

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

PROF. IYABO OLOJEDE

Department of Public Administration,
Faculty of Management Sciences, Lagos State University, Ojo.
Contact: +2348030734977
Email Address: iyaboolojede1@gmail.com;

&

OLOJEDE, IBUKUNOLUWA BOSE (PhD)

Department of Political Science,
Faculty of Social Sciences, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo,
Oyo State
Contacts: +2347061673479 +23492217862
Corresponding email: proudlybosede@yahoo.com

&

BUSAYO QAZEEM, IBIKUNLE

Department of Public Administration,
Faculty of Management Sciences, Lagos State University, Ojo.
ibikunlebusayo@gmail.com

Abstract

Gender based violence in Nigeria has been a pervasive quagmire which has attracted both government and non-governmental organizations. This menace apparently is not limited to women as they affect both genders. Nonetheless, women more often than not are usually at the receiving end of violence which consequently reinforces existing gender inequalities that have unfortunately affected the nation's socio-economic apparatus. Pathetically, this vice remains a challenge that significantly limits women's autonomy, opportunities and predisposes them to poverty. Sexual and physical violence as well as early child marriage are challenges that have not been effectively addressed by governmental agencies hence the reason for this research study. Primary and secondary data were adopted and the findings from this paper revealed that domestic violence has affected the career advancement of women. More worrisome is the fact that government agencies have not been able to find a sustainable solution to the menace. The study therefore concludes and recommends that the destructive culture of child marriage must be eradicated if women are to advance in their careers and maximally contribute to the development of the society and this can be achieved through public enlightenment at the grassroots' level on the implication of child marriage.

Keywords: Career Advancement, Child Marriage, Domestic Violence, Poverty Alleviation, Socio-economic Development.

Introduction

Globally, gender inequality has been a challenge to the equal participation of women and men in social, economic, and political apparatuses (World Bank Group, 2019). According to the World Bank's Inter Agency Standing Committee, Gender Based Violence (GBV) is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females (Klugman, Hanmer, Twigg, Hasan, McCleary-Sills & Santa, 2014). GBV affects both men and women, but women are much more vulnerable because violence reflects and reinforces existing gender inequalities (World Bank Group, 2018).

Due to the high prevalence of female survivors, some organizations, such as UN Women and the United Kingdom and Department for International Development, use the terms "violence against women and violence against women and girls" to describe the focus of their GBV-related work. The United Nations (2018) defines these terms as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life." The two terms can therefore be used interchangeably (Arango, Morton, Gennari, Kiplesund, & Ellsberg, 2014).

The movements to curb gender violence and inequality participation have reduced gender violence in many developed nations such as UK, USA, Canada, France, Germany, etc. while the discrimination of women and girls are still more prevalent in African countries. Africa has not got it right in the fight against gender violence and gender inequality due to nature and culture in the countries of Africa (Olayode, 2016). In Nigeria, over the past decades, there had been challenges in the tackle against the gender violence and female participation in administration this has continued developing debates that should women participated in government?

One of the points raised is that if women participated in administration, the issue of gender inequalities would be rapidly attended to since women are involved in power (Olayode, 2016). The deprivation of women resulting from violence should be of central concern to government and to societies at large as an intrinsic human rights issue and because of the epidemic's negative impact on socio-economic growth and poverty reduction. Exposure to intimate partner violence is linked with a multitude of adverse physical health outcomes, including acute injuries, chronic pain, gastrointestinal illness, gynaecological problems, depression, and substance abuse (Taft & Watson, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Societies that discriminate by gender tend to experience less rapid socio-economic growth and poverty reduction than societies that treat males and females more equally. Similarly, social gender disparities produce economically inefficient outcomes (World Bank 2001). Sadly, the economic costs of GBV include expenditures on service provision, foregone income for women and their families, decreased productivity, and negative impacts on human capital formation, which are burdensome to developing economies. According to a recent World Bank report, the estimated costs of intimate partner violence across five countries is 1.2–3.7 percent of GDP, the same as what most governments spend on primary education (Klugman,

Hanmer, Twigg, Hasan, McCleary-Sills & Santa, 2014). It is against this background that this study attempts to evaluate the difficulties encountered by women in escaping the poverty trap and advancing their careers.

Gender discriminations in accessing equal opportunities and programmes remain challenges in Nigeria, the poverty alleviation and women empowerment policies which served as tools of fighting poverty level has posed violence of gender. In the existing contextual issue, scholars in the related field have brought forward some issues in gender violence and suggested some recommendations in which gender based violence could be defeated in Nigeria. These rising issues such as gender inequalities, discriminations, sexual harassment, domestic violence, etc, have variously been looked into. However, in Lagos, those features still evident which make this study to examine the programmes put in place by government, NGOs, Human rights and international organization on gender based violence in Nigeria if these programmes have filled the gap in gender equality and help in involving women in participation so as to enhance a socio-economic development in Nigeria.

The previous works by Arango, Morton, Gennari, and Ellsberg (2014) titled “Interventions to prevent or reduce violence against women and girls”; the work of Olayode (2016) also wrote Women’s participation and gender issues in local governance in Nigeria. Many of these previous works have pointed and ascertained that gender violence has affected the nation’s development and has also denied the women from participating in the community development in Nigeria. This works are plausible in their perspectives but failed to link the implication of gender based violence on social economic development of the nation.

However, haven red through previous literatures in the related study, the researcher discovered that little or no author have address the following questions which serve as the gap for this study, the questions, at the end of the study will be variously provided answers to: how has domestic violence affected career advancement of women in Lagos? Despite the poverty alleviation programmes as an alternative antidote for child and early marriage, why is the issue of child forceful marriage prevails in Nigeria? The issue of rape is a challenge for self reliance of women in Lagos, how has it affected economic stability in Lagos? The aim of this study is to provide answers to these questions raised in this study.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of Gender-Based Violence on Socio-Economic Development in Lagos State. Other specific objectives are to:

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of Gender-Based Violence on Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria. Other specific objectives are to:

1. Evaluate the significant relationship between domestic violence and career advancement for women in Lagos;
2. Examine the influence of child/early marriage on poverty reduction in Lagos;
3. Evaluate the relationship between Rape, Self-reliance and economic stability in Lagos state.

Research Questions

1. Is there any significant relationship between domestic violence and career advancement for women in Lagos?
2. Does early-child marriage influence poverty reduction programmes in Lagos?
3. Is there any significant relationship between rape, self-reliance and economic stability in Lagos?

Research Hypotheses

1. H₀: there is no significant relationship between domestic violence and career advancement for women in Lagos
2. H₀: early child marriage does not influence poverty reduction programmes in Lagos
3. H₀: there is no significant relationship between rape, self-reliance and economic stability in Lagos

Concept of Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality, and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies. Gender-based violence is violence directed against a person because of their gender. Both women and men experience gender-based violence but the majority of victims are women and girls (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). Gender-based violence and violence against women are terms that are often used interchangeably as it has been widely acknowledged that most gender-based violence is inflicted on women and girls, by men. However, using the 'gender-based' aspect is important as it highlights the fact that many forms of violence against women are rooted in power inequalities between women and men.

The terms are used interchangeably throughout EIGE's work, reflecting the disproportionate number of these particular crimes against women (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). The Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence), as the benchmark for international legislation on tackling gender-based violence, frames gender-based violence and violence against women as a gendered act which is 'a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women'. Under the Istanbul Convention acts of gender-based violence are emphasized as resulting in 'physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life' (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019).

GBV is one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world, undermining the health, dignity and autonomy of its victims (United Nations Population Fund, 2016). From the various views of scholars, it is pertinent to point that all deferent definitions arrived at the same meaning and can also be view as the disagreement that exists between the men and their women counterpart. This agreement could be in the area of discrimination of economic and development participation.

Concept of Socio-Economic Development

According to Fritz (2004), Socio-economic development is a planned and comprehensive advancement in the economic, social, cultural and political processes. It is essentially the

continual improvement in the well-being of the entire population. This reveals that socio-economic development involves progress in terms of economic and social factors within a geographic unit. Therefore, Social development refers to the complexity of social dynamics (the interplay of social structures, processes and relationships) and focuses on (1) the social concerns of the people as objectives of development and (2) people-centered, participatory approaches to development. Social development is about inclusiveness, social justice and the common good. Indicators of social development provide comparative information about areas such as income, poverty, employment, employment security, education, health, crime and civic participation. Sometimes social development indicator lists also have included information about the environment.

Economic development on the other hand is the process of raising the level of prosperity through increased production, distribution and consumption of goods and services (Kriti & Tisdell, 2003). Richard Estes, a co-developer of Hong Kong's social report in 2000, noted that the report included a sub-index on environmental quality with ratings of solid waste recycling, beaches, public open space and fresh water consumption (Kriti & Tisdell, 2003). Hence, the purpose of socio-economic development is to improve the social and material well-being of all individuals and social institutions with the goal of achieving the highest possible level of human development. Socioeconomic development, therefore, requires the integration of economic and social development. Progress in the quality of social and economic life should only be seen as progress if it is rights based and minimally affects, conserves or improves the natural environment (Kriti & Tisdell, 2003).

Gender-Based Violence and Socio-Economic Development

The causes of violence against women and girls are multidimensional, some of which reveal itself at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels. The societal-level factor of unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women, gender-based discrimination and inequality are apparent in the Nigerian society including discriminatory laws, unequal access to political and economic power, socially constructed norms of masculinity and femininity, and gender roles and stereotypes (UN Women 2015). In addition, other factors operating at the individual and relationship levels can affect the probability that a woman or girl will experience violence. These factors include age, education level, alcohol or drug use, poverty, cultural acceptance of violence, unemployment, and depression.

Domestic Violence and Career Advancement among Women

Domestic violence against women has a lot of devastating effects, which also affect women's career development in several ways. Human needs as postulated by Maslow (1954) are arranged in order of hierarchy of potency. The lower basic needs are potent and dominant in demand for satisfaction and survival of the individual. When human safety needs (security, stability, freedom from fear, threat, avoidance of pain, and protection from danger) are addressed with appropriate life intervention there will be upward progression in career development of working women. However, when these needs are threatened by domestic violence, a gap is created and normal behavior and actual functioning of the individual performance achievement is affected (Nwachuku, 2004). At this point, behavior maladjustment problems occurs affecting performance and career development of the women.

Tolman and Rosed (2007) reported that domestic violence often sabotages women's effort to gain employment, acquire job skills and education thus hindering their opportunities to become self-reliant. It may influence economic stability and sustainability. Furthermore, domestic violence is considered an indirect barrier to women's ability for job search and maintaining employment due to increased risk of health limitations or health problem of someone in their care usually a child.

Emotionally some women suffer major physical injuries, scratches, bruises, broken bones, internal bleeding, and head trauma to mention a few. In most cases, they are forced to miss work to go and see a doctor or stay at home because to health condition. Most of the disabilities include major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), some kind of natural health problem often to the level of affecting employment (Tolman & Rapheal, 2007). Economic empowerment requires financial contemporary and astuteness, financial security and confidence. Kim and Gray (2008) opined that job security and potential, are all jeopardized by an abuser coercive strategies of maintaining power and control over the victim. Coercive controlling behavior of abuser can cripple victim's chances of ensuring a secure future, faced with financial and professional barriers. Victims of domestic violence are likely to be employed and less likely to receive cash assistance, some become dependent financially, emotionally physical are otherwise. Women work productivity become impaired, some frequently come late to work or absent from work as a result of abuse (Baum, Gatalano & Rand, 2004).

2.3.5. Early-Child Marriage and Poverty Alleviation

Child marriage is a violation of child rights, and has a negative impact on physical growth, health, mental and emotional development, and education opportunities. While regional disparities exist, child marriage has significantly decreased from 47 per cent (2006) to 27 per cent (2016). It also affects society as a whole since child marriage reinforces a cycle of poverty and perpetuates gender discrimination, illiteracy and malnutrition as well as high infant and maternal mortality rates (Nkwain, 2018).

Poverty is one of the greatest diseases that has plagued Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. It is a state of always being in want whereby thousands of people go for days without food or are not sure of getting a square meal per day. Rural communities are most affected by poverty in Nigeria. These areas are characterized by high mortality rates, high rates of illiteracy, high levels of underemployment and dependency rates. Not everyone in these communities is poor but the weaker members are vulnerable in as they are exploited by those who are financially stable in many ways. Some of the consequences of poverty are hunger, little access to health facilities, no access to education and early marriages.

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman. It is a mutual agreement whereby, a mature man and woman accept to live together as one for life. As a result of poverty, young and underage girls in most rural communities in Nigeria are forced to marry men old enough to be their fathers. Therefore, early marriages are forced unions between underage children or between an underage child and an adult.

Poverty is the main reason behind early marriages in rural areas as most families have large family sizes. With such families, most parents are unable or unwilling to take care of their

children. Early marriages are therefore seen as opportunities to reduce this burden. Others, who cannot feed or send their children to school, give young girls off marriage to older men. Some parents arrange marriages between their children and their creditors as a way of settling debts. The main argument here is, if early marriage will end poverty in these families.

2.3.6. Rape, Self-Reliance and Economic Stability

In some parts of the world women's self-reliance courses, usually organized by institutional Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) programme do in fact exist. This is a rather bold attempt to correct the traditional role ideology especially in the more prevalent sexual assault against women, where a societal expectation about sexual assault exists that men will be aggressive and women will be passive.

However it is equally important to avoid any negative effects of self blame in the unfortunate event of a sexual assault despite possessing self defense skills. To this end therefore such defense courses should also emphasize that responsibility for assault always lies with the offenders and that women or victims are not responsible for Annals of Ibadan Postgraduate Medicine. Defending them from an attack historically, women have been judged to have been raped or assaulted only if they mounted a "forceful resistance", the assumption being that if a woman did not resist with all her strength that the sex must have been consensual.

Notwithstanding all the potential pitfalls of this approach to sexual assault prevention, the positive angle may be that such programmes encourage women to feel more physically powerful and able to disarm rapists. This approach however reflects the early stage of awareness about sexual abuse and is primarily a strategy to encourage women's safety in public not in private where most sexual violence occurs usually perpetrated by someone known to the victim. As already highlighted, it is a confrontational approach with inherent merits and demerits.

Sexual assault is preventable but it requires more than just a causal effort because of the complexity of its nature as alluded to in the foregoing discussion. It is important the developed societies maintain alertness and consolidate on preventive measures in place whilst the developing world could learn from the successes and failures of preventive measures that have been implemented in certain places. A global collaboration is a critical requirement so as to create a hostile environment for sexual assault perpetrators in all climes. To this end, a purpose driven framework developed in Australia is worth considering in confronting the challenges of sexual assault prevention³⁷. This framework is amenable to modification in order to fit into peculiar social, cultural, and religious contexts that exist in different places.

Legal and Institutional Frameworks by government in curbing Gender Based Violence in Nigeria

Policy and Legislative Frameworks: The Nigerian legal system is plural: there is statutory and Sharia law in the northern zones coexisting with customary law in rural areas. The simultaneous application of this three-tier system creates varied degrees of protection for the rights of women and children. The country has an active federalist political system; and both the federal and state governments have the prerogative to pass laws affecting women and children. A state must pass (domesticate) a law for it to be legally binding in that state.

Unfortunately, many of the policies particularly in the Northern part of Nigeria are not women friendly policies or policies that help in the advancement of women socio-politically and economically.

Nonetheless, the federal government of Nigeria has ratified multiple international laws and conventions to address the discrimination and marginalization of women and girls, including GBV (al-Kyari, 2018). Examples include: (1) the Childs Rights Act of 2003, which provides for detailed protection of a girl child until age 18, seeks to end forced labor and child marriages, and is aimed at ensuring health services for pregnant women; (2) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified in June 1985; (3) the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), ratified December 16, 2004; and (4) the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act, which was finally passed in 2015, more than 10 years after it was first presented to the national assembly.

Table 1: Agreements on GBV and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Adopted at the Federal Level in Nigeria

Title	Year adopted	Description	Status
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	1979	• Adopted in 1979, but the general recommendation 19 on violence against women was not adopted by the CEDAW committee until 1992. It recognizes GBV as a form of discrimination and recommends that states take measures to prevent and respond to violence against women. • Article 6 calls for states to "suppress all forms of trafficking and exploitation of prostitution of women."	Although the federal government ratified this in 1985, the Nigerian constitution requires domestication through adoption by the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly.
African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	1981	• Calls for the elimination of discrimination against women and the protection of the rights of women and children. • Prohibits all forms of exploitation, particularly slavery.	Ratified in 1983.
Convention on the Rights of the Child	1989	• Defines a child as a person under the age of 18. • Commits state parties to protecting children from all forms of mental and physical violence, as well as sexual exploitation, child marriage, abuse, harmful traditional practices, and prostitution.	Ratified in 1991
African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	1990	• Defines a child as a person under the age of 18. • Commits states to protecting children from physical and sexual abuse.	Ratified in 2000

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	1998	• Recognizes a spectrum of GBV as war crimes and crimes against humanity, including rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, and forced sterilization.	Ratified in 2001.
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime	2000	• Calls on states to criminalize and take steps to prevent trafficking. • Commits states to providing physical, psychosocial, and social support to trafficking victims.	Ratified in 2001.
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)	2003	• Calls on states to protect rights of women and girls, such as property rights, rights to a consensual marriage, protection against child marriage, widows' rights, inheritance rights, and protection against all forms of violence.	Ratified in 2004.

Source:World Bank 2018; World Bank Group, 2019.

However, these agreements have limited application to the states. Two key laws address GBV: the Child Rights Act and the Violence against Persons Prohibition Act of 2015, both passed by the federal government but not by many of the 36 states, making them inapplicable in those areas. Twenty-four states have ratified the Child Rights Act; 12 northern states have yet to do so. The main barriers to the domestication of these laws are resistance based on entrenched norms of gender inequity and opposition to concepts around equality and rights that are perceived as foreign. In other respects, the law is significantly less controversial than the Violence against Persons Prohibition Act, except for provisions that set a legal age for marriage and criminalize sexual interactions with minors (World Bank Group, 2019). The Nigerian government also approved a federal executive memorandum directing all government ministries, departments, and agencies to appoint gender focal persons within their directorate cadres to mainstream gender equality in various sectoral policies and programming. In 1995, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD) were created to provide an institutional home to address women's issues. The 1999 Nigerian constitution, chapter IV, section 42 (I), (a) and (b); (2); and (3) prohibits discrimination based on gender, religion, ethnicity, age, or circumstances of birth (Olayode, 2016; World Bank Group, 2019).

The first National Women Policy was drafted in 2000, followed by the National Gender Policy of 2006. Both aimed to make gender equality a driver of growth; promote health, survival, and freedom from violence; and create an inclusive society devoid of gender discrimination. The National Plan of Action, which has a five-year target period (2014–19), includes a comprehensive strategy for delivering the national gender policy (FMWASD 2008). The plan prioritizes violence against women and children as a key issue and identifies specific actions

to prevent and respond to this violence. The FMWASD also developed a national referral pathway that identifies stakeholders in each state for the referral of GBV cases (Olayode, 2016).

Marxist Feminist Theory

This paper adopted the Marxist feminist theory as its theoretical construct. The proponent of the theory is Karl Marx (1859) (Ritzer, 1996). The theory maintained that gender inequality is a product of differential access to means of production in the society made possible by the dominant family system in the society. The social arrangement by man to create the family is the source of unequal relationship between men and women in the society because they were born free and equal. The family creates a rational basis for women's subordination and therefore the entrenchment of an overwhelming system of dominant and subordinates roles (Ritzer, 1996). The structural arrangement of the family in Nigeria enables the men to be released to work and even to migrate to new locations in search of work in order to maintain the family. The man is seen as playing instrumental role as the breadwinner role. It centers on resources attainment, and interaction within the occupational system. The woman is relegated to performing the function that has to do with nurture, emotional satisfaction, and integration of the family. The issue of discrimination against women at any level is not just a Nigerian phenomenon but a global one, except that the developed countries are fast moving towards gender equality and equity (Agbalajobi, 2009), with the view of maintaining gender balance in every endeavor. There are quite a number of views that describe women in the contemporary period. Fundamentally the bulk of support and clamoring for women emancipation, liberalization, and even empowerment have emanated mostly from the feminists. According to Marxist-feminists, while exposing the ills that capitalism has brought upon women, they opined that there is high level of oppression on women, particularly in the sexual division of labour (Costa & James, 1981; Eisenstein, 1984; in Olojede 2008: 2005a).

The liberalization of women will only be possible when the liberal state is overthrown and its capitalists and patriarchal structure is dismantled (Olojede, 2008). What this suggests is that there would be a time whereby sexual reordering in terms of division of labour, specialization, politicization and even reproductive activities will witness a transformation. However, it must come with some form of reorientation and change of values for us to have an ideal space for women in governance (Robson, 1993).

Methodology

This research study adopted a survey research design with the aid of a structured questionnaire administered to some selected residents in Lagos state. The researchers used both purposive and accidental sampling techniques to select participants for the study. A sample of 500 respondents was selected for the study on the basis of 100 respondents from each of the five divisions in Lagos. The questionnaire was designed in five points Likert scale. The questionnaire was administered in two formats that addressed questions related to Gender-Based Violence and Socio-economic Development in the Lagos state.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis one:

1. H_0 : there is no significant relationship between domestic violence and career advancement for women

Using product moment correlation coefficient (Pearson)

Correlations

	One of the factors that impede the career advancement of women is Domestic violence.	Education is one of the tools to end physical violence between men and women.
One of the factors that impede the career advancement of women is Domestic violence.	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 .612** .000 300 300
Education is one of the tools to end physical violence between men and women	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.612** .000 1 300 300

Source: Field Research Survey, 2020

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result above with the use of Pearson Coefficient Correlation can be stated as follows:

$R = .612$

P value = .000 which is less than 0.01 level of significance. Thus shows that *“there is a significant relationship between domestic violence and career advancement of women.”*

The calculated P value is = 0.000 < 0.01 so, we accept H_1 and reject H_0

Hypothesis two:

2. H_0 : early child marriage does not influence poverty reduction programmes

Correlations

	Early marriage has contributed to poverty level.	Poverty alleviation were created to reduce early forceful marriage caused by poverty
Early marriage has contributed to poverty level.	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 .327** .001 300 300
Poverty alleviation were created to reduce early forceful marriage caused by poverty	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.327** .001 1 300 300

Source: Field Research Survey, 2020

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The calculated P value is = 0.000 < 0.01 so, we accept H_1 and reject H_0

Source: Field Research Survey, 2020

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion of Findings

The hypotheses have been variously tested on Gender-Based Violence and Socioeconomic Development in Lagos. However, what brings out the peculiarity of this study is the gap this research study has filled. From the first hypothesis, which tested the relationship between domestic violence and career advancement of women, the analysis accepted the alternative hypothesis and concluded that domestic assaults have denied many women to advance in their career. This result is in concomitant with the works of authors the following authors: Adeleke (2014); Mofoluwawo (2014) and Olayode (2016). According to Mofoluwawo (2014), her findings revealed that there was massive displacement of the female in educational development. This singular act frustrated women to participate in politics. It should be stressed that not much was done to improve the lot of the few women in the top positions by their female counterparts. The reason may be because they have been influenced by the men who appointed them.

Adeleke (2014) in her findings argued that every person shall be entitled to assemble and associate freely with other persons, and in particular, may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of interest. The study conducted by Olayode (2016), identified some factors contributed to valueless of women in the society, many women have been humiliated during domestic violence. These are: patriarchy, religious and traditional belief of the position of women in the society, poverty and illiteracy, political violence, money politics, god-fatherism, lack of confidence in the women folk, absence of coordinated media support for women, ineffective and uncoordinated formal training for women aspirants into political offices.

From the second hypothesis, the analysis showed that the alternative hypothesis was true in its hypothetical statement about “child marriage and poverty alleviation” it was revealed that the issue of child marriage which involve sexual violence have contributed to poverty. Although, this study ascertained that government and NGOs have designed poverty alleviation programmes as alternatives for child marriage and as an antidote to poverty level. It is believed that major factor that has contributed to child marriage is incapability of parents to send their children to school, and then see marriage as an easy means of reducing poverty. This finding is in support of the World and Organizations (2019), they argued that lack of knowledge and capacity have contributed to sexual violence that eventually leads to forceful marriage, that if women are well build in capacity, it will reduced poverty level in Nigeria. Okoroafor, Umoh and Oljemma, (2014) argue further that early child marriage is illegal. If the harassment is not sexual in any way, it may or may not be leading illegally child forceful marriage, but it is not described or dealt with as sexual harassment.

Conclusion

Several factors have precipitated the rise in gender based violence some of which include lack of value for the human life, the desensitization of the grievousness of gender based violence, ignorance, illiteracy, anti-humane cultural values, lack of adequate commitment by law enforcement agents in curbing the growing trend of gender based violence. Thus, Nigeria has over the years experienced an unpleasant trend of gender based violence which has unfortunately become a national threat not just to women but the society at large. In the light of this, a global collaboration is a critical requirement in creating a safe, healthy and conducive

environment for all genders. To this end, twisted traditional practices or beliefs that encourage gender based violence need to be overhauled by creating a purpose driven framework.

Recommendations

1. Policy frameworks established must effectively criminalize gender based violence and child marriage. This implies that those found guilty of must be prosecuted immediately to serve as a deterrent for others involved in the same heinous crime. This will rid the society of criminal and unwanted elements;
2. A social and mass media platform has become a powerful tool in this generation that exposes injustice and concealed crimes. Hence, social media must be used in monitoring and following up in the arrest and exposure of perpetrators of gender based violence and pedophiles so that corrupt law enforcement agents will not be able to pervert justice by releasing deviants and criminals whilst sweeping the incidence under the carpet;
3. Cultural or traditional practices that encourage the debasement and assault of human beings by virtue of their gender or the sale of children under the pretext of cultural practices must be totally abolished. This will encourage a peaceful society where the sustainable development goals can be achievable;
4. The issue of state policing has become inevitable owing to the peculiarities, complexities and diversities of crime in Nigeria. Therefore, state policing should be established in different states so as to focus on the tracking, monitoring, arrest and prosecution of gender based violators and pedophilia enablers.

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