

Targeted investigation report 2025

North West: Rustenburg Prevalence of Gender Based Violence in Phokeng Village

First Edition



Compiled by Phokeng Community Monitoring team:

- Kgang Maimane
- Tebogo Dikale
- Thapelo Mangena
- Reabetswe Tladi
- Lehlohonolo Lesomo



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1. Background and Context

Phokeng village is situated in Rustenburg Local Municipality, dubbed “The platinum city”, in North West province. Our village is a mining host community. Mines surround the village. Impala Platinum Mine is the largest Platinum producer in the area. The other mines are Glencore, the Illita chrome mine, and the Nuco chrome mine. The mines have a provision for a living-out allowance; many of the workers opted for the allowance. This has created a mushroom of backyard rooms and backyard dwellers, increasing the population, with other industries contributing to the increase, but the mines contribute significantly. Phokeng is considered a safe place to live in due to better security and better infrastructure; furthermore, its proximity to the town makes it a preferred place to reside. The increase in population has brought many challenges, such as Crime, Alcohol, and other substance abuse, disruption of tradition and cultural norms, and an increase in different kinds of violence.

Phokeng experiences Gender Based Violence. The South African Police Service at Phokeng Police Station has reported that the number of cases reported is not a reflection of the scale of the violence, as many cases are not reported. GBV affects both Genders, but women are affected more than men. Some factors contribute to low reporting of cases. The dependence on a working partner, especially a male partner, for survival; the protection of marriage or relationship; males who believe they will be mocked when reporting abuse by a partner; these are some of the contributing factors to the lack of reporting. When we explore the contributions to GBV, we find that financial dependence, financial power, toxic masculinity, lack of communication, and alcohol consumption are among the factors.

The National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence adopted six pillars:

Pillar	Key Focus
1. Leadership & Accountability:	Strong coordination & clear roles
2. Prevention & Social Cohesion:	Stop GBV early; Heal communities
3. Justice, Safety & Protection:	Safe spaces & enforce laws
4. Response & Healing:	Support survivors; Care & recovery
5. Economic Power:	Women’s financial empowerment
6. Research & Information:	Data-driven strategies; Track progress

2. Problem description

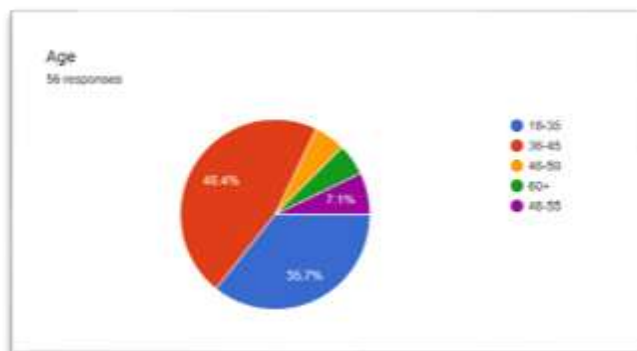
The problem is that there is an increasing Gender based violence in which women are largely affected, we experience an increase in mine workers who are mostly transient males. Women are now employed at the mines, encouraging other women to come to the village in search of employment opportunities. However, women are employed in significantly lower numbers, which renders them vulnerable and dependent on working males, who mostly exercise masculinity and financial power over them. Women suffer from abuse in relationships. Women are requested to perform sexual favours for employment opportunities and promotions. The South African Police Services at Phokeng station reports that there is a low reporting on Gender based violence, which does not reflect the prevalence of violence.

Gender based violence reduces women`s ability to contribute to society, disrupts their social life, and disrupts their fundamental rights. We need to empower them and create a safe space for them, and include men.

Empower women and create a support space for them, and involve both cis genders to tackle and discuss gender justice, which may assist in creating a mindset shift among males. This should be a constant conversation in the public domain, creating a chain of changes within the community.

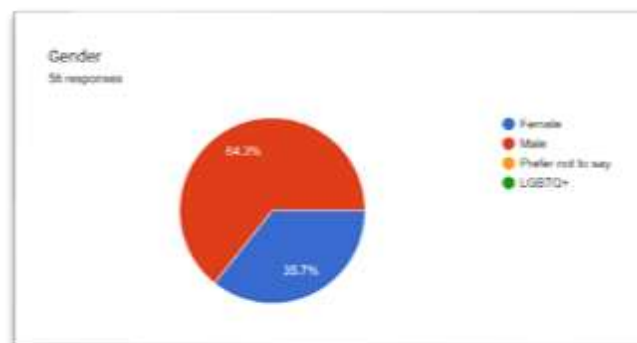


3. Investigation results



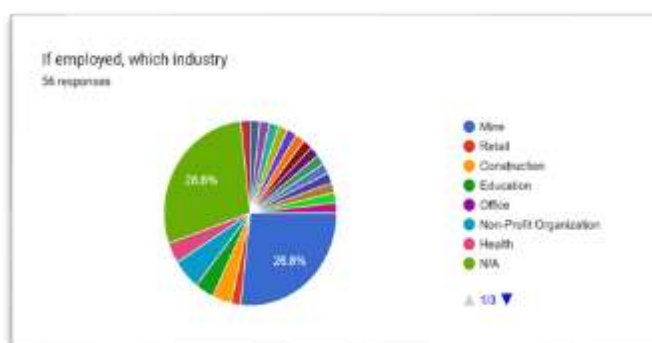
The survey was conducted across various areas of Phokeng Village, with no specific section being targeted, in order to capture a broad perspective of the community. A total of 56 respondents participated in the survey. The age distribution of respondents revealed that the majority were aged 36–45 years (46.4%), indicating a strong representation of the middle-aged adult population in the community. This was followed by

respondents aged 18–35 years 35.7%, reflecting the significant presence and perspectives of younger adults within the village.



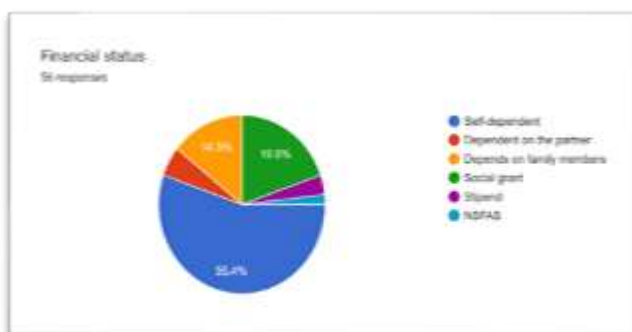
Regarding gender, 64.3% of respondents were male, while 35.7% were female, highlighting a higher participation rate among men in the community. The survey approach ensured inclusivity and aimed to gather a comprehensive understanding of community experiences and perspectives. The survey approach ensured inclusivity and aimed to gather a comprehensive understanding of community experiences

and perspectives. These findings provide important demographic insights that will inform further analysis and interventions in the area.



Respondents were asked about their employment sector. Of those who responded, 26.8% reported being mine workers, highlighting the significant role of mining as a source of livelihood in the community. The remaining respondents were employed across a variety of other industries, reflecting a level of economic diversity beyond mining. The 28.6% of respondents preferred not to disclose their

employment sector, which may indicate privacy concerns or involvement in informal or irregular employment not easily categorized.



The survey also explored respondents' sources of livelihood. The majority of respondents (55.4%) reported being self-dependent, indicating that more than half of the community rely on their own income-generating activities. A smaller proportion rely on external support, with 19.6% depending on social grants, 14.3% relying on family members, and 5.4% depending on partners. These findings highlight the

economic resilience of the community, while also underscoring the importance of social support systems for those who are not fully self-sufficient.

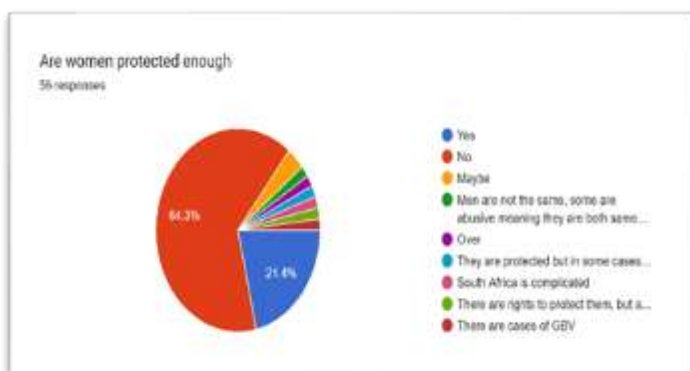


The survey also examined the relationship status of respondents, revealing a diverse distribution. The majority of respondents 50% reported being single, noting that some individuals identify as single while being in a relationship, as their definition of single refers specifically to being unmarried. A smaller proportion of respondents reported being married 14.3%, in a living-in

partnership 12.5%, or in a relationship but living separately 8.9%. These findings reflect the variety of household and relational arrangements within the community, which may have implications for social support networks and community dynamics.

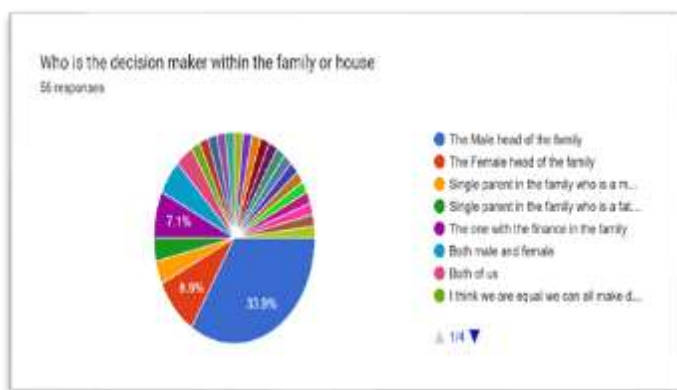
Women's Rights and Gender-Based Violence

Respondents shared a range of views regarding women's rights. While the majority of respondents were male, most acknowledged that women deserve rights. However, some felt that these rights are sometimes abused, with women neglecting the responsibilities and accountability that accompany rights. Others emphasized that women's rights are essential, as women continue to face abuse and violence, and that these rights promote gender equality.



When asked about the level of protection women receive, 64.3% of respondents indicated that women are not given enough protection, while 21.4% felt that women are adequately protected. Many respondents highlighted the role of tradition and culture, noting that cultural practices often oppress women, perpetuate inequality, and fail to safeguard their rights. One respondent suggested,

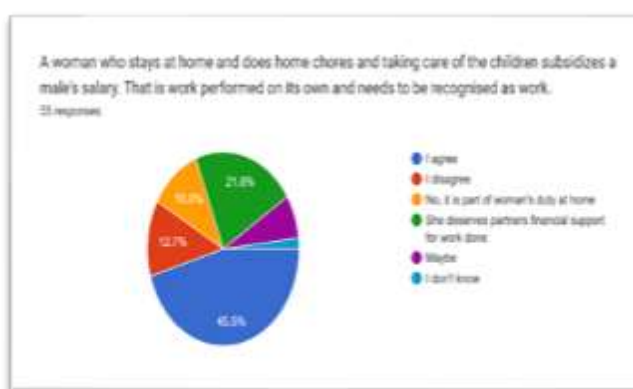
"There should be a system that compares culture and rights and creates a balance between the two."



Regarding household decision-making, 37.5% of respondents indicated that the male, as head of the family, is the decision-maker, 35% stated that decisions are made collectively by both partners, and the remaining proportion noted that decisions are taken by a single parent in single-parent households.

The survey also explored perceptions of women's unpaid domestic work. When asked whether a woman who stays at home, does house chores, and cares for children subsidizes a male's salary and deserves recognition:

- 45.5% agreed that this constitutes work that should be recognized,
- 21.8% indicated she deserves financial support from her partner,
- 12.9% disagreed, and
- 10.9% said it is a woman's job to work at home.



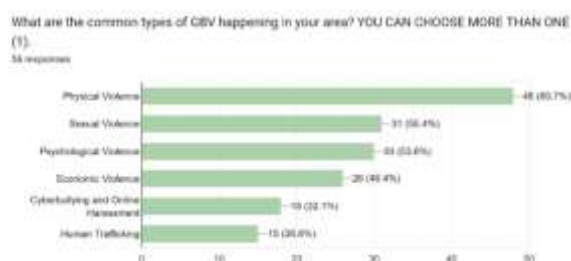
Some respondents emphasized that a woman deserves an allowance as appreciation rather than formal payment: *"She has needs to be taken care of; she should be able to buy herself what she needs. I can hire someone to do house chores and pay that person; therefore, she deserves the financial support, but not as payment."* Others noted, *"Women should stop depending on men; it gives men financial power over them."*

Understanding Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

The survey revealed that most respondents do not have a clear understanding or formal definition of GBV. Common perceptions included: GBV is an abuse by one gender over the other and that GBV is an abuse of women and children by men.

When asked about the types of GBV commonly experienced in the village, respondents identified the following:

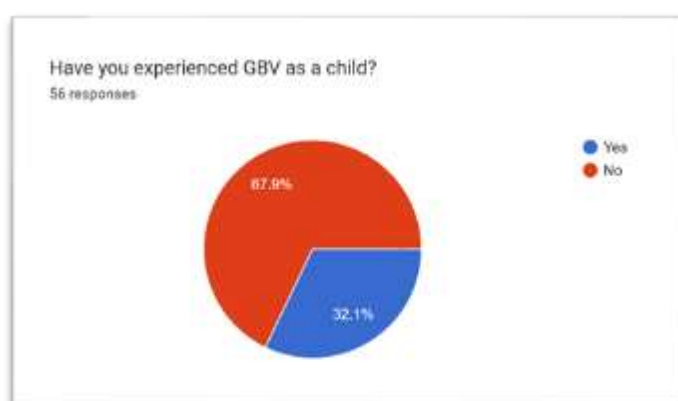
- Physical violence – 85.7%
- Sexual violence – 55.4%
- Psychological violence – 53.6%



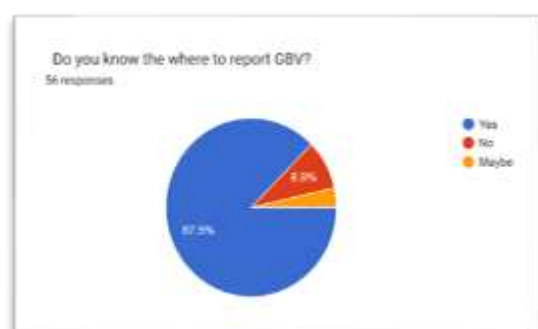
These findings highlight a limited understanding of GBV among community members and emphasize the need for awareness campaigns and educational interventions to improve knowledge, recognition, and prevention of gender-based violence in the village.

The legal definition of GBV in South Africa: Gender based Violence refers to any form of violence directed at a person because of their gender, sex, or sexual orientation.

Experience and reporting of Gender-Based Violence



Respondents were asked whether they had experienced GBV as children. The majority indicated that they had not experienced GBV, with only 32.1% reporting such experiences. Similarly, as adults, only 30.4% of respondents reported experiencing GBV, indicating that most community members have not personally encountered it.



Among those who experienced GBV, the majority did not report the abuse, with some respondents indicating a preference to simply walk away rather than seek formal assistance. Despite this, 87.5% of respondents stated that they know where to report GBV, and on average, respondents scored 3.39 out of 5 on feeling comfortable reporting incidents at the police station.

These findings suggest that while awareness of reporting mechanisms exists, barriers to reporting such as fear, stigma, or distrust remain significant, highlighting the need for interventions that promote safe, accessible, and trusted reporting channels for survivors.

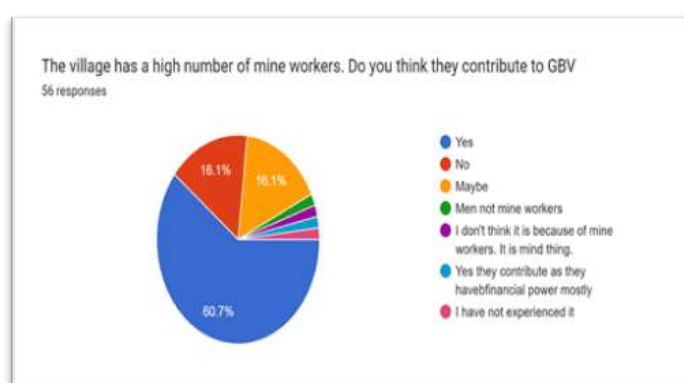
The role culture and tradition play in the way society treats women

Responses show mixed but largely critical perceptions about the role of culture and tradition in women's lives. Many participants felt that traditional expectations can oppress or disadvantage women, reinforcing male dominance, limiting women's independence, and encouraging unequal roles in households and society. Some respondents linked cultural norms to feelings of entitlement among men and to the persistence of abuse and inequality.

At the same time, a smaller group believed that culture can protect, support, or give structure to women and families, noting that in some cases women are respected or treated well within their communities. Others expressed that culture itself is not the problem but needs to adapt to modern realities, balancing cultural values with women's rights, education, and career aspirations.

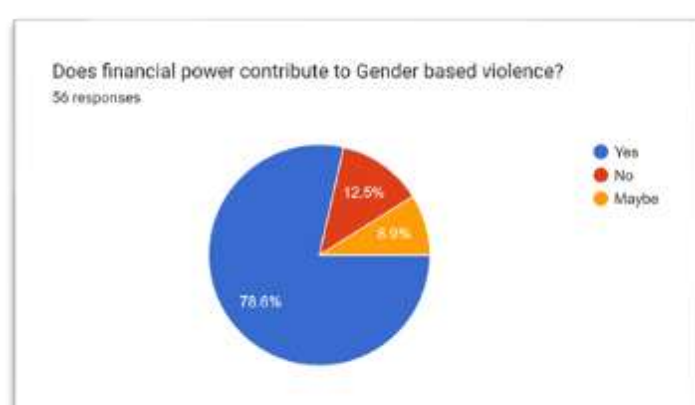
Overall, the feedback suggests a strong perception that culture and tradition are changing and contested, with many calling for modernization, greater equality, and a balance between cultural practices and human rights.

Mining, financial power, and Gender-Based Violence



The survey explored community perceptions of the factors contributing to GBV. As Phokeng Village is a mining area, 60.7% of respondents believe that mine workers contribute to GBV, highlighting the perceived social impact of the mining sector on community dynamics. Additionally, a significant majority 78.6% indicated that financial power plays a role in GBV, reflecting concerns that economic control and

dependence can create environments that increase vulnerability to abuse. findings suggest that interventions addressing GBV in the community must consider both occupational and economic factors, particularly the influence of mining-related income and male financial dominance, in order to develop targeted prevention and awareness strategies.



When asked whether financial power contributes to Gender-Based Violence, the majority of respondents 78.6% indicated yes, suggesting that economic control and financial dependency are significant factors influencing violence. And 12.5% responded maybe, reflecting uncertainty or mixed experiences, while only 8.9% indicated no.

Gender based violence occurs every day, according to the respondents, and alcohol contributes to abusive behavior. In addition to this, on paydays, Weekends, or month-end, there is an increase in the violence. The common causes of the violence are alcohol, miscommunication or arguments, disrespect, cheating, financial problems, financial masculinity, and independent women.

The meaning of Consent, as extracted from the National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and femicide (NSP-GBVF) (2020-2030), says '*Consent is an exercise of choice and voluntary or unforced agreement to engage in sexual activity with the other party. Consent is an ongoing process and can be withdrawn at any time. Consent to engage in sexual activity is compulsory in every sexual act, always*

matters, and should not be assumed, regardless of the relationship status and irrespective of previous sexual activity with the other party’. We asked the respondents if they knew of it and their views on this definition.

An equal percentage of 50-50 are aware of consent, while the other half don’t know.

The statement that *“It is a process that can be withdrawn at any time.”* The majority agrees with the statement that it is a choice that should be respected, while others say it is unfair as it favours women more; it needs to be reworked into a balanced law or statement.

“It is tricky for a man. If you withdraw, that can create insecurities in your partner.”

Note that the NSP-GBVF definition of consent is not directly enforceable in court; however, it is part of a case at the Constitutional Court brought by the Embrace Project NPC [case no. CCT 314/24] and Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) [case no. CCT 315/24] against the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development and others; challenging the legal definition of Criminal Law (sexual offences and related matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007. They advocate for a definition that aligns with the NSP-GBVF and international human rights standards. The current act is based on a Subjective belief that an accused person personally believes that the other person consented, regardless of whether the belief is reasonable or is based on clear evidence. The act should be an Objective belief that requires the accused’s consent to be reasonable and based on observable facts, which demand affirmative signs of agreement.

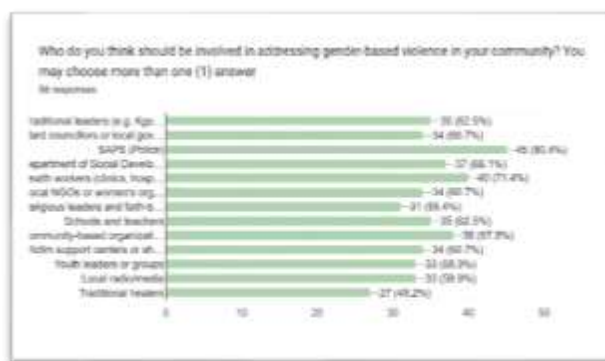
Institutional Support

Respondents were asked whether there are existing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) programmes implemented by the Government or the Royal Bafokeng Administration to address violence within the community. Feedback indicated that there are currently no clearly visible or well-known programmes. Participants further noted the absence of structured initiatives that engage men and boys on topics such as respect, consent, and healthy masculinity, although many felt that such programmes would be beneficial.

The findings also revealed that there are no dedicated support groups actively addressing GBV at community level; most existing efforts appear to be limited to awareness campaigns. While GBV is occasionally discussed within church settings, respondents felt that these discussions are insufficient, and several participants indicated that they do not attend church, which limits the reach of such messaging.

When asked what should be done to better address GBV, participants proposed several actions. These included:

- Encourage openness and honesty so that violence is not hidden or kept secret within the community.
- Increase the involvement of men in GBV prevention programmes to promote accountability and positive change.
- Establish more accessible and safe reporting spaces for survivors.
- Improve community awareness that survivors can seek support directly from the Trauma Centre rather than relying only on the help desk at the police station.



Participants were also asked to identify key stakeholders who should be involved in combating GBV. Community responses show that addressing GBV requires a multi-stakeholder approach. Police 80.4% were viewed as most critical, followed by health workers 71.4%, social services 66.1% and community structures like schools and traditional leaders 62–68%. Local government, NGOs, youth and religious leaders, and media were also important, while

traditional healers 48.2% were seen as less central. Overall, the findings highlight the need for holistic, coordinated interventions across legal, social, cultural, and educational spheres.

4. Views of stakeholders on the issues

Mr. Kabelo Mokgatle – Counsellor, Phokeng Trauma Centre and Men of Calibre

Mr. Kabelo Mokgatle works as a counsellor focusing on substance abuse and behavioural challenges at the Trauma Centre located at Phokeng Police Station, and he also provides similar support through a non-profit organisation, *Men of Calibre*. He highlighted a strong link between substance abuse and violent behaviour, noting that many of the cases he encounters involve both issues. He described his work as emotionally demanding due to the complex challenges presented by clients, and explained that he attends structured debriefing sessions every three months to maintain his own wellbeing and prevent emotional burnout.

During the research process, concerns were raised about men feeling uncomfortable reporting incidents at the police station. In response, Mr. Mokgatle indicated that this discomfort is often influenced by community perceptions rather than personal experiences, as many men have never directly engaged with the reporting process. He emphasised that individuals who do not feel at ease at the help desk may request privacy and be referred to a specialised police officer in a private, survivor-friendly room at the Trauma Centre. Alternatively, survivors can approach the Trauma Centre directly for assistance.

He further observed that harmful peer dynamics among men sometimes reinforce negative behaviours, where individuals are encouraged to assert dominance in ways that may lead to violence within families. Such dynamics can create fear among partners and children, ultimately limiting freedom and safety within the household. His closing reflection emphasised positive masculinity and community responsibility:

“A man is not a failure, not a wolf, not a lion, but a pillar of the community we are living in as a better man. A better man is not a rapist, is not an abuser, is not a killer, but a protector and a provider to his family and community.”

Ms. Itumeleng Temane – Social Worker, Phokeng Trauma Centre

Ms. Itumeleng Temane, a social worker at the Phokeng Trauma Centre, explained that the centre manages both domestic violence and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases. While the centre receives reports of sexual offences, survivors are referred to the Thuthuzela Care Centre at Job Shimankane Tabane Hospital to minimise secondary victimisation. The Thuthuzela Care Centre operates as a one-stop facility, bringing together services from the National Prosecuting Authority, the Department of

Social Development, the Department of Health, the South African Police Service, and the Phokeng Trauma Centre.

She noted that intimate partner violence remains a significant concern in Phokeng, often linked to substance abuse. Additionally, she highlighted the challenge of fragmented responses to GBV, where multiple organisations may run parallel initiatives without sufficient coordination. She stressed the importance of stronger collaboration among stakeholders to improve service delivery, reduce duplication of efforts, and strengthen the overall community response to GBV.



Ms. Sargent Rapoo - Gender-Based Violence coordinator, Phokeng Police Station

She works on GBV, Elderly persons, the mentally challenged, and Child justice and protection care, on Thursdays and Fridays. She is a law enforcer working on the ground. Sargent indicated that the South African Police Service, under the Phokeng Police Station, conducts

GBV campaigns during the road shows in all the areas under their jurisdiction. She says the types of cases reported are Physical, Emotional, Sexual (Rape), and economic abuse. *“90% of GBV cases emanate from alcohol consumption.”*

Physical violence is the most reported case, and alcohol plays a role, and is committed by the Intimate partner. She says all genders are affected by GBV, and women report more than men. There is a perception amongst men that they will be laughed at when they report their female partners, which is false. The act used to be the Domestic Violence Act, which covered women and children; then it was changed to the Gender-based Violence Act, which now includes Men and LGBTQ+ people; no one is excluded. Men have egos, and the way men are taught to be in society, to be strong, also contributes to men not reporting. She indicated that, in general, GBV cases are not reported, which is a challenge as GBV is not policeable, the police are reactive partners, and they depend on reporting from society and their passive Community Policing Forum (CPF) partners, who are within the community. The other challenge is that our area is a mining area, and most of the male mine workers live with female partners who are not working and depend on their partner for support; some are migrant workers who came with their partners, and they are abusive to them, especially after alcohol consumption, these partners do not report as they depend on their working partner.

Men are commonly quiet and endure abuse from their partners, and in due course, they react violently. Verbal abuse is emotional and should be reported. *“You do not have to have physical evidence to report abuse”*. Phokeng Police Station has a victim-friendly facility, located at the Trauma Centre, which operates 24 hours. A person or a victim can go directly to the friendly facility or go to the charge office and request a safe, private space to open a case. The police officer attending to the person will lead the complainant to the friendly room to assist.

She also indicated that the areas that have the highest influx of migrant mine workers are Freedom Park and Luka Village. GBV cases in these areas are at a very high rate; they were also informed by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) that the sexual Offenses Act has been amended, it has a clause that says *“A sexual agreement can be withdrawn at any time* Sargent Rapoo’s closing remarks: *“Reporting is a challenge, people are being abused, and are not reporting as females depend on their male partners for survival. Men believe they will be laughed at for reporting their female partners. Please men, there is help come forward and report the abuse”*.

5. Advocacy Solutions

Fatlhoga plans to use the findings of this investigation to strengthen gender programmes that are informed by community experiences and evidence. The organisation believes that sustainable change requires culturally relevant, community-led interventions developed in partnership with key stakeholders, with a strong focus on both responding to and preventing Gender-Based Violence.

The findings also show that GBV is often addressed only after harm occurs, highlighting the need for a more proactive approach. Fatlhoga aims to promote open dialogue, reduce stigma, and strengthen collaboration with partners to create safe spaces, support survivors, and contribute to long-term social and behavioural change.

**We acknowledge and appreciate the support
from the following organisations:**

**Bread for the World
Church of Sweden
Ford Foundation
Norwegian Church Aid
Steelworkers Humanity Fund – Canada.**

Issued by



**Greenacres Office Park, Cotswold House
Rustenburg Road & Victory Road, Randburg
2196, South Africa
PO Box 62538, Marshalltown, 2107, South
Africa
Email: info@bench-marks.org.za**