American Journal of Sociological Research 2013, 3(3): 53-60
DOI: 10.5923/j.sociology.20130303.01

# Domestic Violence and Death: Women as Endangered Gender in Nigeria

**Adebayo Anthony Abayomi*, Kolawole, Taiwo Olabode**

Department of Sociology, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

**Abstract** Domestic violence against women is a global issue that transcends national, cultural, racial and class boundaries. It is a menace that is deeply entrenched in the society and has led to the sudden death of many women across the globe. Statistics show that at least every year in the United States, 1,000 to 1,600 women die at the hands of their male partners, often after a long, escalating pattern of battering. This estimated number of deaths due to intimate partner violence does not include those women who kill themselves to exit violent relationships, or who die homeless on the streets in their attempt to avoid violent husbands. In Nigeria also, many women have died, brutalised or maimed for life by their violent male counterparts. This paper studies the causative factors of violent assaults suffered by women in the homes. In-depth interview and Newspaper reports were used in obtaining data during the study. The study reveals that the Patriachal nature of society which tends to give ownership of the women to the men is largely responsible for the brutalization of women and also proffers strategies for the eradication the social malaise in Nigeria. The study made use of Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory in its analysis.

**Keywords** Death, Domestic, Nigeria, Violence, Women

## 1. Introduction

There are various dimensions of Violence against Women as the following definition in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action shows: "*any act of gender based violence that results in or likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life"*[1]. There have been serious of efforts to address this menace. These include five International Legal Instruments that deal extensively with the issue of violence against women. They include: the Declaration of the Elimination of Violence Against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993, the Platform for Action from the United Nations fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

(CEDAW) 1979, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights 1945, the Vienna Declaration and World Conference on Human Rights 1993. Violence against women can happen anywhere, on the street, in the work place, at home or at school. There is also systemic violence in which certain acts of violence against women are accepted as part of cultural or traditional practices. Patriarchy made man the centre of society right from the level of family unit to the larger public sphere; consequently authority is derived from the male. Violence against women is evident in many forms, including domestic, verbal and physical abuse, rape and sexual assault, early and forced marriages, incest, female genital cutting, acid baths and outright killing.

From the workplace to the home, women continue to suffer all forms of degradation and deprivation. Women were seen by the male factory workers as threat to their employment. As early as 1841, committee of male factory workers called for the 'gradual withdrawal of all female labour in the factory'. In 1842, the Mines Act banned the employment of women as miners. In 1851, one in four married women were employed; but by 1911 this figure was reduced to one in ten.[2] This discrimination in the workplace manifests itself in the form of violence in the homes. Some men see their wives as rivals. According to Hacker (1972), with the employment of women as wage earners, men were quick to perceive them as a rival group and make use of economic, legal and ideological weapons to eliminate or reduce their competition.[3] However, some men resort to violence to address the supposed rivalry.

Violence against women has been a serious problem in most societies throughout history. Women in Africa, like their counterparts the world over, suffer domestic violence irrespective of class, age, religion or social status.[4] Incidents of domestic violence include battery, beatings, torture, acid baths, rape, and even death through honour

* Corresponding author:
adebayo_nthny@yahoo.com (Adebayo Anthony Abayomi)
Published online at http://journal.sapub.org/sociology
Copyright © 2013 Scientific & Academic Publishing. All Rights Reserved

killing.[5] It is has been estimated that one in every three women suffers domestic violence from the hands of those who claim to love and protect them. Every year in the United States, 1,000 to 1,600 women die at the hands of their male partners, often after a long, escalating pattern of battering. The estimated number of deaths due to intimate partner violence does not include those women who kill themselves to exit violent relationships, or who die homeless on the streets avoiding batterers.[6]

It is estimated that one in every five women faces some forms of violence during her life time leading to serious injury or death in some cases.[7] To show the seriousness of the problem, over 5,000 women marched on the streets of Lagos State in Nigeria on the 22nd April, 2009 to protest the incessant violence against women in the state.[8] In 2004, according to the most recent data available from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's unpublished Supplementary Homicide Report, firearms were the most common weapon used by males to murder females (811 of 1,663 homicides or 49 percent). Of these, 72 percent (582 of 811) were committed with handguns. In cases where the victims knew their offenders, 62 percent of female homicide victims (966 of 1,563) were wives or intimate acquaintances of their killers.[9] All over the world irrespective of culture and religion, women are suffering physically and emotionally from different forms of violence. In Russia, 12,000 women die every year as a result of domestic violence. In Pakistan, the Human Rights Commission of that country says 80 percent of women there are victims of domestic violence. In South Africa, 49,280 cases of rape were reported in 1998 while the Non-governmental Rape Crisis Centre asserts that the actual number of rapes is higher since many incidents go unreported. In Bangladesh the killing of women by their husbands accounts for 50% of murders. In Peru, the National Police received 28,000 report of domestic abuse around the same period while in the United States, the Centre for Disease Control reports that at least 1.8million women are assaulted every year by the men in their lives. Also, a 1999 Government report in the United States indicates a serious problem of sexual abuse of women in State and Federal Prisons. And in Nigeria reports show that many babies are conceived, born and raised inside prison cells. A survey undertaken by the National Institute of Statistics in Metropolitan Lima shows that no less than 82 percent of the 2,460 women interviewed said that they knew someone who had suffered some kind of domestic abuse within the preceding twelve months. Annual reports on violence against women by Project Alert (2004) in Nigeria show that there is a steady increase in violent attacks on women. A total of 169 cases were documented in the 2002 - 2003 report as against 142 for the two previous years. A breakdown of this number indicates that domestic violence / murder had 40 cases, rape / sexual assault 32, assault / murder 73, acid baths 3, kidnap / abduction 21.[10]

It has become obvious that when the primary focus is on domestic violence homicides or injurious physical assaults, our ability to completely identify the broad scope and tragic impact of domestic violence victimisation is severely limited. The majority of the nationally recognised domestic violence organisations and researchers in the US concur that the issue of domestic violence is far more complex and multifaceted than previously thought. In the introduction to the *2003 Massachusetts Domestic Violence Homicide Report* (MDVHR), the authors wrote: *'The human toll from domestic violence is grossly underestimated ... Domestic violence homicides represent just the tip of the iceberg regarding mortality and morbidity resulting from domestic violence. Suicides that can be attributed to domestic violence deaths that result from life-long battering also need to be examined. Within the category of homicide, alone, it is difficult to claim with any certainty that we were able to identify all domestic violence homicide incidents.'*[11]

Case studies of domestic violence carried out by Gender and Development Action (GADA) show that the abuser often believes that there is a justifiable reason for his or her action. This belief in "righteous anger" is usually strong in cases of domestic violence, especially wife battering. And the bad news is that many law enforcement agents tend to share the view that women invite physical violations by what they do or fail to do as daughters, wives and mothers whose behaviour must at all times must mirror societal values. In other words, there is always the tendency to blame the victim, as it is the case in many other aspects of discrimination or suppression of women.

**Theoretical Framework**

The Social Learning Theory is one of the most popular explanatory perspectives in the marital violence literature.[12] Hence, the social learning theory as enunciated by Albert Bandura (1977) is the guiding framework for this study. Social learning theory is a perspective that states that people learn within a social context.[13] It is facilitated through concepts such as modelling and observational learning.[14] People, especially children, learn from the environment and seek acceptance from society by learning through influential models. Social learning theory is a perspective that states that social behaviour (any type of behaviour that we display socially) is learned primarily by observing and imitating the actions of others. The social behaviour is also influenced by being rewarded and/or punished for these actions.

According to Bandura (1997), observational learning can occur in relation to three models:

- Live model: This is the process in which an actual person is demonstrating the desired behaviour.
- Verbal instruction - in which an individual describes the desired behaviour in detail, and instructs the participant on how to engage in the behaviour.
- Symbolic - in which modelling occurs by means of the media, including movies, television, Internet, literature, and radio. This type of modelling involves a real or fictional character demonstrating the behaviour.[15]

Bandura is known for his 1961-1963 experiments utilizing an inflatable clown known as a Bobo doll in order to test modelling behaviours in children. Children were divided into

three groups – one of which was exposed to an aggressive adult model, one which was exposed to a passive adult model, and a control group, which was not exposed to an adult model. Adults in the aggressive group were asked to verbally and physically attack the doll, while those in the passive group were asked to play peacefully. Once the children were given the opportunity to play, results showed that those exposed to the aggressive model were more likely to imitate what they had seen, and to behave aggressively toward the doll. It was found that boys were four times more likely than girls to display physical aggression, but levels of verbal aggression were about the same. The results of Bandura's studies provided support for the influence of modelling on learning. Further, a later study in 1965 showed that witnessing the model being punished for the aggressive behaviour decreased the likelihood that children would imitate the behaviour[16].

The theory proposes that criminal and delinquent behaviour is acquired, repeated and changed by the same process of conforming behaviour. This means that as children grow up in the society, they learn criminal tendencies which includes violence against women, and they also grow up to replicate such behaviour adults. As regards the family, boys grow up to witness the subjugation and brutalization of women by their husbands. As a result of its frequent occurrence and giving no clearly celebrated deterence, they grow up to believe that violence against women which they learn as they grow up is a normal and acceptable phenomenon in the society.

## 2. Violence Against Women in Nigeria

There seem to be a natural gender role distinction all over the world, which has created gap opportunities between men and women[17] (Nwajiuba, 2011). Nigeria is one such country where international human rights instruments have yet to be incorporated into domestic laws. The long-standing military regime in Nigeria resulted in gender-insensitive laws and polices passed by military leadership. Despite increased awareness of democracy and the need to sustain democratic rule in the country, women's rights issues are still not properly articulated in terms of policies and have yet to be given their proper priority by the government.[18]

Amnesty International (2005) report on Nigeria indicates that:

*"on a daily basis, women are beaten and ill-treated for supposed transgressions, raped and even murdered by members of their family. In some cases, vicious acid attacks leave them with horrific disfigurements. Such violence is too frequently excused and tolerated in communities and not denounced. Husbands, partners and fathers are responsible for most of the violence against women"[19]*

In the Nigerian society, violence against women and girls cannot be ignored though it is being ignored. One in three of all women and girls aged 15-24 have been a victim of violence. Women both married and unmarried have been subjected to vicious attacks from men. Rape, sexual insult and assault, brutalization and victimization, domestic violence on girls and women have in recent time been on the increase in Nigeria, with victims embarrassed to report such incidences to the right agencies for justice.

The Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Africa program, Ms Stephane Mikala, once said: "on a daily basis, Nigerian women are beaten, raped and even murdered by members of their families for supposed transgressions, which can range from not having meals ready on time to visiting family members without their husband's permission. Husbands, partners and fathers are responsible for most of the violence." Records have shown that between 50 percent and two thirds of Nigerian women are subjected to domestic violence in their homes. In Nigeria, sixty-five percent or more educated women are in this horrible situation as compared to their low income counterparts, (55 per cent). Unfortunately, a staggering 97.2 per cent of the abused women do not report the crime to the authorities.[20] However, due credit must be given to individuals, civil society, and media organizations that have continued to campaign against this societal abnormality, though more still needs to be done in this regard.

Lately the media in Nigeria has been awashed with horrible stories of men brutally killing and maiming their wives for various reasons. Some of the reports include:

The Punch Newspaper reports: "A middle-aged man identified as Ude Sebastine on Wednesday allegedly murdered his wife, Abigail in cold blood after both of them engaged in a midnight quarrel. The incident took place at the couple's residence around 4.30am in Ikata community, Ahaoda East Local Government Area of Rivers State. Though the reason for Ude's action could not be immediately ascertained, the man, who had engaged in an all-night squabble with his wife, was said to have given Abigail several machete cuts that led to her death. PUNCH Metro gathered that members of the community that learnt about the ugly incident invited the police, who promptly arrested Ude. Speaking with newsmen on the matter, the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Mohammed Indabawa, said the suspect had since been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department for further investigation."[21] The Premium Times also reports: "A Magistrate Court in Akure, the Ondo State capital, has ordered a 50-year-old man, Ojo Toki, to be remanded in prison for allegedly murdering his wife. The accused who was arraigned at the Magistrate court 3, Oke-Eda, Akure, on a count charge of murder, was charged with the killing of his wife, Adesewa Toki, aged 40. The Presiding Chief Magistrate, Bukola Kuye, thereafter, ordered the accused person to be remanded at the Olokuta prison facility in Akure since the offence he was charged with is not a bailable one."[22]

Women are often projected as those who lack initiative and needed to be guided, motivated and monitored in whatever they do[23]. This notion arose from the fact that the African society has some sex role assumptions for both male and female. And this notion has also culminated in the belief

that even the right of the woman to life is dependent on the man no matter the status of the woman in the society. This is attested in the report of PREMIUM TIMES that "a late banker, Mrs Titilayo Arowolo, was allegedly murdered by her husband, Akolade. A horrifying detail came to light during Akolade's trial as his late wife was said to have been stabbed 76 times. The consultant pathologist, John Obafunwa, who was in charge of the victim's post-mortem, stunned an Ikeja High Court, where the case had been on-going for months, when he disclosed that he examined 76 stab wounds on Mrs Arowolo's body. Arowolo, her husband, was charged to court for allegedly stabbing his wife to death on June 24, 2011, at their residence, 8 Akindeinde St., Isolo, Lagos... Obafunwa, the Chief Medical Examiner of the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH), Ikeja, said external and internal examination of the body during autopsy showed multiple stab wounds and incised wounds on Mrs Arowolo's chest, arm, abdomen and other parts of her body. The pathologist made a slide presentation of the wounds to the court, saying the various wounds were consistent with wounds inflicted with a sharp weapon with single-edged blade. He identified an alleged weapon already admitted by the court as exhibit, which he confirmed was consistent with some of the wounds on the body of the deceased. "The wounds affected the left eye, right eye, upper chest area, right chest and collar bone, left armpit and a 10 x 5 cm rectangular area which had multiple individual injuries on the left side of her chest and breast over-laying the heart," the pathologist said.[24]

For Musa Yussuf, the attempt by his wife to refuse his demand for sex deserves the death penalty. P.M. News reports that "Musa Yusuf, who allegedly killed his wife for refusing to submit to his sexual demand, has been remanded at the Federal Prison, Ilorin. An Ilorin Magistrates' Court on Thursday remanded the accused for allegedly committing the offence on Nov. 17 on a farm. The brother of the deceased, Sanni Suleiman, told the court that the woman took food to her husband on the farm but did not return home. Suleiman said when a search party was organised, her corpse was found on her husband's farm with mark of violence on her face. The body, he said, was concealed under weeds. The prosecutor Zachaeus Funsho, told the court that the accused "callously clubbed his wife to death and flew into thin air" before he was arrested by the police"[25]

Furthermore, the permanent mutilation of women continues unabated as reported by the VANGUARD that, "A middle-aged man David Suleiman has been arrested by the police in Lagos State for allegedly pouring acid on his fiancée, Chika Egbo and a yet to be identified Okada rider at Ikotun area of Lagos State. Suleiman who is currently being detained at the State Criminal Investigation Department, Panti, Yaba, Lagos, was said to have attacked his girl friend, a 300 level student at Enugu State College of Education, with acid for refusing him access to their only child. Police sources at the state SCID, intimated Vanguard that trouble began for the couple when Egbo became pregnant for Suleiman, and he abandoned her claiming that he travelled out of the country, and leaving her with the burden of fending for herself and the baby. But few months after giving birth, he came back requesting to see the baby and he was refused. A source, who craved anonymity, said he tricked the 25-year-old students who resides in Enugu State to Lagos State and he took her to an hidden spot in Ikotun where he poured the acid on her. "An Okada rider who witnessed as the incident unfold went after Suleiman, but while he chased him, Suleiman emptied the can of acid on the Okada rider, who held him strongly waiting for the help. Other Okada riders who drove by saw what was happening and the came to his rescue and they took Suleiman to Ikotun police station while the Okada rider and Egbo were rushed to a hospital." Meanwhile, Egbo, who is laying critically ill at the emergency unit of the Lagos State Teaching Hospital, LASUTH, had her face, chest and some other parts of body destroyed by the acid bath"[26]

Similarly, the PUNCH also reports that Olokode Musiliu, a man who allegedly rendered Lateefah Adesope blind by pouring acid on her face, has been brought before a Ebute-Meta Chief Magistrate's Court, Lagos. Olokode (32) was charged before Magistrate Oyindamola Ogala on Wednesday for planning to kill Adesope. The charge reads in part, "That you, Olokode Musiliu, on December 30, 2011, at Aboru, Lagos, unlawfully and with intent to harm one Lateefah Adesope (27), poured acid on her two eyes." The prosecutor, Essiet O. Eshiet, added that Olokode, on the said date and time poured the acid on Adesope's eyes with intent to kill her".[27]

Furthermore, in an in-depth interview with Mrs Paulina who was recently battered by her husband to the point of being hospitalized, she agreed that though she is suffering in her husband's house, but she is enduring it for the sake of her children.

Mrs Adewale also in her response in an interview with her also said that though she is experiencing brutalization and dehumanization from her husband regularly, the welfare of her children, her inability to survive financially without her husband and the stigma of being a divorcee are the factors that are forcing her to endure the suffering.

These are some of the gory reports of cruelty against women in Nigeria. Furthermore, a total number of 170 cases based on media reports covering a period of December 2004 –November 2005. A breakdown of these cases revealed the following: Domestic violence – 43; Rape/Incest – 46; Assault on women – 12; Murder of women – 40; Acid bath – 10; Kidnap/Abduction – 19.[28] However, many of the dastardly activities go unreported. The women are indeed the endangered species in Nigeria as violence against women has been occurring almost on daily basis. The womenfolk need to have more protection from violent men. As horrible and gory as the above reports appear, it is almost certain that no conviction will come out of the cases. Sometimes they are treated as 'family matter' and it ends there in spite of the fact lives have been lost, or someone has been maimed and incapacitated for life.

# 3. The Conspiracy of Silence

The cases of violence against women mostly go unreported because the victims suffer in silence. This negative mind set largely accounts for the mismanagement of domestic violence cases by the police and is also responsible for the culture of keeping silence over abusive personal relationships. Many of the victims do not speak out about violations of their rights due to lack of positive response from the society. Domestic violence is so entrenched in the society that even the victims condone such violations of their rights, some claiming it is a sign of love. Also, due to poverty and economic dependence on men, many victims suffer in silence for fear of losing the economic support of the male perpetrator—where a victim summons the courage to report to law enforcement agents, the issue is trivialized and termed a "private matter".[29] One strong issue in domestic violence is the reluctance of female victims to report to the Police. This is attributed not just to the feeling of humiliation and fear of stigmatization but also the antagonistic response or at best indifference of the law enforcement officers charged with receipt of complaints. Many African countries are yet to have specific laws that prohibit domestic violence and punishing perpetrators of domestic violence. The current laws in operation in the country do not adequately protect victims of domestic violence.

# 4. Causes of Domestic Violence in Nigeria

### 4.1. Cultural/Societal Factors

Customary Practices across Nigeria generally hold that the man is the head of the house and has the absolute control in the decision making process of the home. That is, a patriarchal society reinforces a norm that views men as leaders and women as followers. Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society, where men dominate all spheres of women's lives. Women are in the subordinate position and male children are preferred over the female.[30] The practice of bride price has led to the idea of ownership of the woman, the exchange of bride price being evidence of a commercial transaction. The bride price is understood by many to symbolize the sale of the girl and ownership by her husband and family.[31] The implication of this customary law is that a woman is regarded as the property of the man who is entitled to discipline her as he deems fit. The notion of subjugation of women is so entrenched that all in the society tend to accept violence against women is justified.

### 4.2. Dependence on the Husband for Sustainability

Many women in Nigeria depend on their husbands for their economic sustenance. And since they have themselves and children to take care of, they find it difficult to leave their husbands even if they are being battered every day. Due to poverty and economic dependence on men, many victims suffer in silence for fear of losing the economic support of the male perpetrator.[32] Dependency means that they have fewer options and few resources to help them cope with or change their spouses' behaviours. Consequently, this dependency has been an encouragement to the husbands to violently abuse them.

### 4.3. Political Factors

The political will to enforce International instruments that protect women rights has been lacking in Nigeria. Because females are not well represented in Nigerian politics, gender-sensitive laws and policies are not a priority either at the state or national level. This has contributed to the non-realization of women's political rights and has contributed greatly to the perpetuation of violence against women.

### 4.4. Religion

Most religious practices in Nigeria subscribe to the idea that the man is head of the family and has greater control and decision making powers. Religion teaches that the woman is the weaker vessel and plays the second fiddle in marriage partnership. And since the woman is taught to be subservient to the man, she accepts her battering as part of obedient obligation to her husband.

### 4.5. Addiction to Drug and Alcohol

Men who are addicted to alcohol or drugs are prone to violence against their wives. After an excessive consumption of alcohol or drugs, the husbands acting under influence descends violently on the wife inflicting upon her varying degrees of injuries or in some cases death occurs.

### 4.6. Gender-Insensitive Criminal Justice System

Some provisions of the law, rather than protecting women from domestic violence, encourage incidences of domestic violence and give the accused wide room to escape punishment. [30] Also, the law enforcement officials, like officials of other male-dominated institutions, are not sensitized on the issue of domestic violence or trained on how to respond to such complains. They also operate from the prejudices and stereotypes of the male dominated customs and traditions in the society.[31]

### 4.7. Ethnic Factors

The perception of various ethnic groups about violence against women determines it acceptability and perpetuity. In a study carried out by Oyediran and Isiugo-Abanihe (2005), it was revealed the effect of ethnic affiliation on the perception of women of domestic violence determines its occurrence. Ethnic effect occurs through the levels of resources that women control, which influences relationships between husband and wife as well as the prevailing power relations. In Nigeria, all ethnic groups have a strong patriarchal structure, but the Hausa/Fulani and northern minorities are more gender restrictive. The results show that

respondents of the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group and other northern minority ethnic groups were more supportive of wife beating than their counterparts of Igbo or Yoruba origin and southern minority ethnic groups. For instance, about 80% of Hausa/Fulani respondents affirmed that a husband is justified for beating his wife, compared to 36.3% among Igbo women.[33]

### 4.8. Low Level of Education

Lack of access to education and opportunities, and low social status in communities are linked to violence against women. Women with low education are more likely to experience battering than those with higher level of education. Also, rural residents tend to agree that a husband is justified for beating his wife more than those in urban areas. Similarly, increased educational attainment was associated with a lower likelihood of supporting wife abuse. "An educated woman is more likely to be respected by her husband, and female education tends to expose women to egalitarian dispositions that create an enabling environment for equality and equity in power relation"[33].

## 5. Global Attempts to Eradicate Violence Against Women

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNICEF) took bold steps to fight violence against women in 1998. It initiated regional campaigns aimed at creating awareness on the issue and thereby changing attitudes that trigger the violations. The first campaign which was launched in Latin America and the Caribbean brought together United Nations agencies, top national and regional NGOs, 22 governments and thousands of community –based groups. The success of this first outing encouraged UNIFEM to carry the campaign to Africa, Asia and the Pacific. And in the Caribbean, a protocol for cooperation between Women's Crisis Centres and the police has been developed with the aim of improving response and treatment in cases of violence against women. In Brazil, UN agencies in partnership with government and civil society have launched an "Intra-family pact for Non-Violence", a national commitment to eliminate violence against women. In India, 40,000 posters detailing women's rights were pasted in 14 official languages for distribution to every police station in the country, helping to restate that ignorance of the law and women's rights is no longer an excuse for turning a blind eye to violence against women. In Kenya, South Africa and many other countries, the regional campaign stimulated unprecedented numbers of men to join together to march and speak out against gender-based violence. Senegal was the first to enact a groundbreaking law banning the practice of female genital cutting. Also Nigeria has incorporated into the domestic law the United Nations Protocol to prevent, Suppress and Punish trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The African Charter on Human and People's rights has also been domesticated.[34]

Similarly, four Nigerian states namely Ebonyi, Jigawa, Cross-River and Lagos have enacted domestic violence laws. In addition, six states (Enugu, Edo, Bayelsa, Delta, Cross River and Ogun) have also passed laws against female genital mutilation (Nigeria CEDAW, 2008). NGOs have also taken advantage of the 16 days activism on violence against women that comes up from November 24 to December 10, every year as another strategy to keep the issues alive at international and local levels.

Over the years, there have been considerable efforts to enhance the protection and promotion of women's rights through the international, regional, and national enactment of laws and policies. Such efforts have resulted in standard setting documents like the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action at the international level. Some countries have passed laws and policies incorporating such international standards into their domestic laws. However, in many other countries, women are faced with various and diverse obstacles to the enforcement of international human rights standards and therefore suffer from a lack of protective laws that would meet recent international standards. Such obstacles include lack of political will by the government to integrate ratified international instruments as required by their constitutions, discriminatory cultural and traditional practices, religion, and poverty.[35] Others include lack of participation in politics and decision-making processes, denial of access to education and inheritance, high cost of legal services, and prejudices against women in all the communities. In these societies, women are afforded inferior status in relation to men, despite the significant contributions made by women to the development of the community over the ages.

## 7. Conclusions

The issue of gender equality as it pertains to domestic violence is a serious issue. It is a society problem that cuts across cultures, classes and races. Women are often excluded from participating in most sensitive social activities on the grounds of cultural and patriarchal dichotomies. However, the indisputable truth is that women are part and parcel of every society and its order[36]. In Nigeria, like in many other African countries, gender relations have remained patriarchal in nature and the Nigerian society has been suffocated with stereotypes, patriarchy; gender insensitive statutory, religious and customary laws have all engendered violence against women. It is, however the contention of this study, that if the recommendations proposed are put into use, the occurrence of violence against women will be reduced to the barest minimum, if not totally eradicated. This will go a long way to save the womenfolk from continuous humiliation, dehumanization and untimely death. The female gender deserves a better treatment than they are currently

getting from the society.

## 6. Recommendations

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria makes provision for equality of women, guarantee the rights and protects the interest of women considering the religious, traditional and cultural norms that govern the society. But violence against women has continued in spite of the constitutional provision for the protectection of women rights. According to Olujimi, "the prejudice against women has been an age-long affair".[36] Women are increasingly becoming the endangered gender in the society. Death, brutalization and mutilation of women are becoming the order of the day. Consequently, the prevalent problem of stereotype and patriarchy must be urgently addressed. The Nigerian society must undergo re-construction and re-engineering in order to confront stereotypes and patriarchy that has put the women folk on the danger list. This could be done through awareness creation, education and consultation with stakeholders in the society such as traditional leaders who are custodians of culture, leaders of religious bodies, and community associations. This will help in changing how society views and understands power relations between men and women.

There is need to embark on the training of the members of National and State Assemblies, Police Force, Judicial officers and other state Agencies, on human rights and legislation devoid of gender bias that favour oppression of women. Any attempt to curb and stop violence against women requires the creation and passage of laws regarding such domestic violence, adopting action plans and budgets to implement legislation, instituting prevention programmes and protection services for women survivors. Adequate funding, appropriate technical expertise and political will are non-negotiable in achieving this goal.

Mass public education must be pursued vigorously by relevant government agencies in collaboration with gender-focused human rights organization in order to enlighten the public about the evils of violence against women. This will create the much needed mass awareness and education at grassroots aimed at improving women's self-esteem.

Furthermore, the Nigeria government should put in motion the process of abolishing all statutory, religious and customary laws that promote violence against women. Government should endeavour to meet its obligations under the international human rights law, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which Nigeria as a nation has subscribed. Women should be more empowered economically and given equal educational and employment opportunities with the male counterparts. They should have more access to decision-making structures and political participation.

As a matter of national importance, it is recommended that the arrest and diligent prosecution of perpetrators of violence again women must be made public and given due publicity. The conviction to prison or strigent fines as the case may be must enjoy wide publicity in order to serve as deterrence to those who may have such violent tendencies. This is only way children who are growing up learning violence against women as acceptable as the Social Learning Theory postulates, will come to see it as an abnormality in the society.

## REFERENCES


[1] WHO, (2005). "Addressing Violence Against Women and Achieving Millennium Development Goals: WHO/FCH/CWH/05.1 (http://www.who.int/gender/en)

[2] Haralambos, M. & Holborn, M. (2007). *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives,* 7th Edition. London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

[3] Hacker, H. (1972). 'Women As a Minority Group' in N. Glazer-Malbin and H.Y. Waehrer (eds) *Woman in a Man-Made World.* London: Hienemann

[4] Hamm, S. (2000) *Violence Against Women Takes Center Stage at the Women's World Forum Against Violence*, HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNE, Vol. 7, No. 4, *available at* http://www.hri.ca/tribune/ viewArticle.asp?ID=2595.

[5] Heidi, H. (1998) *A Feminist Reading of Security in Africa*, 20 CARING SECURITY IN AFRICA, 126-131.

[6] Websdale, N. (1999) *Understanding Domestic Homicide*, Boston: NorthEastern University Press.

[7] WHO, 2005

[8] Oladeji, M.O. (2009) Dimensions of Domestic Violence Against Women In Nigeria, in Kehinde, A. (ed.). *Gender and Development. Essential Readings*. Ibadan: Hope Publications Ltd.

[9] The Violence Policy Center (VPC), 2006. Washington.

[10] Project Alert, (2004). *No Safe Haven: Annual Report of Attacks on Women In Nigeria*

[11] Lauby *et al*, 2006, *Domestic Violence Homicide Report* (MDVHR), p. 4

[12] Oladeji, 2009

[13] Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. General Learning Press

[14] Omrod, J. E. Human Learning. 3rd Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

[15] Bandura, 1997

[16] Shuttleworth, M. (Retrieved 2011, Dec 09). Bobo doll experiment. Retrieved from http://www.experiment-resources.com/bobo-doll-experiment.html.

[17] Nwajiuba, C.A. (2011). Culture and Sex Imbalance in Higher Education in Nigeria: Implications for development. *Educational Research* 2(3): 926-930

[18] Eze-Anaba, I. (2006). *Domestic Violence and Legal Reforms in Nigeria: Prospects and Challenges*. Berkeley: Electronic Press

[19] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: Unheard Voices* (2005), *available at* http://web.amnesty.org/ library/index/engafr440 042005

[20] Olurounbi, Ruth. PREMIUM TIMES, October 29, 2012

[21] Akasike, C. PUNCH Newspaper, January 3, 2013

[22] Abimbola Ayobami. Premium Times, February 18, 2013

[23] Olujimi, B. (2009) Intergrating Women In Nigeria Polity for Growth and Development: Perspectives from Obasanjo's Administration (1999-2007) in Kehinde A. *Gender and Development. Essential Readings*. Ibadan: Hope Publications Ltd. Pg. 69

[24] Olurounbi, Ruth. PREMIUM TIMES, October 29, 2012

[25] P.M. News Nigeria. November 29, 2012

[26] Ifeanyi Okolie , VANGUARD Newspaper, November 26, 2012

[27] Eniola Akinkuotu, PUNCH Newspaper, March 22, 2012

[28] Project Alert,2004

[29] Amnesty International, 2005.

[30] Oladeji, 2009

[31] Eze-Anaba, 2005

[32] Amnesty International, 2005

[33] Oyediran, K. A. and Isiugo-Abanihe, U.C. (2005) Perceptions of Nigeria Women on Domestic Violence: Evidence form 2003 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey. *African Journal of Reproductive Health:* 9(2). P. 35-53

[34] Eze-Anaba, 2005

[35] Agina, A. (2008). *Gender and Elections in Nigeria*, GENDER ISSUES 7, 11. This is a publication of Legal Defence and Assistance Project, a non-governmental organization based in Lagos, Nigeria.

[36] Olujimi, 2009.

[37] Davis, R. (2010) Domestic Violence Related Deaths. Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research • 2 (2)

[38] Omrod, J. E. (1991) Human Learning. (3rd Edition) Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall

[39] Eze-Anaba, 2006