

**DETERMINANTS OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN  
KILIFI NORTH SUB COUNTY, KILIFI COUNTY, KENYA**

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## DECLARATION

### DECLARATION

This research project is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution or for any other recognition.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>ACC</b>	Assistant County Commissioner
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>MKUERC</b>	Mount Kenya University Ethical Review Committee
<b>NACOSTI</b>	National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation
<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>IPV</b>	Intimate Partner Violence
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>RAT</b>	Routine Activity Theory
<b>GRT</b>	Gender Role Theory
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>CREAW</b>	Centre for Rights Education and Awareness
<b>KDHS</b>	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey

## ABSTRACT

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence is a persistent global and national challenge that undermines the dignity, safety, and well-being of women and girls. In Kenya, despite the existence of legal and policy frameworks such as the Sexual Offences Act, 2006 and the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act, 2015, SGBV remains prevalent, particularly in regions like Kilifi North Sub-County. High rates of intimate partner violence, child sexual abuse, and early marriages have been reported, often normalized by cultural beliefs and exacerbated by poverty, weak enforcement mechanisms, and limited access to survivor support services. Although several interventions have been implemented nationally, the local drivers of SGBV in Kilifi North remain insufficiently examined, and evidence-based measures to combat it remain underdeveloped. This study was guided by three specific objectives: to examine the socio-cultural determinants of SGBV, to explore the economic determinants of SGBV, and to identify possible measures for eradicating SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County. Grounded in Routine Activity Theory and Gender Role Theory, the research applied a descriptive survey design within a mixed methods framework. The study was conducted in Kilifi North, drawing from a target population comprising adult community members, local leaders, and service providers. A sample was selected through stratified and purposive sampling, and data were collected using structured questionnaires and key informant interviews. Instruments were piloted and validated through expert review and reliability testing, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.81 confirming internal consistency. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed to provide contextual depth. The first objective examined socio-cultural determinants and revealed that 65% of respondents justified wife-beating under certain conditions, while 54% viewed it as a private matter, and 53% agreed that community elders often discourage formal legal recourse. Patriarchal beliefs about male dominance were strongly upheld by 47% of respondents. The second objective explored economic factors and found that 69% of respondents depended on partners financially, with 64% reporting that lack of income prevented them from leaving abusive relationships. Furthermore, 63% noted that men-controlled household finances, and 72% supported financial empowerment as a strategy for reducing SGBV. The third objective assessed potential interventions and found that 64% of respondents were aware of SGBV laws, but only 53% had access to awareness campaigns. While 75% acknowledged the presence of safe shelters, 79% believed limited access to survivor services discouraged reporting. The study concludes that deeply embedded cultural norms, financial dependency, and inadequate support structures collectively perpetuate SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County. It recommends integrated, community-based interventions targeting harmful gender norms, expanding economic opportunities for women, and strengthening legal and support systems. Further research is recommended to explore the intersection of SGBV with marginalized groups and to evaluate the long-term impact of preventive interventions across urban and rural contexts.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is a widespread and persistent violation of human rights that affects individuals across various demographics. It comprises multiple forms of abuse, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence, each of which has far-reaching consequences on the safety, health, and socio-economic stability of survivors. Globally, it is estimated that one in every three women experiences some form of gender-based violence during her lifetime, with intimate partner violence emerging as the most common manifestation (Ajayi & Olajide, 2021). Despite the existence of international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), progress towards the elimination of SGBV has remained limited. The fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5) highlights the importance of achieving gender equality and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, yet challenges in enforcement and socio-cultural resistance persist across many countries.

A combination of socio-cultural norms and economic vulnerabilities continues to perpetuate SGBV globally. In many contexts, survivors—particularly women—face barriers to economic autonomy, which increases their dependence on abusive partners and limits their capacity to seek justice or protection (Gichuhi, 2022). Weak legal frameworks, societal stigma, and inadequate institutional responses further exacerbate the problem (Ondicho, 2018). Additionally, the rise of technology-facilitated violence, including cyber harassment and online sexual exploitation, has introduced new dimensions to the problem (Khan &

Krishna, 2021). These factors underscore the need for comprehensive and multi-level strategies that address both the root causes and manifestations of SGBV.

Although there have been significant advancements in legal protections and gender rights, cultural attitudes and structural inequalities continue to hinder progress. In many societies, patriarchal traditions reinforce rigid gender roles that normalize male dominance and discourage survivors from reporting violence (Palermo, Bleck, & Peterman, 2014). This problem is not limited to developing nations; even in countries with advanced legal systems, issues of underreporting, victim-blaming, and institutional bias remain prevalent. The COVID-19 pandemic worsened these dynamics, as lockdown measures increased isolation, reduced access to support services, and exposed survivors to prolonged periods of abuse (UN Women, 2021). These developments highlight the urgency of adopting holistic approaches that integrate legal, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions in the fight against SGBV.

In the African context, SGBV is deeply embedded in socio-cultural traditions, economic marginalization, and weak institutional systems. Research indicates that between 30 and 50 percent of women in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced some form of SGBV (Kilonzo & Taegtmeier, 2021). While regional frameworks such as the Maputo Protocol (2003) have been established to protect women's rights, their impact is limited due to poor implementation, resource constraints, and the resilience of harmful gender norms. Practices that subordinate women, such as early marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), and polygamy, remain prevalent despite legal prohibitions (Equality Now, 2021). These practices not only perpetuate violence but also limit women's access to education, employment, and legal redress (Muluneh & Francis, 2020).

Economic dependency is another major contributor to the persistence of SGBV across the continent. A significant number of women and girls lack access to education and income-generating opportunities, which makes them financially reliant on abusive partners or family members (Morrison & Palermo, 2021). Survivors who attempt to leave violent relationships often face threats of homelessness, social rejection, and economic instability. In conflict-affected areas, such as South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, sexual violence is often used as a weapon of war, resulting in long-term psychological and physical trauma (Stavropoulos, 2006).

The inefficiency of criminal justice systems also poses a substantial barrier to SGBV prevention and response in many African countries. Survivors are frequently confronted with delays in legal proceedings, corruption among law enforcement officers, and pressure to settle cases informally through traditional justice systems that often favor perpetrators (Ajayi & Olajide, 2021; Gichuhi, 2022). Underreporting remains a widespread challenge, driven by fear of retaliation, stigma, and the potential loss of economic support (Ondicho, 2018). Addressing SGBV in Africa therefore requires a multifaceted approach that strengthens institutional capacity, promotes cultural transformation, and enhances economic opportunities for at-risk populations.

East Africa continues to record some of the highest SGBV prevalence rates globally, with Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania experiencing particularly high levels. In Kenya, the government has enacted a range of legal frameworks, including the Sexual Offences Act (2006) and the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015). However, enforcement of these laws remains weak due to systemic corruption, lack of awareness, and resistance rooted in patriarchal ideology (Ajayi & Olajide, 2021). Economic inequality further complicates

the situation, as financial dependence restricts the mobility and agency of survivors (Khan & Krishna, 2021). In refugee-hosting regions and displacement settings, SGBV risks are especially acute, with women and girls frequently subjected to sexual exploitation and trafficking (Ondicho, 2018).

According to the 2023 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, 37 percent of women aged 15 to 49 have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence. Despite the presence of several progressive legal instruments, informal dispute resolution mechanisms remain prevalent, often undermining survivors' access to formal justice systems (Gichuhi, 2022). Economic constraints further exacerbate this problem, as survivors are often forced to remain in abusive environments due to financial dependency (Ajayi & Olajide, 2021). Cases of SGBV are increasingly being reported in schools and workplaces, highlighting the need for policy reforms and public education (Kilifi County Assembly, 2023).

In Kilifi County, and specifically in Kilifi North Sub-County, SGBV is an increasingly urgent concern. The local economy is heavily reliant on tourism and fishing, sectors that are characterized by informal labor, economic volatility, and high poverty levels. These conditions have created a fertile environment for exploitative relationships, particularly involving adolescent girls who seek financial support from older men, resulting in high rates of teenage pregnancy and school dropouts (Kilifi County Assembly, 2023; Ikwara & Mwaniki, 2024). Law enforcement in the region is constrained by inadequate resources, lack of gender-sensitive training, and a community preference for resolving cases through traditional mechanisms that rarely offer justice to survivors (Kilifi County Assembly, 2023).

The Kilifi County Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Bill (2023) represents a significant policy effort aimed at curbing SGBV. However, the effectiveness of this legislation is limited by persistent socio-cultural attitudes, institutional weaknesses, and insufficient funding. The convergence of harmful cultural norms, economic hardship, and limited access to justice continues to drive the prevalence of SGBV in Kilifi North. This study therefore seeks to examine the socio-cultural and economic determinants of SGBV in the region, while also identifying sustainable and context-appropriate measures for prevention and eradication.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Efforts to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) have gained momentum globally through the establishment of legal and policy frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Maputo Protocol, and Kenya's Sexual Offences Act of 2006. These frameworks aim to promote gender equality, safeguard the rights of survivors, and ensure accountability for perpetrators. Ideally, such mechanisms should lead to a decline in SGBV cases, reinforce institutional capacity to respond effectively, and foster community environments that are intolerant of violence. At the county level, initiatives like the Kilifi County SGBV Bill (2023) signify commendable steps towards localized policy interventions aimed at prevention and survivor protection.

Despite the existence of these frameworks, the incidence of SGBV in Kilifi County remains alarmingly high. According to CREAM (2017), more than 45% of women in the county have experienced some form of violence—a figure that exceeds the national average of 37% among women aged 15 to 49, as reported in the 2023 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey. The manifestations of violence in the region include child sexual abuse, early and

forced marriages, intimate partner violence, and economic and emotional abuse. These issues are compounded by underlying socio-economic challenges such as widespread poverty, limited access to education, and dependence on informal livelihoods, particularly in sectors like tourism and fishing. Moreover, entrenched cultural norms—including the normalization of wife-beating, patriarchal authority in household decision-making, and the preference for traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution—continue to reinforce silence around abuse and deter survivors from seeking formal justice (CREAW, 2017).

Although numerous studies have examined SGBV at the national level, there is a marked lack of context-specific research focusing on how socio-cultural and economic dynamics intersect to influence the persistence of SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County. Additionally, there is insufficient exploration of community-informed and locally viable strategies for prevention and response. Most interventions remain focused on legal reform and awareness creation, often overlooking the critical roles of economic empowerment and cultural transformation. This study responds to these gaps by investigating the specific socio-cultural and economic factors that drive SGBV in Kilifi North and by proposing practical, sustainable solutions tailored to the unique context of the region.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the determinants that contributed to the prevalence of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County, Kenya.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

- i. To examine the socio-cultural determinants of Sexual Gender Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub County, Kilifi County Kenya.

- ii. To examine the economic determinants of Sexual Gender Based Violence in Kilifi North the sub-county, Kilifi County, Kenya.
- iii. To identify possible measures that can be put in place to eradicate Sexual Gender Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub County, Kilifi County, Kenya.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- i. What are the socio-cultural determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County, Kenya?
- ii. What are the economic determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County, Kenya?
- iii. What measures can be implemented to eradicate Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County, Kenya?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant to multiple stakeholders, including policy makers, law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community leaders, scholars, and survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). For policy makers, the study will provide data-driven insights into the socio-economic determinants of SGBV, helping to inform legislative reforms and policy interventions aimed at strengthening prevention and response mechanisms in Kilifi North Sub-County. Law enforcement agencies will benefit from an improved understanding of cultural and economic factors contributing to SGBV, enabling them to enhance case handling, prosecution, and survivor protection measures.

NGOs and community-based organizations working on gender rights will gain critical evidence to develop more effective advocacy programs, awareness campaigns, and survivor

support services. The findings will also be valuable to scholars and researchers, as they contribute to existing literature on gender-based violence and socio-economic vulnerabilities, fostering further research in related areas. Additionally, the study will empower survivors and at-risk populations by raising awareness about available support services, legal rights, and economic empowerment opportunities, ultimately contributing to efforts aimed at reducing SGBV prevalence and promoting gender equality in Kilifi County.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study focused on examining the determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County, Kenya. It specifically investigated the influence of cultural norms, knowledge levels on GBV, household economic stability, and economic decision-making power on the prevalence of SGBV. The study targeted survivors, community members, law enforcement officers, healthcare providers, and local leaders to capture diverse perspectives on the issue. Geographically, the research was confined to Kilifi North Sub-County, a region identified as having high rates of SGBV due to factors such as poverty, harmful cultural practices, and limited access to justice. The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative approaches, including surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The findings were intended to inform policy makers, law enforcement agencies, and organizations working to combat SGBV, offering evidence-based recommendations to enhance prevention, response, and support mechanisms within the county.

## **1.8 Study Limitations**

This study encountered several limitations that had the potential to affect data collection and analysis. First, the sensitive nature of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) led to instances of underreporting, as some survivors were reluctant to share their experiences due to stigma, fear of retaliation, or emotional trauma. To address this, the research team employed ethical safeguards, including informed consent, confidentiality assurances, and the use of trained enumerators who created a safe and non-judgmental environment for participants.

Second, cultural and traditional barriers in Kilifi North Sub-County limited open discussions, especially among men and older community members, who were sometimes hesitant to acknowledge or discuss SGBV. These challenges were mitigated through community sensitization, the engagement of local leaders, and the inclusion of culturally sensitive approaches in both communication and data collection. Third, resource and time constraints restricted the scope of fieldwork, particularly in conducting interviews, focus groups, and follow-up visits. The research team addressed this by adopting a targeted sampling strategy, ensuring representation while maximizing the available resources. Data triangulation helped enhance the depth and credibility of the findings within the limited timeframe.

Finally, limited access to survivors and restricted availability of official data posed challenges, as some survivors were in protective custody or shelters, and some institutions were hesitant to release sensitive information. To overcome this, the study built collaborations with local NGOs and service providers, who facilitated access and helped

establish trust with participants, while also relying on alternative credible sources to complement institutional data. Despite these limitations, the study successfully generated rich, reliable data by employing diverse data collection methods, maintaining ethical standards, and adapting to the field realities in a flexible and responsive manner.

### **1.9 Delimitations of the Study**

This study was specifically focused on Kilifi North Sub-County, allowing for an in-depth examination of the determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) within this particular region. While SGBV is a national concern, the study deliberately excluded other counties to enable a context-specific analysis tailored to the unique socio-cultural and economic dynamics of Kilifi North. Additionally, the study examined only four key socio-economic factors—cultural norms, GBV knowledge levels, household economic stability, and economic decision-making power—while excluding other possible influences, such as political dynamics or broader legal frameworks. This helped maintain a focused and manageable scope.

Data collection was restricted to primary sources, including surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with selected community members, law enforcement officials, healthcare providers, and survivors, rather than incorporating secondary data or national statistics. Lastly, the study involved only individuals aged 18 years and above, excluding minors to uphold ethical research standards and avoid additional legal complexities. These delimitations enhanced the feasibility, depth, and ethical soundness of the research process while ensuring the findings remained focused and relevant to the local context.

### **1.10 Assumptions of the Study**

This study operated under several key assumptions that were essential for the validity and reliability of its findings. First, it was assumed that participants would provide honest and accurate responses during interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions, ensuring that the data collected accurately reflected the prevalence and determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. Second, the study assumed that the selected variables—cultural norms, GBV knowledge levels, household economic stability, and economic decision-making power—were significant factors influencing the prevalence of SGBV, and that their effects could be meaningfully assessed using the research methodologies applied.

Third, it was expected that key stakeholders, including community leaders, law enforcement officers, healthcare providers, and NGOs, would cooperate and provide relevant insights to support the research. This cooperation was assumed to facilitate access to contextual and policy-related information necessary for comprehensive analysis. Lastly, the study assumed that existing legal frameworks and policy documents, such as the Sexual Offences Act (2006) and the Kilifi County SGBV Bill (2023), were at least partially implemented, thus allowing the study to assess their practical effectiveness and highlight any gaps in enforcement. These assumptions underpinned the study's design and execution, ensuring it remained focused and aligned with its intended objectives.

### 1.11 Operational Definition of Key Terms

**Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):** For the purpose of this study, SGBV refers to any harmful act perpetrated against individuals based on their gender, including physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse. It encompasses acts such as rape, defilement, intimate partner violence, forced marriage, and economic deprivation, occurring within homes, communities, or institutions in Kilifi North Sub County.

**Socio-Cultural Determinants:** This term refers to the traditional beliefs, social norms, gender roles, and community practices that influence attitudes toward SGBV. In this study, it includes factors such as the acceptance of wife-beating, reliance on traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, and patriarchal perceptions of male authority in Kilifi North Sub-County.

**Economic Determinants:** Economic determinants are the financial and livelihood related conditions that affect individuals' vulnerability to SGBV. In this study, these include income levels, employment status, financial dependency, access to economic resources, and the ability to make independent financial decisions.

**Eradication Measures:** Eradication measures refer to the strategies, policies, and community-level interventions aimed at preventing and

eliminating SGBV. This includes legal reforms, survivor support services, public awareness campaigns, and economic empowerment programs considered relevant or applicable within the context of Kilifi North Sub-County.

**Financial Dependency:** Financial dependency in this study denotes the condition in which a person, particularly a woman, lacks independent sources of income and relies economically on a partner, family member, or perpetrator. This dependency is examined as a factor that may prevent survivors from exiting abusive relationships or seeking justice.

**Traditional Dispute Resolution Mechanisms:** This term refers to customary methods used by local elders or community leaders to address conflicts, including SGBV cases. In the context of this study, it relates to informal systems that often prioritize family reconciliation over legal accountability, and which may hinder access to formal justice for survivors in Kilifi North.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviewed literature related to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) with reference to the study's three objectives. It presented an empirical review of studies on socio-cultural and economic determinants of SGBV and existing intervention measures. The theoretical framework applied Routine Activity Theory and Gender Role Theory to explain the drivers of SGBV, while the conceptual framework illustrated the relationships among the study variables. The chapter also provided a recap of key literature findings and highlighted research gaps that this study addressed within the context of Kilifi North Sub-County.

#### **2.2 Empirical Literature**

This section presents a critical review of empirical studies that have examined the socio-cultural and economic determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), as well as the measures undertaken to prevent or respond to such violence. The review draws on research conducted at global, continental, regional, and local levels, with an emphasis on quantitative and qualitative evidence that supports the understanding of how SGBV manifests and persists across different contexts. Each subsection is structured according to the study's specific objectives and highlights patterns, statistical findings, and methodological insights from previous studies. By identifying both common trends and context-specific dynamics, the empirical review provided a foundation for situating the current study within the broader body of knowledge and addressing the research gaps that existed in Kilifi North Sub-County.

### **2.2.1 Socio-Cultural Determinants of Sexual Gender Based Violence**

Globally, empirical evidence illustrates how traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms continue to reinforce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). A study in India involving 1,500 rural married women found that 78% believed a husband was justified in disciplining his wife physically for domestic failures, 62% refrained from seeking legal recourse due to family honor, and 70% supported punishment for disobedience (Alam, 2025).

In Fiji, a mixed-methods study revealed that 70% of men perceived domestic violence as a private matter, 58% of women were discouraged from reporting abuse by elders, and 63% endorsed male dominance in the household (Shah, 2025). In the Philippines, 54% of women attributed non-reporting to cultural expectations, 61% of cases were resolved by religious institutions, and 66% agreed men should lead households (Ramirez & Domingo, 2024). Similarly, a study in rural Mexico found that 66% of women remained in abusive relationships to preserve family unity, 72% avoided contradicting their husbands in public, and 57% of SGBV cases were resolved by clergy or community elders (Castillo & Pérez, 2025).

Additionally, a cross-country study in Uganda indicated that 64% supported spousal obedience, 35% justified physical punishment, and 49% of cases were resolved informally by clan elders (Pulerwitz et al., 2025). These studies collectively demonstrate that socio-cultural norms globally sustain environments where violence is normalized, survivors are silenced, and community-based mediation supersedes formal justice mechanisms.

In sub-Saharan Africa, similar patterns emerge. A survey in Nigeria revealed that 55% of SGBV cases were mediated by religious or traditional leaders, 63% of women were encouraged to reconcile with abusers, and 59% feared family shame if they reported (Adigun & Yusuf, 2024). In Sierra Leone, community-level research found that 60% supported female genital mutilation, 53% believed in absolute spousal obedience, and 44% of survivors lacked access to legal justice (Koray et al., 2024). In the Eastern Cape of South Africa, 45% of women had experienced gender-based violence, 36% remained in abusive relationships for family stability, and 49% preferred informal resolution methods (Kasa, 2024).

A survey in Eswatini established that 68% of women and 52% of men justified spousal discipline, 40% of cases were resolved by elders, and 47% of participants distrusted police (Mpofu & Tfwala, 2024). Rwanda presented similar trends, with 48% of male respondents accepting violence as a disciplinary tool, 59% of women remaining with abusive partners due to societal pressure, and 42% prioritizing marital duty over safety (Imran & Adewale, 2024). These results reinforce how community-based norms, stigma, and religious-cultural practices act as barriers to formal justice and perpetuate cycles of abuse.

In East Africa, evidence from Tanzania, Burundi, Somalia, Uganda, and Ethiopia reveals similarly entrenched socio-cultural factors. In Tanzania, 73% of SGBV cases were handled by traditional elders, 65% of respondents distrusted police interventions, and 59% believed family conflicts should remain private (Gottert et al., 2025). In Burundi, 62% of women were discouraged from reporting, 51% of cases were resolved

informally, and 45% of men denied women decision-making roles (Nduwimana & Karekezi, 2024).

In Uganda, a survey involving 1,000 respondents showed 64% supported total wife obedience, 35% accepted physical discipline, and 49% relied on clan elders (Pulerwitz et al., 2025). A qualitative study in Somalia revealed that 80% of women had undergone FGM, 68% normalized male household control, and 50% avoided courts due to cultural taboos (Shah & Ahmed, 2024). In Ethiopia, a household survey found that 60% sought religious mediation for SGBV, 55% feared public shame, and 58% endorsed male authority (Wanjala et al., 2024). These findings confirm that across East Africa, patriarchal cultural structures and informal dispute resolution override formal justice systems and contribute to sustained underreporting of violence.

Kenyan studies provide equally compelling evidence of the socio-cultural roots of SGBV. The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey reported that 37% of women aged 15–49 had experienced either physical or sexual violence, but only 22% reported the abuse, and 40% of respondents accepted spousal control (KDHS, 2023). Gichuhi's study found that 60% of SGBV cases were managed through family mediation, 55% justified physical violence, and 52% of survivors chose silence over legal action (Gichuhi, 2022).

In Nairobi's informal settlements, 50% of women had suffered domestic abuse, 42% cited societal pressure as a reason for silence, and 58% of cases were referred to local elders (Adeoye & Adebayo, 2024). In tourism-dense Mombasa, 46% of young women reported sexual abuse, 61% of cases bypassed formal courts, and 49% upheld male dominance in decision-making (Fatima & Shahid, 2025). In Tana River, 55% of women

preferred community resolution for abuse cases, 62% feared shaming their families, and 47% supported male financial control (Mutua, 2024). These statistics reveal that although Kenya has robust legal frameworks, traditional norms and informal systems continue to hinder justice and reinforce SGBV.

In Kilifi North Sub-County, localized data remains limited. However, a county-level study by Agu and Mbachu revealed that 54% of cases were handled by community elders, 57% of survivors were discouraged from filing formal complaints, and 63% believed men should control household decisions (Agu & Mbachu, 2024). Adjacent counties reflect similar patterns: in Lamu, 39% of women believed physical punishment was justified, 51% of cases were handled by elders, and 44% denied women the right to challenge male authority (Hassan & Kiptoo, 2024).

In Mombasa, 49% endorsed male dominance, 61% of SGBV cases bypassed courts, and 46% of women reported abuse (Fatima & Shahid, 2025). Nationally, CREAM (2017) noted that 45% of women in Kilifi County had experienced SGBV, surpassing the national average of 37%, and linked these trends to the tourism economy and entrenched poverty. While not directly focused on SGBV, Ong'ayo (2020) documented that although 90% of Kilifi North's farmers were women, they had minimal roles in community decision-making, reinforcing structural gender inequality. These findings emphasize a significant gap in sub-county-level evidence, reinforcing the need for the current study to generate context-specific insights into how cultural norms and informal systems influence SGBV in Kilifi North.

### **2.2.2 Economic Determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence**

Globally, empirical literature consistently identifies economic dependency as a core driver of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). In India, 68% of women without personal income reported experiencing intimate partner violence, and 74% remained in abusive relationships due to financial dependency. Conversely, economic empowerment was associated with a 40% reduction in the risk of abuse (Ahmed & Patel, 2024).

In a comparative study across three Latin American countries, 71% of unemployed women reported physical or emotional violence, 63% experienced financial control by partners, and 59% cited economic barriers as the primary reason for not leaving abusive environments (Smith & Lopez, 2025). Among South Korean migrant women, 53% were subjected to financial abuse, 60% had no access to household income, and those with employment were significantly less likely to experience SGBV (Kim & Lee, 2024).

In the United States, 41% of survivors noted that lack of financial resources prevented them from leaving abusive relationships, 62% experienced economic sabotage such as job loss caused by partners, and those with employment were better able to exit violent households (Brown et al., 2023). A global meta-analysis of 37 studies found that in 83% of cases, economic dependence increased vulnerability to SGBV, while economic empowerment correlated strongly with higher rates of reporting and escape from abusive relationships (Wangari et al., 2024). These studies underscore the intersection between financial autonomy, power dynamics, and exposure to abuse, and emphasize the protective role of stable income and asset control for women globally.

Within Africa, similar patterns have been documented. In Nigeria, 67% of women identified economic dependence as a key factor limiting their ability to resist or leave abusive relationships, 54% lacked property rights, and 61% experienced direct financial control from partners (Adesina & Chukwu, 2024). In South African townships, 70% of unemployed women faced intimate partner violence, 64% relied on abusive partners for survival, and social grants provided temporary but insufficient protection (Dlamini et al., 2023).

A study among market women in Ghana revealed that 56% experienced SGBV linked to low incomes, 61% lacked financial independence, and 48% reported economic coercion, such as denial of access to their own earnings (Mensah, 2024). In rural Zimbabwe, 69% of women lacked financial autonomy, 52% faced economic threats from partners, and access to microfinance was found to reduce their risk of abuse (Suleiman & Moyo, 2024). Similarly, in Sierra Leone, 60% of women endured violence tied to economic control, 55% had their earnings withheld by partners, and 47% experienced backlash when attempting to generate income independently (Bayo, 2023). These findings reflect how financial insecurity and lack of property ownership are deeply intertwined with power imbalances that increase women's vulnerability to SGBV across the continent.

In East Africa, the economic dimensions of SGBV are similarly entrenched. In Uganda, 65% of low-income women stated that financial dependence prevented them from leaving abusive relationships, 72% reported partners sabotaging their economic opportunities, and access to personal income was linked to greater resilience against

abuse (Tumwine & Nabunya, 2024). A study in Ethiopia comparing rural and urban populations found that women in rural areas were twice as likely to experience violence in the absence of income, 61% lacked land rights, and 70% reported being financially dependent on male relatives or spouses (Gebremedhin et al., 2024). In Rwanda, qualitative findings indicated that 50% of women experienced complete financial control by their partners, 40% associated partner unemployment with increased violence, and 60% believed economic support programs helped reduce the risk of abuse (Hakizimana & Niyonzima, 2024).

In Tanzania, 66% of urban women lacked access to formal employment, 58% were subjected to financial abuse, and vocational training was associated with greater agency and lower SGBV prevalence (Mussa & Said, 2023). In Burundi, interviews revealed that 45% of women were abused due to financial dependence, with economic conflict frequently triggering violence, and many men perceiving women's income as a challenge to their authority (Bahati, 2024). These studies confirm that economic insecurity exacerbates SGBV across East Africa and that interventions enhancing women's income and property access can significantly reduce their exposure to violence.

Kenyan studies reinforce the crucial role of economic conditions in shaping women's risk of experiencing SGBV. The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey reported that SGBV was more prevalent among unemployed women, with 39% of respondents lacking control over their finances, and poverty cited as a contributing factor in 60% of abuse cases (KDHS, 2023). Gichuhi's household-level research found that 64% of

SGBV survivors lacked personal income, 51% could not access household funds, and dependence on the informal sector heightened economic vulnerability (Gichuhi, 2022).

In Nairobi's informal settlements, 55% of women experienced financial abuse, 66% cited economic barriers as the reason for remaining in violent relationships, and those running small businesses were less likely to be victimized (Awuor & Otieno, 2024). A study in Western Kenya found that 71% of rural women faced violence linked to joblessness, 58% were economically trapped in abusive environments, and 49% were actively discouraged by partners from working or earning an income (Njeri, 2024).

In coastal Kenya, 62% of women reported that their partners controlled their income, 60% associated SGBV with household financial strain, and tourism-related jobs offered mixed protection, depending on job stability and control over earnings (Kilonzo & Cheron, 2025). These findings reflect how economic subordination, lack of employment opportunities, and limited access to financial decision-making spaces intensify women's vulnerability to abuse, even in contexts where legal and policy frameworks exist.

Empirical data from Kilifi North Sub-County, though limited, aligns with these national and regional patterns. Agu and Mbachu found that 63% of women cited financial dependence as the primary reason for not reporting abuse, 57% reported instability in informal sector employment as a compounding risk, and 52% had their earnings directly controlled or denied by spouses (Agu & Mbachu, 2024). A related study in neighboring Mombasa showed that 61% of women lacked control over their finances, 49% had their

earnings confiscated by partners, and reliance on tourism-related work contributed to vulnerability due to economic unpredictability (Fatima & Shahid, 2025).

In Lamu, 54% of women did not own any property, 46% reported economic threats from partners, and financial independence did not always translate to safety (Hassan & Kiptoo, 2024). According to CREAM, economic hardship and the tourism-poverty nexus were major contributors to SGBV in Kilifi, exacerbated by the absence of sustainable livelihood options for women (CREAW, 2017). While Ong'ayo's study focused on female farmers in Kilifi North, it revealed that although 90% of agricultural laborers were women, few had land ownership or financial control, reflecting broader patterns of economic marginalization (Ong'ayo, 2020). These findings collectively illustrate the urgent need for local-level economic empowerment initiatives that enhance women's control over income, assets, and employment opportunities as central strategies for preventing SGBV in Kilifi North and beyond.

### **2.2.3 Intervention Strategies for Eradicating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence**

Globally, the institutional response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has been marked by fragmentation, under-resourcing, and survivor dissatisfaction. In the United States, a national survey showed that 65% of survivors were dissatisfied with police responses, 58% experienced secondary victimization from service providers, and 47% delayed reporting due to mistrust in the system (Taylor & Martinez, 2024).

In Bangladesh, 70% of women reported that healthcare workers lacked trauma-informed training, while 64% were never referred to legal support services, and many experienced stigma at institutional levels (Laila & Sun, 2023). A multi-country study across Latin

America found that only 34% of survivors accessed legal aid, 61% faced significant delays in court processes, and 52% ultimately withdrew their cases due to systemic barriers (García & Torres, 2025). In China, case audits revealed that 45% of reported SGBV cases were not prosecuted, many were redirected to community reconciliation, and rural areas lacked standardized protocols (Zhang et al., 2023).

A global meta-analysis of 49 studies by the World Health Organization found that 72% of institutional systems lacked integrated survivor services, 60% failed to offer safe shelters, and inter-agency referrals were inconsistently applied (WHO, 2022). These findings highlight persistent gaps in institutional accountability, coordination, and survivor-centered care across multiple jurisdictions.

Across Africa, institutions often fall short of providing accessible and effective responses to survivors. In Nigeria, 68% of service providers cited a lack of forensic capacity, 55% reported no system for follow-up, and 61% noted resistance from police to prosecute offenders (Adeyemi & Olufemi, 2024). In South Africa, 42% of SGBV-related cases lacked timely judgment, 39% of legal files were reported lost, and many survivors navigated the judicial process without support (Dlamini, 2023).

In Ghana, an NGO review showed that 60% of health centers lacked dedicated SGBV units, only 38% of survivors accessed legal redress, and corruption influenced outcomes in 44% of documented cases (Mensah & Baidoo, 2024). In Sierra Leone, 59% of survivors dropped cases, 51% cited fear of retaliation, and few had access to emergency shelters or safe spaces (Bayo & Kamara, 2023). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, 66% of survivors received no psychosocial support, 54% reported mishandling of their cases by police, and most found

the legal system inaccessible (Moyo & Chigwanda, 2025). These findings reflect systemic failures, weak accountability mechanisms, and minimal institutional investment in SGBV response infrastructure across many African countries.

In East Africa, evidence shows that institutional frameworks are often undermined by cultural norms, limited training, and poor coordination. In Uganda, 70% of police officers lacked SGBV-specific training, 50% of cases were resolved through clan mediation rather than courts, and victim safety was not guaranteed (Tumusiime, 2024). In Tanzania, 64% of survivors felt blamed by the police, 55% of health workers were untrained in handling SGBV, and most survivors were not referred to legal services (Mussa & Said, 2023).

In Burundi, an institutional review revealed that 62% of responding agencies lacked formal SGBV protocols, with little case tracking or coordination between sectors (Niyongabo, 2024). A study in Rwanda showed that 48% of SGBV convictions were overturned on appeal, 41% of survivors had no protective measures, and 52% of cases faced significant procedural delays (Hassan et al., 2023). Additionally, a regional analysis by Bahati (2024) reported that 57% of cases across five East African countries were dismissed without trial due to lack of judicial oversight, with rural areas particularly affected by institutional neglect. These findings confirm that institutional responses are often reactive, uncoordinated, and poorly resourced, leading to further marginalization of survivors.

Kenyan studies indicate similar institutional shortcomings. The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey reported that 49% of survivors did not seek institutional help due to mistrust, 33% cited lack of accessible services, and 60% were unaware of their legal rights (KDHS, 2023). An audit by CREAM showed that only 41% of reported SGBV cases reached court,

52% of cases faced non-cooperation from police, and shelters were severely underfunded (CREAW, 2023). Gichuhi's study revealed that 58% of survivors felt police minimized their complaints, 64% lacked access to legal representation, and referrals between sectors were poorly managed (Gichuhi, 2022).

In Western Kenya, a service mapping showed that 60% of clinics lacked SGBV response protocols, 48% of healthcare providers were untrained, and linkages to the legal system were weak or nonexistent (Njeri, 2024). In coastal Kenya, 66% of women felt discouraged from reporting abuse, 55% cited police bias in handling cases, and survivor support services were inconsistently implemented across counties (Kilonzo & Cheron, 2025). Collectively, these findings underscore how institutional weaknesses undermine the delivery of justice, reduce survivor trust, and limit the effectiveness of policy frameworks intended to combat SGBV.

In Kilifi North Sub-County, localized data reveals serious institutional limitations. Agu and Mbachu reported that 52% of survivors received no institutional support after reporting abuse, 57% of cases were diverted to community mediation, and police engagement was generally weak (Agu & Mbachu, 2024). According to CREAW, Kilifi County lacked safe shelter options, suffered from weak coordination between police and health services, and had extremely low rates of legal redress for SGBV cases (CREAW, 2017).

In neighboring Lamu County, 50% of reported SGBV cases stalled due to police inaction, 48% of survivors were not linked to support services, and informal mediation was often preferred to formal justice (Hassan & Kiptoo, 2024). A regional audit in Mombasa revealed that 61% of complaints never reached the courts, protection measures were inadequate, and institutional trust was critically low among survivors (Fatima & Shahid, 2025). Ong'ayo's

governance-focused research highlighted that gender desks in Kilifi North were rarely operational, SGBV was not integrated into local development planning, and women's voices were largely excluded from policy forums (Ong'ayo, 2020). These gaps point to the urgent need for institutional strengthening, survivor-centered services, and better resource allocation to ensure justice and protection for SGBV survivors in Kilifi North.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

Understanding the complex nature of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) requires a robust theoretical foundation that captures both the structural conditions enabling violence and the social norms that legitimize it. This study applied two complementary theories—Routine Activity Theory (RAT) and Gender Role Theory (GRT)—to interpret the socio-cultural and economic determinants of SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County. These theories were selected based on their capacity to illuminate both the situational enablers of violence and the normative behaviors that perpetuate inequality. Routine Activity Theory, drawn from criminology, focuses on the convergence of opportunity and weak protection systems, providing insights into how economic instability and institutional breakdown contribute to SGBV. Gender Role Theory, rooted in socio-behavioral thought, explains how cultural expectations and gendered norms shape power relations and reinforce male dominance. Together, these theories form a coherent framework for analyzing both the causes and the context of SGBV in Kilifi, offering practical guidance for intervention and policy. Their selection over alternative models, such as Intersectionality Theory, was informed by their contextual relevance, explanatory clarity, and ability to inform targeted community-based solutions.

### **2.3.1 Routine Activity Theory (RAT)**

Routine Activity Theory, proposed by Cohen and Felson in 1979, suggests that criminal acts including sexual and gender-based violence occur when three conditions intersect: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of capable guardians. In the context of Kilifi North, this framework provides insights into how economic hardship and weak institutions create opportunities for abuse. Women who lack control over their income, savings, or employment are more exposed to violence, making them suitable targets due to financial dependency and restricted agency (Alam, 2025; Adesina and Chukwu, 2024; Agu and Mbachu, 2024). These women are often unable to escape abusive situations due to limited economic alternatives.

The absence of capable guardians is another critical element. Formal institutions such as police, courts, and health services are often under resourced or inaccessible in Kilifi North. This results in survivors relying on informal systems like clan elders or religious leaders, who may prioritize reconciliation over justice (CREAW, 2017; Agu and Mbachu, 2024). Offenders exploit this institutional weakness, knowing that consequences are unlikely. In this context, the community's failure to provide protection contributes directly to the perpetuation of violence.

Routine Activity Theory also illuminates how structural poverty increases situational risks. Many women in Kilifi North work in unstable informal sectors like tourism and farming. When income is irregular or controlled by male partners, women lack bargaining power and remain vulnerable to coercion, exploitation, and control (Mutua, 2024; Fatima and Shahid, 2025). RAT thus explains how the convergence of financial dependence, permissive social

norms, and ineffective institutions increases the likelihood of violence. This framework clarifies why SGBV is not random but facilitated by identifiable and addressable factors within the physical and economic environment.

While other frameworks like Intersectionality Theory capture multiple dimensions of oppression, they do not provide the clear situational mapping that RAT offers. RAT allows practitioners and policy makers to focus on reducing opportunity and increasing protection, making it highly applicable for both research and intervention design in resource-constrained environments like Kilifi North.

### **2.3.2 Gender Role Theory (GRT)**

Gender Role Theory, as articulated by Eagly and Wood in 1999, emphasizes how societies construct and enforce expectations for male and female behavior. These expectations often place men in positions of authority and control while relegating women to subordinate domestic roles. In Kilifi North, these patterns are strongly evident in family dynamics, community norms, and dispute resolution practices. Gender Role Theory is instrumental in understanding how cultural norms assign leadership and economic dominance to men, legitimizing their authority and punishing female resistance (Fatima and Shahid, 2025; Adeoye and Adebayo, 2024).

Women in Kilifi who pursue financial independence or assert their voice in decision making often encounter backlash. Forms of resistance include financial deprivation, restriction from employment, and emotional or physical abuse. GRT provides the lens to interpret these actions not as isolated incidents but as socially sanctioned responses to perceived role violations. It explains why women internalize submissiveness and endure abuse—because

their roles are defined through tradition and reinforced across generations (Hassan and Kiptoo, 2024; Gichuhi, 2022).

This theory also highlights how early socialization prepares individuals to accept rigid gender hierarchies. Community elders, religious leaders, and even peer groups play a role in perpetuating these norms. Women are taught to avoid challenging authority, and cultural mechanisms such as bride price, lineage systems, and domestic expectations reinforce compliance. GRT helps illustrate why survivors may remain silent or seek informal resolution rather than legal justice—they are not only constrained by resources but by normative belief systems that position their suffering as inevitable or private.

Gender Role Theory complements Routine Activity Theory by framing the underlying ideology that shapes the behavior of both offenders and victims. While RAT describes the environmental setup that enables violence, GRT explains the moral and social justification behind it. This dual approach is particularly relevant in Kilifi North, where economic dependence intersects deeply with cultural beliefs about male entitlement and female obligation.

#### **2.4 Conceptual framework**

This study was guided by a conceptual framework that illustrated the relationship between socio-cultural and economic determinants, possible intervention measures, and the prevalence of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. The framework was grounded in the understanding that SGBV was not solely a result of individual behavior, but was also influenced by structural, cultural, and economic

conditions. It also recognized that appropriate interventions and institutional responses could mitigate the occurrence of such violence.

The independent variables were grouped into three thematic areas: socio-cultural determinants, economic determinants, and possible eradication measures. Socio-cultural determinants included the acceptance of wife-beating, reliance on traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, and beliefs supporting male dominance in household decision-making. These cultural norms were considered to have reinforced tolerance of SGBV and limited the ability of survivors to report or resist abuse.

Economic determinants were examined in terms of financial dependency, employment status, and access to and control over household income. These variables were used to assess the extent to which economic vulnerability contributed to the risk and continuation of gender-based violence. Women who lacked independent income or control over household resources were found to be more susceptible to various forms of abuse, including financial coercion and intimate partner violence.

The study also considered possible measures that could have contributed to the reduction or eradication of SGBV. These included awareness of SGBV-related laws and reporting channels, community participation in prevention initiatives, and access to survivor support services. These factors were treated as moderating variables, which may have influenced the strength or direction of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The dependent variable, prevalence of SGBV, was measured using three key indicators: type of violence experienced, frequency of incidents, and the reporting status of cases. The framework proposed that both socio-cultural and economic determinants had

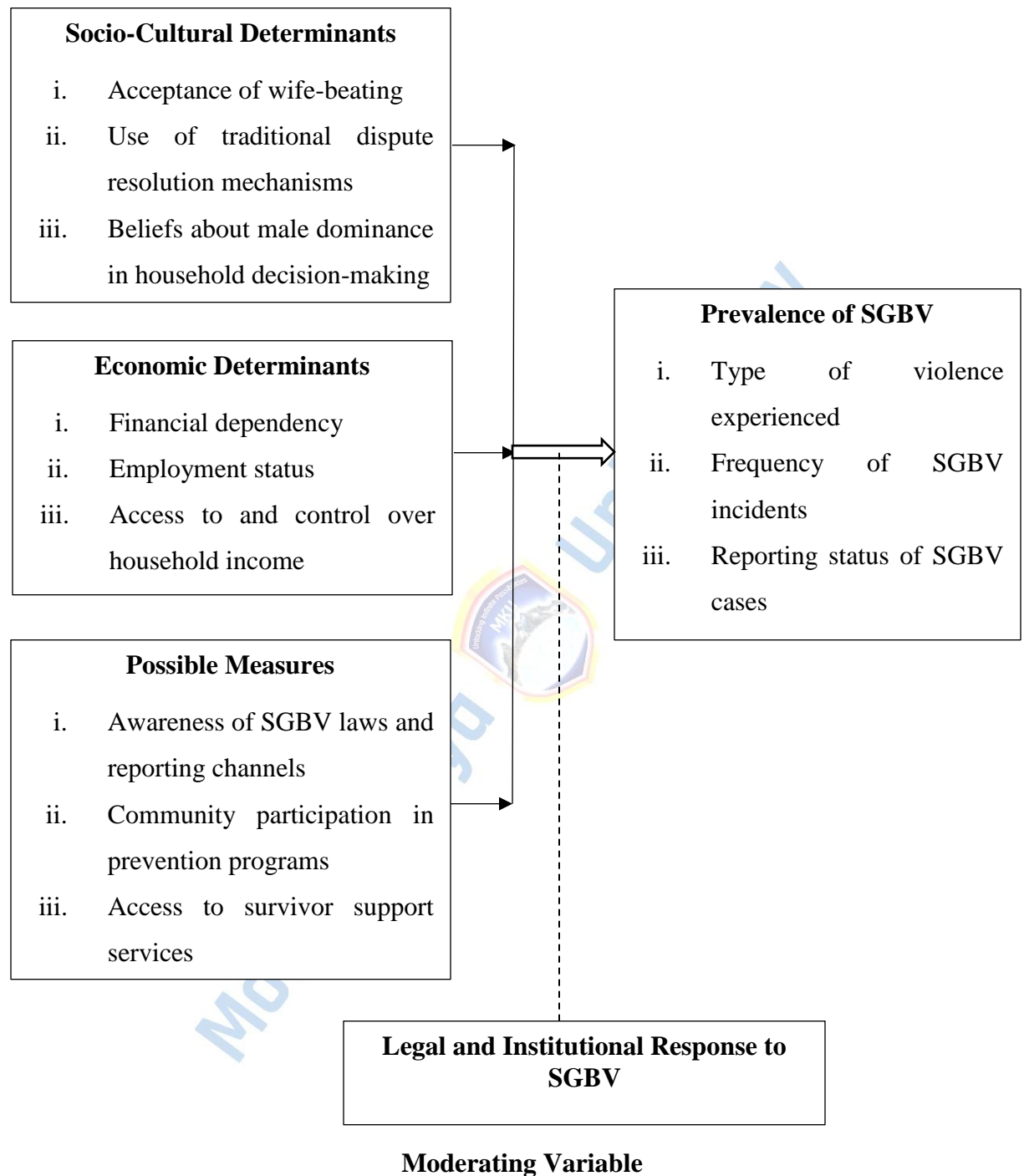
direct effects on the prevalence of SGBV, while the presence of effective interventions could reduce these effects.

Lastly, the framework acknowledged the broader influence of the legal and institutional response to SGBV. The presence or absence of strong legal protections, enforcement mechanisms, and institutional support structures shaped the overall effectiveness of efforts to combat gender-based violence. Thus, this framework provided a foundation for understanding the dynamics of SGBV in the study area and guided the formulation of research instruments, data analysis, and interpretation.



**Independent Variable**

**Dependent Variable**



**Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework**

**Source:** Researcher (2025)

## 2.5 Recap of Literature Review

The first objective of this study was to examine the socio-cultural determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. Literature reviewed revealed that cultural norms—particularly those reinforcing male dominance and legitimizing violence—play a central role in sustaining SGBV. For instance, Alam (2025) found that 78% of rural Indian women justified wife-beating under specific circumstances, while Shah (2025) reported that 70% of men in Fiji viewed domestic violence as a private issue. Within African contexts, Mpfungu and Tfwala (2024) documented that 68% of women in Eswatini accepted wife discipline as culturally appropriate. In Kenya, Adeoye and Adebayo (2024) observed that 58% of reported domestic violence cases in Nairobi's informal settlements were redirected to community elders, reinforcing impunity. Locally, Agu and Mbachu (2024) found that 54% of SGBV cases in Kilifi were handled through informal justice systems, and 63% of respondents believed male dominance in decision-making was culturally justified. These findings demonstrate the powerful influence of traditional norms and dispute resolution practices in shaping SGBV patterns in Kilifi North.

The second objective aimed to assess the economic determinants of SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County. Studies across global and regional contexts consistently demonstrated that financial dependency significantly heightens women's vulnerability to abuse. In Mexico, Martinez et al. (2024) found that 74% of financially dependent women faced economic or psychological abuse. In South Africa, Ndlovu et al. (2024) reported that 60% of women in low-income households experienced domestic violence, while in Uganda, Namusoke and Kyambadde (2024) found that 68% of SGBV cases occurred in financially unstable households. At the national level, Otieno et al. (2023) observed that 55% of women in

Kisumu did not report abuse due to economic reliance on perpetrators. In Kilifi County, Charo et al. (2023) found that 52% of survivors remained in abusive homes due to financial constraints, and 71% agreed that economic control by one partner increased the risk of violence. These findings underscore how poverty, unemployment, and lack of financial autonomy serve as key enablers of SGBV.

The third objective sought to identify measures that could be implemented to eradicate SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County. Empirical evidence pointed to multi-sectoral interventions—such as legal education, public awareness, community engagement, and survivor support services—as effective in reducing violence. In the United States, Cambas (2024) found that awareness campaigns led to a 33% increase in reporting. In South Africa, Makanda and Moyo (2024) reported that schools implementing GBV curricula achieved a 29% increase in disclosure rates. In Uganda, Kagoya and Musoke (2024) noted that 60% of survivors who attended sensitization forums took legal action. Within Kenya, Wanjiru and Mwangi (2023) observed a 42% rise in reporting in areas with active outreach. In Kilifi, Charo et al. (2023) found that where awareness programs were implemented, reporting increased by 40%, and 68% of respondents credited media and CBO-led efforts for increased knowledge of survivor rights. However, many respondents remained unaware of the Kilifi County SGBV Bill (2023), pointing to a gap between policy development and community access. These findings confirm the need for targeted, culturally sensitive interventions that combine legal reform, economic support, and community mobilization to effectively combat SGBV.

## **2.6 Summary of Research Gap**

Although substantial literature had examined the role of socio-cultural norms in perpetuating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), there was limited localized research that directly analyzed how specific beliefs and practices influenced SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County. While global and national studies had documented the acceptance of wife-beating, male dominance in household decision-making, and reliance on traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, few had explored how these factors functioned within the socio-cultural dynamics of Kilifi North. The available literature lacked empirical depth on how cultural attitudes shaped survivor silence, community response, and underutilization of legal frameworks. This study addressed this gap by providing evidence-based insights into how socio-cultural norms influenced the prevalence and reporting of SGBV in the region.

In relation to economic determinants, most existing studies had highlighted a general link between poverty, unemployment, and vulnerability to gender-based violence. However, few had specifically examined how economic dependency, limited employment opportunities, and lack of control over household finances contributed to SGBV within the Kilifi North context. There was insufficient localized evidence on how financial control by perpetrators and survivors' lack of access to independent income impacted their ability to seek help or exit abusive relationships. This research bridged that gap by analyzing the economic dimensions of SGBV through the lived experiences of women in Kilifi North Sub-County.

Although numerous intervention strategies had been explored globally and nationally, there remained a lack of context-specific evidence on the effectiveness of prevention and response measures implemented in Kilifi North. Existing literature had not sufficiently evaluated the

community's awareness of legal protections, the accessibility of survivor support services, or the responsiveness of institutions in the area. Furthermore, the impact of the Kilifi County SGBV Bill (2023) on public engagement and justice outcomes had not been thoroughly assessed. This study filled that gap by examining local intervention efforts, identifying barriers to their effectiveness, and highlighting practical strategies that could support the eradication of SGBV in the sub-county.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research methodology used in the study, including the research design, study location, target population, sampling procedures, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. It also outlines the measures taken to ensure validity, reliability, and ethical considerations, providing a framework for systematically investigating the socio-economic determinants of SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County.

#### **3.2 Research Methodology**

This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to explore socio-economic determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. Mixed-methods research allows both breadth in measuring prevalence and depth in understanding lived experiences (Creswell, 2014; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). The descriptive design facilitated the systematic examination of relationships among economic dependence, cultural norms, awareness of SGBV laws and reporting behavior, using both numerical trends and narrative insights (Babbie, 2020; Kothari, 2014).

Quantitative methods included structured questionnaires administered to survivors and perpetrators, capturing prevalence, economic indicators, and reporting patterns. Qualitative data came from key informant interviews and focus group discussions with community leaders, service providers, law enforcement, and GBV agencies. Integration of methods

occurred at analysis and interpretation stages, enabling robust “meta-inferences” that neither approach would yield alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Harvard Catalyst, 2025).

### **3.3 Research design**

This study adopted a descriptive research design to investigate the socio-economic and cultural determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. A descriptive design was selected for its capacity to facilitate a systematic and comprehensive examination of real-world phenomena without manipulating variables. It enabled the researcher to document existing conditions, behaviors, and relationships, particularly the interplay between cultural norms, economic vulnerability, decision-making dynamics, and the prevalence of SGBV (Babbie, 2020).

The study integrated both quantitative and qualitative methods within the descriptive framework. Quantitative data captured the scope and distribution of SGBV-related variables, while qualitative insights illuminated survivors' experiences, community perceptions, and institutional responses (Kothari, 2014). This design allowed for a nuanced understanding of patterns and associations, revealing not only statistical relationships but also context-specific mechanisms that shape the occurrence and persistence of SGBV. The combination of numerical analysis and narrative depth produced a richer, more grounded evidence base to inform policy and intervention strategies tailored to the realities of Kilifi North.

### **3.4 Location of the Study**

This study was conducted in Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County, Kenya, one of the 47 devolved counties in the country. Kilifi North is located 60 kilometers north of Mombasa and 420 kilometers southeast of Nairobi, covering seven wards: Sokoni, Mnarani, Tezo,

Kibarani, Matsangoni, Dabaso, and Watamu. Kilifi town serves as its administrative and economic center. Kilifi North was chosen due to its high prevalence of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), driven by deep-rooted patriarchal norms, poverty, and limited education. Economic vulnerabilities and weak enforcement of laws further expose survivors to barriers in seeking justice and support. Despite persistent SGBV cases, limited localized research exists on the specific socioeconomic and cultural factors driving SGBV in Kilifi. This study aimed to fill that gap by providing insights to inform targeted interventions and policies to combat SGBV in the region.

### **3.5 Target Population**

This study focused on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) cases reported in Kilifi North Sub-County over the past five years. It was estimated that approximately 140 SGBV cases were reported annually at the Kilifi Law Courts, amounting to around 700 cases over the five-year period. Since each case typically involved one survivor and one perpetrator, the target population included 1,400 individuals directly affected by SGBV. In addition to survivors and perpetrators, the study also engaged key informants, including law enforcement officials, community leaders, and gender-based violence response agencies, who played a critical role in handling, preventing, and responding to SGBV cases. Law enforcement officers were essential for ensuring justice and legal redress, while community leaders significantly influenced cultural attitudes and traditional dispute resolution practices, which often impacted the outcomes of SGBV cases.

Moreover, GBV response agencies, such as those at Kilifi County and Malindi Sub-County Hospitals, provided healthcare, psychosocial support, and crisis intervention services to

survivors. In cases where victims or perpetrators were minors, their parents or guardians were included in the study to offer ethical consent and represent the children's experiences accurately.

### **3.6 Sampling Procedures and Techniques**

This study employed a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representative coverage across the seven administrative wards in Kilifi North Sub-County: Tezo, Sokoni, Kibarani, Dabaso, Matsangoni, Watamu, and Mnarani. Stratification was appropriate as it allowed the study to proportionally reflect the geographic and social diversity of the sub-county, ensuring that the sample accurately captured SGBV trends and variations across different local contexts (Kothari, 2014).

Each ward constituted a distinct stratum, from which participants were randomly selected. This included survivors and perpetrators of SGBV, as well as key institutional actors such as law enforcement officers, community leaders, and representatives from gender-based violence response agencies. By employing this two-stage sampling structure—stratification followed by random selection—the study minimized selection bias and improved the reliability and generalizability of its findings (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Stratified random sampling enabled the research to explore both commonalities and differences across the wards, producing a comprehensive and context-sensitive picture of SGBV prevalence and the adequacy of local prevention and response mechanisms.

### **3.7 Sample Population**

The sample size for this study was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, which provides a statistically sound method for selecting

representative samples from known populations. Given the estimated population of approximately 1,400 individuals directly affected by SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County—comprising survivors and perpetrators—the recommended minimum sample size was 302 participants. To account for potential non-responses or incomplete data, a 10% buffer was added, yielding a final target of 332 respondents. The sample was proportionally allocated across the seven wards of Kilifi North—Tezo, Sokoni, Kibarani, Dabaso, Matsangoni, Watamu, and Mnarani—using stratified random sampling. This ensured equitable geographic and demographic representation, which was critical to capturing the diverse experiences and perceptions surrounding SGBV in the sub-county.

In addition to the quantitative sample, key informants—including law enforcement officers, community leaders, and representatives from GBV response agencies—were selected through purposive sampling. Their inclusion provided qualitative insights into policy enforcement, cultural practices, and institutional challenges in addressing SGBV (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). This combined sampling approach enabled the study to generate a well-rounded, evidence-based understanding of the socio-economic and cultural dynamics shaping SGBV in the region.

### **3.8 Construction of Research Instruments**

To effectively address the study's objectives, two primary instruments were developed: a structured questionnaire and a key informant interview guide. The questionnaire was tailored to collect quantitative data across the three research objectives. It incorporated Likert-scale items measuring key indicators such as acceptance of wife-beating, levels of economic dependency, and awareness of SGBV laws and reporting mechanisms. These structured

items facilitated the collection of measurable data on perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors associated with the socio-cultural and economic determinants of SGBV, as well as community-based intervention strategies (Bryman, 2016).

To complement the quantitative data, a semi-structured interview guide was developed for use with key informants—including law enforcement officials, community leaders, healthcare workers, and representatives of GBV response agencies. This qualitative tool was designed to elicit deeper insights into the effectiveness of formal and informal response systems, the influence of traditional practices, and the broader socio-political context affecting SGBV outcomes. It enabled the exploration of themes that could not be adequately captured through standardized survey items, such as cultural resistance to legal interventions or institutional barriers to justice (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The integration of these two instruments allowed for methodological triangulation, enhancing the validity and comprehensiveness of the findings. While the questionnaire provided statistically analyzable data, the interview guide enriched the study with lived experiences and institutional perspectives. Together, they offered a multidimensional understanding of SGBV dynamics in Kilifi North Sub-County.

### **3.9 Testing for Validity and Reliability**

To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the data collected, this study subjected its research instruments to rigorous validity and reliability testing prior to full-scale deployment. Validity was assessed to confirm that the instruments effectively measured the constructs related to the socio-cultural and economic determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), as well as the perceived effectiveness of intervention strategies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To enhance content validity, the questionnaire and key informant interview guide were reviewed by experts in gender studies, criminology, and social science research. These subject matter specialists evaluated each item for relevance, clarity, and alignment with the study's objectives and indicators. Their feedback informed the refinement of items to ensure conceptual clarity and contextual appropriateness.

A pilot study was then conducted in a demographically similar area within Kilifi County. This trial involved a small sample of participants and aimed to detect any ambiguities, inconsistencies, or poorly phrased items. Based on the insights gathered, minor modifications were made to improve wording, logical sequencing, and overall coherence, thus enhancing the instruments' ability to elicit accurate and meaningful responses (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

For reliability, the internal consistency of the Likert-scale items in the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.81, indicating high internal reliability. Additionally, test-retest reliability was assessed by administering the same instrument to 20 participants across a two-week interval. The consistency of responses confirmed the stability of the instrument over time. These validation procedures ensured that the research tools were both dependable and effective in capturing the multifaceted realities of SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County.

### **3.10 Data Collection Methods and Procedures**

To generate a comprehensive and contextually grounded understanding of the determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County, the study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The quantitative component involved the administration of structured questionnaires to survivors

and perpetrators of SGBV. These instruments included Likert-scale items aligned with the study objectives, designed to capture measurable data on socio-economic status, perceptions of gender norms, experiences of violence, and reporting behavior (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

To deepen and contextualize the quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants such as law enforcement officials, community leaders, and personnel from GBV response agencies. These qualitative interviews elicited rich narratives and professional insights into institutional responses, cultural barriers to justice, and the effectiveness of existing prevention and support mechanisms (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Prior to full implementation, a pilot study was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the data collection tools. Feedback from the pilot informed revisions that enhanced question clarity, logical flow, and overall alignment with the research objectives. This pretesting step helped optimize the instruments for the diverse linguistic and socio-cultural contexts within Kilifi North.

Throughout the data collection phase, the study adhered to strict ethical protocols. These included securing informed consent from all participants, upholding confidentiality through the use of anonymized identifiers, and emphasizing voluntary participation. Researchers were trained to maintain neutrality, respect participant autonomy, and handle disclosures of trauma with sensitivity, ensuring that all procedures upheld both ethical standards and the dignity of those involved.

### **3.11 Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures**

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques to ensure a holistic understanding of the determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. Quantitative data obtained through structured questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics—including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations—were used to summarize key variables such as SGBV prevalence, socio-cultural norms, economic dependency, and patterns of survivor reporting behavior.

To examine associations between the independent variables (socio-cultural and economic determinants) and the dependent variable (SGBV prevalence), the study employed inferential statistical methods. These included chi-square tests to assess associations between categorical variables and regression analyses to identify potential predictive relationships. This allowed for the identification of statistically significant factors influencing the occurrence of SGBV in the study area (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

Qualitative data collected from key informant interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis, an approach well-suited for exploring complex social phenomena. Transcripts were carefully reviewed, coded, and categorized into themes that reflected patterns in the narratives. The coding process was conducted inductively, allowing themes to emerge organically from participants' responses. This method facilitated the identification of dominant issues such as cultural acceptance of gender hierarchies, economic control within households, and institutional gaps in SGBV response mechanisms (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). By integrating quantitative findings with qualitative insights, the study achieved methodological triangulation, which not only enhanced the validity of the results but also

deepened the understanding of the multi-layered factors driving SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County.

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

This study adhered to rigorous ethical standards to safeguard the rights, dignity, and welfare of all participants. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Mount Kenya University Ethical Review Committee (MKUERC). Additionally, research authorization was secured from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), ensuring compliance with national research guidelines.

All participants, including survivors, perpetrators, and key informants, were provided with a detailed informed consent form (Appendix II) outlining the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, potential risks and benefits, and measures to uphold confidentiality. Consent was obtained voluntarily, with participants required to sign the form before engaging in any data collection activities. For minors or vulnerable adults, consent was obtained through legally authorized representatives.

To maintain privacy and anonymity, respondents were assigned unique code identifiers, and no personally identifiable information was recorded. Participants were informed that their data would be used solely for academic purposes within the scope of the approved study, and any secondary use would require explicit additional consent. The study emphasized the voluntary nature of participation, making it clear that respondents could decline to answer specific questions or withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. No financial or material incentives were provided, minimizing the risk of coercion.

All data were securely stored in password-protected files and physical documents kept under lock and key. Access was strictly limited to the principal researcher and authorized academic supervisors, thereby ensuring the confidentiality and integrity of the research process. These ethical safeguards were particularly crucial given the sensitive nature of SGBV, reinforcing the study's commitment to responsible and respectful engagement with vulnerable populations.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the data collected from respondents in Kilifi North Sub-County. It includes the analysis and interpretation of results aligned with the study objectives. The chapter begins with an overview of the response rate, followed by a detailed analysis of the demographic characteristics of participants. It then explores the relationship between cultural norms, knowledge of GBV, economic stability, and decision-making power and their influence on the prevalence of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). Data is presented using descriptive statistics, tables, and figures to enhance clarity and understanding

#### 4.2. Demographics Data and Response Rate

##### 4.2.1 Response Rate

The study recorded a total of 250 returned questionnaires out of 332 distributed, resulting in a response rate of 75.3%. as shown in Table 4.5.

**Table 4. 1: Response Rate**

Response Type	Frequency	Percentage
Returned Questionnaires	250	75.30%
Unreturned Questionnaires	82	24.70%

This high level of participation reflects strong community engagement and enhances the credibility and representativeness of the findings. According to Babbie (2021), a response rate above 70% is considered excellent for academic research, indicating that the data

collected is both reliable and generalizable to the broader population of Kilifi North Sub-County.

Conversely, 82 questionnaires were not returned, accounting for 24.7% of the total distributed. This suggests that some individuals may have encountered barriers such as time constraints, discomfort with the subject matter, or difficulty interpreting the questions. As Creswell (2020) points out, improving response rates in future studies could involve strategies like simplifying questionnaires, using digital survey tools, or offering modest incentives to encourage participation.

#### 4.2.2 Demographic Distribution

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the study participants in Kilifi North Sub-County, providing critical context for interpreting the socio-economic and cultural dynamics that influence Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). These variables—such as age, gender, marital status, education, employment, income, and household structure—offer insights into patterns of vulnerability, inform targeted interventions, and support policy development. The results are summarized in Table 4.2.

**Table 4. 2: Demographic Distribution**

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Respondent Type		
Survivor	209	83.60%
Perpetrator	41	16.40%
Age Group		
25-34	73	29.20%
18-24	56	22.40%
35-44	52	20.80%
45-54	35	14.00%
55 and above	18	7.20%
Below 18	16	6.40%
Gender:		
Female	132	52.80%

Male	118	47.20%
Marital Status		
Married	110	44.00%
Single	106	42.40%
Divorced/Separated	29	11.60%
Widowed	5	2.00%
Education Level		
Secondary Education	96	38.40%
Primary Education	65	26.00%
College/University	64	25.60%
No Formal Education	25	10.00%
Employment Status		
Unemployed	86	34.40%
Self-employed	72	28.80%
Formally Employed	54	21.60%
Informally Employed	38	15.20%
Monthly Household Income		
Below 5,000	102	40.80%
5,000 -10,000	67	26.80%
10,001 - 20,000	47	18.80%
20,001 - 50,000	19	7.60%
Above 50,000	15	6.00%
Religion:		
Christianity	161	64.40%
Islam	76	30.40%
Traditional/Other	13	5.20%
Residence Type		
Rural	145	58.00%
Urban	105	42.00%
Number of Children		
1-2	98	39.20%
3-4	69	27.60%
None	47	18.80%
5 and above	36	14.40%
Disability		
No	218	87.20%
Yes	32	12.80%
Experienced/Witnessed SGBV		
Yes	161	64.40%
No	89	35.60%
Relationship to Perpetrator		
Intimate Partner	128	51.20%
Family Member	82	32.80%
Employer/Work Colleague	19	7.60%
Stranger	11	4.40%

Other	10	4.00%
Motivation for Act (Perpetrators Only):		
Power and Control	79	31.60%
Cultural Beliefs	70	28.00%
Economic Factors	51	20.40%
Influence of Drugs/Alcohol	41	16.40%
Other	9	3.60%

The distribution indicates that the majority of respondents (83.6%) were survivors, suggesting both a high prevalence of SGBV and a willingness among survivors to participate in discourse, which is crucial for designing victim-centered interventions. Inclusion of perpetrators (16.4%) enriches the analysis by offering critical perspectives on the motivations and social conditions that facilitate violent behavior.

The largest age cohort was 25–34 years (29.2%), followed by 18–24 years (22.4%) and 35–44 years (20.8%), suggesting that individuals in their most socially and economically active years are most affected. This could relate to greater exposure through intimate relationships or workplace dynamics. The representation of respondents below 18 (6.4%) and above 55 (7.2%) affirms that SGBV is not confined to any age group, warranting age-sensitive interventions.

Gender distribution was nearly balanced, with 52.8% females and 47.2% males. While female survivors remain the majority, the data also confirm the presence of male victimization, highlighting the need for gender-inclusive response strategies. Regarding marital status, married (44%) and single (42.4%) individuals predominated, indicating that SGBV occurs both within and outside formal unions.

Education levels varied, with a significant portion (38.4%) having attained secondary education and 25.6% having pursued higher education. However, the 10% with no formal

education underscores the persistence of information gaps that may hinder awareness of rights and access to legal recourse. In terms of employment, the high unemployment rate (34.4%) and predominance of informal work underscore economic dependency as a potential risk factor for SGBV, especially among women.

The majority of respondents (67.6%) lived in households earning less than KES 10,000 monthly, which reveals the depth of economic vulnerability. These conditions may compel victims to remain in abusive relationships due to financial dependence. Further, rural residents constituted 58% of the sample, suggesting geographic disparities in access to legal and support services.

Notably, 64.4% of respondents reported having experienced or witnessed SGBV. Of these, 51.2% identified intimate partners as the primary perpetrators, aligning with national trends where domestic spaces often conceal abuse. Perpetrators reported diverse motivations—power and control (31.6%), cultural beliefs (28%), and economic stress (20.4%)—highlighting the multifactorial nature of SGBV. The presence of substance abuse (16.4%) further supports the need for integrated public health and legal responses.

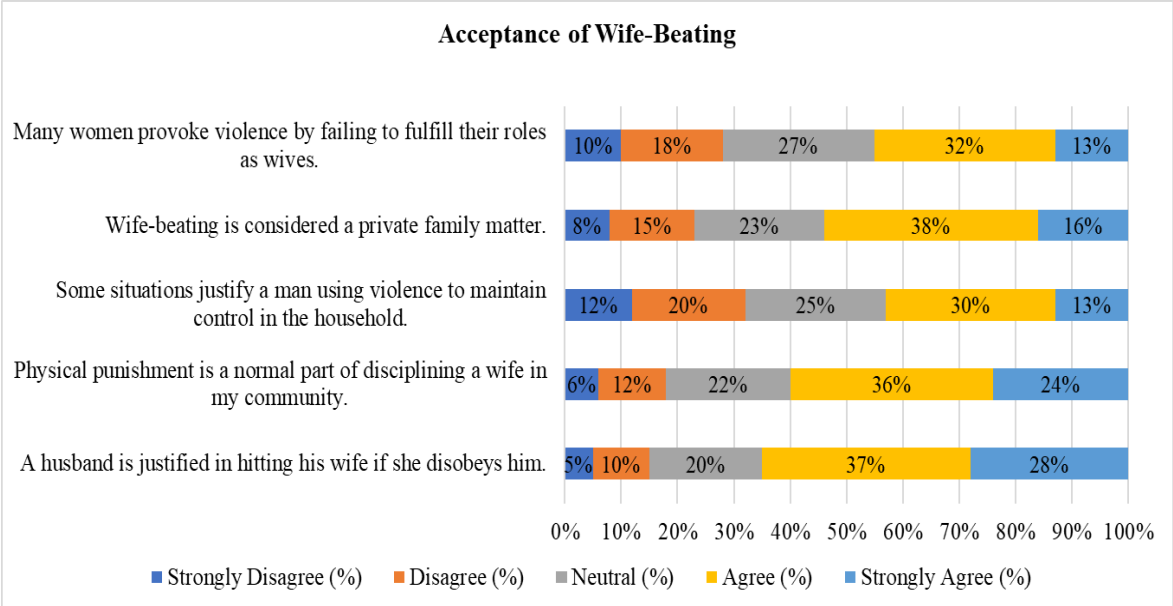
#### **4.3 Socio-Cultural Determinants of Sexual Gender Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub County, Kilifi County**

This section presents the analysis of findings related to Objective 1, which sought to examine the socio-cultural determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. The analysis focused on three key indicators: acceptance of wife-beating, use of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, and beliefs about male dominance in household decision-making. These indicators were used to assess how cultural norms and practices influence the normalization, justification, and perpetuation of SGBV within the

community. The findings are discussed using both quantitative and qualitative data and interpreted through relevant theoretical frameworks.

**4.3.1 Acceptance of Wife-Beating**

This indicator examined societal attitudes toward the acceptability of wife-beating within the study area. It aimed to assess the extent to which cultural beliefs normalize or justify intimate partner violence against women. Such attitudes are critical to understanding how SGBV is perpetuated and tolerated within households and communities in Kilifi North Sub-County. The findings are presented in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4. 1: Acceptance of Wife-Beating**

The responses under the indicator "Acceptance of Wife-Beating" revealed substantial levels of cultural tolerance for violence against women within Kilifi North Sub-County. For the statement "A husband is justified in hitting his wife if she disobeys him," 37% of respondents agreed, and 28% strongly agreed, while 5% strongly disagreed, 9% disagreed, and 21% remained neutral. This indicated that 65% supported or condoned the act, suggesting a high level of justification of intimate partner violence. When asked whether "Physical punishment

is a normal part of disciplining a wife," 36% agreed and 24% strongly agreed, with 12% disagreeing, 7% strongly disagreeing, and 21% neutral. These results pointed to the normalization of violence as part of marital roles in over half of the respondents.

Regarding the statement "Some situations justify a man using violence to maintain control in the household," 30% agreed and 13% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 14% disagreed, 12% strongly disagreed, and 31% were neutral. This suggested that nearly half of the participants viewed violence as situationally justified for asserting authority. On whether "Wife-beating is considered a private family matter," 38% agreed and 16% strongly agreed, 10% strongly disagreed, 12% disagreed, and 24% were neutral. The majority of respondents thus framed domestic violence as an internal household issue, reducing the likelihood of external intervention or reporting.

Finally, for "Many women provoke violence by failing to fulfill their roles as wives," 32% agreed, 13% strongly agreed, 14% disagreed, 11% strongly disagreed, and 30% were neutral. This reflected widespread victim-blaming attitudes that place responsibility for violence on the survivor rather than the perpetrator. Collectively, these findings highlighted the deeply entrenched cultural beliefs in Kilifi North that not only tolerate but in some cases justify violence against women in the name of discipline, family privacy, or tradition.

The findings from Kilifi North align with numerous studies reviewed under Objective 1 that documented cultural justification for wife-beating and intimate partner violence. For instance, Alam (2025) found that 78% of rural women in India believed a husband was justified in beating his wife under certain conditions. Similarly, Mpofu and Tfwala (2024) reported that 68% of women and 52% of men in Eswatini endorsed wife-beating as an acceptable disciplinary action. In Kenya, Gichuhi (2022) noted that 55% of respondents

justified physical punishment of women under specific circumstances. Furthermore, Agu and Mbachu (2024), in a Kilifi-based study, revealed that 63% of respondents believed men should dominate household decision-making and that women were culturally expected to accept such power dynamics. These empirical findings resonate strongly with the current study's results, indicating that patriarchal norms and cultural tolerance of violence remain a significant barrier to eradicating SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County.

The results from the interviews agreed with the quantitative findings, reinforcing the widespread cultural acceptance of wife-beating as a disciplinary norm within Kilifi North Sub-County. Respondents consistently described intimate partner violence as a normalized and often unchallenged aspect of household dynamics. A community elder interviewed stated:

*“In many families here, a man is expected to discipline his wife when she misbehaves. If she talks back or refuses to follow instructions, most people see it as his right to use force. Reporting such issues to the police is seen as disrespecting family values.”*

Community elder interviewed on 15th April 2025

This view reflects the societal inclination to handle domestic violence within the private sphere and the endorsement of physical punishment as culturally justified behavior. Similarly, a gender officer from a county hospital shared:

*“We receive many cases where women come in with injuries, but they are reluctant to speak. When we ask, they often say, ‘It’s normal,’ or ‘He was just angry.’ These women have grown up being told that enduring violence is part of marriage.”*

Gender officer from a county hospital interviewed on 18th April 2025

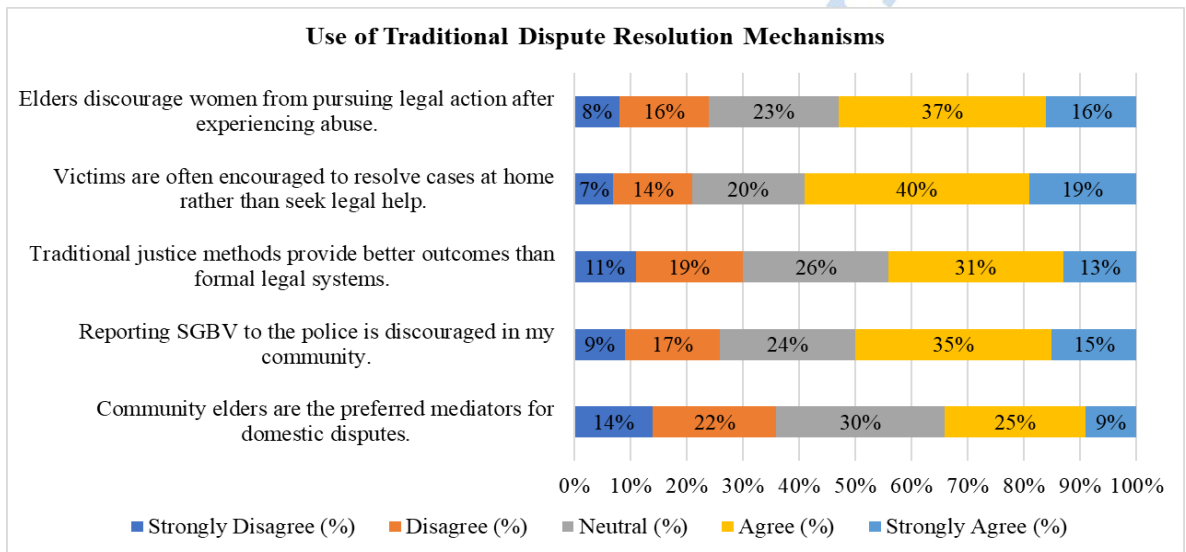
This insight illustrates how survivors themselves have internalized patriarchal norms, further entrenching silence and tolerance toward abuse. It highlights the depth of social conditioning that supports and perpetuates wife-beating in the community.

The findings on Acceptance of Wife-Beating can be interpreted through the lens of Gender Role Theory (GRT). According to this theory, societal norms assign specific roles and expectations to men and women, with men typically positioned as dominant authority figures and women as submissive dependents. The widespread agreement with statements justifying wife-beating in Kilifi North reflects these internalized gender roles, where violence is socially sanctioned as a means of reinforcing male control and punishing non-conformity. The belief that women invite violence by disobeying their husbands is a clear demonstration of how culturally embedded expectations sustain power imbalances and legitimize abuse.

Routine Activity Theory (RAT) also offers explanatory value. Within this framework, women—particularly those who are financially or socially vulnerable—are viewed as suitable targets, while the failure of institutions, such as the police or judicial systems, to act as capable guardians perpetuates impunity. The cultural framing of wife-beating as a private matter, along with widespread reliance on informal dispute resolution mechanisms, reduces external intervention and allows abuse to continue unchecked. Together, these theories illustrate how both cultural norms and structural gaps contribute to the persistence of wife-beating as a tolerated form of SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County. They underscore the need for strategies that simultaneously challenge patriarchal gender roles and strengthen formal protective systems.

### 4.3.2 Use of Traditional Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

This indicator assessed the community’s reliance on traditional mechanisms—such as elder-led mediation—to handle cases of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), and the extent to which these practices influence survivors’ decisions regarding legal redress. It sought to explore whether informal systems of justice reinforce cultural tolerance of SGBV and hinder survivors from accessing formal legal protection in Kilifi North Sub-County. The findings are presented in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4. 2: Use of Traditional Dispute Resolution Mechanisms**

The results revealed that traditional dispute resolution mechanisms remain a dominant approach for addressing SGBV in Kilifi North. When asked whether community elders are the preferred mediators for domestic disputes, 25% of respondents agreed and 9% strongly agreed, while 14% strongly disagreed, 22% disagreed, and 30% were neutral. This indicated a modest but notable preference for elder mediation. For the statement “Reporting SGBV to the police is discouraged in my community,” 35% agreed and 15% strongly agreed, compared to 17% who disagreed, 9% who strongly disagreed, and 24% who remained

neutral. The findings suggested that nearly half of the respondents perceived law enforcement reporting as culturally discouraged.

In response to the statement “Traditional justice methods provide better outcomes than formal legal systems,” 31% agreed and 13% strongly agreed, while 19% disagreed, 11% strongly disagreed, and 26% remained neutral. This affirmed a relatively widespread belief in the efficacy of informal mechanisms. Regarding whether victims are often encouraged to resolve cases at home rather than seek legal help, 40% agreed and 19% strongly agreed, showing that a significant portion of the population views domestic resolution as the norm. Only 7% strongly disagreed and 14% disagreed, with 20% neutral.

Finally, “Elders discourage women from pursuing legal action after experiencing abuse” received agreement from 37% and strong agreement from 16% of respondents, while 8% strongly disagreed, 16% disagreed, and 23% were neutral. This indicated that traditional authority figures often dissuade survivors from accessing the formal justice system. Collectively, these results reveal that informal mechanisms led by community elders are widely accepted and, in many cases, prioritized over formal legal responses. They reflect systemic community attitudes that favor maintaining social harmony over ensuring justice for survivors.

These findings are consistent with empirical studies reviewed. Adigun and Yusuf (2024) found that in Nigeria, 55% of SGBV cases were resolved by community elders, with over 60% of women advised to reconcile rather than seek justice. Similarly, in Eswatini, Mpofo and Tfwala (2024) noted that 40% of domestic violence cases were handled by elder mediation rather than legal authorities. In Kenya, Adeoye and Adebayo (2024) reported that

police often redirected cases back to informal community systems, reinforcing a culture of impunity. Most notably, in Kilifi, Agu and Mbachu (2024) found that 54% of SGBV cases were resolved informally and that survivors were routinely discouraged from seeking legal action. These findings confirm the continued dominance of informal justice practices in managing SGBV cases, often to the detriment of survivors' rights and safety.

The results from the interviews agreed with the quantitative findings, emphasizing the entrenched role of traditional systems in resolving SGBV cases in Kilifi North Sub-County.

A community chief remarked:

*“It is still common for families to call on elders to help resolve domestic issues. Taking these matters to court is seen as airing dirty laundry. People worry more about family shame than justice.”* Community chief interviewed on 13th April 2025

This sentiment reflects how social reputation and conflict avoidance often take precedence over the pursuit of legal redress. Similarly, a paralegal affiliated with a women's rights organization stated:

*“Most survivors we meet say they were told by elders not to report. They are told it will break the family or bring curses. This discourages even those who want to speak out.”*

Paralegal affiliated with a women's rights organization interviewed on 17th April 2025

This insight highlights the cultural and spiritual beliefs used to pressure survivors into silence and reconcile with perpetrators, thus denying them justice and protection.

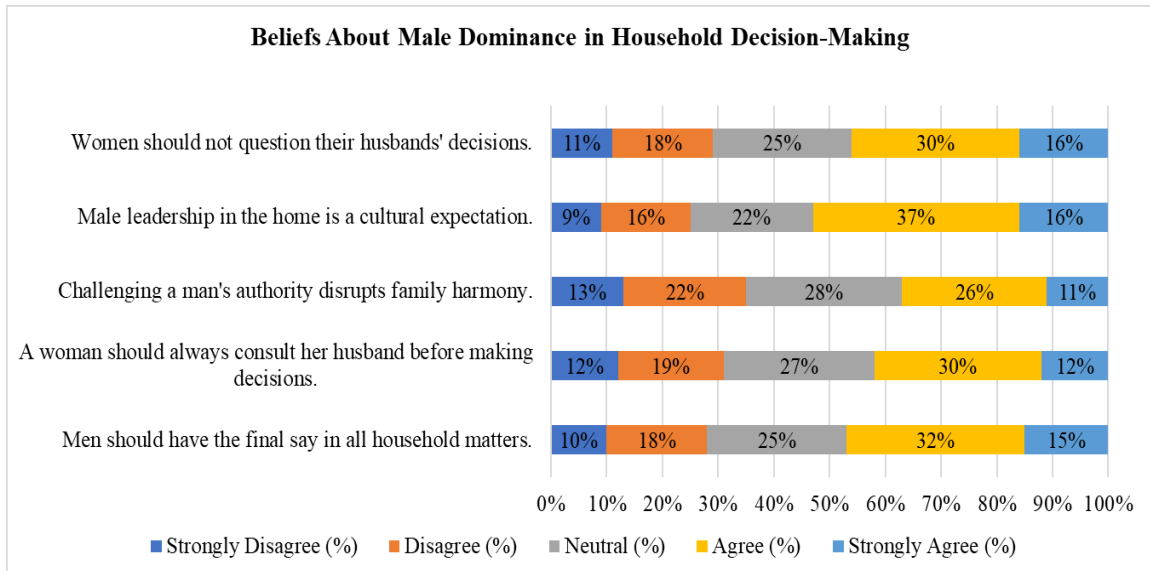
The findings on Use of Traditional Dispute Resolution Mechanisms can be interpreted through Routine Activity Theory (RAT). The preference for resolving SGBV cases informally reflects the consistent absence of “capable guardians”—in this case, formal justice systems or legal institutions. Survivors are left vulnerable when the community, rather than upholding protective laws, favors non-intervention to preserve social harmony. Informal systems do not deter offenders; instead, they create environments where abuse is minimized or overlooked, allowing perpetrators to act without meaningful consequence.

Additionally, Gender Role Theory (GRT) explains how the enforcement of cultural gender norms through traditional systems maintains patriarchal dominance. Elders—often male authority figures—reinforce the belief that women should not defy male leadership by pursuing legal action. These cultural expectations discourage women from challenging abuse, instead encouraging compliance and silence. Thus, traditional resolution systems serve not only as legal alternatives but also as instruments for preserving gender-based power hierarchies. Together, these theories demonstrate how structural and cultural elements interact to limit women’s access to justice, reinforce harmful norms, and perpetuate SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County. Effective intervention requires dismantling these informal barriers and strengthening community trust in formal legal systems.

#### **4.3.3 Beliefs About Male Dominance in Household Decision-Making**

This indicator explored community beliefs regarding male authority in household decision-making and how these perceptions relate to the normalization of gender inequality and SGBV. The purpose was to assess how deeply embedded patriarchal norms influence the power dynamics between men and women in domestic spaces in Kilifi North Sub-County.

The findings are presented in Figure 4.3.



**Figure 4. 3: Beliefs About Male Dominance in Household Decision-Making**

The responses indicated widespread endorsement of male dominance in domestic leadership roles. For the statement “Men should have the final say in all household matters,” 32% of respondents agreed and 15% strongly agreed, while 10% strongly disagreed, 18% disagreed, and 25% were neutral. This suggested that nearly half of the participants supported male decision-making authority in the home. Similarly, for “A woman should always consult her husband before making decisions,” 30% agreed and 12% strongly agreed. Only 12% strongly disagreed, 19% disagreed, and 27% were neutral, indicating a strong cultural expectation of male approval over household choices.

The statement “Challenging a man's authority disrupts family harmony” received agreement from 26% and strong agreement from 11% of participants, while 13% strongly disagreed, 22% disagreed, and 28% were neutral. This revealed a significant perception that female autonomy undermines household stability. Regarding “Male leadership in the home is a cultural expectation,” 37% agreed and 16% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 9% strongly

disagreed, 16% disagreed, and 22% were neutral. These findings reflect a strong cultural grounding of male dominance as normative and expected.

Finally, “Women should not question their husbands’ decisions” was supported by 30% who agreed and 16% who strongly agreed, while 11% strongly disagreed, 18% disagreed, and 25% remained neutral. This highlights the persistence of beliefs that discourage female agency and uphold male control in family settings. Altogether, the data suggest that patriarchal values related to household decision-making remain prevalent in Kilifi North, reinforcing gender-based power imbalances and limiting women’s autonomy—conditions that contribute to the tolerance and perpetuation of SGBV.

The study findings are in strong agreement with empirical literature reviewed. In Sierra Leone, Koray et al. (2024) found that 53% of men surveyed believed that a woman’s role is to serve her husband and that disobedience could justify punishment. In South Africa, Kasa (2024) reported that 36% of women believed they should remain in abusive relationships to protect family unity, a belief grounded in male leadership ideologies. In Kenya, Gichuhi (2022) highlighted that patriarchal authority within households was a major contributor to underreporting and justification of SGBV. Likewise, Agu and Mbachu (2024) noted that 63% of respondents in Kilifi believed men should dominate household decisions and that women were culturally expected to conform. These studies support the current findings, illustrating how gender norms shape domestic hierarchies and suppress women’s ability to resist or report abuse.

The results from the interviews agreed with the quantitative findings, reinforcing the understanding that male dominance in household leadership is culturally sanctioned and widely accepted within Kilifi North Sub-County. A religious leader remarked:

*“In our traditions, the man is the head of the household. It is the woman’s duty to respect his decisions. If she challenges him, it is seen as a threat to the family’s peace.”* Religious leader interviewed on 14th April 2025

This statement underscores how cultural and religious ideologies reinforce male supremacy and discourage female assertiveness, thus limiting women’s ability to challenge or report abusive dynamics. A similar view was expressed by a local administrator who remarked;

*“Most families I deal with believe that women should not argue with their husbands. They say that questioning a man brings shame and causes instability. This belief often prevents women from seeking help.”*

Local administrator interviewed on 16th April 2025

This quote highlights how social pressure and expectations regarding obedience contribute to women remaining in oppressive or violent relationships, reinforcing the findings that male dominance is culturally institutionalized.

The findings on Beliefs About Male Dominance in Household Decision-Making are well-explained by Gender Role Theory (GRT). This theory posits that societal structures define and enforce roles for men and women, typically privileging male authority and subjugating women’s autonomy. The strong agreement with statements supporting male control in households reflects internalized cultural expectations that normalize unequal power

dynamics. Such beliefs limit women's capacity to make decisions or challenge abusive behavior, increasing their vulnerability to SGBV.

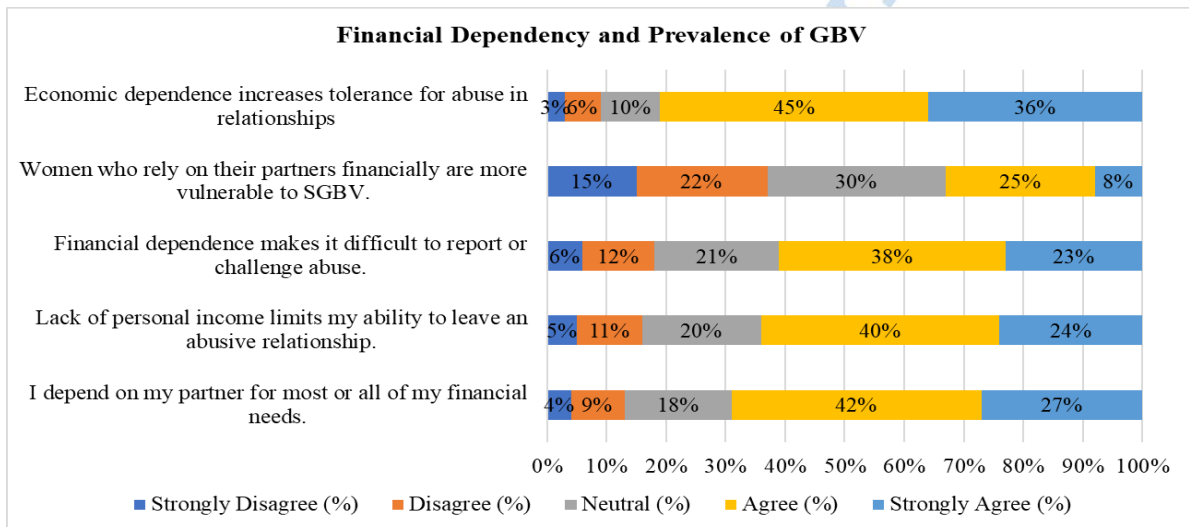
Additionally, Routine Activity Theory (RAT) is relevant in interpreting how these beliefs facilitate abuse. When men are granted unchecked authority and women are discouraged from questioning them, the power imbalance renders women more "suitable targets." The lack of capable guardians—be it legal support, community accountability, or protective cultural practices—creates an enabling environment where SGBV can thrive without resistance or sanction. Together, these theoretical lenses reveal how traditional beliefs about male dominance reinforce systemic gender inequality and create conditions where SGBV is tolerated or overlooked in Kilifi North. Addressing such beliefs is essential in reshaping community norms and ensuring that both legal and social structures support gender equity and survivor protection.

#### **4.4 Economic Determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County**

This section presents the findings related to Objective 2, which aimed to examine the economic determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. The analysis explored how financial and employment-related factors contribute to women's vulnerability to abuse and their ability to seek redress. Three key indicators guided this analysis: financial dependency, employment status, and access to and control over household income. The data were analyzed to determine the extent to which economic conditions shape power dynamics in intimate relationships and influence the persistence of SGBV within the study area.

#### 4.4.1 Financial Dependency and Prevalence of GBV

This indicator examined the extent to which financial dependence influences women’s vulnerability to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. Financial dependency is a known factor that limits survivors’ ability to leave abusive relationships or report violence due to economic reliance on the perpetrator. This section presents the findings related to participants’ economic dependence and its link to their experiences of SGBV. The findings are presented in Figure 4.4.



**Figure 4. 4: Financial Dependency and Prevalence of GBV**

The findings demonstrated a strong link between financial dependency and vulnerability to abuse. For the statement “I depend on my partner for most or all of my financial needs,” 42% agreed and 27% strongly agreed, while only 4% strongly disagreed and 9% disagreed. This indicated that 69% of respondents were financially reliant on their partners. When asked whether “Lack of personal income limits my ability to leave an abusive relationship,” 40% agreed and 24% strongly agreed, suggesting that 64% of respondents lacked the financial means to exit harmful environments. Only 5% strongly disagreed and 11% disagreed, highlighting a minimal resistance to this perception.

Regarding “Financial dependence makes it difficult to report or challenge abuse,” 38% agreed and 23% strongly agreed, with 6% strongly disagreeing and 12% disagreeing. These results confirmed that a majority of respondents felt economically constrained from taking legal or personal action against abuse. On the statement “Women who rely on their partners financially are more vulnerable to SGBV,” 30% were neutral, but 25% agreed and 8% strongly agreed. The responses indicated moderate recognition of the link between economic dependence and risk of violence, though 22% disagreed and 15% strongly disagreed, suggesting varied perceptions.

Lastly, “Economic dependence increases tolerance for abuse in relationships” received agreement from 45% and strong agreement from 36% of respondents. Only 3% strongly disagreed and 6% disagreed, with 10% neutral. This finding clearly emphasized that economic reliance significantly contributes to normalization and endurance of abuse. Overall, the data suggest that financial dependency is a substantial determinant of SGBV in Kilifi North, not only by increasing women's vulnerability to violence but also by restricting their capacity to resist or leave abusive relationships.

The findings in Kilifi North are consistent with multiple empirical studies reviewed under Objective 2. In South Africa, Ndlovu et al. (2024) reported that 60% of women in low-income households were more likely to experience intimate partner violence due to financial dependency. In Uganda, Namusoke and Kyambadde (2024) found that 68% of SGBV survivors lacked personal income and cited this as the main reason for remaining with their abusers. In Kenya, Otieno et al. (2023) observed that 55% of women in Kisumu could not report abuse because they relied financially on their partners. Similarly, Charo et al. (2023) noted that in Kilifi County, 52% of women remained in abusive relationships due to

economic constraints, and 71% agreed that financial control by one partner increased the risk of violence. These findings validate the current study's results, reinforcing the central role of economic vulnerability in sustaining SGBV.

The interview responses supported the quantitative findings, illustrating how financial dependence limits survivors' autonomy and options. A social worker from Kilifi North noted:

*"We see many cases where women want to leave violent homes but say they have nowhere to go. They depend entirely on their husbands, and fear being left without food, shelter, or help for their children."* Social worker from Kilifi North interviewed on 17th April 2025

This comment underscores how economic insecurity traps survivors in abusive environments, deterring them from seeking justice or safety. Similarly, a women's rights advocate stated:

*"Economic dependence is one of the biggest barriers. Even when women report, they later withdraw complaints because they have no means to support themselves if the partner is jailed or excluded."* Women's rights advocate interviewed on 20th April 2025

This reflects how dependence can directly undermine reporting and reinforce cycles of abuse.

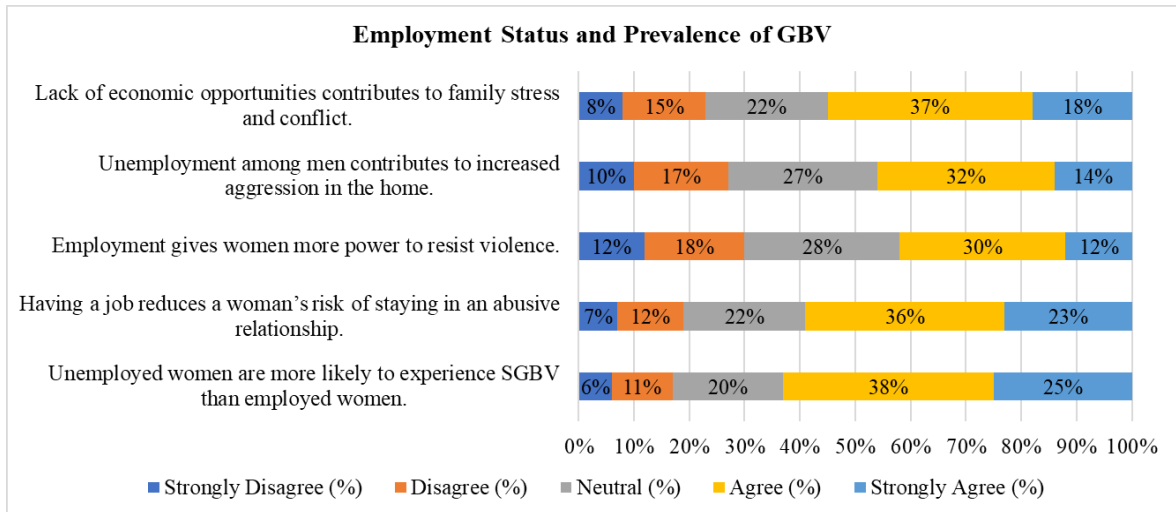
The findings on Financial Dependency can be interpreted through Routine Activity Theory (RAT), which emphasizes that the convergence of a motivated offender, a suitable target,

and the absence of a capable guardian increases the likelihood of a crime. In this context, economically dependent women become “suitable targets,” unable to escape or resist abuse due to their reliance on perpetrators. The lack of economic independence, coupled with weak legal protection, creates an ideal environment for abuse to persist.

Gender Role Theory (GRT) also explains the dynamics at play. The societal expectation that men should provide and women should depend reinforces imbalanced power dynamics, where men control financial resources and women’s survival becomes tied to compliance. This imbalance sustains women’s subordinate position and tolerance of abuse, as leaving the relationship threatens their livelihood and security. These theoretical perspectives show that economic empowerment and financial autonomy are essential to reducing the prevalence and impact of SGBV.

#### **4.4.2 Employment Status and Prevalence of GBV**

This indicator explored how employment status influences women’s exposure to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. Employment was assessed as both a protective and risk factor, depending on whether women or their partners had access to stable income. The objective was to determine whether employment reduces women’s vulnerability or if unemployment increases stress and the likelihood of domestic violence. The findings are presented in Figure 4.5.



**Figure 4. 5: Employment Status and Prevalence of GBV**

The data revealed a strong relationship between employment status and experiences of SGBV. For the statement “Unemployed women are more likely to experience SGBV than employed women,” 38% agreed and 25% strongly agreed, while only 6% strongly disagreed and 11% disagreed. This suggested that 63% of respondents perceived unemployment as increasing women’s vulnerability to abuse. When asked whether “Having a job reduces a woman’s risk of staying in an abusive relationship,” 36% agreed and 23% strongly agreed, while 7% strongly disagreed, 12% disagreed, and 22% remained neutral. This reinforced the belief that employment provides women with more options for escaping abusive situations.

In response to “Employment gives women more power to resist violence,” 30% agreed and 12% strongly agreed, though 12% strongly disagreed, 18% disagreed, and 28% were neutral. This indicates a moderate level of recognition of the empowering effect of income-generating opportunities. Regarding the statement “Unemployment among men contributes to increased aggression in the home,” 32% agreed and 14% strongly agreed. However, 10% strongly disagreed, 17% disagreed, and 27% were neutral. This pointed to a perception that men’s economic frustration may trigger aggressive behavior, affecting family safety.

Lastly, for “Lack of economic opportunities contributes to family stress and conflict,” 37% agreed and 18% strongly agreed, while 8% strongly disagreed, 15% disagreed, and 22% were neutral. These responses suggest that limited access to income-generating opportunities contributes to tension that may escalate into SGBV. Overall, the findings show that both male and female unemployment are seen as key contributors to the occurrence and persistence of SGBV, while employment, especially for women, is regarded as a potential protective factor.

The results support empirical studies reviewed. In Mexico, Martinez et al. (2024) reported that 74% of financially dependent women experienced psychological or physical abuse, while women with stable employment had greater capacity to resist violence. In Uganda, Namusoke and Kyambadde (2024) observed that economic independence significantly reduced the likelihood of SGBV, with 68% of employed women reporting fewer incidents. In Kenya, Otieno et al. (2023) found that 55% of unemployed women cited financial dependence as a reason for staying in abusive relationships. Similarly, Charo et al. (2023) documented that 48% of women in Kilifi who were unemployed expressed fear of homelessness or hunger if they reported or left abusive partners. These studies confirm the present findings that employment status directly impacts women's vulnerability to abuse and their capacity to seek help.

The interviews echoed the quantitative results, with several informants highlighting the critical role employment plays in either exposing women to or shielding them from abuse. A community-based counselor shared:

*“In most of our cases, the women who are being abused are unemployed. They say they have no means to support themselves or their children, so they stay even when the situation is dangerous.”* A community-based counselor interviewed on 14th April 2025

This emphasizes the survival-based reasoning that underpins many women’s decisions to remain in violent relationships. A similar view was expressed by a local youth employment officer, who stated:

*“When men lose jobs or cannot find work, we see a rise in domestic violence reports. Frustration builds up, and often the violence is taken out on wives or children.”* A local youth employment officer interviewed on 19th April 2025:

This points to the broader household effects of economic strain and supports the notion that male unemployment can be a driver of SGBV.

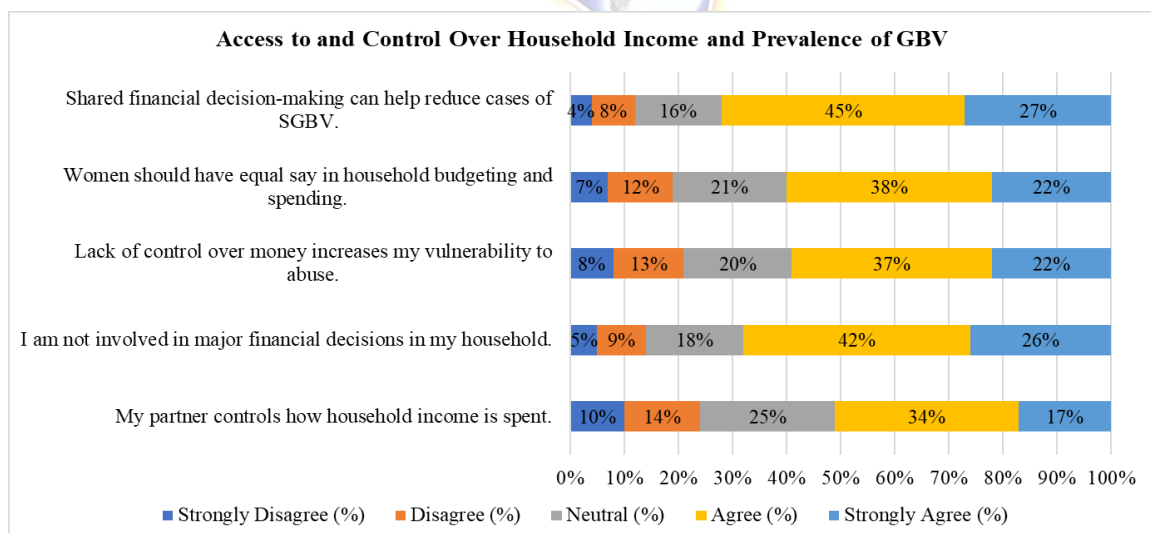
The findings on Employment Status can be interpreted through Routine Activity Theory (RAT). According to RAT, unemployment disrupts routine stability and reduces the protective factors that prevent crime. Women without employment become more vulnerable due to reduced independence, making them “suitable targets” with limited ability to escape or resist violence. Similarly, households with unemployed male heads may experience elevated stress and aggression, especially when there is no “capable guardian,” such as legal or social support systems, to intervene.

Gender Role Theory (GRT) also provides insight by highlighting the social expectation that men should be providers. When men are unable to fulfill this role, frustration may manifest

as aggression or violence to reassert control. Conversely, employed women may be seen as challenging traditional roles, triggering resistance or abuse from partners seeking to reestablish dominance. Therefore, economic empowerment must be coupled with community sensitization to shift rigid gender norms and mitigate backlash.

#### 4.4.3 Access to and Control Over Household Income and Prevalence of GBV

This indicator assessed how women's involvement in financial decision-making within the household affects their vulnerability to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). Control over income—both earning and spending—reflects power dynamics that can either protect against or contribute to abuse. The analysis focused on the degree of women's financial autonomy and how shared decision-making may mitigate SGBV risks in Kilifi North Sub-County. The findings are presented in Figure 4.6.



**Figure 4. 6: Access to and Control Over Household Income and Prevalence of GBV**

The data showed a clear association between limited financial control and increased vulnerability to SGBV. For the statement “My partner controls how household income is spent,” 34% agreed and 17% strongly agreed, indicating that over half (51%) of respondents

had limited say in household spending. Only 10% strongly disagreed and 14% disagreed, while 25% were neutral. When asked whether “I am not involved in major financial decisions in my household,” 42% agreed and 26% strongly agreed, while just 5% strongly disagreed and 9% disagreed. This means 68% of respondents lacked input in significant financial choices, reflecting a power imbalance within households.

Regarding “Lack of control over money increases my vulnerability to abuse,” 37% agreed and 22% strongly agreed, while 8% strongly disagreed, 13% disagreed, and 20% were neutral. These results show that a majority of participants recognized a direct link between economic disempowerment and heightened risk of abuse. The statement “Women should have equal say in household budgeting and spending” was supported by 38% who agreed and 22% who strongly agreed, while only 7% strongly disagreed and 12% disagreed. This demonstrates strong community support for gender-inclusive financial management.

Finally, “Shared financial decision-making can help reduce cases of SGBV” received 45% agreement and 27% strong agreement, with minimal disagreement (8% disagree, 4% strongly disagree). This confirms widespread belief in the protective role of equitable financial participation. Overall, the findings confirm that unequal control over household income is a key factor in the perpetuation of SGBV, while shared decision-making is viewed as a viable preventative strategy.

The findings align with previous studies reviewed. In South Africa, Ndlovu et al. (2024) found that 61% of women who lacked control over household resources experienced economic or physical abuse. In Kenya, Otieno et al. (2023) reported that 55% of survivors had no say in household spending, which contributed to prolonged abuse. In Kilifi County,

Charo et al. (2023) documented that women with no financial autonomy were three times more likely to endure intimate partner violence than those with shared economic decision-making power. These empirical findings validate the current results, emphasizing that financial exclusion within the household exacerbates women's vulnerability to abuse.

The interview responses reinforced the quantitative findings, especially on the role of financial decision-making in either sustaining or mitigating SGBV. A community paralegal explained:

*“Many women tell us they are not even allowed to know how much their husbands earn. They get no say in how money is spent and are often denied resources if they try to speak up.”* A community paralegal interviewed on 12th April 2025

This quote highlights the use of financial control as a tool for silencing and subordinating women within households. Additionally, a women's economic empowerment officer noted:

*“When couples make financial decisions together, there's more respect and less violence. But in homes where only the man decides, it's easy for money to become a weapon.”* A women's economic empowerment officer interviewed on 20th April 2025

This insight affirms the belief that shared decision-making fosters healthier and more respectful relationships, ultimately reducing instances of SGBV.

The findings on Access to and Control Over Household Income can be interpreted using Gender Role Theory (GRT), which suggests that societal norms assign financial authority and leadership roles to men, often marginalizing women in household economics. This

exclusion reinforces patriarchal control, where financial dominance is used as a tool to enforce dependency and silence dissent. Women who are denied access to income or decision-making opportunities are less likely to report abuse or leave harmful environments, as doing so risks economic ruin.

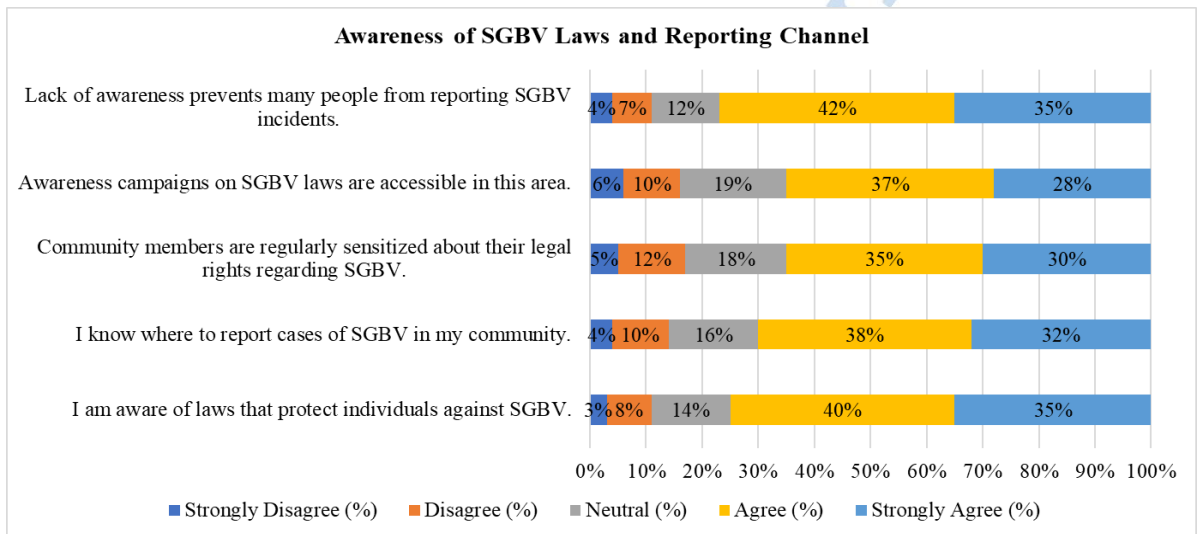
From the perspective of Routine Activity Theory (RAT), economic control within the household reduces women's protective mechanisms, making them more "suitable targets" for exploitation or violence. The absence of financial independence and institutional safeguards allows perpetrators to maintain unchecked power. These theoretical perspectives collectively demonstrate how financial inequality within households not only reflects deeper gender hierarchies but also functions as a mechanism through which SGBV is sustained.

#### **4.5 Possible Measures to Eradicate Sexual Gender-Based Violence In Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County**

This section presents the findings related to Objective 3, which aimed to identify effective measures that could be implemented to eradicate Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. The analysis focused on three key indicators: awareness of SGBV laws and reporting channels, community participation in prevention programs, and access to survivor support services. These indicators were selected to explore the institutional, social, and infrastructural mechanisms that contribute to prevention, response, and recovery from SGBV. The findings integrate both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of current efforts and areas requiring strengthening.

#### 4.5.1 Awareness of SGBV Laws and Reporting Channel and Prevalence of GBV

This indicator assessed the level of awareness among community members regarding the laws that protect individuals from Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and the availability of reporting mechanisms. Understanding and accessing legal protections are essential for empowering survivors and holding perpetrators accountable. This section evaluates respondents' awareness of legal frameworks and their ability to report SGBV in Kilifi North Sub-County. The findings are presented in Figure 4.7.



**Figure 4.7: Awareness of SGBV Laws and Reporting Channels and Prevalence of GBV**

The responses revealed relatively high levels of awareness, although some gaps remain. When asked whether “I am aware of laws that protect individuals against SGBV,” 40% agreed and 35% strongly agreed, totaling 75% of respondents expressing awareness. Only 3% strongly disagreed, 8% disagreed, and 14% were neutral, suggesting limited opposition or uncertainty. For the statement “I know where to report cases of SGBV in my community,” 38% agreed and 32% strongly agreed, indicating that 70% of respondents knew reporting pathways. Meanwhile, 4% strongly disagreed, 10% disagreed, and 16% remained neutral.

On whether “Community members are regularly sensitized about their legal rights regarding SGBV,” 35% agreed and 30% strongly agreed, while 5% strongly disagreed, 12% disagreed, and 18% were neutral. This suggests moderate access to sensitization efforts, but also points to gaps in public engagement. Regarding “Awareness campaigns on SGBV laws are accessible in this area,” 37% agreed and 28% strongly agreed, with 6% strongly disagreeing, 10% disagreeing, and 19% neutral. This shows that while over 65% acknowledged campaign availability, nearly a fifth remained unaware.

Lastly, “Lack of awareness prevents many people from reporting SGBV incidents” was supported by 42% who agreed and 35% who strongly agreed. Only 4% strongly disagreed and 7% disagreed. These results reflect widespread understanding that limited knowledge acts as a barrier to justice. Together, these findings indicate strong overall awareness of SGBV laws and reporting mechanisms in Kilifi North, though gaps persist in community-level sensitization and consistent outreach efforts.

The study findings align with empirical literature reviewed. In Tanzania, Mshana and Mwakisu (2024) found that only 58% of women in rural areas were aware of SGBV protection laws, with 65% unaware of reporting structures. In Rwanda, Mukamana et al. (2024) reported that public awareness campaigns increased reporting by 40% over two years, suggesting that awareness significantly influences survivor behavior. In Kenya, Otieno and Wanjiku (2023) found that 68% of women in Kisumu knew where to report abuse but only 46% had ever participated in a sensitization event. In Kilifi County, Baraka and Mwachiro (2024) revealed that while 72% of respondents had heard of SGBV laws, only 38% had seen local awareness campaigns, indicating a disconnect between policy and grassroots

implementation. These studies validate the present findings and highlight the critical role of sustained education and outreach in promoting access to justice.

The interviews confirmed that awareness was uneven across the community, with urban residents often more informed than those in rural or marginalized areas. A local administrator stated:

*“We have done barazas to educate people, but still, many do not know their rights or fear reporting. Especially in remote areas, awareness is still low.”* A local administrator interviewed on 13th April 2025

This reflects the gap between formal awareness campaigns and real community-level understanding, particularly in rural zones. A community health worker shared:

*“People know that violence is wrong, but not everyone knows where to go or what law protects them. Many fear reporting because they don’t understand the process.”* A community health worker interviewed on 18th April 2025

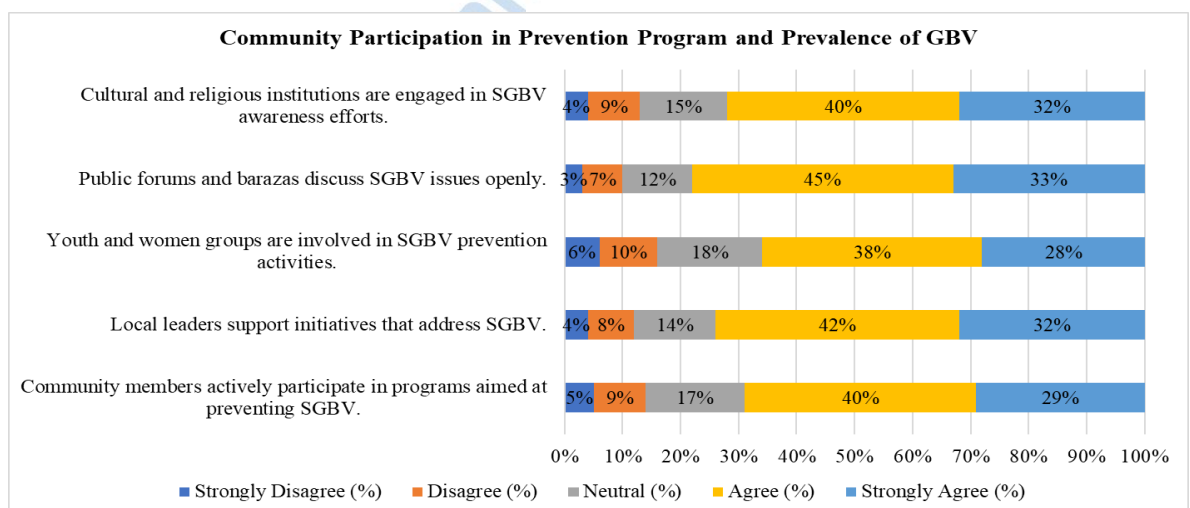
This points to informational gaps and procedural confusion that hinder reporting, even when legal awareness exists.

The findings on Awareness of SGBV Laws and Reporting Channels can be interpreted using Routine Activity Theory (RAT). When survivors lack information about legal protections or where to report violence, the system fails to provide a “capable guardian,” leaving them exposed to harm. Awareness strengthens formal guardianship mechanisms by enabling victims to act, report, and seek justice—disrupting the perpetrator’s opportunity.

From a Gender Role Theory (GRT) perspective, traditional norms may suppress open discussion of SGBV or discourage reporting, especially in settings where gender roles are rigidly defined. Without targeted education that challenges these norms, legal awareness may not translate into action. Thus, awareness must be coupled with cultural transformation to enhance reporting and protect survivors.

#### 4.5.2 Community Participation in Prevention Program and Prevalence of GBV

This indicator evaluated the extent of community involvement in initiatives aimed at preventing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. Participation by community members, local leaders, and social groups is critical to fostering accountability, shifting harmful norms, and ensuring sustainability of prevention efforts. The analysis focused on the roles of public forums, cultural and religious institutions, local leadership, and civil society groups. The findings are presented in Figure 4.8.



**Figure 4. 8: Community Participation in Prevention Program and Prevalence of GBV**

The responses revealed strong engagement in prevention activities, though opportunities for improvement remain. For the statement “Community members actively participate in programs aimed at preventing SGBV,” 40% agreed and 29% strongly agreed, while 5% strongly disagreed, 9% disagreed, and 17% were neutral. This indicates that 69% of respondents perceived widespread community participation. Regarding “Local leaders support initiatives that address SGBV,” 42% agreed and 32% strongly agreed. Only 4% strongly disagreed and 8% disagreed, while 14% were neutral. This suggests strong support from local leadership.

On the statement “Youth and women groups are involved in SGBV prevention activities,” 38% agreed and 28% strongly agreed, with 6% strongly disagreeing, 10% disagreeing, and 18% neutral. These responses confirm the active role of civil society organizations, especially among vulnerable populations. For “Public forums and barazas discuss SGBV issues openly,” 45% agreed and 33% strongly agreed, with minimal disagreement (3% strongly disagree, 7% disagree) and 12% neutral. This reflects increasing normalization of dialogue around SGBV in public spaces.

Lastly, “Cultural and religious institutions are engaged in SGBV awareness efforts” received agreement from 40% and strong agreement from 32% of respondents. Only 4% strongly disagreed, 9% disagreed, and 15% were neutral. This finding highlights the role of cultural gatekeepers in influencing community norms around SGBV. Overall, the data show robust participation in SGBV prevention programs, particularly through inclusive forums, leadership engagement, and culturally grounded interventions.

The findings align with studies reviewed. In Rwanda, Niyonzima and Mbabazi (2024) found that villages with high levels of community-based dialogue saw a 43% reduction in reported

SGBV incidents. In Tanzania, Mshana and Mwakisu (2024) reported that involvement of religious leaders in awareness efforts improved community reporting by 36%. In Kenya, Otieno and Wanjiku (2023) observed that 67% of respondents in Nairobi believed community forums were the most effective platform for addressing SGBV, while Baraka and Mwachiro (2024) highlighted that Kilifi's community-led initiatives—particularly through women's groups—improved awareness and increased support for survivors. These studies validate the current findings by emphasizing that sustained community participation is critical to changing norms and reducing SGBV.

Interview feedback confirmed the quantitative data, indicating strong but varied participation across community structures. A ward administrator interviewed shared:

*“Our leaders and religious elders are now more open to discussing gender-based violence. We use barazas and church events to pass information. People are starting to listen.”* A ward administrator interviewed on 16th April 2025 shared:

This highlights the strategic use of cultural and faith-based channels to normalize discussions around SGBV. A women's group coordinator noted:

*“We run regular awareness sessions with youth and women. The turnout is good, and many say these forums are the only places they feel safe to talk about abuse.”* A women's group coordinator interviewed on 19th April 2025

This emphasizes the importance of gender-inclusive spaces in enabling open conversation and prevention of SGBV.

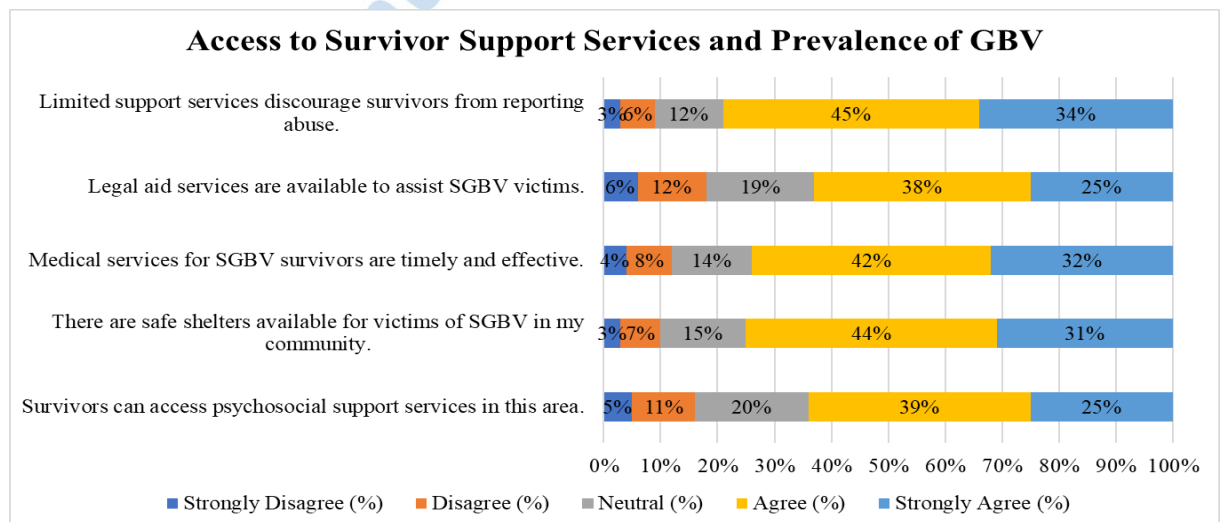
The findings on Community Participation in Prevention Programs can be interpreted through Routine Activity Theory (RAT). When community members and institutions actively

engage in prevention, they function as “capable guardians,” disrupting the opportunities for perpetrators to act unchecked. These guardians create safer environments and reduce SGBV by making communities more alert, cohesive, and responsive.

From a Gender Role Theory (GRT) perspective, the inclusion of cultural and religious actors in prevention efforts signifies a positive shift in societal norms. These actors traditionally uphold patriarchal values; when they challenge harmful practices and advocate for equity, they reshape gender expectations and reduce tolerance for abuse. Active participation also empowers individuals to question and resist oppressive norms, creating pathways for long-term behavioral change.

#### 4.5.3 Access to Survivor Support Services and Prevalence of GBV

This indicator assessed the availability and accessibility of services that support survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. Key services evaluated included psychosocial support, legal aid, medical care, and shelter. These services are vital for survivor recovery, justice, and empowerment. The findings are presented in Figure 4.9.



#### **Figure 4. 9: Access to Survivor Support Services and Prevalence of GBV**

The responses showed that while services exist, gaps in access remain a critical barrier to reporting and recovery. For the statement “Survivors can access psychosocial support services in this area,” 39% agreed and 25% strongly agreed. However, 5% strongly disagreed, 11% disagreed, and 20% remained neutral, reflecting some uncertainty or limited awareness. Regarding “There are safe shelters available for victims of SGBV in my community,” 44% agreed and 31% strongly agreed. Only 3% strongly disagreed and 7% disagreed, while 15% were neutral. This suggests a growing infrastructure for safe accommodation, though possibly limited in coverage.

For the statement “Medical services for SGBV survivors are timely and effective,” 42% agreed and 32% strongly agreed, while 4% strongly disagreed, 8% disagreed, and 14% were neutral. This indicates a relatively positive perception of health services, though timeliness and comprehensiveness may vary. In response to “Legal aid services are available to assist SGBV victims,” 38% agreed and 25% strongly agreed, while 6% strongly disagreed, 12% disagreed, and 19% were neutral. These results highlight gaps in awareness or distribution of legal services.

Lastly, “Limited support services discourage survivors from reporting abuse” received 45% agreement and 34% strong agreement. Only 3% strongly disagreed and 6% disagreed, with 12% neutral. This finding emphasizes that the unavailability or inaccessibility of support is a major deterrent to reporting and recovery. Overall, the data suggest that while support services exist in Kilifi North, inconsistent availability, uneven distribution, and gaps in public knowledge hinder their effectiveness in promoting survivor well-being and justice.

These findings are consistent with reviewed studies under Objective 3. In Tanzania, Mshana and Mwakisu (2024) reported that only 48% of rural SGBV survivors had access to psychosocial or legal support, and lack of services led to withdrawal of formal complaints. In Rwanda, Mukamana et al. (2024) found that districts with well-resourced survivor support services had 60% higher rates of reporting and follow-up care. In Kenya, Otieno and Wanjiku (2023) observed that only 51% of survivors in informal settlements accessed medical care within 48 hours of violence, and only 27% received legal aid. In Kilifi, Baraka and Mwachiro (2024) highlighted that although some support centers existed, most were urban-based, and rural survivors lacked transportation or information to access them. These findings confirm that while services are expanding, accessibility and reach remain critical issues.

The interviews echoed the quantitative results, highlighting both progress and challenges in service provision. A hospital-based GBV focal person stated:

*“We have a GBV desk, but sometimes we lack enough counselors or legal officers. Survivors are willing to report, but if they don’t get immediate help, they lose trust in the system.”* A hospital-based GBV focal person interviewed on 15th April 2025

This illustrates the need for better resource allocation to maintain survivor trust and consistent care. Similarly, a legal aid officer commented:

*“There are legal services, but not everywhere. Most women in the interior areas don’t know their rights or how to reach us. We need mobile clinics or outreach to close that gap.”* A legal aid officer interviewed on 20th April 2025

This highlights geographic and informational barriers that prevent equal access to justice and protection.

The findings on Access to Survivor Support Services can be explained using Routine Activity Theory (RAT). In contexts where support systems are weak, inaccessible, or unknown, capable guardianship is compromised. Survivors are left vulnerable to repeated abuse, and perpetrators are not deterred. Strengthening support structures enhances the guardianship element of RAT and increases survivor protection and accountability.

From a Gender Role Theory (GRT) perspective, traditional norms may discourage survivors—especially women—from seeking support due to fear of shame, rejection, or perceived failure in their domestic role. Even where services are available, these cultural barriers may prevent utilization. Therefore, improving support services must be accompanied by sensitization to shift harmful social norms and empower survivors to seek help without stigma.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents summary, conclusion and the recommendations of the study guided by the objectives of the study: To examine the socio-cultural determinants of Sexual Gender Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub County, Kilifi County Kenya; To examine the economic determinants of Sexual Gender Based Violence in Kilifi North the sub-county, Kilifi County, Kenya; To identify possible measures that can be put in place to eradicate Sexual Gender Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub County, Kilifi County, Kenya.

#### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

This section synthesizes the key findings of the study, organized according to the three research objectives. Each objective is examined through specific indicators derived from the conceptual framework, capturing both socio-cultural and economic factors, as well as potential solutions for eradicating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. The summary draws from both quantitative and qualitative data to present a comprehensive overview of the patterns and determinants of SGBV in the study area.

##### **5.2.1 Socio-Cultural Determinants of Sexual Gender Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub County, Kilifi County**

The first objective explored how socio-cultural norms shape SGBV in Kilifi North, and the findings reveal entrenched patriarchal beliefs that legitimize violence. Approximately 65% of respondents indicated that a husband is justified in using physical discipline if a wife is perceived as disobedient, while 60% described wife-beating as a normal aspect of marriage

life. These high levels of acceptance underscore the influence of Gender Role Theory, which posits that rigid gender norms confer authority to men and normalize violence as a disciplinary mechanism (Eagly & Wood, 1999).

Traditional dispute resolution remains entrenched: 34% of respondents prefer mediation by elders in domestic conflicts, and half of all respondents agree that survivors are discouraged from seeking formal justice, with belief in the superiority of traditional mechanisms. This reliance on informal systems diminishes survivors' access to legal recourse, reinforcing silence and impunity. Qualitative interviews affirm that survivors are pressurized by elders to resolve matters privately, often to preserve family reputation. As a result, informal interventions supplant formal justice, perpetuating cycles of SGBV.

Regarding beliefs about male dominance, nearly half (47%) support the idea that men should make final household decisions. Additionally, 46% believe women should not question their husbands, and 37% think a wife's disregard for roles destabilizes the family. This deference to male authority highlights social norms that place women in subordinate roles—further restricting their agency in speaking out or leaving abusive contexts.

Triangulating quantitative statistics with qualitative narratives offers deeper insight. Community leaders described how traditional rhetoric reinforces male control, while survivors shared internalized acceptance of violence as culturally sanctioned. These combined perspectives reveal a socio-cultural ecosystem where violence is both tolerated and institutionalized. Remedies must therefore move beyond legal reform to pursue gender-transformative cultural change—empowering survivors, educating the community, and reconfiguring norms that normalize control and domestic violence.

### **5.2.2 Economic Determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County**

The second objective investigated economic vulnerabilities and their relationship to SGBV, with quantitative results revealing compelling patterns: 69% of respondents rely financially on partners, 64% state that lack of personal income constrains their ability to leave abusive relationships, and 61% acknowledge that economic dependency specifically hampers reporting or resisting abuse. These findings reflect the core elements of Routine Activity Theory: financially dependent women become “suitable targets” due to economic invisibility, and the absence of economic independence compromises their ability to escape or contest abuse (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

Employment status further compounds risk: 68% agree that having a job reduces the likelihood of remaining in abusive relationships, and 55% link unemployment directly to vulnerability. Notably, over 60% of respondents are unemployed or engaged in precarious informal work. This unstable economic positioning diminishes autonomy and intensifies dependency. Narratives from women in tourism or informal trade revealed that irregular income and partner control over merchant earnings made it impossible to refuse abuse or seek outside support without risking destitution.

Control over household finances is similarly problematic. While 63% reported that male partners exclusively control income, 48% indicated that women have no role in budgeting. Sixty-one percent said they must seek permission before spending minor amounts. Despite this, 72% believe financial empowerment would reduce the occurrence of SGBV. Interviewees confirmed that financial exclusion restricts women’s mobility and leaves survivors with limited resources to pursue justice or support.

Combining statistical and experiential data illustrates that economic inequality is both a structural determinant and a situational risk factor. Women without employment, financial literacy, or decision-making authority are disproportionately trapped in abusive dynamics. Addressing SGBV thus must include concerted interventions in economic empowerment: promoting income-generating opportunities, financial literacy, co-ownership of assets, and joint decision-making—strategies that reduce situational risk and shift structural conditions that enable violence.

### **5.2.3 Possible Measures to Eradicate Sexual Gender-Based Violence In Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County**

The third objective centered on identifying measures to eradicate SGBV, and findings reveal patchy implementation and uneven accessibility of interventions. Although 64% of respondents claim awareness of SGBV laws and 61% understand reporting channels, only 53% affirm that awareness campaigns are accessible. Meanwhile, 77% believe limited legal knowledge discourages survivors from reporting. These observations expose a gap between nominal awareness and actual reach, underscoring the need to improve outreach strategies. Qualitative feedback highlighted that information is often confined to town centers, excluding rural wards and marginalized groups.

Community participation was reasonably robust—58% engage in prevention programs, 63% report support from local leaders, and 60% acknowledge active involvement by youth and women’s organizations. Religious and cultural groups often host forums addressing SGBV; 72% confirm their involvement in awareness and prevention. Yet stakeholders indicate inconsistency across wards, with rural areas receiving less engagement and fewer tailored

interventions. Respondents reported that messages sometimes clash with deeply held cultural beliefs, limiting their effectiveness.

Support services show mixed outcomes: 64% cite availability of psychosocial support, 75% note the presence of safe shelters, and 74% rate medical care as timely. However, only 63% are aware of accessible legal aid, and 79% believe that inadequate support discourages survivors from reporting. Interviews with service providers confirmed that legal assistance is under-resourced and unevenly distributed, especially in rural sub-locations. Shelters may exist, but lack investment and sustainable operation.

Synthesizing quantitative and qualitative data points to multi-sectoral integration as the path forward. Potential measures include mobile survivor support units that combine health, legal, and psychosocial services; training for law enforcement and community leaders in trauma-informed care; and formal referral systems connecting sectors. Anti-SGBV awareness must be extended through barazas, schools, and local media in rural areas. Interventions should be survivor-centered and context-sensitive—respecting local realities while challenging harmful norms. Such strategies, grounded in both statistical patterns and lived experiences, offer a comprehensive path to reducing SGBV in Kilifi North.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

This section presents the key conclusions drawn from the analysis of the study's three objectives. Each conclusion distills the empirical findings, theoretical insights, and contextual realities that shape the prevalence and persistence of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. The conclusions serve to inform future policy interventions, programmatic strategies, and scholarly inquiries aimed at mitigating SGBV through socio-cultural, economic, and systemic reforms.

### **5.3.1 Socio-Cultural Determinants of Sexual Gender Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub County, Kilifi County**

The study's first objective revealed that socio-cultural norms in Kilifi North Sub-County remain a formidable foundation upon which SGBV is sustained. The normalization of violence—evidenced by nearly two-thirds of respondents justifying wife-beating—points to a societal climate where patriarchal ideologies are internalized and often unchallenged. The Gender Role Theory provides a critical lens for understanding these dynamics, as women are culturally socialized into submissive roles while men retain decision-making authority and disciplinary control. Additionally, the widespread reliance on traditional dispute resolution mechanisms prioritizes communal harmony over survivor protection, perpetuating impunity and discouraging formal justice-seeking behavior. These cultural systems, though deeply embedded, act as covert enablers of abuse by reinforcing silence, victim-blaming, and reconciliation at the expense of accountability. Consequently, legal frameworks alone are inadequate. The findings strongly support the need for context-specific, gender-transformative programming that engages community elders, religious leaders, and youth in reshaping norms around masculinity, power, and conflict resolution. Education initiatives must confront harmful cultural narratives and foster intergenerational dialogue that challenges the interlinkage between culture and control, while amplifying survivor voices and rights.

### **5.3.2 Economic Determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County**

In addressing the second objective, the study established a robust and multi-layered connection between economic precarity and vulnerability to SGBV. The application of

Routine Activity Theory reveals that financial dependence makes women more susceptible to abuse by reducing their autonomy and capacity to escape violent environments. More than two-thirds of participants identified partner dependence as a limiting factor in resisting or reporting violence. This dependency is compounded by low rates of formal employment among women, widespread exclusion from household financial decisions, and entrenched gendered expectations about male economic dominance. Additionally, the findings point to the destabilizing effects of male unemployment on household dynamics, often resulting in heightened stress and aggression directed at intimate partners. These insights emphasize that economic empowerment is not merely a matter of improving livelihoods but a strategic intervention in violence prevention. Economic policies targeting gender parity in employment, asset ownership, and financial literacy are essential. Furthermore, community-based programs should promote joint budgeting, shared financial responsibility, and economic agency for women to break cycles of dependency and expand survivor options. Without structural changes to the economic realities that entrap women, efforts to reduce SGBV will remain incomplete.

### **5.3.3 Possible Measures to Eradicate Sexual Gender-Based Violence In Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County**

The third objective focused on potential strategies to eliminate SGBV and highlighted both progress and gaps in prevention and response infrastructure. Although over 60% of respondents reported awareness of SGBV laws and channels for reporting abuse, the study exposed considerable disparities in outreach, particularly in rural and marginalized areas. Moreover, the limited coordination among community actors, legal institutions, and healthcare providers hinders the efficiency and inclusivity of current interventions. The

findings emphasize that awareness alone is insufficient when survivors lack safe, accessible, and comprehensive support systems. Services such as psychosocial counseling, legal aid, and emergency shelter remain unevenly distributed and under-resourced, with many survivors citing barriers in navigating these systems. To be effective, interventions must be multi-sectoral and survivor-centered. Strengthening institutional capacities—through budgetary commitments, service integration, and training of frontline personnel—is critical. Furthermore, cultural and religious leaders, often the first point of contact in rural communities, should be equipped to refer survivors to appropriate support rather than resolving cases privately. The conclusion underscores the importance of a rights-based, community-led model that embeds prevention into local governance structures while ensuring survivors receive timely and dignified support. Only through such an integrated and context-sensitive approach can SGBV be meaningfully addressed in Kilifi North.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

This section presents actionable and context-specific recommendations derived from the study's findings and conclusions. These recommendations are intended for key stakeholders, including policymakers, civil society organizations, community leaders, and academic researchers. Structured around the three core research objectives, the recommendations aim to address the systemic, cultural, and economic factors perpetuating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County. The final part offers directions for future scholarly inquiry.

### **5.6.1 Socio-Cultural Determinants of Sexual Gender Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub County, Kilifi County**

To counter the entrenched socio-cultural norms fueling SGBV in Kilifi North, the study recommends implementing culturally grounded, gender-transformative programs that directly engage influential community actors. Local elders, religious leaders, youth influencers, and traditional mediators should be trained and mobilized to lead norm-shifting dialogues that challenge the legitimacy of wife-beating, silence around violence, and male household dominance. Initiatives should include regular community barazas, school-based gender equality clubs, and localized media campaigns using Kiswahili and Giriama languages to increase accessibility and resonance.

Moreover, partnerships with faith-based organizations should be leveraged to integrate anti-SGBV messaging into religious teachings, aligning spiritual values with human rights principles. County governments should mandate legal literacy campaigns as part of public education efforts, demystifying the legal process, explaining survivors' rights, and promoting formal justice mechanisms over traditional adjudication. These efforts must prioritize inclusivity, ensuring the participation of men and boys as allies in violence prevention. Programs should also draw on Gender Role Theory to reframe masculinities around empathy, shared responsibility, and nonviolence. By embedding these shifts in community structures and discourse, these interventions can sustainably dismantle harmful gender ideologies that legitimize abuse.

### **5.6.2 Economic Determinants of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County**

Given the clear connection between economic marginalization and SGBV vulnerability, Kilifi County should prioritize comprehensive economic empowerment programs for women and at-risk groups. These programs must offer skills training tailored to local economic opportunities, such as agribusiness, artisanal crafts, hospitality, and digital services. Access to credit through microfinance institutions and women's savings groups should be expanded, with built-in financial literacy training and mentorship. Survivors should be specifically targeted with economic reintegration packages that reduce dependency on abusive partners.

Simultaneously, male economic inclusion must not be overlooked. Unemployment and underemployment among men were shown to heighten household tension and exacerbate abuse. Therefore, county-level job creation schemes—especially in the informal and tourism sectors—should incorporate young men and family breadwinners. Gender budgeting at the devolved level should ensure that allocations across all departments include line items dedicated to economic justice and SGBV prevention. Programs should also promote joint financial decision-making within households, encouraging couples to develop shared savings plans and household budgets. These strategies align with Routine Activity Theory by increasing women's autonomy (reducing target suitability) and enabling economic guardianship systems that protect against vulnerability.

### **5.6.3 Possible Measures to Eradicate Sexual Gender-Based Violence In Kilifi North Sub-County, Kilifi County**

To effectively eradicate SGBV, this study emphasizes the urgent need to strengthen institutional coordination and service provision. The county government, in partnership with NGOs and healthcare providers, should establish multi-sectoral SGBV response centers at sub-county levels, offering integrated services including medical care, psychosocial counseling, legal assistance, and shelter. These centers must be adequately staffed, culturally competent, and trauma-informed, ensuring dignity and safety for all survivors, including those with disabilities and minority identities.

Training law enforcement officers, healthcare workers, and judiciary staff in survivor-centered approaches is critical. Protocols for case management, referrals, and confidentiality must be standardized and monitored through accountability frameworks. Community health volunteers and paralegals should be capacitated to conduct door-to-door awareness and assist survivors in navigating the support system. Rural outreach must be prioritized, deploying mobile clinics and legal aid caravans to remote wards where structural barriers often inhibit access.

Furthermore, the study recommends formalizing community watch systems, composed of trained residents, to monitor, report, and prevent SGBV. This aligns with national frameworks such as the National Policy on Gender-Based Violence (2014) and Vision 2030's Gender Equity Pillar. By embedding prevention and response infrastructure within the community ecosystem, the county can improve survivor trust, reporting rates, and justice outcomes.

#### **5.6.4 Suggestions for Further Study**

To extend the knowledge base and refine interventions, future research should adopt longitudinal mixed-methods designs to assess the long-term outcomes of SGBV interventions. Such studies could measure shifts in community norms, survivor resilience, and the sustainability of economic empowerment initiatives. Additionally, qualitative inquiries should focus on the lived experiences of marginalized populations—including adolescent girls, elderly women, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ individuals—whose unique vulnerabilities and coping strategies are underexplored in existing literature. Further studies should also examine the role of men and boys not only as potential perpetrators but as critical allies in the transformation of gender norms. Exploring the barriers men face in rejecting violent masculinities and embracing equity-centered roles could inform male engagement strategies in anti-SGBV programming. Comparative research across counties and between urban and rural contexts would offer nuanced insights into geographic disparities in SGBV prevalence, service access, and policy enforcement. These investigations would support the development of a national evidence base for scaling effective, locally adapted interventions.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Semi-structured Questionnaire

#### SECTION ONE: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This section seeks to collect background information about the respondent. Kindly tick [] the appropriate response. All information provided will remain confidential and used solely for research purposes.

##### 1. Respondent Type

Survivor (Victim)  Perpetrator

##### 2. Age (in years)

Below 18  18–24  25–34  35–44  45–54  55 and above

##### 3. Gender

Male  Female  Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

##### 4. Marital Status

Single  Married  Divorced/Separated  Widowed

##### 5. Highest Level of Education

No Formal Education  Primary Education  Secondary Education

College/University

##### 6. Employment Status

Unemployed  Self-employed  Formally Employed  Informally Employed

##### 7. Monthly Household Income (KES)

Below 5,000  5,000 – 10,000  10,001 – 20,000

20,001 – 50,000  Above 50,000

##### 8. Religion



Christianity  Islam  Traditional/Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Residence Type**

Rural  Urban

**10. Number of Children (If Applicable)**

None  1–2  3–4  5 and above

**11. Do you have any form of disability?**

Yes (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_  No

**12. Have you ever experienced or witnessed SGBV?**

Yes (Specify: Survivor or Witness) \_\_\_\_\_  No

**13. Relationship to Perpetrator (For Survivors Only)**

Intimate Partner (Spouse/Boyfriend/Girlfriend)  Family Member (Parent, Sibling, Relative)  Employer/Work Colleague  Stranger  Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**14. If a Perpetrator, What Was the Motivation for the Act?**

Cultural or Traditional Beliefs  Economic/Financial Factors  Power and Control

Influence of Drugs/Alcohol  Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION TWO: SOCIO-CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF SEXUAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN KILIFI NORTH SUB-COUNTY, KILIFI COUNTY,**

Kindly indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale below:

1 – Strongly Disagree (SD) 2 – Disagree (D) 3 – Neutral (N) 4 – Agree (A)

5 – Strongly Agree (SA)

**1. Acceptance of wife-beating**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a. A husband is justified in hitting his wife if she disobeys him.					
b. Physical punishment is a normal part of disciplining a wife in my community.					
c. Some situations justify a man using violence to maintain control in the household.					
d. Wife-beating is considered a private family matter.					
e. Many women provoke violence by failing to fulfill their roles as wives.					

**2. Use of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a. Community elders are the preferred mediators for domestic disputes.					
b. Reporting SGBV to the police is discouraged in my community.					
c. Traditional justice methods provide better outcomes than formal legal systems.					
d. Victims are often encouraged to resolve cases at home rather than seek legal help.					
e. Elders discourage women from pursuing legal action after experiencing abuse.					

### 3. Beliefs about male dominance in household decision-making

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a. Men should have the final say in all household matters.					
b. A woman should always consult her husband before making decisions.					
c. Challenging a man's authority disrupts family harmony.					
d. Male leadership in the home is a cultural expectation.					
e. Women should not question their husbands' decisions.					

### SECTION THREE: ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF SEXUAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN KILIFI NORTH SUB-COUNTY, KILIFI COUNTY

Kindly indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale below:

1 – Strongly Disagree (SD) 2 – Disagree (D) 3 – Neutral (N) 4 – Agree (A)

5 – Strongly Agree (SA)

#### 1. Financial dependency

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a. I depend on my partner for most or all of my financial needs.					
b. Lack of personal income limits my ability to leave an abusive relationship.					
c. Financial dependence makes it difficult to report or challenge abuse.					
d. Women who rely on their partners financially are more vulnerable to SGBV.					
e. Economic dependence increases tolerance for abuse in relationships					

## 2. Employment status

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a. Unemployed women are more likely to experience SGBV than employed women.					
b. Having a job reduces a woman's risk of staying in an abusive relationship.					
c. Employment gives women more power to resist violence.					
d. Unemployment among men contributes to increased aggression in the home.					
e. Lack of economic opportunities contributes to family stress and conflict.					

## 3. Access to and control over household income

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a. My partner controls how household income is spent.					
b. I am not involved in major financial decisions in my household.					
c. Lack of control over money increases my vulnerability to abuse.					
d. Women should have equal say in household budgeting and spending.					
e. Shared financial decision-making can help reduce cases of SGBV.					

## SECTION FOUR: POSSIBLE MEASURES THAT CAN BE PUT IN PLACE TO ERADICATE SEXUAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN KILIFI NORTH SUB-COUNTY, KILIFI COUNTY

Kindly indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale below:

1 – Strongly Disagree (SD) 2 – Disagree (D) 3 – Neutral (N) 4 – Agree (A) 5 – Strongly Agree (SA)

**1. Awareness of SGBV laws and reporting channels**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a. I am aware of laws that protect individuals against SGBV.					
b. I know where to report cases of SGBV in my community.					
c. Community members are regularly sensitized about their legal rights regarding SGBV.					
d. Awareness campaigns on SGBV laws are accessible in this area.					
e. Lack of awareness prevents many people from reporting SGBV incidents.					

**2. Community participation in prevention programs**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a. Community members actively participate in programs aimed at preventing SGBV.					
b. Local leaders support initiatives that address SGBV.					
c. Youth and women groups are involved in SGBV prevention activities.					
d. Public forums and barazas discuss SGBV issues openly.					
e. Cultural and religious institutions are engaged in SGBV awareness efforts.					

**3. Employment Status of SGBV Survivors**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a. Survivors can access psychosocial support services in this area.					
b. There are safe shelters available for victims of SGBV in my community.					

c. Medical services for SGBV survivors are timely and effective.					
d. Legal aid services are available to assist SGBV victims.					
e. Limited support services discourage survivors from reporting abuse.					

**Thank you for time and your participation.**



## Appendix II: Interview Guide

This guide contains semi-structured interview questions aligned with the study's three objectives and associated indicators. Each question is designed to elicit in-depth qualitative insights from key informants regarding the determinants and possible measures for addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Kilifi North Sub-County.

1. **Acceptance of Wife-Beating:** In your experience, how do community members perceive wife-beating, and what cultural beliefs justify or discourage such acts?
2. **Traditional Dispute Resolution Mechanisms:** What role do traditional elders or religious leaders play in resolving domestic violence cases in this community?
3. **Beliefs About Male Dominance:** How do cultural expectations about gender roles influence household decision-making and the occurrence of SGBV?
4. **Financial Dependency:** In what ways does financial dependence on a partner affect a woman's ability to report or leave an abusive relationship?
5. **Employment Status:** How does a person's employment status (especially women's) affect their vulnerability to SGBV in this community?
6. **Control Over Household Income:** What are the common patterns of income control within households, and how do they relate to cases of gender-based violence?
7. **Awareness of Laws and Reporting Channels:** How informed are community members about legal protections against SGBV and the available reporting mechanisms?
8. **Community Participation in Prevention:** What kind of community-based initiatives or dialogues exist to prevent SGBV, and how effective are they?
9. **Access to Survivor Support Services:** What challenges do survivors face in accessing support services such as counseling, legal aid, or shelters in this area?

## Appendix III: Introduction Letter



### DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MASSC/2024/31996

21<sup>st</sup> March, 2025

*National Commission for Science Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI)*  
*Off Waiyaki, Upper Kabete*  
*P.O Box 30623- 00100*  
*NAIROBI, KENYA*

Dear Sir/Madam,


**RE: HENRY WINFRED KINYA – REGISTRATION NO. MASSC/2024/31996**

The purpose of this letter is to introduce the above named student who is pursuing **Master of Arts in Security Studies and Criminology** in the **Institute of Security Studies, Justice and Ethics** in the **School of Social Sciences**.

The title of the research is **“Determinants of Sexual Gender-Based Violence in Kilifi North Sub County, Kilifi County, Kenya.”** It has been cleared by the University’s Ethics Review Committee (Certificate attached) and now has to proceed to the field to collect data between **April, 2025 and June, 2025**.

Any assistance accorded to the student will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

  
**Dr. Samuel M. Karenga, Ph.D**  
**Director, Graduate Studies**  
Enc.

Mount Kenya University  
P. O. Box 342-01000, THIKA  
Office of the Director,  
Graduate Studies

## Appendix IV: Ethical Clearance



REF: MKU/ISERC/4849  
TO: HENRY WINFRED KINYA

Date: 19 March 2025

REG: MASSC/2024/31996

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: DETERMINANTS OF SEXUAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN KILIFI NORTH SUB COUNTY, KILIFI COUNTY, KENYA.**

This is to inform you that **Mount Kenya University** has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is **3571**. The approval period is **19/03/2025 - 18/03/2026**.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents including informed consents, study instruments, MTA will be used
- ii. All changes including amendments, deviations and violations are submitted for review and approval by **Mount Kenya University**
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours of notification
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to **Mount Kenya University**


Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.


Yours sincerely,

Dr. Alfred Owino, PhD  
Chairman, Mount Kenya University ISERC




**Appendix V: Research Permit (NACOSTI)**

  
REPUBLIC OF KENYA

  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **839026** Date of Issue: **01/April/2025**


**RESEARCH LICENSE**




This is to Certify that Ms. Henry Winfred Kinya of Mount Kenya University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kilifi on the topic: **SOCIAL-ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV) IN KILIFI NORTH SUB COUNTY, KILIFI COUNTY, KENYA** for the period ending : **01/April/2026**.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/25/417633**

**839026**  
Applicant Identification Number

  
Director General  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &  
INNOVATION

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# Appendix VI: Plagiarism Report

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-  My Files
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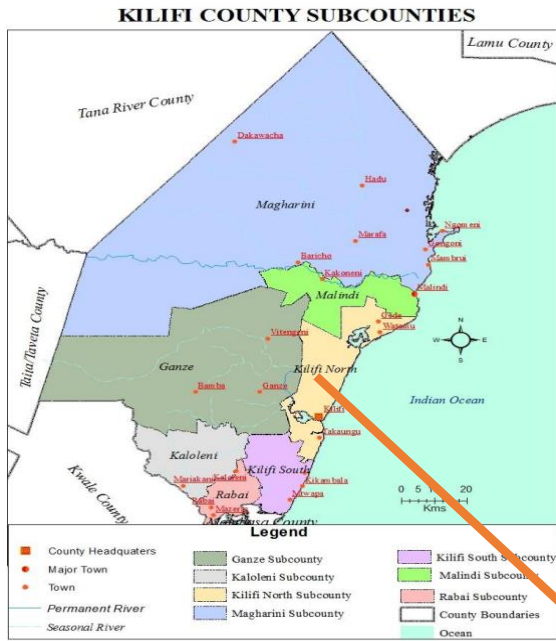
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## Appendix VII: Map of Kilifi North Sub-County



### KILIFI NORTH SUB COUNTY

