

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS IN BUDAKA DISTRICT

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### Abstract

Budaka is one of the 146 districts in Uganda experiencing domestic violence (DV) with 5016 cases, recorded in 2020. This was a significant number with obvious development repercussions despite relevant regulations, prohibiting the vice. The purpose of this study is to determine the nature and causes of domestic violence in Budaka district, development implications, and then suggest a course of action. A mixed-methods approach that included desk review and interviews to obtain quantitative and qualitative data, respectively was used. Domestic violence affects people of all ages, education levels, income levels, social standing, and religions, and manifests itself in form of physical, economic, sexual, political, religious, cultural and psychological. Poverty, culture, ethical and moral failure, biological vulnerability of women, and difficulties in obtaining evidence are the causes of domestic violence with far-reaching economic, political, and social development implications in Budaka district. In conclusion, domestic violence exists in Budaka district as a social construct with enormous developmental ramifications. The study recommends deconstruction through adopting Uganda's National Gender Policy of 2007, gender mainstreaming in the district, enacting by-laws, gender monitoring and evaluation, and strengthening Mifuni NGO in the fight against domestic violence.

**Keywords:** domestic violence, Budaka district, Uganda, development implications, physical violence, emotional violence, sexual violence.

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### 1. Introduction

Domestic violence is a type of gender-based violence that occurs in every country on the planet. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, articles 1 and 5 states that all people are equal and no torture or cruel punishments. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2015–2030, goal number five stresses gender equality as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1985. In spite of all the above clauses, the vice continues to pervade society as a result of history, perception, and practice. Domestic violence by intimate partners is estimated to have occurred in the lives of 640 million women (26 % of women aged 15 and above) over the world. One in every four adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 has been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or husband (24 %) [1]. In 2018, one in every seven women was projected to have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner or husband in the previous year (13 % of women were aged 15–49) [1]. Domestic violence has a greater impact on low- and lower-middle-income countries and regions than it does on high-income countries and regions. For example, 37 % of women aged 15 to 49 who live in countries, designated as “least developed” by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2015–2030), had experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner abuse at some point in their lives. Furthermore 22 % of women, living in “least developed countries”, have been subjected to intimate partner violence in the past 12 months, which is substantially higher than the global average of 13 % [1]. Over 155 countries have passed laws on domestic violence, although even when such laws exist, compliance with international standards and recommendations, or enforcement of the laws remains wanting [2]. The prevalence estimates of lifetime intimate partner violence range from 20 % in the Western Pacific, 22 % in high-income countries and Europe, and 25 % in America to 33 % in Africa, 31 % in Eastern Mediterranean, and 33 % in East Asia [1]. The overall prevalence of domestic violence (physical, sexual, or emotional) in Africa ranges from 30.5 % in Nigeria to 43.4 % in Zimbabwe; 45.3 % in Kenya; 45.5 % in Mozambique; 53.9 % in Zambia; and

57.6 % in Cameroun [3]. It is more common in poor countries than in rich countries, indicating a link between low income and violence as synonymous with underdevelopment.

Despite the existence of laws and policies that protect victims and survivors, violence against women is on the rise in Uganda. According to the 2016 Uganda Police Force's Annual Crime Report, the number of gender-based violence offences reported and investigated grew by 4 %, from 38,651 to 40,258 cases, between 2015 and 2016 [4]. Up to 22 % of Ugandan women between the ages of 15 and 49 who participated in the 2016 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey reported experiencing sexual violence of some kind. According to the study, 13 % of women between the ages of 15 and 49 say they experience sexual violence every year [5]. In Uganda, this corresponds to more than 1 million women being sexually abused each year. According to a research, issued in August 2007 by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics [6], 68 % of ever-married women aged 15 to 49 have suffered some sort of violence, perpetrated by their spouse or intimate partner. Similar findings were found in a 2006 research by the Uganda Law Reform Commission, which found that 66 % of men and women surveyed had experienced domestic violence. All of this continues despite article 44 of the Republic of Uganda's 1995 constitution, which states that freedom from torture, cruel, and inhumane treatment is a non-derogable right for all people, as well as article 33, which states that women have "full and equal dignity of the person with men" and prohibits "laws, cultures, customs, or traditions" that undermine their welfare, dignity, or status. The Ugandan National Gender Policy (NGP) of 2007 contains no provisions for torture, discrimination, or violence against any gender, and states that all people should live in harmony, peace, equality, and equity in all aspects of life. These national statistics are seen in numerous forms in Budaka district, obstructing growth in general and women's empowerment in particular.

The study was guided by the liberal feminism theory ("equality feminism") of Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1799) who represents its beginning in a publication of "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman". In the publication she asserts that women need to be educated just like men in order for them to grow up into moral and independent human beings. The theory is primarily concerned with ensuring gender equality and according to the theory, equality is essentially a question of attaining equal legal rights and access to higher-level positions. This was because at that time, laws, rights and privileges, relating to adult suffrage, marriage, divorce, property, and education, were in all favour of men at the cost of women. Liberal feminists entirely seek to end mistreatment of women as result of being legal dependents on men who are either husbands, or fathers or brothers. Liberal feminists, such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–99), Harriet Taylor (1807–58), John Stuart Mill (1806–73), Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902), and Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), used the liberal philosophy of equality and individual freedom to contend that social status at birth and sex were no longer legitimate basis for discrimination against women. The Theory helps this study to comprehend the nature and causes of domestic violence as a result of the patriarchal system, derived historically, perceived as okay and reinforced by practice in the larger part of the world, including Budaka district of Uganda. As a way forward, the theory argues that individual development required the ability to educate and expand one's faculties. Therefore, discriminatory access to services, allocation of resources, and distribution of benefits inhibits women's full human potential development, in which both private and public returns are lost, hence underdevelopment.

The United Nations defines domestic violence as: "a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner". Violence may be in form of physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. In the process of causing violence, the offender may "frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone" (the offended). People of all financial status, educational levels, race, age, religion, and gender are affected by domestic violence. It can occur to couples who are either married, or cohabiting or just dating [7]. Development is growing and becoming advanced in all spheres of life political, economic, and social. It is about positive change and improvement in all faculties of life [8]. Development thrives largely on peaceful coexistence, human rights protection, and a gender-responsive society. Therefore domestic violence which causes gender imbalances and interferes with peaceful coexistence indeed hampers development.

Budaka district was established in 2007 from Pallisa district. It is composed of 2 counties, 15 sub-counties, 4 town councils, 73 parishes, and 312 villages [9]. It is mainly occupied by the

Bagwere who are one of the 65 indigenous speech communities since 1st February 1926 as recorded in the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. The district population is estimated at 207,597 of whom 100,620 are males and 106,977 females [10] who should live happily in a domestic violence-free environment, hence achieving holistic development. However, Budaka district had a total of 5016 domestic violence cases, recorded in 2020 [11]. The national statistics as given above by the 2016 Uganda Police Force's Annual Crime Report, The 2016 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, the 2007 Uganda Bureau of Statistics report on gender based violence, and the 2007 Uganda Law Reform Commission, all indicate the existence of domestic violence in various forms, which indeed hampers development in general and women empowerment in particular. Budaka is one of 97 poor districts altogether that contributed 25 % of the GDP out of 116 districts by 2017 where 19 rich districts altogether contributed 75 %. Specifically, it was number 85 where it contributed 24.6 Million US\$ with 124 GDP per capita US\$ [12].

Given such poverty levels and the increasing domestic violence at 5160 cases, reported in 2020, it has become significant to establish the nature, causes and its development implications. This is because domestic violence has direct and indirect negative effects on the development process of society and the paper makes appropriate recommendations in terms of policy, practices, and programmes relevant for promoting a domestic violence free society.

## 2. Literature Review

**Nature of Domestic Violence:** In every society, men and women experience some form of domestic violence, which is one of the components of gender-based violence in the world and it occurs in various ways as evidenced by several authors.

The United Nations (UN) describes domestic violence as: “a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner”. It occurs either in form of “physical, sexual, emotional, economic, psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person” [7]. Such UN definition is useful in establishing the actual picture of the forms of domestic violence in Budaka district of Uganda.

The world over, approximately 35 % of women have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime, and a third of women who have ever been in a relationship have experienced physical or sexual violence, inflicted by an intimate partner [13]. In North America, (1.1 % in Canada, 6.6 % in the US, 7.8 % in Costa Rica, and 27.1 % in Bolivia), while in Central and South America, Bolivia had the greatest % (52.3 %) of women who had ever been physically abused by an intimate relationship. However, the % of women who said they had ever been sexually assaulted by an intimate partner was consistent across countries (i. e., Bolivia 15.2 %, Nicaragua 13.1 %, Guatemala 12.3 %, Colombia 11.8 %, Ecuador 11.5 %, El Salvador 11.5 %, Haiti 10.8 %, and Peru 9.4 %). Furthermore, with a few exceptions, the % of women who reported ever experiencing emotional abuse (insults, humiliation, intimidation, and threats of harm) was relatively consistent across countries (e. g., Nicaragua 47.8 %, El Salvador 44.2 %, Guatemala 42.2 %, Colombia 41.5 %, Ecuador 40.7 %) (Haiti 17.0 %, Dominican Republic 26.1 %). Furthermore, 31.1 % of Colombian women said they had encountered economic or patrimonial abuse from a spouse, 7.6 % said they had experienced sexual violence from a boyfriend, and 64 % said they had experienced psychological violence from a partner [13]. In Ecuador, similar figures have been reported. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC 2019), 43 out of 100 women in the country have been exposed to IPV in some way. 40.8 % of the women in this group indicated they had been victims of psychological violence (e. g., humiliation, insults, or being threatened with a weapon), 25 % said they had been victims of physical violence, and 8.3 % said they had been victims of sexual abuse [13]. Though in America, it brings out statistics of violence, which we do not have in Budaka district of Uganda, and thus useful.

In the United States, one out of every four women and one out of every seven men has been physically abused in a romantic relationship [14]. Stalking, psychological/emotional, sexual, and economic abuses are not included in those statistics, although they are just as common. Findings of [14] brings out the fact that even men experience domestic violence, which some studies have ignored, and core in this study to establish every victim without prejudice.

Koenig [15] in the study of Domestic Violence in Rural Uganda, established that domestic violence is becoming a growing public health concern in emerging countries. In a poll of 5109 women of reproductive age in Uganda's Rakai District, 30 % said they had received violent threats or abuse from their current partner in the previous year, and 20 % said they had experienced it in the year before to the survey. Three out of every five women who reported recent physical threats or abuse said they had been subjected to three or more acts of violence in the previous year, with just under half claiming injuries as a result. Though the study was in Rakia and not Budaka, which is a gap, nonetheless it will add value in establishing the nature of domestic violence.

Domestic violence is real and comes in many forms, as evidenced by the above. Such evidence, which has been found in different parts of Uganda and the world, was helpful in determining the true nature of domestic violence in Budaka district, where we have no clear record despite the 5106 cases in 2020 and many years before. This information aided in determining the true extent and nature of domestic violence in Budaka district.

**Causes of Domestic Violence:** DV vice is real in society and just cannot occur in a vacuum. There must be causes because it cannot occur and reoccur to the extent of becoming a public menace without roots. Those causes in various societies by authors are indicated below and will indeed assist the study in establishing the actual causes in Budaka district.

According to Yonfa [13], the root of the problem was societal standards around domestic violence. For example patriarchal systems, in which the woman is considered a possession of the husband, and social attitudes, justifying IPV, indeed increase the prevalence of DV. Women in these areas are more inclined to tolerate this habit when it affects them and are less likely to quit a violent relationship. This study though in America, has a direct relationship with this one in Budaka district of Uganda in terms of context, scope, objectives, and emphasis hence being useful.

Koenig [15] established that the impact of the male partner's alcohol use increases the chances of male violence against the female. He further established that 70 % of men and 90 % of women believe that mugging a wife or female partner is culturally justified, hence a hindrance to domestic violence reduction. Given that both Rakia and Budaka are rural districts in Uganda, the findings in the former is relevant in the latter study on domestic violence. They are located in separate parts of the country, in the central and eastern regions, respectively. Therefore Koenig's findings will enhance the study in Budaka in terms of the nature, causes, and development implications of domestic violence.

The above indicates that DV is a product of several circumstances. This information was valuable in identifying the actual causes of domestic violence in Budaka district, where we have no clear record despite the 5106 cases, reported in 2020 and many years prior.

**Development Implications as a result of Domestic Violence:** The impacts are many and painful on the whole society's development and individuals in particular as evident below:

Domestic violence is a pervasive problem in our culture that impacts the victim's welfare and safety for long above the violence incidence and pervades all aspects of their existence [14]. It was noted, that domestic violence impacts on people from all financial status, educational levels, geographic places, and gender identities, though at varied degrees. Lubaale [8] indicates that women in KyU experience hardship, agony, stress, abuses, insults, poverty, and psychological torment as a result of domestic violence, which is one of the gender-based violence that the author studies in general. Domestic violence lowers women's self-esteem, drive, and liberty as well as restricting their opportunities for higher attainment in all university faculties/spheres of influence. These authors indicate that violence cuts across all groups of people, which is central in our study to establish whoever is experiencing domestic violence without prejudice in Budaka district.

**Strategies to Mitigate Domestic Violence:** MIFUMI Non-Government Organization (NGO) was founded in 1994 to address domestic violence in Budaka and nearby districts, which was obstructing overall growth evident in illiteracy, ill-health, lameness, marriage break down, big work burden on women and poverty. Through comprehensive services in education, health care, micro-enterprises, and domestic violence advocacy, MIFUMI has directly impacted the lives of over 50,000 women and their children. Its main strength is that it is located in the research region and is better related to the grassroots people, making it valuable in this 2021 study, which intends to propose appropriate measures for lowering the district's rising vice.

The above indicates serious development implications in various parts of Uganda and the world all over as a result of DV. This information was useful in identifying the development implications as a result of domestic violence in Budaka district where 5106 cases were reported in 2020 as well as possible mitigation measures.

The paper aims at establishing:

The nature of domestic violence in Budaka district.

The causes of domestic violence in Budaka district.

The development implications of domestic violence in Budaka district.

### 3. Materials and Methods

A mixed-methods approach that combined desk reviews and interviews was used [16]. This is because it was easy to collect quantitative data from documents and qualitative data from interviews. The study employed a cross-sectional design with the checklist and interview guide as research instruments. The target population was 5106 victims of domestic violence, derived from the 5106 cases reported [9]. A non-proportional quota sampling technique [17] was adopted where 3 victims in every category of domestic violence namely; (i) physical, (ii) economic, (iii) sexual, (iv) political, (v) religious, (vi) cultural, and (vii) psychological were selected, leading the study to 21 respondents as sample size. This was done because the victims were the best to provide information on domestic violence from their experiences and also ensure that every category of violence is represented. Besides it helped to reach data saturation.

The researcher obtained quantitative data from documents using the checklist from police papers in the Budaka area, while qualitative data from interviews was collected through face-to-face interaction with the 21 respondents. Following that, descriptive statistics were used to examine quantitative data, while content analysis was used to study qualitative data by identifying themes, summarizing the findings and finally the researchers' interpretation. Five experts in gender and development assessed the validity and suitability of the instruments. Their input was utilized to produce the Content Validity Index (CVI). Each item's CVI was calculated, and any items with a score of less than 0.8 were changed. The test-retest approach was used to determine the item's reliability. The Cronbach Alpha test resulted with a score of 0.6. Participants' confidentiality, and the use of informed permission were all used to assure ethical considerations. Informed consent was obtained from the participants at will after explanation and indicating to them that the study was purely academic.

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.1. Nature of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is represented in the following ways, as evidenced by numerous police records and documents as registered at Budaka district police station.

The **Table 1**, shows the trend and frequency of domestic violence in Budaka district, in which physical is the highest and psychological is the lowest.

**Table 1**

Showing Domestic Violence Cases at Budaka District Police Station

S/N	Nature of Domestic Violence Cases	Actual Cases	%
01.	Physical	3106	61.9
02.	Economic	1491	29.7
03.	Sexual	301	6
04.	Political	84	1.7
05.	Religious	19	0.4
06.	Cultural	10	0.2
07.	Psychological	05	0.1
08.	Total	5016	100 %

Source: Budaka District Police Station, 2020

Note: The above categorization of data into forms of violence was done by the researcher. Police just had the data in general as lump sum in the context of domestic violence.



**Physical Domestic Violence:** This occurs when one of the parties physically damages the other, such as through fighting, boxing, pounding, or beating. It is the most common in Budaka, with a frequency of 61.9 %.

**Economic Domestic Violence:** This refers to the financial, material, and general economic well-being of the persons, involved in a partnership. When one party harms the other by stealing money, refusing to buy basic necessities at home or financially supporting the other, refusing to work, or bringing your relatives to be supported by the other party, violence ensues. This was visible in police records at 29.7 %, posing a serious threat to peaceful coexistence.

**Sexual Domestic Violence:** This occurs when one of the partners sexually abuses the other, such as refusing to have sex with your spouse, opting for unfavourable frequency of sex, asking for certain sex styles not in other party's interests/abilities, as well as duration, and timing of sex, which may not be favourable to the other party. The incidence of parties, sexually harming each other, was reported to be 6 %.

**Political Domestic Violence:** This is to do with making political-related choices and decisions. Violence occurs when one of the parties coerces the other to subscribe to his/her political affiliation like a husband being in the NRM Party and forcing the wife to do so. There was a trace of such cases in homes at a rate of 1.7 %.

**Religious Domestic Violence:** This arises from religious differences and making religious-related choices and decisions. Violence occurs when one of the parties compels the other to subscribe to his/her religious affiliation like a wife being a Moslem and forcing husband to change to Islam or even fast. There was a trace of such cases in homes at the rate of 0.4 %.

**Cultural Domestic Violence:** This arises from cultural differences and making culturally related choices and decisions. Violence occurs when one of the parties forces the other to subscribe to his/her cultural affiliation like a wife being a Mugisu and forcing the husband to circumcise. There was a trace of such cases in homes at the rate of 0.2 %.

**Psychological Domestic Violence:** This has to do with how people's thoughts function and how that influences their actions. When one party's activities in the relationship become emotionally or mentally hurtful to the other, such as being quiet, withholding affection, ceasing communication, arriving late, and ceasing to eat food at home without a clear explanation, violence develops. With a frequency of 0.1 %, this is the lowest.

The above establishment of the nature of domestic violence in Budaka district was guided by the United Nations classification as "physical, sexual, emotional, economic, psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person." [7]. Physical, sexual, economic, or patrimonial abuse, and psychological abuse were all frequent in America, according to [13]. This was similar to the findings of [14], who found that one out of every four women and one out of every seven men in the USA have been physically assaulted in a romantic relationship. He also mentioned stalking, psychological/emotional, sexual, and economic abuses as typical types of violence, albeit he didn't have enough statistics to back up his claims. Koenig [15] established that in Rakia district of Uganda, three out of every five women reported to have experienced physical violence from their intimate partners. Therefore this paper, coming up with those seven domestic violence, forms is in tandem with other studies in the world, although the order of frequency of occurrence as physical, economic, sexual, political, religious, cultural and psychological is a new discovery not anywhere earlier established. Besides informing readers of other forms like political, religious and cultural, which are scanty in the literature, indeed adds value to the body of knowledge.

#### 4. 2. Causes Of Domestic Violence

Through interviews, it was vital to learn about the respondents' viewpoints on the causes of domestic violence in Budaka area, as living testimonies to the vice's nature as physical, psychological, sexual, economic, political, religious, and cultural:

**Poverty:** Poverty is a multifaceted social phenomenon with different definitions and causes depending on age, gender, culture, and other socioeconomic factors, and many of its components are typically concealed. There are different definitions of poverty; nonetheless, the concept of 'lack,' 'deficiency,' or 'deprivation' is often the common denominator for many perspectives of

poverty. Poverty is a dynamic socio- economic, and political process that involves sacrifices, or deprivations that affects individuals or communities, often resulting in a limited access to basic necessities of life as well as a sense of powerlessness, helplessness, exclusion and eventually isolation from productive means [18]. Several respondents cited poverty as the leading cause of domestic violence during the interviews, as mentioned below.

If men are not working, they become unruly and rude at home, which often results in fighting and quarreling (a female respondent A1 at Iki-Iki in February 2021).

Once men are just idle at home with no money, and no work, they often turn their frustration to sexual demands from their wives unnecessarily, which results in fighting, quarreling, injury, and so on (a female respondent A2 at Katira in February 2021).

I was beaten by my husband after asking him for money to buy meat for visitors three times. He said I embarrassed him before children, yet I know that he is not working (a female respondent A18 at Budaka in February 2021).

My wife denied me sex because I had not paid school fees for children (a male respondent B4 at Budaka in February 2021)

Limited basic needs like food, poor housing, medical care, and clothes among others make relations between husband and wife always on the negative and often result in disappearing from home, fights, quarrels, My husband during the lockdown in May 2020 abandoned us at home with children because he had no money to support us... (a female respondent A17 at Kamonkoli in February 2021).

When some families compare themselves with others, they notice a huge difference, which results in accusations and counter-accusations or negligence, which affects love in the relationship, hence withdrawing affection, abandonment, fights, quarrels and so on (a male respondent B2 at Kamonkoli in February 2021)

According to the respondents, poverty is a major source of domestic violence in Budaka because all households and families require money to cover basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, medical treatment, and education, which is agreement with [18] argument that poverty causes family strife. When there are shortages or a sense of permanent insufficiency, partners' affection suffers, and the effect is felt by the entire family. It's no surprise, that this is true given the district's poverty rate is 43 %, implying that 43 % of Budaka's families are struggling to make ends meet on a daily basis, leading to daily experiences of domestic violence. Budaka being in Uganda a developing country, such finds are consistent with other poor countries like Bolivia that had (52.3 %) of women who had ever been physically abused in an intimate relationship.

**Culture:** The people in Budaka district are majorly Bagwere one of the 65 speech communities in Uganda according to the 1995 constitution of Uganda. Culture encompasses all aspects of a person's way of life, including dress, values, beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and practices. Bagwere culture is patriarchal, defined as the father's authority and male dominance over women and children within the household, as well as the expansion of this domination to other aspects of society, including as government, education, business, and religion [19]. Several respondents recognized culture as one of the primary causes of domestic violence throughout the interviews, as explained:

Our community has been ruined by culture. Everyone believes that men should always be in positions of leadership and that women should always follow them. Men abuse women as a result, which leads to domestic violence (a female respondent A8 at Kakule in February 2021).

Due to the patriarchal nature of society, where men's opinions are valued more highly than those of women, and the fact that women in Budaka endure a lot of domestic abuse in all its forms, women cannot be treated equally to men (a male respondent B3 at Kachomo in February 2021).

Culture restricts women's sexual freedom and denies them access to resources that are necessary for economic productivity, which causes many women to face various forms of domestic violence in the homes of men with no way out because culture permanently subjugates them to males (a female respondent A16 at Iki-Iki in February 2021).

Patriarchy is a rule of the father as noted in the Bagwere culture, which keeps women dominated and subordinated by men in all spheres of life (political, economic, and social), hence the

current domestic violence because women have no opportunity to air out their views or grow in all spheres of life (a female respondent A15 said at Kachomo in February 2021).

The preceding remarks imply that culture, traditions, customs, beliefs, teachings, and practices are a reality in Budaka, to the point where people of all ages, classes, and religious affiliations are all susceptible to domestic violence. Since the cultural expressions, traits, and dynamics of male domination over females are alive and well in society today, this was clear when cases, involving old people, young people, and religious people, were recorded. Such establishment in respect of culture is similar to earlier arguments by [19] that culture is one of the causes of domestic violence because of placing men in permanent leadership positions over women, which is often abused. Furthermore, because of history, perception, and practice, which encourages male dominance over females in many aspects of life, culminating in power struggles, fighting, and economic exploitation, this occurrence is still occurring today. Men continue to use religious, political, and cultural force to compel women to join their side, which result in domestic violence, which is similar to that of [13] where male domination of women as their properties/possession is justified. This is precisely why it is so difficult to challenge gender norms in Budaka district because the Lugwere culture is very patriarchal, and the traditional gender stereotypes/roles of female submission to men are preserved and perpetuated as evident from above. Such findings are line with the argument that the whole world is largely patriarchal, hence the existence of DV on the entire planet at approximately 35 %, including developed countries [13] like 1.1 % in Canada, and 6.6 % in the US. The above will help readers gain a better understanding of why more women in Budaka endure domestic violence than men.

**Ethical and Moral Failure:** The term ethics is derived etymologically from the Greek word “ethike”, which means customs, way of living, attitude to life, and human conduct. Ethics is the discipline therefore that deals with what is good and bad or right and wrong or ought to be done and not in a society with moral duty and obligation on part of the followers and people in general to comply. Morals refer to personal conduct in society or community, given the ethical standards set [20]. The above is based on the premise that all normal human beings are moral agents and that there are responsible for every activity that they do. At a global level, moral and ethical failure is at the heart of Africa’s current socio-economic crisis [21]. As a result, constant ethical and moral failure on the part of people in Budaka, whether male and female, is a source of domestic violence because people do what they want without concern for the other party in the house. This is evident in the various testimonies of respondents:

Several men continue to engage in extramarital relations under the pretext of being men and culture seems to support, hence continuous fights with their wives at home and other related sexual violence (a male respondent B1 at Iki-Iki in February 2021).

A husband and wife who both work for the district got into an argument and he beat his wife. This was extremely embarrassing particularly for the female as a person and for all the other female employees. Such bulldozing attitudes do in fact make women fearful, which hinders their advancement (a female respondent A9 at Budaka in February 2021).

Moral failure often leads to improper accountability of resources at home in that women work but keep quiet on the outcome as well as men besides under declaration, which puts the couple on tension, suspicion, and accusations, hence fights and quarrels (a female respondent A5 at Kamonkoli in February 2021).

Drug abuse, drunkenness, and theft among others greatly affect negatively family relations evident in contusions fights, theft of house properties to go and drink alcohol, abuses of personal and family resources, sexual violence like marital rape under the disguise of drunkenness among others indeed lead to domestic violence (a female respondent A10 at Lyama in February 2021).

There is a lot of gender based violence in society as a result of ethical and moral failure in society generally and individuals, in particular as a result of I don’t care attitude (a female respondent A12 at Nansanga in February 2021).

The preceding comments suggest that ethical and moral failure on the part of individuals and society is a reality to the extent that domestic violence manifestations, features, and dynamics continue to occur regardless of age, education, income, status, or religion. This ethical and moral



failure is one of the development challenges of Uganda Vision 2040. The above as well is supported by the patriarchal system, which sustains male supremacy over females in all sectors of life and this reality continues to be reinforced up today in Budaka district.

**Biological Vulnerability of Women:** Due to their biological structure in terms of anatomy and physiology, women are more susceptible than men. This can be seen in the reproductive organs, breasts, menstrual periods, and nine-month pregnancy, as well as the challenges of delivering. Women in Budaka are at risk for domestic violence in addition to reproductive problems, such as cervical cancer, fibroids, and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Respondents explained the following during the oral interview:

Related costs like buying sanitary facilities keep women vulnerable by asking for money from men, which in some cases lead to quarrels and fights (a female respondent A11 at Tadameri in February 2021).

Some women's unpleasant periods have an impact on their productivity (a female respondent A13 at Kabuna in February 2021).

Many women avoid hard work after having children, which permits men to financially exploit them (a female respondent A7 at Naboa in February 2021).

Women who experience sexual violence at home may get irritated, ashamed, exhausted physically and emotionally, which hinders their progress (a female respondent A6 at Mugiti in February 2021).

When women often tell their boyfriends or husbands that they are pregnant, men normally are in denial, resort to withdrawing affection, reduce financial support, and often telling them to abort, which is frustrating and detrimental to the lives of women (a male respondent B4 at Budaka in February 2021).

The biological susceptibility of women is universal for all women, regardless of age, status, wealth, education, race, area, or religion, as stated in the preceding remarks. Such vulnerability, which is universal, confirms the existence of DV in the whole world at approximately 35 % in both developed and developing countries though at varying degrees due to income and civilization [13]. The above will help readers appreciate it as a pernicious condition, in which women suffer, and unfriendly men and society as a whole take advantage of this vulnerability to perpetuate patriarchal tendencies that frequently result in domestic violence and, as a result, stunt women's development. This finding was related to that of [8] in Kyambogo University, which strengthens the findings and confirms that biological vulnerability is real and factual in causing domestic violence in Budaka district.

**Difficulties in Securing Evidence to Present in Courts of Law:** The 1995 constitution of the Republic of Uganda article 28 [3] presumes innocence of the accused until proved guilty. Furthermore, the burden of proof rests with the complainant and for that matter, you must have sufficient evidence beyond reasonable doubt to convict someone, since domestic violence is largely a criminal matter. This strict demand of evidence in courts of law in Uganda indeed perpetuates domestic violence as evident in the interviews below:

At one time in the night, my husband beat and even raped me. Which evidence could I present in court when we were two in the bedroom? I gave up.... (a female respondent A2 at Katira in February 2021).

Several men continue to exploit women because they know that it is difficult to adduce sufficient evidence in courts of law on things like rape, quarrelling, slapping, and abusing among others.... (a male respondent B1 at Iki-Iki in February 2021).

The stigmatization, often received by victims of domestic violence like rape or fights from society and offenders relatives, is cruel besides the strict demand of evidence in court, which often is embarrassing to adduce, indeed blocks many from getting justice, which promotes the vice (a female respondent A12 at Nansanga in February 2021).

From the above testimonies and statements, we note that domestic violence continues in Budaka district because offenders know that it is difficult to secure sufficient evidence to adduce in courts of law to convict them. Besides stigmatization and its related effects, which makes the victims quiet and fail to report even if they know where to go, the strict evidence technicality sustains

domestic violence in society. Such demands of strict evidence is international in all courts, thus the inability to present it or sustain it beyond reasonable doubts indeed remains a stonewall to getting justice, hence perpetuating the vice.

#### 4. 3. Development Implications

Domestic violence in Budaka district, as seen above, has significant repercussions for the district's political, economic, and social growth in the following ways:

**Economic Development:** Families that continue to experience domestic violence stand out to lose on the economic gains and opportunities in the district and the country at large, hence creating economic gaps as evident below in the interview responses:

As some people and families are busy pooling resources and energies together for development, others are busy fighting, and misusing resources, hence income inequalities in Budaka (a female respondent A18 at Budaka in February 2021).

Poverty certainly appears in disgruntled families as a result of misusing resources, unemployment on their party because all the time they are fighting and theft among themselves (a male respondent B4 at Budaka in February 2021).

Underutilization of resources like land, labour, and capital because individuals and families are busy fighting each other, very suspicious, not working on the land, like many men in Budaka district just go to town as women are tilling the land, hence low productivity (a female respondent A9 at Budaka in February 2021).

The low productivity in the district and homes from all factors of production because families are not stable, hurting, crying and permanently in regret (a female respondent A1 at Iki-Iki in February 2021).

The low tax base in the district and economy is because of low productivity, hence perpetual underdevelopment of Budaka district (a male respondent B2 at Kamonkoli in February 2021).

We have indeed missed out on grants and projects where gender balance is a requirement (a female respondent A15 at Kachomo in February 2021).

The above increases comprehension of the current low economic development in Budaka district evident in high poverty levels, income inequalities, low productivity, low tax base, and underutilization of resources that it is partly attributed to domestic violence in the district, which undermines hard work. This was found to be similar to that of [14] that domestic violence is a pervasive problem in our culture that impacts the victim's welfare and safety for long above the violence incidence and indeed pervades all aspects of their existence, including economic welfare.

**Political Development:** Families that continue to experience domestic violence become a disgrace in the political growth of the district because of either their limited contribution or increased costs of security as well as keeping law and order, hence creating political gaps in comparison to stable areas as evident below in the interview responses:

Contribution to the democratic process of Budaka and good governance by families and individuals who are hurting, crying, wailing, and frustrated is often limited (a female respondent A16 at Iki-Iki in February 2021).

Increased domestic violence in Budaka increases costs of public expenditures through security, police keeping law and order, investigations, prosecutions, and judgments, hence promoting political underdevelopment (a female respondent A10 at Lyama in February 2021).

All leaders need credentials, experience, mentorship, role models, advice, and support from everyone, but especially people of your gender. Many women have missed here because their counterparts are continuously nursing wounds of domestic violence (a female respondent A6 at Mugiti in February 2021).

Due to Domestic violence, there are fewer women in positions of leadership, which discourages others from rising to the top and gives the situation an artificial appearance of naturalness. It is often evident when men block their wives from standing for elective positions and even coerce women to subscribe to their political affiliation (a male respondent B4 at Budaka in February 2021).

Human rights abuses that occur to various people as a result of domestic violence indeed block donors and the international community from extending support to such areas like Budaka

district because human rights observance is often a prerequisite for attracting donor support (a female respondent A1 at Iki-Iki in February 2021).

With such escalating domestic violence in Budaka district, it is no longer debatable, that the overall political leadership output hangs in balance due to the absence of many men and women's scholarship, mentoring, leadership, and support to the district and beyond, hence perpetuating political underdevelopment.

**Social Development:** Social underdevelopment occurs or will always occur in families that are experiencing domestic violence and will often lose in social gains when opportunities appear, hence creating social gaps as evident below in the interview responses:

Unplanned population increase as a result of rape and unstable families that are unable to use family planning methods will certainly affect resources mobilization and planning, hence underdevelopment (a female respondent A2 at Katira in February 2021).

Death of young or useful people has occurred accidentally through fighting, abortions, and contracting Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), which is a boomerang to the development process (a female respondent A17 at Kamonkoli in February 2021).

Education inequalities will appear among gender, communities, and clans as well education achievement, which will complicate trickle-down effects of development fruits (a male respondent B3 at Kachomo in February 2021).

Ill-health as a result of becoming lame due to fighting, escalating STDs, inability to access health facilities because of violence, and inability to pay among others often lead to low productivity of people, hence underdevelopment (a female respondent A8 at Kakule in February 2021).

Cultural barriers to development will stay unchecked with increasing domestic violence (a female respondent A6 at Mugiti in February 2021).

Unethical behaviors will continue in society because of limited stable families for discipline and nurture (a female respondent A10 at Lyama in February 2021).

Women's contributions to research, innovations, labor, and community service will be modest due to the aforementioned gender disparities, which will weaken the district development strategy (a female respondent A12 at Nansanga in February 2021).

Family breakdown and marriages as a result of domestic violence have indeed undermined social progress (a female respondent A14 at Kaderuna in February 2021).

No wonder that 5016 domestic cases were recorded in Budaka district in 2020 because of a broken-down social system that is unable to nurture reasonable citizens to champion development at all levels. Social underdevelopment indicators like illiteracy, maternity health, infant mortality, unethical actions, high dependent population, and cultural practices that hinder development will continue to prevail in Budaka district. This is supported by Black [14] that domestic violence is a pervasive problem in our culture that affects the survivor's well-being beyond the instances of violence and pervades all aspects of their existence. This indeed has frustrated progress in the district.

**Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; 2015-2030):** President Museveni of Uganda is one of the world leaders who attended the United Nations Summit in New York on September 25, 2015 to approve the 2015–2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are used as a framework to guide governance, policy, and finance for the next 15 years, beginning with a historic vow to end extreme poverty by 2030. With increasing domestic violence in Uganda in general and Budaka district in particular, the chances of achieving the 17SDGs namely:

SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being, SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 12: Responsible Consumption, Production, SDG 13: Climate Action, SDG 14: Life Below Water, SDG 15: Life on Land, SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, And SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals(UNDP, 2022) are limited. Below are the views of respondents:

Economic indicators like GDP, GNP, tax base, reduced unemployment, poverty, inequalities, inflation, and economic growth in Uganda in general and Budaka, in particular, are still low

because of domestic violence, which stands out as a stonewall for achieving the SDGs by 2030 (a male respondent B1 at Iki-Iki in February 2021).

Political indicators like stable and growing democracy, good governance, observance of human rights and law in Uganda in general, and Budaka, in particular, are still low because of domestic violence. This will certainly inhibit the SDGs attainment by 2030 (a female respondent A18 at Budaka in February 2021).

Social indicators like the good health system, quality education, reduced cultural and religious barriers to development, literacy, ethical society, and gender balance in Uganda in general and Budaka, in particular, remains with gaps because of domestic violence and this will complicate the achievement of the SDGs by 2030 (a female respondent A17 at Kamonkoli in February 2021).

From the above development indicators, it is now clearer why Budaka is doing badly as well as Uganda because of domestic violence, which frustrates stable families. This eventually leads to low productivity of individuals and the families, which ultimately feeds into the district and the economy. DV remains a stonewall in all developing countries because of its effects on families stability, income, productivity and progress, hence contributing greatly to the difficulties countries are facing in achieving the SDGs.

**Self-Esteem:** Domestic violence has greatly contributed to the underdevelopment of Budaka district economically, politically, and socially because one of the core values of development is self-esteem, the other two being sustenance and freedom [18] have been pushed under the carpet. People with low self-esteem become part of the causes of underdevelopment. At the interview, the respondents said that:

Domestic violence behaviors harm women in profound ways and are socially constructed. As a result, they endure great suffering, stress, abuse, and insults, all of which have a negative impact on their overall sense of self-worth (a female respondent A11 at Tademeru in February 2021).

Psychological trauma, brought on by domestic violence, progressively lowers women's self-esteem, freedom, motivation, and ambition (a female respondent A13 at Kabuna in February 2021).

Domestic violence limits women's chances to education access, achievement, and leadership in the district and beyond (a female respondent A9 at Budaka in February 2021).

Domestic abuse is a reality in Budaka district, according to the remarks above, and it undermines women's self-esteem, freedom, desire, and ambition to actively contribute to district development. This finding is similar to [8] at Kyambogo University, where a variety of women face stress and insults that limit their independence, motivation, and ambition, hence limiting their prospects for higher accomplishment. Low self-esteem does undoubtedly fracture many people's ability to serve Budaka district in various positions, hence underdevelopment.

## 5. Recommendations

**1: The National Gender Policy (GNP) 2007:** The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), in collaboration with the Local Government Ministry, should work with Budaka district local government to make the NGP a reality in the district, particularly in terms of gender equality, equity, and affirmative action. Overall, the 15 sub-county chiefs, 73 parish chiefs, and all Local Council Leaders (I, II, III, IV, and V) should be made aware of the nature, causes, and effects of domestic violence, as well as applicable strategies to mitigate the vice, so that effective community policing can be implemented, instilling fear in offenders and encouraging victims to speak out. Rewards and sanctions should be devised such that each officer is compensated in a currency commensurate with his efforts to combat the vice.

**2: Gender Mainstreaming Program:** Budaka district local government, in collaboration with the Community Development Officer, should establish fully operational gender mainstreaming programs and a directorate to address all of the above-mentioned causes and effects of domestic violence, including referrals, temporary housing, basic needs, scholarships, medical care and prosecution, psychosocial support, and mediation. The Gender Officer, in cooperation with MGLSD, will provide technical advice from time to time and will also ensure that gender-responsive budgeting is done at all levels, so that resources to address domestic violence are available at all times.

**3: Bylaw:** Budaka district local government council should draft bylaws, prohibiting domestic violence in the district and raise public knowledge about the types, impacts, and prevention of domestic violence on a regular basis. In case that DV occurs, the perpetrators will face a variety of penalties, including warnings, cautions, counseling, compensation, parental responsibility, and dismissal from the job or village or school. This will not end or remove police work or courts but reinforce reduction from the district side structures. The district Gender Mainstreaming Directorate will provide technical assistance in developing the policy and ensuring that the bylaws are followed.

**4: Gender Monitoring and Evaluation:** With technical assistance from the Gender Directorate, the Budaka district Local Councils (I, II, III, IV, and V) should always conduct gender monitoring and evaluation in relation to policies, regulations, and programs that will ensure that domestic violence in the population is minimized, regardless of age, education, income, status, or religion. During monitoring and evaluation, additional emphasis should be made at ensuring that the correct policies, programs, objectives and targets are implemented effectively and efficiently.

**5: MIFUMI NGO:** This NGO has a solid track record of reducing domestic violence, and as a result, it should be supported in Budaka area by law, financial, moral, and technical aid. Such assistance will enable her do more which will result in domestic violence reduction. This NGO should be enabled and funded to monitor government programs and agencies, and the government should oversee her operations as well. Such double-checking on all powers will increase accountability and, in turn, contribute to the desired gender equality, equity, and violence-free district.

#### **Study limitations and prospects for further research**

Some participants were hesitant to respond to the study because of past experiences, in which NGOs would get data from them and give empty promises on their plight. I assured the participants that the study was purely academic and that their participation would help expose the vice and attract interventions in future hence the positive response.

The cost of the study in Budaka and getting participants went beyond the budget because of COVID 19 restriction in the country. I requested the family for more funding and this helped me complete the study.

**Researchers in the future** should pick interest in the causes of every nature of domestic violence (physical, economic, sexual, political, religious, cultural and psychological) and development implications in Budaka district and the world at large.

## **6. Conclusion**

Domestic violence exists in Budaka district, regardless of age, education, income, status, geography, or religion, and manifests itself in the form of physical, economic, sexual, political, religious, cultural and psychological. Due to patriarchal struggle, history, perception, and practice, women are the most common victims of domestic violence. This has resulted in the district's underdevelopment, as indicated by the district's poverty rate of 43 %. No wonder the district's GDP was 24.6 million dollars and its GDP per capita was 124 dollars, placing it 85<sup>th</sup> out of 116 districts in 2017. Domestic violence and underdevelopment have a direct association, according to the study, which is not nefarious. From the above, it is clear, that the causes of domestic violence are not natural but socially constructed, and so they can be minimized. This paper outlines policy choices and techniques for deconstructing domestic violence in order to pave the way for a more gender-responsive, egalitarian, and violent-free society, which will lead to the holistic development of Budaka district in particular and Uganda as a whole.

#### **Conflict of interest**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in relation to this paper, published research results, financial aspects of conducting the research, obtaining and using its results, as well as any non-financial personal relationships.

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