

ASSESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN SOKOTO; CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

In the Sokoto metropolis, many women are violently treated by their close partners while they suffer silently without much publicity. In our society, women and children are exposed to multiple forms of violence in their homes. However, the most common form of violence is wife battery ranging from verbal abuse, slapping, kicking, rape, denial of financial support and sometimes death. Women are the engine of every society hence the need to be treated with utmost respect and honor; they are homemakers, custodians of fundamental values, culture and good training. Considering all these, women deserve better treatment and utmost respect from their husbands, but the opposite is usually true. The study discovers that domestic violence can take many forms, including physical, psychological, sexual, and economic. The study further discovers that domestic violence has devastating physical and psychological consequences on its victims and can seriously damage the foundations of the family, leading to its disintegration. The study further suggests ways to address this societal challenge. On this note, the paper highlights the meaning of domestic violence and the effects of domestic violence on the victims and their children. The paper recommends that relevant stakeholders develop stiffer laws to deal with the menace.

Keywords: Domestic violence, women, psychological, wife battery and children

INTRODUCTION

According to United Nations, domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner, which could be physical, emotional, economic, sexual, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person (Nwokocha & Civilization, 2023). Domestic violence is a violation of fundamental human rights. Domestic Abuse affects women and has devastating consequences for children and societal institutions. Domestic violence is a "pattern of coercive and assaultive behaviors that include physical, sexual, verbal, and psychological attacks and economic coercion that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partner" (Olusegun, Oyelade, & Law, 2022). Bunting and Lawrance (2016) maintained that men's violence against female partners is an issue of direct concern for children; almost all children in these families are subjected to the emotional cruelty of seeing, hearing or being aware of violence against their mother.

Thus, children experience violence from one parent against the other by seeing it, hearing it, getting involved in it and through the consequences of violence (Olusegun et al., 2022). Bunting and Lawrance (2016) maintained that domestic violence is the most prevalent form of gender-based violence, primarily within families and inside homes. According to

Nwokocha and Civilization (2023), women facing domestic violence often suffer physical and psychological consequences, usually affecting their behavior and productivity. United Nations General Assembly defines violence against women as acts or gender-based violence that result in physical suffering to women, including the threat of such acts of coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether accruing in public or private life (Nwokocha & Civilization, 2023).

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) states that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the total advancement of women and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men. According to Bazza (2009), Domestic violence is reinforced by cultural values and beliefs that are repeatedly communicated through the media and other societal institutions that tolerate it. The perpetrator's violence is further supported when peers, family members, or others in the community (e.g., traditional heads or village heads, elders, police, or clergy) minimize or ignore the Abuse and fail to provide consequences. As a result, the abuser learns that not only is the behavior justified, but also it is acceptable. Alcoholism, substance abuse, poverty, cultural factors, anger, stress, and depression often are thought to cause domestic violence.

Domestic violence used to include psychological or mental violence, which can consist of repeated verbal use, confinement, harassment, and deprivation of financial, physical and personal resources. Domestic violence can happen in families from any class, economically disadvantaged or lower group or age group (Sule et al., 2021). According to (Nwokocha & Civilization, 2023), domestic violence occurs in a domestic setting, such as in a cohabitation or marriage. It is committed by one of the partners in an intimate relationship against the other person, and it can take place between former spouses, relationships or partners. In its broadest sense, domestic violence also involves violence against parents, the elderly and children.

Types of Domestic Violence in Sokoto

- i. **Physical Abuse**; this includes physical assault or physical violence. it is an intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person as a result of kicking, hitting, beating or use of physical force
- ii. **Sexual Abuse**; is often perpetrated using force or taking advantage of one another. It is abusive sexual behavior by one person upon another person. Rape, unwanted touching is an example of sexual Abuse.
- iii. **Psychological Abuse**; is also called verbal or emotional Abuse. it is an intentional infliction of distress, anguish, or intimidation through non-verbal and verbal acts or denial of civil rights. It includes ridicule, insults, and name-calling to cause pain.
- iv. **Economic Abuse**; is an unreasonable deprivation of financial resources to which a victim is entitled under the legal law or which the victim requires out of necessity.

CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Some people believe domestic violence occurs because the victim provokes the abuser to violent action, while others believe the abuser has a problem managing anger. The roots of domestic violence can be attributed to various cultural, social, economic, and psychological factors (Noah, 2001). So, what could be the reasons for domestic violence in a healthy marriage? Domestic violence is a systematic pattern of behavior to instill dominance, surveillance and superiority in the relationship. (Majekodunmi, 2004) bring about many causes of domestic violence, which include the following;

- **Unemployment and poverty:** People in dire financial problems are more likely to be involved in domestic violence. The abuse victims are in abject poverty. Often lack the means to escape the violence. Abusers usually take action to ensure they also keep their victims in poverty. They ensure they block any job opportunity for their victim to keep the victim under their dependence.
- **Alcoholism:** Frequently using alcohol and other drug substances leads to domestic violence.
- **Self Defence:** Many married couples can resort to violence to avoid any outbreak from their partner or act in response to their partner's Abuse. Using violent means can only be justified when the partners have no other way to depend on themselves.
- **Mental Disorder:** Women, children and men are victims of severe physical abuse and are likely to suffer from mental illnesses. The illnesses included depression, drug dependence, anxiety, alcoholism, and antisocial Disorder.
- **Suspicion of Infidelity:** The married couple's relationship is meant to be based on faith and trust. However, when the trust is put into question, it can act as the cause of domestic abuse in marriage. Domestic violence is highly uncalled for.
- **Cultural Differences:** When two people from different cultures decide to be wedded, they both do not need to be acquainted with the differences in the culture. Cultural differences can be one of the common causes of domestic violence. If married couples do not adopt cultural differences cautiously, it can easily lead to domestic violence.

WAYS TO PREVENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- **Tolerance;** a perfect human being does not exist. Both partners must exhibit maturity and tolerate each other's imperfections to keep a relationship going. When there is tolerance, violence rarely results in a home. Tolerance can be one of the best domestic violence prevention methods.
- **Respect for Religious Obligations;** religion extols virtues such as faithfulness, love, kindness, peace and others. Strict adherence to these religious obligations will go a long way to stopping domestic violence in your relationship.
- **Avoid Bad Company;** sociologists often say peer pressure strongly influences young people and adults. If your peers include those who boast about their domestic violence exploits, then the chances are that you will soon adopt such habits.
- **Show Affection and Love;** marriages and relationships can be very challenging. This is partly why there is a high divorce rate in Sokoto state. However, with genuine love and affection for each other, challenges like violence at home can be easily handled.

- **Avoidance of Infidelity;** there is a solid connection between infidelity and domestic violence. Violence or Abuse resulting from infidelity or allegations of infidelity is common among married couples. Being faithful to your partner can thus help in domestic abuse prevention.
- **Resort to Dialogue;** in every relationship, hostility, temper, intolerance, and anger can often degenerate into domestic violence; Dialogue and tolerance remain one of the most feasible solutions to any form of domestic violence or Abuse.
- **Education;** embarking on rigorous educational training can help people learn how to stop domestic violence; training teaches people about the violations of women's and men's rights. Low literacy has been identified as a factor negatively affecting domestic violence prevention efforts in Sokoto state Nigeria.
- **Legislative Laws:** Laws against women's Abuse should be passed by the National and State Assemblies and the judiciary. The executives and judiciary should be strengthened to implement the laws and ensure that offenders are punished within the ambit of the law.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study deduced that domestic violence is evil and should be nipped in the bud by every means possible. Domestic violence has sent many to their early graves and has left its victims scared, anxious, threatened and dejected. This study, however, advocates some pragmatic approaches in tackling this menace that has bedeviled many marriages, especially within the Nigeria/ Sokoto homes. Since there is provision for the protection and limitation of women's rights, the following recommendations were drawn; there should be premarital counseling for intending couples on how to cope with their marital relationship. Public enlightenment has to be encouraged through social media on the adverse effects of domestic violence against women, wild beating and injury. There is a need for religious leaders to teach their followers against marital violence vigorously. Married couples should be encouraged to imitate their parents in living peacefully with their wives. The punishment given to gravely antisocial husbands should be publicized to serve as deterrence to others.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are proffered:

- In some societies, some cultural practices perpetuate women's Abuse; those practices should be reformed or abolished.
- Detrimental traditions such as early child marriage and poor widowhood practices should be eliminated.
- All legislative laws against women's Abuse should be adequately implemented.
- People should be well-sensitized to the dangers of women's and children's Abuse through various channels such as training, social media, seminars and workshops.
- Domestic violence and women's abuse should be integrated into the school curriculum and taught in schools. It will enhance the transfer of what is learned about domestic violence and the Abuse of women to their everyday life geared towards stopping the menace.

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