



The Impacts of Domestic Violence against Women in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria

Omolade, Akinmade Olatunde;^a Orefale, Martha Oluwatosin^b and Fetuga, Adenike Raimot^c

^a Department of Physical and Health Education, Lagos State University of Education (LASUED), Formerly, Michael Otedola College of Primary Education, Noforija-Epe, Lagos. omo42016@yahoo.com

^b Department of Primary Education, National Teachers' Institutes Kaduna LASUSTECH Ikorodu, Lagos. orefalemartha@gmail.com

^c Department of Educational Management Faculty of Education, University of Lagos. fetugaadenike@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper focuses on the impacts of domestic violence against women on children's development in the Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State in recent times. Specifically, it examined how the psychology of a child is impacted by domestic violence in the family and also investigated the various forms of domestic violence women experience. Hence, domestic violence against women and its impact on children's development will bring to the notice of the populace and the various forms of domestic violence women are exposed to in the society was critically spotlighted by this paper. The qualitative methodology of research approach to data collation and interpretation was adopted for the study. It also employed the survey descriptive research design and also from the responses obtained and analysed, the findings revealed that the major people that experience domestic violence are women and that women are frequently abused domestically in the society. The paper concludes that most domestic violence against women includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, verbal abuse, and emotional abuse. It recommends that both governmental and non-governmental organizations are to identify these abuses families and children encounter and develop strategies to combat domestic violence.

Keywords: Violence, Women, Domestic, Children, Development

Introduction

One of the major agents of socialization is the family and it's the smallest unit of every society. The family is the first and most important agent of socialization because that is the place a child has his/her first encounter in life and its plays a major role in the development of the child. Psychology has proven that the brain of a child is blank like a whiteboard and whatever that is written inside it, stays and contributes to the growth of the child either in a good or bad way. Activities that go on in the family between husband and wife affect a child negatively or positively. Research has shown that one of the factors that affect a home nowadays is domestic violence among couples. The higher percentage of this violence is majorly against the wives in the home for one reason or another and it has become a trending issue. Domestic violence is a controversial issue which makes its assessment quite difficult.

Over time, the term has borne various definitions. According to Amnesty International Nigeria,¹ it is an act of threatening, harassment or violence of any kind psychological, physical,

¹Amnesty International, Nigeria. (2005). Unheard Voices, Retrieved on 12th August 2014 from: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf440042005>



sexual or emotional between adults involved in a relationship or previously involved in one, regardless of their sex or gender. Violence against women includes also domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, human trafficking, genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Many women experience different kinds of domestic violence from their husbands ranging from physical abuse such as beating, slapping, using objects on the woman, suffocating, etc. Sexual abuse is another kind of domestic violence women experience in their homes such as forced vaginal penetration, anal penetration, oral stimulation, and forced exposure to material or explicit sexual activity. Violence against women includes any spoken, physical or sexual act meant to violate either body or identity of a woman regardless of her age, race, ethnicity or country.²

Physical violence may also be defined as the behaviour that involves the intentional use of force against the body of another person and that may cause physical injury, injury and/or pain. The author defines sexual abuse as any unwanted sexual intimacy imposed on an individual by another.³ The issue of domestic violence according to research has led to the death of many women. Some were injured severely, some pregnant women lost their babies and some were disabled. In 1994, statistics from the justice office shows that about 92% of domestic violence cases in the world involved women.⁴

Women Against Domestic Violence 2014,⁵ domestic violence threatens many Nigerian families and, unfortunately, increases in our society. It makes women feel less of themselves and reduces the dignity of the person in society. Every country frowns on the issue of domestic violence including Nigeria. Section 42 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (As Amended), guarantees all Nigeria including women, the right from discrimination on the basis of sex. Also, Section 34 guarantees every citizen the right to the dignity of a human person which in its subsection (a) forbids torture and inhuman or degrading treatments, subsection (b) forbids the subjection of anybody to slavery or servitude yet violence against women continues unabated, unchecked and this has been blamed on the loopholes in our laws, some of which undermine the provision for equality in the constitution. One thing about domestic violence is that it can happen to anyone irrespective of social status, race, religion or education.⁶

Socialization is the process whereby a person acquires knowledge, new behaviour and development. This process starts with the family. A child learns to talk, walk, and call his/her name in the family which is the primary stage of socialization before the secondary comes. Activities that go on in the family between husband and wife affect a child negatively or positively. A child learns from his parents. Whatever a child witnesses his parents do, to him/her it is good and he copies the act. The development of a child takes different stages.⁷

When a child witnesses his father beating and abusing his mother either verbally, physically, or sexually, it may develop in the child physical, psychological, emotional and behavioural problems either short term or long-term as a result of the forms of violence he/she is

² Amnesty International, Nigeria. (2005). Unheard Voices, Retrieved on 12th August 2014 from: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf440042005>

³Dutton, M. A. (1992). *Empowering and Healing The Battered Woman: A Model For Assessment And Intervention*. Springer Publishing Co.

⁴Dutton, M.A. (1992). *Empowering and healing the battered woman: A model for assessment and intervention*. Springer Publishing Co.

⁵ Women Against Domestic Violence 2014.

⁶ Women Against Domestic Violence 2014.

⁷Abama, E and K, C. M. A. (2009). "Violence Against Women in Nigeria: How the Millennium Development Goals Addresses the Challenge". *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.3 No. 3.



exposed to. This may corrupt the developmental process of the child and mar his/her destiny. It may as well affect the child's education, how he/she relates with peers, sees the opposite sex, academic achievement, and other aspects of the child's life.⁸ There has been an increase in acknowledgement that a child who is exposed to domestic abuse during his upbringing will suffer in his development and psychological welfare.⁹

Some emotional and behavioural problems that can result due to domestic violence include increased aggressiveness, anxiety, and changes in how a child socializes with friends, family and authorities. Problems with attitude and cognition in schools can start developing, along with a lack of skills such as problem-solving. In some cases the abuser will purposely abuse the mother in front of the child to cause a ripple effect, hunting two victims simultaneously. It has been found that children who witness mother assault are more likely to exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).¹⁰

Conceptual or Thematic Concerns

Conflict and Violence

A conflict is a situation in which individuals, groups or countries are involved in serious disagreements or disputes. Conflict is a necessary process in life. Within the individual, there is always a conflict between thoughts, choices and interests, to name a few. This is known as intra-personal conflict. This not only makes decision-making difficult but has also been identified as a major cause of stress. On the other hand, there are interpersonal conflicts between individuals, groups, members of an organization and states.¹¹

Conflicts can also be constructive or destructive. When conflicts are handled or resolved properly, there will be peace. On the other hand, when resolution and reconciliation fail, conflict escalates into chaos, crisis or war. Also, conflict is "deviations of interests, goals or priorities between individuals, groups or organizations or failure to meet the demands of a task; Activity or process".¹² Duncan¹³ suggested that conflict involves certain types of hostility and bad desires, which can be considered a case of extreme competition. Conflicts are different from the competition, although competition can lead to conflict. This suggests that conflicts may occur without any specific reference to competition, as they could occur as a result of a breakdown in the mechanism of decision-making.

On another view conflict was described as whenever two individuals come together, there are bound to be disagreements at times.¹⁴ That's natural. However, sometimes these differences can grow to enormous proportions where they become detrimental to the involved parties and the environment. When that occurs conflict is present. Fischer defined violence (conflict) as any random

⁸ Abama, E and K, C. M. A. (2009). "Violence Against Women in Nigeria:How the Millennium Development Goals Addresses the Challenge". The Journal of Pan African Studies, vol.3 No. 3.

⁹Dodd 2009 <https://philpapers.org/rec/DODVAP-3>

¹⁰ Abama, E and K, C. M. A. (2009). "Violence Against Women in Nigeria:How the Millennium Development Addresses the Challenge". The Journal of Pan African Studies, vol.3 No. 3.

¹¹ Yogo N. (2008) Impact of Domestic Violence Against Women. A Case study of Baba I Community, University of Buea, Cameroon. Unpublished material.

¹² Yogo N. (2008) Impact of Domestic Violence Against Women. A Case Study Of Baba I Community, University of Buea, Cameroon. Unpublished Material.

¹³Duncan Chapell and John Monahan (1975) Prediction of Violence (From Violence And Criminal Justice) retrieved online August 12, 2022.

¹⁴ Duncan Chapell and John Monahan (1975) Prediction of Violence (From Violence And Criminal Justice) retrieved online August 12, 2022.



or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence a process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, or forced “protection.”

The crucial thing is for the monitors to understand deeply the context and concept of electoral violence for easy and comprehensive reporting of incidents in a way that will capture incidents across the stages without neglecting any stage.¹⁵

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence and intimate partner violence (IPV). It is a pattern of abusive behaviours by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family or cohabitation. Domestic violence, so defined, has many forms, including physical aggression or assault (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects), or threats thereof; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; controlling or domineering; intimidation; stalking; passive/covert abuse otherwise known as neglect; and economic deprivation.¹⁶

Domestic violence and abuse are not limited to obvious physical violence. It can mean endangerment, criminal coercion, kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment, trespassing, harassment and stalking.¹⁷ The US Office of Violence Against Women (OVM) defines domestic violence as a “pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner”. The definition adds that domestic violence “can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender”, and can take many forms, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, economic and psychological abuse.¹⁸ 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 the victim’s gender as the 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 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 and even the ‘State’ itself.¹⁹ Worldwide governments and organizations actively work to combat violence against women through a variety of programs. 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, and custodians of social, cultural and fundamental values of society and permanent change is often best achieved through them. Full community development is impossible without their understanding, cooperation and effective participation. Considering the importance of women as mothers, sometimes breadwinners,

¹⁵ Duncan Chapell and John Monahan (1975) Prediction of Violence (From Violence And Criminal Justice) retrieved online August 12, 2022.

¹⁶ Action on Armed Violence, and the Working Group on Armed Violence (2013), The Violent Road, An Overview of Armed Violence in Nigeria via <http://aoav.org.uk/2013/the-violent-road-nigeria-north-east/>

¹⁷ National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2011

¹⁸ Office of Violence Against Women, 2007

¹⁹ United Nations, 1993



teachers and guardians, they deserve respect, recognition and better treatment but the opposite is usually the case.²⁰

Women are more likely to be victimized by someone that they are intimate with, commonly called Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The impact of domestic violence in the sphere of total violence against women can be understood through the example that 40-70% of murders of women are committed by their husbands or boyfriends.²¹ Studies have shown that violence is not always perpetrated as a form of physical violence but can also be psychological and verbal.

Distinctions are made among the types of violence, motives of perpetrators, and the social and cultural context-based patterns across numerous incidents and motives of the perpetrator. Types of violence identified by Johnson are:

a. Common Couple Violence (CCV): This is not connected to general control behaviour, but arises in a single argument where one or both partners physically lash out at the other.

b. Intimate Terrorism (IT): This may also involve emotional and psychological abuse Intimate terrorism is one element in the general pattern of control by one partner over the other. It is less common than common couple violence, more likely to escalate over time, not as likely to be mutual, and more likely to involve serious injury. Intimate terrorism barterers include types: “Generally-violent-antisocial” and “dysphonic-borderline”. The first type includes men with general psychopathic and violent tendencies. The second type is men who are emotionally dependent on the relationship. Support for this typology has been found in subsequent evaluations.²²

c. Violence Resistance (VR): This is sometimes thought of as ‘self-defence’. It is violence perpetrated by victims against their abusive partners.

d. Mutual Violent Control (MVC): This is a rare type of intimate partner violence occurring when both partners act violently, battling for control. The various forms of violence against women include wife battery, denial of self-expression, female-child labour, childhood marriage, female genital mutilation, violence from in-laws, violence from sexual relationships, antagonism because of the sex of new-born child, exploitation, violence by law enforcement agents, negative cultural attitudes and degrading traditional practices, e.g. widowhood rites and denial of female education.²³ Out of these various forms of violence, this researcher is particularly interested in domestic violence against women with particular reference to wife battery. Wife battery is an exposure of a married woman to serious beating or repeated injuries.²⁴ Violence by the husband is a higher and far more harmful form of violence, such as battery and the use of knives and guns. Domestic violence against women has deep roots in most cultures and religions and is supported, even institutionalized by patriarchal values in most societies. Public responses to acts of violence range from pride, denial or tacit conceit. Wife battery may happen in 30 per cent of families but is not recognized in the public eye. Violence is a global problem that can no longer be ignored or permitted by remaining silent, excusing violence, blaming those who are involved and accepting cultural and religious biases.²⁵

²⁰ United Nations, 1993

²¹ World Health Organization, 2002

²² Hamby and Skupien (1998). Intimate Partner Violence and Injury in the Lives of Low-Income Native American Women.

²³ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1997). Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 18, 2nd and 3rd Periodic Reports of States Parties: Nigeria.

²⁴ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1997). Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 18, 2nd and 3rd Periodic Reports of States Parties: Nigeria.

²⁵ Ellsberg, M., Heise, L., Pena, R., Agurto, S. and Winkvist, A. (2001). “Researching Domestic Violence Against Women: Methodological and Ethical Consideration. Studies in Family Planning Journal. Vol. 32 No. 1.



Origin and Causes of Violence against Women

Most of today's conflicts in Nigeria take place within states. Their root causes often include poverty, the struggle for scarce resources, and violations of human rights. These have a tragic feature in common: women suffer their impact disproportionately more than men. According to International Organisation for Migrants (2002),²⁶ women and girls endure the same trauma as the rest of the population -- bombings, famines, epidemics, mass executions, torture, arbitrary imprisonment, forced migration, ethnic cleansing, threats and intimidation -- they are also targets of specific forms of violence and abuse in conflict situations. These include sexual violence and exploitation. Efforts to resolve these conflicts and address their root causes may not succeed unless there is the empowerment of all those who suffer most from them - including and especially women.

Hence, until women begin to play a full and equal part, in conflict resolution, we cannot build the foundations for enduring peace - development, good governance, human rights and justice. Armed conflicts continue to occur in many parts of the world and have escalated over the last decade.²⁷ In Africa, over one-quarter of the continent's countries was afflicted by one form of conflict or the other in the late 1990s. Today's armed conflicts are predominantly internal, with regional and sub-regional repercussions; and the victims of those conflicts are disproportionately women, just as we have in Egypt and Syria. In the aftermath of most conflict situations, women are often the first to become unemployed or under-employed. In 2001, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that there were 19.8 million refugees, asylum-seekers and others of concern to the Organization. UNHCR also estimates that women and children constitute 80 per cent of the world's refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).²⁸

Forms of Domestic Violence against Women

- ✓ **Sexual Violence:** Although women are more at risk of violence from their intimate partners than from other persons, sexual violence by non-partners is also common in many settings. According to the 2006 In-Depth Study of the Secretary-General; "Sexual violence by 'non-partners' refers to violence by a relative, friend, acquaintance, neighbour, work colleague or stranger. Estimates of the prevalence of sexual violence by 'non-partners' are difficult to establish because in many societies, especially in Africa, sexual violence remains an issue of deep shame for women and often for their families. Statistics on rape extracted from police records, for example, are notoriously unreliable because of significant underreporting."²⁹
- ✓ **Physical abuse:** It is the use of physical force against another person in a way that ends up injuring the person or puts the person at risk of being injured.
- ✓ **Emotional abuse:** This can be verbal or non-verbal. It may be in form of calling names or criticizing the victim. It may be non-verbal as the other party makes all decisions on behalf of the other leaving no say of the victim.
- ✓ **Financial abuse:** It includes withholding resources, stealing from the victim or using the victim's name to incur debt.

²⁶ International Organisation for Migrants (2002), retrieved online

²⁷ International Organisation for Migrants (2002), retrieved online

²⁸ World's Refugees And Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs, 2005) retrieved online 23/ 07/2022

²⁹ BILL (2003) The Violence Against Women (Prohibition) Bill 2003—(VAW)—The coalition is known as the Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence Against Women (LACVAW). It is a National Membership Organization Made Up Of 55 Organizations And 6 Individuals.



- ✓ **Spiritual abuse:** It is anything which comes in way of one's doing something or feeling good about oneself. The victim is not allowed to practice her moral, cultural or religious beliefs and is forced to give up things that are important to her.
- ✓ **Harmful Traditional Practices:** these practices are forms of violence that have been committed against women in certain communities and societies for so long that they are considered part of accepted cultural practice. These violations include:³⁰
 - (1) Female Genital Mutilation or cutting (FGM),
 - (2) Honor killings and
 - (3) Early marriage.
- ✓ **Female Genital Mutilation:** it refers to several types of deeply-rooted traditional cutting operations performed on women and girls. Traditionally, FGM is sometimes justified as a way to ensure chastity and genital "purity." It is estimated that more than 130 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM, mainly in Africa and some Middle Eastern countries and two million girls a year are at risk of mutilation.³¹ Since the late 1980s, opposition to FGM and efforts to combat the practice has increased. According to the Secretary-General's In-Depth Study, as of April 2006, 15 of the 28 African States where FGM is prevalent made it an offence under criminal law.
- ✓ **Honour Killings:** In some Nigerian communities, rape victims, women suspected of engaging in premarital sex, and women accused of adultery have been murdered by their relatives because the violation of a woman's chastity is viewed as an affront to the family's honour. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that the annual worldwide number of "honour killing" victims may be as high as 5000 women.³²
- ✓ **Early Marriage:** The practice of early marriage is prevalent throughout the world, especially in Africa and South Asia. This negates the peace and security of any nation because it is a form of sexual violence since young girls are often forced into marriage and into sexual relations. This practice jeopardizes women's rights to health, raises their risk of exposure to HIV/AIDS and limits their chance of attending school. Some parents and families justify child marriages by contending that it ensures a better future for their daughters. Some parents and families also marry off their younger daughters as a means of gaining economic security and status for themselves as well as for their daughters. Insecurity, conflict and societal crises also support early marriage. As reported by the UN (2002),³³ in many African countries experiencing conflict, where there is a high possibility of young girls being kidnapped, and marrying them off at an early age is viewed as a way to secure their protection.

Domestic Violence against Women

There is no agreement among scholars and practitioners on what is meant by violence against women. For example, is pushing a woman or sending harassing text messages violence against women? If a husband verbally insults his wife or controls the purse strings, is this violence

³⁰ BILL (2003) The Violence Against Women (Prohibition) Bill 2003—(VAW)—The coalition is known as the Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence Against Women (LACVAW). It is a National Membership Organization Made Up Of 55 Organizations And 6 Individuals.

³¹ United Nations General Assembly, 2006

³² United Nations General Assembly, 2006

³³ United Nations General Assembly, 2002.



against women? This lack of agreement about what violence against women is, undoubtedly contributes to inconsistencies in estimates of the prevalence of violence against women. Be that as it may, whether a female is victimized by a stranger or an intimate partner, it is still regarded as violence against women.³⁴ The perpetrator of the violence does not really matter but what matters most is that a woman has been victimized and the act should be regarded as violent. Although men are more likely than women to be victims of violent crimes, patterns of victimization differ. Women are far more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner.³⁵ The international violence against women's Survey (IVAWS, 2004)³⁶ measured three distinctive types of self-reported violence against women. They are:

1. Physical (including threats of physical violence).
2. Sexual (including unwanted sexual touching) and
3. Psychological or emotional (controlling behaviours such as insults, humiliation, and restrictions on freedom). One of the universally accepted definitions of violence against women is that of the United Nations which defined violence against women as "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 deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life".³⁷

Furthermore, there is this view that there is increasing evidence to suggest that marital violence revolves around cultural definitions of appropriate sex roles and partners' expectations of each other's roles within relationships, particularly those related to wifely obedience and domestic service. They went further to state that the failure of the woman in satisfying the partner's expectation of her role, results on many occasions in the incidence of violence against women. Also, women's economic dependence on men, patriarchy and women's status has continued to aid the perpetration of violence against them. According to them, the incidence of violence against women cuts across social, economic and cultural boundaries. For too long, family violence was primarily regarded as spouse abuse and was mostly limited to battering.³⁸

Effects of Domestic Violence on Women

Physical Effect: Bruises, broken bones, head injuries, lacerations and internal bleeding are some of the acute effects of a domestic violence incident that require medical attention and hospitalization. Some chronic health conditions that have been linked to victims of domestic violence are arthritis, and irritable bowel syndrome. Victims who are pregnant during a domestic violence relationship experience a greater risk of miscarriage, pre-term labour, and injury to or death of the foetus.

Psychological Effect: Among victims who are still living with their perpetrators, high amounts of stress, fear and anxiety are commonly reported. Depression is also common, as victims are made to feel guilty for 'provoking' the abuse and are frequently subjected to intense criticism. It is reported that 60% of victims meet the diagnostic criteria for depression, either during or after

³⁴ Ellsberg, M., Heise, L., Pena, R., Agurto, S. and Winkvist, A. (2001). "Researching Domestic Violence Against Women: Methodological and Ethical Consideration. *Studies in Family Planning Journal*. Vol. 32 No. 1.

³⁵ Ellsberg, M., Heise, L., Pena, R., Agurto, S. and Winkvist, A. (2001). "Researching Domestic Violence Against Women: Methodological and Ethical Consideration. *Studies in Family Planning Journal*. Vol. 32 No. 1.

³⁶ International Violence Against Women's Survey (IVAWS, 2004)

³⁷ United Nations, 1993.

³⁸ Christiana Sanvo Zadding (2012) "Assessment of Domestic Violence and Abuse Against Women and Its Effects on Family Relationship in Nigeria", M.A. Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.



the termination of the relationship, and have a greatly increased risk of suicidality. Many researchers state that PTSD is possibly the best diagnosis for those suffering from the psychological effects of domestic violence, as it accounts for the variety of symptoms commonly experienced by victims of trauma.

Financial Effect: Once victims leave their perpetrator, they can be stunned by the reality of the extent to which the abuse has taken away their autonomy. Due to economic abuse and isolation, the victims usually have very little money of their own and few people on whom they can rely when seeking help. This is one of the greatest obstacles facing victims of domestic violence, and the strongest fact that can discourage them from leaving their perpetrators.³⁹ In addition to lacking financial resources, victims of domestic violence often lack specialized skills, education, and training that are necessary to find gainful employment, and also may have several children to support.

Long-term Effect: Domestic violence can trigger many different responses in victims, all of which are very relevant for a professional working with a victim. Major consequences of domestic violence victimization include psychological/mental health issues and chronic physical health problems. A victim's overwhelming lack of resources can lead to homelessness and poverty.

Impact of Domestic Violence against Women on Children's Development

There has been an increase in acknowledgement that a child who is exposed to domestic abuse during his upbringing will suffer in his development and psychological welfare.⁴⁰ Some emotional and behavioural problems that can result due to domestic violence include increased aggressiveness, anxiety, and changes in how a child socializes with friends, family and authorities. Problems with attitude and cognition in schools can start developing, along with a lack of skills such as problem-solving. Correlation has been found between the experience of abuse and neglect in childhood and perpetration of domestic violence and sexual abuse in adulthood. Additionally, in some cases, the abuser will purposely abuse the mother in front of the child to cause a ripple effect, hurting two victims simultaneously. It has been found that children who witness mother assault are more likely to exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).⁴¹

According to the community overcoming relationship abuse, children and teens are often hidden victims of domestic violence/abuse. When exposed to an abusive parent, children and teens often witness domestic violence/abuse, get hurt accidentally or become direct victims of abuse. The effects of exposure to domestic violence abuse can be as damaging to children and teens as the damage that an abusive person inflicts on his/her partner. The good news is that children and teens are resilient. They are strong and able to heal if they are listened to, nurtured and allowed to feel safe.⁴² Three to 10 million children witness domestic violence/abuse. The extent of the risk and trauma of witnessing domestic violence/abuse depends on the age of the child and the severity length and frequency of the abuse. Children as young as 1 and 2 years and teens exposed to an abusive parent often feel afraid, helpless, guilty, angry, frustrated, isolated and confused.

³⁹ Stop Violence Against Women, 2010

⁴⁰ Dodd 2009. <https://philpapers.org/rec/DODVAP-3>

⁴¹ Adesoji, A. (2010), 'The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria', *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 45 No. 2, pp. 95-108

⁴² Amaike, O.G. and Quadri, M.O.M (2005) Perception of Sexual Violence Against Women in the Era of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria: A case study of the university of Lagos Students. *International Journal of Violence and Related studies* vol.01. 2005-No.1



As the incidents of interpersonal violence grow in our society so does the need for investigation of the cognitive, emotional and behavioural consequences produced by exposure to domestic violence, especially in children and teens.⁴³ Traumatic stress is produced by exposure to events that are so extreme or severe and threatening that they demand extraordinary coping efforts. Such events are often unpredictable and uncontrollable. They overwhelm a person's sense of safety and security.⁴⁴

A traumatic event can seriously interrupt the school routine and the processes of teaching and learning. There are usually high levels of emotional upset, the potential for disruptive behaviour, or loss of student attendance unless efforts are made to reach out to students and staff with additional information and services. Students traumatized by exposure to violence have been shown to have lower grade point averages, more negative remarks in their cumulative records, and more reported absences from school than other students. They may have increased difficulties concentrating and learning at school and may engage in unusually reckless or aggressive behaviour.⁴⁵

According to www.treatment-centre.net, children exposed to domestic violence not only have more disciplinary problems at school but also perform considerably worse in math and reading than other students. They also have negative effects on their classroom peers, resulting in decreased test scores and increased disciplinary problems according to a new study by economists Scott Carrel of the University of California-devised Mark Hoekstra of the University.

Exposure to violence has been associated with problems in children's cognitive processes and poor academic functioning. Researchers have linked exposure to chronic abuse and violence with lower scores, poorer language skills, decrement in visual-motor integration skills and problems with attention memory. Cognitive problems associated with exposure to violence and abuse comprise one of the most direct trends in the development task of school adaptation and academic achievements.⁴⁶ Deficits in attention regulation, language skills and memory undermine the child's ability to accomplish the central requirements of academic achievements and school adaptation, namely to encode, organize, recall and express understanding of new information.

Conclusion

Violence against women is a fundamental human right issue. It carries with it both short- and long-term implications for the peace and security of Nigeria because it affects women's physical and psychological well-being. This is because development will make little sense if the population of women is excluded from participating, contributing and reaping its benefits. That is exactly what happens when violence – together with harmful gender norms and discriminatory legislation prevents women from being full partners in development projects.

Better job opportunities and female empowerment through education can reduce the risk of violence. However, for peace and security and the targets of the MDGs to be realized in Nigerian

⁴³Agenzia Fides, 23 July 2013, 'Boko Haram: Christian Girls Kidnapped And Islamized, Schools Targeted', Via <http://www.fies.org/en/news/34019>

⁴⁴Akanji, Olajide O (2009), 'The Politics Of Combating Domestic Terrorism In Nigeria'

⁴⁵Wafula, O. and B, Anneli (eds), *Domestic Terrorism In Africa: Defining, Addressing And Understanding Its Impact On Human Security*, (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies)

⁴⁶Akiyode-Afolabi, A. (2011) "2011 Election: Gender Ranking of Political Candidates and other Issues in Women's Political Participation." Women Advocates Research and Documentation Center (WARDC) With Support from Heinrich Boell Foundation (HBF)



communities, comprehensive approaches to peaceful coexistence that reduces gender inequality and violence against women must be developed and implemented. Women cannot take their rightful place in the power structure of Nigeria until the cultural attitudes and socialization practices are overcome by women themselves.

The inferiorization and demonization of women that they lack the will and self-esteem to actually seek and gain power must be overcome by a broader informal and formal education system. The educational levels of women must improve. Illiteracy, the bane of the majority of women, must be battled. Harmful traditional practices militating against women having the time and space to do politics must be stopped. Women on their own must respond to these, by speaking out and creating a support base for themselves and also try as much as they can to inculcate moral values into their children.

Recommendations

Based on the responses obtained, the researcher proffers the following recommendations:

- There is a need for educating people about family responsibility, as a way of eradicating domestic violence among families.
- There should be advocacy and legislation on the abolition of all traditional practices that limit women's access to credit, economic resources, property rights and the right to inheritance.
- Gender Policies that state the strategies to improve women's economic rights, should be made effective.
- Poverty reduction strategies should have substantive gender components. Hence, the government should mainstream gender and rural women in the implementation of development initiative such development initiatives. All the programs for the development of rural areas and empowerment of rural dwellers should articulate the needs of rural women and allocate resources to address these needs as a matter of priority. By so doing, such policies like the NEEDS/SEEDS policy should as a matter of urgency recognize the contributions and situation of rural women and the implications of violence on rural women empowerment.
- There should be training for policy formulators on how gender dimensions are tackled and integrated into policy and how these gender dimensions are integrated within the MDGs and the needs/seeds and made sustainably.
- Efforts to domesticate CEDAW and pass the Abolition of all forms of Discrimination Law and the Administration of Criminal Justice Law should be renewed. Hence, effective domestication of these laws should be decentralized and implemented at all levels of government.