

Research article

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NIGERIAN URBAN SETTINGS WITH REFERENCE TO IYANA IPAJA CRISIS IN ALIMOSO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

This descriptively designed study focused on the violence against women in Nigerian Urban cities using the crisis in IyanaIpajaAlimoso Local Government Area of Lagos state as a case study. Both primary and secondary data were used. All women in Alimoso LGA were the targeted population for the study. The LGA was stratified into 6 clusters and 30 questionnaires were administered in each cluster making a total of 180 questionnaires were administered using quota sampling technique but only 165 (91.7%) were received and used for this study. A version 16 SPSS was used to analyse data. Findings revealed that all the respondents (100.0%) have a good knowledge of violence against women and have incessantlywitness violence in the area of study but just 57.6% women have participated in violence at different level. These set of women were called “omoita, alatika mama, or iyandagbe”. And on the domestic causes of violence, assault account for 27.9% while bullying was 23.0% among other things. About 90.1% respondents maintained that violence has devastating effects on women. Also, 41.9% assured that violence against women has reduced because of peace, violence management and resolution mechanism put in place in

Alimoso LGA. The paper concluded that government at all tiers should maintain and sustain the model of resolving violence in the area and look into the care, rehabilitation and integration of those affected in the violence and law should catch-up with those involved in the violence.

KEY WORDS: Violence, Urban settings, Women, Growth and Development

Introduction:

“Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women...”

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, General Assembly Resolution, December 1993.

Urban violence common social phenomena across the globe. It is a serious development constraint especially in developing countries and increasingly dominates the daily lives of citizens across the globe. The accompanying increase in fear and insecurity has led to a wide-scale preoccupation with the phenomenon, but there is little agreement on the underlying causes of such endemic violence or of its costs and consequences. Equally, the capacity of various sector-specific violence reduction interventions to address this pervasive problem is often questioned.

Recently there has been growing acknowledgment that urban residents themselves may be the key to a better understanding of such violence and to identifying appropriate interventions. Participatory urban appraisals offer a practical way for local people to articulate their perceptions of the complexity of everyday violence. Complementing existing knowledge, such assessments assist in developing a more holistic framework that positions violence in terms of three interrelated components; first, the social, economic, political, and institutional categories of violent manifestations; second, the underlying causal factors, not only structural factors but also individual identity and agency; and third, the costs of violence in terms of its impacts on women and the assets of poor households, (Joda et al., 2007).

Violence is a major obstacle to growth and development. Violence against women in particular hinders progress in achieving development targets in Nigeria. Despite the growing recognition of violence against women as a public health and human rights concern, and of the obstacle it poses for development, this type of Violence continues to have an unjustifiably low priority on the international development agenda and in planning. It is estimated that one in every five women faces some form of violence during her lifetime, in some cases leading to serious injury or death. Until recently, most governments have considered violence against women (particularly “domestic” violence by a husband or other intimate partner) to be a relatively minor social problem. Today, due in

large part to the efforts of women's organizations and the evidence provided by research, including that of the World Health Organisation (WHO), violence against women is recognized as a global concern, (Abama and Kwaja, 2009).

In his own contribution, Obadare, (1999) noted that violence is almost a universal experience in cities all over the world; girls and women feel unsafe alone in the street. At some point in their lives many have had to or will have to face sexual harassment, abuse, theft and all manner of dehumanization and immorality as a result of violence in urban settings, only because of their gender. Violence against women and girls cuts across lines of income, class, culture and residence. Some forms appear to be more prevalent in rural areas, for instance child marriage and honour killings; others in urban areas, such as sexual harassment in public places, forced prostitution and economically coerced sex.

Physical, sexual and psychological violence can be a daily feature of women interactions in their neighbourhoods, on public transport, in workplaces, schools, sports clubs, colleges, hospitals, and in religious and other social institutions. Unsafe spaces abound in cities and surrounding areas“ deserted streets, dark lanes, isolated bus stops, or public latrines. Urban environments appear to offer greater anonymity to perpetrators of violence against women and girls. There is a causal link between domestic violence and urban violence, attributed to changes in social controls, in particular the breakdown of social bonds at neighbourhood level, (Mary et al, 2009).

Violence is generally underreported and reliable statistics are hard to come by. Women tend to feel shame, stigma and lack of confidence in protection by the law and fear of retribution. Many adolescent girls first sexual experience is forced on them. For example, according to a survey in Ghana, the first sexual experience of female adolescents in urban areas was significantly more likely to be coerced than among their counterparts in rural areas. A study in Cape Town, South Africa for instance, showed that 72 per cent of young women who were pregnant and 60 per cent of those who had never been pregnant had reported experiencing coerced sex. A similar study in Lima, Peru found 41 per cent of young girls between the ages of 10 to 24 had experienced coerced sex. And a multi-country WHO study found that in Bangladesh 22 per cent of female respondents in cities as against 11 per cent of those in the provinces had experienced physical or sexual violence after the age of 15 by someone other than their partner; in Brazil 24.5 per cent of female respondents in the city and 15.9 per cent in the provinces reported violence. The same study found high levels of domestic violence in most cities and provincial areas, (Innocenti, 2000).

Violence against women and girls compromises the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims. It can leave deep physical and psychological scars. It undermines girls development by making it difficult for them to remain in school, destroying their confidence in adults and in peers, and putting them at risk of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Research in Rwanda, South Africa and Tanzania has shown that young women who experience violence are three times more likely to be infected with HIV.

In Nigeria, the level of violence against women in the home remains poorly mapped, pilot studies conclude it is "shockingly high". Up to two-thirds of women in certain communities in Nigeria's Lagos State are believed to have experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence in the family and in other areas around 50 percent of women say they are victims to domestic violence. In the absence of official studies, research into the prevalence of violence in the family has been conducted by individuals and organizations, (Alemika, and Chukwuma, 2007). In a recent small-scale study of gender inequality in Lagos and Oyo states, 40 percent of the women interviewed said they had been victims of violence in the family, in some cases for several years. The study concluded that such violence was not documented in Nigeria because of widespread tolerance of violence against women: "once a woman is married, she is expected to endure whatever she meets in her matrimonial home," according to information released by the human rights group Amnesty International today. It is against this backdrop that this survey intends to investigate in women and urban violence in Alimosho area of Lagos State.

The Ontology of Urban Violence

It is surprisingly rare to find a definition of urban violence. In particular with relation to children and adolescents, in either the popular or research literature. Thus uncertainty prevails as to whether violence is limited to physical abuse or includes verbal and psychological abuse. A clear and unambiguous definition of urban violence is needed if progress is to be made in determining the extent of violence in Europe. A precise definition would facilitate the making of cross-cultural comparisons. Although the term violence is very commonly used, there is no acceptable definition of what it really connotes, and what acts constitute violence and which do not. In some societies, for example, child beating is seen as a form of discipline, in others it is child abuse and violence against children. Some form of 'domestic violence' would appear normal cultural practice in some societies, while in others; it is not just condemnable but would constitute a crime punishable by law. It would then appear that there could be cultural variations in the way that violence is perceived and treated.

Keane (1996) (as quoted in Moser and Mcilwaine 2006), see violence as the use of physical force which cause injury to others in order to impose one's wishes. Others have broadened the definition to include psychological damage, material deprivation and symbolic disadvantage (Moser and Mcilwaine 2006). In his own contribution, Salami (1993) has widened the definition of violence even further when he noted that 'most people think of violence in a narrow context, equating it with images of war, murders or riots. Yet, violence comes in many more forms. The range of phenomena that could be induced under this label is quite extensive. If one accepts the notions that any act that threatens a person's physical or psychological integrity is a form of violence, then one needs to consider that occurrences as diverse as racism, pollution or poverty can be symptoms of violent situation' (quoted by Obadare 1999). In this sense, racial policies and actions whether violently expressed or not can be regarded as acts of violence.

Obadare (1999) differentiates between what he calls passive and repressive violence. The military by taking power and employing undemocratic methods to rule and impose its will on the people is seen as repressive violence, while failure to address the problem of poverty in richly endowed country like Nigeria by all types of governments is also regarded as violence against the people.

Violence can be by individuals or by groups. We are interested here in collective violence by groups arising from communal conflicts. Here, collective violence is defined as;

...collective violence result when individuals engage in violent activities at a group or institutional level. Like personal violence, incidents of group violence such as riots, revolutions, and gang warfare are typically viewed as local events, tied to a specific cause or geographical region. Nevertheless, group violence possesses its own unique dynamics and is generally more destructive than personal violence. Sociologists and psychologists have observed that individual members participating in group violence frequently feel less responsibility for their activities and are willing to commit greater atrocities because they are acting in the name of a higher cause, be it religion, political beliefs, or loyalty to an ethnic group or nation.

This definition appears to capture rather well the kind of violence that has characterized the ethno-religious crises that have occurred in Nigeria in the past decade and a half, and which had witnessed large scale destruction of lives, properties; churches mosque, schools, shops, etc. It is not straight forward to equate violence with a particular motive or cause. Robben and Nordstrom (1995), have shown that violence is increasingly seen as complex, chaotic and multidimensional. This appears to be the case with the violence crises in major cities in Nigeria such as Lagos, Jos and Port Harcourt to mention but a few.

Due to problems in conceiving and defining what violence really is, Obadare (1999) has rightly noted that the literature tends to cause more intellectual confusion than clarity, particularly over the meaning, causes, nature, possibilities and social utility of violence. He notes that violence is inherent in every social formation regardless of the nature of its political forces and levels of development.

Moser and Mcilwaine (2006) have categorized violence into four main types; political, institutional, economic and social violence. These are based on the motives to gain and maintain power. Social violence relates to the use of power in social relations and could be gender based, ethnic violence, violence among peers or gang violence. Economic violence is motivated by the desire to obtain material gain and may include theft, mugging, armed robbery, kidnapping, gang violence to control drugs market, etc. Institutional violence on the other hand relates to violence perpetuated by public organs, institutions and the state; the police, the judiciary, the army, government departments etc. Political violence is driven by the desire to win and hold political power; and these would include, electoral rigging, voter intimidation, the use of political touts to harass opponents, to the extreme cases of political assassinations. Examples of all these forms of violence can found in Nigeria in abundance. Many

writers have argued that the long years of military rule in Nigeria, had in fact instituted institutional violence and raised other forms of violence to state policy (Obadare, 1999). Corruption by the military rulers and indeed democratic governments in Nigeria has planted the attitude of mistrust of leaders among the citizens, facilitated cheating by people in positions and in turn entrenched poverty and deprivations to large sections of the society. Poor governance coupled with culturally plurality of the Nigerian society (with over 250 major ethnic groups), and two major religions (with about 50-50 percent Christians and Muslims) makes violence not only latent but very germane.

Many theories have been advanced as to the causes of violence, the 'ecological model' relating to the upbringing of children, lack of parental care, child abuse, etc to the structural, institutional and interpersonal models. Structural violence is induced by the inequality in the distribution of resources in society. In Nigeria, 10% of the people own or control about 90% of the resources and this situation creates despondency and feelings of oppression and marginalization by the majority. The number of people living below the poverty level in the country is over 70%. (World Bank, 1996). Other approaches to the causes of violence see it in terms of urbanization. Rapid urbanization in Sub Saharan African has created sprawling slums and sub standards housing, worsen poverty among urban dwellers and heighten competition for very limited resources by the burgeoning population in the cities leading to acts of aggression and violence to gain access or to control resources. The youth who constitute the majority of the urban population in Nigeria (and other developing countries), are seen as potential threat as growing unemployment in the urban areas has forced the youth into crime and violence (Sommers, 2003; Anyambola 2007). Huntington has advanced the 'youth bulge thesis' and projected the youths as perpetrators of violence in all societies (see Sommers, 2005). Although youth unemployment has increased significantly in Nigeria over the last 20 years (about 12% in some cities), the problem of youth involvement in violence is due largely to the lack of their integration into society.

Urban Violence in Nigeria

Chief ObafemiAwolowo had expressed the view that Nigeria was just a geographical expression. This he meant that the country was nothing less than an amalgam of different and disparate ethnic nationalities. How true, his statement has been because with almost half a century of independence, the country is much further away from nationhood than it was in 1960 at independence. In 1914 Sir Fredrick Lugard had amalgamated the southern and northern protectorates to form Nigeria. The country has witnessed a bitter civil war (the Biafran insurrection in the late 1960s) in which over two million people were said to have lost their lives. It has been characterized with political instability and brutal military rule for over 30 years. The present government is the longest democratic dispensation in the country since independence (10years). In the last 20 years, the country has witnessed violent ethno-religious crises, the ZangoKataf pogrom of the 1990s pitched against the indigenes who are mainly Christians and settlers who are mainly Muslims in southern Kaduna; the Maitasine religious uprising of the 1980s; the Sharia riots in most parts of northern states in this century (12 states in northern Nigeria had declared Sharia system since 1999) and the Niger Delta crisis in the oil producing areas of the Niger Delta creeks which an amnesty was recently

declared by the Federal government. Even more recently, there has been the *Boko Haram* religious jihad in some cities in the north; Bauchi, Gombe, Damaturu, Maiduguri and Kano in which over 1000 people were killed, millions worth of properties destroyed and more than 10,000 people displaced. The sect led, Mohammed Yusuf, who was killed by the police, preached a radical Islamic theology that western education is sin and had to be prohibited. Olurode and Oshodi (2009) have suggested that their detest for western education could be due to the fact that most leaders who had acquired western education were not living exemplary lives as they were very corrupt and were seen as the cause of the growing poverty in the country (**The Guardian** of Monday August 10th , 2009 p73).

Violent communal crises are on the increase in Nigeria, and there is no part of the country that is not affected in one way or the other, from the Jukun-Tiv crisis in the central zone to the incessant community conflicts and crisis in the South Eastern zone, the Niger Delta militancy in the South-South and the spate of armed robbery almost everywhere. Lagos is reputed to be second only to Johannesburg in South Africa in terms of gun related victimization in Africa (Muggah, nd). In Kaduna, the number of people subscribing to private security companies (PSC) has tripped between 1997 and 2001 (Muggah, nd). This is due to the lack of confidence in the police and other security outfits in providing protection to the people. Militant vigilante groups have also emerged in many cities because the Nigerian to combat the rising incidences of violence crimes, for example; the Bakassi Boys, deadly ethnic crisis, the Odudua Peoples Congress (OPC) and now the popular Boko Haram etc. The increasing incidence of violent crimes is evident in the number of books, conference proceedings and papers published on the subject of recent (see, for example, Albert, et al 1994; Nnoli 2003; Otite and Albert 1999; Babawale 2003; Best 2006 & 2007; Gyuse, 2006); and the number of specialized centres for conflict resolution and management.

The Causes of Urban Violence

In much of the development literature of the 1960s and 1970s, violence was viewed as an individual issue of criminal pathology linked to rapid urbanization and to the marginality of migrant populations. The shift from an emphasis on the individual to an emphasis on the structural causes of violence was influenced by neo-Marxist and dependency debates of the 1970s and 1980s, which led to the recognition that a complex of institutional and structural factors affects violence levels.

Evidence from Latin America challenges the popular stereotype that poverty is the main cause of violence and shows that inequality and exclusion (unequal access to employment, education, health, and physical infrastructure) intersect with poverty to precipitate violence. At the same time, in contexts of severe inequality, living conditions of the urban poor heighten the potential for conflict, crime, and violence.

Globalization and the spread of neoliberalism have also increased social polarization, with the disenfranchised again most likely to experience crime and violence. In addition, globalization has led to a worldwide criminal economy in drugs, firearms, prostitution, and extortion. In many countries emerging from political conflict and undergoing democratization, everyday violence seems to be endemic.

In Latin America, the shift from authoritarian regimes to democratic governments has led to the democratization of violence itself, with the use of force no longer the preserve of armies or of guerrilla or paramilitary groups. This is reflected in the emergence of street gangs or criminal groups comprising former guerrilla, paramilitary, or military members and a burgeoning illegal drug industry, its networks established during times of conflict.

Among the approaches developed to understand the interrelated causes of violence, the most common is the ecological model. This has been used to elucidate the complex causes of, for example, child abuse, youth violence, sexual coercion, intimate-partner violence, and global violence. The model identifies violence at structural, institutional, interpersonal, and individual levels; examines the relationship between individual- and context-specific factors; and considers violence as the outcome of multiple influences. Another model of causality identifies factors underlying violence in terms of the interrelationship among structure, identity, and agency. For instance, political- and economic-related violence over disputed territory is often caused by structural historic conditions relating to the distribution of resources. This is often linked to economic violence between neighbors, when individual characteristics such as envy or greed highlight the importance of individual agency. Jealousy, infidelity, and alcohol abuse are other issues of individual agency often linked to intra-family social violence, when factors relating to gender-based and age-based identity make spouses and children particularly vulnerable. In addition to identifying forms of urban violence, Boskin also argued that racial conflicts generally included some elements of the following:

- i. Extraordinary social change like wartime mobility and economic depression;
- ii. Confrontations during the hot summer months, when large numbers of unemployed young people are idle and bored;
- iii. Rumors, lies, exaggerations and general misinformation;
- iv. Negative view of local police by the Black community; and
- v. The violence usually occurring in, or on the fringes of, the black community.

Akparanta (1994) attempted to provide reasons for urban violence in post-civil war Nigeria, arguing that following the war, there was an abundance of guns in private hands and times were hard economically. Accompanied by deterioration in the standard of education, and the lack of specific training in areas relevant for sustaining both the agricultural and the industrial sector, many youths went astray. Another argument was that the continuously unpredictable political atmosphere and lack of progressive management of the economy brought about galloping inflation, and concentration of wealth in the hands of the few who were in positions of public authority fuelled a sense of hopeless desperation among the masses. Albert (1994) identified causes of urban violence in Africa. These include: high population growth rates with its attendant unemployment, poor wages, poor living

conditions, urban culture shocks, and poor quality of urban management that is manifested in the crisis in health care, transportation, housing and employment.

However, the genesis of violence is multi-causal and Salami (1994) postulates that any attempt to explain violence should be approached from the psychological, social and anthropological prisms. In spite of attempts at theoretical contexts in which to situate rising crime rates in urban areas of Nigeria, the more recent phenomena of violence by urban gangs, cult groups and ethnic militias are serious causes of concern occasioning dislocations in urban economy and life.

Understanding Violence against Women

One of the most pervasive violations of human rights in all societies exists on a continuum from violence perpetrated by an intimate partner to violence as a weapon of war (Grown, 2005:231). Violence against women is a major threat to social and economic development. This was recognized in the Millennium Declaration of September 2000, in which the General Assembly of the United Nations resolved “to combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women” (United Nations, 2005:12). Such violence is intimately associated with complex social conditions such as poverty, lack of education, gender inequality, child mortality, maternal ill-health and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

Although some of the associated conditions of violence are targeted in the goals set up to guide the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, violence against women is not highlighted in either the targets or the indicators. Violence against women takes many forms, from the overt to the subtle. WHO has adopted the following definitions of physical and sexual violence to aid in research and programming, concentrating on identifiable acts? *Physical violence* means a woman has been: slapped, or had something thrown at her; pushed, shoved, or had her hair pulled; hit with a fist or something else that could hurt; choked or burnt; threatened with or had a weapon used against her. *Sexual violence* means a woman has been: physically forced to have sexual intercourse; had sexual intercourse because she was afraid of what her partner might do; or forced to do something sexual she found degrading or humiliating. Though recognized as a serious and pervasive problem, *emotional violence* does not yet have a widely accepted definition, but includes, for example, being humiliated or belittled; being scared or intimidated purposefully. *Intimate-partner violence* (also called “domestic” violence) means a woman has encountered any of the above types of violence, at the hands of an intimate partner or ex-partner; this is one of the most common and universal forms of violence experienced by women, (Alemika, and Chukwuma, 2007),

Violence is a regular part of most women's experience in Nigeria, especially at homes intended to nurture the psychological upliftment and development of its members. Domestic violence refers to violence within the home. It is carried out mostly against women and children. These acts include rape (forced sex); physical abuse; verbal abuse; incest; Female Genital Cutting (FGC); denial of food; denial of time for relaxation; forced marriage and child marriage (Joda et al., 2007). For the purpose of this study, domestic violence is defined as the European Council of Ministers suggests: Any act or omission committed within the framework of the family, by one of its

members, that undermines the life, the bodily or psychological integrity, or the liberty of another member of the same family, or that seriously harms the development of his or her personality.

Rape is defined as any form of sexual intercourse without free mutual consent between those involved. Sexual intercourse that involves force, threat, blackmail, deceit or coercion is rape - even when there is no penetration. A woman is raped if sexual intercourse takes place without her consent. Rape within marriage (forced or coerced sexual intercourse between wife and husband) is not recognized as a crime by Nigerian Law. At best, a husband who forces his wife to have sex may be found guilty of assault, wounding, or grievous harm depending on the degree and effect of the force he used on his wife. But this is usually limited to situations where the couple have separated (they are not living together or co-habiting). In Sharia law (Islamic law practiced in the northern part of Nigeria by the predominantly Muslim population¹), the husband may withdraw maintenance to his wife if she refuses him sexual intercourse. Rape of a wife is generally not recognized as an offence by customary laws in Nigeria and is not penalized even when the wife suffer bodily harm in the course of the husband forcefully having sex with her (Joda et al., 2007).

On a daily basis women are beaten and "punished" for supposed transgressions, raped and even murdered by members of their family (Fatusi and Alatisé, 2006). In some cases, vicious acid attacks leave them with horrific disfigurements. Girls and young women are forced into early marriage by parents and relatives. In many communities in Nigeria (Fatusi and Alatisé, 2006), the traditional practice of female genital mutilation continues to traumatize young girls and leave women with lifelong pain and damage to their health. Such violence is all too frequently excused and tolerated in communities where women are assigned an inferior role, subordinate to the male, head of the family. In support of this claim, Narayans et al. (2000: 123) affirm that in many social contexts, domestic violence, whether sexual, physical or psychological, is supported by social norms such as a cultural ideology which promotes the primacy of men over the women. Husbands, partners and fathers are responsible for most of the violence against women. The violence persists because discriminatory laws condone and even legalize certain forms of violence against women. Dismissive attitudes within the police and an inaccessible justice system compound the failures of the state to protect women's rights. The criminal justice system and the Police provide little protection for the victims and often dismiss domestic violence as a family matter and fail to investigate or press charges. Often times, the few rape victims who take their cases to court face humiliating rules of evidence and discriminatory attitudes from court officials and have little chance of getting justice. Moreover, few cases of rapes are reported to the police, because of the associated social stigma attached to the victim and the difficulty in obtaining medical evidence. Women who bring a complaint of rape cannot insist on speaking to a woman police officer as of right and agitations for specific women and human rights desks in all police stations are yet to be implemented.

The word "violence" has strong connotations in ideological terms and its meaning is constantly changing. It covers a wide range of problems that must be put into context in order to better grasp their structure. Violence is not gender-specific as both men and women are victims of violence. However, there is enough gender specific violence

which underlies the subordinate position of women in Nigeria to warrant a focus on women as victims of intimate partner rape/violence. These are few examples of gender specific violence as reported by Adidu (2001: 87).

Some Empirical cases:

"In 1987, a 12 year old Hausa girl; Abubakar from northern Nigeria died after having both legs amputated by her husband for repeatedly running away from him after she was forced to marry him...."

"In 1999, in Zaria, Nigeria, a jealous lover poured acid on his girlfriend when she jilted him. He had earlier threatened to render her unmarriageable if she ever dumped him and he made good his promise".

In Nigeria, the woman is frequently victimized twice First by the violence she endures and by the failure of the governments to bring her abuser(s) to justice.

"Sometime in 1999, an uncle sexually assaulted a little girl of six years old. The matter was taken to court and prosecuted. In giving judgment however, the magistrate set the accused person free for lack of "corroboration". This was in spite of the bloodied pants, the testimony of the mother who noticed the pains while bathing her and the medical evidence from a government hospital. The magistrate said corroboration meant testimony from another person who witnessed the alleged act (Except for interview with a human rights defender by Amnesty International, 2004b)."

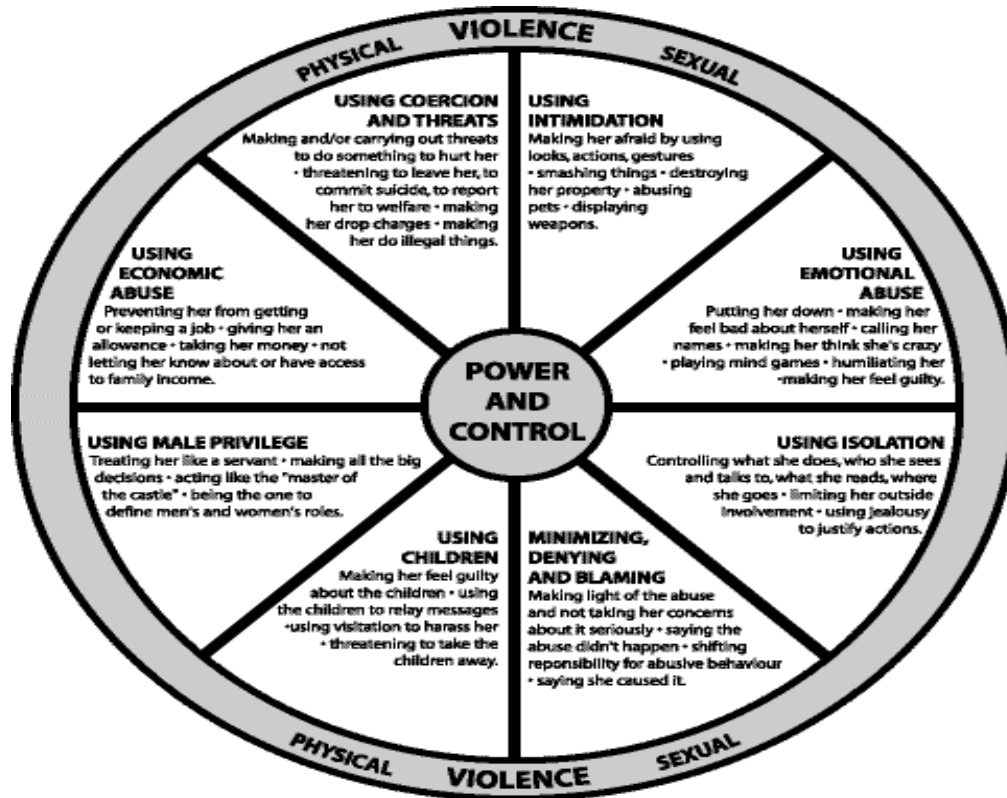
Furthermore, a certain young girl "Folake" was jailed after she accused a man of rape. A domestic worker, she said her employer's husband had forced her into his bedroom and made her watch a pornographic film before forcing her to have sex. A medical examination supported her allegation. Yet she was the one brought to court, charged with slander for making the accusation and remanded in prison (Amnesty International Interview with "Folake", 2004a).

Conceptual Framework on Women Violence

A conceptual framework on thematic explanation on several or various forms of violence especially at it has to do with women. The schema unravels all sorts of techniques, strategies and mechanisms that people especially men can explore in the name of violence against women in any society. It also has at the centre the provision of legal, traditional or ethical power and control in any given society in reducing the pains and multiplier effects of the menace on women and the society at large to a barest minimum level.

Methods:

The descriptive survey used both primary and secondary sources of data. The study took place in Lagos state Nigeria. The women of Iyanalipaja Alimoso Local Government Area were used to obtain data for this study. The local government was stratified into six cluster and thirty (30) structured questionnaires were administered in each cluster using quota sampling technique. That is, a total of 180 questionnaires were used for this study. A current version of SPSS was used to analyse the quantitative data.



Developed by the *Domestic Abuse Intervention Project*, 202 E. Superior St., Duluth, MN 55802

Findings and Discussion:

Knowledge on Urban Violence and its Causes

This section is on the respondent's knowledge and understanding of what women violence is all about and its causes in Alimosho area of Lagos State.

All the respondents 165 (100.0%) have heard of violence. This means that the concept of violence in its actual occurrence is not strange to all the respondents. They have witness one form of violence or the other before. It is likely that some of them were victims of violence or they have witness some violence or have friends who have suffered urban violence at one time or the other. This is because violence is a common thing in Alimosho local government because the area is known to be urban set up, even when there is clash between different factions in the area; it disrupted social and economic activities in the area and women and children are seriously affected. It is also important that lots of lives are lost which cut across all age grades majority of whom are women and children. That is, violence in the area claims some women's lives because lots of them suffer psychological trauma of different degree depending on the level and type of violence they were subjected to, (Mary et al, 2009).

On what the respondents understand to be violence, some said it is the use of physical force by person or group of people to injure somebody/other people or damage something that belong to the opponent or the general public during violence. It is also an illegal use of unjustified force or power by some people who feel above the law, or the intimidating effect created by the

threat of this some group of people. Violence can be said to be a situation of pandemonium, serious disorder and total disorganization by group of people against another people on thing or issue that is trivial but cause destruction to the area and in some instances claim innocent lives. It may be planned or framed disorderliness by group of people mostly boys who have nothing to do. For instance, area boys, *omoita or agbero*. The World Health Organization (WHO) in its 2002 global report on violence defines violence as:

“...the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.”

Table 1: Domestic and constant causes of violence in Alimosho Area

Common Causes of Violence	Frequency	Percentage
Assault	46	27.9
Bullying	38	23.0
Embarrassment and Harassment	31	18.8
Socio-economic and political Crisis	25	15.2
Disrespect and lawlessness	25	15.2
Total	165	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents 46 (27.9%) agreed that assault is the major among the common causes of violence against women in Alimosho area, 38 (23.0%) said it is bullying, 31 (18.8%) maintained that it is embarrassment and harassment while 25 (15.2%) each were crisis or disrespect and lawlessness. This means there are some common causes of violence against women but some are more predominant than others. That is, assault against women is common among the people of Alimosho area in Lagos State. It is worthy of note that more than average of the respondents said the causes of the violence are resolved by all the stakeholders while 35.8% of the respondents maintained that the causes of the violence are still on. This may not be totally true because how is assault against women resolved? How are embarrassment and harassment, bullying and the rest resolved? These things have become part and parcel of the people in urban areas especially Lagos State. They are domestic part of their lives. Crisis which the area is well known for may have been resolved in a way but not other common causes of violence against women which are known to be communicative in nature.

Evaluate the Participation of Women in Urban Violence

This aspect is basically on the participation of women in violence in Alimosho local government area using IyanaIpaja as a better case study.

All the respondents 100% maintained that they have at one period or the other witness and 57.6% have participate in violence at different level while 70 (42.4%) said ‘No’ they have never participated in violence. It means violence in

Alimosho area does not exempt women although not all of them but those that really are known to be “*omoita, alatika, or iyandagbe*”. Women demonstrate act of violence against other women who do not share rough life like them, they harass and embarrass them, and some are bullied. Other women participated in just violence when the right of fellow women is denied or women were harassed or embarrassed anywhere.

Table 2: Respondents level of participation in the violence

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Actively	35	21.2
Semi-active	40	24.2
Indifferent	21	12.7
All of the above	69	41.8
Total	165	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 2 shows that most of the respondents 69 (41.8%) maintained that the level of women participation in violence in Alimosho area involve been actively, semi-active and indifferent, 40 (24.2%) said it is actively, 35 (21.2%) maintained that women are semi-active while 21 (12.7%) said women are indifferent. This indicates that the level of women participation in violence in Alimosho area is all encompassing. That is, women in Alimosho area are involved in all manners of the violence in the area. This is because Lagos as it were, does not really favour people especially women who are simple in nature, attitude or character. It is believe that such people or women are always taking for ride by anybody. They are popularly known as *sesede*(JJC). Women participation in violence depend on the type of violence or rather the cause of the violence. But it is important to note that some women actively subject other women counterparts into violence, (Mary et al, 2009).

On why respondents 70 (42.4%) did not participate in violence, they maintained that not that they don't participate in violence but not all forms of violence because they cannot face the hoodlums and they don't have the mind to do such thing, some said, '*eniti o balogunariyinya, kii je aayan*' (literally, person who does not have medicine for chest irritation does not eat cockroach' but those that are gender sensitive. That is, the violence strictly affects women especially on economic matters (market).

Assess the Effects of Urban Violence on Women in Alimoso Area of Lagos

This area is mainly on the measurement of the effects of urban violence on women in Alimosho local government area in Lagos State.

Table 3: If violence has any effect at all

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	150	90.1
No	06	3.6
Don't Know	09	5.5
Total	165	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 3 shows that most of the respondents 150 (90.1%) said 'yes' violence has effect, 9 (5.5%) did not respond to the question while on 6 (3.6%) said 'no' violence did not have effect at all. It means violence going by its definition or meaning to an average person has the potential to be dangerous in all ramifications. That is why it is called violence, the use of force to attain a thing which in process may claim some people's lives because of the psychological effects it has on those subjected to the violence. About 152 (92.1%) respondents said 'yes' women in Alimosho area (IyanaIpaja) share from the effect of violence. This indicates that women of course bear the largest effects of any form of violence across the globe even when they did not participate in the violence but the fact that the violence happens in the area where they are, they are really affected in various degrees. A Yoruba adage says, '*Orunnyabo, kii se oroenikan*' (literally means heaven is falling is not going to fall on one person). That is, there is a way such a thing will happen and women will occur and women will be exempted from its effects.

Some of the major effects of violence on women in Alimosho Area are as follows. They are:

- i. Psychological trauma
- ii. Social stigma
- iii. Public disgrace
- iv. Sexual harassment
- v. Loss of life
- vi. Long time bruise or scar
- vii. Economic or financial backwardness

Table 4: Who is mostly and always affected in violence in Alimosho Area

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Men	22	13.3
Women	81	49.1
Children	17	10.3

Everybody	45	27.3
Total	165	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 4 shows that most of the respondents 81 (49.1%) said that women are mostly and always affected in violence in Alimosho area of Lagos State, 45 (27.3%) said everybody is mostly affected in violence (men, women and children), 22 (13.3%) maintained that men are mostly and always affected in violence while 17 (10.3%) affirmed that children are mostly affected in violence. This indicates that women are always, mostly and constantly bear the brunt of all violence in (IyanaIpaja) Alimosho area. They are not as strong like men and their focus is always on their business in the informal sector, (Mary et al, 2009).

The reason why women are mostly and always affected in violence is because most time, the violence start when people mostly (women) least expected, that is, the violence catch them unawares and unprepared, fear gripped them. Therefore, most women are affected materially and even life wise. That is, some women lost their lives and their children’s lives apart from the economic lost which may wreck some women economically for life as a result of gross lost in the violence. Area boys and thieves cart away with goods and materials worth thousands of naira or millions of naira in some cases. The finding of Moser (2004), corroborated with this. She argued that, ‘The uncertainty generated by violence is expressed in fear and insecurity. Fear has been defined as “...the institutional, cultural and psychological repercussion of violence”, and identified as an outcome of destabilization, exclusion and uncertainty. It is very sad and pathetic to hear that those affected in the violence were not in any way compensated 62 (37.6%). It means governments at all tiers do not care whether people affected in violence are compensated or cared for or not because the area of case study for this research is known for constant violence. For any tier of government to shoulder the responsibility of compensating anybody affected will be a big project.

Examine Government’s Role in curbing Urban Violence in Alimoso Local Government

This is an area where the role of government in the state and local level and other stake holders in Alimosho local government area was examined in this study.

Table 5: Has violence against women in Alimosho Area reduced?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	69	41.9
No	55	33.3
Don’t Know	41	24.8
Total	165	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents 69 (41.9%) said ‘Yes’ violence against women in Alimosho area has reduce, 55 (33.3%) said ‘No’ violence against women in the area has not reduce while 41 (24.8%) did not respond to the question.

This indicates that the generality of women in Alimosho local government area of Lagos State cannot really tell the condition of things. This is because most people in Lagos live a rough life, nobody is ready to accommodate each other in any form, people live I don't care life and attitude. Therefore, violence as it were, is a normal life thing, it is part of each day activities, it keeps the area going and lively. What account for the reduction of violence against women in Alimoso area was the presence of government security personnel and establishment of traditional institution which comprise traditional leaders, religious leaders, community leaders and representative of different social group in the area all participated in the meeting on violence management and resolution against women because of its perpetuated biting effects and alarming rate and the urgent need for it in the area. The following measures were put in place in order to maintain peace relatively in the area. They are:

- i. Involvement of uniform men to apprehend anyone that misbehaves in the area;
- ii. Government prosecute those involve in any act of violence in the area and;
- iii. the people in a way caution themselves on any behaviour that is against the law

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study has confirmed that urban violence is common in Nigeria especially in the industrialized cities and it is also a known fact that women and children are always at the receiving end of any form of violence. To this end, it is recommended that government should provide women, who experience violence with multi-disciplinary services including counseling and other resources that they need for full psychological, social and economic recovery and integration in their communities, legal support (including provision for compensation) and to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice and later rehabilitation. In addition, men should be educated from infancy on the concept of manhood and their supportive and protective roles in the family as a means of limiting their participation in all forms of violence against women. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should champion this public based campaign to eradicate/eliminate gender-based violence against women in our society.

Recommendations

This study comes up with the following recommendations which reflect the specific interventions that are necessary for resolution and reduction of violence against women folk:

- i.) Local, state and federal governments in Nigeria must take a more critical look at the nation's urban centres especially in the areas of physical planning, economy and the provision of social welfare services. In doing these, priority must be given to helping the urban poor meet their needs for sustainable livelihood. The generally poor quality of urban life and growing poverty are serious enticement for violence activities in Alimosho local government area.
- ii) There should be a good working relationship between rural economy and the urban areas in order to promote growth in the agricultural sector, provide jobs and improve rural quality of life. This should reduce the lure of urban employment that fuels the large-scale migration of young children especially boys to growing urban areas, it will also engage some women who are jobless and not responsible in any way serious with life and get something doing.

- iii) government should do everything possible to ensure that urban areas are well electrified with uniform and armed men. Their sight alone should be able to create some level of fear into the people, they will not be able to plan any violence and women will be protected.
- iv) Government of the day both at local and state level should have a good implemented law to protect women's right anywhere in the country at large. This will enable women to be in a way free from any form of violence.
- v) There is need for retraining and refocusing the police force. Background checks should be made at recruitment to ensure that only persons of integrity and proper education are taken. Training should focus more on investigation and surveillance techniques, record keeping and handling crisis situations. To attain this, there is need to recruit persons who have proper educational qualifications. The present quality of recruits is very poor. For increased surveillance within the cities, the police need better equipment, in form of vehicles, cameras, phones, and security gadgets. For instance, the newly acquired security materials by the government of Lagos State should be evenly distributed across all the local governments in the state. It will go a long way to curb and reduce to the barest minimum violence in Alimosho area.
- vi) The religious leaders should enjoined to preach all the time good morals to their teeming followers. They should be told to live, preach and demonstrate good behaviour. This will make every person to be of good behaviour even their children too.
- (vii) Job creation and making sure that those that are unemployed are gainfully employed, it is a major task for government. The political class and those in government must appreciate this and give it the serious attention it deserves.

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