


The Impact of Gender-based Violence on the South African Economy: A Literature Review



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ABSTRACT

Not only is gender-based violence (GBV) pervasive in South Africa, but it is also acknowledged as a worldwide scourge that impacts people of all ages and genders. Nonetheless, data and most GBV cases show that women and children are particularly susceptible compared to males and boys. In addition to violating the basic rights and dignity of victims, GBV puts their lives in danger and puts a financial strain on the South African economy. This led to this literature evaluation to investigate the costs related to GBV as well as the costs of response and prevention in South Africa. The study procured secondary data from numerous sources retrieved from academic databases (such as Google Scholar, Researchgate, etc.) and employed qualitative content analysis to scrutinise the data gathered from the collection of literature. Notably, the paper used qualitative approaches to support or refute claims and arguments made by many experts about GBV and the economy. The findings revealed that GBV depletes women's energy, jeopardises their emotional and physical well-being, and undermines their sense of self recommend. The study further revealed that, in addition to the physical, sexual and mental impairment caused by GBV, there is also an economic loss owing to GBV that needs to be explored by relevant bodies and scholars. The study recommended strategies to lower the rising financial losses caused by GBV. The study further suggests reducing existing spending in response to GBV. The study also recommended more investment in preventative measures than reactive spending. This study contributes to the literature on the impact of GBV on the economy of South Africa.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) is primarily used to describe the mistreatment of women and children, and particularly in various African states, it is considered a fast-growing problem. However, according to the United Nations (UN) gender-based violence is any damaging act performed against someone based on socially ascribed (gender) disparities between males and females.¹ Likewise, Graaff believes that GBV is directed at people because of their gender identity.² In their paper, Enaifoghe, et.al., add that, in addition to threats, pressure, and deprivation of financial or educational resources, GBV includes abuse that is

¹ IASC–Inter-Agency Standing Committee. Guidelines for integrating gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery. (2015).

² Karen Graaff, “The Implications of a Narrow Understanding of Gender-Based Violence,” *Feminist Encounters* 5, no. 1 (2021): 1–12.

physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and psychological and can occur in both public and private settings.³ Therefore, it is critical to understand that GBV is a larger category and does not only refer to abuse towards women.⁴ This indicates that GBV affects men, boys, and members of gender minority groups, such as LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual) people.⁵

In simple terms, GBV is the result of various factors joining together. Khuzwayo asserts that interactions between people, communities, economics, cultures, and religions are what lead to GBV.⁶ Ott claims that GBV can have detrimental effects on one's physical, emotional, social, and financial well-being, among other things.⁷ Moreover, Anena and Ibrahim claim that GBV infringes on human rights, impedes economic growth and productivity, and endangers the health and well-being of millions of people globally.⁸

As has already been said, GBV is a problem that is identified on a worldwide scale.⁹ According to Kusuma and Babu, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was overwhelmingly endorsed by 195 UN members on September 25, 2015.¹⁰ With 17 objectives and 169 targets, this agenda gives countries a framework for advancing sustainable social, economic, and environmental development over the course of the next 15 years.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) place a strong emphasis on preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG). The "gender goal," or SDG-5, is entirely focused on empowering women and girls and attaining gender equality. Its purpose (5.2) is to eradicate all kinds of violence against women and girls, including trafficking, sexual exploitation, and other forms of exploitation. It also addresses harmful customs, including female genital mutilation (target 5.3) and, forced marriages. A strong gender framework and a thorough comprehension of gender inequality serve as the foundation for this SDG. It includes interrelated social, economic, and political facets.¹¹

The goal of SDG-16 is to end violence against women and the deaths that follow, particularly dowry and domestic abuse, which are common in many poor nations. Thus, violence against women and girls (VAWG) is directly addressed by these four SDG objectives (5.2, 5.3, 16.1, and 16.2) while numerous other SDG targets seek to prevent and reduce VAWG, either directly or through indirect means. These goals include providing men and women with similar opportunities for resources, essential services, inheritance, property control and ownership, natural resources, technological advances, and others.¹² In particular, GBV against other people is neither differentiated nor subject to discrimination in this article. The paper admits that governments, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), media, international organisations, and the general public are paying increasing attention to GBV against women and girls. On the other hand, GBV against males and boys frequently gets little to no attention. Thus, regardless of the gender impact, this article looks at the financial effects of GBV on the South African economy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a conspicuous dearth of research on the subject of GBV in South Africa. There is also a dearth of studies on the financial consequences of GBV in other countries across the globe and the financial toll that these crimes have on the world economy. Globally, there is a tendency in the fields of criminology and the criminal justice system to focus on GBV against urban women and girls, while ignoring GBV against men and boys.¹³

³ Andrew Enaifoghe et al., "The Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence against Women in South Africa: A Call for Action," *African Journal of Gender, Society & Development* 10, no. 1 (2021): 117.

⁴ Graaff, "The Implications of a Narrow Understanding of Gender-Based Violence,"

⁵ Graaff, "The Implications of a Narrow Understanding of Gender-Based Violence."

⁶ Z.M. Khuzwayo, "Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Umlazi, Ward 83 Durban" (Durban University of Technology, 2023).

⁷ M. Ott, "Series: What Does That Mean? Gender-Based Violence. Women-for-Women International," 2017,

<https://www.womenforwomen.org/blogs/series-what-does-meangender-based-violence>.

⁸ Catherine Pauline Anena and Solava Ibrahim, "Revisiting Economic Empowerment as a Sufficient Remedy for Gender Based Violence: The Case of Jinja District in Uganda," 2020.

⁹ Enaifoghe et al., "The Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence against Women in South Africa: A Call for Action"; Graaff, "The Implications of a Narrow Understanding of Gender-Based Violence."

¹⁰ Yadlapalli S Kusuma and Bontha V Babu, "Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls as a Global Action Agenda," *Journal of Injury and Violence Research* 9, no. 2 (2017): 117.

¹¹ Kusuma and Babu, "Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls as a Global Action Agenda."

¹² Kusuma and Babu, "Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls as a Global Action Agenda."

¹³ Monde Lisulo, "Attitudes of Young People towards Female Perpetrated Gender-Based Violence against Men in Zambia" (2019).

In recent years, there has been little focus on gender-based violence against boys and men. The scholarly and journalistic sectors, as well as the general public, have been impacted by the total disregard for this subject. The public's awareness of and empathy for the violence experienced by men and boys has only just grown. Because GBV against men and boys was previously unheard of, the media and academic community neglected to prioritise and study the subject, just as they do with violence against women and girls. The article contends that GBV significantly affects a nation's economy regardless of the victim's gender.¹⁴

The prevalence of gender-based violence in South Africa

Like other regions of the world, South Africa is not immune to the global epidemic of GBV. Abuse that is physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological is just a few ways gender-based violence can manifest. The World Bank has cited several instances, including forced and early marriages, sex trafficking, female genital mutilation, murder, and so-called "honour" killings.¹⁵ Remarkably, almost 30% of women globally have been victims of either physical or sexual assault.¹⁶ Moreover, 38.6% of female killings worldwide are thought to be the result of romantic relationships; 20% of women report having experienced sexual abuse as children, and 7% of women globally report that their spouses have abused them sexually since the age of fifteen.¹⁷ Also, there are an estimated 11.4 million women and girls who have been trafficked worldwide. A staggering 70 million girls have, often against their will, been pushed into marriage before reaching 18. Over 3 million girls are in danger of having their genitalia cut every year, and up to 140 million women and girls have suffered from this practice in Africa.¹⁸

These results stem from pervasive gender discrepancies that exist in almost every country, as women frequently encounter obstacles while trying to get various services, including healthcare. Increased use of healthcare services is necessary for those who have suffered violence.¹⁹ Women's equitable involvement in society is hampered by VAWG, which also has an adverse effect on general development.²⁰ In addition to being the main cause of female homicide, exposure to VAWG has been linked to several mental health conditions, such as depression and suicidal thoughts and behaviours, and raises the risk of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection in women and girls who have been victims of violence.²¹

A poll of 5,621 South Africans from four distinct areas was conducted in 2012 by Gender Links. According to the research, GBV has been experienced by 77% of women in Limpopo, 51% in Gauteng, 45% in the Western Cape, and 36% in KwaZulu-Natal at some point in their lives. GBV can take the form of sexual, physical, financial, or emotional abuse. According to the report, men conduct GBV at a higher rate than women: 76% of those who confess to committing the crime in Gauteng, 48% in Limpopo, and 41% in KwaZulu-Natal. A total of 179,683 occurrences of violence against women and 45,229 cases of violence against children were recorded.²² The author could, however, not find relevant statistics on GBV cases committed against men.

¹⁴ World Bank, "Gender-Based Violence: An Analysis of the Implications for the Nigeria for Women Project. Washington, DC: World Bank," 2019; S. Breuer, "Economic Analyses on the Cost of Gender-Based Violence in Namibia (No. 86)," . . . *ZÖSS Discussion Paper*, 2021.

¹⁵ World Bank Brief, "Gender-Based Violence (Violence against Women and Girls)," 2019,

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls>.

¹⁶ World Bank, "Violence Against Women and Girls – What the Data Tells Us," 2022, <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/data-stories/overview-of-gender-based-violence/>.

¹⁷ Kusuma and Babu, "Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls as a Global Action Agenda."

¹⁸ Kusuma and Babu, "Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls as a Global Action Agenda."

¹⁹ Ana Speed, Callum Thomson, and Kayliegh Richardson, "Stay Home, Stay Safe, Save Lives? An Analysis of the Impact of COVID-19 on the Ability of Victims of Gender-Based Violence to Access Justice," *The Journal of Criminal Law* 84, no. 6 (2020): 539–72; Ankunda Milia, "Access To And Utilisation Of Health Services By Male Survivors Of Gender Based Violence In Kamwenge District" (Makerere University, 2020); Tonny Ssekamatte et al., "Help-Seeking and Challenges Faced by Transwomen Following Exposure to Gender-Based Violence; a Qualitative Study in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area, Uganda," *International Journal for Equity in Health* 21, no. 1 (2022): 171.

²⁰ Emma Fulu and Sarah Homan, "Sustainable Development Goals and Violence against Women and Girls," 2021.

²¹ Ruxana Jina and Leena S Thomas, "Health Consequences of Sexual Violence against Women," *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics & Gynaecology* 27, no. 1 (2013): 15–26.

²² South African Police Service. Annual Performance Plan 2018/2019. Pretoria: South African Police Service. (2019).

GBV, as a violation of human rights and a matter of public health, affects not only the survivor but also the survivor's family, the community, and the government. According to Mpani and Nsibandé, GBV impacts not only the victim but also the survivor's family, the community, and the government. Physical injuries such as bruising, fractures, chronic pain, headaches, unintended pregnancies, miscarriages, early deliveries, or injury to the foetus in pregnant women are among the personal effects of GBV.²³ According to Thobane et al., GBV can also result in the development of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, phobias, panic disorders, and behavioural problems like alcoholism, suicidal thoughts, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, living in constant fear, and rationalising the abuse.²⁴ Furthermore, as the same study notes, there has been a correlation between the establishment of hostile attitudes, psychiatric problems, drug misuse and childhood sexual abuse. Boys who have been sexually abused are more likely to display aggressive behaviours in their future intimate and non-intimate relationships, whereas females who have suffered sexual abuse are more likely to engage in sexual activities that put them in danger of being victims again. According to Artz et al., a quarter of children who have experienced sexual abuse at the hands of adults have serious challenges in their academic and attendance lives.²⁵

In South Africa, GBV has escalated to crisis levels.²⁶ It still makes news in South Africa despite official efforts to stop it. The most serious types of GBV are thought to be femicide and intimate partner violence (IPV).²⁷ Globally, one in three women claim to have experienced gender-based violence.²⁸ Notably, every three hours, on average, a woman is slain by her intimate partner.²⁹ It should come as no surprise that South Africa, which is rated 38th out of 163 countries, is acknowledged as one of the most violent nations in the world. Unfortunately, because GBV is so sensitive and complicated, very little information about it is disclosed. GBV is described as "the tip of the iceberg" or "an invisible catastrophe" by Mr. Ramaphosa, the president of the Republic of South Africa.³⁰ Unfortunately, many survivors are reluctant to talk about their violent experiences for a variety of reasons. The article subsequently discusses and gives a general summary of the financial costs related to GBV.

The economic cost of gender-based violence in South Africa and elsewhere in the globe

Mulenga posits that GBV has an adverse effect on the psychological health of the victim.³¹ It creates mistrust and terror, cutting off the individual from the neighbourhood or other family members. Mulenga has observed that victims of GBV also typically distance themselves from economic activities that promote growth and productivity.³² Enaifoghe, et.al., corroborate this claim.³³ Enaifoghe also discovered

²³ Patience Mpani and Nondumiso Nsibandé. "Understanding gender policy and gender-based violence in South Africa: A literature review." Retrieved from Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre: <https://www.soulcity.org.za/campaigns/gbv/resources/understanding-gender-policy-and-gender-based-violence-in-south-africa-a-literature-review> (2015).

²⁴ Mahlogonolo Thobane et al., "Collaboration in Gender-Based Violence Response, Access to Justice and Prevention" (Cape Town, South Africa: Gender, Health, and Justice Research Unit ..., 2020).

²⁵ Lillian Artz, et.l., *Sexual victimisation of children in South Africa—Final report of the Optimus Foundation study: South Africa*. Zurich: UBS Optimus Foundation. (2016).

²⁶ Shaka Yesufu, "The scourge of gender-based violence (GBV) on women plaguing South Africa." *EUREKA: Social and Humanities* 1 (2022): 96-100.

²⁷ Peter Manzanga, "A public pastoral assessment of Church response to Gender Based Violence (GBV) within the United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe." PhD diss., North-West University (South-Africa), 2020; R. N. Matzopoulos, Abrahams, B. Bowman, N. Shai, M. Prinsloo, S. Salau, D. Bradshaw, and G. Gray. "Utility of crime surveys for Sustainable Development Goals monitoring and violence prevention using a public health approach." *South African Medical Journal* 109, no. 6 (2019): 382-386.

²⁸ Ali Bani-Fatemi, Monica Malta, Amanda Noble, Wei Wang, Thanara Rajakulendran, Deborah Kahan, and Vicky Stergiopoulos. "Supporting female survivors of gender-based violence experiencing homelessness: Outcomes of a health promotion psychoeducation group intervention." *Frontiers in psychiatry* 11 (2020): 601540.

²⁹ Nobuhle Judy Dlamini, "Gender-Based Violence, Twin Pandemic to COVID-19," *Critical Sociology* 47, no.4–5(2021):583–90.

³⁰ S. Mulenga, "The Social and Economic Effects of Gender-Based Violence: A Case Study of Lusaka District's Selected Compound and Residential Areas: Bauleni and Mutendere Compound; Woodlands and New Kasama Residential Areas" (2020).

³¹ Mulenga, "The Social and Economic Effects of Gender-Based Violence: A Case Study of Lusaka District's Selected Compound and Residential Areas: Bauleni and Mutendere Compound; Woodlands and New Kasama Residential Areas."

³² Mulenga, "The Social and Economic Effects of Gender-Based Violence: A Case Study of Lusaka District's Selected Compound and Residential Areas: Bauleni and Mutendere Compound; Woodlands and New Kasama Residential Areas."

³³ Enaifoghe et al., "The Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence against Women in South Africa: A Call for Action."

that because of the stigma and the physical and mental strain brought on by the attack, GBV might prevent survivors from realising their full economic potential.³⁴

Due to its substantial economic impact, VAWG is projected to cost 1.2% of GDP in Brazil and Tanzania, 2% in Chile, and 0.9–1.3% in South Africa.³⁵ While England and Wales predicted spending £22.9 billion in 2004 and Australia expected spending £4.5 billion in the same year, the United States projected spending \$5.8 billion annually on healthcare, legal, police, and social services linked to VAWG in 2003.³⁶

Based on estimates from Khumalo et al., GBV costs South Africa between R28.4 and 42 billion annually, or 0.9% to 1.3% of GDP.³⁷ No matter an individual's location, social-cultural background, socioeconomic history, race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity, many scholars concur that GBV can have a significant negative influence on them.³⁸

While men, boys, and other sexes are acknowledged to have experienced GBV, women and girls are unquestionably the most impacted.³⁹ This research makes the claim that the economic impact of GBV impacts people irrespective of their demographic background. GBV has a financial cost to the state and survivors. To alleviate the physical and psychological pain caused by the atrocity, survivors and their families frequently seek medical assistance. Furthermore, because of the trauma and injuries caused by GBV, survivors may lose their jobs.⁴⁰ Also, Breuer identifies some areas in which the economy is negatively impacted, such as lower economic output, higher healthcare costs, legal fees, social welfare costs, costs for special services, personal costs, intangible costs relating to psychological and physical effects, and costs for second-generation investments.⁴¹ Given that these services are provided to individuals in need at no cost, governments must set aside money for them.

As stated above, in the modern world, GBV is a major social problem. It is widespread in South Africa and other nations where gender-based customs and cultural norms support and encourage abusive conduct. Raising awareness is the first step towards changing attitudes and actions that support different types of GBV, which is necessary to prevent such violence successfully.⁴²

According to claims put forward by Roy et al., significant investments have been made by Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and South Africa for both prevention and response to GBV.⁴³ However, GBV did not receive sufficient consideration even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, as funding was dependent on assistance from domestic and international funding sources. Healthcare and psychological support, two key services for GBV response, were few and mostly available in cities. However, due to the long travel distances and expensive transportation, these necessities proved to be difficult to reach in rural areas. In addition, the judicial system lacked the tools and knowledge required to handle GBV cases efficiently, making the process of getting legal counsel time-consuming and expensive. Furthermore, international NGOs provided the majority of financing for GBV prevention initiatives.⁴⁴

South African Police Service and National Prosecuting Authority

Thobane et al. study exposed a worrying deficiency in police officers' knowledge and experience in handling GBV cases, especially those at the station level.⁴⁵ Many GBV victims face secondary

³⁴ Andrew Osehi Enaifoghe, "Gender Based Violence and the Global Gendered Viewpoint Approaches to Building a Peaceful South Africa," *Journal of Social and Development Sciences* 10, no. 2 (S) (2019): 15–25.

³⁵ Kusuma and Babu, "Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls as a Global Action Agenda."

³⁶ Kusuma and Babu, "Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls as a Global Action Agenda."

³⁷ B. Khumalo, S. Msimang, and K. Bollbach, "Too Costly to Ignore: The Economic Impact of Gender-Based Violence in South Africa," 2014, <https://ci.uct.ac.za/projects-reporters-resources-violence-against-children-overview-violence-overview-reports/too>.

³⁸ Given Mutinta, "Gender-Based Violence among Female Students and Implications for Health Intervention Programmes in Public Universities in Eastern Cape, South Africa," *Cogent Social Sciences* 8, no. 1 (2022): 2079212; Enaifoghe, "Gender Based Violence and the Global Gendered Viewpoint Approaches to Building a Peaceful South Africa."

³⁹ Enaifoghe, "Gender Based Violence and the Global Gendered Viewpoint Approaches to Building a Peaceful South Africa."

⁴⁰ Thobane et al., "Collaboration in Gender-Based Violence Response, Access to Justice and Prevention."

⁴¹ Breuer, "Economic Analyses on the Cost of Gender-Based Violence in Namibia (No. 86)."

⁴² Folasayo Enoch Olalere, "Gamification as a Tool for Social Change: A Case of Gender-Based Violence in South Africa," *Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (EHASS)* 3 (13), <https://doi.org/10.38159/Ehass> 20223135 (2022).

⁴³ Charlotte M Roy et al., "Impact of COVID-19 on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Services in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and South Africa: A Cross-Sectional Survey," *Frontiers in Global Women's Health* 2 (2022): 780771.

⁴⁴ Roy et al., "Impact of COVID-19 on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Services in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and South Africa: A Cross-Sectional Survey."

⁴⁵ Thobane et al., "Collaboration in Gender-Based Violence Response, Access to Justice and Prevention."

victimisation after reporting their cases to the authorities, and this deficit is a major contributing component to their experience. These results are consistent with other studies that have also brought attention to police personnel's insufficient training.⁴⁶ Statement-taking, secondary victimisation, and inappropriate execution of medical assessments for filling out the SAPS 308 form are the areas of dispute that especially show the absence of training among officers.⁴⁷

Legal reform initiates laws and policies.

There is a growing recognition of GBV as a major international concern. As a result, to address this issue, several laws, rules, and intervention programmes have been implemented. However, as highlighted by Graaff, limiting the use of the notion of GBV in preventative efforts may fail to address the entire spectrum of gendered violence, successfully preventing primarily heterosexual and cisgender types of GBV.⁴⁸ Graaff goes on to say that gendered violence in many situations and more general gender inequality should be fully addressed by broadening the definition of GBV to make it more inclusive.⁴⁹

The UN has dedicated itself to advancing gender equality since its founding, some 70 years ago. The Commission on the Status of Women was established as the first step towards this aim. It proceeded by approving important accords, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).⁵⁰ The resolution to strengthen the role of health systems made by the 67th World Health Assembly (WHA) is another international effort to reduce violence against women and girls. The SDGs now include a number of intricate objectives in addition to the prevention and eradication of VAWG. The UN General Assembly has pledged to mobilise the required resources to achieve this objective, which calls for increased international collaboration.⁵¹

South Africa has excellent anti-GBV regulations; however, they are not widely enforced. As a result, victims of crime—including GBV—frequently face a number of difficulties when navigating the criminal justice system. Numerous challenges confront the justice system (CJS), including a substantial attrition rate of GBV cases, a scarcity of resources (police officers/stations, skilled GBV experts, cars), and secondary victimisation of complainants.⁵² The laws pertaining to GBV in South Africa are quite extensive and progressive. For example, all types of non-consensual sexual penetration, irrespective of gender, are recognised as rape under the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act. Moreover, the Domestic Violence Act defines domestic ties as covering couples of the same sex, and marital rape has become formally recognised as an offence since 1993.

Early GBV policies largely focused on VAWG to highlight the risk of violence that many women and girls face daily.⁵³ Parallel to this, feminists and gender activists have long emphasised the importance of VAWG, emphasising that it particularly targets women in an unequal society because of their gender. It is a myth that a woman's profession, her wardrobe, her use of drink, or her solo excursions signify her permission for a sexual attack. Rather than advocating for individual women to alter their conduct to prevent violence, women are more vulnerable to certain types of violence because of their social status, regardless of how this intersects with other forms of inequality. Thus, systemic action is required as this is a systemic problem. There are many strong arguments in favour of companies giving VAWG priority.⁵⁴

⁴⁶ Mothibi A Kholofelo and Happy Mathew Tirivangasi, "Police Capacity Building in Dealing with Domestic Violence Cases in South Africa: An Entry Point to Women's Access to Justice," in *Violence Against Women and Criminal Justice in Africa: Volume I: Legislation, Limitations and Culture* (Springer, 2021), 123–47; Caroline Smart, "An Analogy Of Gender-Based Violence And Police Corruption In Matters Related To Violence Against Women During The Covid-19 Pandemic," *JACL* 6 (2022): 170; Nozipho Nkosikhona Simelane, Jacob Tseko Mofokeng, and Dee Khosa, "Analysis of Institutional Responses to Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in the South African Police Service," *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development* 16, no. 08 (2023): 33–52.

⁴⁷ Thobane et al., "Collaboration in Gender-Based Violence Response, Access to Justice and Prevention."

⁴⁸ Graaff, "The Implications of a Narrow Understanding of Gender-Based Violence."

⁴⁹ Graaff, "The Implications of a Narrow Understanding of Gender-Based Violence."

⁵⁰ Kusuma and Babu, "Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls as a Global Action Agenda."

⁵¹ Kusuma and Babu, "Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls as a Global Action Agenda."

⁵² Thobane et al., "Collaboration in Gender-Based Violence Response, Access to Justice and Prevention."

⁵³ Graaff, "The Implications of a Narrow Understanding of Gender-Based Violence."

⁵⁴ Graaff, "The Implications of a Narrow Understanding of Gender-Based Violence"; Francesca Gains and Vivien Lowndes, "Identifying the Institutional Micro-Foundations of Gender Policy Change: A Case Study of Police Governance and Violence against Women and Girls," *Politics & Gender* 18, no. 2 (2022): 394–421.

Table 1: An Overview of policy and legal frameworks related to GBV in four countries.

Table 1. Policy and legal frameworks related to GBV				
	South Africa	Kenya	Uganda	Nigeria
International human rights conventions	State party to nearly all, incorporated in national law	State party to nearly all, incorporated in national law	State party to nearly all	State party to many, but most not domesticated
Law against domestic violence	<i>Domestic Violence Act</i> has expansive definition of domestic violence; Domestic Violence Amendment Bill included dating and customary relationships	<i>Protection Against Domestic Violence Act</i> , includes civil protective orders	<i>The Domestic Violence Act 2010</i>	No, except in Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) <i>Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act</i>
Marital rape	Prohibited, but customary and religious law impacts prosecution	<i>Protection Against Domestic Violence Act</i> provides only civil, sanctions; Sexual Offenses Act excludes marital rape	Not addressed in relevant laws	Excluded from federal and many state penal codes
Traditional practices ^a prohibited by law	Yes, but traditional courts commonly permit them; polygamy legal	Yes, but prosecutions rare; polygamy legal	Yes, but widow inheritance, polygamy not explicitly outlawed	Some yes in some states, but many continue under customary law systems in many states; polygamy prohibited
National GBV Policy or Action Plan	National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide 2020–2030	National Policy for Prevention and Response to GBV	National Action Plan on Elimination of GBV	No, but some GBV goals included in the 2006 National Gender Policy
^a Traditional practices include child marriage, female genital mutilation, wife inheritance, virginity testing, and widow cleansing.				

Source: John, Bukuluki, Casey, Chauhan, Jagun, Mabhena and McGovern.⁵⁵

An overview of the legal and policy frameworks that South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria have put in place in their respective nations is given in the table above. These nations' dedication to tackling the problem of gender-based violence is demonstrated by the range of laws and regulations they have enacted, as seen in the table above.

METHODOLOGY

The study used content analysis from previously collected data. Public domain documents, publications, reports, and online sites were some of the sources from which this information was gathered. The researcher assessed the data's applicability to the current investigation. As a result, secondary sources were mostly used for data collecting in this work. The report used a qualitative research technique and a literature review. The data search was conducted between 2015 and 2023, with sources older than 2015 excluded if they were essential and pertinent to the situation. Through a survey of the literature, this research investigates the financial effects of gender-based violence on the South African economy. The data collected from several literature reviews was analysed by the researcher using qualitative thematic content analysis.

⁵⁵ Roy et al., "Impact of COVID-19 on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Services in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and South Africa: A Cross-Sectional Survey."

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS /FINDINGS

The lives of women and their partners are significantly impacted by GBV on a social, emotional, economic, and societal level.⁵⁶ Research has demonstrated that GBV depletes women's energy, jeopardises their emotional and physical well-being, and undermines their sense of self.⁵⁷ According to Enaifoghe et al., there is a higher likelihood of substance addiction, physical handicap, chronic pain, and mental diseases such as depression among survivors of GBV.⁵⁸ In addition, women who have suffered gender-based violence frequently fail to build lasting relationships and feel socially excluded and alienated. Mutinta claims that mental health problems, such as suicidal thoughts and acts, are among the effects of GBV.⁵⁹ According to Enaifoghe, the stigma associated with gender-based violence and the physical and psychological pain it causes could prevent women from realising their full economic potential.⁶⁰ This essay makes the case that GBV-related suicides or fatalities have a detrimental economic impact on a nation because they result in a loss of tax income from the potential contributions of the deceased.

This study found that the loneliness and melancholy brought on by the violence had a substantial negative influence on the economy as a result of GBV. According to Enaifoghe, survivors of GBV are prevented from actively engaging in economic activities.⁶¹ This barrier results from the trauma—both psychological and physical—caused by the abuse as well as the stigma. According to the World Health Organisation, GBV prevents women from actively participating in the economy, frequently as a result of beliefs about their weaknesses.⁶² Enaifoghe, et.al., claim that the economic cost of GBV in some nations reaches up to 3.7% of GDP, surpassing most governments' expenditures for education.

According to Hsiao et al., violence against children, health problems and death reduce one's capacity to contribute to the economy.⁶³ In addition, the inability to stop violence against children can have a detrimental effect on their cognitive capital, which is the combination of communication, problem-solving, and decision-making capabilities. According to Hsiao et al., these cognitive skills affect young people's ability to work and support the economy.⁶⁴ In the case of gender-based violence, an individual's ability to contribute to the economy may be hampered by physical or mental health issues stemming from the assault. Furthermore, the cost of providing victims with medical treatment significantly reduces financial profits.

The negative health effects of gender-based violence put a strain on healthcare systems and burden the country's socioeconomic structure by decreasing productivity and obstructing the growth of social and human capital. Indirect costs include decreased productivity at work and loss of income upon death, in addition to direct expenditures like healthcare, legal fees, and social services related to gender-based violence. For example, the national government of Colombia was projected to have spent \$73.7 million in 2003 to prevent, detect, and assist victims of domestic abuse; this amount represented almost 0.6% of the country's total budget.⁶⁵

At the municipal level, gender-based violence reduces the economic productivity of the urban labour force. It is difficult for women to work or function well when they are the targets of widespread and persistent abuse. According to research done in Nagpur, India, 13% of women said that the health

⁵⁶ Enaifoghe et al., "The Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence against Women in South Africa: A Call for Action." Xitsakisi Fiona Mahlori, *Social work students' perceptions of gender based violence and their perceived preparedness for practice*. University of Johannesburg (South Africa), 2016.

⁵⁷ Goitseone Leburu, "From 'victim' to 'survivor': Deconstructing the Pervasive Notion of Victimhood in Discourses around Programmes Dealing with Gender-Based Violence," *Social Work* 59, no. 3 (2023): 224–44.

⁵⁸ Enaifoghe et al., "The Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence against Women in South Africa: A Call for Action."

⁵⁹ Mutinta, "Gender-Based Violence among Female Students and Implications for Health Intervention Programmes in Public Universities in Eastern Cape, South Africa."

⁶⁰ Enaifoghe, "Gender Based Violence and the Global Gendered Viewpoint Approaches to Building a Peaceful South Africa."

⁶¹ Enaifoghe, "Gender Based Violence and the Global Gendered Viewpoint Approaches to Building a Peaceful South Africa."

⁶² World Health Organization. *Ethical and safety recommendations for intervention research on violence against women: building on lessons from the WHO publication putting women first: ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence against women*. World Health Organization, 2016.

⁶³ Celia Hsiao et al., "Violence against Children in South Africa: The Cost of Inaction to Society and the Economy," *BMJ Global Health* 3, no. 1 (2018): e000573.

⁶⁴ Hsiao et al., "Violence against Children in South Africa: The Cost of Inaction to Society and the Economy."

⁶⁵ Cathy McIlwaine, "Urbanization and Gender-Based Violence: Exploring the Paradoxes in the Global South," *Environment and Urbanization* 25, no. 1 (2013): 65–79.

effects of partner violence prevented them from working, which translated into an average of seven missed workdays for each abuse occurrence. According to McIlwaine, violence has a negative impact on labour demand and productivity, forcing women to take low-paying jobs to make ends meet.⁶⁶

An unpublished report from February 2014, estimated that the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development would spend R106,855,823, the South African Police Department would spend R40,604,988, and forensic medical services at four Western Cape hospitals would cost R40,604,988.⁶⁷ Protection order issuance was expected to cost R70,122,556 the total cost of all provinces' costs would be more than one billion rand.⁶⁸

The expenses of GBV in South Africa were assessed in 2014 by the multinational financial services consulting firm Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG). According to KPMG, the state was expected to lose between R28.4 and R42.2 billion in 2012–2013.⁶⁹ Since the South African government does not maintain comprehensive information on GBV, this is an estimate. Rape, for instance, is classified as a sexual offence by the South African Police Services. Reducing violence lowers costs for taxpayers and rape survivors by minimising the money spent on law enforcement, prosecution of offenders, enforcing court orders, counselling victims, and determining the assistance and income loss of women.⁷⁰

The economy of developing nations is greatly impacted by gender-based violence, which results in decreased worker productivity and income, a decline in the accumulation of social and human capital, and the continuation of various types of violence. GBV can have direct costs, which include real expenditures associated with the crime, such as medical bills, legal fees, and social services. Conversely, indirect costs show the cost of missed production from both paid and unpaid labour. Furthermore, the amount of potential lifetime earnings that women who have died as a result of abuse have lost.⁷¹ Violence prevents survivors and those who depend on them from successfully adjusting to societal changes, which impedes the development of resilience. Economic growth is directly related to human capital, productivity, and well-being, all of which are significantly impacted by GBV. It is extremely difficult to determine the impact of each of these elements on economic growth, even if the health-related repercussions stated above are equally significant when examining how GBV affects economic growth and development.⁷²

RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhanced efforts at preventive

Strengthening the response and preventative measures of GBV could play an optimum role in boosting the economy and controlling expenditure. Therefore, it is recommended that the government make reliable and sound proposals if it wants to produce a robust response to GBV. The stakeholders must work in collaboration with society and community forums to identify the victims of GBV in places such as schools, churches and households because victims of GBV are people that people engage with on a daily basis and other victims are abused by well-trusted citizens in churches, schools and homes in communities. Therefore, community members must take initiative in the establishment of preventative measures and law enforcement should work with them.

Addressing the root causes of GBV

This action entails addressing problems like inequality, poverty, and negative cultural norms. This is because GBV is caused by a number of factors that may be disregarded in the fight that the government initiated directed at curbing the scourge of GBV. Most victims and root causes in society do not receive the necessary attention. Before taking any further steps, the government must look into eliminating the

⁶⁶ McIlwaine, "Urbanization and Gender-Based Violence: Exploring the Paradoxes in the Global South."

⁶⁷ Jen Thorpe, "Financial year estimates for spending on gender-based violence by the South African Government." *February. Parliament of the Republic of South Africa*. http://www.ghjru.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/242/documents/gender-based-violence-budget.pdf. Accessed June 17 (2014): 2016.

⁶⁸ Amanda Gouws, "Women's Activism around Gender-Based Violence in South Africa: Recognition, Redistribution and Representation," *Review of African Political Economy* 43, no. 149 (2016): 400–415.

⁶⁹ KPMG, "Too Costly to Ignore: The Economic Impact of Gender-Based Violence in South Africa," *Survey Report*, 2014.

⁷⁰ Gouws, "Women's Activism around Gender-Based Violence in South Africa: Recognition, Redistribution and Representation."

⁷¹ Sarah Bott, Andrew Morrison, and Mary Ellsberg, "Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence in Middle and Low-Income Countries: A Global Review and Analysis," 2005.

⁷² Mulenga, "The Social and Economic Effects of Gender-Based Violence: A Case Study of Lusaka District's Selected Compound and Residential Areas: Bauleni and Mutendere Compound; Woodlands and New Kasama Residential Areas."

root causes of GBV in communities because failure to do so will affect any initiative established at any level and law enforcement will find it hard.

CONCLUSION

To combat GBV, the South African government has already set up GBV offices at police stations and published a National Strategy Plan for Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. However, more work has to be done to guarantee that GBV won't affect any South Africans. This study examined the financial effects of GBV in South Africa using qualitative research methodologies. Based on the analysis and arguments, the study shows that GBV causes large financial losses. Nonetheless, in contrast to earlier hypotheses, the results point to a decrease in the total financial load. This suggests that efficiently managing GBV might help the country's economy. As a result, the study suggests changing how resources are allocated. To eventually reduce GBV and related economic losses, South Africa should prioritise prevention measures and interventions rather than only responding to GBV through crisis expenditures. This proactive strategy might boost the South African economy and make everyone's community safer. The negative effects of gender-based violence on the nation's economic output are highlighted by this study. It is much more difficult for women who experience violence regularly to engage productively in employment. This emphasises how urgent it is to combat gender-based violence, not only for moral and social reasons but also because it has been shown to have detrimental effects on the economy. Cities may promote a more successful and productive economy by protecting women's well-being and security.

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