

## Domestic Violence against Women in Maiduguri Borno State Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*Domestic violence has continued to be a global, social, public health and human rights problem which has physical, psychological, economical and social effects on victims. It also examined the effective strategies to ending domestic violence against women. This paper examined domestic violence against women in Borno State Nigeria. The paper also observed that the gender inequalities in the system have occasioned an intense marginalization and subjugation of Nigerian women to the background, in virtually every sphere of life. An exploratory and qualitative approach was adopted for this study with the use of secondary sources such as books, journals, newspapers and internet sources. There are also two major forms of domestic violence against women in Borno State which are intimate partner violence and sexual violence by non partners. The paper also observed that there is correlation between girl child marriage, VVF, domestic and gender based violence likewise sexual and gender based violence in Borno State Nigeria. Several factors were observed to contribute in the rise of domestic violence in Borno State Nigeria which are; religious belief system, culture, tradition and culture of silence. The societal imposition of male superiority over women has weakened the females thereby making them vulnerable to violence and keeping them economically dependent on men. It was also observed that women are forbidden to report domestic violence. A woman is seen as sex object and is only good in child bearing, house chores and does not have any significant contribution to make in the society or aspire for self development.*

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**Keywords:** *Domestic violence; Gender equality; Vesico-Vaginal Fistula; Girl child marriage and Sexual violence.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Violence against women is a manifestation of unequal power relation between male and female leading to discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full-advancement of women (UN General Assembly, 1993). The intentional use of physical force, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or community, either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation (WHO, 1996).

According to Himanshu and Panda (2007), it is estimated that one in every five women faces some form of violence during her lifetime and, in some cases leading to serious injury or death. In early 2002, the home office in England and Wales observed that at least two women are brutally murdered each week by an existing or past partner. The Metropolitan Police Service highlighted that in 2001 there was 36 domestic violence murders in the Purice District. Extrapolated nationally the figures indicated that approximately 35% of all murders were linked to domestic violence.

It is also the most widespread and socially tolerated way in which women and girls are denied their basic right. Out of ten countries surveyed in 2005 by W.H.O, more than 50% of women in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru and Tanzania reported having been subjected to physical or sexual violence by intimate partners with figures reaching 71% in rural Ethiopia. Only in Japan did less than 20% of women reported incidents of domestic violence. Empirical data are available on the prevalence, types, and consequences of physical, sexual and psychological violence in many countries.

A local survey of Native American women in Oklahoma showed that 58.7% of the participants reported lifetime physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV); past-year prevalence was 30.1%, of which 5.8% were reports of physical violence, 3.3%, forced sexual activity incidents; and 16.4%, physical injuries (Malcoe, Duran and Montgomery, 2004). A national survey of women in Brazil found that prevalence of physical abuse ranged from 13.2% to 34.8%, and psychological aggression was 78.3% (Reichenheim et al., 2006). In Matlab, Bangladesh, 17.5% of women studied had experienced physical or mental violence from their husbands in the 4 months preceding the interview (Ahmed, 2005). Prevalence of physical violence was 25% in national surveys in South Africa (Jewkes, *et al.*,2002) and 34% in a similar national survey in Egypt (Centre for Health and Gender Equity, 1999).

Location-specific studies found prevalence rates of 30% in Uganda (Koenig, 2003), 31% in Nigeria, 42% in Sudan (Ahmed and Elmardi, 2005), and 48% in Zambia (Kishor and Johnson, 2004). Similarly, local studies on sexual violence found prevalence of rape to be 3% in Tanzania (McCloskey, Williams and Larsen, 2005) and 5.5% in Nigeria (Fawole, Ajuwon, and Osungbade, 2005), whereas 1 of every 4 women had been raped in South Africa and 7.3% had experienced forced first intercourse in Eastern Cape(Armstrong, 1994).

In northern India, 18-40% of men admitted having non-consensual sex with their wives, and 4-9% had physically forced their wives to have sex (Martin, Tsui, Maitra and Marinshaw, 1999). In a local study in Melbourne, Australia, 13% of women interviewed had experienced rape or attempted rape (Mazza, Dennerstein and Ryan, 1996). Research on psychological violence in Kenya and South Africa showed that it was more prevalent than assumed (Pillay and Schoubben-Hesk, 2001). In a study in southwest Nigeria, 61% of married women reported psychological abuse such as intimidation, belittling, and verbal aggression (Fatusi and Alatis, 2006). In one study in Namibia, 60% of battered women had also experienced emotional abuse, including being controlled by partners or experiencing fear for their safety (Nangolo, 2003). In Spain, 40% of women seen in selected general practice clinics reported psychological gender-based violence (Pontecorvo et al., 2004).

Women are neglected, trapped within cultural framework, molded by dogmatic thoughts of the patriarchal system. As a result, violence against women is viewed as a normal phenomenon in the light of male attitudes (Hossain, 2016). In this era of modernization, globalization, civilization and advocacy, women in Maiduguri Borno State Nigeria still suffer from violence, domestic violence, rape, forced sex, sexual harassment, forced marriage, and other psychological issues. Violence against women has become one of the most visible social issues in the 21st century (Hossain, 2016).

Domestic violence against women, especially wives beaten by husbands, is a daily affair in any male dominated society (Hossain, 2016). Domestic violence against women in Maiduguri has increased rapidly in recent time. The estimate of physical violence against women by husbands or other family members varies between 30% and 50%. Despite the seriousness of the problem in terms of violation of human rights and public health consequences, there is a dearth of knowledge, nature, and the context of Domestic Violence against Women (DVAW) in the developing countries for various reasons (Hossain, 2016). Actually, the incidence of domestic violence against women involves husband, wife, and other family members is perpetuated by the societal context, a family and community-centred approach to alleviate the problem (Khatun and Rahman,2012).

Women of all economic strata are maltreated and abused by husbands, in-laws, and other family members. Brutal attacks on women are widespread across the country. Daily news reports are filled with the atrocities, including physical and psychological violence. The rate of reported violence acts against women has risen at an alarming rate since 1990 (Zaman, 1999).

African studies point to an increasing trend in violence against women (Raikes, 1990; Coker and Richter 1998; Odimegwu and Okemgbo, 2003). In Nigeria interest in studying and addressing the problem of gender based violence is emerging as researchers are beginning to document the prevalence and correlates of violence against women (Sogbetun and Osoba, 1977; Kisseka and Otesanya, 1988; Odunjirin 1993; Odimegwu, 1998; OAU, 1998 and Okemgbo *et al.* 2002).

The culture of silence, religious and cultural norms and belief system has exacerbated the prevalence of domestic violence against women in Maiduguri Borno State Nigeria. The fear of being labelled as an agent against cultural and religious norms has made victims of domestic violence not to speak, but to suffer the pains and brutality in silence as a means of showing loyalty and being submissive to their husbands. It is worthy to note that men also suffer domestic violence in the hands of women especially married men. Most of the married men suffer from the following domestic violence in the hands of their spouses or wives: sex starvation, food starvation and constant bullying.

Domestic violence affects development as it hinders women to achieve their full potentials in life. In this light, the paper seeks to discuss domestic violence, types and effective strategies to end domestic violence in Maiduguri Borno State North East Nigeria.

## CONCEPTULIZATION

### Violence Against Women (VAW)

According to UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) has defined violence against women as all gender-based violent acts occurring in both the family and public which result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women. It is any act of force or coercion with intent to perpetuate or promote hierarchical gender relationships (Albert, 1994; Odimegwu, 2000 and Beijing Platform, 1995). It is variously called 'domestic violence' or 'family violence'. It may be psychological or mental violence, which can consist of repeated verbal abuse, harassment, confinement and deprivation of physical, financial and personal resources (Afkamiet *et al.* 1998; Odimegwu 2000 and Blanc *et al.* 1996).

The UN further described VAW as; '...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 full 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.'

### Gender Based Violence

The United Nations adopted the first internationally accepted definition of violence against women in 1993, defining such violence to be "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women...whether occurring in public or private life (United Nations, 1993)". This definition hints that gender-based violence is a broader category than violence against women, and that gender-based violence at least theoretically could also include violence that affects men, if it is conditioned upon or affected by men's gender roles.

Sida (2007), defined gender-based violence as: Any harm or suffering that is perpetrated against a woman or girl, man or boy and that has a negative impact on the physical, sexual or psychological health, development or identity of the person. The cause of the violence is founded in gender-based power inequalities and gender-based discrimination.

### Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a violation of a woman's right to physical integrity, to liberty, and to her right to life itself. When a state fails to take proper steps needed to protect women from domestic violence or allow these crimes to be committed with impunity, states fail in their obligation to protect women from torture (Khan and Aeron, 2006).

### **FACTS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

- i. According to the 2013 WHO report on intimate partner violence and non-partner violence against women, nearly one third of all women who have been in a relationship have experienced violence by their intimate partner, and as many as 38 % of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners (WHO, 2014).
- ii. 603 million women live in countries where intimate partner violence/domestic violence is not yet considered a crime (United Nations Secretary-General's Campaign Unite to end violence against women).
- iii. Most women who experience violence never seek help or report. Data from 30 countries shows that only 4 in 10 seeks help at all, and only 6 % from authorities (World Bank Group, 2014). There is an 11.9 % lifetime prevalence of non-partner sexualised violence in Africa according to WHO (WHO, 2013).
- iv. Nearly a quarter of the 10, 000 men interviewed for the UN P4P unprecedented study on men's use of violence against women in Asia and the Pacific, reported having raped a woman or girl (UN Women, 2013).
- v. Between January and November 2013, the UN recorded at least 4,530 cases of sexualised violence perpetrated by armed men in different parts of the Central African Republic (Zainab, 2014).
- vi. Every year, approximately 15 million girls are married before the age of 18, across countries, cultures and religions. Statistics for 2012 showed that of all known Syrian girls who were married between the ages of 15 and 17, 16.2 % were married to men 15 years older than them or more (<http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/>).
- vii. More than 125 million girls and women alive today have been subject to FGM in the 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East where FGM is concentrated (UNICEF, 2013).
- viii. UNFPA estimates that the annual worldwide number of 'honour killing' victims may be as high as 5,000 women (UNFPA, 2000).
- ix. According to a screening of male refugees from eastern DRC, 13.4 % of the male population aged 18 or older had experienced sexual violence in the preceding 12 months (Dolan, 2014).

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

According to Johnson (1998) and Gelles (1985), social learning theory explains family violence in terms of a "learned phenomena", that is, the intergenerational link between violence and individuals' learned behavioural role. It forms during childhood and established through the process of modelling. Gelles (1985), further states "not only do the families expose individuals to violence and techniques of violence, the family teach approval for the use of violence". Finkelhor et al (1988), suggests that those who are abused suffer from a sense of powerlessness, stigma, and inability to trust others, inability to contribute towards the development of the community which impairs the development of normal coping mechanisms leading to violence. The contribution by Walker (1989), has significantly influenced the body of thought around family violence. According to Gelles (1985), Walker developed a "cycle theory of violence", which outlines distinct phases experienced by women in episodically family violence, including escalating tension, an explosion of violence and a honeymoon stage. The core emphasis of the social learning/ intergenerational theories is on family dynamics and interpersonal relations.

Family violence is viewed as a symptom of dysfunctional family relationships and key concepts include learned helplessness, socialized roles and modelling effects. The danger in applying this understanding is the tendency to assume women are helpless victims. Further, this is exacerbated

by notions that reduce family members and self-esteem issues of women. The difficulty of these assumptions is the tendency to target interventions in the form of couple counselling and family therapy, thus individualizing the nature of the problem. Disclosure of violence by a family member during a treatment session may precipitate violence and lead to its escalating once outside the counselling setting.

Sociological and feminist theories including social exchange theory and gender theory consider social disadvantage as a contextual stressor that influences individual behaviour by reinforcing traditional symbolic structures of male dominance and thus motivating violent behaviour among men (Courtenay, 2000 and Jewkes, 2002). This traditional or hegemonic masculinity is often defined by behaviours such as restricted emotional displays (except for anger), focus on success, power and achievement, substance abuse (especially alcohol), risk sexual behaviour, using controlling behaviours within relationship, homophobia, anti-femininity, using aggressive psychological defences during conflicts, perpetrating intimate partner violence and homicide (Mankowski and Maton, 2010; Peralta, Tuttle, and Steele, 2010). Men living in poor neighbourhoods who experience higher levels of stress and social powerlessness (Strauss, Gilles, and Suzanne, 2006) would be more likely to affirm their male identity and display these types of behaviour, including violence against female partners.

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN MAIDUGURI BORNO STATE NIGERIA**

In the typical setting of Maiduguri Borno State Nigeria, traditional norms and religious beliefs system have dominated family relationships and prevented societal recognition of domestic violence, gender based violence (GBV) and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) or intervention in all matters of violence against women. The societal imposition of male superiority over women has weakened the females thereby making them vulnerable to violence and keeping them economically dependent on men. A woman is seen as sex object and is only good in child bearing, house chores and does not have any significant contribution to make in the society or aspire for self development. The society they found themselves have made them subordinate to men and they do not have right to question a man since men are seen as superior being. Domestic violence, like forced sex by men is said to be the cause of numerous sexual and reproductive health issues including sexually transmitted diseases and infections and unwanted pregnancy by women and young girls Borno State Nigeria. Domestic violence and Violence against women is not just a local issue but a global problem which has continued to affect the fundamental human rights of women and their social, political and economic development.

According to Zara Kareto Mohammed who is an advocate and activist against domestic violence, SGBV, GBV, VAW and a promoter of gender equality:

*“You are seen as someone who is against the status quo, culture and religious belief when you speak against violence meted on women and girl child. When you advocate for gender equality and women emancipation in the society you are labelled a western world agent who wants to adulterate their culture with western world way of life. For the fear of been called derogatory names or labelled as a rebellious being has made women to remain silent in the face of oppression and subjugation which has contributed to the increase of violence against women. A male course mate was angry when she was made to lead an assignment group presentation, who vehemently opposed her leadership of the group and was vowing that a woman cannot and does not lead him. His behavioural act and outburst showed how women are oppressed, discriminated and subjugated in Maiduguri”.*

When women suffering from domestic violence try to speak out or defend themselves, they are subjected to ridicule and name calling. The husbands or men employ the strategy of instigating other women against her by either accusing her of infidelity or disloyalty to him. Many women are suffering from domestic violence and gender based violence in their homes but are, compelled to endure such inhuman act because of culture, religious belief and what people will say if the lady

seeks for divorce or speaks out. When such women complain to their parents, they are asked to endure and never come back home. This attitude has given most men the impetus to continue with the impunity of domestic and gender based violence against women in Maiduguri Borno State Nigeria.

Aggression, frustration, forced marriage and displacement caused by insurgency in Borno state has also contributed to the increase in domestic violence and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) against women in Maiduguri. Girl child marriage and sexual violence against women has led to the increase in the cases of Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (VVF). Those women suffering from Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (VVF) are abandoned in the hospitals and at home by their husbands, who then go out to marry new wives. There is a nexus between girl child marriage, domestic violence, GBV, SGBV and VVF in our society, especially core Northern States of Nigeria.

According to Geidamand Barka (2016), in a study carried out at state specialist hospital Maiduguri Borno state there is a prevalence of 18.3% of VVF, most (51.9%) of the fistulae occurred in women aged 15-24 years. The patients are mostly married (79%), primiparas (56.5%), uneducated (89%) and not salaried employed (99.4%). According to premium times of April, 17 2016, the Borno Specialist Hospital in Maiduguri said on Sunday that it had so far recorded 28 severe cases of Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF) this year.

Laraba Bello, the Chief Medical Director, CMD, of the hospital, made the disclosure while receiving relief materials donated by the Nigeria Airforce Officers Wives Association. Ms. Bello said that the patients were mostly members of vulnerable groups who had no one to cater for them. "The donation is timely as it will go a long way in alleviating the plight of our patients, most of who are between the ages 17 and 20 years". "Some of them have been here since last year while some are internally displaced persons abandoned by their husbands", she said. The wife of the Chief of Air Staff and the association's chairperson said the visit was part of efforts aimed at assisting the less privileged members of the society.

### **INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

The form of violence that is most often associated with the concept gender-based violence is intimate partner/domestic violence, in particular men's violence against women. Intimate partner violence is a global phenomenon and also the form of violence we have most statistics on, even though numbers are still unreliable or unavailable in many contexts. International surveys show that at least 1/3 of women in intimate relationships have experienced violence from their partner (World Bank Group, 2014). Intimate partner violence is often systematic and contains parallel physical, sexual and psychological violence. It may take many different forms, be conducted by different perpetrators throughout the lifetime, and have severe direct and indirect health consequences. Additionally children who witness violence are indirect victims, and are also likely to be exposed to direct violence (The Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority, 2010).

### **SEXUAL VIOLENCE BY NON PARTNERS**

Sexual violence by non-partners includes for example sexual assault, sexual harassment, rape and gang rape. WHO statistics show that globally 7 % of women have been exposed to sexual violence outside a relationship (WHO, 2016). In South Africa for example, studies reveal that nearly 33 % of men report raping a woman during their lifetime (Morrell, and Jewkes, 2011). In a recent study in Asia and the Pacific, men reporting having raped a woman who was not their partner and being involved in gang rapes ranged from 3 and 1% (rural Bangladesh) to 27 and 14% (Bougainville, Papua New Guinea) (World Bank Group, 2014).

Gang rape is a violent crime in which various men use sexualised acts to intentionally harm and hurt mostly women and girls, but also men and boys are victims. These acts are expressions of misogynistic, xenophobic, racist, homophobic norms that produce and reproduce socialisation processes that victimise and devalue women and femininity, and high levels of economic poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalisation seem to increase the violence. UN Women has

been one of the key actors addressing sexualised violence against women and girls by non-partners in public spaces through global initiatives like ‘Safe Cities’ (UN Women, 2013).

### **INSURGENCY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN MAIDUGURI BORNO STATE NIGERIA**

When violence in general is more present in a society and in situations of increased militarisation, subordinated groups in the society become more vulnerable in public arenas as well as in private. Displacement and heightened tensions within communities and households exacerbate the risk of domestic violence, including men’s violence against their intimate partners and other forms of violence in the family. Poor welfare services and the breakdown of social networks and justice systems make it more difficult for victims of violence to get justice and the perpetrators get unpunished (Sida, 2015).

Women and girls are the main targets for perpetrators of sexual violence during insurgency, and adolescent girls are particularly exposed to sexual violence such as rape, but also sexual exploitation, early and forced marriage, unintended or forced pregnancy and forced abortion (Save the Children, 2013). There has been an increase in cases of domestic and sexual violence against women and girls in IDP camps in Borno State Nigeria which are most times done by security personnel meant to protect the camps and the occupants. Security forces and members Boko Haram terrorist group are also reported as perpetrators of violence and sexual violence against women and girls.

Domestic and sexual violence remains pervasive across the globe, and its widespread use has been reported in most conflict settings, such as in Europe during World War II Bosnia, Rwanda, Liberia, Northern Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, Iraq, Libya and Syria (<http://www.ids.ac.uk/publication/addressing-sexual-violence-in-andbeyond-the-warzone>).

#### **EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

In order to prevent domestic violence and to protect and bring justice to survivors, Sida has an interconnected strategy which includes: Preventing violence, strengthening legal and policy frameworks, and improving response services for survivors.

##### **Preventing Domestic Violence**

Preventing domestic Violence, to stop it from happening in the first place, is a key priority. Given that Gender Based Violence is based on gender norms and gender-based power inequalities. Gender Based Violence prevention strategies are intrinsically linked to efforts to increase gender equality more generally. Hence, rather than disconnecting and treating Gender Based Violence as a separate and isolated problem, it has to be situated in the context of gender inequalities. Sida’s prevention strategies therefore entail (CSW 57 (2013) “Agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls” E/2013/27).

- i. A shift in focus from seeing women and other groups exposed to gender-based violence as victims to seeing them as survivors, actors and agents of change with a strong focus on women and girls’ empowerment and agency.
- ii. Efforts to increase women’s political participation and influence in contexts of peace, conflicts and other humanitarian crisis. Women have rights to participate on equal terms with men in political bodies at all levels of the society, including in peace processes. In many countries women’s political representation is very low, and women are often excluded from formal peace negotiations. This has devastating consequences for the possibility to reach a sustainable development, peace and human security (UNIFEM, 2010).
- iii. Efforts to increase women’s economic empowerment that enhance women’s bargaining power and ability to leave abusive relationships. This includes strengthening women’s entrepreneurship and employment opportunities, improving women’s access to land and property rights, promoting equal sharing of unpaid care work between women and men and encouraging universal access to quality education. While such efforts can contribute to increased violence against women in the short term due to gender ideals linking masculinity

- to the provider role, increasing women's economic empowerment is still crucial for longer term prevention of Gender Based Violence. Women's economic empowerment interventions which also address gender norms and reach couples and communities can reduce such risks.
- iv. Efforts to increase sexual and reproductive health and rights are crucial for preventing Gender Based Violence given the close relationship between the two. Such efforts include promotion and protection of women's right to have control and decide freely over matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, family-planning possibilities and HIV/AIDS prevention.
  - v. Incorporate men and boys as perpetrators, as victims/survivors and as agents of change. Men and boys are often neglected as survivors of Gender Based Violence. Hence, there is a need to recognize and address men's and boys' particular vulnerabilities and needs in relation to Gender Based Violence, especially in the context of armed conflict. Rather than simply 'bringing men in' to work against violence against women, there is a need to work towards transformed norms around gender relations and masculinity. Such an approach acknowledges that men and boys are also restricted by expectations linked to masculinity and can also be victims of violence. A failure to recognize and address this can contribute to the perpetuation of cycles of Gender Based Violence. When successful, though, such an approach enables men and boys to become agents of change.
  - vi. Transformation of norms and behavior that underpin Gender Based Violence. The logic of Gender Based Violence is based on gender stereotypes, such as ideals linking masculinity to the provider role, macho behavior and violence as well as ideals linking femininity to chastity, submission and victimhood. Prevention efforts should start early in life and be directed at girls and boys. Both non-formal education and formal education are important sites for normative change and have the potential to address gender inequalities and prevent Gender Based Violence.

#### **Accountability for Domestic Violence: Strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks**

The obligation of states to prevent violence against women and girls and to provide comprehensive services to survivors of such violence was established as a "due diligence" standard by General Recommendation No. 19 of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 1992. Strengthening the legal and policy framework forms an important part of both prevention and response to Gender Based Violence, while enabling provision of justice for survivors, legal frameworks and punishments shape norms in society and might work as deterrents.

- i. Improving existing legislation directly linked to domestic violence. The present historic number of laws and policies addressing different forms of gender-based violence is to a large extent due to sustained and strategic advocacy from women's rights organizations across the globe. Research has shown correlation between strong and independent feminist movements and comprehensive laws protecting women from violence (Htun and Laurel, 2012).
- ii. Supporting women's legal rights to property, land, inheritance, employment and income can increase women's ability to leave abusive relationships and establish their own households. Improving legislation indirectly linked to Gender Based Violence also includes laws on, for instance, corporal punishment and alcohol taxation which are related to other risk factors such as child maltreatment and alcohol abuse. Hence, strategies to improve legislation should not have a narrow focus on laws pertaining directly to domestic violence, but take into account and strive for improved legislation in other areas as well.
- iii. Bridging the gap between law and practice. While solid legislation acknowledging the rights of domestic violence survivors is a prerequisite, a major obstacle often lies in the implementation of such frameworks. For this reason, emphasis should be on bridging the gap between law and practice through the strengthening of accountability mechanisms to follow up and evaluate the implementation of laws addressing prevention and response to domestic violence.



- iv. The rule of law and ending impunity for domestic violence. Systematic failures of police, justice personnel and armies put women and girls at risk of violence and prevent access to justice. Perpetrators of domestic violence must be held accountable under national and international law. Yet, attempting to reduce Gender Based Violence by a simple focus on prosecuting offenders may not lead quickly to the desired outcomes (Nynke and Dorothea, 2012). There is a need to recognize the limitations of convictions as prevention (through deterrence) and combine legal actions with so called secondary prevention efforts addressing social and psychological driving forces, particularly in post-conflict settings.

#### **Improving Response Services for Survivors**

The effects of domestic violence have to be tackled. Survivors have rights to protection and access to services.

- i. Strengthening and enhancing multi-sectorial services at all levels. Services must be based upon survivors' needs and safety. Although the state is responsible for the safety of survivors, it is important that not only the state but also women's organizations are provided with resources to give support. Women's organizations often have a deep knowledge and long experience of support and service to survivors of domestic violence. Services must be effectively coordinated in development and humanitarian contexts and include:
  - Health sector response to domestic violence including reproductive health, medical and psychosocial support;
  - State run shelters and counseling centers in order to provide safe place to survivors of domestic violence;
  - Shelters and counseling centers run by independent actors such as women's organizations;
  - Adequate police and justice response including legal aid to survivors;
  - Economic services.
- ii. Recognizing strong and important links between prevention and response. Multi-sectorial services (e.g. medical and psychosocial support) can help both survivors and perpetrators of domestic violence to avoid further violence. If a survivor does not have the personal strength because of traumas and stress caused by domestic violence, he or she may not have the strength to pursue justice. Services must also reach out to perpetrators of violence, the so called secondary prevention in order to decrease future perpetration.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Domestic violence against women is an age long problem which must be addressed globally. It is an impediment to peace, progress and a threat to gender equality. Domestic violence appears as traditions, customs and religious practices that degrade the status accorded to women. Domestic violence against women is a violation of their fundamental human rights.

One of the most effective measurements in identifying violence is to assess government's compliance with international standards relating to human rights abuse and gender based violence. In Borno State Nigeria, it is a big concern that requires urgent attention. Although globally women's rights are human rights, violence against women remains a pervasive issue. Recognizing domestic violence against women as a violation of their fundamental human rights is a breakthrough in the struggle to end domestic violence against women globally. It is to promote fundamental human rights of women and girl child and to prevent domestic violence against women. It is pertinent that government at all level, her citizens and development partners must undertake effective measures to ensure gender equality. The sustainable development goal number 5 advocates for gender equality targeting to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In order to curtail the prevalence of domestic violence likewise gender based violence, sexual and gender based violence against women and girl child and to improve on gender equality in Nigeria and Maiduguri Borno State, the following recommendations are preferred:

- Effective grass roots campaign involving the Non Government Organizations, Community Based Organizations, by using various media channels such as Radio, Television and posters to enlighten the public about violence against women and to report such cases to appropriate authorities.
- Government must ensure proper policy formulation and implementation strategies and be consistent in executing programmes aimed at eradicating any act of domestic violence against women.
- The traditional and religious leaders likewise community leaders and stakeholders must be educated and enlightened on the issues and effects of domestic violence, gender based violence and sexual and gender based violence against women and girl child.
- Greater economic opportunities for women, through access to credit, skills acquisition and trading. This will ensure that women become economically independent and self reliant.
- Establishment of more domestic violence monitoring agencies and groups. It is advocated that more domestic violence monitoring agencies be established by the Nigerian Government, especially at the grassroots level for an effective monitoring and reporting of gender rights violations against women and girl child Nigeria.

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