Abstract
Gender based violence is a global phenomenon which cuts across all cultures, nations and tribes. It manifests in several forms such as wife battering, sexual harassment, rape, genital mutilation and incest among others. Whatever form it may take, it is mainly directed towards women and aims at keeping them under the oppression and dominance of their male counterparts. Highlighting both the physical and mental impacts on victims, this position paper critically discusses gender-based violence and its implications for family and community development. To curb gender-based violence, it is recommended that family-related issues be demystified. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can take up legal, financial and housing issues to assist those affected by domestic violence, Tertiary institutions and Government could sponsor research and publications on family issue. Victims should be referred to counselors and psychologists for counseling and psychotherapy. Gender-based violence is used synonymously with domestic violence, wife battering and family violence.

Introduction
Of all the problems in human life, none perhaps is as painful and traumatic as gender based violence which occurs all over the world, irrespective of status, religion, culture or race. Gender based violence takes place in the home (family) and is mostly between husband and wife. The family is the basic fabric of society and has become the index of measuring society. What happens in the home is a reflection of what happens in the society. Danger in the home portrays danger in the larger society. Gender-based violence has threatened the inter and intra family relationships expected to exist in society. Family violence can be likened to a cancer which is part of an organism but which at the same time totally corrupts and destroys its host (Dorcas & Cusat, 1999).

In the United State of America (USA), Federal Bureau of Information (FBI) record of statistics shows that 52% of murder victims were killed by their partners from domestic violence. A study by Lori (2008:131) in Chile found a domestic violence prevalence of 60%, while Marais (1999) in South Africa found in a hospital-based study (in family practice setting) a prevalence of 21.5%.
In Nigeria, the national prevalence is not yet known. However, several authorities have described the prevalence as high with very negative consequences. A community based study in Lagos (Odujurin, 1993) found a prevalence of 81%, while in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State, Andehaya (2000) found a prevalence of 71.2%. A hospital based study also in Jos by Gyuse (2004) found a prevalence of 63.2%. A survey of divorce records in Makurdi by Gbenda (2000) indicates that violence has a frequency of 72 and 54.96%.

Types of Violence
From the definitions, there are three types of violence namely: physical aggression (slapping, hitting, kicking, beating, battering), psychological abuse (belittling, threats, intimidation, humiliation, isolating a person from their family and friends, monitoring their movements and restricting their access to information or assistance) and sexual abuse (including forced intercourse or marital rape, coercion and other forms of sexual humiliation).

Causes of Gender Violence
Many cultures around the world consider acts of violence against women especially wives as normal because the wife is a mere property of the husband, who has the right to control the wife's behaviour. In countries such as Bangladesh, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, studies have shown that violence is viewed frequently as physical chastisement to correct an erring wife (Taylor, 1994; Shane & Ellsberg, 2002). Gender norms about responsibility in the home also buttress domestic violence. The husband is to provide for his family financially, while the wife is to remain in the house, care for the children, and show obedience and respect to her husband. Any violation of this order may result to justifiable violence. Women in general tend to accept the perception that men see them as inferior, hopeless and dependent without question (Oyetunde, 1991). The cultural dynamics of violence is probably the most difficult to change because this is the world's view of the issue.

Customary practices and traditional beliefs all over Nigeria, Africa and in the world generally are the pivot point of wife battering. They hold that man is head of the family and has the greatest control. For instance, Imam (1986:27) is of the view that “Yoruba women are expected to ensure the success of their marriage through submission to their husbands even if their husbands beat them. This is what culture further demands from them”
Furthermore, much of the aggression hostility vented on women in the form of beating must be seen as a product of the country's sexually schizoid culture. Kirby (1997:274) suggests that “in many cultures a man is seen as having the right to beat his wife, children and other female members of the family”. In the same vein among Tiv women, there is a belief that if a woman has not been beaten by her husband, she does not know the joy of marriage.

Patriarchal society has taught men to dominate women and violence is one of the ways. The use of violence in such a society is not a deviant behaviour that is tolerated, rather a desirable part of patriarchal family system. The usual interpretation of the use of physical force by the husband is based on the idea of wife precipitation actions and the husband's rule, following response as a form of social control, putting the wife in her place. That is why some scholars have addressed the rules governing the application or occurrence of battering. Start & McCoy (in Ingyoroko, Ikpa and Zumba, 2008) discussed the legitimate or acceptable conditions, mentioning the use of such phrases as “for no good reason” implying the existence of good or acceptable reason for battering.

This acceptable reason varies from place to place. The necessary condition for justifying the battering is the definition of the wife as the property of the husband meaning the husband is the head of the wife. He therefore determines if she deserves to be treated in that manner. This could be why some scholars refer to marriage as a “hitting license”. This is to say that the norms and values of the patriarchal society nurtures wife battering. According to Aluko (2008) the structure that has consistently been used for perpetrating the oppressive acts against women is patriarchy, which in the words of Krieger (1993:337) has the ultimate aim of “… keeping women consistently at the subservient position in the society”.

**Consequences of Gender Violence**

According to Gyuse (2008), a growing body of evidence has emerged in recent years on the mental and physical health consequences of violence against women and the burden it places on health care systems. Although most data on domestic violence are comparatively from the developed world, clinicians (including Nigerian) and advocates agree that the figures regarding the health consequences of domestic violence generally are comparable to what they see clinically.

Victimization is a high risk factor for a variety of unhealthy outcomes. In addition to causing immediate physical injuries and mental anguish, violence also increases
women's risk for future ill-health as shown in several studies involving women that experienced violence at home. After a review of data on domestic violence, health maintenance organizations in the USA came out with the following conclusions (Gyuse, 2008:334).

1. Influence of abuse can persist long after the abuse has ceased.

2. The more severe the abuse, the more its impact on the woman's physical and mental health.

3. The impact of different types of abuse and multiple episodes over time appears cumulative.

World Bank estimates that rape and domestic violence accounts for about 5% of healthy years of life lost by women of reproductive age in demographically developing countries. In Chile, the healthy years lost to domestic violence and rape accounts for 16% of the burden. At the global level the health burden of gender based violence among women aged 15-44 years is comparable to that posed by other risk factors and diseases already high on the world agenda like Human Immune-deficiency Virus (HIV), Tuberculosis, Sepsis, during child birth, Cancer and Cardiovascular diseases.

Heise (1999) in population report series suggested that 75% of women who are physically abused by a partner are injured by this act at a point in their life. In the same report in Alexandria, Egypt, it was found in a three-month surveillance survey that domestic violence accounted for 27% of all visits by women to the area trauma units, while in the urban Papua New Guinea, 18% of married women had received hospital treatment for injuries inflicted by their husbands. The consequences of such injuries can be severe as shown by a review from Canada which found that 43% of women injured by their partners needed time off from work.

Women's reproductive and sexual health is affected by domestic violence. In the USA, a study by Campell (2002) found that women who experienced intimate partner abuse were three times more likely to have gynecological problems than non-abused women. These problems include chronic pelvic pain, vaginal bleeding or discharge, vaginal infections, painful menstruation, sexual dysfunction, fibroids, pelvic inflammatory disease, painful intercourse, urinary tract infection and infertility. Domestic violence involving forced sex can cause physical and mental trauma too. In addition to damage to the urethra, vagina and anus, abuse can result to sexually transmissible infections (STIs) including HIV/AIDS (Shane & Ellsberg,
Physical violence and forced sex can also put women at increased risk of unwanted pregnancies, because many women of reproductive age are afraid of refusing their husbands' sexual advances even when not convenient or safe because refusal might cause their husbands to beat them (about 43% of women interviewed in a study in the Philippines and collaborated by a married men's survey on the same subject in India also agreed that forced sex can lead to unwanted pregnancies) (Heise et al, 1999; Martin et al, 1995).

With regard to contraceptive use, many women are afraid to raise the issue of contraception because their partners may react violently. This was captured very clearly in a report in India when a woman stated her predicament very clearly saying: "what can I do to protect myself from these unwanted pregnancies unless he agrees to do something? Once, when I gathered the courage and told him I wanted to avoid sex with him, he said, 'what else have I married you for? He beats me for the smallest reason and has sex whenever he wants" (Heise et al, 1999). In nearby Ghana 51% of women and 43% of men agreed that a husband was justified in beating his wife when she uses a family planning method without his knowledge (Bawah, et al, 1999).

Implication of Gender based Violence on the Family and Community Development

Family, community and national development is a process of growth in social, economic, political transformation of a nation. Indices of national development can at least be in three areas of increased productivity, health and well being (Gyuse, 2008). Gender based violence initiates young people into violence and creates a culture of violence that is perpetrated not only in family but in the larger society. Violence in the family and in the society creates an atmosphere of insecurity that affects productivity.

Children are affected by parental violence in many ways that impinge on their productivity. Because husband and wife spend the greater part of their time in conflict, they have very little time to attend to the academic, psychological and social challenges of their growing up children. This lack of attention may lead to parents not buying necessary books and materials for their children which will likely affect their performance at school. Children who are victims of family violence will have the tendency to compare themselves with their mates and feel bitter about their conflicting parents. This comparison is likely to leave them depressed and develop low self-esteem which will affect their academic and social outputs. Children who develop low self-esteem and are depressed are not likely to do well in academic subjects, which will also affect their career development. Many of such children could end up as academic drop outs and unable to contribute to the development of
their society. This is because they had very little time to develop themselves. Such academic drop outs are more likely to be recruited as political thugs and local militia by politicians to settle scores with political opponents. Since these youths have imbibed a culture of violence, it is very easy for them to unleash violence on others particularly when their mentors pay them some money. These are youths who have been so traumatized that they place very little value on human life. Because they have grown up into a culture of violence, inflicting pain and even killing other human beings could be looked at as game. It is no wonder that young people are very willing to become violent and to shed blood at the slightest provocation. The spate of violence that is becoming perennial in Nigeria could be linked to family violence. Benue State has had its own share of bloody communal conflicts and conflicts with all their neighbours at their borders. In most cases is it the young people that perpetrate this violence.

Family-based violence affects parents who are involved in conflict too. It is not very likely that a husband will batter his wife at home and go to work and pretend that all is well and will have very robust social relationships with colleagues at work and perform his responsibilities at work well and be very productive. Even if such a husband is not likely to feel so much guilt and be so weighed down at work, affecting his productivity, at least the physical exhaustion would have depleted his energy used in doing his work. Violence would also have robbed him of some sleep which will likely affect his productivity. If he sustained injuries or cuts in the course of violence, that would also have accounted for loss of some man hours at work.

The battered wife is likely to be depressed, have low self-esteem and could end up with broken bones or bruises which will affect her performance at work. Even if she was able to overcome these, certainly she will loose sometime at work, explaining to colleagues the reason for her swollen face or cuts and bruises sustained. According to Okpaga (2008), domestic violence presents an impediment to national development. Specifically, violence against women presents an obstacle to their economic and social development. Physically brutalized women lack the energy to participate in economic activities. As United Nations Fund for Women (UNIEM) recently observed, “women cannot lead their labour or create ideas if they are burdened with the physical and psychological scars of abuse” (Okpaga, 2008:322). Psychologically battered women paralyzed by terror, suffer impaired capacity to run the home and bring up the children properly. It might lead to suicide or murder.

Women who suffer abuse face the problem of concentration, sleep and eating disorders, feeling of anger, hatred and revenge, humiliation, self-blame and severe sexual problems, including fear of sex. By so doing, they face the risk of sexually
transmitted diseases, with its attendant consequences of low productivity and even death. Women subjected to domestic violence feel negative emotional reactions ranging from shock, panic and negative self-image which may consequently affect their dignity as human beings. These impacts may lead the abused into unpleasant behavioural traits to the extent of even committing murder. Referral to Guidance counselors and psychologists is necessary to avert suicide.

According to Agishi and Nongo (2008) crisis in the family may not allow for women's participation in governance. Their reduction does not only approximate violence against them but also affects socio-political development as well. Studies have shown that the positive influence of women in public life, particularly corruption is very great. Where their influence is domineering, corruption is lower. In fact they are known to maintain higher ethical standard than men (World Bank, 2002). Reducing women will also mean denying more than half the population of Nigerians from participating in its development, which is likely to create underdevelopment.

Domestic violence tends to family poverty and increases the risk to more conflicts as scarce family finances are used on hospital bills rather than on basic family needs like food and shelter. Children who saw their mothers battered by their fathers will most likely batter their wives and the cycle continues with it attendant consequences.

Conclusion

Gender based violence in the 20th century has impeded individual, family, community and national development. Governments; both at the national and local government levels, the academia, women liberation groups and individuals must synergize to stem this ugly monster.

References


