

Social Protection Systems for Women Victims of Gender-Based Violence in Zambia: Awareness, Accessibility and Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT: *This study aimed at exploring awareness, accessibility and effectiveness of Social Protection Systems (SPS) for Women Victims of Gender-Based Violence in Zambia, as a way of mitigating GBV. The study was qualitatively done under phenomenological design. Purposive sampling was used to sample 4 women victims, 3 officials from government institutions, 2 officials from NGOs dealing with GBV cases who were individually interviewed. Simple random sampling was employed to sample 12 non GBV women victims who completed a questionnaire containing open ended questions. Data was analysed and presented thematically. Findings reviewed that most women are not aware of the existing SPS. Accessibility is a challenge due to distance where such facilities could be accessed, non-existence of SPS in most communities, and lack of knowledge on how SPS can be accessed. Effectiveness is hindered due to insufficient funding, patriarchal system, weak enforcement of laws, lack of trained personnel, and ineffective collaboration between the government and NGOs dealing with GBV cases. The study recommends to the government to ensure SPS are accessible to all women victims of GBV in Zambia.*

Keywords –Accessibility, Awareness, Effectiveness, Gender Based Violence, Social Protection Systems.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women's rights and generation equality have been the main concern globally due to the fact that many women in the world are not fully enjoying their social, economic, cultural and political rights. Achieving equality between women and men is becoming a night mare despite the widespread crusade of fighting for the equality of women by national and international organizations. There is enough evidence in literature suggesting that gender-based violence against women and girls is the main cause of the deprivations of rights and equality among the women and girls (Stark, et al., 2021; Torres-Rueda, et al., 2020; World Bank, 2019; UN, 2010).

Evidently, Murthy (2009) states that, globally GBV stands as the major cause of morbidity and mortality rate among women and girls between 15-49 years than any other disease such as malaria, cancer and HIV/AIDS. The research done in South Asia, and Africa also document the highest rate of child marriages and high incidences of intimate partner violence (Solotaroff and Prabba, 2014; Johnson and Parkes, 2021). These reports show that women and girls suffer the setbacks of realising the human rights and equality they deserve among other things in the communities they live.

In Zambia, reports show that on daily basis there are cases of gender-based violence (GBV) reported and unreported both in rural and urban areas (Zulu, 2020; Parkes, et al., 2020; UN, 2010). A topical and notable example of gender-based violence in Zambia is the incident of a 15-year-old girl who was raped and impregnated by the stepfather (News Diggers, 2021). The case attracted a widespread media coverage and ignited demands for tougher action to prevent and respond to gender-based violence across the country.

Gender-based violence is a term used to denote harm inflicted upon individuals and groups which are connected to normative understandings of their gender (Shelah 2008). It involves the description of intimate partner violence (IPV) and domestic violence (wife/husband battering) (Cotter, 2021; Heidinger, 2021; Savage, 2021). The forms of GBV are physical abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse economical abuse and intimate partner violence. The root causes of GBV are social/cultural norms, lack of self- confidence, lack of resources, weak legal and social systems coupled with poverty and lack of women empowerment which leads to

women depending on men as the sole providers in families (Luvo, and Saunders, (2022; Javed, and Chattu, 2021).

Social protection systems refer to policies and programs designed to reduce/mitigate cases of GBV and improving the lives of the victims (Jones, 2021). These SPS are in form of accessing free health services, legal services; and social protection systems for GBV survivors such as women empowerment and providing homes for refuge and safety (Schüring, and Loewe, 2021).

Despite the escalation of GBV cases, the stakeholders have been making some strides in mitigating GBV against women and girls (Uzbekistan, 2019; UN, 2010). Thus, they have put social protection systems (SPS) which would help to curb the vices thereby improving on accessing the desired women's rights and equality. However, SPS have been in existence in Zambia for some time now, (but the cases of GBV are still rampant and the women's rights/ equality are not near the realization). This is evidenced by the 2017 Gender Based Violence (GBV) third-quarter report which indicates that the total number of GBV cases in just one quarter countrywide was 16,090, compared to 13,092 cases in 2016 during the same period which reflects an 18.6% increase (Makasa, et al. 2017). In this regard, this research was conducted in order to establish how SPS could be enhanced in order to mitigate the cases of GBV, with a view of achieving women's rights and generation gap. The study focused on three-fold areas, with regards to establishing awareness, accessibility, and effectiveness of the existing SPS for GBV for women victims.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Cases of gender-based violence against women are still being reported across the globe (Stark, et al., 2021; Torres-Rueda, et al., 2020; World Bank, 2019; UN, 2010). In Zambia, gender-based violence involving women is a persistent problem, distressing women of all ages in societies. The 2018 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey, documents that 46% of women in Zambia have been victims of physical violence, or sexual violence, or even both in some cases at some phase of their lives (CSO, 2019). The quest of wanting to achieve women's rights and equality remains a challenge due to the persistence of GBV cases against women, despite SPS being in place as initiated by the government and cooperating partners in the fight for GBV (Torres-Rueda et al 2020, Moono et. al., 2020). Due to the forgoing, there was need to explore how SPS can be enhanced, specifically in Zambia, with a view to achieve women's rights and generation gap. Little is known on awareness, accessibility, and effectiveness of the existing SPS for GBV for women victims currently in place. Hence an attempt made by the researchers and conducted this study.

1. Purpose of the Study

The study aimed at investigating Awareness, Accessibility and Effectiveness of Social Protection Systems for Women Victims of Gender-Based Violence to mitigate GBV in Zambia, with a view of achieving women's rights and generation equality.

2. Objectives of the Study

The following are the specific objectives that the study sought to address.

- i. To establish awareness of SPS intended for women victims of GBV in selected townships in Lusaka District of Zambia.
- ii. To determine the accessibility of the existing SPS by women victims of GBV in selected townships in Lusaka District of Zambia.
- iii. To ascertain the effectiveness of the existing SPS in mitigating GBV against women in selected townships in Lusaka District of Zambia.

3. Contributions of the Study

It is hoped that the findings of the study would inform policy and practice in promoting inclusiveness in accessing SPS by the women victims of GBV in Zambia. In addition, findings of this study would stimulate further research that would bring out information on how women's rights and generation gap would be achieved.

4. Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Capability Approach Framework. The theory was developed in 1980 by Amartya Sen, and Later advanced it with Martha Nussbaum in the 1990s (Sen, 1999). The Capability Approach advocate for the importance of individual capabilities being freedom and opportunities that human beings ought to realise their full potential in life (Nussbaum, 2011). According to this approach, social policies and programs should aim at expanding people's capabilities, or opportunities and freedoms to lead lives they value. The advocates of the theory argue that human beings have different requirements and situations. In this regard, social policies are expected to liberate them based on an individual's circumstances.

The Capability Approach has been widely used to various fields by different scholars, including in the area of social protection and gender-based violence. For instance, Yang and Valverde (2021) used it to analyse domestic violence and social protection systems in China. Other scholars such as; Aslam, Kingdon, and Rawal, (2015); Molyneux and Jones, (2018); used the approach to examine the efficacy of social protection programs in

improving women's welfare and empowerment. Capability Approach has also been applied to assess the impact of gender-based violence on women's competences and liberties (Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1999).

The Capability Approach was deemed relevant to this study because it was applied to evaluate the efficacy of social protection systems in enhancing women's capabilities and freedoms, as well-being of women as their capacity to live free from violence and access support services. The approach was also used to investigate the barriers and challenges that inhibit women victims from accessing and benefiting from social protection systems, and recommend strategies that would enhance awareness, accessibility and effectiveness of the available systems. In addition, the significance of the Capability Approach to this study is that it stresses the significance of increasing individual competencies, which supports the importance of social protection systems for woman victims of gender-based violence. The Capability Approach stresses that women victims of gender-based violence encounter major barriers to achieve their full potential. Therefore, it is expected that social policies ought to mitigate such barriers and offer support for their empowerment. It is for this reason that the Capability Approach offers a valuable lens to this study for analysing and understanding the social protection systems in Zambia, and their potential for supporting women's capabilities and their security.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender-based violence against women in Zambia include but not limited to domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, child marriage, and human trafficking. Such forms of violence are often perpetrated by intimate partners, family members, acquaintances, or strangers. Such kind of violence can have lasting physical, psychological, and social consequences for women victims.

Studies on Gender Based Violence (GBV) affecting women and girls have continued to stimulate academia as cases of GBV are still on the increase world-wide, (Torres-Rueda et al., 2020). However, literature reviewed under this section point to the need for enhancing social security systems against GBV in a bid to combat GBV, as well as to enable women achieve their rights and generation equality.

A study was conducted by Aboh (2018) in India on why the Indian security and justice system is less effective to prevent gender-based violence against women and girls. Findings revealed inconsistencies in laws that have some loopholes for abuse, and the patriarchal (male-controlled) system which despises the equality of men and women. Irrespective of the challenges faced in the administration of justice, the study reports on the entire criminal justice system essentially compromised by the long-standing, never-ending extreme conservative misogyny and caste-patriarchy of Indian. Thus, the study recommended addressing the context of GBV where women have increasingly become helpless and hopeless.

The patriarchal system which has a negative impact on equality of men and women agrees with the study done by Eisenbruch, (2018) on violence against women in Cambodia in which findings reflect on local culture promoting violence against women. The forgoing is in line with another study conducted by Hadi (2017) on patriarchy and gender-based violence in Pakistan. The aforesaid studies bring out similar recommendations on the change in patriarchal system which could be changed by strengthening the social political and economic positions of women.

Further, a survey was conducted in Pakistan by Ashraf, Abrar-ul-Haq & Ashraf (2017) on Domestic Violence against Women. Findings revealed challenges faced by legal system to administer punitive measures due to the conservative (traditional) environment, which has a negative impact on violation of women's rights. The study recommended proper implementation of law and justice after violation.

While studies by Ashraf, Abrar-ul-Haq & Ashraf (2017); Eisenbruch, (2018), Hadi (2017) and Aboh (2018), provide useful insights regarding domestic violence against women; and challenges faced in the administration of justice, respectively, they do not give details on how the social protection systems could be strengthened to address the identified challenges. The current study therefore provides more insight to the discussion considering that it specifically centres on how social protection systems can be enhanced to ensure the protection and prevention of GBV against women by ensuring improved awareness, accessibility and effectiveness in the existing social protection systems.

In Africa (Uganda), Anena & Ibrahim (2020) conducted a study on 'Revisiting Economic Empowerment as a Sufficient Remedy for Gender Based Violence.' The researchers established factors affecting women's vulnerability to GBV. The study critiques that women empowerment alone cannot mitigate GBV. Their argument is based on empirical research carried out in Eastern Uganda in 2017/2018. The paper suggests and reports on adoption of a multidimensional approach to address GBV specifically for women as; strong and dependable social network, advocating for women's rights, laws that prosecute perpetrators of GBV, policies that prevent and respond GBV, psychosocial support, sensitizing communities, and having institutional reforms to handle GBV cases professionally.

GBV is said to be very rampant among the intimate partners in Africa. In her book, 'Current Trends in Gender Issues in Education', Mwale-Mkandawire. (2019), indicates that most governments in Africa have now incorporated gender in their national education plans where deliberate effort is directed at eliminating the gender

gap in access to education as the illiterate levels of women make the women more vulnerable to poverty and eventually has made them continue to accept and live in violent homes.

Furthermore, Anena & Ibrahim (2020) reports on a global survey conducted by World Bank (2019), bringing out a contradiction on the link between GBV and Women Economic Empowerment (WEE), which is in tandem with the argument by Anena & Ibrahim (2020). It is reported that WEE may cause harm to the beneficiaries as opposed to preventing GBV. However, the reported findings point to the ensuring awareness, accessibility and effectiveness of social protection systems.

Muthami, et al (2017) conducted a study in Kenya on Violence against women and Girls. Their focus was on providing therapy for gender-based violence survivors. Findings show the negative impact on the lives of women and girls. The study recommended awareness on effects of GBV, the need for preventive, protective and redress mechanisms to guard against GBV financial empowerment for therapists, women and girls and policies to be put in place to curb the violence, as well as the government and other stakeholders to work together to overcome violence in society. The researchers brought out the aspect of victims' awareness on where they can access help to cope with consequences of violence as well as further research on what should be done to curb GBV. However, the study does not dwell on the effectiveness and efficiency of the protection systems.

Another related study was done by Obagboye (2020) titled *Stemming the Tide of Violence against Women in Nigeria and Africa*, with emphasis on South Africa Ghana and Malawi. The study established factors that endangered violence against women as; socio-cultural (e.g. forced marriage and patriarchal practices), religious factors on women being inferior to men and the law that denies divorce, illiteracy leading to poverty, forced marriages, economic pressure, drunkenness and substance abuse. The study made the following recommendations as a measure to curb GBV: legal reforms, provision of shelter to the victims, women education and empowerment, awareness campaigns on GBV, and encouraging women activism.

In as much as the study done by Anena & Ibrahim (2020), Muthami, et al (2017) provide much insight on adopting multidimensional approach to address GBV, and the recommendations made on the survey conducted by Obagboye (2020) on *Stemming the Tide of Violence Against Women in Nigeria and Africa*. They do not dwell much on enhancing the existing social protection systems in the countries of focus. This however was the main focus of this present study which aimed at how the existing social protection systems in Zambia could be enhanced in order to mitigate cases of GBV.

From the Zambian perspective, Chingumbe, (2018) conducted a study on *Coordination in a Multi-Agency Partnership approach to Prevention of Gender-based violence*. The study focused on 'Lessons from the Agencies' perception of the One-Stop Centres (OSC) centres model of providing coordinated psycho-social and medical support to the victims.' The research was qualitatively done where data was collected using interviews with participants selected from key agencies operating from five One-Stop centres in Lusaka Province. Findings indicate a host of coordination challenges despite the positive coordination among OSC agency players. Overall, the study established that information sharing, communication, clearly defined goals and agreed outcome, increased knowledge of inter-disciplinary roles and inter-agency philosophy foster effective inter-agency coordination among key players in OSC. The study also established some hindering factors such as inadequate resources, high attrition of staff, loss of membership interest and commitment, lack of motivation and heavy reliance on unmotivated volunteers. These however were identified as major drawbacks to effective operation of OSC in Zambia. In addition, the study established that adequate allocation of resources, joint capacity building trainings and permanent attachment of staff to OSC as remedy to various challenges hampered the effective operations in OSC in Zambia.

However, the study recommended some additional funding for OSC model, delivery of social services and finding a lasting solution to various cross-cutting social problems affecting the nation, as well as evaluation of OSC in Zambia, and the need to find out how agencies work together. In light of the given findings and recommendations made, the information provided by the study stimulated the current study as it sought to establish how the protection systems put in place can be enhanced in order to address cases of GBV in Zambia.

Moono et. al., (2020) investigated on the influence of lobola, a payment made for marriage, on gender-based violence among married women in Lusaka's Kamanga compound. The findings suggest that paying lobola translated into buying a wife who could be subjected to abuse and violating her rights. This seems to take away a wife's rights to make decisions on matters that affected her own life such as running economic activities. The study recommended that the Ministries of Justice and the Local Government should revise the issue of paying lobola and strengthen laws and policies to deal with patriarchy to enable women enjoy rights as human beings.

As observed from literature reviewed, both local and international studies do not explicitly focus on establishing how the social security systems in Zambia could be enhanced in order to mitigate the challenges. With critical examination on most recommendations made, there is a clear indication on the need to increase awareness by

providing more knowledge on the accessibility of the SPS and also ensure their effectiveness in mitigating GBV affecting women and girls.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in selected townships of Lusaka District. The area was purposively sampled because at the time of conducting this study the prevalence cases of GBV was high. The study was qualitatively done under phenomenological design in the sense that the researchers needed to get the views and attitudes of the people which needed to be explained rather than using statistics. Purposive sampling was used to sample 4 women victims, 3 officials from government institutions, 2 officials from NGOs dealing with GBV cases who were individually interviewed through telephone. Simple random sampling was employed to sample 12 non GBV victim women who completed a questionnaire created using Google forms, and contained open ended questions. The non-victim women were sampled for triangulation purposes. Data was analysed and presented thematically. Trustworthiness was achieved through triangulation of the data by the use of two methods of data collection and responses from the four categories of participants. In addition, verbatim quotes obtained from interviews and questionnaires were also used to establish the trustworthiness of the study.

V. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The researchers had consent completed by the participants before engaging them. The participants were informed of who the researchers were and assured them that the information obtained was to be treated with confidentiality.

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study under three themes derived from the research objectives namely; Awareness, Accessibility, and Effectiveness of Social Protection Systems meant to mitigate GBV.

a. Awareness of Social Protection Systems by Women Victims

All the participants reported that women were aware of the social protection systems meant for dealing with cases of GBV. However, the women victims stated that they have heard about such facilities, but did not have full details of the services being offered. For instance, one of the victims of GBV had the following to say:

Most women especially in rural areas and the illiterate might not know about these services, others shun them for fear of being stigmatised...most women lack knowledge on social protection systems that help women facing challenges of GBV (Field data, 2023).

As regards to responses from Government and NGOs officials, they submitted that women are aware of SPS in place. They further stated of some likelihood of some women being ignorant of such facilities. This is as reported by one of the government officials who stated that:

With various ways of sensitising women on cases of GBV, most women are aware about social protection systems that have been put in place to help them deal with issues of GBV. This is because of late, we receive a lot of reports and the number of cases being reported by women victims are on the increase (Field data, 2023).

Another respondent from NGOs stated that:

We are carrying out a number of sensitisation programmes in communities where we physically go to sensitize women, through drama, songs, and dance. Sensitisation is also done through print and electronic media, as well as one to one talk.... (Field data, 2023).

Based on the above responses, it shows that the women victims were aware of the existence of the social protection systems in their communities. Their knowledge of such facilities was evidence by the examples of social protection systems currently in place, initiated by the government and NGOs. The examples given among many are: justice systems, victim support through police stations, one stop centres, radio and television awareness programmes, advocacy, the church, women empowerment, and legal aid clinic for women. The government and NGO work hand in hand towards the same goal of mitigating the scourge of GBV. The efforts made by the government and NGOs in providing a service to women victims of GBV is in line with Capability Approach theory (Sen 1999), which emphasises on the well-being of women.

However, findings from the women victims of GBV suggest that in as much as they may be aware of some systems in place such as financial empowerment for the women victims, they are not convinced that such programmes truly benefiting women victims. This is because they have they claimed they have not really physically witnessed such programmes in their communities and that they have never benefited from them as they just hear and watch such programmes on television. In addition, some women victims of GBV showed ignorance on some NGOs and legal aid that offer help to women victims of GBV.

The Government and NGO officials were positive about women being aware of the SPS that are in place due to a number of programmes running, aiming at creating awareness as already alluded to. This is because they are in charge of such programmes ensuring awareness of the SPS in place being accessed by the victim of GBV. In addition, the officials' interviewed also reported on an increase of women victims accessing the facilities.

However, women victims of GBV and non-victims claimed that the awareness of SPS is not much especially for women in rural areas who are victims of GBV due patriarchal and religious practices which consider women being inferior to men (Obagboye 2020). Furthermore, women respondents lamented that for the women victims who may be aware of SPS in place, decide to keep quiet due cultural norms and discouragement from friends and family members discouraging them not to speak out on their marital problems. Such practices have a negative impact on equality of men which results into promoting violence against women.

The abovementioned findings are in line with the study findings by Eisenbruch, (2018) on violence against women in Cambodia where the findings reflect on local culture promoting violence against women, Hadi (2017) on patriarchy and gender-based violence in Pakistan which points to tradition influencing GBV on women, and a study in Zambia by Moono et al., (2020) on the influence of lobola, a payment made for marriage whose findings suggest that paying lobola translated into buying a wife who could be subjected to abuse and violating her rights. Such issues call for strengthening the social political and economic positions of women. This is affirmed by Socialist feminist theory which talks about women being oppressed due to cultural practices influence by patriarchal system.

Owing to the established findings, from all the categories of the participants, it may be understood that sensitisation done on the availability of SPS through various means as already alluded to, is mainly done in urban areas. As such, it brings to light on the much-needed awareness to be enhancement of SPS provided to fight the elements of culture which influence GBV as advocated by the Capability Approach theory that guided this study (Sen 1999).

b. Accessibility of Social Protection Systems by Women Victims of GBV

All the respondents submitted that the SPS are accessible by all those requiring assistance. The level of accessibility differed due to various reasons as reported by the participants. Women victims claimed that the facilities are not very accessible due to long distances from where they could access such facilities. In some cases, the victims stated that they were unable to access the facilities due to lack of confidentiality, while others submitted that SPS facilities such as Victim Support Units were easily accessed, while financial and material assistance were not easily accessed, in that not every victim benefited. To substantiate the above responses some women victims expressed the following:

Social Protection Systems such as the Victim Support Units are readily accessible except that they are not evenly distributed in all areas. Certain areas of the country do not have such facilities. Some areas are far from where such facilities are available, hence making them difficult to access (Field data, 2023).

Another respondent stated that:

...not very accessible as the one stop centres are isolated from other health departments and one can be spotted accessing the service (Lack of privacy). The help being provided is limited because safe houses are rare, the client might have to go through several departments to complete screening...fear of stigma (Field data, 2023).

Further, another respondent expressed that:

...we just watch on the TV from our fellow women who have been victims of GBV being empowered by being given money to start up business...financial support has been lacking, some clients have gone back to the homes of their abusers (Field data, 2023).

The officers in charge of SPS submitted that the facilities are easily accessible in the sense that they always received cases GBV affecting women and are being attended to accordingly. This is in contrast with responses from women victims who expressed that some facilities are not easily accessed as they remained closed during weekends and public holidays, and that toll-free lines are usually engaged. This was observed from one of the participants who stated that: "...the service is not 24 hours and its closed-on weekends and public holidays..."

In light of the above findings as regards to accessibility, it is clear that SPS need to be enhanced to ensure inclusive accessibility. The established findings suggest that SPS are mainly accessed by the literates as some illiterates are hindered by cultural beliefs as well as ignorance on how they could access the SPS in rural areas and their communities. Cultural practices appeared to be one of the major hindrances for most women victims especially the illiterate in both urban and rural areas (Eisenbruch, 2018; Hadi 2017). This view is informed by Socialist feminist theory which talks on women suffering in the hands of men as their oppressors. It is in this regard that SPS ought to be enhanced to ensure improved accessibility. Emphasis on accessing the

SPS is supported by the Capability Approach theory as it advocates for human freedom and protection, value of human life, and the importance of social protection systems for woman victims of gender-based violence (Yang and Valverde, 2021).

c. Effectiveness of Social Protection Systems in the Fight against GBV

All the participants reported on SPS being effective, though not very effective in some cases. Women victims submitted that the existing SPS could be very effective if some measures were put in place to enhance their effectiveness. One of the government officials came out so strongly in support of SPS being very effective in mitigating cases of GBV, who reported that: *“The SPS are very effective because the cases in which women are victims have increased as compared to the time when the SPS were not in place...”*

One of the victims of GBV expressed that:

The SPS are effective because when I personally went to report my case to victim support, I was welcomed very well and I was attended to and I was counselled...but the only problem is that they don't make follow ups to find out how the victim is coping. In this case, I can say they are not very effective (Field data, 2023).

Another victim expressed that:

Some SPS are not very effective because if you report the GBV case at victim support, in many times the officers say they have no transport to pick up the perpetrator...they ask the victim to provide transport or money for fuel or even ask you to bring the perpetrator (Field data, 2023).

An officer from NGO submitted that:

The existing social protection systems are effective though sometimes some systems might not be very effective due to financial challenges, lack of trained personnel and some patriarchal hindrances (Field data, 2023).

Commenting on the effectiveness of the SPS, findings suggest that systems could be effective if the areas of concern were improved upon. The suggested areas to be worked on were; strengthening laws on perpetrators, increased funding, having trained personnel, doing away with some patriarchal practices which make some women to withdraw cases, as well as improved collaboration between the government and NGOs. In as much as the government official reported that the SPS are very effective as evidenced by the number of cases increasing, it is striking to note that the cases are increasing instead of reducing. The increase in GBV cases could imply that the establishment SPS have contributed to an increase in GBV where women are victims. This raised concerns which Commenting on patriarchal practices as a hindrance to effectiveness of SPS is line with findings from studies done by Anena & Ibrahim (2020); Moono et al., (2020); Chingumbe, (2018), who reported on justice system being ineffective due cultural interferences. It is from this perspective that the effectiveness of SPS required to be strengthened in order to combat the scourge so as to enable women achieve their rights and generation equality. Ensuring the effectiveness SPS is cardinal for improving the welfare of women as advocated in the Capability Approach theory (Molyneux and Jones, 2018).

VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Findings of this study cannot be generalised as it was qualitatively done with a small sample. However, the results provide useful insights to institutions and organisations that deal with cases of GBV.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Findings revealed that women are not fully aware of the existing SPS in Zambia due inadequate sensitization as well as some communities lacking facilities directly linked to dealing with cases of GBV. The existing SPS are accessible though in some cases facilities like victim support units based at police station, legal aid, women financial empowerment cannot easily be accessed. The SPS are effective but have proved to be ineffective due to challenges in accessing the facilities. Above all, findings point to the need for enhancement of the existing SPS for increased awareness and accessibility of the SPS in Zambia.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings the study recommends much emphasis on awareness on SPS through women to form small group meant for information sharing on GBV and SPS, improving services to survivors of violence in accessing financial empowerment, the need to put up more protection facilities closer to the people, as well as government institutions and NGOs to work in collaboration and continuously strive to strengthen the existing SPS as a pathway way for women to achieve their rights and generation equality.

Potential Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interest.

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