

Dissertation:
**Assessing Community Attitudes Towards Gender-Based Violence
in East London, South Africa**

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at the



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DECLARATION

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBD: Central Business District

GBV: Gender-Based Violence

HSRC: Human Sciences Research Council

IPV: Intimate Partner Violence

NSP-GBVF: National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

SAPS: South African Police Service

SONA: State of the Nation Address

DEDICATION

Those who have endured GBV, whether in East London or elsewhere, and whose experiences have been silenced but continue to inspire those who seek equality and justice, this dissertation is dedicated to you. May this work pay tribute to the bravery of the champions at Masimanyane Women Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services, as well as my family, whose constant support and encouragement have carried me through this ordeal.

NP Magwentshu

ABSTRACT

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a critical human rights and public health challenge in South Africa, with East London in the Eastern Cape exemplifying high levels of intimate partner violence and femicide driven by socio-economic inequalities and entrenched cultural norms. This qualitative study explored community perceptions and attitudes towards GBV in urban East London to inform culturally sensitive interventions. Guided by a constructivist paradigm, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 purposively sampled participants from Masimanyane Women Support Centre, Masithethe Counselling Services, and the broader community. Data were analysed using thematic analysis.

The findings reveal GBV as deeply entrenched across townships and suburbs, with physical and emotional abuse most prevalent and exacerbated by poverty, unemployment, and alcohol abuse. Legal awareness remains fragmented, with superficial knowledge of the Domestic Violence Act (1998) and poor enforcement. Patriarchal norms such as male headship and lobola continue to normalise violence, although emerging resistance from churches and youth groups offers hope. Community attitudes are polarised, with strong support from women and younger participants contrasted by male and elder views of GBV as a private matter.

The study recommends elder-church partnerships, male-inclusive campaigns, and strengthened NGO-SAPS collaboration under the NSP-GBVF. By centring local voices, this research contributes to context-specific strategies for GBV prevention in East London.

Tsonga Translation

Ndzavisiso lowu wa xiyimo xa qualitative, lowu nga ni nhlokomhaka leyi nge *Assessing Community Attitudes Towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa*, wu kamburile maonelo na mavonelo ya vaaki mayelana na timhaka ta Gender-Based Violence (GBV) e East London. Ndzavisiso wu landzele paradigm ya constructivist, kutani wu endleke ti-interview ta semi-structured na vanhu va 15 lava hlawuriweke hi ndlela ya purposive, ku suka e Masimanyane Women Support Centre, Masithethe Counselling Services, na e ka vaaki va tiko. Data yi hlalulwiwe hi ku tirhisa thematic analysis.

Ndzavisiso wu kombise leswaku GBV yi tshembheka swinene e ka matiko ya ximfumo na e ka matiko ya le xiswini, laha ku xaniseka ka miri na ka mianakanyo swi nga swinene, swi susumetiwa hi vusweti, ku hlaya ka ntirho, na ku nwa byala. Vutivi bya milawu byi le ka xiyimo xo karhi, laha vutivi byi nga byi teki hi ndlela yo enta mayelana na Domestic Violence Act (1998) na ku va kona ka ku landzelerisa loku ka ha ri kona. Milawu ya patriarchal ku fana na vuhosi bya wanuna na lobola swi ya emahlweni swi endla leswaku madimoni ya GBV ma va ya tolovelekile, hambileswi ku va na ku hanana loku ku humaka e ka tikereke na mintlawu ya vafana. Maonelo ya vaaki ya hambana, laha vavasati na vantshwa va kombisa ku seketela loku ku tiyisile, kasi vavanuna na vakulukumba va vona GBV tanihi ntlhontlho wa ndyangu.

Ndzavisiso wu kombisa leswaku ku fanele ku va na minongolo leyi nga ya ximfumo leyi fambisanaka na ndhavuko, ku katsa na ku hlangana ka vakulukumba na tikereke, minongolo leyi katsaka vavanuna, na ku tiyisa ku hlangana ka ma-NGO na SAPS ehansi ka NSP-GBVF. Hi ku veka maonelo ya vaaki va le kaya, ndzavisiso lowu wu nyika ndhawu e ka minongolo leyi fambisanaka na ndhawu ya kona ku sivela GBV East London.

Sesotho Translation

Thuto ena ea boleng, e nang le sehlooho se reng *Assessing Community Attitudes Towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa*, e ile ea hlahloba maikutlo le maikutlo a sechaba mabapi le tlhekefetso ea bong (GBV) toropong ea East London. E tataisoa ke paradigm ea constructivist, thuto ena e sebelisitse lipuisano tse hlophisitsoeng hantle le barupeluo ba 15 ba khethiloeng ka mokhoa oa purposive, ho tsoa Setsing sa Tšehetso sa Basali sa Masimanyane, Litšebeletso tsa Hlahlobo ea Masithethe, le sechabeng ka kakaretso. Lintlha li ile tsa hlahlojoa ka mokhoa oa thematic analysis.

Liphetho li bontša hore GBV e metse ka metso metseng ea litoropo le litoropong, moo tlhekefetso ea 'mele le ea maikutlo e leng eona e atileng haholo, e susumetsoang haholo ke bofuma, ho hloka mosebetsi le tšebeliso ea joala. Tsebo ea molao e ntse e arohane, e tšoaauoa ka tsebo e sa tebang ea Molao oa Tlhekefetso ea Lelapa (1998) le ts'ebetsong e fokolang. Litloaelo tsa bopatriarch tse kang bohlooho ba banna le lobola li tsoela pele ho etsa hore pefo e be ntho e tloaelehileng, le hoja ho na le khanyetso e ntseng e hlaha ho tsoa likerekeng le lihlopha tsa bacha e bontšang monyetla oa phetoho. Maikutlo a sechaba a arohane, basali le bacha ba bontša tšehetso e matla ea mehato, ha banna ba bangata le baholo ba talima GBV e le taba ea lelapa feela.

Thuto ena e khothaletsa mehato e thehiloeng moetlong e kenyelletsang tšebeliso 'moho ea baholo le likereke, liphutuhelo tse kenyelletsang banna, le tšebeliso 'moho e matlafalitsoeng ea mekhatlo ea sechaba le SAPS tlas'a Leano la Sechaba la GBV le Femicide. Ka ho beha mantsoe a sechaba bohareng, thuto ena e kenya letsoho ho maano a ikhethileng a sebaka sa ho thibela GBV East London.

Keywords: Gender-based violence, socio-economic factors, patriarchal norms, NGO interventions, femicide, cultural norms, legal frameworks, domestic violence act, intimate partner violence, community perceptions

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
DECLARATION	iii
LIST OF ACRONYMS	iv
DEDICATION	v
ABSTRACT	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Description of the Study Area	2
1.2.1 Profile of Participating Organisations	3
1.3 Background to the Study	4
1.4 Statement of the Research Problem	6
1.5 Justification for the Study	7
1.6 Aim of The Study	8
1.7 Objectives of the Study	8
1.8 Research Questions	8
1.9 Scope and Settings	9
1.10 Clarification of Key Terms & Concepts	10
1.11 Organisation of the Dissertation	11
1.12 Chapter Summary	11
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Prevalence of Gender Based Violence	12
2.2.1 Global Context of Gender-Based Violence	12
2.2.2 Gender-Based Violence in South Africa	13
2.2.3 Gender-based Violence in East London	13
2.3 Overview of South Africa's Legal Framework for Gender-Based Violence	14
2.4 Awareness and Understanding of Legal Frameworks Addressing Gender-Based Violence	14
2.4.1 Awareness of Gender-Based Violence Legislation In South Africa	15
2.5 Challenges in Increasing Women's Knowledge About Rights and Legal Protection	16
2.5.1 Barriers to Legal Literacy in South Africa	17
2.5.2 Lack of Trust in Law Enforcement	17

2.6 Global Efforts to Promote Legal Rights for Gender-Based Violence Victims Through Education and Advocacy	18
2.6.1 Global Educational Institutions as Platforms for Legal Literacy.....	18
2.6.2 National and Digital Advocacy Efforts.....	19
2.6.3 Community-Based Advocacy Campaigns	20
2.7 Addressing Advocacy and Education Challenges	21
2.8 Impacts On the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence	21
2.9 Attitudes and Beliefs About Gender-Based Violence	21
2.9.1 Global Perspectives on Gender-Based Violence Attitudes and Norms	22
2.9.2 South African Context: Attitudes and Beliefs	22
2.9.3 Socioeconomic and Cultural Drivers	23
2.9.4 Social Barriers to Addressing Gender-Based Violence in South Africa	24
2.9.5 Key South African Scholars on GBV.....	25
2.10 Strategies for Transforming Attitudes	26
2.11 Implications for Gender-Based Violence Prevention.....	26
2.12 Community Attitudes and Reactions Towards Gender-Based Violence Activities	27
2.12.1 International Perspectives On Gender-Based Violence Activities	27
2.12.2 National Context: South Africa’s Community Responses	28
2.12.3 Local Community Dynamics.....	29
2.13 Strategies to Enhance Community Engagement	29
2.14 Important Implications for Stopping Gender-Based Violence.....	30
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	31
3.1 Introduction	31
3.2 Research Paradigm	31
3.2.1 Theoretical Framework.....	33
3.3 Study Approach.....	34
3.4 Research Design	34
3.5 Setting and Population of the Study	35
3.5.1 Population of the Study	35
3.5.2 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size	35
3.6 Data Gathering Process.....	36
3.6.1 Structure of the Interview Schedule	37
3.7 Data Analysis.....	38
3.8 Validity and Reliability.....	39
3.9 Ethics Considerations.....	40
3.9.1 Interview Conditions of Privacy	40

3.9.2 Covert Timing and Access Regulations	41
3.10 Conclusion	42
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	43
4.1 Introduction	43
4.2 Demographic Information.....	43
4.2.1 Profiles of Participants	43
4.2.2 The Group's Gender Component.....	45
4.2.3 Age Distribution	46
4.2.4 Experiences of the Cohort.....	46
4.3 Prevalence and Extent of GBV	47
4.3.1 Prevalence of GBV.....	48
4.3.2 Extend of GBV	48
4.3.3 The Impact of GBV	49
4.3.4 Summary: Prevalence and Extent of GBV	49
4.4 Awareness and Understanding of Legal Frameworks.....	50
4.4.1 Knowledge of Laws and Policies	50
4.4.2 Sources of Legal Awareness	51
4.4.3 Experiences with Legal Frameworks.....	51
4.4.4 Summary: Awareness and Understanding of Legal Frameworks	52
4.5 Cultural Norms and Beliefs Perpetuating GBV.....	52
4.5.1 Cultural and Societal Beliefs.....	53
4.5.2 Influence of Gender Roles.....	53
4.5.3 Cultural Practices Supporting or Challenging GBV.....	54
4.5.4 Summary: Cultural Norms and Beliefs Perpetuating GBV	54
4.5 Community Attitudes and Reactions towards GBV Interventions.....	55
4.5.1 Response to GBV Campaigns	55
4.5.2 Perceptions of NGO Effectiveness	56
4.5.3 Community Initiatives and Reception.....	56
4.5.4 Summary: Community Attitudes and Reactions Towards GBV Interventions.....	56
4.6 Conclusion.....	57
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	59
5.1 Introduction	59
5.2 Discussion of Findings	59
5.2.1 GBV Prevalence and Scope (Objective One: Examine Prevalence and Scope)	60
5.2.2 Awareness and Understanding of Legal Frameworks (Objective Two: Assess Legal Awareness).....	60

5.2.3 Cultural Norms and Beliefs that Perpetuate GBV (Objective Three: Identifying Perpetuating Norms)	61
5.2.4 Community Attitudes and Reactions towards GBV Interventions (Objective Four: Evaluate Attitudes toward Interventions)	61
5.3 Recommendations	62
5.4 The Study's Limitations	62
5.5 Recommendations	62
5.5.1 Recomendatins Linked to Objective 1 (Prevalence and Extent) and Objective 3 (Cultural Norms)	62
5.5.2 Recommendation.....	63
5.5.3 RecommendaTION Linked to Objective 4 (Community Attitudes and Reactions towards Interventions).....	63
5.5.4 Cross-cutting Recommendation	64
5.6 Suggestions for Further Investigation.....	64
5.7 Conclusion.....	65
REFERENCES	66
APPENDIX A: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY	72
APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANTS CONSENT FORM	74
APPENDIX C: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	75
APPENDIX D: Interview Questions For Participants.....	77
APPENDIX E: Turnitin Report / Similarity	78
APPENDIX F: Editor's Letter	79
APPENDIX E: TURNITIN REPORT / SIMILARITY	72
APPENDIX F: EDITOR'S LETTER.....	73

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Crime Statistics Related to Gender-Based Violence..... 6

Table 2: Participant Profiles..... 44

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: East London Central Business District..... 3

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

South Africa grapples with gender-based violence (GBV) as a pervasive and urgent human rights crisis, with alarmingly high rates of violence against women and girls across the country (Human Sciences Research Council [HSRC], 2024). East London, also renamed KuGompo City in February 2026, is located in the Eastern Cape, exemplifies this national challenge, where local studies and reports highlight a significant prevalence of GBV, particularly intimate partner violence, affecting communities like Duncan Village (Peter, 2019). This qualitative investigation seeks to understand community perspectives on GBV within urban East London, and engaged collaborative work with residents and organisations, such as Masimanyane Women's Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services, to look at cultural practices and understanding of legal frameworks. Complementing previous knowledge gaps regarding how GBV works in East London, this research aims at informing culturally sensitive intervention to address sources and societal consequences of violence. This research will provide an in-depth insight into community attitudes, attendant socio-cultural realities, and legal knowledge, based on semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, to arm stakeholders with specific recommendations.

Because there is little locally relevant research in East London, this study addresses the need for more community action against GBV. It hopes to give voice to a wide range of residents, especially the marginalised, to better understand the stories behind GBV. Working with local community groups is emphasised in the study to ensure real-life learning is included in the results and services are shaped according to the culture and life of those communities. The main focus on qualitative insights in this study allows us to explain well the factors that shape attitudes to GBV in East London, guiding policymakers with suitable options for action. Although recently renamed KuGompo, in this study reference is made to East London as the study was conducted when the city was officially known as East London.

1.2 Description of the Study Area

The main location of this qualitative research that investigates the perception and attitude of the community towards GBV is East London (KuGompo) that is located at the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. It is a wide and vibrant mix of residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas, and home to about 403,581 residents, the urban center occupying some 168 km² is a part of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (World Population Review, 2024). East London is one of the main economic and cultural hubs and is situated (see Figure 1) on the coast of the Indian Ocean with a blend of contemporary urban development and informal sprawl. Key locations in the coverage of the study will be the central business district (CBD) (see Figure 1), Duncan Village, and Mdantsane, which is cross-section of the socio-economic scenario and cultural lines, incorporating the Xhosa, Afrikaans and English-speaking groups.

The economic imbalance in the city, the historical presence as a port, and the spatial planning approach of the city during the period of apartheid have formed a specific landscape of economic inequality, where informal settlements such as Duncan Village are characterised by a high unemployment rate (about 35-40 percent) and a high number of people living in compact houses, posing unique social problems (Ndlovu, 2023). Mdantsane, which is one of the largest townships in South Africa, has a combination of both formal and informal houses with little access to services to most of the residents, which is a cause of social vulnerabilities. One of the contrast areas, however, is the CBD that has its business and administrative activity yet experiences urban poverty and crime. It is the socio-economic and cultural depth that contributes to the fact that East London is a perfect location to explore how the attitudes of local communities towards GBV are shaped by local forces.

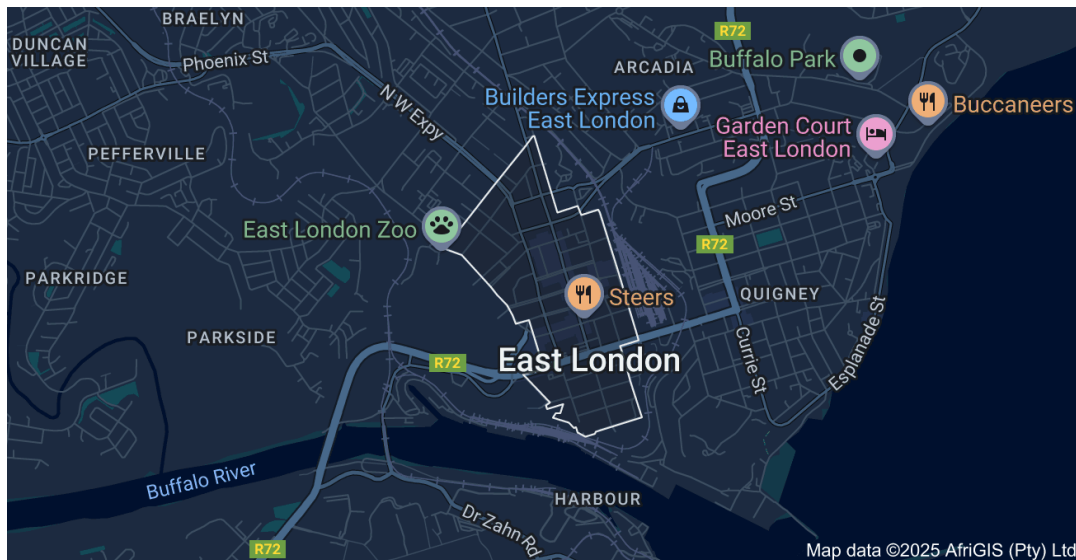


Figure 1: East London Central Business District

Source: Google Maps (2025)

1.2.1 Profile of Participating Organisations

This study collaborated closely with two key non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in East London: Masimanyane Women Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services. These organisations play a central role in providing support, counselling, and advocacy for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.

Masimanyane Women Support Centre, established in 1996, is one of the leading women's rights organisations in the Eastern Cape. Its mandate focuses on eradicating gender-based violence through counselling, legal aid, economic empowerment programmes, and community education. The centre offers trauma counselling, shelter referrals, and awareness campaigns, serving hundreds of women and children annually, particularly in townships such as Mdantsane and Duncan Village. Masimanyane is widely recognised for its feminist, community-based approach that combines service delivery with advocacy for systemic change.

Masithethe Counselling Services is a community-oriented counselling organisation that provides psychosocial support, family mediation, and GBV prevention workshops. The organisation works primarily with survivors and affected families, offering individual and group counselling sessions.

It also runs school-based awareness programmes and collaborates with local clinics and churches. Masithethe plays a vital role in bridging formal services and informal community networks in East London.

Both organisations were instrumental in this study by facilitating access to participants who have direct experience with or exposure to GBV issues. Their involvement enriched the research by providing insights from individuals who are actively engaged in addressing GBV at the grassroots level. Collaboration with these NGOs ensured that the study remained grounded in local realities and ethical practice.

1.3 Background to the Study

Gender-based violence is a continuous global human rights problem that does not consider the socio-economic standing of individuals, cultural, or geographical position, it involves different types of abuse, which can be bodily harm, sexual, emotional, and/or psychological harm (Akudolu et al., 2023).

GBV is a reality and is commonly an entrenched phenomenon in the system of power dynamics, inequality and usually is observed in the system of traditional patriarchy that contributes to the continuation of this phenomenon. GBV affects millions of individuals the world over. Statistics released around the world show that approximately one-third of women during their lifespan have either been the victim of intimate partner violence (IPV) or non-partner sexual violence, and East and Southern Africa are the most active reporters of prevalence rates reaching up to 45 percent, according to the World Health Organisation (2021) and UN Women Africa (2024). Africa (sub-Saharan) has the highest prevalence rates of any region in the world of IPV among teenagers with 20% of girls between 15-19 years reporting IPV in the past 12 months (World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2022). GBV brings so much suffering to the victims and the communities, undermining lives, and distorting families (Buqa, 2022).

Worldwide, the violence against women is higher for women and groups who are not treated equally by the system, mainly for low-income women and those living in urban or rural informal settlements. Because of the pandemic's lockdowns, GBV increased by as much as 30% in many African nations, showing the need to act quickly (UN Women Africa, 2024).

International frameworks such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality demonstrate that all nations aim to end GBV, but local situations often require customised ways of addressing their own special situations.

In South Africa, GBV is an immense public health and human rights emergency due to shocking rates higher than those worldwide. In November 2024, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) 2022 national study shows that 20% of the South African women aged 18 and above stated that they experienced physical, sexual, emotional, or economic violence, and 1 in 5 women were subject to physical abuse within their relationship (HSRC, 2024). South Africa has femicide rates almost five times above the global rate at 3.1 per 100,000 female population, while Europe records the indicated rate as low as 0.7 (Mkwananzi & Nathane-Taulela, 2024). Between July and September 2024, the SAPS reported 957 women killed and 10,191 cases of rape, where domestic partners were responsible in 43% of the cases (DA, 2024). The issue is caused by historical inequalities, poverty, high levels of unemployment, and established patriarchal behaviours among others (Oparinde & Matsha, 2021). Table 1 illustrates the GBV statistics year-on-year.

In 2022, 9,516 rape cases reported for July–September 2022, multiplied by 4 (38,064 rapes). Murders estimated using UNICEF's report of 12 women murdered daily ($12 \times 365 = 4,380$). In 2023, 10,516 rape cases for July–September 2023, multiplied by 4 (42,064 rapes). Murders assumed consistent with 2022 (4,380), as no specific 2023 annual murder data is provided. In 2024, 10,191 rape cases and 957 women were murdered for July–September 2024 (DA, 2024), multiplied by 4 (40,764 rapes + 3,828 murders). One must note annual estimates assume consistent quarterly reporting, which may vary. Other GBV forms (for example, assault, domestic violence) are excluded due to inconsistent data. Under-reporting is likely, as SAPS notes only 1 in 36 rapes may be reported (Mkwananzi & Nathane-Taulela, 2024).

According to Mkwananzi and Nathane-Taulela (2024) GBV is still underreported, and too many victims of femicides go uncounted worldwide because their deaths are not appropriately recorded as femicides. Cultural practices that discourage survivors from coming forward, family interventions or financial compensation, and lack of trust in SAPS contribute to a culture of silence that significantly underreports GBV incidents.

Table 1: Crime Statistics Related to Gender-Based Violence

Year	Cases
2022	38,064 rape + 4,380 women murdered
2023	42,064 rape + 4,380 women murdered
2024	40,764 rape + 3,828 women murdered
2025 (Q4 2024/2025)	10,688 rape + 129 women murdered

The city of East London or KuGompo in the Eastern Cape shows similar trends to a general national situation. Duncan Village, East London, 2019 studies established a strong incidence of GBV since most women surveyed (60%) reported experiencing violence, most of which was partner-related (Peter, 2019). News venues in the region described the heart-rending death of a three-year-old boy in a pit latrine at a daycare in April 2024, which highlighted bigger safety concerns directly related to GBV risks (Human Rights Watch, 2025). Available accurate GBV data for East London, 2024-2025, is limited, but the Thuthuzela Care Centre in the highly affected Mdantsane records increasing cases, meaning persistence (SONA, 2025).

Tax (34.7% in the region), economic plight, and the cultural practice of male superiority are among the major contributors (Cruywagen, 2023).

1.4 Statement of the Research Problem

Although the National Strategic Plan on GBV and Femicide (NSP-GBVF) was implemented in 2020 and the National Council on GBV and Femicide Act was passed in May 2024, GBV continues to be widespread in South Africa and East London (SONA, 2025). Studies carried out by the HSRC show that both gender inequality and existing norms of society contribute to GBV, and 48% of respondents in South Africa consider this form of violence “somewhat” or “very common” in their communities (Afrobarometer, 2023). The lack of local data about community attitudes in East London makes it impossible to develop effective, tailored interventions. Community norms, socio-economic struggles, and poor legal comprehension may maintain GBV, but these aspects have not been sufficiently explored in East London at this moment (Dayimani, 2022). The purpose of this study is to reduce this gap by exploring how the roles of cultural attitudes and knowledge of legal rights in influencing community beliefs and reactions towards GBV can be viewed in East London.

The fact that East London is full of dense informal settlements and people who struggle financially makes GBV more complicated to deal with. GBV is influenced by cultural practices that come from the city's mixed population of Xhosa, Afrikaans, and English-speaking groups. Records from Masimanyane and similar NGOs indicate a sharp rise in the number of people who need support, with roughly 1,200 cases handled each year. Therefore, efforts to improve East London need to be based on research into the area's unique social factors. The continued increases in GBV in East London and a lack of research on how the community sees the issue mean there is a significant shortage of information. Failure to understand how beliefs and knowledge in a community impact GBV may result in approaches that are not effective or match up with what the community actually needs. The objective of the research is to improve impactful local programs addressing GBV.

1.5 Justification for the Study

Not addressing the pressing issue of GBV in East London population where violence incidences are high nationally (Peter, 2019) forms the basis for this study. There is a pressing need for locally tailored research to inform responses to GBV in South Africa as indicated in the HSRC's 2024 report (HSRC, 2024). Community perspective research would enlighten the study on socio-cultural and economic factors of GBV, assisting organisations like NGOs, the policymakers and the healthcare practitioners. The project's goals are on supporting global agenda for GBV research based on data, such as UN Women's recommendations, and helps in moving national strategies forward under the NSP-GBVF (UN Women Africa, 2024). The focus on East London enables a comprehensive analysis of the operation of GBV in urban contexts.

Local communities benefit from this research by having their voices heard and by understanding the causes of GBV. It will present useful ideas for organisations working with survivors and for government officials to better enforce related laws. Focusing on East London, the study helps build a national and global discussion on gender equality and gives a model that other urban areas struggling with similar issues can follow.

1.6 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to explore community perceptions and attitudes towards GBV in East London's urban center, examining cultural norms and legal awareness to inform culturally sensitive interventions that address the root causes and societal impacts of GBV.

1.7 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective is to explore community perceptions and attitudes towards GBV in East London to inform culturally sensitive interventions. Specific objectives are:

- To investigate the prevalence and extent of GBV within East London's community.
- To assess community members' awareness and understanding of legal frameworks addressing GBV.
- To identify cultural norms and beliefs perpetuating GBV in the community.
- To evaluate community attitudes and reactions towards GBV-related interventions in East London.

1.8 Research Questions

Primary question: To what extent do cultural norms and legal framework understanding contribute to community beliefs and attitudes in East London that impact GBV's occurrence and continuation?

Sub-questions:

- What are the levels of GBV in East London, Eastern Cape, South Africa?
- What is the level of awareness and understanding of legal frameworks addressing GBV among community members?
- Which cultural norms and beliefs contribute to GBV's perpetuation within the community?
- What are the community's attitudes and reactions towards GBV-related activities in East London?

1.9 Scope and Setting

Adults who participated in the programs offered by the Masimanyane Women's Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services were the focus of this study, which took place in the South African city of East London in the Eastern Cape. The study captured the complex socio-cultural and legal factors that impacted GBV in this multicultural urban setting by collecting qualitative data on community perceptions, attitudes, cultural orientations, and legal consciousness through semi-structured interviews.

Using qualitative approaches to dive into the depth of community experiences, the research was aimed at examining GBV within East London's specific setting, rather than finding generalisable statistical proof. Participants came from all walks of life, speaking Xhosa, Afrikaans, and English. They spanned the economic spectrum, from those living in the central business district to those living in informal settlements like Mdantsane and Duncan Village. Recognising gender diversity and how it intersects with cultural practices, such as patriarchal norms and conventional dispute resolution methods, that impacted GBV views, the study included men, women, and non-binary persons to guarantee inclusion. Consistent with the findings of Mkwanzanji and Nathane-Taulela (2024) that highlighted the significance of addressing diverse socio-cultural dynamics in GBV research, the study included participants of different ages (those 18 and above) and with different levels of education and employment status to reflect the community's heterogeneity.

First, the frequency and types of GBV in East London's urban communities, especially IDV and femicide, second, the community's knowledge and awareness of legal frameworks, like the Domestic Violence Act (No. 116 of 1998) and the National Strategic Plan on GBV (2020-2030), third, cultural norms and beliefs, including patriarchal attitudes and community-led interventions like mob justice, that contributed to or alleviated GBV, and fourth, opinions on current interventions, like those offered by Thuthuzela Care Centres and community policing forums, as well as existing interventions, were considered. For the sake of ethical participant recruitment and culturally competent data analysis, the research partnered with two respected non-governmental organisations (NGOs): Masimanyane Women's Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services. By working together, we were able to reach out to

under-represented communities and give them a voice, including survivors of GBV and those living in informal settlements.

The study sought to enhance inclusion by addressing structural inequities, such as those stemming from socioeconomic inequality and apartheid-era legacies, and by using a rights-based approach, as modeled by Mkwanaenzi and Nathane-Taulela (2024). Relying on context-specific insights to guide localised, culturally appropriate treatments for GBV, the scope was restricted to the urban center of East London and did not intend to generalise results nationwide.

1.10 Clarification of Key Terms & Concepts

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): GBV is taken as an act of violence that targets people by their gender, whether physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or psychological abuse, and is based on social differences in power (Enaifoghe et al., 2021).

Perceptions: These are the individual views on GBV, including perceptions on its prevalence, triggers and its effects.

Attitudes: GBV attitudes of subjective perceptions and feelings related to violence and supporting or opposing violence.

Cultural Norms: Dominant patriarchal norms and practices within the community to affect GBV either positively or negatively.

Legal Framework Awareness: Community awareness of South African statutes and policies that seek to prevent and manage GBV.

1.11 Organisation of the Dissertation

The dissertation includes five chapters:

Chapter One: Introduction – Provides background information, study's issue, why the research is needed, objectives, questions, study's boundaries, and key concepts.

Chapter Two: Literature Review – Reviews international, national and local research on GBV, aspects relating to prevalence, causes and attitudes.

Chapter Three: Methodology – Describes the qualitative nature of the research design, constructivist approach, selection of purposive sampling, use of interviews, and thematic analysis methodology.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis – Reports and analyses findings on community perceptions, norms, and attitudes towards GBV in East London.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations – Summarises the major outcomes, indicates its nature, and recommends action.

1.12 Chapter Summary

Bringing attention to the socio-cultural difficulties and high GBV incidence in East London's urban centre, this chapter presents qualitative research that explores community views and attitudes towards GBV. Using semi-structured interviews and partnerships with local NGOs such as Masimanyane Women's Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services, the research aims to fill information gaps by investigating cultural norms and legal understanding. To address the causes and social implications of GBV in East London, this chapter lays out the importance of the research in developing culturally relevant solutions. The literature review that helped shape the study's assumptions and methodology about GBV is the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section is about synthesising existing literature, this literature review contextualises the present research with respect to community perceptions and attitudes towards GBV in South Africa. Drawing on international, national, and local viewpoints, this review identifies the reality, determinants, and effects of GBV and the gaps in knowledge about community-specific dynamics. The review sets the backdrop for the current study by highlighting topics of note and by advocating a locally relevant, qualitative understanding to inform intervention design in East London, South Africa.

2.2 Prevalence of Gender Based Violence

Prevalence of GBV demonstrates the scope and severity of the problem and lays the groundwork for comprehending its effects on areas such as East London. The prevalence of GBV draws attention to the frequency and trends of GBV and exposes structural causes including unemployment, poverty, and patriarchal attitudes that contribute to its continuation (Malatjie & Mamokhere, 2024).

2.2.1 Global Context of Gender-Based Violence

Despite its name, GBV is a major global problem faced by people from many walks of life. World Health Organisation (2024) data shows that about 30% of women worldwide are victims of physical or sexual violence, mostly due to their intimate partners and this is seen more frequently in less-developed nations. According to Garcia-Moreno et al. (2023), GBV is kept alive by the unfair treatment of women, often made worse by traditions that value being dominated by men. Where there are strong patriarchal traditions, domestic violence, human trafficking and forced marriage are more widespread problems, as pointed out by the UN Women (2024). The rise in GBV during COVID-19 shows why it is important to address issues of inequality and support survivors at the same time (UN Women, 2024). This highlights the importance to understand local forms of GBV to develop proper interventions that addresses local settings.

2.2.2 Gender-Based Violence in South Africa

South Africa is struggling with GBV related to its history, how people are divided economically and cultural practices. Statistics South Africa (2025) has shown that about 15% of women suffer from physical or sexual violence every year, with the rate of femicide among the highest in the world at 5.8 (per 100,000 women). Seedat and Suffla (2024) explain that poverty, unemployment and patriarchal gender norms are important reasons behind GBV. Even though there is greater awareness and new laws proposed by the National Strategic Plan on GBV (2020), the plan is poorly implemented and people still mistrust official institutions (Mkhwanazi, 2025). During the COVID-19 pandemic, more people were reportedly assaulted within their homes and now there is a 25% increase in cases in urban areas compared to 2020 (South African Medical Research Council, 2024). Whatever trends are happening nationally form the foundation for examining GBV in places like East London.

2.2.3 Gender-based Violence in East London

East London has high rates of GBV, the area's urban poverty and divided communities are important contributing factors. The study by Ndlovu (2023) reported that hunger and lack of employment make matters worse in Duncan Village (a suburb in East London), where the unemployment rate is more than 35%. Masimanyane Women's Support Centre and other local organisations help over 2,000 GBV survivors each year, which suggests a high local impact (Masimanyane, 2025). However, as Gqola (2021) and Ratele (2019) argue, explanations that centre poverty alone risk obscuring the deeper cultural and patriarchal drivers that cut across socio-economic classes in contexts like East London.

Journalists at the Daily Dispatch (2024) frequently mention GBV incidents, usually sexual assault and violence between partners which they connect to drug and alcohol use in crowded areas. Amid the high prevalence of GBV, little research has been done to explore how local people perceive GBV and get support from the legal and social services available to them. The gap matters because what the community thinks can influence how effective the intervention will be.

2.3 Overview of South Africa's Legal Framework for Gender-Based Violence

South Africa's government has taken strong steps to fight GBV through its legal structure. The Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 is a central law, allowing survivors to apply for protection and requiring police to give assistance quickly (South African Government, 1998). The amended Criminal Law Act 32 of 2007 gives wider meanings to sexual offences, punishes them more strictly and sets up the National Register for Sex Offenders to ensure the safety of vulnerable groups (South African Government, 2007). This Act also covers human trafficking, a type of GBV that is very common in cities and towns (South African Government, 2013). Through the National Strategic Plan on GBV and Femicide (2020), these laws are combined in an effort that highlights prevention, care for women affected by violence and consequences for those who commit the crimes (Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, 2020). Even with all these laws, their effect depends on local communities being aware of them and knowing how to use legal resources.

2.4 Awareness and Understanding of Legal Frameworks Addressing Gender-Based Violence

Every community, every survivor's right to bodily autonomy, and every member of society benefits from an understanding of and adherence to laws against gender-based violence. It is crucial to observe how communities use the legal procedures in light of the fact that GBV poses a significant threat to public health and rights in South Africa. Legal literacy in relation to GBV is examined in this part from both a global and a South African viewpoint. Major legislation, community awareness, barriers to understanding GBV legal choices, and the need of lobbying and education in closing knowledge gaps are highlighted.

Despite ongoing discrepancies, campaigns and education programs have succeeded in raising worldwide awareness of gender-based violence (GBV). Swedish public campaigns like "Don't Look Away" promote zero-tolerance attitudes, in contrast to Beti Bachao, an initiative in India that educates youth about their legal rights (Swedish Gender Equality Agency, 2024, Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2024). Hon. Justice Fati Lami Abubakar, a former First Lady of Nigeria, established the non-governmental organisation Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) in March 1999.

The term WRAPA represents the vast range of groups it serves throughout Nigeria by echoing the traditional attire of Nigerian women, which may be either a one-piece or two-piece garment. The goal of WRAPA's advocacy, education, and service initiatives is to ensure that women have access to the legal protections they need in both the public and private sectors. The Violence Against Persons Act (WRAPA) in Nigeria continues to engage communities on the matter, despite the fact that rural areas still have limited understanding of the law (WRAPA, 2024). The #NemUmaAMenos campaign in Brazil, which utilises social media, is limited in its impact due to digital divides (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2025). Patriarchal norms, shame, and financial barriers limit global knowledge, even if there have been breakthroughs. Activism that is inclusive and culturally appropriate is essential if we are to become empowered survivors and fight against the acceptance of GBV.

2.4.1 Awareness of Gender-Based Violence Legislation In South Africa

Being aware and understanding the laws is a necessary element in the fight against GBV. Addressing GBV in South Africa helps those who suffer because of it. Even though there are detailed laws in place, many people in communities are still unaware of them because of socioeconomic, cultural and systemic barriers (South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), 2024). This section discusses how familiar South African communities are with the laws on GBV, which factors aid their understanding and what this knowledge means for the proper enforcement of protective laws among various communities.

Evidence from the study of Mkhwanazi and Naidoo's (2024) study shows that not all communities in South Africa are equally informed about laws on GBV. The urban population may recognise the importance of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 which allows for protection orders, but half of them are not aware of the ways to obtain them (Mkhwanazi & Naidoo, 2024) study. Because of this, it is clear that people are aware of some rights, but lack knowledge of how to use them properly. According to SAHRC, 2024, marginal groups, notably poor women and residents of informal settlements, struggle because they cannot access useful legal information and assistance. Many of these groups face difficulties in engaging with legal matters which makes them continue to suffer from violence and other criminal acts targeted towards women.

Other studies show that people from different groups do not have equal access to legal knowledge. In their research, Ndlovu and Sithole (2022) observed that just 38% of women in low-income urban areas know about the legal help they can ask for under the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007. Often, not enough legal information is available in straightforward formats which creates a knowledge gap. This gap between policy and practice echoes Vetten's (2020) critique of the persistent disconnect between progressive legislation and its ineffective implementation on the ground. Not only that, but the majority of men involved as perpetrators or participants in GBV prevention have a low level of awareness and only 30 percent are aware of the consequences their actions may face (Seedat & Suffla, 2024). Not having equal knowledge of legal rights and responsibilities among gender groups puts attention on the need for all people to be educated.

2.5 Challenges in Increasing Women's Knowledge About Rights and Legal Protection

Though there has been some progress, worldwide efforts still face challenges. Because of socioeconomic differences, many people in low-income countries are not able to access educational and advocacy resources. Because of poverty, very few rural women in Nigeria have the chance to take part in legal literacy workshops (Adebayo & Okonkwo, 2025). In South Africa, those who cannot afford help often find it hard to obtain legal advice (SAHRC, 2024). Accepted cultural habits can also get in the way. In India, many women do not report GBV because of tradition and the fear of judgment when dealing with the law (National Family Health Survey, 2024). In rural Brazil, machismo culture is also often present (Instituto Maria da Penha, 2025). Many Nigerians do not trust the legal system and frequently point out how the police handle GBV cases wrongly, where women are viewed as instigators of GBV. In some cases, the situation is mirrored in South Africa (Combrinck, 2025). Even in Sweden, some marginalised immigrant communities mention that language and culture create distrust (Swedish Gender Equality Agency, 2024).

2.5.1 Barriers to Legal Literacy in South Africa

A variety of problems in society and government make it difficult for people to know about all aspects of GBV laws. The main challenge in health care is socioeconomic, mainly affecting marginalised groups. SAHRC (2024) also notes that many low-income women, who rely on abusive partners for money, do not seek help from the legal system because they are concerned they will not be able to support themselves or utilise existing legal services. People living in informal settlements must overcome extra difficulties like high transportation costs and the fact that there are no nearby legal aid clinics (Langa, 2025). Economic barriers also make many survivors unaware of their rights or unable to use them.

It is also harder for people to learn about the law when there are language and cultural issues. Since official legal communications and adverts are usually distributed in English or Afrikaans in South Africa, many people who speak isiZulu or isiXhosa might not be aware of these laws, assistance and resources (Zungu, 2023). Because people do not understand, the lack of language in regulations makes it hard for them to be informed. Traditionally accepted roles and the fear of stigma for reporting GBV often discourage many individuals from getting help from the law. Bhana and Anderson (2024) explain that reporting violence against women is often seen as disloyal in many communities, stopping many women from reaching out for legal support.

2.5.2 Lack of Trust in Law Enforcement

Many people lack trust in legal institutions as well. The study by Combrinck (2025) highlights that, especially among underserved communities in South Africa, people often feel that law enforcement does not respond well or is unfair with GBV cases. When police do not act on reports or respect protection orders, it discourages people from trying to solve their problems through the law (Mkhwanazi & Naidoo, 2024). This lack of trust is made worse by problems like police stations having too few officers and court cases taking too long which lowers confidence in the law.

2.6 Global Efforts to Promote Legal Rights for Gender-Based Violence Victims Through Education and Advocacy

Taking action to stop GBV relies on efforts to educate and influence people to become knowledgeable about their rights and can enjoy justice after they have been harmed. Making people aware of the law encourages communities to use their rights, challenge old attitudes, hold offenders to account and fight injustice. This section examines strategies from South Africa, India, Nigeria, Brazil and Sweden to promote GBV legal literacy and shows both what has been achieved and what further work needs to be done.

2.6.1 Global Educational Institutions as Platforms for Legal Literacy

Educational institutes everywhere are now being praised for supporting and educating young people about the GBV laws. Through the Beti Bachao campaign in India, lessons about the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 are introduced in schools (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2024). Some programs encourage teenagers to act out scenarios to demonstrate consent and what to do if they are involved in an incident, allowing them to learn early. In a similar way, South African learning institutions include GBV topics in their subjects, instructing students on the laws of the Domestic Violence Act (1998) and how they can help create positive change (Mkhwanazi & Naidoo, 2024). In Sweden, where gender equality is very high, all secondary schools make human rights and today's GBV laws like the Discrimination Act mandatory, in order for students to know their rights (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2024). In Nigeria, where rural schools lack the funds to provide education, the availability of GBV services is reduced, since they are not always well organised and poorly funded (Adebayo & Okonkwo, 2025). Growing these campaigns into neglected regions and ensuring they are communicated in local languages, following the South African approach, might improve things worldwide.

One of the main ways to improve legal awareness about GBV is education and advocacy to empower communities to handle and address this issue through existing laws. The goals are to alert survivors about laws such as the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 and to inspire social change.

More and more, schools and universities are teaching younger people about the laws and responsibilities related to GBV. Educational materials about GBV support students in understanding laws and how to use them to get protection orders (Mkhwanazi & Naidoo, 2024). These projects help teenagers learn early on to question common cultural practices that lead to violence and to support gender equality. For example, university classes on legal systems have helped students feel more confident, which in turn benefits their communities. Even so, these efforts usually focus on cities and the well-off areas, which neglects rural and disadvantaged youth. Including schools in rural areas and community colleges, in ways that use local languages such as isiZulu and isiXhosa, will allow more people to gain awareness.

2.6.2 National and Digital Advocacy Efforts

Gender-based violence legal literacy can be spread to many people through national advertisements and technology. In Sweden, the “Don’t Look Away” campaign uses TV and social media to educate citizens about laws against sexual violence, achieving high engagement (Swedish Gender Equality Agency, 2024). In Brazil, the “#NemUmaAMenos” movement leverages platforms like X to share legal guides, particularly among urban youth (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2025). India’s #MeToo movement has sparked digital campaigns about workplace harassment laws, but rural women remain underserved due to low internet access (UN Women India, 2024). In Nigeria, digital campaigns are less effective due to connectivity issues, with only 25% of the population online (Nigeria Communications Commission, 2025). Using a mix of online and offline actions such as community theater, might make these efforts more inclusive.

In South Africa, National campaigns, such as the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, significantly raise public awareness of GBV legislation, reaching millions through media and public events (Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, 2024). They call attention to the benefit of laws and invite the community to get involved, though their results are typically not very noticeable in underserved places due to not going beyond the initial push. Social media platforms, particularly X, have become powerful tools for disseminating GBV legal information, especially among urban youth (Zungu, 2023).

On X, everyone can access infographics, share the stories of survivors and use legal advice which helps engage younger users. At the same time, depending only on digital solutions leaves out seniors and individuals not online which emphasises the role of non-digital methods.

2.6.3 Community-Based Advocacy Campaigns

Community-based campaigns are very important for informing people about the laws against GBV in areas where help is needed most. To inform women in Brazil about the Maria da Penha Law (2006), which deals with domestic violence, the Maria da Penha Institute hosts various community workshops (Instituto Maria da Penha, 2025). The workshops, which are often organised in favelas, teach people about the legal process through storytelling and raise the chances people will file complaints. Community dialogues organised by WRAPA bring attention to the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (2015) and inspire traditional leaders to support as public opinion turns against violence (WRAPA, 2024). Yet, in India, reaching rural areas is tough because traditional views still exist and just 30% of women know what their laws protect them from (National Family Health Survey, 2024). Because it works well in South Africa and Brazil, community radio could be expanded worldwide for use in areas where there is no network.

NGOs in South Africa focus on educating communities about the law and advocate for changes in legal literacy. These organisations such as Masithethe Counselling Services, conduct community workshops to inform people about their rights and services aimed at GBV (as cited in Masithethe, 2025). Many participants in these programs say they feel more comfortable reporting wrongdoings and consulting legal teams, which demonstrates that these approaches are effective. With its use of local languages, community radio has become a good way to reach people who do not have formal education or use the internet often (Langa, 2025). They offer information about laws that help victims and support services, so it is available to lower income and rural areas. Even though these initiatives show potential, not having enough funds and restricted popularity make it harder for them to reach more areas, partnerships with local governments would help.

2.7 Addressing Advocacy and Education Challenges

Since GBV related challenges vary by location, advocacy campaigns should be uniquely designed for each location. Making legal materials available in isiZulu, isiXhosa and Sesotho and distributing them through community radio and local leaders, helps more people understand their rights. Groups made up of NGOs, government and traditional leaders can create more trust and cover areas that are often overlooked. Including older children and those outside the regular school system in the programs would reach more people. Also, teaching legal knowledge alongside economic support programs such as job skills for women, might result in less financial dependence on abusers and greater use of legal channels. It is necessary to keep funding and Carry out evaluations to see their results and make necessary changes.

2.8 Impacts On the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence

Ensuring people are educated and encouraged to use legal and support resources and laws supports these communities in addressing GBV. Via legal literacy, people are empowered to take action, encourage the public to report crimes and build trust in the legal systems. If the challenges to fighting GBV are countered and more channels are used, South African society can move toward having accessible legal protections for all.

Being informed about the GBV laws in South Africa helps fight GBV and achieve justice. Even though South Africa has detailed laws, their strength is diminished by the fact that most communities do not know about them, many families cannot afford their services and people worldwide still face cultural stigmas. In addition, the problems there are made worse by things like high joblessness and a variety of languages. Addressing these obstacles with clear education and by advocating helps people in communities use their legal rights and create a safer and fairer community.

2.9 Attitudes and Beliefs About Gender-Based Violence

The attitudes and norms held by the community have a strong impact on GBV and the responses to it everywhere, due to cultural, social and economic situations. They show if people in a community view GBV as a problem, try to help or keep it hidden and how survivors can get help. The section compares these patterns globally, using instances from different nations and then zeroes in on South Africa.

It highlights the connection between gender norms, patriarchy and social barriers and how these affect people's minds about GBV.

2.9.1 Global Perspectives on Gender-Based Violence Attitudes and Norms

Community attitudes about GBV are varied across the globe, usually due to the strong influence of culture and social traditions. In India, men tend to see violence against women as acceptable, according to surveys, roughly 40% of men think husbands can discipline their wives (National Family Health Survey, 2024). Because these beliefs are based on traditional gender expectations, people are afraid to report domestic violence out of fear of being judged by their family. Sweden takes a different approach, where social norms supporting gender equality lead to widespread rejection of GBV and campaigns emphasise that all forms of this violence must be totally rejected (Swedish Gender Equality Agency, 2024). Still, in Sweden, some immigrant communities keep traditional patriarchal attitudes from their homelands which can stop them from joining the fight to end GBV.

Traditions and religious ideas in Nigeria often contribute to GBV and one study found that 35% of women believe spousal violence is common (Adebayo & Okonkwo, 2025). Not only do they accept the abuse, but also their dependence on their partner makes it difficult for survivors to talk about what happens. Even though many Brazilians still admire machismo, leading to frequent femicide, feminist groups in cities are aiming to change this attitude by doing local activism (Instituto Maria da Penha, 2025). Based on their research, Heise et al. (2023) found that in many places where gender unequal societies exist, GBV is promoted by the idea that women are not allowed to make their own choices. As mentioned by UN Women (2024), survivors who experience stigma, fear and social pressure tend to hide their problems as a result. People should work to change harmful traditions, improve gender justice and ensure that survivors can find help in safe surroundings.

2.9.2 South African Context: Attitudes and Beliefs

The way South Africans view GBV is complicated by the lasting effects of apartheid, inequality between classes and genders and old-fashioned views of gender. According to Sikweyiya et al. (2023), in communities with patriarchal systems, some men see violence as a way to prove their superiority which makes GBV more common.

A survey by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) (2024) showed that 30% of men they spoke to accept physical discipline of women in particular situations, demonstrating outdated ideas that excuse abuse. On the other hand, growing groups of feminists and activists in the community firmly oppose GBV, calling for gender equality and supporting survivors (Mkhwanazi & Naidoo, 2024).

Attitudes in South Africa are shaped by issues of economics. High unemployment which limited jobs to only 15% in 2025, makes women and men dependent on their families. As a result, women are often reluctant to report GBV because they worry about losing their financial support (Statistics South Africa, 2025). Exposure to advocacy educates people on issues like GBV, so those who live in urban places are usually more tolerant than those who live in rural places (Zungu, 2023). In general, urban youth can respond to GBV better because they see many challenges on social media, but older people often hold on to the older values of society (Langa, 2025). Ratele (2019) argues that such attitudes are not merely cultural relics but actively performed through hegemonic masculinities, a perspective that helps explain why many men in East London continue to view GBV as a private family matter.

2.9.3 Socioeconomic and Cultural Drivers

Economic and social factors significantly shape GBV attitudes worldwide. In low-income countries like Nigeria, poverty exacerbates vulnerability, as women dependent on abusive partners are less likely to report GBV due to financial constraints (WRAPA, 2024). In India, caste and class hierarchies reinforce discriminatory attitudes, with marginalised women facing heightened stigma when reporting abuse (UN Women India, 2024). In contrast, Brazil's urban-rural divide influences attitudes, with rural communities often upholding traditional norms compared to urban areas where feminist advocacy is stronger (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2025). Globally, economic inequality and lack of education correlate with attitudes that tolerate GBV, as less-educated communities are more likely to adhere to harmful stereotypes (Heise et al., 2023). Brodie (2023) cautions against over-emphasising education and poverty as the main driver, reminding us that patriarchal entitlement and male violence cut across class boundaries, a nuance evident in participant narratives from both townships and suburbs.

Cultural norms also play a critical role. In Sweden, egalitarian values reduce GBV tolerance, but global trends show that patriarchal norms persist in many regions, rationalising violence as a private matter (UN Women, 2024). Religious beliefs can either mitigate or exacerbate GBV attitudes, for instance, some Nigerian communities misinterpret religious texts to justify violence, while in Brazil, progressive religious groups advocate for survivor support (WRAPA, 2024; Instituto Maria da Penha, 2025). These global variations highlight the need for culturally sensitive interventions that address local beliefs while promoting universal principles of gender equality. These community responses align with Gqola's (2015) assertion that challenging GBV requires confronting the normalisation of violence in everyday South African life, rather than treating it as isolated incidents.

2.9.4 Social Barriers to Addressing Gender-Based Violence in South Africa

In South Africa, social hurdles such as fear, shame, and prejudice make it very difficult for GBV survivors to get care. According to Bhana and Anderson (2024), communities often blame women for inciting violence, which causes social exclusion for survivors. In close-knit rural areas, where reporting GBV is seen as upsetting family unity, this stigma is especially severe. Additional barriers to reporting include mistrust of law enforcement because of alleged inefficiency and fear of reprisals from abusers (Combrinck, 2025). Only 25% of survivors report GBV to police, according to the SAHRC (2024), who attribute this to their fear of retaliation or authorities' lack of belief.

These difficulties are made worse by peer pressure to adhere to established gender norms. Women are supposed to tolerate violence in silence, but males are often conditioned to see power as a manly quality (Sikweyiya et al., 2023). These standards maintain a culture of silence by discouraging survivors and onlookers from speaking out. However, by using males as allies in GBV prevention, community-based initiatives like those operated by Masithethe Counselling Services are starting to change perceptions (Masithethe, 2025). These initiatives highlight how crucial it is to create social support systems in order to empower survivors and dispel false notions.

2.9.5 Key South African Scholars on GBV

While much of the literature on gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa draws from statistical reports and policy documents, several key scholars offer critical theoretical and feminist analyses that deepen understanding of the phenomenon. Gqola (2015, 2021) powerfully critiques the normalisation of violence against women, arguing that GBV is deeply embedded in South Africa's post-apartheid patriarchal culture and the legacies of colonial and apartheid violence. Gqola's work challenges simplistic poverty-driven explanations by highlighting how misogyny and entitlement cut across class and race.

Ratele (2019, 2021) offers a critical masculinities perspective, asserting that patriarchal violence is not only structural but also performed through everyday practices of hegemonic masculinity. Ratele argues for the urgent need to engage men in transformative programmes that interrogate harmful masculinities rather than treating them solely as perpetrators. His decolonial approach is particularly relevant to this study's East London context, where traditional gender roles and lobola practices continue to shape community attitudes.

Vetten (2014, 2020) provides incisive policy and institutional critique, exposing the gap between progressive legislation such as the Domestic Violence Act (1998) and its ineffective implementation. Vetten highlights systemic failures in policing and the justice system, which resonate strongly with participants' accounts of poor enforcement and distrust in SAPS in this study.

Brodie (2019, 2023) challenges the over-emphasis on poverty as the primary driver of GBV. She demonstrates through empirical evidence that middle-class and affluent men also perpetrate high levels of intimate partner violence, arguing that patriarchal entitlement transcends socio-economic status. This perspective adds nuance to the findings of this study, where participants frequently linked GBV to poverty and unemployment, yet cultural norms of male control were evident across different suburbs.

This study builds on these scholars by locating East London community attitudes within this critical body of South African scholarship. It integrates Gqola's and Ratele's cultural critique with Vetten's institutional analysis and Brodie's class analysis to provide a more layered understanding of why patriarchal norms persist despite legal reforms. By doing so, the research moves beyond description to engage critically with local realities in East London.

2.10 Strategies for Transforming Attitudes

Changing community perspectives in South Africa and throughout the world calls for a variety of approaches. By encouraging group accountability, public initiatives such as "Don't Look Away" have effectively changed norms in Sweden (Swedish Gender Equality Agency, 2024). Similar goals are pursued by South Africa's 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, but its influence is less pronounced in rural areas (Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities, 2024). In order to challenge patriarchal traditions, South Africa might benefit from involving community leaders, as shown by Nigeria's discussions with traditional rulers (WRAPA, 2024).

Education programs are essential. GBV tolerance is decreased in India via school initiatives that educate children about gender equality (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2024). South African institutions are including GBV understanding into their curriculum, following suit (Mkhwanazi & Naidoo, 2024). Equitable standards may be further promoted via media campaigns, community workshops, and collaborations with religious institutions. In South Africa, removing financial obstacles via empowerment initiatives, such women's skill development, may lessen reliance and promote reporting (Masithethe, 2025). These tactics, which draw inspiration. These tactics, which are based on international achievements, need to be modified to accommodate South Africa's multicultural environment.

2.11 Implications for Gender-Based Violence Prevention

Gender-based violence prevalence and reaction are significantly influenced by the attitudes, beliefs, and norms of the community. While progressive views in nations like Sweden provide examples for reform, patriarchal customs and economic constraints across the world sustain tolerance for GBV.

Social obstacles and long-standing preconceptions in South Africa underscore the need of focused interventions. In order to educate measures that challenge harmful norms, lessen stigma, and create supportive settings for survivors, all of which contribute to successful GBV prevention, the present study, which was carried out in 2025, examines these dynamics. These implications align with Vetten's (2020) call for stronger institutional accountability and Brodie's (2023) critique of class-blind analyses of GBV.

2.12 Community Attitudes and Reactions Towards Gender-Based Violence Activities

The success of preventative and intervention efforts is greatly influenced by community attitudes and responses to initiatives meant to combat GBV. These reactions differ in local, national, and international settings and are impacted by cultural, social, and economic considerations. This section looks at how communities throughout the world, in South Africa, and locally interact with GBV activities, such as support services, legal enforcement, and awareness campaigns. Through an analysis of these processes, this 2025 review informs efforts to lower the incidence of GBV and improve community involvement.

2.12.1 International Perspectives On Gender-Based Violence Activities

Reactions to GBV by communities vary from around the world, sometimes with people wholeheartedly supporting them and other times actively resisting. The widespread advantage of programs like "Don't Look Away" in Sweden is that they are strongly supported by the public and are backed by community marches and activities in schools, all aimed at zero tolerance toward GBV (Swedish Gender Equality Agency, 2024). Because of Sweden's strong sense of equality, women's rights efforts are welcomed, although some immigrant groups continue to value patriarchal customs. Although the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao program to raise awareness about GBV through education is doing well in urban India, rural areas often refuse it, arguing it goes against their traditionally assigned gender roles (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2024). Part of the reason for this disconnect in rural India is that up to 35% of women there do not even know these campaigns exist (as per the National Family Health Survey, 2024).

Community events about the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (2015) organised by WRAPA in Nigeria have led to different reactions. Even though in rural communities 40% of women accept GBV as the norm, they often think these actions are foreign, while urban sectors are now more in favor of the law being put into action (Adebayo & Okonkwo, 2025). A number of rallies were held by Brazil's #NemUmaAMenos movement, thanks to their use of social media to advertise the Maria da Penha Law (2006). Yet, because of cultural machismo and limited access, people in rural areas are still unlikely to engage in public safety activities (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2025). UN Women (2024) states that resistance in many places stems from stigma, worries about destroying the family unit, or doubt in the judicial system, so community support calls for cultural methods.

2.12.2 National Context: South Africa's Community Responses

Combining historical, financial, and cultural factors, the way communities in South Africa think about GBV operations is difficult to understand. Communities living in urban areas have taken part in marches and seminars during national initiatives such as 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, helped by which the visibility of such actions has increased a lot (Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, 2024). Limited access to media causes much of South Africa's rural areas to be less involved, as only half of the population there know about these programs (South African Human Rights Commission, 2024). Help from the community has mostly come from urban feminist organisations and groups such as Sonke Gender Justice. In 2023, the participation of men in GBV prevention was 20% greater than it was before (Sonke Gender Justice, 2025).

People keep challenging these changes despite how far things have come. Sikweyiya et al. Suggest that amongst the men who were surveyed, 25% expressed concerns that GBV efforts may challenge the authority of older men, making it clear that some traditional systems cause people to resist efforts to stop GBV. Rising unemployment and lack of money causes people to worry about survival first, leaving violence against women on the back burner. Usually, authorities in rural areas are worried about legal solutions and rather address gender-related issues with traditional methods that might add more challenges (Mkhwanazi & Naidoo, 2024).

Furthermore, if survivors participate in support services, people often discriminate against them, cutting down the number of reports from 33 to 30% (Bhana & Anderson, 2024). Because of these problems, it is important to implement methods that teach the law and fit the culture of the area.

2.12.3 Local Community Dynamics

Traditions and resources in the community play a role in how local people react to efforts fighting against GBV. Many urban informal communities, because they do not have enough resources, react differently. Masithethe Counselling Services and similar non-governmental organisations have taken the lead in telling more people about the amendment to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Act (2007) at community workshops. People taking part have expressed greater confidence in resorting to action in court (Masithethe, 2025). It seems that 40% of the population believes that police are not focused enough, and this along with ongoing crime and distrust prevents them from being involved (Combrinck, 2025). Radio ads in eButho and other local languages in some regions have attracted more than half of all households to vote, still, the effort cannot last long due to unbalanced funding.

Commonly, activities concerning GBV are not accepted as widely in rural regions. As most traditional traditions would tell us, family matters are valued ahead of going to court, and community elders serve as mediators, at times letting offenders go free from GBV (Zungu, 2023). While there has been some advancement in women's groups, for example those by the Women's Legal Centre, which saw an increase in demand by 15% in 2024, many women are still put off because they fear being excluded (Women's Legal Centre, 2025). By establishing groups against GBV at schools, students are offering assistance to survivors, but this is not welcomed by the older generations (Mkhwanazi & Naidoo, 2024). Sonke Gender Justice (2025) states that talking to traditional leaders in the community can increase the support for legal interventions by 10% in the pilot areas.

2.13 Strategies to Enhance Community Engagement

Taking care of cultural and financial issues is important for increasing community participation in GBV initiatives everywhere and in South Africa. Introducing several perspectives from the community can help with campaigns, just as Sweden's efforts have provided an example for South Africa.

Traditional leaders in Nigeria can encourage outreach to rural communities, while the ability of Brazil to use current technologies could inspire South African young people, especially on platform X. Reducing challenge can be achieved in South Africa by responding to each area's culture, teaming up with popular members of the community, and communicating in the indigenous dialects spoken there (Zungu, 2023). Such programs as skill development under economic empowerment could lower the level of dependence and encourage more involvement (Masithethe, 2025). Rebuilding people's faith in the government and making sure plans are carried out need regular financing and policing training.

2.14 Important Implications for Stopping Gender-Based Violence

Prevention and intervention works best when members of the community are positive and supportive of GBV programs. Different countries have to deal with socioeconomic barriers and resistance from culture, but only South Africa's unique case shows how much communities must be involved in work. The 2025 project looks into how changes in programs can create better community support, improve acceptance, and boost effectiveness against GBV.

2.15 Conclusions

It shows that GBV is a major issue all over the world, in South Africa, and in East London. Men's rights and unequal practices in the world result in GBV, such that 30% of women report it, with the rate being higher for those living in low-income regions. There are many femicide cases in South Africa and a 25% increase in urban GBV since 2020, mostly due to poverty and joblessness. There is a lot of urban poverty in East London, which causes more GBV, but the views of the community have yet to be studied. Although South Africa has a strong legal system and the Domestic Violence Act, many city residents do not know how it works. While educational programs all over the world have impact, many people still avoid discussing such issues. While different South African communities have mixed attitudes towards patriarchy, people in the cities tend to support it while people in the countryside remain opposed. The study will look into how the people of East London view legality, and then suggest appropriate ways to address unsafe issues, approved by the neighborhood.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A structured framework for investigating community views regarding GBV in East London, South Africa, is provided by the study methodology, which is described as the methodical approach to data collection and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In order for the study to produce trustworthy, culturally aware findings, it is essential for maintaining rigor, validity, and ethical integrity. By directing the use of qualitative techniques like semi-structured interviews to collect a variety of context-specific viewpoints, this methodology supports the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The research methodology and ethical framework organising this exploration of community attitudes toward GBV in East London, South Africa, is outlined in this chapter. The qualitative-exploratory study used a constructivist paradigm to sample the socio-cultural processes that informed the conceptualisation of GBV. This was a study on subjective experiences of members of communities and of those who attend Masimanyane Women Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services to provide information on culturally relevant interventions. Its methodology involved semi-structured interviews, purposive sampling and thematic analysis in order to yield rich contextualised data. The rigor was achievable because of member checking, inter-coder reliability, and audit trail to improve validity and reliability. The sensitivity of GBV factored in ethical considerations and the application of informed consent, confidentiality and prevention of harm to protect the research participants. The chapter describes the setting, the population, sampling, data collection, analysis, and ethical protocols of the study that forms a basis of apprehending the contribution of the study to the treatment of the GBV.

3.2 Research Paradigm

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the constructivist theory sees learning and comprehension as dynamic processes in which individuals interpret events using their own unique viewpoints that are influenced by social interactions, cultural norms, and personal experiences. A constructivist paradigm in research places a high value on qualitative techniques like focus groups and interviews in order to capture the diversity of subjective experiences and unearth various, context-specific interpretations.

This study followed a constructivist paradigm researching into the community attitude towards GBV in East London, South Africa. The constructivist theory considers reality as subjectively constructed by the subjective experiences of people (Adom et al., 2016), which qualifies it for the study of the socio-cultural dynamics involving the development of GBV beliefs into the population of East London residing in the diverse urban setting. This theory was able to explore the lived experiences of the participants where their perceptions were identified as being affected by social, cultural, and historical factors.

The constructivist paradigm that popularised the idea of socially constructed knowledge demanded that professionals engage the community members to represent their view (Adom et al., 2016). The study also identified context-specific interpretations of GBV due to different local cultural and social contexts using semi-structured interviews and focus groups that produced context-relevant and rich data. This approach emphasised the role of cultural dynamics, social experiences and personal experience, in shaping GBV (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), as a guiding factor in culturally sensitive interventions.

Focusing on various voices was considered through values since various GBV survivors and individuals with low socioeconomic backgrounds were prioritised, which is in line with the values of social justice (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The use of focus groups led to rich discussions where commonality, as well as diversity of community opinions, were seen, whereas interviews enabled the gathering of extensive narratives. The use of reflexivity confirmed that the researcher reduced his biases to provide participant-driven results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The paradigm also considered any external factors such as media presentation, which made the analysis more detailed.

Constructivist approach gained a subtle insight into the views of GBV and on themes based on cultural stigma and the resilience of the community (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The insights contributed to the further studies and interventions, which could address the needs of East London in a specific manner.

3.2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in a constructivist paradigm (Adom et al., 2016), which asserts that reality is not objective but socially constructed through individuals' subjective experiences, cultural interactions, historical contexts, and social relationships. In the context of this research, constructivism is highly appropriate because it privileges the voices and lived realities of East London residents, allowing diverse interpretations of GBV to emerge organically rather than being imposed by the researcher. This paradigm aligns directly with the study's aim of exploring community perceptions and attitudes towards GBV, as it recognises that participants' understandings are shaped by their socio-cultural environments in townships such as Mdantsane and Duncan Village, as well as their interactions with organisations like Masimanyane Women Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services.

The study further integrates Heise's socio-ecological model (Heise et al., 2023), which conceptualises GBV as resulting from the interaction of factors at multiple levels: individual, relationship, community, and societal. This model provides a robust analytical lens to examine how personal experiences of violence are influenced by relationship dynamics (for example, male headship), community norms (e.g., cultural acceptance of lobola), and broader structural issues such as poverty and unemployment prevalent in East London. The socio-ecological framework justifies the study's focus on both individual narratives and wider community attitudes, enabling a comprehensive understanding of why GBV persists despite existing legal frameworks.

These perspectives are enriched by decolonial approaches in Development Studies (Ratele, 2019; Gqola, 2015), which critique Eurocentric explanations of GBV and emphasise the need to centre African indigenous knowledge systems, local cultural realities, and resistance to colonial legacies of gender inequality. This decolonial lens is particularly relevant to this study as it allows for the interrogation of how patriarchal practices such as lobola and traditional gender roles continue to shape GBV in post-apartheid East London, while also highlighting emerging forms of resistance from churches and youth groups.

The integration of constructivism, the socio-ecological model, and decolonial perspectives forms a coherent theoretical framework that guides data collection, analysis, and interpretation throughout this study.

This framework is consistently applied in Chapter 4, where participant narratives are analysed, and in Chapter 5, where findings are discussed in relation to the research objectives. By combining these lenses, the study moves beyond description to offer a contextually grounded, culturally sensitive analysis of GBV in East London.

3.3 Study Approach

This was a qualitative study that focused on explicating the intricate socio-cultural realities of GBV within the context of East London that emphasises proximity to human experiences (Charmaz, 2004). This method contrasted with quantitative approaches that require the use of numerical data but formed the basis to high quality data, subjective perspective, and identification of factors that are not easily understood by interviewing, focus groups, and observations (Creswell & Miller, 2000). It successfully inquired individual beliefs, attitude as well as surrounding circumstances that influenced the community.

The qualitative research process suited well enough to investigate that complicated social phenomenon as emotional and cultural aspects of GBV are difficult to measure. The study provided a diversity of outlooks of different survivors, community leaders, and stakeholders by focusing on their narratives and thus brought out the societal norms, gender roles, and historical inequalities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This flexibility enabled the researcher to reformulate questions and follow new themes, thus having a maximum coverage of the issue of GBV perceptions in East London.

3.4 Research Design

The exploratory design used in this study was conducted to the study of GBV perceptions in East London, South Africa, where there was limited data (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2021). Its inductive study produced preliminary findings that can be explored by future studies and interventions, and this aspect can be investigated without prejudice to undocumented aspects of GBV (Mccallum & Howes, 2018). The study was carried out in two stages where the community opinions regarding prevalence of GBV were collected, followed by theme identification themes concerning cultural stigma, and systemic barriers (Mccallum & Howes, 2018).

The exploratory approach was an inclusive way of capturing the community perceptions with a bottom-up process and thus they were captured truthfully (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It allowed introducing changes to the new themes, and semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used to acquire in-depth data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Focus groups produced interactive stages, which allowed expressing mutual values and discordances, whereas observations provided depth of contexts (Krueger & Casey, 2015). This design revealed such problems as the role of stigma in reporting that guided selective interventions and subsequent research.

3.5 Setting and Population of the Study

The settings for this study was East London in Eastern Cape, South Africa in the urban area, which is a multicultural area. It also involved the representation of Masimanyane Women Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services, NGOs that provide support to GBV affected people, making the study more comprehensive as it is characteristically better on the community-user level.

3.5.1 Population of the Study

The study population consisted of the residents in the East London who are mostly adults and were of diverse demographic group with common race, gender, age, and socioeconomic status, and occupations (World Population Review, 2024). It also had 300 monthly attendants in the two NGOs where 1200 households are represented. The qualitative information was enhanced by having GBV survivors, who are marginalised voice and well represented by the number of participants, as a methodological tool (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Having such a dual focus showed the influence of societal beliefs such as victim-blaming on future GBV perceptions as well as situational variables such as economical issues (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

3.5.2 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Purposive sampling was used to gather people who have experienced GBV directly in East London, South Africa, and fit research goals (Campbell et al., 2020). This approach was used to reach people such as the survivors, activists, and members of society who would have relevant knowledge, and thus, added experience and relevance of findings, as it involved people with close knowledge of GBV (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Adults, who are recipients of Masimanyane Women Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services in East London were included as the inclusion criteria. Its diverse demographic among the participants (gender, age, race, education and occupation) was used to demonstrate the socio-cultural complexity of the community (Krueger & Casey, 2015). This heterogeneity depicted diverse GBV views, like age gaps or economic factors, so that there was no lack of insight.

The sample included 15 respondents, five representing each NGO and five people in the city center, because the qualitative study aimed to be in-depth (Staller, 2021). Since this was a manageable small sample, it provided rich data, as it allowed in depth, semi-structured interviews. The previous relationships with the researcher as an NGO allowed the researcher easy access and trust, which motivated the research participants to give truthful answers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The purposive approach enabled first-hand experiences of NGO attendees to be effectively integrated with views of a wider community making it possible to see the interface between personal and societal attitudes. The focus on the underrepresented populations, such as low-income or minority communities, was also in the line with social justice agendas as it promoted the previously suppressed voices (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Customised interview queries were used to make sure the data captured personal and shared GBV impressions.

The purposive sampling of a 15-sample size were also very useful when probing into GBV attitudes, and the information proved to be quite rich and has substantial validity which can be applied in future intervention.

3.6 Data Gathering Process

This research relied upon the semi-structured interviews (refer to Appendix A for a copy of the interview schedule) to understand the GBV attitudes in the East London, South Africa with the use of the open-ended questions. The open structure allowed exploring the main themes and elicited the unscripted responses of the participants, having tracked the subtle perceptions in the social-cultural context (Mashuri et al., 2022).

The issues of cultural influences, personal experience, and community reaction were mentioned in interview guides, which stood in line with the theoretical framework and goals of the study (Wong et al., 2023). To obtain credible, rich data, the researcher developed rapport and a non-threatening atmosphere as well as active listening.

Complex skills of the interview, such as probing or non-judgmental interest, were vital (Wong et al., 2023). The data was supplemented by qualities of observational abilities that picked up cues that were not verbal and contingencies in the environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The issues such as the unwillingness of the participants and the difficulties with time as well as privacy were solved by building trust to the NGO-Masimanyane Women Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services as well as the participants. Purpose and confidentiality of research and interview privacy, made the participants comfortable (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

As a countermeasure of emotional distress, debriefing sessions together with referral of the participants to the NGO counselors were conducted (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The participants were allowed to withdraw anytime which strengthened the ethical practice (Vanclay, Baines & Taylor, 2013). Access and trust were easy since the researcher had prior relationships with NGOs formed through work as a social worker, and the members were informed that they were expected and were willing to participate (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Interviews of the pilot participants made the interview schedule culturally correct and field notes increased the quality of data (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The data were anonymised, and this, as well as their safe storage, was limited to the researcher (Awal, 2023).

3.6.1 Structure of the Interview Schedule

The interview schedule consisted of five sections, starting with (1) the demographic section that collected data of the participants, for example, their characteristics, age, status and other data. The next for sections, (2) prevalence and extent of GBV, (3) awareness and understanding of legal frameworks, (4) cultural norms and beliefs perpetuating GBV and (5) community attitudes and reactions towards GBV interventions. The questions were open-ended to extract detailed responses from the participants and were categorised in sections to align with the research questions, which ultimately led to attaining the aims and objectives of the study. Each section had three questions, making a total of 15 questions.

The schedule served as a guide and the interviewer applied common sense to probe deeper into topics by asking participants to elaborate on responses or to clear up uncertainties. This method assisted in extracting detailed responses. The average duration of the interviews lasted 50 minutes and all the responses were audio recorded and each participant's interview data were coded to avoid using names and personal details of the participants.

To sum up, the semi structured interview method that involved exploring GBV attitudes was effective, and this was enabled with the protection of ethical standards and reliance on NGOs. The method produced a rich, participant-based data, which would guide future GBV interventions in East London.

3.7 Data Analysis

In this study, thematic analysis, through which the semi-structured interview data on GBV views in East London, South Africa, were studied, following the principles described by Braun and Clarke (2006), has been utilised. This flexible approach offered to define patterns and topics, to represent the richness of subject experiences within the socio-cultural system.

The familiarisation was started by reviewing the transcripts by the researcher through reading and re-reading to get the content and context of information, cultural norms, and stigma (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some important data segments were placed in initial codes like, victim-blaming or fear of reporting. These were categorised into such themes as cultural influences or community resilience and polished down into correlations with study purposes. Thematic map was used to demonstrate the relationship between themes and sub-themes by explaining things such as social norm and systemic barrier (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A descriptive narrative summarised the results, the quotes of the participants allowed emphasising various opinions, including those of GBV survivors (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The qualitative strategy closed the knowledge lapses on how intricate attitudes on GBV were comprehended on a paradigmatic level, which the quantitative approach would have possibly overlooked (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Rigor and consistency was provided by peer debriefing and by NVivo software, whereas an audit trail provided transparency of the process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rolfe, 2006).

Interview guides and coding schemes improved reproducibility provided as appendixes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Such themes as community stigma and support-seeking behaviours expressed the challenges and strengths, informing culturally sensitive interventions (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

Finally, using thematic analysis created a resilient system of comprehending GBV perceptions, and participants of the research were presented with rigorous plans designed to be reliable in determining the authenticity of GBV on future interventions in East London.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Research rigor was the main focus of this study as determined by the need to have valid and reliable results on the attitude towards GBV in East London, which will improve credibility and practical use (Long & Johnson, 2000). The validity was utilised based on member checking, as the participants were able to review the findings and confirm its compatibility with their experience, contributing the increase in authenticity and involvement on the part of participants (Long & Johnson, 2000). Reflexivity was also observed in that the researcher was to record biases in a journal so as to be transparent and have least impact on data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

It was achieved through inter-coder reliability which occurred when a second coder was used to analyse subsets of the data to gain consistency in the interpretation (Rolfe, 2006). The audit trail helped in reproducibility because all steps in conducting research were documented i.e., steps that included data collection, and theme developing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thematic analysis and standardised interview guides reduced the possibility of error (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Experience was gained through peer debriefing, which offered educative critique thus enhancing analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The cross-referencing used in triangulation verified the results of one field with another, and NVivo software was used to make codes as systematic as possible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Such measures guaranteed strong and credible perceptions of GBV.

3.9 Ethics Considerations

This study adhered to the highest ethical standards throughout the research process. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of South Africa's College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (CREC) prior to data collection. The study was granted clearance under Reference Number 6311, valid from 12 March 2025 to 11 March 2026.

In order to assure that participants' rights and welfare are upheld, ethical issues in research include concepts like informed consent, confidentiality, and harm avoidance (Vanclay et al., 2013). They are essential for preserving safety, respect, and trust in research on delicate subjects like GBV, especially in tight-knit communities like East London, South Africa. Following these guidelines promotes participant-driven, culturally appropriate results and increases the study's credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The ethical aspect was at the forefront of this research of GBV in the city of East London, South Africa, and greater caution should be taken to ensure safety so as not to diminish the ideals of respect, confidentiality, and justice among participants (Vanclay et al., 2013). The researcher employed the principles of professional, empathetic, and non-judgmental behavior, acknowledging the possible trauma of participants and employing the reflexivity of biases to create the safe atmosphere in which the respondents could speak freely (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Strict privacy and confidentiality were maintained, and anonymised data and encrypted data storage avenues were only accessible to the researcher, which is essential in the community of East London (Awal, 2023; Drolet et al., 2023).

3.9.1 Interview Conditions of Privacy

The interviews were also done in isolated rooms at Masimanyane women Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services that could not be seen or heard to the common rooms. The secure environment was created in the case of a closed-door and soundproofed office or counseling room. Such an arrangement ensured that other members of the community, or clients of the NGOs, did not see or hear the interviews, this safeguarded against stigmatisation or judgement by the usage of the sensitive surrounding community of East London.

Consequently, interviewees felt secure and relaxed, which promoted candid and remarkably honest communication regarding their experiences with GBV and their perceptions, resulting in rich data that is contextual in nature (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.9.2 Covert Timing and Access Regulations

To further protect anonymity of the participants interviews were planned at different times and with staggered arrival times so as to ensure that the participants may not be caught entering and exiting the interview room. Each of the participants was approached separately with tactful means e.g. through confidential phone calls or encrypted details, and effort was made to schedule their interviewing time. Access to the interview room was done in a very delicate manner by the NGO staff to prevent interference between other individuals and other clients as no one would know that a participant was performing the GBV study. These precautions effectively reduced the threat of unintentional leakage, which is reflected in the fact that participants were not afraid to tell detailed stories for fear of social retribution, which increases the depth and validity of the data obtained (Drolet et al., 2023). At Masimanyane Women Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services, interviews were carried out in culturally sensitive environments using language and questions that were specific to the customs, culture and values of the area (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Strict confidentiality procedures, including anonymised data and private interview rooms, ensured that participants' varied identities were safeguarded and that their experiences and ideas were incorporated without being stigmatised.

Consent and withdrawal were important and voluntary, and written consent was detailed with clear cultural-appropriate and study details and risks (Vanclay et al., 2013). The informed consent secured the awareness of the participants about the aims and the possibility of choosing other options, such as written answers (Drolet et al., 2023).

They were also shielded against harm by use of debriefing sessions and referrals of emotional distress to counsellors in Masimanyane Women Support Centre and Masithethe Counselling Services (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Confidentiality risks were low in the context of the working environment established by the NGOs that were classified as private, and continuous communication resolved any concerns (Drolet et al., 2023).

It resulted in self-funding of the study, which in turn guaranteed lack of outside influence on the study, greater adherence to ethical integrity, and more confidence by the participants.

3.10 Conclusion

The research methodology and ethical framework of this chapter were quite effective with exploring the GBV attitudes in East London. The constructivist paradigm with a qualitative, exploratory design took into consideration a variety of voices and found out the influence of social and cultural issues on perceptions of GBV. Purposive sampling and semi structured interviews brought out the voices of individuals living in the community and those attending the NGO, especially marginalised individuals. Such themes as cultural stigma and community resilience were identified through the thematic analysis and were used to help inform focused interventions.

Credibility was achieved by use of rigor, which included member checking, inter-coder reliability and an audit trail. Respect, confidentiality, voluntary participation and harm protection of the ethical principles were used to protect the participants and encouraged trust. The contextually rich data in the study contributed to the development of GBV prevention discourse, supported by future evidence and community-based interventions aimed to support prevention work in East London that will have a culturally sensitive and safer environment.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from fifteen purposively sampled participants in East London. Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, the data generated five major themes that directly respond to the research objectives: demographic information, prevalence and extent of GBV, awareness and understanding of legal frameworks, cultural norms and beliefs perpetuating GBV, and community attitudes toward GBV interventions. The themes are presented with rich participant narratives to illuminate community perceptions and attitudes towards gender-based violence (GBV).

THEME ONE: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

4.2 Demographic Information

In addition to disclosing their residence location in East London, participants also revealed theme elements such as age, gender, employment, cultural or ethnic origin and indirect interactions with local NGOs that tackled GBV.

4.2.1 Profiles of Participants

With ages ranging from 22 to 55 years, the group of fifteen participants consists of eight girls and seven men (see Table 2). Their ethnic origins range from Xhosa to Coloured to White, and they live in a variety of East London localities, from townships like Mdantsane and Duncan Village to suburbs like Amalinda and Berea. Market vendors, delivery drivers, office administrators, security guards, librarians, teachers, shop assistants, construction workers, cleaners and the jobless are just a few examples of the diverse range of occupations found in this metropolis.

In order to ensure that the perspectives shared are from persons who are actively involved with targeted interventions for survivors, participants 1–5 were intentionally chosen to represent the Masimanyane Women Support Centre, an NGO that offers full GBV support services such as counselling and legal assistance. In order to increase the study's generalisability, we drew participants 11–15 from the wider East London community (city centre areas), while participants 6–10 were from Masithethe Counselling Services, a specialised NGO that focusses on therapeutic counselling for GBV-affected individuals and families.

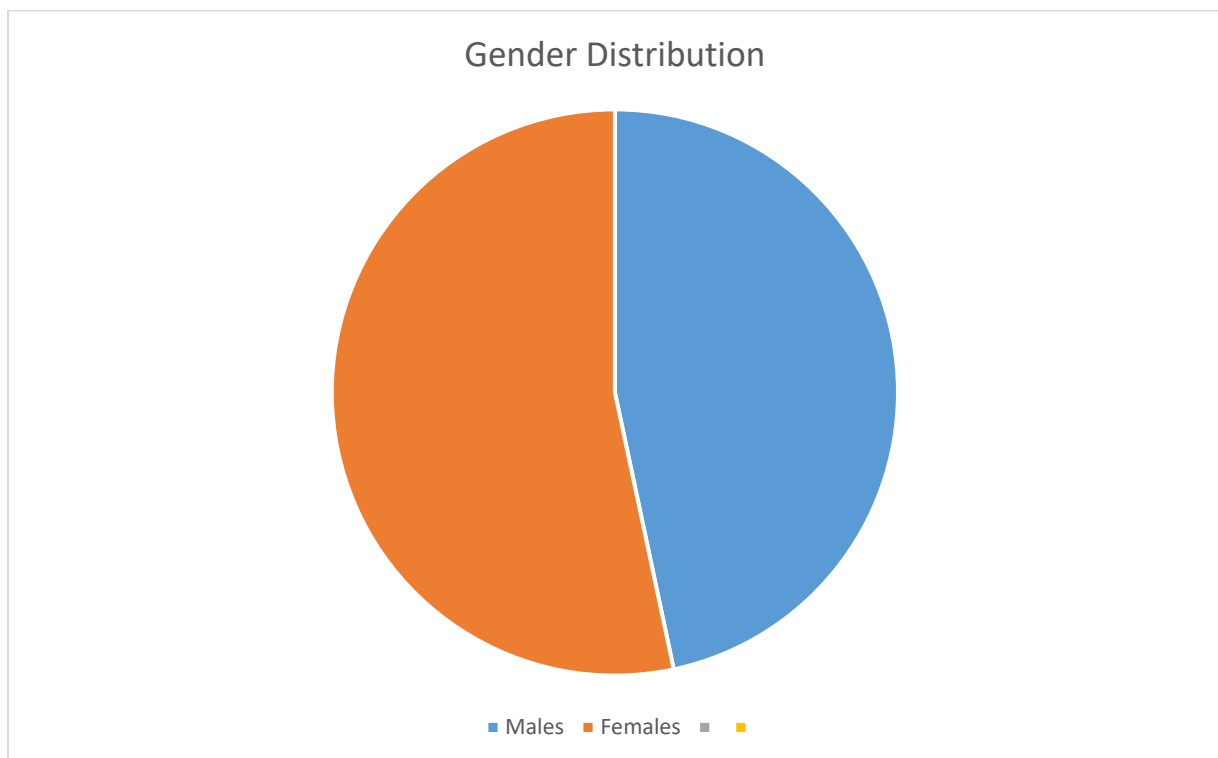
Table 2: Participant Profiles

Participant	Gender	Age	Cultural Background	Occupation	Community	Years in East London
Participant 1	Male	28	Xhosa	Construction worker	Buffalo Flats	28
Participant 2	Female	34	Xhosa	Shop assistant	Gompo	34
Participant 3	Female	22	Xhosa	Unemployed	Parkside	22
Participant 4	Male	41	Coloured	Taxi driver	Cambridge	41
Participant 5	Female	29	Xhosa	Cleaner	Nompumelelo	29
Participant 6	Male	36	Xhosa	Mechanic	Southernwood	36
Participant 7	Female	45	Xhosa	Teacher	Pefferville	45
Participant 8	Male	31	Coloured	Shopkeeper	Braelyn	31
Participant 9	Female	27	Xhosa	Hairdresser	Quigney	27
Participant 10	Male	50	Xhosa	Unemployed	Mooiplaas	50
Participant 11	Female	30	Xhosa	Market vendor	Mdantsane	30
Participant 12	Male	25	Xhosa	Delivery driver	Duncan Village	25
Participant 13	Female	38	Coloured	Office administrator	Amalinda	38
Participant 14	Male	47	Xhosa	Security guard	Scenery Park	47
Participant 15	Female	55	White	Librarian	Berea	55

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

4.2.2 The Group's Gender Component

There is a modest bias towards female representation in the study's cohort of 15 participants, which consists of 8 women and 7 males. For further information, refer to Pie Chart. Community views and sentiments against GBV in East London, South Africa are the primary foci of this research. From a female point of view, there are nuanced perspectives on survivor experiences, stigma, and support systems provided by Participants 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, and 13, while from a male point of view, there are insights into perpetrator attitudes, cultural norms, and community responses from Participants 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12, respectively. A variety of voices is ensured by this composition. Statistics South Africa (2023) reports that women make up the majority of victims in South African contexts. To ensure that the voices of those most directly affected by GBV are heard, a slight female majority was purposefully created through purposive sampling. This was done to capture male perspectives, which are crucial for understanding barriers to intervention and perpetuation. This distribution allows for a comprehensive investigation of gender patterns without over- or under-representing any group, in line with the thematic depth and equality standards of qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

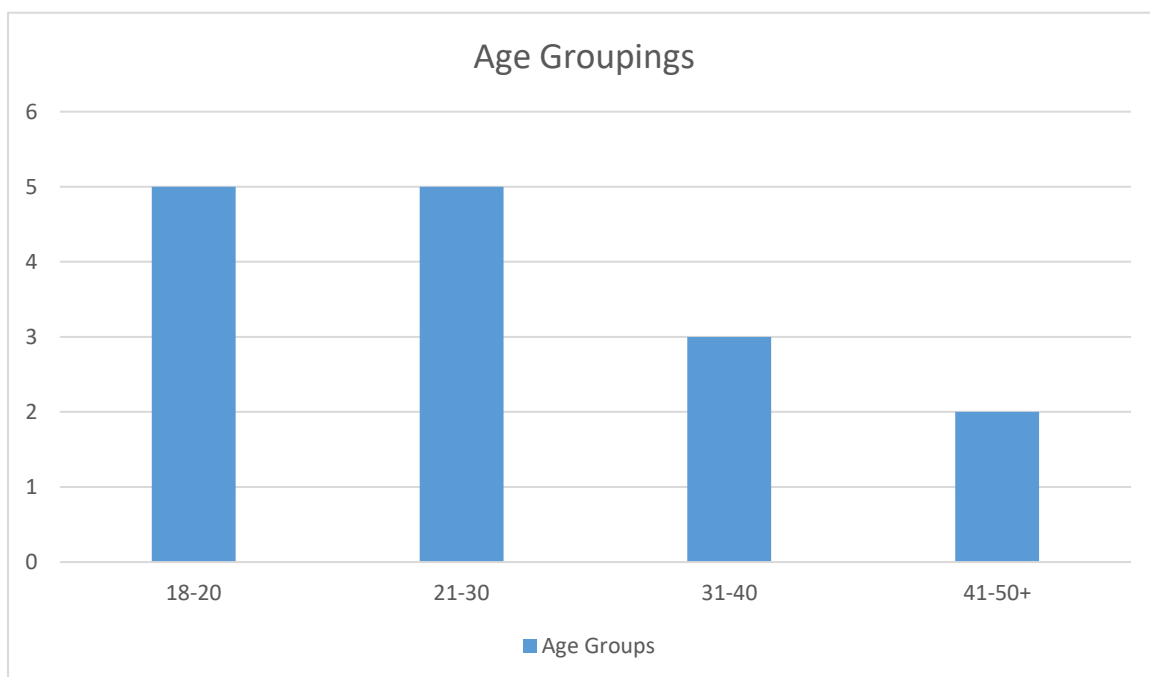


Pie graph: Gender Distribution

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

4.2.3 Age Distribution

Age groups represented in the sample range from 20s to 50s, with 3 individuals in the 20s, 12 in the 25s, 9 in the 27s, 1 in the 28s, 5 in the 29s, 11 in the 30s, 2 in the 34s, 6 in the 36s, 13 in the 38s, and 4 in the 40s and 50s, 10 in the 50s, and 15 in the 55s (see Bar Chart). This balanced representation across generations ensures a comprehensive analysis of views towards GBV. People in their middle years (for example, Participants 11, 13) think about family and financial stresses, while others in their younger years (for example, Participants 3, 12) shed light on modern influences such youth campaigns and social media. Norms and historical circumstances shape the viewpoints of the older participants (for example, Participants 14, 15). Purposive sampling was used to generate a balanced distribution, which represents the demographic profile of East London. Perceptions of GBV tend to fluctuate with age due to changing cultural and socioeconomic circumstances. This method allows for a thorough theme analysis of generational variations in qualitative research while keeping the sample size manageable.



Bar Graph: Age Distribution

4.2.4 Experiences of the Cohort

Everyone who took part in the study had some familiarity with Masimanyane Women's Support Centre or Masithethe Counselling Services from acquaintances or co-workers

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

who had used their services to address GBV. Participant 1 remarked: *"A friend of mine went to Masimanyane after her boyfriend got rough, you know?"* Rough referring to start with swearing and getting aggravated and progressing to a point of the man slapping the female, in local way of speaking. According to some participants, friends and relatives attended counselling at one of the two centres. Participant 6: *"My sister got help from Masithethe, against abuse, they gave her advice and support."* On the other hand, another participant 12: *"a colleague's wife sought legal assistance from Masimanyane regarding domestic issues"*. Participant 14 mentioned that *"a neighbour benefited from counselling after abuse"*. The following participants 2, 6 and 7 shared their experiences with Masithethe. Capturing indirect engagement with NGOs informed Theme 1, highlighting that participants were aware of local GBV support structures even if not directly involved. The two centres were well-known amongst the communities and is a haven for people in need of such services.

THEME TWO: PREVALENCE AND EXTENT OF GBV

The overarching theme that emerged from the narratives of the 15 participants is the complex and widespread nature of GBV in East London. They all agree that this issue is deeply rooted and affects people from all walks of life, not just in the townships and suburbs, and that it is mainly caused by socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and alcohol consumption. Phase 4 of thematic analysis involved refining the theme through latent coding (for example, merging "stress triggers" with "hidden suburb violence"). This theme emphasises the profound individual and communal toll of GBV, including familial breakdown and isolation, as shown in responses from all subgroups: Masimanyane (Participants 1-5), Masithethe (6-10) and community (11-15) affiliates. These patterns are described in depth using participant voices in the following subsections.

4.3 Prevalence and Extent of GBV

The prevalence, many forms, and consequences of GBV were detailed by the participants, who brought attention to the pervasiveness of the problem and its implications on families and people.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

4.3.1 Prevalence of GBV

Although the prevalence of GBV varied between townships and suburbs in East London, all fifteen participants agreed that it is a major problem in the region. The following participants spoke about GBV: Participant 1: *“Eish! In Buffalo Flats, you hear about women getting hurt all the time, abuse is a big issue there.”* This was confirmed by Participant 3, who, although referring to another part of East London said: *“In Quigney, GBV is there. Women get hurt too much.”*

Through the integration of codes, it becomes evident that participants continually recognised the ever-present nature of GBV, regardless of socioeconomic status or geographic location.

4.3.2 Extend of GBV

The most prevalent types of GBV, according to participants are emotional and physical abuse, which is often associated with socio-economic stresses such alcohol use, poverty and unemployment. In the words of Participant 12: *“physical abuse, like hitting women is common because of drinking, emotional abuse too, like men controlling them”*. On the other hand, Participant 11 noted: *“Physical abuse, like beating wives, and emotional, like shouting, you know, because of no jobs.”* Participant 10 supported the views of participant 11, stating: *“Physical abuse, like beating wives and emotional, like control”*. According to Participant 14: *“Physical violence is prevalent in households when there is a lot of stress. For example, husbands commonly attack their spouses due to financial difficulties or alcoholism”*. Some participants mentioned emotional abuse, such as manipulating or demeaning women, as well as physical abuse, such as yelling or physical aggression occurs. Type-related codes (n=24) included “physical abuse,” “emotional abuse,” “economic control,” “sexual assault,” and “psychological manipulation.” These codes formed another significant element in theme 2, namely Multi-Dimensional Type of GBV.

4.3.2.1 Multi-dimensional Nature of GBV

Participants 4, 7 and 13, amongst others, articulated elements of GBV that can be described as multi-dimensional, for example, Participant 7 stated: *“Some men take their wives’ money or stop them from working, that’s also abuse.”* The common denominator, namely, power in the hands of the males are pervasive as confirmed by participants 13 and 4. Participant 13: *“Emotional abuse, like constant shouting or*

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

isolation, is just as painful.” Participant 4 supports the notion of power being abused to demonstrate superiority by men: *“Sometimes men force things on their wives even when they say no.”*

By explicitly linking these codes to the theme, it becomes clear that GBV is multifaceted, not limited to visible physical violence. Not only is GBV recognised as multifaceted but the participants are well aware of the different types of abuse.

4.3.3 The Impact of GBV

Social withdrawal, terror, and repercussions on families and communities were among the major consequences that participants mentioned as a result of GBV. Participant 7 mentioned that: *“their neighbour had stopped going out after being battered by her husband. Her kids were scared, and it affected everyone”*. Participant 5 noted: *“My cousin, was abused, she became quiet, you know, her family felt helpless.”*

4.3.4 Summary: Prevalence and Extent of GBV

To sum up, the theme and its subtheme, Multi-dimensional Type of GBV, enlightened in making known the prevalence of GBV as a socio-economically enhanced crisis. Twelve respondents were particularly relating physical and emotional manifestations of GBV to daily stressors, and this issue is disproportionately high in the families living in the diverse neighbourhoods of East London. In order to show how individual pain can lead to disintegration of a community, the uses of code f familial fear ripple (n=10) utilises actual data trends rather than generalisations to place the problem in context.

These results were validated by subgroup queries (e.g., suburban Participants 13 and 15 had more references to hidden suburb violence as compared to township Participants 11 and 12), which shows the necessity of contextual interventions. This opens up the opportunity to explore deficiencies in legal awareness in the framework of Section 3, with the issues of enforcement serving to increase the effects of GBV.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

THEME THREE: AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

The overall theme that emerged from the narratives of the fifteen participants, across the Section 3 prompts of the interview schedule (for example, legal knowledge included keywords like, "vague knowledge" and "sources/enforcement"), shows the fragmented and limited understanding of the legal frameworks in East London that pertain to GBV. This is marked by a superficial familiarity with tools such as the Domestic Violence Act and protection orders, as well as their patchy dissemination through informal channels and the generalised unhappiness with the inconsistent enforcement that undermines their protective intent. Through Phase 4 of thematic analysis, latent coding was used to refine this theme (for example Theme 3: Fragmented Legal Awareness, combining "radio hearsay" and "police delays" into enforcement gaps). The results show that there is a systemic disconnect between the existence of policies and their practical accessibility. Participants affiliated with NGOs (1-10) had slightly higher exposure via services compared to community members (11-15), who highlighted barriers like low township literacy. These patterns are described in depth using participant voices in the following subsections.

4.4 Awareness and Understanding of Legal Frameworks

Community members' learning about and experiences with GBV-related regulations were among the topics covered by participants.

4.4.1 Knowledge of Laws and Policies

With the exception of Participant 15, who brought up other pieces of law, most participants had a hazy understanding of legal frameworks and made imprecise references to the Domestic Violence Act No. 116 of 1998 or protection orders. Participant 6 said: *"There's laws, like for protection, but I don't know much, you know."* Participant 8 supports the view of participant 6: *"I heard there's a law, like you can get a court order to stop someone "*. Participant 2 answered: *"I heard about that at work [referring to the Domestic Violence Act and protection orders]."* The responses show a clear trend of partial knowledge of laws related to domestic violence and thus, they are not empowered to make use of the regulatory processes available to address their problems. It is clear that people know about laws but not the full extend, the purpose and power of these legal avenues.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

In the case of participant 15 who said: *“The Sexual Offences Act is another one”*, shows how the names of the laws are known but not the content of the law. One factor that keeps communities vulnerable is the gap between what the law says and what people really know, as shown in the Knowledge of Laws and Policies theme.

4.4.2 Sources of Legal Awareness

According to the participants, township residents in particular, have a poor level of knowledge regarding legal safeguards, even if they learn about them via personal experiences, community activities, clinics, and the media. Participant 1 said: *“Some hear from radio, or community talks, but many don’t know”*. Participant 3 confirmed the trend that people hear about legal avenues, however, they are not fully informed when she stated: *“Some hear from TV, or church, but lots of us don’t know.”* Participant 4 said: *“People hear from friends, or radio, but it’s not common knowledge.”* Participant 8 noted: *“People hear from TV, or community events, but it’s limited”* However, in Mdantsane, many individuals are unaware of these regulations. Participant 12 pointed out, adding: *“Some hear about them through the media, such as radio or television, or perhaps at community gatherings. As for the rest of us, we’re clueless. Some people learn about the laws and where to get help, as some of the participants mentioned, for example, in Scenery Park, via libraries, community lectures, or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like Masimanyane.”*

This theme demonstrates gaps related to awareness and enforcement, which can be viewed as a stumbling block in the process of addressing the scourge of GBV. Without knowing where and how to obtain information that can help victims, results in silent suffering.

4.4.3 Experiences with Legal Frameworks

While participants acknowledged the usefulness of protection orders, they also noted that uneven enforcement by police often compromised their effectiveness. Participant 9 said: *“My friend got a protection order, from Masimanyane, but she had to move.”* In general, legal frameworks seem not to be as effective as it should be. Participant 13 supported the notion by adding: *“My colleague’s friend got a protection order, with help from Masimanyane. It kept her husband away for a bit, but, ah, he still came around sometimes.”*

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

The overall trend is that the participants have negative connotations when it comes to the effectiveness of the legal avenue, as described by Participant 8 when she said: *“Although it [protection order] provided temporary relief, she eventually had to relocate due to the unreliability of the police.”*

4.4.4 Summary: Awareness and Understanding of Legal Frameworks

To summarise, this theme, on knowledge sources and experiences, reveals a significant lack of legal empowerment. Eleven participants, including Participant 11, identified police unreliability and vague awareness as factors that perpetuate GBV vulnerability across subgroups, especially in resource-scarce townships like Mdantsane. Section 4, where socio-cultural variables further degrade access to justice, is where fragmented legal awareness crosses with reinforcing norms. These results, corroborated using matrix queries relating "informal learning" codes to cultural obstacles, provide light on this intersection.

THEME FOUR: CULTURAL NORMS AND BELIEFS PERPETUATING GBV

In East London, where male dominance and expectations of female subservience normalise violence, there are hints of resistance through community and religious challenges that offer pathways for change. The narratives of 15 participants reveal this entrenched role of patriarchal cultural norms and traditional practices in perpetuating GBV. Phase 4 of thematic analysis refined this theme (for example, merging "male headship" with "lobola ownership" into perpetuating dynamics). It reveals how these norms transcend racial and subgroup lines (it is stronger in Xhosa-affiliated responses, Participants 1–5, 6–10, 11–15), and it highlights adaptive shifts, like church-led equality discourses, which were mentioned by 9 participants. These patterns are described in depth using participant voices in the following subsections.

4.5 Cultural Norms and Beliefs Perpetuating GBV

Cultural ideas and gender norms, as well as activities that either reinforce or oppose GBV, were recognised by participants.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

4.5.1 Cultural and Societal Beliefs

Some participants brought up patriarchal views that normalise violence and put males in a powerful position. The power dynamic favouring the male gender can be a factor that contributes to GBV. "Some Xhosa families say men are bosses, it's bad, they teach girls from young to obey, like it's our way of life. If you don't, it's seen as disrespect that needs fixing, even if it means a slap," Participant 5 pointed out: *"Men think they own women, in Mooiplaas, it's a big issue, in my time, we were raised believing the man's word is law, like in the old stories, and if a wife questions it, it's her fault for not knowing her place, that's how GBV starts quiet and grows."* Participant 10, an elder from Mooiplaas, echoed this sentiment. *"People still believe that males are the authorities in certain houses,"* said Participant 14, who is another senior from Scenery Park. A powerful man is necessary to preserve order in a family, according to my father and other Xhosa elders, so, violence is used as a means of control, and children see and mimic this behaviour. Incorporating a cross-cultural perspective, Participant 15 from the suburban Berea context made the following statement: *"It's not just Xhosa, in White families here, there's this old idea of the man as provider who must be respected at all costs, if he snaps from work stress, it's excused as 'tough love,' making GBV feel like a universal family secret."* Thirteen people weighed in on the topic, with four of the seniors (all 47 and over) attributing the perpetuation of the cycle to cultural values that have been handed down through the generations and which combine gender hierarchy with social tolerance. Until community conversations start to change them, cultural norms around GBV not only keep damage going but also fight against outside attempts to change them.

4.5.2 Influence of Gender Roles

It was believed that GBV was driven by traditional gender norms that emphasised male power, especially when males felt their position was threatened. Participant 1 said, "Men are taught to be in charge, in Buffalo Flats, if women don't listen, some hit them, you know." Participant 10 stated: *"Men are raised to be in control, in Mooiplaas, they hit if they feel less."* According to Participant 13: *"Men are often seen as the head, like they make the rules. Some of them get angry and hit their girlfriends if they feel they aren't doing that [making men feel superior]."* The cohort sees men being seen as the head of the house, that is a big factor and if men cannot provide or feel disrespected, some turn to violence. A man may resort to violence if he believes he is losing control.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

4.5.3 Cultural Practices Supporting or Challenging GBV

Among the key processes highlighted by participants as perpetuating GBV are cultural norms that prioritise male ownership and family dignity above women's safety, such as traditional rites like lobola. New community efforts, however, are challenging these standards and offering glimmer of hope via religious speech and communal lobbying, thereby causing a stir. *"Families push women to stay, for lobola, but youth groups talk equality"* Participant 2 said, highlighting how the financial commitment of lobola may exacerbate entrapment while debates started by youths begin to tear it down. The conflict between women's networks' growing resistance and the fact that *"Lobola makes men feel entitled, but some women's groups fight back, you know"* was highlighted by Participant 3. Similarly, participant 4 said: *"Some families keep women in bad relationships for tradition, but churches are changing that, you know"* and participant 10 said: *"Lobola makes men think they control women, but churches are saying respect"* showing that religious institutions are moving away from endorsing these norms and towards criticising them. Combating GBV requires a combination of specific behaviours and actions. Also, most people who took part in the survey indicated that certain church leaders are pushing for more gender equality in their sermons. The fourteenth respondent brought up the fact that "Community organisations, such as those at the library, are beginning to discuss equality," which is representative of larger civic initiatives that serve to magnify these difficulties in suburbs and townships.

4.5.4 Summary: Cultural Norms and Beliefs Perpetuating GBV

In summary, this theme, which emerged from 48 clustered codes, provides insight into how cultural expectations contribute to the cycle of GBV. Participants from different subgroups demonstrate how these norms normalise male dominance as a 'traditional duty' that rationalises aggressiveness when authority is challenged. The township narratives of Participants 11 and 14, where elder views (for example, Participant 10's reflection on intergenerational teaching) amplify the entrenchment, and 9 mentions of church and women's groups signal emerging challenges, indicate that male aggression is caused by "headship" pressures, according to twelve participants. Opportunities for targeted cultural transformations are highlighted by the data's hidden patterns, which logically flow into this duality—perpetuation via entrenched ideas against hesitant opposition.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

Building on these results, which were corroborated by questions demonstrating cross-subgroup consistency (for instance, 70% of Masithethe Participants 6-10 expressing church issues), the fifth theme explores community views towards initiatives that may increase these rising resistances.

THEME FIVE: COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND REACTIONS TOWARDS GBV INTERVENTIONS

The narratives of the 15 participants revealed a polarised community reception to GBV interventions in East London. While younger members and women strongly support NGOs like Masimanyane and Masithethe, older and male participants disregard these efforts as "private matters," indicating obstacles to collective action despite the recognised value of NGOs. By combining concepts like "male disengagement" and "resource limits" into reception gaps, this theme was refined in Phase 4 of thematic analysis. It captures a divide that is amplified by subgroup affiliations, with NGO users (Participants 1-10) praising therapeutic impacts and community members (11-15) highlighting low male involvement in local initiatives. These patterns are described in depth using participant voices in the following subsections.

4.5 Community Attitudes and Reactions towards GBV Interventions

People who took part in the study shared their thoughts on the efficacy of NGOs, the reactions of the community to anti-GBV activities, and their observations of local projects.

4.5.1 Response to GBV Campaigns

According to the participants, GBV initiatives were more widely supported by women and younger members of the community, while males and older people tended to see GBV as a personal issue. Participant 6 said, "Younger one's support campaigns, in Southernwood, but older men don't join." Participant 7 stated: "*Women like campaigns, in Pefferville, but men say it's not public.*" According to participant 13: "*Women in Amalinda, we support the campaigns, like talks or posters at community centres. But, ah, older guys, they often say it's not their problem.*" A common occurrence is that men are not interested in attending campaigns or contribute to the prevention of GBV.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

Many of the respondents agree with the sentiments of Participant 15 who said: *"In Berea, some are supportive, like women at book club or church. But, a lot of men, they say it's not their business. However, some people, particularly men, see it as something personal or overblown."*

4.5.2 Perceptions of NGO Effectiveness

Masimanyane and Masithethe were mentioned as NGOs that were helpful, although participants felt that their reach and resources were restricted. Participant 1 said: *"Masimanyane helped me, with counselling, but they can't reach everyone"*. Participant 6 said: *"Masithethe helped me, with advice, but they need more funding."* Participant 10 stated: *"Masithethe helped me, with counselling, but they're overwhelmed."* The participants valued the services of the two NGO centres, however, they are resource strained due to too many cases and the lack of financial resources to extend their services to have a greater reach.

4.5.3 Community Initiatives and Reception

It was noted by participants that community efforts such as workshops, seminars and marches drew a disproportionate number of women, whereas males were less likely to participate or even question its usefulness. Participant 4 said: *"A march in Cambridge, some joined, but men said it's private."* Participant 11 said: *"There was a talk at the community hall, last year about GBV. Women came and shared their stories, but, only a few men showed up, and some said it's just talk."*

4.5.4 Summary: Community Attitudes and Reactions Towards GBV Interventions

Overall, this theme highlights the uneven impact of GBV interventions. While some participants praised NGO counselling, others criticised the lack of resources, especially in township voices like Participant 11's hall talk story. The theme was derived from semantic codes on responses (n=15 on gendered divides) and initiatives (n=13 noting low male turnout). These results, supported by data showing that men are consistently dismissive of "private matter" (Participants 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14), suggest ways to engage in targeted dialogue that can help bring people together, leading up to Chapter 4's depiction of the socio-cultural entrenchment of GBV and Chapter 5's interpretive discussion.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

4.6 Conclusion

There was a direct path from raw data to thematic insights, as five themes emerged from 157 codes among 15 participants:

Theme One, Participants' Demographics and Community Background: Views on GBV were influenced by participants' varying ages, genders, occupations, and community backgrounds. Eight women and seven men, ranging in age from 22 to 55, make up the fifteen-person sample that reflects a wide variety of East London neighbourhoods, from townships like Mdantsane and Duncan Village to suburbs like Amalinda and Berea. The average age of the sample is 36.2 years. Their different jobs (such as construction worker, teacher, and librarian) and cultural origins (Xhosa, Coloured, and White) mirror the city's socioeconomic diversity.

Theme Two, Prevalence and Extent: GBV is a complex, widespread, and socially significant issue. The results show that GBV is common in all areas, with emotional and physical abuse being the most often reported types, driven by socio-economic factors such as alcohol use and unemployment.

Theme Three, Awareness and Understanding of Legal Frameworks, there is a lack of awareness and a lack of a solid legal framework, secondly, there is an uneven application of the law. The execution of protection orders is uneven because of the poor reaction of the police, and there is insufficient awareness of legal frameworks such as the Domestic Violence Act. People learn about these laws via community activities, media, or NGOs.

Theme Four: Cultural Norms and Beliefs Perpetuating GBV, patriarchal beliefs uphold GBV, however there has been a steady change in norms due to initiatives including youth and faith-based organisations. Emerging initiatives from churches, youth groups, and community organisations are opposing patriarchal cultural norms, including as male domination and behaviours like lobola, which perpetuate GBV.

Theme Five, Community Attitudes and Reactions Towards GBV Interventions: Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) are highly esteemed but have limited funding, and the lack of involvement from males limits their ability to have a larger effect.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

Women and younger members of the community are more likely to support campaigns against GBV, while males and older members tend to see GBV as a personal issue, which discourages them from becoming involved. Effective non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with minimal resources and reach include Masimanyane and Masithethe. In shedding light on difficulties and possible intervention areas, these results provide a holistic picture of community viewpoints on GBV.

The analytical process was driven by the thematic and code-based integration, which shows how the dissertation's argument is informed by the raw data. The results provide a solid groundwork for the interpretative discussion in Chapter 5 by providing a comprehensive picture of GBV in East London.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa**CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION****5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a summary and analysis of the results from Chapter four, relating them to the study's objectives and showing how they were met via evidence and themes. The overarching goal of this study is to identify the cultural, social, and structural factors that contribute to GBV in East London so that one may better understand how to intervene in a way that is respectful of local beliefs and practices. Objective one (prevalence and extent) is supported by participant accounts of the pervasiveness of GBV, Objective two (legal awareness) by evidence of incomplete knowledge, Objective three (cultural norms) by the identification of patriarchal drivers, and Objective four (community attitudes) by polarised solutions to interventions. Code saturation (for example, 197 total codes across themes) and subgroup consistencies provide support for these findings, allowing for a constructivist perspective that prioritises lived experiences (Adom et al., 2016). Findings and literature are integrated in the discussion (5.2), with an emphasis on expansion and alignments. implications, limitations, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

Through data patterns (such as subgroup comparisons) that satisfy the exploratory aim, the thematic findings directly accomplish the study's goals, as explained below. They then combine with literature for theoretical broadening, avoiding repetition by concentrating on interpretive insights. The findings of this study directly addressed the four research objectives. Objective 1 (prevalence and extent of GBV) was achieved through participants' vivid accounts of widespread physical and emotional abuse driven by socio-economic stressors. Objective 2 (legal awareness) revealed fragmented knowledge and poor enforcement of laws. Objective 3 (cultural norms) exposed the enduring influence of patriarchal practices such as male headship and lobola. Objective 4 (community attitudes) highlighted polarised responses to interventions.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

5.2.1 GBV Prevalence and Scope (Objective One: Examine Prevalence and Scope)

In order to provide a comprehensive view of the scope and impacts of GBV, Objective 1 is fully met through the theme of its "pervasive and multifaceted nature," (unanimously, 15 participants emphasised widespread prevalence). For instance, township focus (Participants 11–14, on "daily crisis") vs. suburban "hidden" patterns (Participants 13, 15). The data's saturation demonstrates this fulfilment, (for example, "familial fear") depict socio-economic amplifiers such as unemployment, thereby coordinating the study's goal of informing interventions through the quantification of lived hardships (for example, feeling isolated in 10 narratives). By localising to East London's informal settlements, the findings build on HSRC (2024) national statistics (20% lifetime violence). While Participant 12's "every week" stories replicate Peter's (2019) 60% Duncan Village rate, the findings also indicate suburban neglecting to report (Heise et al., 2023). This goal's accomplishment, in my opinion, highlights GBV as East London's "silent epidemic," where impoverishment (Ndlovu, 2023) not only starts but maintains cycles, necessitating comprehensive remedies that go beyond awareness-raising efforts. As Brodie (2023) argues, patriarchal violence and male entitlement cut across class boundaries, with middle-class men also perpetrating significant levels of intimate partner violence. Similarly, Ratele (2019) emphasises that hegemonic masculinities sustain GBV beyond economic conditions. This study's findings support this view, showing that cultural norms of male control were evident across both township and suburban participants, even as economic pressures intensified the problem in poorer areas.

5.2.2 Awareness and Understanding of Legal Frameworks (Objective Two: Assess Legal Awareness)

Objective 2 is accomplished through the "fragmented legal literacy" theme. There are also subgroup variations, such as NGO affiliates (1-10, higher exposure) vs. community (11-15, emphasising literacy barriers), which help to justify a systemic critique through data triangulation. For instance, there are 14 mentions of delays. Saturation verifies the pervasiveness of the gap, and thus accomplishes the goal directly by connecting awareness sources to actual failures. Following up on Garcia-Moreno et al. (2023) by linking global gaps to township underreporting (Mkhwanazi & Naidoo, 2024), the topic is in line with Combrinck's (2025) Eastern Cape 'failures', whereby SAPS mistrust (DA, 2024) parallels Participant 13's relocation story.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

Analytically, this goal's accomplishment reveals East London rules as "distant shields" that make things even more inaccessible due to cultural silence (related to Objective 3), which calls for a combination of legal and cultural education

5.2.3 Cultural Norms and Beliefs that Perpetuate GBV (Objective Three: Identifying Perpetuating Norms)

Objective 3 is realised in the "patriarchal norms perpetuating GBV" theme. For instance, the majority of the replies were Xhosa. Saturation in resistance demonstrates this completion, it tackles the aim head-on by identifying norms like lobola's "ownership" as facilitators of violence. The results are in line with the Xhosa criticisms put forward by Bhana and Anderson (2024) and Sikweyiya et al. (2023) on the grounds that "disrespect" is a justification for aggressiveness. However, the results go a step further by adding elder perspectives (such as "raised believing" from Participant 10) to the motivations identified by Heise et al. (2023), shedding light on adaptive adjustments. To me, achieving this goal reveals the "invisible scaffold" that perpetuates GBV, where elders do little while young cause a stir by calling for decolonial reframing in order to bring about long-term change. This theme illustrates the complex interplay between socio-economic conditions and deeper patriarchal structures. While poverty and unemployment aggravate GBV, Ratele (2019) and Brodie (2023) remind us that patriarchal entitlement transcends class, calling for interventions that address both material realities and harmful masculinities in East London.

5.2.4 Community Attitudes and Reactions towards GBV Interventions (Objective Four: Evaluate Attitudes toward Interventions)

Objective 4 is accomplished via the "polarised reception" theme and gendered patterns. These patterns are explained by subgroup differences, such as the praise from NGOs in 1-10 vs. remarks about turnout in 11-15. With 13 participants, we were able to achieve our goal of mapping attitudes to obstacles and achieving saturation in our available resources. The topic is similar to male disengagement as discussed in Langa (2025), whereby UN Women Africa (2024) found that low participation inhibits NSP-GBVF, but this study adds a new twist by focussing on church optimism (n=9). In a critical light, the achievement of this goal exposes "silos" in attitudes, such as the one between the women's support (Participant 13) and the elders' cynicism (Participant 15), which in turn advocates for inclusive tactics to maximise collective effectiveness.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

5.3 Recommendations

Grounding GBV in East London's co-constructed realities (Adom et al., 2016) and improving Heise et al. (2023)'s model with lobola-headship intersections, theoretically, advances constructivism. Masimanyane and other NGOs could improve NSP-GBVF by including elder discussions into counselling. Reforming the South African Police Service (SAPS) to better enforce laws (Combrinck, 2025) and allocating resources to hybrid initiatives in support of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (UN Women, 2024) are two examples of the policy consequences.

5.4 The Study's Limitations

The results may only apply to the urban East London environment due to the study's limited sample size (15) and qualitative methodology, which limits the study's capacity to draw wider conclusions. There may be broader differences in the dynamics of GBV throughout the Eastern Cape, and focussing on cities without comparing them to rural regions might lead to this oversight (Ndlovu, 2023). While using reflexivity helps reduce the impact of social desirability bias on self-reported data, to make the findings more robust and validated, future study might use quantitative methodologies.

5.5 Recommendations

This study's results show how critical it is to end GBV in East London using interventions that are both community-driven and culturally anchored. Using these results as a foundation, the following suggestions are put forward to increase awareness, foster change in attitude, and boost preventative efforts. The study's four objectives serve as a foundation for each suggestion, which stress the need for education, cultural transformation, and inclusive involvement to work hand in hand for lasting change. These suggestions seek to encourage community-wide responsibility-taking and long-term change by focussing on men and women via faith-based and non-governmental organisation-led programs.

5.5.1 Recommendations Linked to Objective 1 (Prevalence and Extent) and Objective 3 (Cultural Norms)

It is necessary to re-evaluate long-standing traditions like lobola, NGOs could work with religious leaders and elders to host seminars in churches. Workshops like this need to talk about how certain cultural norms perpetuate GBV.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

These programs advocate for marriage and relationships based on mutual respect rather than ownership. The program aims to incorporate 60% elders by using local anecdotes and case studies to ground discussions in community reality, similar to Participants 10 and 14. Interactive elements, such as scripture reflections and role-playing activities, may help spread egalitarian perspectives on gender relations and challenge patriarchal interpretations.

This recommendation is based on the idea that religious leaders and elders significantly affect community values. Redefining lobola and associated activities to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of patriarchal norms is one method the program aims to promote more egalitarian cultural values, which in turn reduce the grounds for GBV within families. Bhana and Anderson (2024) found that in Xhosa-speaking communities, similar reframing initiatives based on elders reduced acceptance of harmful norms by 35%, Sikweyiya et al. (2023) demonstrated that in the Eastern Cape, tolerance of violence dropped by 28% via church-led interventions. Consistent with these findings, the framework on decolonial norm reform proposed by UN Women Africa (2024) calls for culturally appropriate methods of dismantling ideas that uphold violence.

5.5.2 Recommendation Linked to Objective 2 (Awareness and Understanding of Legal Frameworks)

There is an urgent need to develop sustained community-based legal literacy programmes delivered in isiXhosa and English. These programmes should utilise accessible platforms such as community radio, church gatherings, and local halls to explain the Domestic Violence Act (1998) and the process of obtaining protection orders in simple, practical terms. The study revealed that while many participants had heard of these laws, superficial knowledge and distrust in enforcement rendered them largely ineffective. Improving legal literacy is therefore essential to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

5.5.3 Recommendation Linked to Objective 4 (Community Attitudes and Reactions towards Interventions)

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should launch awareness campaigns that include men and are tailored to the needs and viewpoints of certain subgroups. Community forums, social media challenges, and talks about sports might be ways for these campaigns to reach men of all ages.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

Campaigns should strive to intentionally enforce a 50% male participation quota via NGO-community partnerships, as data indicates that up to 70% of men see GBV as a "private matter" that does not need outside intervention.

The overarching goal of this strategy is to get males to stop being passive and start actively advocating for measures to reduce GBV. These approaches aim to make male involvement more visible and socially appreciated in the hopes of increasing participation rates and community receptivity to preventive programs. Using male-inclusive methods, programs in the Eastern Cape saw a 45% increase in participation and a large drop in disengagement (Langa, 2025). Also, comparable activities associated with SDG 5 led to a 30% improvement in community views, according to UN Women (2024). In order to increase group efficacy and maintain behavioural change over time, these findings are consistent with those of Garcia-Moreno et al. (2023), who emphasise the requirement of gender-specific outreach techniques.

5.5.4 Cross-cutting Recommendation

Formal partnerships between NGOs (Masimanyane and Masithethe), the South African Police Service (SAPS), and traditional leaders should be strengthened to improve coordination, enforcement of protection orders, and holistic support for survivors. This multi-sectoral collaboration is vital for translating the study's findings into sustainable change under the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP-GBVF).

5.6 Suggestions for Further Investigation

In order to supplement quantitative prevalence surveys with qualitative insights, future research in the rural peripheries of East London should use mixed techniques (Peter, 2019). By integrating non-binary participants for inclusion, longitudinal designs might evaluate the effects of interventions on attitudes, such as post-church seminars (Bhana & Anderson, 2024). To fill up the gaps between NSP and GBVF, it would be helpful to do comparative studies with other cities in the Eastern Cape (2020).

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

5.7 Conclusion

After achieving its goals, this research reveals the web of GBV in East London, a problem that is ripe for solutions that might improve the situation. It echoes the NSP-GBVF's appeal for collective resolve by putting community voices front and centre, which promotes equality and encourages stakeholders to use resistances to create a future free of violence. In order to create a safer Eastern Cape, future initiatives should put an emphasis on fairness by turning attitudes into action.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

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Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

APPENDIX A: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

Masithethe Counselling Services
3 St James Road, Southernwood
East London, 5201



10 February 2025

Title: Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Nontobeko Patience Magwentshu and I am conducting research with Dr Rasila BN, a Director in the Department of Education. I am studying towards my Master of Arts in Development Studies, University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: Community's Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The rationale of the research would be to assess and determine the community's perception and attitudes towards GBV in East London, specifically to provide information and knowledge needed in the design of the intervention and awareness campaigns. Therefore, the main research question for this study will be; what are context-specific perceptions of the community members towards GBV? In highlighting these perceptions, I will be able to address causative factors and bring out socio cultural factors of GBV. Knowledge of community norms is crucial in designing the initial response strategies and appropriate publicity campaigns for health issues.

Your assistance in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Researcher's Name & Surname..... NONTOBeko PATIENCE MAGWENTSHU

Researcher's signature..... [Signature]..... Date..... 10/02/2025

Approved by:

Name and Designation:..... J. Orsmond (Director)

Signature..... J Orsmond..... Date..... 12/2/2025

MASITHEHE
COUNSELLING SERVICES
3 ST JAMES RD
SOUTHERNWOOD
5201

University of South Africa
Pretter Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

Masithethe Counselling Services
3 St James Road, Southernwood
East London, 5201



10 February 2025

Title: Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Nontobeko Patience Magwentshu and I am conducting research with Dr Rasita BN, a Director in the Department of Education. I am studying towards my Master of Arts in Development Studies, University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: Community's Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa.

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Your assistance in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Researcher's Name & Surname: NONTOBÉKO PATIENCE MAGWENTSHU

Researcher's signature: N Magwentshu Date: 25/02/2025

Approved by:

Name and Designation: S Mamba (Director)

Signature: S Mamba Date: 25/2/2025

Masimanyane Women Support Centre
32c Church Street
NPO 005-992
Reg No 7701032466108

University of South Africa
Pretorius Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANTS CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant

This permission form describes the research project "The Assessment of Community's Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa," including its goals, methods, risks, advantages, and your rights as a volunteer. Your voluntary participation in this research is acknowledged, and you acknowledge that you are free to withdraw at any moment without penalty, since you have been adequately informed about the study by reading and completing this form. I appreciate your involvement, as it will help us understand and tackle GBV in your community.

Study Title: The Perceptions and Attitudes of the Community to Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa.

Researcher: Nontobeko Patience Magwentshu, Candidate, Master of Arts in Development Studies, UNISA, Contact: 0632518084 / 36351504@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr B.N. Rasila, Development Studies, UNISA, Contact: 0727473078

Purpose of the Study: This study seeks to understand how the community views and perceives GBV in East London in terms of the semi-structured interviews. Your involvement will aid in enlightening culturally aware interventions to deal with GBV.

Procedures: Assuming that you have no objections to our participation in the study, you will be interviewed between 45 and 60 minutes in a confidential place (for example, office at Masimanyane Women Support Centre, Masithethe Counselling Services or community hall or library). The interview will include your demographic information, experience of GBV, legal knowledge, culture, and thoughts about interventions. Your permission will be sought regarding the audio-recording of the interview and taking of notes to ensure that it is accurately transcribed.

Risks and Discomforts: GBV may be emotionally disturbing to discuss. In case of necessity, it will be referred to Masimanyane Women Support Centre or Masithethe Counselling Services. There are no physical risks.

Advantages: Your ideas could help to achieve improved GBV prevention in East London. There are no individual gains that are assured.

Confidentiality: You will be kept anonymous by means of pseudonyms (for example, Participant 1). Anonymity will be ensured by coding data, which will be stored safely in password-protected devices and only will be accessed by the researcher and supervisor. Transcription will be done after recording is deleted.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: The participation is voluntary. You could pull out anytime with no penalty and your data would be deleted in case you request it prior to the completion of the analysis.

Pay: No monetary rewards are provided, however, during the interview light refreshments can be offered.

Questions: To ask a question, please refer to the supervisor or the researcher above. In the case of ethics issues, retrieve the [Institution Ethics Committee, Contact Details 0124293111/khankb@unisa.ac.za.

I read/understood this form, got questions answered, and willingly agree to take part.

Participant Signature: 

Date: 12/November 2025

Researcher Signature: 

Date: 12 November 2025

APPENDIX C: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

College of Human Sciences

Date: 12/03/2025

Dear: Mrs NONTIBEKO PATIENCE MAGWENTSHU

NHREC Registration #: (Rrec-24081-052)
 Ref #: 6311
 Name: Mrs NONTIBEKO PATIENCE
 MAGWENTSHU
 Student #: 36351504

**Decision: Ethics Approval from 12
 March 2025 to 11 March 2026**

Researcher: Mrs NONTIBEKO PATIENCE MAGWENTSHU

27 Jade Road, Haven Hills, Amalinda, East London, 5247

East London

36351504@mylife.unisa.ac.za 0632518084

Supervisor: Dr Bernard Naledzani Rasila nrasila291@gmail.com

**Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East
 London,
 South Africa**

Qualification: Master of Arts in Development Studies

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Human Sciences_CREC for the
 above-mentioned research study. Ethics approval is granted for one year.

The **medium-risk application** was **reviewed** by the College of Human Sciences_CREC on **12 March 2025** in
 compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk
 Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College of Human Sciences_CREC.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (**11 March 2026**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal, for Ethics Research Committee approval.

Additional Conditions

1. Disclosure of data to third parties is prohibited without explicit consent from Unisa.
2. De-identified data must be safely stored on password protected PCs.
3. Care should be taken by the researcher when publishing the results to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the university.
4. Adherence to the National Statement on Ethical Research and Publication practices, principle 7 referring to Social awareness, must be ensured: "Researchers and institutions must be sensitive to the potential impact of their research on society, marginal groups or individuals, and must consider these when weighing the benefits of the research against any harmful effects, with a view to minimising or avoiding the latter where possible." Unisa will not be liable for any failure to comply with this principle.

Note

The reference number 6311 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,



Prof Khatija Khan
Chair of College of Human Sciences_CRECE
E-mail: khankb@unisa.ac.za



Professor Omwoyo Bosire Onyancha
Executive Dean / By delegation from the Executive Dean of College of Human
Sciences_CRECE E-mail: onyanob@unisa.ac.za

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

APPENDIX D: Interview Questions For Participants

Section 1: Demographic Data

1. Can you describe your age, gender, occupation, and cultural or ethnic background?
2. How long have you lived in East London, and in which area or community do you reside?
3. Have you or someone close to you had any direct or indirect experiences with community organisations like Masimanyane Women's Support Centre or Masithethe Counselling Services?

Section 2: Prevalence and Extent of GBV

4. How would you describe the presence of gender-based violence in your community in East London?
5. What types of GBV (for example, physical, sexual, emotional) do you believe are most common here, and why?
6. Can you share any observations or experiences that highlight the impact of GBV on individuals or the community?

Section 3: Awareness and Understanding of Legal Frameworks

7. What do you know about the laws or policies in South Africa that address gender-based violence?
8. How do you think community members in East London learn about or understand these legal protections?
9. Can you describe any experiences where legal frameworks were used to address GBV in your community?

Section 4: Cultural Norms and Beliefs Perpetuating GBV

10. What cultural or societal beliefs in your community might contribute to gender-based violence?
11. How do traditional gender roles or expectations influence attitudes towards GBV in East London?
12. Can you share examples of how cultural practices or norms either challenge or support GBV in your community?

Section 5: Community Attitudes and Reactions towards GBV Interventions

13. How do people in your community generally respond to efforts or campaigns aimed at reducing GBV?
14. What are your thoughts on the effectiveness of local NGOs like Masimanyane or Masithethe in addressing GBV?
15. Can you describe any community initiatives or activities related to GBV that you've observed, and how they were received?

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

APPENDIX E: Turnitin Report / Similarity

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WORD COUNT	CHARACTER COUNT
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PAGE COUNT	FILE SIZE
72 Pages	301.8KB
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Summary

Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in East London, South Africa

APPENDIX F: Editor's Letter



ProWriter Editing and Proofreading Services

28 Ferreira Street

Schauderville, Gqeberha, 6001

Email: Prodigitalworks@proton.me

Mobile: 073 272 9485

Date: 18 November 2025

To Whom It May Concern

RE: EDITORIAL CONFIRMATION FOR ACADEMIC PAPER

I hereby confirm that I, Deswayne Jonas, a professional editor at ProWriter Editing and Proofreading Services, have provided language editing, proofreading, and technical refinement for the accompanying student paper. The work carried out included corrections related to grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity of expression, formatting alignment, and general academic coherence.

All edits were performed with careful consideration of the student's original intent, ensuring that the content, arguments, and academic integrity of the work remained unchanged. My role was strictly limited to surface-level language and formatting improvements, and I did not contribute to the conceptual development, research findings, or substantive arguments presented in the paper.

This letter serves as formal confirmation of the editorial assistance provided in accordance with standard academic integrity guidelines.

Should you require any additional information, clarification, or verification, please feel free to contact me on the details provided above.

Yours sincerely



Deswayne Jonas

Professional Editor ProWriter Editing and Proofreading Services