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# ASSESSMENT OF THE PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN SOME SELECTED STATES IN NORTH EASTERN NIGERIA

***SULEIMAN ADAMU; *ISA BUBA & **KASIMU MUSA**
*Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola, School of Social and Management Sciences Department of Crime Management. **Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola, School of Social Administrative and Business, Department of Social Development Studies, Numan Campus.
*suleimanspy@adamawapoly.edu.ng*

## *Abstract*

This study is designed to examine and assess the prevalence of violence against women in some selected states of North Eastern Nigeria: Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. In Nigeria, women experience violence in the hand of their male counterparts. Cases like rape, sexual assault, beating, acid attacks, molestation, and corporal punishment are the forms of violence against women in our society. The findings of the study also revealed that on a daily basis, women are beaten and ill-treated for supposed, transgressions, rape and even murdered by members of their family. The study adopted the descriptive research design, where copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents in the study areas. The research population have involved government officials, legal practitioners, security personnel and Women Associations in the study areas. The researchers selected a sample of 422 respondents that were drawn using purposive sampling method. The secondary data collected through literature review while primary data collected from the respondents using questionnaire/interviews. Governors should assent to all outstanding human rights legislation namely the Gender and Equal Opportunities Act, Child Rights Act, VAPP Act, legislation creating a Special Rights Agency and domestication of the Kampala Convention once passed by the State House of Assembly. Ministry of Justice to Set up a Special Court on GBV as part of the existing High Court to operate in other judicial divisions with prosecution and defence lawyers, judges and court personnel

trained in handling GBV cases, a practice direction sent out, procedures drawn up to protect survivors and suspects and outreach conducted to the police, NSCDC and communities.

**Keywords:** Domestic Violence, Prevalence, Gender-Based Violence, Violence Against Women, Rape.

## INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to overstate the importance of women to the advancement of any country. For instance, women are important members of the family, which is recognized as the fundamental social unit in all societies. In addition to carrying out the duties of childrearing and childbearing that are essential to human social existence, they also give family members emotional and material assistance. More importantly, whether in traditional or modern countries, women make a substantial economic contribution to the country. In Nigeria, women are victims of violence committed by their male counterparts. Notable occurrences in Nigerian society include rape, sexual assault, beatings, molestation, and corporal punishment.

Given the terrible consequences of violence against women, families, and society at large, this is a problem that needs to be addressed immediately. Violence is when victims' rights are violated by force or other means. The deliberate use of physical force or power, whether actual or threatened, against oneself, another person, or a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation is defined as violence by the World Health Organization (2020). The issue of violence against women in Africa and the efforts to tackle it are not uncommon. Violence against women has been identified to be the most prevalent form of violence against women in at least 71 African countries, according to a 2006 UN report that was collected from various studies, found that violence against women as the common thing in Ethiopia.

Since the 1990s, the issue of violence against women has received a lot of attention on a local and global scale. One of the most recent studies, conducted in 2004, by Aina, Aderinto, and Alumanah, as a cross-cultural analysis of domestic violence in selected geographical zones in Nigeria, with a focus on the TIV, Idoma, and Igede peoples of Kogi and Benue state. Aderinto (2004) conducted research on the Igbo people, while Alumanah (2004) researched on the minority ethnic groups in the states of Edo and Delta. These studies

demonstrated the pervasiveness of domestic violence against women in Nigeria. According to nationwide surveys, the percentage of cases of domestic abuse increased from 21% in 2013 to 30% in 2020 in just three years (CLEEN Foundation, 2020).
According to a survey conducted in Adamawa State, 113 occurrences of rape, kidnapping, sexual assault, child theft, and trafficking were reported between 2016 and 2019 (Sense Project, 2019). In light of this, the aim of this research was to determine the prevalence of violence against women in a few selected states in North Eastern Nigeria.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROPBLEM**

Like many other African nations, Nigeria has a long history of supporting the beating of wives and children as a form of discipline. According to a study by Amnesty International on Nigeria in (2021), women there are routinely raped, beaten, and subjected to other cruel treatment because of perceived offenses. Some are even killed by family members. Brutal acid attacks can sometimes leave individuals horribly disfigured. Too often, communities condone and allow this kind of violence without speaking out against it. Fathers, partners, and husbands are mostly at blame for violence against women. Among women and girls aged 15 to 24, one in three have experienced violence.
Men have been viciously attacking married and single women in Nigeria. Rape, sexual assault, brutalization, and victimization have increased recently, and victims are too ashamed to report these incidents to the appropriate authorities for justice. According to available data, domestic violence affects between 50% and 2/3 of Nigerian women in their homes. Around 1.34 million people died as a result of domestic abuse in 2016 compared to approximately 1 million in 2000 (Awake, 2018). About 830,000 people commit suicide each year, 476,500 experience interpersonal violence, and 18,500 experience collective violence (Watts, 2020).
According to a survey on violence against women conducted in 2021 in Lagos state, Nigeria, 64% of 45 women surveyed in the workplace admitted to having been beaten by a partner (boyfriend or husband), and 56.6% of 48 women surveyed in the market acknowledged having experienced such violence. Similar surveys conducted in Oyo state and other parts of Nigeria produced similar results (Aihie, 2021).
The biggest threat to women's dignity and freedom from state violence may not be the existing rate of physical and sexual abuse of women in the Northeast. The following data from this zone illustrates the trend:
(a). In one way or another, at least 35% of women in the state have been victims of gender-based violence in intimate relationships with partners

(b). It is estimated that one in four women and girls aged 15 to 25 have experienced some form of violence, which has led to acts of insurrection and other terrorist operations. Aisha (2020). In view of the above, the purpose of this study is to assess the prevalence of violence against women in some selected states in North Eastern Nigerian.

**Objectives of the Study**

i. To investigate the factors responsible for the violence against women in some selected states in North Eastern Nigeria.
ii. To identify forms of violence against women in some selected states in North Eastern Nigeria.
iii. To know the effects of the violence against women in North Eastern Nigeria

**Research Questions**

The following research questions will be formulated to guide the study

i- What are the factors responsible for the violence against women in some selected states in North Eastern Nigeria.
ii- What are the forms of violence against women in some selected states in North Eastern Nigeria.?
iii- What ate the effects of the violence against women in some selected states in North Eastern Nigeria?

**Significance of the Study**

In view of the prevalence of violence against women in some selected states in North Eastern Nigeria. The research will bring out to the government, legal practitioners, policy makers and women organizations some of the factors and forms of violence facing by women in our societies.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is on violence against women in some selected states in North Eastern Nigeria. The selected States include: Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. This study will attempt to cover the period of five years from 2017-2021 respectively. This has to do with the fact that within this period there was high rate of cases of violence against women in the study area.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Conceptual Clarification of Violence**

Because of their gender, women experience various forms of maltreatment in the majority of countries worldwide. Social discrimination in the home, business, school,

and many other settings is one type of abuse. Nonetheless, there aren't many examples of prejudice and violence against women committed by other women; most of the time, men are to blame. Abuse of any kind, whether it be financial, psychological, sexual, or physical, is considered violence against women. Because of their physiological makeup, women are particularly vulnerable to aggression from men (Rosen, 2018).Any assault, sexual assault, sexual battery, or other illegal conduct that causes a family member or household member to suffer physical harm or pass away is considered a violent crime.

A violent act is a persistent, crippling experience of physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse that occurs within the home and is linked to a reduced level of personal freedom, accessibility to resources, and increased isolation from the outside world. A woman has been abused if she is put in danger of harm or is subjugated by the use or threat of physical force. It might consist of the following:

i. Physically pushing, shoving, slapping, hitting, kicking, or choking;
ii. Using a weapon as an attack
iii. Restricting, holding, or tying her down
iv. Leaving her in a hazardous situation
v. Refusing to assist her in the event that she becomes ill or is hurt (Aihie, 2021).

Oyeshola (2015) asserts that violence can be defined as a confrontation with potentially fatal forces that impacts millions of people's lives on an individual, family, community, and global economic level. Mohammed (2016) defines violence as a physical assault committed against a person or group. It might be personal (such as violence against women) or stem from a person's biology, past experiences, or set of beliefs. The perception of violence is typically influenced by culture; for example, the definition of a violent act varies depending on the society. The deliberate use of physical force or power, whether actual or threatened, against oneself, another person, or a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation is defined as violence by the World Health Organization (2020). Spouses and ex-spouses, individuals connected by blood or marriage, adults in (or formerly in) a dating relationship, and anyone with a biological or legal parent-child relationship are all considered family or household members (CEDW, 2013).

**Classification of Violence**

Violence can be categorized based on the features of the violent acts, such as self-directed, interpersonal, and collective violence; alternatively, it can be categorized based on the type of violence, such as physical, sexual, psychological, and involving

deprivation or neglect, financial abuse, or identity abuse (Kappler, 2017).

**The Violence Prevalence Worldwide**

Over 1.6 million individuals worldwide lose their lives as a result of violence each year (WHO, 2020). According to Awake (2018), 60.9% of every 100,000 individuals in Africa pass away violently each year. Violence impacts people from all walks of life and in all cultures, regardless of their financial situation (Watts, 2020). Statistics from the Bureau of Justice show that in 2019, women reported intimate partner violence six times more frequently than males did. Nonetheless, research indicates that men are significantly less likely than women to report being victims in these circumstances (Tonia et al, 2007). The proportion of women who have ever experienced physical abuse from an intimate partner varies significantly among nations, according to a number of national surveys: Barbados (30%), Canada (29%), New Zealand (35%), Switzerland (21%), and the United States (33%), with survey results as low as 10% coming from the Philippines and Paraguay (CDCP, 2011). Approximately 70% of women in India experience violence (BBC, 2016).

In India, a "bride burning" takes place every two hours due to the woman having a little dowry or to enable her husband to get married again (Kristof et al, 2019). According to statistics released in 2004, the number of indigenous women in Australia who become victims of abuse may be forty times higher than that of non-indigenous women (Domestic violence in Australia, 2009).

According to Foster (1999, IRIN 2002, JIWS 2004), several African nations, including South Africa, have the highest rates of gender-based violence worldwide, including rape and domestic abuse. According to a survey conducted in rural Egypt in 2012, eighty percent of the women claimed that beatings were regular and frequently justifiable, especially when the lady refused to have sex with her husband.In India, a "bride burning" takes place every two hours due to the woman having a little dowry or to enable her husband to get married again (Kristof et al, 2019).

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victims of violence. Many of the offenders—55 percent—and victims—63.7%—drank alcohol, and 76.1% had experienced or witnessed conflict at least once a week in their homes, families, or places of residence. The most frequent cause of violent acts—49.2%—were disputes. (Ekwebelem, and Adindu 2020). According to Afrol News (2012), up to two thirds of women in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe report having experienced domestic abuse.

**Factors Responsible for Violence against Women**

Although there are a number of elements that might lead to violence, the reasons of violence against women are not entirely evident because specialists in this subject cannot agree on what these causes are. Among the most significant is the idea that abuse, either verbal or physical, is appropriate when it comes to living in a violent household or growing up in a culture that condones violence (WHO, 2020).There are numerous justifications given for violent acts against women; they might include, but are not limited to, asking the spouse about an extramarital affair, not preparing meals, neglecting the children, and leaving the house without permission (Davies, 20044). Other factors include substance abuse, unemployment, psychological problems, poor coping skills, lack of legal protection sanctity especially at home, isolation of women in their families and communities (Newman and Mackin 2010).

**Theoretical Framework**

Radical feminists argue that society is a patriarchal structure in which men considerably possess authority over the classes of women in society (Msughter et al., 2020). It is a feminist theory that starts with the notion that there is a basic conflict between the sexes and that patriarchy in all cultures directly causes or results in women's subjugation. Additionally, this idea suggests that every social activity is a manifestation of some kind of human restriction and compulsion. While many forms of communication barriers are present in all social structures, women do not have to be suppressed and enslaved as a result of these barriers.

However, interpersonal relationships and communication are restricted in a patriarchal control system to the extent that rigidity arises and persists, which is viewed as an oppressive method of accomplishing their objectives. Women are treated as second-class citizens in the home and in society, even in positions of authority within the government. Despite the prevalence of patriarchy, there is a basic power struggle between the sexes (Ojemeiri et al. 2022).

Therefore, the core tenet of radical feminism is that gender inequality is the cause of every hardship, persecution, injustice, and oppression that women experience in today's global society (Vukoicic J. 2017). This research advances the theory of radical

feminism. It is a contemporary social and political movement founded on the idea that men have the right to rule over women everywhere since society is set up according to patriarchal ideals. Women frequently experience gender prejudice in both their public and private lives.

While discrimination against women can take many different forms, the primary distinction between them is the degree to which interactions within patriarchal societies are viewed as the source of all types of discrimination against women. The primary distinction between radical feminism and other forms of oppression is in the belief that the social structure, which is founded on female power conflicts, is the root source of all subsequent injustice, inequality, and supremacy. This strengthens the case that women face a variety of forms of discrimination and exploitation in patriarchal societies, which are inherently unequal systems. Radical feminist philosophy holds that all other injustices and oppressions against women stem from gender inequality. Because of patriarchy, which is a hierarchical structure in which men dominate the feminine gender, women are enslaved and forced to submit to power-hungry beliefs that life is meaningless without it.

Women experience high levels of violence and deprivation on a wide range of personal and social issues due to the widespread practice and establishment of the patriarchal system in most cultures worldwide. As a result, women often spend their entire lives unable to make decisions that affect them personally. Women who pay attention to their intuitive senses may find it challenging to understand this situation because it is now accepted as normal. Because patriarchy permits the use of physical and other forms of societal violence against women who violate conceptual norms and standards of conduct in such a society, patriarchy is detrimental to and greatly unfair to women. Conversely, women would become less in control and exhibit unpredictable behavior if restrictions were lessened or eliminated since their actions would be determined more by their perceptions than by rigidly enforced rules (Slater P 1991).

## METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This section deals with the methods adopted in eliciting and processing of data for this study. These include: research design, study areas, study population, sample size and sampling technique, method of data collection, instrument for data collection validity and reliability of the instrument and method of data analysis.

### Research Design

The study adopted the survey research design. This will involve selecting an unbiased representative sample of subjects to be drawn from the study target group. Surveys are useful in describing the characteristics of a large population. This research method

provides broad capability, which ensures a more accurate sample to gather targeted results in which to draw conclusions and make important decision (Nwogu 1991, p.21). In addition, responses in survey are usually standardized. they are especially useful in making generalization. The survey approach that will be used includes questionnaire, FGD and key informant interviews (KII)

**Study Population**

The study will be conducted in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states which Based on 2017 projected population census, the states have estimated populations of 12,554,984 (NPC, 2017). Out of this Yola North, in Adamawa state, Maiduguri municipal LGA in Borno State and Damaturu, LGA in Yobe state was selected for the study.

**Sample Size**

Data collected from one of the local government of each of the three selected States in the North Eastern Nigeria. (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe state). A sample size of one local government from each of the selected states will be used to get the relevant information this is because it will be difficult for the researcher to study all the people from which the researcher wants to elicit information. In addition, it will be difficult to administer questionnaire and interviews to every member of the study population; hence a research sample selected using Krejci and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size for a finite population. The table indicates that anynumber greater than 100,000 the sample size is 384 and above. Therefore, a sample size of 450 questionnaires, 15 key informants' interviewee and 18 FGD which sum up to 422 used for the purpose of this study.

**Sampling Technique**

Purposive Sampling Technique and Simple Random Sampling used. The purposive sampling technique, also called judgmental sampling is one of the most cost- effective and time- effective sampling methods available. The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest. Also, it is based on the researchers' knowledge of the respondents. On the other hand, the simple random sampling is chosen because it provides equal probability or chances for participants to be selected. In a nut shell, the simple random sampling techniques used to generate quantitative data while the purposive sampling used for qualitative data generating.

**Method of Data Collection**

The main sources of data for this study are primary and secondary. The primary and secondary sources have been streamlined to meet the information requirements of this study.

**Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument used for the data collection is the questionnaire, Key Informant Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) which generate questions on "The Assessment of the prevalence of Violence against Women in the study areas. Questionnaires and Key informant interview (KII) guide, designed in English language and used to answer the research questions generated in the study. The questionnaires administered with the help of nine (9) research assistants who assisted in the distribution and retrieving of the questionnaires to the respondents and the interpretation of the questions in the respondent's language for easy response. The investigators had a face-to-face contact with the key informants to elicit information for this study.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The method of data analysis will be divided into quantitative and qualitative method of data Analysis.

**Gender-based violence (GBV**) affects all racial and religious groups as well as all geographical regions of study. Respondents in these locations discussed several instances of boys who had suffered sexual violence in Yola North of Adamawa State; the attacks were primarily directed against women and girls. Rape and other sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic abuse and violence, early and forced marriage, and ritual killings were examples of GBV that were brought up in these research locations. Although most of the perpetrators were known to the survivors, they belonged to a variety of social classes and backgrounds. According to the respondents' interviews, there is essentially the same level of violence in these places.

**Sexual violence** Respondents mentioned a steady rise in the quantity of reported occurrences of child rape and sexual assault. They claimed that more people were aware of the need of reporting these violations, that there have been changes in the responsiveness of security agencies like the police and NSCDC, and that people were becoming aware of the potential health risks, such as the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), if these violations are not reported immediately. We will talk more about these tendencies in the findings section that follows.

**Domestic violence and abuse/ intimate partner violence** According to respondents, the prevalence of abuse and violence between intimate partners—married or not—is

substantially higher, despite the fact that most GBV interventions tend to concentrate on sexual violence. More reports of violence by spouses against wives than of rape and sexual assault in the three states are received by NGOs that work with communities. Women in focus groups in Yola North, Damaturu, and Maiduguri talked extensively about domestic abuse and violence in their areas, stating that the past four years have seen an increase in cases because of the poor economic climate. A woman in Damaturu said, "I've noticed that men beat their wives a lot." When a woman returns home from a full day at the market or on the farm, her husband takes the products to the market to be sold. Alternatively, she makes money by selling items, while her spouse keeps everything she brings in. She ends up hitting when she speaks. Nowadays, women bear all of the duty for males; they must look after the health and education of their children as well as what to consume her spouse's house."

**POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES**

This section begins by summarizing some of the gender-based violence that occurs in the three research locations. It then looks at the main outcomes, difficulties encountered by policy and programmatic solutions, and lessons that may be applied. The following is by no means exhaustive, as it was not possible to meet every MDA, NGO, and UN agency operating in these states, even though the author spoke with a number of people working for government ministries and departments, security agencies, international and NGOs, and UN agencies, asking each to reflect on results, challenges, and lessons.

**RESULTS**

Better laws and policies: As of 2017, the state's applicable laws provided a maximum sentence of 14 years along with the possibility of a fine. The prosecution also needed to show penile penetration and provide witnesses in order to prove rape convictions. Lawyers who tried GBV cases claim that a large number of cases were dismissed because the evidence did not satisfy the level of proof beyond a reasonable doubt. Even in cases where rapists were found guilty by juries, their sentences might only be two or three years long. Since then, Adamawa State has modified its Penal Code, which was published in May 2019. The new law stipulates that rape carries a minimum punishment of 21 years in jail and a maximum term of life in prison, with no possibility of a fine. The Penal Code eliminates the need for witnesses and broadens the definition of penetration to encompass objects and any portion of the body.

New offenses such as sexual assault and harassment were also included. It toughened the penalties for kidnapping, stealing cattle, and kidnapping. The Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) and the Proceeds of Crime Act were also passed by the

state. The latter claims to shorten the amount of time needed to complete a case and grants witnesses and the accused the right to legal representation during police questioning. Additionally, In collaboration with partners including the British Council and the European Union-funded Rule of Law and Anti Corruption initiative (ROLAC), the Ministry of Justice has also rehabilitated courts outside of Mubi. There are presently five High Courts in Yola, as well as plans to establish divisions in Guyuk and Michika and judicial divisions in Ganye, Gombi, Mubi, and Numan. The MoJ has assigned attorneys to collaborate with judges in several regions, and these divisions have resident counsel. Although a large number of MoJ attorneys have received training in alternative dispute resolution (ADR), the state and the multi-door lack mediation centers.

According to Borno and Yobe, there is a growing consciousness of human rights, particularly those of women and girls, and a growing number of reports of human rights abuses. Additionally, girls and boys have greater access to education, and community conflict resolution organizations and structures are becoming more responsive and inclusive, with a normalization of multi-stakeholder decision-making.

## CONCLUSION

The research team has adhered to the bounds of research ethics regarding the causes, evidence of increase and reasons for prevalence, recommendations, and strategies for curtailing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the states. These strategies have programmatic and policy implications for and beyond the states. The study team has examined the prevalence of violence against women in the selected states in North Eastern Nigeria and outlined some key results, challenges, and lessons from policy and programming interventions to date.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**To the Governors**: After the State House of Assembly passes the Kampala Convention, they should ratify all pending human rights laws, including the Gender and Equal Opportunities Act, Child Rights Act, VAPP Act, legislation establishing a Special Rights Agency, and others.

**To the Ministry of Health**: Incorporate the SARC into upcoming budgets and include a system to ensure its ongoing inclusion. Allocate monies to guarantee the SARC ambulance's functioning, including hiring a driver, fueling the car, and doing maintenance.

**To the Ministry of Justice**: Establish a Special Court on GBV within the current High Court to function in other judicial divisions. The court will be staffed by judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and court employees who have received training in

handling GBV cases. Additionally, a practice directive will be sent, protocols will be developed to safeguard suspects and survivors, and outreach will be carried out to the NSCDC, communities, and police.

To the Police Commissioners: Implement protection services and discuss protection needs with witnesses and survivors Reissue the order requiring the transfer of all GBV cases to the state CID Allocate financial resources for supplies and automobiles to guarantee accurate and punctual examination of GBV.

**To the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development**: Increase accessibility of and the quality of services that can be provided by current safe houses to survivors

**To other programme implementers**: Improve financial and operations systems to make outstanding payments and mitigate the risks of future delays as they are having severe consequences on programme delivery (Nagarajan C. 2019).

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