

Domestic Violence Among Couples in Oshimili South, Delta State

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Abstract- Introduction: Domestic Violence is a very serious issue. It is a violation of basic human rights. Despite the fact that women make up the majority of domestic violence victims, not all abuse is directed towards women. Domestic violence involves both parties. A victim or an abuser of any gender is possible. Men and women both use violence against one another; it happens both ways. The purpose of the study was to investigate Domestic Violence among couples in Oshimili South, Delta State. **Methods:** 6 research questions were raised to guide the study. Descriptive survey research was adopted in this study. The population of the study consisted of all 93,292 residents of Oshimili South Local Government Area within the ages of 15 and 64 years. The sample size comprised 400 residents selected from the population using multi-stage sampling technique. The research instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of public health, the reliability was done using test-retest reliability, and a coefficient score of 0.81 was achieved using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The instrument was administered to the respondents in their various residential places and the data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages. **Result:** The results revealed that there was a 79.2% prevalence of Domestic Violence, among men, and 87.5% among women. The most common form of Domestic Violence experienced was psychological abuse. It was discovered that men and women experienced this almost equally. Among the causes of Domestic Violence outlined, refusal of sex seemed to be the highest at 26%. When considering reporting, it was found that 43.5% of abused respondents had reported the abuse to either family, friend, neighbor, colleague or religious leader. 74% and 78% of respondents who suffer abuse said they have not received any form of empowerment, either in monetary form, business start-up, or skill acquisition from government or NGO respectively. Only 19% of respondents who have been abused have ever attended couples' counseling. Though reporting was done, 40.5% of those who reported or had any other intervention in the form of empowerment or counseling, said there was no change in the violence situation. **Conclusion:** Suggestions were made to reduce Domestic Violence. Among them, educating the younger ones at 65.5% and creating more awareness at 42.5% received the highest support. The study concluded that the prevalence of Domestic Violence is still very high. Recommendations were given which included government funding more research, amending some laws, and for domestic violence awareness to be included in children's educational curriculum.

Keywords - Domestic violence; Intimate partner violence; Psychological abuse; Gender-based violence; Couples; Abuse prevalence; Reporting behavior; Empowerment; Counseling; Oshimili South; Delta State; Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence is defined by the United Nations as any act of violence that results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, girls, men, and boys, as well as threats of such acts, coercion, or the arbitrary deprivation of liberty

(Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, 2019). Domestic Violence is violence or other abuse that occurs in a domestic setting such as in a marriage or cohabitation. It is often used as a synonym for Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), which is defined by World Health Organization (WHO) as any behaviour within an intimate relationship by an intimate partner that causes physical, psychological, or sexual

harm to those in the relationship (Benebo et al, 2018). It is one of the most common types of violence experienced by women. And a good number of men equally experience Domestic Violence. For both men and women, DV is characterized by acts of aggression done physically such as slapping, hitting, dragging of the hair, throwing objects at the person with express intent to cause harm or injure the person, punching, kicking and beating; psychological abuse such as calling the person hurtful names in public or private, intimidation, threatening the person's safety or that of their loved ones, isolating the person from family and friends, monitoring their movements, constant belittling and humiliation; sexual abuse such as forced intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion like forcing the person to watch pornography; and financial abuse such as refusing to provide for the family, withholding the person's financial assets and forcing the person to spend money or be in debt.

Globally, over a third (35%) of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by a non-partner at some point in their lives (Benebo, et al, 2018). In Nigeria, it is even more of a burden. Studies showed that over a third (35.3%) of women of reproductive age group in Nigeria experience Intimate Partner Violence. Even as reporting of DV is low among women, it is lower still among men. Men also experience domestic violence, however, they may not report it for fear of being seen as weak, or being controlled by their partners.

Globally, it has been calculated that male aggression is more likely to cause deformities or deaths in women between the ages of 15 and 44 than cancer, malaria, auto accidents, and other forms of conflict combined.

It is not any different for men who are being abused by their partners. Though the numbers of men being abused is significantly lower than the number of women being abused, these men still pass through a lot of emotional turmoil as a result of the abuse. They lose confidence in themselves. Because of the perceived dominance of men, they find it even more

difficult to share their experience with friends. Also because of the perceived male dominance in the society, the man feels like his friends will say the abuse should be the other way round, with him as the abuser. They would probably call him a woman and belittle him. To avoid this, he keeps the abuse to himself.

The most unsettling thing about Domestic Violence is that it causes so much damage, but is the least punished crime.

There are other elements that have been linked to domestic violence, including culture, religion, the structure of marriage, the legal system, and law enforcement. In some African societies, women were viewed as the husband's property. Both the legislation and accepted social norms reflected this. A husband cannot be prosecuted with marital rape once the marriage is in existence and the wife has reached puberty; sexual activity with her is never rape, according to Northern Nigeria's criminal code sections 357 and 282 of the penal code. Unfortunately, laws continue to reflect the long-standing notion of women as property.

The culture of silence is also a huge contributor. When people, both male and female, fail to cry out and let people know about the abuse, the correct statistics will not be gotten, and proper measures will not be taken to eradicate the problem. So young people getting married feel it is still okay to abuse their partners, since they have seen that nobody gets punished for abuse. Early and arranged marriages also contribute to domestic violence. In most of these types of marriages, there is no love or affection between the couples. These marriages are contracted sometimes for business or financial purposes. Girls and even children getting into marriages without knowledge or without any financial stability puts them at the mercy of the man they married. If he turns out to be a violent person, they have to bear because they have been "bought", and have no way to fend for themselves if they leave.

Sometimes, frustration and financial difficulty can lead to domestic violence. This can be on both the male and female sides. Women lash out at their

husbands out of frustration and unmet needs. They insult him and belittle him because of his inability to properly provide for the family.

Some Governmental bodies and Non Governmental Organizations have carried out some activities in intervene and bring relief to Domestic Violence Victims. Such interventions include i) Community mobilization, ii) economic empowerment, iii) empowerment, and iv) awareness programs. It is clear that while a range of gender-based violence programs are currently being implemented, evidence for the effectiveness of interventions for prevention remains limited, especially as most of them are to bring relief after DV has occurred. There are not many to prevent DV from occurring.

II. METHOD

Study Setting: Delta State is a state in Nigeria, and has Asaba as the capital city. Asaba is located in Oshimili south local government area, which is one of the major LGAs in Delta State. The population of Oshimili South is about 205,600. This is a projected population from The National Population Commission of Nigeria and National Bureau of Statistics (2022).

The study population is made up couples from age 15 to 64 years of age, living in a domestic setting in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State. The total number of people within this age was projected to be 93,292, both single people and those who have partners (National Population Commission of Nigeria (web), National Bureau of Statistics (web), 2022). A total number of 400 subjects were included in the study and given the data collection instruments.

Study Design and Sampling Techniques: A descriptive survey research was adopted in this study. The design was suitable because the aim of the study was to systematically collect and measure data from a subset of the population, which would help to understand the occurrence of the phenomenon under study. It was also deemed suitable because it does not allow the manipulation of variables and data.

The sample size for this study was 400, and was selected through the Multi stage Sampling Technique. In the first stage, the Systematic Sampling Technique was used to select (five) 5 wards from the (eleven) 11 wards. This was done by writing the names of the wards in alphabetical order, serially, while all the even numbers were picked to get (five) 5 wards. In the second stage, the Simple Random Sampling Technique was used to pick eight (8) streets each from the 5 wards to get a total of 40 streets. In the third stage, the same Simple Random Technique was used to pick ten respondents each from the 40 streets, to get a total of 400 respondents.

Data Analysis: Data gotten from this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages for the research questions raised.

Results

400 respondents were sampled, 304 women and 96 men. The prevalence of Domestic Abuse from this study is 79.20% among men, and 87.50% among women. 76 men and 266 women are passing through Domestic Violence. That is a total of 342 respondents suffering out of 400 respondents. Just 58 people out of the 400 respondents sampled are not passing through any form of violence. Psychological Abuse was experienced the most among the four forms of abuse. It had a prevalence rate of 81% among men and women. It shows that it is a very common form of abuse. The next highest form of abuse experienced is the Physical Abuse, followed by Financial Abuse, and then Sexual Abuse. It is worthy of note that there was no form of violence that had the 'no's' more than the 'yeses'. This shows that abuse is a very common problem in many homes.

'Other Misunderstanding', 'Drunkenness', and 'Refusal of Sex' seem to be the highest reasons for abuse.

The major reason why women get abused, according to 86 female respondents, is drunkenness of their spouses (32.6%). The major reason for abuse of men is other misunderstanding. 84 women said they get abused mostly for refusing their partners sex, and 68

women said it is because they raise their voices or talk back to their partners. 33.3% of men say they get abused for not providing for the home, and 25.6% for refusal of sex.

These constitute the major reasons for Domestic Abuse of men and women.

Reporting of Domestic Violence among men was 59%. 46 men out of all men who have suffered abuse reported to either family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, or religious leaders. 128 women (48.9%) reported to one or more of the named people. Couples counseling was attended more than Domestic Violence seminars, and was attended more by men. 56 (21.2%) women have attended couples counseling as opposed to 16 (6.1%) who have attended domestic violence seminars. 20 men (25.6%) men have attended couples counseling, and 4 (5.1%) have attended domestic violence seminars. None of the respondents received financial empowerment from NGOs. All the empowerment interventions received scores of less than 10%. Out of the 322 people who had one or more of the interventions, 42% said the Domestic Violence reduced, 50% said the violence did not reduce at all, and 8% said it reduced a little.

314 respondents believe that Domestic Violence can be reduced. 118 people believe more skill acquisition will help, 118 people believe more financial empowerment will help. The number goes up to 170 that believe that more awareness on Domestic Violence is important to reduce Domestic Violence. It goes even higher to 262. 262 respondents believe that education of younger ones will do the trick, 116 people agree with arrest and prosecution of offenders, and 68 people agree with culture adjustments as a way of reducing Domestic Violence.

Discussion

In this study, a total of 400 participants were sampled: 96 men and 304 women. The total prevalence of Domestic Violence for men from this study is 79.2%, and that of women is 87.5% (Table 1). Women are seen as the weaker of the two genders. The African and Nigerian societies do not help this at all as women are expected to be subservient and

more patient than the men. Women are seen as lower than men, and therefore, are at their mercy, especially when they are in a domestic relationship. This data involves all forms of violence. The men also experience Domestic Violence. The prevalence for men in this study is high because it involves Psychological abuse, which is the major form of violence/abuse experienced by men.

The proportion of women passing through Domestic Violence in this study is a bit lower than that of a study in Enugu by Chime et al (2018), where it was 89.9% for women. Prevalence is slightly higher among women. The two studies still depict an alarmingly high prevalence of Domestic Violence against women, especially in Nigeria where our culture and beliefs affect all our interactions whether in the home or workplace. A study by Kolbe & Buttner, (2020) showed prevalence rates of 3.4% to 20.3% for domestic physical violence against men, as against 79.2% discovered in this study. They made use of several studies that spanned a period of 1990-2019, and utilized 17 studies. They stated that only articles containing prevalence rates of medically relevant forms of domestic violence as reported by the injured parties or the perpetrators were considered eligible for inclusion (Kolbe & Buttner, 2020). This inclusion criteria and the years covered contributed to the low prevalence rate.

The forms of violence experienced include Physical, Psychological, Sexual, and Financial Violence/Abuse. 66.50% of all respondents have experienced Physical Abuse. The forms of Physical Abuse include kicking, slapping, shoving, punching, choking, and throwing objects at. Among these forms, slapping is the highest experienced (41%), and mostly by women (Appendix B). In this day and age, it is sad that when men are provoked they easily raise their hands and slap their partners. According to NCADV (2022), 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner. This includes a range of behaviors (e.g. slapping, shoving, and pushing). This is 33% for women and 25% for men. The difference between the study by NCADV and this one comes from the fact that a wider population was sampled in NCADV. Their data was derived from the entire United States population,

while this study sampled a smaller, close nit population.

An almost equal proportion of men and women pass through Psychological Abuse (81.6% for women, and 79.2% for men). That of women is slightly higher. This can be explained through the study by Uro-Chukwu & Anyanwu (2022). In their study, Psychological abuse had a prevalence of 100%, and they explained that it is easy to see and report physical violence especially when bodily wounds are seen, however, psychological ones would be ignored when they could have been the precursors or results of physical and sexual violence.

Psychological abuse is the most experienced form of violence from this study. It is evident from all the social demographic characteristics. Men experience it more than any other form of violence. This agrees with the study by Onwuegbuzie, 2015, that men and women experience and feel abuse differently. Men feel more abused when told hurtful words, like being called impotent or useless, and this is often the weapon of women when they are treated in ways that they do not like. Men react to psychological abuse by being physical. Men take pride in being respected and honoured, especially in this part of the world. That is part of the age-old conflict between men and women. A man feels belittled when a woman is made his boss, he feels emasculated when his female partner makes more money than him, etc. There is an innate need for men to be on top, to be ahead of the women in their lives financially, and otherwise. That is why when this power feels threatened, they react. This is threatened in the domestic setting mostly by psychological abuse by the woman, and by financial independence of the women in their lives.

Women, on the other hand, use Psychological Abuse as their weapons, especially when they feel mistreated by their male partners. They verbally abuse their partners, keep malice, and generally make the home uncomfortable for the men. Being told hurtful words topped the list of forms of Psychological Violence at 42% (Appendix B). Some men cited this as the reasons for their Physical Abuse to their female partners. Some women equally stated

that it is the Physical Abuse from the men that cause them to psychologically abuse them. 60.5% of women experience Sexual Abuse, and 72.4% of women experience Financial Abuse. Men are the bread winners, and the heads of the home. This does not necessarily mean the women are not working, but a high percentage of women have indicated that their male partners sometimes deny them finances as a way to control them. Some women stated that their partners even run up debt in their names. This is for some women who earn more than their spouses. Less men stated that they experience Financial Abuse, because in our society, the men provide for their partners, not the other way round. The forms of sexual abuse include forced sexual activity which means being coerced, tricked, threatened, pressured, or physically forced to perform the art of oral sex, penetrating the body (rape), or watching pornography. This had 21%. This was less than the data by CDC. About 41% of women and 26% of men experienced contact sexual violence (CDC, 2022). The other form of sexual abuse is being accused to having sex with others. This had 37.50%.

Among the causes of abuse, refusal of sex is the highest reason at 26% for the combination of both genders. 32.6% of women said the reason they were abused is because of drunkenness of their partners, 40% of men indicated that the reason for their abuse was some other misunderstanding.

This is consistent with the report by Kolbe & Buttner, 2020, that six reported that their partners had mental disorders, in equal proportions alcohol dependency, depression, and paranoid schizophrenia. Of these, two reported being alcohol dependent or having borderline personality disorder themselves. Participants named as triggers mainly accusations of unfaithfulness, financial worries, or the already mentioned underlying mental disorders.

Some interventions which have been implemented were looked at, and their effectiveness considered. 43.5% of respondents who responded positively to being abused said they talked to people about the abuse. There are not many studies that show data on the number of people who report DV, however, a study by Arisukwu, et al, 2021, showed that the

culture of silence is still very operational, especially in Nigeria. They explained that our culture subdues women, and makes them feel the need to protect their husbands, even though they abuse them. However, in this study, we have a relatively fair percentage of people who reported. The difference could be as a result of the fact that questionnaires were used, that assured their anonymity. The respondents had the opportunity to fully express themselves. Those who could not read, interview method was used, and the respondents expressed themselves, while local data collectors wrote their responses. The respondents felt comfortable talking to the data collectors, because natives of Oshimili South Local Government Area were used as data collectors.

The percentage of people who reported, while not being very high, is still higher than expected, based on other studies. This may also be a sign of the minds of people opening up to recent happenings in the society, especially after the awareness on Domestic Violence that followed the death of the popular Nigerian Musician, Osinachi.

Those who did not talk to anyone were asked their reason (Appendix B), and 16.5% said marital issues are private. This was the highest reason. It is sad that with all the awareness on DV, people still feel the need to keep DV issues private. The next highest reason was that they were embarrassed at 9.5%, and fear of divorce at 8.5%. Most of these were from women. It aligns with most studies on this issue. Women feel they have the sole responsibility of keeping their homes together. The society consider women the home keepers, and this puts unnecessary pressure on women to maintain a mirage of peace in their homes, while they die silently.

There are 5 people whom this study highlighted (Appendix B), asking the respondents which person they talked to. They include Family, Friends, Colleagues, Neighbour, and Religious Leaders. 27% talked to a family member, and a shocking 3% only talked to a Religious leader. 17.5% talked to their neighbour.

Another intervention is receiving empowerment from government or NGOs. 74% of respondents who pass through DV said they have not received any form of empowerment, either in monetary form, business start-up, or skill acquisition. 78% said they have equally not received any of these from NGOs. Only 19% of respondents who have been abused have ever attended couple's counseling, as opposed to 66.5% of people who have not attended.

Though reporting was done, 40.5% of those who reported or had any other intervention said there was no change in the violence situation. Reporting was done, people talked to their family members. Now the question is, what did the family members or member do about the complaint? Did they help the situation or just tell the woman or man who complained to bear it, with the common saying "He/she will change"? What about talking to their Religious Leaders? With the number of churches and religious leaders everywhere, it is sad that most people do not trust their Religious Leaders enough to confide in them. Also, if there was some empowerment, who was it targeted at if the people who it was meant for claim not to even know about it. Was money not released to empower people? How about the counseling and seminar? Why were they not effective? This may be as a result of the fact that many people do not even know where to go when they are abused.

78.5% of respondents believe that Domestic Violence can be reduced. This is a positive sign.

Some methods are suggested and respondents selected the methods they believe will help to reduce DV significantly. The suggestions include more skill acquisition, more financial empowerment, more awareness on DV, education of younger ones, arrest and prosecution of offenders, culture adjustments. 65.5% of respondents believe that educating the younger ones will help to significantly reduce domestic violence. 42.5% believe that more awareness on DV will help greatly to reduce DV. These are the major methods chosen. It is clear that people desire that DV be reduced. They need people to pioneer this change, as some people are too weak to take steps on their own. It is also clear that

awareness and education will help to break the culture of silence, change the mindsets of the younger ones, so that cultures surrounding the ideologies placed on the female gender will be reduced.

III. CONCLUSION

Domestic Violence still has a high prevalence. It is very clear that efforts need to be implemented urgently, as cases report to the hospitals daily, even as many more are still not discovered. This study was able to discover many cases because of the method of data collection used. Respondents felt free to air their views, without fear of being exposed. Efforts should be made by all parties to reduce Domestic Violence.

Recommendations

Strict measures should be implemented to considerably reduce Domestic Violence against women. The prevalence of DV against women is still very high.

Psychological Abuse had the highest prevalence. This calls for more relationship and marriage coaching. This applies to both genders, as Psychological abuse was almost equal for both. Religious leaders should take more time on pre-marital counseling, and parents need to focus on talking to their children who are ready for marriage. People need to develop more humane ways of communicating, instead of emotional and psychological manipulations.

There is a need for the government to amend some laws, such as the one that allows men to have sex with their wives, even if the wives do not want to. The South-Western lingo that refers to the husband as 'olowo ori mi', which means 'he owns me' needs to be discouraged and banned. This makes men feel they have full right over their female partners to do with them as he wishes. Sexual Violence needs to be properly defined so as to identify and punish offenders.

More interventional studies are required. Government should fund more studies that will

throw more light on the interventions that would work to reduce Domestic Violence considerably.

The workability of these studies should be tested, so that when they are implemented in the population, they will achieve their intended purposes.

Primordial prevention is also very vital. This is prevention before the act even occurs. This should start from younger ones. Domestic Violence education should be included in their school curriculum. They should be made to know that it is wrong. Young people should be made to look at the female gender differently, not as property, but as partners in every sense of the word. They should be made to understand that efforts to keep and build a home does not lie only on the woman, but on the couple. Young girls should also be taught to have a healthy self-image. This will help ensure that they do not accept any treatment from any man that is not suitable to them. Young boys should also know this, because men also experience DV.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study has helped throw light on the fact that DV is still a serious issue, and should be treated as such. The culture of silence is gradually reducing, but when people report, the right steps should be taken immediately so that they will not regret reporting.

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TABLES

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TABLE 1: Forms of Violence and Gender

Sex	Physical	Psychological	Sexual	Financial
Male	44(45.8%)	76(79.2%)	42(43.8%)	36(37.5%)
Female	222(73.0%)	248(81.6%)	184(60.5%)	220(72.4%)

TABLE 2: Forms of Physical Violence

Forms	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Kick	56	21.1	210	78.9
Shove	72	27.1	194	72.9
Slap	164	61.7	102	38.3
Choke	36	13.5	230	86.5
Punch	60	22.6	206	77.4
Throw Objects at	78	29.3	188	70.7

TABLE 3: Forms of Psychological Violence

Forms	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Hurtful Words	168	50.3	166	49.7
Negative Names	86	25.7	248	74.3
Threats	52	15.6	282	84.4
Cut off from family/friends	72	21.6	262	78.4
Movement	124	37.1	210	62.9

Restriction				
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TABLE 4: Forms of Sexual Violence

Forms	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Forced Sexual Activities	84	36.8	144	63.2
Accused of Having Sex with Others	150	65.8	78	34.2

TABLE 5: Forms of Financial Violence

Forms	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Refused to give you money	100	37.9	164	62.1
Refused to provide for the family	70	26.7	192	73.3
Taken your money or property	86	32.8	176	67.2
Ran up debt in your name	46	17.6%	216	82.4%
Refused you access to financial resources	54	20.6%	208	79.4%

TABLE 6: Who the Victims Talked to

Who They Talked To	Male	Female

	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Family	24	52.2%	84	64.6%
Friend	18	39.1%	52	40.0%
Colleague	8	17.4%	4	3.1%
Religious Leaders	2	4.3%	12	9.2%
Neighbour	0	0.0%	4	3.1%
Police	40	41.7%	108	35.5%

TABLE 7: Reasons for not talking

Reasons	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Family Disgrace	8	4.7	162	95.3
I was Embarrassed	38	22.4	132	77.6
My Partner Threatened me	10	5.9	160	94.1
Marital Issues Ought to be Private	66	38.8	104	61.2
My Partner Apologized. Promised to Change	32	18.8	138	81.2
Fear of Divorce	34	20.0	136	80.0
Process of Reporting and Getting Justice is Tedious	2	1.2	168	98.8

I reported before and nothing happened	4	2.4	166	97.6
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