

# Gender Violence and Women's Right in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State

**Green-Wike Endurance**

Department of Political Science, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

**ABSTRACT:** The paper examined gender violence and women's right in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The paper was guided by three objectives with corresponding research questions. Conflicts theory propounded by a German Sociologist, Dabredof (1959) was used as a basis for analysis. The paper adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for this study was 223,399 women in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. A sample of 399 respondents was drawn with the aid of Taro Yamane formula. The study adopted simple random sampling technique to administer the research instrument to the respondents. The primary instrument used was a self-made questionnaire titled; 'Gender Violence and Women's Right Questionnaire' (GVWRQ). The data generated were analyzed with Mean and Standard Deviation through the aid of SPSS version 25. The study revealed that there is a prevalence of gender related violence which endangered women in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. These violence oriented behavior against gender is mostly attributed to tradition and illiteracy among the inhabitants of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. Therefore, the paper recommended among other things that, the government and other relevant organizations/foundations should take a decisive action to reduce the occurrence of gender related violence against women in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area through mass campaign on television, radio and religion organizations.

**KEYWORD:** Gender, Violence, Women's Rights.

## I. Introduction

Every human being enjoys certain right which cannot be taken away. These include the right to live free from violence and discrimination; to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; to be educated; to own property; to vote; and to earn an equal wage. Women's rights are the rights and entitlements claimed for women and girls worldwide. They formed the basis for the women's rights movement in the 19th century and the feminist movements during the 20th and 21st centuries. In some countries, these rights are institutionalized or supported by law, local custom, and behavior, whereas in others, they are ignored and suppressed. They differ from broader notions of human rights through claims of an inherent historical and traditional bias against the exercise of rights by women and girls, in favor of men and boys (Hosken, 2011). But across the globe many women and girls still face discrimination on the basis of sex and gender. Gender inequality underpins many problems which disproportionately affect women and girls, such as domestic and sexual violence, lower pay, lack of access to education, and inadequate healthcare. Issues commonly associated with notions of women's rights include the right to bodily integrity and autonomy, to be

4	ISSN 2690-9626 (online), Published by "Global Research Network LLC" under Volume: 3 Issue: 5 in May-2022 <a href="https://grnjournals.us/index.php/AJSHR">https://grnjournals.us/index.php/AJSHR</a>
	Copyright (c) 2022 Author (s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). To view a copy of this license, visit <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>

free from sexual violence, to vote, to hold public office, to enter into legal contracts, to have equal rights in family law, to work, to fair wages or equal pay, to have reproductive rights, to own property, and to education (Lockwood, 2006).

Gender-based violence (GBV) is the general term used to capture violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, along with the unequal power relationships between the two genders, within the context of a specific society (Bloom and Gelman, 2008). GBV is when violent acts are committed against women and LGBTI people on the basis of their orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics. Gender based violence happens to women and girls in disproportionate numbers (Amnesty International, 2019).

Domestic violence affects men and women of all ages, races, religions and incomes. However, due to the “secrecy” of domestic violence, it is often a hidden social problem. The “invincibility” of the problem is largely attributed to the belief that it is a private family matter, which should not be known to outsiders. This problem is not confirmed only to Rivers State but to Nigeria and the whole world at large.

Domestic violence against females is common across culture, religion, class and ethnicity. There are various reasons for domestic violence and it may have serious hidden outcomes. Violence against a woman is a world-wide phenomenon and derives its roots from the time the society started differentiating roles between women and men. On the basis of the nature of the roles, society started to perceive men’s roles as being superior to those of women and such the status of Men was given a superior position that resulted in power imbalance and consequently abuse (Samps et al 1994). This phenomenon cuts across class, age male resolution and national classification.

Domestic gender based violence is a problem affecting millions of women globally and this problem manifested in various forms, research that such indicates that the abuse is a common and pervasive problem and that men from practically all countries, culture, class and income groups indulge in domestic violence. In Obio/Akpor to be precise, little or no effort has been made to in the study of gender violence and it is eating up our culture. Giving the male counterparts the thinking that the females are inferior. Due to all these, women’s rights have been neglected. The women have no right to work or to do anything for themselves, they are told by their husbands to sit at home and take care of the children. The rights of women in Nigeria, Rivers State to be precise is nothing to write home about. The women are looked down both at the family and the community level. They are seen as second class citizens subservient to the wimps and caprices of the men’s folk. The men in Obio/Akpor local government area tend to feel that when a woman is given so much right, she abuses it and tend to feel superior, so for this reason, the woman’s right is abused.

Domestic violence is a global issue which anuses national boundaries as well as socio economic, cultural racial and class distinction. Women from all kinds of backgrounds are affected by violence every day. Thus violence is not considered seriously unless it involves homicide or a serious physical injury to the victim.

### Statement of the Problem

Domestic violence occurs in all countries, rich or poor, developed or under developing, with no regard to castle, creed, color, social status, wealth urban or rural residence or the ages of victims and aggression. Nigeria, rivers state to be precise is no exception to the problem of domestic violence. Ignorance is the main problem we face in gender based violence. The main reason for the progressive increase rate of different forms of women right violation

5	ISSN 2690-9626 (online), Published by “Global Research Network LLC” under Volume: 3 Issue: 5 in May-2022 <a href="https://grnjournals.us/index.php/AJSHR">https://grnjournals.us/index.php/AJSHR</a>
	Copyright (c) 2022 Author (s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY).To view a copy of this license, <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>

The issue of gender violence and women right has been grossly neglected; violence against women or domestic violence has been a serious problem in most societies throughout history. Especially in Nigeria, river state in particular. This is a big problem because it has prevented our women from studying out of the society, rather they hide in their pains and

In educational sector women have been neglected and deprived the right to education. Looking at Obio/Akpor in Rivers State the number of women in school is less and this is affecting the society negatively. Gender violence has really made the girl child to lose her value in Rivers state Obio/Akpor in particular. According to Ovoru (2007) the women are kept out of reach of education. Left out in decision making process utilized at home without due reinformation kept at home as home investigate the extent to which the violence keepers and never allowed to earn a living for herself.

Based on submission by various observers and proponents on gender issue, the researcher decided to investigate the extent in which the violence impedes women rights in the society. It is true that so many studies have being conducted on gender related violence but none was carried out in Obio/Akpor local government area of Rivers State. Therefore, the researcher decided to carry out this study to fill this gap in scholarship.

### Objectives of the Study

The study was undertaken to examine the impacts of gender oriented violence on women's right in Obio/Akpor local government area in Rivers State. Specifically, the study seek to:

1. examine the factors responsible for women devaluation in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area
2. examine the impact of gender violence on women's right in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area
3. examine the effect of gender violence in development of women in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area

### Research Question

1. What are the factors responsible for women's devaluation in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area?
2. What are the impact of gender violence on women's right in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area?
3. What are the solutions to gender violence on women in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area?

## II. Theoretical framework

In this paper adopted the conflicts theory propounded by a German Sociologist, Dabredof (1959) though his argument had two perspectives: the consensus theory and the coercion theory for the purpose of this study, the coercion theory is used. This theory states that every section of the society suffers the coercion of some of its members by others this theory is in line with the researchers theme as some section of the society (the women) are forced and compelled by threats. The evidence of this conflict theory is visible in the area of finance, education and politics.

Financial empowerment has been a common cause of conflict, as women agitate to be financially empowered, the men tends to believe that if the women are financially stable, they (men) will lose the honour, loyalty and respect. The men tends to feel that once a woman becomes financially stable, then the man around her are doom this believe is rising and creating more conflict in the society. Even in the educational section, women are been discriminated against. In a university where a woman is a lecturer and she is a professor and worth having a post (HOD or DEAN) because she is a

woman, her male counterparts will look down at her leaving her with the chance of stepping down for a male. The women activist educate the rural women on the road to be educated, and this had not gone down well with the male folks because they believe that their position will be threaded.

They are therefore putting up resistance aimed at thwarting women's effort in advancement of this great endeavour of set advancement. In political affairs, women participation is very less the men hold great post but are still fighting against the political participation of women. This has made many abandon politics and left the men since there is a saying which states that "only men can play the game of politics".

### III. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The reason for descriptive survey research design is because it helps the researcher to examine the situation just as it is at the moment without manipulating any variable, also in doing so, the questionnaire is a very powerful tool for generating information from respondents. The population for this study is 223,399 women out of the 649,600 people in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area which was drawn from the 2016 city population project. A sample of 399 respondents was drawn with the aid of Taro Yamene formula. The study adopted the simple random sampling technique to administer the research instrument to the respondents. This is because the simple random sampling technique gave the entire members of the population an equal and independent chance of being selected in the sample to be studied. The study generated data from both quantitative and qualitative sources. The researcher made use of the following research instruments questionnaires, personal observation, and other documentary methods such as journals, academic materials, and textbooks. The primary instrument used was a self-made questionnaire titled; '*Gender Violence and Women's Right Questionnaire*' (GVWRQ). The questionnaire was structured based on a four-point Likert scale with a 30 items aimed at examining gender violence and women's right in Obio/Akpor Local Government area in Rivers State. The study employed the test-retest method. This method allows the researcher to assess the survey instrument by applying two separate measurements on the same elements at different times with the same methods. The outcome of the pilot survey was compared with that of the final survey to confirm if the results are the same. The data generated were analyzed with Mean and Standard Deviation through the aid of SPSS version 25. The criterion mean was 2.5 which implied that any item found equal or above 2.5 was accounted as agreed, while item means lesser than 2.5 were interpreted to be disagreed.

### IV. Data Presentation and Analysis

**Research Question One:** What are the factors responsible for women's devaluation in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area?

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on the factors responsible for women's devaluation in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area**

**N=385, Criterion=2.5**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
1	Cultural problems	122	162	80	21	3.00	0.86	Agreed
2	Poverty and unemployment among men and women	28	296	11	50	2.78	0.67	Agreed
3	Illiteracy among the people	44	286	35	20	2.92	0.72	Agreed
4	Relationship retention behaviour	221	11	153	--	3.18	0.97	Agreed

7	ISSN 2690-9626 (online), Published by "Global Research Network LLC" under Volume: 3 Issue: 5 in May-2022 <a href="https://grnjournals.us/index.php/AJSHR">https://grnjournals.us/index.php/AJSHR</a>
	Copyright (c) 2022 Author (s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). To view a copy of this license, visit <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>

5	Self-defense especially among men of self-confidence	304	--	38	43	3.47	1.06	<b>Agreed</b>
6	Alcoholism and other hard substances	221	132	32	--	3.49	0.65	<b>Agreed</b>
7	Suspicion among partners	274	55	55	1	3.56	0.75	<b>Agreed</b>
8	Notion of masculinity linked to dominance, honour and aggression	206	96	32	51	3.19	1.06	<b>Agreed</b>
9	Norms granting men control over women	203	94	62	26	3.23	0.95	<b>Agreed</b>
10	Associating with peers who condone violence	182	36	132	36	2.94	1.05	<b>Agreed</b>
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>3.18</b>	<b>0.87</b>	

Table 1 showed the factors responsible for women's devaluation in Obio/Akpor L.G.A. It was accounted that cultural problem (Mean=3.00, Std.=0.86), poverty and unemployment (Mean=2.78, Std.=0.67), relationship retention behavior (Mean=3.18, Std.=0.97), suspicion of infidelity (Mean=3.56, Std.=0.75), Norms granting men control over women (Mean=3.23, Std.=0.95), and Associating with peers who condone violence (Mean=2.94, Std.=1.05) are the factors responsible for women's devaluation in Obio/Akpor L.G.A.

**Research Question Two:** What are the impact of gender violence on women's right in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on the impact of gender violence on women's right in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area**

**N=385, Criterion=2.5**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
11	Gender violence leads to emotional breakdown on women	215	69	81	20	3.24	0.96	<b>Agreed</b>
12	Victims of gender violence vent their frustrations on children and others	188	53	125	19	3.06	1.00	<b>Agreed</b>
13	Gender violence victims transmit and intensify their negative experiences on those around them	101	184	56	44	2.89	0.92	<b>Agreed</b>
14	Physical injuries on the victims	179	143	44	19	3.25	0.85	<b>Agreed</b>
15	It leads to physical disabilities on the women	36	290	43	16	2.90	0.60	<b>Agreed</b>
16	Chronic health problems (irritable bowel syndrome, gastrointestinal disorders, various chronic pain syndromes, hypertension, e.t.c)	107	177	86	15	2.98	0.81	<b>Agreed</b>
17	Gender violence could resold to infertility among women	121	120	122	22	2.88	0.92	<b>Agreed</b>
18	Gender based violence leads to	332	43	9	1	3.83	0.43	<b>Agreed</b>



	anxiety, fear, mistrust of others, inability to concentrate, loneliness, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, suicide, e.t.c							
19	Rejection and social stigma at community level	164	123	81	17	3.13	0.89	<b>Agreed</b>
20	Acute fear of future violence	151	167	31	36	3.12	0.91	<b>Agreed</b>
21	Damage of women's confidence resulting in fear of venturing into public spaces	238	118	--	29	3.47	0.84	<b>Agreed</b>
22	Job loss	28	307	15	35	2.85		<b>Agreed</b>
23	It lower women's income generating power	82	247	40	16	3.03	0.70	<b>Agreed</b>
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>3.13</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 2 showed the impact of gender violence on women's right in Obio/Akpor L.G.A. The table showed that the impact of gender violence on women's right in Obio/Akpor L.G.A are emotional damage (Mean=3.24, Std.=0.96), venting of their frustrations on children and others (Mean=3.06, Std.=1.00), transmitting and intensifying of negative experiences on those around them (Mean=2.89, Std.=0.92), physical injuries (Mean=3.25, Std.=0.85), and acute fear of the future (Mean=3.12, Std.=0.91), among others are the impact of gender violence on women's right in Obio/Akpor L.G.A.

**Research Question Three:** What are the solutions to gender violence on women in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area?

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on the solutions to gender violence on women in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area**

**N=385, Criterion=2.5**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
24	Stringent law should be enacted and implemented to deter gender related violence	94	165	80	46	2.80	0.67	<b>Agreed</b>
5	Traditional rulers and council members should take the lead by committing to protect the rights of women against violence as well as work to nurture new cultures that do not tolerate gender-based violence.	36	278	47	24	2.85	0.67	<b>Agreed</b>
26	Sensitization programmes should be carried out in schools, homes and the communities to educate the women folk and also the men folk on the rights of women	120	163	83	19	3.00	0.85	<b>Agreed</b>
27	In schools, social and civil studies should be broaden to include gender-based violence to enable young people develop positive life	164	160	44	17	3.22	0.82	<b>Agreed</b>

	styles that promote healthy living and social relations							
28	Parents should educate their children on the various types of gender-based violence, teaching them not to let anyone touch their private parts	121	162	81	21	2.99	0.86	<b>Agreed</b>
29	Parents should educate their children not to follow especially people of the opposite sex to unfamiliar places and as well how to sense the onset of violence such as changes in a person's tone of voice or behaviour	197	162	26	--	3.44	0.62	<b>Agreed</b>
30	Women should establish gender-based violence support groups to challenge men who beat their wives and anyone who perpetrates any form of violence against and girls	141	108	84	52	2.88	1.05	<b>Agreed</b>
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>3.03</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 3 showed the solutions to gender violence on women in Obio/Akpor L.G.A. The table showed that the state demonstrating the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act, signed by Ex-President Goodluck into law to protect the rights of women and victims, and ensure the enforcement of the laws (Mean=2.80, Std.=0.67), traditional rulers and council members taking the lead by committing to protect the rights of women against violence as well as work to nurture new cultures that do not tolerate gender-based violence (Mean=2.85, Std.=0.67), sensitization programmes been carried out in schools, homes and the communities to educate the women folk and also the men folk on the rights of women (Mean=3.00, Std.=0.85), and women establishing gender-based violence support groups to challenge men who beat their wives and anyone who perpetrates any form of violence against and girls (Mean=2.88, Std.=1.05), among others are the solutions to gender violence on women in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area

## V. Discussion of Findings

Research question one examined the factors responsible for women's devaluation in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. It was found that cultural belief, poverty and unemployment, relationship retention behavior, suspicion of infidelity, norms granting men control over women and associating with peers who condone violence, among others are the factors responsible for women's devaluation in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. The study is very much in line with Bott et al. (2015) which showed that gender based violence is simply one element in a system that subordinates women through social norms that define women's place and guide their conduct. Most parts of the world have these norms that makes the women folk look more inferior to their counterparts, the men capitalizing on these always attempt to make sure they are always on top. Gender-based violence (GBV) is the general term used to capture violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, along with the unequal power relationships between the two genders, within the context of a specific society (Bloom & Gelman, 2008).

Research question two examine the impact of gender violence on women's right in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. The study found that emotional breakdown, venting of their frustrations on children and others, transmitting and intensifying of negative experiences on those around them, physical injuries, and acute fear of the future, among others are the impact of gender violence on women's right in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. The finding correlated with the study of Imasiku and Hamweene (2013) which showed that respondents who experienced GBV showed cognition deficits in working memory, verbal learning and recall.

Research question three investigated the solutions to gender violence on women in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. The study showed that enactment and implementation of stringent laws, the use of traditional rulers and council members could help in reducing gender-based related violence in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. Education of women fold and establishing gender-based violence support groups to challenge men who beat their wives and anyone who perpetrates any form of violence against and girls among others are the solutions to gender violence on women in in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. The study is consistent with Bott et al. (2015) which showed that group-based credit programs can reduce men's violence against women by making women's lives more public. The problem of men's violence against women is deeply rooted, however, and the authors argue that much more extensive interventions will be needed to significantly undermine it. The study also relates with

## VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

Domestic gender based violence is a problem affecting millions of women globally and this problem manifested in various forms, research indicates that the abuse is a common and pervasive problem and that men from practically all countries, culture, class and income groups indulge in domestic violence. In Obio/Akpor Local Government Area to be precise, little or no effort has been made to in the study of gender violence and it is eating up our culture. Giving the male counterparts the thinking that the females are inferior. Due to all these, women's rights have been neglected. The women have no right to work or to do anything for themselves, they are told by their husbands to sit at home and take care of the children. It was to this end researcher decided to investigate the extent to which the violence impedes women place in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The root cause of gender-based violence lied in unequal power relations between women and men in Obio/Akpor. However, a variety of factors on the individual level, the family level, and at the level of community and society, often combine to raise the likelihood of violence occurring. The effects of gender-based violence are far-reaching and extend beyond the individual survivor, to the family and society as a whole. Potential social responses to gender-based violence are most effective when there is a common understanding of the nature and causes of gender-based violence and it is addressed from all angles, through the participation of multiple sectors and entire communities.

Based on the study's findings, the researcher recommends as follows;

1. The government and other related organizations/foundations should take a decisive action to reduce the occurrence of gender related violence in Obio/Akpor local Government Area through mass campaign through television, radio and religion organistions.
2. Adequate and frequent sensitizations should be carried out in homes, schools and other spaces to address the plague of gender based violence in Obio/Akpor local Government Area
3. The women should form groups and associations in the local communities to carry out campaigns against this nefarious act of discrimination.



## References

1. Bloom, P. & Gelman, S.A. (2008). Psychological essentialism in selecting the 14th Dalai Lama. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 12(4), 24-29
2. Firestone, T. (1972). *The family, feminism and socialism*. Pathfinder Press.
3. Hosken, F. P. (2011). Towards a definition of women's rights. *Human rights quarterly*, 3(2), pp. 1–10.
4. Imasiku, M. L. & Hamweene, M. J. (2013). Effects of Gender Based Violence on Neurocognitive functioning in HIV positive individuals. <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahukewjnzeh488r3ahvhw4ukhtq1bt8qfnoeaoqaq&url=https%3a%2f%2fwww.ajol.info%2findex.php%2fmjz%2farticle%2fview%2f110538&usg=aovvaw3gwncknpxjgumto8mtporj>
5. Jack, S. (2006). Violence against women in Nigeria. Lagos gender studies and human rights documentation centre.
6. Ketebu, B. (1996). *Women and development in contemporary Nigeria*. Vintage Publishers (Int.) Ltd.
7. Lockwood, B. B. (2006). *Women's rights: A human rights quarterly reader*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
8. Obele, O. O. (2005). *Beast of borden: A story of women legal status and reproductive health right in Nigeria* Lagos civil liberties organization.
9. Okon, L. (1986). *An examination of psychological violence against women implication for marriage stability*. M.ED Research project, Unitas.
10. Olubunmi, O. (2005). The effect of the wife's employment on the family power structure in Beck and Yogel. Huns Press
11. Ovuru, M. (2007). The influence of family characteristics on girl child development: A case study of Nembe Local Government Area, Bayelsa.
12. Silver, O. (1980). *The theory of organization*. Heineman.
13. Torfinn, O. E. (2005). The fundamental of women's right: An anti-women abuse of Africa (AWSA) publication of National war college, Abuja Nigeria.
14. Wakama, A. (2007). *Native of violence against women problems of national development*. Emene Press.
15. World Health Organization (2007). WHO multi country study on women health and domestic violence against women. Geneva