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Gender-Based Violence:

A feminist social work analysis on the processes and perceptions on seeking justice by the Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit at Mampong, Ghana.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CID - Criminal Investigations Department

CHRAJ- Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice

DOVVSU- Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit

DSW- Department of Social Welfare

DV – Domestic Violence

GBV – Gender-Based Violence

GPS- Ghana Police Service

PWDs- Persons with Disability

UN- United Nations

UN Women – United Nations Women

WHO- World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

Gendered violence against woman and children has been in existence and predominant in various societies for a long period of time with its intensity varying from one factor to the other. Many nations around the world including Ghana in West Africa have measures and directives to mitigate of the persistent social menace and possibly eradicate it towards sustainable welfare and development for individuals in the country. Feminist and Structural social work theories together with other relevant conceptual frames addressed the theoretical discussion of the study. The study employed a qualitative case study approach to investigate and analyze the processes and services from the perspectives of officials of the Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service (GPS) at the district of Mampong in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Employing a non-probability purposive sampling together with snowballing technique, in-depth synchronous interview was the source of empirical data from nine respondents from the unit. Document analysis was as well used a source in gathering secondary data. The study identified from the findings, tracing from the history of Ghana that the formation of social institutions like DOVVSU rests on the foundation of patriarchy of already existing preconceptions of gender roles from precolonial era and it was reinforced by imperialism. A gender-neutral institution backed with actors and directives to reduce gendered violence faces barriers to attain justice for its service users due to gendered power relations that results in inequitable distribution of resources impeding the services of the unit. Moreover, as a result, these power dynamics under the patriarchal systems, there are underreports cases from vulnerable victims at the district since among other reasons, most of the victims believe perpetrators are not prosecuted instead end up on the streets due to the ineffectiveness of the institutional strategy to combat the rate of GBV at the district of Mampong. In this manner, some marginalized and oppressed women will be excluded and remain (in)visible in their oppressive state which at the end sabotages individual welfare and development considering the uncontrollable rise in gendered violence if structural adjustments and policy implementation in DOVVSU of GPS are enforced not only at Mampong but throughout the Police Service of Ghana.

Keywords: Gender-Based Violence, Patriarchy, Ghana, Justice, Gender Equality.

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CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Personal motivation

Studying and practicing social work during my bachelor's studies in Ghana exposed me to the lived realities of some women who encounter various forms of violence daily. During our mandatory fieldwork with the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU)¹ and the Social Welfare Department (SWD). DOVVSU is a unit of the Ghana Police Service (GPS) under the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) to render a crucial role in violence issues and serves as a starting point in legally investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of violence cases if there is a need (DOVVSU 2017). I was surprised to see the number of reported cases of gender-based violence in the district where I lived. This exposure led me to join the Ambassadors for End Gendered Violence Advocacy Club on campus and started observing and engaging some women in their daily experiences with GBV in my community. Among the many conversations I had, one struck me and lived with till day, which served as my greatest motivation to conduct a study on their plights.

As a woman living with visual impairment, Agyeiwaa shared with me how her condition, educational background, and gender have double jeopardy for her life and plan on living life to the fullest. As a victim of sexual violence and societal discrimination, she shared with me how she was gang-defiled by three unknown men as a helpless teenager, leading to her having a child with no form of support in place to assist her through her challenges. Sadly, the perpetrators of this despicable act were never apprehended by the Police while she did not receive any form of treatment or support after the incident according to her. She recounted how she is still struggling psychologically, socially, and physically to raise her daughter after her mother passed. The consequences of the abuse she suffered coupled with stigmatization and the never-ending verbal abuse still live with her. She mentioned

See (<https://police.gov.gh/en/index.php/domestic-violence-victims-support-unit-dovvsu/>)

how prejudicial and mocking comments such as *so do women in such conditions need justice?* from people that share in the wrong notion that women with disabilities do not need justice, further add to her griefs. Living off the petty trade to survive, she and her daughter share the hope that gendered violence against the vulnerable, especially those women of her kind will be promoted in Ghana, and perpetrators of such actions will be brought before the law. This among many other stories I heard motivated choice of study.

Realizing the severity of the issue, I decided to investigate from the perspective of DOVVSU of the GPS at the district of Mampong in the Ashanti region of Ghana where I grew up on how such cases are been handled towards justice. According to the 2017 report by the DOVVSU, Gender-based violence (GBV) has been on the rise among women in the Kumasi metropolis especially the marginalized women (PWDs) of which Mampong is no exception. Also, the study by Opoku et al. (2015) presents Mampong as one of the districts where GBV some vulnerable women is predominant in the Kumasi metropolis, thus, an excellent place to conduct the study to examine from perceptions of officials on why some perpetrators of GBV against these vulnerable groups of persons are on the rise.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although patriarchy embedded in the customs and traditions beliefs are believed to be the root cause of GBV, research has also revealed that certain characteristics have also contributed to the increase in the number of domestic violence cases (Harcourt 2009, Azumah 2019). Azumah (2019) in his study presents data that shows the Mampong district records some of the highest numbers of reported cases of GBV, with many involving vulnerable women such as PWDs. He argues the demographics of the victims seem to place some categories or groups of individuals into vulnerable and precarious positions in society. These groups include women, children, and double vulnerabilities for women or girls with different forms of oppression. Some women around the world experience a much higher level of physical, sexual, and psychological violence for a longer period and with the worse physical and mental outcome because of violence than others, however, this is no different from what is being observed in the Mampong district (Astbury 2013,

Opoku et al. 2015). These traumatic life experiences force many of them to live in some form of informal hierarchy that does not promote their rights to life and protection. The hierarchies of gender influenced by some of these characteristics such as gender, class, power relations, marital status, among others, promote these imbalances and inequalities that impede social and legal justice and sustainable development against the forms of violence (Azumah 2015, Collins & Bilge 2016, Opoku et al. 2019). In some instances, the barriers to victims of GBV accessing justice lies within the enforcement or application of the legal and structural procedures by state institutions that are responsible to promote the rights of these vulnerable populations. In response to this challenge, research must be conducted to tackle the issue from a holistic point of view, by engaging in a bottom-up approach. By this, the voices of the victims on the various obstacles they encounter while pursuing justice will be used as the basis of advocacy for improved services from DOVVSU for access to justice for victims of gender-based violence in Ghana. However, to better understand the root cause and current situation of GBV in the district, it is paramount to consider the historical background of the context and how has affected the social systems in Ghana (Cantalupo et al. 2006). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth overview and understanding of the services and processes of the Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) that promote victims of GBV access to justice at Mampong in Ghana.

1.3 Research Question

To achieve the study's aim and objectives of investigating and analyzing from the perspectives of the unit's officials concerning the processes and services provided by the Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the GPS on gender-based violence, the following questions were asked:

- How do the services of DOVVSU influence justice for GBV victims?
- What contributes to the underreport cases of GBV especially among the vulnerable groups such as PWDs in Mampong?
- Why do some perpetrators of GBV end up on the streets of Mampong?

1.4 Conceptualization of Terms

For clarity and the utmost goal of conducting transparent research, I have made it clear and easy to grasp by readers, the concepts defined and how it is used interchangeably throughout the paper. Other specific concepts like ‘gender’ are being explained in footnote reference.

1.4.1 Domestic violence (DV)

The concept of domestic violence has been interpreted in many ways by different scholars with a difference in perspectives from the diverse geographical location around the world. However, the United Nations (UN) defines domestic violence which is also referred to as ‘domestic abuse’ as a repeated behavior or actions in a relationship that is used to gain authority or maintain power over another individual. These actions tend to oppress the powerless in the forms of physical, sexual, emotional, etc. abuses (UN 2020). Domestic violence is a persistent form of ‘Gender-Based Violence’ that actively affects victims mostly women and children in various households perpetrated by their intimate partners (Singha & Bhattacharyyab 2020). This affirms the assertion of WHO that about 30% of women have been victims of domestic violence in various households in the global sphere and arguably state that these forms of violence are being perpetrated by men against women (WHO 2017). This social menace being a contributor to gender inequality has been in occurrence over the decade although mechanisms have been put in place by both international and non-governmental organizations like the United Nations, World Health Organizations among others, there are still rising in the numbers of reports in domestic violence cases. It is evident that ever since the WHO in 2020 declared the coronavirus COVID-19 a pandemic, the rate of domestic violence has been in a persistent rise since most countries observed total lockdown as part of the measures from the national level of every nation to help curb the transmission rate of the coronavirus (WHO 2020).

1.4.2 Justice and Welfare

The concept of justice has been in the daily discourse of some disciplines in social sciences such as social work, feminism, sociology, and political science for a long period now with a developmental visionary to achieve sustainability among humanity. Young explains ‘justice’ as conditions in societal and institutional

structures that has the mandate to eliminate domination and oppression⁴ among individuals and accords human flourishing of members of society (Young 2011). In the social work context, researchers like Gary Craig gave an exceptional definition of social justice as “a framework of political objectives, pursued through social, economic, environmental and political policies based on an acceptance of difference and diversity, and informed by values concerned with achieving fairness and equality of outcomes and treatment” (Craig 2002 p. 671-672). This affirms and makes it understandable that dissecting justice or observing one form of justice, for instance, *legal justice* without viewing its influence on the other forms of justice such as *social justice* becomes problematic and might maximize domination and oppression of society. However, the achievement of sustainable development and welfare through equality and fairness irrespective of one’s differences or social group will be sabotaged resulting in developmental setbacks of society if the concept of justice is not critically addressed.

Most countries around the world including Ghana upholds justice following its 1992 constitution, stated emphatically in Article 14, that is, protecting citizens' access to justice. The constitution puts in place measures to ensure that sustainable welfare of its citizens is achieved through its contributions to the SDGs with much focus on ‘peace, justice and strong institution’ which is number 16 of the SDGs (UN, 2020) as far as equality and fairness are observed towards sustainable welfare and development. Justice in Ghana is however observed and witnessed a systematic proceeding through security institutions such as the Ghana Police Service, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the Judicial system (Courts) among others. Considering this, it is, therefore, crucial to note that the broadest concept of justice in the scope of the study enshrines all its forms that contribute towards inclusiveness, equality, transparency, and fairness that enables good governance and development not only in the district of Mampong but the nation to attain its SDGs for the betterment of the welfare system in the country.

⁴ According to Young (2011), it is critical to observe the concept of oppression which can be dissected into five other parts (violence, marginalization, exploitation, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism), and understood from different perspective.

1.5 Background to the Study

The existence of violence has been a global canker that sabotages sustainable development among individuals around the world (Astbury 2013). From the global understanding of the concept of violence across cultures and within various societies, its gravity and definition vary from one nation-state to the other. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) (2021) defines violence as the intentional use of physical force or power to inflict pain on oneself or another individual that results in deprivation, harm, maldevelopment, or even death of a person.

The deprivation of an individual's fundamental human right and sovereignty with the use of authoritative power and force in a deliberate manner putting them at vulnerable and oppressed positions retards the rates of development in general from the global perspective. However, the predominance of many forms of violence in the Sub-Saharan Africa context massively contributes to the hindrance of human dignity and negatively impacts the socio-economic and political development of some nations (Tsegah 2016). Most of these forms of violence are deeply rooted in patriarchal power structures, customs, and traditions which corners individuals to face various abuses that are believed to be inhumane and barbaric to one's wellbeing (Harcourt 2009). Amongst the many forms of violence globally known is Gender-Based Violence (GBV) which according to UNCHR (2021) refers to actions against an individual based on gender⁵ that can cause long-life threatening or even death.

GBV is also believed to be rooted in gender inequality due to abuse of power or authority in society. There are many examples of GBV that have been codified by WHO and these codifications are the likes of sexual violence, intimate partner violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriage, among others. UNDP (2021) also defines GBV as actions performed under coercion or power that violate the fundamental human rights of an individual based on one's gender. Globally, it is evident that most victims of GBV are women and children according to 2014

⁵ Inasmuch as this research study projects on the broad concept of 'Gender', acknowledging its identities, the scope of this study focuses on the legal processes and perceptions of DOVVSU on cases of 'violence' especially GBV between men and women in the context of this studies.

reports of the World Health Organization (WHO). Although some men face the violence of these forms in many ways (Connell 2005), yet Adu-Gyamfi (2014) asserts that GBV mostly predominates among women and children in the African context with Ghana being no exception. Having said this, the act of seeking justice for all irrespective of one's age, gender, class, disability among others has been a major focus of most nations globally. Many nations in the world such as Sweden, the USA, Germany, China, etc. have many forms of strategies and action plans against perpetrators and for victims of violent acts, especially GBV, and are accorded the appropriate sanctions and measures they deserve respectively (WHO 2017).

Following the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), nations like Ghana have at heart to uphold the interlinked goals of sustainable development enforced by the United Nations (2020) to ensure justice and equality for all in the country. The SDGs emphatically include deprived and vulnerable people from participation and to enjoy to the fullest the fundamental human rights in the country of which rights to legal justice is no exception. The DOVVSU unit of the GPS established by the government of Ghana was however primarily set up to oversee that there is justice, peace, equality, and harmony among individuals in a GBV embedded society in Ghana. GBV has been notably mirrored as a form of violence that is perpetrated by men against women in society. Research studies in line with this form of violence assert that GBV is a worldwide social phenomenon where men exert their power and authority over women and children.

1.5.1 Establishment of the Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU)

Most nations in the world including Ghana in Sub-Saharan Africa have laid down national directives and strategies with the firm backing and collaboration with international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), World Health Organization (WHO), Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), etc. to purposely check against the violence of all forms such as GBV that causes the state of oppression, vulnerability and even yearly death of close to 1.3 million people worldwide according to a report on violence prevention (WHO 2014).

The government of Ghana, to mitigate violence-related issues, established the Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit which was formally known as the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) in 1998. However, the name change of the unit was based on the ideology focusing on WAJU then, was that the unit was gender-specific in favor of women and children resulting in male victims of violence feel left out and reluctant in reporting cases against them by their partners (DOVVSU 2017). DOVVSU is a special unit integrated under the Criminal Investigations Department (CID)⁶ of the Ghana Police Service (GPS) to render a crucial role in violence issues and serves as a starting point in investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of violence cases if there is a need. According to the official website of DOVVSU⁷, among the numerous roles of the unit are (a) to educate the public on preventive measures against violence (b) protect individuals from gender-based violence of all forms (c) render free services to members of the public in Ghana.

Although DOVVSU is part of the GPS, its operations are somehow distinct from the police service, yet the unit has the mandate to document violent cases, make arrests investigate, and prosecute perpetrators of these acts (DOVVSU 2017). The functioning of DOVVSU does not end only with the stated roles above but in collaboration with other actors such as the Health Care Services where cases are being referred, some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Legal Aid, Department of Social Welfare (DSW) among others together to ensure that the basic needs and sustainable welfare of victims of violence are adequately provided and met (ibid).

1.6 Outline of the study

This research study is divided into six major chapters in a well-structured manner. The first chapter provides a background to the study, beginning with a case study in the study area that influenced my decision to conduct my research in this area. It also introduces the study's problems; GBV and challenges in accessing justice. Having conceptualized GBV and justice, the first chapter gives a concise yet

⁶ (See Appendix 3)

⁷See (<https://police.gov.gh/en/index.php/domestic-violence-victims-support-unit-dovvsu/>)

detailed run-through of what the study is about. Guided by the study's objective and research questions, this chapter also demonstrates the essence of the study in the chosen context and the lines along which the entire study is conducted.

The second chapter contextualizes information reviewed on legal frameworks, government documents, and relevant academic literature that are useful for the study. To answer the research questions, this chapter discussed the situation on GBV in Ghana in a broader context and down to the study population. It also presents a document review on the legal frameworks on GBV and how they are applied practically to promote victims' access to justice.

The theoretical and conceptual framework of the study was addressed in chapter three upon which the findings that emerged from the empirical data analyzed and discussed rely on the scope of the study. I used two theoretical underpinnings to the study: The Feminist Perspectives and Structural Social Work theory. While the feminist perspectives and conceptual framework support the arguments about the vulnerabilities of women and the multiple challenges and categories that oppress and marginalize some women, the Structural social work theory challenges the social injustice faced by victims of GBV in accessing justice. The combination of these theories suits the study's aim of promoting emancipation and progressive society for the sustainable welfare of all individuals at Mampong.

The fourth chapter outlines in-depth how the study is designed, methodology, data collection, and processing techniques. Using a qualitative approach to research, the study made use of both primary and secondary resources as the source of data. Engaging in a thorough desktop document review of relevant documents in addition to qualitative interviews with synchronous research approach, the data was processed using content analysis and NVivo to make sense of the information for discussion in the fifth chapter. This chapter also contains the ethical consideration in conducting the research, my reflexivity as a researcher, and the role as a male social worker with feminist knowledge. The concluding part of the chapter discusses the shortcomings or limitations of the entire research process.

Chapter five presents the analytical phase of the study. This chapter is divided into two sections for vivid comprehension for readers to coherently follow. It presents the data using its analytical strategy adopted by the study and interprets the results

obtained from the empirical data collected during the data collection period. Drawing knowledge from the theoretical underpinning of the study in chapter three, the findings are discussed alongside the themes generated in the data processing in chapter four are discussed. The discussion is done vis-à-vis literature and excerpts from the interviews.

The last chapter is the concluding part which summarizes wholly the overall framework, structure of the study, and the study's findings. This chapter addresses the coherence of all the chapters by explaining how the objectives of the study were met and how the research questions posed were answered accordingly. It also provides recommendations on how DOVVSU and government institutions tasked with the responsibility of promoting the rights of the vulnerable in society can improve upon their services and procedures to improve victims of GBV access to justice in Ghana. To conclude the entire report, I suggest some areas worthy of study in the future as a way of contributing to research on the topic of GBV with much focus on institutions responsible for mitigating such social menace.

CHAPTER TWO

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction:

This chapter provides reviews of previous studies like the topic of what this study focuses on. Although there is a limited number of research studies on this specific topic the study has addressed. However, this chapter provided me a fair knowledge and understanding of the context of the study and rationally justifies the importance of the problem addressed (Randolph 2009, Hart 1998). Through a critical and thorough review of the previous study of other researchers, this chapter also summarizes and evaluates bodies of other writings on related topic giving me new ideas and on how to approach the study and exposes possible limitations that I might encounter during the research process (Knopf 2006, Shaw & Holland 2014).

2.2 Studies on Domestic Violence

Violence against women and children have always been on the rise undermining their fundamental rights and dignity denying them access to justice and equality in most of part of the world (UN News 2017). Gendered violence is a global issue found in most countries; however, its intensity varies from continents to continents, that is it is predominant mostly in the third world countries such as Vietnam in Asia, Ghana in Africa, and in most countries in South America (Rydström 2003, WHO 2014). In the West African context Ghana to be precise, domestic violence is of no news since numerous scholarly studies by researchers focus most importantly from the gendered perspective and how these form of violence affects women and children in the society. Given this, the most affected gender in domestic violence cases in Ghana is women, though it is acknowledged that some men also face this form of violence from their partners, it is evident that women predominantly fall as victims of domestic violence in the Ghanaian society taking into consideration findings related studies (Cantalupo et al. 2006, Tsegah 2016). Domestic violence is predominant especially in patriarchal ethnic groups in most societies in the country (Dutton 2011). Many scholarly research studies like the work of Asiedu (2016) in Ghana, targets domestic violence most focus on how lineage ties impact on women in the country. Most of these studies such as the

works of Adjah & Agbemafle (2016) and Ajayi (2018) focuses on the causes, measures, and implications of GBV in various regions in the country. Though, on the one hand, some of these studies address victims of GBV with much focus on PWDs such as the works of Azumah (2019) and Opoku et al (2015), few of these researchers of the likes of Golo et al. (2017) on the other hand focus on the legal aspect and effective procedures of DOVVSU.

Over a decade, DOVVSU of the GPS reported about 109,784 cases of violence against women and children across the country (Adu-Gyamfi 2014). Parallel to this, the annual report from DOVVSU (2011) shows that about 12,076 cases of domestic violence were reported in 2010. 954 were prosecuted out of which 118 convictions were attained. Although there are directives and laws enacted to eradicate this social issue, the rate of punishment or convictions of perpetrators is massively low and unsatisfactory exposing women to domestic violence each day. This national predicament has been a stumbling block towards social development because of persistent legal (in)justice in the country for some victims of this social issue. The findings of some of these studies shows that GBV has been noted and acknowledged as actions that are set to violate human rights and constraint to national development (Anderson 2018). Throughout the country, the Ashanti region is noted as the second region with the most reported cases of domestic violence in Ghana (Golo et al. 2017). This explains some part of the legal procedures of DOVVSU and from its reports why convictions of perpetrators are minimal than expected in the sight of the motto of the Republic of Ghana that is Freedom and Justice.

2.3 Gendered Violence in the district of Mampong

GBV has been on the rise for some time now in the district of Mampong in the Ashanti region of Ghana. According to Azumah (2019), the most marginalized group of women facing a greater risk of GBV are women living with disabilities. A qualitative study like this context of the likes of Opoku et al (2015; 2016) also shows that women living with disabilities are more marginalized as victims of DV due to fear of cut in support and abandonment of relatives in households. Most of the perpetrators of these forms of violence are relatives such as a spouse who are considered the ‘breadwinners’ (Atkinson et al. 2005). In some Ghanaian societies,

it is believed that PWDs from the cultural perspectives are a curse rather than blessings in families. Most of PWDs are mostly dependent on their immediate families and friends in terms of economic support for basic needs exposing the issue of class a characteristic that contributes to gender equality (Acker 2000, Opoku et al. 2016). The issue of class has been a mainstream discourse in feminism where some feminist such as Joan Acker, Patricia Hill Collins, among others argue that there cannot be equality of any form without addressing issues of economic class difference in the society (Acker 2000, Collins & Bilge 2016).

The findings from Azumah's (2019) qualitative study which adopted the use of interviews as a tool in collecting data directly from victimized PWDs show that when cases of domestic violence against them are reported to the rightful institution like DOVVSU, it is difficult for legal justice to prevail at the end. This is because, considering the financial/economic background of the victims, the police do not follow up on the cases. According to the respondents in the study, some police officers only work effectively on cases where they can gain funds from the victims leaving perpetrators on the street and cases not prosecuted. With this, a study by Andersson (2018) elaborates on how expensive gaining access to legal justice on cases of domestic violence is perceived to be in the country. With perpetrators being the breadwinners of households involving economic dependent victimized, marginalized, and oppressed women such as PWDs. Opoku et al. (2015) averse that institutions like DOVVSU have been overshadowed with traditional customs that perceive domestic violence cases as private and should be addressed and solved amicably in various households.

Similarly, findings from Anderson's study show that government institutions such as the police in DOVVSU perceive domestic cases as family issues feeding victims of domestic violence the thoughts of how irrelevant it is to report cases of violence against perpetrators and encourage them to amicably solve such cases in their homes. The findings of these qualitative studies believe that some of these are the reasons that contribute to underreported cases of violence against victims.

2.4 Identifying the study gap

As discussed earlier, most previous research studies are topical about issues of violence concerning the problem of this research project. They give an exceptional

overview of how domestic violence is being portrayed in the country especially on vulnerable groups like PWDs. Taking into consideration the qualitative approaches being adopted by most of these researchers, there are diverse ways of tackling this issue from different dimensions. In summary, these previous research studies made referrals to DOVVSU as the institution responsible for domestic violence cases, hence starting the point from which seeking legal justice for DV victims against perpetrators in the country. Although DV occurs in most households across Ghana, the context of some of these studies concerning this topic is centered around Mampong with reasons explained above (see Chapter 1).

Acknowledging the similarities in methods and techniques of how these academic research studies are being conducted under the shade of social research ethics, other research gaps which as a social researcher, embedded in the feminist theoretical scholarship must find it relevant in addressing the gaps and loopholes from the theoretical perspective that were blind before other researchers in the field and drawing their attention on probing into the legal processes of DOVVSU from this perspective.

However, this study does not underestimate the findings of these studies but goes beyond to view reasons from the theoretical perspective of understanding the proceedings and perceptions of DOVVSU and its corporative actors aiming to combat and eradicate domestic violence in Ghana with much focus on the district of Mampong in the Ashanti Region in the country.

CHAPTER THREE

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction:

As previously mentioned in Chapter two, research study like this, approached their research problems from diverse theoretical perspectives. This chapter of the study provides some solid foundational theories (Feminist social work theory and Structural social work theory) upon which the findings of this study rest. The study is underpinned by these two main theoretical frameworks grounded in the interdisciplinary field of social science that makes the research findings from the empirical data analyzed more acceptable, understanding, and meaningful and makes the study viable to contribute to knowledge production in the field of academia (Adom et al. 2018).

Before I present these theories, the synergies between DOVVSU of GPS and chosen theories under social work addresses and rests on the same principle on attaining the goals of education, protecting, empowering, and alleviating poverty among others in each society such as Mampong, where oppression and marginalization of vulnerable groups caused by injustice and inequality are dominant (Collins & Bilge 2016, DOVVSU 2017, Hick & Murray 2012). This demonstrates how parallel the agenda of DOVVSU of the GPS like that of social work practice. Therefore, the nexus between the said police unit within the GPS functions similarly to that of social work practice making these theories viable to understand the phenomena being investigated (ibid)

3.2 Feminist Social work Theory

To start with, I adopted the use of multiple feminist perspectives and conceptual frames grounded in extensive theoretical approaches and scholarships of both feminism and social work practice to support the arguments that evolved during this study. In that sense, the concept of intersectionality is used as an analytical tool to understand and analyze complex phenomena producing oppression and inequality of any form in an institution or society (Collins & Bilge 2016, Bubar et al. 2016). It was coined by a feminist and legal scholar named Crenshaw Kimberly in 1989 to explain how the intersection of gender, power relations, class, and race

apprise the experiences of African American women in the legal system (Bubar et al. 2016). Other feminist scholars such as Lorde (1984), Collins and Bilge (2016), Acker (2000), among others finds the contribution of the term intersectionality as a significant framework in the interdisciplinary space of academia and ways from its lens to view and deconstruct the ideologies which lead to domestic violence, gendered privileges, and patriarchal power.

Feminist scholars argue that the concept of intersectionality can be used as a theory, an analytical tool, a framework, and a method in understanding complexity such as oppression, injustice, and vulnerability from one's experience and standpoint in the society (Collins & Bilge 2016, Crenshaw 1989, Bubar et al. 2016). To better understand the complexity of social inequality, institutions or individual's life experiences resulting in oppression and injustice, Collins & Bilge (2016) argues that thinking through one axis like gender cannot bring full comprehension of the social issue such as inequality and injustice but rather when analyzed with many axes as gender, power, class, ethnicity, location, (dis)ability, etc., and how they overlap each other.

Since intersectionality has been integrated into disciplines and their mode of analyzing social issues and their complexity in academia for instance disciplines like social work practice, in the field of social work, intersectional theories and approaches are applied to better understand from the experiences of the marginalized and how the interlocking axes such as gender, power, class, location, and (dis)ability in the context and aim of this study overlap each other impeding institutional processes and their services (Bernard 2020). The projects of social work practice and its theories relating to that of feminism share similar goals and vision of enhancing and promoting the sustainable welfare of individuals in a society (Gray & Webb, 2012, Oakley 2005).

In addition to these frameworks, other feminists with a legal background such as Levit & Verchick (2006) argue that the jurisprudence of feminism among others aims for equal rights for justice and protection from all forms of domination and oppression among the marginalized in society such as PWDs. Some of these feminist scholars believe that a society where men dominate in all spheres (i.e., societal, political, institutional, and economic) brings about persistent inequality of

justice and oppression among the marginalized (Lorde 1984, Rich 2003). Affirming this some feminist legal scholars such as Mackinnon (1979), initiated the concept dominance under the umbrella of theories of feminism in 1979 which argues that there would always be an unequal distribution of power and resources in a society that is deeply rooted in a patriarchy where privileges are given in favor of men while women are subjugated under their patriarchal power structures exposing them (women) to GBV, legal injustice, and oppression in the sense of this study. Parallel to this, borrowing the concept of Unmasking patriarchy, Levit & Verchick (2006) avers that the cultural ideology and understanding of patriarchy has shaped the institutional structures that are a deeply rooted society with the belief that men are superior to women in all aspect of life portraying women as properties in some relationships such as marriage. With regards to Joan Orme, exploring the relationship between social work practice and feminism, she explains how crucial it is to understand the interlocking ways of thinking analyzing from the intersectional lens of how the interrelation of some categories such as gender, power, class, location, and (dis)ability brings about social and legal justice for all in the society (Orme 2009).

3.3 Structural social work Theory

It is obvious and understandable that social problems such as GBV will always persist when the focus to curb or eradicate these issues are mostly off the root cause of the problems themselves. Structural social work theory which is embedded and grounded in critical sociological theories was introduced in the mid-1970s in Canada to challenge social injustice, promote emancipation, and progressive society for the sustainable welfare of individuals (Hick & Murray 2012; Carniol 1992). This theory combined with the relevant conceptual framework, among other things, questions the legitimacy or lawfulness of institutional structures set up to ensure the social welfare and well-being of the citizens, to whom services rendered are in a justified manner. To ensure sustainable welfare through effective structural performativity to attain justice in a society, this theory has been included in the present-day social analysis of ending oppressions taking into consideration factors such as gender, class, power relations, (dis)ability, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. (ibid).

Structural social work is found in a large pool of approaches that is, transformative, radical, and progressive in the social work practice and addresses many forms of oppression such as marginalized PWDs from the perspective of societal and institutional structures with regards to the multiple axes of categories upon which individuals are being exploited (Gray & Webb 2012, Hick & Murray, 2012). This structural approach to social justice, ending of societal oppression, and promoting equality towards development also addresses the systems of patriarchy, ableism, capitalism, and institutional discrimination based on gender, class, power relations, location, and (dis)ability. As avers by Ife (1999, p.55) referred by Sewpaul (2005, p.312) he states that “Because of the dominance of class, power, gender, and race/ethnicity as forms of structural disadvantage, any social or political program which does not specifically question or challenge them is likely to reinforce these forms of oppression by accepting the dominant order which supports them”. Consequently, with the intersectional lens and structural social work approach to eradicate multiple forms of oppression and seeking justice and equality, it is essential to analyze the services and processes of law enforcement institutions such as DOVVSU at the district of Mampong.

3.3.1 Supporting conceptual framework adapted

The concept of power will be used as a tool, to support my theoretical argument. I draw on Michel Foucault’s (1980; 2007) concepts of both power and discipline to underpin my explanations on how DOVVSU as an institution can enhance the effectiveness of the unit’s services. In the sense of Power as a concept, Foucault explains how reproduction of knowledge contributed to the current state of gender roles resulting in patriarchalism in Ghana. Therefore, recognizing the fact that most Ghanaian societies are patrilineal patriarchal ones shaped by male power domination and privileges and also institutional structures and policies enacted mostly by men, the feminist social work theory together with the goals of structural social work theory emphasizes keenly on the concept of equality, justice and sustainable welfare and development (social, political, cultural and economic) and how they can be attained in Ghana with much focus on the district of Mampong (Levit & Verchick 2006).

The choice of theories highlights and looks beyond the factors contributing to inequality and injustice, giving an overview and (de)constructing the ideologies in

the society from the perspectives of gender in the societal structures and institutions (Ahmed 2000, Orme 2009). Considering the objectives (educate by creating awareness, protect, empower, and motivate victims of violence) of DOVVSU as a police unit, the transformational objectives of structural social work theory professes on the societal (educating, empowering and protecting) and institutional (meaningful representation, equal resource distribution, equality, patriarchal knowledge deconstruction) level ensuring active participation of the oppressed and at the same time transforming the institutional structures. I, therefore, finds the relevance, coherence, and connections between these chosen theories and concepts in understanding DOVVSU of the GPS on addressing social problems such as GBV in the country with much focus on rural districts as Mampong in the Ashanti region of Ghana.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design and Method

This chapter of the research study is where I spread all cards on the table, directing and detailing the step-by-step strategies and techniques adapted to which the necessary derived empirical data to respond to the research questions are explained. In other words, this chapter of the study is considered the blueprint that gives me the ability to overcome obstacles that might hinder the validity of the study findings and enables me to grasp and efficiently answer accordingly the research questions posed above (Burns & Grove 2010). To adequately situate the findings of the empirical data and secondary data in the theories introduced in chapter 3, the study has strategically provided a road map to guide me to meet the objectives and aim the research seeks to achieve (Bairagi & Munot 2019, Yin 2014).

In the analytical phase, I take into consideration the commonness of Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) in a case study method, hence employs QDA to systematically interpret the raw data obtained from the field making this study feasible and comprehensive for me to efficiently among other questions this study aims to answer and demonstrates how DOVVSU legally handles cases of domestic violence in Ghana (Wood et al. 2020, Creswell & Poth 2016).

4.1.1 Case Study

First, the study adopted qualitative methodological approach research where a Case Study was employed as a method together with interviews to investigate and interpret the legal processes of DOVVSU of the GPS in the district of Mampong. A case study as a method in a qualitative research approach examines thoroughly by analyzing and providing an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon such as domestic violence in the study context (Golby et al. 2002, Humphries 2008). This method goes beyond investigating in-depth institutional settings like DOVVSU of GPS to understand the logic behind its legal procedures and assist me to comprehend why domestic violence as a contemporary phenomenon persists in the district of Mampong (Humphries 2008). Adopting Case study as a method in the

field of social work is open and diverse to the contributions of other qualitative methods with multiple techniques in gathering data which with regards to previous studies, applied by other researchers during their study periods enhanced their process of data collection (see Chapter 2) (Humphries 2008). With regards to the flexibility of case study as a method to incorporate simultaneously with other qualitative research methods, I acknowledged the relevance of case study as a method suitable to dive into thorough investigation on DOVVSU of GPS who is geared in combating, protecting, and seeking justice for victims of gendered violence with much focus on the district of Mampong. To achieve the aim and objectives of the research during the study period between 20th January through to 20th May 2021, I find case study relevant to meet the study aim.

4.2 Access to potential participants

In social science research, Jensen (2008) states that one of the most crucial aspects a researcher needs to consider is how to gain access to potential participants or context of study especially in qualitative research like this. Having noted this, taking into consideration the methods ensured in this study, I made use of a gatekeeper who happens to be an insider (police officer) but belongs to a different division/unit of the Ghana Police Service at the regional police headquarters in the Ashanti region. The essence of having such a gatekeeper as an entry point was to catalyze and gain access to DOVVSU of GPS at the district level to build rapport, create contact links (convenient online meeting arrangements) between potential participants and I, as well as to prevent suppression of crucial information necessary for the study from DOVVSU officials since the gatekeeper belongs to this said institution that is GPS (O'Reilly 2009). It is important to state and make it clear that the gatekeeper had no influence on participants, instead unit is open to researchers like myself to help education and contribute to its effort of reducing violence such as GBV (DOVVSU 2017). As noted by some researchers such as Adu (2016) without a gatekeeper, access to institutions such as DOVVSU might be time-consuming, or absence of vital evidence needed for research studies like this. Therefore, I find the gatekeeper as a useful catalyst to speed up access to the field of this study.

4.3 Sampling strategy

This stage in the research process after gaining access to the potential participant, was up to my ability to be critical in selecting from a sample population of 12 DOVVSU officials believed to generate the appropriate source of data out of which 9 officials represent the sample size based on gender and ranks of the officials targeted (Mason 2018).

Non-probability purposive sampling was ensured in selecting 9 officials from the unit out of a proposed sample population of 12 (Mason 2018, Etikan et al. 2016, Humphries 2008). The 3 remaining potential participants left of the sample size were also important, placed on standby, should there be any uncertainties such as withdrawals from participating that might have disrupted the sample size and generating data from the data source. Also, a snowballing technique was employed where active participants specifically referred potential participants who were willing and interested to contribute to the study since one of the aims of DOVVSU is to create awareness and educate the public on how to be avoided, protect, and seek justice when victimized. Therefore, the snowballing technique adopted was useful to rapidly assist attain the sample size of the study (Humphries 2008). This sampling technique was also adopted to target the DOVVSU institution based on certain characteristics such as expertise, gender, availability, and willingness of participant to take part in the study to provide me with meaningful information that is relevant to better understand the theoretical framework of the study (Etikan et al. 2016). The count and gender of participants included 5 female officials and 4 male officials in all. The recruitments came up because of hierarchical (unit strata) perspectives of officials from the unit and willingness on the part of consented officials to contribute to the study. Therefore, Officials are to be identified with pseudonyms, throughout the phase of the analysis. This is better summarized and understood with the figure illustrated below.

Table 1. Pseudonyms, details, and interview times of study participants

DOVVSU Officials	Gender	Date & Time (GMT)	Perspective
Akosua	Female	18/04/2021, 17:30-18:30	District level

Ama	Female	20/03/2021, 17:40-18:20	National level
Afia	Female	15/03/2021, 17:30-18:30	Regional level
Akua	Female	26/03/2021,17:30-18:30	District level
Abena	Female	01/04/2021, 17:30-18:30	Regional level
Kwaku	Male	23/08/2021, 17:30-18:30	National level
Kwame	Male	04/04/2021, 17:35-18:20	District level
Kwadwo	Male	19/03/2021, 17:40-18:25	District level
Kofi	Male	24/03/2021, 17:30-18:20	District level

4.4 Data collection process

The data collection process was a crucial part of the research process carefully performed. Empirical and secondary data is gathered using different data collection techniques. The empirical data was gathered by conducting in-depth interviews with the officials from DOVVSU. On the other hand, I ensured document analysis in gathering data from previous research studies, annual reports, and articles on related domestic violence cases from DOVVSU as explained above in 4.2.3 of this study.

4.4.1 Synchronous Research Approach

Ever since WHO (2020) declared coronavirus COVID-19 a pandemic in March 2020, most nations across the world have put in place national measures which include some countries lockdown, travel restrictions, among others to minimize the spread of the virus. Concerning this, I, in addition to case study adapted the use of synchronous approach to be specific, as a supporting qualitative data technique to assist in gathering empirical data through real-time online interviewing

(Blommaert & Dong 2020, James & Busher 2016). The use of a Synchronous approach for online interviewing bridges the gap between the study context (Mampong, Ghana) and my current location (Lund, Sweden) of the researcher amidst the ongoing health crisis (COVID-19) and the iterative policy travel restrictions at the national level of most countries in the world including Sweden and Ghana (James & Busher 2016, Blommaert & Dong 2020). According to Janghorban et al. (2014) and O'Reilly (2009) this approach does not require the researcher to be on-site or have face-to-face interviews with participants (officials) in terms of data collection, yet in this sense, I was able to participate in real-time interview activities and processes for effective and efficient data gathering, necessary for the success of the research study through technological online platforms such as zoom, etc. This approach influenced the data collection period which similarly enabled me conduct interviews, making it convenient and feasible for me and the officials of DOVVSU, although challenges and limitations were encountered that have been addressed respectively at section 4.6.

4.4.1.1 In-depth Interviews

Interviews are back and forth conversations between two parties built on a rapport to gather meaningful thoughts and ideas grounded on a topic being discussed (Blommaert & Dong 2020). With the use of Synchronous approach, In-depth interview in the English language was ensured in collecting data because it enabled me to delve deeper into the conversation between the interviewer (researcher) and the interviewees (DOVVSU officials) in understanding step by step the processes of DOVVSU and how legal justice are being attained at the end of every case of DV being reported to the unit (O'Reilly 2009). A total of 9 in-depth interviews ensued between me and some officials from the DOVVSU of the GPS at the district of Mampong in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The interviews which lasted for 1 hour including 15minutes breaks were scheduled for and executed on different dates and times between 15th March 2021 and 4th April 2021, all between 17:30hr and 18:30hr GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) as illustrated in Table 1. The reasons for using this technique are that in-depth interviews provide the interviewer the opportunity for follow-up questions, probe for additional information, and provides a vivid understanding of the motivations and perceptions of the interviewee on the study focus. Though the technique is considered time-consuming, it is very

insightful, and adequate information could be retrieved even from the fewer sample size targeted by the study (Guest et al. 2013). Being guided by an interview guide structured with the aid of analyzed secondary data, the in-depth interview adapted opened arrays of opened-ended questions to the officials in gathering important data that contributed to the needed information which adequately answered the research questions of this study. Examples of these opened-ended questions were *How is the unit motivated in seeking justice for the victims of DV? Do societal beliefs in the sense of patriarchy influence the activities of the unit?* Open-ended questions like these afforded me the opportunity to understand from the perspectives of the interviewed officials' reasons as to why perpetrators of this DV do not face legal justice in the study context.

Consequently, as stated in 4.2.2 in this chapter, face-to-face interviews were not possible between I and the participants, however, the instrument used in conducting the interviews between the participants and I, was zoom video online application with skype as an alternative application which enabled me to interview and record the sessions upon the consent of the interviewed participant. The idea of recording the conversation was that during the data analytical phase, the recordings assisted me to reflect on some key points, concepts, and information in the conversation since as human, I cannot grasp whatever was discussed during the in-depth interview. Limitations on using these instruments (zoom and/or skype) are addressed in section 4.6

4.4.2 Document Analysis

Secondly, the approach I adapted through the empirical data collection phase was Document analysis concerning the 'standpoint' approach as a methodology in feminism and that of social work practice to understand the power relations in the society (Rolin 2009). This approach was used to analyze secondary data of other qualitative research studies, annual reports, and articles on DOVVSU that I found relevant in diverse ways in contributing to better understand from the experiences of victims of GBV in the district of Mampong (Shaw & Holland, 2014). I employed this approach to analyze interviews of previous studies such as the works of Azumah (2019), Tsegah (2016), among others, which enabled the precise structure of interview questions and guide posed to the DOVVSU officials during the interview sessions. Rolin (2009) and Harding (1991) avers that to better understand

institutional (DOVVSU) power imbalances and societal injustice and inequality, it was essential to grasp from the standpoint of victims of GBV which then exposes hidden aspects between societal gender relations and institution like DOVVSU responsible for these social structures. Having observed this approach, strategic and precise interview questions were asked during the interview sessions with the officials of DOVVSU. According to Rolin (2009), standpoint theory as a methodology will prevent suppression of vital empirical data needed to understand the phenomenon of underreports of GBV cases and breaks the barriers of power relations that would have been a threat between the DOVVSU officials and I during the interview sessions. In addition to the above, this method served an important role during the aspect of the theoretical presentation of data in Chapter 5. After critically analyzing reports, articles, and journal about research studies about DOVVSU and the stated research problem in Ghana, this method assisted me to authenticate some assertions made by participants with references to existing documents to produce reliable and robust results from the data (Prior 2016, Bowen 2009). From my understanding, this a relevant approach in the sense of this study to ensure the reliability of analyzing both the primary and secondary data.

4.5 Method of Analyzing Data

The essence of analyzing the data in research was to provide the roadmap, sort and retrieve tangible meanings from the information gathered from participants using the data collection techniques employed in this study with the major aim to address and answer the research questions posed accordingly (Shaw & Holland, 2014). After conducting and recording interviews with participants, the data was first processed incoherence and sequential manner transcribed from audio into a textual form using Microsoft Word packages where I watched and listened to the interviews, transcribed the audios into the text after critical clarification of words (Miles et al. 2018, Shaw & Holland, 2014). This made the document non-reactive, that is, it became unchangeable and could be reviewed multiple times for truth and reliability of what was said by the interviewee to establish trustworthiness between the audio data and transcribed data during the transcription process (Blommaert & Dong 2020, Shaw & Holland 2014).

The process of sorting codes into themes was made systematically and strategically geared to respond to the research questions and meet the objectives of the study. This was done with the use of one of CAQDAS', NVivo to be specific, a flexible, time-efficient (considering interviews duration and information gathered) research analytical software capable of assisting me to facilitate, store, navigate, manage, and keep track within the data during coding (Miles et al. 2018, Shaw & Holland 2014). The reason behind this choice of analytical approach was influenced by the methods the study employed and it afforded me ample time to interpret, familiarize with the transcribed data, and point out detailed accounts of the data being analyzed

In that sense, a qualitative data analytical technique was employed where I made use of Thematic analysis. Scharp & Matthew (2019) define thematic analysis as an analytical approach that critically recognizes, examines, and reports gathered data in text-structural forms and represents the meanings derived with phrases (codes)⁸. To also ensure anonymity, the names of respondents were codified with pseudonyms to represents participants such as Akua, Ama, Kwame, etc. (*see Table 1*). The study was an iterative-inductive process where I needed to thoroughly analyze back and forth, line by line to familiarize, generate themes from the codes and sub-themes, define, naming themes, and identify exemplars with the data collected during the analytical phase (Braun & Clarke 2006, Saldana 2016, Bowen 2009). Table 2 below illustrates the themes and sub-themes identified when analyzing the data. A total number of 4 themes were identified which was discussed in chapter 5 of the study to give understanding and response to the research questions.

Table 2: Identified Themes and Sub-themes during data analysis

Themes	Sub-themes
The genealogy of gendered violence in Ghana	Gender roles, Patriarchy, Motivation to serve, Imperialism
Power relations and (Mal)distribution	Gendered power relations, Increase rate in DV, Inequitable distribution of resources, Equal opportunity to service

⁸ “Code(s) in a qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana 2016, pp 4).

The intersecting matrix of oppression among the vulnerable	Socioeconomic status, class difference, Gendered hierarchy, sociocultural belief and tradition, Lack of Empowerment
(In)effective institutional strategies towards perpetrators.	Barriers to justice, Lack of active participation among actors, Lack of institutional discipline.

4.6 Limitations of research design.

Some obstacles may arise or suppress the flexibility of this study. The first difficulty to address is getting easy access to participants for the study considering synchronous approach or way of collecting empirical data with the use of interviews from the participant. It would have been much easier if I was present on the field to get into contact with participants. However, the current global health crisis (COVID-19) and travel restrictions prevented me from traveling to the research site and the best way to overcome this difficulty was to make use of a gatekeeper/insider who also made data collection doable and feasible for this study.

The issue of unstable internet connection is another difficulty that may be encountered during the online interview using online video applications such as zoom and skype. Although the interviews are set to be recorded, the video aspect of it would be deactivated to ensure a stable connection and clear audio recording. Notes on emotions and reactions of the interviewee through video would have been better but the appropriate and only way to overcome this limitation is to disable video if network interruption is noticed.

4.7 Ethical consideration

To start with, this study is guided by the ethical principles of social science research and that of the principles of social work practice (Humphries 2008, Mason 2018). My chosen methodology and behavior towards the study are governed by some ethics that made the study conduct safe, viable, neutral, and objective to arrive at a conducive and successful research process (ibid). Humphries (2008) argues that seeking for social justice (as one commitment in SW practice) is somewhat intertwined with ethical research in the field of social work practice. However, since case study as one of the methods adopted in this study targets an institution

that is DOVVSU, the critical choice of ethical codes does not only protect and focus on participants of the study but also DOVVSU as an institution (ibid). Therefore, observing the following code of ethics is crucial to protect me and those involved in the scope of this study as expected by IFSW/IASSW.

4.7.1 Informed Consent

The first code of ethics observed is informed consent. Before I involved potential participants in this study, absolute transparency was required where an overview of what the study was about were addressed before the participant (Mason 2018, Humphries 2008). This enables the participant to understand thoroughly the aim, objectives, and possible risks that may arise before and during the research study. I provided detailed information of what, who, and where the research focuses and introduces his/her/their selves to the participants without suppressing parts of the study (ibid). Therefore, in the sense of this study, a consent form⁹ was drawn out to potential participants from DOVVSU detailing what his/she/their needs to know about the study project and their willingness to take part in the online interview which will be scheduled between me and the said participant at a convenient time after the participant is convinced and have signed (signature) the consent form.

Secondly, considering the use of Document analysis as a method to gather secondary data upon which interview questions are derived, another aspect informed is the permission to use secondary materials purposely for the study. Mason agrees to the fact that:

Visual documents and found materials can take a very private or confidential form, and it can be difficult to establish informed consent for their use because they may refer to or implicate people other than their owners or keepers. (Mason 2018, p.99)

In that sense, I made use of public articles, reports, and journals published online by DOVVU and other related institutional actors such as Legal Aid and DSW in collaboration with the unit to achieve one goal. Also acknowledging the absolute anonymity of other research studies such as the works of Azumah (2019), Opoku et al. (2015), among others, I analyzed such documents to generate secondary data.

⁹ (See Appendix 1)

Ethically, according to Tripathy (2013), it is important to acknowledge authors of other studies if their documents are being analyzed which signifies the act of seeking their consent, and documents published on the internet freely by institutions, states, or individuals were respectfully acknowledged.

4.7.2 Confidentiality and Rights

One of the most important ethical aspects of social science research is that privacy must be respected reciprocally during the research process (Mason 2018). I tried not to pry into the personal lives of potential participants; therefore, interview questions are structured critically and strategically to avoid privacy invasion. I ensured and observed that total anonymity where participant's details such as their names, ranks, and even their gender will be kept private to avoid possible future risk to them. Some vital information that may have arisen during the interview session which is deemed sensitive as the personal experience of the participant or expose the participant were be kept private. Sensitive data related to cases of some victims that may have arisen were not be disclosed since the participant were assured absolute privacy protection and materials gathered served solely the purpose of only what this study's aims, and objective seeks to achieve at the end of the study that is, no information was be disclosed outside the context of this study. Both empirical data and secondary data were stored, secured, and protected on a password secured document on my personal computer to avoid third-party access to them. (Silverman 2020, Humphries 2008).

Having respect for the privacy of the participant during the study, I prioritized the right of the participant to withdraw from the study at any point convenient to suit his/her/their selves against any potential risk that they think might seem harmful to them (Humphries 2008). It was unethical to use coercive manner such as offering gifts (cash) to lure or persuade participants in taking part in the study. The consent form spelled out all the dos and don'ts to be observed. Therefore, the utmost respect for participants' fundamental rights is taken into consideration before participating in this study (IFSW 2018, Mason 2018).

4.7.3 Being reflexive as a researcher

The part of a researcher being reflexive in social science research is important because it contributes to measuring how rigor and trustworthiness of the study as

far as the personality researcher towards participants is concerned (Dodgson, 2019). As avers by Berger (2015, p.220) reflexivity means “turning of the researcher lens onto oneself to recognize and take responsibility for one’s situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation”. My personality and past experiences of being a social work practitioner during bachelor’s education, a Ghanaian by citizenship, and theoretical knowledge from the feminist scholarship could have influenced the research process. Being reflexive and situating oneself outside the margins and borders of social science research, I was motivated and passionate about the sustainable welfare and development of individuals at the study area. This is also parallel to some of the country’s objectives and SDGs¹⁰ towards sustainable development starting from areas such as Mampong. However, to seek the real ‘truth’ behind the situation as to why there is no balance between GBV cases reported and cases that attained justice, understand the reasons behind underreported cases and why perpetrators end up on the streets without prosecution accordingly, I tried to be objective by putting aside, emotions, experiences and acquired knowledge to be able to gain from the neutral lens to critically analyze, produce and conduct a successful research study that will contribute to knowledge production in academia as far as domestic violence is concerned (Shaw & Holland 2014, Humphries 2008).

¹⁰ Ghana’s contribution and achievements towards sustainable development in this context depends on and is centered between these interconnected SDGs that is, No.4-Quality Education, No.5-Gender Equality, No.10- Reduced Inequalities, and No.-16- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (UNDP Ghana, 2021).

CHAPTER FIVE

5 THE THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS FROM DATA.

5.1 Introduction:

This chapter discusses and analyzes the data of this study through the lens of the theoretical framework proposed in Chapter 3. It provides answers to the research questions posed in chapter 1 with comprehensive sections guiding readers to understand the whole arguments made under this theoretical phase of analysis from the data.

5.1.1 The structure of this chapter:

This chapter is structured in a coherent and thematic form. The first part provides the foundation from the precolonial era for the reader to understand from the genealogies of how patriarchal systems were reinforced in Ghana (system of patriarchal government), why there is the persistent rise in GBV, and how the patriarchal systems influence institutions like DOVVSU of the GPS. The chapter furthers to builds upon and focuses on this ideology in answering the research questions posed in the study. I find the structure relevant because without tracing back to the roots of how institutions like DOVVSU of the GPS was embedded in patriarchalism, it becomes difficult to grasp why such a gender-neutral institutions breed inequality and injustice giving rise to GBV in the country with much focus on Mampong district.

This theoretical discussion provides a critical and in-depth understanding of the phenomena and answers the research questions suitable for readers to follow and with the thematic coherence between the chosen frameworks. Other concepts were also borrowed from other scholars to support the arguments as discussed. However, concepts together with their explanations employed concerning the data are solely within the scope of this study and subjected not to undermine the actual meanings of such conceptual frames.

5.2 The genealogy of gendered violence in Ghana.

First and foremost, before answering the research questions of this study, it is important to understand why amongst all the forms of violence, GBV is predominant and still on the rise among people in the district of Mampong as claimed by some of the participants. Most theorists from the social science disciplines especially social work and feminism find in their daily discourses' how patriarchy impacts negatively on gender inequality and injustice that together results in undermining individual's welfare towards sustainable development in life. As situated in feminist post-colonial theories, Anne McClintock in a different context demonstrates how imperialism could trace back to the post-colonial era where Western countries such as Great Britain, Portuguese, United States, among others, with the ideology of having power over nations especially in the third world countries like Ghana which was formally known as Gold Coast (McClintock 1995). Findings from the data suggests that most of the officials during the interview assert the fact that before colonialism, in Gold Coast then, men had possession and absolute control and power which they believe has been instilled in the social structures in contemporary Ghana. According to some of the participants when asked from their perspectives the roots of GBV. They stated that:

[...] our societies especially this one has been structured to accommodate gendered violence in such a way that men are supposed to lead and make most of the decisions in our various homes from centuries. They hate to be challenged when decisions are made, and I think this is one of the reasons for gendered violence in most homes. This has extended to most of the social institutions where male authority is not challenged or flouted (Ama, Female 2021).

Domestic violence has been with us here in Mampong for so many years even before I was born. I remember when my great grandmother told me when they use to solve his marriage issues with my grandpa at the Chief's palace and sometimes in shrines. They were the only places instant justice were found during domestic violence cases (Kofi, Male 2021).

Analyzing from the perspectives of these officials, the existence of patriarchy, where men have absolute power over men in various societal structures has been in play for several years even before the postcolonial era. It existed within various ethnic groups where the concept of patriarchy was somewhat related to gender roles in post-tribal and precolonial times. The roots of patriarchy were instilled in various tribes in all societies in the country and were further institutionalized and reinforced over time into a compounded social structure, that is the justice systems and governmental structures that made up the society (Azumah et al. 2019, Akita 2010). The reinforcement of patriarchy was cemented decades when the colonized (men: slaves), were allocated the spot of economic activities to provide manpower to increase the productivity of the exploitative resources in favor of the then colonizers. The activities of women were feminized and domesticated leaving women to take care of household chores, childbearing, etc., while the men were made to work to take care of their families (Lewis & Mills 2003, McClintock 1995). Anne McClintock illustrated using Haggard's map which exhibits the themes of this western Imperialism as among others, the power of males through controlling women (portraying them as weaker vessels) and the emergence of global cultural knowledge (McClintock 1995). The reproduction of these imperial ideology and knowledge of the patriarchal reinforcement was stemmed from the already existing culture and traditions in Ghana before colonization by the British colonizers. This knowledge reproduction is what Michel Foucault's argument on power mirrors to showing that the formation of power is the establishment of knowledge being produced (Foucault 1980). As a nation colonized by the British, Ghana inherited among other things the British bureaucratic legislation that to date governs and manages its institutional structures after independence in 1957 leading to patriarchalism (Woodman 1974).

5.2.1 The current situation of GBV and services of DOVVSU in a patriarchal society.

This reaffirmation according to some feminist scholars argues that it is the source of inequality in socioeconomic status, social injustice, and inequitable distribution of resources for both genders which results in a social problem such as GBV that impedes an individual's welfare development (Acker 1998, Fraser 2007, Lorde 2003). As explained by Mackinnon (1979), a dominance theorist, she avers that the

domination of men having the socioeconomic and political power over women in a society suppresses the freedom and ability of some women in their various households.

With this, the logic behind GBV of all forms among individuals especially women and children could be expanded from the genesis of societal structures and its formulation at Mampong. Harcourt (2009) made a speculator argument on how patriarchal power structures are embedded in customs and traditions resulting in an inequitable distribution of resources among gender. He further explains that forms of violence vary by location and beliefs of a particular certain (ibid). A 2014 report from CEDAW related to a study in Ghana showed the persistent entanglement of customs and traditions among social ethnic groups across the country with strong adherence to patriarchal power structures and beliefs exposing the varied gender roles and power between women and men (CEDAW 2014).

In a society such as Mampong is no exception, that is deeply rooted in a respected manner for these socio-cultural beliefs that men are born to be leaders while women are perceived to be subordinates, given rise to domestic violence due to maldistribution of power and resources (economic and political). Though there are other forms of ongoing violence at Mampong, Azumah et al. (2019) and Opoku et al. (2015) agree that violence against women is predominant among the people of Mampong due to patriarchy where men are believed to be superior throughout the social, economic, and political sphere. This has subjugated the power of women under men which suppresses their voices, efforts, and freedom, leaving them in oppressive and vulnerable positions in Mampong. The establishment of these traditional ideologies is one of the reasons why almost in every household at Mampong, there is some sort of violence against women. Findings from the data of this study suggests that some of the present situations of GBV as at now at the district of Mampong. From their perspectives, some revelations were made on how even the recent lockdown restrictions due to COVID-19 also contributed to the rise in GBV at the district. According to them:

Ok, Domestic violence here in Mampong so far, I can say it's not going down, it's coming up day in day out. It's always increasing, err, people are

still threatening their partners, marital rapes, assaults, and so on. All the time we get to hear something about domestic violence here in our office. (Akosua, Female 2021)

[...] Ok although we try our best to reduce violence especially domestic ones, I can say that it has not gotten worse, neither has it gotten better. But with this year, it is worse than in previous years. More victims are lodging complaints after the national lockdown. (Kwame, Male 2021)

Analyzing from the data, the patriarchal systems under which women are subjugated under men from the economic perspective make it clear how it contributes to GBV at Mampong. Amongst some of the havoc caused by lockdown restrictions are depression, emotional distress due to financial instability because COVID-19 caused more financial harm than good in the various household. This as a means of exposing some women to GBV according to some of the officials of DOVVSU is one of the reasons for the persistent rise in GBV at the district. Most findings from other research studies on GBV in Ghana especially in rural areas and districts such as Mampong points out the many causes of GBV including poverty, the economic dependence of women on men in such societies (Cantalupo et al., 2006). Though findings from studies from researchers such as Opoku et al. (2015), Azumah et al. (2019), and others show that poverty, economic dependence are some of the causes of persistent violence in households at Mampong.

However, the assertions of participants affirm the findings of these previous researchers exposing the fact that societal beliefs and ideology of men as breadwinners of households as expected by traditions through patriarchy, were financially affected during the outbreak of the coronavirus COVID-19 virus, due to among others expected measures to curb transmission, includes lockdowns of some countries of which Ghana was no exception (UN 2020, WHO 2019). This according to some participants has resulted in the rise of GBV cases reported to DOVVSU during these periods. The knowledge reproduction of such beliefs and ideology of men superiority over women at Mampong is the root cause of all forms of GBV in various households and it has always been reinforced into how societal institutions

such as DOVVSU are being structured to obstructs the sufficient and smoothly offered services rendered by the institution.

5.2.2 DOVVSU's commitment to its emancipatory practice at Mampong

Having an insight about the current situation of GBV situation at Mampong, most of the officials explained following the interview questions about the processes and services of the unit and its motivation to attain justice for the victimized. On the one hand, as part of the aims of feminism, DOVVSU is geared to alleviate and set victims free from domination and oppression and on the other structural social work approach eases personal and structural changes in this context (Chan 2018, Mullaly 2007). Performing the tasks of seeking the wellbeing and development of a marginalized group of people in the society irrespective of one's gender, class, and location, the unit plays a crucial role to assist victims to attain justice when complaints are lodged. The dedication of the unit is parallel to the objectives of feminist social work practice.

Most of the officials during the interview explained how they (officials) are dedicated to the services they render and attested to the facts, from their perspectives in favor of the DOVVSU's services that, the unit makes the process of seeking justice easy and convenient for victims to attain the rightful justice they deserve at the end of their investigative process to free victims from oppression and make sure perpetrators are prosecuted and indicted for the necessary punishment they deserve after court's ruling. Speaking of the unit's dedication to working and how easy and convenient their services are, this is one of some responses from the officials. According to him:

[...] lodging a complaint with DOVVSU or the police has been made simple for complainants. I call it just a call, hahaha. For instance, during the covid lockdown period, DOVVSU made available toll-free lines, 18555 or 191, and active phone numbers with which at the comfort of the victim can call to report crimes like violence especially domestic ones if there is any in various home [...]. (Kwaku, Male 2021)

From the conversations with participants, it was made clear that even though there is a rise in domestic violence cases in the district of Mampong, there is no hassle in contacting and accessing the services of DOVVSU at the district. According to most of the officials, it has been made clear that DOVVSU of the GPS is dedicated to what it does to reduce or eliminate the rate of oppression and domination through GBV in various homes at Mampong, ensuring that everyone has equitable access to their services to attain justice which results in sustainable development and welfare of individuals at Mampong.

Therefore, to quiz oneself on how power dynamics and patriarchal systems in the name of societal tradition and beliefs does impede on the services of DOVVSU for seeking justice for victims of GBV, we dive into the feminist scholarship from the interdisciplinary broad theories in social sciences to deduces the complex understanding of this phenomenon into its simplest form with its considerable conceptual framework.

5.3 Power relations and (mal)distribution of resources.

The power dynamics of gender and patriarchal systems sheltering some women in Mampong exposes them to fear and timidness in seeking justice when victimized which contributes to the high number of domestic violence in the district. As Runyan and Peterson (2014, p.6) thinks that “Gender is about power, and power is gendered”. To discuss the first research question on how the services of DOVVSU influence justice for victims of GBV need to address the basics and composition of the GPS under which DOVVSU emerges. When analyzing the data, three categories responded to this research question: history of societal structure, power relations, and lack of resources.

Drawing on the concept of ‘unmasking patriarchy’ as a technique used by feminist legal scholars, that is, Levit & Verchick (2006) we can identify the gendered power relations in policymaking and distribution of resources at DOVVSU as social structure. The principles of the distributional premise are paramount to justice in society (Mullaly & Dupré 2019). Therefore, it can be argued that not only has patriarchy got influence on some women in their various households but the whole

composition that makes up the society including its structures and at the end, breeds maldistribution of resources, inequality, and injustice. In the sense of structural social work theory, Mullaly and Dupré (2019) argue that the ultimate source of social problems such as GBV is centered on how the society is been structured by its dominant ideologies of patriarchy and social belief systems. They further aver those societal problems are rooted in social structures (institutions) such as the GPS which includes DOVVSU in this sense because the understanding and knowledge reproduced in such structures rests on the patriarchal ideologies shaped by gendered roles during post-tribal and precolonial era. During the in-depth interview, several insightful information emerged. Out of the many questions addressed and discussed during the conversations, officials were made to address some of the impediments that obstruct the services of DOVVSUs at Mampong.

Most of the officials pointed out similar problems concerning the distribution and access to resources necessary for effective services of the unit. Addressing some of the obstacles faced by the unit at the district, most of the officials pointed out that, the unit lacks an operational budget to support victims throughout the process of seeking justice and lacks vehicles to perform its investigative activities at crime scenes. According to them, they stated that:

Errrm, I will say that we lack vehicles to the crime scenes during investigations. You see I told you that we help as humans in many ways because since we do lack vehicles as a unit of the police service, sometimes we take taxis with our fares to the crime scenes for investigation. So, imagine if a case is being reported and I don't have money during that time, what am I going to do or how am I going to get there? I only do so when I have the power to get to the crime scene. It happens here each time and I will confirm that lack of vehicles makes our work very difficult. (Kofi, Male 2021)

[...] I can say that here in Mampong, vehicles owned by the unit are even problem to journey back and forth for investigative purposes and to court, so most of the time victims are those who bear the cost. (Akosua, Female 2021)

The lack of resources such as vehicles for rendering services by the unit as pointed out by some officials is one of the many difficulties that sabotage the process and services of DOVVSU. Some of the officials also pointed to the fact that lack of resources at their units also contributes to frustration and withdrawals of cases lodged by victims making their work hectic. With this claim made by some officials, in a different context of a report from a study conducted by ActionAid Ghana (2019) at different district in the country also shows that DOVVSU officers do not have available resources such as vehicles to perform their expected duties which affirms the assertion of the officials. Withdrawals of cases due to unsuccessful process to seek justice for the victims are some factors that also impede the services of DOVVSU in the district to attain justice for victims as explained by most of the officials. According to some officials, they state that

[...] honestly speaking the justice system will be slow if we don't even have our unit vehicles to facilitate our investigations. When this happens, victims withdraw their cases, some don't even follow up because they become fed-up. The court might have its difficulties with its services but with our units, that is what I think. (Afia, Female 2021)

Drawing on the works of structural social work, it is important to focus on change in the structure of DOVVSU as well as ensuring emancipation among the oppressed in the district of Mampong (Mullaly 2007). The ideologies of the officials of DOVVSU of the GPS especially the women with the socio-economic and political status within the structures of the unit must build a connection of solidarity with grassroots women (oppressed) to engage in dismantling the dominant structures reproducing oppression in the institution (Mohanty 1988, Mullaly 2009).

At this juncture, it is imperative to acknowledge the representation of a woman being the current national coordinator of DOVVSU of the GPS, that is, Chief Superintendent Owusuaa Kyeremeh since women positions such social institutions are generally less powerful for their voices to be heard and to make a bold decision when it comes to resource distributions in this sense (UNFPA 2020, Runyan & Peterson 2014, Mullaly 2007). In line with, Nancy Fraser's argument on

representation and recognition, the strategy of reframing gender equality and justice through such representation at DOVVSU provides women with the steppingstone to be recognized in the socio-political sphere for their experiences and voices to be amplified specifically concerning seeking justice for victims of GBV when there is equitable distribution of resources (Fraser 2007).

This enhancement towards a gender-balanced in decision-making board of the GPS could have led to a speedy road to justice and minimizes the level of GBV among people of Mampong district, however, the current district command of the police service at Mampong is a male, that is, Chief Superintendent Stephen Boadu who is responsible for the overall activities at the district level, which in this sense reveals the masculine and superiority of leadership throughout the district structures of the police unit including DOVVSU at the district. Relying on the foundation and frameworks of feminism, although there is women representation in other parts at units of the GPS, I do argue that the representation of a woman as a national coordinator of the institution does not entirely reflect on gender equality in terms of power during decision making and equitable distribution of resources through the various units or departments of the GPS especially DOVVSU as professing by the officials of the unit. The effort of such representation of a single privileged woman becomes difficult to penetrate and deconstruct the gendered power relations within such male-dominated institution (Dominelli & Campling 2002).

In this context, I reflect on the interesting quote of a prominent feminist and an activist, Audre Lorde who states that *“For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change”* (Lorde, 2003, p. 27). Simply cementing the arguments in the margins of Audre Lorde’s quote, this statement is parallel to the understanding of how patriarchy is used as a weapon by men to control the societal structures and their processes at Mampong. I therefore assert that the representation of a woman as a national coordinator for DOVVSU is just a decoy in portraying the diversity of gender at the institution and how it relates to the efforts in achieving the Gender Equality and Reduction of Inequality of the SDGs, but such representations can never be used to destroy the institutionalization

of the patriarchal ordering of the GPS and its district units at Mampong (Runyan & Peterson 2014, UNDP Ghana 2021).

Most of the officials interviewed made points on how the unit is dedicated to working and observes equality in terms for gender in their processes and services rendered to its users. From the perspective of an official relative to most of them, it was stated that

The DOVVSU offices are opened 24/7 for everyone to make reports or complaints no matter your condition at cost-free. Everyone is treated the same with respect under the services of the unit here. We work very hard in favor of those who are being violated, children, women, and even some men are being abused by their wives. We do not take issues related to abuses lightly, because we are here to protect and support. (Abena, Female 2021)

Having this promising aim as an institution towards social justice through the elimination of domination and oppression in the society (Chan 2018, Young 2011), the GPS is blind to its male-dominated institutional structure that influences its decision makings on the distribution of resources to the various units. This makes it arguable that the hierarchical structure of the institution consists of a disproportionate number of gendered heads of departments throughout the institution from the national level through to the level district levels including Mampong which mirrors and points to patriarchal belief systems with its assumptions, symbolizing men as leaders and women expected to be submissive in the traditional way of stereotyping gender roles (Runyan & Peterson 2014, Acker 1988, Cantalupo et al. 2006).

Feminist scholars such as Acker (1988) and Fraser (2007) argue similarly that gender is structured hierarchically in societies that are deeply rooted in patriarchal customs and beliefs the district of Mampong which destructs equitable platform in terms of decision-making during board discussion of the heads GPS on matters distribution of resources for effective work in all districts in the country including Mampong. According to Runyan & Peterson (2014), she elaborates on the fact that gender stereotyping goes beyond individual households and has become a structural obstacle in a patriarchal society such as Mampong. Radical feminists also argue that

dismantling such patriarchal systems is the only successful way of ending inequality in such a society and its structures (Chan 2018, Mullaly 2007). In line with Runyan and Peterson's assertion, they state that "[...] the privileging of masculinity is political insofar as relations of inequality, manifested in this case as gender inequality, represent men's and women's unequal access to power, authority, and resources" (2014, p.7). This is to say that the power handed over to men in a society such as Mampong as deemed by customs and traditions throws light on DOVVSU's structure and services at the district. Therefore, per the findings and revelations of the study, I argue that the lack of resources such as vehicles for work efficiency for the district unit of DOVVSU in Mampong finds its roots and causes on how the society and some of its institutions are being structured, reinforced, and influenced by the same traditions and imperialism from the postcolonial era. Andrew Armitage contributes and quizzes on how patriarchy in societies as such impact's social institutions like DOVVSU. He argues that:

The goal of a more equal and democratic workplace for workers and service users represents an important challenge. If human service organizations cannot produce a more equal and equitable environment in their sphere of activity, how can they expect to introduce these values to the wider community? (Armitage 2003, p.183)

This gives a clear understanding of how even within the structures of the GPS including DOVVSU produces and reproduces features of male domination that influences the distribution of resources such as vehicles, institution budgets, among others within the GPS, and how this affects the processes and services expected to be rendered by the institution to ensure emancipation, education, individual's social welfare and protection from the violence of all forms especially GBV at the district of Mampong.

Therefore, it becomes burdensome for DOVVSU to efficiently render its services through its processes to attain justice for victims of GBV since most of the policies and decisions made for various units in the district of Mampong are enacted and affirmed by men and addressing issues of domestic violence is perceived as 'normal' and minor social issues at the district of Mampong, due to societal beliefs

and ideologies on how men are portrayed in such society (Cantalupo et al. 2006, Cusack & Manuh 2009).

5.4 The intersecting matrix of oppression among the vulnerable.

The second research question quizzing what subscribe to underreports of GBV among the vulnerable especially PWDs at Mampong has been tackled by other researchers from admirable angles, but this study contributes to this knowledge in a different manner. The data revealed five categories in response to this question, these are socioeconomic status, societal ideology, class difference, and gender hierarchy. The study reveals that these are some of the reasons why some victims hide under their state of oppression. To answer this question, we dive into the feminism scholarship where, scholars such as Catherine Mackinnon together with the likes of Kimberley Crenshaw, Collins, and Bilge also provided a framework to critically understand the complexity within the district under which attainment of justice could be explained towards equality and sustainable welfare and development with regards to DOVVSU as an institutional structure.

In the sense of Mackinnon's (1979) dominance theory, discusses how the power relations between women and men at Mampong have an influence on societal structures like DOVVSU itself and how it compromises its goal to protect and seek justice for victims of GBV. It is rather unfortunate that men have been given the power to control all forms of resources contributing to development under the shade of patriarchy which exposes gender to unequal distribution of resources. This power domination reflects also on the societal policies, its makers, and procedures to govern a society and its structures involving gender as elaborated above.

This is a starting point to grasp and expose how some victims of violence in patriarchal societies like Mampong face problems with reporting issues of GBV to DOVVSU of the GPS. In feminism, it is argued by most scholars that to observe equality and justice towards development in such a society, there must be a balance between the ties of class and gender to eradicate domination and oppression (Acker 1988, Fraser 2007). According to Acker (2006), she argues further that the processes of class are being shaped through gender, location, and other forms of dominations and inequalities. Using the concept of intersectionality as an analytical

tool coined by Crenshaw (1989), Collins & Bilge (2016) see through the interlocking axes (gender, class, and societal belief) that give rise to inequality and injustice among the people in Mampong and impacts negatively on the attitude of victims and the services of DOVVSU. These interlocking axes between gender, class, and societal belief from the intersectional lens in this sense, undermine the services and processes of the institution when they consistently overlap due to the unequal distribution of resources especially economic power. This widens the gap for the minority group and maximizes the state's oppression among these marginalized groups (victims of GBV).

The absolute socioeconomic status and power handed over to men through patriarchy as part of traditions elevate the status of men to have control over some of these women in Mampong. Having gendered power control of political and economic resources makes victims powerless that suppresses their motivation to seek justice when they are being abused by perpetrators. Some assertions from most of the officials of DOVVSU in the district mirrors that since men are considered the breadwinners in various households with the socioeconomic power, on the one hand, the fear of cutting off financial support from their partners on the part of the victims makes them feel reluctant or desist from reporting cases and on other hand some victims are pushed to withdraw cases lodged and not follow up their active cases because they cannot afford the cost involved in the back-and-forth journey to the court in seeking justice. According to some of the officials, they state that:

[...] hmmm, I want to be frank with you, most of these cases even with those who are not disabled do not make it through court. Some make the reports, others do not bother themselves because who is going to take care of the court journeys and bear the costs of transportations and medical examinations from the hospitals? they get scared and don't even bother to complain. (Kofi, Male 2021)

Following the claim made by Kofi, Kwadwo also affirmed this claim stating that:

Even here in Mampong, in the Akan tradition, men are considered to be the breadwinners and women are those that take about 80% of domestic work,

so you can imagine. Not only in the north but most parts of the country because of culture and tradition are made. It makes us understand that men are the head of the house, so he has the mandate and power to do whatever he likes and in addition, he is being the breadwinner at home. Who is going to care for you and your children if you report the head? So, the fear of losing marriages prevents the victims from reporting to us, we know all these [...] (Kwadwo, Male 2021)

From the narratives, this is to say that though DOVVSU as an institution itself professes the attitude of fairness in terms of gender, yet the issue of gendered socioeconomic status holds back the capability of some women with the poor socioeconomic background to support themselves financially through the process of attaining justice from DOVVSU whenever they are being victimized by the perpetrators as pointed by some participants. It can also be understood from the narratives of the officials that the intersection between gender, class and social belief reproduces fear and panic which at the end prevents victims from lodging complaints to the police. With the aid of an intersectional lens, the overlapping of these interlocking axes and many more are what Collins & Bilge (2016) profess that makes us understand the genesis of why most victims of GBV do not report to the police for justice.

I hereby argue that as it is evident that men are believed to be the breadwinners of most of the households at Mampong, it becomes problematic for smooth victim-institution relations and processes towards justice because being entangled in a patriarchal society as such puts the fear of broken marriages, financial burdens or even extreme violence resulting in the death of victims. These are some doings of how the district of Mampong is being structured under traditions and customs following its historical background before (post)colonialism (Runyan & Peterson 2014, Cantalupo et al. 2006).

At the end, there is a continuous and persistent rise of GBV among some women at the district of Mampong because such violence against women was legitimized and normalized as among other things, was a mechanism to save family name from public shame as avers by some participants until 2007 when the Domestic Violence

Act was passed (Cantalupo et al. 2006, Cusack & Manuh, 2009). Justifying some of the claims by officials using intersectionality makes it clear that with the concepts of gender, class, societal belief, and location, it is certain that DOVVSU as a gender-neutral institution when rendering services is fair to both men, women and the *other* based on the respect for one's dignity and human right. However, speaking about socioeconomic status, the former concepts overlap and impede the gender equality and equity goal of the DOVVSU at the district of Mampong.

The findings show that some victims of GBV are somewhat reluctant to follow up their complaints lodged with DOVVSU due to the fear of shaming their families, cutting financial support from their spouse or family and friends when they do contrary to what tradition demands, especially as marital issues are expected to be settled amicably at home to save family reputation (Cantalupo et al. 2006). The mentioning of location as an intersectional axis overlapping class maximizes the gap of marginalization and oppression, as argued by Adrienne Rich. According to Rich (2003) and Harcourt (2009), the politics of location impacts the effective services provided by DOVVSU and contributes to the marginalization and reinforces oppression among victims of GBV at the district of Mampong.

Though the scope of the study does not permit a comparative argument, since Mampong is considered as a rural district with DOVVSU, it explains some reasons why the unit lacks resources such as vehicles for its operation and operational budget of the unit as already discussed by some participants stating minimal attention from the sight of heads of the GPS and influences the distribution of resources within the structures of the GPS. This contributes to why the services of DOVVSU are negatively impacted to render it effective services to attain justice for service users.

5.4.1 Gendered hierarchy from the intersectional lens.

Some mainstream feminist scholars are somewhat blind to address the issue of gendered hierarchies in societal structures such as DOVVSU. It is crucial to understand through this intersectional lens how some women are not motivated to report cases of GBV against them to the police (Runyan & Peterson, 2014). Concerning gendered relations from the perspectives of the DOVVSU officials,

brings out the accuracy in detailing the complexity of the hierarchies of gender. GBV has no exceptions on its victims based on gender, class, (dis)ability, education, location, etc. Though these forms of violence are dominant among women, it is fair to acknowledge the fact that some men are oppressed and vulnerable in the presence of their partners, and even among the same gender they belong to and vice versa (Cornell 2005). Focusing on women as the most victimized gender, from the hierarchical perspective, some women are more oppressed and marginalized speaking of the kind of violence they face and possible means of attaining justice from DOVVSU.

The ladder of hierarchies between 'women' are better viewed from the intersectional lens where class, location, (dis)ability and education intertwine to categorize some women into more oppressive and marginalized position. For instance, a dependent unemployed woman living with a disability with no education in Mampong is more exposed to series of gendered violence with no possibility to afford financially to seek justice as a victim than a working-class woman with an education background living at Mampong. Without support from family and friends, it is of no relevance for such victims to complain of violence against them to the police according to the findings and assertions from officials. Most of them stated parallel to affirm this claim that some victims do not report since they cannot afford the services through its processes. According to some officials:

Most of those cases that make it through courts for judgments are for victims who are motivated and have financial support for transportation from friends and families and can afford the processes through court. Like I said earlier, transportation to and from the court is a problem, if you have money and a car, you have will make it to court at ease. So, my brother, it is not easy to make it to court if you don't have the financial means to do so. (Kwame, Male 2021)

Some cases like assaults, we give victims medical forms for free to go and see their doctors and those hospital costs are being taken by the victims and not DOVVSU so most of some victims find it very difficult to come up with

such amount to visit the hospitals, so to them, it is better to forget about making proceeding with the process [...]. (Abena, Female 2021)

According to the officials, using the service of DOVVSU and its process of seeking justice for victims of GBV does not cost money but the obstacles faced by the unit are the causes of destruction making service utilization and attainment of justice an issue between both DOVVSU and the victims. According to some participants, among these other problems, is another crucial revelation that hinders the services of DOVVSU.

The findings of the study suggest that most of the women at the district of Mampong fall under the margins of these anecdotes of the official due to certain interlocking factors such as political status, education level, and socioeconomic status. I hereby side with the argument of Chandra Mohanty (1988) on the feminist postcolonial discourse on how the grouping of *women* is being universalized in mainstream feminist discourse about how to alleviate domination and oppression of a marginalized group of women by fighting for the right to justice at the district of Mampong in this context.

Making the conceptualization of *women* clear, in the sense of Mohanty (1988) she argues that the universalization of *women* of the category of analysis on the attainment of justice when victimized, becomes problematic in the sense that not all *women* are under the umbrella of oppression or cannot afford with follow-up in seeking justice. Instead, the groupings of women should demonstrate through the spectacles of socioeconomic political context such as the district of Mampong. The intersections between class, education, (dis)ability, and location categorize these marginalized and oppressed women into hierarchical strata of oppression and domination at the district. Therefore, the context of this feminist analysis on the grouping of *women* dwells within the arguments of third world feminism which makes it inappropriate to universalize the experiences and level of oppression among the whole women group.

5.4.2 Empowerment and social movement for structural social change.

One of the feminist movement agendas relating to the profession of social work practice is to ensure the transformation of society and its structures towards equality and development. This is where women with socioeconomic and political status establish solidarity with the marginalized and oppressed women into the limelight of recognition to dismantle the structures of oppression (Chan 2018, Mullaly 2007). Ferguson's contribution to the feminist scholarship on how social institutions like DOVVSU at Mampong can transform and decentralize the male-dominated ideology depending on the proper representation of the victimized in the various unit of the GPS especially at the unit of DV (Ferguson 1984). Ferguson argues in line with Mohanty (1988) and Fraser on the fact that the proper representation of victims with experiences from DV who are from the grassroots of the oppressed and marginalized is crucial in deconstructing the knowledge by telling stories from their own experiences as it is on how vulnerable and oppressed, they are, instead of the universal discourse from fortunate and privilege women with class, sociopolitical status, and education. Such representation from the category of the gendered hierarchy will empower and motivate the victimized in such vulnerable oppressed positions to seek justice as part of their fundamental rights and to eliminate the issue of underreports of cases to the police (Ferguson 1984, Mohanty 1988).

As Foucault (1980) explains that knowledge is power since both (knowledge and power) are inextricably related, sharing from different perspectives knowledgeable experience of victims will earn them (*victimized*) the power, recognition, and attention of the public including the head of state, GPS, and Gender Ministry, through their heard voices, on the urgent attention to help curb GBV as a social canker impeding social welfare and development at the district of Mampong. Protesting for the individual right to justice as argued by mainstream feminists, the performative way through social movement and inclusion in solidarity among women with socio-political status like the national coordinator of DOVVSU and together with the institutional actors that is SWD, CEDAW, ActionAid, CHRAJ, among others, who share similar sociopolitical interest to fight for their right to justice will help reduce the rate of DV at the district. Hence, individuals who initiate an approach of emancipation through empowerment have the possibility of gaining

justice in the societies in which they find themselves (Dominelli & Campling, 2002). This strategic coalited form of empowerment through protest and performativity will emancipate women from all forms of GBV and motivate them to report violence against them to the police after there is structural institutional change at DOVVSU of the GPS (Mullaly & Dupré 2019, Butler 2015). Therefore concerning the issue of underreporting cases by GBV victims to DOVVSU, I certainly argue and believe that having the thoughts of being supported by the society especially from the population of one's gender and standpoint concerning one's experience from the grassroots will motivate victims of GBV not only women but both genders facing GBV to report and seek justice and protection they deserve from perpetrators and enjoy fully their fundamental human right towards sustainable welfare and development (Mohanty 1988, Runyan & Peterson, 2014).

5.5 (In)effective institutional strategies towards perpetrators.

The complexity to grasp without critically analyzing one's attempt to answer some of the reasons why some perpetrators of GBV in this sense still end up on the streets of Mampong without being prosecuted and convicted is explained from this perspective. The categories retrieved from the data in response to the third question of this study are primarily the consequences of interconnectedness and the overlapping of already identified categories responding to questions one and two of the study. Every structured society has institutions responsible for its crucial role in contributing to development in the welfare of its citizens and the society. DOVVSU at the district of Mampong relies on the national policies against DV, that is, the Domestic Violence Act 732 of the 1992 constitution and its (DOVVSU) organization to adequately and effectively render its services to protect, educate and emancipate victims of violence irrespective of one's socio-economic and political status from perpetrators to ensure a safe and violence-free society for citizens living at Mampong.

Most of the officials interviewed explained why some perpetrators are still on the streets without being prosecuted. Some of their reasons are similar in connection with some of the obstacles such as slow justice system, lack of resources, etc., faced by DOVVSU at Mampong. According to some officials, they explained that:

[...] honestly speaking the justice system will be slow if we don't even have our unit vehicles to facilitate our investigations. When this happens, victims withdraw their cases, some don't even follow up because they become fed-up. The court might have its difficulties with its services but with our units, that is what I think. (Afia, Female 2021)

From others perspective, Ama also contributed stating that:

Mostly the suspects of that violence flee to other cities or neighboring communities making their arrest very difficult because we do not get there as soon as we can due to lack of vehicles. So, most of the suspects are left around without been arrested or charged for crimes they have committed [...] (Ama, Female 2021)

From the findings of the study, it has been made obvious that lack of resources such as vehicles obstructs the efficiency and effective services of DOVVSU, however, the wandering around of perpetrators of GBV at Mampong could be avoided through the transformation, policy implementation, and effectiveness of the objectives of the DOVVSU of GPS. According to the Domestic Violence Act 732, article 10, section 1-3, states emphatically that arrest can be made by a person other than the police, who (person) has witnessed an act of domestic violence and can hand over the culprit to the nearest police station within a reasonable time (Domestic Violence Act, 2007). As one of the major aims of DOVVSU is to provide education to the public especially women and children, with the knowledge on how to protect themselves from situations like GBV.

Making possible efforts to bring perpetrators to book for prosecution and conviction if found guilty could be done by persons other than the police if citizens are being properly educated by DOVVSU on such instances from the Domestic Violence Act of the constitution. In such cases, through this knowledge production, efforts and support from the public sphere would contribute to the reduction in GBV since perpetrators will be accorded the respective punishments they deserve and not individuals necessarily rely on the police to arrest the culprits.

Michel Foucault (2007) thinks that instilling discipline by social institutions concerning the concept of panopticon will ensure both comportment on the side of individuals and institutional effectiveness on the part of DOVVSU in this context. I posit that DOVVSU reinforcing and exerting its institutional power with the legal foundation from the judicial system (court) as one of its actors in curbing GBV to implement discipline in the form of punishments such as stripping off some rights (bail denial), specifically towards perpetrators of GBV until the processes to seek justice by DOVVSU is done (Foucault 2007). This will serve as a precedent for potential perpetrators to know the consequence of such acts that inflicts pain and oppresses others in the society. As explained by one and affirmed by most officials during the interviews, she stated that:

Every case isailable, so there are cases such as assaults, the suspect can be granted bail within the 72hours with a condition of having 2 sureties. So, when we have our immediate investigation done before 72hours, then we further arraign and prepare the suspect for court. But after the 72hours, the suspect is left to go home because it is against his or her human right to be in cells for more than 72hours. (Abena, Female 2021)

The unwillingness to follow up on cases lodged by victims contributes to the reasons why perpetrators end up on the streets of Mampong resulting in other series of GBV. The institutionalization of such policy reforms towards the civil right of perpetrators of GBV according to Foucault (2007) is a way of maintaining power in society and its institutions (DOVVSU and its actors) and strengthening their capacity to curb the persistent rise of social problems especially GBV at the district of Mampong.

5.5.1 Absence of Media participation within the services of DOVVSU.

The mass media (broadcasting, internet, publishing) plays an important role in the contemporary world we find ourselves in. Considering the location of Mampong from the intersectional argument and assertions from the officials above, the district has been considered as a rural district compared to others. Therefore, the (in)visibility of victims of GBV and the efforts of DOVVSU at Mampong also contribute to some reasons why culprits of domestic violence find themselves free

on the street resulting in their continuous abusive and oppressive actions towards the vulnerable. The social institutional transformation towards progressiveness expected of structural social work premise takes at heart self-determination, equality, and popular participation of all and sundry in the society (Hick and Murray, 2012).

However, the inclusiveness of the media in the institutional structure of the unit could be used as a weapon for recognition through self-representation, and the *truth* behind the experiences of the marginalized and oppressed groups at Mampong. Together with social movement and support from other organizations such as CHRAJ, ActionAid, etc., I argue that DOVVSU could have a solid foundation to make the facilitation of their services and processes in finding justice for victims of DV and to prosecute and convict culprits if found guilty with the mandate and power from the judicial system. Although there have been backlashes from some feminist critics on the use of mass media to further suppress the voices of women resulting in reproducing gender inequality and injustice in society. Watkins & Emerson (2000) in this sense, explain how important it is for a societal institution like DOVVSU of GPS with the reputation of observing gender-neutral, take into a critical consideration of its aim and objectives before including the media into its structures.

The inclusiveness of the media should be gender-balanced with its stories and publications constructed from the standpoint of the experiences of the oppressed subjects. A feminist and social activist, bell hooks in a different context explained how powerful using the media as a tool to produce, reproduce and maintain knowledge about what is the *truth* of individual experience and frames these experiences from the standpoint of the oppressed. She explained in her context that:

When most black people in the United States first had the opportunity to look at film and television, they did so fully aware that mass media was a system of knowledge and power reproducing and maintaining white supremacy. (hooks 2003, p. 208)

The use of the media as a weapon by DOVVSU of the GPS should be inculcated into the process and services of the unit and should be effectively utilized. Speaking of education and protection of victims as part of the aims of the unit, the use of the media would be the appropriate methodology to provide the necessary education to the public on the fundamental human right of every individual per the Domestic Violence Act 732 of the country's 1992 constitution, as well as providing information on what one has to do in a situation of domestic violence and also deconstructing the knowledge of the expensiveness of services offered by the unit. With the inclusion of the media, emphasis should be made on the fact that services rendered by the unit including protection from perpetrators are at a free cost. Therefore, working hand in hand with popular television stations, social media influencers, publishing on the official websites of the GPS could also contribute to creating awareness to the public about the perpetrators of such violence.

Most of the officials of this current study agreed to the fact that cases that get to the limelight and reach the attention of the public through the media (TV or social media platforms) get the fastest judgment from the court because everyone (public) wants to know the outcome of the court's judgment. It could be argued that the issue of perpetrators of GBV ending up on the streets of Mampong contributing to oppression according to Mullaly (2009) could be rectified around these three spheres: personal, cultural, and structural within the society. Thus, explaining personal as the provision of education for individuals, cultural by gradually deconstructing patriarchal ideologies and structural by ensuring the progressive transformation of the institutional structure. As a principle of structural social work, the premise focuses on change within the structures of the GPS in this sense especially DOVVSU as a unit and ensures systemic emancipation outside the institution as well to ensure justice which results in inequitable outcome for victims of GBV at Mampong (Chan 2018, Mullaly 2007).

Therefore, with the aims and objectives of DOVVSU similar to feminist social work practice, as an institution to alleviate oppression and ensure the sustainable development and welfare of individuals by promoting inclusion, equality, and justice at the district of Mampong, it is important to consider and put into practice the argumentation from these theoretical discussions to overcome the obstacles

being faced by the unit and to ensure participation of the marginalized group (victims of GBV) to bring perpetrators or culprits of this social menace before the laws and directives for the appropriate sanctions to enforce towards them. With this, there would be a reduced rate of gendered violence at the district of Mampong, effective service and service users' relations (victim-DOVVSU), and together with time as a society, gendered violence will mitigate and possibly eradicate.

CHAPTER SIX

6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview and summary of what was discussed throughout the various chapters of the study. It spells out some recommendations on how studies such as this, would contribute to the practice of feminist social work practice especially in social institutions geared to eliminate social problems such as GBV and alleviate oppression among marginalized groups.

6.2 Summary of findings

This qualitative research study contributes to the vast literature produced in the field of social work practice concerning domestic violence in Ghana with much focus on the district of Mampong in the Ashanti region. The persistent rise in domestic violence among some women in the district of Mampong in the Ashanti region has many causal factors even though the government of Ghana has directives together with institutions to help mitigate the violence of all forms including GBV. The study aimed and focused was to explore and analyze, from a feminist and social work theoretical perspectives, the processes, and services from the perspectives of officials of DOVVSU of the GPS, which is one of the major institutions set up to mitigate, protect, educate, and handle gendered-violence related cases among individuals in the country.

In response to understand the problem posed by this study from the lens of feminist theoretical perspective, the study has demonstrated through its findings that the barriers faced by DOVVSU to offer its services to citizen concerning the attainment of justice had its influence from how the society is being structured traced from the pre-colonial era and how already existing traditions were reinforced impacting on social institutions like GPS under which DOVVSU is established. The study findings further suggest that a patriarchal society such as Mampong is one of the major contributors of how power relations are disproportionate in terms of gender in institutions like DOVVSU which impacts negatively on the distribution of resources such as vehicles, operational budgets, among others, to enhance the

processes and services of the unit in curbing gendered violence at the district of Mampong. The findings also revealed that societal beliefs and perceptions, socioeconomic dependency was among some of the contributors as to why some women (victimized) are not motivated to report or make use of the services of DOVVSU in seeking justice for themselves leading to underreporting of GBV cases at DOVVSU at the study context. Although it was revealed that services rendered by the unit were cost-free, however, service users were reluctant to lodge complaints to the unit. Finally, the adoption of the theoretical framework of social work practice together with feminist theories, the study exposes and throws more light on why some perpetrators end up on the street of Mampong after committing punishable crimes that put individuals especially some women into more vulnerable and oppressive positions at Mampong. This is because the mechanism and measures to be put in place to be enacted and implemented together by both individuals in the society and DOVVSU as an institution is not enforced and effective to ensure that culprits of these said gendered violence are brought before the laws governing and protecting individuals as far as Mampong is concerned.

6.3 Recommendations for future research.

Base on the findings, the study contributes to the numerous kinds of literature on domestic violence in Africa where patriarchy is observed especially in some countries in Sub-Saharan African nations. Further social work research studies must look through from the theoretical lens, together with a practical application when addressing issues of violence where women and children are most affected. This study highlights relevant theoretical concepts and approaches that frame GBV and has shown that the mass concentration of researchers' studies on the causes, effects, and measures to mitigate violence especially GBV at various districts in the country especially in Mampong is not enough to understand why such social problems still exist regardless of the country's effort to mitigate or curb it with directives like the Domestic Violence Act 732 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana. The study has shown that tackling a social problem from its root cause is crucial to a promising developmental agenda for both individuals and the nation, instead of solving its consequences. Therefore, this theoretical study, giving an overview of how and why GBV persists in the given context, should be practically enforced by the various societal institutions with their actors such as the DOVVSU of the GPS to

decentralize the gendered power relations within its structures. The study has revealed that the slow pace of the justice systems also contributes to the ineffectiveness of DOVVSU of the GPS, thus, further studies could focus and probe more into the processes and how effective some of the actors like the judicial system (courts) also handle issues of GBV when cases are brought in by DOVVSU. This study did not investigate the acting bodies working together with DOVVSU of the GPS to mitigate the rate of DV in the country. Therefore, it is relevant for further researchers, taking into consideration this theoretical piece, to follow up on this study with the actors like Judicial Systems, Social Welfare, CHRAJ, among others on how cases of gendered violence are being handled.

6.4 Conclusion

To conclude, though there have been many research studies on domestic violence in Ghana, yet a handful of researchers in this field focused on the districts of Mampong with different aims and objectives. This study was contextualized in the district of Mampong like other research studies but with a different focus area in terms of the study subject. It critically contributes to important strategies on how to address issues of Gendered violence in various rural districts in Ghana, most importantly the district of Mampong and how to ensure gender equality, justice and effective society through meaningful representation and active participation geared to sustainable welfare and development. Focusing on DOVVSU of the GPS specifically at the district of Mampong, this study was insightful to understand why some social problems such as GBV do persist and why seeking justice for some victims become problematic at Mampong though the unit and its officials are motivated to curb such menace. This study's focus stands out as unique with its contribution from the theoretical perspective to the numerous studies on domestic violence in Ghana, most importantly at the district of Mampong. To strengthen DOVVSU's capacity to handle the many cases of GBV reported to their office at Mampong, I propose a structural (societal and institutional) transformation of proceedings and investment in the capacity of the staff to enhance effective and robust services provided by the DOVVSU. This way the unit can work with its actors to achieve its aim and objectives as an institution towards mitigation of gendered-related violence at the district of Mampong.

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7.1 APPENDICES

7.1.1 APPENDIX 1

Online interview consent form scheduled on _____

Research Title:

Gender-Based Violence:

A feminist social work analysis on the processes and perceptions on seeking justice by the Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) at Mampong, Ghana.

Researcher: CLINTON OFORI BOATENG,

M.Sc. Social studies of Gender with major in Social
Work Graduate School - Lund University, Sweden.

The aim of the research project: The aim of the project is to examine and analyze the legal perceptions of DOVVSU (officials) of the Ghana Police Service on GBV-related cases against individuals on how justice is being attained in favor of victims with much focus on PWDs in the district of Mampong in the Ashanti region of Ghana.

- The participant is assured absolute confidentiality and anonymity in this study.
- Participant's participation to this interview is out of his/her/their willingness to serve as a source of data to contribute to this research study.
- The researcher foresees no risk during the session of the interview; however, the participant has the rights to withdraw from the interview sessions at any time before and during the scheduled time of the session.
- The data and information obtained through this interview will solely serve the purpose within the borders of this research.
- The interview time is lasts between 45-60minutes; however, it is up to the interviewee to spend less or more time within the allotted time for the interview session.
- In the sense of recording the interview session to assist the researcher during the analytical phase, the interviewee will be consented before recording proceeds.

NB: The interview sessions will be recorded to assist the researcher to reflect word by word what was said by the participant during the analysis of this study. Therefore, participant's signature appended on this form acknowledges the consent of the participant, agreeing on the terms and conditions stated above.

Thank You.

**Participant's signature,
signature**

Sign:

(Date: _____)

Researcher's

Sign:

(Date: _____)

7.1.2 APPENDIX 2

Interview Questions (Open ended questions)

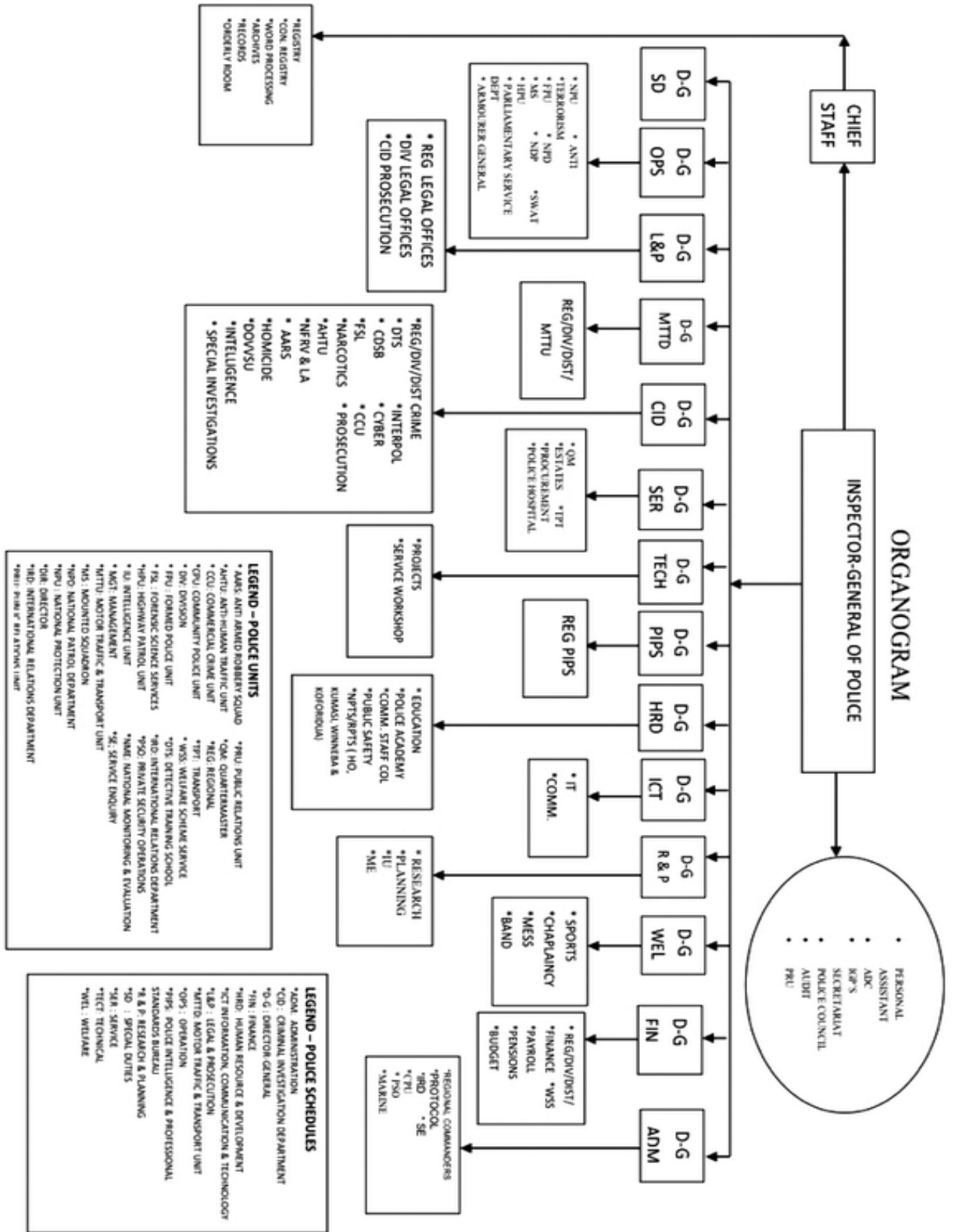
1. **How does the services of DOVVSU influence ‘justice’ for GBV cases?**
 - What do you think is the root cause of GBV in Ghana?
 - How is the situation of GBV in Mampong so far?
 - Imagine a disabled woman who has suffered GBV makes a case with the Police, how is DOVVSU motivated in seeking justice for the victim?
 - Can you elaborate more on how handling such cases turnout at the end of the investigation?
 - Considering the number of GBV-related cases handled by your unit, how many cases have you attained justice after court proceedings?
 - Tell me about the impressions behind GBV cases reported by victims to the unit?
 - Can you tell me how societal beliefs influence the unit’s ability to handle GBV cases?

2. **What contributes to the underreports cases of GBV against PWDs?**
 - It is believed that seeking justice for victims of violence related cases expensive. Can you tell me why?
 - How do you assist victims of GBV to seek justice before and after reports are made?
 - Why does it take ‘forever’ for legal justice to be attained?
 - Does DOVVSU have exceptions in its proceedings for vulnerable groups such as PWDs?

3. **Why do some perpetrators of GBV not face prosecution especially in Mampong?**
 - Considering services rendered by the unit, what are the setbacks in handling cases of GBV?
 - How does the unit overcome these setbacks?
 - How are perpetrators handled before and after reports are made?

7.1.3 APPENDIX 3

Organogram of the Ghana Police Service.



(Source: Agbozo, 2017).