

## The Impact of Domestic Violence on The Learning Process of High School Students

**Franciscah Kithonga**

Principal, Katangi Girls High School (Posthumous)

**Rosemary Wahu Mbogo**

Dean, School of Education, Arts and Social Sciences (SEAS),  
Education Department, Africa International University

### ABSTRACT

Exposure to domestic violence among high school learners is one critical issue in schools that needs to be brought at the forefront in understanding dynamics involved and its impact on the learning process. A range of effects not limited to decreased educational performance and behavioural problems arise from domestic violence. Mistakenly, most people fail to see the harm caused to a child living in an abusive household unless physical abuse is extended towards them. Authors of this paper recognize the impact, other than physical, and explore how domestic violence affects the learning process of students in high school. A descriptive design was adopted for the study. With focus in Migwani Sub-county, schools were stratified into two, i.e. girls' and boys' schools. A sample of 56 respondents was then conveniently obtained from 10 public schools. This included students (30), teachers (12), principals (10) and parents (4). Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. Data were analysed using the SPSS. The paper presents the perceptions of respondents on domestic violence as the causative agent of sluggishness on learning in Migwani Sub-county. The study is meant to better the learning process in the County.

**Key words:** Domestic Violence, Effect, Learning Process, High School Learners.

### INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is the wilful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behaviour as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and emotional abuse [1]. The frequency and severity of domestic violence can vary dramatically; however, the one constant component of domestic violence is one partner's consistent efforts to maintain power and control over the other.

Domestic violence is an epidemic affecting individuals in every community, regardless of age, economic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality. Children in a household experiencing domestic violence become the hardest hit as it affects their participation in school, relationship with friends, their social behaviour and the learning process as a whole. Domestic Violence is often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behaviour that is only a fraction of a systematic pattern of dominance and control. Abuse may begin with behaviours that may easily be dismissed or downplayed such as name-calling, threats, possessiveness, or distrust. Abusers may apologize profusely for their actions or try to convince the person they are abusing that they do these things out of love or care. However, violence and control always intensify over time by the abuser, despite the apologies. What may start out as something that was first believed to be harmless (wanting the victim to spend all their time only with them because they love them so much) escalates into extreme

control and abuse (threatening to kill or hurt the victim or others if they speak to family or friends). It is important to note that domestic violence does not always manifest as physical abuse. Emotional and psychological abuse can often be just as extreme as physical violence. Lack of physical violence does not mean the abuser is any less dangerous to the victim, nor does it mean the victim is any less trapped by the abuser.

Additionally, domestic violence does not always end when the victim escapes the abuser, tries to terminate the relationship, and/or seeks help. Often, it intensifies because the abuser feels a loss of control over the victim. Abusers frequently continue to stalk, harass, threaten, and try to control the victim after the victim escapes. In fact, the victim is often in more danger following the end of the relationship or when they seek help: A fifth of homicide victims with restraining orders are murdered within two days of obtaining the order; a third of the victims are murdered within the first month [2]. Victims of abuse are usually unfairly blamed because of the generalization that victims choose to stay in abusive relationships. The truth is, bringing an end to abuse is not a matter of the victim choosing to leave; it is a matter of the victim being able to safely escape their abuser, the abuser choosing to stop the abuse, or other agents (such as law enforcement courts) holding the abuser accountable for any abuse inflicted on the victim.

### LITERATURE UNDERPINNING

Although domestic violence has been on the increase in many families and marriages in the world, some people feel that this problem is insignificant and given undeserving attention. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) exists in all regions of the world and Kenya is no exception to this form of brutality which negatively affects women and children, in most cases. The Kenyan Government and the society recognize the importance of the family and the constitution of Kenya 2010 provides protection of women against violence and discrimination of all forms. In spite of the constitutional provision, domestic violence remains rampant in Kenya and one of the causes of many significant deaths in Kenya [3].

The state of education in Migwani Sub-county has been a matter that has raised eyebrows among stakeholders. The population of the learners in secondary schools has indicated a rising trend in the recent past. Over 40% of the population in secondary schools comprises of female students who are surviving poverty, domestic violence and early marriages that are detrimental in the education sector. The performance of the students from the year 2000 to the year 2015 has been declining compared to other sub-counties in Kitui County, with domestic violence being one of the reasons for the decline [4].

### Problems Associated with Children Witnessing Domestic Violence

Children who witness violence between parents in their homes have become more visible in the spotlight of public attention. Out of 84 studies reporting on children witnessing domestic violence originally identified, 31 studies met criteria of rigorous research [1], with 18 of them comparing children who witnessed adult domestic violence to other groups of children, 12 others using multiple regression procedures to compare subjects along a continuum of violence exposure or by demographic characteristics, and one study applying qualitative research methods. The findings of these 31 studies can be divided into three major themes: (1) the childhood problems associated with witnessing domestic violence; (2) the moderating factors present in a child's life that appear to increase or decrease these problems; and (3) an evaluation of the research methods used in the studies reviewed. Reviewed studies report a series of childhood problems statistically associated with a child's witnessing domestic violence. These problems can be grouped into the three main categories presented in more

detail in the next subsection: (1) behavioural and emotional; (2) cognitive functioning and attitudes; and (3) longer-term.

### **Behavioural and Emotional Problems**

Children's behavioural and emotional functioning is an area with probably the greatest amount of information on problems associated with witnessing violence. Generally, studies using the Child Behaviour Checklist [5] and similar measures have found child witnesses of domestic violence to exhibit more aggressive and antisocial ("externalized" behaviours) as well as fearful and inhibited behaviours ("internalized" behaviours), and to show lower social competence than other children. Children who witnessed violence were also found to show more anxiety, self-esteem, depression, anger, and temperament problems than children who did not witness violence at home. Children from homes where their mothers were being abused have shown less skill in understanding how others feel and examining situations from others' perspectives when compared to children from non-violent households. Peer relationships, autonomy, self-control, and overall competence were also reported significantly lower among boys who had experienced serious physical violence and been exposed to the use of weapons between adults living in their homes.

Overall, these studies indicate a consistent finding that child witnesses of domestic violence exhibit a host of behavioural and emotional problems. A few studies have reported findings with no differences on some of the measures, but these same studies found significant differences on other measures that include law enacting and civic education. Another aspect of the effects on children is their own use of violence. Social learning theory would suggest that children who witness violence may also learn to use it. Several researchers have attempted to look at this link between exposure to violence and subsequent use of it. Some support for this hypothesis has been found. For example, Singer, Miller, Guo, Slovak and Frierson [6] studied 2,245 children and teenagers and found that recent exposure to violence in the home was a significant factor in predicting a child's violent behaviour.

### **Cognitive Functioning and Attitudes**

A number of studies have measured the association between cognitive development problems and witnessing domestic violence. While academic abilities were not found to differ between witnesses and other children [7], another study found increased violence exposure associated with lower cognitive functioning [8]. One of the most direct consequences of witnessing violence may be the attitudes a child develops concerning the use of violence and conflict resolution. Jaffe, Wilson and Wolf [9], suggest that children's exposure to adult domestic violence may generate attitudes justifying their own use of violence. Spaccarelli, Coatsworth and Bowden's [10] findings support this association by showing that adolescent boys incarcerated for violent crimes who had been exposed to family violence believed more than others that "acting aggressively enhances one's reputation or self-image" [10]. Believing that aggression would enhance their self-image significantly predicted violent offending. Boys and girls appear to differ in what they learn from these experiences. Carlson [11] found that boys who witnessed domestic abuse were significantly more likely to approve of violence than were girls who had also witnessed it.

### **Longer-term Problems**

Most studies reviewed previously have examined child problems associated with recent witnessing of domestic violence. A number of studies have mentioned much longer-term problems reported retrospectively by adults or indicated in archival records. For example, Silvern's et al. [12] study of 550 undergraduate students found that witnessing violence as a child was associated with adult reports of depression, trauma-related symptoms and low self-

esteem among women and trauma-related symptoms alone among men. Witnessing violence appeared to be independent of the variance accounted for by the existence of parental alcohol abuse and divorce. In the same vein, Henning, Leitenberg, Coffey, Turner and Bennett [13] found that among 123 adult women who had witnessed domestic violence as children, greater distress and lower social adjustment existed when compared to 494 non-witnesses. These finding persisted even after accounting for the effects of witnessing parental verbal conflict, being abused as a child, and level of reported parental caring. Adolescents exposed to community and domestic violence appeared to cope better if they lived in more stable and socially connected households.

### **How Effects of Domestic Violence Affect Learning Process**

DuRant, Cadenhead, Pendergrast, Slavens, and Linder [14a] assert that when children experience domestic and family violence, it can affect their emotions. Children often feel fearful, stressed, depressed, angry, anxious or ashamed. Emotional security is the foundation of healthy relationships later in life. This security can be damaged if attachment between the mother/carer and baby is disrupted by domestic violence. DuRant et al. [14a] assert that in adults, they can frame their problems in a funny story. But children in school do not have that luxury. Like adults, their own knowledge often flies out of their grasp when they are scared. Faced with frustration, despair, worry, sadness, or shame, kids lose access to their own memory, reasoning, and the capacity to make connections. The mere prospect of being asked to read aloud in class is enough to freeze some kids. Having to take a written test or exam, with its combined requirements for memory, reasoning, handwriting, planning and organization, can lock some kids' gears. The sight of a math word problem knocks some kids sideways. Scared kids perform poorly, and do not learn new information well. Anxiety is the enemy of memory. And, sadly, in many of today's classrooms, we see children whose intellectual energies and capacities are drained by negative emotional states. Emotion is the on/off switch for learning.

Children may not be able to concentrate at school because they are constantly on the lookout for danger. This can be subconscious. Detentions at school, missed school days and frequent changes of schools, which can emanate from domestic violence, also affect learning. Moreover, children may have low self-esteem, and think negatively about themselves or people around them. For example, they may think, 'everyone hates me'. A range of illnesses may be related to domestic and family violence. Headaches, stomach aches, stress reactions (for example rashes or immune system related illnesses) and sleep disturbances (for example nightmares, insomnia or bedwetting) are common.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was guided by a descriptive design which according to Adèr, Mellenberg and Hand [15], saves time, expenses and the amount of quality information yielded is valid, while interviewer bias is reduced because participants complete identically worded self-reported measures. This study attempted to collect data from members of a population by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes, behaviours or values in order to describe an existing phenomenon [16].

Questionnaires and interviews as selected out of their merits [16] were the data collection instruments used. Respondents were chosen from 10 schools in 4 locations of Migwani sub-county with each school presenting 125 respondents. A sample of 56 respondents were then conveniently selected from the ten schools, i.e. two girls' and two boys' schools. This included students (30), teachers (12), principals (10) and parents (4). Data were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

The authors' intention for the study was that the study better the learning process in Migwani County. This paper thus presents the perceptions of respondents on domestic violence as a factor that influences learning in Migwani Sub-county.

## RESULTS

The study obtained a hundred percent (100%) response. Data analysis was done by use of Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS), version 20. Out of the 30 students surveyed, 11 (36.7%) were male and 19 (63.3%) were female. Students of the age bracket between 15 to 20 years were considered for the study. The authors established the extent to which domestic violence affects high school learners in a family as victims of domestic violence. Focus was directed on children's daily activities including their school life. Individual perceptions and attitudes were therefore sought and findings are as presented in the following tables.

**Table 1: Students' Views on the Impact of Domestic Violence**

| Opinion  | Agree     |         | Disagree  |         |
|--|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
|  | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| Injuries/Break up resulting from fights          | 11        | 36.7    | 19        | 63.3    |
| Siblings' school dropout due to parent break ups | 13        | 43.3    | 17        | 56.7    |
| Lack of Concentration                            | 3         | 10      | 27        | 90      |
| Affects Students' Performance                    | 29        | 96.7    | 1         | 3.3     |

N = 30

Source: Field data (2016)

**Table 2: Teachers' Views on the Impact of Domestic Violence**

| Opinion                                | Agree     |         | Disagree  |         |
|--|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
|  | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| Students affected in their performance | 10        | 83.3    | 2         | 16.7    |
| Poor performance                       | 6         | 50.0    | 6         | 50.0    |
| Family break ups                       | 6         | 50.0    | 6         | 50.0    |
| Slows learning                         | 10        | 83.3    | 2         | 16.7    |

N = 12

Source: Field data (2016)

**Table 3: Principals' Views on the Impact of Domestic Violence**

| Opinion                          | Agree     |         | Disagree  |         |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
|                                  | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| Students affected in performance | 10        | 100.0   | -         | -       |
| Poor performance                 | 4         | 40.0    | 6         | 60.0    |
| Family break ups                 | 6         | 60.0    | 4         | 40.0    |
| It slows learning                | 9         | 90.0    | 1         | 10.0    |

N = 10

Source: Field data (2016)

**Table 4: Parents' Views on the Impact of Domestic Violence**

| Opinion                               | Agree     |         | Disagree  |         |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
|                                       | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| Drop outs because of violence         | 4         | 100.0   | 0         | 0       |
| Affects education standards in family | 4         | 100.0   | 0         | 0       |
| Slows Learning                        | 4         | 100     | 0         | 0       |

N = 4

Source: Field data (2016)

Table 1 indicates that out of a total of 30 students that took part in the study, 11 (36.7%) agreed that domestic violence brought injuries and family break ups. However, 63.3% of the

students disagreed. Pointing out to those who disagreed, it could be because they may not have witnessed such scenarios of family break ups and injuries or if they had witnessed, then the family suffers in silence with breaking up not being an option. More so, 13 (43.3%) of the students agreed that parents break ups affect them in terms of having their siblings' dropout of school while 56.7% disagreed. It was established from 10% of the students that when parents fight, there is no concentration in their studies, while the other 90% did not agree on the issue of less concentration due to parents' fights. A representation of 96.7% agreed that family fights affected their performance, while 3.3% objected to the point of family fights affecting their performance.

From table 2, 10 (83.3%) of the teachers agreed that domestic violence affected students in their performance while 2 (16.7%) objected. It is seen that 6 (50%) of the teachers mentioned poor performance as an impact of domestic violence to high school learners while another 6 (50%) mentioned family break ups as being the resultant effect of domestic violence. More so, more than half - 10 (83%) of the teachers agreed that domestic violence slows the learning process with 5 strongly agreeing and another 5 agreeing. However, 2 (16.7%) disagreed with this perception thus opined that domestic violence does not slow learning.

Table 3 presents the opinions of principals with 100% agreeing that domestic violence affects students' performance. Also, 40% of the interviewed principals agreed on poor performance as an impact of domestic violence while 60% disagreed saying there were other impacts, thus a 60% response in agreement that family break up is an impact of domestic violence that eventually affects learners in class. On if domestic violence slows learning, 90% of the respondents agreed that it does while 10% disagreed with the statement.

From table 4, all (100%) parents agreed that there are many school drop outs as a result of domestic violence. Dropping from school could be caused by family breakups or injuries sustained during physical abuse in the family. The parents agreed to the existence of school drop outs due to violence experienced in the families. All the parents (100%) agreed that domestic violence affected education standards in families. The education standards are affected especially when the students do not get conducive environment to carry out their study. Continuous absenteeism from school was also a concern for parents which they said was a result of injuries sustained by the learners. A half (50%) of the parents, agreed that domestic violence slows the learning process, as the other half (50%) strongly agreed on the same. Parents were, in an interview, asked of whom the victim of domestic violence is usually and 75% of them said that the father is usually the victim while 25% said it was the mother. This finding is contrary to the common belief that women are primary victims of domestic violence.

It was the authors' interest to establish how domestic violence was dealt with in various capacities by affected individuals. Of the 30 students interviewed, 12 (40%) of them said that their family issues are solved by in-laws, 8 (26.7%) of them said pastor/priest came in to intercede while the other 10 (33.3%) opined that clan elders play a role in solving domestic violence issues. Students were also asked whether their friends were aware of the fights that occurred in their families. At least 3 (10%) of the students agreed on the fact that their friends are aware of family fights while majority 27 (90%) disagreed. This could have been because the students preferred to keep the matters to themselves than to share it with friends. Prevalence of domestic violence in Migwani sub-county is at a high rate as evidenced by the large number (9) 75% of the teachers interviewed agreeing that students in school experienced domestic violence. Only 3 (25%) thought domestic violence was not experienced by their students.

### Addressing Domestic Violence to Enhance Student Learning

Table 5 shows that 50% of the teachers agreed on approaching parents concerned and the other 50% had never approached parents concerned. A 16.7% on the other hand, had involved the children’s department concerning the situations, while 83.3% have never involved the children’s department.

**Table 5: Teachers’ Perspective**

| Opinion   | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| <i>Ways in which teachers address Domestic Violence</i>         |           |         |
| Approached parents concerned                                    | 6         | 50.0    |
| Involved children’s department                                  | 2         | 16.7    |
| Addressed issues during parents’ meetings                       | 7         | 58.3    |
| <i>State has contributed to Combating Domestic Violence</i>     |           |         |
| Strongly disagree   | 1         | 8.3     |
| Neutral   | 8         | 66.7    |
| Agree   | 1         | 8.3     |
| Strongly agree  | 2         | 16.7    |
| <i>Civic Education plays a role to reduce Domestic Violence</i> |           |         |
| Strongly disagree   | 3         | 25.0    |
| Disagree  | 4         | 33.3    |
| Neutral   | 2         | 16.7    |
| Agree   | 3         | 25.0    |

N = 12.

Source: Field data (2016).

The authors sought to know what teachers thought the state has done to deal with domestic violence. As seen in Table 5, 1 (8.3%) of the teachers strongly disagreed that state law is doing enough to combat cases of domestic violence, 8 (66.7%) were neutral while another 1 (8.3%) agreed on the issue and the remaining 2 (16.7%) strongly agreed.

In addition, it is clear that 25% of the teachers strongly disagreed on civic education playing a role in combating domestic violence with 33.3% disagreeing, while 16.7% were not sure whether civic education has helped to combat domestic violence. Only 25% agreed that they have seen an immense contribution of civic education in combating domestic violence.

**Table 6: Principals’ Perspective**

| Opinion  | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| <i>Ways in which domestic violence has been solved</i>             |           |         |
| Approached parents concerned                                       | 1         | 10.0    |
| Involved children’s department                                     | 7         | 70.0    |
| Address issues during parents’ meetings                            | 1         | 10.0    |
| <i>State has been Involved to Combat Domestic Violence</i>         |           |         |
| Strongly disagree  | 1         | 10.0    |
| Disagree   | 8         | 80.0    |
| Neutral  | 1         | 10.0    |
| <i>Civic Education plays a role in combating domestic violence</i> |           |         |
| Disagree   | 1         | 10.0    |
| Neutral  | 8         | 80.0    |
| Agree  | 1         | 10.0    |

N = 10

Source: Field data (2016)

All principals interviewed (100%) agreed on having students experiencing domestic violence. Only 10% of the principals had approached parents involved in domestic violence. While 90% had never approached the parents concerned, this had been made possible through raising such matters in parents' meeting. The result of majority not being involved could be because the parents failed to show up in the meetings whenever they were called upon. Thus, only a small percentage (10%) could be informed. It is also clear that 70% claimed to have involved the children's department when it came to matters of domestic violence while 30% did not.

At least 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the state laws are in anyway combating domestic violence while 80% of the respondents disagreed on the same. Therefore, it is clear that principals did not think the state was doing enough to deal with domestic violence cases. However, 10% of the Principals were neutral on the issue.

Concerning use of civic education, 10% of the principals disagreed on the fact that civic education is playing a role to combat domestic violence, 80% were not sure if the civic education has helped while 10% agreed that use of civic education helps solve domestic violence matters.

**Table 7: Parents' Perspective**

| Opinion  | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| <i>Ways in which domestic violence has been solved</i>   |           |         |
| Witnessed domestic violence within neighbours            | 4         | 100     |
| Involved Children's Department                           | 2         | 50      |
| <i>State plays a role in Combating Domestic Violence</i> |           |         |
| Disagree   | 2         | 50.0    |
| Agree  | 2         | 50.0    |
| Disagree   | 1         | 25.0    |
| Neutral  | 1         | 25.0    |
| Agree  | 2         | 50.0    |

N = 4

**Source: Field data (2016)**

Table 7 indicates that all the four (100%) parents interviewed agreed that they had witnessed domestic violence in their neighbourhoods. Of the Parents, 50% tried involving children's department in solving domestic violence while the other 50% have never involved the children's department. Half (50%) of the parents agreed that the state law is doing enough to combat cases of domestic violence while the other 50% disagreed saying not enough has been done by the state law. Also, half (50%) of parents thought combating domestic violence had been made easier through civic education. However, 25% of them disagreed positing that civic education in the sub-county had not played a role in combating the domestic violence, while another 25% were not sure of what civic education has done in solving the problem.

## DISCUSSION

Domestic violence results into dire consequences that affect students directly and indirectly. For example, confrontation on lack of basic needs could lead to insults being hurled, and in most cases, resulting into fights. Domestic violence thus has effects that include injuries and family break ups. However, most students are not aware of the injury and break up consequences since despite the fights, some families experiencing domestic violence still live together. This is contrary to literature and personal experience through which it has been made clear that when parents fight in a family, sometimes using crude weapons, they end up injuring each other. Some injuries could be so severe leading to hospitalization or even death.



Family breaks ups are also evident in most cases of domestic violence. This leads to divorce or separation of involved spouses. One of the spouses, in most cases usually the woman, is forced to leave the house due to continuous beating from the husband. Men are as well victims of domestic violence though few cases have been reported of men leaving their houses because of being beaten by the wife.

The responses from the students show how cases of domestic violence affected their academic performance. It was evident that performance and concentration in class was being affected by domestic violence experienced at home. Such circumstances resulted to some students missing out in school because they were injured as a result of the fights or even money meant for their school fees had been used for medication for an injured parent.

The teachers interact much with the students and for that matter can track well the performance of their affected students. Most teachers were of the view that domestic violence reduces students' performance and slows the learning process. This could be brought about by the physical injuries incurred by the students hence absenting themselves from school or even the failure to have a conducive environment to study while at home.

It is evident that family break ups resulted to some students dropping out of school because of a lack of school fees especially for a case where the father was the sole bread winner. When the parents separate, the mother leaves home with the children who are then left without any financial support. This leads to students dropping from school or slowing the learning process and eventually poor performance in school.

Most teachers did not seek help from the government. Many cases of domestic violence are not reported to relevant authorities. This can be attributed to lack of awareness among the victims or witnesses of domestic violence. It could also be because these individuals lack knowledge of their rights in society, thus do nothing to protect them. The failure to report could also be attributed to fear of victimization. Threats from abusers could make the victims suffer in silence.

Surprisingly, most teachers were not sure whether the state law is doing enough to combat cases of domestic violence. Since domestic violence is a crime that is punishable by law, the concerned state organs should be enhance their efforts of curbing domestic violence. Though there are cases which are reported to the police, there are those who find their way out of police custody. On the other hand, only a few teachers thought civic education is playing a role in combating domestic violence. Overall, majority of them said that civic education did not play a role in combating domestic violence. This could be because the people tasked with carrying out civic education do not do so. If civic education is not carried out then its impact on dealing with domestic violence will not be felt.

Most teachers did not address the issue of domestic violence during parents' meetings but only a few had discussed it in those forums. It is therefore evident that domestic violence is not much talked about and on how to deal with it. Whenever a domestic violence occurs, the family members shun talking about it to other people for fear of shame and ridicule. This can be attributed to one of the reasons that parents, teachers and school principals do not raise or discuss domestic violence cases.

Although the prevalence of domestic violence is clear in Migwani sub-county, Children's department is not fully involved in combating domestic violence. Despite admission by most parents to have witnessed domestic violence, only a few of them are reported, with the most

abusers being left unpunished. This has made victims in families experience suffering in silence. Given that parents' opinions on the role of civic education were divided, it is important to consider the role of the state. Thus, state officials and other stakeholders should engage more on civic education to help combat domestic violence. Through this, the public will also be more aware of steps to take in occurrences of domestic violence.

### CONCLUSION

It is evident that students are reportedly witnesses of domestic violence in their homes and this affects their performance as well as slows down the learning processes. It is therefore imperative that teachers never underestimate the impact of domestic violence and should be empathetic with students who report suffering from domestic violence. Student whose performance dips due to domestic violence should be helped with counseling and academic coaching to mitigate against the negative effects of their situations on learning.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. The school principals should form strong guidance and counseling departments to help the students recover from the trauma of domestic violence.
- ii. The principals should sensitize the parents during parents' general meetings on matters of domestic violence.
- iii. The teachers should identify any dip in the performance of the students and discuss the cause with the students.
- iv. Strict laws should be enforced to deal with abusers in the society.

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