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**SILENCE ON THE SALIENT? AN APPRAISAL OF MEDIA'S COVERAGE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND IT'S IMPLICATION IN NIGERIA.**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study focuses on media's coverage of violence against women in Nigeria and its implications. One of the objectives of this study is to understand press coverage of violence against women and ascertain the implication of the coverage on the societal ill. Related studies on the concept of violence, causes and types of violence were reviewed. The study is anchored on the Social Responsibility Theory. Content Analysis and In-depth interview were employed as research methodologies. The study population comprises 180 editions of Daily Trust and The Sun Newspapers, out of which 90 formed the sample size of the study. An In-Depth Interview was also conducted with a gender expert. The categories content-analyzed are: Editorial Items published, Perspective of Presentation of Stories on Violence Against Women and Placement of Stories. Findings reveal that women in Nigeria suffer rape and outright killing the most. This is closely followed by sexual assault and physical abuse. The study concludes that despite the exposition on these issues, one of the implications of press coverage of violence against women is that it helps victims get justice and also help discourage the practice of violence against women. It recommends that the Nigerian media should devote more space in exposing, reporting and covering cases of violence against women. Also, media should open a special channel or desk where community members can lodge complains on violence against women.*

***Keywords:*** Media Coverage, Violence, Women, Content Analysis

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## INTRODUCTION

Violence against women has been viewed from varying angles by different scholars and organizations. The United Nations' maiden conceptualization of gender-based violence was unveiled at the General Assembly in 1993, as it accepted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. As captured by the W.H.O (2005), the United Nations (1993) postulates that 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 private life. As used variously, the term "gender-based violence" would be used inter-changeably with "violence against women" in the course of this work. Accordingly, violence against women entails but is not limited to the following:

- a) Physical, sexual and psychological abuse manifesting at home, ranging from battery, female child sexual abuse, marital rites-related violence, spousal rape, female genital mutilation and varying cultural behaviours that are considered as harmful to the female gender, etc
- b) Psychological, physical and sexual violence manifesting in the society, including but not limited to, sexual harassment, rape, sexual abuse and workplace bullying, trafficking and enforced prostitution;
- c) Sexual, psychological and physical violence occurring or tolerated by a Government, however it is manifested.

Manifestations of gender-based violence unleashed on women could also appear in form of forced circumcision of the female genital organs and forced abortion, coercive/forced use of contraceptives, female infanticide and pre-natal sex selection.

Violence against women was first viewed as a severe societal menace in the early 1970s. This was attributed to the rise of the Women's Movement. It became a multi-disciplinary issue, as academics with backgrounds in disciplines such as especially social science, started viewing violence against women in the context of a feminist ideology. In spite of the increased turn-over in violence against women-focused researches especially on rape and intimate partner violence, there still remain intellectual gaps on violence against women. (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

According to India Ochs, US Attorney, as cited by Fagboyo (2016) the outside world find it easy to tell a victim to, 'fight back', but it is absolutely not as easy

or smooth as it sounds. A lot of the victims do not fight back because of the fright in them as at the time. Websdale (1999) postulates that an estimated figure of one woman, out of three deals with domestic violence brought on by an alleged lover, who should protect them. Yearly, 1,000 to 1,600 women lose their lives in cases of abuses carried out by their lovers in the United States, often after a protracted and escalating case of battery. The estimated figures of deaths tied to cases of partner violence do not capture instances where women take their own lives to escape violence-ridden relationships, or those who become homeless and lose their lives in a bid to avoid violent partners. All over the world, across the confines of culture, religion and ethnicity, women suffer physically and emotionally from different forms of violence.

As put by Abayomi et al (2013), there have been germane efforts to address this social anomaly. As part of these efforts, five internationally notable legal instruments that comprehensively address the issue of violence against women have been activated. There are: the Platform for Action from the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, the Declaration of the Elimination of Violence Against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1945, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979, the Vienna Declaration and World Conference on Human Rights 1993. Gender-based violence against women occurs everywhere, in the community, at work place, at residential homes or at schools.

Hamm (2005) posits that gender-based violence pervades most societies and has been an age-long issue. In Africa, women suffer domestic violence usually notwithstanding their societal ranking, age range, religious affiliation and societal status. Some forms of violence are institutionalized and tied to societal structures and systems. Here, certain manifestations of violence against women are culturally or traditionally shielded as accepted practices. Patriarchal manifestations have placed men at the core of society, from the family level to the outer society; thus, authority is seen as residual with the man. Haralambos & Holborn (2007) put that, in cases as this, some men resort to violence and bully to address the perceived rivalry from women.

"Folake" ended up being thrown in jail, after she reported someone for raping her. She was a home worker and reported the husband of her employer, as forcing her into his bedroom and played a violent video for her before forcefully having carnal knowledge of her. A medical examination was

undertaken and it showed evidences that her allegations were not unfounded. Folake was brought before a court after being charged for allegedly making slanderous comments via her statement of rape. She was returned to custody up until her family raised money to bail and have her released. The material evidence of the rape that was given to the police, was reported to be missing and no charges were levelled against the man that was accused (Amnesty International, 2004, p.1).

### Statement of Problem

In countries all over the world, women, notwithstanding their status, class, age, ethnic group or religious beliefs, experience violence in virtually all spheres of life, either at the home, work, school, in the community, in government institutions, or in times of conflict or crisis.

Violence unleashed on women are not always physical, as there also manifest themselves psychologically and structurally. These issues have stopped women from reaching their zenith in career, business, politics etc. On occasions, while abusers are unilaterally responsible for their actions, government legislations have also been a problem, as it fosters or by legislation legalize the act.

This is what the crux of the Gender and Development [GAD] advocacy represented. Indeed, the 1995 Beijing platform for action cited in Fab-Ukozor (2003, p. 261) states that:

*...governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively including children.*

The press which is the watchdog of the society is saddled with the responsibility of exposing societal ills. This functions cuts across every sphere of societal life; lifestyle, culture, politics, economy, family, security etc. Studies have shown that the media's coverage via reporting, showing and exposing ills in society is capable of bringing respite, in tandem to its traditional functions.

With violence against women traversing across countries, it is critical to understand where the media comes in. These violence are perpetrated by

colleagues at work, neighbours at home, family circles and even women who shared love relationships. On the regional prevalence rate of violence perpetrated by intimate partners, the W.H.O (2010) data shows that intimate partner violence stands at 37.7% in South-East Asia, 36.6% in Africa, 25.4% in Europe, 29.8% in the Americas and 37.0% in the Eastern Mediterranean. These figures posit a great concern for the world, Nigeria inclusive.

This study seeks to examine the extent to which the mass media gives coverage or otherwise violence against women in Nigeria and how it affect the public's understanding of the issues relating to such rights. It also examines the implications of the coverage of gender-based violence in Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. To determine the prevalent gender-based violence women experience in Nigeria
2. To determine the formats of news on violence against women in Nigeria
3. To determine the sources of news on violence against women in Nigeria
4. To ascertain the implication of the coverage on the societal ill.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What is/are the prevalent gender-based violence women experience in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the formats of news on violence against women in Nigeria?
- iii. What are the sources of news on violence against women in Nigeria?
- iv. What is the implication of the coverage on the societal ill.?

### **The Concept of violence**

Scholars have offered varying perspective as to how violence should be viewed and understood, on what it includes and excludes, and on how to classify the various forms of violence. This has resulted to the very many forms of violence, as we know it today.

As cited by Adele (2002), Fanon postulated a tripartite approach to the segmentation of violence synonymous to the offering of Galtung (1969) these are: physical, structural and psychological violence.

Physical violence comprises seeable injuries inflicted on people. It could be outright killing of an individual, maiming or any other form of bodily harm.

Structural violence encapsulates cases of deprivation of social justice while psychological violence pertains to hurt or damage inflicted on the human thought process or psyche. It comprises brainwashing, indoctrination of various kinds and threats.

According to (Alanamu, 2005) violence is categorized into two. That is, direct type of violence and indirect type of violence. Direct violence entails acts of deliberate attack on one's physical or psychological state. This category of violence involves all types of killings (war, homicide, crime, massacres, terrorism, murders) and all other nature of ruthless actions such as kidnap, torment, rape, ill-treatment. On the other hand, indirect violence hovers around hurtful, occasionally even deadly conditions or actions which, due to human factors, do not essentially involve a direct relationship between the victims and the institution.

Violence could be said to be an encompassing phenomenon. It is undertaken by the people or institutions to cause harm or injury with the intents and purposes to carry out a desired objective.

### **Violence Against Women in Nigeria**

The woman is born disadvantaged in opportunities and survival because the world is configured in such a manner that there is an almost-natural distinction between what a man is and what he should in variance with the societal functions of a woman and what she represents, which hold a woman back Nwajiuba (2011). Women's rights have continued to play second fiddle in Nigeria as well as many other countries. The country's military junta were grossly inconsiderate of women's right when it mad and passed its very many decrees. However, Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 has not witnessed the domestication of a lot of international laws and conventions that supports and protects women's right. Political parties have technically ruled out a female chairmanship, as it only reserves a place for "women leader". Women lead only women? Why can't the woman lead the entire party, including the men? It smacks traces of institutionalized structural violence.

Single and married women have been victims of vicious predatory actions of men. Rape, sexual abuse and assault, brutalization and victimization, domestic violence on women in recent times have been on the increase in Nigeria, especially as the world went into lock down during the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and peaked.

CNN (2020) reported that Dr. Anita Kemi DaSilva-Ibru at the Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF) posited that the number of violations reported via their 24-hour helpline increased by 64% during the period, as women called, desperately in need of help.

The report had it that a woman (protected identity) said a co-worker, who is a friend came to her apartment in April, in the guise of coming to greet her. Few minutes into his visit, she said the conversation became uncomfortable. "He kept coming towards me and when I told him to back off, he covered my mouth, pinned me to the floor", she narrated. After he had violated her, she said he apologized and hurriedly left the house. The lady said she did not report to the Police because of the stigma and strain the rape story might attract to her and her family.

Similarly, Equality Now Regional Coordinator, Africa, Judy Gitau said during the 2014 Ebola disease outbreak, teenage pregnancies had spiked in Sierra Leone. This is the plight many women go through in Nigeria. UNICEF (2017) puts that one out of every four girls in Nigeria is a victim of sexual violence. Although prevalence has dropped, Nigeria has the third highest number of women and girls who have undergone Female Genital Mutilation worldwide.

### **Gender-Based Violence and its Reportage**

A lot of the cases of violence against women have largely gone unreported for varying reason ranging from fear of shame and lack of trust in the justice system. This line of thoughts has discouraged many people to report or talk about their experience either in relationships, marriages or in the society. Victims are scared to voice out on abuses they suffer due to the sort of reactions they get from the society. In many cases, victims are not economically independent and the source of financial sustenance is the predator who gets to abuse them, For the fear of losing their source of livelihood, many victims have resorted to keeping quiet and suffer in silence. In cases where victims summon the courage to report such cases, some are trivialized and swept under the carpet (Amnesty International: 2005). One of

the many reasons victims do not like cases of domestic violence covered by the media is not just about the feeling of opprobrium and fear of stigmatization but also the antagonistic response or at best indifference of the security agency charged with investigating the complaints when it gets to their books. Although many countries have been passing laws to protect its citizens, the operation of the law have not been satisfactory. In 2015, Nigeria passed into the law the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act but has not witnessed meaningful progress in reducing cases of violence. The legislations and laws have not proven to adequately protect the rights of women. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had their work cut out on the case of gender-based violence and reeled out its steps in 1998. UNIFEM introduced regional-based advocacies that were targeted at awareness creation on violence women suffer, all in a bid to engineer attitudinal change. UNIFEM's maiden campaign kick-started in Latin part of the Americas and also in the Caribbean, as it conglomerated agencies of the United Nations, high-ranking NGOs from the national and regional levels, governments of 22 countries and thousands of community-based groups. The attained victory of the maiden campaign catalyzed UNIFEM to plunge into the same movement in the African continent, Asia and the Pacific region. A synergy has been created in the Caribbean that sees Crises Centres for women working in collaboration with the Police so as to accelerate response rate and treatment of women who suffer from gender-based violence (Eze-Anaba:2005).

As captured by Agina (2008), in the years passed, a lot of significant energies have been invested to foster the defence and advancement of women's rights via legal instruments that cuts across international, continental, and national laws and policies. These struggles have birthed encompassing documents like the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action at the international level. Many nationals and sub-nationals have enacted laws and policies domesticating international laws as these and many others. However, in many nations, women's right are not exactly protected as there are obstacles to these international laws that do not allow for their domestication and full enforcement. These hindrances are the absence of political will by the government to domesticate standard international laws as obligated by national constitutions, bigoted cultural and traditional standpoints, religious



practices et al. Other obstacles are political exclusion and loop-sided representation decision-making procedures, inaccessibility to education and inheritance compared to the male child, difficult nature of accessing legal services, especially in the third world. In most societies, women are seen as inferior in comparison to men, this is in spite of the noteworthy and lofty efforts made by women in the development of humanity over the years.

### **Manifestations of Violence Against Women**

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality, gender-based violence is manifested under very many forms, from its commonest form, [intimate partner violence](#), to manifestation of violence in the cyber space. (Abayomi et al, 2013) aver that violence against women is manifested in ways such as domestic, verbal and physical abuse, rape and sexual assault, early and forced marriages, incest, female genital cutting, acid baths and outright killing From their places of work to their homes, women deal with multiple forms of abuse and deprivation. These different manifestations of the violence may not be water-tight compartments but are also not mutually exclusive to themselves, as different forms of violence can be manifesting at the same time and rubbing off each other.

The Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence), defines violence against women as falling under four key forms: physical, sexual, psychological and economic.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) outlines the following as the forms of violence against women:

#### **1. Physical violence**

Any act which causes physical harm as a result of unlawful physical force. Physical violence can take the form of, among others, serious and minor assault, deprivation of liberty and manslaughter.

#### **2. Sexual violence**

Any sexual act performed on an individual without their consent. Sexual violence can take the form of rape or sexual assault.

#### **3. Psychological violence**

Any act which causes psychological harm to an individual. Psychological violence can take the form of, for example, coercion, defamation, verbal insult or harassment.

#### 4. Economic violence

Any act or behaviour which causes economic harm to an individual. Economic violence can take the form of, for example, property damage, restricting access to financial resources, education or the labour market, or not complying with economic responsibilities, such as alimony.

It is also important to recognise that gender-based violence may be normalised and reproduced due to structural inequalities, such as societal norms, attitudes and stereotypes around gender generally and violence against women specifically. Therefore it is important to acknowledge structural or institutional violence, which can be defined as the subordination of women in economic, social and political life, when attempting to explain the prevalence of violence against women within our societies.

Other widespread forms around the globe include: sexual exploitation, sexual trafficking, and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), forced and child marriage.

The perpetrators of violence may include the State and its agents, family members (including husbands), friends, intimate partners or other familiar individuals, and strangers. (UN General Assembly, 2006).

#### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on the Social responsibility theory. The theory posits a press system that is void of any form of suppression but however the media contents are deliberated in public panel and the press is expected to accept any obligation from public interference or professional self-regulations or both. The theory finds itself sandwiched between authoritarianism and libertarianism, as it allows absolute freedom at one end but exert control at the other end.

Anaeto et al (2008) citing McQuail (1987) in Ojobor (2002) puts that the main principles of the social responsibility theory are:

1. The media should accept and fulfil certain obligations to society.
2. Through professional standards of information dissemination, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance, these obligations can be met.
3. The media must regulate itself within the ambit of law and established institutions to be able to carry out its responsibilities.

4. Whatever that could lead to crime, violence, civil disorder or offence to minority groups, should be avoided by the media or have the interest of the disadvantaged protected.
5. The media should reflect society's plurality, giving access to various points of view and granting all the right to reply.
6. Accountability of the media professionals should be to the society, employers and the market.

Being a watchdog of the society and the fourth estate of the realm, the media is expected to be socially responsible in its reportage of burning issues, of which violence against women is one. When this study is concluded, one would be able to deduce if the media is socially responsible or otherwise.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Method**

According to (Asika 2010), this is used for the purpose of obtaining data to enable the researcher test hypotheses or answer research questions. It is an outline or scheme that serves as a useful guide to the researcher in his efforts to generate data for his study.

Research designs are, therefore, used by researchers as a scheme or blueprint for data collection, prior to the actual study. It is a useful guide". For the purpose of this research, content analysis and interview methodologies are used.

The first research design is content analysis. (Kerlinger 2000) in (Wimmer & Dominick 2006) defines content analysis as a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables. For the interview, the researcher interviews a health expert, who is also a gender rights activist.

### **Population of the Study**

Wimmer and Dominick (2006) define a population as "a group or class of subjects, variables, concepts, or phenomena". For Asika (2010), "a population is made up of all conceivable elements, subjects or observations relating to a particular phenomenon of interest to the researcher. Subjects or elements are individual items that make up the population. They may be observed or physically counted".

For content analysis, population of this study are offline editions of the Daily Trust Newspaper and The Sun Newspaper between January-December 2019.

### Sampling Technique and Sample Size

According to Asika (2010), Sampling procedure or technique is the method or guideline for selecting the subset that is to be studied from the entire population.

Simple random sampling method will be used in the selection of sample. Simple random sampling is adopted because of the availability of a sample frame and the homogeneous characteristics of the study population. Simple random sampling is the basic sampling technique where we select a group of subjects (a sample) for study from a larger group (a population). Each individual is chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. Every possible sample of a given size has the same chance of selection. This study draws from its population, a sample size of 90 newspaper editions.

### Findings

In study employs textual analysis of its data with the use of frequency tables to present some of its findings.

**TABLE 1: CATEGORIZATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

<i>CATEGORIES</i>	FREQUENCY	PERCENT (%)
<i>Domestic</i>	1	1.7
<i>Verbal abuse</i>	0	0
<i>Physical abuse</i>	7	12.1
<i>Rape</i>	14	24.1
<i>Sexual assault</i>	11	18.9
<i>Early, forced marriage</i>	3	5.2
<i>Incest</i>	1	1.7
<i>Female Genital Cutting</i>	0	0
<i>Acid/hot water bath</i>	4	6.9
<i>Outright killing</i>	17	29.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Content Analysis, 2019

The above table shows that violence against women categorized as domestic has a frequency of 1, representing 1.7%, violence categorized as verbal abuse recorded 0 (zero) reportage, the frequency of violence categorized as physical abuse is 7 representing 12.1%, violence categorized as rape recorded a frequency of 14, representing 24.1%, for violence categorized as sexual assault, the frequency recorded is 11 representing 18.9%, for early and forced marriage, the frequency recorded is 3 which represents 5.2%, frequency for incest stands at 1 which represents 1.7%, female genital cutting recorded 0 frequency, acid/hot water bath recorded a frequency of 4, that is, 6.9% and outright killing has a frequency of 17 representing 29.3%. The above table shows that a majority of the publications show that outright killing is the category of violence women suffer the most, with the frequency standing at 17, that is 29.3% while rape is second category of violence women suffer the most (24.1%).

**TABLE 3: PERSPECTIVE OF PRESENTATION OF STORIES ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.**

<i>PERSPECTIVE</i>	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
<i>Political</i>	5	8.6
<i>Economic</i>	2	3.4
<i>Social</i>	51	87.9
<i>Religious</i>	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Content Analysis, 2019

The above table shows that 5 of the stories representing 8.6% are approached from a political perspective, 2 stories representing 3.4% are from an economic perspective while 51 stories representing 87.9% are from a social perspective and none of the stories reflect a religious perspective. This indicates that a majority of the stories are approached from a social perspective.

**TABLE 4: PLACEMENT OF STORIES**

<i>POSITION</i>	FREQUENCY	PERCENT (%)
<i>Front page</i>	2	3.4
<i>Inside page</i>	56	96.5
<i>Back page</i>	0	0

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>
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Source: Content Analysis, 2019

Table 5 shows that 2 stories representing 3.4% were placed on the front page, 56 stories representing 96.5% were placed on the inside pages while no story was placed on the back page. This reveals that a majority of the stories were placed on the inside pages of the publications.

### Discussions

In answering the question on the types of violence women suffer in Nigeria, findings, as shown in table 1, reveals that women in Nigeria suffer rape and outright killing the most. This is closely followed by sexual assault and physical abuse.

This is in line with the findings from the in-depth interview (IDI) conducted, where the interviewee said that physical abuse and sexual assault are the most common type of violence women suffer.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) postulates that physical violence entails any act which causes physical harm as a result of unlawful physical force. Physical violence can take the form of, among others, serious and minor assault, deprivation of liberty and manslaughter. Outright killing and physical abuse both fall under this genre of violence. Also, it defines sexual violence as any sexual act performed on an individual without their consent. Sexual violence can take the form of rape or sexual assault, as categorized in this study.

Findings from this study reveal that the major types of violence on women are outright killing, rape, sexual assault and physical abuse (as shown on table 1). This corroborates the report of Amnesty International (2005) that on a daily basis, in Nigeria, women are beaten and ill-treated for supposed transgressions, raped and even murdered by members of their family.

The major types of violence indicated by Amnesty International's report are physical abuse, rape, murder and acid attacks. Findings from this study justify postulation of Amnesty international.

On the implication of press coverage of gender-based violence on society, the discussion goes thus: firstly, mass media's coverage on this societal ill, could be said to be moderate. This is measured via finding out the space devoted to this coverage, Table 3 shows that 7 of the stories representing 12.1% are

above 11 paragraphs, 36 of the stories representing 62.1% are between 6-10 paragraphs, 15 of the stories representing 25.8%. This reveals that a majority of the stories are between 6-10 paragraphs. This means that coverage is not high nor is it low (most stories above 5 paragraphs but below 11), thereby moderate coverage is given to the issue. This is justified by the postulation of (McCombs and Shaw, 1972), in their work, *The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion*, that the mass media help a reader understand the importance of the story through headline size, story placement, and story length to convey significance.

Having been revealed that the mass media devotes space to reporting these violence, what implications does this have on the society? Response from the IDI goes thus: "We have witnessed instances where the course for justice for victims of abuse was triggered by the media. Aside the justice being obtained, the perpetrators get to make resolutions for a better life. Not also forgetting how that serves as a deterrent to others"- (Dr. Sam Bayero). This excerpt from the IDI indicates that mass media's coverage, as one of its implication uncovers this heinous acts, helps victims get justice and also help discourage the practice of violence against women.

Also, an excerpt from the IDI responses reveals that, constant mass media coverage provides help for victims, as well as giving them a voice. "The culture of silence can only be broken when all stakeholders put in a concerted effort towards making the discussions on issues regarding gender based violence safe. The media has a role to play in providing a safe space for these persons to open up and share their stories and by that, encouraging others to do same and in the long run, curtailing the chances of these persons going into the long term complication of depression" – Dr. Sam Bayero (Gender Activist).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The mass media has continuously been described as the Fourth Estate of the Realm, this is in recognition of its important societal roles such as Surveillance, watch-dog functions, agenda-setting responsibility, correlation, mobilization, awareness creation etc.

In the course of this study, analysis of newspaper pages showed that the press gives coverage to issues of violence against women. The big question however remains, if adequate coverage and utmost importance are given to these issues. As revealed by analysis of contents and interview conducted, It could

be concluded that the press must devote more space to coverage of these issues and expose the perpetrators of these heinous societal crime.

Aside helping expose these issues, one of the implications of press coverage of violence against women is that, it helps victims get justice and also help discourage the practice of violence against women.

Based on findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Nigerian media should devote more space in exposing, reporting and covering cases of violence against women sufficiently.
2. In helping victims get justice, relevant government agencies, such as the Ministry of Women Affairs, the Nigerian Police Force should work hand-in-hand with media houses, so as to ensure all cases of violence after being reported, justice is thereafter pursued. This would bolster the administration of justice, thereby deterring perpetrators from indulging in such.
3. The media should open a special channel or desk where community members can lodge their complains on violence against women. For hinterlands where media may not reach, community members may reach out to the press and report their case. Also, less pronounced cases will find their way to the desk of editors.
4. Members of the press should be trained on specialized methods of reporting these cases. They would learn how to protect victims from discrimination, undue public attention and other times, not to be extreme in their reportage (especially in cases involving couples, where marriages could be at stake).

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