

**AN APPRAISAL OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A FOCUS ON NTIGHA ABIA STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This paper tries to appraise the impact of Violence against Women, considering the rate at which women are violated at by their loved ones especially the male folks, the paper looked at types of violence as well as the causes, perpetrators and consequences of violence against women. The paper collected data through primary and secondary sources. The questionnaires constituted the major instrument of the primary source and it was drawn and administered on the chosen sample. Random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample size of this study. From the findings it was discovered that culture, ignorance, illiteracy and other factors are usually responsible for the violence against women. The consequences of the wicked act were also found. Some of the consequences include psychological trauma, acid attack, deprivation of right and lack of women empowerment. The research also made useful suggestions how violence against women can be minimized.*

**Keywords:** women, violence, psychological trauma, and empowerment

**INTRODUCTION**

The Nigerian women for instance is born into a culture of male superiority this is because male children are believed to be more economically viable for the parents and the continuity of the family name depends on whether or not there is a male child with permanent residence in their ancestral home. On the other hand, the girl child is perceived an article bound to be disposed off. Girls leave their parental homes for marriage and consequently become their husbands properties. The arrival of a male child is presumed to strengthen the position of the woman in the family of marriage.

This is shown by the preference of male children to females in our society, a women who gives birth to male issues are honored in the society while on the other hand a woman who gives birth to female children will be under anxiety, shame, hate and divorce and the women are regarded as a failure in the husband's house and the husband may marry another wife in order to have male children.

Early and forced marriage constitutes a very dehumanizing ordeal women suffer in the society. Rather than encouraging a girl child to develop her potentials, it has often being the expectation of the father to give out his young daughter to marriage so that the money paid as dowry should be used by her father to marry more wives and take tittles. Young girls are therefore forced into child marriage at the very tender ages of between 10 to 14 years of age when they are neither biologically or psychologically prepared to face the challenges of family lives and motherhood and in most cases these girls are given into marriages to men who are almost 40 to 60 years older than themselves. This in most cases lead them to early widowhood and at times it leads to wife battering and this leads girls to confusion for the rest of their lives.

**ETHNOGRAPHY OF NTIGHA GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION:**

The Area of study is Ntigha in Isiala Ngwa North Local Government Area of Abia State. Ntigha is a Community in the Northern part of Ngwa. It is located in the present day Isiala Ngwa North Local Government Area in Abia State Nigeria central senatorial zone of Abia State. It is the last Ngwa community

while moving Northwards in Abia State along the Enugu-Port Harcourt express road or the old Aba-Umuahia road. It is situated at the remote northern border of Ngwa land between Aba and Bende division. It is bounded on the North by Nsirimo, Abam Ubukala town in Umuahia South Local Government Area, on the south by Amorji and ihie/Abayi towns all of Ngwaukwu Community in the same Local Government Area, on the East by Nsulu group of villages in the same Local Government Area and on the West by the natural boundary between Imo and Abia state and Imo River also as the boundary between the defunct. Aba and Owerri divisions of old Imo state.

### **ORIGIN OF NTIGHA**

The fact that "no man is an Island" accurately explains the assertion that "no society can come into being in isolation". The origin of Ntigha therefore cannot be unraveled without a full knowledge of the origin of her siblings and the links between them. As a result, the historical account of the origin of Ntigha must start from the very origin of Ngwa land. Ntigha is in Ngwa land, therefore expectedly, the history of the origin of Ngwa land (and in fact Ntigha) has traversed several generations and therefore, stand a chance of mutilation. However, migrating in group from their original home with their luggage including yams, and after a long trek, they were weary and hungry. They decided to stop, rest and eat at a spot very close to the present Imo River. There was no Imo River when they got to that place but it must have been a swampy area. A group of these migrants decided to boil their yam while the other group elected to roast theirs. The boiled yams were ready before the roasted ones hence one group ate and therefore got strength to continue the journey before the other group. The group that had eaten theirs continued the journey crossing over this swampy area. Not too long after they crossed over, water covered this swampy area in fact over-flowed its banks apparently separating the two groups.

The group whose yams were still on fire cried out "Ngwam Ndi Ngwa ngwa" meaning the lucky ones who are fast. In their reaction those who had crossed over reverted not necessarily in reply to the other group, "Ndi Oliuhu". The group that crossed before the Imo River incidence comprised eight (8) brothers. They first settled at " Okpuala Ngwa". They were Ukwu<sub>7</sub> Nwoha and Avosi from one mother. Ntam (Ntigha) and Nsulu from one mother, Ovuokwu and Ovungwu from same mother and Mbutu. Mbutu is the son of Nwoha (Umuoha). All the villages in Obiomangwa came from the eight (8) major villages from the eight original brothers. That is why there is a repetition of the names of villages in Isialangwa in Obiomangwa like, Abayi and Ahiaba. They started dispersing further from Okpualangwa certainly in search of space. Ntigha and Nsulu the younger brother migrated together and first settled at Oriebe (Now in Umukalu Ntigha). They had the problem of water, yet, they lived for sometime before Nsulu later went eastwards and settled at Eziala. The man Nsulu called that place of settlement Eziala because the land was fertile. He planted a tree at Eziala to register his presence and consecrated the tree to signify the home for the ancestral shrine. He called that home "like na Ehime" this is the present-day Eziala Nsulu. Ntigha left Oriebe at the same lime with Nsulu and settled at Okpuala (now Okpuala Ntigha). He planted a tree and thus institutionalized the ancestral home. There was a road in the past that linked Okpuala Ntigha, Oriebe Osusu, Okpuala Ngwa Ntigha in turn had eight (8) sons viz Avo (the first son) Ogele, Eziamana, Kalu, Ekpe, Okpuala, Nkpeyi, and Amapu (last son), the sons named in between the first and the last were not named in order of age or seniority.

### **iii. SOCIO -CULTURAL BASE**

The socio- cultural base of Ntigha people is observed in the socialization process, marriage system, social rite, and tittle taking among others, which are all inter-twined with their religious worship. They practice both polygynous and monogamous types of marriages.

### **iv. RELIGION**

The Traditional system of religious worship in the community was formally based on polytheism which is the worship of a supreme being and lesser gods, such as the Nnemiri Ihie, Nnemiri Ahia Ori, personal god. Although today many people with the help of Christianity have embraced Christ. They believe in the supreme being who they called Chineke, Chukwu and Ezekereuwa

### **(V). SOCIO POLITICAL BASE**

The socio -political base of Ntigha, is observed right from the family. Obligations and legitimacy are based on the customs and tradition. They practice patriarchal kinship system, of inheritance and patri-local system if residence.

### **VI) SOCIO ECONOMIC BASE**

In spite of the mass exodus of Ntigha men and women into the urban centers, agriculture still remains at the centre of their economic, more of Ntigha aggregate manpower are engaged in agricultural pursuit than another occupations combined.

Ntigha is very blessed with natural factors that support intensive agriculture practices such as fertile land, good climate etc.. The soil nature of Ntigha is so favourable that one hardly finds any agricultural product that will not flourish in Ntigha. Ntigha has a very good topography that encourages high yield of agricultural product. Also Ntigha has a good climate, for instance, the rainfall experienced in Ntigha is moderate that encourages the speedy growth of most agricultural crops.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The incidence and prevalence of violence against women in Nigeria gives cause for concern although it is acknowledged that it is a world wide phenomenon. In many societies in this country, cases and incidence of wife battering, acid attacks, sexual harassment, harmful traditional practices in the form of genital mutilation among others are becoming the rule instead of the exception. These do not only violate their fundamental human rights but also a gross violation of the sanctity of womanhood.

### **TYPES OF VIOLENCE**

Dworkin, Andrea (2000) writes that, Women are more likely to be victimized by someone that they are intimate with, called "Intimate partner violence". Also, the impact of domestic violence in the sphere of total *violence against women* can be understood by the fact that about 40 - 70% of assassination of women are committed by either their husbands or boy friends. Also, it shows that violence is not always perpetrated in the form of physical violence but can also be psychological and verbal. He said that in an unmarried relationships it is commonly called "dating violence", whereas in the context of married couples it is called "domestic violence".

Further, that most of these violent acts are not reported to the police and thus many believe that the true magnitude of the problem is hard to estimate.

He also revealed that, domestic violence is often portrayed as an issue within the context of heterosexual relationships as well as in lesbian relationships, but that it is observed that violence against women in lesbian relationships is about as common as violence against women in heterosexual relationships

### **DIAGNOSIS PLANNING**

The National Advisory Council on Violence against women (2000) indicated that, American Psychiatric Association Planning and Research Committees, have canvassed a series of new relational disorders which include marital conflict disorder without violence or marital abuse disorder and marital conflict disorder with violence. Couples with marital conflict disorders the research committee observed *that* the couple recognize long standing dissatisfaction with their marriage and come to the clinician on their own initiative or are referred by a state health care professional. Also, the committee observed that, there is serious violence in marriages which is usually the husband battering the wife. In these cases the committee noted that the emergency room or a legal authority is often the first to notify the clinician. *The* committee claimed that, most importantly, marital violence is a major risk factor for serious injury and even death and that women in violent marriages are in much greater risk of being seriously injured or killed. The committee also observed that, (here is a current considerable controversy over whether male - to -female marital violence is best regarded as a reflection of male psychopathology and control or whether there is an empirical base and clinical utility for conceptualizing these patterns as relational. The committee recommended that clinicians making a diagnosis of marital relational disorder should include the assessment of actual or potential male violence as regularly as they assess the potential for suicide in depressed patients. Further, that clinicians should not relax their vigilance after a battered wife leaves her husband.

### **PRIVATE PATRIARCHY**

Walby (1990), observed that, in private patriarchy an individual patriarch, the male head of household, controls women individually and directly in the relatively private sphere of the home. Also that, it is the man in his position as husband or father who is the direct oppressor and beneficiary, individually and directly of the subordination of women. Also he claimed that, women remain oppressed because they are prevented from entering the public sphere in areas such as employment and politics.

### **PUBLIC PATRIARCHY.**

Walby (1990), revealed that public patriarchy is a form in which women have access to both public and private arenas. Also said that, they are not haired from the public arenas, but are nonetheless subordinated within them. Also that, in public sphere, women tend to be segregated into certain jobs which are lower - paid and are given a lower status than men's jobs. He also said that, women are no longer exploited

collectively by men in general through their subordination in public arenas and also that women are no longer restricted to the domestic hearth, but have the whole society in which to roam and exploit.

Feminist Theory;

Fredrich Engels's (1984) argued that women's subjugation coincided with the rise of private property during industrialization. He further, emphasizes that in our society today that male dominance goes far beyond the economic sphere. Also, examined were disturbing aspects of men's behaviour toward women .and said that the ugly realities of rape, wife battering, sexual harassment, and street harassment all illustrated and intensify women's subordinate position.

However, he claimed that even if women reach economic parity with men, even if they win equal representation in government, that genuine equality between the sexes cannot be achieved if these attacks remain as common as they are today.

The theorist acknowledged that it is not possible to change gender roles drastically without dramatic revisions in a culture's social structure. According to Talcott Parsons and Bales (1995) the relationship between female and male have traditionally been one of unequal power with men in a dominant position over women.

In Nigerian society, this has been the case, the women have always fallen the victim of discrimination, violence, sexual harassment, wife battering, acid attack and other factors. In Nigerian society women have been programmed to work in a particular field in the offices and also home keeper not minding the potential or quality of the women This has been Nigeria's culture and this particular state has reached a stage of conflict between the males and females, and this is why we are experiencing alot of women coming out now to participate in politics, managers of top offices and in some cases heads of families.

#### **SOCIO - DEMOGRAPHI CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS:**

This section deals with the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as sex, age, educational attainment, marital status, occupation and income. The relevance of these variables in a research such as this is that they may provide insight into the background of the respondents which may influence the opinion and attitudes of the respondents toward the topic of this study.

*Table 1: Distribution of Respondents By Sex:*

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	48	43.6%
Female	62	56.4
Total	110	100

According to table 1, majority of the respondent constituting 56.4% are females while males constitute 43.6%. The high numerical strength, of women in this study may be assumed to be due to the topic of this study which is most likely to be attractive to women than men. This suggests therefore that women were over-representative in this study.

*Table 2: Distribution of Respondent by Age.*

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-28 years	40	36.4

29-39 years	30	27.3
40-50 years	25	22.7
51 - years +	15	13.6
Total	110	100

From the data in table 2, it can be notified that 36.4% of the respondents claimed to be between 18-26 years while 27.3% of the respondents are between 29-39 years. Also, the data show that 22.7% and 13.6% of the respondents fall into the age categories of 40-50 years and 51 years and above.

Age is associated with reasoning which influences people's sense of judgment. Thus, from this data, respondents who fall into the age category of 18-28 years constitute the highest group that featured in this study. Age is associated with reasoning which influences people's sense of judgment. Thus, from this data, respondents who fall into the age category of 18-28 years constitute the highest group that featured in this study.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Attainment**

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Primary School	45	40.9%
Post Primary	35	31.8
Tertiary	20	18.2
	10	9.1
Others		
Total	110	100

According to table 3, 40.9% of the respondent have attained primary education, 31.8% indicated that They have attained post primary education and 18.2% stated that they have attained tertiary education. However, 9.1% of the respondents possesses vocational or, technical education. Education is an aspect of socialization and it influences individuals rationalization of issues. Thus, it may influence people's perception of violence against women.

**Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status;**

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	38	34.5
Married	29	26.4
	22	20.0
Divorced	14	12.7
	7	6.4
Separated		

Widowed		
Total	110	100

Table 4, shows that 34.5% of the respondents are single, 26.4% of them are married while 20.7% are divorced. The table also depicts that 12.7% and 6.4% of the respondents claimed to be separated and widowed respectively.

From this table one can observe that the respondents who claimed to be single constitute the highest group in the study.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	60	54.5
No	50	45.5
Total	110	100

From table 5, 54.5% of the respondents indicated "yes" that they know about violence against women while 45.5% of them feigned ignorance of it. From this data, the researcher believes that majority of the respondents are aware of the violence against women. When the researcher asked the respondents to state the types of violence they know against women, they identified wife beating, verbal attack, deprivation of positions, subordination and oppression of women in almost all sectors of the economy.

**Table 6: Perception of Violence Against Women**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
With positive feelings	47	47.3
With negative feelings	34	30.9
With mixed feelings	24	21.8
Total	No	100

When the researcher asked of the perception of the respondents about violence against women. 47.3% of the respondents indicated positive feelings, 30.9% had negative feelings while 21.8% of the respondents perceived it with mixed feelings. From table 8 therefore, one can observe that there are various perceptions of violence against women by the respondents.

*Table 7: Causes of Violence Against Women:*

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
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Ignorance	39	35.4
Patridiarchy	33	30
Culture	21	19.1
Illiteracy	17	15.5
Total	110	100

From table 9, various causes of violence against women are identified by the respondents. According to this table, 35.9% of the respondents stated that ignorance of the consequences of their acts make some people to perpetrate violence against women. The table further reveals that 30.0% and 19.1% of the respondents indicated patriarchy and culture as some of the causes of violence against women. But for 15.5% of the respondents, the main cause of violence against women is illiteracy.

**Table 8: Opinion on being a Victim**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes No	65 45	59.1 40.1
Total	110	100

In an attempt made by the researcher to gather from the respondents whether they have been victims of violence against women, 59.1% of them stated "Yes" while 40.9% of them stated No". This data suggest that most of the respondents of this study, perhaps women have been victims of violence. When the researcher asked them to indicate the type of violence they have experienced, they stated beating, verbal assault and others

**Table 9: Feelings of being a Victims**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	37	33.6
Negative	50	45.5
No feelings	23	20.9
Total	110	100

When the researcher asked the respondents who claimed to be victims of violence to state their feelings of such incident, 45.5% of them said negative, 33.6% of them said positive feelings while 20.9% of them stated no feelings.

**Table 10: Role of Men in Women Violence**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
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Perpetrators	59	53.6
Contributors	31	28.2
Promoters	20	18.2
Total	110	100

On the question of the role of men in women violence, table 12 shows that 53.6% of the respondents stated that men perpetrate the act, 28.2% said men contribute to it and 18.2% of the respondents stated that men promote the ugly act. From this table, one can observe that men play a crucial role in the violence against women.

Table 11: Effects of Violence against Women:

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Psychological	45	40.9
Physical	32	29.1
Deprivation	20	11.8
Mal-adjustment	13	18.2
Total	110	100

The data in table 13 shows that 40.9% of the respondents believe that violence against women results in psychological problem for women, while 29.1% of them see it as resulting in physical harm. Also 18.2% and 11.8% of the respondents believe that violence against women result in deprivation of resources and mal-adjustment for women.

From this table, one can observe that violence against women has numerous consequences on women.

Table 12: Types of Violence Against Women

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Beating	43	39.1
Verbal assault	34	30.9
Denial of rights	18	16.4
Widowhood practices	15	13.6
Total	110	100

## CONCLUSION

This study which deals on the impact of violence against women have tried to achieve some of its fundamental aims and objectives. The study explored various cases and types of violence against women. However, the perception of the female folk by both society and culture as weaker sex, has become major reasons why women all over the world especially in Ntigha Community are subjected to all sorts of violence. This conclusion impacts on women tremendously so much so that many of them are denied their rights and position in society.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the impact of violence against women, the researcher makes the following recommendations for both intellectual, policy and practical purposes;

1. Women should rise, unite and fight for their rights.
2. Government should enact a law making it a crime to physically assault or beat a women.
3. Religious organizations should preach against violence women.
4. N.G.O's should address the problems of violence against women



through enlightenment programs

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