

Knowledge of what constitutes gender-based violence among adult residents of Igbo-Eze North LGA, Enugu State, Nigeria and practice implications for social workers

¹Patricia U. Agbawodikeizu, ^{2*}Prince C. Ekoh, ³Malachy E. Ebue, ⁴Henry, T. Ajibo, ⁵Chiemezie S. Atama & ⁶Uzoma O. Okoye

^{1-4,6} Department of Social Work & ⁵ Department of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

**Correspondence: princechiagozie.ekoh@unn.edu.ng*

Abstract

Gender-based violence has been given diverse perceptions and interpretations worldwide. Global concerns investigating and describing the term majorly focus on acts of discrimination, deprivation and injustices meted out to the women folk. Recurrent cases denoting gender-based violence in Igbo-Eze North LGA promulgated by their culture/traditions informed the thrust of this paper which examined knowledge of what constitutes gender-based violence from the perspectives of adult residents in the community. Qualitative methods including focus group discussions and key informants interviews were conducted with 63 adult men and women in Enugu-Ezike, Igbo-Eze North LGA in Enugu state, Nigeria. Findings show that majority of the women described gender-based violence as acts of discrimination, deprivation, injustices; physical and verbal abuse against them while almost all the men expressed lack of knowledge of what constitutes gender-based violence and understood physical abuse of the women as correctional measure. Differing views about acts that constitute gender-based violence exist and these acts are still perpetrated and perceived as a norm in the studied sites; therefore, the study recommends in-depth enlightenment programmes especially at grassroots level on acts that constitute gender-based violence as well as laws protecting the rights of women. Implications of these findings for social workers were discussed.

Keywords: Gender-based violence, forms of gender-based violence, knowledge, implication, discrimination, patriarchy.

Introduction

Gender-based violence has been conceptualized and interpreted globally showcasing its diverse contextual meanings. Gender-based violence according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (2017) is defined as any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will which is based on socially-ascribed (e.g. gender) differences between males and females. In furtherance, UNFPA (2017) noted that gender-based violence reflects and reinforces inequities between men and women;

undermines the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims, and remains shrouded in a culture of silence. In the view of Cooper, Paluck, Fletcher, Ryan, Branscombe and Center (2013), gender-based violence is physical, psychological or sexual acts against an individual or a group on the basis of gender or gender norms. The authors noted that gender-based violence encompasses various forms of violence such as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual harassment and rape, violence arising from dowries and female genital mutilation, trafficking, forced prostitution and intimidation. These definitions present key terms that are akin to the descriptions given to a similar phenomenon which is violence against women.

The World Health Organization (2001) defined gender-based violence against women as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, or deprivation. The United Nations General Assembly [UNGA] (1993) noted that the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women see violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in or is 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. In this regard, Worku and Addisie (2002) described violence against women as any type of harmful behaviour directed at women and girls because of their sex. Similarly, Womankind (2015) described violence against women as a violation of women's fundamental human rights; often with devastating consequences. Implicit in the above definitions given to gender-based violence and violence against women are key descriptive terms which point out harm inflicting acts targeted towards a victim(s); that though both women and men experience gender-based violence, women are always disproportionately affected. This may explain why both concepts (gender-based violence and violence against women) are often perceived and explained as same in some settings. Victims of such violence can suffer sexual and reproductive health consequences including forced and unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, traumatic fistula, sexually transmitted infections and death. Evident in the descriptions also are diverse types of the phenomenon which will be discussed in two broad categories namely structural and institutionalized forms of gender-based violence.

From the structural standpoint, there exists in the literature an acceptance of cultural practices and social norms which define, induce, condone and encourage gender-based violence particularly against women in both domestic and public contexts (Amnesty International report, 2017; Antai, 2011; Atama, Agbawodikeizu & Ogbonne, 2016; National Population Commission (NPC) (Nigeria); ICF International, 2014). This buttresses the significance of the works of feminist theorists such as Mead in 1955 who argued strongly that gender behaviours were largely cultural formations and definitions rather than any form of natural or genetic endowment, and suggested that gender practices are relative to the cultural context of any society (White & Klein, 2002). Simon de Beauvoir in 1949 whose concepts "subject-object dichotomy and authenticity", in her analysis of gender relations, guided her realization that in a patriarchal culture, the male is set up as the positive or the norm where as the female is set up as the negative, unessential and abnormal (White & Klein, 2002). Moreover,

Gender in Nigeria Report (2012) stated that up to a third of women in Nigeria indicated they have been subjected to some form of physical and psychological violence, including marital rape and sexual exploitation/harassment within the home. NPC (Nigeria) and ICF International (2014) assessed community attitude towards violence against women and revealed that a surprisingly high number of women think beating a wife is completely justified. Institutionally on the other hand, the Nigeria legal systems do not offer women and girls adequate protection from violence. For instance, Women Advocates' Research and Documentation Centre (2017) indicates that in Nigerian law, section 55(1) (d) of the penal code legalizes "corrective" beating of a wife as long as it does not cause grievous hurt; likewise in section 182 marital rape was not recognized as rape as long as a married woman has attained puberty. Consequently, Womankind (2015) further noted that in countries where there is no law against domestic violence, women's average life expectancy is typically shorter than that of men, and that globally, about 38% of women who have lost their lives were murdered by their intimate partners. This may happen when protection of women and girls from violence is not given adequate attention by the legal system in any society. Thus, this and the provisions made in Nigerian legal system create a plural justice system that potentially will undermine women's rights to seek legal redress in such cases, and may inform perceptions regarding what constitutes gender-based violence.

Global concerns investigating gender-based violence appear to majorly focus on acts of discrimination, deprivation and injustices meted out to the women folk, and relatively describe it to be akin to violence against women. This can be seen in the report of Amnesty International (2017) which indicates that gender-based violence stems from the failure of government and societies to recognize the human rights of women. The report further stated that gender-based violence is rooted in a global culture of discrimination which denies women equal rights with men and legitimizes the appropriation of women's body for individual gratification. More so, the works of some scholars such as Antai (2011), Atama, Agbawodikeizu and Ogbonne (2016), Ezeah and Achonwa (2015), Fawole, Adeonmu and Fawole (2005), Nwabunike and Tenkorang (2015), Oyediran and Isiugo-Abanihe (2005), Oli, Igbo and Okoye (2013) and UNFPA (2017) explained gender-based violence as mostly violent acts or practices against women by males who are/have been in positions of trust and intimate relationships such as husbands, boyfriends, fathers, father-in-laws, step-fathers, brothers, uncles, sons and other relatives, and observed that such practices are entrenched in the culture within patriarchal societies. The report of Women Advocates' Research and Documentation Centre (2017) equally indicate that the dominant customary and religious law systems in Nigeria are patriarchal; discriminatory against the women and not very open to change especially as the people consider them core elements of their cultural identity. Also, Aluko (2015) opined that the concept of gender-based violence refers to violence that mostly targets women due to perceptions about their gender in specific cultural contexts. However, Cooper et al (2013) noted that men can also be victims of gender-based violence, though majority of victims are women. Tolhurst et al (2012) argued that gender transformative interventions often focus more on changing men's behaviour and attitudes as well as ensure that women are supported and given voices to seek protection. Justifying this claim, Tolhurst et al (2012) further stated that a noteworthy presentation of this dimension is the way in which sexual violence against boys and men is often not constructed as gender-base

violence and rarely acknowledged by men as they have been observed to liken their acknowledgement of experiencing sexual violence to signify feminizing and casting self as victims rather than agents.

The problem of gender-based violence has also not failed to attract scholarly attention as numerous studies have been conducted on diverse forms of gender-based violence such as violence against women and domestic violence in Nigeria. However, a good number of these studies focused on issues such as perception of domestic violence by women (Atama, Agbawodikeizu & Ogbonne, 2016; Oyediran & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2005), perceived acts that constitute violence against women (Oli, Igbo & Okoye, 2013), health implications of gender inequality (Ezeah & Achonwa, 2015) and intimate partner violence (Fawole, Adeonmu & Fawole, 2005). None of these studies has tried to assess the knowledge commonly held by men and women on what actually constitute gender-based violence in the rural setting. This informed the bedrock of the present study because there is need to also investigate knowledge of same concept from the viewpoint of male gender to highlight the views of both gender categories and indentify what group(s) requires gender-orientation transformative interventions as cases of violent acts against the women were observed to still exist in some part of Igbo-Eze North LGA (Atama, Agbawodikeizu & Ogbonne, 2016). This study explored this dimension because except for the NPC (Nigeria) and ICF International (2014) project, what is mostly reported on gender-based violence include views of urban residents and in few cases those of only rural women on gender-based violence against women revealing a dearth in literature on what the rural men know and regard as gender-based violence. Assessment of knowledge of what constitutes gender-based violence from the viewpoints of men and women in the rural community is particularly significant as it will add to the body of existing literature on perception of gender-based violence. It will also be useful to attain three objectives: first, to find out and highlight the level of awareness of the rural dwellers regarding what represents gender-based violence; second, to find out whether there are gendered differentials in the knowledge of what constitutes gender-based violence in the rural area, and third, to provide policy makers, social workers as well as organizations working on achieving gender-based violence free society with information on what the people in a rural setting actually regard as gender-based violence; which is hoped to inform evaluation of educational/enlightenment programmes aiming to change gender norms as knowledge to a large extent informs practice.

Perception of what represent gender-based violence has been investigated in some communities in Nigeria and reports abound on differing viewpoints of the phenomenon; some even highlighted gendered differential on views held about it. Oli, Igbo and Okoye (2013) examined what acts constitute violence against women among 1,165 adult males and females in Onitsha North LGA, Anambra state and reported that the act perceived to most constitute violence against women is wife beating. This finding is quite contrary to what was observed by Odimegwu (2001) among the Tiv-speaking people of middle belt, Nigeria that wife beating was perceive as a sign of affection. NPC (Nigeria) and ICF International (2014) report reveals that women who are currently married or living together and women who are employed but not for cash are more likely than other women to believe that there are occasions when wife beating is justified. In addition, same report stated that rural women are more likely than

women living in urban areas to believe that wife beating is justified (41% and 26% respectively); likewise, men living in rural areas are more likely than men living in urban areas to accept wife beating as appropriate (29% and 19% respectively). Atama, Agbawodikeizu and Ogbonne (2016) investigated perception of domestic violence by married women in Igbo-Eze North LGA of Enugu State, among 38 respondents and found out that almost all the respondents perceived gender-based violence to involve all violent acts by men targeted against the women and their rights.

The radical feminist theory was considered relevant and adopted as the framework strengthening this work seeing that it locates the root cause of women oppression in patriarchal gender relations. Radical feminists described patriarchy as a tool deeply woven into the fabric of the culture of a people which tends to promulgate gender-based violence. The theorists described ill situations of most women in any society as the consequences of direct power relationship between men and women in which men have concrete interests in controlling, subjugating and oppressing women (Ritzer, 2011). The views of the radical feminist theorists earlier reflected in the observations of White and Klein (2002) wherein they noted that the male is perceived as norm whereas female is perceived as unessential. Traditional Nigerian society has been observed to be patriarchal and this creates structural factors that support a male dominated social order in which men often exercise power over women in several ways (Antai, 2011). Patriarchy has been observed by the radical feminist theorists as the least noticed but most significant driver of social inequality in any societies. This implies that violence practiced by men in any society may be perceived as norm; acceptable and not gender-based violence. However, these differing perceptions of what constitute gender based violence must be understood by professionals who aim to end violence against women and provide support for women experiencing domestic violence (Keeling & Van Wormer, 2012).

Social work with women is under the purview of family welfare service (Nnamma-Okechukwu, Chukwu & Ekoh, 2018); an area of social work with a statutory mandate to support the welfare of vulnerable individuals and families (Okoye & Ijebor, 2013). Social workers intervene in issues of gender-based violence at the clinical levels (working with individuals and families) and at macro levels (policy) (Nnamma-Okechukwu, Chukwu & Ekoh, 2018). Furthermore, they can take to culture cum gender-reorientation and sensitization aimed at changing the apparent acceptable perception of wife battering as a sign of affection, and for correction or any other justification or excuse provided.

Materials and methods

Design and data collection

The researchers employed cross-sectional design and qualitative approaches such as Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) in collecting data for this study. Data collection was conducted in two villages namely Aji and Umuagama in Enugu-Ezike, Igbo-Eze North LGA, Enugu State. Aji and Umuagama in Enugu-Ezike community were purposively selected for the study due to their notable cultural practices/norms that promulgate gender-based violence particularly violence against women and recurring cases of the said gender-based violence meted to the female gender therein (Atama, Agbawodikeizu & Ogbonne, 2016). Qualitative

approaches were used for the study because they provided a basis for in-depth analysis and insight into what the people regard as gender-based violence, and through the use of methods such as probing, individual interviews and group discussions; these approaches enabled a rich understanding of the processes and causal linkages that result in particular viewpoints held by the respondents on the issue studied. According to the 2006 National Population Census, the population of Igbo-Eze North LGA was 258,829 comprising 126,069 males and 132,760 females (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). This population was projected to 367,537 consisting 179,018 males and 188,519 females in 2018 haven applied population project formulae ($P_n = P_o (1 + r)^n$) with the use of the annual growth rate percentage (2.95%) of Enugu state provided by National Bureau of Statistics (2018). The target population for this study was all adult men and women aged 18 years and above who reside in Enugu-Ezike. The instruments used for the study were KII and FGD guides.

The study used purposive sampling to select key informants who participated in Women for Women International educational gender-transformative programme. These key informants were contacted through the assistance of the desk officer of Women for Women International, Enugu-Ezike branch. The key Informant interviews (n=10) were conducted with the following respondents: two key officials of local security outfit, two town union executives, two executive members of a social group (association of married women) and four eldest women from the two villages selected. On the whole, we had four men and six women for the KIIs. Additionally, for the focus group discussions, we purposively selected other eligible community members who were available at the time of the visit of the researchers to elicit community views on the subject matter. Eight FGD sessions (two male and two female groups) were conducted in the two villages respectively. The eight focused group discussion sessions were organized and conducted at locations chosen by the respondents using the FGD guide. Each of the four FGD sessions with the women comprised seven participants (n= 28) while the four sessions with the men comprised six to seven participants who participated till the end of the discussions (n=25); giving a total of 53 participants and 63 respondents in all. All the respondents used for the study were willing to participate in the study. The sessions and interviews were moderated by the authors while two research assistants helped with note taking.

All interviews and discussions were audio recorded and supplemented by the notes. The interviews with the KIIs took an average of 45-60 minutes while the discussions took an average of 60-90 minutes. All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and notes written by the note taker during the interviews and discussions were added to the transcripts.

Data analysis

The audio-recorded interviews and discussions were transcribed verbatim and subsequently edited for sentence structure. For ease of identification of source of quotes in the transcripts, identifier codes were generated and all transcripts were anonymized with each of the codes; each participant was given an identifier code as well. Keys representing source of data, category of respondent, location number and participants' number were put together to form an identifier code for each of the participants. Thus explanation to the keys refers: FGD (Focus Group Discussion), KII

(Key Informant Interview), W (Women), M (Men), V1 and 2 (Village 1[Aji] Village 2[Umuagama]), P1-8 (Participant 1-8) and R1-10 (Respondent 1-10). Coding of transcripts followed a rigorous process that started with familiarization of the transcripts, developing coding scheme with the guides' questions, revision of the coding scheme to ensure application to all the transcripts, identification of recurrent/common themes based on the research objectives, identification of emerging nodes and sorting them into related categories. Coded data were sorted into the themes leading to identification of patterns and explanations.

Results**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in the KIIs and FGDs**

Responses	KII	FGD	Frequency/ Percentage (%)
Gender			
Male	4	25	29(46.0%)
Female	6	28	34(54.0%)
Age			
25 – 34 years			18(28.6%)
35 – 44 years			23(36.5%)
45 – 54 years			4(6.3%)
55 – 64 years			13(20.6%)
65years and above			5(8.0%)
Marital status			
Single	-	9	9(14.3%)
Married	8	33	41(65.1)
Ever married	-	4	4(6.3%)
Widowed	2	7	9(14.3%)
Occupation			
Unemployed	2	6	8(12.7%)
Trading	1	15	16(25.4)
Farming	4	23	27(42.9)
Civil servants	2	6	8(12.7%)
Retirees	1	3	4(6.3%)
Highest level of education			
No formal education	2	8	10(15.9%)
Primary education completed	3	12	15(23.8%)
Secondary education completed	2	24	26(41.3%)
Post-secondary education completed (Diploma)	-	4	4(6.3%)
University graduate education completed	2	5	7(11.1%)
University post-graduate education completed	1	-	1(1.6%)
Religion			
Catholic	7	31	38(60.3%)
Other Christian denomination	3	9	12(19.0%)
ATR	-	13	13(20.6%)
Monthly income			
Below 20,000	1	21	22(35.0%)
20,000 – 39,000	5	26	31(49.2%)
40,000 – 59,000	2	5	7(11.1%)
60,000 and above	2	1	3(4.8%)

Source: Survey 2018

Data in Table 1 above show socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents that participated in the KIIs and FGDs. The table shows that more females (54%) than males (46%) participated in the study and predominantly those aged 35 – 44 years old (36.5%). Greater percentage of the respondents are married (65.1%) and farming was their main occupation (42.9%). On their highest level of education attained, those that completed secondary education (41.3%), primary education (23.8%) and had no formal education (15.9%) were more than those that completed university graduate education (11.1%), post-secondary education such as pre-degree programme (6.3%) and university post-graduate education (1.6%). Predominant religious affiliation of the respondents was Catholic (60.3%) while most of them earn ₦39,000 and below as monthly income (49.2% & 35%). From the table, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents attained lower level of education, earn lower level of income and can be categorized as younger adults given their age (44 years and below).

Respondents' views on whether they have heard about gender-based violence

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they have heard of or know what is regarded as gender-based violence. Their responses in the interviews and discussions revealed that more of the women than men have heard about gender-based violence; most of the men stated that they are not aware of such thing in their community though only a few of them indicated their understanding of the term though both categories of the respondents likened gender-based violence to violence against women. This finding may be attributed to their level of education as majority of the respondents attained lower level of education which may not have exposed them to knowledge about gender-based violence except for the few that were exposed to such knowledge through the training by an NGO. Views expressed by the respondents in the interviews and discussions include:

There is no woman here that will say she does not know what gender violence (*gender-based violence*) is because it is what we experience from our husbands on daily basis. (FGD/W/V1/P5).

Yes, I have heard about it because the Women for Women group came here sometime ago and taught us everything about it. It is the maltreatments we women get from our husbands such as beating, not giving us money for feeding and denying us our rights. (FGD/W/V2/P1).

Yes, I know what gender-based violence means. In my own understanding, it is violence against the women by men. It can be in the form of a man using abusive words on a woman or even beating her and giving her injuries. (KII/W/V1/R2).

On the other hand, almost all the male respondents stated otherwise pointing out that they are not aware of what gender-based violence means, and that it does not occur in their community. Some of the FGD participants expressed these remarkable views: I can't think of anything that is called gender-based violence; in fact, it does not exist in our community. (FGD/M/V1/P1).

We are talking about economic hardship and you are asking us about gender violence, we don't know what it means and we don't want to know it in this village. (FGD/M/V2/P4).

See, in my own opinion, such a thing does not exist at all. It is just what women created for them to start challenging us and feeling powerful that's it! (FGD/M/V2/P3).

I am not aware of it; maybe you should teach me that one so I can learn. I don't think it is important for me, and is it for husband or wife. (FGD/M/V1/P7).

Similar to the women, only two male respondents in the KIIs who affirmed they were part of the community members trained under Women for Women International educational gender-transformative programme said: when you hear gender, it refers to imbalance and oppression of women by men. Gender-based violence means violence against women. (KII/M/V1/R4).

In our place, a woman does not lead in the family. She is always under her husband and she does all that her husband asks her to do. This is what people may call gender violence but to me that is an act of obedience and respect. (KII/M/V2/R1).

Acts that constitute gender-based violence

The study further sought to find out views held by the men and women on what acts constitute gender-based violence. Findings indicate that while the women reported more of the acts they perceive as gender-based violence and gave their specific examples such as discrimination, deprivation, injustice, physical and verbal abuse against them, almost all the men maintained that they lack knowledge of what act constitutes gender-based violence revealing that the finding also varied by gender of the respondents. This finding is rather surprising given the fact that majority of the respondents are those that can be categorized as younger adults due to their age (44 years and below), it is expected that over half of the male respondents should have knowledge of acts that constitute gender-based violence which is relatively recent and not common among those that are older though their level of education may not have enabled access to such knowledge. All the acts reported as gender-based violence particularly against the women include:

In this village, men and women do not participate in the same group meeting except for church group meetings. This I consider as gender-based violence. (KII/W/V2/R3).

Women are not allowed to own anything that is solid and should give them money in this community; that is why we totally depend on our husbands for everything. (KII/W/V1/R6).

Another thing I will like to add is, men always make the rules and these rules are against the women. This is because women are not allowed to be part of the cabinet that makes the rule. So, the rules the men made against the women

still prevail because women were not there when the rules were made. (FGD/W/V1/P8).

Yes, the gender violence is that women are not allowed to say their views on issues that concern their welfare in this village. It should not be only the men that will always say how things should be done here. (FGD/W/V2/P2).

Almost all the males in the FGDs were unanimous in their views on being ignorant about acts that actually depict gender-based violence. Some of the respondents made significant statements in one of the discussions which others concurred to implying that they expressed their intents.

This gender-based violence of a thing is not taken serious by men I must be honest about it. When do I have time to go and learn what and what is violence against women. After all, everything we do is violence against women; the women keep complaining about what we have and have not done. Women can never be pleased or satisfied so it is better we don't know it and leave it like that. (FGD/M/V2/P1).

We do not use violence against children or women and such a thing does not happen in our community. The reason why women are excluded from some activities here is because we believe they are fragile and not strong enough to withstand the stress associated with the numerous activities we engage in. (FGD/M/V1/P4).

In addition to the acts listed above, inclusion of women in leadership appears not to be near realistic in the community. This is because while the female respondents consider their exclusion from assuming leadership positions as unjust and discriminatory, the male respondents believe that such act was geared towards saving women the stress associated with leadership. According to the respondents:

Women are not elected into any leadership position here. In fact, men do not dream about nominating or electing a woman. It is only the men that are allowed to take up all leadership positions be it political or traditional. (FGD/W/V1/P4).

Women do not take leadership positions in our community, it is very wrong for them to do that. They are not encouraged to be leaders because we believe females are weaker gender and should not be subjected to the stress of leadership. (FGD/M/V1/P6).

Physical abuse of women which appears to be the only recurring view common among the males was reported as a correctional measure used by the men. Reports on wife beating reveal circumstances of its occurrence and acceptance of such act as a norm. Although this finding is not new, its observation in this study could be attributed to the respondents' levels of education and income as majority of them attained lower level of education and earn lower level of income (below ₦39,000 per month) and these may deny them access to knowledge of implications of physical abuse of women and finance to seek help if considered necessary. Views expressed by the respondents are as follow:

Our men beat women here! If a husband tells his wife that he wants to have sex with her and the woman refuses him, he will beat her and still have sex with her. (*KII/W/V1/R5*).

There are men who are fond of beating women, I mean dealing with them and giving them intense beating at every slightest provocation and that is the only way to tell the woman that he is in-charge. Some men cannot contain the excesses of women and to me, it's the best way to bend the women and correct their wrong doings. (*KII/M/V1/R4*).

My wives are under me and they keep to my instructions. I give orders and they have to obey them to the last letter and when any of them disobeys me, I beat the devil out of them. That is how I correct their misbehaviours and it is not gender-based violence in any way. (*KII/M/V1/R10*).

Do you say beating, it is a normal thing here and it has become part of us. It is no longer a problem to me because I am used to it. Our men beat us like children even in front of our children. (*FGD/W/V2/P3*).

Also, all the female respondents indicated that the use of harsh words on women is another act that constitutes violence against them. A female respondent in one of the FGDs said "Yes, men use harsh words on their wives when talking to them and this kills the soul faster than any illness especially when you are trying to please them". (*FGD/W/V1/P1*). Again, it was stated that a man forcefully engaging in sexual activity with his wife/wives is not rape. According to the respondents, the reason is because it is obligatory for married women to offer their bodies to their husbands when needed, though a few number of the women condemned it. The respondents shared common belief on this issue and considered it as a rape for unmarried individuals:

Rape is when a man has sex with a woman who is not his wife and without her consent. If a man forcefully has sex with his wife, it is a shameful thing and a big offence against the woman but the problem is that no woman can come out and say openly that her husband raped her. (*FGD/W/V2/P7*).

One cannot call it rape even when it was done forcefully because they are married. The type that was done forcefully by unmarried youths is rape. But, it is not right for a married woman to report such thing to the law enforcement agencies. A woman should endure it because she is in a union. (*FGD/W/V2/P5*).

For me, rape is when a man forces a woman he is not married to in order to have sex with her. A married woman is not expected to say no to sex when the husband demands for it and for me, forcing her to have sex with her is not a rape. It can never be imagined and there has never been a time and there will never be a time when such a woman should complain of being raped by her husband. It is unheard of. (*FGD/M/V1/P2*).

Respondents' opinions on their awareness of gender-based violence laws in Nigeria

The study also sought to find out whether the respondents have knowledge of gender-based violence laws in Nigeria. The results show that almost all the respondents said they have not heard about the laws or know about their existence. The reason for this may be attributable to their report on their tradition being dominant and taking precedence in guiding their conducts and their predominant level of education which may not provide them with opportunity to be exposed to such knowledge. Some of the respondents said: No! I haven't heard about it. I am yet to know about these laws. (FGD/M/V1/P2). I haven't heard about it. Maybe you will tell me about it so I will learn. (KII/M/V2/R8).

No, we do not know about the laws because it is meaningless to us and because ours is traditional. We respect our tradition and it oversees what is right or wrong. A woman has no power here. (FGD/W/V2/P5).

Discussion

We examined knowledge of what constitutes gender-based violence, as well tried to find out whether there are differential on same issue among male and female respondents in Enugu-Ezike, Igbo-Eze North LGA, Enugu State. Findings show that indeed, responses to knowledge of gender-based violence revealed knowledge of the term coming from more of the women than men implying gender-differential in the knowledge about it. This was made known as majority of the females than males reported they have heard of gender-based violence and both categories of respondents likened the term to violence against women. This corroborates with what exists in reports evidenced in the literature. Amnesty International report (2017), Antai (2011), Atama, Agbawodikeizu and Ogbonne (2016), Ezeah and Achonwa (2015), and UNFPA (2017) amongst others earlier investigated different dimensions of gender-based violence and observed that the term was described to be akin to violence against women. This may be attributed to the explanation offered by Aluko (2015) who pointed out that the concept of gender-based violence refers to violence that mostly targets women due to perceptions about their gender in specific cultural contexts. This also presents a reflection of an ideology (which explains gender-based violence as maltreatment of women by men) that is gradually gaining depth into Nigeria's social structure. Also, although observations of Cooper et al (2013) and Tolhurst et al (2012) may be similar to the situation in Nigeria, the ideology of equate gender-based violence with violence against women may likely become the standard thereby leading to little or no attention being given to violence experienced by men. This may be the reason most males who participated in this study expressed (or feigned) lack of knowledge of gender-based violence.

Additionally in the results of this study, discrimination, deprivation and injustice against women were reported by the female respondents as acts that constitute gender-based violence. This finding is akin to that noted in the report of Amnesty International (2017) wherein gender-based violence was observed to be rooted in a global culture of discrimination against the women which also denies women equal rights with men. Similar to the finding of this study is one of the key descriptive terms seen in the definition of gender-based violence against women by WHO (2001) which noted that the phenomenon can be defined as intentional use of physical force etc against self or

another person which can result in deprivation. More so, physical abuse of women (wife beating) was reported as correctional measure and a necessary male duty to assert manhood within the traditional family, and the women have been socialized to accept and encourage such belief. This may likely be unending as previous reports in the literature documented it (Antai, 2011; Atama, Agbawodikeizu & Ogbonne, 2016; NPC (Nigeria) and ICF International, 2014; Nwabunike & Tenkorang, 2015; Odimegwu, 2001; Oli, Igbo; Okoye, 2013) and the social media regularly exhibits experiences of women who summoned courage to report same.

Theoretical explanation for these findings lies in the fact that radical feminist theory, which locates the root cause of women oppression in patriarchal gender relations, described patriarchy as a tool deeply woven into the fabric of the culture of a people and tends to promulgate gender-based violence. The dominant customary and religious laws in Nigeria are patriarchal; discriminatory against the women and not very open to change (Women Advocates' Research and Documentation Centre, 2017). It also puts eradication of violence against women in this Century in serious doubt as the enacted laws that are discriminatory against the women are still being enforced without any attempt towards repeal, while perpetrators of this violence feign ignorance of their act.

Findings from this study have some implications for movements to achieve gender-based violence free society in the 21st century. This is because virtual records of activities performed by several human rights' movements and organizations in Nigeria as well as some of the agenda in development policies show a target at fertilization of ideas into social structures in the society with the aim of achieving gender-based violence free society, yet there is inadequate knowledge of gender-based violence and a wide margin on such knowledge between males and females who participated in this study. Findings of this study also have practice implication for social workers. Social work has been cited as a profession that is at the 'cutting edge' for the provision of support for women experiencing gender-based violence (Nnamma-Okechukwu, Chukwu & Ekoh, 2018). Social workers are devoted to uncovering the underlying and complex patterns of socio-bio-physical organization that govern the social behaviors of humans, individually and collectively (Harvey, 2012-18), and they strive to address some of the basic problems elucidated in findings of this study. These findings provide evidence that can be used in advocating for re-evaluation of public enlightenment programmes, particularly in the rural areas, on what actually constitute gender-based violence, and advocating for amendment of Nigerian laws promoting physical abuse of women. This can be done with the use of such strategies as lobbying, advocacy, sensitization and research to create a stable and less antagonistic society. Social workers, having got a clear picture of perspectives of gender-based violence that are influenced by the shared values of rural men and women, have a responsibility to protect the dignity and worth of women, and should fight against any action or inaction that trample upon this dignity through liaising with organizations to improve on educational empowerment programmes for women.

Therefore, findings from this study reveal that more work need to be done in the area of sensitization to achieve a gender-based violence free society in the near future. For instance, these results show that men engage in diverse acts that are interpreted as gender-based violence against women by the female respondents, and the males

expressed lack of knowledge of same. Likewise, greater number of the respondents stated they are ignorant of gender-based violence laws in Nigeria. This calls for in-depth enlightenment programmes especially at grassroots level on acts that constitute gender-based violence as well as laws protecting the rights of women. This is because empowerment practice is addressed first as a strategy to assist individual women to take control of their lives and second, as a strategy for taking action against domestic violence in certain communities (Davis & Lockhart, 2010). When women are empowered through education and training, they have a better understanding of their worth, appropriate measures to report physical abuse and can protect themselves better. The major limitation of this study is that it failed to recognize the impact of gender-based violence on children, because children in families where gender-based violence thrive may be in danger of harm.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank in particular Women for Women International desk officer, Enugu-Ezike branch for providing us with information on contacts of the Key Informants in this study. We would also like to thank the traditional ruler of the studied community for his contribution to this research and finally, to the men and women who participated in this study without grudges.

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