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CONTENTS

Editorial Board	ii
Contents	iii
Network Analysis as a Potent Tool for Waste Evacuation: A Case Study of Northwestern Area of Lokoja, Nigeria <i>S.A. Joseph</i>	1
Assessment of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Practices of Households in Balanga North, Gombe, Nigeria <i>R. D. Abu, G. O. Abu, E. N Gajere, E. O. Iduseri, M. O. Oke, G. A.songu and J. Sajo</i>	9
Assessing the Spatial Pattern of Crime in Bomadi and Patani Local Government Areas of Delta State, Nigeria <i>B. E. Daukere, M. A. Iliya, I. M. Dankani, U. A. Karofi</i>	18
An Assessment of Solid Waste Disposal and Management Techniques in Benin City, Nigeria <i>H.U. Agbebaaku</i>	32
Groundwater Quality Assessment for Drinking Water Using Water Quality Index (WQI): A Case Study of Nguru, Yobe State, Nigeria <i>M. Suleiman, D.S. Sani and H. Audu</i>	45
Effects of Some Weather Parameters on Rice and Tomato Production in the Downstream of Tiga Station, Nigeria <i>B. Adegbihin, S. Mukhtar, Y. Y. Yakubu, C. K. Daudu</i>	51
Wet and Dry Spell Occurrences in Lokoja Area, Kogi State, Nigeria <i>A. F. Olatunde and I. D. Sullaiman</i>	58
Relationship between Rainfall and Temperature Variability and the Yields of Selected Grain Crops in Sokoto State, Nigeria <i>E. Ikpe, B. A. Sawa, J. D. Ariko, A. I. Abdulhamid and B. Akpu</i>	63
Spatio-temporal Variations of Climatic Conditions and the Implications on Tourist Attractions in Kano State <i>M. Abba and L. J. Magaji</i>	71
Perception on the Effect of Forest Deforestation on the Environment in the Central Zone of Taraba State, Nigeria <i>U.J. Abba, Y.M. Bakoji, A.A. Umar, 4M.S. Isa, J.A. Mohammed</i>	83

Trends of Births and Deaths Registration in Sokoto Metropolis, Sokoto State, Nigeria <i>L. Barau and I. A. Abdulkarim</i>	91
The Carbon Stocks of Tropical Forest Reserves: An Allometric Analysis of Oba Hill Plantation, Osun State, South-West Nigeria <i>A.S.O. Soneye, A.O. Daramola and A.O. Idowu</i>	101
Evaluation of Transit Crimes in Parts of Lagos State, Nigeria <i>T.A. Iloabanafor and E.E. Ege</i>	108
Evaluation of Residents' Intra-urban Trip Patterns in Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria <i>D. A. Yakubu and S. A. Mustapha</i>	116
Assessment of Domestic Violence Against Women in Nigeria: Example from Rural Environment <i>A.M. Tunde, J.O. Okunade and O.P. Omojola</i>	123
The Assessment of Infrastructural Inequality in Selected Communities of Ahiazu Mbaise LGA, Imo State <i>C. Ukah and O. Ekanade</i>	134
Assessment of the Factors Affecting the Spatial Distribution of Secondary Schools in Some Parts of Benue State, Nigeria <i>D.S. Aule, M.S. Jibril and T.O. Adewuyi</i>	144
Impacts of Insurgency on Land Use Changes in North Eastern Nigeria <i>O.P. Mamudu, P. Yakubu and G.O. Enaruvbe</i>	153
Covid 19: Controversies and Implications for Development <i>R.A. Asiyanbola, A.G. Ogunleye, S.A. Adeniyi</i>	163
Temporal Analysis of Urban Heat Island in Ibadan Metropolis <i>O.S. Durowoju, K.J. Samuel and B.W. Anibaba</i>	170
Note To Contributors	181



ASSESSMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NIGERIA: EXAMPLE FROM RURAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

This paper examines domestic violence against women in the rural areas of Ido-Osi Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria. It identifies the most common types and perpetrators of violence; identifies major causes of domestic violence; assesses the impact of violence on the well-being and health of women; and highlights the challenges faced by victims of domestic violence in seeking help. A total of 399 respondents were sampled with copies of questionnaire. To complement this, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were organized with men. Findings revealed that 89.2% of the women were 30 years and above, 64.3% married and 53.4% had no formal education. Sexual assault was reported to be the most common assault ($x=3.62$). Major cause of violence includes intolerance on the part of partners ($x=3.52$) and males are usually the perpetrators. The impact of domestic violence shows that assaults from domestic violence shape the way a spouse is treated ($x=3.41$). Some of the men responded that they were both victims and perpetrators. The most difficult challenge is that victims are too ashamed to ask for help. Rural women suffer more in terms of domestic violence in the country; they should therefore be empowered economically and educationally.

Keywords: Domestic; Violence; Gender; Rural; Well-being, Women

Introduction

Domestic Violence, also known as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is often referred to as any abusive behavior in any intimate relationship such as dating, marriage, family or cohabitation that causes immediate and long-term physical, psychological, or sexual harm (WHO, 2012). It is the initiation of control and fear by one partner in a relationship, which can be in the form of physical assault, psychological, emotional, social, economic, financial abuse, or sexual assault over another intimate partner (Office of Violence against Women, 2007).

Domestic violence is a main public health problem and one of the customary forms of violations experienced by women worldwide (Shamu *et al.*, 2011). A global issue widely dispersed geographically, domestic violence has no boundaries as it occurs in every nation of the world irrespective of cultural, socioeconomic, racial, religion and class

distinction (WHO, 2007). Domestic violence generally involves violence against different classes of people irrespective of gender but particularly women, girls, children, and parents/elderly. This study, however, focuses on women. Violence could be emotional, mental, verbal, economic, physical, religious and sexual abuse. Domestic violence common among women takes the form of subtle, coercive, marital rape, physical abuse such as beating, molestation, corporal punishment, choking, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation and acid baths (Yusuf, 2000). It is an act that has serious impacts on women's health and well-being.

Statistics on violence against the female gender worldwide are shocking. For instance, Zafar (2020) reported that almost 40% of women are affected by domestic violence worldwide and about 137 women are killed by their partner or a family member every day. He emphasized that 15 million girls are married before the age of 18 each year; this translates to 28

girls every minute and about 200 million women and girls have experienced Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). Male partners commit 38% of murders of women globally (Zafar, 2020). The subordinate nature of women folk put a lot of them in the circle of domestic violence.

Apart from this, some occupations that women engage in also make them vulnerable to the risk of gender-based domestic violence. A lot of females, especially in African and Asian countries, are forced into prostitution either by their parents, husbands or boyfriends or as a result of the difficult socio-economic conditions in which they find themselves (Olajide, 2013). Watts and Zimmerman (2002) noted that in a survey of 540 female sex workers in Bangladesh, 49% had been raped and police had beaten 59%. In Kuwait, female migrant workers often suffer beatings and sexual assaults at the hands of their employers (Craven, 1996). Similarly, 580 sex workers were studied in East Bengal, India, out of this, 24 per cent had been trafficked into the sector (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002).

In Africa, Afrol News (2021) reported that assaults of female spouses were highest of domestic violence. In sub-Saharan Africa, intimate partner violence against women is common, but the levels are much higher among women with lower levels of education and residing in rural areas. Nabaggala *et al.* (2021) assert that Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has one of the highest prevalence of IPV against women which is a major public health and human rights problem in the world. Hoque *et al.* (2009) submit that violence against pregnant women is very high in the rural areas of South Africa. Izugbara (2020) found out that the prevalence of IPV is highest in conflict and post-conflict states such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone. In Dakar and Kaolack, Senegal, 25% of women suffered physical violence from their partners but could not report and few that reported to family members were advised to endure (Afrol News, 2021). Religious and cultural factors within the society did not allow enforcement of penal code law of punishing domestic violence violators with prison sentences.

Women and girls in Nigeria are often constrained by certain factors that limit their potentials. One of these is gender-based domestic violence against them. Olajide (2013) examined the predictors of women violence and abuse among women in rural communities of Oyo State, Nigeria, and discovered that environmental and cultural factors have a greater role to play in women violence and abuse. Obi and

Ozumba (2007) studied factors associated with domestic violence in South-East Nigeria and reported that 92% of the victims of abuse were female partners. In a similar study by Agbo and Choji (2014) in Abuja, a woman lost two pregnancies as a result of brutality by her husband when drunk. Igbolekwu *et al.* (2021) carried out a study on domestic violence against women in the Nigerian rural context and discovered that domestic violence has a serious psychological implication on women and lack of authorities to report cases of violence to and fear of the consequences of such reports prevented many of these rural women from seeking help when they were abused.

Parents and husbands in Nigeria just like other African countries believe they are instilling discipline by scolding/beating their wives and children (UNICEF, 2001; Ampofo & Prah, 2009; Qayum & Ray, 2010). This can be linked with the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society like other African societies that place women as subordinate to men. "The level of violence against women in Nigeria is increasing by the day with two out of every three women in certain communities experiencing violence in the family" (Fareo, 2015:24). Many women in Nigeria suffer in silence as they do not want to engage in divorce, they, therefore, do not report cases of violence. Ordinarily, partners are not supposed to remain in any relationship fraught with domestic violence; some people however remain in this relationship for reasons beyond their control such as emotional, stigmatization, isolation, economic and physical factors.

Nittis *et al.* (2013) observed that cultural and religious factors have been responsible for underreporting and non-documentation of domestic violence. The problem of stigmatization and lack of awareness about domestic violence prevent rural women from easily identifying their situation as abusive, hence, cannot speak out about the terrible experience of infringements of their rights. This is further compounded by insensitivity, nonchalant attitude and negative response from their immediate family and society as a whole. Women and girls in the rural areas lack knowledge about their rights and support services for survivors, this deters them from taking decisions to escape abusive marriages (Rasool, 2015). Amnesty International (2007) reported that in Nigeria, girls are often forced into early marriage and are at risk of punishment if they attempt to escape from their husbands. Leonard *et al.* (2014) in their study concluded that the burden of domestic violence against women might be higher in rural

communities than in urban communities in Southeast Nigeria. Hence, Aihie (2009) suggested that seminars and workshops where trained counselors would assist in propagating the anti-domestic violence campaign should be organized to curb domestic violence in Nigeria.

All the aforementioned studies focused on violence against women in different states of the country but none in rural areas of Ekiti State. Gender-based domestic violence in the rural areas of Ekiti State, Nigeria, is a problem that has not received adequate attention over the years at individual and government levels. Furthermore, studies on the specific problems of domestic violence in the rural areas of Nigeria particularly Ekiti State are still very few. This research, therefore, focuses on the examination of domestic violence in rural areas of Idosi-osi local government, Ekiti State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study analyzes types of domestic violence and the perpetrators in rural areas; identifies major causes of domestic violence; assesses the impact of violence on the well-being and health of women; and highlight the challenges faced by victims of domestic violence in terms of seeking help.

Material and Methods

Biophysical setting of the area

The study area for this research work covers the rural areas of Ido-Osi Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The local government area is located between latitude $7^{\circ}45'N$ and $7^{\circ}54'N$ of the equator and Longitude $5^{\circ}0'5''E$ and $5^{\circ}15'E$ of the Greenwich

Meridian (Figure 1). It consists of eleven (11) wards: Aiyetoro1, Aiyetoro 11, Ido 1, Ido 11, Ifaki 1, Ifaki 11, Igbole/Ifisin/Aaye, Ilogbo, Orin/ora, Osi and Usi. There are two seasons of wet and dry in the area and the temperature ranges between $32^{\circ}C$ and $35^{\circ}C$. The relative humidity is high at about 85%. According to National Population Commission (2006), the local government area has about 159,114 people. The pattern of the settlements includes both linear and nucleated well linked with network of roads. The Ekitis, whose ancestors migrate from Ile-Ife as a people, form one of the largest ethnic groups in Yorubaland. Ekitis are culturally homogeneous and they speak a dialect of Yoruba language known as Ekiti. The main staple food of the people of Ekiti is pounded yam with Vegetable soup. The State can boast of more than 127 large and small ancient and modern towns, located on hills and valleys that characterize the state from which the confinement takes its name, Ekiti, that is, "Okiti" meaning hill. The religion practiced by the people include Islamic, Christianity, and traditional.

The state is highly rich in culture. They have their own unique traditional way of dressing, dancing, festival, religion and other way of life. The rulers of the towns are Obas like other Yoruba towns. Traditionally, the natural rulers in Ekiti State, whose people are Yorubas are usually described as sacred or divine kings. Their installation and coronation are performed with solemn and lengthy rites, which set them apart, thereafter, living an ordered ceremonial existence, secluded in their palaces, subjected to the many rituals of court and approached only with infinite respect.

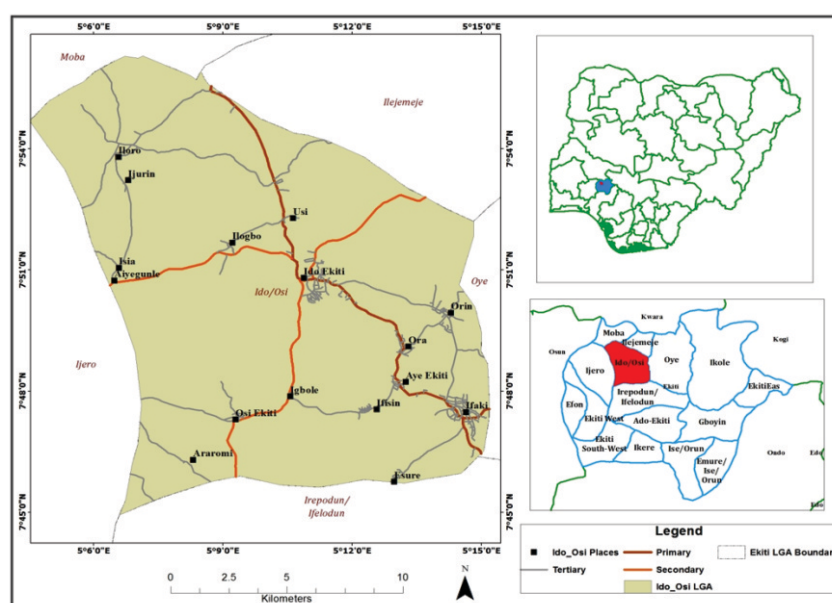


Figure: 1. Ido-Osi LGA in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

The people of this area are predominantly farmers with few cottage industries and civil servants. Major agricultural produce includes tobacco, rubber, cotton, cashew and cocoa (although on small scale). (Ekiti State, 2017).

The study was conducted in the rural districts of Ido-Osi local government area of Ekiti State. Ido-Osi local government consists of three (3) districts namely: Ido-Ekiti (Aiyetoro Ekiti, Igole Ekiti, Ilogbo Ekiti, Osi Ekiti and Usi Ekiti), Orin-Ekiti (Aaye Ekiti, Ifisin Ekiti, Ilogun, Odo-ora, Oke-ora and Ora-Ekiti) and Ifaki Ekiti (Igbira camp, Ipole, Obaji, Odo Oba-Aladesusi, Okalawa, Oke-Ese, Osi and Temigbola) districts.

Data sources and collection tools

Sources of data include both primary and secondary. Primary data were sourced directly from the respondents on the field with the use of questionnaire and Focused Group Discussion (FGDs) while secondary data were sourced from maps collected from Idosi Local Government Area, National Population Commission Textbooks, Magazines and internet browsing. To determine the sample size, the only officially recognized record of the population was the 2006 population census. For Ido-Osi L.G.A, it was 159, 114 (Females 78, 540 and male 81,461). To select respondents, therefore, Yamane's formula was employed to obtain the required and appropriate sample size with the use of the female population. Yamane's formula as expressed by Israel (1992) is denoted by

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n= sample size

N= population size (78,540 for females)

e= error of sampling 0.05

Hence n is 399

Rural settlements sampled include Osi-Ekiti from Ido-Ekiti district, Aaye Ekiti from Orin Ekiti district and Igbira camp from Ifaki-Ekiti district. A purposive sampling technique was employed for the study. Since the population of women in these villages could not be ascertained as there are no official records of it, copies of the questionnaire were therefore distributed equally among respondents in the three villages. This means 133 copies per settlement. Focused Group Discussions were organized with men in the three villages sampled to refute or corroborate the information provided in the questionnaire administered to women.

Research design and sampling procedure

In the questionnaire, questions on socio-demographic characteristics, dimensions of domestic violence experienced; major causes; impacts of violence on wellbeing and health of women; and challenges faced by victims in terms of seeking help were probed. Responses from these questions were used to achieve the stated objectives for the study. The sampling procedure involves a two-stage sampling technique. The first stage involved using the three districts as the sampling frame, then sampling a village in each district. In all, three villages were sampled from the three districts with a village representing a district. The second stage involved the use of a random sampling technique to obtain the required respondents. In this context, only households with women were sampled and one woman per household was used as the target population in the absence of their husbands for those still living with their husbands. This is in order to be able to get accurate information. The first building on the right hand side of all the major roads and footpaths in each village were selected to examine a household because a building can have more than one household while the second was skipped. Similarly, the 3rd 5th and nth buildings were systematically selected. (i.e all odd-numbered houses with at least a married woman or woman in a relationship or who had a partner before were surveyed while the even numbers were skipped). This was done until a total of 133 women were sampled per village for the three villages to get a total of 399 women sampled for the study. Frequency tables, percentages, mean ranking and likert scale were employed to analyze the gathered data. The mean (\bar{x}) is given as: Percentage score of the variable multiplied by the likert scale score represented in the questionnaire divided by 100.

Therefore, assuming the likert scale score are; $b_1, b_2, b_3, \dots, b_n$ and the percentage score (%) are; $\%_{(1)}, \%_{(2)}, \%_{(3)}, \dots, \%_{(n)}$. The Mean Value implies $(\bar{x}) \frac{\%_{(1)} * b_1 + \%_{(2)} * b_2 + \%_{(3)} * b_3 + \dots + \%_{(n)} * b_n}{100}$. Ranking of the mean was done from the most important i.e variable with highest mean to the least in descending order.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 presents the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the sampled women. From the results, 89.2% of the women are 30 years and above. This is expected as these groups of people

are more experienced. The marital status shows that a greater percentage (74.3%) of the women is married. This group of women may currently be experiencing the scourge of violence against them particularly in the rural areas of Ido-Osi Local Government of Ekiti State. The educational status revealed that the majority (53.4%) of the respondents in the study area had no formal education while the rest had. This means that the perception of the illiterates will quite be different from those who are literates. This is similar to the findings of Marketa & Huskova (2018) that all age groups of married women and women who live in the countryside without elementary education are in danger of violence.

Table 1: Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of respondents

Socio-economic & Demographic Characteristics	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age (in years)		
Less than 19	5	1.3
20-29	38	9.5
30-39	105	26.3
40-49	149	37.3
50 and above	102	25.6
Total	399	100.0
Mean \pm SD	34.6 \pm 12.7	
Range (min-max)	15.0-73.0	
Marital Status		
Single	5	1.3
Married & still together	293	73.4
Widow	68	17.0
Separated	33	8.3
Total	399	100.0
Education		
None	213	53.4
Primary	107	26.8
Secondary	73	18.3
Tertiary	6	1.5
Total	399	100.0
Occupation		
Unemployed	5	1.3
Farmer	145	36.3
Trader	131	32.8
Civil Servant	57	14.3
Student	18	4.5
Artisan	33	8.3
Others	10	2.5
Total	399	100
Household Size		
1-5	243	60.9
6-10	156	39.1
Total	399	100.0
Monthly Income		
< ₦ 30000	158	39.6
₦30000-49000	128	32.1
₦50000-79000	92	23.1
>₦ 80000	21	5.2
Total	399	

Tranchant and Mueller (2017) equally reported that lack of access to education and employment triggers domestic violence. In the same view, Jekwes (2002) noted that education is assumed to have a protective effect against violence.

The occupational distribution indicates that the majority of the sampled women in the study area are gainfully employed. This explains why 83.9% of the women are farmers, civil servants and traders. The household size reveals that 60.9% have a household size of 1-5. Also, the monthly income shows that majority of the sampled women are low-income earners. This is reflected as 55.2% of them earn between ₦30,000 and ₦79,000 monthly (\$54 and \$141). This attests to the poverty situation of the rural people. To further buttress these findings, Ajah *et al.* (2014) reported that rural women are significantly less educated, less likely to be employed, had higher parity, had higher numbers of living children, and had more polygamous marital relationships.

Types of domestic abuse

There are various types of domestic violence based on past studies and the reconnaissance survey conducted for this study. Some of the sampled women claimed to have experienced one form of domestic violence or the other. These forms of domestic violence were ranked in order of the most common in the study area. Table 2 depicts that sexual assault (marital rape, sexual harassment, forced prostitution, intimidation at work and in educational institutions) was ranked as the most common domestic assault with a mean value of 3.62. In line with this is the finding of Kimani (2007) that a local organization in Zaria, Nigeria, discovered that 16 per cent of patients with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) were girls under the age of five, a sign of sexual assault. Similarly, in 1990, the Genito-Urinary Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe, treated more than 900 girls under 12 for STDs, an indication of the prevalence of sexual violence. The second common type of domestic violence in the study area is physical assault (beating, burning, kicking, punching, biting, maiming or killing, or the use of objects or weapons, forced abortion, forced sterilization) as a lot of sampled women pointed to the fact that they experienced physical assaults from their spouses and this has a mean value of 3.59. Supporting this is Ajah *et al.* (2014) that the prevalence of physical violence was significantly higher among rural women than urban women (37.2% versus 23.5%; $P=0.05$).

The results also corroborate the findings of Muluneh

et al. (2020) that the highest prevailed domestic violence were emotional (29.40%) physical (25.87%) and sexual (18.75%). Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO) found that 50 per cent of women in Tanzania and 71 per cent of women in Ethiopia's rural areas reported beatings or other forms of violence by husbands or other intimate partners. Neglect of spouses by men is another highly ranked domestic violence experienced by women in the study area with a mean value of 3.45 recorded. In most cases, women are neglected and abandoned by their male spouses to live with other women. Abuse from excessive consumption of alcohol comes third on the ranking scale with a mean value of 3.39. This is because their male spouses always over-react at home whenever they have excessively consumed alcoholic drinks and beverages causing domestic violence against them. Other types of domestic violence experienced by women in the study area include frustrations from the dwindling and hard

economic situation of the country, emotional (forced marriage, dowry-related violence), religions as well as a spiritual factor and human trafficking (usually in the form of trading off their wards in exchange for money as nannies to some rich individuals in the cities).

Perpetrators of domestic violence

Sampled women reported that perpetrators of violence are usually male partners as 80% claimed their husband as the perpetrator of domestic violence, 15% reported their boyfriends while 5% said their in-laws (Figure 2). This is similar to a study carried out by Hoque *et al.* (2009) on the prevalence and experience of domestic violence among rural pregnant women in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa that intimate partners (boyfriends/husbands) were the main perpetrators of domestic violence.

Table 2: Types of Abuse usually experienced by respondents

Common Violence	Always n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Undecided n (%)	Rarely n (%)	Not at all n (%)	Mean \bar{x}	Rank
Economic	64 (16.0)	238 (59.6)	0 (0.0)	87 (21.8)	10 (2.5)	2.65	7 th
Physical	266 (66.7)	123 (30.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (2.5)	3.59	2 nd
Neglect	237 (59.4)	134 (33.6)	0 (0.0)	28 (7.0)	0 (0.0)	3.45	3 rd
Emotional	112 (28.1)	204 (51.1)	14 (3.5)	69 (17.3)	0 (0.0)	2.90	5 th
Spiritual	70 (17.5)	228 (57.1)	18 (4.5)	83 (20.8)	0 (0.0)	2.71	6 th
Sexual	147 (36.8)	175 (43.9)	2 (0.5)	75 (18.8)	0 (0.0)	3.62	1 st
Human Trafficking	39 (9.8)	54 (13.5)	131 (32.8)	101 (25.3)	74 (18.5)	1.71	8 th

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2021

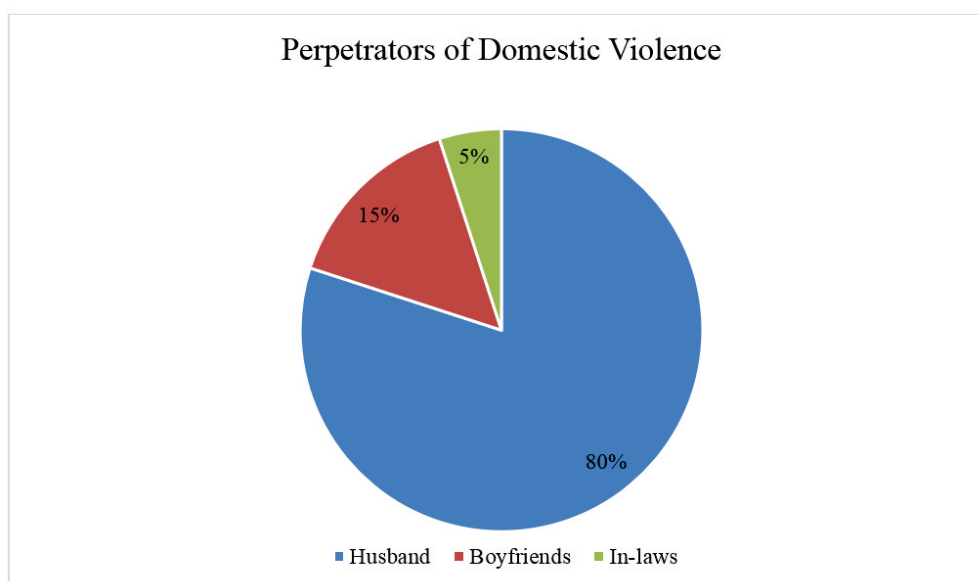


Figure 2: Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

Source: Authors Fieldwork

Major causes of domestic violence experienced

The major causes of domestic violence were listed and sampled women were asked to respond to why domestic violence is rampant against women in the study area. From Table 3, it can be affirmed that psychological problems such as intolerance on the part of partners ($x=3.52$); either male or female and the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society (Cultural/traditional beliefs) ($x=3.51$) are the major causes of violence against partners in rural areas of Ido-Osi Ekiti. Some scholars have argued that violence against women is an expression of patriarchal domination of women by men, rooted in gender and power inequality (Lawson, 2012). In a situation whereby changes occur in the traditional gender order and roles, violence can result, particularly in patriarchal societies (Haise *et al.*, 2018). Neglects, not taking care of the children ($x=3.43$), inadequate skills to communicate effectively and bride price are the least causes of domestic violence against women in the study area each with mean values of 2.29 and 1.99 respectively. This further connotes that violence against women in the study is not dependent on inadequate skills to communicate effectively and bride price rather psychological problems.

Impacts of violence on the wellbeing and health of women

This section depicts some probable impacts of domestic violence on the well-being and health of women in the study area. From Table 4, 60.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that violence against women could lead to permanent loss of body parts. This result is in agreement with a similar study by Kaur and Garg (2008) which stated that violence against women has serious adverse consequences on their physical and mental health, including their reproductive and sexual well-being, these include injuries, gynecological problems, temporary or permanent disabilities amongst others. About 52.4% strongly agreed that domestic violence shapes the way their spouses are treated. This was also reported by Finkelhor *et al.* (2007) that family dynamics are usually affected by domestic violence. About 47.1% of the women strongly disagree that violence against women can cause disability amongst them. This finding was refuted by another study which asserts that violence itself can lead to new or more severe disability (Dunkle *et al.*, 2018; Kaur & Garg 2008).

A total of 72.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that violence against women often results in psychological trauma for the victim. Islam *et al.*

Table 3: Major causes of domestic violence

Causes	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Undecided n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n(%)	Mean \bar{x}	Rank
Early Marriage	188 (47.1)	192 (48.1)	0 (0.0)	19 (4.8)	0 (0.0)	3.37	5 th
Patriarchal nature of Nigerian society (Cultural/traditional beliefs)	209 (52.4)	190 (47.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.51	2 nd
Denial of advances for sexual intercourse	173 (43.4)	215 (53.9)	0 (0.0)	11 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	3.38	4 th
Making wrongful assumptions	137 (34.3)	233 (58.4)	0 (0.0)	29 (7.3)	0 (0.0)	3.22	8 th
Unmet financial needs/economic dependence of women on men (Poverty)	139 (34.8)	211 (52.9)	1 (0.3)	43 (10.8)	5 (1.3)	3.09	12 th
Intolerance on the part of the partner (Psychological)	226 (56.6)	163 (40.9)	0 (0.0)	10 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	3.52	1 st
Personal traits such as anger	158 (39.6)	190 (47.6)	0 (0.0)	41 (10.3)	10 (2.5)	3.12	10 th
Husbands believe they are instilling discipline by scolding/beating their wives and children (Cultural)	154 (38.6)	205 (51.4)	0 (0.0)	10 (2.5)	30 (7.5)	3.11	11 th
Environmental Factors	102 (25.6)	172 (43.1)	21 (5.3)	94 (23.6)	10 (2.5)	2.66	13 th
Peer Influence	147 (36.8)	218 (54.6)	0 (0.0)	22 (5.5)	12(3.0)	3.17	9 th
Family Size	123 (30.8)	110 (27.6)	3 (0.8)	153 (38.3)	10 (2.5)	2.46	15 th
(Neglects) Not taking care of children	237 (59.4)	135 (33.8)	0(0.0)	17 (4.3)	10 (2.5)	3.43	3 rd
Effects of alcohol	210 (52.6)	167 (41.9)	0 (0.0)	8 (2.0)	14 (3.5)	3.36	6 th
Spiritual Problems (Religious)	135 (33.8)	113 (28.3)	8 (2.0)	97 (24.3)	46 (11.5)	2.48	14 th
Not Submissive	194 (48.6)	169 (42.4)	24 (6.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (3.0)	3.34	7 th
Bride Price (Cultural)	89 (22.3)	143 (35.8)	15 (3.8)	99 (24.8)	53 (13.3)	2.29	17 th
Inadequate skill to communicate effectively	93 (23.3)	86 (21.6)	32 (8.0)	102 (25.6)	86 (21.6)	1.99	18 th
Jealousy	105 (26.3)	123 (30.8)	53 (13.3)	51 (12.8)	67 (16.8)	2.37	16 th

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2021

(2018) in their study aligned with this result as their quantitative research linked domestic violence to poor mental health, their findings further revealed that it is related to mental disorders. This is also similar to the finding of (CDC, 2006) that anger and stress experienced by victims may lead to depression and other emotional disorders sometimes leading to suicide (CDC, 2006). About 71.7% believe that domestic violence results in separation and divorce. However, women do not prefer to adopt the option of separation or divorce (Kaur & Garg 2008).

Further information in the table reveals that domestic violence 'leads to psychological trauma on the part of the victim' ($x = 3.72$) ranks as the most important implication of domestic violence in rural areas. 'Resort to separation' and divorce ranks second with a mean value of 3.71 while 'diminishes love within the family' ranks third with a mean value of 3.59. This corroborates the work of Lloyd (2018) that harm caused by domestic violence can be physical, emotional, behavioural, cognitive, and social, and effects are usually overlapping and interrelated.

Men's opinions about domestic violence

Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) were organized with men in the three villages sampled to corroborate

the questionnaire administered to women. This was done in an attempt to gauge their opinions on how they perceive domestic violence. For instance, in Osi-Ekiti a man had this to say: "It is not only women that are victims of domestic violence but men also". When asked if they have ever been a perpetrator or victim of domestic violence, some of them responded that they were both victims and perpetrators. For example, a man responded that many at times his wife had insulted and instigated a fight between them. Another one said his wife is financially stronger than himself and so she usually attacks him at every request. A man from Aaye Ekiti said he became a perpetrator when his wife complains about tiredness whenever he wants to have sexual intercourse with her and that he used to force her. Another one said: "I am the head of the house and paid her dowry so I should be able to have her anytime I feel like". At Igbira camp, a man retorted, "women are all the same and the only way to correct them according to our culture is by scolding or beating them". When you do this, according to the man, you are instilling discipline in them. Discussants were asked to identify the root causes of domestic violence. According to them, lack of respect on the part of women is one of the root causes because some of them do not respect our culture and

Table 4: Impact of domestic violence and its implication on well-being and health of respondents

Impact	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Undecided n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Mean \bar{x}	Rank
Domestic Violence has left me physical scar(s)	142 (35.6)	101 (25.3)	10 (2.5)	43 (10.8)	103 (25.8)	2.34	16 th
Psychological trauma	131 (32.8)	124 (31.1)	10 (2.5)	32 (8.0)	102 (25.6)	2.38	15 th
Permanent loss of body parts	241 (60.4)	151 (37.8)	0 (0.0)	7 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	2.81	14 th
Assaults from domestic violence shapes the way spouse is treated	209 (52.4)	171 (42.9)	0 (0.0)	9 (2.3)	10 (2.5)	3.41	9 th
The impact has made me become a patient in the hospital and pharmaceutical stores	81 (20.3)	135 (33.8)	18 (4.5)	63 (15.8)	102 (25.6)	2.07	19 th
It has led to high blood pressure	116 (29.1)	122 (30.6)	18 (4.5)	54 (13.5)	89 (22.3)	2.31	17 th
Unwanted pregnancies	74 (18.5)	94 (23.6)	20 (5.0)	102 (25.6)	109 (27.3)	1.80	21 th
Led to contracting Sexually Transmitted Diseases such as AIDs	31 (7.8)	30 (7.5)	24 (6.0)	109 (27.3)	205 (51.4)	0.93	24 th
Bleeding as a result of FGMC	72 (18.0)	84 (21.1)	20 (5.0)	102 (25.6)	121 (30.3)	1.71	22 th
Disability	23 (5.8)	68 (17.0)	20 (5.0)	100 (25.1)	188 (47.1)	1.09	23 th
Abortion	76 (19.0)	138 (34.6)	20 (5.0)	62 (15.5)	103 (25.8)	2.05	20 th
Depression/Anxiety	107 (26.8)	120 (30.1)	12 (3.0)	60 (15.0)	100 (25.1)	2.19	18 th
Reduces respect from neighbours	257 (64.4)	142 (35.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2.93	13 th
It leads to Psychological trauma for the victim	288 (72.2)	111 (27.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.72	1 st
Children are often ashamed of their parents	240 (60.2)	151 (37.8)	0 (0.0)	8 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	3.26	12 th
Diminishes love within the family	254 (63.7)	145 (36.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.64	3 rd
Breeds bitterness and coldness in the way partners are treated	237 (59.4)	162 (40.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.58	5 th
Easy transfer of aggression to innocent people	230 (57.6)	169 (42.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.57	6 th
Reduces women's self-esteem and sinks confidence	245 (61.4)	134 (33.6)	0 (0.0)	10 (2.5)	10 (2.5)	3.49	7 th
Resort to separation and Divorce	286 (71.7)	113 (28.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.71	2 nd
Physical Effect such as bruises	238 (59.6)	161 (40.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.59	4 th
Financial effect	192 (48.1)	176 (44.1)	0 (0.0)	31 (7.8)	0 (0.0)	3.33	10 th
Long term effect such as stigmatization	192 (48.1)	165 (41.4)	0 (0.0)	42 (10.5)	0 (0.0)	3.27	11 th
Loss of lives	229 (57.4)	145 (36.3)	8 (2.0)	17 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	3.47	8 th

so want to equate themselves with men. A man in Osi-Ekiti has this to say, “some of them are very jealous at the sight of any woman by our side and such behaviour is usually influenced by their friends”. This is quite different from the responses of rural women sampled with questionnaire.

Challenges faced by victims in terms of seeking help

From Table 5, 55.9% strongly agreed that society favours chauvinism (malevolence) and makes men superior to women. About 52.4% thinks that it is the same everywhere; hence there is no point in seeking help. The table further revealed that “victim too ashamed to ask for help” is the most difficult challenge facing the sampled respondents with a mean value of 3.37. This is expected as the finding corroborates the finding of Igbolekwu *et al.* (2021) in their study which discovered that women lack the authority to report cases of violence to appropriate authorities and fear of the consequences of such reports prevented many of them from seeking help when they were abused. The second most important challenge facing sampled respondents has to do with the fact that they think that the situation is the same everywhere so do not seek help from anywhere rather keep enduring.

Conclusion

In the rural areas of Nigeria, domestic violence against women is common as women who are not

educated are more of the victims. Sexual assault was reported as the most common form of domestic violence while intolerance on the part of partners is the major cause of violence. According to the women respondents, men are majorly the perpetrators of domestic violence while some of the men during focused group discussions too claimed to be victims of domestic violence. The impact of domestic violence is that it shapes the way spouses are treated. The most difficult challenge is that victims are too ashamed to ask for help. It can therefore be concluded that rural women suffer more in terms of domestic violence in the country although men also claimed to be victims of domestic violence however, women are more at the receiving end than men. Therefore, women, particularly those in rural areas should be sensitized on the need to report perpetrators to appropriate authorities, at the same time those who report cases of domestic violence should be adequately protected. There should be the establishment of counseling centres in every community. Perpetrators of domestic violence should be punished in line with the provisions of extant laws. In addition, rural women should be provided with quality formal education and empowered economically to curtail domestic violence in the rural areas of the country. To check violence among couples, religious bodies, local governments, social workers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should be encouraged toward inculcating best practices.

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