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An Analysis of Gender-Based Violence in Ghana's Marine Fisheries Sector

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ACRONYMS

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations-
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council
NAFPTA	National Fish Processors and Traders Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	World Health Organisation

DEFINITION AND EXPLANATIONS OF TERMINOLOGIES AND CONCEPTS

GENDER: socially determined differences between men and women, such as roles, attitudes, behaviour, and values. Gender characteristics are assigned to men and women during their childhood and are expected to be followed. For example, in some societies, women are considered dependent on men; in other societies, women are decision-makers, or men and women equally make decisions. Gender characteristics vary across cultures and over time; they thus are amenable to change.

SEX: refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define humans as female or male. These sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive, as there are individuals who possess both, but these characteristics tend to differentiate humans as females or males.”

GENDER ANALYSIS: a process to assess the differential impact of policies, programs, projects and legislation on men and women. Gender analysis recognizes that the realities of men’s and women’s lives are different, and that equal opportunity does not necessarily mean equal results.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: all acts or omissions that are directed against a person because of their gender, that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: all acts or omissions including verbal, physical, sexual, psychological, or economic violence causing physical and, or moral harm or suffering, including threats of such acts or omissions, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, that occur within the family or domestic unit, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim, and shall include children who are witnesses of violence within the family or domestic unit. Sexual violence, GBV and Violence against women are terms that are often used interchangeably.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE: Any act which causes physical harm as a result of unlawful physical force. Physical violence can take the form of, among others, serious and minor assault, deprivation of liberty and manslaughter.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE: Any sexual act performed on an individual without their consent. Sexual violence can take the form of rape or sexual assault.

PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE: Any act which causes psychological harm to an individual. Psychological violence can take the form of, for example, coercion, defamation, verbal insult or harassment.

ECONOMIC VIOLENCE: Any act or behaviour which causes economic harm to an individual. Economic violence can take the form of, for example, property damage, restricting access to financial resources, education, or the labour market, or not complying with economic responsibilities, such as alimony.

PERPETRATOR OF GBV: Are individuals, groups or institutions that directly inflict, support violence or other abuse against a person or a group of people. Perpetrators are in a position of real or perceived power and can thus exert control over their victims. Contrary to common belief, most acts of GBV are perpetrated by someone known to the victim, and many violent incidents are planned. It can be intimate partners (husbands, boyfriends) family members, close relatives, caregivers and friends; influential community members (teachers, religious figures, leaders, politicians, employers, supervisors and colleagues)

EMPOWERMENT: the process of increased opportunity and ability of women and men to control their life. Empowerment of women or men includes increasing their power to make decisions, to have their voices heard, to put things on the agenda, to negotiate and to challenge past customs.

GENDER EQUALITY: means that women and men enjoy the same status within a society. It does not mean that women and men are the same, but rather that their similarities and differences are recognized and equally valued. Gender equality means that women and men experience equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and have equal opportunity to contribute to and benefit from political, economic, social and cultural development of their country.

GENDER EQUITY: is the process of being fair to both women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity can be understood as the means, where equality is the end. Equity leads to equality.

GENDER ROLES: behaviours that are expected from men and women. Gender roles are learned and vary across cultures and over time; they are thus amenable to change.

FISHERIES VALUES CHAIN: Activities undertaken by workers of the fishing industries in the selected communities as well as its intersection with their lives in the general community

1.0 BACKGROUND

The gendered nature of the fishing industry globally and in Ghana is a well-documented phenomenon in literature (FAO, 2016; International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2019, Smith, 2017). Men, for instance, dominate in the formal and harvesting (actual fishing) sectors in fisheries, while women are located predominantly in the informal, ancillary and post-harvest (intermediary) roles that link consumers and other players in the fisheries value chain, such as fish sorting, processing, marketing and trading (Choo, 2004; FAO, 2022; Torell, Owusu, Crawford, Beran, & Kent, 2019; Torell, Owusu, & Okyere Nyako, 2015; Quist et al., 2010; Tetteh, 2007). The FAO 2020 global report on gender representation in the fisheries industry indicates that of the estimated 58.5 million persons employed in the industry's primary sector globally, only twenty-one per cent were females. While this number still looks minute, it is a significant shift from the 2018 findings, which note that women constituted just 14 per cent of all employment in the industry's primary sector (FAO, 2020). The numbers, however, show a glimpse of hope when women's industry representation is assessed across the entire value chain. These numbers rise to near fifty per cent when the data is extended to include activities from the pre-harvest through to the post-harvest periods (Coulthard, White, Paranamana, Sandaruwan, Manimohan, Maya, 2019; FAO 2022; Joseph & Doon, 2021; World Bank, 2012).

Women play decisive role in funding the fishers' activities such as raising capital for the fish trade, financing trips, fishing equipment, and running businesses and providing fuel for processing fish and credit for men. While women's role is critical to the industry, their activities are perceived to be less skilled, resulting in the phenomenon of lower or absent wages in certain instances for jobs done, invisibility and lack of recognition (Choo 2014; FAO 2014). The industry's patriarchal and segregated nature and structure also places men in the top hierarchies and dominance in decision-making roles, restricting women's ability to influence practices, programmes, and policies and alter the existing inequalities in the industry (FAO, 2014; Mangroves for the Future, 2016). Gender stereotypes and harmful socio-cultural practices such as the denial of women's right to education are some of the identified reasons for women's low representation in the leadership structures of the industry. The low educational background of women in the industry limits them to the industry's lower and less skilled sectors. However, in small-scale industries run mainly by spouses, women seem to have many voices as they are placed in decision-making positions by being family members.

Also, the incidence of sexual and gender based violence is pertinent within the sector as a result of the patriarchal and segregated nature of the sector. SGBV has been identified as one of the most extensive forms of gender inequalities braving the sector, with alcoholism and domestic violence being very visible feature within the fishing communities worldwide. Another pertinent gendered feature of the industry is the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence. Siles, Prebble, Wen, Hart and Schuttenberg (2019), for example, identify gender-based violence as one of the most extensive forms of gender inequalities braving the fisheries sector. Coulthard et al. (2019) also state that alcoholism and domestic violence are visible features in fisheries communities worldwide.

In Ghana, like many other sub-Saharan African countries, the persistent structural inequalities and harmful social norms present in the fisheries sector is noted to put women and girls in situations that may make them vulnerable to gender-based violence (Siles et al., 2019).

Also, women's low representation in numbers and decision-making denotes they have fewer voices in the industry hierarchies, creating differences in privileges, responsibilities, and access to resources. The marginalisation of women in the fisheries sector reduces the presence of women in the political structures, making them exposed to more risks such as SGBV.

GBV resulting from structural inequalities and harmful social norms in fishing communities have negative impacts on the wellbeing of women and men, leading to unsustainable fisheries management practices. Empirical evidence in support of this assertion is scanty, thereby rendering interventions to tackle GBV in fisheries potentially ineffective. An Analyses of Gender-Based Violence in the marine fisheries sector within selected coastal communities in Ghana was conducted to fully understand the gender dynamics and drivers of GBV in the sector and also the opportunities to strengthen how the projects interventions will promote gender equality and end SGBV within the fisheries sector.

This analysis forms a core component of the Women in Fisheries Against Violence (WiFVEs) project funded by the European Union, which aims, to reduce gender-based violence at all levels of the fisheries value chain

1.1 Purpose of the GBV Analysis

The gender-based violence analysis was conducted under the Women in Fisheries Against Violence project to serve as the basis for supporting advocacy actions against SGBV at all levels of the fisheries value chain and implementation of the project goals, by ensuring that the project is grounded in the contextual understanding of;

- The gendered relations between girls/women and boys/men] in the selected regions and its contributions to the prevalence of SGBV
- The underlying drivers and factors contributing to the occurrence of GBV in marine fisheries;
- The impacts of GBV on the wellbeing of women and men in the fisheries value chain;
- The resources and services for women and men at-risk and survivors of GBV, among other factors and drivers of GBV in the sector.
- Support systems and opportunities available to men and women in fisheries sector to fight GBV.
- Strategies and actions for elimination of GBV in the project sites.

The end goal of the sexual and gender-based violence analysis component of the project is to offer the project qualitative data that details the types of SGBV present in the focal communities. The results are expected to inform implementers on what forms of GBV take place, what structures exist, and what new things may be required to inform the planning and implementation of the project.

1.2 Study location

The study was carried out in selected coastal communities of focus to the Women in Fisheries Against Violence project within the Western and Central Regions of Ghana. Data was collected in six (see fig.1) out of the eighteen (18) proposed project implementation communities. These were Anomabo, British and Dutch Komenda for the Central Region and Akwidaa, Eikwe and Ellonyi for the Western Region.

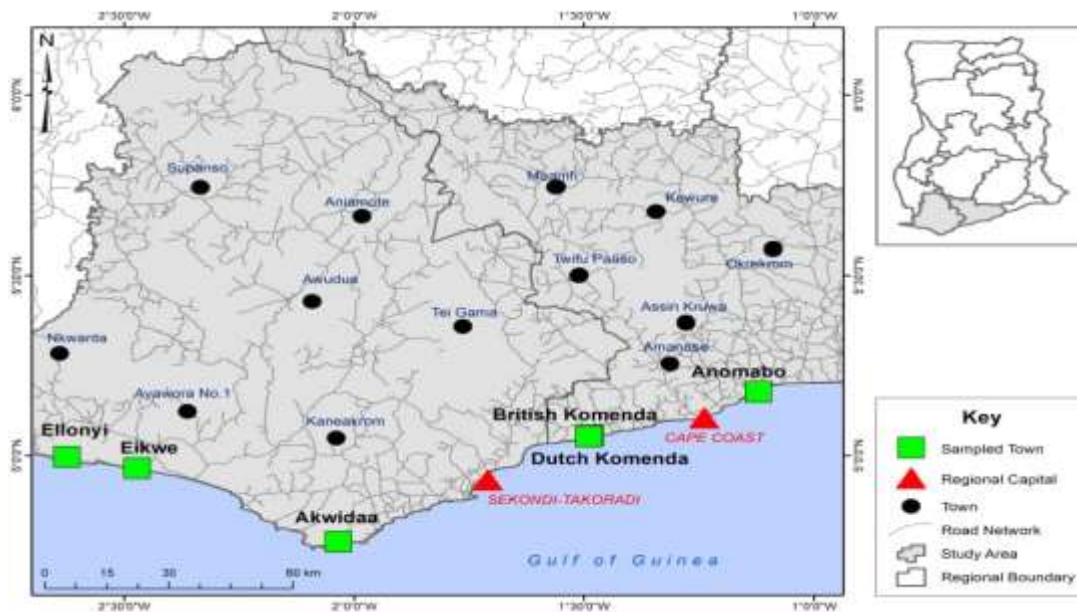


Figure 1: A map showing the study areas in the Central and Western Regions

1.3 Methodology

This study employed both primary and secondary data collection methods. A desk review of relevant documents to gain a better understanding of the project design and conceptual framework was done. Additional literature on gender and fisheries, fisheries governance, gender-based violence, masculinities, femininities, and the intersections between GBV and fisheries management, were also reviewed.

Data were collected through focus group discussions and key informant interviews in the target communities. The focus group discussions involved women fish processors and traders, fishermen, youth and children within Anomabo, British Komenda, Dutch Komenda, Akwidaa, Eikwe and Ellonyi fishing communities.

Key informants' interviews were also conducted which involved health workers, teachers and assembly members. The data collection was conducted from 1st June, 2022 to 16th June 2022 (see Appendix A for a complete list of sites and groups involved in the assessment). An interview schedule/protocol was also developed to guide the primary data collection (see Appendix B for the protocol for the focus group discussions and interviews). The data were collected in Fante, Twi and Nzema and audio recorded with permission from participants.

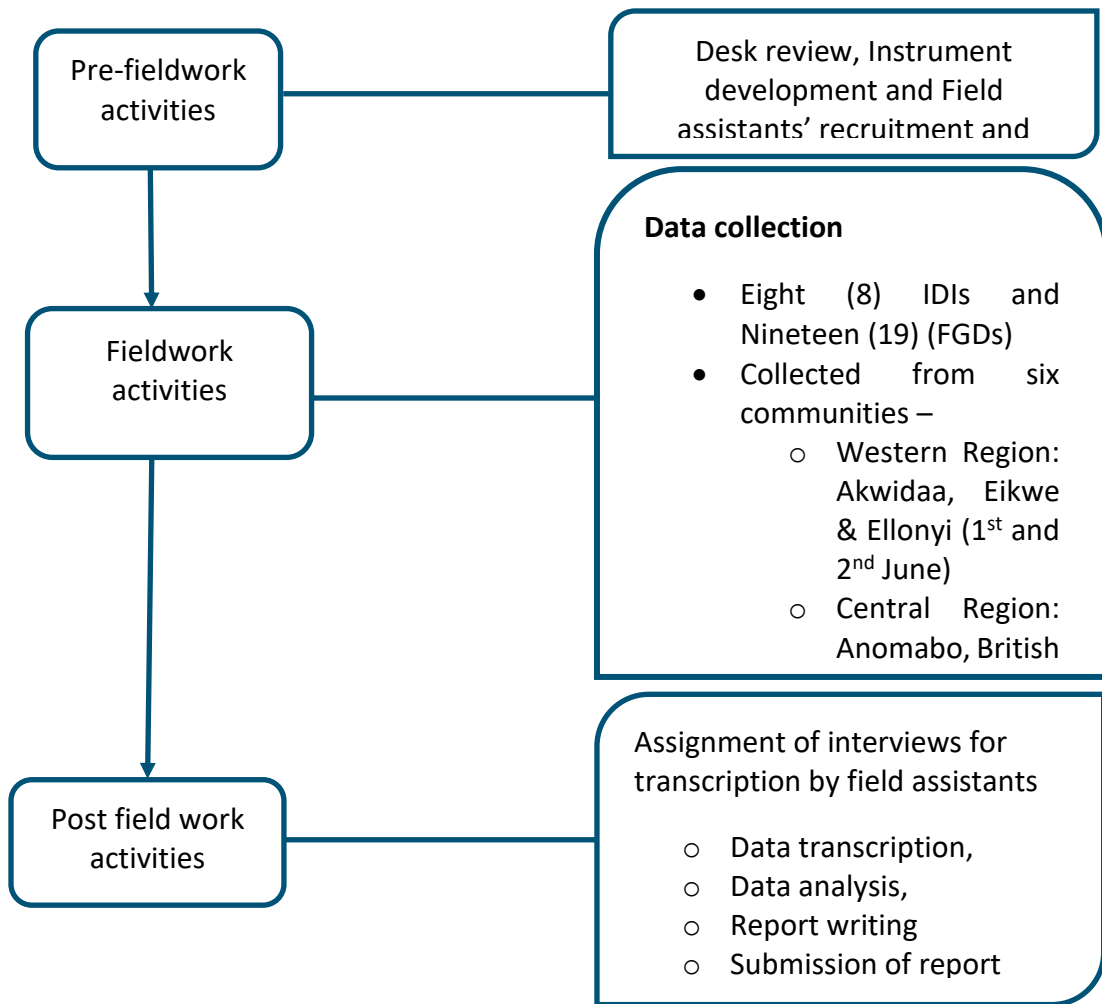


Figure 2: Pictorial presentation of field activities



Figure 3: Facilitation of focus group discussions at Mumford

2.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings from the fieldwork carried out in the Central and Western Regions of Ghana in June 2022 for the WIFVES project. The discussions are divided into six sections. The first section addresses the gender relations present in the fishing industry. These issues discussed here focus on the roles and governance in the industry. The second section looks at the driving force and contributing factors of GBV within the Fisheries Sector and gender-based violence present in the fisheries line of work. The data here looks at the driving and contributing factors and the issues of abuse in all its forms identified by the study participants. The third section is the segment on the impacts of SGBV within the sector and the general community. The fourth and fifth sections present the support structures available for addressing SGBV in the fisheries value chain and identifying gaps for further support. The last section recommends the entry points and strategies the project can adopt to address SGBV within the fisheries sector.

2.1 Gender relations and access to resources in the Central and Western regions

The section presents a gender analysis of the roles and activities of the fishing industry in the Central and Western regions. The discussions sought to determine the other forms of gendered relations in the fisheries line of work. The interviews teased out the similarities and differences in access to resources, such as leadership and decision-making and ownership of resources. Both women and men participated in decision making and leadership positions, owned fisheries equipment and funded the fisheries activities. The equitable share of benefits in the fishery value chain depends on the opportunities and resources present. The discussion here employs the Harvard framework for the analysis. Tools 1, 2 and 3 of the framework are in the study.

Tool 1: Activity Profile

This section looks at the various roles women and men play in the fishing industry. The data available does not reflect all the activities carried out by women and men in the regions. The responses from the interviews informed the items presented in **Table 1**. The data identified five key activities: harvesting, processing, trading or marketing, financing and decision-making.

Table 1: Activities engaged in by women and men in the fishing line of work

Who does what	Women/girls	Men/Boys
Harvesting	Absent	√
Processing	√	absent
Trading/Marketing	√	√
Financing	√	√
Leadership and Decision-making	√	√

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Men and boys were the only groups in the communities engaged in marine fish harvesting. Women dominated in the processing, trading and marketing roles.

The leaders of the fishery sector in the community are the Apofohene (chief fisherman), Konkohemaa (queen fishmonger) and boat owners. The chief fishermen and his committee and Konkohemaa and her committee are, however, noted to spearhead most of the leadership and decision making. This notwithstanding, the Apofohene seemed to wield more power as most of the decisions are made by him. **“In the fishing business if there is any issue, the first person we go to is the chief fisherman. If I did a business with someone and the person did not treat me right, I would report the individual to the chief fisherman” (Anomabo, adult male group).** In some communities the position of Konkohemaa was absent. The leadership structure present is the Apofohene and his committee. **“An example is during the time our premix ceased coming, the chief fisherman called on all the fishermen to come and meet and discuss the way our premix can come. Clearly it had no issue with the women but just the men” (Anomabo, adult male group).**

Private individuals, both women and men owned the boats, nets and other assets used for fishing. Women were not discriminated against owning fishing equipment. Some wealthy women in the communities owned boats and nets and financed the activities of the fishermen. The numbers, however, are not equal since men comparatively outnumber the women boat owners.

Women and men funded operations in the fishing industry. The activities of the fishermen are at times pre-financed by some women fishmongers. The pre-financing arrangement is built on the exchange relationship between the fishermen and the fishmongers- financing in anticipation for fish in exchange on their return. The extent of women’s contribution, however, depended on the community under study. Women in the Western Region tended to dominate in financing the operations as against those in the Central Region. We were informed, because they had higher access to credit and also in the amounts offered compared to the men. Further, women have access to loans through formal credit institutions while men relied on women and other men in the communities which came with higher interests and short payment times. This is deterring to the men, and they have to rely on those who will take fish in exchange for the loan.

Tool 2: Access and control profile

The data illustrates that women and men in the fisheries industry have equal access to resources (see Table 2). Women can own boats and other fishing equipment. Women also had access to credit and capital. However, an in-depth look at the issues points to variations in the extent of control over these resources by women and men. While both gender had access to the sea for their activities, men had more significant control over the space. They determined who could go sea fishing and when.

Further, men had control over decision-making spaces across all the study settings. The chief fisherman is the first point of call in all situations. He is the intermediary between the anglers and the state. Despite the presence of women boat owners, the equipment was largely controlled by the men who used them for fishing.

Table 2: Women and Men’s Access to and Control Over resources

Resources	Access		Control over (decision making processes)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Sea	√	√		√
Boats	√	√		√
Fishing nets	√	√	√	√
Fuel	√	√	√	√
Credit	√	√	√	√
Capital	√	√	√	√
Labour	√	√	√	√
Decision-making	√	√	√	√
Benefits				
Profits	√	√		√
Income	√	√		√
Fish supply	√	√		√
Presence at the decision-making table	√	√		√

Source: fieldwork 2022

Tool 3: Factors responsible for the gender division of labour, access, and control

The discussion here teases the influencing factors in the sexual division of roles, access, and control. Socio-cultural norms and historical narratives about women's roles and institutional support are some of the primary influencing factors. They served as either inhibiting factors or opportunities to engage in the industry. While the existing socio-cultural norms mainly disadvantaged women, institutional access to credit facilities facilitated their active engagement in the industry. Women had more access to credit facilities than their male counterparts, placing them in the positions of financiers in the industry. The precarious and seasonal nature of the fishing activities respondent noted hindered their ability to access loans. Fishers' inability to access loans regularly has created different financial arrangements between them and the

women in the industry, where the latter grants loans in exchange for fish supply. This arrangement also benefits these women as it offers them a constant supply of fish.

Table 3: Influencing factors for gendered division of labour and access to resources

Influencing factors	What do they present			
	Constraints		Opportunities	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Community norms around sea fishing	√			√
Historical structures around fishing	√			√
economic conditions-poverty	√	√		
Social hierarchies, e.g. cultural practices, and religious beliefs	√			√
Precarious nature of the job	√	√	√	
Institutional structures- credit facilities			√	

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

2.2 Drivers of SGBV and Exploitation

The section sought to explore the underlying reasons for the SGBVs present in the fishing industry. Power, poverty, lust, harmful social norms, and stereotypes about women and men are some of the reasons attributed to the presence of SGBV in the fisheries industry. A number of the study participants were of the view that the perpetrators who engage in SGBV and exploitation do so because of their lustful desires. In all, however, unequal power relations present in the industry came out as the key contributing factor for the occurrence. To the participants, norms of power stereotypes of what it means to be a man or a woman as well as exaggerated masculinities are key attributable reasons for why men are able to exploit women sexually.

The harmful practices come from negative beliefs about women’s abilities, their lower status in society and the designation of spaces for women in society. Study participants noted that the harmful notions about men’s access to women’s bodies and historical practices of sexual harassment on the job, which have been left unchecked, have culminated in the culture of sex for fish. Study participants emphasized the culture of sex for fish dates back in time, enabling men to continue.

Again, inadequate financial resources on the part of women to invest in their own business, makes them vulnerable to such exploitation. It was noted that women lacked access to adequate

financial resources. Perpetrators (fishermen) thrive on this vulnerability and take advantage of the situation to exploit them. Poverty increasing vulnerability of abuse in women was also disclosed to be an underlying reason for men's susceptibility to exploitation. Respondents were of the view that the exploitation happens in both ways thus some women who are also financially stable, use their influence to exploit men. Women who owned boats sometimes asked for sex from these fishermen in order to work with them, but this situation is very rare.

2.2.1 Key Contributing Factors to SGBV within Fishing Communities

In terms of causes of SGBV, in both Western and Central regions, poverty was identified to be the major cause of SGBV in the community. According to the respondents, women and girls were the recipients of SGBV in the community because they were basically those who are not financially sound and have inadequate resources to work and generate income. Noted in one of the discussions in the Central region was the fact that some parents especially mothers condone to SGBV because the perpetrator may be someone they owe or who supply them with fish. For example, there was a case where a minor was raped and instead of the grandmother reporting the issue, she resorted to herbal medication to treat the girl's injury because the perpetrator was a family friend, when she decided to take the case to the police, the family fought and stigmatised her. This phenomenon makes marginalised groups and victims powerless and susceptible to exchanging sex for resources. It was also noted in some communities, poverty which affects men's ability to provide sometimes results in bickering and other forms of exchanges at home which eventually results in physical assault in some circumstances.

Additionally, the irregular nature of the fishing industry was also identified to be a cause for act of economic denial. Men were unable to provide for the home, pay the tuition and other school fees of the wards because of lack of money. This challenge at home pushes some girls to exchange sex for resources and end up getting pregnant. On the other hand, their male counterparts resorted to fishing or working along the coast to gain some fish for sale. The monies gained gave them access to girls, through provisions of money and some need and they end up impregnating.

Stereotypes and socialization around women and girls and their appropriate positioning in society was also identified to be a cause of the SGBVs experienced in the community. Social norms about the powerful male and the male head that has control over women are some of the reasons given for contributing to SGBV in the community. This, they noted, created unequal relations between men and women and gave men the power to abuse women.

Alcoholism was mentioned to be one of the causes of SGBV. Men in their drunken state lose consciousness and resort to abuse. Noted in one of the children's FGD, **"The men, sometimes get drunk and because of their state, whatever they find around, they use it to physically abuse the woman"**.

Also, lack of proper resolution of cases, was a key factor to the occurrence of SGBV. For example, some respondents from both Western and Central regions were of the view that **"some perpetrators are able to get away with their crime because of their wealth and the relationship they have with the chiefs and elders"**, it created a fertile ground for SGBV to thrive in the

community. Gender relations manifested in power differentials when it comes to money and resources, and thus was of great concern to participants.

2.2.2 SGBV Present in the Fisheries Sector

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines gender-based violence as "any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships". Gender-based violence is rooted in gender inequalities and other systems of oppression and takes the forms of physical, emotional, psychological, sexual and acts of economic denial or denial of access to resources and services. Although gender-based violence can be perpetrated against both women and girls and men and boys. Women and girls tend to be the principal victims of gender-based violence. Global reports reveal that about 35 per cent of women and girls in the world have experienced some form of sexual and gender-based violence at least once from an intimate partner (World Health Organization, 2021; World Bank, 2019). Women and girls' susceptibility to gender-based violence is mainly attributable to unequal relations. The theme explored the kinds of sexual and gender-based violence present in the fisheries line of work. To tease a lot of responses on possible exploitation, the research focused on the overall challenges faced by workers in their line of work, specific cases of exploitation present in the fisheries line of work and the forms of support structures available for addressing such challenges

Challenges Faced by Fisher Folks

Some of the key challenges that respondents highlighted included financial constraints, fish stock depletion and irregular supply and high cost of premix fuel. Inadequate money to invest and expand their work was a major challenge in all the study communities. The fisher folks faced challenges of accessing loans to finance their work. The limited supply of fish to sell due to depletion of fish stock also made it difficult to make good sales to reinvest in their activities. They noted that the depletion of fish stock was caused by the use of illegal fishing methods such as light, dynamites and chemicals for fishing. Higher numbers of canoes on the sea resulting in fewer catch is also one of the identified causes of low catch and fish supply.

Irregular supply and the high cost of premix fuels for fishing were also prominent in the responses. Participants noted the supply of fuel for the canoes either delays or they do not get supplies at all. Where available, they come at very high costs which affect their ability to purchase them adequately for their operations. In addition to this is the diversion of the fuel to private non fisher folks who hoard and sell to the consumers at higher costs. The unavailability of supply meant that they resort to purchasing fuel from the regular fuel stations which are equally expensive due to the recent increases in fuel prices in the country. As a solution some of the participants recommended that all fuels be sold at the general fuel stations where everyone gets equal chances of accessing the fuel on a regular basis and at the same cost.

Another worry expressed by the study participants is how government agencies, NGOs, researchers are using the inputs they give them through research and project intervention to

formulate laws against their operations. Sea closure without alternative livelihood opportunities possesses a challenge on their activities and affects their living standards negatively.

Issues of Exploitation

The section sought to explore issues of sexual and gender-based violence, beyond the general challenges that face persons in the fishing industry. Some of the questions intended to elicit responses are whether exploitation or sexual and gender-based violence exists in their line of work and what forms they take.

The existence of exploitation in the fishing industry was affirmed by all respondents. Diverse issues of exploitation ranging from physical abuse, verbal and emotional abuse, sexual harassment and extortion, cheating, non-payment for loans and salaries, breach of agreement among others were some of the issues highlighted. Issues of exploitation such as fish for sex, unwelcome sexual advances, inappropriate touching, and denial of what is due them as well as diverting fish and money to others happen to women and men respectively in their line of operation.

The kinds of exploitations identified however, differed according to the study settings and gender. The exploitations experienced were also gendered in forms and the source of exploitation. While these issues of abuse identified happens to both women and men respectively, it is more prevalent in women than men. Men were identified as the major perpetrators of the various forms of abuses even where the victims are males. Nonetheless women experienced a wide array of abuses than men.

Sexual Harassment and Extortion

This played out mostly in the forms of inappropriate touching, sexual advances and transactional relationships, sex or relationship for fish and other opportunities. Sex or relationship for fish is a form of quid pro quo sexual harassment where fishermen request sexual favors and relationships in exchange of offering women fish mongers fish for trading and other opportunities. It also takes the forms of women canoe owners sexually abusing and exploiting the men who take charge of their canoes. This notwithstanding, the practice is more prominent in the men asking for sex in exchange for fish from the women.

The existence of the phenomena of sex or relationship for fish was acknowledged by all the adult participants irrespective of the study setting. The extent of practice, however, differed according to the study communities. While the practice was noted to be prevalent in the Central Region, it seemed totally absent in the Western Region communities. The presence of the fish for sex or relationship phenomenon being dominant in the Central Region was acknowledged in all the female FGDs even in some of the discussions undertaken in the Western Region. The practice is common to the extent that it transcended the fisheries line of work to the general community where men lured vulnerable young girls into sexual relationships with fish leading sometime to adolescent pregnancies in the communities. **“They use their fishes to lure young ladies into having sexual relations with them and end up impregnating them”**(British Komenda, older women, 20 - 48yrs). Men in some of the communities have also normalized and trivialized the act and its effects considering it as a necessary exchange. **“It is more of a give and take affair. If**

you don't like me you don't have to like my fish too. I won't sell my fish to any woman who does not agree to my sexual advances"(Dutch Komenda, male youth, 17-32yrs).

Women fish mongers who refused to condone to these sexual advances faced dire consequences such as being denied fish supply, threats, or coercing through other means to agree. "When the fishermen make sexual advances and the victim refuses, they stop selling their fishes to the victim. It was also revealed that some perpetrators spread false rumors about the victims and stop other colleague fishermen from selling to victims when they refuse their advances. **"When we refuse to engage in any sexual relationship with them, they ask their friends to desist from selling to us and this is a very big issue because this is our only source of livelihood"**(British Komenda, older women, 20 - 48yrs). When all these attempts fail, participants noted they resort to spiritual means to get the women to agree. "When they come and you turn them down, they may resort to other means such as "For girls" and by the time you realize you would have already been intimate with them".

Despite the wide acknowledgement of the practice some of the male respondent denied its existence in their communities but present in another jurisdiction. Participants also submitted that persons, who avail and subject themselves to such exploitative practices turn to improve their incomes, get access to jobs and fish. They noted however, that they are also exposed to health challenges such as STIs/HIV AIDs and associated stigma.

Breach of Agreement

Women and men equally experienced this form of exploitation. These were presented in the forms of denial of what is due workers and women investors being cheated. The men highlighted how the crew Captain they work with denied them of their due pay at the end of the season. It was also noted in some of the interviews that the male workers are not paid throughout their work until the end of the season. Women who pre-finance the activities of the fishermen with the hope of getting fish in exchange noted that they are either cheated by the men by receiving little fish than was agreed upon or the men run away and divert the fish to other places to sell for profit.

"I have gone for loan. The man comes to plead that oh I need loan to go fishing. I will get some fish and bring to you to sell. As we are making these arrangements, his wife is not around. He starts the expedition one and brings me some fish for the first time then after some time, he the man doesn't want to consider you who gave him the loan for the expedition. Even when he makes a catch, he lies that he didn't, he starts hiding from you. Meanwhile you the lady who went for the loan, you are on the other side suffering. When he makes the catch, he never gives to you but to the wife and you have to pay for the loan as well. We suffer a lot" (Akwidae, adult women group).

Affirming this response by a wife who is also a financier **"Some fishermen are also very wicked, they give out their fishes to their girlfriends leaving their wives who are also fish mongers just because they have had marital issues, because of these issues some of these women resort to other fishermen who will provide them with the quantity of fish they need to sell so they can get money to feed their children"**.

To manoeuvre these exploitations, the crew members in some communities have devised means of ensuring transparency and accountability. Revealing one of the strategies employed, a respondent in an all-male adult group at Akwidae noted **“That happens a lot. I remember a young man once called me to sit in the midst of his co-workers; during the time they were to share money. Essentially, I was the witness to the money disbursement. We normally do same when we share money among ourselves”**. The culture of fairness however seems well established in some communities **“There is no discrimination when it comes to the sharing of fishes. Let us assume we are three that went for fishing, upon return we add the owner of the business to it and share it accordingly among our women, the women can also decide to share it with their friends”** (Eikwe, adult group).

2.3 Impacts of SGBV and Coping Mechanism

Some identified effects of SGBV are injuries, increase in school dropout, stigmatization from the community members and victims’ inability to work. Adolescent pregnancy arising out of sexual activities resulted in school dropout. Further, the inability of parents to provide the educational needs of their wards has resulted in the phenomenon of boys dropping out of school to go into fishing or finding other jobs to survive. Child labour was also affecting boys within these communities and their quest to survive. It was identified in some of the communities in the Central Region that boys had to start working early to fend for themselves throughout their lives because of lack of parental support. This sometimes resulted in poor performance and school dropout rates for boys. Child marriage is also one identified effect of SGBV. The young girls who get pregnant are forced to go and live with the men or boys who impregnated them. This also had consequences for their education. Burden of care by the elderly is also one key phenomenon observed. Adolescent pregnancy had pushed the responsibility of care and double burden to parents who were already struggling to provide for the immediate family. This, thus, required that parents and grandparents had to work extra to provide for themselves, the children and the new-born kids. In some communities, grandmothers over 60 years had to keep working to enable them to cater for the children left behind.

In terms of coping with SGBV experiences, both Western and Central region communities resort to internal coping mechanism such as the use of chief fisherman, Konkohemaa, clan heads, friends and relatives. Formal mechanisms such as the police and social welfare were rarely used in resolving SGBV cases. While they are aware of these avenues, fear of divorce, stigma from community members, among others, made it impossible for them to access these avenues. They coped by relying on the internal structures. Participants were of the opinion that reporting incidence of abuse to an external person beyond the family is tantamount to wanting a divorce. Accordingly, they preferred to address the issues at home. The preferred means of reporting cases of SGBV in the community was the chief fisherman and immediate family members and friends. Even the chief and leadership of the church are a last resort. If the case was to go beyond the family and chief fishermen, the most preferred medium for reporting SGBV to them is their religious leaders (***Osofo, Asafomaame, Asor mpanyinfo***) and the chief due to fear that their marriages maybe dissolved. Cases reported to the police station are very few and mainly when the issues are unresolved by the local leadership. Once again fear of not getting the proper

response from the police was a deterrent for people who want to report their cases and possible case of stigmatisation.

2.3.1 Nature of SGBV Experienced by Fishing Communities

Women's lack of protection in the industry makes them vulnerable to sexual harassment and abuse, experience the phenomenon of unpaid work and low wages (Biswas 2017; Joseph & Doon, 2021). Merten (2007) reveals that 'poor unmarried or widowed women fish processors and traders in Sub-Saharan Africa are sometimes forced into sex to have access or sell fish products' (as cited in Joseph & Doon, 2021).

This section addressed the forms of violence that take place in the general community. The section explored the existence, spread and nature in the general community and its intersection with the fishing industry. The participants for this section covered fisherfolks, nurses, teachers, assembly men and children. The engagement of these participants was to validate the responses from the fisher folks as well as to access from their perspectives the challenges around SGBV in the community. The discussion began with the assessment of participants' knowledge of SGBV, incidence of the phenomenon in the community.

Knowledge about the Concept of SGBV

Participants were asked if they had heard of the word gender-based violence prior to our coming to the community and if yes, where they had heard it from. This was to gain an understanding of their insight into SGBV and the sources of their knowledge. All the respondents confirmed that they had heard of gender-based violence before and through diverse spaces. Television, radio and programmes, Facebook, community centre announcements and programmes organised by NGOs in the communities are some of the outlets for the knowledge acquisition. NGO'S in collaboration with the social welfare organised community durbars in some communities to educate and enlighten the community especially the fisherfolks on issues of SGBV, how they can address it and the medium through which they can report and get their issues resolved.

Incidence and Forms

The prevalence of SGBV was confirmed by both males and female respondents. These take the form of physical assault, sexual, psychological and verbal abuse as well as abuse in line of work and acts of denial. Issues of physical and sexual abuse, it was noted in one of the communities, were on the low because of the education and sensitization form the NGO's.

Victims and Perpetrators

Sexual and gender-based violence is experienced by both females and males. Women and girls are, however, more susceptible to these experiences compared to their male counterparts. While adults experienced abuses from similarly older persons, SGBV against young girls were from multiple sources. Young females in communities in both the Western and Central regions acknowledged that SGBV were perpetrated by both older males and peers. Older family members, males and females respectively, lured younger girls into engaging in sex in exchange for financial favours.

Men's experience of SGBV was from their spouses. In the Western region for instance, men who are unable to bring home enough income due to the erratic nature of the fishing industry such

as low catch, sea closure, delayed payments and the seasonal nature of the work experienced emotional and sexual abuse from their spouses. They were unable to demand for sex or are denied when they do. They indicate their loss of financial power made them vulnerable. Some men get denied of food due to their inability to support the home **“It is the females that mostly do it to the men. The woman can cook and because the man did not contribute, he would be left out”**. The women in the Western region further confirmed that the lack of financial provision from the men compelled them to even leave their marriages.

Community Response

The shared responses were that occurrence of SGBV, is not tolerated generally in the community because it gives them a bad name. In some communities in the Western region for instance, the respondents believed that engaging in SGBV could bring bad omen to the fishing expedition. However, because the community does not have stringent rules and resolution mechanisms to deal with occurrences, they are unable to halt it. In some communities, they had set up security measures to keep a check on the occurrence of SGBV although it had not been sustainable and all these are activities in one way or the other helped to reduce the issues of rape, defilement and transactional sex.

2.4 Present Support Structures Available

The support structures available are mainly the internal structures engaged in times of SGBV which revolves around the use of traditional authorities, family relations and other community leaders. Counselling, reprimand, and compensation (fines- “mmpata sika”) have also been the main forms of support received. The communities in the Central Region were privileged to have the support of NGOs who organised occasional educative programs in the community. In some of the communities however, the activities are currently halted. One of such organisations is the Securing Child Rights in Fishing Sector (SECRIFISE)). These programmes are organised by SECRIFISE with joint support from social welfare to educate the populace on SGBV through drama and talks. The activities are tailored to equip, empower and enlighten both adults and children on issues of SGBV. Again, it was disclosed that religious institutions that embark on evangelism in the community also educate their church members on the need to refrain from SGBV as adult and children. The challenge is that these programmes are limited to the church members and not the entire community. A considerable number of the participants in the Central Region had, however, attended some of these programmes and have some level of awareness on issues of SGBV.

2.4.1 Reporting Platforms and Resolution Mechanism

The goal of the section was to identify the reporting platforms employed by workers in time of abuse. It is also to offer the project a fair understanding of how to approach the issues and who to rely on for support. Across both the Western and Central regions, issues of exploitation were mostly addressed within the family or community. For instance, in the central region, most women respondents reported that in the cases of abuse and exploitation, they solve the issues among themselves **“Hen aa hen ho”** it was disclosed in all the communities. The **‘Apofohene’** (chief fishermen) and **‘konkohenmaa’ (queen fish monger)** where available were the main and first point of all in seeking redress for issues of exploitation. These two and their respective

committees receive and address complaints in all forms of abuse in the line of work as well as marital issues. Perpetrators when found to be guilty are subjected to some form of counselling, reprimand, compensation for victims among others to deter further happenings. Apart from the chief fisherman and queen fish monger, the next preferred for reporting issues of exploitation are the family or clan heads, religious leaders, elders in the community and the chief. In some communities in the Western region for instance, the respondents indicated that they have no interest in reporting issues of GBV to formalised institutions such as police because, they are often unable to follow through with the cases.

The police are involved in the resolution process only when victims felt cheated, or issues at hand seem to be beyond the abilities of the chief fishermen and Konkohemaa and their respective committees or perpetrators fail to meet the sanctions given them by the chief fishermen and Konkohemaa among others. In some communities, however, resorting to the police was unacceptable acknowledging that the structures may not be sufficient in tackling these challenges. The phenomenon of *“Hen aa hen ho”* prevent them from exploring other resolution mechanisms. Further, the respondents expressed mistrust in the police’s attitude and commitment to address the cases and the cost that comes with using the police. Participants in the Western region did not seem to have confidence in the process and sometimes referred to it as bureaucratic in nature. Further, the possibility of chiefs and other key persons in the community withdrawing cases from the police station to be addressed at home compelled them to rely on local community and family structures in addressing SGBV issues instead of reporting to the police. There were, however, some cases where people successfully used the police to address their issues of abuse

2.4.2 Identifying Gaps for Support and Trainings

Both males and females in the regions share the idea of interventions geared towards equipping and enhancing the capacity of women and girls especially since they appear to be more susceptible to SGBV. The respondents reiterated that they would want problem solving programs practical enough to ensure that this issue of SGBV is out of the community. In view of that they would want programs in vocational training that will equip the people especially the women and girls to improve their socio-economic status. Also, programs that will provide them with soft loan facilities to invest and expand their business will be welcomed. Constant and periodic education and training to enlighten the populace on the need for people to refrain from sexual and gender base violence and equipping them economically are the forms of support requested by participants. Participants wanted these economic programs to be centered on business skill building approaches-savings etc. as well as new skills to create employment to help generate income and empower them as poverty is a root cause of SGBV in the community. Participants especially those in the Western region communities preferred trainers from outside the community rather equipping people within the community/families to handle the sensitization. The fear of being tagged as invading people’s privacy or using privileged information as examples, in their view, could cause problems with acceptance and it will be better if trainers are brought in from outside. Informed by their fear of ownership and acceptance, the collective view of the participants was that everyone in the community should be trained and equipped on issues of SGBV. They were of the opinion that selective training may not be effective to produce the

needed results. However, the traditional authorities (Chiefs/ Queen mother, Clan heads) and the leadership of the fishing industry and other law enforcers should be tasked to enforce the training measures on SGBV. It was also recommended that teachers and radio presenters be trained to sensitize them so they can use their platforms to engage members of the community to that effect. Noted by one assemblyman and a teacher, training the media persons saves cost and offers a free and continuous space for awareness raising. Several of the schools, it was revealed, engaged female teachers in educating girls about adolescent pregnancies and other reproductive health issues.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Entry Points and Strategies to Address SGBV Within the Fisheries Sector

The women in the fisheries sector in Western and Central regions are knowledgeable about GBV and its forms and the reasons responsible for its occurrence as they all confirmed it's quite evident in their communities. However, more advocacy and social behaviour change communications within these communities need to be strengthened, enhanced and recognized to fight against "SGBV. Based on the analyses in the preceding sections, the following recommendations should be considered:

- The key access point to the various communities and addressing the issues of SGBV are the chief fishermen. While the queen fish monger is important, the chief fisherman is the most mentioned in decision making in all the communities. It is, thus, important that the project takes their opinion into consideration. This is not to leave out the konkohemaa. There are communities that did not have the queen chief monger. The project can inquire if they need one and equip these communities to elect one. The queen fishmongers should also be equipped in receiving and addressing the issues of sex or relationship for fish.
- Due to the closed nature of the fishing communities and their preference to solving their problems internally by themselves it is important that the project takes into consideration their call for individual empowerment. Their capacities on what steps to take to protect themselves in times of abuse should be strengthened. Through this they can also build the strength to seek external support.
- The leadership of the fishing industry in the various communities should be equipped to introduce formal structures in addressing issues of exploitation in the workplace. They can be supported to have gender and workplace friendly policies to guide interactions at the workplace.
- There seem to be a lot of mistrust between the fishing communities and the police in addressing the SGBV. The project can, through its advocacy and sensitisation activities, introduce regular stakeholder meetings to build trust.
- While the challenges were the same, women in the Western Region seemed to be more empowered than those in the Central Regions. Consequently, the men in Western Region had more complaints about experiences of SGBV than the men in the Central Region. The project may have to vary its approaches according to the communities.

- The findings revealed that a key challenge to SGBV is poverty and power relations. Participants thus requested for activities that seek to address poverty as well such as business skill building and savings among others. Alternative livelihood approach may be one key approach to addressing SGBV in the fishing communities. This could reduce the poverty issues raised.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Details of communities, focus group discussions and interviews

Regions, Districts and communities visited	Focus group discussions	Key informant interview (IDI)
Western Region: Ahanta West- Akwidae Jomorro- Ellonyi Ellembelle- Eikwe	4 per community - Between 8 and 12 persons (a) All female adult group [parents/guardians/cut across different jobs- preferably fishermen] (b) All men adult (same characteristics as the female group) (c) Mixed group children 8 - 12 years (d) Mixed group youth – 13 to 18 years	<i>Duty bearers:</i> Nurse/doctor, teachers, religious & Traditional leaders (chief & queen mother), social welfare, DOVVSU, assembly member, other SGBV services providers in the area they are aware of GPS- pick coordinates of hospitals/clinics/CHPS compound, police station, service providers etc.
Central Region: KEEA- British and Dutch Komenda Mfantseman- Anomabo		

Source: Fieldwork 2022

APPENDIX B: Focus group and key informant interview questions

Date: Start time: End time: Duration:

A. Demographics

1. Age...
2. Gender...
3. Level of Education
4. Religious Affiliation
5. Ethnicity
6. Marital Status: Single, Married, In a relationship, Cohabiting
7. Number of children
8. Age of children
9. Occupation

B. Incidence abuse/ exploitation in the fishing value chain

10. What are some of the challenges you face as women OR men in the fisheries industry?
11. Are there issues of exploitation that occur in the line of work in the fisheries sector?
 - a. Fishermen asking for sex or a relationship before giving fish for selling
 - b. Harassment (in all forms) from business partners – women and men-inappropriate touching, sexual demands, cheating, denying people what is their due, abuse of crew members
 - c. Extortion – fish, money, diverting fish to other men
12. What do you think are the reasons that these things happen?
 - a. harmful social norms in the fishing industry, beliefs about women, power, lack of (or access to) resources etc.
13. Do these happen to only women or there are instances of men getting exploited as well
14. What has been some of the effects of these practices on fishing activities
 - a. Inability to go to work
 - b. Make income
 - c. Get supply of fish or jobs
 - d. Health-STI, psychological etc

15. Do women/ men benefit equally from resources and opportunities available to the industry?- fish, money, loans, decision making, leadership
16. Who owns the boats, nets etc. in this community?
17. Who finances the activities of the fishermen?
18. Who are the leaders of the fishing sector in this community? Do you have women in the leadership positions?
19. How do you address or manage the challenges mentioned above?
 - a. Keep quiet
 - b. Report- police, chief, chief fisherman, Konkohemaa, etc.
20. What support structures are available to help address these when you report your issues? Probe
21. Do you find these structures to be sufficient? Probe- if are they are not what more will you require to help address your challenges and what forms should they take?

C. Nature [incidence and forms] of SGBV- Existence, Spread and Nature

22. Have you heard of gender-based violence before? Probe-where, when, and how?
23. Does it happen in this community? How/why?
24. What is the situation of SGBV in this community? Is it high or low?
25. What forms do they take? Probe-
 - a. Physical- beating, pouring acid etc,
 - b. Sexual-rape or defilement, transactional sex- sex in exchange for fish
 - c. Verbal- insults, threatening
 - d. Economic- Act of denial, lack of access to and control over resources-money from selling fish, fish proceeds
 - e. forced marriage in children etc.
 - f. abuse in the line of work
26. Which category of people experience SGBV in this community? Probe- Is it
 - a. Women and girls only?
 - b. Boys and men as well?
 - c. Children only?
 - d. Adults as well- aged etc?

- e. Those in school or out-of-school etc?
- 27. Who do you think are/ know/have heard to be the perpetrators of SGBV in this community? - Peers, older wo/men, relatives?
- 28. Do you know anyone that has experienced SGBV and who was the perpetrator? – Probe who was it- friend, relative, child, church member etc?
- 29. Which places in this community do these happen often?
- 30. What is the attitude of the community members towards SGBV and why?- don't like it, find it to be normal?

D. Contributing factors to SGBV

- 31. Why do you think these people mentioned in Q26 above are the ones who experience SGBV?
- 32. What do you are the contributing factors to SGBV in this community? Probe-
 - a. Socialisation- what we tell women and men about SGBV, roles, stereotypes, relationship between women and men.
 - b. Poverty etc. (probe for more).
- 33. In which ways do you think the gender relations present in these communities are responsible for shaping SGBV cultures/ practices in this community?
 - a. Gender relations- manifested in power, inequality, differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, and decision-making powers between girls/women and boys/men].

E. Effects of SGBV

- 34. What are some of the identified effects of SGBV you have seen in this community?
 - a. Adolescent pregnancy and or child marriage.
 - b. sickness/diseases- STIs- HIV infections.
 - c. Injuries and death.
 - d. School dropout.
 - e. Inability to work loss of job etc.
 - f. Stigma.

F. Coping strategies employed

- 35. How do people cope with the experiences of SGBV in this community? Strategies – report, keep quiet etc.

36. What resources or support system are available for supporting survivors of SGBV in this community?- e.g. counselling, healthcare support, etc.

G. Reporting and addressing strategies

37. Are you aware of places to report or seek help when SGBV occurs? Name some- DOVVSU, Social welfare.

38. Where do people in the community report cases of SGBV when it occurs? Probe –to:

- a. Friends, family
- b. Chief/queen mother
- c. Assembly member
- d. Hospital
- e. DOVVSU/Police station
- f. Pastor/Imam
- g. Teacher
- h. Keep quiet over it

39. Which of these has been the most preferred choice and why?

H. Present support structures available

40. Are there any programmes/ activities available/ ongoing in this community to address SGBV in this community? Probe Can you name some of these programmes?- radio announcements, DOVVSU.

41. How long has this programme being in place? - has it been a year/more or less

42. What forms do these programmes take? Probe

- a. Capacity building for leaders.
- b. General community empowerment? - for children, adults etc.

43. Who are the persons responsible for these programmes? – Probe

- a. DOVVSU
- b. Schools
- c. Health professionals
- d. Traditional authorities
- e. Municipal assembly

- f. Religious institutions
- g. PPAG
- h. Social welfare etc.

44. Have you ever participated in any of these programmes?
45. What are some of the issues that the programme addressed?
46. What is your opinion about the programme? - Is it good/ beneficial and in what ways?
47. In what ways have they been beneficial? To them as individual or the community
48. What has been the community(s) response to these programs?- welcomed or not
49. What is your opinion about the issues addressed? Are they comprehensive and target the needs of the community? Or it is not enough?

I. Identifying gaps for further support: Capacity building

50. If there are no programmes what programmes/measures do want to be put in place to equip people in this community on SGBV?
51. What issues/topics would you want to be addressed should a programme be introduced?
52. What do you think will be the community's response to these programmes? - welcomed or not?
53. What resources will you need to build your capacity in addressing/respond to SGBV in this community?
54. Who do you think will need to be trained/equipped to lead this? -
 - a. Everyone
 - b. Traditional leaders
 - c. Health professionals
 - d. Chief fishermen
 - e. Teachers etc.
55. Which of the names or people mentioned will be your most preferred choice and why?
56. What forms of training would you suggest that they are given?
57. What issues do you think should be addressed?
58. What approaches or activities do you think when employed will help achieve the utmost results/impact in addressing SGBV? Every day/month/ year etc