regulations by demonstrating against poor working conditions (Amnesty International, 2021).

Zimbabwe's main opposition political party, the MDC Alliance (now Citizens Coalition for Change [CCC]), accused the government of weaponising the pandemic. The party's trio of Netsai Marova, Joana Mamombe, and Cecilia Chimhiri was allegedly abducted after being arrested by the police during an anti-restrictions demonstration. The three ladies, who claimed to have been raped and made to drink urine, were charged with staging their own abduction and subsequently hospitalised under heavy police guard. Party spokesperson Fadzai Mahere was arrested for falsely claiming that, in enforcing lockdown, a policeman had beaten a woman with a baby, resulting in the death of the toddler who had been stabbed in the back.

From victims to activists

Taunyane-Mnguni founded Monitor South Africa, a non-profit organisation, after being frustrated by the media's coverage of GBV (Ngwane, 2021). Digital media provides a more affordable and effective way to access information and share opinions. However, devices like computers and laptops require access to electricity, connectivity, equipment, and the required expertise, which can be challenging in most sub-Saharan African countries. Literacy

rates among women and girls are lower than those of their male counterparts, who get preference for opportunities to study due to socio-cultural and religious reasons. On the one hand, the pandemic reinforced social and digital inequalities (van Dijk, 2020). On the other hand, it increased the usage of information and communication technology (ICT) devices. Although many people in remote areas lack smartphones and cell phones to facilitate the consumption and dissemination of information, especially through WhatsApp, group chats enable marginalised groups, such as women, to share their experiences. Fraser (1997) refers to such platforms as parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs.

Methods

GBV was already a problem before the advent of COVID-19, so we set out to establish the impact of the pandemic on this societal scourge. Data were collected through content retrieval from the *NewsDay* website. In the Google search engine, we typed 'coverage of COVID-19/Coronavirus and men/women/women and girls/gender in Newsday Zimbabwe'. We also inversely rephrased this statement to read, 'Newsday Zimbabwe's coverage of men/women/women and girls/gender and COVID-19/Coronavirus.' In the search, we added different time frames, such as 2020, 2021, 2022, and from 2020 to 2022. Other searches included 'lockdown' and 'hard lockdown' because the seismic aftereffects of this period are still being felt. We scoured the list of results from our searches, which appeared in batches arranged in numerical order, and stopped searching when the results began to recur and irrelevant material started to appear frequently, indicating that our searches had reached a point of saturation. At times, less relevant information would have emerged by the time we got to the third batch. From the 40 stories, we purposively sampled nine articles. This figure facilitated efforts to obtain representative findings. The following keywords appeared in the nine articles that were ultimately selected: "men", "women", "GBV", "Gender-based violence", "COVID-19", "epidemic", and "pandemic." These articles cover incidences of GBV between March 2020, when COVID-19 was at its peak, and October 2022, when its threat had subsided significantly.

NewsDay was selected for a few reasons. Much has been written on the coverage of COVID-19 in Zimbabwe's two indigenous language newspapers,

Kwayedza (which is published in Shona) and Umthunywa (Ndebele) (Chibuwe, 2020; Tshabangu & Salawu, 2021; Tshabangu & Salawu, 2022; Roya & Ngcobo, 2022; Maodza, 2023; Roya, 2023, to cite a few). In addition, Tshabangu and Salawu (2021) have examined coverage of COVID-19 in *The Herald*. Whilst this creates the appearance of diversity in the sampled newspapers, it masks the fact that all these papers are published by Zimbabwe Newspapers (1980) Limited (Zimpapers), Zimbabwe's biggest media group. Zimpapers is a state-owned and -controlled entity, effectively serving as a mouthpiece of the government. It, therefore, stood to reason that *NewsDay*, the country's largest privately owned daily newspaper, published by Trevor Ncube's Alpha Media Holdings (AMH), which also publishes *The Standard*, *Zimbabwe Independent*, and operates an online broadcasting channel, Heart and Soul, among other entities, was considered. According to its publisher, *NewsDay* enjoys a degree of independence: "I am not my papers", quips Ncube through the 'bio' on his X handle (Ncube, 2025).

Findings and discussion

Previous studies on COVID-19 coverage by Zimbabwean newspapers appear to overlook the impact of COVID-19 on the rate of GBV, creating the impression that it is no longer a problem or that the two are mutually exclusive. The present study takes a different trajectory, as its main concern is investigating the correlation between COVID-19 and GBV, as reflected in articles published in *NewsDay* during 'the COVID years' (2020-2022). For ease of understanding, we assigned codes to the nine articles selected for analysis, based on the order in which they were published (see Table 1 below). For instance, the article 'Musasa rescues 10,849 GBV survivors during the lockdown,' published 1 August 2020, is Article 1 (hereafter, A1). On the extreme end of the spectrum, 'GBV is the second pandemic: Nyoni' referred to Article 9 (A9). We reviewed all the articles and organised them according to the issues they covered. Though we limited our scope to headings that explicitly referred to GBV, issues like child marriage and teenage pregnancy assisted in providing a nuanced analysis of the interplay of factors that constitute GBV. Government policies, misinformation and disinformation, culture and religion, class, and other dynamics will be analysed. These classifications are not mutually exclusive, as issues discussed in the subheadings are interconnected. These categories have been formulated as guidelines.

Table 1 Articles written on GBV

Article title and date	Article code
Musasa rescues 10,849 GBV survivors during lockdown, August 1, 2020	A1
GBV statistics rise as lockdown measures eased, October 6, 2020	A2
COVID-19 takes toll on GBV victims. December 3, 2020	A3
Men are also GBV victims during lockdown, February 8, 2021	A4
GBV Spotlight on abused women during COVID-19, August 7, 2021	A5
Home now a dangerous place for women, November 22, 2021	A6
Gender-based violence cases on the rise: Minister, March 8, 2022	A7
The epidemic of domestic violence in Africa must be stopped, June 22, 2022	A8
GBV is the second pandemic: Nyoni, October 13, 2022	A9

Headings as signposts

A cursory examination of the headlines of the nine articles reveals that COVID-19-induced lockdowns exacerbated GBV. A2 and A6 reveal that easing lockdown restrictions triggered increases in GBV. A2, A7, A8, and A9 report that GBV cases have increased, albeit without linking this to lockdown. However, A1 provides figures that show that the lockdown resulted in the rescue of a staggering 10,849 people by the Musasa Project, a civil society group that seeks to protect girls and boys. None of these headlines mentions the sex of the affected people. However, abused women are the subject of A5. A4 goes a step further by pointing out that “men are also GBV victims.” Gender-based violence is such a societal problem that even its various euphemisms like ‘crime of passion,’ as coined by Roggeband (2021), ‘GBV,’ and ‘domestic violence’ conjure gory images. To put the gravity of this issue into perspective, identifying a few keywords from the nine articles under study suggests that GBV leaves a trail of destruction in its wake. It reduces people to “GBV victims” (A3; A4), “GBV survivors” (A1), “abused women” (A5), “GBV statistics” (A2), and “cases” (A7). A6 notes that high incidences of GBV turned the home into a dangerous place for women. As if to underline the harm that GBV has caused to society, the eighth and ninth articles under study draw parallels between it and viruses such as COVID-19, with A8 describing GBV as an “epidemic” and a “pandemic” (A9). An epidemic denotes an outbreak, while a pandemic occurs when a disease becomes widespread.

Unmasking the many faces of GBV

The nine articles essentially note that GBV encompasses physical, sexual, economic, and psychological facets and has spread around the world at an exponential rate during the period under study, particularly in the first quarter of 2020, which was dubbed ‘the first wave’. Commenting on the complex nature of GBV, Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) Chief Executive Officer, Virginia Muwanigwa, says “There is no one-size-fits-all solution” because different cases require different solutions (A5). GBV is ‘borderless’ because it transcends different indices; it is so pervasive that it takes place at every level, everywhere, “at work, at educational institutions, and in public spaces” (A1, A9).

Inadequate COVID-19 education, insufficient medication, and the incapacitation of health personnel worsened the plight of abused women. Ekenia Chifamba, founding director of Shamwari yeMwanasikana, a community-based civic group that promotes the rights and empowerment of girls, attributed the increase in miscarriages, stillbirths, and deaths of pregnant mothers to ignorance and fear of contracting the virus by some health workers (A5). Post-partum depression was more pronounced in young mothers because of a lack of financial and moral support. A report by Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) revealed that in Harare, a woman gave birth while putting on a mask because nurses feared getting infected with COVID-19 (WLSA, 2021). Another woman gave birth in a car, with the assistance of an untrained apostolic church lady (WLSA, 2021). The women had been turned away from a Highfield clinic because it only focused on COVID-19 emergencies. Women found it difficult to travel because they were harassed at police roadblocks. GBV victims also found it costly to attend court cases, which worked to the benefit of perpetrators (A8).

The nine articles echo the Swedish Embassy head of programmes, Berthollet Kaboru’s sentiments that “husbands and boyfriends” are the main perpetrators of GBVs. Celebrities are not exempt, and religion sometimes acts as an enabler for GBV. In addition, Zimbabwe’s minister of Women’s Affairs, Community and Medium Enterprises Development observes that “harmful cultural and religious practices have also worsened GBV” (A7). Osinachi Nwachukwu, a Nigerian gospel musician, was killed by her husband in April 2022, and in June of the same year, Idah Alisha, a Kenyan actor, recounted how she suffered at the hands of her former husband, a youth pastor (A8). When Alisha narrated her ordeal to the pastor who presided over her wedding, the cleric felt that “she was the problem and would need to do a better job of playing her proper

role in the marriage.” Nwachukwu’s friends and relatives said she had endured her husband’s abuse, hoping that “things would get better.” A8 identifies Proverbs 31 as one of the sections in the Bible which brainwashes Christian women to emulate a ‘wifely’ woman who is submissive to the husband who is “beyond reproach.” The article cites a survey, which found that Nigerian women believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife if “she burns food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children or refuses sex” (A8). This promotes a culture of silence among abused women and girls who fear being stigmatised if they speak out.

However, GBV is not always characterised by a linear, male-perpetrator vis-a-vis female-victim dichotomy as suggested by Kaboru and A4, which refers to “perpetrators at home with wives.” GBV has far-reaching psychosocial and economic effects on women. Alois Nyamazana, co-founder of Fathers Against Abuse (FAA) Trust, a non-profit organisation which fights GBV, argues in A4 that sometimes boys and men are “abused by their partners”. Some get burned with scalding cooking oil, paraffin, or water. Nyamazana clarifies that though this is usually done in retaliation, “it remains violence” and adds that boys can be forced into sexual activities with elderly women for lustful or ritual purposes (A4). This is reminiscent of 2011 reports across Zimbabwe of female motorists who allegedly offered lifts to unsuspecting male pedestrians whom they would abduct and whose semen they would harvest. Men are expected to be strong and provide for their families, so if they fail to meet these expectations, they often become subjects of ridicule. In addition to physical means, social media platforms are used to denigrate men and boys whose appearances deviate from the ‘norm’. Due to the pressure that society places on them, FAA co-founder Alois Nyamazana says, “men are victims of patriarchy. They must endure and suffer in silence.” Children who are brought up in a violent environment often become perpetrators or victims of violence, leading to “a vicious cycle of domestic violence” (A4). Therefore, boys and girls ought to be socialised into responsible and respectful adults.

Gender representation among article writers

To solve any problem, all stakeholders must actively participate in the search for solutions. Since GBV affects more women and girls than men and boys, it is important to have female voices in reports and discussions on this issue. In the nine articles under study, the number of female writers heavily outnumbers that of male writers, which is a welcome development considering that “on its current trajectory, it will now take 135.6 years to close the gender gap

worldwide” (World Economic Forum, 2021, p. 5). Each of the nine articles that constituted this study’s unit of analysis involved a female writer, except A7, which Methembe Sibanda wrote; A8 struck a gender balance as it was co-authored by Tijani Salami (male) and Jane Otai (female). A physician, Salami founded the Sisters Caregivers Project Initiative, a non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights in Nigeria through outreach, health promotion, and the empowerment of women and adolescents. Otai is a development worker in Kenya who leads the Empowered Girls Initiative, which advocates for adolescent mothers’ rights to education, healthcare, and employment. *NewsDay* reporters wrote the rest of the articles: Veneranda Langa wrote A1, Harriet Chikandiwa (A2), Vanessa Gonye (A3, A6), Miriam Mangwaya (A4), Margaret Chinowaita (A5), and Varaidzo Mudewairi (A9).

Coordination of efforts in fighting GBV

There have been numerous initiatives to combat GBV as well as advance the rights of women and girls at the local, regional, and international levels. WHO, the world’s largest health body, designated 31 July as Africa Women’s Day to promote the fight against maternal and neonatal mortality on the continent (A1). The African Union (AU) took a further step by designating the day as Pan African Women’s Day to celebrate African women who contributed to the continent’s liberation and development in various capacities, including as farmers, traders, entrepreneurs, scientists, and leaders in diverse fields. A joint statement by Musasa Project and Oxfam in A1 demonstrates a united front between local and international organisations in the eradication of GBV. The Musasa Project assisted 10,849 gender-based violence (GBV) survivors during the lockdown between 1 April 1 and 11 July 2020 (A1). The Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe and the Women in Politics Support Unit, two groups that seek to further the interests of women from different sectors and promote their participation in politics, respectively, lobbied for women’s rights to water in accordance with WHO guidelines.

The Zimbabwean government participates in annual observances of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (A3) and the International Women’s Day (IWD) UN initiatives. IWD has been commemorated on 8 March every year since 1975 to highlight challenges faced by women (A7). To demonstrate the synergy between the UN and Zimbabwe, their 2022 themes centred on climate change, with the former focusing on “Gender Equality for a Sustainable Tomorrow,” while the latter emphasised “Gender Mainstreaming

and Women Empowerment in Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management.” The 2013 Constitutional amendments made provisions for the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC), an independent constitutional commission, to promote gender equality and address complaints of gender rights violations. The ZGC operates in the 16 districts of the country. In A5, Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), a regional civic group sought a court order to compel the government to improve the functions of the health system, pledged to provide supporting policies and initiatives to parliamentarians, and partnered with the police victim-friendly unit and the courts to facilitate justice for GBV victims. Additionally, WLSA requested that the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare expedite the investigation of GBV cases and provide recommendations.

In the articles under study, women are well represented in strategic positions that advance women’s rights and gender equality. Nomathemba Ndlovu, a women’s rights advocate, is a lawyer for WLSA (A5). Precious Taru is the director of Musasa Project; Chipso Madiwa, who is the MP for Mutasa North, leads the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Women Affairs (A2); Virginia Muwanigwa is the chief executive officer for ZGC; Ekenia Chifamba is the founding director of Shamwari yeMwanasikana, a community-based civic group that seeks to advance the rights and empowerment of the girl child in the home, school and community (A5). Iheoma Obibi represents Alliances for Africa, a non-profit organisation dedicated to human rights, peace, and sustainable development (A8).

The nine articles under study reflect a harmonious relationship between men and women in government and civic organisations. Women’s Affairs secretary Melusi Matshiya, standing in for Women’s Affairs Minister Sithembiso Nyoni, said the ministry sought to partner with religious leaders due to their significant societal influence. Alois Nyamazana, co-founder of Fathers Against Abuse (FAA) Trust, a non-profit organisation which aims to socialise boys into men who respect other people, especially women and girls, called for the inclusion of men to partner with women in initiatives to fight GBV. In A6, Deputy Minister of Women’s Affairs Jennifer Mhlanga, speaking at the Love Should Not Hurt campaign, stated that every member of society should contribute to the fight against GBV to complement initiatives such as the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. Berthollet Kaboru, the Head of Programmes at the Swedish Embassy, said men should be trained as peers to help increase social awareness of the need to expose any abuse. Nyoni assured journalists that the government would provide police victim-friendly units, safe shelters, and more one-stop centres, which had already been established in Manicaland, Midlands,

Matabeleland South, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central, and psychological and legal services were already available in Harare. Love Should Not Hurt brings together government and civic groups to fight GBV. WAN-IFRA's Women in News Social Impact Reporting Initiative sponsored reporting of GBV in marginalised communities (A5). Taru in A2 promised to consult the president on matters concerning GBV and the sentencing of perpetrators.

Parting shots

The concluding segment of an article is significant because it leaves a lasting impression and helps call for action or map the way forward. To avoid a conflict of interests, most of the articles end with comments from sources, not the writer. A1 ends with women activists calling for policies that take cognisance of women's unique needs for water, such as reproductive needs, and that they are responsible for fetching it. Taru's call for mandatory sentencing for convicted rapists to deter other rapists and her promise to take this up to the president caps A2. Matshiya sums up A3 by saying child marriages have far-reaching consequences for abused girls, their families and communities because it deprives the girls of the opportunity to make a meaningful transformation. In concluding A4, Nyamazana implores the government to include organisations advocating for an end to GBV among essential services during lockdown so that they can attend to rising cases of GBV. WLSA's Ndlovu discloses that the organisation raised GBV awareness, engaged heads at local clinics and monitored their health facilities in A5. A6 explains that the Love Should Not Hurt campaign aims to influence boys and men to take a proactive role in fighting GBV and to raise awareness that GBV should not be tolerated. In A7, on behalf of the government, Nyoni promised to offer, among other services, safe shelters, one-stop centres and police victim-friendly units. With three words, "Enough is enough", the shortest concluding sentence among the articles under study ends A9 with a clarion call for clerics, civil society and political leaders to cooperate in fighting GBV.

Conclusion

Based on the collected data, we find *NewsDay's* articles informative because they include experts on gender, women's rights, reproductive health, high-ranking officials from relevant ministries, and international observances, among other key stakeholders. These articles demonstrate that GBV affects everyone regardless of gender or nationality, though it mainly affects poor women. They identified COVID-19, climate change, patriarchy in its manifestation in socio-religious

spheres and women's complicity as major enablers of GBV. GBV stifles social development because girls and women are stripped of their humanity. We recommend that the government and stakeholders, like officials from the Ministry of Education and Gender, and women's lobby groups, increase outreach programmes, especially in remote areas, provide educational material and include common problems like child abuse and child marriage in the curriculum. Parents and adults who are involved in flagrant violations of children, such as these, should be handed custodial sentences. Educating religious and faith leaders on the importance of observing girls' and women's rights is important. Gender representation, which includes a greater number of female actors in all sectors, such as the media, sources, and other stakeholders, is crucial to achieving comprehensive social transformation, as GBV, as has been alluded to, is a pervasive social challenge. Stakeholders, including social media influencers, musicians and other public figures, should participate in initiatives that fight GBV. Lengthy jail sentences should be handed to perpetrators of rape, murder and fraud because their actions traumatise victims and their families. Police officers and nurses should be trained to deal with people, especially women, in a humane way, lest some women avoid confiding in them.

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