





psychological; it is destructive for both the battered and the batterer. It has been from generation to generation. Gender based violence can happen between past and current partners, spouses, minors, and girl child and women not related in any form. It affect minors and women of any ethnic group, race or religion, gay or straight, rich or poor, teen, adult or elderly. Global Research has shown that most victims are women, young girls and children; and the report shows that between 960,000 and 3,000,000 incidents of gender based violence are reported each year, while many other incidents go unreported. At least 5 million acts of gender based violence occur annually to women between 18 years and older women with over 3 million. It also revealed that 86% women interviewed had been beaten by a partner, 88% women and girl child interviewed had been raped and molested this divulge that most women had experienced one form of gender based violence or the other especially rape. (Omoregbe, 2020) affirmed that the number of women in United State who suffered one form of abuse or the another is five million every year probably one victim in every seconds. Lauren (2017) avows in his research reported approximately 88.8% of the accused abusers were men compare with 18.2% of female offenders. In Nigeria gender based violence, rape, killing and domestic violence against women has become disturbing in recent times, it is one of the under estimated and under reported crimes. It has been grossly under reported and not document as a result of cultural factors, stigmatizations (Afro News, 2018) in line with this Effah chukuuma (2014) stressed that the actual rate of gender based violence in Nigeria cannot be established as a result of lack of National Survey. Although studies around the world had shown those women are significantly more abused by their partners and non partners alike, and living with gender based violence has cause physical and psychological harm to children and young girls in the family in so many way such as ongoing anxiety and depression, emotional distress, eating and sleeping disorder or disturbance, infection and disease, unwanted pregnancy, nightmare, flashback, broken bones, physical symptoms, such as headaches and stomach aches, hatred for men, lack of interest for marriage, timidity and the victims find it hard to mange stress and low self-esteem. Against this backdrop this study examines gender based violence against women in Nigerian: implications for counseling.

## **Gender Based violence Abused**

Gender based violence is not physical violence alone, it is any behaviour with the purpose of gaining supremacy and control over a spouse, partner or intimate family member, and non intimate partner especially women, young girls and children. Abuse is learned behavior, and it could be caused by anger, mental problem, drug or alcohol or other common excesses. Violence is defined by the WHO (2019) in the **WRVH** 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, as if it has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, and psychological harm make development. Violence can lead to premature death, disability; separation or cause non-fatal injuries people who survive violent crime evidence physical pain and suffering and may also experience mental distress and reduced quality of life. Repeated explosive to crime and violence may be linked to an increased in negative upbringing, family value and health outcomes.

### **Causes of Gender Based Violence are as follows:**

1. Sense of entitlement
2. A belief that they should have power and control over their partner
3. Belief that they can get away with it
4. Learned experienced that being abusive gets their what they want
5. Belief that their lives should take priority
6. Influence of ones peers
7. Unemployment/lost of job
8. Drugs and alcohol
9. Having a lack of attention in respect
10. Having low self-worth
11. Experiencing abuse or neglect
12. Witnessing violence in the home, community or Medias and access to weapon.

Gender Based Violence is somehow traditionally accepted in Nigeria, as in many other African countries, the beating of wives and children is widely sanctioned as a form of discipline (UNICEF, 2018). Therefore, in beating their girl child, parents believe they are instilling discipline in them, much the same way as in husbands beating their wives, who are regarded like

children to be prone to indiscipline which must be curbed. This is especially so when the woman is economically dependent on the man. The society is basically patriarchal and women's place within the scheme is decidedly subordinate. Gender based violence therefore functions as a means of enforcing conformity with the role of a woman within customary society. It therefore does not matter if the woman is economically dependent or not, her position, like that of the girl child is subordinate. Violence against women and girl child in the home is generally regarded as belonging to the private sphere in Nigeria and is therefore shielded from outside scrutiny. A culture of silence reinforces the stigma attached to the victim rather than condemning the perpetrator of such crimes (afrolNews, 2007). The incidence of gender based violence is high, in a study carried out by Obi and Ozumba (2007), on the factors associated with gender based violence, in South East, Nigeria, 70% of respondents reported abuse in their family with 92% of the victims being female partners and the remaining 8% being male. The common forms of abuse reported were shouting at a partner (93%), slapping or pushing (77%) and punching and kicking (40%). Oyediran and Isugo (2015), in a study of women's perception of wife-beating in Nigeria, found that 64.4% and 50.4% of ever married and unmarried women, respectively, expressed consent for wife beating. Reports in the print and electronic media reveal vicious attacks on women by intimate partners and non intimate partners in different forms such as 'acid bath', rape, beatings, some of which sometimes result in the death of the victims. Many victims do not report for fear of reprisal from abusers or the belief that the police and the judicial system cannot help. The police are also reported to frequently dismiss complaints of gender based violence as a 'private matter'.

### **Types of Gender Based Violence**

There are different kinds of abuses but the type of abuse the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) (2016) and Ministry of Justice has classified seven different including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, financial or material exploitation, neglect, abandonment and self neglect. They include:

1. **Physical abuse:** This is the use of physical force in a way that injures the victim or puts her at risk of being injured. It includes beating, kicking, knocking, punching, choking, confinement. Female genital mutilation is physical abuse. Physical abuse is one of the commonest forms of

abuse. Obi and Ozumba (2007) found that 83% of respondents in their study reported physical abuse. According to Ayadeji (2018) physical abuse has to do with anything that causes physical pain such as hitting, biting, kicking, stabling, punching, shooting or slapping one's partner or non partner (victims), it also involves physical force denying a partner medical care or forcing a partner to use drug or alcohol. It also involves physical force against someone in such away to injure or endanger the person. It can also be inform of torture, acid baths among others which aim at disfiguring the person. Signs of physical abuse include pushing, slapping biting, kicking or choking partner, damaging property when angry with partner hurting children in the family, trapping spouse at home or keep your spouse from going out. Others include killing their partners (spouses) or Victims non partner, forcing spouse/victims out among others.

**2. Economic Abuse :** Economic abuse This includes stealing from or defrauding a loved one, withholding money for essential things like food and medical treatment, manipulating or exploiting family member for financial gain, preventing a loved one from working or controlling her choice of occupation. This is a form of abuse where one intimate partner controls the partners access to economic resources. It is an attempt made to make one's partner to be financially dependent on the abuser, withholding one's access to money or forbidding ones' attendance to school or employment. It also involved limiting the partner the access to money, phone or car. Making the abuser to account for every penny spent at home. It also involved denial of food, clothing, medication and shelter. The effects of emotional abuse can be painful and destructive, both in the short and long term. Survivors are often plagued by low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and feelings of helplessness.

**3. Narcissistic abuse** is a form of emotional abuse projected by a narcissist on to another individual. These include abuses such as financial, spiritual, exploitation, abandonment. neglect, sexual and physical.

**4. Digital Abuse:** Includes technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, talk or intimidates a partner, including send pornography films or pictures to victims. It is usually perpetrated online example are sending negative, insulting and threatening emails, facebook messages, tweets or other messages online. The use of any kind of technology monitors partners.

**5. Verbal Abuse:** is the act of forcefully criticizing insulting or denouncing another person which is characterized by underlying anger and hostility. Examples of verbal abusive are withholding, countering, discounting, verbal abuses disguised as jokes, blocking and diverting, accusing and blaming, judging and criticizing, trivializing undermining, threatening, names calling, forgetting, ordering, denial and abusive yelling and screaming wrong use of word

**6. Sexual abuse:** This includes all forms of sexual assaults {rape}, harassment or exploitation. It involves forcing a person to participate in sexual activity, using a child for sexual purposes including child prostitution, rape of young girls and pornography. Marital rape also comes under this, its an of molestation, is abusive sexual behavior by one person upon another. It is often perpetrated using force or taking advantage of the victim.

**7. Financial Abuse:** involves controlling a victim ability to acquire, use and maintain financial resources. Those who are victimized financially may be prevented from working. They also may have their own money restricted or stolen by the abuser. And rarely do they have complete access to money and other resources. Examples are bank fraud, cashing checks without the permission,, coercion into signing a document, credit card fraud, deceit to sign document, forged signatures, investment fraud and misuse of money or possessions. It can leave women with no money for basic essentials such as food and clothing. It can leave them without access to their own bank accounts, with no access to any independent income and with debts that have been built up by abusive partner set against their names.

**8. Emotional Abuse-**This includes threatening a person or his or her possession or harming a person's sense of self-worth by putting him/her at risk of serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional or mental disorders. Shouting at a partner which was found to be the most common abuse by W.H.O (2017) is included. Also included in emotional abuse are name-calling, criticism, social isolation, intimidating or exploitation to dominate, routinely making unreasonable demand, terrorizing a person verbally or physically and exposing a girl child to violence. Abuse may occur once, or it may occur repeatedly often in an escalating manner. It can cause nervous breakdown. Consequences of gender based violence (abuse) Victims of gender based violence are often in a position of dependence (financial, emotional, physical and otherwise) on the person abusing them, for instance, a husband and a wife, children and parents, dependent relatives, aged parents, domestic servants, and total strangers (unknown). Women and

girl child are often principal victims of gender based violence. Witnessing abuse and living in an environment where one is constantly abused, or someone else, usually a care giver is a victim of abuse, can be and devastating for a child. Stranrock (2019) reported that children who are molested by parents have higher rates of depression than those whose parents disciplined in other ways and are more likely to think about suicides. Some researchers have also found that children whose mothers were abused by their partners have intelligence quotients (IQs) lower than usual (BBC. New Education,2013). Violent punishments such as corporal punishment have been found to lead to delinquency in adolescent and subsequently violent crimes. Anagbou (2019) sees violence as a threat to women, young girl and children well-being. The women, young girls and children may become socialized in violent behaviour. She may become confused and angry. The anger may become directed towards either parents or other children. They may become aggressive, they may also become withdrawn, isolating themselves from others and may underachieve, academically. Victims of gender based violence (whether children or adults) may suffer physical injuries such as minor cuts, scratches and bruises. Others may be more serious and cause lasting disabilities such as broken bones, internal bleeding and head trauma, among others (Dobson, 2018; CDC, 2006). Some injuries are not physical but emotional. Victims often have low self-esteem, finding it difficult to trust others. The anger and stress experienced by victims may lead to depression and other emotional disorders sometimes leading to suicide (CDC, 2006). Victims may also exhibit harmful health behaviour like excessive smoking, alcohol abuse, use of drugs and engaging in risky sexual activity. An abused child, for instance, may grow up not to trust other people, may go into relationships with an aggressive mode or may become withdrawn, afraid to go into intimate relationship. This usually results in involvement in risky sexual behaviour. Growing up in an abusive environment is what makes a person find the sight of a suspect being beaten or burnt to death, entertaining and enjoyable. Gender based violence gives rise to a violent society. Ahile 2009

The following are the signs of emotional abuse.

1. Seem unconfident or lack self-assurance
2. Struggle to control their emotions
3. Have difficulty making or maintaining relationships
4. Act in a way that is inappropriate for their age
5. Low self esteem and timid



6. Extremely apologetic or meek
7. Seeming fearful
8. Changing in sleep habits (sleeping too much or not enough)
9. Agitation, anxiety or constant apprehension
10. Developing a drug or alcohol problem
11. Symptoms of depression
12. Loss of interest ideal activities

**9. Psychological Abuse** often called emotional abuse, is a form of abuse, characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another person to behavior that may results in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder. A person may be subjected to more than one form of abuse. Signs of psychological abuse are:

- i. Withdrawal from friends or usual activities,
- ii. Changes in behavior such as aggression, anger, hostility or hyperactivity
- iii. Depression, anxiety or unusual fears, or a sudden loss of self-confidence.
- iv. An apparent lack of supervision
- v. Absent minded
- vi. Suicide tendencies
- vii. Frequent absence from school

**10. Spiritual Abuse:** This includes preventing a person from engaging in his or her spiritual or religious practices or using one's religious believes to manipulate or dominate a partner (Aihie, 2009)

**11. Neglect:** This includes failure to provide for dependants who may be adults or children, denying family members food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and protection from harm or a sense of being loved and valued.

**Factors that can Causes Gender Based Violence:** So many factors are responsible for domestic abuse. In Nigeria, some of those factors include economics, social, psychological, cultural and religious factors.

**Economic Factor:** loss of job by partner may bring undue financial pressure on the family. This may result to lack of understanding which might lead to gender based violence. Also poverty which hinders partners form living up to their responsibilities, may force victims to hardship.

**Cultural Factors:** In Nigeria some culture, values and believe are found to support or enforce gender based violence. In some part of Nigeria, wife battering is usually regarded as form of discipline for stubborn wives and for men to claimed superiority over their wives. Igbo, Edo, Yoruba, Hausa wives are precisely wives are bound to obey their husband's instruction whether the instruction is reasonable or not, right or wrong, because he is said to be the head of the family. Women are seen as a bundle of property bought; some see her as a slave. Also there is this believe that men have born right to control women is a strong factor. The believe that women are inferior while men are superior; this contributes a lot to gender based violence.

According to social learning theory, social learning explained that behavior can be learnt and also it can be unlearned. This means that one can learn or practice gender based violence from neighbours, friends, parents and co workers, from social media (watching of films, home video) by observation. He also predicts that those raised in aggressive family will grow up to become aggressive. Exposure to gender based violence reinforces it on individual. For example a child who observes his or her parents maltreating each other will grow to live like his parents if he/she eventually marries, or treat women, old or young like that; without respect and value for life.

**Power and Control:** This is a situation where one partner controls the other partner. This situation usually attracts gender based violence. Other things that bring about gender based violence under social factors are social stress, anger and lack of self control, alcoholism, anxiety, depression, jealousy among others.

**Biological Factors:** Gender based violence could be genetically acquired from abusive parents, Brain dysfunctioning could also lead to gender based violence.

**Psychological Factors** It affect the self esteem and self worth, they shink in and withdrawn from fear of being hurt or molested again, fear of being stigmatized, as many suffer different forms of abuse more than once.

### **Effects of Gender Based Violence**

Regardless of it causes impact on those who experience or witness it. Violence can cause physical injury as well as psychological harm. Other psychological symptoms such as depression, anxiety and mood swings are common in victims of gender based violence. The effect of gender based violence consequences include increased incidences of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder and suicide, increased risk of cardiovascular disease and premature mortality. The health consequences of violence vary with age of the victims as well as the form of violence or abuse experienced or subjected to.

### **Risk Factors of gender based violence**

Several factors increase the possibility of gender based violence happening, although the presence of these factors do not always mean that gender based violence will take place. CDC (2006) identified the following as risk factors (a) use of drugs or alcohol (b) seeing or being a victim of violence as a child (c) not having a job. This is more so when it is the male partner that is jobless. Catalano, Lind, Rosenblatt and Novaco (2013) found that increase in unemployment increases the incidence of gender based violence. The author found that the unemployed hypothetically feel frustrated and angry. They labeled this the 'provocative effect' because it shows that unemployment introduces anger into personal relationship that would otherwise be supportive. Other risk factors include tradition and norms within African traditional culture that regard wife battering and harsh disciplining of a girl child as normal. Obi and Ozumba (2017) found that gender based violence was significantly associated with financial disparity in favour of the female, influential in-laws, educated women and couple within the same age group.

### **Risk factors for intimate partner violation perpetration are as follows**

- i. low self-esteem
- ii. Low income

- iii. Low academic achievement
- iv. Low verbal IQ
- v. Young age
- vi. lack of family values
- vii. Aggressive or delinquent behavior as a youth
- viii. Heavy alcohol and drug use
- ix. Depression and suicide attempts
- x. Anger and hostility.

#### **Individual risk factor of gender based violence.**

1. History of violent victimization
2. attention deficits, hyperactivity or learning disorders
3. History of early aggressive behaviour
4. Involvement with drugs, alcohol or tobacco
5. Drugs
6. Cultism
7. Wrong association
8. Low IQ
9. Poor behavioural control
10. Deficits in social cognitive or information processing abilities
11. High emotional distress.

#### **Harmful Effects of Gender Based Violence on the Abuser**

Gender Based violence hurts victims as well as their families; people who suffer from abuse can be badly hurt. They are also likely to have long lasting (chronic) health problem such as depression, headache and post traumatic stress disorder. This is because of the repeated injuries and stress from living with abuse. There has been increase in acknowledgement that a girl child who is exposed to gender based abuse during her upbringing will suffer developmental and

psychological damage. During the mid 1990s the adverse childhood experience study (ACE) found that children who are exposed to gender based violence and others forms of abuse had higher risk of developing mental and physical health problems (Innovation Exchange Team, 2014).

Abusers suffer from physical injuries such as bruises, broken bones, head injuries, internal breaking lacerations, miscarriage and sometimes death as a result of gender based violence. Other chronic health conditions that have been linked to victims of gender based violence are arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic pain, pelvic pain, ulcers and migraines. Also pregrant victims may experience labour and injury to or death of the fetus (Jones, Richard, Horan and Deborah 2019)

### **Preventive Major among spouses**

1. Talkless
2. Avoid provocative words and actions
3. Avoid being confrontational, negative stimulation, use of offensive words, challenging and insulting attitude, actions and inactions. Including the use of wrong words.
4. Irritating, harassment and nagging should be reduced to the bearest minimum, to allow for peace and harmoning
5. Be reasonable in your demands
6. Be broadmindedness
7. Be persistence, patience
8. Be respectful to elders
9. Respect your spouse
10. Don't be indolent
11. Be peaceful and maintain a peaceful environment
12. Always do your responsibility and play your role well.
13. Forgive easily and let go.
14. Avoid retaliation

### **Preventive Majors for young girls**

1. Dress decently(don't expose your body)
2. Avoid walking alone at odd hours
3. Always be cautious of safety at all time
4. Avoid being alone, in a lonely environment, street or area.
5. Don't walk at night.
6. Parents are to keep watch of their young girls
7. Teach them sex education on time and teach the children to speak out.

### **Coping Strategy for the Victims**

1. Confide in any family members who is psychologically and emotionally matured, and readily supportive
2. Victims should be loved, no stigmatization.
3. No playing back. Don't remind the victims of the past experience.
2. Family counseling or family therapy is necessary
3. Assertiveness training is necessary for the victim to be free in expressing themselves
4. Be occupy with productive activities
5. If possible victim must be remove from the scene of the incident
6. Practice relaxation techniques
7. Practice mediation techniques
8. Use of affirmation Exposing the information
9. Positive pet self talk
10. Use group dynamics therapy

11. Behavior modification
- 12 Reading of good books (Bible, anointed books by good authors)
- 13 Watch good films
- 14 Listen to good music
- 15 Do what makes you happy.
- 16 Listen to jokes
- 17 Listen to music, that makes her happy
- 18 Laugh, take a walk, swim
- 19 Use praying therapy
- 20 Self control and avoid abusive environment.

## **Recommendations**

1. Counselors should integrate the dangers of gender based violence into marriage counseling. Couples should be given suitable counseling about gender based violence before dabbling into marriage. Gender based violence should be made public (reported)
2. Parents and young women should look beyond wealth of guys, Women and young girls should not be too emotional when it comes to love. They should not be carried away or blind to love or too blind to see what they ought to see. Once violence tendencies is notice such should relationship should be stopped.
3. Women and young girls should not endure an abusive relationship, it could lead to death.
4. Government should create enough public awareness of gender based violence and its consequences. Government should enact a law for offenders and there should be enforcement of such law.

5. There should a severe penalty for anyone who carried out violence against women, married or unmarried ones especially rape. And there should be death or life imprisonment for rapist.
6. Parents should inculcate the right family values to their children. All stakeholders must ensure that this ugly madness of gender based violence in the society is put to an end.
7. Victims are encouraged to speak out in order to seek help and assured of their adequate protection and safety.
8. Parents and significant others in the society should be good, non violent and a good role model for the young ones to emulate especially fathers. Also the young ones should be made to understand that violence life is not helpful instead they should be tolerance, considerate, love others as themselves, see their mothers, sisters, daughters in every woman and young girls out there, be kind and cooperative.
9. Leaders (Religious, Traditional, institutional and political) should publicly condemn the act. Moreover, religious leads should show interest more in the preventive measure of gender based violence.
10. There should be sanctions or the perpetrators of gender based violence for others to be discouraged. Also government should enforce the existing laws against gender based violence and new legislation that would adequately address the act as a social ill/criminal offences should be enacted.
11. Partners should always ensure that they embrace peace by frankly discuss their differences and embrace to understand themselves. There should be re-orientation of family values to our men/boys will know how to treat women.

### **Implication for counseling**

To remedy the gender based violence especially rape situation in Nigeria, all stakeholders must be involved - the communities, religious groups, institutions, government at all levels. Seminars and workshops, where trained counselors would assist in propagating the anti-gender based violence campaign, should be organized. There is the need to create awareness at these forums, to underscore the fact that violence in the home front serves as a breeding ground for violence in the society.



The need to regard gender based violence from a psychological rather than a socio-cultural perspective should be emphasized. spouses should be made to understand that adults can change the social norms that justify gender based violence by (1) being role models and working together to end violence in the home and the society (2) modeling non-violent relationship (3) disseminating information which condemns gender based violence in its entirety, the counselor could give enlightenment talks, encouraging spouses and young ones to use friendly measures, which are non-violent on themselves and avoid exposing children to violence of any form. seminar could include short talks on the issue of gender based violence, such as rape, domestic violence, sexual abuses, emphasizing its evil consequences and the need for people to avoid it for a better society. The counselor could organize group counseling sessions for spouses, young ones (youth) on the advantages of staying away from violence especially against women, young girls, and children this will go along way to help us have a violence free society. The young men, in particular should be counselled on how to grow up into 'healthy' men. There are influences within the home, outside the home, from friends, the internet, music and movies – messages that show that a man must be tough and in control in a relationship or out there to show that he is strong. The men should be taught how to be assertive without being aggressive and harmful. They should be taught how to express anger and frustration without violence. In counseling individual spouses with anger problem, the various anger management techniques should be taught. Churches and mosques should organize seminars and outreach programmes where professional counselors are invited to enlighten the people on the need to protect the women and all girl child in order to enjoy a violence free society with the home as the cradle. Professional counselors be incorporated into the marriage committee of the churches and mosques to allow for a thorough counseling and also enable the young couples planning to get married should be guided on the ways to avoid violence in the intimate relationship of marriage. The government should establish and fund counseling centers at the community, and Local Government levels and employ professional counselors to help victims and perpetrators of gender based violence.

### **Conclusion:**

Women, young girls, and children are now more vulnerable to gender based violence than ever before, most worrisome is that, in some cases their victims are killed as well, for instance Miss

Vera Uwaila Omozuwa, a 100 level university undergraduate, was raped and brutally murdered in a church while reading in Benin City, Miss Tina was killed in Lagos, A 12 years old girl was raped by 11 men in jigawa, and a 3 years old child was raped by 49 years man are recent cases of gender based violence just to mention but a few. Therefore every right thinking person must rise up to say No to gender based violence against women, young girls and minors. Consequently, its expedient that all stakeholders should put their hand on deck to end these ugly menaces of gender based violence against women and girl child which has become highly prevalent in Nigeria now.

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