

## **Interrogating human capital as a gender based violence reduction strategy in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract**

*This study assessed the role of human capital in gender based violence reduction. A case study research design was employed. Twenty four participants from 5 wards in Mwenezi District which pioneered the programme were purposively selected based on the severity of gender based violence cases documented by the Victim Friendly Support Unit from the police, traditional leaders, nurse in charge and operating Non- Governmental Organisations in the district. Findings were analysed using content analysis and thematic methods of data analysis. The study revealed that knowledge and skills acquired through awareness campaigns, referral systems, and dialogue with stakeholders enabled sound protection, programming, participation and prevention of various forms of gender based violence. To achieve violent free communities, human assets with the support from transforming structures and processes enable sound protection, programming, participation and prevention of gender based violence among rural households. However, success of this framework is determined by the type, phase, age and religious beliefs of the vulnerable household or survivors.*

**Key words:** gender based violence, human capital, skills, survivors, knowledge

### **Introduction**

Gender based violence has been described as an evil that has disturbed many women the world over and knows no economic, social or national boundaries. About 35% of

women have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner, while national statistics show numbers as high as 70% who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime (Hraba, 2018; Research and Advocacy Unit, 2018; Rasanathan, 2011). Gender based violence has been conceptualised as any form of violence that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm to women (Zim Vac, 2016). From the Research and Advocacy Unit (2018) gender based violence has proven to be a severe human rights catastrophe that transcends the boundaries of class, religion and culture. It is one of the most pervasive human rights violations, denying particularly women and girls' equality, security, self-worth and their right to enjoy sacrosanct and fundamental freedoms. "Gender based violence remains one of the most serious threats to the health and safety of women and girls worldwide" (Tappis, Freeman, Glass & Doocy, 2016, p. 32). The violence, particularly against women, has been an area of concern on the agenda of many developing countries and Zimbabwe is no exception. Ngubeni and Smyth (2005) revealed that it is problematic to get a full picture of the actual state of gender based violence from crime statistics. While reliable statistics are hard to come by, global dimensions of this type of violence as highlighted by studies on its incidence and prevalence are alarmingly high and unacceptable (Ngubeni & Smyth, 2005).

In Zimbabwe, gender based violence is widely acknowledged to be of great concern, not just from a human rights perspective, but also from an economic and social perspective (Zim Vac, 2016). As Chireshe (2015) alludes, in spite of the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act in Zimbabwe in response to escalating cases of domestic violence, there is limited utilisation of the provisions of the law. The United Nations General Assembly, in December 1993, adopted the declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. It is considered as the first international human rights instrument to deal exclusively and decisively with gender based violence particularly against women and a ground breaking document that became the basis for many other parallel processes (United Nations, 1993). The untold suffering inflicted by this social conundrum compelled this article to assess the role of human capital in gender based violence reduction.

The Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (2015) noted that many forms of gender based violence are significantly heightened during humanitarian emergencies like natural disasters such as drought, floods which cause food insecurity thereby increasing the level of violence in households, of which those in southern Africa are not an

exception (Zim Vac, 2016). Pursuant to a growing need to reduce gender based violence, the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women have also addressed violence against women and identified it as an issue of global importance (Sturke, 2008; Chireshe, 2015). These efforts by conferences were aimed at primary gender based violence prevention and no systematic reviews of gender based violence prevention efforts have been made. The inadequately detailed role of human capital is large, leaving methodological and theoretical gaps. Hence very limited focus on the use of human capital in gender based violence reduction. The development and implementation of human capacity that exposes survivors and perpetrators to reproductive and sexuality education, youth leadership training and appropriate teacher training curriculum and community and policy outreach was found to boost knowledge and reduce gender based violence. However, the implementation of all these remained problematic, as they lack political will and professional accountability (Mapfumo, Muchena & Madziwa, 2016; Wilson, 2011). There remains a limited body of evidence on the role of human capital in gender based violence reduction (Tappis, Freeman, Glass & Doocy, 2016).

Despite Papageorgiou, Suárez, Wilkie, McDonald, Graham and Davison's (2016) effort in shifting incentives for risky behavior of violent relationships using health improvements as one of the human capital precepts, the ideas of knowledge and skills as other facets of human assets in reducing violence against women has not been realised. Using Giddens' (1984) Structuration theory, it is the interface of structures and actors which determine human behavior. A structure in the theory protects the few in a society and does little to meet the needs of majority. Actors or participants in a society operate within the context of rules produced by social structures and only by acting in compliance with reinforced structures (Chuma & Chazovachii, 2012). However, a critical understanding of the theory reveals that stability of social structures is influenced by human action since social structures are socially constructed. Agencies have the opportunity to modify social structures by acting outside the constraints placed by structures on them (Gibbs, 2015). Human capital has emerged to be the human actions which this article seeks to interrogate to achieve stability in violence. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that the paper seeks to assess the influence of knowledge and skills (facets of human capital) in reducing gender based violence since no evaluation has been done. To achieve this, the study sought to identify and assess the utility of human capital precepts in gender based violence reduction in households.

Human capital can be perceived as the knowledge, skills, competencies and other attributes embodied in individuals or groups of individuals acquired during their life and used to produce goods, services or ideas in market circumstances (Pettinger, 2017). What determines human capital are skills and qualifications, education level, work experience, social skills – communication, intelligence, emotional intelligence, judgement, personality – hard working, harmonious in an office, habits and personality traits, creativity. Ability to innovate new working practices/products and brand image of an individual also determine human capital. For example, celebrities paid to endorse a product, Geography – Social peer pressure of local environment can affect expectations and attitudes (Pettinger, 2017). Theodore Schultz in his book entitled *Investment in human capital* (1961, p.23) stated that:

Although it is obvious that people acquire useful skills and knowledge, it is not obvious that these skills and knowledge are a form of capital, which this capital is insubstantial part a product of deliberate investment.

In human capital, there is an adaptation which deals with ‘disequilibrium’ structures, with situations in which there is a changing environment, where one has to adapt to it (Papageorge, et al., 2016). The Domestic Violence Act (2007), which was introduced in Zimbabwe as an attempt to reduce gender based violence, by creating a conducive environment for stability in violence, was challenged as it was perceived as trivialising African manhood. Violence against women was taken by Chuma and Chazovachii (2012) as a normal aspect of gender relations. Women have devised strategies that involve forging networks to provide emotional support, using love portions and resorting to newly emerging Christian denominational churches to ameliorate their suffering, but all these have remained contentious, elusive, opposed and resisted by men who are the major beneficiaries of patriarchy.

The role of non-state actors brought in the emergence of human capital and how it contributes to the social - political development and freedom. Human capital is the capacity to adapt to life in a hierarchical society, to work in organizations, obey orders in capitalist society. The capacity of human beings is knowledge and skills embedded in an individual. So, realising the entrapment of human potential by structures in society, the idea of knowledge and skills needs to be explored and check the extent to which it can ameliorate gender based violence in rural communities.

## **Method**

### *Research design*

A case study was used to enable the researchers “explore an issue or a setback case as a specific illustration” as advised by Creswell (2013, p. 57). The use of a case study was considered ideal because of its capacity to address the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions of the contemporary problems (Gray, 2014; Gonye, 2016). The research design allowed the researchers to explore the utility of human capital in reducing gender based violence in the rural context of Mwenezi District. Using a single district ensured an in-depth analysis to the phenomenon under study.

### *Sample*

Five wards in Mwenezi District which pioneered the programme on gender based violence were purposively selected based on severity of gender based violence cases documented by the Victim Friendly Unit from the police, traditional leaders and operating NGOs. A total of 24 (5 traditional leaders, 5 perpetrators, 5 survivors, 5 ward based gender officers, 1 Victim Friendly police officer, 1 NGO representative, 1 nurse in charge and 1 lead gender officer) respondents participated in the study. From each of the 5 wards, 4 participants; traditional leader, perpetrator, survivor and ward based gender officer were selected. The other 4 were a representative each from the victim friendly unit department of the police, non-governmental representative and the lead gender officer from the district office of Mwenezi. The perpetrators and survivors were chosen to participate based on severity at the rehabilitation centre for interviews.

### *Instrumentation*

Interviews and focus group discussions were used in the study. Key informant interviews were done with the nurse in charge at the district hospital in Mwenezi working with non-governmental organisations operating in the district, the officer in charge of the Victim Friendly Unit in the district, five traditional leaders in the aforementioned wards and lead gender official at the rehabilitation centre. The focus of the interviews were on the human capital precepts that contributed to gender based violence and how these can assist in averting gender based violence. In each ward, a Focus group discussion (FGD) was held with the traditional leader, perpetrator, survivor and ward based gender officer to get the experience, work habits and trustworthiness and initiatives in the family. A total of 5 FGDs were held. Focused group discussions were held with aforementioned key informants to ensure trustworthiness and credibility

of the findings as the researchers compared the responses. Interviews were chosen for the small sample of key informants and both perpetrators and victims because they allowed the researchers to ‘enter into their ‘perspectives’, an issue which might have been impossible with other tools (Gonye, 2016). The interviews allowed respondents to comment on how knowledge and skills imparted by programs and interventions have transformed their attitude and experiences on violence and its implications on household stability and security. All key informants, perpetrators and survivors targeted through these tools comprised participants who had ‘stories to tell’ (Creswell, 2013,p.155) and who could “purposefully inform an understanding” (Gonye, 2016, p. 60)of the study of the existing human capabilities in reducing gender based violence.

#### *Data Collection Procedures*

The lead researcher approached the Provincial Social Welfare Office in Masvingo and obtained clearance to carry out the study in the named wards of Mwenezi District. The researchers visited the sites of the wards that had been selected for the study. At these sites, the researchers guided by the ward based gender officer, discussed with lead gender officer at district level, NGO representative and victim friendly unit officer. The researchers requested cooperation of the key informants and took advantage of the workshop which was going on at district offices to access members of the focused group discussions for the study to go ahead.

#### *Data analysis*

Data were thematically analysed to determine the usefulness of human capital in gender based violence reduction.

#### *Ethical considerations*

Participants were informed that the study was of a worthwhile scholarly purpose. They were assured of the freedom to withdraw even after signing the consent forms. It was due to the code of ethics that this was done, as a requirement to avoid infringing the rights of participants and for the avoidance of harm to participants (Gonye, 2016).

## **Results**

Findings of the study which sought to establish human capital precepts and their contribution to gender based violence reduction were obtained from the interviews and focused group discussions. A summation from the interviews and FGDs indicated

that education, experience, training, work habits, trustworthiness and initiatives were the major elements which assisted in reducing gender based violence among households. In an interview with the lead gender officer, findings revealed that before training by the victim friendly unit, there was persistent violence among residents of Mwenezi. The officer reiterated that training had brought knowledge and skills of dispute resolution. This was echoed by the NGO representative that after the workshops perpetrators and survivors were found playing a pivotal role in sharing their experiences which assisted new survivors and perpetrators in understanding the negative aspects of violence in the society. The above sentiments are demonstrated by the following verbal quotes:

*Violence has reduced from 25 to 9 cases per week among traditional leaders and from 12 to 5 cases per week according to the victim friendly unit records. Experience is the best teacher. Trustworthiness among perpetrators has led to improved work ethics. The rate of reports about violence has reduced as shown by our records (Lead gender officer).*

*After the workshops, perpetrators and survivors are playing a pivotal role in sharing their experiences which assisted new survivors and perpetrators in understanding the negatives of violence in the society. The workshop has done the 'training of trainers' as survivors can be seen spreading the gospel of the shortcomings of violence (NGO Representative).*

The NGO representative revealed that education, experience, training, gave knowledge about gender violence reduction and skills critical in averting the violence. The above sentiments are demonstrated by the following verbal quote:

*Truly speaking, the learning process and practical exposure that perpetrators and survivors got has transformed their way of thinking on violence (NGO Representative).*

In one FGD, perpetrators and survivor reached an agreement that trustworthiness and communication are key in averting conflicts. The sentiments are demonstrated by the following verbal quotes as participants revealed that:

*Trust bring good work ethics (FGD member 1).*

*Good work ethics bring initiatives on how to reduce misunderstanding (FGD member 2).*

*Understanding among members yield productive outcomes (FGD member 3).*



The knowledge and skills guide both the perpetrator and the victims through the referral processes. The knowledge imparted through awareness campaigns, referral system and rehabilitation process enhances the skills that empowers perpetrators and victims of violence in reducing gender based violence. This is demonstrated by the following verbal quotes:

*Victims and perpetrators have confirmed that, out of the knowledge brought about by awareness campaigns by NGOs and local institutions like the victim friendly unit, referral system and during rehabilitation process, they have gained skills, capabilities and capacities of resolving gender based violence among themselves (Key informant in FGD 1).*

*Existence of referral centres has transformed the lives of both the survivors and perpetrators (Key informant in FGD 2).*

*Survivors and perpetrators have confirmed that, out of the knowledge brought about by awareness campaigns by NGOs and local institutions like the victim friendly unit, referral system and during rehabilitation process, cases of social dissonance and cohesion reduced (Key informant in FGD 3).*

## **Utility of human capital precepts**

### *Referral systems*

Findings revealed that before and after the violence, the process of referring the survivor for relevant assistance is critical. For the sexually, physically and psychologically harassed persons, the health center is the first port of call, followed by police and later to a safe shelter located at Hebron high school under Mwenezi. The safe shelter nurses the affected persons until they recover. Health centre is critical for resolving clinical related challenges that the survivor is suffering from like rape cases and physiological ailments. The counselling process done by the nurse brought our family together. The above sentiments are demonstrated by the following verbal quotes as participants revealed that:

*I now know where to go or refer other survivors (Survivor 1).*

*Safe shelters have nursed us till we recover. The rape cases needs urgent clinical support. The efforts done by the nurse brought our family together (Survivor 2).*



The perpetrators revealed that police documentaries have transformed perpetrators attitudes towards violence and restore order between the survivors and the perpetrators. The above sentiments are demonstrated by the following verbal quotes:

*The experiences that was revealed by the police about the dangers of violence and cases of bad habits and untrustworthiness of partners which led to the demise of other families have taught me a big lesson in my life (Perpetrator 1).*

*The experiences that was revealed by the police about the dangers of violence has brought a new dawn to our lives (Perpetrator 2).*

Findings revealed that the safe shelter is the rehabilitation centre where human empowerment is done. Survivors of violence are empowered with human, social, financial, physical and natural assets that can transform not only him or herself but the perpetrators of all forms of violence.

Sentiments are demonstrated by the following verbal quotes:

*Our livelihoods have been transformed through empowerment. As survivors, we acquired skills, accessed financial resources, networks and integration; and health support from the rehabilitation centre. We are no longer thinking of violence but development ( FGDs member 1).*

*Reciprocity is the order of the day as a result of the rehabilitation centre (FGDs member 2).*

*If we all make use of these centre the community can have the capacity to do self help projects (FGDs member 3).*

Participants revealed that the system in safe shelter educates survivors and perpetrator on how to respond to a challenge. It assists survivors in getting support in form of security and peace. Conflicts are addressed at local level by local persons due to imparted knowledge and skills as opposed to the earlier years when human capital was limited. The above sentiments are demonstrated by the following verbal quotes:

*It is lack of initiatives, trustworthiness, access and assets that causes violence in households. Now that we have been transformed with knowledge from the education, experiences gathered from stories told, work habits and initiatives, we are in a new world of peace and stability (Interviewed couple 1).*

*We are ready to face problems as a peaceful family* (Interviewed couple 2).

*Dark ages are over, as misunderstanding are solved inhouse* (Interviewed couple3).

*Safe shelter has emancipated both survivors and perpetrators for ever* (Interviewed couple 4).

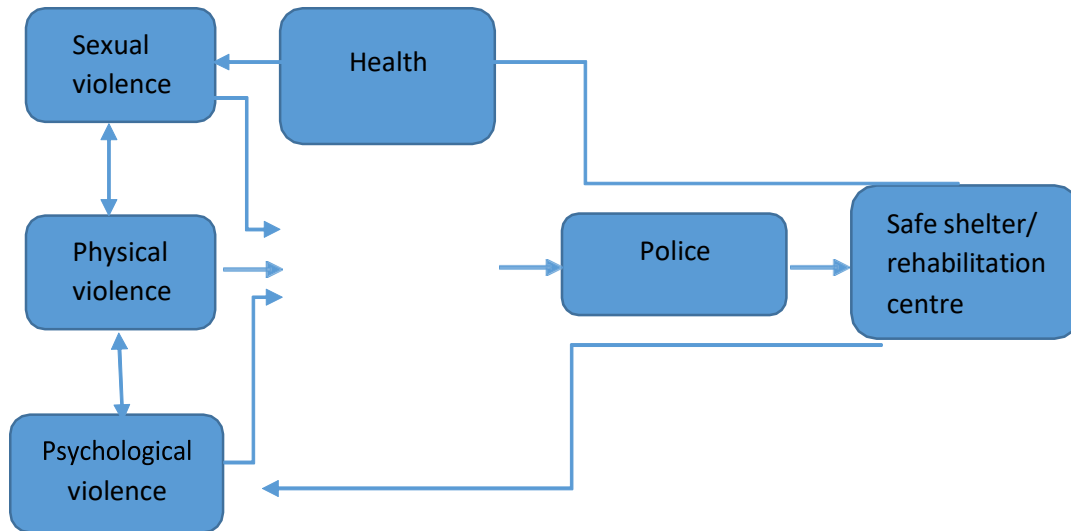


Figure 1: Sources of violence and stages in referral system

Figure 1 reveals processes under which stability and household wellbeing is achieved through the referral system in Mwenezi District.

#### *Awareness campaigns*

From the interviews held with lead a gender field officer; representatives who are the actors in gender based violence reduction in Mwenezi are National Aids Council, Campaign for Female Education, Musasa Project, Plan International, Regai Dzive Shiri officials just to mention but a few the knowledge, skills, power through healthsupport services by the National Aids Council officials were delivered during awarenesscampaigns on survivors and perpetrators of violence and HIV and AIDS. The gospelis about reduction of the gender based violence impact on the spread of HIV and AIDS and infidelity. The campaign for female education is on women empowermentto reduce violence. It assists children who are vulnerable. It teaches females and vulnerable children on life skills before and after affection. The above sentiments aredemonstrated by the following verbal quotes:

*Awareness on HIV and AIDS instils trustworthiness, intelligence and self-help initiatives that brings peace and stability in rural households (NGO official 1).*

*It educates both perpetrators and survivors by sharing experiences through drama and poems about reduction of the gender based violence impact on the spread of HIV and AIDS and infidelity (NGO official 2).*

*This has assist women and children on skills of life even before and after infection (NGO official 3).*

Results revealed that the knowledge and skills on psycho-social support by Musasa project to the affected persons has brought self-reliance. It gives referral procedures to members affected by violence; which could be economic, psychological, sexual or physical violence. The awareness gave survivors access to transport fees, food and life skills support like dressmaking, computers, income- savings and lending schemes at its safe shelters around the district. The above sentiments are demonstrated by the following verbal quotes:

*As survivors, we are now aware of the referral procedures (Survivor 2).*

*With knowledge and skills, awareness campaigns from Musasa project, we are now self-reliant due to psycho-social support and life skills. We can now do cross border trading, market gardening, dress making as taught by NGOs (Survivor 3).*

*Dressmaking, computers, income- savings and lending schemes at safe shelters are economic transformation efforts which have empowered ordinary residents of Mwenezi (Survivor 4).*

Results from the study revealed that peace clubs are established in the district by Musasa project acting as eyes for gender based violence. Among members in the peace clubs are the councilors, village heads, headman, and chiefs in the district who have the experience and traditional knowledge and skills of resolving conflicts while councilors and other stakeholders have a modern legislative understanding of conflict resolution. These local institutions are the runners on the ground and initially, five wards pioneered the programme. The above sentiments are demonstrated by the following verbal quote:

*Since the start of the peace club programme, we had realised a significant reduction in the cases of gender based violence since every individual has a role to play in peace building. The involvement of councilors, village heads, chiefs, survivors and perpetrators brought responsibility and accountability to all (Peace club official).*

Findings revealed that coordinators of the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development at each and every ward carry out awareness campaign programmes at community level luring, males (mostly identified as perpetrators of violence) involvement during Food for Asset and, AGRITEX programme. The whole community is involved through poems and drama to conscientise the individuals, households and the community at large. Ward coordinators make use of social functions like Food for Asset Programmes, village routine meetings, political rallies and primary and secondary school social function programmes, doing poems and dramas, alerting the victim and perpetrators of violence about the negative impacts of gender based violence, procedures to follow when sexual, physical, economic or psychological violence erupted in the neighbourhood. This implies that everybody in the community has a role to play in combating gender based violence. The approach is bottom up in nature, hence people centered. The above sentiments are demonstrated by the following verbal quotes:

*Taking advantage of the Food for Asset, village routine meetings, political rallies and primary and secondary school social function programmes, and AGRITEX programmes we invite the whole community where school pupils would be doing poems and dramas, alerting the survivors and perpetrators to concertize the individuals, households and the community at large on the danger of gender based violence (Ward based gender field officer 1).*

*Combating violence should start with the community and not those outside it (Survivor 3).*

*Through artistic approaches to information dissemination, it conscientises the individuals, households and the community at large to appreciate and understand challenges associated with violence (NGO Official 3).*

### *Dialogue*

Interviews revealed that dialogue enables participation which brings responsibility, accountability, ownership to activities and behaviour in place. A responsible partner does not sexually, physically, economically perpetrate violence. Ownership brings concern, security, and protection against harm. Participation enhances knowledge and insight and awareness of the constraints and opportunities of an act. It creates an enabling environment for comprehensive comparative analysis of facts from various stakeholders like Musasa, NAC, Regai Dzive Shiri, Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development coordinators. It allows the affected and the infected to physically, psychologically express the magnitude and reciprocal behavior noted. Peace clubs are eyes for gender based violence and composed of local people who are well

versed with the social, cultural, economic and political environment. The above sentiments are demonstrated by the following verbal quotes:

*My husband is now responsible, no sexual and economic violence in our family. With dialogue, we could share views with experts and the experienced. It reduces barriers and institutional constraints (Survivor 4).*

*Truly, we were lost. A responsible partner does not sexually, physically, economically perpetrate violence. Ownership brings concern, security, and protection against harm. Participation in this dialogue has enhanced knowledge and insight and awareness of the constraints and opportunities of an act (Perpetrator 2).*

*The role of Plan international and Regai Dzive Shiri in promoting dialogue is applauded. Their effort in sponsoring the safe shelter project for the affected or victims of gender based violence is highly commented. The way they nurture the youth, protect and prevent sexual, physical, psychological violence have registered significant development in maintaining a violence free society (Key informant 2).*

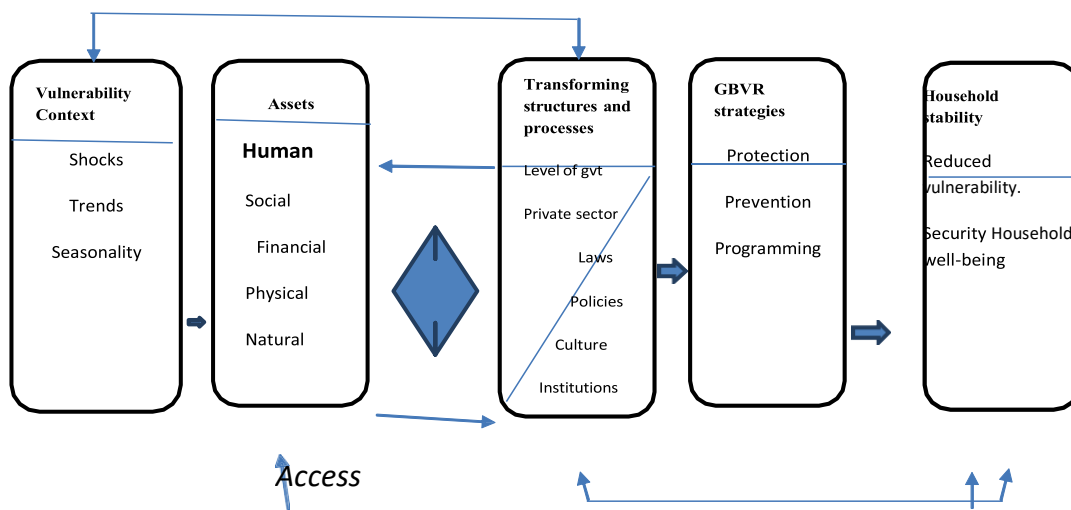


Figure 2: Gender based violence reduction framework modified from Scoones (2010) As shown in Figure 2, the study revealed that human capital can avert the vulnerability context faced by survivor due to gender based violence. Focus group discussions revealed that human capital has enabled survivors and perpetrators access to private organisations, policies, laws and government agencies that would facilitate a violence free society to exist. It is these transforming structures and processes that would influence knowledge, skills transformation to avert vulnerability of the survivors. It is from transforming structures and processes that programmes to protect and prevent

violence are set. It is these gender based strategies that will result in positive livelihood outcomes.

## **Discussion**

Results from the study showed that referral systems, awareness campaigns and dialogue with stakeholders who are trained, experienced, trustworthy and received education and initiatives are human capital precepts that can reduce gender based violence. Both the victims (survivors) and the perpetrators are critical in the referral systems, awareness campaigns and dialogue. In line with Papageorge et al. (2016), human capital assets that transform household from traditional bondage to modernity. It is these precepts that create an enabling environment through referral system, awareness campaigns and dialogue for the households or victims (survivors) and perpetrator to protect and prevent gender based violence.

From the results, *Regai Dzive Shiri* and *Musasa* project have provided awareness on how to access referral points and created a platform for dialogue between perpetrators and the survivors an effort that has transformed knowledge and relationships among community members. The interaction with the trained and experienced stakeholders has made facilitating institutions accessible and responsive to the instability that was disturbing peace among households.

A referral system can only be understood by those who receive education, and have experienced the services of the system. It takes a great deal of trust for a victim or perpetrator of violence to visit referral points. Knowledge and experience are needed for one to understand the importance of participation and prevention of different forms of violence. Prevention is better than cure. Prevention protected youth, families from economic hardships, HIV and AIDS, sexual abuse and physical harm. Peace clubs, dialogues and referral process also prevent perpetrators and victims from vulnerability. Traditional and modern laws or acts like DVA 2007, Criminal and Codification Act, just to mention a few, are critical in averting gender based violence in rural areas (Government of Zimbabwe, 2006).

As findings reveal, transforming structures and process which encompasses, rules and laws, institutions and culture influence human behavior. From Gibbs (2015)'s view point on the theory of structuration, structures in African societies in the form of

culture and institutions are reinforcing blocks that impedes a violent free society. Structures, if left unchecked will result in social disorder. One should separate modern and traditional structures. Traditional ones are barriers of a tranquil society as opposed to modern laws, policies and other private and government initiatives.

As revealed by the findings, it is the structure that causes shocks, trends and seasonality among households as individuals would be subjected to the powers of traditional values and have no control over their lives. All these compromise the reasoning capacity of humans. Only a few are protected. Vulnerability context is this condition under which violence can take place. The traditional values system supported by Chuma and Chazovachii (2012) who took violence against women as a normal aspect of gender relations, determines the vulnerability context of a household as shown by the modified gender based violence reduction framework in Figure 2. It is human capital that influences household access to transforming structures and processes. However, Gibbs (2015) noted that it's critical to realize that stability or avertion of vulnerability context of society is influenced by human action since social structures are socially constructed. Hence, human capital comes as an asset among the five that would influence and enable access to transforming structures and processes (Scoones, 2010). The conditions under which the framework functions is determined by the type, phase, age educational levels and religious beliefs of the vulnerable household or victim.

It also emerged from the study that, education, experience, training and initiatives influence institutions that transform structures that protect, prevent households to achieve household stability. Last but not least, prevention of gender based violence can be done through protecting and empowering survivors while enlightening or educating perpetrators. Protection, programming, participation and prevention are critical to the sexually, physically, economically and psychologically affected persons. Awareness campaign projects are done to those not yet affected to achieve reduced vulnerability, household security and well-being. Participation calls both perpetrators and survivors to their involvement in protecting, programming and prevention of gender based violence (Furusa & Limberg, 2015). It protects the youth and families from the negative effects of violence. The affected persons are protected from further devastation through safe shelter. The forms of empowerment through life skills at safe shelters protect persons from further hardships. Protection brings independence, self-reliance and self-determination. Violence separates partners, exposes them to HIV and AIDS, hence protection averts vulnerability of partners from being affected by the diseases (Furusa & Limberg, 2015). Transforming structures and processes



influence vulnerability context by instituting laws and policies through government and private sectors to refrain from retrogressive cultural values that breed seasonal conflicts.

The study revealed that, programming entails coming up with programs and projects that assist the youth, couples and the affected on life skills. Programming involves dialogue with stakeholders, peace clubs, and socio-psychological support for the victims. It comes with projects that avert economic and physical causes of violence. As Giddens (1984) alludes, cultural structures and actors constraints capacities and capabilities of households to emancipate themselves. However, the emergence of policies, laws and proactive institutions has transformed these barriers to avert vulnerability and enable human knowledge and skills to protect, prevent and programmes to take a centre stage.

## **Conclusion**

Human capital has managed to reduce the vulnerability of survivors of gender based violence. Human capital has given survivors access to transforming structures and referral systems. The transforming structures and referral processes have improved by coming up with programmes to protect and prevent vulnerability to achieve a positive outcome for the household. However, the success of this framework is determined by the type, phase and age of the vulnerable household or victim. Vulnerable households have been empowered and an enabling environment created for them to access and influence a violent free rural society.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made:

- Rehabilitation centres need to be equipped to sustainably empower survivors
- Programmes for prevention and protection of survivors need to be participatory in nature
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be put in place in people driven programmes that avert vulnerability of the household.

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