

**EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF CHURCH LEADERS IN AVERTING GENDER
BASED VIOLENCE IN IMENTI SOUTH SUB-COUNTY, MERU COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other University.

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DEDICATION

To my wife Jacinta Wanja and children Valerie, Viola and Phoebe for the support, encouragement and understanding

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ABSTRACT

Gender based violence is violation of human rights and it is affecting men, women, and children spiritually, physically and emotionally. The Church leadership is being looked at when it comes to averting violence at communal and family levels. The purpose of the study was to examine the role of the Church leaders in averting gender based violence in Imenti South Sub-county. The study was guided by four objectives: To determine instructional role of Church leaders in averting gender based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Kenya, To examine the influence of pastoral programs in averting gender based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Kenya, To assess the influence of Church leaders' advocacy against gender base violence in Imenti South Sub-county and to analyze the influence of Church leaders conflict resolution on gender based violence in Imenti South Sub-county. The study was carried out in Imenti South Sub-County, Kenya with a focus on Church leaders under the National Council of Churches of Kenya. The study was based on descriptive survey design. The target population in this study included 144 church leaders from different denominations and 153 victims of gender-based violence. Purposive sampling was employed to sample 45 Church leaders and 44 victims of gender based violence. The gender based violence victims include men and women in Imenti South Sub-County, Kenya. Data was collected using questionnaires for Church leaders and scheduled group interviews for gender based violence victims. The data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively and presented using tables and figures. This study concluded that the church leaders play an important role in the disclosure of abuse because of the trust by individual, families and community as a whole. Many women do not choose to reveal abuse to other agencies in the community or even policemen because they do not have a history of trust with them as they do to church leaders. The Church provides resources, emotional support, spiritual support and help with activism to help prevent a similar repetition of violence down the road, and they are also a prayer support for the victim. This study recommends that church leaders to organize conferences, seminars and training where the faithful get the opportunity to open up and get help needed. Church leaders have a role to teach members to co-exist in harmony with respect and love through workshop and couple's trainings and seminars. Church leaders have opportunities to take a leading role in creating awareness and advocacy on Gender Based Violence in places where some cultural practices are detouring advances against this vice. The church leaders should also emphasis on the development of relational virtues such as selflessness and unconditional love.

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ACK	Anglican Church of Kenya
AIPC	African Independent Pentecostal Church
CREAW	Centre for Rights Education Awareness
FGCK	Full Gospel Churches of Kenya
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GBV	Gender Based Violence
MCK	Methodist Church of Kenya
NCKK	National Council of Church of Kenya
PCEA	Presbyterian Church of East Africa

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Gender-based violence is violence involving men and women, in which the female is usually the victim; and which is derived from unequal power relationships between men and women. Violence is directed specifically against a woman because she is a woman, or affects women disproportionately (Palermo, Bleck & Peterman, 2013). It includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, and psychological harm. It includes that violence which is perpetuated or condoned by the state. Research has shown that globally, at least one out of every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime and usually the abuser is someone known to her. According to the World Report on Violence and Health, 40 to 70 percent of all women who are murdered are killed by a (male) intimate partner. Thus, women are more likely than men to experience violence inside the home. While men and other vulnerable groups or marginalized populations also experience GBV, this guide focuses on violence against women as a key aspect of GBV (Dunkle & Decker, 2013).

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is experienced across a wide variety of settings like culture, social and economic backgrounds in many parts of the world including Kenya (Barnett, Maticka-Tyndale, & Kenya, 2016). While gender involves both men and women, women are the majority of the victims whereby they are made to tolerate and accept such experiences more than their men counterparts (Dunkle, Jewkes, Nduna, Jama, Levin, Sikweyiya, & Koss, 2007). However, in the modern world, men too are speaking out their experiences of gender-based violence perpetuated against them by women.

According to Abramowitz and Moran (2012) there are a range of different forms of violence that fall under the category of GBV which include; Intimate partner violence (physical, sexual,

psychological, and economic), Sexual coercion, Childhood sexual abuse, Rape, including that occurring in conflict settings, Trafficking Harmful traditional practices, such as female genital cutting (FGC), dowry murder, honor killing, and early marriage Women are disproportionately affected by violence. This is the result of social and cultural norms that often subordinate women. For example, many laws and customary practices create and perpetuate women's unequal status. This can be seen in women's legal, social, and economic status, including norms such as polygamy, FGC, and inheritance rights. Societal attitudes also perpetuate GBV.

Some of the societal attitudes that justify GBV include the idea that men have the right to control wives' or partners' behavior and can discipline them in many ways. Attitudes also include believing that there are just causes for violence. As a result, GBV survivors often are blamed for the violence they have experienced both by men and by women themselves (Palermo, Bleck & Peterman, 2013). For example, research from the Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey reveals that slightly fewer than half of women (48%) believed that a husband is justified in beating his wife for at least one of the following reasons: Going out without telling him (33%), Neglecting the children (30%), Arguing with him (26%) , Refusing to have sexual intercourse with him (24%), Burning the food (12%).

In United States of America (USA), GBV was more domestic and often advocated for following courts order that wife beating was allowed by husbands as a form of correction without need for prosecution. It has been observed that GBV in the USA is a problem affecting mostly women in marriage and so turning to domestic violence (Rees, Silove, Chey, Ivancic, Steel, Creamer, & Slade, 2011).

A study by Chynoweth (2017) examined sexual violence against men and boys in the Syria crisis and their access to services in Jordan, Lebanon, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The study documented devastating multi-faceted impacts of sexual violence on male survivors

and their families. The study indicated that sexual violence had profoundly debilitating and destabilizing psychological consequences on men and boys. The study indicated that sexual violence against men and boys resulted in physical injuries, social exclusion and economic marginalization.

In African culture, men are not supposed to cry and speak of violence in public due to shame. However, the women fall as victims of gender based and marital violence as opposed to men. While considering the case of women, this form of violence is characterized by use of physical force by the husband; described as wife battering (Semahegn & Mengistie, 2015). The problem is propelled by the fact that many cultures, especially the African context condones this practice. The existing levels of gender inequality between men and women also enhance marital and gender-based violence making it quite difficult to protect the women who are the largest victims. Research on gender-based violence indicates that the nature of cultural upbringing of women has fixed them in a situation whereby they need to tolerate good and bad behaviors of men. In Africa people are becoming more and more enlightened through education and activities of women rights activism, so do they (women) get to understand the significance of their human rights (Rees et al., 2011).

Apart from culture, it has also been found that there are religious roots that encourage marital and gender-based violence. Some religions such as Islam present man as having male dominion while women are subordinates (Ager, Bancroft, Berger, & Stark, 2018). At the same time, religion tries to indicate a state of equality of all human beings before the Supreme Being (God). However, this religious view is met with negativity from the societal beliefs concerning of equality of women to men. In marriage, in the course of socialization, sexual and gender-based violence begins between the couples, siblings and parents. In the African context, the males are brought up with a superiority feeling which makes them tough, while at the same

time discriminating the women (Pahl, 2016). Other factors linked to marital and gender-based violence include deprivation of human rights, politics and economic situations (Freedman, 2016).

When asked the same questions, men were less likely to report that they find violence against women justifiable. Thirty-seven percent of surveyed men agreed with at least one of the reasons for why a man is justified in beating his wife. Twenty-three percent agreed that beating a wife is justified if she goes out without telling him, 22 percent if she neglects the children, and 21 percent if she argues with him. Gender-based violence can have a range of significant health consequences, ranging from injuries to death. In addition, GBV affects mental health. Violence and abuse increase the risk of depression, social isolation, post-traumatic stress disorder, and emotional distress. Furthermore, violence against women is associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes, such as miscarriage and low birth weight, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as HIV. This guide focuses on GBV in relation to HIV, which is a crucial health issue around the world. This is particularly true in countries and areas that face generalized epidemics (Oduro, Swartz & Arnot, 2012).

GBV, particularly IPV and sexual violence, has been shown to be a risk factor for diverse and severe physical and mental health consequences, including serious SRH consequences. GBV is linked to many serious health problems for women, both at the time violence occurs and throughout life. GBV is increasingly viewed as a risk factor for a variety of diseases and conditions and not just as a health problem in and of itself. Health consequences include injuries, gynecological disorders, mental health problems, adverse pregnancy outcomes, and STIs (Jewkes, 2013). The World Health Organization (WHO) multi-country study confirms a strong association between IPV and many forms of poor health, including mental health and suicidal tendencies. Ellsberg and another recent overview (Raghavendra, Duvvury & Ashe,

2017) identifies the following conditions as associated with a “history of physical or sexual abuse”: irritable bowel syndrome; sexually transmitted diseases; gastrointestinal disorders; gynecological problems, including vaginal bleeding and vaginal infections; urinary tract infections; chronic pelvic pain; and serious mental health problems as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and risk of suicide.

According to Hayati, Emmelin, and Eriksson (2014), in religion, Church leaders offer guidelines to their followers for the purposes of a balanced social wellness, and commitments to the respective religion. These leaders are chosen among the people to guide people to meet their spiritual needs. Among the many roles that Church leaders play, one is that they should teach the people to do to others what they would expect to be done unto them (Usher, 2015). This involves a high sense of respect to human rights, be willing to listen to one another and develop a positive attitude to self and others.

The Church leaders who are looked upon for spiritual help have been crucial in ending marital and gender based violence. This is because these leaders are tools critical for advocating for social protection rights among the people. As Usher (2015) states, since all religions are exposed to marital and gender based violence, they have a duty to change the culture and beliefs of the people to avert such vices. Since religions advocate for gender equality and peace among the people, then sexuality is a core topic that is significant to Church leaders.

Both GBV and the associated health consequences are costly for societies and their health systems. Evidence generally suggests that women who experience or have survived GBV have more health problems and use physical and mental health services more than other women. Heise conducted the first major study on the costs of these health consequences in Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) and other standard measures (Heise,1994) followed by another World Bank study in 2004 (Abdi, 2016). The list of ill health consequences generated by the

WHO multi-country study and other sources mentioned above provides a basis for costing studies, but health-service statistics can help to improve costing estimates where universal screening is implemented. A team from The International Center for Research on Women examined 30 studies, mostly from industrialized countries, showing that the economic costs of IPV are “enormous,” but suggesting a different costing framework that focuses on household and community costs for developing countries (Raghavendra *et al.*, 2017).

Usher (2015) examined the role of religious approaches to preventing gender violence and sexual abuse in Nigeria. The study utilized inter-disciplinary method in gathering information. Findings from the research revealed that sexual abuse and gender violence is endemic in Nigerian society. The study indicated that use of liberation theology, enhancing religious teaching on equality of all sexes, enculturation of men and women equality and promotion of women rights helps in averting GBV.

In Kenya, gender base violence cases are often reported. For instance, in the year 2003, a woman in Western Kenya was charged with assaulting her husband and causing serious physical injuries (Mulama, 2003). Njoroge (2016) evaluated television news framing of domestic violence against men in Nyeri County. As media freedom and accessibility to many parts of the county is rapidly experienced in Kenya, most stories aired are drawn from Nyeri County despite the Kenya Demographic Survey of 2014 indicating that other Counties are experiencing gender based violence.

In Imenti South Sub-County, women are the most affected and victims of GBV because they have been poorly educated and economically dependent on men who eventually abuse them. This is attributed to power inequalities between men and women (Jewkes, 2002). Recently, reports by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics indicates that violence against men is minimal compared to women although it is rising (Kenya Demographic & Health Survey 2008-09). A

research by Agostino (2015) in Igoji self-help group found out that many women had sustained injuries from battering by men. Kenya has made remarkable and progressive commitments through policies and constitution to avert the vice (Kenyan Constitution article 29, 2010).

Apart from the national government, county government of Meru and different Non-Governmental Organizations has carried serious studies to address GBV. More advances to addressing GBV have been made on policy documents, while more attention is necessary to practically avert the vice. Religion is practically in touch with the victims and perpetrators of GBV at the ground level, this could be a good platform for the Church leaders to use the pulpit to rationality and consciousness enhances a healthy relationship among family members (Ellsberg, Arango, Morton, Gennari, Kiplesund, Contreras, & Watts, 2015). Likewise, Church leaders are well positioned to avert GBV by facilitating dialogue and upholding human dignity, practicing of virtue of love and advocacy of human rights among family members under their spiritual care. Therefore, this research aims at examining the role of Church leaders in averting gender based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru County, Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Gender Based Violence has become rampant in many Kenyan communities affecting men, women, and children physically and emotionally. It also affects the health and social wellbeing of the victims and a lot of time is wasted in managing these effects, thus leading to low social and economic development of the society. According to CREAM Report the National Crime Research in 2015 cited Meru County as one of the areas with increased cases of Gender Based Violence. Among the GBV cases reported, Meru County reported 34.9% of killings and murder of survivors as compared to Nakuru and Nyeri with a prevalence of 15.2% and 9.5% respectively. Between April 2018 to April 2019, Meru County Human Rights Paralegal Office

records shows that GBV cases reported are 185 in total, accounting for 140 women, 32 children and 13 men. These statistics clearly indicate that GBV is taking place in Meru County.

While there have been national and county governments' policies to address gender based violence, the problem has not yet been put under control at the family levels. Since most of gender based violence activities take place within families, the current initiatives exclude the role of Church leaders in averting GBV yet they are in touch with communities and families under their pastoral and spiritual care. It is therefore against this background that this study examined the role of Church leaders in averting gender based violence.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of Church leaders in averting gender based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru County, Kenya.

1.4 Specific Objectives

This study was guided by the following specific objectives;

1. To determine instructional role of Church leaders in averting gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Kenya.
2. To examine the influence of pastoral programs in averting gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Kenya.
3. To assess the influence of Church leaders' advocacy against gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Kenya.
4. To analyze the influence of Church leaders' conflict resolution on gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Kenya.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the instructional role of Church leaders in averting gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Kenya?
2. To what extent does pastoral programs help in averting gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Kenya?
3. To what extent do the Church leaders' advocacy help in influencing against gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Kenya?
4. Do Church leaders conflict resolution help in solving gender based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Kenya?

1.6 Justification of the Study

Any person experiencing or has experienced gender based violence undergoes physical, sexual and emotional pain. They also regret and self-blame for being victims of abuse this promote need for protection and care by the governments, community and family members. This study is therefore important Imenti Sub-County. The study findings and recommendations may significantly inform the Church leadership in redesigning, evaluating or strategizing on their active roles in advocating against GBV in the communities under their spiritual care. The study may generate empirical findings that may guide the expansion of existing approaches and especially on involvement of Church leaders in averting GBV. With the introduction of Counties Governments, this study may assist in designing means of handling cases of GBV at the county level through Churches and other religious organizations.

The study may also promote comprehensive solutions to be applied in civic education by faith-based organizations for better understanding of averting GBV in South Imenti Sub County. The study may attempt to determine how the Church leader scan avert gender based violence by

constructively involving themselves in genuine dialogue and mediation, forgiveness and reconciliation processes among the GBV victims and perpetrators.

The findings of this study may inform the religious studies curricula as taught in theological institution to empower trained theologians with knowledge and skills in averting GBV. In addition, the study findings may also augment other researches in Kenya, Africa and the world on strategies for mitigation against GBV by Churches and faith-based organization.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The underlying aim of this study is to increase understanding of gender based violence and uncover ways to decrease its prevalence in Kenya by targeting the Christian/ community which is the most widely practiced religion in Kenya. The study will be a major benefit to the policy makers in both the national and county governments because for it will inform on how Church leaders as stake holders communities can be involved in averting GBV.

In addition, the findings of this study will enable institutions working on gender based violence to determine ways in which they can work with the Church. This study will also inform the Churches on the effectiveness of their methods of addressing gender violence. At the national and strategic level, this study will contribute new knowledge that will inform the development of a national strategy to address broader issues of gender based violence.

The study will also illuminate training needs of the clergy for bible colleges and theological schools in the development of their counseling curriculum. Lastly, this study will establish special training needs of Church leaders in order for them to contribute to solving the problem of domestic violence in Kenya. By this religion through its leadership will be doing the mission

of God; the ministry of diakonia by protecting and caring those who may be potential victims of GBV.

It has also been noted that there is scarcity of literature on the role of Church leaders in averting GBV. The study therefore will add a new knowledge to the existing literature on religion and its role in averting GBV but will be unique in that it explores specifically the role of clergy.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study was confined to Imenti South Sub-county and specifically to the NCKK Upper Eastern region, which brings together all the Church leaders of the member Churches. These included Anglican Church of Kenya, Presbyterian Church of East Africa, African Independent Pentecost Church, Methodist Church in Kenya and The Full Gospel Churches in Kenya. These Churches were selected because leaders had been involved in different religious- social forums that advocates for human rights, which included Gender Based Violence. They also had a very clear leadership structure that is recognized by the constitution of Kenya and the county governments within the Societal Acts. The study is also confined to the role of church leaders in averting gender based violence, although there are many aspects of GBV.

1.9 Limitation of the Study

The study encountered the following limitations:

The study did not incorporate non-Christians but only focuses on the mainstream Churches within NCKK. This means that the findings could not be generalized to other Churches like the Roman Catholics and other non-member Churches of the NCKK. Some respondents were hesitant to provide the required data on the role of Church leaders in averting gender based violence. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the data they provided.

Some of the victims were unwilling to participate in the study due to the sensitivity of the issue.

The researcher ensured that participation was completely voluntary.

Given that each region had varied demographic factors, the results on the role of church leaders in averting gender based violence, could not be generalized to the rest of the country.

1.10 Delimitation of the Study

Gender Based Violence is a critical societal issue that violates human rights. This interprets to be an issue of every bodies concerns calling for attention it deserves. Although the study was done in South Imenti Sub-county it gave a wide presentation of Meru County and other counties in Kenya. The study made crucial discoveries on the role of Church leaders in averting GBV. This hasn't been documented in most of Churches spiritual and pastoral program policy documents.

1.11 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the following assumptions: That the respondents would give the needed information for the study truthfully. Further, the study assumed that the information obtained from the study would be meaningful and enable the researcher make meaningful inferences in future. That the respondents would cooperate with the researcher during the study. That the respondents chosen would have adequate knowledge of the subject under investigation and that gender based violence is prevalent among all genders in the area of study.

1.12 Definition of operational terms

Church Leader: In this study refers to the person who leads a religious group or organization. Church leader is one who is recognized by a religious body having some authority within that body.

Church leader's advocacy: In this study Advocacy can involve engaging with the general public to raise awareness on gender-based violence as well as influencing policy-makers towards a desired solution

Conflict resolution: Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. The disagreement may be personal, financial, political, or emotional. When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is negotiation to resolve the disagreement.

Gender Based Violence: Gender based violence (GBV) is violence that is directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex OR gender identity. It includes physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse, threats, coercion, and economic or educational deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life.

Guidance: In this study it refers to advice or information given by a religious leader aimed at averting gender based violence

Instructional role: In this study Church leader's instructional roles are expressed in specific behaviors like giving feedback, making suggestions, effective teaching on gender based violence and soliciting opinions.

NCCK Upper Eastern Region: The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) is a family of Christian communions and organizations in fellowship and witness. Upper region comprises of Isiolo, Marsabit, Meru and Tharaka-Nithi.

Pastoral programs: These are programs that focuses on the theory and principles of pastoral care and prepares ordained clergy to provide non-clinical pastoral counseling to individuals and groups.

Pastoral: It refers to the giving of spiritual guidance to persons who belong to a specified religion in relation to gender violence

Preaching: In this study it refers to delivering a sermon or religious address to an assembled group of people in relation to gender violence

Sub-county: The decentralized units through which county governments of Kenya provide functions and services. In this study Imenti South Sub-County which is decentralized from Meru County.

Teaching: In this study it refers ideas or principles taught by a religious leader in relation to gender violence

Violence: In this study it refers to the behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone of either gender.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of empirical literature in regard to the role of the Church leaders in averting Gender Base Violence. The literature is subdivided into discussions on the objectives of the study which include: the instructional role of Church leaders in averting gender-based violence, influence of pastoral programs in averting gender based violence, the influence of Church leader's advocacy against gender based violence and the influence of Church leaders conflict resolution on gender based violence.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Instructional Role of Church Leaders in Averting Gender Based Violence

Radunovic (2015) points out that GBV is dealt mainly from one perspective and that is the social aspect of it. However, the authors also claim that GBV should be dealt with as a spiritual and theological issue not just as a social one. Equally, Cooper (2012) outlines how the Church is inadequate to deal with the matter of GBV. According to study, the Church needs more resources to respond to the instructional roles in the fight against GBV such as: training materials like books and Bibles, finances and human resource. The study outlines what the Church should respond to GBV by preaching against women degradation. Sweetman (2014) research points out the nature and extent of violence against women. According to the research, women have greatly suffered at the hands of merciless husbands. The researcher points out the need for the Church to respond or fight this vice which has greatly affected a lot of married women.

Two studies one in America and the other in South Africa (Petersen, 2014; Martin, 2016) both reveal that clergy admit that they are not adequately trained or knowledgeable on how to deal with gender-based violence. Clerics in the South Africa study who recognized spouse abuse as a problem felt that lack of information on treatment programs, programs for abusers, legal/state laws, and lack of counseling training hindered their response (Peterson, 2014).

In their counseling roles, Moran (2015) study on the European countries indicate that one of the most common problems that clergy encounter is gender-based violence in the marriage institution. These problems often include domestic violence issues. Undoubtedly, clergy are regarded as a resource to victims and perpetrators alike. Due to the fact that Churches are not immune to domestic violence and clergy are often sought for help on this issue, clergy need to be adequately educated and trained to address it within their Churches. Clergy often struggle with the dilemma of salvaging a marriage and protecting victims of spouse domestic violence (Levitt & Ware, 2016). Unfortunately, most clergy are often unprepared or lack sufficient training to help victims of domestic violence (Shannon-Lewy & Dull, 2015).

Domestic violence remains widespread in Kenya and lies become a key barrier to the achievement of national development objectives embedded in the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is a critical problem that crosses differences in race, ethnicity and social status (Abera, Addis Desta & Alemu, 2016). It occurs even within religious circles including in conservative Christian communities. In Kenya among married, divorced or separated women, about one in four has experienced emotional violence by their current or past husband; 40% have experienced physical violence and 16% have experienced sexual violence. (Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) [Kenya], Ministry of Health (MOH) [Kenya] and ORC Macro. 2004).

Domestic violence is embedded within social and cultural norms that perpetuate inequality between women and men, and condone or even encourage discrimination against women, including the chastisement of women by men and others (Ramsey, 2016). Domestic violence in particular is the epitome of unequal power relationships between women and men (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993). It carries great costs to the individuals, who experience it, and also to society and to the many services and sectors, including the health care system, that have to respond to its consequences (Jewkes, 2013).

Literature suggests that many men use physical violence infrequently but abuse women by resorting to other overt and covert behaviours including intimidation (Musune, 2015). According to Kaphle *et al.* (2015) physical abuse is the use of any physical force against your partner intended to make her afraid or to hurt her. Examples of such abuse include pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping, punching, kicking which confirm what participants regarded as physical abuse and control. Kaphle *et al.* (2015) argue that batterers often demand to have sex with their partners after an abusive incident. For many women sex after battering is further degradation the act solidifies his power. Sexual abuse incorporates an array of acts, which have common underlying sexual content. It can take on the form of visual, verbal and or physical assaults. In the context of an abusive relationship, sexual violence is often in the form of rape or sexual assault. According to Dunkle and Decker (2013) some abusers use sexual violence as a primary choice of intimidation and harm to batter their victims. Sexual battering may include pressured sex when the victim does not want sex, coerced sex by manipulation or threat as well as physical forced sex. Victims may also be forced to engage in sexual activities, which they experience, as humiliating, painful or unnatural, by the perpetrator.

Literature reviewed confirms that psychological and emotional abuse is a prominent feature in domestic violence, which is often dominated by the theme of control. Ellison (2016) writes that

emotional abuse within the context of battering is a powerful psychological weapon designed to cause pain, depersonalize the victim, and increase power for the batterer. Roe-Sepowitz (2012) describes emotional abuse as a tactic of control that consists of a wide variety of verbal attacks against the victim's worth as an individual or role as a parent, family member, friend, co-worker, or community worker.

Literature reviewed recognized that religious teachings and clergy members have both helped and hindered efforts that seek to establish non-violence in relationships (Marks, 2015). Casa (2000) cited in Longwood (2018) in her cover story for the National Catholic Reporter reported that when social services in Santa Clara County, California asked domestic violence victims during a survey in 1996 where they first turned for help, their answer overwhelmingly was "to the church." But when they were asked where support was most lacking, their answer was the same: "the church"

Semahegn and Mengistie (2015) indicates that some religious traditions hold that even in the face of abuse, women must not separate from or divorce their partners. Furthermore # some individuals use biblical references to legitimize the use of physical coercion as a strategy for getting women to submit to the authority of the men in their lives. Ushe (2015) confirm that it is either by its silence or its instruction, that the church has too often communicated to battered women that they should stay in abusive relationships, try to be better wives, and "forgive and forget". To batterers, they say, the church has communicated that their efforts to control their wives or girlfriends are justified because women are to be subject to men in all things (Ephesians 5:22-24, The Holy Bible, New International Version, 1984:1071). Denial and silence in religious communities about wife abuse, not only immobilizes religious victims, according to Ushe (2015), but inadvertently encourages the behaviour of the perpetrator.

Because religion is a personal and institutional reality in the majority of lives, it is no surprise then that religious teachings and affiliation provide a significant context for many women as they address experiences of violence. (Marks, 2015) postulate that, through texts, traditions, teachings and doctrines, religious communities and institutions convey values and belief systems to their members.

The church response to violence against women has been greatly influenced by the Judeo-Christian cultural beliefs (Marks, 2015). The Judeo-Christian culture was patriarchal and male domination over women was seen as natural. Early church history shows that the Greco Roman world at the time of early Christianity, was / dominated by Aristotle's theory of the family That said that "free men should be masters of their slaves, constitutional rulers of their wives and monarchical rulers of their children" (University of Chicago, 1998).

Grady's study (2016), indicates that some religious traditions hold that even in the face of abuse, women must not separate from or divorce their partners. Furthermore, some individuals use biblical references to legitimise the use of physical coercion as a strategy for getting women to submit to the authority of the men in their lives. Fortune and Enger (2014) confirm that it is either by its silence or its instruction, that the Church has too often communicated to battered women that they should stay in abusive relationships, try to be better wives, and forgive and forget. To batterers, they say, the Church has communicated that their efforts to control their wives or girlfriends are justified because women are to be subject to men in all things. Denial and silence in religious communities about wife abuse, not only immobilizes religious victims, according to Nason- Clark (2014), but inadvertently encourages the behaviour of the perpetrator.

According to Ramsey (2016), gender-based violence (GBV) is a phenomenon that transcends social, economic, and geographic borders. Impacting girls and women all over the world, GBV

is fueled by multiple factors, including male dominance, social acceptance of harmful practices, and insufficient legal protections (Ramsey, 2016). Yet recognizing these triggers has helped identify steps to lessen the vulnerability of girls and women to gender-based violence. Ramsey (2016) argue that addressing gender norms through legislation and behavior change; improving cross-sectoral services to support GBV survivors; increasing equitable access to economic assets; and investing in women's movements could help address GBV against women. It is however unclear what roles Church leaders play in ensuring that such strategies are put in place to avert GBV against women.

Feminist theologians point out that scripture as well as Christian theology is ingrained in a patriarchal sexist culture and shares its biases and prejudices (Njagi, 2017). Many of the church forefathers accepted female inferiority and women's sinfulness advocating as a consequence, the necessity of male rule, male laws and the advocacy of dominance as natural inherent nature of things. Furthermore, hierarchy and authority were important to ancient Israelite families and these were structures around male prerogatives and favoring elder sons (Goodman, 2014). The influence of the Greco-Roman culture on Christianity has led to a Christian theology and practice that is patriarchal. Due to its patriarchal nature, the church is seen to be profoundly complicit in perpetuating teachings that legitimize violence against women and children (Pahl, 2016). Such teachings include that of Ephesians chapter five on submission, which has been used to encourage women to be submissive to their husbands even in the face of violence.

In addition to the Biblical passages, early church doctrines also contain texts that condone male violence against women. According to (Goodman, 2014), the right of chastisement was the enforcer of women's subordination in marriage. In the rules of marriage compiled by Friar Cherubino in the 15th Century as quoted in (Dariescu, 2012) there is the careful instruction to a husband to first reprimand the wife, and 'if still this does not work, then take up a stick and

beat her soundly, for it is better to punish the body and correct the soul than to damage the soul and spare the body'.

According to Cruz and Klinger (2011), gender-based violence is described by many as the most prevalent human rights violation in the world. Of the varied ways in which sex discrimination manifests itself across the globe, such violence is exceptionally dehumanizing, pervasive and oppressive. Cruz and Klinger (2011) argue that gender-based violence both reflects and reinforces inequalities between women and men. At least one in three women around the world is estimated to have been coerced into sex, physically beaten and/or otherwise abused in her lifetime. For women aged 15 to 44 years, such violence is a major cause of disability and death (Cruz & Klinger, 2011). Gender based violence not only causes pain and suffering but also devastates families, undermines workplace productivity, diminishes national competitiveness, and stalls development (Cruz & Klinger, 2011).

Kaphle, Neupane, Adhikari and Hamal (2015) investigated gender-based violence against women at workplace in different food industries of Pokhara Industrial Estate. They indicated that majority of women are not safe in their workplace as they are the victim of many types of gender based violence at workplace. The study argued that women are more likely to experience violence in different forms such as physical, emotional, sexual or psychological. However, due to social stigma, economic condition, illiteracy these are under reported. The study indicated that about fifty percent (49.5%) of the respondents had experienced gender-based violence in their workplace where 47.3% faced emotional violence and 14.8% faced sexual violence but none of them experienced physical violence. The major perpetrators for emotional violence were seniors (86.0%) whereas male coworkers (66.7%) for sexual violence. The risk of sexual violence was found 8.39 times more to those who experienced emotional violence. The risk of sexual violence was 3.67 times greater in below 20 years' age than 20

years or above age groups. The study argued that awareness and training programs to empower female workers could help eliminate gender-based violence at workplace. It is however, unclear whether Church leaders have such programs that can avert gender-based violence against women.

A study by Mukanangana, Moyo, Zvoushe and Rusinga (2014) indicated that gender-based violence (GBV) negatively impacts on women's reproductive health (R.H) and is contrary to human rights and RH statutory instruments. The study triangulated quantitative and qualitative research methods with women in the reproductive age group being the target group. The study noted that 95% of the respondents experienced physical violence, 31% rape by a stranger, 92% spousal rape and 65% forced marriages. The study argued that socio-cultural, religious, economic and policy implementation factors underlie a culture of silence that prevails among the victims of GBV. The study indicated that economic empowerment of women and information, education, counseling pertaining to the negative effects of GBV to both males and females could help avert GBV against women. It is however unknown whether Church leaders are involved in some of these activities that could help avert GBV against women.

According to Chynoweth (2017), the Church proclaims the moral order of the human universe and this moral order is based upon the dignity of every human being male or female is created in the image of God, from which the word of love and peace are perpetuated as a gift from God. The Church has a binding, connecting and a uniting force that is very instrumental in the management and resolution of Gender Based Violence since the issue of humanity is a reflection of God's love and expectation on human kind. The Church is one social institution where there is no discrimination based on political affiliation or socio-economic backgrounds. The role of the Church is bringing people together as a family to avert any form of gender violence by setting the examples as written in the scripture of our Lord Jesus Christ on Love

and harmony. The Church as an institution has the duty of uniting people from all walks of life under the spirit of oneness. Church leaders put efforts in preaching about peace from the family up to the society at large since Peace, unity and justice tend to important elements in the society (Freedman, 2016).

Semahegn and Mengistie (2015) in their study found out that there is a general misconception that men are immune from gender violence, owing to gender stereotypes of women as weak and therefore victims, while men are either the powerful protector or perpetrators of violence. The stereotype of traditional masculinity is inconsistent with the position of victimhood, leading many to believe a man, unlike a woman, should have been able to protect himself. Many people discount the possibility of men being victims.

A study by Chynoweth (2017) examined sexual violence against men and boys in the Syria crisis and their access to services in Jordan, Lebanon, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The study documented devastating multi-faceted impacts of sexual violence on male survivors and their families. The study indicated that sexual violence had profoundly debilitating and destabilizing psychological consequences on men and boys. The study indicated that sexual violence against men and boys resulted in physical injuries, social exclusion and economic marginalization. The study also indicated that numerous barriers impeded both service provision as well as accessibility. Such barriers included strong social stigmatization against male survivors; absence of effective identification mechanisms; lack of awareness and dismissive attitudes among some humanitarian staff; a shortage of sensitized and experienced providers; a poor evidence base for interventions; legislative barriers; limited donor interest; and lack of clarity regarding the sectorial and institutional responsibility for addressing sexual violence against adult men.

In his study Musune (2015) reported that physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of men is something that doesn't get talked about very much. Musune (2015) established that female domestic violence against men is in form of physical assault, verbal abuse, sexual violence and psychological abuse. The study further revealed that the reasons for why female violence against men vary is because of men's perceived infidelity, infertility, failure to provide for the family, alcohol abuse, children from other marriages and retaliating male dominance. The study indicated that female violence against men often results in physical injury, lack of economic power, isolation, fear, depression, low self-esteem and HIV/AIDS. Given the devastating effects of gender based violence against men, it is important that specific mechanisms be put in place to try and avert such forms of violence. Thus, the current study seeks to establish the role of Church leaders in averting gender based violence. It should however be noted that this study was carried out in a war torn country and the interventions were mainly post-exposure rather than preventive measures. Any form of sexual violence may have similar effects like the ones noted by (Chynoweth, 2017).

Kubai (2014) investigated domestic violence against men in Mukurwe-ini. The study established that alcoholism was the main cause of domestic violence against men in Mukurwe-ini. The study indicated that whenever men indulge in alcoholism, they fail to sufficiently provide their families with the basic needs and hence their roles are taken up by women. This often results domestic violence against them (men). It is however, not clear whether alcoholism contributes to gender based violence against men in Imenti South Sub-county and how Church leaders help in averting such.

According to CREAM Report the National Crime Research (2015) cited Meru County as one of the areas with increased cases of violence against women and girls. Among the GBV cases reported, Meru County reported 34.9% of killings and murder of survivors as compared to

Nakuru and Nyeri with a prevalence of 15.2% and 9.5% respectively. Over the past decade, Kenya has made great strides in strengthening its legal framework to prevent Gender based Violence against women and girls. Among pastoralist communities in Kenya's arid north and northwest, however, GBV remains a reality for many women and girls, particularly within communities where patriarchal social structures are deeply rooted.

Kaluyu (2007) conducted a study on causes, consequences and management strategies of gender based domestic violence in Kitui. The results from the study showed that alcohol consumption was a major cause of domestic violence. The study also reported that mental stress, reduced family income and poor family health were some of the mentioned consequences of gender violence. There was a significant relationship between the rate of violence and the level of education, the level of income and the rate of alcohol consumption. This implies that education, economic empowerment and reduction in alcohol consumption could help in averting GBV against women. However, this needs to be supported by a systematic study.

Njoroge (2016) evaluated television news framing of domestic violence against men in Nyeri County. The study found out that media are stereotypical. The study indicated that stories aired were all drawn from Nyeri County despite the Kenya Demographic Survey of 2014 indicating that other Counties had the same problem. The study also established that media does not assign seriousness to the issue of domestic violence against men due to the humorous tone taken in packaging this stories, the frequency of airing such stories and the lack of adequate follow up and analysis. The study found out that frames of brutality, trauma, law and order, crime and justice and fairness and equality were used. Given the stereotyping of gender based violence against men, it is likely that very little is undertaken to avert such kind of violence.

Nonetheless, this needs to be supported by empirical data. Thus, the current study seeks to assess the role of Church leaders in averting gender based violence against men.

Obwanda (2014) sought to establish factors that lead to domestic violence against women in Laini Saba of Kibra slums. The study found that cultural factors, social factors and economic factors fueled violence against women who live in Laini Saba of Kibra. The study also found that battered women do not seek help from families or legal aid and when they do, police and legal help agents are reluctant to help. The study, therefore, concluded that while many traditional practices are slowly dying due to modern ways of life, beating women in Laini Saba seems to have defied the process. Given the persistent gender based violence against women, there is need to establish the role of Church leaders in averting this kind of gender based violence.

In 1 Peter 3:1-7, “a woman is supposed to submit to her husband and the husband should love his wife. This is a peace and unity verse that can help avert repetition of gender violence in communities and especially in Imenti South Sub-County in Meru County (Ramsey, 2016). The Church leaders have a role of making disciples from all corners of the world through teaching what God has commanded such as respect and love for one another, leading a merciful life, helping one another in times of need, tolerance, forgiveness, truthfulness among other values that helps in averting gender violence as it is written in the book of Matthew 28:19-20. It is through the Church that social order in the family and society at large can be enhanced with God being the architect through the Church and the human race being the project (Kaluyu, 2007).

2.2.2 Pastoral Programs in Averting Gender Based Violence

Judith Viorst (2016) states that some people deal with their marital challenges through seeking help from trained professional counselors and religious leaders. She further states that others seek from trusted friends and family members. That people can work through hard times on their own through communication, understanding and willingness to change. Moreover, Viorst (2016) avers that couples can overcome marital challenges by 35 making reconciliation their top priority, accepting responsibility for ones' mistakes, changing behaviour, offering forgiveness, seeking advice from religious leaders and receiving support from friends and family members. This scholar's views are important to this study for they lead to the premise that there are pastoral programs which deal with marital challenges, though they have not adequately managed to address the challenge effectively; hence the need to review them.

In his contribution towards ways of addressing marital challenges, Omartian (2003) posits that a person can choose to overcome and break away from marital challenges through prayers. Couples who pray in the middle of problems are able to defuse tensions, cool down and explore deeper marital issues that may be causing challenges. On the other hand, Lichuma and Lichuma (2014:31) seem to support the views of Omartian by positing that prayer holds couples together after a storm and that it brings the husband and wife back together after a misunderstanding. After identifying and understanding the cause of their marital challenge, couples resolve it and set goals on how to move forward (Kigume, 2012).

Researchers have shown that clergy members are usually one of the first, if not the first, persons to be asked for counsel on family problems and domestic violence issues (Chynoweth, 2017). Historically, clergy have played an important role in the guidance of their parishioners (Ellison, 2016). They are seen as honest, familiar, and understanding. Moreover, those with

strong religious faith may view clergy as their ideal resource since the clergy understand their moral and spiritual beliefs (Hayati *et al.*, 2014).

In their counseling roles, studies from other countries indicate that one of the most common problems that clergy encounter is marital problems (Kaphle, Neupane, Adhikari & Hamal, 2015). These problems often include domestic violence issues. Undoubtedly, clergy are regarded as a resource to victims and perpetrators alike. Due to the fact that churches are not immune to domestic violence and clergy are often sought for help on this issue, clergy need to be adequately educated and trained to address it within their churches. Clergy often struggle with the dilemma of salvaging a marriage and protecting victims of spouse domestic violence (Marks, 2015). Unfortunately, most clergy are often unprepared or lack sufficient training to help victims of domestic violence (Pahl, 2016).

Lahaye (2004) asserts that couples apologize when they wrong one another and such an apology removes the root of bitterness that would affect their marital relationship negatively. Gitaari (1999) on the other hand posits that couples who attend family enrichment seminars and read good books on family life are able to use the knowledge to handle their marital challenges. It can be concluded that the scholars imply there are ways of addressing marital challenges however; they are silent on whether these are the best way of addressing marital challenges, a concern for the current study.

Burke (2010: 87) contends that a key to success in conjugal love is learning to forgive and asking for forgiveness. In one of the Pauline's teachings found in Ephesians 4:32, Paul teaches: Forgive each other just as in Christ God forgave you. In the Lord's Prayer, all Christians ask God to forgive them their trespasses as they forgive those who trespass against them. When they are wronged by their spouses, they forgive them because forgiving others is a requirement for their own forgiveness. Matthew 6:14-15 states that, if you forgive others the wrongs they

have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive the wrongs you have done.” Leviticus 5: 5 states that, whoever is guilty in any of these ways, he must confess in what way he has sinned.

Cole (2015) avers that a lot of evidence from research shows that holding on to grudges and bitterness results in long-term health problems and denies a person the much desired happiness. The above review implies that it is important to forgive and to ask for forgiveness but the scholars have not given it as a way forward towards addressing marital challenges. In conclusion, the above views of different scholars on ways of coping with marital challenges in Christian families have apparently not given us the best way to address marital challenges

According to Freedman (2016), the Church should take a leading role in capacity enhancement in collaboration with other stakeholders in the communities and the society at large. Some of the capacity enhancement programmes are aimed at developing skills in self-confidence, self-esteem, communication, conflict resolution and negotiation for social transformation by identifying critical issues, finding innovative solutions and planning to take action (Hayati & Eriksson, 2014). These programmes are done through peace building workshops and training like the NCKK training which was organized with conjunction with CREAM to train and educate the community on impacts of gender violence among the male, female and community at large. The Church leaders are also involved in Counseling during courtship and marriages where gender based violence should be addressed, Seminars which should entail topics addressing gender based violence, dangers and consequences on gender based violence (Agostino, 2015).

Homily – Church leaders should prepare their sermons addressing gender based violence thus enabling families affected and infected to come into reconciliation (Erickson, 2012). Teachings – the role of teaching is very key in addressing gender based violence - Church leaders need to be involved in teaching families the importance of avoiding any form of gender violence and this can be done through seminars, Church catechism to include the topic of gender based violence, conferences for both men and women (Pasch, 2015). Prayers – religious leaders should hold prayers for families affected by gender based violence (Ellison, 2016). This will help addressing the trauma faced during thin instances. For example, rape cases, family disputes, female genital mutilation, divorce will need prayers and counseling from Church leaders (Marks, 2015).

Inter Religious Dialogue – religious leaders need to be involved in dialogue to discuss issues pertaining gender based violence with understanding that gender based violence affects members of different denominations. This will promote understanding, experiences and skills on issues based on gender based violence (Goodman, 2014).

According to Dudley and Kosinski (2013), most of cases experienced in gender based violence is contributed by poverty, idleness. Church leaders need to come up with Income generation projects for its members to enables them to be occupied and have income and busy in day to day operations thus averting the thought of vices which could turn to violence between them. Two studies one in America and the other in South Africa both reveal that clergy admit that they are not adequately trained or knowledgeable on how to deal with domestic violence. Clerics in the South Africa study who recognized spouse abuse as a problem felt that lack of information on treatment programs, programs for abusers, legal/state laws, and lack of counseling training hindered their response (Ramsey, 2016).

Some researchers and theologians have also suggested that the patriarchal nature, structure and socialization of clergy in Christian churches contribute to an environment of silence and acceptance of domestic violence (Ushe, 2015). Since one's belief system influences how one behaves and makes moral judgments, it is not surprising that religiously conservative clergy are more likely to adhere to patriarchal gender roles and be less proactive in responding to domestic violence (Ramsey, 2016)

Another study in the United States of America found that clergy with more formal education did not necessarily exhibit greater knowledge of domestic violence, nor did they have better responses to domestic violence. Additionally, higher education made no difference in the referral rates of the clergy. In another study, Ramsey (2016) compared Clergy's views of battered women among Catholic male priests, Protestant male clergy, and Protestant female clergy. Their studies suggest that the extent to which clergy holds to fundamentalist / religious beliefs and their gender may shape their perspectives of and interventions with battered women. In effect, clergy with fundamentalist beliefs had a narrower definition of spouse abuse, adhered more to male headship and myths of domestic abuse, and were not as likely to ask a woman about spouse abuse (Ramsey, 2016).

In regard to training, studies of clergy responses to domestic violence have also shown that more counseling training produces greater effectiveness. Sardenberg (2017) found in her study that education and training made a difference in the counseling and referral practices of clergy. Those with more formal training or education in counseling were less likely to assign Bible reading, devotions, or prayer as responses to women and men who report domestic violence. Instead, they were more likely to use other professional approaches and to take their role as counselors more seriously. Furthermore, Marks (2015) reported that clerics with specific training on spouse abuse were more apt to help victims secure help from community agencies and shelters.

The Church leaders are also creating awareness of repercussion of gender violence in reference to legal advisors who they invite to give talks and educate communities about gender based violence especially in Imenti South Sub County Reconciliation program is another role that the Church leaders have taken up to ensure that those in gender violence get educating to avert cases of broken marriages and families.

2.2.3 Church Leader's Advocacy against Gender Based Violence

According to Ellison (2016), cases of Gender Based Violence are of great concern in the society and therefore need to be treated as a matter of urgency before more deaths, divorces among married couples, mental casualties, school drop outs among other devastating effects and as the saying goes Prevention is better than cure (Ushe, 2015). The Church should get out of the sleeping slumber, take the lead to speak out and make the world know that, all people have a right to a life without violence by preaching the true Gospel of love and transformation, a Gospel which shuns bad cultural practices, discrimination, immorality and social injustices. As the guardians of the religious texts, religious leaders are best placed to guide and influence their communities. The Church leaders preach the Gospel that leads people to recognize and accept God's value, irrespective of sex, religion and culture (Semahegn & Mengistie, 2015).

According to Ramsey (2016), advocacy is one among other activities by the Church in reducing and preventing gender based violence. This can be through encouraging law enforcement agents like the police, traditional leaders, members of the general public among others for enforcing zero tolerance of all forms of violence against women, men and girls by creating an environment in which there is non- tolerance of gender based violence. The Church has a role to strengthen and forge commitment through campaigns for the reform and implementation of laws allowing women to inherit land and property, access to education and health care which most cases are the cause of gender violence in Imenti South Sub County.

To begin the forum, speakers argued for religious leaders to be more actively involved in GBV. One religious leader stated that many faith leaders have separated faith and GBV, and so you rarely see a faith leader advocating against GBV. She argued that GBV is not outside the faith but within and taking place among the faithful, stating, “We do not expect the faith organizations or institutions to remain quiet in the midst of increased GBV.” Institutions and their leaders are in a position to address these issues. Faith-based institutions have many established forums to use to advocate against GBV. For example, leaders can make deliberate efforts to ensure that GBV is on the agenda during services/prayers, gatherings, celebrations, and at any other point when they have the opportunity to meet with their members. In addition, they can make a decision not to officiate at early marriage weddings (Chynoweth, 2017).

According to a study carried by Marks (2015), people need to be informed and educated much on Gender Based Violence and ways of reducing it completely. Intervention programmes, seminar, workshops, trainings and fellowships by the Church leaders among other partners to be taken aboard if Gender Based Violence is to be effectively addressed (Goodman, 2014). In their study, Dudley and Kosinski (2013) revealed that Church leaders needs to teach women about their rights so that they can advocate for themselves and other women in the community.

It is also an essential Church leader’s role to advocate and to teach men about women’s rights and their responsibility in defending those rights including preventing GBV. This idea is grounded in the idea that women and men are partners who should work hand-in-hand to achieve gender equality (Ellison, 2016).

According to Erickson (2012), Gender based violence can be as a result of infidelity among family members thereby leading in these members either male or female having extra marital affairs. While most Churches condemn sex outside marriage, sex is still a major source of conflict in most marriages especially that from extra marital affairs, few Church leaders talk about it willingly (Ushe, 2015). Majority of Church leaders have a reservation when it comes

to counseling couples in such matters and will always find reasons to suppress it in the name of preserving the marriage bonds either in the name of “what God has put together no one should put asunder”.(Mark 10:1-12) or submissiveness, because women are in most cases the first victims. It is the role of the Church leaders to advocate fidelity and respect between man and woman thus averting reasons for gender violence (Semahegn & Mengistie, 2015).

Other speakers presented information to educate the audience on GBV. For example, one speaker presented general information on GBV, such as definitions, descriptions of different types of violence, and international statements against GBV. Another speaker presented GBV statistics from around the world, along with links between GBV and HIV, explaining that women are at greater risk of HIV when they encounter violence, such as sexual assault, FGC, polygamy, economic dependence, and physical abuse. Furthermore, the speaker stated that HIV can spark violence against women, such as property grabbing (Erickson, 2012).

According to Pahl (2016), Sermons are the way that a religious leader communicates to his or her congregation. It usually involves picking a lesson that is to be used that week and using scripture to enforce that lesson. Most members of the Church go once a week or even twice a week to hear these messages. It is their way of connecting with God and worshipping together. This is why weekly sermons can be a very useful place to begin to educate the congregation on the issues surrounding gender based violence (Cruz & Klinger, 2011).

Usher (2015) examined the role of religious approaches to preventing gender violence and sexual abuse in Nigeria. The study utilized inter-disciplinary method in gathering information. Findings from the research revealed that sexual abuse and gender violence is endemic in Nigerian society. The study indicated that use of liberation theology, enhancing religious teaching on equality of all sexes, enculturation of men and women equality and promotion of women rights helps in averting GBV.

To initiate action planning to address GBV, participants met in small groups to identify a problem, goal, desired outcome, and strategies and activities for achieving the goal. For example, one group stated a goal of building a society free from GBV. Their desired outcome was to change people's attitudes related to GBV, and for religious leaders to make a substantial commitment to the fight against GBV. Strategies for these outcomes include sensitization and awareness raising among all stakeholders related to GBV and HIV, religious leaders preaching against GBV, and educating women about their rights and their religion. Activities include mounting advocacy campaigns, organizing seminars for religious leaders to equip and encourage them to include "proper interpretation" of the scriptures, organizing workshops/seminars for all concerned groups, training women so they can assist in GBV-related activities, and counseling victims. Forum organizers encouraged participants to brainstorm about strategies and activities that could be integrated into existing work on these issues. These discussions of action planning were separate from the action plans that came out of the regional workshop and were not supported financially by this project (Kubai, 2014).

The forum concluded with the ACRL Executive Committee drafting and signing a statement solidifying their commitment to addressing the issues and calling upon other religious leaders to address GBV in their communities. Their press release was read to the press¹⁷ (see Annex F). In this statement, senior religious leaders said:

"We are disturbed by the increasing and high levels of gender-based violence, and which situation is compounded by the HIV. Women and children are at more risk for genderbased violence, and this is a threat to human security and a violation of human rights. We have, and continue to discuss about the faith-based approach to gender-based violence, and note that this approach can be used as a step towards solving the problems of gender-based violence. The religious communities have to intensify their efforts to reduce and eventually eradicate gender-based violence."

Njagi (2017) sought to establish the role of faith based organizations in curbing gender based violence in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study found out that all types of Gender based violence exist in Nairobi County. It also found that Faith-based organizations have a great potential not only in the prevention of Gender based violence but also in providing care and support to people living with trauma associated with gender based violence. The study indicated that this can be attained through promoting behaviour change through inviting or allowing GBV educators to address congregations and using the prestigious moral authority of religion to advocate behavior change. The study also indicated that faith based organizations work through advocacy to end GBV.

In Liberia, religious leaders held a workshop on FGC and its links to HIV. Liberian women of faith have also taken on a range of activities related to GBV, which are supported by Norwegian Church Aid. Women are learning to mediate disputes and resolve conflicts; provide psychosocial support for girls being reintegrated following the conflict and the related process of giving statements for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; maintain a presence on the council of elders in several towns; address issues of inheritance, property ownership, and GBV, such as rape, and FGC; and advocate for their rights and the rights of other vulnerable groups in society (Ramsey, 2016). In addition, they have worked to sensitize men in rural areas about FGC and early forced marriages, including advocating for education as an option for girls rather than early marriage. The participants report that GBV and FGC have decreased. Of particular note, female traditional practitioners are engaged in dialogue with religious leaders and healthcare providers about ending FGC, which has social, psychological, religious, and economic implications. FGC has become a source of income generation for traditional female practitioners (Zoes), so they have appealed for international support towards capacity building, skills training, and other economic ventures to help sustain them if the practice is discontinued (Ushe, 2015).

With increased and improved capacity, Religions for Peace has adopted GBV as an advocacy issue for 2009. Religions for Peace has become active in addressing GBV through a variety of partners and donors worldwide. The group currently is working with UNIFEM on the “Say No to Violence Against Women” Internet campaign and has gathered more than 20,000 signatures around the world to contribute to the cause. As Religions for Peace’s Secretary General, Dr. William F. Vendley, stated, “People of faith around the world believe that it is a moral responsibility to end violence against women. While religious traditions vary, it is clear that religious men and women around the world are increasingly convinced that their respective traditions call them to work as partners to end this violence.” On another front, UNIFEM is developing a web portal on violence against women and will include all of the project documents on this site as resources for others working with religious leaders on GBV.

Religions for Peace also brought attention to the need for action on GBV at the Women, Faith, and Development Summit to End Global Poverty, a multiyear initiative to create political will to increase global investments in women and girls. At the summit, Ms. Katumi Mahama, a representative from the African Women of Faith Network and participant from the senior leadership forum in Tanzania, said, “We pledge to take action to educate religious leaders on domestic violence, implement a ‘no tolerance’ policy for sexual harassment and help women who are victims of domestic violence.”

Stellenbosch and Stellenbosch (2017) sought to establish how faith communities can be mobilized to address GBV. They pointed out that there is much debate around whether gender based violence (GBV) interventions should be framed within ‘women’ or ‘men’ movements. Stellenbosch and Stellenbosch (2017) argued that there is a need, particularly within faith communities in the Global South, to explore the notion of an integrated approach. The dominance of restrictive patriarchal structures means that men, and especially male faith leaders, need to be systematically targeted and incorporated into faith-based intervention

strategies, as partners in addressing the issue. Stellenbosch and Stellenbosch (2017) also argued that religious teaching can be a serious hindrance to having faith communities respond constructively to GBV. Teaching can support religious beliefs that contribute to creating an environment that justifies GBV and hamper survivors from seeking help and leaving abusive situations. Especially messages about submissiveness have been used to justify abuse. The study also established that many faith leaders disbelieve the GBV statistics and continue to deny that GBV is happening within their own faith communities. However, the study also indicated that faith leaders are indeed willing to become involved in GBV prevention and response once they have become aware that it is an issue within their communities. Nonetheless, the study established that these leaders stated that they are not equipped to deal with GBV, and that they need more training.

2.2.4 Church Leaders Conflict Resolution and Gender Based Violence

The term conflict resolution for the purposes of this study was defined as what Church leaders do to try to restore harmony to in cases where based violence is experienced. The three most common religious beliefs and practices that have helped resolve and avert gender-based violence are (a) scriptural teachings, (b) attendance at religious services, and (c) prayer.

A study by Curtis and Ellison (2012) revealed that men's religious attendance had a modest inverse association with the frequency of gender-based violence. In addition to religious attendance, couple prayer has been found to decrease negativity, contempt, and hostility, as well as emotional reactivity toward one's partner, children or any person of opposite gender (Butler, Stout, & Gardner, 2012). Holeman, (2015) have shown the role of religious beliefs in helping couples forgive each other following conflict. Although these studies demonstrated an empirical relationship between religiosity and gender-based violence, they did not attempt to investigate how or why this relationship exists and left many questions unanswered.

Marsh and Dallos (2016) partially addressed the issue of how Church leaders may help the congregation deal effectively with gender based violence. They found that religious practices such as prayer helped Christians to manage their anger during conflict. Although this study adds a new dimension to what is known about religion and anger management, qualitative research that exclusively focuses on Church leaders and gender based violence and samples individuals from a broad range of religious backgrounds is needed to elucidate possible explanations for the relationship.

Dudley and Kosinski (2016) pose it that religion may be a resource in curbing gender based violence. Unified religious participation in couples was associated with greater conflict. Brody (2014) also found similar results for rural African American couples. This association may be partly because of spousal similarities promoted by religious homogeneity, which are conducive to a more stable marriage, stable relations and therefore few cases of gender based violence (Lehrer & Chiswick, 2014). Scanzoni and Arnett (2017) found that through public and private religious activities, people often cultivated a sense of purpose and values centered on loving and caring. Perhaps, religious participation enhances those relational qualities that reduce gender-based violence.

Ellison, Bartkowski, and Anderson (2016) found that Church leader's interactions dissimilarity was associated with a heightened risk of domestic violence. In general, some data have indicated a connection between certain expressions of religiosity and undesirable outcomes, including authoritarianism, abuse, and tolerance for abuse (Dollahite, Marks, & Goodman, 2014). Rosen-Grandon, Myers, and Hattie (2014) also found that when people interact more often with the Church leaders, a shared vision a shared quality of relationships is developed and therefore minimizes cases of gender based violence. Another key finding relating to gender

based violence prevention is that couples often expressed that their religious involvement has helped them to develop conflict deterring virtues.

The church proclaims the moral order of the human universe and this moral order is based upon the dignity of every human being which flows out of the fact that everyone is created in the image of God from which the word of love and peace is perpetuated as peace is a gift of God. The church is believed to have a binding, connecting and a uniting force (Musune, 2015) that also is very instrumental in the management and resolution of Gender Based Violence since the issue of humanity is a reflection of God's love and expectation on human kind.

Upon the above said view, the then Vice President of Zimbabwe Joyce Mujuru once said, 'The church is one social institution where there is no discrimination based on political affiliation or socio-economic backgrounds. The role of the church is bringing people together as a family.' The church as an institution has the duty of uniting people from all walks of life under the spirit of oneness. Different church groups compliment government efforts in preaching about peace from the family up to the society at large. Peace, unity and justice tend to important elements in the society. Upon this sentiment, Marks (2015) writes, 'In the tradition of the Catholic Church morals, people find principles related to personal justice, of distributive justice in the relationship with others, and also in the relationship with the international justice as regards to the relationship between families, societies and countries.

Some people believe that the church today provides a hidden haven for Gender Based Violence and condone it by misunderstanding and misinterpreting the Bible. This sentiment has been shared by Abdi (2016) who states with regards to the church that "the position of women was higher at an earlier period in their history than it later became." The church through the dictates of its religious leaders is believed to opine on how women should behave, dress and participate as well as the belief of men having the right to make decisions for women in the society.

Although there are such beliefs, the church is being viewed as that which can bring positive results in curbing gender violence and perpetuate peace and harmony among spouses and families at large as supported by the story of creation that portray Eve as a suitable companion for Adam not as a servant to be manipulated for personal gains. Since religious leaders and communities play a vital role in identifying key health and social issues in their broader communities and often lead positive, faith-based responses to such issues, they are crucial partners in addressing GBV and HIV, (Abera *et al.*, 2016). They have a religious mandate to effect a change in communities and may lobby policymakers and governments in their own areas and as policymakers also within their own institutions; they are likely to give support to GBV activities if they are actively engaged at every level.

With reference, to 1 Peter 3:1-7, “a woman is supposed to submit to her husband and the husband should love his wife.” Under this notion, the church today however uses this verse as a single-phase point, to suppress women and to destine their position in the society. In actual sense, submissiveness in the Bible encourages a woman to be obedient, humble, willing, loyal, respectful, and loving and have compassion for her husband. In the same way the husband should love, respect and take care of his wife. It means, that for this to happen both the wife and the husband should understand their roles and duties and be able to apply and abide by them with due respect for each other. Otherwise failure of one party to recognize his or her responsibility would create a barrier, the barrier conceives conflict, conflict gives birth to Domestic Violence then Domestic Violence graduates to Gender Based Violence. The center points of this verse are for both the man and woman to love, respect, and care for and appreciate each other. Submissiveness in this case does not mean that a woman should tolerate ill treatment against her will (Longwood, 2018). The true teaching of Christianity is that humans are created in the image and likeness of God, who is love. People exemplify Christ through loving themselves and others, not through enduring the abuse of a partner. “No one is

superior to the other. Therefore, no one should be discriminated against based on religion, race, sex or political affiliation.” said Vice President Mujuru. Sunday Mail 19-25 (2013, 02)

Dudley and Kosinski (2015) revealed that Church leader’s interventions helped people experiencing gender based violence more often. In Nigeria also, Ogunsanya (2000) studied some fifty couples in an encounter weekend in the Redeemed People’s Mission Church in Ogun State University. These couples had experienced some form of gender based violence. The objectives were to create communication outlet for cordiality to be revitalized. From the results, it was discovered that gender based violence imposes negative influences upon psychological conditions including moodiness and incompetence in couples concerned.

Several studies have reported that Church leaders can help avert gender based violence (Markman, Whitton, & Kline, 2004) but have not analyzed the specific ways which Church leaders should adopt in the modern times in fight against gender based violence. The current study provides some needed explanation for this question and is supported by the results of other studies.

2.3 Theoretic Framework

According to Ajzen’s (1991), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) predicts and explains human behavior in a specific context. The TPB focuses on the reasons that motivates people to perform a behavior on the basis that “the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior, the more likely should be its performance” (Ajzen, 1991). According to this theory, it is important to understand the reasons that lead to peoples’ intentions in order to be able to predict future involvement in a behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is one of the best theories for this study because it sets a model for humans’ actions in which intentional behavior like the GBV is determined. The intentional behavior to abuse the other is determined by; attitudes and behaviors, subjective norms and perceived controls.

Attitudes and behaviors comprise of emotional feelings towards a certain behavior of either the victim or perpetrator. This connects the emotional feelings to the believing that abusing the other has intended outcomes like discipline, correction or revenge. Subjective norms are the opinions given by other people surrounding the perpetrator or the victim involved in gender-based violence. These opinions or advices, leads to peer pressure and social pressure and these pressures can lead to abuses. Perceived control is the power of perception of the ability to perform a certain behavior. This contributes to both having the intention to perform an action as well as questioning whether the person would actually perform the action.

In this study the theory of planned behavior was used to explain and predict the behavior of Church leadership involvement in averting gender-based violence. The use of PTB is adoptive enough to account for the dynamic and complex nature of Gender Based Violence. Furthermore, Church leader's role modeling, involvement through pastoral program and advocacy are all factors that can aid in averting Gender Based Violence (Alghazo & Alghazo, 2015).

Feminist research has developed a theoretical perspective based on the oppression and exploitation of women in society that locates men's violence as part of men's structural power within patriarchy (Young & Skrla, 2012). This perspective is adopted for this research. Dominant, patriarchal ideologies that are also adopted by religions demand women to be good mothers and patient wives. Feminist theorist further postulate that response systems 'naturalize' violence against women in the home, by allowing perpetrators to act without fear of punishment by the state and the so-called 'helping institutions' claim to help battered women to meet their rights only they do help themselves to meet their own. These structural systems hence are devoted to maintaining male control over women.' Such systems include the church and the clergy that serve in it. For violence against women in the home was and, unfortunately,

it still is premised on beliefs regarding the 'rightness' of male power and the 'entitlement' of men to exercise control over women's behaviours, decisions /and actions. This theory is also supported by cultural feminists, who claim that traditional religious economic, political and judicial institutions are masculinist by nature and masculinist in practice. They further postulate that institutions are patriarchal even in the way they are structured hence their responses to domestic violence would also be patriarchal (White, 1999 cited in Dunkle, & Decker, 2013). This theoretical framework is relevant to this research as it primarily explores the situation of women, the social relations and the unequal power relations that curtail women's full participation in development.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

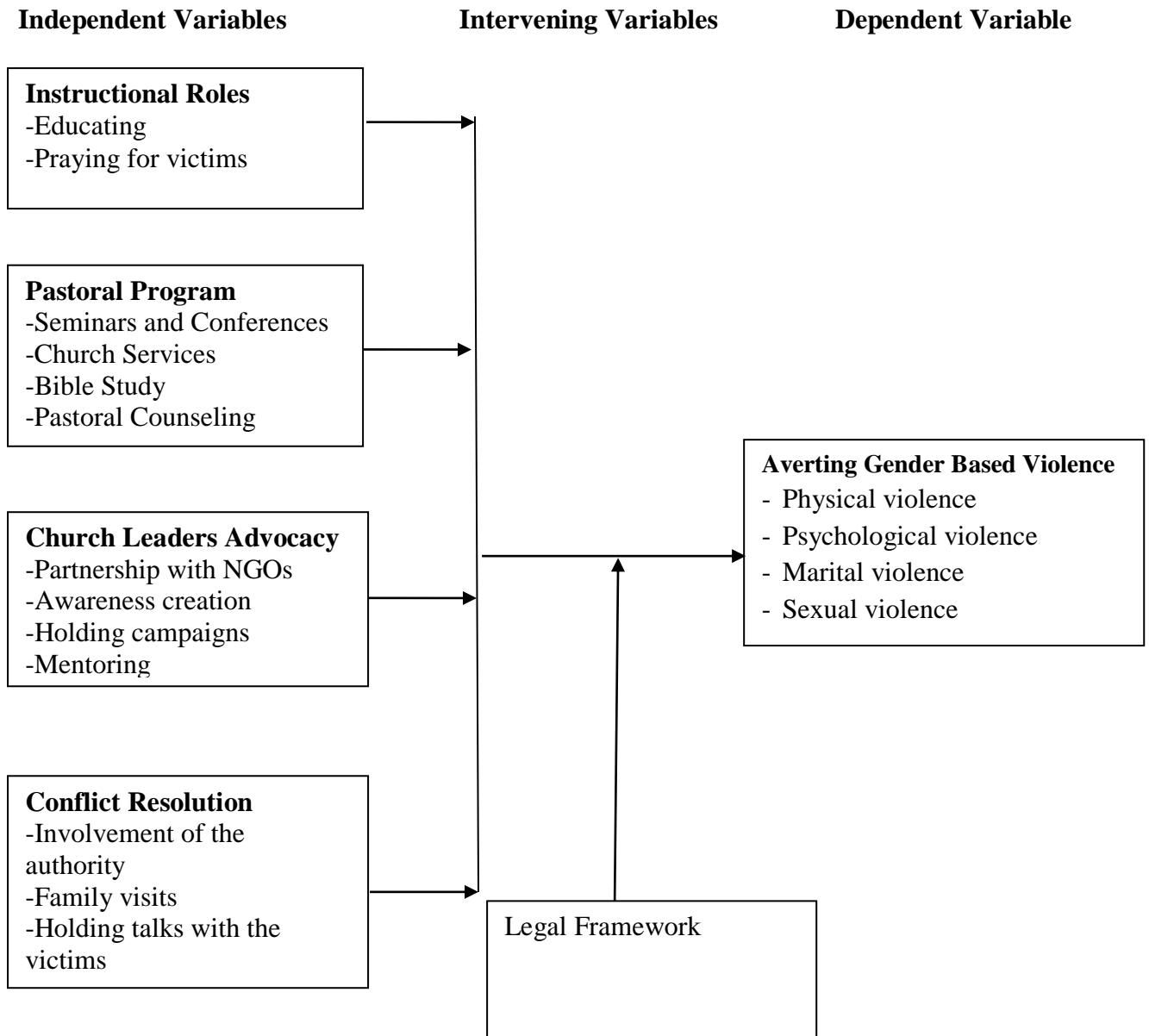


Figure 2. 1 Conceptual Framework

The above conceptual framework shows the relationship between the study variables. The dependent variable was gender-based violence which was being influenced by a set of specific objectives. The objectives included instructional roles, pastoral program, Church leader's advocacy and conflict resolution. The study was further intervened by legal framework, policies and culture.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology employed in the study. It describes the research design, target population, sampling procedures and sample size, instrumentation, data collection and analysis procedures and ethical consideration.

3.2 Research Design

The research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurements and analysis of data (Kothari, 2004). Research design directed the research to efficiency and yielding maximum required information with minimal expenditure of time, money and effort. This research used descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design in this study involved gathering of facts from a large population by interviewing and administering a questionnaire to a sampled group of Church leaders and gender-based victims.

The design systematically described the attitudes, opinions, habits and feelings of the respondents towards gender-based violence without influencing it in any way (Brink, Walt & Rensburg, 2006). Profoundly this design provided a platform for a self-reported fact about respondents (Kuada, 2012) making it easier to gather data that describes their roles and experiences respectively. This design made it possible for the research to describe events and then organize, tabulate and depict data collected. Further the data collected was reduced into manageable form and further organized into patterns that emerged for easy of analysis and comprehension of the role of Church leaders in averting gender-based violence.

3.3 Target population

Target population refers to all the members of a hypothetical or real group of subjects, objects or individuals to whom a researcher desires to generalize the conclusions of the study (Kothari, 2004). Further, Mugenda & Mugenda, (2012) describes target population in research as to an entire group of individuals, events or objects having a common observable characteristic in this study target population included Church leaders from NCKK member Churches and victims of gender-based violence within South Imenti Sub-County, Meru County. Target population was 297 respondents as shown in tables 3.1 and 3.2 respectively.

Table 3. 1
Target Population

Church leaders	Target Population
ACK	14
AIPC	18
FGCK	56
MCK	40
PCEA	16
Total	144

Table 3. 2
Target Population

GBV Victims	Target Population
Men	13
Women	140
Total	153

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Techniques

Sampling in research is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals selected represent the large group from which they were selected (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003). Sample size refers to the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute a sample (Kothari, 2004). According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2012) 10-30% of the study population recommended is sufficient representation of a given population.

This study utilized purposive sampling technique where the Church leadership from NCKK member Churches and GBV victims were purposely selected as demonstrated in Table 3.3 (a) and 3.4(b) respectively. Purposive sampling was done by identifying church leaders from NCKK Upper Region records obtained from the regional office in Meru town and the victims records obtained from Meru County human rights paralegal office, Meru town respectively.

Table 3. 3
Distribution of the Sample Size

Category of Churches	Church Leaders	Sample percentage	Sample Size
ACK	14	36%	5
AIPC	18	33%	6
FGCK	56	30%	17
MCK	40	30%	12
PCEA	16	30%	5
Total Sample size	144	31%	45

Source: NCKK Upper Eastern Region Office (2018)

Table 3. 4: Distribution of the Sample Size

Category of Victims	Population	Sample percentage	Sample Size
Men	13	30%	4
Women	140	30%	42
Total Sample size	153	30%	44

Source: Meru County Human Rights Paralegal Office (2018)

3.5 Research Instruments

Research instruments refers to tools that were used for data collection. The data for the study was collected from the participants using questionnaires and interviews schedules. The choice of research instruments depends on the objectives of the study because some studies may require use of only one instrument of collecting data while others require use of different instruments. In order to decide on the instruments to use for data collection, the researcher needs to analyse the problem and objectives of the study to determine the type of data required. The researcher ensured the validity and reliability of the instruments chosen for the research depended to a large extent on the suitability of the instruments. This study is based on primary data and in order to efficiently collect the data, a structured questionnaire and interview

schedule was developed to assist the researcher in identifying and understanding the role of the church leaders in averting gender-based violence.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires were structured and elicited to facilitate the collection of data. The questionnaire contained background information of the respondents and each section of the variables of the study was included. Questionnaires were preferred for this study because gave the respondents freedom to freely express themselves and their experiences in gender-based violence. The questions were designed to probe the respondents to provide in-depth information on the GBV without necessary influencing the validity and reliability (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2006).

In order to achieve this, the researcher wrote a study protocol by getting acquainted with the subject of gender-based violence, conducted a literature review, formulated research questions and developed objectives that guided development of questionnaires for data collection.

Different parts of the questionnaires were designed using the list of required information from the objectives of the study. Questionnaires were completed, verified the content and style of the questions and pre-tested (piloted) in North Imenti Sub-County that was not included in the study. After the pre-test, the questionnaires were amended and refined with consultation with the supervisors. The refined questionnaires were given to the respondents to complete during data collection.

3.5.2 Group Interview Schedules

Group interview schedules using an interview guide for the gender-based violence victims was conducted. Group interviews enabled the gender-based violence victims as a group to correctively express their experiences and how better the church leaders can play their role in averting gender-based violence.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

Validity of the research instruments determined the accuracy of the research findings. Instruments validity was ascertained through subjecting the questionnaires to piloting. Piloting is a pre-test of research instruments to confirm their accuracy. For this study, the questionnaire was pre-tested before the actual study. It was undertaken in Meru Imenti South Sub-County.

3.6.1 Validity of the Instrument

Validity is the accuracy of the research instruments. It refers to the usage of instruments, data or information. Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), states that validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences that are based on research result. Instruments validity was ascertained through piloting the questionnaires in Meru Imenti South Sub-County. Questions that were not well understood during the piloting were revised and amended in consultation with the supervisors. The supervisor verified the questions validity and how far they are credible to the study.

3.6.2 Reliability of the Instrument

Mugenda & Mugenda (2009), defines reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. An instrument is reliable when it can measure a variable accurately and obtain the same result over a period of time. Reliability of the instruments was ensured through pre-testing of the research instruments before the real study.

3.6.3 Pre-Testing

Pre-test of research instruments for the study was carried out in North Imenti Sub-County. North Imenti Sub-County has the same characteristics with South Imenti Sub-County. The researcher piloted pre-test questionnaires' to ensure validity and necessary adjustments are

made. Any item in the tools found to be unclear or irrelevant was refined or eliminated through the advisory of the supervisors. The research sampled 10 Church leaders within NCKK Upper Eastern Region Member Churches. The results of the piloting were useful in revising the instruments before the actual research takes place.

3.7 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

The researcher received an introduction letter from Kenya Methodist University. The researcher visited Churches in the area under study to contact the respondents. He introduced himself and explained the purpose of the study. He delivered the questionnaires to the respondents to fill in the details. The researcher then gave the respondents time to respond to questions. The researcher also conducted group focused interviews for the victims of Gender Based Violence.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of breaking complex information into smaller elements that can be easily clarified and understood (Kothari, 2004). The data collected was studied and analyzed according to the objectives of the study. The collected data from the completed questionnaires and interview schedules was cleaned by identifying missing values, edited for completeness, and organized by sorting into categories of respondents. They were then modelled into coded categories to enhance their analysis. SPSS version 22.0, NVIVO for qualitative data analysis, as well as Microsoft excel was used to present the data in tables and draw linkages in qualitative data like the interview schedules. The SPSS was applied to generate percentages and frequencies of closed ended responses. Qualitative data from the open-ended questions were coded, trees drawn, nodes generated, and linkages established using NVIVO for qualitative data analysis.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are related to the principles and values to be upheld while the research is on progress. The researcher seek permission from the relevant authorities to undertake the study. An introduction letter was obtained from the university explaining the purpose of the research. The researcher received permission from the respondents to interview them and gave an assurance that the information obtained from them was for research purpose only. To assure respondent of total confidentiality and privacy of the information given, they were required not to write names and those of their schools on the questionnaires.

They were assured that participation in the research is voluntary and that they would not be coerced to give the required information. They were also required to fill the questionnaires at their convenient time but within the time limit of the study. To create confidence and elicit information, the researcher politely and with dignity present himself to the respondents. The researcher also assured the respondents that the information they gave were preserved in computer disks and safely stored in the office under key and lock.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The objective of the study was to examine the role of Church leaders in averting gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru County, Kenya. In this chapter, the results of the study are presented, interpreted and discussed in the context of the objectives of the study. The findings are discussed on the instructional role of Church leaders in averting gender-based violence, involvement role of Church leaders through pastoral programs in averting gender-based violence, the influence of Church leaders in advocating against gender-based violence and the influence of Church leaders' conflict resolution on gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Kenya. The results are described using frequencies and percentages. The qualitative data set is presented through emerging themes portrayed from the interview schedules.

4.2 Response rate

The researcher sought to establish the response rate of the respondents. The results are indicated in figure 4.1

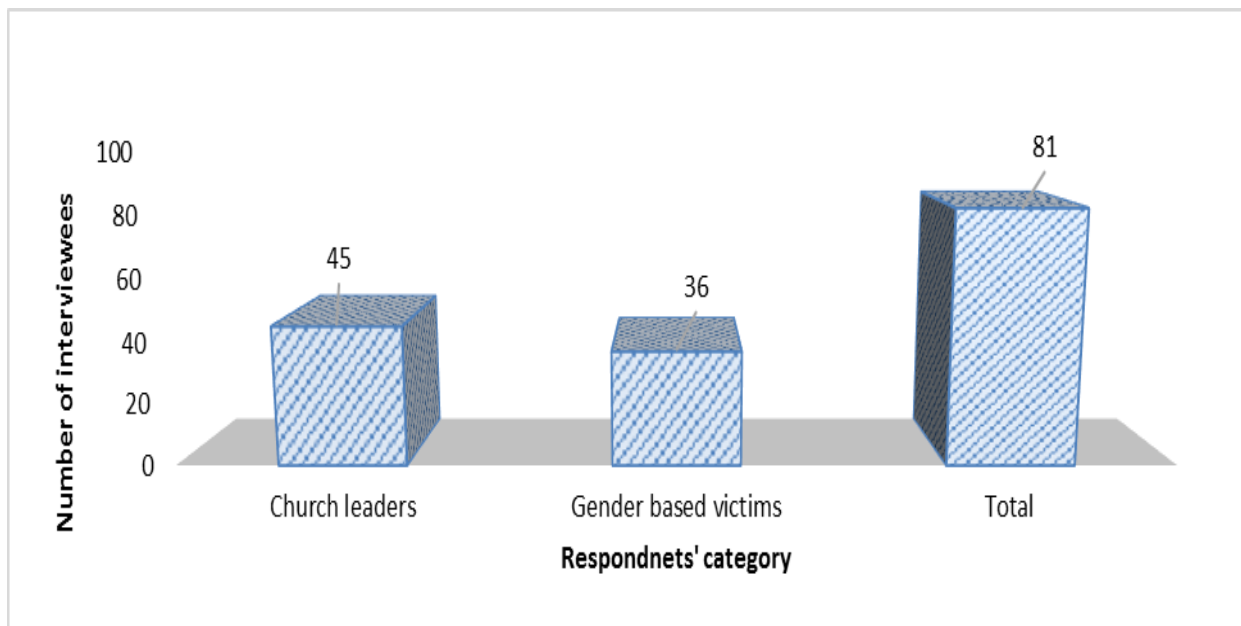


Figure 4. 1 Response rate

Figure 4.1 above shows the response rate of the research. A total of 81 respondents were interviewed which represented 81.2 percent of the total sampled participants. The response was therefore rated very well. The commendable response rate was achievable after the researcher administered the questionnaires personally and made personal visits and phone calls to remind the participants to fill-in and return the questionnaires.

4.3 Demographic Data

4.3.1 Marital Status of the Church leaders

The study sorts the marital status of the church leaders under the study. This was important as an indicator to whether the leader has experience in marriage. The findings are presented as follows;

Table 4. 1
Marital status of Church Leaders

	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Married	14	48.3%	8	50.0%
Single	13	44.8%	7	43.8%
Divorced	2	6.9%	0	0.0%
Widowed	0	0.0%	1	6.3%
Total	29	100.0%	16	100.0%

From table 4.1 the study revealed that majority of the Church leaders are married with 50% of the female and 48.3% of the male. However, others were still single while some were divorced and widowed. The married church leaders were better place to understand the dynamics in marriages and the indicators of a gender-based violence in marriage.

4.3.2 Age of the respondents

The researcher sought to establish the age bracket of the respondents. The results are indicated in table 4.2

Table 4. 2
Age of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-35 Years	3	7.0%
36-45 Years	10	22.2%
46-55 Years	24	53.3%
56 Years and Above	8	17.0%
Total	45	100.0%

Table 4.2 shows that most (53.3%) of respondents were between 45-46 years, 22.2% were between 36-45 years, 17.0% were age 56 years and above while 7.0% were 18-35. The age of respondents was necessary since respondents it determine his/her level of experience (Vasilescu, 2013).

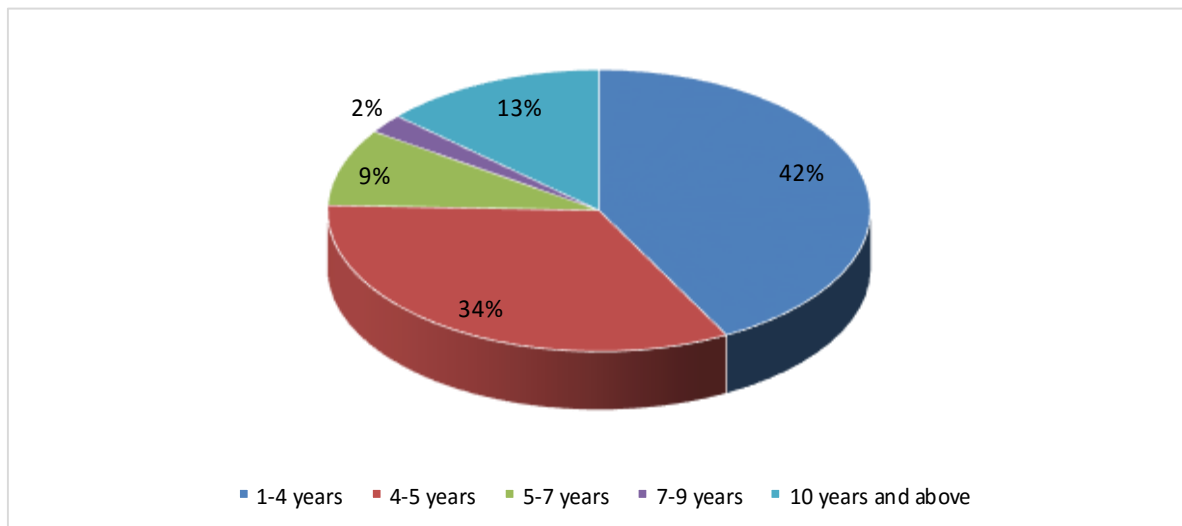
4.3.3 Level of Education of the Church Leaders

The researcher sought to establish the education level of the respondents. The results are indicated in table 4.3

Table 4. 3
Level of education of the Church leaders

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
O- Level / K.C.S. E	14	31.1
Primary (K. C.P. E	0	0.0
College /Polytechnic	19	42.2
University	12	26.7
Total	45	100.0

From table 4.3, the results established that 42.2 per cent of the respondents had their highest level of education being collage/polytechnic while 31.1 per cent had KCSE qualification while only 26.7 percent of the respondents had university undergraduate qualification. Church leaders' level of education is important in because it determined how a church leader would comprehend and handle cases of gender-based violence reported to him.



4.3.4 Duration in Church Leadership

Figure 4. 2 Duration in Church Leadership

Figure 4.2 shows the duration the leaders had spent in Church leadership. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents had been Church leaders for 1-4 years with 42.2%. Also, the remaining had been in leadership for 4-5 years, 10 years and above, 5-7 years and 7-9 years sequentially. Duration in church leadership was critical for this study in terms of church leaders experience on averting gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru, Kenya.

4.3.5 Category of jobs apart from Church leading

Table 4. 4
Category of Job of Church leaders

	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Mentor	6	20.7%	3	18.8%
Business	5	17.2%	5	31.3%
Chef	0	0.0%	1	6.3%
Doctor	3	10.3%	1	6.3%
Farmer	9	31.0%	3	18.8%
Technician	1	3.4%	0	0.0%
Tailor	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Teacher	4	13.8%	3	18.8%
Pastor	1	3.4%	0	0.0%
Total	29	100.0%	16	100.0%

Apart leadership in Church, Table 4.4 shows that there exist other engagements by the Church leaders. It is revealed through the study that most Church leaders 20.7% and 31.3% are involved as mentors and businesspeople. Other Church leaders were engaged as farmers, doctors, chef, tailor and teachers respectively. This study observes that in the Church, there are highly educated people. The spiritual expectations of these professionals cannot be satisfied by a semi-literate cleric therefore the clergy should involve more skilled professionals. This is because even the early Church had some of the finest brains in the Roman empires as bishops.

Origen, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Athanasius, Augustine and many others were intellectual giants of their time (Waruta, 2014).

4.3.6 Hearing of GBV by the Church Leaders

Table 4. 5
Hearing of GBV by the Church Leaders

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Society conflict	25	55.6
	Sexual harassment	5	11.1
	Polygamy Conflict	2	4.4
	Through seminars	3	6.7
	Media	4	8.9
	Total	39	86.7
	Not heard	6	13.3
Total		45	100.0

Table 4.5 shows how the Church leaders heard of gender-based violence. Most respondent indicated that they heard gender-based violence through society conflicts with the highest percentage of 55.6% with the polygamy conflict being the lowest with 4.4%. Some Church leaders 13.3% (6) also said that they have not heard of gender-based violence. This is an illustration that gender-based violence is rampant in the modern society. This therefore call for immediate initiative to curb this vice from all dimensions.

4.3.7 Roles of Church Leaders in Averting Gender based Violence

The study wanted to assess the Roles of Church leaders in averting gender-based violence. The study sort to determine church leaders' instructional role in averting gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru, Kenya. The findings are presented as follows;

Table 4. 6
Instructional Roles of Church Leaders in Averting Gender Based Violence

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Mentor	5	10.20%
Enhance Awareness	17	38.80%
Addressing the cause of violence	1	2.00%
fight for Human rights	1	2.00%
Being role model	16	36.70%
Help access justice	3	6.10%
Help people to Respect each other	1	2.00%
Addressing victims needs	1	2.00%
Total	45	100

Table 4.6 shows the instructional roles of Church leaders in averting the gender-based violence. Majority 17 (38.8%) indicated that they create awareness followed by 16 (36.7%) who acted as role model. Other Church leaders assisted by helping in accessing justice, enforcing respect between individuals and addressing the cause of the violence. Church leaders play a fundamental role of preaching and teaching God’s message of love and compassion for all, in the knowledge that every single person, male and female, is made in God’s image. Therefore, in their teachings, church leaders need to show gender equality by respecting women, letting them take part in decisions made in the Church, and allowing women in leadership role.

4.3.8 Actions of Church leaders when GBV cases are reported

The study sort to establish the actions taken when GBV cases are reported to the church leaders. Church leaders are the most trusted in the community and therefore it is important for this study to know which actions they take as part of their role in averting gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru Kenya. The findings are presented as follows;

Table 4. 7
Actions of Church leaders when GBV cases are reported

Actions	Frequency	Percentage
Give them moral support	10	22.20%
Educating them	3	6.70%
Being trustworthy	2	4.40%
Counselling	7	15.60%
Report to the authorities	4	8.90%
Understand and solve the problem	2	4.40%
Pray for them	2	4.40%
Total	45	100.00%

Table 4.7 shows the actions of the Church leaders when gender-based violence cases are reported to them. From the study, majority 15 (33.3%) ascertained that they guide the victims. 22.2% (10) indicated that they give the victims moral support, while the remaining Church leaders reported that they educate, counsel, report to authorities and pray for the victims proportionately. It’s the role of church leaders to guide the congregation on the best actions to

take when such cases of gender-based violence occur. Church leaders can help in solving some of the problems that could be the root cause to gender based violence through counselling, prayers and provision of moral support.

4.3.9 Availability of Pastoral Programs in the Church

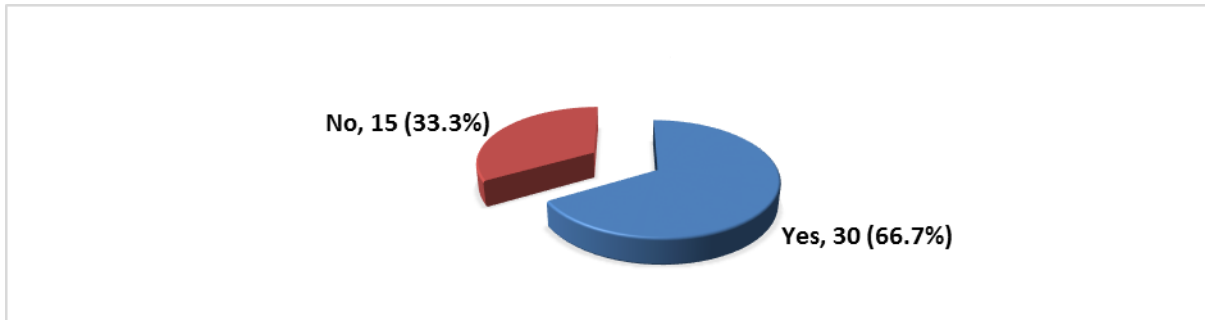


Figure 4. 3 Availability of Pastoral Programs in the Churches

As shown from figure 4.3 above, 66.7% of the interviewed Church leaders indicated that there existed pastoral programs that helped in addressing gender-based violence while 33.3% do not have the programs.

4.3.10 Pastoral Programs in the Church Aiding in Averting GBV

Table 4. 8
Pastoral programs in the Church aiding in averting GBV

Programs	Frequency	Percentage
Outreach	4	8.9
Organize crusade	2	4.4
Trainings on violence	4	8.9
Guidance and counselling	4	8.9
Gender equality programs	2	4.4
Seminars	6	13.3
Family visits	2	4.4
Bible study programs	2	4.4
Conference	2	4.4
Pastoral visit program	2	4.4
No pastoral programs	15	33.3
Total	45	100

From table 4.8 above majority of the respondents 6(13.3%) connoted that seminars are the most used Church pastoral program. However, some respondents indicated outreaches, crusades,

bible study programs, conferences and pastoral visits as installed programs in the Churches for fighting gender-based violence. It was also revealed through the study that 33.3% (15) had no pastoral programs in the Churches. This is an indication that gender-based violence is a serious issue in the modern times and the church is working hard to avert the vice. The findings of this study showed that the church needs to improve her services of gender-based violence with the inclusion of programmed which will reach both the perpetrators and the victims of the vice.

4.3.11 Effectiveness of Pastoral Programs in Averting GBV

Table 4. 9
Availability of Pastoral Programs in the Churches

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	86.7%
No	39	13.3%
Total	45	100.0

Table 4.9 shows the effectiveness of Church pastoral programs. 86.7% of the of the respondents indicated that Church pastoral programs are effective while 13.3% maintained that the programs are not effective in averting GBV. There are some couples who find it helpful to inform their pastor about 93 any marital crisis they may be coping with. This is because in most cases, the pastor prays for them, reads the Bible to encourage them with the word of God and counsels them accordingly. This corroborates the findings of Mpagi (2012) in which he found out that Christians value prayers and that the Church should re-awaken her ministry of prayer, exorcism and healing.

4.3.12 Reasons why Pastoral Programs are Effective in Averting GBV

Table 4. 10

Reasons for Effectiveness of Pastoral Programs in Averting GBV

Reasons for Effectiveness of Pastoral Programs	Frequency	Percentage
Help address family issues	6	13.3
Through awareness help victims get the information in an easier way	2	4.4
Victims tend to forget about their Cultural beliefs	1	2.2
Awareness help victims understand better	19	42.2
Outreach	5	11.1
Counselling help victims to avoid depression	3	6.7
Seek justice for victims	2	4.4
Divorce cases have reduced	1	2.2
Total	39	86.7
Not sure	6	13.3
Total	45	100

Tables 4.10 above shows the reasons why pastoral programs are effective in averting gender-based violence. Majority of the respondents 19 (42.2%) felt that the programs help to create awareness about gender-based violence. Others indicated that the pastoral programs help in avoiding depression through counselling and reduces divorce cases. However, 13.3% were not sure if the programs may help in averting gender-based violence.

4.3.13 Effective Pastoral Programs on averting Gender based violence

Table 4. 11

Availability of Pastoral Programs in the Churches

Programs	Frequency	Percentage
Role model	3	6.7%
Bible study programs	2	4.4%
counseling programs	6	13.3%
Education Programs	10	22.2%
Pastoral visits	8	17.8%
Organize Campaigns	3	6.7%
Crusade and seminars	13	28.9%
Total	45	100.0%

Table 4.11 above shows the effective pastoral programs used in averting gender-based violence. Majority 13 (28.9%) indicated that crusade and seminars help in averting gender-

based violence. Others said bible study programs, counselling programs and education programs proportionately.

4.3.14 Position of Church Leaders on GBV in Accordance to National and County Governments Efforts to Fight Gender based Violence

Table 4. 12
Position of Church leaders

Position of Church Leaders	Frequency	Percentage
Form partnership with NGO's	3	6.7
Hold campaigns	7	15.6
Mentoring	3	6.7
Pastoral visit	4	8.9
Support them	6	13.3
Avoid traditional practices	10	22.2
Create awareness	12	26.7
Total	45	100

Table 4.12 shows the position of the Church leaders on gender-based violence in accordance to county and national government and, NGOs efforts to fight gender-based violence. Most respondent 12 (26.7%) indicated that the leaders should create awareness. Others felt that the leaders should have pastoral visits, also they should hold campaigns and form partnerships with NGOs. This was crucial to this study because church leaders are trusted and would be involved in partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations programs in averting gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru Kenya.

4.3.15 Church Leader's Involvement in Advocating Against Gender based violence

Table 4. 13
Church Leaders' Involvement in Averting Gender based Violence

Occasion for Advocating on GBV	Frequency	Percentage
Church seminars	10	22%
School Academics	9	20%
Conference	20	44%
Education Forum	2	4%
Widows Day	2	4%
In case of Rape	1	2%
In case of FGM	1	2%
Total	45	100%

Table 4.13 shows the involvement of Church leaders in advocating against gender-based violence. Majority of the leaders 44% (20) indicated that they advocate on GBV during conferences. Also, proportionate number 22% (10) and 20% (9) ascertained that they advocate on GBV during Church seminars and school academics respectively.

4.3.16 Instances where Church Leaders of NCKC Came Together to Advocate Against Gender based Violence

Table 4. 14
Instances of Advocating for GBV

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	67.70%
No	15	33.30%
Total	45	100%

Table 4.14 shows that Church leaders of NCKC frequently come together to advocate against gender with 15 (33.3%) indicating that they do not advocate on GBV. Some of the instances mentioned include; in case of early marriage, seminars, education forums, when case arises in the society on gender-based violence. The results strongly suggest more involvements of the church leaders through NCKC to avert gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-County, Meru Kenya.

4.3.17 Church Leader Involvement in Averting Gender based Violence

Table 4. 15
Church Leaders' Involvement in Averting GBV

Leaders Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
Organize educational seminars	15	33.3
Partnership with different organization	1	2.2
Being role model	10	22.2
Pray for the victims	4	8.9
Educating the victims	11	24.4
Help victims access justice	3	6.7
Funding programs	1	2.2
Total	45	100

Table 4.15 shows the best practices the Church leaders to be involved in to avert gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru Kenya. Most of the respondents 33.3% and 22.2% ascertained that through organizing seminars to educate people and being role model to them respectively will assist in averting gender-based violence. The Church leaders have a big role to play in averting gender based violence and more specifically children who are most affected in cases where the parents or the guardians get involved with any form of violence, exploitation and abuse are often practiced by someone known to the child, including parents, other family members, caretakers, teachers, employers, guardians, cousins, Uncles, law enforcement authorities, state and non-state actors and other children. Only a small proportion of acts of violence, exploitation and abuse are reported and investigated.

According to the respondents, cases of violence have been reported in the Sub-county where children are defiled by their relatives and such cases are concealed by the family members and children suffer in silence not knowing who to talk to thus affecting the child’s physical and mental health in the short and longer term, impairing their ability to learn and socialize, and impacting their transition to adulthood with adverse consequences later in life. Another important involvement is helping the victims to get just justice. This would be possible when church leadership partners with NGOs, county and national governments in seeking just for the victims.

4.3.16 Effect of Culture on Promoting Gender based Violence

Table 4. 16
Effect of Culture on GBV

Effects of Culture	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	91.1
No	4	8.9
Total	45	100

Table 4.16 shows the effects of culture on gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county. Meru Kenya. Majority of the Church leaders 41 (91.1%) ascertained that culture promotes

gender-based violence. Some of the mentioned factors include; promoting of wife inheritance, early marriage, traditional beliefs, dowry conflict, female genital mutilation and gender inequality conflict in relation to family inheritance. Church leadership has a role to create awareness on culture practices that promote gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru Kenya.

4.3.17 Effectiveness of the Government of Kenya’s Legal Framework on Averting GBV

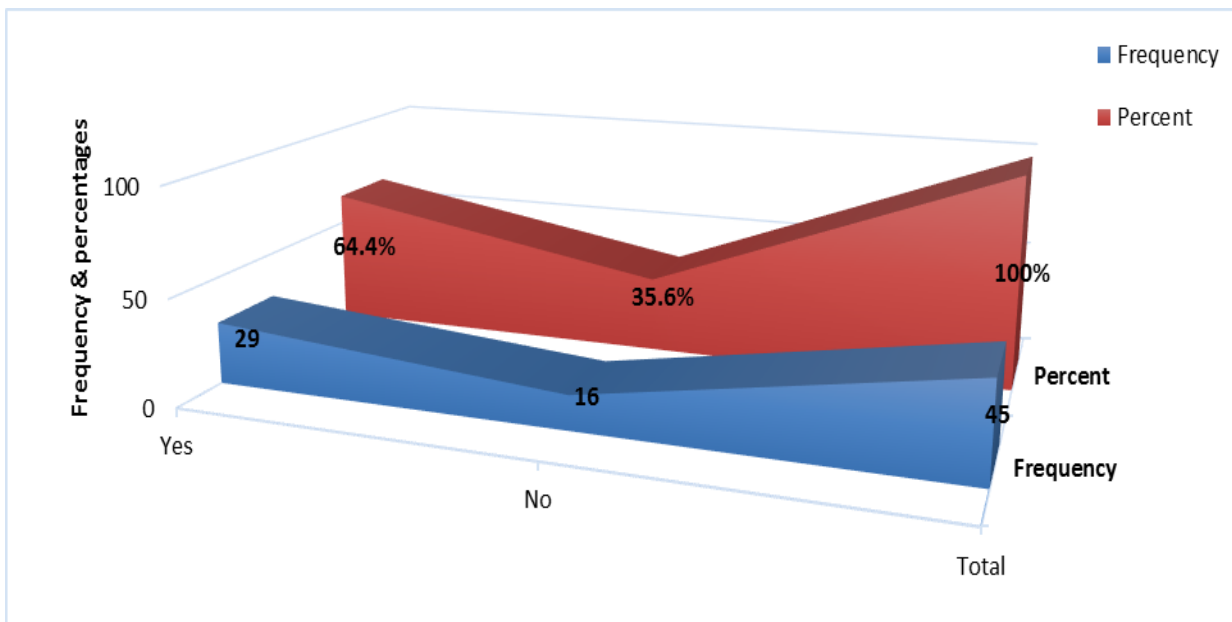


Figure 4. 4 Effectiveness of Government of Kenya’s Framework on GBV

Figure 4.4 shows the effectiveness of the government of Kenya’s legal framework on averting gender-based violence. Majority of the Church leaders 29 (64.4%) ascertained that the government of Kenya’s framework helps in averting gender-based violence. The respondents further mentioned some of the effects of the framework as reduction of traditional rights, right of expression and enforced laws on GBV. All genders need to be nurtured and protected, as well as heard and respected, “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22–23). Christians can model these virtues by being in the forefront of efforts to protect all genders from violence. It’s the role of the Church leaders

to educate the people on values and treating both genders equally. The leaders should counsel, teach and preach that a loving family environment is the best place for full development of children and thus preventing violence against them at home.

Table 4. 17
Demographics of the Victims

A child or an adult		Marital status							Total	
		Married	Single	Widowed	Divorced	Not willing to share	N/A	Separated		
Adult	Gender	M	1	1	0	0	0		0	2
		F	4	4	1	5	9		5	28
	Total		5	5	1	5	9		5	30
Child	Gender	M						3		3
		F						3		3
	Total							6		6
Total	Gender	M	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	5
		F	4	4	1	5	9	3	5	31
	Total		5	5	1	5	9	6	5	36

4.4 Analysis of the Gender based Violence Victims

4.4.1 Demographics

Table 4.17 shows the analysis of gender-based violence victims demographics. From the study, 36 victims were interviewed of which 28 were female adults, 2 male adults. 6 children were also interviewed. Of the interviewed adults, the study found that proportionate numbers of 5 were married, single, divorced and separated. Also, 9 of the respondents were not willing to share their marital status. The interviewed children were not subjected to the questions of marital status.

4.4.2 Victims View on Relation to GBV

The research sort to get views from the victims of Gender Based Violence in relation to the role of church leaders in averting GBV.

Table 4. 18
GBV Victims View in Relation to GBV

Do member of your large family know that you are experiencing Gender Based Violence?			What are your experiences regarding Gender Based Violence?				Total		
			Don't want to remember the feeling	Gives thoughts of committing suicide	Lowers self esteem	Traumatizing			
No	How would you describe Gender Based Violence?	Beaten by a partner	0	0	0	1	1		
		Non listening in to a couple	0	0	1	0	1		
		not sure	0	1	0	1	2		
		Sexual harassment	2	0	2	4	8		
		Traditional norms	1	0	0	0	1		
		Use of abusive language	0	0	1	0	1		
		Total	3	1	4	6	14		
		Not sure	How would you describe Gender Based Violence?	Beaten by a partner			6	1	7
				Non listening in to a couple			0	1	1
				Not sure			0	1	1
sexual harassment					1	1	2		
Sexual harassment					2	2	4		
Total			9	6	15				
Yes	How would you describe Gender Based Violence?	Not sure	0			1	1		
		Sexual harassment	0			3	3		
		Threatening	1			0	1		
		Traditional norms	2			0	2		
Total		3			4	7			
Grand Total			1	6	13	16	36		

Table 4.18 shows the victims view on relation to gender-based violence in terms of the experience and where their entire family members know whether they are experiencing gender-based violence. Also, their understanding of the concept was examined by the schedule. From the findings, it revealed that only 7 of the totals (36) victims had shared with their large family members. Majority of the respondents understood the concept of GBV as sexual harassment. Also, some victims related gender-based violence to non-listening partner, being beaten by a partner and use of abusive language. One respondent said;

“Someone just come back home at night when he is very harsh and abusive. When I try to talk to him, he beats me until even the children start to cry because he beats me in front of them and abuse with some personal and bad abuses”

The respondents further indicated that their experiences in relation to gender-based violence was traumatizing and lowered their self-esteem. Some respondents didn't even want to remember, and she said;

“I don't even want to recall what this man did to me after all the sacrifices I had endured in that marriage. When this feeling hits my mind, I feel very sad and demoralized and I can even cry the whole night and lack sleep. At one point I even thought of committing suicide because it was too much to bear”

4.4.3 GBV Victims view on pastoral programs

Table 4. 19
GBV Victims View on Pastoral Programs

		Are Church pastoral program helpful in averting Gender Based Violence?					Total	
		I am not sure	May be	No	Sometimes	Yes		
Do your Church leader (s) advocate against Gender Based Violence ?	I don't think I have not heard	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
	May be	0	0	1	3	2	0	6
	No	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Rarely	0	0	0	2	3	0	5
	Sometime	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
	s							
	Yes	0	2	0	0	0	10	12
Total		1	2	1	17	6	10	36

Table 4.19 shows the GBV perception on gender-based violence. Majority of the victims 24 were not sure whether their Church leaders advocate against gender-based violence. Also a few respondents (10) indicated that the Church pastorals programs have been helped in averting gender-based violence. One respondent said;

“Where are the pastoral programs being held because I have not heard of any and I do go to Church?”

4.4.4 Influence of Pastoral Program is Averting Gender Base Violence

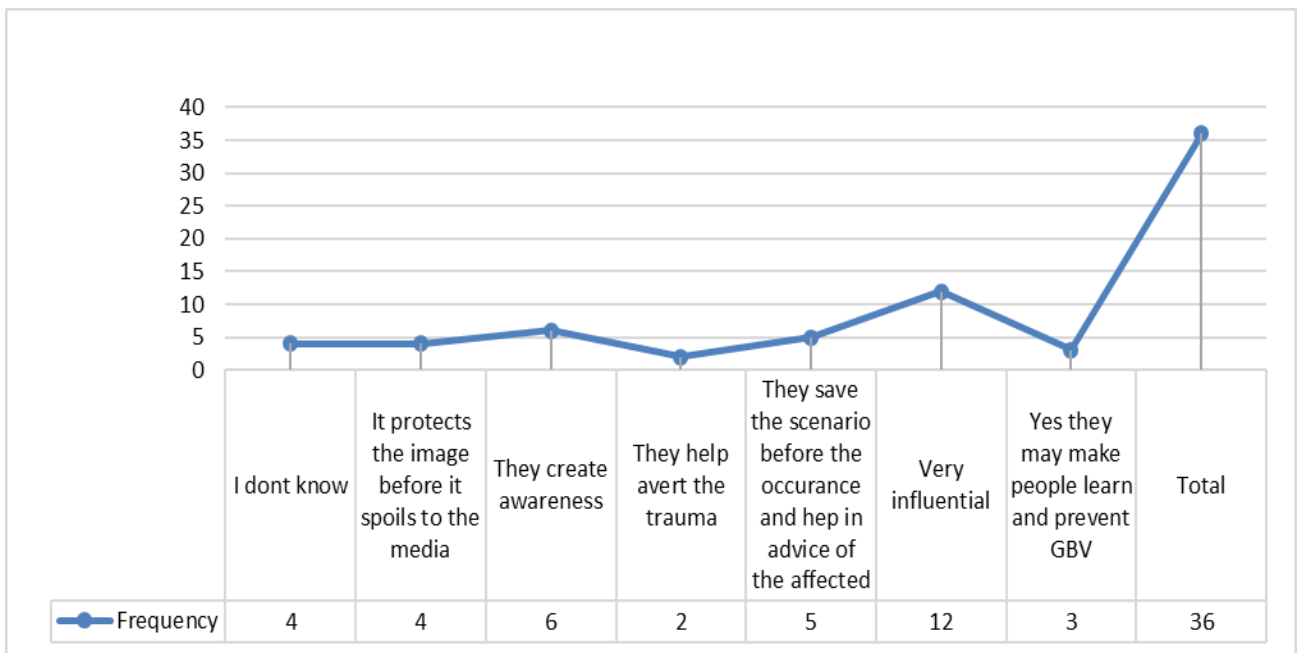


Figure 4. 5 Influence of Pastoral Programs in Averting GBV

Figure 4.9 shows the influence of pastoral programs in averting gender-based violence according to the GBV victims’ views. Majority (12) ascertained that the programs are very influential. Proportionately, others indicated that it may help in protecting the image before it is spoilt to the media, it may also create awareness and, the programs may help in averting trauma. One respondent runcinated that;

“I think the programs may even help in preventing the cases before they occur only if they are effective”

4.4.5 Connection of Church Leaders and Gender based Violence

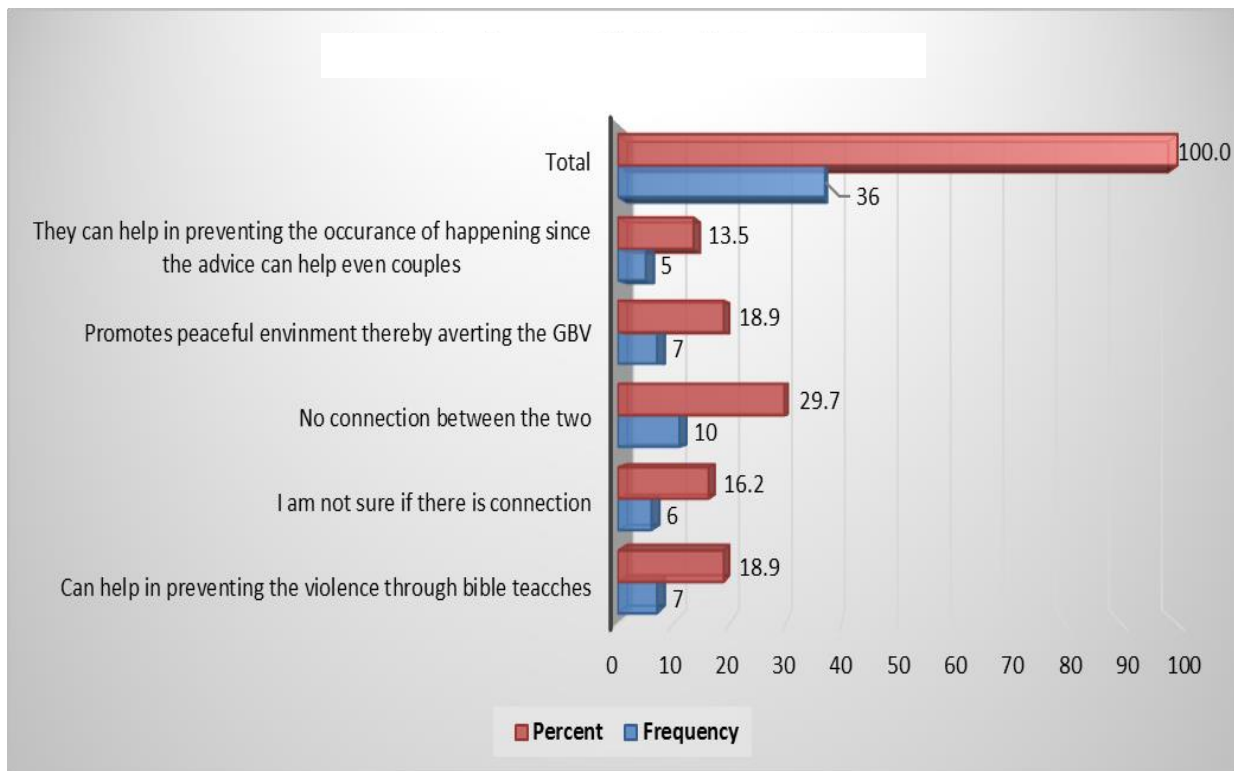


Figure 4. 6 Connection of Church Leaders and Gender based Violence

Figure 4.10 shows the perception of the victims and gender-based violence. Majority of the victims are not sure if there is connection between Church leaders and gender-based violence. However, a proportionate percentage 18.9% and 13.5% indicated that the Church leaders may promote peaceful environment thereby averting gender-based violence. They may also prevent the violence through bible teachings, and continuous advising of couples. One respondent said that;

“The Church leaders may really help us by counselling us together with our husbands”

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study examined the role of Church leaders in averting gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru County, Kenya. Chapter five presents the study summary, conclusion and recommendations. The purpose of the study was to examine the role of Church leaders in averting gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru County, Kenya. The summary, conclusion and recommendations are presented as per the objectives of the study namely; instructional role of Church leaders in averting gender based violence, involvement role of Church leaders through pastoral programs in averting gender based violence, the influence of Church leaders in advocating against gender based violence and the influence of Church leaders' conflict resolution on gender based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Kenya.

5.2 Summary

The findings of the study also revealed that majority of the Church leaders 38.8% (17) have enhanced awareness on gender based violence in the sub county. Some Church leaders have acted as role models, and others fought for human rights, foster respects between individuals and helping in accessing justice. The leaders have fought gender based violence by guiding the victims, giving them moral support and educating them on the importance of embracing positivity even when faced with tough conditions and seeking continuous God's deliverance. This conforms with the study by Njagi (2017) highlighting the roles of faith-based organizations in curbing gender based violence in Nairobi county.

Through the study, it was also revealed that there exist factors that promote reporting of gender based violence cases to Church leaders. Majority of the interviewed Church leaders ascertained

that the fact they are trustworthy makes it simple for the victims to report the cases to them. Also, the study revealed that financial constraints compel the victims to approaching of Church leaders. Other leaders mentioned that the fact that they are role model in the society and educating society members on gender based violence has enabled the victims to report the cases to them. The study is in conformity with Njagi (2017) study which expanded on how the faith-based organizations enhances and influences the reporting of gender based violence cases.

From the study, the findings from the Church leaders' interview revealed that the NCK Churches have pastoral programs with majority (66.7%) indicating that there exist pastoral programs. Some of the pastoral programs which came out in helping to avert gender based violence included; outreaches, crusades, guidance and counselling, gender equity programs, family visits, seminars and pastoral visits. However, some Church leaders 33.3% (15) indicated that they do not have pastoral programs in the Churches to avert gender based violence. This conforms the findings from the interview schedule with the gender based victims in this study who majority (24) reiterated that they are not sure whether such programs exist. The victims further maintained that they are not sure whether their Churches advocate against gender based violence since they had not heard of the programs. It conflicts with the study of Ramsey in (2016) which highlighted dramatic reduction of gender based violence through Church programs. The Churches should enforce morals through teachings and bible studies as written in the Bible.

The interviewed respondents further ascertained that pastoral programs are effective in averting gender based violence. Majority (86.7%) said that the programs are affective in averting gender based violence. Some of the reasons mentioned included helping in addressing family issues, creating awareness thereby helping in eradicating staunch traditions that promotes gender based violence such as female genital mutilation. The pastorals programs also help in counselling of the victims to avoid depression. The programs have also helped in reducing divorce cases.

The study further found out that the NCK Church leaders have also formed partnerships with NGO's, held campaigns, mentored, created awareness in Imenti south sub county in attempts to assist in averting gender based violence. This was done through bible study programs, crusades, organized campaigns, conferences, in case of female genital mutilation, in case of rape, in widow's forums, and education days. This has helped in reducing gender based violence cases such as sexual harassment, violence in marriage, traditional norms like female genital mutilation. Some of the interviewed gender based violence victims (16) pointed that the experience traumatizes and didn't even wanted to recall. The study by Mukanangana et al., in (2014) revealed some of the effects of gender based violence especially in women. This research conforms to Mukanangan's study since some of the victims reiterated their experiences on gender based violence.

The study further revealed that traditions had major influence in gender based violence. Issues such as wife inheritance, female genital mutilation, property inheritance like women lacking power to inherit their parents' property came out as some major causes of gender based violence as connoted by Kubai (2014) on the causes and consequences of domestic violence. The victims affirmed that the pastoral programs should be enforced in all the Churches to create peaceful environment, advice couples and even children thereby helping in averting gender based violence.

Through the study, it is revealed that pastorals programs and instructional roles of Church leaders to some extent has helped in averting gender based violence in Imenti South Sub – County. Therefore, a study should be carried out to examine the extent to which NCK Churches have pastoral programs and of their effectiveness in averting gender based violence in Imenti south.

5.3 Conclusion

This study concludes that the Church plays an important role in the disclosure of abuse because of the trust that the Church represents. Many women do not choose to reveal abuse to other agencies in the community or even policemen because they do not have a history of trust with them. In this sense, the Church can actually be a tool used by other organizations or the police department. The Church provides resources, emotional support, spiritual support and help with activism to help prevent a similar repetition of violence down the road, and they are also a prayer support for the victim. Although they may not advise on legal issues, they are present and supportive during these times.

Church leaders have prayer groups formed with the victim; they are also emotionally present for things such as court hearings for divorce, custody, or protection orders. Religious leaders need to preach God's message of love and compassion for all, in the knowledge that every single person, male and female, is made in God's image. Religious leaders show gender equality by respecting women, letting them take part in decisions made in the Church, and allowing women in leadership role.

By condemning domestic violence in the Church, Church leaders turn a barrier for women into a positive thing. Violent Abusers will no longer be able to validate their abuse with interpretation of scripture and women will be more comfortable coming forward. The Church leaders identify reliable resources in the community to help with this gender violence these can include policemen in the community, social work, shelters, clinical psychologists, and legal offices. "By partnering with other professions and formal providers, Church leaders can expand their capacity to address domestic violence.

Religious leaders in Churches are collaborating with NGOs, governments' offices, law offices and travel agents in addressing these issues of gender violence. With the organization help, the

leaders are able to Highlight the issue in local newspapers to build up a ‘resistance’ network and declare that there is absolutely no excuse for rape, be it alcoholism, drug abuse, temptation or temporary loss of control. In Meru there are organizations like CREAM and RIPPLES that merges with Churches to fight gender violence through conferences, seminars to educate people about the impact of gender violence in the community.

Finally the study in agreement with (Cruz & Klinger 2011) concludes that, gender based violence causes pain and suffering and lowers self-esteem to the victims. The findings revealed that most of the Church leaders (55.6%) in the in Imenti south Sub-county, Kenya heard gender based violence through societal conflict. Although others get to hear the violence through polygamy conflicts, sexual harassments and seminars. This conforms to Stellenbosch and Stellenbosch (2017) study which sought to mobilizing communities in addressing gender based violence. Through the findings of this study it is revealed that the communities in Imenti south sub county still faces gender based violence as connoted by the Church leaders.

5.4 Recommendations

The study therefore makes the following recommendations;

The Church leaders should help in ending the harmful traditional practices that may be related to socio-cultural and religious beliefs, including female genital mutilation/cutting, early marriage, gender based violence, and violent discipline and Advocate with local and national authorities for effective prevention of violence against children and adolescents, requesting that they provide services to protect children and adolescents from violence to Promote non-violent discipline of children and adolescents as a key strategy towards ending other forms of violence against children and adolescents.

The Church leaders organizes conferences, seminars and training where the faithful's can get the opportunity to open up and get help through the Church with the help of other government and non-governmental bodies thus averting repetition of gender violence. The Church has a role to teach the members about living in harmony with respect and love through workshop and couple's trainings and seminars.

Pastors among other Church leaders should take a leading role in creating awareness on Gender Based Violence in places where some cultural practices are detouring advances against this disaster. At school, children should be taught that violence is wrong. The Church in partnership with Women supporting organizations like CREAM, RIPPLES, RED CROSS among others should be invited to talk at schools or workplaces about gender based violence and educate people on how they can be involved to reduce it and unlock avenues that discourage some cultural practices that subjugate women and their roles and rights in the society that include bargaining powers over safe sexual issues. Letters among other publications on domestic violence should also be made to the television, the local radio and newspapers.

The church leaders should also emphasis on the development of relational virtues such as selflessness and unconditional love. Given the importance of relational virtues, church leaders should help congregant develop those virtues that are most likely to prevent gender based violence.

5.5 Recommendation for further Research

This study examined the role of Church leaders in averting gender based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru County, Kenya.

The study recommends further on inclusion of church leaders in policy making processes pertaining gender-based violence. Further study is also recommended on the extent to which church pastoral programs influences averting gender-based violence by Christians.

The study also recommends further study on National Council of Churches of Kenya programs on advocacy against gender-based violence.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Rev. David Nkaabu

P.O. Box 446-60200

Meru – Kenya

Dear Respondent,

I am Rev. David Nkaabu, a student at Kenya Methodist University. I am conducting a research on examination of the role of Church leaders on averting gender-based violence in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru County, Kenya. You have been selected to participate in this research because I believe you have valuable information and knowledge related to it. The information sought is required only for this study. Participation is entirely out of your own will; and is necessary for the success of this work. I request you therefore to respond with truthfulness and honesty for the success of the research. Kindly note that the information you provide will be treated with total confidentiality. Please fill the questions by writing on the spaces provided Please do not write your name or confidential personal information anywhere

Thanks you

APPENDIX II: CHURCH LEADERS RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please tick the answers to the best of your knowledge.

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Marital status: Married Single

 Divorced Widowed

3. Family status: Father Mother

4. Choose the age bracket below as it applies to you

18 – 35 years

36 -45 years

46 – 55 years

56 years and above

5. What is your highest level of education?

O- Level / K .C.S.E

Primary (K. C.P.E)

College /Polytechnic

University

Others Specify _____

6. Please indicate the duration that you have been a Church leader.

1-3 years

3-5 years

5-7 years

7-9 years

10 years and above

7. Is your Church a member of NCKK Upper Eastern Region?

Yes

No

8. Please indicate the name of your Church _____

9. Apart from being a leader in your Church, what else do you do in the community?

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.....

10. As a Church leader have you heard about Gender Based Violence? If yes please explain how and where

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11. What do you think is your role (s) in averting Gender Based Violence

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12. When cases of Gender Based Violence are reported to you, what kind of actions do you take?.....

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13. What do you think promotes victims of Gender Based Violence to report to you as their Church leader what there are experiencing?

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14. Do you have Church pastoral program(s) that address the issue(s) of Gender Based Violence? If yes, indicate what kind of program(s)

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15. Do you think the Church pastoral programs are effective to averting Gender Based Violence? If yes describe how

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16. Indicate which are the most effective pastoral program(s) on averting Gender Based Violence.....

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17. The government of Kenya, the county governments and NGO's are seriously advocating against Gender Based Violence, what would be the position of the Church leaders?

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18. Indicate instances where you have been involved in advocating against Gender Based Violence.....
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19. Which approaches are effective to you when advocating against Gender Based Violence.....
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20. As a member of NCKK are there instances where Church leaders come together to advocate against Gender Based Violence? If yes, describe the instances
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21. Based on the answer above, indicate the most effective forms of advocacies that Church has put in place to avert Gender Based Violence
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22. According to your experience, how best can Church leaders be involved in averting Gender Bases Violence?
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23. Do you think culture is promoting Gender Based Violence? If yes explain how
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24. Based on the answer above, indicate how culture can be useful in averting Gender Based Violence
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25. The Government of Kenya has legal framework and policies aiming at averting Gender Based Violence; are these effective on averting Gender Based Violence? If yes, explain how
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APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GENDER BASED VICTIMS

1. Gender
2. Marital status
3. Family status:
4. What is your highest level of education?
5. How long have you been in your marriage?
6. How would you describe Gender Based Violence?
7. What are your experiences in regard to Gender Based Violence?
8. Are member of your large family know that you are experiencing Gender Based Violence?
9. Apart from your family who else knows that you are experiencing Gender Based Violence?
10. Do your Church leader(s) know that you are experiencing Gender Based Violence?
11. What do you think would be the role (s) of your Church leader in regard to Gender Based Violence?
12. What are some of instructional methods your Church leader uses to address Gender Base Violence issues?
13. Are Church pastoral program helpful in averting Gender Based Violence?
14. Do your Church leader (s) advocate against Gender Based Violence?
15. How influential can be pastoral program is averting Gender Base Violence?
16. What is your perception in regard to Church leader(s) and Gender Base Violence?