



## Research Article



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## Examining the factors that militate against women reporting domestic violence to DOVVSU amongst Talensi and Bolga in Northern Ghana

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**Abstract**

Globally, discrimination against women is an international epidemic that impacts many women's lives. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, which also underscore gender equality and women's empowerment for peace around the world and the duty of every country to check whatever happens to women in their countries accordingly. In Talensi district and Bolga Municipality of northern Ghana, women are vulnerable to violence because of the patriarchal society in the northern part of the country; the resulting male dominance results in extensive violence against women. This study looked at factors which actively opposed domestic violence reported to DOVVSU in the district of Talensi and the municipality of Bolga. Fifty married women were chosen using methodology known as purposive sampling. Semi-structured surveys and in-depth interviews were used to collect the data. Registration and transcription were used to evaluate the data. According to the findings of the study, at least seven out of 10 women in the district surveyed have been exposed to some form of violence. The study showed again that women who have a higher educational degree are more exploited by their wives than women who have lower education levels. That may happen because higher education women are more exposed and refuse to submit to their husbands. The study suggested that there should be DOVVSU units in the area, one would be very beneficial because the rate of abuse against women is troubling and the unit's presence in the district would be a message to men who harass women.

**Keywords:** domestic, gender, violence, victim, women

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### Public Interest Statement

This study looked at factors which actively opposed domestic violence reported to DOVVSU in the district of Talensi and the municipality of Bolga. Fifty married women were chosen using methodology known as purposive sampling. The study suggested that there should be DOVVSU units in the area, one would be very beneficial because the rate of abuse against women is troubling and the unit's presence in the district would be a message to men who harass women.

## 1. Introduction

Many women throughout the world are silently victimised by various forms of domestic abuse since it takes place in their own homes, which is considered a private issue. As a result of this idea, there has been a rise in domestic violence against married women because the victims do not disclose the crime. Gender inequality is a grave infringement of human rights. As a result of the increased stigma surrounding domestic violence, many women are reluctant to come out when they have been subjected to abuse (Ackah 2012). According to Heise et al. (2002), women's violence is the most common kind of violence against women around the world (Ackah 2012). A new practise in our societies is domestic harassment, which has persisted for many years and is now seen as a pervasive cultural phenomenon in most African countries (Ackah 2012). As a result of domestic violence being pervasive around the world, it exacerbates socioeconomic concerns such as the devaluation of women, patriarchal governance systems, authoritarian religion, and the existence of military governments (Walker 1999). It has been shown that stress-related factors such as poverty, loss of education, economic advice, phases of envy, high levels of alcohol and drug misuse, and the existence of big families have raised the risk of domestic abuse. Martin et al. (1999); Wagner et al. (2001). 1999, Xingjuan. As a result of the 2007 Domestic Violence Act, the problem of domestic violence has been addressed head-on in Ghana. One of the most important law enforcement agencies nowadays is the DOVVSU, or Domestic Violence Support Unit. The Women and Youth Unit was established in October of 1998. (WAJU). WAJU was a division of the Ghana Police Force that handled specialised cases. Because of the rise in reports of harassment and abuse of women and children, the police force was created. Every regional capital in Ghana hosted a re-enactment in 2002. Investigation of all relevant offences against women and children was among WAJU's tasks. It also dealt with incidences of domestic violence, child abuse and delinquency, and prosecuted all eligible cases. The Inspector General of police might also undertake other functions. People can expect free public services, protection from all forms of violence, including physical and sexual assault, psychological and emotional abuse, and negative social practises from the DOVVSU. They can also expect the organisation to build a reliable database to help identify crimes, prosecute those who have committed them, and treat crime victims and their families with respect. It also helps victims in need of immediate care, as well as clinical psychologists, social workers in the community services division, and unit consultants. To help victims who require assistance, DOVVSU plans to work with NGOs and other members of civil society (DOVVSU, 2011). However, it is difficult for women in Ghana to report domestic abuse. This is because some cultural values suggest although a few women report domestic violence cases to the women and young people program, domestic violence is a circle of relatives' business and ought to consequently be treated outside the criminal justice system (WAJU, 2003). In Ghana violence against women is manifested, according to Appiah and Cusack (1999), by some cultural traditions, such as widows' ancestry, forced marriages, women's genital mutilations, and women's circumcision.

Since the establishment of DOVVSU, no study has been carried out on factors affecting resolving domestic abuse cases in Ghana, domestic violence against women, especially in the Upper East region of DOVVSU. This study aims to identify the influencing factors in the Talensi and Bolga

areas for domestic violence against women.

### 1.3 Research Objective

Identify the factors that militate against women reporting domestic violence to DOVVSU between Talensi and Bolga in northern Ghana.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 What is domestic violence?

Viciousness against ladies is any demonstration of sex-based brutality closes or may influence sexual, physical or mental badgering or pain to, the casualty of savagery, including dangers to, terrorizing of or nonsensical refusal of opportunity, either openly or private, as expressed in the UN assertion at the elimination of Violence against women (UN 1993). Savagery and wellbeing is additionally portrayed Organization (WHO, 2002) as any act of physical viciousness and risk to one's will or to a gather of individuals who might lead to passing, mental trouble, harm and hardship. Be that as it may, (Politics et al. 2000) portrays all shapes of physical viciousness, assault and stalking by means of a woman's previous or recent confederate for example viciousness towards the family. (Politics et al. 2000) portrays household mishandle as an attack and control on the insinuate accomplice of a grown-up. In conclusion, a few analysts were separated into three beneath the concept of residential viciousness: physical viciousness, sexual savagery and financial savagery (George 1997).

### 2.2 Factors that influence domestic violence.

Residential viciousness contributing components shift from nation to nation and from locale to region. Phorano et al. (2005) carried out inquire about in Botswana and detailed that the bridal fetched of ladies in marriage, primarily utilized by men as a pardon for mishandle, included components which impact residential violence. Martignoni (2002) has expressed that social conviction that benefit men as holders of specialist among families lead to the higher level of residential savagery against ladies in Zambia in her inquire about on savagery against ladies in Zambia. She reports hence that the wedding cost of such malobola (lobola) or bride in Zambia too contributes to household viciousness since pride installments uncover ladies to spouse viciousness since they are entitled to treat them as a virtual slave.

There cannot be any underestimation of the part of patriarchy in antagonistic impacts of household violence. Research in Africa reliably demonstrates that guys feel superior than ladies and those men rule ladies in their connections (Gage and Thomas 2013) 18 percent of ever married women had experienced intimate partner physical violence, 4 percent had experienced intimate partner sexual violence, and 24 percent had experienced intimate partner emotional violence at least once in their life time. Of women who had ever been pregnant, 5 percent had experienced physical violence during pregnancy. The highest rates of violence victimization in the current union or most recent union, regardless of the type of violence, were found in the South South (46%. Some portion of Ghanaian setting, patriarchy has been portrayed by numerous analysts who conducted ponders (Rydström, 2010; (Poggendorf-Kakar 2018) Galtung 1996; Parpart et al, 2014; Qayum and Beam 2010). For occurrence, Rydström, (2010) depicted patriarchy as Obvious as an fundamental figure within the different ways in which female casualties of residential savagery have looked for to clarify the mishandle they have persevered. The believe concerning what is more establish that Patriarchy endorses roles and expert within the household climate, authorizes the utilize of viciousness and legitimizes it.

It is implanted within the nature of society's culture and is well caught on as the auxiliary relations and social developments that make the activity of the manly sexual orientation additional completely suitable to control the presence of others. (Poggendorf-Kakar 2018) and Parpart et al,

(2014) moreover depicted patriarchy as the framework of male dominance makes a road for elevating and consigning ladies. Galtung (1996) depicts the patriarchy for instance the institutionalization of masculine supremacy within vertical structures, with remarkably difficult connections between position and sexual orientation, legitimized by traditions, and commonly developing as coordinate viciousness connecting folks as subjects and females as objects. The patriarchal cadre trains women and men birth by how towards act and socializes them within cliché accommodations.

The more gendered the part of a man's manhood is, a woman is likely to encounter wickedness lacking. Qayum and Beam (2010) address patriarchy for example a task which distinguishes the predominant dominance of men in through the different forms and particular ranges of masculinity. Male virility is within some cases used because the coordinated inverse of femininity.

(Chabata 2010)both positively and negatively. Many studies have been done in Zimbabwe on lobola but they have mainly focused on how this practice is conducted and the cultural significance attached to it (Chigwedere, 1982 and Bourdillon, 1976 & 1998Kambarami (2006) moreover concurred that the prior analysts that Patriarchy as any control structure one where men play all social parts and hold ladies to the claim of male dominance in subordinate positions. He states, as well, that patriarchal standards produce difference between the genders, which renders ladies incapable to control their sexuality entirely.

(ActionAid 2009)the number of people facing chronic malnutrition was extremely high, and falling extremely slowly. Since 2005, it has jumped by 20 percent. An extra 170 million people have been pushed into hunger<sup>2</sup> Food prices remain stubbornly high in developing countries;<sup>3</sup> the global recession is hitting jobs and incomes; and climate change is battering rain-fed agriculture. Already nearly one in three of the world's children is growing up chronically malnourished. As a result, many will die before the age of five. Those who survive are likely to suffer irreversible cognitive and physical damage. They will complete fewer years of school, and earn less as adults. Their immune systems permanently impaired, they are 12 times more likely to die from easily preventable and treatable diseases. The children of undernourished mothers often suffer stunting while still in the womb, ensuring the vicious cycle will continue.<sup>4</sup> However, hunger is a choice that we make, not a force of nature. Hunger begins with inequality - inequality between men and women, and between rich and poor. It grows because of perverse policies that treat food purely as a commodity, not a right. It is because of these policies that most developing countries no longer grow enough to feed themselves, and that their farmers are amongst the hungriest and poorest people in the world. Meanwhile, the rich world battles growing obesity. But policies can be changed. In this scorecard, ActionAid tracks the dramatic progress that has been made when countries translate the right to food into concrete actions, such as investing in poor farmers, and introducing basic measures to protect the vulnerable. Their success makes the inaction and apathy of other countries all the more inexcusable. Our indicators are based on the actions that the UN has identified as most critical to reverse growing global hunger, most recently in its 2008 Comprehensive Framework for Action.<sup>5</sup> Developing countries have been graded on four indicators: their legal commitment to the right to food, their investment in agriculture and social protection, and their performance on hunger and child nutrition. Developed countries have been ranked on their aid to agriculture and social protection; and their commitment to sustainable agriculture and tackling climate change. T...,"author":{"dropping-particle":"","family":"ActionAid","given":"","non-dropping-particle":"","parse-names":false,"suffix":""},"container-title":"October","id":"ITEM-1","issue":"October","issued":{"date-parts":[[2009]]},"title":"Who 's Really Fighting Hunger? ActionAid's hungerfree scorecard investigates why a billion people are hungry","type":"article-journal"},"uris":["http://www.mendeley.com/documents/?uuid=48b66add-e637-3aa2-8f23-00dc6776d1a8"]},"mendeley":{"formattedCitation":"(ActionAid 2009 too clarified that stigmatization and social disgrace are a few of the variables that regularly anticipate ladies announcing Mishandle at the home. (Kinyoki et al. 2020)household members or communities experience both undernutrition

and overweight. Here, we show geospatial estimates of overweight and wasting prevalence among children under 5 years of age in 105 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs were of the see that instruction is one figure in enabling ladies. Instruction empowers them to gather, absorb, abuse and screen data, protect and protect themselves from all shapes of mishandle. The think about concluded that ladies with more instruction have more capacity to protect themselves in require, for case when adapting with a rough companion. Ladies with higher instruction levels are too anticipated to witness less violence. (Gudžinskienė, Raudeliūnaitė, and Uscila 2017) declared that instruction was one of the variables due to the truth when ladies are engaged through instruction. Instruction gives them the capacity to accumulate and acclimatize data, control and control the cutting-edge humankind, protected and secure themselves from several framework of violence. The think about concluded that ladies with more instruction have the control to bolster themselves in times of require, such as a manhandle accomplice. Ladies with higher instruction levels are too anticipated to encounter less violence. Ardayfio (2000) in a ponder distinguished household viciousness which included spouse beating, assault, debasement, widowhood ceremonies, constrained relational unions and female circumcision.

Women's socio-economic situation in Ghana was examined by Debie (2018) and it was revealed that cultural and religious convictions, obstructive behavior from others, and fear of social exclusion are the most common reasons people fail to report incidences of sexual orientation-based viciousness (GBV).

On the total, the hole pointed out as shortage thinks about of variables that militate against ladies announcing household savagery particularly within the northern of Ghana in which Talensi and Bolga included an inspiration for this think about is as displayed in this segment.

### **3. Methods and Materials Section**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The investigate makes utilize of the subjective investigate strategy (Gudžinskienė et al. 2017). This investigate was outlined through subjective inquire about since the factors beneath examination, which are variables that stifle ladies who report household mishandle, were enough clarified through phenomenological endeavors to resolve the participants' points of view. The analyst recognizes the involvement of a key demeanor of a marvel as portrayed by members Phenomenological Design. Comprehension of lived encounter marks phenomenology as both hypothesis and viable, and strategy includes the investigation of a restricted number of subjects through intensive and maintained interaction (Guyen 2018)parents face the new challenge of teaching their children to successfully navigate learning in a digital world. A review of the existing literature provided a history of both the benefits and risks of one-to-one learning. Research revealed a lack of parent voice. The purpose of this transcendental, phenomenological study was to look at the experiences of 10 parents whose students had access to one-to-one technology required or provided for educational purposes at a private, faith-based secondary school in California. Baumrind's (1967, 1968. This is since the factors were as of now related to person subjective substances. Through the subjective technique, the analyst was able to look at the more profound designs and different measurements of household viciousness. Through a subjective procedure, the analyst was able to look at the more profound designs and numerous measurements of household violence.

#### **3.2 Target Population**

The populace objective the investigate work is made up of: Casualties of GBV within the Talensi Locale and Bolga District as well as work force of DOVVSU.

### 3.3 Study Population

The study population includes individuals between the ages of 20 and 60 who have witnessed gender-based cruelty, as well as selected police officers from Talensi and Bolga Territorial DOVVSU.

### 3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Scheme

A total of twenty-four respondents, four males and twenty females, were used as the test measure for this ponder via purposive examination. According to Creswell, a test estimate of fifteen or more is sufficient for subjective thought. One member of the DOVVSU staff was unsatisfied. Intentional inspection was used to choose individuals for this examination. This is often a circumstance where an analyst employments caution for a specific reason in choosing cases. Reason testing is pertinent in three (3) situations. Next, an analyst employment it to choose uncommon, shrewd occasions. Moment, deliberate inspecting of populaces that are specialized or troublesome to get to can be utilized by the analysts (covered up populaces). At last, a deliberate test is utilized to classify different sorts of cases for a point-by-point investigation by a researcher.

### 3.5 Sources of Data and Data Collection

Both primary and secondary information was gathered for this investigation. Primary data were gathered through in-depth (semi-structured) interviews.

### 3.6 Data Collection and Data Analysis

The information from field was transcribed and interpreted. The information was at that point analyzed specifically to come up with topics which were at that point talked about. The participants' answers to the investigate questions were at that point gathered into different subjects to reply to points of intrigued to the researcher.

## 4. Findings

To find answers to the research question, 'the factors that militate against women reporting domestic violence to DOVVSU amongst Talensi and Bolga areas in northern Ghana?' the responses from the respondents are presented below:

### 4.1 Cultural Beliefs Practices (Patriarchal Social Structures)

This study identified patriarchal social structures as an important factor that prevents women reporting domestic violence to DVVVSU unit within the study areas.

According to the interviewees, the northern Ghanaian culture features several customs that obviously allow for violence against women. Most respondents agreed that our culture tolerates domestic violence. One of them stated that:

*Women are expected to be quiet and subservient in our communal cultures, which means that abuse of women and girls is regarded as part of the culture and cannot be reported.*

Another respondent also stated that:

*When a man becomes the head of the household, many in this community believe he is entitled to be aggressive toward women and to believe that he is better than them, and if a woman exposes his violent behavior to DOVVSU, she will be fired and compelled to return to her father's place of residence.*

Another respondent agreed with the others that:

*Certain guys are so powerful that they will resort to violence at the least hint of resistance from a woman. And because guys are typically stronger, they will use it against you to demonstrate how powerful they are, and as a woman, you are unable to report them due to your marriage.*

From the data collected and responses from respondents, cultures have a much influence on the way men in the study areas think about violence against women. Several Ghanaian cultural

practices particularly northern part of the country portrays women as inferior to men.

#### 4.2 Paying bride price or dowry of women

According to the respondents, several Ghanaian men, particularly in the northern part of the country, consider the payment of the bride price to mean that the man has complete power over the woman, who is required to treat him with the utmost respect. However, if a woman dies, the husband may bury her without notifying the woman's relatives. One respondent said:

*My husband thinks he owns me because he paid my bride price and even sees me as part of his properties and not a partner.*

Another respondent also said that:

*The dowry or bride price the husband pays my parents make him think that he bought me and am his property and if he does something to me, I should keep quiet and should not report to anybody.*

According to the study's findings, the dowry or bride price that a man spends before marrying a woman tends to convince him that the lady is his property and that he may do anything he wants with her.

#### 4.3 Interference, Familial and community pressures

Unfortunately, even when a victim decides to disclose a case of domestic abuse, there is a great deal of intervention and pressure from both within and without. Most respondents in the study areas stated that most women, even after reporting a case to the unit, withdraw the case due to pressure from the man's family and outsiders, in particular, the woman family, who frequently uses the dowry received from the husband to dowry the wives of the women/victim brothers. As a result, it becomes extremely difficult for the victim family to seek divorce due to their inability to refund the dowry. The respondents also mentioned that familial and community pressures prevent women reporting violence to DOVVSU.

One respondent explained that:

*I was beaten by husband and collapsed and was sent to the hospital. I decided to report my husband to the police station (DOVVSU unit). My husband uncle influenced me to drop the case.*

Another respondent also explained that:

*Family members, pastors, chiefs, queen mothers, and political leaders normally influenced women not to report domestic violence committed by their husbands to police station (DOVVSU Unit)*

A respondent was asserted that:

*Opinion leaders, political parties and religious leaders also intervene. The professional at the DOVVSU Unit also confirmed.*

#### 4.4 Social Stigma

In the research locations, most respondents expressed how they were isolated and stigmatized because of speaking up about their partners' violence.

One of them mentioned that:

*"I felt terrible, as if I had done something wrong when I was beaten by my husband, and when I attempted to report the incident, I was told I was being a wicked woman.*

Another respondent also mentioned that:

*As women, when your complaint and report your partner to police you will be isolated that makes people not*

*like reporting their partners.*

A respondent agreed with the other respondents that:

*People have to change their thinking, attitude and behave towards women who report their husbands, because I know some women who are really being dealt with by their husbands, but they cannot talk.*

From the data gathered from the study areas, the society indirectly or directly normally encourage violence to happen to women because of people thinking, attitude and behave toward victims.

#### **4.5 Lack of Education and Awareness Creation**

It was found that most respondents don't report domestic abuse to the DOVVSU because they don't know about it or don't know how to report it, according to Ghana's Department of Domestic Violence Victim Support (DOVVSU). In response to a question on what could be done to help, they all agreed that a national education campaign on domestic abuse and the harm it causes to women and the community is essential. One respondent made it clear that:

*Because most of us are not educated we do not know the procedures of reporting and so whatever our husbands do whatever they want to us.*

#### **4.6 Poverty**

Some women do not have the lorry fare to travel from their cottage / village to the nearest big town where DOVVSU is located. *A woman with 5 kids whose is not only undergoing physical abuse but also non maintenance will not be in the position to travel with the kids to report to DOVVSU. The woman family will say to her should the husband sack you from the house after reporting him, where will you sleep? Sometimes, there is worthy man in the family to face the husband by threatening to return his dowry to him. The man usually knows it is impossible to for the woman family to return his dowry and as such the woman has nowhere to go.*

### **5. Discussion Section**

The research examines how respondents (particularly women involved in domestic violence) identified and interpreted the factors that were militant in the DOVVSU Domestic Violence Reporting Unit of Ghana. This study is important feature that influence it important through researchers, practitioners as well as policy makers towards develop arrangements so as to respond to women's involvement in domestic violence. The discoveries of the examiner were very enlightening because most respondents found cultural beliefs practices were also a significant factor in preventing women from reporting domestic violence (patriarchal social structures).

This research is supplementary to existing literature on the problems of domestic violence within Ghana. This finding indicates that in Africa men consistently assume they are more dominant than women and that men can monitor females in their relationships. This study was supported by Jewkes et al. (2001); Kaufman et Al. (2005); Morrell, (2002); WiLDAF-Ghana, (2000).

This assertion was confirmed by researchers like Galtung (1996), portrayed patriarchy such as an institutionalization of masculine predominance in vertical structures, through tremendously high relationships connecting positions and sex, cultural legitimized, and frequently emerging because direct violence between males for instance subjects and female as objects.

The payment of the bride worth or the dowry of woman often subjected married women to domestic violence.

Traditionally, some Ghanaian men interpreted paying the bride price as dowry between four and three cows. This interpretation led men to believe that they should have complete control over the woman they were marrying. As a result, these men believe that they have already "bought the women" and are therefore required to treat her with the utmost respect as a result. If she is



“disobedient,” she is granted every right to regulate her wife (Adomako - Ampofo & Prah, 2009; Cusack, 2009). This finding is related with work conducted out with Phorano et al. (2005) in Botswana and affirmed that liquor, medicate enslavement and a need of regard for ladies are components connected to viciousness against ladies. Investigate has appeared that women’s marriage charges are now and then utilized as a pardon for abuse.

This study contradicted the findings of Ajayi et al. (2018), which found that most respondents did not consider bride price payment, polygamy, or clear cultural norms as key drivers of domestic abuse in their experiences.

It was also discovered that the interference, familial and community pressures is one factor preventing women reporting domestic abuse. Respondents in this study indicated that family and community pressures made them to report domestic violence. This finding agrees with Debrie (2018) study that found in Ghana that culture and religious beliefs, interference from other parties are the main reasons why people do not report cases of gender-based violence (GBV).

Furthermore, this study discovered that, social stigma is one the major factors preventing women reporting domestic violence. The interpretation given to this was that instead of societies believing and encouraging them to report violence to the institutions responsible they rather make them feel worse by naming and shaming women who report. This normally make women not to come out but keep quiet and pretend all is well suffer in their homes and even some die because of this. Sulak et al. (2014) affirm this finding. They indicate that, stigmatization said by many who report violence have been found to discourage victims of domestic violence from access by the criminal justice system to available resources. Ghanaian ladies confront critical obstructions to uncovering manhandle that determines from social recognition residential savagery may be a private, family matter that ought to be concerned with exterior the criminal equity system.

This finding is consistent with (ActionAid 2009), which indicated that stigma and social stigma are common barriers to women reporting domestic violence.

This study also identified lack of education and awareness creation as an important factor that encourages women not to report domestic violence. Most of the women are ignorant about it and do not also know the procedures in reporting domestic violence. This is consistent with Malhotra (1997) & Kishor (2000) and Johnson’s studies (2004). They were asserted that education was one of the factors influence domestic violence among women. Education enables them to collect, assimilate, exploit and monitor information, safeguard and defend themselves from all forms of abuse. In the study and in the women’s detailed narratives of domestic violence, it became clear that women fear the Ghana Police Service, and was vulnerable of police reporting, especially the DOVVSU Unit.

## **6. Conclusion**

The study has found that there is prove of viciousness against ladies within the ponder zone and this cut over age, culture, and socio-economics status. It takes after hence that this age long fiendish against ladies is still predominant despite so many introductions in worldwide conferences on ladies and their rights. It has too appeared that these acts frequently go unpunished since they need choices and trust that the condition will alter or that they will resolve the issues. It is in this manner, prudent to say that there’s ought to alter societal conviction and behavioral patterns to the expand that it alters the culture of spouse beating and take up an awfully striking step at seeing them as accomplices and not possessions.

## **7. Recommendations**

*Television and radio advertisements raising awareness about domestic violence against women will go a long way, as the ordinary Ghanaian watches television and listens to the radio frequently. This study recommends that open sensitization exercises be conducted in the form of workshops for police officers infrequently assigned*

*to the Upper East and Ghana as a whole, in collaboration with the Household Manhandle and Casualty Back Unit (DOVVSU). DOVVSU should embark on education and sensitization on domestic violence on opinion leaders which include chiefs, family heads, political parties, religious leaders, and women.*

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