**ASSESSING FEMLE SURVIVOR’S EXPERIENCES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN UGANDA: A CASE OF INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVING MALE POLICE OFFICERS**

**ABSTRACT**

The study aimed at assessing female survivors’ experiences of intimate partner violence and access to Justice, with a focus on relationships involving male police officers. In order to understand the complexity of IPV against women, the study employed an integrated ecological framework because it provided a nuanced conceptualization of IPV at different levels. The study also employed the intersectionality theory that helped me to understand and treat women as varied, rather than a homogeneous category. The researcher also used the rational choice exchange theory to helped me understand the intricacies surrounding officers’ choice to perpetrate or not to perpetrate IPV and women’s choice to report or not to report IPV.

Methodologically, the researcher used case study design in which in depth analysis of female survivors’ experiences of IPV and access to justice were developed. The study was qualitative and it involved twenty in-depth interviews with female survivors of IPV and six male spouses. In addition, twelve key informant interviews were conducted and six focus group discussions were conducted. The study findings indicate that female survivors of intimate partner violence experienced, economic sexual, physical and psychological violence. Factors leading to IPV included: institutional, economic, social, cultural and individual factors. Factors affecting women’s access to justice were institutional, cultural, economic, and individual. Women employed coping mechanisms including marriage preservation, self preservation, child protection mechanisms.

The study concludes that police operations results into work spillovers that trigger IPV against women. These spillovers are evident in police transfers, daily deployments, outposts, and work related stress. Inadequate housing and alcoholism have created tensions and serious damage to police families. Female survivors’ access to justice is highly constrained when the abuser is a member of law enforcement. The study recommends that Government should address the institutional factors that trigger IPV in police families, and it should organize sensitization programs for officers, and spouses about IPV and its impact on families. Government should empower women economically and improve their pathways to justice.

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