

**An Identification and Analysis of the
Security Situation of Elderly Women in
Kadoma**



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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

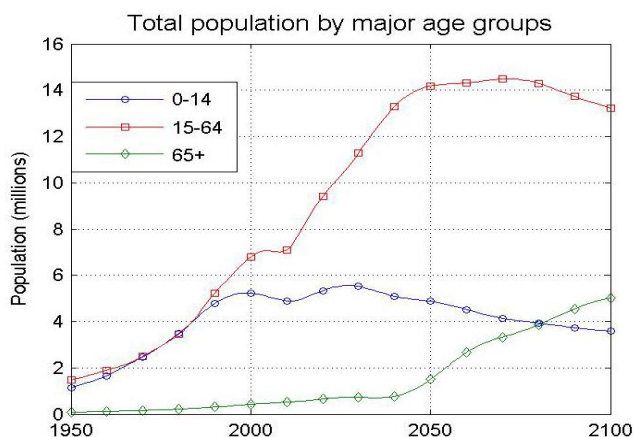
Studies conducted show that there is an unprecedented growth in the number of elderly persons across the world. This has necessitated the need for governments to take responsive action to the various societal changes that this has brought. The 1992 Proclamation on Ageing called on decision makers and researchers to cooperate in undertaking action- oriented studies. Several studies have been conducted on the situation of elderly people in Zimbabwe. However, there would appear to have been no studies conducted on the security situation of elderly people and elderly women in specific.

The present research paper is based on research conducted in Kadoma on the security situation of elderly women. It looks at how elderly women may be particularly exposed to security problems as a result of their fragility. It analyses how elderly women’s care giving role, kin unavailability and customary beliefs present security problems for them.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND LOCATION OF THE RESEARCH

Like any other country, the proportion of the population made up of older people in Zimbabwe is increasing. This has in part been attributed to the decline in fertility rate since the 1980s (Kimuna, 2005a). Table 1 below indicates population projections for Zimbabwe.

Table 1: Zimbabwe Population Projections



Source: The 2010 World Population Prospects:

Volume II: Demographic Profiles. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division.

The projections above indicate that the number of people aged 15 to 64 as well as that of 65 is expected to rise by 2100 as compared to the population of those between the ages of 0 to 14 which is expected to go down. This shows the expected changes in the family structures with families having more elderly people hence the need for governments to prepare for such changes. It is also necessary to consider the effect such changes will have on elderly women. The 2002 Madrid International Action Plan on Ageing also recognises that older women outnumber older men and increasingly so as age increases necessitating the need to specifically consider issues relating to elderly women.

Secondly, I was informed by the anti-essentialism theories which recognise that apart from being oppressed on the basis of their gender, women are also oppressed as a result of other factors which may not apply to all women. It is basically against essentialising women and their experiences. This informed my thinking that elderly women may be particularly vulnerable to security problems not only as a result of being women but also because of their age, care giving roles, culture and economic status among other factors.

My study as indicated above was conducted in Kadoma, one of the districts in the province of Mashonaland West. As per the 2012 Zimbabwe National Census, the population of Kadoma is 90,109 and of these 47,065 are women.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As the population changes have occurred, there has been an emergence of new roles and positions assigned to elderly people. For example, death of children or children going to seek employment elsewhere has led to some elderly people taking care of themselves changing the attitude that has always been symbolic of an African society that elderly persons are taken care of by their children. In addition to this, others end up caring for orphaned grandchildren as well as sick children. This is more so a result of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Studies have shown that throughout the sub Saharan Africa region older people especially women are either by necessity or voluntary contribution the key resources for the combating of AIDS and the alleviation of its impact (WHO, 2002). This is despite the fact that older women are one of the poorest population groups in sub Saharan Africa (Kimuna, 2005b).

This study recognises the challenges faced by elderly women and focuses on identifying and analysing the security situation of elderly women in Kadoma. It aims at determining how breakdown of kinship

ties, elderly women's care giving roles and customary beliefs present security risks for elderly women. Further, it looks at the different state interventions and their response to the security concerns of elderly people.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The study aims at identifying and analysing the security situation of women in Kadoma, particularly of elderly women. The study considers that elderly women may be particularly exposed to personal security problems because of their care giving role, lack of kin availability and customary beliefs.

1.3.1 Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study was to identify and analyse the security situation of women and girls in Kadoma. However, for elderly women, the study seeks to:

- To ascertain whether amongst women in general, elderly women may be particularly exposed to personal security problems in Kadoma.
- To determine whether there are programs and policies in Kadoma addressing the needs of elderly people as well as their effectiveness.
- To determine the challenges elderly women face as a result of breakdown in kinship ties, care giving roles and culture.

1.4 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS AND QUESTIONS

1.4.1 Research Assumptions

The major assumption in the present study was that elderly women (65 years and above) may be particularly exposed to personal security problems. Further assumptions were as follows:

- Breakdown of kinship ties may expose some elderly women to security problems since they are vulnerable and fragile.
- Some elderly women's care giving role renders them vulnerable to security problems.
- Some customary beliefs may expose some elderly women to security problems.

1.4.2 Research Questions

- Are elderly women particularly exposed to personal security problems?
- Does the breakdown of kinship ties expose elderly women to these security problems as a result of their fragility and vulnerability?
- Does the care giving role of some elderly women render them vulnerable to these security risks?
- Do some customary beliefs expose some elderly women to these security threats?

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study met quite a few challenges but which do not have an adverse effect on the results. Firstly, some of the views received from a number of officials did not have the necessary supporting statistics. This lack of statistics was a challenge in the triangulation of some of the data collected and as it will come out later in the paper, it is one area which needs to be looked into if the conditions of elderly women are to be improved.

Secondly, the lack of Non Governmental Organisations or other non-state actors whose work focuses on elderly persons was also a challenge. This also presented problems in the triangulation of some of the data.

Lastly, it was also quite difficult to get in touch with some of the respondents since there were moments we would visit them and not find them. This reflects in the few numbers of respondents from some of the suburbs like Waverly. For some, I was able to mitigate that by setting up phone interviews which were successful. Related to this is also the fact that the research was carried out over a one week period which was not enough to get in touch with all the possible respondents. However, I managed to use the time I had to the best of my ability to capture the voices of those I had interviewed.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

I realised during my literature review that whilst others have written on the different challenges faced by elderly people for instance as a result of HIV and AIDS, it appears nothing has been written on the security situation of elderly women in Zimbabwe. I believe that the present piece of work will help inform on the subject as well as assist in the implementation of various programmes targeting elderly people especially with the newly enacted Older Persons Act as well as the new Constitution.

One of the studies was carried out on the living arrangements and conditions of older people in Zimbabwe by Sitawa R. Kimuna. The study used data from the 1994-1995 Zimbabwe Aging Survey and the 1999 Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey. She, in that study considers the structures of living arrangements, the support and nature of family relationships of older people and further looked at the attributes of older people on living arrangements (Kimuna, 2005a). Whilst one of the findings of the study was the uniqueness of challenges faced by older female headed households, the study did not look at the security concerns or risks faced by those elderly women in the different living conditions.

In another study, Kimuna looks at the role played by elderly female headed households and their socioeconomic support systems (Kimuna 2005b). She considers the challenges faced by these women in light of the HIV and AIDS pandemic and what steps they take in response to these problems. She places emphasis on the participation of these elderly female household heads' contribution in the growth and development of their countries and specifically of Zimbabwe. Thus, like the previous study, this also does not go further to address the security situation of those elderly female household heads.

In 2002, the World Health Organisation published results of a study it had carried out titled, 'Impact of AIDS on older people in Africa: Zimbabwe Case Study'. As the title suggests, the study focussed on finding out the effects of the pandemic on elderly people both as carers and on their own health. The study recognises the role played by elderly women at the household level as a result of the pandemic in caring for the patients and orphaned children. That the burdens placed by the pandemic on families and societies are to a large extent absorbed by elderly women. It unlike the present study did not look at the

security concerns of the elderly care givers. In addition to this, the study was not carried out in Mashonaland West, where Kadoma is located.

Hence, the present study comes in to consider how ageing and other challenges affect the security situation of elderly women living the urban area of Kadoma.

2.1 DEFINITION OF AGEING

As various writers on the subject have noted, definitions of ageing and old age vary widely leading to much dispute over how to define old age (Herring, 2009, p2). This can be attributed to the fact that each society has its own sense of old age (Kimuna (b) p161). The United Nations uses the age of 60 in its definition as per the General Assembly's Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002.

The former Constitution of Zimbabwe did not provide for the definition of old age which may be attributed to the fact that it did not specifically recognise age as a ground for discrimination. However, the new Constitution does recognise age as one ground for discrimination and further specifically provides for the rights of elderly people. It does in Section 82 provide for the rights of people over the age of seventy years, thus adopting 70 as its definition of old age. However, the Social Welfare Assistance Act Chapter 17:06 provides in Section 6(1) (a) that persons over 60 years of age are eligible to receive social welfare assistance. The Older Persons Act adopts the age of 65 years in its definition of an older person in Section 2 as follows:

‘Older Persons’ means a citizen of Zimbabwe aged sixty five years or above, who is ordinarily resident therein.

The present study adopted the age of 65 as per the Older Persons Act it being the piece of legislation specifically for older people and further considering that the new Constitution was not yet in force at the time the research was carried out.

2.2 HUMAN RIGHTS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The following section looks at the human rights and legal framework for older people at both the international and domestic level.

2.2.1 HUMAN RIGHTS AND ELDERLY PERSONS

2.2.1.1 International Stage

Unlike other vulnerable groups such as women and people with disabilities, there is at present no specific convention or treaty on the rights of older people. As a result, reliance is placed on the Conventions which have some provisions from which protection of the elderly is inferred. Some of the provisions like the right to an adequate standard of living, right to health, freedom from torture and others as found in the International Bill of Rights¹ are used in advancing the rights of older people. In addition to this, there have been several recommendations made by the different human rights bodies. For instance, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted General Comment No. 6 outlining State parties obligations to older persons under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Specific to older women, the Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted General Recommendation No. 27 on the protection of older women under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women.

Regard is also had to non binding United Nations documents on ageing which more or less paved the way for concern over ageing. Some of the work on ageing has led to the following documents being adopted; the 1982 Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing, the 1991 United Nations Principles for Older Persons, the 1992 Proclamation on Ageing with its recommendation on the need for the development of policies and programmes which respond to the special characteristics, needs and abilities of older women, the need to give adequate support to older women for their largely unrecognised contributions to the economy and the well-being of the society.

The more recent work of the United Nations is the 2002 Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing reaffirming the need for action on issues concerning elderly persons. It has had a big effect in the work concerning elderly people as noted by the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights that:

¹ The International Bill of Rights consists of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

'it has guided the development in key areas of legislation and social policies at the national level and has provided a framework for dialogue on the international fora. The Political Declaration reaffirms the commitment to promote and protect human right, to the elimination of age discrimination, neglect, abuse and violence...the Madrid Plan of Action, priority directions I,II and III underscore the importance of health, development and well-being.(OHCHR, 2011)'.

2.2.1.2 Africa

However, On the African continent, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (The Charter) specifically recognises the rights of older persons. Article 18(3) of the Charter does so by providing that the aged and people with disabilities shall have a right to special measures of protection in keeping with their physical or moral needs. Apart from the Charter, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Women's Protocol) goes a step further by providing for the rights of elderly women in its Article 22 as follows:

The States Parties undertake to:

- (a) provide protection to elderly women and take specific measures commensurate with their physical, economic and social needs as well as their access to employment and professional training;
- (b) ensure the right of elderly women to freedom from violence, including sexual abuse, discrimination based on age and the right to be treated with dignity.

Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Women's Protocol and ratified it. This means that as a state party, it has the duty to ensure that elderly women are protected from violence as well as discrimination on the basis of age which may pose a risk on their security as well as that elderly women are treated with dignity.

At the regional level, Zimbabwe is a party to the Southern African Development Community Charter of Fundamental Rights which provides in its Article 8 for the rights of elderly persons relating to work and work benefits (pensions and work after retirement). Zimbabwe also ratified the Southern African Development Community Gender and Development Protocol (SADC Gender Protocol) though it has not domesticated it as required under Section 111B of the former Constitution. The SADC Gender Protocol does not have any provision dealing directly with the rights of elderly women. However, inferences can be drawn from the various provisions as they pertain to women in general. For the purposes of the present research, Article 3(a) outlines one of the objectives of the Protocol as providing

for the empowerment of women and elimination of discrimination through the development and development of gender responsive legislation, policies, programmes and projects, from which the necessity to put all these in place for elderly women can be inferred. In addition to these provisions, it is also necessary to consider Article 16 of the Protocol which requires that state parties shall conduct time use studies and adopt policy measures to ease the burden of the multiple roles played by women by 2015. This recognises the invisible time spent by women in domestic and care activities which have an effect on their access to resources as compared to that spent by men. For elderly women, it becomes crucial when considering their future financial welfare since they will not have saved for the future. Zimbabwe has not yet conducted such studies (SADC Gender Barometer, 2012).

2.2.1.3 Domestic Legislation

As stated earlier, the former Constitution of Zimbabwe did not specifically provide for the rights of elderly persons. However, the new Constitution does prohibit discrimination on the basis of age in Section 56. It further provides for elderly people under its national objectives (which should guide the state and its institutions in its policy implementations); Section 21 requires the state to take reasonable measures including legislation to secure, respect, support and protection of elderly persons. Section 82 of the new Constitution provides that elderly persons have the right to receive reasonable care and assistance from their families and the state, as well as to receive health care, medical assistance and receive financial support by way of social security and welfare. The latter provision makes it clear that the State shall achieve the progressive realisation of the right, signalling its being subject to availability of funds.

Apart from the Constitution, the rights of elderly persons are further recognised in the Older Persons Act of 2011 which provides for older persons' welfare and the creation of an Older Persons Fund. Of particular interest is Section 9 on the eligibility for social welfare assistance which is to the following effect:

- (1) The Director, or any person acting on his behalf, may grant social welfare assistance to a destitute or indigent older person where he or she is satisfied that such person—
 - (a) is handicapped physically or mentally; or

- (b) suffers continuous ill-health; or
- (c) is a dependant of a person who is destitute or indigent or incapable of looking after himself or herself; or
- (d) otherwise has need of social welfare assistance.

(2) In determining whether an older person qualifies to receive or to continue receiving social welfare assistance, the Director or any person acting on his or her behalf shall assess—

- (a) the availability to the applicant and his or her dependants of any assistance, financial or otherwise, from any source; and
- (b) the suitability of the applicant and his or her dependants for resettlement or rehabilitation; and
- (a) the state of health, educational level and the level of skills for purposes of the employment
- (b) prospects of the person applying for social welfare assistance.

As it was shown throughout the conduct of this research, such a fund and financial assistance would play a crucial role in the life of elderly women considering their present situation. The issue of access to resources and finances was a recurring fact and which has adverse effects on the security of elderly women.

This Act can be read in consolidation with the Social Welfare Assistance Act Chapter 17:06 of the Laws of Zimbabwe which for the purposes of eligibility adopts the age of sixty years as one criterion in Section 6(a) but also as Section 3 puts it that the person must be destitute or indigent. The destitute or indigent requirement might have the meaning that those in their homes do not qualify and this is problematic for those with the care role as it will be discussed later. It is also pertinent to consider the provisions of Section 5 providing for the forms of social welfare assistance which may be in financial form or other forms like rehabilitation, institutional nursing, the provision of orthopaedic and orthoptic appliances, pauper burials as well as the supply of food or clothing and any other assistance necessary to relieve destitution.

Apart from legislation, the Government of Zimbabwe also has in place the National Gender Policy adopted with the aim of effectively transforming the provisions of the national, regional and international legal and human rights instruments to the practical level as well as the provision of guidelines and the institutional framework to engender all sectoral policies, programmes, projects and activities at all levels of the society and economy (National Gender Policy foreword, 2002). Some of the policy's focus areas include housing, health and democracy, justice and human rights. However, the

policy does not have specific provisions on elderly women. A new policy was adopted at the time of writing the report; however the report uses the old one since it was the one in use during the research period.

2.4 Specific human rights areas relevant to older women

2.4.1 Non-Discrimination

Work in the human rights arena has focussed on the prohibition of discrimination on the ground of age. According to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, states are required to refrain from discrimination (negative obligations) and to take action to combat formal and substantive discrimination and exclusion (positive obligations) towards its citizens (UN HRC General Comment No.18), leading to the need for states parties to incorporate age as a ground for discrimination. As regards older women the realisation has also been that there are differences in how men and women age. In its report, the UNFPA notes that:

‘Both older men and older women may face age discrimination. However, older women also face the cumulative effects of gender discrimination throughout their lives, including less access to education and health services, lower earning capacity and limited access to rights to land ownership, contributing to their vulnerability in older age.’

It is therefore necessary to take into consideration elderly women’s lack of access to education and resources amongst other factors which may not be applicable to men. This is also very crucial for women when one takes into consideration their multiple roles which prevent them from participating in economic activities and access to resources is very much dependent on their husbands.

2.4.2 Violence against Women

In addition to non-discrimination, focus has also been on the prevention of violence towards elderly people. This has been due to the realisation that discrimination leads to greater vulnerability to violence. Here our point of departure is the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) which provides for the definition of violence against women in Article 1 and a comprehensive definition in Article 2 as follows:

Article 1

For the purposes of this Declaration, the term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Article 2

Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

(b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;

(c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

Though a non binding document, this definition has come to be accepted as it puts obligations on the state to protect women from violence occurring both in public and private. It extends the state's obligations from the family to the community as well as violence perpetuated by the state regardless of where it occurs. This is very crucial considering that the state has previously tended to avoid interfering with what happens in the private sphere.

In Africa, these principles have been adopted by the SADC countries in the addendum to the SADC Gender Protocol which reaffirms state parties' commitment to the prevention and eradication of violence against women and children in the SADC region. Among other things, the addendum calls on state parties to adopt legislative measures to ensure the protection and removal of all forms of discrimination against and empowerment of women whose circumstances make them especially vulnerable to violence and it specifically mentions the aged. It is also important to note that the Beijing

Declaration and Platform for Action also recognised that elderly women are particularly vulnerable to violence (Beijing, para 116).

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Theoretical framework

There are a number of theories that informed the research process as well as the analysis of the data collected. These will be looked at in this chapter.

3.1.1 Feminist Perspectives on Ageing

Feminist studies on ageing (or feminist gerontology) have come about because of the noted exclusion of a women's perspective from the previous studies on ageing. They do not exclude men but identify with the fact that men and women experience ageing differently as a result of the social construction of gender and relations inequality. As **Calasanti** observes:

‘In its theories of such systems of inequality, feminist gerontology recognizes that both women and men have gender and that their experiences are structured by *gender relations*: dynamic, constructed, institutionalized processes by which people orient their behaviours to ideals of manhood and womanhood, influencing life chances as they do so...’(Calasanti, 2009:472).

She proceeds to say:

‘...because men's privileges are intimately tied to women's disadvantages, the situation of one group cannot be understood without at least implicit reference to the position of the other’ (2009:473).

In addition to gender relations, there also emerges the concept of *age relations* which as put by Hendricks (2003 cited by Calasanti, 2009:474) acknowledges that societies are organised on the basis of age and that groups gain identities as they strive to live up to age-specific ideals of behaviour. Age therefore increases the level of existing inequalities whilst at the same time it presents a loss of power for those that are old. For instance, this explains the pressure by old people to avoid the physical markers of ageing because of the stigma and cultural devaluation that are associated with old age. Such pressure leads to some getting cosmetic surgery and other procedures and this is more present in women faced with the pressure to look young and beautiful (Calasanti, 2009).

This informed my research and data collection by recognising the intersectionality between gender and age for women as they grow up. For instance the loss of power as one grows up was evident from some of the women I interviewed. Many of them no longer engaged in the activities which were assisting them earn a living because they became frail with age.

In addition to this, gender relations were also at play in that a loss of income earning for women who had lost their husbands or children was a contributing factor to the threat to their personal security. These women's background showed that they were relying on their husbands for resources since they were themselves for instance not in any form of employment. This informed the data collection from the different kinds of key respondents (that is elderly women) in understanding for instance how women's economic status is influenced by their marital status.

3.1.2 Liberal Feminist Theory

This theory emphasises core principles of freedom of choice, individual rights, non-discrimination and equality of opportunity (Roederer, 301). It challenges the content of the law to remove bias and discrimination to ensure that women and men receive equal treatment before the law to occupy equal positions in society. The theory became crucial during the research period more especially during interviews with the officials many of whom emphasised that the community is well aware of the principles of equality and non-discrimination as they appear in the laws and policies. For example one of the officials from the ministry of Gender emphasised that, 'the law does not allow for discrimination'.

However, it was also interesting on the other hand, to listen to the elderly women's views on how the laws and policies are operating in reality. It was interesting to note for instance that these women are not aware of some of these policies since they are not involved in the planning processes as well as the lack of information on these programmes.

Further to this, another strand of this theory encompassing the sameness/difference debate was also observed and informed the research process. This debate asks whether the aim should be equal treatment for men and women on the basis that women are the same as men or we see the differences between them. It was apparent during the analysis of the data the effective operation of laws like the

Older Persons Act and the Social Welfare Act requires the recognition of the differences between elderly women undertaking the care giving role and elderly men not doing so.

3.1.3 Marxist Feminism

Marxist feminists are primarily concerned with the division of labour that keeps women in the domestic sphere and men in the workplace (Tong, p110). The result is that work done by women is trivialised and undervalued. This informed much of the research process more especially when considering the role taken up by elderly women as care givers and the absence of assistance from the government. It was also quite helpful when analysing the Older Persons Act and the Social Welfare Act's criterion for eligibility for assistance.

The silence over the role of elderly care givers was also evident from the information gathered from the officials. It became evident that the work undertaken by women in the home is taken as normal and culturally acceptable. This undervaluing of elderly women's work proved to have an adverse effect on the security of some of them as it will be discussed in the coming chapters.

3.1.4 Relational Feminism

This focuses on women's reproductive role and the nurturing relationships. It stresses the value of caretaking and relationships. The work in this area has focussed on the recognition that women value relationships by emphasising on values, virtues, and traits such as:

Interdependence, community, connection, sharing, emotion, body, trust, absence of hierarchy, nature, imminence, process, joy, peace, and life whilst men as a group are associated with values, virtues, and traits such as "independence, autonomy, intellect, will, wariness, hierarchy, domination, culture, transcendence, product, ascetism, war, and death. (Braggin, 1982, cited in Tong, 2009: 163)

What came out clearly from the research process was the fact that the values of women being relational are indeed manifest in many cultures. These women have in their lives invested in relationships their whole life with one of them having cared for her granddaughter who has downs' syndrome from a young age to the present time (the grandchild is now in her twenties).

In summary, the above theories helped me understand the situation of elderly women in Kadoma.

3.2 Methodological Framework

The methodologies below were employed during the research period in the collection and analysis of data.

3.2.1 Women's Law Approach

This approach takes women's lived realities as the starting point with the purpose of describing, explaining and understanding the legal position of women in order to improve the position of women in society. It does this through examination of the law from a women's perspective (Dahl, 1988). This approach was necessary during the research process as it directed me to the need to interview the people who are directly affected, in this case the elderly women themselves. Apart from hearing from the people responsible for policy formulation and implementation like the Council and Ministry of Gender officials, it was very pertinent to hear from the elderly women themselves as to how they relate to the laws and policies that are in place.

It was also crucial during the study to use one strand of the feminist legal methods to ask the 'woman question' which seeks explanations for women's exclusion from those who perpetuate such exclusion (Barnett, 1998). This helped my understanding of the problems that elderly women face on a daily basis which in effect makes the laws that would otherwise been helpful to them less helpful. For instance, through the interviews conducted it was realised that women are treated as a homogenous group and this helped in explaining some of the problems encountered by elderly women.

3.2.2 Grounded Theory Approach

This approach is a grounded research process in which the researcher collects data, sifts and analyses it, considers the implications of her findings, determines what to collect next to meet her needs and continues the collection and analysis cycle (Bentzon et.al, 1998). This pays attention to the emerging categories requiring further inquiry. During our daily evening meetings with our supervisor, we would analyse the data collected and identify the gaps that had to be filled by following up with particular respondents. For example, I was informed by the caretaker at Rimuka Old People's Home that it is the

council which is responsible for the running of the home. I decided to include the Council among the list of my respondents to find out more about their role. This was very crucial since they admitted that they do not want to be seen as the ones responsible for running the home as they have financial constraints.

3.2.3 Actors and Structures Approach

Considering that the provision of security to elderly women involves service delivery by different players in society, it became important to engage with these service providers. To illustrate this, it was heard from some of the elderly women interviewed that they fear for their daily safety considering that they have been targets of sexual violence. One of them even said:

‘We now walk in groups when we want to go to our fields as it is much safer that way’

On the contrary, for the police (responsible for providing this security) or other officials this did not seem a problem. Whilst they would admit that there had been such incidents, they tended to think it was not a problem anymore. This also helped understand the lack of dialogue between the officials and the elderly women to be able to understand their concerns. It also helped to explain the absence of programs tailored to meet elderly women’s needs as there is a lack of data or statistics on these women due to the absence of investigations by the officials.

3.2.4 Legal Centralist Approach

This involves an examination of the law as it exists in statutes and case law in an attempt to understand the legal position occupied by women. It starts by appreciating that law is a reflection of social and political imperatives and is shaped by a multitude of competing interests, hence the starting point should be a law in context approach (Stewart, 1997). This helped in understanding the gaps that are in existence in catering for the needs of elderly women when for instance the laws provide for equality of all and equal access to resources and opportunities. It informed the process in helping appreciate why laws such as the Social Welfare Act and the Older Persons Act are not adequately addressing elderly women’s needs. By hearing from the elderly women themselves, I was able to understand why such laws fall short of addressing their needs.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The research process employed a number of methods in the data collection process which were: individual interviews, collective individual interview, focus group discussions and desk research.

3.3.1 Individual Interviews

This involved one on one interaction with the respondents that I interviewed and it was also the widely used method in interviewing the elderly women. There was no fixed set of questions used so as to allow the respondents to talk without being restricted to any specific information. I identified many of these respondents through other community members and I visited their homes.

3.3.2 Collective Individual Interview

This was when other community members joined in our conversation. This method was employed during one interview which was conducted whilst we were seated outside of the respondent's house where about four other people joined the conversation. This was particularly important in the triangulation/ corroboration of the information that had been given by the key respondent before.

3.3.4 Focus Group Discussions

This was used when a workshop was held with officials from key government departments to hear their views on a wide number of issues. Even though I did not personally attend the discussion, I was represented by members of the group who were able to collect information on my area of interest. This was very helpful as it allowed for the collection of different views at one time.

3.3.5 Desk Research

This method involved reading material related to my topic. I read other research findings conducted on elderly people, books, international human rights instruments, domestic legislation and policies. This was particularly helpful before setting out for field as it defined the areas that required probing. For instance, it assisted in discovering the gap in the absence of research in the area of elderly women’s security.

3.3.6 Sampling Methods

The selection of the respondents was very much informed by the women’s law and grounded theory approaches. I selected these respondents depending on the basis that they were the key subjects of the research. This was also influenced by the fact that I had a targeted age group though this did not stop me from considering the situation of those women below the age of 65 who were in similar circumstances as those within the age group bearing in mind that they are going towards the same. Also included were other community members who assisted in identifying the key respondents.

Below is a table showing the key and community respondents interviewed:

Table 2: community respondents

Location	Female (above 65)	Male(above 65)	Other (community members)	
			Male	Female
Rimuka	6	1	2	2
Ingezi	1			1
Waverly		1		1
Kadoma CBD			1	3

Respondents were also purposely selected on the basis of the different roles that they play in society, this basically focussed on the different actors and institutions. These included the police, courts, social welfare as well as non state actors such as religious leaders (See appendix 2).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.0 Situation of elderly women in Kadoma

This chapter looks at the research findings as regards the situation of elderly women in Kadoma. It examines the findings in relation to the assumptions which informed the research process.

4.1 Care giving

The research findings showed that there are many elderly women undertaking this role. These women look after the younger generation which otherwise should have been looking after them. Many of the households to which these women belong are of the skipped generation type, where grandparents live with their grandchildren with the middle generation missing (the elderly women's children are not there). This was confirmed by some of the officials who were interviewed. These families have been created as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, since families and communities took up the responsibility of looking after the young ones left orphaned. The church has taken an active role to assist these women with food, clothes, and school fees and in some cases even pays their house rentals.

It was also discovered that it is elderly women unlike elderly men who are likely to be living in these households. Many of the elderly women interviewed are widowed. The findings also indicated that care giving is mainly done by women even in cases where men are around, for instance some of the women were doing this alone despite having their sons alive. One of the women had this to say:

‘I had nine children, seven boys and two girls, but the girls have since passed on leaving behind four children. I am the one who looks after them since my other children do not work. I am the one responsible for the grandchildren's education, at the moment one of them who is in form three needs school fees but I have no idea how I will raise that.’

Her story thus underlined the view that women are the ones who usually undertake this work. In many cases, this role is taken up by the maternal grandmother.

However, in other cases, elderly women undertake this role together with their spouses in cases where both are alive. A couple we visited in Waverly looks after seventeen grandchildren, nieces and nephews who have been left orphaned by the death of the couple's children, brothers and sisters. It was established that such families had no problems managing their security in relation to their care giving

role as they rely on each other's input, the man does piece work being a builder by profession and the woman is able to buy and sell different items since she is able to form small business cooperatives with other women. This is unlike the situation for those who are alone for example a widow from Rimuka who solely relies on the money she earns after selling tomatoes and other fresh produce on the streets of Kadoma which she does at the risk of being chased away by the Council for illegal vending and having her merchandise seized from her.

The research further established that this care giving role presents a threat to the security situation of some of the elderly women. For instance, some are given problems by those who are under their care, for example the case of one woman whose grandson dropped out of school and was causing problems around the home until she reported him to the police. The police confirmed receiving such type of cases though there were no statistics to support this, which could among other reasons be attributed to the fact that such cases are mostly settled out of court.

In addition, these women face security problems in trying to provide for those under their care. It was established that many elderly women do not receive any social welfare assistance from the government or any other assistance from Non Governmental Organisations. Many of these women do not also receive any pension since they will not have been engaging in any form of employment which would have guaranteed them the pension. They will in many cases have been reliant on their husbands, losing all assistance in the event of their husbands' death. As a result, many of them have to find alternative means of earning an income. Some engage in urban farming which presented security problems for them². These women have been targets of sexual violence when they go to tend to their fields. An 83 year old woman from Rimuka narrated to me how she survived an attempted rape from a boy young enough to be her grandson. She explained as follows:

‘...he asked me how I thought my vagina was special and told me he was going to have sex with me. He pushed me to the ground but I grabbed his private parts and he let me go...I thought it was better for me to die that day than to be raped.’

I was also told of a certain elderly woman who was raped by three boys in the presence of her husband. What came out further is the fact that such attacks come from young men and that they opt to rape these elderly women since they get sexual intercourse for free unlike when they do so with

² Urban farming is illegal and unregulated, though one official indicated that there are plans to change this.

women their own age. The situation has resulted in these women going to the fields in groups as a way of protecting themselves. On the other hand, many of the officials said there are no such incidents. Upon further inquiry, they would admit that this was indeed happening but that it stopped. They were however not in a position to provide any statistics on such cases.

In summary, it was established that there are elderly women undertaking the care giving role and that this does in some cases present security problems to them as they try to provide for their families and in some cases from their own families.

4.2 Kinship ties and kin availability

The research findings were mixed on this point. For some women, these kinship ties were available and could rely to be cared for by other people, who in many cases are family members. For example, a woman interviewed from Ingezi who is looked after by her son and daughter in law. Some elderly women also rely on their kin to assist in caring for young ones who may be under their care. However, as other studies have shown, this does not mean that family can and does provide adequate support (WHO, p30). This is due in part to the fact that those providing support have their own families to look after and in other cases, the elderly women have many people under their care. For example, one of the women looks after four of her grandchildren said that despite the fact that she gets assistance from her son who is in South Africa, such assistance is not enough and she still has to borrow money from other people.

For other elderly women such kinship ties are unavailable and this renders them vulnerable and destitute as in the case of the women in the Old People's Home. One of them shared her story:

'I was in a polygamous union and when another man proposed to me, I accepted knowing it will be a monogamous marriage. I was living with my husband growing crops and rearing animals until he passed on. Since we had no children together, I was left alone with no-one to look after me. A distant relation took me in but later decided to stop looking after me and someone brought me to Rimuka bus station and gave me directions to the home'

For another, the death of her husband and her two children left her with the responsibility of looking after four grandchildren who later moved to town to look for work. She was left alone with no one to look after her and ended up in the Old People's Home. It can be agreed that for these women, the situation would have been otherwise if they had their family or kin to look after them considering that some of these women complained that people were taking advantage of their being alone to steal their property.

It was also established that kinship availability is dependent on whether these elderly women and men invested in relationships during their younger years. This helped me in appreciating the reality that caretaking and nurturing relationships has different effects on different women as well as explain elderly men's situation. Being relational may yield positive results for women in their old age, for instance, investment in relationships helped explain why there are few women in the Rimuka Old People's home³, in that many of the men had no family to look after them in their old age, for instance one of them was living alone before being taken to the home. He was however before this, married and in active employment. The same could also be said of the woman in the Old People's Home above, who left her family and could be said to have 'deviated' from the 'feminine' norm of interdependence and being relational. In contrast, for one of the elderly women in Ingezi, who was being taken care of by her son and his wife, it could be said the nurturing work turned out to be beneficial for her.

Absence of relatives renders these women vulnerable to security problems in a number of ways. First, considering that they do not have any person to support them, these women have to find alternative sources of income like urban farming and as discussed above this presents a threat to their personal security. Secondly, those who end up being put in the Old People's Home also face security threats. It was discovered that the men in the home make sexual advances towards these elderly women at night considering that the home has no caretaker during the night to monitor what goes on. The home does not have a security guard at night leaving these elderly women vulnerable to security problems.

³ At the time of conducting the research, the home had seven men and two women.

4.3 Culture and Cultural Beliefs

The research revealed that Kadoma has diversity in its citizenry with a mixture of Zimbabweans and people from other countries. This according to one of the officials is because of the factories and gold mines that were offering jobs to people before they were shut down. From my own observation, this diversity was evident as some of the respondents originated from Malawi and Zambia among other countries. Such diversity also means a diversity of cultures. For instance on caring for the elderly, I was told that among the Shona, it is the duty of the daughter to look after the mother. It is in many cases generalised that elderly women will be taken care of by their daughters forgetting that not all the citizens are Shona. In addition to this, according to one of the officials, there is also a danger being posed to the extended family as more families are now becoming nuclear and as discussed above there have been changes in family structures such that it is no longer daughters who are undertaking this role.

Cultural beliefs also dictate the way of life in Kadoma. However, not all beliefs produce positive results for elderly women there. An interview with some elderly women and other community members revealed the negative side of culture where elderly women are accused of practising witchcraft. One of the women had this to say:

‘I remember there was a time when a certain woman came to my house and accused me of having caused her illness by bewitching her. She insulted me to the extent that I reported to the police. I was lucky that she came and apologised to me but it had brought shame upon me.’

It was found out that each time death occurs in the community, people always point fingers at others for being responsible. However, it was quite interesting from the official point of view when they said instances of witchcraft accusations are not there. The officials were of the view that since there is the Witchcraft Suppression Act which prohibits one from accusing another of witchcraft, such accusations are not there as people fear being arrested. But as the research showed, this is not the case since such accusations are still made. However, it was heard from some residents of Waverly and Kadoma Central Business District that such accusations are not there, but such a distinction could be attributed to the difference in living arrangements and poverty levels in that in these two places, the conditions there being better than in the other areas.

4.4 State Intervention

There have been a number of interventions by the state in trying to assist elderly persons in Kadoma. For instance the Kadoma municipal council donated the piece of land where the Rimuka Old People's Home (opened in 2006) was constructed. The home was initially for men only but according to the volunteer caretaker there, it admitted a woman last year since there are no homes for women whilst waiting for her to be transferred to another home outside Rimuka but that the same has not happened to date and they also admitted another woman.

According to the gender focal person, the Council is responsible for paying the caretaker in the home but that the Council does not want to be seen to be responsible for the home due to financial constraints. The Council does not have specific funding for the Home and the residents have to rely on well wishers and as established by the research such outside assistance is rare.

In addition to this, Council also runs a Housing Scheme where vulnerable people, elderly women included get a 50% reduction on housing rates and that one criterion is that one must be a caregiver. However, this programme has lacked publicity and elderly women have not benefitted. In addition to this, one of the officials said they once refused to give some women a piece of land for agricultural purposes which they wanted to help their families for fear of opening the floodgates. As such there are still elderly women living in houses that are sub standard and this renders them vulnerable to security threats with some women saying they do not go outside to relieve themselves in the night since the toilets are far away. The findings also showed that there is a lack of coordination on the different state institutions in that it is thought that it is the Ministry of Gender which is solely responsible for protecting women's rights forgetting the multifaceted nature of women's problems as well as the different kinds of women being dealt with.

Thus in brief, elderly women in Kadoma face security challenges as a result of being care givers, having no one to look after them and also due to cultural beliefs. The research also revealed the effect that these women's financial standing affects their daily life, since lack of stable financial sources was a recurring issue.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter analyses and draws a link on how the situation for elderly women in Kadoma presents security challenges to them.

a. Financial Assistance

The research found out that there are a number of situations that expose women to security problems. Elderly women struggle to find resources with which to support their families and as per the discussions above, they are vulnerable to personal security problems as they look for alternative sources of income. Many of the respondents interviewed do not receive any social welfare assistance from the government despite the fact that they would really benefit from the same. Such a finding means that the laws such as the Social Welfare Assistance Act enacted to help these elderly women mitigate the effects of old age offer little or no assistance. The inadequate funding towards this cause is a major obstacle in protecting their right to social welfare assistance and as established renders elderly women vulnerable to security problems. It is necessary for the Government to have a gender responsive budget which at the same time considers the vulnerable nature of elderly women due to their age if the Older Persons Act is to be of benefit to these women. Preparation for ageing must begin way before these women have aged to establish a sound financial base.

b. Special Interventions

To further protect elderly women, Government institutions as well as other institutions must move away from essentialising and generalising the situation of women. It is necessary to have interventions that specifically respond to the needs of elderly women. It must also be appreciated that men and women age differently and the responses must be tailored to suit the needs of elderly women. For instance, the finding that it is mainly elderly women who undertake the care giving role means that issues of financial assistance or other form of assistance must have due regard to this in considering their eligibility to receive social welfare assistance. This can also be further achieved if there is full engagement with these elderly women in the programmes or initiatives tailored for them. Coupled with

information dissemination on the different initiatives being put in place, these women will benefit through their participation.

c. Data and Statistics

It was also evident that there is a lack of data and statistics disaggregated both on the basis of age and sex. It was discovered that there was a lack of information and statistics specifically on elderly women from the different institutions. For example, the police admitted that there were attacks targeted towards elderly women but could not provide statistics in support. One of the recommendations by the Committee on the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women is that countries must provide sex aggregated data and comprehensive statistical information on older women (CEDAW Committee, 2010). The different state actors must undertake to have available statistics on the condition of elderly women in Kadoma. Through a multi sectoral approach which allows coordination between different state departments, each department can provide these statistics and be in a position to find out the areas requiring intervention.

d. Operation of the Old People's Home

Whilst appreciating the Council's intervention through the provision of the Old People's Home, the lack of a clear mandate on who has the responsibility of running the home presents an obstacle to the protection of women from the security threats. There is no clear duty bearer for instance on the provision of a security guard or a full time care giver. It is necessary for the state to take up the responsibility over the home or engaging with other stakeholders. It must encourage the formation of properly regulated Non Governmental Organisations which they can work with. The different state institutions must work together in response to the needs of elderly women. For instance, the police should be able to engage with the Department of Social Welfare to determine if there are any elderly women facing security risks.

e. Interventions on the effects of Culture on Elderly Women

The multiplicity in cultures and the effect this has on elderly women should be fully taken into consideration in coming up with interventions for elderly women. A clear understanding of the differences in beliefs will assist in protecting elderly women from accusations of witchcraft among others. Considering the disparity in opinions and views between the officials and the community members, there is a need to fully engage with the communities on the ground to get a clear picture of the situation. This will assist in understanding the law (Witchcraft Suppression Act) in action and not just in books.

Further, an appreciation of the fact that customary beliefs that children look after their parents in old age is being challenged by the death of children or the emergence of more nuclear families is necessary to ensure the effective protection of elderly women rendered destitute. Each case must be approached differently to ensure that the responses are effective.

CONCLUSION

The discussion above has shown that elderly women face security challenges as they undertake care giving roles, due to kin absence as well as due to some cultural beliefs which associate witchcraft with being old. Despite the existence of good laws such as the Social Welfare Assistance Act and the Older Persons Act on paper which could be of huge benefit to elderly women, these do not translate well on the ground. It has also established that there it is necessary not to undervalue elderly women's work which is mostly domestic involving care giving work. If elderly women's rights are to be fully realised and protected, the state must take active steps to create programmes responding to elderly women's specific needs.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

DEVAW: Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women

NGOs: Non Governmental Organisations

SADC: Southern African Development Community

WHO: World Health Organisation

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund

Appendix

Appendix 1: Table showing list of actors/officials interviewed

Name	Sex	Occupation/Designation	Department/Institution
Reverend Gwena	Male	Reverend	All Saints Anglican Church- Kadoma
Ms Thom	Female	Volunteer Caretaker	Rimuka Old People's Home
Williams Muzavazi Patson Chapuka Tafadzwa Maeresera	Male	Not given	Ministry of Gender and Women's Affairs
Mr Mchemwa	Male	Area Public Prosecutor	
Mr Chipwanya	Male	Acting District Social Welfare Officer	Social Welfare Office
Dzivai Shyletety	Female	Acting Director for Housing and Community Services	Kadoma Municipal Council
Happison Hatinahama	Male	Foreman, Waterworks, Engineering Department	Kadoma Municipal Council
Ms Zhou	Female	Director of Finance	Kadoma Municipal Council
Sgt Kuimba	Male	Police Officer	Rimuka police station
His Worship Richard Ramaboea	Male	Magistrate	Kadoma Magistrate Court
Exton Muzavazi	Male	Community Services Officer	Council: Rimuka Office
Reverend Mazula	Male	Reverend	St Pauls Anglican Church, Rimuka

Note: Also interviewed was an officer from the Victim Friendly Unit, whose name was not be obtained

