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## AN EVALUATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN BORNO STATE

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### **Abstract:**

*In our society, many women are violently treated by their men counterpart while they suffer in silence. In some cases, domestic violence leads to the death of these women. This should not be allowed to continue because women are crucial to the growth and development of any nation and the world at large. They are homemakers, custodians of social, cultural and fundamental values of the society; and permanent change is often best achieved through them. Full community development is impossible without their understanding, cooperation and effective participation. Considering all these, women deserve better treatment but opposite is usually the case. Violence against women affects the physical and psychological wellbeing of the abused women and even that of their children. It is on this premise that this paper discusses the meaning of violence against women, types of violence against women, gender based violence in Nigeria, theories of violence against women, literature review, causes of violence against women, conclusion and recommendations.*

***Key words:*** Gender, Violence, Women, Domestic, Force.

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### **Introduction**

Violence against Women is any use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage or destroy against women, such as rape, prostitution/sex trafficking, domestic violence and femicide to mention but mention but few.

Violence against women is a technical term used to collectively refer to violent acts that are primarily or exclusively committed against women. Similar to a hate crime, this type of violence targets a specific group with victim's gender as primary motive. The United Nations General Assembly defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women noted that this violence could be perpetrated by assailants of either gender, family members or even the 'State' itself (United Nations, 1993). Worldwide governments and organisations actively work to combat violence against women through a variety of programmes. A UN resolution designated November 25 as International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Women are crucial to the growth and development of any nation and the world at large. Women constitute half of the world's population and they are homemakers, custodians of social, cultural and fundamental values of the society and permanent change is often best achieved through them. Full community development is impossible without their understanding, cooperation and effect participation. Considering the importance of women as mother, sometimes breadwinners, teachers and guardians, they deserve respect, recognition and better treatment but the opposite is usually the case. According to Davies (1999), women are enslaved in a circle of poverty and they suffer from neglect, discrimination and exploitation. They are also subjected to different forms of violence by their male counterparts.

Some historians believe that the history of violence against women is tied to the history of women being viewed as property and a gender role assigned to be subservient to men and also other women (Harvey and Gow, 1994). The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) states that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women and that violence against

women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.

In the 1870s, courts in the United States stopped recognising the common-law principle that a husband had the right to “physically chastise an errant wife” (Calvert, 1974). In the UK, the traditional right of a husband to inflict moderate corporal punishment on his wife in order to keep her “within the bounds of duty” was removed in 1981 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1911).

### **Gender Based Violence in Nigeria**

Incidents of Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Nigeria have escalated dramatically with the insurgency in the north east. North-East Nigeria has witnessed an increase in violence since the beginning of 2015, causing a major humanitarian crisis. More than two million individuals have been displaced as a consequence of the intensification of attacks by on-going military operations and non-state armed groups. As a result, humanitarian protection and assistance needs have grown exponentially albeit with commendable response efforts from both national and international actors.

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD) has the mandate for coordinating prevention and responses for GBV in Nigeria. With the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the FMWASD established the dedicated GBV Sub-Sector to cover the humanitarian needs of the north east. As a result, the Gender Based Violence Sub Sector was activated in 2015. In October 2016, the humanitarian leadership declared an internal level 3 operation in the north east and partners scaled up their operations. The coordination for the GBV Sub Sector – as with other sectors - moved from Abuja to Maiduguri, in Borno state, overseeing interventions in the three most affected states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study was supported by the feminist theory on domestic violence (Pence & Paymer, 1993). This theory notes that the root causes of intimate partner by violence is as an outcome of living a society that condones aggressive behaviors perpetrated by men, while socializing women to be

non-violent. It focuses on the societal messages that sanction a male's use of violence and aggression throughout life, and proscribed gender roles that dictate how men and women should behave in their intimate relationships. The components of this theory for example societal messages that sanction a male's use of violence, aggressions and proscribed gender roles made this theory to be adopted for the study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Violence** is "the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy. Less conventional definitions are also used, such as the [World Health Organization](#)'s definition of violence as "the intentional use of physical force or [power](#), threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal development, or deprivation."

Internationally, violence resulted in deaths of an estimated 1.28 million people in 2013 up from 1.13 million in 1990. Of the deaths in 2013, roughly 842,000 were attributed to self-harm ([suicide](#)), 405,000 to interpersonal violence, and 31,000 to collective violence ([war](#)) and legal intervention. In Africa, out of every 100,000 people, each year an estimated 60.9 die a violent death. For each single death due to violence, there are dozens of hospitalizations, hundreds of emergency department visits, and thousands of doctors' appointments. Furthermore, violence often has lifelong consequences for physical and mental health and social functioning and can slow economic and social development.

In 2013, assault by [firearm](#) was the leading cause of death due to interpersonal violence, with 180,000 such deaths estimated to have occurred. The same year, assault by sharp object resulted in roughly 114,000 deaths, with a remaining 110,000 deaths from personal violence being attributed to other causes.

Violence in many forms can be preventable. There is a strong relationship between levels of violence and modifiable factors in a country such as an [concentrated \(regional\) poverty](#), income and [gender inequality](#), the harmful use of alcohol, and the absence of safe, stable, and nurturing relationships between children and parents. Strategies addressing the

underlying causes of violence can be relatively effective in preventing violence, although mental and physical health and individual responses, personalities, etc. have always been decisive factors in the formation of these behaviors.

### **Types of violence against women**

Rape

Prostitution/Sex Trafficking

Domestic violence

Femicide

### **Rape**

Rape is the unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman without her consent or with her consent, if such consent is obtained by fraud, duress or any form of intimidation. Rape- the term rape originates from the latin (supine stem raptum)", to snatch, to grab to carry off since the 14<sup>th</sup> century the term has come to mean "to seize and take away by force". In Roman law, the carrying off of a woman by force, with or without intercourse, constituted raptus.

Rape is a type of assault usually involving sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetrations carried against a person without that persons consent. The act may be carried out by physical force coercion abuse of authority or against a person who is incapable of giving valid consent, such as one who is unconscious, incapacitated, has an intellectual disability or is below the legal.

Rape is a crime under international and national laws, rape, whether committed by a state actor or a non-state actor constitutes a violation of women's rights and fundamental freedoms. It violates the rights of the women and girls to be free from torture, mental and physical integrity liberty and security of the person and prevent enjoyment of right of such as the right to health employment and freedom of expression and in some cases, it denies them the right to life international human right law- rape of women and girls is an act of gender- based violence and constitutes, discrimination" as prohibited CEDAW.

Rape remain major concern including rape of minors. August and December 2016. A human right watch (HRW) report released in October

2016 detailed cases of rape and sexual abuse by the military and government authorities such as camp leaders, vigilante group, policemen and soldier.

### **Prostitution Sex Trafficking**

Who is a prostitute? "a woman who offers sex in exchange for money" could be a ready answer she may be found in cheap brothels in the many slums and ghettos that dot our urban environment. Society can also easily identify as a prostitute the loudly dressed girl hanging around popular hotels or strategies street comers at old hours of the day and night flagging down unwary motorist for ride. easily classifiable is the college students who is willing to sell her sexual favour to the highest bidder like the common prostitute but who is saved from such tagging because she does not openly solicit. And because she carries a student's identify card and lives in the hostel; or even with her parents. In many countries of the world, prostitution is controlled by organized crime syndicates. It is a complex "industry" involving strings of brothels, pimps and those who live on immoral earnings, corruption of law enforcement personnel through regular pay offs corruption of politicians and local government and city officials the exploitation and coercion of women and girls into prostitution which often involves physical assaults, blackmail, terror and intimidation. Prostitution oils other criminal enterprises, drugs, property offences (those who patronize prostitutes are vulnerable to having their pockets picked or violently taken) armed robbery prostitutes are invariably gangster molls, confidants and receivers of stolen property. It is therefore confounding that Nigerian law kales a somewhat lenient attitude towards the practice indeed, there is no offence of prostitution per se.

Domestic or family violence is one of the most insidious (forms of violence against women. It is prevalent in all societies. It is violence that is directed against a women because she is a women or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. Gender-based violence infringers many rights of women including the right to life, freedom from torture, liberty security of the person. Legislative intervention, has been put in place in many other Countries-

United states, South Africa and Mauritius, for example. The importance of such legislation is that will show the political commitment of the state to eradicate the problem. Without such legislation. Prevention of domestic violence and specifically victimization of women will be stultified.

### **Femicide**

Increasingly, experts are linking the failure to tame domestic violence with appropriate legal procedures to the burgeoning of female homicide (femicide) based on alleged provocation of husbands, lovers and other intimates by their victims. The pathology of femicide reveals that women are often killed by person standing in close primary relationship with them such as husbands or lovers. The motive usually in unbridled passion (jealousy, hatred, revenge).

### **Causes of Violence against Women**

#### **An ecological model for understanding violence against women**

The ecological model of public health-based analyses has gained traction in recent years to aid understandings of these complex and intersecting “contributing factors”, as embedded in the social practices and values of broader society.

#### **The societal level**

The largest or all-encompassing circle represents the societal level. At this level, laws, policies and practices emanating from the State – as well as from traditional or customary practices at the broad social level – can directly contribute to violence against women, fail to respond to it, and/or create an environment where violence against women is tolerated, excused or justified.

Societies that value women’s participation and representation, and where there are fewer economic, social or political differences in power between men and women, have lower levels of violence against women.

Other contributing factors at the societal level include limited economic opportunities for women, and women’s insecure access to and control over property and land rights. Strategies to promote women’s economic autonomy and access to skills training, credit and employment; encourage

girls' completion of secondary school; delay age of marriage to 18; and ensure women have their rights respected as to when and whether to marry and have children – are all “protective factors” against violence against women at the societal level.

### **The community level**

At the community level, other contributing factors begin to emerge, compounding those at the societal level. Isolation of women from support mechanisms, and the lack of safe spaces for women and girls to freely communicate and develop friendships and social networks have been found to contribute to violence and compound its impacts.

Community (or social) norms such as those granting men control over female behaviour, acceptance of violence as a way to resolve conflict, notions of masculinity tied to dominance, honour or aggression, and rigid gender roles all contribute to higher risk of violence against women. Attitudes or practices that invisibilise, minimise, condone or justify such violence are similarly contributory, such as the belief that neighbours should not intervene when a wife is being beaten because that is a “private” matter, or the belief that reporting that a daughter was raped would bring shame to the family.

Broader discriminatory or gender-stereotyping norms – for example supporting male dominance or entitlement – are also associated with attitudes tolerant of violence against women and girls, including attitudes and practices that reinforce female subordination (e.g. dowry, bride price, child marriage); and the normalized use of violence and aggression within the family or society to address conflict.

Women themselves may be conditioned by these social norms to accept violence, with surveys conducted in various countries showing that in many contexts women will report that violence is justified in a number of cases.

### **The relationship level**

At the level of a relationship or family, one of the strongest risk factors for violence is male control over social and economic decision-making.

Other factors include justification of male use of violence against women and girls in the family, such as the belief that husbands have the right to physically “discipline” their wives under certain conditions; and placement of individual and family privacy and honour above the safety and wellbeing of girls and women who experience violence.

Many of the above (community and relationship level) factors can also be reflected in peer groups and organizational cultures, which also have further contributing factors such as male dominance and gender segregation, higher levels of hostility towards women, peer support for violence, norms of sexual conquest and the denigration of women.

### **The individual level**

Finally, at the individual level, the most consistent predictor of the use of violence among men is their agreement with sexist, patriarchal and/or sexually hostile attitudes.

Other contributing factors have been identified relating to age, level of education, and anti-social behaviour.

Studies on partner violence in particular cite the harmful use of alcohol as presenting a more complex contributing relationship to violence against women and girls, potentially exacerbating and increasing the severity of violence, as well as the first time perpetration of sexual assault. Personal childhood exposure to, or experience of, violence is a strong risk factor for later perpetration, but this is by no means inevitable and is affected by a number of other social, educational and psychological factors – most notably the existence or otherwise of alternative non-violent social norms and models for healthy relationships.

There is often a tendency to focus on individual life histories, attitudes and behaviours in discourses on prevention of violence against women, but it is of paramount importance to remember these are only one part of the ecological model – and continually influenced by factors at all other levels.

To this end, the Secretary General's *In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women* emphasizes that “explanations for violence that focus primarily on individual behaviours and personal histories, such as alcohol abuse or a history of exposure to violence, overlook the broader impact of systemic gender inequality and women’s subordination.”

### **Unequal power remains the common thread**

While the causes of violence against women and girls have been examined from various theoretical perspectives, all have concluded that no single cause adequately accounts for violence against women – though unequal power between men and women remains the common thread.

As the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences has noted: “no form of interpersonal violence against women is devoid of structural violence – as in all places, such abuse is underpinned by beliefs about the perpetrator’s right to harm another, based on societal notions of gender and rights.”

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, violence against women is a technical term used collectively refer to a violent acts that are primarily or exclusively committed against women. Violence against women is a widespread global phenomenon which affects women from all social sectors, ethnic background religious or ideologies in all societies all over the world, although we can rely on the acknowledgment of violence against women as a societal problem and a severe human’s/women’s rights violation by the international and European conventions.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- i. To offer protection to women who are victims of torture or threatened with torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, taking into account the specific nature of the violence used against them.
- ii. To ensure that the respect and the promotion of women’s human rights become an irreversible reality at the same level as men’s human rights.
- iii. To ensure that problems that are specific to women and the violation of their rights are taken into consideration by relevant UN bodies (treaty monitoring bodies) and are granted greater attention.
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- v. Ensure that criminal justice professionals who have contact with victims possess necessary skills to properly assess the situation and make appropriate and safe referrals.
- vi. Ensure that criminal justice professionals who have contact with victims possess necessary skills to recognize signs of abuse and different Early detection and reporting Victim protection and support issues Crime Prevention
- vii. Ensure that all forms of domestic violence (physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence) are punished and criminalized.
- viii. To Criminalize all forms of traditional practices harmful to women and girls, such as crimes committed in the name of honour, forced and early marriages, female genital muilation and dowry-related violence

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