

Challenges and Opportunities of Domestic Violence in Nyeri County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

For many years, domestic violence has been stereotyped as violence against women and girls, with men as perpetrators. However, in recent times, men have also become victims. Domestic violence is a violation of human rights and should not be condoned. Nyeri County has experienced tremendous development and, therefore, changes in terms of education, occupation, and economic activities, making it one of the richest counties in Kenya. With these changes in society, there is a high level of education, strong cultural adjustments, and economic endowment, and the expectation is that there should be harmony in the homes. To the contrary, there is a lot of domestic violence, as captured by scholars and the media. The objective of the study was to assess the challenges and opportunities resulting from domestic violence in Nyeri County, Kenya. Data was collected using questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. The study was underpinned by the frustration-aggression theory and the social learning theory. Descriptive and evaluative research designs were used. The study was conducted in Nyeri County, which has a population of 759,164. The study used random, purposive, convenience, and census sampling techniques. The following respondents were sampled to participate in the study: 384 household heads, 12 assistant chiefs, 15 police officers, 30 religious leaders, 12 NGOs/CBOs, 3 sub-county administrators, and 20 village elders. The primary methods of data collection were questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 25 to give frequency distributions, means, and percentages, and findings were presented using tables, graphs, and charts. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic narrations, and findings were presented using narrations and descriptions. Challenges to domestic violence include a lack of political will (16%), modernity (15%), the influence of social media (20%), societal victimisation (29%), and high poverty levels (20%). There are some opportunities for enhancing the resolution of domestic violence, such as boosting moral values, strengthening the justice system, enacting social programmes and sensitization, and providing psychosocial support. The study recommends that the government, civil society, and the general public should work together to end domestic violence in the county, as it is a major threat to human rights.

Keywords: Domestic, Dynamics, Family, Peace, Socio-Cultural, Violence

I. INTRODUCTION

The social-cultural dynamics in Nyeri County have created an environment that breeds domestic violence. Firstly, Cagnolo (1952), as cited Wanjiru and Kaburi (2015), notes that the Agikuyu community was matriarchal. Women were highly ranked in the community. In fact, all the clans are named after the nine daughters, making every member of the community identify with a woman. In this case, women were the leaders in society and even in homes. The men started to fight for their space in the early 1990s after interacting with other tribes such as the Akamba, Ameru, and Masaai, which had a patriarchal structure (Wanjiru & Kaburi, 2015). It is practically impossible to fight a war that is culturally instilled in social structures. Thus, as men try to fight an already established, strong woman, conflicts arise.

In addition, Nyeri County is ranked the most educated county in the central region (KNBS & SID, 2013). In fact, one of the sub-counties in Nyeri, Mathira Sub-county, is referred to as *Mathira ya Githomo* (Educated Mathira). The missionaries encouraged parents to take their children to school, and the majority of the girls benefited. The education that women in Nyeri acquired empowered them. The boy child was abandoned as the girl child continued to shine. Considering the cultural structures, educated women became more powerful (Salami, 2010). The women learned that they could live independently without depending on men for financial assistance. In this case, Nyeri has the second highest number of single women in the country, after Nairobi County (KNBS & SID, 2013). Women who are married do not fear quitting their marriages, as they see many other women surviving on their own. Men, on the

other hand, are aware that women are empowered. Consequently, a minor domestic disagreement finds a prepared man who is ready to fight back and win the battle. Thus, domestic violence in the county escalates.

Nyeri County is featured more in the news than other counties. Njoroge (2016) argues that the media is stereotypical. All the media stations analysed in a study conducted between 2012 and 2015 showed that they had reported too many cases in Nyeri as compared to the other counties. The three media stations analysed by Njoroge (2016) confirm the same. According to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2014) as cited by Ringwald *et al* (2023), Kenya has reported many cases of GBV. The media reports GBVAM in Nyeri County in a humorous tone. The tone used in packaging the stories fails to capture the seriousness that the topic deserves, with the media using the topic as a comic relief. There is no follow-up for the GBVAM cases. The proper analysis that should follow them is usually absent. Consequently, the victims and perpetrators are left with no assistance to help them recover.

Njoroge (2016) and Mucheru (2014) argue that the cases reported in Nyeri are very many. The cases are also very serious, unlike in other counties where the cases are rarely reported, and if reported, there are hardly serious allegations like the ones in Nyeri County. There is a serious issue in the county, according to the ongoing reporting by media outlets. Since 2010, the media has increasingly reported domestic violence in Nyeri County. On February 6, 2012, the media reported the case of a 40-year-old man, Simon Kiguta, who was seriously attacked and injured by his wife, Julia Wairimu. The couple had been married for 12 years and lived in Mihuti Village, Mukurwe-ini Sub-County, Nyeri. Citizen TV reported that Kiguta came home drunk, and his wife attacked him with a machete. He was hospitalised because he had deep wounds on his body.

In Nyeri County, the high prevalence of domestic violence is far from receding, with most of the disproportionately affected victims being women. Notably, Nyeri is one of the Kenyan counties that has and continues to post a remarkable and stellar economic performance (Karanja (2019). It has experienced tremendous development and, therefore, changes in terms of education, occupation, and economic activities, making it one of the richest counties in Kenya. With these changes in society, there is a high level of education, which has highly contributed to the holistic empowerment of both genders, thus making some of the women secure the most stable jobs that were primarily held by men; cultural adjustments, which have seen the decline in male dominance; and the exchange of gender roles, among others (Wanjiru & Kaburi, 2015). Notably, cultural adjustments have imprinted severe changes in feminine perception, which in turn has influenced the dynamics of domestic violence. Again, economic endowment and empowerment have significantly contributed to the independence of both genders since even women have become a reckoning force in various economic sectors that drive the development of the country.

Among other factors, there ought to be a clear expectation that peaceful coexistence should be the order of the day and that peace and tranquilly should prevail in all homesteads. On the contrary, there is a lot of domestic violence, as captured by scholars and the media. The former has conducted significant research to ascertain the validity of increased domestic violence in the county; with the latter being the voice to the outside world as it unearths the brutalities perpetrated by spouses to their intimate partners. It was in the prime interest of this study to investigate the challenges and opportunities of domestic violence.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study was underpinned by the frustration-aggression theory and the social learning theory. Descriptive and evaluative research designs were used. The study was conducted in Nyeri County, which has a population of 759,164. The study used random, purposive, convenience, and census sampling techniques. The following respondents were sampled to participate in the study: 384 household heads, 12 assistant chiefs, 15 police officers, 30 religious leaders, 12 NGOs/CBOs, 3 sub-county administrators, and 20 village elders. The primary methods of data collection were questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 25 to give frequency distributions, means, and percentages, and findings were presented using tables, graphs, and charts. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic narrations, and findings were presented using narrations and descriptions.

III. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Challenges to Resolving Domestic Violence in Nyeri

The study sought to assess challenges that hinder successful resolution of domestic violence in the study areas. The respondents were asked to indicate the main challenges in resolving domestic disputes in Nyeri County. The results are shown in Figure 1.

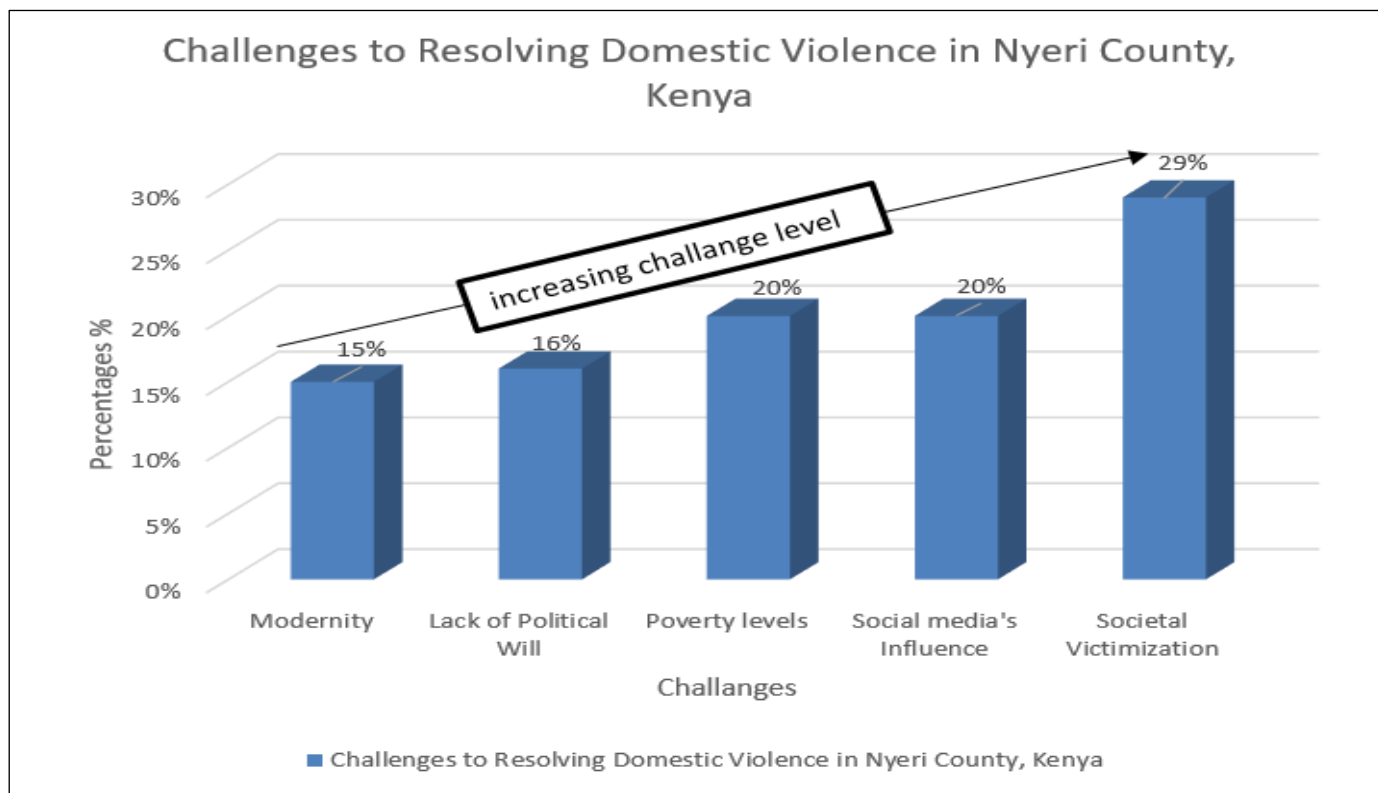


Figure 1
Challenges to Resolving Domestic Violence in Nyeri County, Kenya

3.1.1 Lack of Political Will

Based on Figure 1, 61 (16%) of the respondents claimed that political will is one of the significant challenges facing the battle against domestic violence in Nyeri County. Political will is the extent of commitment key decision-makers show based on a particular solution regarding a specific social issue or problem. In this case, 21% of the respondents argued that in Nyeri County, the groups responsible for ensuring that cases of domestic violence in the county are eliminated are not as effective as expected.

County administrations lack political will. Consequently, they cannot oversee their security personnel in charge of homeland security. Analysis by Lunani *et al.* (2013) affirms that it is not a shortage of equality legislation that is the issue. Poor leadership is the challenge. Typically, a county's leaders' democratic commitment can mobilise an entire community, secure the necessary resources, manage market forces, and commit the heft of stable federal programmes to a lengthy national project. Although there are numerous examples of such dedication, it is crucial to note that the probability of county government personnel intervening on behalf of the poor and defenceless may not always be apparent. The ruling elites' lack of interest, if not a plain lack of dedication, in the well-being of the majority has been a fundamental hindrance to growth in many places. There are nearly three times as many disadvantaged households headed by women as by men. Approximately 30% of children are born into families whose basic needs are not provided by Lunani *et al.* (2013). Despite these facts, the county government of Nyeri has no policy or even a "declaration" that addresses the feminization of poverty in the country.

3.1.2 Societal Victimization

The presentation of data in Figure 1 shows that 111 (29%) of the respondents claimed that societal victimisation is a significant challenge affecting the process of resolving domestic violence issues in Nyeri County. Societal victimisation is the process of targeting intended behaviours, gender, or other social factors that intend to harm individuals by affecting their social status or relationships. Societal victimisation takes different forms, such as friendship manipulation, malicious gossip, social exclusion, and being looked down upon.

For certain women, children are the driving force behind their decision to leave an abusive relationship and seek assistance. For several women, leaving was motivated by a desire to have a wonderful childhood for their offspring. Others saw it as a way to show that abusive and violent acts are not typical of a successful relationship (Karanja, 2019). Simultaneously, the determination to maintain the family structure together can prolong receiving help (King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2017; Karanja, 2019).

It is worth noting that the occurrence of actual assault has no bearing on these young people's commitment to remain in or quit a partnership. Instead, it is the encounter with other poor relationship character traits, such as psychological abuse or miscommunication, which causes the marriage to end. The acknowledgment of the matter by peers and family also influences this judgement. Those whose partner is highly regarded by one's friends and family are more likely to continue the relationship. At the same time, those whose substantial other is viewed negatively by their friends and family are much more inclined to leave. If they think that there is a chance to meet someone new, youth are also more likely to leave these partnerships.

3.1.3 Modernity

In Figure 1, one may observe that 58 (15%) of the respondents claimed that modernity is among the significant challenges that make it hard to fight the issue of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Modernity is the evolution of the social culture of behaviours. Modernity, per the thesis on aggression and enlightenment, diminishes violence, yet criminality and warfare continue to be causes of conflict at Nyeri society's periphery (Njoroge, 2016). On the outskirts of society, the impoverished, who are experiencing poverty and inequality, are the principal users of aggression in this strategy (Mutahi, 2017). This is criminalised, aberrant behaviour. Atomization, individualism, social dysfunction, unemployment, and social upheaval are modern factors that undermine the curbing of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Crime, including violent crime, is seen as a result of social and economic inequality in the county.

Those who cannot obtain goods or services through traditional means turn to illegal routes. In the views of Njoroge (2016), modernity's civilising benefits are mediated by a rise in ego, especially management over the manifestation of violent inclinations. This results from a significant interplay of modifications in numerous social structures and personality types. According to various homicide studies, the incidence of murder has increased over time in Nyeri County (Mutahi, 2017). This increase has been attributed to modernism through the influence of economic progress.

Nyeri is a contemporaneous county, for it entails a local government with a monopoly on justifiable aggression in a particular region. This hegemony arose after a long era in history, during which Nyeri County government security personnel became increasingly violent (Mwangi, 2017). Since the growth of construction military technology provides an edge to those institutions that can raise the vast sums of money required, this tendency linked the state's authority to go out to conflict with the growth of the government's capacity to raise taxes. Outside of the state, smaller groups and warlords were also diminished. In historical sociology, the study of these processes has a lengthy history (King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2017).

3.1.4 Social media's Influence on Domestic Violence

According to Figure 1, 77 (77%) of the respondents claimed that the influence of social media is one of the significant challenges facing the attempt to thoroughly eradicate the issue of domestic violence in Nyeri County. It is important to note that social media can be used positively to handle domestic violence in Nyeri County. Still, it also plays a vital role in challenging the fight if used negatively.

Media violence has long been connected to aggressive behaviour and the commission of violent crimes, such as family abuse (Njoroge, 2016). According to the study, there is barely a sprinkle of evidence that shows a link between broadcast violence and crime (Githaiga, 2020). Pearson's correlation is less than 0.4% in most studies in this field. There is no statistically significant link between exposure to violent acts in the media and the conduct of crimes in Nyeri County. Media coverage of television and computer games shows that violent behaviour is not a significant predictor of violent crime. Even though there is little link between media violence and violent behaviour, there are



traces of a moderately positive relationship between media aggressiveness and domestic violence perceptions. The media's hostility has been linked to several deviant attitudes, ranging from rape to views on domestic violence. These attitudes encourage and accept women's rape and abusive acts towards intimate relationships.

The Cultivation Theory presents a theoretical explanation for the link between violent media exposure and violent criminal behaviour. According to Cultivation Theory, "when people are exposed to media content or other socialisation agents, they progressively adopt or acquire beliefs about the world that match the pictures or messages they have been hearing" (Lee et al., 2019). As a result of this, people mistake their "world reality" for "media reality," increasing the risk of violence (Njoroge, 2016). People exposed to violent media are more likely to believe that their reality is equally damaging, which increases their odds of acting aggressively. Individuals from social conceptions associate their experiences with "media reality," causing them to believe that violence seen in the media is acceptable in real life.

The Cultivation Theory presents a theoretical explanation for the link between violent media exposure and violent criminal behaviour. According to Cultivation Theory, "when people are exposed to media content or other socialisation agents, they progressively adopt or acquire beliefs about the world that match the pictures or messages they've been hearing". At the end of the study, it is possible to analyse the impact of following up on television shows and highlighting episodes on rape myth acceptance. Soap opera viewers in Nyeri County were more inclined to believe race myths and had an "overestimation of fake rape charges", whereas crime show viewers were less likely (Njoroge, 2016). This demonstrates how the type of television show one watches influences how and what the county residents learn from it.

3.1.5 High Poverty Levels

The presentation of data in Figure 1 shows that 77 (20%) of the respondents claimed that poverty is a significant challenge affecting the process of resolving domestic violence issues in Nyeri County. While poverty, unemployment, corruption, and economic stress do not cause domestic violence, they do raise its likelihood in Nyeri County and also hinder the resolution of domestic violence. Domestic violence is more than twice as common among women who live in low-income areas as it is among women who live in more affluent places in Nyeri County (Njenga & Njoroge, 2021). Poverty affects an assailant's ability to maintain dominance and influence over an abuse survivor. Sexual assault victims who can leave a marriage amicably and create safe, affordable homes with a way to provide for themselves rather than their spouses are more likely to avoid repeated abuse, as per scholarship and practise. Victims of domestic violence who have little or no money, especially those who have children, rarely have the resources they need to flee the violence.

3.2 Opportunities of Domestic Violence in Nyeri County, Kenya

Even if there are some challenges associated with resolving domestic violence in Nyeri County, it is important to note that opportunities are also there. In this case, there are opportunities in terms of strategies that can be applied to addressing the issues of domestic violence in Nyeri County. It is equally important to ensure that whatever strategies are implemented are ones that have been proven to be effective in preventing the vice, revealing the root causes, and addressing cases of domestic violence that may have already taken place in the past.

The study sought to assess opportunities for domestic violence in Nyeri County. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the given parameters as possible opportunities for resolving domestic disputes in the study area. The results were presented in the following tables:

3.2.1 Boosting Moral Values

The respondents were asked if boosting moral values was a possible opportunity of resolving domestic disputes in the study area. The findings were presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Boosting Moral Values

Strategy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Cumulative agreement
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Boosting moral values	5 (1%)	4 (1%)	2 (1%)	200 (52%)	173 (45%)	373 (97%)



According to Table 1, 5 (1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 4 (1%) disagreed that boosting moral values is one of the best opportunities for domestic violence in Nyeri County today. However, 200 (52% agreed) and 173 (45%) strongly agreed that boosting the moral values among the members of Nyeri County would help deal with the issue of domestic violence. Additionally, 2 (1%) of the respondents said that they did not know.

Secondly, the impact of religion in the county is also not as pronounced as it was a few decades ago. Many Kenyans, those in Nyeri County included, may identify as Christians or Muslims, but most do not embrace the teachings of such religions (Aizer, 2010). This can be attributed to the hustle and bustle associated with a modern lifestyle that has seen a significant number of Nyeri County urban residents shun the practice of attending church services on Sundays and instead opt to engage in recreational activities. Encouraging people to seek guidance and counselling from religion will most likely boost moral values among residents of Nyeri County. This is because most religions, including Christianity and Islam, discourage domestic violence (Aizer, 2010).

Finally, the lack of effective role models has also led to the erosion of moral values, as some of the people who are considered leaders in the country are the ones engaging in various forms of vice, including domestic and sexual violence. It is therefore imperative that individuals in leadership positions in society, including political leaders, religious leaders, and cultural celebrities, are encouraged to embrace positive morals and exhibit the same in their conduct as a way of encouraging the rest of Nyeri residents to do the same (Basar & Demirci, 2018).

3.2.2 Strengthening the Criminal Justice System

The respondents were asked if strengthening the criminal justice system was a possible opportunity of resolving domestic disputes in the study area. The findings were presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Strengthening the Criminal Justice System

Strategy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Cumulative agreement
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Strengthening criminal justice system	3 (1%)	6 (2%)	0 (0%)	278 (72%)	97 (25%)	375 (97%0

According to Table 2, 3 (1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 6 (2%) disagreed with the argument that strengthening criminal justice systems is an opportunity that can help reduce cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County. On the contrary, 278 (72%) of the respondents agreed, and 97 (25%) strongly agreed that boosting and streamlining the justice systems would help curb domestic violence cases in Nyeri County.

Most of the respondents complained about the issue of corruption in the justice system as one of the significant reasons for the permissiveness of domestic violence in Nyeri County. The problem was raised and defended well in a meeting with members from NGOs and other community-based organisations in Nyeri County.

Defilement is a legal term that refers to a crime where an adult engages in sexual conduct with an underage. Defilement can also constitute a form of domestic violence in cases where an adult family engages in violent or even alleged consensual sexual acts with a minor. In such a case, the minor cannot give such consent, and this cannot be used as a defence in a court of law (Groves & Thomas, 2013). Be that as it may, the evidence threshold in defilement cases can be very high in instances where the courts may require physical evidence. In many cases of defilement, the victim is usually ashamed of the act, and they are most likely to report it days, months, or even years after this form of sexual violence has occurred, especially when it involves close family members (Groves & Thomas, 2013). For this reason, it may be difficult to collect physical evidence, such as DNA samples, from the victim. The high evidence threshold is one of the weaknesses in the legal system that may allow perpetrators of defilement in Nyeri County to get away with their actions. Easing the threshold of evidence and allowing the testimonies of the victims to be taken into account in cases of defilement is one of the main avenues through which the criminal justice system can be enhanced to address cases of domestic violence. This will ensure that underage victims of domestic violence can get justice for the crimes committed against them.

The criminal justice system's response to victims of household conflicts and cyberstalking should be strengthened, and the activity should be offender-focused. The perpetrators should be arrested, dealt with accordingly by the law, and have harsh penalties imposed on them. Moreover, the victims of domestic abuse should also be followed up on and safeguarded against further humiliation and control by the abusers. This will prevent the

frustration and mental problems that may be caused by further physical or cyber harassment and also decrease the incidence of domestic violence in general, as supported by the frustration-aggression theory that underpins the study.

3.2.3 Sensitization

The respondents were asked if sensitization was a possible opportunity of resolving domestic disputes in the study area. The findings were presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Sensitization

Strategy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Cumulative agreement
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Sensitization	6 (2%)	3 (1%)	5 (1%)	197 (51%)	173 (45%)	370(97%)

In Table 3, it is well depicted that 6 (2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and 3 (1%) disagreed that sensitization of domestic violence will help reduce cases in Nyeri County. However, 197 (51%) of the respondents agreed, while 173 (45%) strongly agreed that sensitising the issue of domestic violence in Nyeri County would help reduce it. Five of the respondents said that they did not know.

Sensitization of the issue of domestic violence in Nyeri County is the process of emphasising the point so that people can see the magnitude of the problem. Based on the information recorded after an interview with members of NGOs and other community-based organisations, one major reason why domestic violence in the community is still rampant is because most people do not understand its impact or what domestic violence is.

Sensitization also plays a crucial role in putting a face behind the stories of domestic violence. In some cases, Nyeri residents may fail to pay too much attention to the problem, as some may never have come across anyone who is a victim of domestic violence (D'Ambrosi et al., 2018). Having such people narrate their stories will go a long way in enabling the residents to appreciate the seriousness and extent of the problem.

3.2.4 Current Media Selection

The respondents were asked if current media selection was a possible opportunity of resolving domestic disputes in the study area. The findings were presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Current media selection

Strategy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Cumulative agreement
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Current media selection	12 (3%)	19 (5%)	4 (1%)	203 (53%)	146 (38%)	349 (91%)

Table 4 has an articulation of how respondents viewed the impact of current media selection as an opportunity. The table shows that 12 (3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 19 (5%) disagreed that current media selection could be used to reduce cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County. However, 203 (53%) of the respondents agreed, and 146 (38%) strongly agreed that current media selection could be used as an essential tool to control cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County. Four of the members, who were about 1% of the total respondents, neither agreed nor disagreed with the idea of current media selection as a tool to eliminate cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County.

A sound sensitization strategy ought to be coupled with the most appropriate current media solution. This is because it is the current media in question that will pass along the intended message on the effects of domestic violence. In Nyeri County, just as is the case with many other counties across the country, television and radio remain the most popular media outlets. However, a significant number of Nyeri County residents have embraced new media solutions such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and other emerging social media platforms (Haas, 2017). The sensitization strategy should therefore integrate elements of both traditional media platforms such as television and



radio as well as the aforementioned new media platforms. Such an integrated approach will ensure that the message can reach as many residents of Nyeri County as possible (Roberts & Marchais, 2018).

3.2.5 Balanced Distribution of Resources

The respondents were asked if balanced distribution of resources was a possible opportunity of resolving domestic disputes in the study area. The findings were presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Balanced Distribution of Resources

Strategy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Cumulative agreement
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Balanced distribution of resources	11 (3%)	6 (2%)	8 (2%)	148 (38%)	211 (55%)	359 (93%)

Based on the information presented in Table 5, 11 (3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 6 (2%) disagreed with the idea that balancing the distribution of resources effectively reduces domestic violence in Nyeri County. However, 148 (38%) agreed, and 211 (55%) strongly agreed that balancing the distribution of resources in Nyeri County will help solve the domestic violence issues rampant in this county. 8 (2%) of the respondents said they did not know.

It is very easy for an individual with resources to subjugate one who lacks the same. The fact that many men in Nyeri country are wealthier than women has resulted in the men feeling like they can dominate their female counterparts, and unfortunately, some men prefer to use physical violence as a way of reaffirming their dominance (Lök, Başoğul, & Öncel, 2016). A scenario in which women in Nyeri County are facilitated and encouraged to pursue various wealth creation solutions will most likely translate to more respect from the men, which will ultimately reduce cases of domestic violence. The question therefore begs: “how can women be economically empowered to reduce the overall skewness of wealth distribution in Nyeri County?” One of the solutions would be a change in cultural practises that deny women the right to inherit property, especially paternal property (King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2017). Women should be accorded more or less the same inheritance rights as men. Such a practice will ensure that women can inherit wealth directly from their parents, thus reducing the number of women who are one hundred percent dependent on their husbands (Njoroge, 2016). This will reduce cases of domestic violence since men will be more respectful of the women in their lives.

An even distribution of resources within the household will reduce frustration between the partners, as both the man and the woman will carry out their gender roles and responsibilities effectively. On top of that, a balanced distribution of resources in society is also important, such that certain households will not feel deprived of resources for the benefit of others. This will reduce frustration within households, thereby lowering the cases of domestic violence in the county, as supported by the frustration-aggression theory.

3.2.6 Enhancing Community Policies

The respondents were asked if enhancing community policies was a possible opportunity for resolving domestic disputes in the study area. The findings were presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Enhancing Community Policies

Strategy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Cumulative agreement
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Enhancing community policies	18 (5%)	11 (3%)	4 (1%)	229 (60%)	122 (31%)	351 (91%)

On the issue of the establishment of community policies as an opportunity of reducing domestic violence cases in Nyeri County, Table 6 shows that 18 (5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 11 (3%) disagreed that this would be an effective way of tackling the issue. On the contrary, 229 (60%) of the respondents agreed, and 122



(31%) strongly agreed that coming up with new community policies will help curb the issue of domestic violence prominent in Nyeri County. 4 of the respondents claimed they did not know.

Community policies are interventions made concerning various societal or communal problems through the community's involvement. Developing new community policies is done by encouraging community members' active participation in public decision-making. Therefore, coming up with unique community policies means that the residents of Nyeri County can join hands through various forums and make rules and policies that will help govern the conduct of people in this county.

Karanja (2019) argues that it is important to have in place an improved policy framework surrounding punishment for perpetrators of domestic violence. Before implementing the policy, there should be clear objectives that inform on the policy. In the case of domestic violence, one of the main objectives should be the administration of justice (Karanja, 2019). It is important that whatever punishment is given out to the offender, the victim, and members of society, in general, should be able to appreciate that justice has indeed been served. When the punishment is seemingly too lenient, then the objective of justice will not have been achieved. In addition to administering justice, another main objective on the policy framework concerning punishment should be deterrence (Lopes, 2016). The punishment for perpetrators of domestic violence ought to be harsh enough to discourage any potential offender from engaging in violent conduct against those close to them. It is important for the relevant authorities in Nyeri County including the judiciary, the police, and society in general, to ensure that they can play their respective role towards ensuring that punishment for offenders is extremely high.

One of the reasons why a significant number of victims of domestic violence in Nyeri do not end up getting the justice they deserve is the impact of traditional culture. There are various cultural solutions, including eliciting the services of clan elders, that can effectively address minor cases of domestic violence, such as disagreements between siblings, spouses, or any other family members that do not give rise to physical violence (Karanja, 2019). However, such cultural solutions are sometimes employed in more serious cases, including extreme physical violence, rape, and even incest. In many cases, the punishment prescribed by culture might not befit the crime. For this reason, the policy framework on punishment should ensure that perpetrators of any serious case of domestic violence are brought before a court of law and not subjected to some traditional conflict resolution mechanism that may see them walk free.

3.2.7 Psychosocial Support

The respondents were asked if psychosocial support was a possible opportunity of resolving domestic disputes in the study area. The findings were presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Psychosocial Support

Strategy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Cumulative agreement
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Psychological support	98 (26%)	76 (20%)	16 (4%)	187 (48%)	7 (2%)	194 (50%)

Table 7 shows that 98 (26%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 76 (20%) disagreed that psychological support would not be an effective way of solving domestic violence in Nyeri County. However, 187 (48%) of the participants agreed, and 7 (2%) strongly agreed that psychological support would help control domestic violence cases in Nyeri County. 16 (4%) of the respondents said they did not know.

According to Ghafournia (2017), most perpetrators of domestic violence have unresolved underlying issues. As earlier mentioned, many men engaging in domestic violence may have been raised in abusive families. Psychosocial support is one of the most effective solutions that can unearth some of the underlying issues that may prompt Nyeri residents to engage in violent behaviour against their significant others or any other close member of the family. Potential perpetrators will thus be accorded an opportunity to confront the issues that they may have avoided for many years, thus improving their capacity to establish and retain proper, violent-free, and loving relationships with the people that they consider dear (Ghafournia, 2017). Finally, while a professional such as a psychologist may play a

key role in administering psychosocial support, other close family members must participate in the same. Such an approach will make the person feel loved and appreciated, thus commencing the healing process.

3.2.8 Economic Boost by Using Devolved Resources

The respondents were asked if economic boost by using devolved resources was a possible opportunity of resolving domestic disputes in the study area. The findings were presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Economic Boost by Using Devolved Resources

Strategy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Cumulative agreement
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Economic boost	34 (9%)	18 (4%)	6 (2%)	199 (52%)	127 (33%)	326 (85%)

In Table 8, 34 (9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 18 (4%) disagreed that boosting the economy of Nyeri County will help solve cases of domestic violence in this county. On the other hand, 199 (52%) of the individuals agreed, and 127 (33%) strongly agreed that boosting the economy of Nyeri County would help reduce cases of domestic violence in the county. Six (2%) of the respondents said they do not know what the effect of boosting the economy of Nyeri County will be regarding domestic violence.

In many cases, women in Nyeri County rely on funds from their investment groups, otherwise referred to as *chamas*. The investment groups have gone a long way in enabling a lot of women in the county to start their own businesses or boost existing ones, but funds from the groups are very limited (Mwangi, 2017). In almost all *chamas*, their only source of funds is the contributions of individual members. One of the ways through which the county government can channel economic boost funds can therefore be through such investment groups. Funds from the devolved government can significantly boost the overall capacity of women investment groups, enabling them to expand their businesses or even venture into more lucrative business segments that ordinarily may be too expensive for them. If implemented effectively, an economic boost programme initiated by the devolved government in Nyeri will enhance the status of Nyeri women. The women will be more independent, more respected, and more engaged in the overall economic welfare of their families. Such women are less likely to be victims of domestic violence.

3.2.9 Enactment of Programs within Social Groups

The respondents were asked if enactment of programs within social groups was a possible opportunity of resolving domestic disputes in the study area. The findings were presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Enactment of Programs within Social Groups

Strategy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Cumulative agreement
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Enactment of programs	21 (5%)	33 (9%)	5 (1%)	238 (62%)	87 (23%)	325 (85%)

Table 9 shows various responses after the respondents were asked if the enactment of programmes is an opportunity that can reduce cases of domestic violence in Nyeri County. According to the results, 21 (5%) strongly disagreed and 33 (9%) disagreed that enacting programmes would reduce domestic violence cases in this county. However, 238 (62%) and 87 (23%) agreed strongly with the idea. Five (1%) of the respondents said they did not know. Enactment of programmes is the process of making some of the programmes in the community legal by seeking official permissions from the necessary authorities. In this case, some of the programmes run in women's groups, churches, and youth groups should be enacted to perform as expected.

According to Karanja (2019), both church groups and youth groups can also play a key role in eliciting debate on various topics relating to domestic violence, thus facilitating the formulation of potential solutions. The groups can also be used as awareness-creation vehicles, whereby members of the groups are involved in passing across messages on how to deal with domestic violence, including sharing hotline numbers that victims can use.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

The study focused on evaluating obstacles to effectively resolving domestic violence within Nyeri County. After surveying respondents about challenges in addressing domestic disputes, findings indicated that societal victimisation posed the primary hindrance, followed by the impact of social media and poverty levels. Conversely, lack of political will and modernity were identified as less significant challenges in addressing domestic violence. The study also explored opportunities for improvement. Enhancing moral values, strengthening the criminal justice system, sensitization efforts, current media utilisation, balanced resource allocation, new community policies, psychological support, economic upliftment, and programme enactment were recognised as potential avenues. The study concludes that despite obstacles like political will and societal victimisation, there are hopeful opportunities that, if effectively harnessed, could lead to improvements in the domestic violence situation in Nyeri County.

4.2 Recommendation

It is recommended that the government, the civil society and the general public should work together to end domestic violence in the county as it is a major threat to human rights. Domestic violence can only be curbed in Nyeri if the society works together with the government and other stakeholders and takes the right measures.

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