

Causes of gender-based Domestic Violence during COVID-19 Pandemic in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria

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Abstract— The study investigated Causes of gender-based Domestic Violence during COVID-19 Pandemic in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The study covered all the residents in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The study aims at investigating the incidences of gender-based violence, find the causes of gender-based violence and find the effects of gender-based violence. This study adopted a descriptive survey design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents from the six (6) Area Councils in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The population was 3,277,740 residents in Abuja. A sample size of 384 respondents was used for the study. A self-structured questionnaire titled: Gender-Based Violence Questionnaire (GBVQ) was used to collect data for the study. The validity and reliability of the instrument were determined by experts in the field and test-retest technique was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Data collected were analysed through frequency count and means scores. Findings from the study revealed that there are high consequences including psychological trauma. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that spouses should ensure that the unique marital relationship is placed above any prejudice, irritations and should never allow sentiments to tear it apart.

Index Terms— Gender-Based, Domestic Violence, Pandemic, COVID-19.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) has greatly engrossed the attention of researchers, scholars, experts and institutions at the local and international system. It is a major public health and human rights problem involving all ages and sexes. However, it has also been observed recently that there is increase violence against women (Oladepo, Yusuf, & Arulogun, 2011).

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVW), defines the term “violence against women” as: “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (UN in Oladepo et al 2011).

Some organizations like UNHDI acknowledges the reality of oppression and marginalization of women across nations, races and ethnicities, lived experiences of gender oppression for Nigerian women assumes a frightening dimension when factoring in the peculiarities of the feminization of poverty,

women access to elective and appointive positions, the enduring nature of the ideology of patriarchy and how religion and culture provide expressions that strengthen the eccentricity and helplessness of female folks (Eme, 2008).

Also, Arisi and Oromareghake (2011) posit men’s double standard against women. While the concept ‘women’ is used broadly for females. Studies show that gender-based violence is shockingly high, although, not restricted to Nigeria (NDHS, 2013). The improvement of the socio-economic status of women and professional counselling will lessen the incidence of violence against women (Oluremi, 2015).

Internationally, it is projected that one in three women experience either physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime (WHO, 2020). According to NDHS in (UN Women, 2020), these figures are mirrored in Nigeria, with 30% of girls and women aged between 15 and 49 reported to have experienced sexual abuse. COVID-19 has served to exacerbate the occurrence of GBV in Nigeria alongside insecurity.

In the opinion of (UN Women, 2020) these stark figures can be ascribed to entrenched gender discriminatory norms and a pervasive culture of impunity among the male folks. Access to justice for women to redress violations remains a mirage and is further hindered by barriers to domesticating and harmonizing legislation due to the multilateral system of governance.

Those that survive GBV also face immense challenges in accessing affordable quality services, basically due to the unavailability of GBV referral centres, and where available are underfunded and have low capacity. More so, where they do exist, women and girls face challenges in accessing services due to socio-cultural norms and fear of stigma and discrimination (UN Women, 2020).

Stigma, cultural practices and fear of discrimination also lead to significant under-reporting of cases of GBV, such that obtainable data only indicates very few cases. Data collection on GBV is further hindered by lack of a central GBV data collection mechanism. According (Afu, 2020) GBV is majorly committed by family members, and this lead to immoral behaviours such as prostitution, frustration among others.

Most studies on domestic violence have centred on men as the culprits of violence; however, this is not to refute that cases of men being victims of domestic violence do not exist. It has been reported that men have their share of adverse consequences of domestic violence.

In the study conducted by (Fawole, Ajuwon, Osungbade, & Fawega, 2002) on violence among young female hawkers, 19.7% of women had experienced physical assault, 36.3% had

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received the sexual harassment, while only 7.2% had emotional or psychological violence. Prevalence of wife-beating among civil servants in another study was 31.3%; 42.5% of the men had been perpetrators, while 23.5% of the women had been victims. In this study, alcohol consumption and growing up in an environment where parents fight publicly were significantly associated with men beating their wives while being young, unmarried and domestic violence between parents of the respondents were significantly associated with women being beaten.

Oladepo et al (2011) conducted a study on factors influencing gender-based violence among men and women in selected states in Nigeria. Findings show that gender-based violence still constitutes a problem in Nigeria, affecting women more than men. However, efforts should be geared towards addressing the factors that promote violence among both sexes through increased awareness and education.

Uwameiye and Iserameiya (2013) researched Gender-Based Violence against Women and Its Implication on the Girl Child Education in Nigeria. The study found that there is GBV in the study area and recommended effective grassroots campaign involving the use of various media such as radio, television and posters should be used to enlighten the general public about the educational implication of gender-based violence on the girl child.

It is against this background that the Causes of gender-based Domestic Violence during COVID-19 Pandemic in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria were investigated.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

All-female folks are likened to an incubator that gives life to its subjects, breed and modifies her content for continuity. These same female folks are defenceless in most of the most African communities, especially in Nigeria. Women are abused and downgraded in many forms by many people in the society especially their male counterpart.

Even as ugly as this GBV is, it has become the norm for even family members and the entire community to abuse this set of gender for selfish interests. The reports on the media on

this subject matter are alarming and it continues unabated in the COVID-19 era, it may affect the moral and marital status of women in Nigeria. This is worrisome and this prompted the researcher to carry out this study on the Causes of gender-based Domestic Violence during COVID-19 Pandemic in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

The following questions are raised to guide the research:

- i. What are the incidences of GBV Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria?
- ii. What are the causes of GBV in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria?
- iii. What are the effects of GBV in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria?

III. METHODOLOGY

The research design that was adopted for this study is the descriptive survey. The population of the study comprises of 3,277,740 residents in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The sample size for the study is 384 students based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample table of specification. The proportionate random sampling procedure was used in selecting the respondents from different locations across relatively the population. The instrument for data collection titled: Gender-Based Violence Questionnaire (GBVQ). The GBVQ is a 30-item instrument designed along a four-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was validated by consulting experts and items that were considered to be vague and irrelevant were removed to ensure validity. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted. Reliability analysis was carried out on the GBVQ comprising 30 items. Cronbach's alpha showed the questionnaire to reach acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.81$. The questionnaire was administered directly on the respondents by the researchers. The instrument was therefore considered reliable for this study. The tools that were used in analysing the collected data include mean scores.

Results

Research Question One: what are the incidences of GBV Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria?

Table 1 shows the incidences of gender-based violence in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The sectional mean of 2.50 shows that the respondents

S/N	Statements	Mean	Decision
1	Home is not a safe place for me because of abuse.	3.33	Agree
2	I need medical attention because of violence.	3.56	Agree
3	I am suffering from mental/sexual/social/long-term physical health problems because of violence.	3.48	Agree
4	I am worried about someone I know.	1.45	Disagree
5	I wanted to report an incidence of violence during COVID-19.	1.45	Disagree
6	I am worried about being abused by my partner during the lockdown.	3.36	Agree

7	Violence against women increased since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic	1.06	Disagree
8	COVID-19 increase risks of violence for women	2.34	Disagree
9	Staying at home for a long period led to GBV		
Sectional Mean		2.50	

agreed that there are cases of gender-based violence in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

Research Question Two: What are the causes of GBV in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria?

Table 2: Causes of GBV Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

S/N	Statements	Mean	Decision
10	Couples were always together at home for a long period during COVID-19	3.33	Agree
11	The rate of hunger during Lockdown increased violence against women	3.56	Agree
12	Lack of social gathering during Lockdown aided GBV.	3.48	Agree
13	Harmful gender norms	1.45	Disagree
14	Under-representation of women in power and politics	1.45	Disagree
15	Lack of economic resources generally makes women vulnerable to violence.	3.36	Agree
16	Lack of balanced education caused violence against women during the pandemic.	1.06	Disagree
Sectional Mean		2.52	

N=384

Table 2 shows the causes of gender-based violence in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The sectional mean of 2.52 shows that the respondents agreed that some factors such as; lack of balanced education, lack of social gathering

during the lockdown, harmful gender norms amongst others caused gender-based violence in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria during the pandemic.

Research Question Three: What are the effects of GBV in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria?

Table 3: Effect of GBV Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

S/N	Statements	Mean	Decision
17	GBV leads to lack of Self-esteem among the women	3.33	Agree
18	GBV causes marital conflict within FCT	3.56	Agree
19	Children from GBV home are likely to grow violent	2.48	Disagree
20	Most females who have violated lives in distrust all the days of their life.	2.56	Agree
21	GBV causes affected married women to resign their job at of fear.	1.45	Disagree
Sectional Mean		2.67	

Table 3 shows the effect of gender-based violence in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The sectional mean of 2.67 shows that the respondents agreed that GBV has a great effect on the affected women. The respondents agreed that in some cases it causes the women to lose self-esteem and also leads to marital conflicts in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria.

line with the study conducted by Uwameiye and Iserameiya (2013) researched Gender-Based Violence against Women and Its Implication on the Girl Child Education in Nigeria. The study found that there is GBV in the study area, which leads to marital conflicts and recommended effective grassroots campaign involving the use of various media such as radio, television and posters should be used to enlighten the general public about the educational implication of gender-based violence on the girl child.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed that that Gender-Based violence exists in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria and the GBV is caused by some factors such as hunger, harmful gender norms amongst others. This violence against women leads to immoral behaviours and marital conflicts. This is in

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher concluded that Gender-Based Violence exists in the study area and that the GBV is caused by harmful gender norms, hunger amongst others. The effect is enormous and leads to low self-esteem, broken homes etc.

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From the result of the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Counsellors should sensitize couples on the effect of Gender-Based Violence, irrespective of their level of education or gender.
2. School guidance counsellors should design seminars on marriage to enlighten and educate the youth on possible causes and prevention of Gender-Based Violence regularly.
3. It is recommended therefore that spouses should ensure that the unique marital relationships placed above any prejudice, irritations and should never allow sentiments to tear it apart.

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