DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis contains no other person’s work which has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree of diploma in any other tertiary institution.

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Supervisor: Prof. NS Rembe

October 2011
ABSTRACT

In all the Black communities, women’s rights have always been taken for granted. Women have always been subordinate to the patriarchal system. The denial of domestic violence against rural women has its origin in the age long patriarchal society, deeply rooted in culture and tradition. The main aim of the patriarchal society is the control of women by men. The idea of protecting women abuse is not really new. It is a necessary component of long established and internationally recognized human rights. This includes the right to equality and freedom, liberty and personal security. The recognition could be traced to the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (UDHR). However, women’s rights remain unrealized and are continuously violated despite the fact that these rights are well expressed in many international documents and national laws.

The study examined the factors that conduce towards domestic violence against rural women in the Kwa Zulu Natal Province of South Africa. In this regard, the reasons why they support culture and traditional practices that are detrimental to their health were also explored. The small isolated area of Umzimkhulu was used. In-depth face to face interviews were employed to elicit information from the respondents and brief notes were written down to collect the data. The findings revealed that women are not aware of their human rights. This ignorance and negative attitude is influenced by the dependency of women to men, supremacy of the patriarchal system and the dominance of culture. Most disturbing is that these women don’t seem to see anything wrong with the situation. It is evidently clear therefore that women empowerment, through education, will not only affect women’s autonomy but will also increase their worth and make them understand the impact of traditional practices that they support. All these will have implications for policy and legislative interventions.
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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVA</td>
<td>Domestic Violence Act (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPV</td>
<td>Spousal Partner Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCPR</td>
<td>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICESCR</td>
<td>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KZN</td>
<td>Kwa Zulu Natal Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO’s</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDHR</td>
<td>Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)</td>
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