

## **Violence Against Women in Nigeria: Examining the Effects in Bayelsa State, Nigeria**

**Fiemotongha Christopher and Lovegod S. Ogbotubo**

Issac Jasper Bor College of Education Sagbama, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Email: [christofiems@gmail.com](mailto:christofiems@gmail.com)

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/gjahss.2013/vol13n38493>

Published March 25, 2025

---

**Citation:** Christopher F. and Ogbotubo L.S. (2025) Violence Against Women in Nigeria: Examining the Effects in Bayelsa State, Nigeria, *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol.13, No.3, pp. 84-93

---

**Abstract:** *The effects of gender-based violence is not restricted to Bayelsa state alone, but has become an encompassing problem in Nigeria, eluding both national and international attention. This study “Violence against Women in Nigeria: Examining the effects in Bayelsa state” examines the prevailing effects of gender-based violence and the remoteness of rural communities in the state. Gender based violence has continued to be a menace in the state, though the government have put in place several measures to address this menace, the people believe government has the capacity to eradicate it, but has done enough. Some of the effects of violence against women includes; sexual and reproductive damage to women, psychological trauma on the victims, impedes socio-economic development of society etc. it is observed that government has not done enough to address the problem of gender-based violence. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods in the collection of data, the social learning theory is applied as the theoretical framework for the study. Government should as a responsibility persistently sensitize the people on the evil of violence against women, especially rural people.*

**Keywords:** Bayelsa state, violence, gender-based violence, women

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Gender based violence in Bayelsa state has continued to pose a problem not only to the rural communities but also to the government as well. Though national and international legislations, have been made to curb violence against women and the girl child, and some of these laws have been domesticated, the problem of gender-based violence has continued to persist. Stakeholders involved in gender-based advocacy have also described the rising cases of violence against women and rape of the girl child, some 50 cases were recorded in Bayelsa state in 2020 (Oyadongha, 2020).

The effects of gender-based violence are sometimes devastating and can have life-long repercussions on victims, which can even lead to death (Quinne, 2021). As shown in this study, some of the effects of violence against women especially on rural communities includes; psychological trauma on the victims sexual and reproductive damage to women, impedes overall socio-economic development of society, can cause isolation of victims from social events, undermines the place of women in society etc. This study also looked at the difficulty in accessing rural communities which also pose a problem to the fight against gender-based violence. It is noteworthy that women and girls often avoid reporting sexual violence due to neglect, blame-shifting, fear of disciplinary action, and distance of the perpetrators from the authorities (Nwaopara, 2024). Victims of gender-based violence in rural communities are sometimes faced with difficulty in reporting such incidents to the authorities who are constitutionally-empowered to deal with such cases. Though as shown, the difficulty in accessing rural communities emboldens perpetrators of violence against women, and this discourages victims from reporting cases, a major defining and contributing factor to violence against women is bad governance. With the instrumentality of government, gender-based violence should have been squarely addressed, however if the fight against violence is not taken as a priority of government, it would continue to pose a problem to not only the people but even to the governments itself. Government should as a matter of urgency sensitize the people on the evil of violence against women and put in place a mechanism in the rural areas that can enable victims and potential victims have access to the authorities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Several theories could be employed in this study; however, the study applied the social learning theory to explain the violent disposition of men against women as a social construct. The social learning theory was propounded by Albert Bandura in 1977. The theory explains that people learn by observing the behaviors of others forming an idea of how new behaviors are performed, using the coded information as a guide for action, accepting the modeled acts as a guide for one's own behavior, etc.

The social learning theory is a theory that explains how peoples learn from the behaviors of others, which includes gender-based violence, through the process of observing others. The theory can be applied to gender-based violence, to explain how people, especially the younger generation, learn to be violent through exposure to violence directly or indirectly. Social learning theory emphasizes observational learning or acquiring new skills or information by watching others rather than overt trial-and-error behavior (Southam-Gerow & Avny, 2011). It (theory) explains that violence against women is socially constructed and this is done through culture and the society.

The theory is employed in this study to explain how the act of violence against women and girls is learned in society and not an in-born characteristics. Those who perpetrate violence against the female gender, were not born with it, but they learned the act of violence behaviours, especially they tend to exhibit them when the opportunity comes, because they see them (violence acts)

acceptable in society. Violence acts against women and the girl child are learnt from social processes in society according to the theory, and as contained in this study.

### **Effects of Gender Based Violence**

The problem of gender-based violence (GBV) or violence against women is now a global phenomenon. According to the World Bank account, about 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical or sexual partner violence or non-partner violence 7% of women have been assaulted by someone other than a sex partner, 38% of women murdered are committed by an intimate partner and about 200 million women and girls have experienced female genital mutilation.

As already mention the situation is even worse in developing countries. There are cases of violence against women and the girl child that are not even recorded and several factors could be responsible for this. Victims who live in this part of the world may not even know how to go about it when they are violently abused. The level of education of the victim, the belief system, custom, values of the society determines if a violent act against victim will be condemned or not, and this is why perpetrators of violence against women in some societies hold unto societal beliefs and customs as excuse. According to Necula (2020) most falsifications or excuses attributed to violence against women derive from the traditions, beliefs, customs, values and religion.

The effects of violence against women abound in all political environments, however they are more felt in underdeveloped societies, where laws that prohibit violence against women are yet to be fully implemented or where there is difficulty in implementation. For instance, there is difficulty in assessing rural communities in Bayelsa State, and this is a hindrance to the implementation process.

Some direct effects on the victims includes; Homicide or Suicide, Injuries, Unintended Pregnancies and Abortions, Child Health, Depression, Drug addiction by the victims, and this compound the problem of violence against women in these communities, as most cases are not reported. Violence can cause psychological trauma, physical harm, mental disorder, exclusion from the larger society, sexual and reproductive damage on the victims and this could in the long run cause an overall development deficit in society. As contained in a study by the ministry of Women Affairs and social development, supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA) 28% of Nigerian women aged 25-29 have experience some form of physical violence since at the age of 15, while 15% of women experienced physical violence, and further reported that 44% of divorced, separated or widowed women reported experiencing violence at age 15 while 25% of married women or those living with their spouses have experienced violence(ogukwu and agu 2020) . women may also suffer lack of participation in regular activities, isolation, inability to work, loss of wages and limited ability to care for their children or dependants (World Health Organization)

**International and National Legislations Prohibiting Violence Against Women**

Gender related violence against women has become not just a national problem but an international phenomenon that requires concerted efforts of national governments, international bodies, community leaders, nongovernmental organizations, individuals/groups etc., to confront. This is why in order to nip the problem of violence against women in the bud, international treaties and conventions relating to violence against women and girls, as well as national legislations that prohibits violence against women some of which have been domesticated at the local level should be implemented to the latter. The association against child sexual and gender based violence (AACSGBV) commended the Bayelsa state government for the passage and signing into law the violence against person's prohibition (VAPP) Act (Olusegun, 2022), though the state is lacking in several areas. The VAPP Act has since been domesticated by all the state of Nigeria and the federal capital territory as demonstrated on the table below:

**Table 1: The Violence Against Person's Prohibition Act (VAPP) of Nigeria was passed in 2015 and has been domesticated in the following states:**

S/N	STATE	LEGISLATIVE STATUS (BILL)	EXECUTIVE STATUS (LAW)
1.	FCT	Passed	Assented to on 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2015
2.	Abia	Passed on 3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2019	Assented to on 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2020
3.	Adamawa	Passed on March 1 <sup>st</sup> 2021	Assented on 30 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
4.	Akwa-Ibom	Passed on 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2019	Assented on 19 <sup>th</sup> June 20
5.	Anambra	Passed in 2017	Assented in 2017
6.	Bauchi	Passed in May 2015	Assented in 2020
7.	Bayelsa	Passed on February 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2021	Assented in 2020
8.	Benue	Passed on May 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Assented to on May 28 <sup>th</sup> 2019
9.	Borno	Passed in 2022	Assented to on 10 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
10.	Cross Rivers	Passed in 2021	Assented to on 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2021
11.	Delta	Passed on July 28 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Assented to on October 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2020
12.	Ebonyi	Passed on May 1 <sup>st</sup> 2018	Assented to in May 2018
13.	Edo	Passed on June 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2021	Assented to on August 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
14.	Ekiti	Gender-Based Violence (Prohibition) Amendment Law 2019	
15.	Enugu	Passed on April 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	Assented to in April 2019
16.	Gombe	Passed on October 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2022	Assented to on 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2022
17.	Imo	Passed on July 27 <sup>th</sup> 2021	Assented to on 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
18.	Jigawa	Passed on the 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2021	Assented to on 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2021
19.	Kaduna	Passed in December 2018	December 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2018
20.	Kano	Yet to passed	-
21.	Katsina	Passed	Assented to on 22 <sup>nd</sup> December 2023
22.	Kebbi	Passed on 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	Assented to on 27 <sup>th</sup> July 2022

## Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK

23.	Kogi	Passed on March 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2021	Assented to on 27 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
24.	Kwara	Passed on Sept 24 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Assented to on 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
25.	Lagos	Passed the Protection Against Domestic Violence Law of Lagos State 2007	
26.	Nasarawa	Passed on January 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2021	Assented to on January 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2021
27.	Niger	Passed on February 24 <sup>th</sup> 2021	Assented to on November 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2021
28.	Ogun	Passed on January 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2018	Assented to in 2018
29.	Ondo	Passed on July 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2021	Assented to on July 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
30.	Osun	Passed on August 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2021	Assented to on 11 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
31.	Oyo	Passed on December 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	Assented to on 26 <sup>th</sup> , February
32.	Plateau	Passed on December 24 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Assented to on 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
33.	Rivers	Passed on January 2020	Awaiting to in 2021
34.	Sokoto	Passed on January 19 <sup>th</sup> 2021	Assented to on 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2021
35.	Taraba	Passed on 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2022	-
36.	Yobe	Passed in 2021	Assented to on 16 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
37.	Zamfara	Passed in December 2023	Assented to in 2023

Source: [www.partnersnigeria.org](http://www.partnersnigeria.org)

There are other national legislations in Nigeria that seek to prohibition violence against women and some of these There are other national legislations in Nigeria that seek to prohibits violence against woman and some of these legislations are replicated at the state levels. Section 34 of the 1999 constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria provides that;

Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his/her person and accordingly no person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment. There is also the National Gender policy of 2007, and the child's Right Act, which came into effect in 2003. Although there are challenges of enforcement, these laws were put in place to especially curb the menace of violence against women and girls at the national and state levels.

In 1979 the united (UN) General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The convention required in 1989 all governments to act to protect women against violence of any kind whether in the family or area of social life. This treaty was regarded as the most widely ratified treaty relating to fundamental human rights that addresses the rights of women and the responsibility of the state. There was also the first international instrument that solely provides for violence against women. In 1993, the united Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of violence against women (DEVAW), calling on states to exercise due diligence, to prevent, investigate and punish perpetrators of violence against women whether the acts are committed by states or individuals (Abenoa, 2023).

There is also the Maputo protocol of the African charter on Human and people's Rights of women in African. The protocol prohibits GBV as part of women's rights to life, integrity. And security of person and dignity. Just like the African charter on Human and people's Rights, there are other regional organizations to deter potential offenders. The criminal code, VAPP law Bayelsa state, Widows and Widowers Protection Law, Administration of Original Justice Law of Bayelsa State, Bayelsa State Action Plan (BSAP) for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women peace and security and the Female Genital Mutilation Prohibition Law are major existing legal frameworks that enforce prosecution of GBV cases in the state. However, despite all these legislations and polices there is still a gap in the prevention of gender-based violence.

### **Forms of Violence Against Women**

There are various forms of violence against women and girls, and some of them are prevalent in all environments while others are peculiar to some societies. Though these different forms of violence against women are given different names in some societies, they are described here in this study for easy identification.

Physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, child marriage, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, trafficking in girls, honour killings etc, are some major forms of violence against women and girls. Physical violence includes physical actions taken by the male gender against the female gender which mainly involves bodily contact like killing, slapping, punching, being thrown down etc. sexual violence here includes sexual partner violence which could be rape, sexual assault which could be by a partner or non-partner, forced prostitution etc, Although women are more at risk of violence from their intimate partner than the from other persons, as sexual violence by non-partner is also common in many societies (mboho, etal 2018). It is estimated that sexual violence by non-partners are difficult to establish, especially In Africa, because it remains a thing of shame for women and their families. Women believed to be guilty of premarital sex, adultery and rape victims in some Nigerian societies have been killed by their relations or community because the violence of a woman's chastity is viewed as a taboo and affront to the family's honour. The united Nations population fund estimates that the annual world-wide number of honour killings victims may be as high as 500 women (UNFPA in mboho etal 2018). Trafficking in girls involves using illegitimate means of deception, coercion and threats of violence to move the female gender from one environment to another for mainly economic reasons, to the detriment of the victims but to the benefit of the trafficker.

NAPTIP, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking In Persons is the body baddled with the responsibility to prevent all forms of trafficking in persons in Nigeria, however it is pertinent to note that so far NAPTIPs activities are focused on cases relating to the female gender. As reported by ojemeiri 67.6percent of girls in the North West and 56.6 percent of girls in the North-East are forcefully given out to marriage before they get to the age of eighteen 49percent in

both girls and women who are between the ages of 15 to 49 years in the South-West are also victims of violence (ojemeiri etal, 2022,p.4 ).

One defining factor of child marriage or forced marriage in Nigeria has been cultural and religious beliefs that are already accepted as norms by the society, especially in Northern Nigeria, where the practice is very common. According to UNICEF(2024), female Genital Mutilation (FGM) refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non medical reasons. This was very common in Bayelsa state of Nigeria but has been since abated as a result of international and national calls, including the renewed efforts of the Bayelsa state government. Different organizations have in different ways joined the campaign to end female genital mutilation (Eyindah 2022) the government embarked on corrective measures to curb female genital mutilation through polices programmers and legislations which have resulted to reduction in female genital mutilation.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### RQ1

#### Effects of Violence Against Women and Girls

S/N	Items	Frequency and Percentage				
		A	SA	U	D	SD
1	Violence against women causes psychological trauma on the victims	185	108	7	22	25
		54.41%	31.76%	2.06%	6.47%	7.35%
2	Violence causes isolation of women from the large society	120	40	1	141	38
		35.29%	11.76%	0.29%	41.47%	11.18%
3	Gender based violence impedes overall social-economic development	132	122	6	58	22
		38.82%	35.88%	1.76%	17.06%	6.47%
4	Violence against women causes sexual and reproductive damage to women	190	130		16	4
		55.88%	38.24%		4.71%	1.18%

#### Field Work

As shown on the table above 340 respondents responded to the research question above. In response to item 1 on the table (violence against women causes psychological trauma on the victims) 185 respondents, which is about 54.41% of total respondents agreed that gender based violence causes psychological trauma on victims. 108 respondents (31.76%) strongly agreed, while 7 respondents were undecided, 22 respondents (about 6.47%) and 25 respondents (7.35%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. In other words majority of respondents in response to item one on the table (agreed that violence against women and girls causes psychological trauma on the victim).

In response to whether violence against women causes isolation from the larger society or not, 120 respondents agreed violence causes isolation while 40 respondents which is about 11.76% of total respondents strongly agreed. One respondents was undecided while 141 respondents (41.47%) and 38 respondents (11.18%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. As shown on the table, though more respondents disagreed violence causes isolation from society, the margin is not wide. 132 respondents (38.83%) were of the opinion that gender based violence impedes overall socio-economic development, with 122 respondents about 35.88% strongly agreeing. 6 respondent (1.76%) were undecided, 58 respondents, about 17.06% of total respondents disagreed while 22 respondents which has about 6.47% of respondents strongly disagreed. The response of respondents to item 3 on the table shows that majority of respondents agreed gender based violence impedes overall socio-economic development of society. This is so because victims may be stigmatized and prevented from contributing to socio-economic development of society.

In response to whether violence against women causes sexual and reproductive damage 190 respondents which is about 55.88% of total respondents, agreed violence against women causes sexual and reproductive damage while 13 respondents making 38.24% of the respondents strongly agreed. 16 respondents amounting to 4.71% disagreed and 4 respondents, making 1.18% of respondents strongly disagreed. In summation, majority of respondents agreed in response to item 4 on the table that violence against women causes sexual and reproductive damage to women.

## RQ2

### Remoteness and Difficulty in Accessing Rural Communities

S/N	Items	Frequency and Percentage				
		A	SA	U	D	SD
1	Remoteness of communities affects government effort against gender based violence	90	55	5	110	80
		26.47%	16.18%	1.47%	32.35%	23.53%
2	Difficulty in accessing rural community by government is not the cause for persistence of gender based violence, but bad governance	140	125	Nil	50	25
		41.18%	36.76%		14.71%	7.35%
3	Remoteness of communities emboldens perpetrators of violence against women	150	110	2	60	18
		44.12%	32.35%	0.06%	17.65%	5.29%
4	Remoteness and difficulty in accessing rural communities discourage victims from reporting cases	170	80	Nil	70	20
		50%	23.53%		20.59%	5.88%

### Field Work



---

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK

The Table above show the response of respondents to items relating to research question one, presented in frequency and percentage. As shown above, 90 respondents presented in percentage as 26.47% agreed that the remoteness of communities in Bayelsa state affects efforts against gender based violence. 55 respondents, making up 16.18% strongly agreed, while 5 respondents (1.47%) were undecided. 110 respondents (about 32.35%) of total respondents disagreed and 23.33% of respondents (80 respondents) strongly disagreed. According to the response of respondents, remoteness of communities does not hinder government efforts against gender based violence.

In response to item 2 on the table 140 respondents about 41.18% of total respondents, are of the view that the difficulty in accessing rural communities by the government is not the cause for persistence of gender based violence but rather bad governance. 125 respondents, which is 36.76% strongly agreed while 50 respondents (14.71%), disagreed and 25 respondents agreed that the persistence of gender based violence, especially in the rural areas is as a result of bad governance and not because rural communities are difficult to access.

Majority of respondents are also of the view that the remoteness of communities and distance from authorities emboldens perpetrators of violence against women. 150 respondents (44.12%), agreed while 110% respondents (32.35%) strongly agreed. 2 respondents (0.06%) were undecided while 60 respondents (17.65%) disagreed and 18 respondents (5.29%), strongly disagreed. In response to item 4, 170 respondents (50%) were of the view that remoteness of communities discourages victims from reporting cases and 80 respondents (23.53%) strongly agreed. 70 respondents which is about 20.59% disagreed while 20 respondents making 5.88% strongly disagreed. As shown on the table, majority of the respondents agreed that the remoteness of communities discourages victims from reporting gender-based violence cases to relevant authorities.

## CONCLUSION

This study, “The effects of violence and the Girl child in Bayelsa state” examines psychological and physical trauma on women, sexual and reproductive damage to women, restricting of women in contributing to the socio-economic development of society, as some of the effects of violence against women. The difficulty in accessing rural communities as a hindrance to the fight against gender related violence is also examined. Though the government has put in place some measures to address the problem of gender-based violence, it is observed that these measures are not enough. The punitive measures in place are also not enough to deter potential offenders. This study is a clarion call on government and stakeholders to rise up to the occasion and address these issues.

## Recommendations

It is recommended in this study that:

1. Laws on violence against women should be made more sever or punitive through legislations to deter potential offenders

2. The government and will society groups should embark on massive state-will enlightenment campaign on the evils of violence against women.
3. Gender based violence response centres should be established in the rural communities to deter potential offenders and encourage victims or rural people to report cases of violence against women.

## REFERENCES

- Abena, M.T Achataseh, G. & Bih, F.E (2023). International declaration and laws to mitigate gender based violence for women and men with highlight on Cameron situation. *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution* 14 (2), pp. 19-24. Doi;10.5897/JLCR2023. 0363. ISSN: 2006-9804
- Eyindah, S.C., & Amadi, V.A. (2022). Media campaign on female genital mutilation and attitude of aged women towards the practice in Bayelsa State. *Advanced Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*. 5(2), ISSN63005290.E ISSN2474-7602. DOI:10.19080/IGWA. 24556131
- Mboho, K.S., & Udoh, E.R. (2018). Gender and violence against women in Nigeria. A socio-psychological perspective. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research*. 14 (5), pp.29-37
- Necula, M.R. (2020). The effects of violence against women. *Lagos University Mentality Education Novelty Law*. 8 (1), pp.73-84.DOI.10.18662/Lumen Law/8.1/38. ISSN:2284-5968. E- ISSN:24581046
- Nwaopara, U., & Nwaopara, B. (2024). Investigating sex and gender-based violence in Bayelsa state, Nigeria, a police gender desk review. *Advance Journal of Arts, Humanities and SocialScience*. 7,(6),ISSN6300-5290,E-ISSN4226-6348. <https://aspjournals.org/ajabss/index.php/ajahss/index>
- Oyadongha, B. (2020). Bayelsa stakeholders lament increase in gender-based violence. <https://www.vanguardngr.com>
- Ojemeiri, K.A., Aondover, E.M., & Aruaye, A. O. (2022). A critical review on gender based violence in Nigeria. *Media Dimension Journal of Gynecology and Women Health*. 24(2) ISSN2474-7602. DOI:10.19080/IGWH.24556131
- Olusegun, 5. (2022) Coalition lands Bayelsa foe Domesticating VAPP act <https://www.thisdaylive.com>
- Ojukwu, T. & Agu, O.B. (2020). Sexual and gender-based violence/ harmful traditional practices against women and girls across Nigeria. *National Human Rights Commission*
- Quin, W. (2021). Causes and effects of gender-based violence. A critical literature review Cari Journals. *Journal of Gender Related Studies*. 2 (1), Doi:<https://doi.org/10.47941/jgrs.742>
- Southern- Grerow, M.A., & Avary, S.B. (2011). Cognitive behavioral Therapy for adolescences. *Encyclopedia of Adolescent*.
- UNICEF (2024). Female Genital Mutilation Statistics <http://data.unicef.org>