JOURNAL OF INCLUSIVE & INNOVATIVE PRACTICES (JOIIP)
ONLINE ISSN: 3005-9976

Demystifying Gender-Based Violence Defilements of Female Students with Disabilities in Higher and Tertiary Inclusive Institutions in Masvingo

[1]Phillimon Mahanya
Great Zimbabwe University
Corresponding Author: pmahanya@gzu.ac.zw

ABSTRACT

In Research covering gender-based violence (GBV) against female students with disabilities in tertiary institutions is occurring at a very slow rate. Such studies are imperative towards eradication of, by 2030, gender-based violence against female students with disabilities (FSwDs) enrolled in such settings. Female students with disabilities frequently face challenges in academic and social participation, as they are subjected to discrimination and social exclusion. In particular, they are prevented from accessing academic rights that are freely available to other students at tertiary institutions due to myths and misconceptions surrounding gender-based violence statutes and human rights declarations. The students encounter particular vulnerabilities to violence that are escalated by obstacles in accessing justice. Recent studies show that students with disabilities are ridiculed, viewed as students who are paying for their sins, and perceived as witches and wizards. The researcher adopted the qualitative research approach entrenched in the interpretive paradigm. The study employed the phenomenological design. Focus group discussions and semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to generate data from female students with disabilities and lecturers in inclusive tertiary institutions. Data generated were thematically analysed. The analysis was rooted in Critical Disability Theory. It emerged that FSwDs are more vulnerable to all forms of violence as a result of their physical status, mental capabilities and the over-dependency syndrome on their education and livelihoods. The need for awareness and sensitisation on GBV and human rights was proffered. Reproductive health information in accessible formats to all students with disabilities, and the enactment of deterrent policies against perpetrators of violence against female students with disabilities at tertiary institutions, were recommended.

Key Words: **: Gender-based violence, human rights, inclusive tertiary education, women with disabilities.**

© 2024 This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence (https:// creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) which permits unrestricted use, distribution and production in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence is often used by some authors interchangeably with the phrase `violence against women`. The General Recommendation No. 19 of the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (CEDPD) (2022) explains discrimination of FSwDs as any violence directed against a student because she is a woman with disability. It includes any act or threat by men to inflict psychological harm on FSwDs because of their sex (Carmody, 2020). Mala and Jensenius (2020) define gender-based violence in Article 1 of the UN's 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women as any act of viciousness that results in harm or threats of coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty in public or private life. Further to that, Article 2 of the Declaration posits that the definition incorporates, and is not limited to, acts of physical, sexual and psychological violence in the family, community, or perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs. These acts include spousal battery, sexual abuse, including of female children, dowry-related violence, rape (including marital rape), female genital cutting, and other practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in school and elsewhere, trafficking of women, and forced prostitution. The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action expands this United Nations (UN) definition. Violence encountered by FSwDs enrolled in tertiary institutions includes omissions, such as deliberate neglect or lack of respect, as well as overt acts that harm a person's physical or mental integrity (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022; Nosek, Howland & Hughes, 2021a, 2011; Naidu, Haffejee, Vetten & Hargreaves, 2015). WHO (2021:6) states that, "there should be recognition of and promotion of equal treatment and promotion of a gender inclusive approach to female students with disabilities." This means that there is need for equity when dealing with gender-based issues at higher and tertiary inclusive institutions.

Global Factors that Increase Human Rights Defilements of Female Students with Disabilities in Higher and Tertiary Institutions

A number of studies indicate a clear link between disability and vulnerability to violence (Barrette, O'Day & Carlson, 2009). Driedger (2016) notes that FSwDs experience discrimination on the basis of their disability and gender, and that this

CC BY

discrimination is further compounded by poverty, race and/or socio-economic disadvantage. Thus, FSwDs experience multiple disadvantages resulting from the interplay among inclusivity in education, gender, disability and poverty. The confluence of these four factors results in an extremely high risk of violence against FSwDs and they are more likely to be verbally insulted, made to feel bad about themselves, belittled, intimidated, and subjected to physical and sexual violence (Carmody, 2020; Htun & Jensenius, 2020; WHO, 2022). According to Asby and Coss (2016), perpetrators of violence look for, and use, vulnerability to create opportunities for violence, and thus, many FSwDs are physically, socially, economically and psychologically vulnerable. The vulnerabilities of female students with FSwDs prevent them from physically escaping violent situations. The perpetrators of violence against FSwDs are those without disabilities and often people that are known and close to the victim (Iglesias, 2018). A study by Heise, Ellsbery and Gottemoeller (2019) found out that in 44% reported cases of gender-based defilements of FSwDs in North America, the abuser had a relationship with the victim. Nearly 28% of these included disability service providers and this imp oses particular academic barriers, particularly to FSwDs. In some instances, female students with albinism face additional risks of sexual abuse and violence from predatory males who believe sex with a person with albinism will bring wealth (Ford, 2017). In a study aimed at understanding the vulnerability of FSwDs to abuse, WHO (2022) identified five myths around disability that increase the likelihood of FSwDs` victimisation. These include dehumanisation, damaged merchandise, feeling no pain, disabled menace, and helplessness. As a result of the sexual constraints and inhibitions which society places on FSwDs, they have fewer opportunities to explore their sexual likes and dislikes and set sexual boundaries. FSwDs may not have had the opportunity to date, go to parties, or engage in age-appropriate sexual activity. They may come to believe that the only options available to them are celibacy and violent sexual encounters because of the internalised belief that they are unattractive and no loving person would want them (Baker, 2017). The belief that a female student with disability enrolled at inclusive tertiary institutions is dependent and child-like becomes a means of exerting control over her and excluding her from decision-making. This belief allows FSwDs to increase the cycle of dependency,

CC BY

making them believe that they are academically and socially incompetent and not capable.

The global prevalence of GBV is highest in developing countries and most extreme rates were reported in African countries (Mashizha, 2013). It is estimated that female students with disabilities (FSwDs) are more likely to be abused, either verbally or sexually, by other individuals at tertiary institutions (WHO, 2022; Beaver, 2017; Human Rights Reports, 2020). While the frequency of GBV against FSwDs varies with the location of the tertiary institution, the WHO (2022) multi-country study on FSwDs states that globally, one out of three women will be coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime, with rates reaching 70% in some countries. WHO's (2021) multi-country study found that in 2011, 15-71% of FSwDs reported experiencing verbal and or sexual violence. This finding is in line with an earlier study by Delvin and Pothier (2016), which shows that at least one in every three of the world's females has been verbally, emotionally, or sexually abused at some time in her life. The Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey of 2018 showed that the prevalence of gender-based violence stood at 47 percent among women (Country Policy and Information Note Zimbabwe: Version 3.0, October, 2018). Based on the available data, though scarce, the incidence of maltreatment, abuse and violence against FSwDs exceeds that of men with disabilities and women without disabilities. In Zimbabwe, GBV is increasingly gaining recognition due to its rising incidence and consequences to the health of the survivors. Almost half, 47%, of all women are physically and emotionally abused (Mashizha, 2013). This does not spare FSwDs enrolled in tertiary institutions, hence the need to articulate ways of preventing maltreatment of female students with disabilities in tertiary institutions.

GBV Encountered by Female Students with Disabilities in Higher and Tertiary Education

Violence in the context of disability is divided into active and passive violence. Active violence includes physical, emotional, and sexual violence, while passive violence includes emotional neglect, as well as discriminatory actions that may result in psychological harm to the victim (Naidu et al., 2015). Disability-related abuse in inclusive tertiary education is found in the categories of both active and passive violence (WHO, 2022; Beaver, 2017; Morgan, 2011). It manifests in aggression to different parts of

CC BY

the body (Cohen & Crabtree, 2016), while emotional abuse is damage to the welfare and emotional balance of FSwDs (European Disability Forum, 2020). This implies that it manifests in isolation, verbal threats and cruelty, intimidation, and emotional abuse (WHO, 2022). Sexual abuse means sexually-aggressive action towards a woman, which can produce physical or emotional harm (United States Health and Human Services, 2020). It manifests in rape, sexual harassment and sexually-explicit actions that result in feelings of humiliation or degradation on the part of FSwDs (UN, 2023). FSwDs suffer passive violence in form of physical neglect and denial or deprivation of the basic participation required for maintaining academic and health safety (Naidu et al., 2015), while emotional neglect includes actions that deny FSwDs attention, consideration and respect.

Although FSwDs experience the same forms of violence experienced by all other women, some forms of violence against FSwDs have not been visible as gender-based violence because of heightened discrimination. Violence against FSwDs at tertiary institutions includes intimidation, psychological manipulation, deception, and misinformation (UN, 2023). Furthermore, violence may include omissions, such as deliberate neglect or lack of respect, as well as overt acts that harm a person's mental integrity (Fiduccia, 2011; International Network of Women with Disabilities, 2010). The implication is that FSwDs enrolled at inclusive tertiary institutions mostly battle forced isolation, purposeful neglect, verbal abuse, ridicule, and being ignored.

Effects of Gender-Based Violence and Human Rights Defilements on Female Students with Disabilities in Higher and Tertiary Education

Globally, GBV is both a public health and individual problem. It is affecting people of every class, race, age, religion, and national boundary, although to varying degrees and in different ways (Mashizha, 2013). In most instances, FSwDs who are abused may suffer prolonged psychological pain, may be rejected by their families and communities, and may be denied opportunities for health care and economic self-sufficiency (Anderson, 2016). Concerns about the economic and health burden of GBV in the form of pressure on the overstretched health system medical bills, school absenteeism due to injuries, and pressure on the judicial system to process court cases have been reported by the media (WHO, 2022). A study done by SIDA in 2016

CC BY

in Zimbabwe showed that GBV imposes a high financial burden on survivors, their families, communities, and society at large. The study established that direct costs incurred by survivors in dealing with the consequences of the violence included payments to access legal and support services provided by the government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Tertiary institutions also formally provide support services for survivors of GBV, such as counselling.

Intimidation and male dominance within tertiary institutions exacerbated by GBV hinders FSwDs from seeking proper academic services. The impact of GBV on FSwDs hinders their academic progress and goes further than short-term injury (Mashizha, 2013). It frequently leads to isolation and even ostracism of the survivor, and ultimately long-term mental, medical and economic consequences. International studies have pointed to the numerous barriers FSwDs confront in responding to abuse. Participants in Cosier et al.`s (2016) study pointed to the important links between how society devalues and discriminates against FSwDs by fostering abuse and neglect. The implication is that, if academic institution members as worthy citizens do not value FSwDs, then violence will continue to be perpetrated and cases of abuse in which the victim is FSwD might seem less worthy of criminal prosecution (Carmody, 2020). In most cases, women interest groups expressed concerns about procedural barriers in accessing justice under the Domestic Violence Act (Berghs, 2014). Women interest groups pointed out that the prerequisite filling in of a lengthy (protection order) form is daunting and traumatising. It has been reported that a Zimbabwean Women Lawyers' Association Information Officer said a protection order document is 16 pages long and has proved overwhelming even to a literate user and impedes eradication of gender-based violence against FSwDs.

Several studies have shown that only 13% of FSwDs who suffer from gender-based violence seek help from the police and 13% of those seek help from a doctor or medical institution, social services or a lawyer (Country Policy and Information Note Zimbabwe: Version 3.0, October 2018). These challenges are not peculiar to Zimbabweans alone; they are also experienced in other parts of Africa and beyond. In Northern Uganda, FSwDs have reported having to pay fees to register cases, that police also require payment for transport, lunch and mobile airtime to arrest suspects,

CC BY

and that FSwDs are also made to pay for costs involved with collecting evidence, transporting, and facilitating any witness. This financial burden is compounded by the frequency of appearances required in court and at police stations (WHO, 2022). Naidu et al. (2015) conclude that FSwDs may not be aware of services available to them to confront GBV, resulting in some GBV survivors not reporting or seeking assistance.

Most FSwDs in inclusive tertiary education across the globe who report cases of gender-based violence and abuse to administrators face multiple barriers in accessing justice and seeking violence prevention (Mahanya & Chabaya, 2016). Violence against FSwDs is sometimes not reported and if a student tries to report it, the justice system is inaccessible or officials, including tertiary institutions staff, do not believe it or do not find her case worthy of investigation. Naidu et al. (2015) attribute this to inadequate training of tertiary institutions` personnel on disability issues, as well as capacity and resource constraints.

United Nations (UN)`s (2023) study on Deaf students` access to the justice system in South Africa concludes that there are significant communication barriers that undermine their right to justice. The barriers identified by this study include administrators trying to take down statements without a professional sign language interpreter in the sign language used by the Deaf person. These challenges include barriers to adequate mechanics of handling disability issues, which worsen poor access to appropriate services and support.

Although female students with disabilities encounter GBV in higher and tertiary education, empowerment is a precursor to preventing violence, abuse, and exploitation. Knowing one's rights to a life free of violence, exploitation and abuse, and having access to key services, including sexual and reproductive health, violence prevention as well as education, helps to stem vulnerability to violence and abuse (WHO, 2022). Thus, FSwDs and those without disabilities have the right to live a life free from the fear of violence. The disempowerment of women and girls with disabilities is widespread. It is rooted in the lack of inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in education, poverty eradication programmes, women's health and reproductive health programmes, and gender-based violence services.

CC BY

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following research objectives guided this study. To:

1. establish how female students with disabilities and lecturers understand gender-based violence (GBV) at higher and tertiary inclusive education institutions in Masvingo.
2. assess gender-based violence defilements encountered by female students with disabilities enrolled at higher and tertiary institutions in Masvingo.
3. explore the effects of gender-based violence and human rights defilements of female students with disabilities at higher and tertiary institutions in Masvingo.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research was guided by the Critical Disability Theory. The theory is rooted in a critique of traditional discourses and assumptions of disability which serve to oppress persons with disabilities and infringe their human rights (Mahanya, 2022). The theory involves scrutinising not disability but the social norms, beliefs and values that define particular attributes as impairments as well as the social conditions that concentrate stigmatising attributes in particular populations (Schalk, 2017). The theory describes disability as a cultural, historical, relative, social, and political phenomenon (Cosier, Feike & Batres, 2015). The Critical Disability Theory is a framework for analysing disability and challenging negative assumptions which shape society. The theory aims at exposing ableism, as it escalates discrimination on the basis of ability (Mandeville & Hanson, 2012). It was through this theory that the researcher examined GBV systematic barriers encountered by female students with disabilities in GBV in higher and tertiary institutions.

The theory was used to articulate how cultural capital is created and used to negotiate the systematic oppression of female students with disabilities in higher and tertiary institutions. The Critical Disability Theory was intentionally adopted as the study's its objective is to support the transformation of higher and tertiary institutions so that female students with disabilities are treated equally in GBV issues and fully integrated into education. The theory is built upon the argument that "disability is not fundamentally a question of medicine or health, nor is it just an issue of

CC BY

sensitivity and compassion but rather, it is a question of power, power over, and power to" (Schalk, 2017). The Critical Disability Theory challenges so-called able-bodied supremacy and the oppression that arises from restricting education and social benefits to female students with disabilities, who are then redistributed as privileges to be negotiated in GBV.

The theory privileges the interests, agendas and voices of female students with disabilities in GBV. It also promotes self-confidence in disadvantaged female students with disabilities who are enrolled in higher and tertiary education institutions. The researcher adopted the Critical Disability Theory with the assumption that it promotes social justice, equality, inclusivity opportunities, and access to all facets of higher and tertiary education. The theory assumes competence and rejects deficit models of disability (Connor, Gabel, Gallagher & Morton, 2008; Delvin & Pothier, 2016). The belief was that the Critical Disability Theory creates equitable learning environments and opportunities for female students with disabilities to fully take control of GBV in higher and tertiary education. Connor (2016) asserts that "be aware of the history of people with disabilities, their subjection to ableism, and their struggle for rights as citizens." The implication is that higher and tertiary institutions need to impart knowledge of injustice, deficit-driven models, and ableism to promote a culture of equality and social justice in GBV defilements of female students with disabilities. The critical disability theory compels higher and tertiary staff to acknowledge and embody the notion that all students deserve equal educational opportunities and fair treatment in GBV. The theory was used to deepen understanding of GBV on female students with disabilities in higher and tertiary institutions' daily experiences.

METHODOLOGY

The study was rooted in the interpretive paradigm and employed the qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is viewed as a collection of "all of which rely on verbal, visual, auditory and olfactory data" (Patton, 2014:68). The researcher employed the qualitative research approach as it offered familiar techniques of handling verbal materials to make gender-based violence defilements come alive. The qualitative research approach also facilitated a deeper understanding of female students with disabilities` perceptions towards GBV. A phenomenological study design was used,

CC BY

where two teacher-training universities were considered. The adoption of a phenomenological design gave the researcher the advantage of understanding both the subjective and objective experiences and insights around GBV against female students with disabilities at higher and tertiary institutions. The design also afforded the researcher the opportunity to assess, cut through long-held assumptions and challenge conventional assumptions on how higher and tertiary institutions lecturers understand GBV against female students with disabilities.

Purposive sampling was employed to come up with the actual sample of participants and allowed the researcher to generate rich data from that sample, until data saturation. According to Rubin and Babbie (2016), a sample is a limited subset of the entire population and the lesser the number of participants the easier it becomes to manage (Silverman, 2009; Galleta, 2013). Therefore, for this study, 10 lecturers and 10 female students with disabilities were selected to give information on the lived experiences on gender-based violence at higher and tertiary inclusive institutions.

Focus group discussions and semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to generate data from female students with disabilities and lecturers, respectively. Data were individually translated, analysed, and interpreted into branded themes (Silverman 2009; Clark & Creswell, 2015). In order to evade the distortion of information by the participants, audio recording was done during discussions and the scripts were later analysed by the researcher as a follow-up to the discussions. The extracted quotes that were reflective of each theme were presented in the vignettes. Ethical clearance was sought from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education (MoHTE) and considerations such as voluntary participation, beneficience and confidentiality of data were adhered to. The participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time during the process.

FINDINGS

The study focused on GBV as a serious health concern that also impedes inclusivity of FSwDs in higher and tertiary education. These Codes (S1-10 and L1-10) were affixed to present data.

Lecturers` and Female Students with Disabilities` Understanding of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) at Higher and Tertiary Inclusive Education Institutions

CC BY

A number of studies, including the current one, indicate a clear link between disability and vulnerability to violence. Findings of this study reveal that FSwDs are at great risk of all forms of GBV in higher and tertiary institutions. However, females with disabilities who participated in this study indicated that most men from their higher and tertiary institutions have made some sexual advances, with some going to the extent of promising them some gifts in exchange. Participants had this to say:

> S3: *"It was one day when a certain man approached me and he said he wanted to give me help and l agreed but he touched me the way I did not like."*

> S8: *"Had it not been for someone who passed by, l do not know what would have happened."*

The excerpts above show that those who volunteered to help female students with disabilities sometimes may have their own ulterior motives that are related to GBV. Most female students with disabilities went on to say that even young boys treat them like young girls, as they sometimes try to sexually abuse them. One of the participants with visual impairment revealed that sexual violence is also perpetrated against them by the sighted students and some members of staff. She narrated one such case, when she fell pregnant as a result of GBV by another male student and the perpetrator escaped to one of the neighbouring countries. The case was not reported because of fear of victimisation. The other participants indicated that they had not experienced any sexual violence but have heard of such cases happening to some female students with albinism, where one of the male students did GBV for the sake of being adventurous. Participants in this study indicated that they were sometimes sexually harassed by their institution male staff members. All these issues go unreported as participants expressed that they were either afraid of the consequences or wanted to protect their images and that of their institutions.

Some of the participants also indicated that they were at great risk of physical and emotional violence from other students and institutions` academic and non-academic staff. Some of the female students with blindness had this to say:

> S5: *"At one time I regretted why l was born as the treatment l receive is not worthy of a human being."*

> S2: *"I had requested for individual academic assistance and l was told*

CC BY

there was nothing for me as an individual and yet other students made individual consultations with the same lecturer."

S8: *"l was assigned to one lecturer for research supervision, but he was not willing to have individual consultations with me."*

The above sentiments show that female students with disabilities sometimes are not given individual assistance. They noted inferiority complexes because of their disabilities and oftentimes some male members at higher and tertiary educational institutions are not willing to assist such students for fear of being labeled as perpetrators of GBV to FSwDs. The above vignettes show that some FSwDs revealed that they are called all sorts of names, ridiculed, stigmatised, stereotyped, isolated, segregated, discriminated against and even subjected to inhuman treatment like being denied preferential treatment on residential accommodation at higher and tertiary institutions. Most of FSwDs went on to say that they are sometimes belittled or humiliated in front of other students. Some female participants with physical impairment had this to say:

S1: *"It is really disappointing to find out that those without disabilities think I am asexual."*

S9: *"One day, one of the lecturers looked at me as if seeing something else."*

S3: *"Some students do not even want to greet or share a seat with me in a lecture room.*

L4: *"They are students just like others and they should be treated with respect."*

Other participants had this to say:

L7: *"When one female student with a disability was moving along the corridor some male students started shouting negatively about her disability."*

L2: *"It took me some time to gather courage to associate with some of those female students with disabilities at this institution because of a lack of understanding of disability issues."*

L10: *"There is a real need for our institution to raise awareness on disability issues."*

CC BY

The image portrayed is that some students at higher and tertiary education still hold negative perceptions and stereotypes about disabilities and as such they may unknowingly practice GBV to some female students with disabilities and this may escalate all forms of abuse to female students with disabilities enrolled at higher and tertiary institutions.

GBV Defilements Encountered by Female Students With Disabilities Enrolled At Higher And Tertiary Institutions

Most FSwDs face extreme barriers in escaping violence, reporting crimes and accessing justice while at higher and tertiary educational institutions. The following were cited as the major challenges FSwDs encounter in seeking redress to GBV:

> S9: *"Some students have extensive negative perception of my disability and do not even want to socialize with me and this affected my studies."*
>
> S10: *"They call me names because of my disability and some even isolate me during group discussions, they discriminate against me because I am a female with visual impairment."*
>
> S6: *"Look at this, I don't have sight, how can I get through these steps to a room where they are having a lecture right now, more to that, these other ladies are not patient with me.*
>
> L9: *"These FSwDs Lack of access to quality education and reproductive health services and compassionate response to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation*."

Most of the participants noted that negative stereotypes, stigmatisation and isolation are the major forms of challenges they encounter at higher and tertiary institutions. In some cases, FSwDs lack access to reproductive health services as they are deemed asexual depending on the type and severity of the disability. Apart from rejection, FSwDs encounter restrictive social and physical impediments in their endeavor to prevent gender-based violence while at such institutions. Some participants noted that their challenges are exacerbated by lack of awareness and advocacy amongst students and lecturers at higher and tertiary inclusive education institutions and at most their complaints on GBV issues are not taken seriously when they report such cases. Therefore, in such instances, FSwDs view their issues as not worthy of pursuing as they could not be trusted. Some lecturers at higher

CC BY

and tertiary inclusive education institutions revealed that cases of persons with visual impairment, especially those of sexual violence, are at times dropped as survivors are not able to describe or identify the perpetrators. In other cases, as expressed in a research by UN (2023), some female students accept bribes and cases are dropped or may recommend out of court settlement.

The researcher observed that most higher and tertiary institutions` social environments are not conducive to FSwDs who have pronounced and severe disabilities. Both the social and physical environments escalate GBV against female students with disabilities. Some units like Victim Friendly units and disability resource centers are not found in most higher and tertiary institutions in Masvingo, yet they enroll students with different categories with disabilities. Such enrollments where there are no support services to guard against GBV escalates, sexual harassment and abuse on female students with disabilities. Other participants argued that their lack of knowledge on disabilities leads to GBV as some students and staff at higher and tertiary institutions expressed fear and intimidation in assisting individually female students with disabilities.

CONCLUSION

In light of the study's findings, the researcher concluded that female students with disabilities are experiencing gender-based violence in all its forms while at higher and tertiary institutions and they are not receiving redress due to various defilements identified. It was concluded that most lecturers and FSwDs understand gender-based violence encountered by such students who are enrolled at higher and tertiary inclusive institutions. They pinpointed stigmatisation, improper association, rejection and lack of universally designed social and physical environment to prevent and halt gender-based violence against female students with disabilities. It was found out that violence against FSwDs is sometimes not reported because of inaccessible social and physical environments. Gender-based violence hinders FSwDs` social and emotional development, including limited access to quality inclusive higher and tertiary education leading to poor academic progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus, in view of the stated findings and conclusions, the researcher recommends the following:

CC BY

1. Holding of awareness and sensitization campaigns on GBV and human rights in higher and tertiary institutions that enroll students with disabilities.
2. Higher and tertiary institutions should have a disability resource center that will monitor GBV issues.
3. Putting in place mechanisms and deterrent measures against perpetrators of violence against vulnerable groups like females with disabilities.
4. There is a need for reproductive health information in accessible formats to all students and victims of GBV to speak out and seek justice in order to reduce the incidences.

REFERENCES

Anderson, M.J. (2016). 'Campus sexual assault adjudication and resistance to reform', The Yale Law Journal, 125(7),1940–2005.

Ashby, C. & Cosier, M. (2016). "The Work and History of Special Education." In Enacting Change from within: Disability Studies Meets Teaching and Teacher Education. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Baker, K.K. (2017). 'Campus misconduct, sexual harm and appropriate process: The essential sexuality of it all', Journal of Legal Education, 66(4), 777–803.

Barrette, K. A., O'Day, B., & Carlson, B. L. (2009). 'Intimate Partner Violence, Health Status, and Healthcare Access among Women with Disabilities', Journal of Women's Health Issues, 2(19), 94-100.

Beaver, W.R. (2017). 'Campus sexual assault: What we know and what we don't', The Independent Review, 22(2), 257–268.

Berghs, M. (2014). 'The New Humanitarian: Neoliberalism, Poverty and the Creation of Disability', Journal of Human Rights and Humanitarianism, 1(2), 113-229.

Carmody, P. (2020). "The "Shadow Pandemic": Addressing Gender-based Violence (GBV) during COVID-19", in COVID-19 in the global South. Bristol: University Press.

Clark, V. L. & Creswell, J. W. (2015). Understanding Research: A consumer's guide (2nd Ed.). Upper Saddle River: NJ.

Cohen, D. & Crabtree, B. (2006). 'Qualitative Research Guidelines Project.' July (2006). Available http://www.qualres.org/Homelnte-3516.html (Accessed on 02/8/24).

Cosier, M., Gomez, A., McKee, A., & Beggs, S. (2016). "Three Ways to Use the Common Core State Standards to Increase Access to General Education Contexts for Students with Disabilities," in Enacting Change

CC BY

from within: Disability Studies Meets Teaching and Teacher Education. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Devlin, P., & Pothier. R. (2016). Critical Disability Theory: Essays in Philosophy, Politics, Policy and Law. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Driedger, D. (2016). 'Emerging from the Shadows: Women with Disabilities Organise' in Driedger, D., Feike, I. & Batres, E . (2015) (eds). Across Borders: Women with Disabilities working together. Canada: Gynergy Books.

European Disability Policy (2022) Disability inclusive social protection response to crisis. EU:

World Institute on Disability. https://www.ilo.org.social-protection.[online] (Accessed: 25 July 2024).

Fiduccia, B. W., & Wolfe, L. R. (2011). Women and Girls with Disabilities: defining the issues, Center for Women Policy Studies and Women & Philanthropy. Washington: UBC Press.

Ford, J.V. (2017). 'Sexual assault on college hookups: The role of alcohol and acquaintances', Sociological Forum, 32(2), 381–405. https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12335.

Galleta, S. (2013). Reflecting on the Methodological Aspects of a Critical Ethnographic Approach used to Inform Change for Adolescents with Disabilities Qualitative Report. Journal of Qualitative Research, 16(2), 523-562.

Heise, L., Ellsberg, M., & Gottemoeller, M. (2009). 'Ending Violence against Women', Journal of Population Reports Series, 11(4), 123-141.

Htun, M. (2020). Disability Education for Law Enforcement: Canada: Gynergy Books

Htun, M., & Jensenius, F.R. (2020). 'Fighting violence against women: Laws, norms & challenges ahead', Daedalus, 149(1), 144–159. https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01779

Iglesias, M. (2018). Violence and Women with Disabilities; Vedras, Spain: AIES; The Swedish Research Institute for Disability Policy: Retrieved 16 January 2024 from http://www.wwda.org.au/swedishstudy1.pdf.

Mahanya, P. (2022). 'Practices that support effective inclusive teaching practice supervision: Voices from the grassroots in primary and secondary schools in Masvingo District,' Dzimbabwe Journal of Educational Research, 3(10), 12-29.

Mahanya, P., & Chabaya, O. (2016). 'Unmet Academic Needs: A Dilemma of Student with Visual Impairment in Inclusive Education in Masvingo District of Zimbabwe,' International Teacher Development Journal, 3(1), 68-80.

Mala, H., & Jensenius, F.R. (2020). 'Fighting violence against women: Laws, norms & challenges ahead,' Daedalus, 14(1), 144–159.

Mandeville, H., & Hanson, M. (2012). Understanding caregiver abuse as domestic violence: Systematic change in Wisconsin. Wisconsin: Publishing Press.

Schalk, J. (2017). Critical Disability Studies as Methodology. New York: UBC Press.

Mashizha, S. (2013). The Prevalence and Factors Associated with Gender Based Violence among Zimbabweans Deported through Beit Bridge District, Matebeleland South Province Zimbabwe. A Master's Thesis. Harare: UZ, College of Health Sciences.

Morgan, R. (2011). Barriers to justice: Deaf People in courts. Rondebosch Cape Town: UCT.

Naidu, E., Haffejee, S., Vetten, L., & Hargreaves, S. (2015). On the Margins: Violence Against Women with Disabilities Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

Nosek, M., Howland, C., & Hughes, R. (2021). 'The Investigation of Abuse and Women with Disabilities,' Journal of Gender Based Violence against Women, 7(4), 112-130.

Patton, M. Q. (2014) Qualitative research methodologies. Wisconsin: Publishing Press.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, (2015) Gender-based Violence. New York: UN.

United Nations (UN) (2023). Global Gender-based Discrimination against People with disabilities Report. New York: United Nations.

Rubin, A., & Babie, E. (2016). Empowerment series: Research methods for social work. Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

Saxton, M., Curry, M., Powers, L., Maley, S., Eckels, K., & Gross, J. (2010). 'Violence against Women,' Journal of Gender Based Violence against Women, 2(1), 156-168.

Silverman, D. (2009). Doing qualitative research. California: SAGE Publications.

World Health Organisation (WHO) (2021). 'Sexual and gender-based violence and protection', in A guidance document for medical teams responding to health emergencies in armed conflicts and other insecure environments, pp. 114–131.

World Health Organisation (WHO) (2022). Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women. New York: WHO.

CC BY