

## Women and Urban Violence in Nigeria: A Study of Ibadan Metropolis

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**KEYWORDS** Violence. Urban Violence. Violence Against Women. Frustration. Community

**ABSTRACT** The focus of this study is on violence against women in Ibadan metropolis. The research made use of survey research design to locate the sample which consisted of 100 participants. 28 people out of the participants were males while 72 were females, the research sample also consisted of both Muslim and Christian individuals. Six (6) research questions were generated for the study. Questionnaire on violence against women (QVAW), a self-designed structured questionnaire divided into 6 sections served as the instrument used for data collection. The data generated was analysed using frequency count, simple percentages and inferential statistics using Chi-square. The study revealed that the attitude of women as regards their dressing and their dependability on men for living make men have the opportunity to humiliate them. Similarly, it was obvious from the findings of this research that violence against women have adverse effects on family, co-workers, and even causes depression to the individual in question. Based on this result, some recommendations were made.

### INTRODUCTION

Violence is becoming more rampant in our society nowadays, even within the so called better homes and communities and this is already a very serious problem (Aremu 2008). Violence is not a new phenomenon, every person at one time or the other has witnessed or has been involved in one form of violent act or the other. A wide range of violent acts exist, especially in war situations, torture in detention without trial, crimes of armed robbery, aggression in the home, repressive discipline in schools and in families with aversive experiences. Leo (1994) opines that violence is the unlawful use of force or threat on fellow human beings. It is any action, behaviour, or attitude against other people based on anger and frustration, which could lead to injury or harm. Fighting, beating other people by any means, rioting, destruction of lives and properties, and even wars are such actions that amount to violence in the society. It is now recognized that threatening other people, denial of human rights, harassment, intimidation or forcing people against their constitute violence. Yllo (1993) submits that those behaviours, actions and attitudes which put fears into the minds of women, and even put their lives in danger amount to violence against their rights.

Apart from its affinity with the notion of force, violence can also be conceptualised in terms of the verb 'to violate', meaning to infringe, or transgress, or to exceed some limit or norm. Stanko (2005) goes as far as to suggest

that the idea of violence is much more closely connected with the idea of violation than it is with the idea of force. Following Stanko, many contemporary theorist of violence, have converged on the idea of defining it in terms of violation, although there seems to be some disagreement about what exactly is being violated when an act of violence takes place.

Salami (1993) defines violence as any avoidable action that constitute a violation of a human right, in its widest meaning, or which prevents the fulfillment of a basic human need. He goes on to say that each time human beings starve or are undernourished because of social or political reasons, it is legitimate to consider these people as the victims of social violence.

The appeal of defining violence in terms of the violation of rights is evident, but once again, further analysis exposes at least two intrinsic problems with this line of reasoning. There are cases of violence occurring without rights being violated. This point has been made by Stewart and Strathern (2002) 'while there are also cases, like wrestling and boxing, in which even paradigmatic violence can occur without the violation of any moral'. Apart from the violation of basic rights, such as right to life, to personal security and to liberty, violence is understood to include also the violation of our socioeconomic rights. Yet the broader the definition of human rights, the more pervasive and escapable violence becomes. As Tilly (2003) points out 'if violence is violating a person or a person's rights, then every social wrong is a vio-

lence, every crime against another is a violent crime, every sin against one's neighbor is an act of violence'.

Miller (1971) says that violence refers to injury done to that which is entitled to respect, reverence or observance, profanation, infringement, force and outrageous assault. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines violence as an unlawful exercise of physical force. Olweus (1999) also defines violence to mean the use of physical force. He conceives of violence as an aggressive behaviour where the actor or perpetrator uses his or her own body as an object, to inflict injury or discomfort upon an individual. However, he reiterated further that, violence has been in a broader sense to include behaviour by people or against people liable to cause physical or psychological harm.

Violence within the context of the home includes emotional abuse in addition to physical abuse. Emotional abuses include threats, verbal attacks, taunting and shouting.

Aremu (2008) classifies violence into three broad types which include:

1. Structural violence
2. Direct violence
3. Domestic violence

**1. Structural Violence:** This type of violence is rooted in the dominant political, economic and social system and is expressed in the blockage of access to the means of survival for the poor majority or the under privileged in a market economy. Structural violence creates a society that socialises individuals to accept and to inflict suffering and sometimes religion is used by such societies, to keep the people docile and accept suffering as God's reward for sin. Thus, a structural state of violence creates, nurtures and perpetuates the second form of violence, that is, direct violence.

**2. Direct Violence:** This type of violence is perpetuated directly against an individual, groups or an institution. Frustration is one of the factors that can lead to direct violence. A good example in which frustration leads to aggression and or direct violence can be seen in the crises in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria where people are now taking laws in to their hands by vandalising oil pipelines, kidnapping oil workers for fat ransoms and generally creating problems for those they believe are responsible for their predicaments.

**3. Domestic Violence:** This is violence within the home. It is carried out mostly by the male

members of the family that is the husband and his relatives, against women and children. The term *domestic violence* is used to cover various situations which takes place in the home and which are characterised by their brutality. The expression is used in its strictest sense to mean incidents amounting to physical attacks which may take the form of physical or sexual violations such as pinching, kicking, punching, throwing boiling water or acid and so on. It is essentially the most common forms of urban violence.

The problem of women and urban violence in Nigeria is now attracting attention. It is not only the intensity or regularity at which these violent acts are committed that is so alarming but also the variety of crimes committed against women. Presently, various offences like sexual assault/harassment, forced prostitution, rape, trafficking, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, beating, and verbal abuse are among the crimes committed by men against women. The incidences of violence against women in urban areas have been observed as the product of multiple dynamic determinants. For instance, besides being a feature of developmental, sociological and psychological factors like frustration, non-satisfaction of mental health needs; economic factors like poverty and want of material needs as well as factors like heredity have all been associated with what initiate violence against women.

The United Nations (1999) opines that the set of women who are vulnerable to violence include:

- a. Women belonging to minority groups: for example those from very tiny or small tribes, communities, or cultures within a society
- b. Women migrant: that is those forced to leave their original homes or communities in order to try to make a living in other places. Such women usually either have to live on their own, or with their families as complete strangers in other families.
- c. Women in poverty: that is those whose means of livelihood or small earnings are not enough for them to adequately meet basic needs.
- d. Destitute women: this group of women can be found along towns and cities.
- e. Women in prisons, remand homes, rehabilitation centre, and detention camps or police custody.

- f. Women with disabilities
- g. Repatriated women.
- h. Free women who have no decent or good ways of livelihood and work.

However, this study will attempt to investigate into the causes and consequences of urban violence and its implication for women in Ibadan metropolis. The study will take into cognizance the view of both young and old. It is necessary to note that raising awareness of this subject is of great importance in terms of preventing urban violence against women and for developing role model behaviours for the young generations they will bring up in the future.

### **The Problem**

It is no longer an exaggeration that the rate of violence and crime against Nigerian women is on the increase as even the number of perpetrators of this violence act against women appears to be ever increasing on a daily basis. In almost every tribe, the status of women is very low and women are considered the property of men. Accordingly, a husband's right to discipline his wife is accepted. This tradition seems not to be effective in preventing domestic violence against women. Many times, women are maltreated and considered inferior at home, workplace, schools and so on thereby making them suffer from beating; sexual assault; sexual harassment; denial of time for relaxation; denial of right to accumulate wealth even when women actually do most of the work; emotional and psychological abuse to mention just a few. Physically, women emerge from these violent episodes every time with black eyes, bruises, rape and burns to internal injuries to the psyche may be just as disabling. Further, there is an inter-generational effect on children who have witnessed violence, as they are more likely to be abusive themselves as adults. Violence against women constitutes a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and impairs or nullifies their enjoyment of those rights and freedoms.

### **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The study comprises 28 men and 72 women, which totals 100 participants. The researcher randomly selected areas where women could easily be found, these areas include the school,

supermarkets, offices as well as their home. According to this research sampling technique, the number is quite the representative of the target population. It is therefore assumed that even with the limited sample, the result can still be obtained.

A multi-item questionnaire was prepared for the purposes of determining the extent of urban violence against women and its causes in Ibadan. And also, the questionnaire on Violence against Women was developed by the researcher to elicit information to assess the incidence of violence against women in Ibadan.

The survey form was composed of A-G sections. The section A contained demography-related questions. The section B contained research questions such as, why is the act of violence perpetrated against women. What are the effects that violence has against women in the urban areas? What are the coping strategies used by women who experience any form of violence? Why is it that man cannot control their violent actions or impulses against women? Does violence against women have effect on their children? What is the effect of religion towards violence against women?

The women included in the study were asked to evaluate these statements by choosing one of the following options. Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Undecided (3), Disagree (4), Strongly Disagree (5). The research data were collected using the questionnaire prepared by the researcher.

Section C contained items that measure impulse control of violence, items in Section D measured the coping strategies used by women against violence. Section E on its own dealt with some items that measure the effect of violence against women. Similarly, Section E also contained items that measure the effects of violence on children while items in Section G contained items that measure self-esteem and religious attitude towards violence respectively.

The research sought the consent of the respondents used for the study and explained to them the objective of the study and they were placed in an environment where all extraneous variables were minimised and even removed to avoid distraction. The questionnaires were distributed to these women with adequate assistance given to the respondent in respect to their immediate needs and also the researcher established rapport with them by assuring them of confidentiality.

Opportunities were given to them to ask for assistance in any of the item that was not clear to them. Moreover, there was no time limit to answering the questions which means that enough time was allotted to them to complete all items. Oral interview was conducted at the end of the test to validate the responses of some of them to the questionnaires. The data obtained from the questionnaire was analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, simple percentages and inferential statistics involving Chi- square.

### RESULTS

This section deals with the data analysis and presentation of results in tabular form. The results will be used to answer the research questions posed for the study. The demographic representation of the respondents is presented in the Table 1.

**Table 1: Gender distribution of respondents**

Gender	No. of sample	Percentage %
Male	28	28
Female	72	72
Total	100	100

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of the respondents. According to the Table, 28(28%) forms the total percentage of male respondent while 72(72%) account for the percentage of female respondent.

The family type distribution in Table 2 reveals that out of the 100 respondents 80% fall within the monogamy category while 20% of the remaining respondents are from a polygamous family.

**Table 2: Family type distribution of the respondents**

Family type	No. of sample	Percentage %
Monogamy	80	80
Polygamy	20	20
Total	100	100

It shows the distribution of the sample participants based on their religions. It shows that majority of the respondents used were Christians as 56 of them were Christians, 44 were Muslims while none of the respondent is from any other religion. These numbers constitute 56%, and 44% the entire sample respectively (Table 3).

**Table 3: Religious affiliation of respondents**

Religion	No. of sample	Percentage %
Christian	56	56
Muslim	44	44
Others	0	0
Total	100	100

**RQ 1: Why is the act of violence perpetrated against women?**

The result shows that there are three factors that make people to perpetrate acts of violence against women. The first reason is that most women do not dress well and 49 and 51 respondents respectively Strongly Agree and Agree on this reason. The second reason has to do with the proposition that most women depend on men for living as 37 and 63 respondents respectively Strongly Agree and Agree on this position. The third reason is that women must be submission and 1 respondent Strongly Agree to this point (Table 4).

**Table 4: Frequency showing the reasons why violence is perpetrated against women**

	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean response
Most women do not dress well.	49	51	-	-	-	2
Most women depend on men for living.	37	63	-	-	-	2
Women are regarded as inferior.	-	-	44	56	-	4
Women do not show a sense of responsibility.	-	-	40	59	1	4
Women must be submission	1	-	33	66	-	4

**RQ2: What are the effects that violence has against women in the Urban areas?**

The result shows the effects of violence on women in urban areas. The effects of violence against women in the urban areas are depression, loss of self-confidence and avoidance of family, friends, work and so on (Table 5).

**RQ3: What are the coping strategies used by women who experience any form of violence?**

The result showed that the only coping strategy being used by women who experience any form of violence against them is that women do keep silence when one is violent at them (Table 6).

**RQ 4: Why is it that man cannot control their violent actions or impulses against women?**

The result shows that the only reason why men cannot control their violent actions or im-

**Table 5: Frequency count showing the effects that violence has against women in the urban areas**

	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean response
Women are depressed when they experience violence.	43	57	-	-	-	2
Women lose their self-confidence.	43	56	1	-	-	2
Violence against women makes them avoid the family.	37	63	-	-	-	2
Exposes women to sexually transmitted diseases.	1	-	-	46	53	5
Affect their functioning ability at work, home.	1	-	-	21	78	5
Women are psychologically, emotionally and physically	1	-	-	60	39	4

**Table 6: Frequency count showing the coping strategies used by women who experience any form of violence against them.**

	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean response
Avoid talking to any man who is violent at them.	1	-	-	41	58	5
Cry when men shout at them.	1	-	-	38	61	5
Imbibe good cultural norms when they experience sexual.	1	-	-	38	61	5
Avoid make-ups when sexually harassed.	1	-	-	26	73	5
Keep silence when someone is violent at them.	41	58	-	1	-	2

pulses against women is that men want to be respected always (Table 7).

**RQ5: Does violence against women have effect on their children?**

The result shows the effect of violence on the children. Of the total respondents, 36 and 47 respectively Strongly Agree and Agree that violence makes children to be more antagonistic and rebellious and an insignificant number of respondents think otherwise. Furthermore, 38 and 40 respondents respectively Strongly Agree

**Table 7: Frequency count showing the reasons why men cannot control their violent actions against women**

	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean response
Culture favours men	1	-	-	41	58	5
Men want to be respected always	1	-	-	38	61	5
Men have too much ego	1	-	-	38	61	5
Men are always being frustrated	1	-	-	26	73	5
Women's physical structure is Irritable	41	58	-	1	-	2
Men act violent against women b/c they have power.	-	-	-	25	74	5

**Table 8: Frequency count showing whether violence against women has effect on their children**

	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean response
Violence makes children to be more antagonistic and rebellious	36	47	8	9	-	2
Violence makes children to withdrawal from friends and usual activities	38	40	11	11	-	2

and Agree that Violence makes children to withdrawal from friends and usual activities (Table 8).

**RQ6: What is the effect of religion towards violence against women?**

The result from Table 9 shows that Chi-square value is 1.274, degree of freedom (df) is 2 and P = 0.529. Since P = 0.529 > 0.0 It implies that religion has no effect on violence against women.

**DISCUSSION**

The table answers research question which has to do with why the act of violence perpetrated against women? The findings in Table 4 show that there are two major factors that make people to perpetrate act of violence against women. The reason which are most women do not dress well and that most women depend on men for living. The finding therefore supports

**Table 9: Chi-square showing the association between violence acts and religion believe**

	Low	Moderate	High	Df	$\chi^2$	P	Remark
Xtian	1	33	12	2	1.274	0.529	NS
Islam	-	39	16				

those of Dutton (2006) that violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal relations between men and women which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women's full advancement.

*Research Question 2:* "what are the effects that violence has on women in urban areas?" This question was answered in Table 5 which shows that the effect of violence on women in urban areas includes depression, loss of self-confidence and avoidance of family, friends, work etc. This finding therefore supports the findings of Schhechter (1982) that indicates that women who experience violence are battered and suffer from varieties of medical problems, from depression to chronic pain. Furthermore, the findings of this research support the submission of Gelles and Cornell (1972) who posit that women may be more or less vulnerable to particular kinds of abuses, which have significant consequences for their children, family, friends, co-workers and the community.

*Research Question 3:* "what are the coping strategies used by women who experience any form of violence? This was answered in Table 6 and the result shows that the only coping strategy women who experience violence employ is silence. This claim corroborates with the submission of Gelles (1972), Dobash (1979) that a continuum of verbal provocation attract silence from majority of women in Africa.

Table 7 answers research question 4: "why it is that man cannot control their violent actions or impulses against women?" The finding shows that the only reason men are violent against women is because they always want to be respected. This position is consistent with the submission of Dixon (1993) that women must obey their husbands who are the head of the family and by virtue of their position exercise unquestionable authority within the family. Research question 5: "does violence against women have effects on their children?" The result in Table 8 reveals that violence against women significantly has effect on their children's behavioural dispositions. The finding supports the report of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) that battering of women imposes significant cost on the community, children and so on. The answer to research question 6: What is the effect of religion towards violence against women? is presented in Table 9. The data col-

lected on this was analyzed using chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. The finding however showed that religion has no effect on violence against women. This may be as a result of the fact that most people believe that cultural norms supersede religious interference. The findings support the submission of Boswell (2005) that religion also devalue womanhood and relegate them. Boswell citing Quran 4:34 said that husbands are given the authority to physically beat their disobedient wives. Similarly, the finding has relationship with the submission of Matthew (2005) who said that the Old Testament recognize women only to the extent that they play a significant role in their society.

## CONCLUSION

The impact of women's mistreatment affects us all, as well as the entire community. Most times when the women being violated cannot bear it they file for divorce and either remarry or stay as single parents. The effects of violence at time may involve the victim's inability to function in daily life. Victims of violence often take more absences from work to visit the doctor. Battering may lead to feelings of shame, embarrassment and humiliation, particularly when beating leaves marks, which in turn may lead to further isolation from friends and family and to absence from work.

That is the reason why we should note that violence weakens both the women as individuals and their families and consequently the society. The cost of violence against women does not only consist of the services provided to the victims of violence or the procedures conducted against the perpetrators. Besides those direct costs, there is also an indirect cost which causes production and employment to fall. The results of previous analyses demonstrate that the cost of preventing urban violence against women is much lower than the total cost of violence victims' treatment and protection costs and the cost of legal proceedings conducted against the perpetrators. Therefore, any initiatives made in order to prevent violence are even more significant for both women and society

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is very obvious that violent attitude is dangerous to health and the individual and collec-

tive growth and development. A tense society, family or workplace will suffer set back and the morale of individuals involved is at stake. To achieve anything, there is need for love and care for the other person because women themselves are stakeholders as agents of social change; therefore, adequate respect should be given to their personality by all and sundry. They should be involved in decision making and opportunities to be in position of authority should be given to them.

Counselling psychologists should develop modalities which will sensitize the general public about the importance of women's participation in growth and development of the Nigerian economy even when the home as an entity is found peaceful. Moreover, counselling psychologists should encourage women not to look at themselves as inferior to men. Similarly, the security agents should be at alert to bring to book any individuals who by any means abuse women either sexually, physically or psychologically.

The government should try as much as possible to comply with the recommendation of the World Health Organisation for prevention of domestic violence, which include compliance with legal agreements and the development of laws and other mechanisms aimed at protecting human rights.

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