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Gender Based Violence Against Women: Implications for Family Well- Being in Nsukka L.G.A

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Abstract

The study focuses on violence against women in Nsukka local government area of Enugu state and implications on family wellbeing. The study sought answers to three research questions, these include: To identify different dimensions of violence against women, to identify major causes of violence against women, to determine ways of preventing violence against women. Survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study comprised of 60 females who were victims of gender-based violence in the study area. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. Frequency, percentage and Mean were used for analyzing the data collected. Findings show that violence against women has had consequences on victims. Different dimensions of violence, such as wife beating with mean of S«= 3.78, rape = 3.63, sexual abuse S«= 3.63, and infidelity on the part of the male S«=3.45 were identified from the study. Causes of gender- based violence against women shows that illiteracy on the part of male 3.30, alcohol/drug addiction S«= 3.25 and the woman's status S«= 3.20 among others were the major causes. Measures to be adopted towards the prevention of violence against women shows that women and girls should be educated on their rights 3.62, perpetrators should be arrested and punished with grievous penalty, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)s should intervene. The study recommended inter alia; that government and NGOs should support and organize seminars to educate the public on the ills of all forms of violence against women. Government should enact and/or reinforce penalty, civil, labor and administrative sanctions in legislations to punish and redress, any act of violence done to women, whether in the home, workplace, community or society. The family should be at the fore front in inculcating the right values to their member and on the need for equal treatment of everybody not minding their gender. Government must be consistent in executing program aimed at eradicating any act of violence against women.

Key words: Violent actions, Gender, Family Wellbeing, discriminative practices,

Introduction

Traditional view about women has been that of a wife and mother and her sacred duty to serve man. She is expected to be subservient to the man, the society expects her to be under the authority of the man and not to question his decisions and actions. This tends to make women seem as inferior beings to men. They are denied access to own land and property. Women are at risk and are vulnerable, and majority of them experience both emotional and psychological trauma as a result of harassment and threat from their male counter parts especially intimate partners. The discrimination against women in the society leaves much burden and has been a serious setback to some women. Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in the world, especially developing countries like Nigeria (Ajayi, 2020). It occurs in every country of the world (United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM, 2010). There have been many cases of

violence against women. These are increasing daily in number and dimension. In recent times and even in years past women are constantly being subjected to various forms of violence and abuse (Fatemeh and Mehdi, 2009).

Around the world, at least one woman in every three has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime (World Health Organization WHO 2017). In Nigeria many women have been subjected to various form of abuse including but not limited to battering, rape and even death (Hadiza, 2009). Violence is a physical force used to harm someone or something. Violent actions may result in damage to properties, or injury to people, which may result to death. (Anyakoha,2013). United Nations (2001) define violence as the misuse of power that is likely to result in cohesion, deprivation of liberty and physical assaults. World report on violence and health in WHO (2014), define violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation. "Violence against women is a chosen action against a woman or girl child simply because of her gender, because she is female. Feleke & Gebresilassie (2008) pointed out that Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. Abuse of women and girls is best understood within gender framework because it stems in part from women's and girls' subordinate status in the society. Violence against women can also be described as any violation against women and their rights. Violence against women cuts across lines of race, religion, income, class, and culture. Violence against women is compounded by discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, sexual identity, social status, class and age. Women have constantly complained of one form of violence or another. The causes also include obnoxious cultural practices where woman is excluded from decision making over issues that affects them including the choice of whom to marry. The girl child may be denied education and maybe given out early in marriage. These acts of violence are numerous and come in varied forms and dimensions (Bakhtiari and Omidbakhsh, 2003). They include but not limited to the following acts of abuse and maltreatment. Such treatments are Domestic/ Physical Violence involves hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, pushing, grabbing, throwing, burning, hair-pulling, twisting arms, use of weapons against a woman.

Sexual Violence includes; Sexual assault (forced sexual activity) rape, genital mutilation refusal to use protection from Sexually Transmitted Diseases or unwanted pregnancy, forced abortions, unwanted sexual touching. Emotional or Psychological Violence involves isolating a woman from others, creating fear, threatening to report her to authorities. While, financial or Economic Violence include; controlling access to finances and bank accounts, withholding money, denying the right to work, forcing a woman to do precarious work against her wishes. These deprive the women their independence, survival and their independence and self-confidence. This domestic violence leads to physical injuries, sexual and reproductive hazards, psychological trauma, and fatal health consequences. Thus, violent acts against women have adversely affected the individuals, families, society and community development in different ways. For instance, economic violence may be used to keep a woman dependent on the abuser, with stalking and harassment preventing her from accessing outside support (Kocacik and Dogan 2006). Verbal Violence involves yelling, swearing, using degrading language and put-downs.

Furthermore, Human Trafficking involves recruiting, transporting, transferring, harboring or receiving people by improper means (such as force,

abduction, fraud, coercion, deception, or repeated provision of a controlled substance) for an illegal purpose, including sexual exploitation or forced labor. Some women are often denied the critical factors of production leading to abject poverty. When a woman is denied her political and legal rights in the society, it is a form of violence because this denies her the opportunity of contributing her ideas to family, society and community development. When a woman is physically abused either by raping, battering or intimidation or by other forms of physical abuse by the male counterparts, the implications is felt on the families and the community at large. Violence against women (VAW) is the most pervasive, yet least recognized human rights abuse in the world. Women in Nsukka like any other society experience violence. Hence, this study is undertaken with focus on violence against women in Nsukka local government area of Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, it will determine the forms of violence meted out to women in Nsukka, local government area of Enugu State, the causes of these violent behaviors towards women and the measures that could be adopted towards preventing and consequently, stopping these barbaric acts against women and the implications to overall family wellbeing. This study will therefore be beneficial to all women, especially, women who are often violated by their male folks, also to students who would want to carry out such study on women violence as the study provides useful information on violence against women. Families will benefit from the findings of this study because it will enlighten family members on how to handle violent issues against women.

The study will be quite useful to the field of Home Economics since it is an area of study that deals with family and wellbeing of every member of the family, so the study will help families, and parents to teach their children and other family members gender equality, to teach their girl-child to understand her worth and how important she is to the society, and her rights. The study will also be useful to government at all levels; local, state, and federal government, it will help in handling the issues of violence against women, as the study explores the various causes of violence against women and proffers possible solutions. This study is limited to violent issues against women and girls in Nsukka local government area of Enugu state.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the different dimensions of violence against women in Nsukka local government area of Enugu State?
2. What are the causes of violence against women in Nsukka local government area of Enugu State?
3. What are ways of preventing violence against women in Nsukka local government area of Enugu State?

METHODOLOGY

Design of the study

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Survey design was adopted because with survey responses are generated from the respondents and used to generalize over the entire population. Hence, it is efficient for this study. Nsukka was chosen because there are cases of domestic violence being perpetrated in the area as in other communities and societies.

Population

The population of the study comprised of 60 women who have experienced one form of violence in Nsukka local government area and have reported the violence. It is assumed that these women are victims and can participate effectively in the study. The social welfare department of the state provided the information and was the site for interaction with the respondents. The entire population was used for the sample.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Violence

against Women (VAW). This was developed by the researchers in line with the objectives of the study through extensive review of literature. The instrument was divided into two sections; section A was on the demographic data of the respondents while section B has 3 clusters A to C in line with the research questions. Thus, cluster A is on the forms of violence against women, cluster B is on the causes of violence against women, and cluster C is on ways of preventing violence against women. The instrument developed was structured on a four- point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1. The initial draft of the instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts to ascertain its validity, two from Home Economics and Hospitality Management and one from Social works department, all from University of Nigeria Nsukka. The experts face validated the draft copy of the instrument with respect to appropriateness, clarity and structure of the items and their observations, comments and suggestions helped in the modification and production of the final draft of the instrument for the study.

Method of Data collection

The final copy of the instrument was administered to the respondents personally by the researchers. The questionnaires were administered on a one-on-one basis in order to ensure uniformity in the interpretation of concepts and recording of responses. Data was collected only from the respondents who indicated willingness to participate in the study. On the spot explanation of the questionnaire items were done to ensure 100 percent return rate. The respondents expressed their views on the subject of the study. Data collection covered a period of one month.

Data Analysis

Data from the bio-data of the respondents was analyzed using frequency and percentages Research questions were analyzed using frequency and mean. The criterion mean of 2.50 was used for the decision rule. Responses with a mean rating of 2.50 and above were considered positive and agreed while mean rating less than 2.50 were considered negative and disagreed

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Results and Discussion

The analysis of data in Table 1 shows the mean responses on the various dimensions of violence against women. Items with mean scores 3.30, 3.33, 3.37, 3.45, 3.63, 3.63 and 3.78 to a high extent are the various dimensions of violence against women. The Grand mean of 3.18 shows that the items against women as listed were identified in the study as dimensions of violence against women in Nsukka. Result shows that items 1-18 have mean scores which fall within mean range of 2.50 and above indicating that these are the various dimensions of violence against women.

Table 1: Mean Scores of the Different Form of Violence Against Women in Nsukka LGA

S/NO	Dimensions of Violence	Mean	Decision
1	Wife beating	3.78	Accept
2	Rape	3.63	Accept
3	Early/forced marriage	3.37	Accept
4	Female Genital mutilation	3.03	Accept
5	Women/girls trafficking	3.07	Accept
6	Kidnapping of women and girls	3.05	Accept
7	Acid bathing	2.80	Accept
8	Verbal abuse	3.25	Accept
9	Denial of financial resources	3.03	Accept
10	Threats	2.93	Accept
11	Intimidation of any kind	2.83	Accept
12	Infidelity on the part of the male	3.45	Accept
13	Humiliation	3.02	Accept
14	Denial of rights	2.82	Accept
15	Incest	2.97	Accept
16	Use of dangerous weapons on women	3.30	Accept
17	Sexual harassment	3.33	Accept
18	Sexual Abuse	3.63	Accept
	GRAND MEAN	**3.18**	Accepted

The analysis of data in Table 2 shows the mean responses on the causes of violence against women. The Grand mean of 3.00 shows the various causes of violence against women. Result shows that items 1-12 have mean scores which fall within mean range of 2.50 and above indicating that these are the various causes of violence against women.

Table 2: Mean on the Causes of Violence Against Women in Nsukka LGA

S/NO	Causes of Violence	Mean	Decision
1	Illiteracy on the part of male	3.30	Accept
2	Woman Status	3.20	Accept
3	Alcohol/Drug Addiction	3.25	Accept
4	Political motives	3.10	Accept
5	Improper upbringing of children	3.05	Accept
6	Frustration/Anger	3.07	Accept
7	Unemployment	3.18	Accept
8	Fear	2.85	Accept
9	Traditional/cultural rites	3.08	Accept
10	Economic dependence on men	2.91	Accept
11	Indecent Dressing	3.10	Accept
12	Peer pressure	2.95	Accept
	GRAND MEAN	**3.00**	**Accepted**

The analysis of Table 3 shows that if the different suggested ways can be adopted, it will help to minimize the causes and cases of violence against women. Items, with mean score of3.23, 3.30, 3.37, 3.45 and 3.62, and respectively to a high extent can minimize incidence of violence against women if adopted as preventive measures.

Table 3: Mean Scores on the Ways of Preventing Violence Against Women

S/NO	Preventive Measures	Mean	Decision
1	Educating women and girls on their Rights	3.62	Accept
2	Perpetrators should be arrested /grievous penalty	3.45	Accept
3	Adult Education programs should be encouraged	3.17	Accept
4	NGOs should intervene	3.30	Accept
5	Children should be taught gender equality	3.23	Accept
6	Effort to reduce poverty and hunger	3.15	Accept
7	Increasing women's educational status	2.98	Accept
8	Women's economic independence	3.37	Accept
9	Traditional rite against women rights should be abolished	3.22	Accept
	GRAND MEAN	**3.26**	**Accepted**

Discussion

Violence against women has had consequences on victims in Nsukka local government area These include early or forced marriage with a mean of 3.37, rape with the mean score of 3.63, sexual abuse with mean of 3.63, and wife beating with mean of 3.78 are different forms of violence against women to a high extent in the study area. This is in line with what Ezeilo & Ohia (2006) pointed out that the forms of violence include dehumanization, physical pains and harm, embarrassment, deformation, diseases and sickness, death, depression and emotional harm, severe pains and injury, shame and disgrace, stress, divorce, poverty, unwanted pregnancy and abortion.

The major cause of gender based domestic violence in the region was alcoholism, illiteracy on the part of male, women status, political motives, unemployment, indecent dressing, with mean of 3.10, 3.10, 3.18, 3.20, 3.25 and 3.30, and respectively. Other causes include: improper upbringing of children, frustration or anger, fear, traditional or cultural rites, economic dependence on men, and peer pressure. This is in accordance with what Adebayo, (2003) observed that some of the causes of violence against women include disobedience to men, poverty, lack of trust, uncaring nature, power tussle, impatience and alcoholism.

On ways of preventing violence against women, communities have had unique ways of coping with the problem of violence against women. However, the findings of this study have shown that some of the measures that could help in preventing this menace include: arresting of perpetrators of violence, educating women and girls on their rights, NGOs should intervene, children should be taught gender equality, reduction in poverty rate and hunger, equal treatment of both the male and female child at home and traditional rites against women should be abolished. This is in line with the UNICEF (2000) recommendation that a well-informed society is better able to take the correct practical measures against violence on women, and victims of violence should not keep quiet, rather they should rise and fight for their fundamental human right as well as seek for appropriate support services.

The study showed that violence against women has significant impact on family wellbeing. It erodes the right family values by hindering happy family and societal life which consequently leads to the development of individuals and family members who are maladjusted especially the children who daily witness their mothers and sisters being abused, harassed and maltreated. Women are part and parcel of everyday life in the community and violence lowers their self-esteem and confidence hence, their effective participation in the family and society. The socio-economic effect of violence against women is poor conditions of living as violence has been seen to make women solely dependent on men thereby depriving them and their families their contributions

in terms of financial contribution to the family. This can directly or indirectly contribute to poverty in the family.

The low economic status of women in the society has serious consequences for social and legal status of women. These women see themselves as inferior and that they have little or nothing to contribute in the society. They are regarded solely as a financial burden (Eze 2004). If women are economically independent, they can provide for themselves and their children thereby improving the conditions of living in the family.

Other implications of violence against women like divorce and separation, child abuse and neglect, lack of women representative in politics, and in severe cases death of the woman can distort happy family life among family members and the society in general.

Violence against women is bad and efforts should be made by everybody to prevent it as it has very bad implications on family wellbeing.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The main objective of the study was to determine violence against women and its implication to family wellbeing in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. From the findings, it can be concluded that women in the study area experience violence in various dimensions and a lot of factors has been attributed to cause it as shown from the study. Violence does exist at various levels and dimension; this affects the fabric that holds the society together which is the family. In order to reverse the negative trend of violence against women in Nsukka local government area of Enugu state, the following recommendations have been proffered:

1. Government and non-governmental organizations should support and organize seminars to educate against all forms of violence meted out on women. Also, government should enact and/or reinforce penal, civil, labor and administrative sanctions in legislations to punish and redress, any act of violence done to women whether at home, workplace, community or society. Furthermore, government must ensure proper policy formulation and implementation strategies and be consistent in executing program aimed at eradicating any act of violence against women.
2. There must be an effective grass roots campaign involving the Non-Government Organization (NGOS), Home Economics extension workers, Community Organizations, by using various media such as Radio, Television, conferences, and the mass media to enlighten the public about violence against women and to report such cases to appropriate authorities.
3. Families should educate family members on the ills of violence against women. The family should start early to inculcate in its members' the importance of equal treatment for both genders.

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