

## THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** *Domestic violence is a global phenomenon, a human rights violation and an important public health problem that has negative effects on women's physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive wellbeing. It is a social illness that cuts across all races, religions, and class status. Many societies, including Nigeria, have accepted domestic violence as normal and a part of women's life. Culture, on the other hand, has shaped people's perceptions towards the menace of domestic violence. The rate of violence against women in Nigeria is alarming, and it needs to be addressed. This study aimed to examine the influence of cultural practices on the prevalence of domestic violence in Nigeria through the lens of feminist theory. This study utilized primary sources from fieldwork study where interviews have been conducted with women to collect data across the study area of Adavi, Ajaokuta, Okehi and Okene Local Government Areas of Kogi State, Nigeria, and secondary sources of literature from published journals, articles, textbooks, and internet resources, to analyse the influence of culture on domestic violence in Nigeria. Findings from this study revealed that socio-cultural practices such as norms about marriage system, the predominant position of male children, and forced marriage, have exposed women to domestic violence in Nigeria. Ending domestic violence, therefore, requires concerted efforts and commitment from the government and the community to address the patriarchal system at all levels.*

**Keywords:** *Domestic Violence, Cultural Practices, Patriarchal, Customary Marriage, Nigeria.*

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### Introduction

Domestic violence is a global problem and a major public health issue which has attracted the interest of researchers as well as policymakers (Ansari et al., 2016; Abrahams et al., 2014; Kunnuji, 2014). Domestic violence is a human rights violation that affects women, families, and the society in general (Standish, 2014; Terry & Hoare, 2007). It was reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) multi-country study that 15-71% Of women had been exposed to marital violence at one point in time or the other (García-Moreno, Hegarty, & d'Oliveira, 2015;

Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006). Similarly, the updated report of (WHO, 2016) stated that almost 1 in every 3 of women in marital relationships has experienced some forms of violence which could be physical or sexual, from their partners. The health, physical, sexual, and the general wellbeing of millions of women have been negatively affected by violence with its short and long-term consequences (WHO, 2016; Semahegn & Mengistie, 2015; Colucci & Hassan, 2014).

Growing body of literature has indicated that pervasive patriarchal cultures of the world have adversely exposed women to domestic violence across the globe (Aisyah & Parker, 2014; Ansari et al., 2016; Bowman, 2003; Ishola, 2016; Kelmendi, 2015; Lee, Moon, & Gomez, 2014; Othman, Goddard, & Piterman, 2014). In African societies, violence against women is perceived as a private issue of marital affairs and women have been socialized into accepting it as such (Ilika, 2005; Ishola, 2016; Ofeibea-Aboagye, 1994; Oluremi, 2015). Some cultural practices in Nigeria have exposed women to all forms of abuse in their matrimonial life. Norms about marriage, predominant male positions, and forced marriages have been identified as having risk factors of domestic violence in Nigeria (Alesina, Brioschi, & Ferrara, 2016; Chika, 2012; Linos, Slopen, Subramanian, Berkman, & Kawachi, 2013).

To tackle the harmful effects of violence on women and the society, there is urgent need to challenge this social structure and cultural practices at all levels. The goal of the present study, therefore, is to empirically identify the factors that contribute to domestic violence in Nigeria. The implications for the physical, mental and reproductive wellbeing of women and prevention of violence are further discussed. This paper is structured into introduction, literature review, methodology, conceptual and theoretical framework, results, discussion of the findings, recommendations and conclusion.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Overview of Domestic Violence in Nigeria***

Nigeria is one of the societies that recorded the highest rate of domestic violence in the world (Balogun & John-Akinola, 2015; Linos et al., 2013; Aihie, 2009). It is worthy of note that, just like other developing countries, there is a paucity of information on the nationwide official statistical data on the prevalence of domestic violence in Nigeria (Olayanju, Naguib, Nguyen, Bali, & Vung, 2013). However, some studies have reported the prevalence rate of violence with varying degree, according to regions and religions. One of the profound studies on domestic violence in Nigeria is the National Demography and Health Survey (NDHS) of 2008. In this survey, the lifetime prevalence of violence was 27.7%, ranging from 13.1% in the North to 52% in the Southern part of the country (Balogun & John-Akinola, 2015; Nwabunike & Tenkorang, 2015). However, there are several other studies about violence in Nigeria that reported different prevalent rate of domestic violence. The possible reasons that accounted for these variations can be attributed to the differences in the study areas and the purpose of the research (Ajah, Anthony, Nkwo, Nwakoby, & Ezeonu, 2014). Most studies in the Southern part of Nigeria, such as Nelson (2015) and Ilika (2005), recorded high prevalence of domestic violence largely due to the consumption of alcohol. For instance, Balogun, Owoaje, and Fawole (2012) reported 64% and 70% among the rural and urban women, respectively, in south-western Nigeria. Nelson (2015) noted that consumption of alcoholism in the Southern states accounted for the high prevalence rate of domestic violence among the women surveyed. Another nationwide study showed that 11% of the respondents had experienced domestic violence in their lifetime

(Nwogu, 2015). Furthermore, Kunnuji (2014) recorded 22% as the prevalence rate of violence among the girls and women surveyed in South-West of Nigeria. The study found that domestic violence is more common among uneducated women. And only 17% of the informants justified violence against in some instance such as leaving the house without permission, not respecting husbands' authority, and sexual infidelity. And the common forms of violence was recorded to be slapping (77%), kicking (40%), and shouting (93%), among the women (Abayomi, 2014; Obi & Ozumba, 2007).

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic state which is very rich in traditions and customs, with two faces of native and modern. Therefore, studies of domestic violence in Nigeria is of immense importance because of its position in Africa (Ishola, 2016). However, in most of the Nigerian societies, the cultural practices still overshadowed the modernity in traditions (Balogun & John-Akinola, 2015; Olayanju, Naguib, Nguyen, Bali, & Vung, 2013). In their study, Balogun and John-Akinola (2015) found that patriarchal culture dictates that women should be submissive to their husbands. As such, women have been socialized to ignore and accept domestic violence as a cultural norm which needs not be challenged. Women perceive physical and sexual abuse as part of marital rights of the husbands, even though it negatively affects their physical, mental and reproductive well-being, and they are likely to justify it (Iliyasu, Abubakar, Galadanci, Hayatu, & Aliyu, 2013; Chika, 2012; Ilika, 2005). The beating of wives and children, for instance, is sanctioned as a disciplinary measure in Nigeria (Abayomi, 2014; Aihie, 2009). According to Amnesty International report of 2005, women are beaten and abused on daily basis in Nigeria by their husbands or family members. With all these incidences of violence in Nigeria, Abayomi (2014) conclude that domestic violence is a means of subjugating women's power to conform to the leadership roles of men in patriarchal societies.

### ***Cultural Practices in Nigeria***

Culture is an organized, learned or created experience of a group of people, transmitted from past generations to another (Avruch, 1998). Culture is also defined as a totality of people's way of life (Nnonyelu, 2009). It is a learned and socially transmitted behaviors of a people which include knowledge, beliefs, morals, customs, arts, that are handed from generation to generation (Nnonyelu, 2009). The roles of culture in shaping the attitudes and perceptions of a people can never be overemphasized. According to Ishola (2016), in African culture, fathers are always revered with authority; his commands must be obeyed by everybody in the family, without questioning, including the wives. He argued further that this patriarchal culture that places men above women with the power to control and dominate them exists among all the ethnic groups in Nigeria.

### ***Culture as Contributing Factors to Domestic Violence***

Culture affects the perceptions of people in relation to their interpretation of life. It allows a group of people to define themselves, and to decide the meaning, relationship and management of their environment (Kim, Park, & Park, 2000). What is normal in a culture may be abnormal in another. For instance, in Korea, snails are considered as pests, while they are a delicacy in France (Kim et al., 2000). Therefore, the African societies' view on marital affairs is different from others. Literature has indicated the influence of cultural belief and perceptions on the people's understanding of family rights and roles (Lee et al., 2014). To this, Ntoimo and Isiugo-Abanihe, (2014) observed that most of the Nigerian cultures are patriarchal in nature, which distinguishes males from females from the very beginning. For instance, in Igbo culture, the

birth of a male child is announced by a gun shot while that of a female is through the display of some coins (money) on the mothers' door step (Nelson, 2015). These acts signify the source of power in the former and a property to be sold, in the latter. Be that as it were, the major cultural factors that expose women to abuse are as follows:

### ***Norms about Marriage***

Nigerian culture has a strong marriage and family ideology which socialize women to marry and remain in the marriage forever (Ntoimo & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014). Ntoimo, et al., (2014) asserted that stigma from the society and pressure from parents make women to endure and stay in their abusive relationships. Furthermore, women are often regarded as property in most African societies. In this regard, Bowman (2003) noted that the exorbitant expenses during the wedding appear to have equated her to a property being sold. Similar study by Onifade, Aduradola, and Adamu (2016) found that at marriage in African cultures, a woman is being traded away by the reception of bride price and other gift items by the family. These items include cattle, goats, yams, and the like; which symbolically demonstrate the transfer of her rights and authority to the husband. As a result, the man not only exerts power and authority over the wife because of her weakness but also because her family may be either unable or unwilling to pay back the price in the event of separation or divorce. However, Ntoimo et al., (2014) found that women who can pay back their bride price because of their economic independence are less likely to be abused, and this has made most women to be bent on achieving some social and economic independent before marriage. On the contrary, in their study, Balogun and John-Akinola (2015) found that economic independence of women increases their risk of being abused. Their lack of submission to, and dependence on their husbands, because of their financial independence are found to be triggering violence in the homes. Moreover, the marriage is viewed as a relationship between the couples and the two families which makes it difficult for women to end such a relationship (Bowman, 2003).

### ***Gender Biased***

Male-Child syndrome is one of the contributing factors of domestic violence in Nigeria. Birth of male children generally attracts praises and encomiums from friends, while that of female children can cause a woman a real problem in her matrimony (Ishola, 2016). In addition, the birth of a male child assures the mother of a high status in the family, who has fulfilled her marital obligations (Nwokocha, 2007). Therefore, the desire for male children which is an essential part of gender inequality in African societies (Bowman, 2003), was among the identified factors for domestic violence in studies across Africa. For instance, in a study conducted in Kenya by Njue, Rombo, Smart, Lutomia and Mbirianjau, (2014), it was revealed that sons are treasured more than daughters in patriarchal societies, and women have been abused because of this. Overall, male children are regarded as the heads of the family, who will continue to sustain the family's lineage while the female children will surely be married to someone else. So, where a man did not get a male child who will take over the headship of the family, he may be disturbed and in most cases, subjecting his wife to verbal abuse and threats of divorce or remarriage.

### ***Forced Marriage***

Forced marriage is a marriage contracted against the wish of the parties involved. This form of marriage is still practiced in some cultures in Nigeria, where young girls are given out in

marriage to wealthy individuals or close friends; to strengthen the existing relationships (Ishola, 2016). Studies on gender and marriage institutions in Nigeria confirmed that ideas about marriage are almost the same across all the ethnic groups in Nigeria (Ishola, 2016; Ntoimo & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014). It is established that early marriage is encouraged among all the ethnic groups in Nigeria (Ntoimo & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014), and any woman who refuses to marry her fathers' approved choice is usually tagged as a social evil and a disgraced to the family (Ntoimo & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014; Ekiran, 2003).

Overall, these are some of the cultural practices in Nigeria that contributed to the pervasive incidences of domestic violence in matrimonial homes. It is worthy to mention that these practices still exist, however, the influence of religions, education and exposure have greatly reduced its operations.

## **Methodology**

This paper adopted the qualitative research approach to report the findings of this study. A fieldwork was conducted to expound the perceptions of women about domestic violence in Nigeria. A purposeful sampling technique was adopted for the informants' selection. This is an intentional selection of the individuals who have the necessary information required for the study, and the usual standard for this selection is the participants' wealth of experience about the phenomenon under study (Clark & Creswell, 2015). The target participants in this study are women (married and divorced) with experiences of domestic violence in matrimonial relationships. Therefore, a total of 16 women were interviewed. The study was conducted across Adavi, Ajaokuta, Okehi, and Okene Local Government Areas of Ebiraland, Kogi State, Nigeria. The study area is an urban area with a total population of 877,447 people (National Population Commission, 2006). The people are a homogenous group, distinguished by a unique culture with the same language called Epira (Audu, 2010). Epira is one of the ethnic groups in the Middle Belt zone of Nigeria. Though, the percentage of Muslims and Christians were not stated in the 2006 census, however, literature indicated that Muslims have the highest population in Ebiraland (Bunza & Ashafa, 2010; Jimba, 2012; Okene & Suberu, 2013). A patrilineal family system; where an oldest male takes the leadership of the family, is a common practice in the study area (Tenuche, 2011). Wives and children are expected to be subservient to men. The data were later analyzed to identify the factors that contribute to domestic violence in Nigeria.

## **Profile of Informants**

This section of the study elaborates the profile of the informants from the four Local Government Areas that made up Ebiraland in Kogi State, Nigeria. These informants consist of eight married women and eight divorced women from the study area.

Table A shows a general background of the sixteen (16) informants in this study. The distribution was classified into A1-A8, married women, and B1-B8 divorced women.

**Table A: General Profile of the Informants**

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
1	A1	47 years	Married	Primary	Business
2	A2	54 years	Married	NCE	Teaching
3	A3	39 years	Married	NCE	Teaching
4	A4	35 years	Married	None	Business
5	A5	34 years	Married	NCE	Teaching
6	A6	37 years	Married	Secondary	Business
7	A7	44 years	Married	First Deg.	Civil Service
8	A8	36 years	Married	Secondary	Teaching
9	B1	32 years	Divorcee	Secondary	Teaching
10	B2	36 years	Divorcee	Secondary	Trading
11	B3	34 years	Divorcee	First Deg.	Business
12	B4	39 years	Divorcee	ND	Business
13	B5	33 years	Divorcee	Secondary	Business
14	B6	41 years	Divorcee	NCE	Teaching
15	B7	40 years	Divorcee	None	Trading
16	B8	36 years	Divorcee	ND	Civil Service

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Framework of Domestic Violence - Feminist Theory**

The World Health Organization defines domestic violence as any act that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including controlling behaviors, by a partner towards another in a marital relationship (WHO, 2016). Similarly, Tucker (1994) defined marital violence to mean an intentional treatment of a wife that results in injury or any form of harm. It is also described as a violent act between family members or between husbands and wives in marital relationships (Cherlin, 2002, p. 386). However, in Nigeria, it was further described as any form of physical harm, sexual abuse, or threat of violence, which emanate from a member of the family towards another (Kunnuji, 2014). From the above definitions, the manifestations of domestic violence can be in three main forms which include physical such as pushing, slapping, kicking, sexual like coercion or rape, and psychological violence such as acts of humiliation (Kelmendi, 2015; Kunnuji, 2014; Saltzman, Green, & Marks, 2000).

The framework that most scholars suggested in understanding domestic violence is the feminist theory (Bowman, 2003; Eswaran & Malhotra, 2011; Osisiogu, 2016; Tenuche, 2011). Feminist theory seeks to address women's conditions in relation to the past, present, proposes a promising future (Coleman, 2008). According to feminist theory, domestic violence is a social ill that resulted from a male-dominated stereotype that conditions women into accepting being controlled by men (Tenuche, 2011). Feminist theory views domestic violence as born out of patriarchal structure which accords males certain power to control women and keep them subservient by whatever means possible (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Lewis, 2000; Eswaran & Malhotra, 2011). The theory, therefore, suggested that the solution to prevent domestic violence is to establish programs and social services for the women who are experiencing, or have experienced domestic violence (Black, Weisz, & Bennett, 2010; Ofei-Aboagye, 1994). Patriarchy on the other hand, is a cultural structure that places men in a leading positions over women, thereby marginalizing them in terms of economical, religion, social, political, and marital relation (Adjei, 2016; Chireshe, 2015).

Based on the above, Chireshe (2015) and Anderson (2010) argued that, patriarchy is the main factor that leads to domestic violence against women throughout the human history. Therefore,

viewing patriarchy from a feminist perspective, provides a suitable framework for proper understanding of domestic violence against women. Premise on the above, this study aimed to identify the cultural practices that contributed to the prevalence of domestic violence in Nigeria, by answering the following research questions:

1. What is the women's perception of domestic violence?
2. What are the contributing factors of domestic violence?

Based on the themes generated from the fieldwork interviews, thematic data analysis was employed to analyze the data. This process involves a thorough examination of the narratives, exploring the informants' experiences about domestic violence, data reductions and verification of the themes found in the data (Clark & Creswell, 2015). The themes were later refined for analysis. Important narratives are reported verbatim.

## **Results**

### ***Women's Perceptions about Domestic Violence***

All the informants in the study admitted that domestic violence exists and has caused a lot of physical, mental and reproductive problems to women in the community. Most of the women agreed that there is no marriage without trial; one either passes it or fails. Although all the informants admitted that violence has affected their health and general wellbeing, they, however, agreed that man has the right to control his family and he should be respected for whatever action he takes. An informant during the fieldwork stated:

*Women do complain a lot. Are you the one taking care of the family? Are you the one controlling your husband? To me a man knows how to manage his home better, it is therefore advisable that you respect him (INF. 12, married)*

The women experienced physical, psychological, verbal and sexual forms of abuse from the husbands. They all admitted that violence in the matrimony is usually noticed when the couples engaged in quarrelling, abusing each other, and fighting. Denial of sex is however perceived as a corrective measure against a recalcitrant wife, and women do not complain about it.

All the informants in the study felt that domestic violence has caused series of damage to women in their life. Informants spoke of effects of violence on the psychological and mental wellbeing of the women. These consequences range from depression, aggression, having chronic diseases such as blood pressure and stroke, and sometimes caused them to lose the pregnancy. One of the informants interviewed expressed this concern:

*There will not be peace of mind in the home and this can lead to thinking, aggression, frustration and eventually the common health problem in our land, High Blood Pressure (BP). There can also be a physical health problem, she eats but appears like she is always hungry because she is not at peace with herself. She will become hard-hearted, there is nothing you can tell her to calm her (INF. 4, divorced).*

### *Cultural Practices that Contribute to Domestic Violence*

Generally, all the informants felt that there are cultural and social norms that exposed women to domestic violence. Women reported that culture dictates that women should be submissive to their husbands. During the fieldwork interviews, among the recurrent practices that were mentioned as contributing factors to domestic violence are norms about marriage, desire for male children and forced marriages.

Informants spoke about the marriage system in the society as one of the factors that exposed women to abuse. The payment of bride prize and all other expenses during marriage ceremony are indications that a woman must be obedient and subservient to her husband. The most unfortunate thing in this marriage system is that when a woman decides to leave, she must return all the expenses done on her. As such, the women need to obey all the commands because, neither she nor her family will be capable to return such an amount of resources expended on her during the wedding ceremony. One of the informants interviewed stated that though, we are not slaves, but our acceptance of the marriage has denied us some of our rights (INF.5).

The desire for a male child is also identified as among the practices that exposed women to domestic violence in Nigeria. Informants spoke of the predominant position of the male child in Nigerian societies. The fathers believe that it is only the male children that can enrich them and continue their legacy and family names. As for females, they will be married out and continue to bear another family names. Therefore, when a wife is unable to give birth to a male child as expected by the husband, this can trigger violence in the home. A quotation from an informant stated:

*gender preference in children has also caused domestic violence. Some families believed that male children are the only source of riches in life. In a situation where his wife is giving birth to female children all the time, it can trigger the violence among the couple (INF. 8)*

Forced marriage is one of the cultures that are still in practice in some of the societies in Nigeria. Informants narrated that one of the cultural factors that exposed women to abuse is forced marriage. Some families arranged marriages for their children because they are family friends. About 80% of informants admitted that most of such marriages are bound to experience violence because there may not be love between the couples in the first place. Couples in such situations may not be compatible and little misunderstanding can cause them their marriage. One of the informants highlighted this point during the interview:

*The assumption of love can cause domestic violence. When fathers are forcing their children to their friends' children, you know this is bad. These people may not be able to reject their fathers' wish ...there are situations when people fake love, so, when they come to realize it, they become violent at each other (INF. 6).*

## Discussion of the Findings

This study revealed a high prevalence rate of domestic violence among the women in the study area. The narratives from the informants during the fieldworks suggested this fact. This finding is consistent with other studies which reported a significant level of domestic violence in Nigeria. For instance, previous studies conducted in Lagos and Ile-Ife reported 87% and 77.3% lifetime prevalence respectively (Onigbogi, Odeyemi, & Onigbogi, 2015), while that of Ibadan reported 57.6% (Owoaje & OlaOlorun, 2012). It is evident from the data collected that patriarchal culture and domestic violence are related phenomena. The findings revealed that 80% of domestic violence cases occurred due to men's desire to control and dominate the womenfolk. This fact is well established in literature within and outside Nigeria (Khaironisak, Zaridah, Hasanain, & Zaleha, 2016; Onifade et al., 2016; Balogun & John-Akinola, 2015; Davies & True, 2015; Kelmendi, 2015; Ntoimo & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014). Previous studies have also indicated that some cultural practices such as norms about marriage, a predominant position for male children, and forced marriages, are still in vogue in Nigeria. And these practices have remained as obstacles to curbing domestic violence from our societies (Nwogu, 2015; Oluremi, 2015; Isiugo-Abanihe & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2007; Bowman, 2003). The present study widens our horizon in understanding the influence of these cultural practices on the incidence of domestic violence in Nigeria.

Results from this study support the findings in previous studies which indicated that desire for a male child is one of the contributing factors to domestic violence in most societies of the world (Ishola, 2016; Kumar, Haque Nizamie, & Srivastava, 2013; Chika, 2012; Isiugo-Abanihe & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2007). Nigeria is a patrilineal society which prefers male above female children. The cardinal principle of progeny continuity and legacy maintenance in male children have accounted for this preference. Men are therefore obsessed with having male children because of the attached societal values and recognition. Hence, the inability of the wives to give birth to male children have exposed them to marital violence in Nigeria. In the current study, informants narrated their ordeal in marital relationships because of male children. Their constant persecution and embarrassment from their husbands' family could not be overemphasized.

Another important insight arising from this study is that forced marriage has exposed women to domestic violence in Nigeria. A sizeable proportion of the informants (75%) admitted that such marriages are usually marred by violence, and eventually, divorce because of lack of interest from the beginning. Most narrative data indicated that women are forced to remain in such relationships because of pressure from their parents and other family members at the expense of their happiness and human dignity. This is because, in Nigeria, most cultures frown at divorce and as such, women do not easily opt out of abusive relationships. This fact was fairly established in the previous studies across Nigeria which indicated the influence of forced marriage on the incidence of domestic violence (Ishola, 2016; Onifade et al., 2016; Tenuche, 2011).

Furthermore, the current study reveals that domestic violence has negative effects on women's physical, mental and psychological wellbeing in general. This finding has also been reported widely by previous studies about domestic violence (Alesina et al., 2016; Abrahams et al., 2014; Stöckl et al., 2014; Ofeibea-Aboagye, 1994). The informants' narratives of the series of health issues resulting from various forms of abuse call for urgent attention. The study revealed that chronic diseases such as hypertension and stroke are very common among the women

interviewed in this study. 74% of the informants reported that domestic violence has affected their health physically, mentally, and socially, and therefore believe that it is not justifiable. Therefore, intervention programmes such as health care facilities, for the treatment of the victims, and counselling centers to address the psychological problems of the victims and the perpetrators, are of paramount importance.

### **Recommendations for Preventing Domestic Violence in Nigeria**

Domestic violence is a system that could be changed. This change can only be achieved by creating awareness and recommending effective strategies for its prevention. The narratives of the informants indicated that domestic violence should be resisted and prevented. This paper therefore suggests that to prevent domestic violence from our societies, the following recommendations should be employed as strategic tools:

1. The government should legislate laws prohibiting domestic violence and facilities should be put in place for its strict enforcement. The enforcement of these laws would serve as a deterrent to others, and encourages the victims to always report to relevant authorities.
2. The government should initiate intervention programmes such as financial supports for abused women, free education for the victims and their children, emergency relief centers for counselling traumatized victims as well as the perpetrators.
3. The law enforcement agents such as police and judicial professionals should be educated on the best way to address violence against women. It is observed that in most cases, these law enforcement agencies often treat cases of domestic violence as trivial family affairs.
4. Medical professionals should be empowered and sensitized on how to recognize and assist the battered women. Patients should be thoroughly inquired into her medical history, and those with psychological effects should be referred to professional counsellors.
5. Religious institutions have the responsibilities of organizing seminars and programmes to enlighten the public about the evils of violence in the society. The youths should be educated on how to be non-violent individuals who have respect for women. Finally, the public should be educated about the negative effects of these obnoxious cultural practices on the wellbeing of women, children and the society in general.

### **Conclusion**

The prevalence of domestic violence in Nigeria has caused a lot of harm to women's physical, mental and psychological wellbeing. The cultural practices have contributed greatly to the increase of this social illness. These cultural practices have relegated womanhood to the background and subjected them to several forms of abuse in their marital life. To get rid of these social menaces from our societies, it is important to examine the factors mitigating against the eradication of this violence. Therefore, the government must pay urgent attention towards uprooting the entrenched beliefs and obnoxious cultural practices that set the pace for gender inequality in our societies.

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