

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTION

BOSEDE REMILEKUN, ADEUTI, Ph.D, LL.M, LL.B (Hons), B.L (Hons)\*

### ABSTRACT

The existence and domineering violent nature of male over their female counterpart has been from the beginning of the universe; where men were seen as lords and women as servants in their place in the home as man and wife. Domestic violence against women is a violation of their human rights, and it is on the increase; it is generally seen as a complex family issue that is dealt with and emotionally settled. This terrible situation cuts across all class, tribes, race, status, sexual identity, nationality, culture, religious affiliation, and age where women are battered and destabilized from functioning in their various capacities as a result of different health issues. Women in most societies are usually victims of physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence due to inequalities and discrimination. There are several forms of domestic violence against women that prevent the expression of their human right which constitutes and adds to societal problems. This requires necessary cooperation of all law agencies, other government agencies and non-government organization to be able to eradicate such violence from the society and not accept domestic violence as an acceptable way of life. Women need a definite protection against their male counterparts to prevent an unending global disaster. Eradicating domestic violence against women is paramount and ensuring women's security should also be a priority for all organizations which must be reflected in the law of their countries for peaceful development of the society. This article focuses on violence against women by their partners.<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords:** Domestic-violence, Women, Men, Health-issues, Society

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\* Dr. Bosede Remilekun, Adeuti obtained a Doctorate Degree of Laws (Ph.D) from Ekiti State University in 2019 and Master Degree of Laws (LL.M) from University of Ibadan in 2011. She was called to the Nigerian Bar as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria in 2008 and had practiced extensively for 12.Years in diverse areas of law. She is a Senior State Counsel at the Attorney General Chambers, Ministry of Justice, Ondo State, Nigeria. She is a member of notable international professional associations, including the Nigerian Bar Association, the Law Officers Association of Nigeria, the Amnesty International, the Professional Negotiators and Mediators, and the Young International Council for Commercial Arbitration. [bosedelizabeth@gmail.com](mailto:bosedelizabeth@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> It can be their husbands, lovers, partners

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is now a known fact that domestic violence is a universal<sup>2</sup> common frightening issue that vehemently exists since several decades ago, till recent decade<sup>3</sup>; in which women are affected irrespective of their background. Above all, violence is considered a private silent killer<sup>4</sup> that is filled with gumming venom,<sup>5</sup> resulting in severe physical injury for the victims, which at times result in death.<sup>6</sup>

Violence may be referred to as a situation where the use of physical destructive force or energy is in place to harm someone.<sup>7</sup> Domestic violence may be referred to as harm<sup>8</sup> or suffering that is perpetrated against a woman that has negative impact on her. This scenario can occur anywhere considering the circumstance in which both parties find themselves,<sup>9</sup> but basically, these inequality-based actions occur between two opposite sexes,<sup>10</sup> who are probably in relationship and can cause expressive trauma to the victim, who is mostly female.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, the above expression is known as domestic violence and it is one out of the common crimes committed against women in the world which is a total violation and disrespect of women's fundamental human rights. Information gotten from various data or existing

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<sup>2</sup> Karen Scott Collins et al., *Health Concerns Across a Woman's Lifespan: The Commonwealth Fund 1998 Survey of Women's Health*, accessed at [www.cmf.org/usr\\_doc/Healthconcerns\\_surveyreport.pdf](http://www.cmf.org/usr_doc/Healthconcerns_surveyreport.pdf), on Sept. 14, 2004

<sup>3</sup> R. Abdullah and R. Raj-Hashim, and G. Schmitt, 'Battered women in Malaysia: Prevalence, problems and public attitudes.' (A summary Report of Women's Aid Organization Malaysia's National Research on Domestic Violence. (1995, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: WAO)

<sup>4</sup> The "invisibility" of the problem is largely attributed to the belief that it is a private family matter, which should not be made known to outsiders. For many years rape, domestic abuse, and other forms of violence against women were considered to be private matters, best kept silent and in the family. Efforts to eliminate such abuses were deemed futile and when placed against "real issues," concern with gender specific violence is often still minimized as trivial.

<sup>5</sup> D. Green, 'Gender Violence in Africa: African Women's Responses'. Macmillan Press, Hampshire and London. (1999)

<sup>6</sup> T.G. Ondicho, 'Battered Women: A Socio-legal Perspective of Their Experiences in Nairobi. (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Institute of African studies, University of Nairobi. 1997. Domestic violence against women as an obstacle to development in Kenya. Mila, (N.S.), 2: 19-28, 1993

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, CEDAW Committee, *General Recommendation No. 35 on Gender-Based Violence against Women, Updating General Recommendation No. 19*, paras. 6, 14, 30(b), 26 July 2017, CEDAW/C/GC/35 and United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 48/104, *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, 20 December 1993, A/RES/48/104.

<sup>8</sup> Ilika, A. 'Women's perception of partner violence in a rural Igbo community.' (2005) (9) *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 77-88.

<sup>9</sup> In different private and public spaces, including on the internet and through other evolving technologies.

<sup>10</sup> women and men

<sup>11</sup> United Nations, CEDAW Committee, *General Recommendation No. 35 on Gender-Based Violence against Women, Updating General Recommendation No. 19*, paras. 6, 14, 30(b), 26 July 2017, CEDAW/C/GC/35 and United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 48/104, *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, 20 December 1993, A/RES/48/104.

sources,<sup>12</sup> based on violence against women by men who might be their husbands, lovers or partners; these sources acknowledges the global reality and total outbreak of violence against women in the society which must be curbed to prevent total collapse of the economy.<sup>13</sup> This is the most common form of world-wide terrible violence against women, and it may be in the form of female battery, female assault, forced excavation or removal of female fetuses, non recognition of female children, female suicide, rape, slander, and female abuse. This is so glaring or seen in daily circumstances within the societies of the world.<sup>14</sup>

Based on report from previous researchers, it is known that women who had encountered several challenges in form of discrimination are usually subjected to violence.<sup>15</sup>

*According to the report, it was found out that indigenous women are significantly more likely to experience rape than non-indigenous women and more than one in three indigenous women are raped during their lifetime.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, persons with an actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity that diverges from a particular social norm are often targeted for violence. The Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity highlights killings, rapes, mutilations, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading*

<sup>12</sup> such as UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, UN Women and WHO

<sup>13</sup> UNFPA, Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, (New York, 2015); UNFPA, Adolescent Girls in Disaster & Conflict: Interventions for Improving Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services, (New York, 2016); UNICEF, Division of Data, Research and Policy, A Familiar Face, Violence in the Lives of Children and Adolescents, (New York, 2017); UNICEF, A Child is a Child: Protecting Children on the Move From Violence, Abuse and Exploitation, (New York, 2017); UNICEF and IOM, Harrowing Journeys: Children and Youth on the Move Across the Mediterranean Sea, at Risk of Trafficking and Exploitation, (New York and Geneva, 2017); UNODC, Global Study on Homicide 2011, Trends, Contexts, Data, (Vienna, 2011); UNODC, Global Study on Homicide 2013, Trends, Contexts, Data, (United Nations publication, Sales No. 14.IV.1); UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2016, (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.IV.6); UNODC, "The 2017 United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (2017 UN-CTS)", available from <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime/cts-data-collection.html> (accessed 15 March 2018); UNESCO and UN Women, Global Guidance on School-related Gender-Based Violence, (Paris and New York, 2016); UN Women, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and Violence against Women and Girls: Strengthening the Policy Linkages Between Different Forms of Violence, (New York, 2017); and WHO, Global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system within a national multisectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children, (Geneva, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> UN Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Girls. Human Rights Fact Sheet no 23 UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR). (1995)

<sup>15</sup> UN Women, *Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it?* URL: [http://unwomen-asiapacific.org/docs/WhyDoSomeMenUseViolenceAgainstWomen\\_P4P\\_Report.pdf](http://unwomen-asiapacific.org/docs/WhyDoSomeMenUseViolenceAgainstWomen_P4P_Report.pdf). Page 40 (2013),

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples*, Victoria Tauli Corpuz, ( para. 47, 6 August 2015, A/HRC/30/41.)

*treatment, arbitrary detentions, abductions, harassment and physical and mental assaults as particularly widespread.*<sup>17</sup> Domestic violence is not only by physical contact but it can occur in different other ways such as on the internet, letters, and through other evolving technologies.<sup>18</sup> This is deeply established in the ways of life of people breeding inequalities between women and men in the society<sup>19</sup> which can definitely cause physical, social, psychological and economic harm to women of all ages.

Women are always referred to as the weaker vessels. They are prone to easy attack from the opposite sex and definitely in a cushion position to be exploited. Therefore, the need for proper protection against domestic violence cannot be over emphasized. Women must be protected and awareness of their right against the opposite sex must be advocated and enforced; it is until then that it will become paramount to carefully ensure that women, justice and security sector institutions are respectively well equipped to claim and respond to the rights and needs of women.<sup>20</sup>

I was a victim of domestic violence. I had a personal experience as to what domestic violence entails for four (4) years without informing anybody about it. Domestic violence is not a good thing that one should pray for. This issue of domestic violence against women is never a recent scenario; it has been in existence for a very long time and obviously, several women's state of mind during cohabitation with their partners in an abusive relationship will not be stable. This is detected and felt in each woman's experience of domestic violence which ranges from verbal outbursts, physical abuse (pushing, beating, slapping, kicking, pressing, hair-pulling, throwing, twisting, body torture, isolated in a dark room, black eyes, fractured bones and use of a weapon), emotional, psychological, behavioural, and sexual violence that can occur within their homes or outside their homes.<sup>21</sup> This has an unwelcomed effect on women's health and their well-being and its continued existence will extinguish female godly ego therefore, living in such abusive

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<sup>17</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council, (2017), *Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity*, para. 2, 19 April 2017, A/HRC/35/36.

<sup>18</sup> private and public spaces,

<sup>19</sup> C. Zimmerman, *Plates in a basket will rattle: Domestic violence in Cambodia*, Phnom Pehn, (Cambodia: the Asia Foundation. (1994)

<sup>20</sup> While violence against women has gained a great deal of attention in justice programming in comparison to other areas of women's rights, its magnitude and accompanying impunity towards violations of women's rights demands a scaling up of programmatic interventions.

<sup>21</sup> E. Buchbinder, and Z. Eisikovits, *Battered women's entrapment in shame: A phenomenological study*. (2003) (73) (4), *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 355-366.

environments is like living in hell; thereby making life difficult for such battered women which will result in an unknown fear resulting into any form of infirmity in the body.<sup>22</sup>

Domestic violence,<sup>23</sup> as said earlier, is a world-wide deeply rooted issue<sup>24</sup> that cuts across all culture, race and levels that it is beginning to be accepted as a general behaviour. This is known to be a terrible societal norm that is generally accepted as a common phenomenon in which women of all height, race or colour encountered based on different cultural mores, religious beliefs, economic beliefs and political beliefs; all the above mentioned beliefs pinpoint directly or indirectly to the fact that women must not fight back, or should keep mute in the face of domestic violence to avoid being stigmatized.<sup>25</sup>

The above paragraph discussed gender inequality and rudeness to women. This kind of violence came into play when women had swallowed, digested and accepted the societal belief<sup>26</sup> of non-retaliation when being hit or hurt by the opposite sex despite the existence of variance sizes and power or energy compared to that of women. Also, most societies, if not all, prefer to equip men well from younger age than their female counterparts. Women are given poor orientation about protection and are never well equipped to stand firmly and fight back in the face of danger, when their husbands or partners are vigorously violent like volcanic eruption.<sup>27</sup>

Domestic violence is dangerous and not beneficial to human existence at all in the society where all avenues of power such as political, social, legal, economic and religion are in support.<sup>28</sup> This then gives room to hierarchical gender inequality and this is seen in different ways or forms to make men a powerful symbol in the society especially over women. Domestic violence against women is a global pandemic, crime and costly violation of the fundamental human rights of women which is therefore a matter of critical concern.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> R. Stephenson and M.A. Koenig and S. Ahmed, Domestic violence and symptoms of gynaecological morbidity among women in north india(2006) (Vol. 32.), *Int Fam plan perspective*, pp201-208.

<sup>23</sup> D. Anderson, The impact on subsequent violence of returning to an abusive partner. (2003) (34) (1), *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 93-112.

<sup>24</sup> It is a global issue reaching across national boundaries as well as socio-economic, cultural, racial and class distinctions.

<sup>25</sup> Committing an act of violence is a choice that the individual makes out of a range of options.

<sup>26</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity*, para. 2, 19 April 2017, A/HRC/35/36.

<sup>27</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity*, Para. 2, 19 April 2017, A/HRC/35/36.

<sup>28</sup> Whether domestic violence operates as direct physical violence, threat, or intimidation,

<sup>29</sup> Existing data on violence against women from sources such as UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, UN Women and WHO

acknowledges that violence against women continues to be a global pandemic and therefore a matter of critical concern.

A slim glimpse at the world around show the existence of women all around the world in their various careers, sectors or fields and when they are battered or attacked by their partners, will definitely bring about economic earthquake and societal degradation in which such behaviour affects the development of a nation.<sup>30</sup> This is because, victims of domestic violence will never perform well on their day to day activities; they tend to lack concentration, nurse injuries, pass through psychological trauma, wounded mind, and sometimes death, which will affect their environment at that particular moment. This situation or scenario will definitely cost the government several funds to curb such undeserving action by compulsorily empowering all law enforcement agencies, all health care organizations, human right activists and others who are concerned about domestic violence.<sup>31</sup> It is definitely a huge cost to individuals, to health systems and to the society at large. This sole act of a singular man will affect the woman, and her family, friends, employer, and those around her.<sup>32</sup>

It is therefore necessary to note that several women who are lucky to scale through without being dead have spent a lot of financial resources on their health due to this act of violence without notifying anyone. According to the report made by World Health Organization,<sup>33</sup> which basically stated that *“the proportion of women who had ever experienced physical or sexual violence or both by an intimate partner are numerous.”*

Also, looking at the United Nation Population Fund report,<sup>34</sup> which also revealed that *“around two-thirds of married women in India were victims of domestic violence.”*

## **2.0 SOCIETAL ACCEPTANCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA AND OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

Violence in Nigeria<sup>35</sup> and other developing countries<sup>36</sup> had been displayed from various media outlets showing how dangerous it is; it brings about death, broken legs, broken arms, limbs, and

<sup>30</sup> D. Sheila, ‘Individual or Invisible: Women’s Human Rights in the Public and Private Sphere in Women Gender, and Human Right: A Global Perspective Marjorie (2001), *Agosin ed* Rutgers University Press.

<sup>31</sup> Yet no other major problem of public health has been so widely ignored and so little understood.

<sup>32</sup> C. Zimmerman, Plates in a basket will rattle: Domestic violence in Combodia, Phnom Pehn. Combodia: The Asia Foundation. ., (1994),

<sup>33</sup> “WHO” Multi-country study on Women's health and domestic violence against women. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2007

<sup>34</sup> United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Violence against girls and women: a public health priority (<http://www.unfpa.org/intercenter/violence/>, accessed 5 February 2009).

<sup>35</sup> Unite For Sight, (2015), Violence and Domestic Violence in Developing Countries, Available online at <http://www.uniteforsight.org/gender-power/module3>, accessed on the 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2020

<sup>36</sup> L. M. Sardinha, and E. Héctor and N. Catalán. Attitudes towards domestic violence in 49 low- and middle-income countries: A gendered analysis of prevalence and country-level correlates. PLOS ONE, 2018; 13 (10): e0206101 DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0206101

blindness. Violence that had occurred within families are nothing to write home about, because it had been tagged a taboo for battered women to voice out their experience or situation thereby making such women of victimization to remain voiceless in the face of storm. There are so many unreported cases of domestic violence that are tagged family-issues which exist unnoticed daily within the society and these so-called family-issue cases must not be heard, discussed or settled outside but must be within the close-family and the women involve will suffer in silence till they commit suicide, or run away from the environment, while some will stay put till they become disabled, become mentally derailed or die. This drastic increase of battered women showed there is need for a quick intervention to prevent a noticeable disaster; because this is a serious problem that must be put in check.<sup>37</sup> Nigeria is known to be a dignified entity with long preserved way of life, where existing cultural heritage maintains a strong family close-tie relationship; that promote or encourage battered women to stay back and endure the violence waging against them in order to preserve the existing harmony within such family; in which it will be very difficult for such women to severe or separate themselves from such family ties. There are other reasons why it might be difficult in the Nigerian settings or in other developing countries to quit such an abused marriage or relationship, it is because married women or partners staying together are well categorized and respected within the society but the opposite is the case where a woman is divorced or separated because such individual will be stigmatized. It is important to note that women who have decided to stay in an abusive marriage or relationship must be respected.<sup>38</sup>

There are several difficulties faced by women in their marriages or relationships as a result of gender based violence that exists in all countries of the world, with no regards to their status;<sup>39</sup> whether of high calibre or low calibre.<sup>40</sup> A look at Nigeria or any other developing countries<sup>41</sup> of the world will reflect a better view of their non-exception to the issue of domestic violence in which various records revealed that there has been significant increase in wife battering that had

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<sup>37</sup> S. Mohd, and D. Mohd, 'The legal & social issues of wife battering and marital rape in Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasadan Pustaka. (1996), Available online at [http://studentsrepo.um.edu.my/5660/3/Chapter\\_1\\_5\\_2013\\_Viva.pdf](http://studentsrepo.um.edu.my/5660/3/Chapter_1_5_2013_Viva.pdf) accessed on the 5/12/2018

<sup>38</sup> L. A. Hoff, *Battered Women as Survivors*. NY: Routledge. (1990).

<sup>39</sup> It could be between anybody; rich or poor, developed or developing, with no regard to caste, creed, colour, social status, wealth, urban or rural residence, or the ages of victim and aggressor

<sup>40</sup> K. Ravneet, and G. Suneela, 'Addressing Domestic Violence Against Women: An Unfinished Agenda' (2008), Available online at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2784629/#CIT2>

<sup>41</sup> Ministry of health and family welfare, Government of Indian, fact sheet: National family health survey *NFHS-III* 2005-2006, PP1

been reported severally over the past years.<sup>42</sup> Records from the Police<sup>43</sup> showed that the cases of violence that was reported at Nigerian Police Station<sup>44</sup> had noticeably and drastically increased with about 30%<sup>45</sup> and the increase in number of reported cases was never a sign that such women had been helped or free from such bondage but because they needed an assistance to save their relationship or marriage from total crash.<sup>46</sup>

This is seen in the citation made by Shipway<sup>47</sup> based on the following:

*“(1). Fear of further or escalating violence should the victim report an incident; (2). Hopes, that the relationship can be salvaged; (3). Mistrust of agencies; and, (4). Lack of knowledge about what most agencies could do to help.”*

Assaults that are reported or recorded by the victims themselves such as sexual abuse<sup>48</sup> or fight against women are the only kind of common domestic violence that are recognized by the law of the land; while those ones that suffered emotional, psychological and financial abuse; who hide it from family, work-place, friends, social media, public places and as well refuse to report such incident are not counted as what should be looked into and curbed.<sup>49</sup>

Cases of battery are so common on women by their partners; and when there is great opportunity for them to finally run out of the marriage or relationship for their dear life, they stay glued and pretend nothing happened to them.<sup>50</sup> This is not a welcome ideology for female souls since I know what it entails to go through such a dilemma. I kept on asking myself several questions on why women tend to be mute, decide not to run away and those that managed to leave the marriage or relationship, also tend to come back into such violent affair, but I have not gotten a single satisfactory answer as each situation is typically different from the other, across countries based on cultural, economic, and political differences. It is so obvious that a careful

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<sup>42</sup> M. Rashida, and M. Calleigh, ‘Gender-based Violence and Justice in Conflict and Post Conflict Areas’ (2011) Vol. 44 No. 11 *Cornell International Law Journal*; 11-12.

<sup>43</sup> Diraja, (2010)

<sup>44</sup> in 2009

<sup>45</sup> from 2,555 cases in 2003 to 3,643 cases

<sup>46</sup> However, the increase in the reported cases does indicate that women are developing an awareness of their right to be free from violence.

<sup>47</sup> L. Shipway, *Domestic violence: A handbook for health professionals*. (2004) London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>48</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières /Doctors Without Borders (MSF). (Mar. 2009) “Shattered Lives Immediate Medical Care Vital for Sexual Violence Victims.” <https://issuu.com/msfsouthafrica/docs/shattered-lives>.

<sup>49</sup> Dersch, C. A and Harris, S.T.M. and Rappleyea, D.L. Recognizing and responding to partner violence: An analog study. (2006). 34, *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 317-331.

<sup>50</sup> Barnett, O. W. Why battered women do not leave, part 1: External inhibiting factors within society. *Trauma*, (2000). 1(4), *Violence, & Abuse*, 343- 372.



study on the issue of domestic violence have not been conducted in Nigeria or other developing countries.<sup>51</sup> Most responses are based on the fact that they don't want themselves<sup>52</sup> or their children to be stigmatized<sup>53</sup> based on the societal norms that such children might not meet up to standard of other children who had a co-parental care. Also, some of the responses are based on their inability to cope as a single parent due to financial restrain, or inability to cope with the stigma that follow a single parenting even though there is financial independence and lastly, their wish or duty to bring the family closely to themselves despite going through stress.<sup>54</sup> But it is saddening that most research or researchers did not concentrate on finding out why the lucky women<sup>55</sup> left their abusive marriage or relationship without looking back on the outcome.<sup>56</sup>

Based on the survey conducted within an hospital by Chin et al,<sup>57</sup> where he concluded that apart from confiding in the doctors in an hospital,<sup>58</sup> most victims of domestic violence rarely seek assistance from family or those that can shed more light on the scenario,<sup>59</sup> they rather shut their mouth up.<sup>60</sup>

Series of pertinent questions went through my mind when I became a victim of domestic violence from my partner; some of such questions are:

- (a) How can I leave this marriage without getting hurt or being destroyed?
- (b) How do I face the world, especially my parents and my siblings?
- (c) How do I cope at my work-place and other place of my endeavours?

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<sup>51</sup> Anderson, K. L. Who gets out? Gender as structure and the dissolution of violent heterosexual relationships. (2007). 1(2), *Gender & Society*, 173-201, Barnett, 2000, 2001; Davis & Taylor, 2006; Kearney, 2001; Nagae & Dancy, 2010)

<sup>52</sup> The society will not recognize them as responsible but will be seen as harlot and useless.

<sup>53</sup> Called several names like bastard

<sup>54</sup> C. Chin, and A. Ahmad, and O. Susan. 'Survey of battered wives', *University Hospital Magazine* (1988). Presentation at the First Malaysian Conference on Psychological Medicine, Kuala Lumpur.

<sup>55</sup> as I refer to them

<sup>56</sup> Radhika, C., and Lisa, M., "Violence Against Women" (2005), (1) *Women and International Human Rights Law Journal*, 184-184.

<sup>57</sup> Chin, C., and Azizah A., and Ong, S., 'Survey of battered wives' *University Hospital* (1988). Presentation at the First Malaysian Conference on Psychological Medicine, Kuala Lumpur.

<sup>58</sup> Gail, G., 'Doctors Vs Domestic Violence@ Yes, You Can Make a Difference''(2000) (20) (40) *Medical Economics*,

<sup>59</sup> Parker, B., McFarlane, J., (1991), "Identifying and Helping Battered Pregnant Women, (1991) (16) *Matern Child Nurse Journal*, 161

<sup>60</sup> Little research in Nigeria has focused on talking to the women who leave permanently with a focus on the factors that helped them to leave. A significant number of intimate partner violence studies have focused on the USA and many interventions were based on the North American model. However, there is a danger in this approach as the experience may be different across countries due to cultural, economic, and political differences.

Some persons were asked why they still stayed in such a perplexed marriage or relationship where they are victim of domestic violence;<sup>61</sup> others were asked why they did not vacate the environment and so on. The above questions are not as relevant as the one I am about to ask, which are:

- (i) How did those battered women who left their partners able to get the audacity to leave their marriage or relationship and face their future.
- (ii) How will those women finance themselves; and probably those children they left the toxic relationship with?

According to a renowned writer Elizabeth,<sup>62</sup> who argued that: *Separation is a complex process and cannot be confined just to the “stay/leave construct”*. “One needs to see the decisions of the women in staying and leaving as a process rather than a single act.”

Furthermore, it is vital to note that, it is good to accept leaving or moving away from such an abusive marriage or relationship as a choice rather than accepting it as a best way out. Barnett<sup>63</sup> commented that, “on average, women left and returned five times before permanently ending the abusive relationship.”<sup>64</sup> The dilemma of a battered or abused woman can never be known unless spoken out.<sup>65</sup> So many women are tortured in their marriages or relationships; some are beaten without mercy with the use of rod, some are being hit with a hot iron, some are left with black eyes due to excess force from the fist of an aggressive partner, some are shot dead, some are also stabbed to death, broken bottles are used to create excessive mark on their bodies, some are left uncared for so as to bleed to death,<sup>66</sup> some are raped or sexually abused,<sup>67</sup> some are robbed, and so on. It is unfortunate that some women having gone through one or more of the above listed means of violence, still prefer to stay back, some will leave the abuse only to return back later while another will leave and never to return though this is not an easy choice or decision but a

<sup>61</sup> Melinda, S., M.A., and Jeanne, S., “How to Get Out of an Abusive Relationship” (2019), *Help guide newsletters*, Available online at <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/abuse/getting-out-of-an-abusive-relationship.htm>

<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth, V., Separating from violent male partners: A resistant act in the midst of power relations. (2003), (4) (3), *Journal of International Women’s Studies*, 62 -80.

<sup>63</sup> Barnett, O. W. ‘Why battered women do not leave, part 1: External inhibiting factors within society.’ (2000). (1) (4), *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 343- 372.

<sup>64</sup> Davis, K., and Taylor, B. Stories of resistance and healing in the process of leaving abusive relationship. (2006) (21) *Contemporary Nurse*, 199-208.

<sup>65</sup> Chopyak, D. and Abdullah, R. ‘The psychological problems of battered women and their families: Implications for the helping professions.’ (1986) (2) *Journal Perkama*, 59-75.

<sup>66</sup> Hoff, L. A., *Battered Women as Survivors*. NY: Routledge. (1990)

<sup>67</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières /Doctors Without Borders (MSF). “Shattered Lives Immediate Medical Care Vital for Sexual Violence Victims.” (Mar. 2009). Available online at <https://issuu.com/msfsouthafrica/docs/shattered-lives> accessed 15 September 2020

difficult one.<sup>68</sup> I have come to the conclusion that moving away from such a terrible act<sup>69</sup> is a process and not a single act which must be accepted as a best solution.

Kirkwood<sup>70</sup> has described those that are unable to leave as being “*trapped or known as “web” of entrapment used by abusive men to entrap their partners.*”

### 3.0 CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

There are several factors traceable to the existence of domestic violence within the society.<sup>71</sup> Generally, men are likely to perpetrate violence more if they have record of being maltreated while still young, domestic violence between their parents, addiction to alcohol and drugs,<sup>72</sup> exposure to societal beliefs of gender inequality and supremacy over females,<sup>73</sup> and having a natural violent nature.<sup>74</sup> Other factors include;<sup>75</sup>

- anger Management Issues<sup>76</sup>
- lower levels of education;<sup>77</sup>
- inferiority Complex;
- exposure to family violence;<sup>78</sup>
- unawareness of basic human rights and other legal rights of women;<sup>79</sup>
- jealousy;
- low self-esteem;<sup>80</sup>
- frustration-Aggression;<sup>81</sup>
- antisocial personality disorder;<sup>82</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Kirkwood, C., *Leaving abusive partners: From the scars of survival to the wisdom for change*. London, UK: Sage (1993),

<sup>69</sup> Lom, B., and Nancy, and Mlillan, M., and Leslei., "Violence Against Women: Current Theory and Practice in Domestic Abuse. Sexual Violence and Exploitation'. 2013. pp. 8-9.

<sup>70</sup> Koepsell, J., Kernic, M., & Holt, V., Factors that influence battered women to leave their abusive relationships. *Violence and Victims*, (2006). (21) (2), 131-147.

<sup>71</sup> Cook, and Rebecca J., "Human Rights of Women National and International Perspectives", (1995). p. 120.

<sup>72</sup> Misra, and Preeti., 'Domestic Violence Against Women In India: Juristic Norms' (2003),(23) (24) *Legal Control and Judicial Response Law Review* p. 14.

<sup>73</sup> Kaur, G. 'Domestic violence or Violence against Women: Faw & Practice'(2004) (XX1) *Delhi law Review*,205.

<sup>74</sup> Misra, P. "Domestic Violence Against Women :Legal Control and Judicial Responses". 2007, p. 226.

<sup>75</sup> Ahuja, Ram, 'Violence against Women", 1998, p. 200.

<sup>76</sup> Niamh, R., *Women's Human Rights*, (2000), Polity press, pp.98.

<sup>77</sup> World health Organization, (2017), *Violence against women*, Available online at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>. Accessed 21 September 2020

<sup>78</sup> Sri Ram, Rajalakshimi, "Violence in the Family: A View From Witlim," (2001) (62) *The Indian .journal of Social Work*, Iuly 388.

<sup>79</sup> Kumar, M., Kumar, K., *Problems*"(2009) 278.

<sup>80</sup> Erwstr, Hilyard, " *Introduction to Psychology*"(1975) 435.

<sup>81</sup> Myers, G. and David, " *Social Psychology*", (1996) 436

<sup>82</sup> Reid, and Sheila, 'Preventing Violence Against Women: A European Perspective', (2003) 17

- sexual dissatisfaction leading to extra marital affairs;<sup>83</sup>
  - suspected by their partners of infidelity;<sup>84</sup>
  - psychological disorder;<sup>85</sup>
  - lack of women's access to paid employment;<sup>86</sup>
  - having records of violence;<sup>87</sup>
  - lack of communication between partners,
  - lack of genuine love;
  - having a mindset of normal male sexual entitlement when women are not willing,
- and
- weak legal system (laws) towards sanctions for domestic violence.

The root causes of domestic violence against women<sup>88</sup> by men are as a result of gender inequality and ancient societal beliefs on the total acceptability of violence towards women that are expected not to stand where men are.<sup>89</sup>

#### 4.0 HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The effect of domestic violence on women's physical health, mental health, sexual health, and reproductive health is so severe.<sup>90</sup> It is a major problem that affects women, their children, their family and the society, which will lead to social and economic loss.<sup>91</sup>

The effect of domestic violence on women includes the following<sup>92</sup>:-

- (a) increase in mental disorder or instability of mental alertness;<sup>93</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Sheri S., Causes and Risks of Why Married People Cheat : Motivations for extramarital affairs are vast and can vary by gender, (2019) Available online at <https://www.verywellmind.com/why-married-people-cheat-2300656>. Accessed 20 September 2020

<sup>84</sup> Rhoades GK, and Stanley SM, and Markman HJ. Pre-engagement cohabitation and gender asymmetry in marital commitment. *Journal of Family Psychology*. 2006;20:553–560.

<sup>85</sup> Flowers, and Ronald, B., "The Victimization and Exploitation of Women. A Study of Physical, Mental and Sexual Maltreatment in the United States and Children".(1994) 34.

<sup>86</sup> Hampton, Robert, L., "i'amily \violence: Prevention and rietment'. (1999) 12.

<sup>87</sup> Swisher K. and Wekesser C. (Eds) *Violence Against Women'*(1994), Green haven Press, San Diego, CA

<sup>88</sup> Crowell, and Nancy, and Burgess, and .Ann, W., *Understanding Violence .Against Women*. (1996) 60.

<sup>89</sup> United Nations. Declaration on the elimination of violence against women. New York : UN, 1993. Available online at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

<sup>90</sup> Silva, A.A., and Irabor, A., and Olowookere, O.O., and Owoaje, E.J., and Adebuseye, L.A., 'Health- Related Factors Associated With Intimate Partners Violence in Women Attending a Primary Care Clinic in South-Western Nigeria', *South African Family Practice* (2015), (57) (2) 69-76

<sup>91</sup> Hughes, J. 'Gender, Equity, and Indigenous Women's Health in the Americas.' Available online at <https://www.paho.org/hq/dmdocuments/2011/gdr-gender-equity-and-Indigenous-women-health-americas.pdf>. Accessed 17 April 2020

<sup>92</sup> Ravneet Kaur and Suneela Garg, 'Addressing domestic violence Against Women: An unfinished Agenda' (2017), *Indian journal of community medicine: official public publication of Indian association of preventive and social medicine*, wolters kluwer-med know publications.

- (b) high rate of homicide or suicide;
- (c) report of severe injuries,<sup>94</sup>
- (d) unacceptable behavioural and emotional disturbances;
- (e) unintended pregnancies, induced abortions, gynecological problems, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.<sup>95</sup>
- (f) high rate of miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-term delivery and low birth weight babies.<sup>96</sup>
- (g) Increase in depression, post-traumatic stress and other anxiety disorders, sleeping difficulties, eating disorders, and suicide attempts.<sup>97</sup>
- (h) higher rates of infant and child mortality and morbidity
- (i) constant headaches, back pain, abdominal pain, gastrointestinal disorders, limited mobility and poor overall health;
- (j) smoking, drug and alcohol misuse, and risky sexual behaviours.

#### 4.1 Social and Economic Consequences

When the society is faced with huge existence of domestic violence, the social and the economic situations will be down. Most women occupy a large portion of the society and when they are experiencing domestic violence,<sup>98</sup> they will not be able to work; leading to loss of wages, bringing about intensive self-isolation, lack of participation in regular activities and limited ability to care for themselves, family and their children at that particular period. In view of this, the society will definitely feel the impact.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Anderson, I., Breese, "Intervention Through Collaboration: The Development of Domestic Violence".(2008) 12.

<sup>94</sup> with 42% of women who experience intimate partner violence reporting an injury as a consequence of this violence.

<sup>95</sup> The 2013 analysis found that women who had been physically or sexually abused were 1.5 times more likely to have a

sexually transmitted infection and, in some regions, HIV, compared to women who had not experienced partner violence. They are also twice as likely to have an abortion.

<sup>96</sup> The same 2013 study showed that women who experienced intimate partner violence were 16% more likely to suffer a

miscarriage and 41% more likely to have a pre-term birth.

<sup>97</sup> The 2013 analysis found that women who have experienced intimate partner violence were almost twice as likely to

experience depression and problem drinking.

<sup>98</sup> Goodmark, L. 'A Troubled Marriage: Domestic Violence and the Legal System' (2012) 32-33.

<sup>99</sup> Rocca, C., and Rathod, S., and Falle, T., and et. al. "Challenging assumptions about women's empowerment: social and economic resources and domestic violence among young married women in urban South India." (2009). *International Journal of Epidemiology*. 38.

## 5.0 PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

There are several studies on the total prevention of domestic violence,<sup>100</sup> the most important study is based on enactment and enforcement of legislation; and the development, and implementation of policies that promote gender equality. These laws will be in place to end discrimination against women in marriage, divorce and custody laws, it will also improve women's access to paid employment, and it will also develop resourcing policies to address violence against women.

Introduction of advocacy and counseling<sup>101</sup> interventions will improve the surviving rate of victimized women and reduce such violence. This includes;

a) empowerment of women economically and socially through a combination of finance and skills training related to gender equality;

(b) encouragement of relationship and effective communication skills between couples and the society;

(c) transformation of harmful gender and social norms through community mobilization and group-based participatory education with women and men to generate critical reflections about unequal gender and power relationships.<sup>102</sup>

(d) Involvement and intervention of every group or individual within the society such as school,<sup>103</sup> community and media, and consistent advocacy and counseling on how dangerous domestic violence is, will transform and break the hardened social norms in order to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women by challenging violent men.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Saunders, D. "Prediction of Wife Assault." (1995). In J. Campbell (ed.), *Assessing Dangerousness: Violence by Sexual Offenders, Batterers, and Child Abusers* (pp. 68–95). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; Roehl, J., and Guertin, K. "Intimate Partner Violence: The Current Use of Risk Assessments in Sentencing Offenders." (2000) (21), *Justice System Journal*, 171–197; Kropp, P., Hart, S., Webster, C., and Eaves, D. 'Manual for the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide' (2nd ed.). (1995). Vancouver, Canada: British Columbia Institute on Family Violence.

<sup>101</sup> Chandrasekaran, V., and Krupp, K., and George, R., and et. al. "Determinants of domestic violence among women attending an human immunodeficiency virus voluntary counseling and testing center in Bangalore, India. (2007) *Indian Journal of Medical Sciences*.

<sup>102</sup> WHO (1999), *Putting women's safety first: Ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence against women*; WHO/EIPIGPE/99.2 Geneva, World Health Organization.

<sup>103</sup> Holtz, H. A., and Hanes, C., and Safran, M. A., and et al. Education about domestic violence in US and Canadian medical schools: (1987-1989) (38) *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 17-19.

<sup>104</sup> Burlon, B., and Duvvuru, N., and Varia, N., 'Justice, Change and Human Rights: International Research and Response to Domestic Violence' (2000), Jointly published by *International Center for Research on women and Center for Development and Population Activities*, Washington DC, 20.

(e) Awareness must be created through media intervention such as campaigns, rally and via media outlets such as television, radio, newspapers; this is effective for altering attitudes towards gender norms.<sup>105</sup>

(f) Awareness creation on zero-taking or reduction in harmful use of alcohol.<sup>106</sup>

The health sector must declare violence against women as societal health problem. They must provide standby health services to women by sensitizing and training health workers.<sup>107</sup>

They must identify women who are experiencing violence early so as to prevent recurrence of violence by providing appropriate referral, support and confidence.<sup>108</sup>

Introduction of permanent school based programmes on ‘stop domestic violence’ to children at an early age before they become deeply ingrained in societal beliefs or norms on gender inequality or supremacy of men over women. This will address gender norms, dating violence and sexual abuse among teenagers and young adults.<sup>109</sup>

Nigeria and other developing countries must take a cursory look at the New York City and other developed countries on how domestic violence was prevented. Before now, the rate of domestic violence in Princeton, New York City and other places was higher than the case of murder<sup>110</sup> but In November 2016, *Mayor Bill de Blasio* launched the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force to develop a citywide strategy to reduce domestic violence. By bringing together leaders from the domestic violence field, including experts from victim advocacy organizations, city agencies, community-based organizations, law enforcement, and nonprofits, the Task Force proposes innovative strategies to resolve the challenging and complex social problem of domestic violence through earlier identification of abuse, supportive intervention, and effective

<sup>105</sup> Michaela R., and Jasmin R., ‘Campaigns to End Violence against Women and Girls,’ (2011), *United Nations Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*

<sup>106</sup> Cunradi, C., and Caetano, R., and Schafer, J., ‘Alcohol-related problems, drug use, and male intimate partner violence severity among U.S. couples. *Alcoholism, Clinical and Experimental Research*, (2002), (26) (4), 493-500. ; WHO, (2019), 10 areas governments could work with to reduce the harmful use of alcohol, Available online at <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/10-areas-for-national-action-on-alcohol>. Accessed 20 September 2020

<sup>107</sup> Krug, E. G. and Mercy, J. A. and Dahlberg, L. L. and Zwi, A. B. ‘The world report on violence and health.’ (2002) (360) ( 9339), *The Lancet*, 1083-1088.

<sup>108</sup> Evans, M. And Feder, G. ‘Help-seeking Amongst Women Survivors of Domestic Violence: A Qualitative Study of Pathways Towards Formal and Informal Support Health Expectations: (2016) (19) (1) *An International Journal of Public Participation in Health Care and Health Policy*, 62–73.

<sup>109</sup> Warwick, L., and et al ‘Homophobia, Sexual Orientation and Schools: a Review and Implications for Action’ (2004) University of London; Tammi, L. Telling it like it is: An Introduction to Peer Education and Training. ., (2003) Article 12, Angus, Scotland.

<sup>110</sup> ‘Domestic Abuse Killings Climb as Murders Drop, Frustrating New York Official’ Available online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/29/nyregion/domestic-abuse-killings-new-york-city.html> accessed on the 29th of January, 2020

prevention,<sup>111</sup> and this shows that the government cares about the affairs of each family by preventing it. Also, the NYC Bar and Princeton city did not relent in their efforts to curb domestic violence<sup>112</sup> by introducing committees<sup>113</sup> that must stand against domestic violence.<sup>114</sup>

There is need to make an inquiry into the ideology and experience of women all over the world especially Nigerian women who made a choice by quitting their marriages or relationship; also looking at the procedure of their exit, the dilemma they went through and the resources that made them to stay away from the marriage or relationship without seeking help from their partners and then provide solution.

According to Liang et al.,<sup>115</sup> where he stated that “

*domestic violence as a complex phenomenon that is subjectively experienced by each woman and is thus affected by distinct histories and values.”*

Based on the above, it is necessary to investigate and engage willing battered women on face to face discussion so that they can pour out the content of their battered experience before they left the marriage or relationship and what they went through after leaving an abusive marriage or relationship without minding the aftermath of their exit thereof; this will bring about advance knowledge in this area, especially on why and how they left so as to encourage the following women:-<sup>116</sup>

<sup>111</sup> ‘Task Force – The Domestic Violence Task Force -Defending the Right of Crime Victims’ Available online at <https://criminaljustice.cityofnewyork.us/programs/the-domestic-violence-task-force/> accessed on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January, 2020

<sup>112</sup> ‘Domestic violence committees’ Available online at <https://www.nycbar.org/member-and-career-services/committees/domestic-violence-committee> accessed on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January, 2020

<sup>113</sup> The Domestic Violence Committee engages in policy and legal analysis, and attorney and public education on issues relating to domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence. Recent topics addressed by the Committee include police accountability for responding to domestic abuse, housing and employment discrimination against survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, and sentencing for defendants who are domestic violence survivors.

<sup>114</sup> Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence, and Stalking are emotionally and physically traumatic, and are a violation of one’s rights. There are many on-campus and community support services and resources available to help Students. Students who have experienced Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence or Stalking are referred to as “Complainants.” Students who are accused of Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence or Stalking are referred to as “Respondents.” This document provides resources and information for both Complainants and Respondents. This resource guide should be read in the context of the Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence, and Stalking Policy (the “Policy”) and capitalized terms in this guide are defined in the Policy.

<sup>115</sup> Liang, B. and Goodman, L., and Tummala-Narra, P., and Weintraub, S., ‘A theoretical framework for understanding help-seeking processes among survivors of intimate partner violence’ (2005) (36) *American Journal of Community Psychology* 71-84

<sup>116</sup> Carole and Warshaw, M.D. ‘Identification, Assessment and Intervention With Victims of Domestic’ , pp 49-86, Available online at [https://www.ecu.edu/tnwe/Endowment/Resources\\_files/improvinghealthcare\\_2.pdf](https://www.ecu.edu/tnwe/Endowment/Resources_files/improvinghealthcare_2.pdf). Accessed 15 September 2020



- (a) who are still in abusive marriage or relationships;<sup>117</sup>
- (b) those attempting to leave;<sup>118</sup>
- (c) those women who are leaving and;
- (d) those who are remaining out of abusive relationships.

## 6.0 QUESTIONS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

It is vital to ask oneself questions on why women are being treated less in situations where both male and female are involved? Also, why do women keep quiet in such circumstances? Then, why do women still stay glued in an abusive relationship? And how did abused women arrive at the decision to leave an abusive relationship or marriage? What is their experience of leaving like? And how did they survive being alone?<sup>119</sup>

It is necessary to have a sound understanding of the dilemma battered women have in an abusive relationship; this will enable an appropriate counseling intervention. Leaving an abusive relationship is very difficult for most women. Many abused women attempt to leave an abusive relationship unsuccessfully five or six times before they are successful.<sup>120</sup> The cost of failure to identify and intervene when violence occurs, in terms of women's suffering and the use of time and resources, is incalculable. The long term nature of the effects of trauma, the pattern of repeated assaults by intimate partners typically means misery for the women involved.<sup>121</sup> Giving a voice to these women who have actually lived through these experiences will enable counselors to be able to relate to women's individual situations and circumstances in a way that is empathetic and responsive to the needs of women who have left as well as those who have not yet managed that journey.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Sullivan, M.C., 'Examining the Work of Domestic Violence Programs Within a "Social and Emotional Well-Being Promotion" Conceptual Framework' National Resource Center on Domestic Violence Project. (2016), Available online at <https://www.dvevidenceproject.org/wp-content/uploads/DVEvidence-Services-ConceptualFramework-2016.pdf> Accessed 15 September 2020

<sup>118</sup> Davis, L.V., and Srinivasan, M. 'Listening to the voices of battered women: What helps them escape violence. (1995) 10(1), *Affilia*, 49-69.

<sup>119</sup> Constantino, R., and Kim, Y., and Crane, P. A., 'Effects of a social support intervention on health outcomes in residents of a domestic violence shelter: A pilot study. (2005) (26) *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 575-590.

<sup>120</sup> Barnett, O., 'Why battered women do not leave, part 1: External inhibiting factors within society. (2000) (1) (4) *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 343-372

<sup>121</sup> Coker, A. L. and Davis, K. E. and Arias, I. and Desai, S. and Sanderson, M. and Brandt, H.M. 'Physical and mental health effects of intimate partner violence for men and women' (2002) (23) (4) *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 260-268.

<sup>122</sup> Bybee, D.I. and Sullivan, C.M. The process through which a strengths-based intervention resulted in positive change for battered women over time. (2002) (30) (1) *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 103-132.

This study also provides a means for women to tell their stories and possibly raise the consciousness of those who read their narratives as they are given a voice regarding this phenomenon. By sharing their story, it might shed light for other women who are still in an abusive relationship and help them to see a way out. It is hoped that the experiences as told by the abused women who have left can promote continuation of social activism and advocacy to heighten public awareness, raise public conscience, and generate greater understanding of the plight of women who struggle to free themselves from the grip of intimate partner violence.<sup>123</sup> All these need to translate into practical support and interventions by family, religious authorities, social welfare departments, the criminal justice system, and all other parties concerned.

## **7.0 INTERNATIONAL LAWS AND POLICIES TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY**

There are existing international instruments enacted to prevent, eliminate and redress the issue of domestic violence in Nigeria and other developing countries. The development of international and national legal frameworks that promote gender equality can play an important role in preventing violence against women. Internationally, a number of human rights agreements require states to take measures to eliminate gender-based violence against women,<sup>124</sup> and developing countries such as Nigeria, India, Singapore and other countries can hide under these laws to curb domestic violence and promote gender equality.

These laws includes the:-

- (a) Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women;<sup>125</sup>

This is an international treaty adopted and signed in 1979 at the New York City by the United Nations General Assembly. It is an international bill of rights for women; it became effective on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September, 1981 and it has been ratified by 189 states.

- (b) laws that criminalize violence against women (e.g. intimate-partner violence, rape in marriage, trafficking for prostitution);<sup>126</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Eisikovits, Z., and Buchbinder, E. *Locked in a violent embrace: Understanding and intervening in domestic violence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (2000).

<sup>124</sup> Randall, T. 'Domestic violence intervention calls for more than treating injuries.' (1990) (264) (8) *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 939-40.

<sup>125</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection (1981) 3<sup>rd</sup> of September

<sup>126</sup> Violence against Women Act (VAWA) 1994; 2006, Pakistan's Protection of Women Act (Criminal Law Amendment) Act; The Acid Control and the Acid Crime Prevention Act of 2010 amended in 2011; The Protection against Harassment of Women at the workplace Act of 2010 and the Domestic Violence (Preventive and Protection) Act of 2012; Bangladesh's Dowry Provision Act of 1980; The Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act of 2000; The Acid Control Act of 2000; and The Acid Crimes and Control Act of 2002.

(c) laws and policies that support and protect those affected (e.g. implementing protection orders, child and family protection units, specialized response teams, women's shelters and family courts); improving the response of police and other criminal justice officials towards cases of violence against women; and improving women's rights in marriage, divorce, property ownership and inheritance and child support (3,16,17).

(d) Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict,<sup>127</sup>

(e) The CSW Agreed Conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.<sup>128</sup> This call for developing comprehensive approaches to prevention of violence, especially by addressing structural and underlying causes of such violence transforming social norms, developing appropriate education programs, working through media to eliminate gender stereotypes.

(f) African Union, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa known as Maputo Protocol.<sup>129</sup> It is known as international Human Right Instrument established by African Union in 1995 and signed in 2003 and came into effect in 2005.

(g) OAS, Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women known as Convention of Belém do Pará,<sup>130</sup> It is the international Human Rights instrument adopted by the American Commission of Women.

(h) ASEAN, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region,<sup>131</sup> ASEAN, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Elimination of Violence against Children in ASEAN,<sup>132</sup> and

(i) Council of Europe, Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).<sup>133</sup>

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is evident that the spread of domestic violence against women is caused by lack of access to legal information, aid or protection, lack of law that effectively prohibit violence against women; failure to reform existing laws; inadequate efforts on the part of public authorities to promote awareness of and enforce existing laws and absence of

<sup>127</sup> United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3318(XXIX),

<sup>128</sup> CSW 57<sup>th</sup> session 2013

<sup>129</sup> African Resolution AHG / RES 24 (XXXI)

<sup>130</sup> Adopted in 1994

<sup>131</sup> 2012

<sup>132</sup> 1993

<sup>133</sup> CETS, NO. 210. It came into force on 01/08/2014

educational and other means to address the cause and consequences of domestic violence. It is also evident that putting an end to a relationship or marriage is not a sudden event but a gradual process which is based on each woman's experience and circumstance. Also, each woman's mode of exiting their terrible situation is based on the fact that each woman develops personal surviving skills within the turbulent marriage or relationship and right after their exit from such.

Therefore, violence against women can be prevented via-a-vis the involvement of public health and legal sectors that have important roles to play in dealing with its causes and consequences. Countries should improve on laws governing domestic violence and it is right to state that persons who are trained to support, encourage and assist abused women to move out of their marriage or relationship must do so with technical wisdom, and improve on themselves by allowing those victims to make choices voluntarily without being forced, so that they can stand by their actions later on.

Also, domestic violence against women has gained attention worldwide in number of programs introduced by several organizations demanding an end to domestic violence. Within this context, it becomes necessary to carefully ensure that women and justice and security sector institutions are respectively well equipped to claim and respond to the rights and needs of women, in order to eliminate violence against women so as to achieve gender equality and full empowerment of women.

