

## **Domestic Violence against Women and Family Relationship Tarka Local Government of Benue State**

**Obademi Agnes Olufunke, Chiakyor, Joy Idowu**

Department of Educational Foundations and General Studies, Joseph Sarwuan  
Tarka University, Makurdi, Nigeria.

Email: [agnfunkebademi@gmail.com](mailto:agnfunkebademi@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

The study assesses Domestic Violence against Women on Family Relationship in Benue State. Four research objectives were stated with four corresponding questions and null hypotheses. Domestic violence against women is domiciled in the home cutting across race, level of education since women are regarded as second class citizens. The study was conducted on married couples in Tarka Local Government area of Benue State, with a population of 40,515 using descriptive survey research design. The sample of 100 was selected using sample and sampling technique. The instrument used for collecting data for the study was a thirty-three (33) item questionnaire. Data were collected by the researcher from the study area. Data collected were statistically analyzed using mean and standard deviation to obtain differences in responses of the subjects while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the four null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between domestic violence against women and family relationship. The first finding showed that, there was a high influence of spousal abuse against women and family relationship which stated that partners gave threatening looks when he/she did not agree with something said or done, which creates fear. The researcher recommended that, Religious and elders in the community in Benue State should give talks on how good homes should be and how partners live peacefully by giving each other mutual respect and taking collective decision that concerns the family to strengthen family relationship. The researcher further recommended that Benue State Government should set up guidance and counseling centers on family matters, to educate partners on how best to improve family relationship.

**Keywords:** Domestic Violence; Family Relationship; Gender.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Violence against women in the home has been part of human history and human societies have lived with it without feeling that it was anything wrong (Shalhoub-Kevorkian & Shalhūb-Kīfūrkiyān, 2009). Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women. Violence against women continues to be global epidemic that kills tortures and maims. It is one of the most pervasive of human rights violation that denies

women of their security, equality, dignity, self-worth and right to enjoy fundamental freedom. Violence against women is present in most countries in the world, cutting across boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity and age (Shilubane & Khoza, 2014).

Dutton (2011) states that domestic violence could be anything that constitutes an action meted out to someone which is capable of depriving the individual from his or her basic human right. Marganski & Melander (2018) added that domestic violence is a form of bullying whereby a person is dealt with physically, thus resulting to injury on the victim just because the

perpetrator does not know of any other way to handle the situation.

Yogo (2008), states that domestic violence is a pressing global issue which is often associated with women's isolation from supportive kin ties. It is an essential component of gender-based violence which has been defined as those actions and activities that cause physical, psychological and emotional harm to a person just because of mere misunderstanding, (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). As a phenomenon, however, violence against women relates to a broad spectrum of issues affecting the existence of the female specie in relation to the family. The female folks suffer in their matrimonial homes because God Almighty constituted marriage in the Garden of Eden, made women help mate and consequently our social system places women in a disadvantaged position (Gamble, 2004).

Child marriage involves the marriage of a child below the age of 18 years (Mahato, 2016). Young girls have not achieved full maturity and capacity to act, and lack ability to control their sexuality. When they marry and have children, their health can be adversely affected. Child marriage has inflicted dangerous and devastating effects on young girls who are compelled to tie the knot in most cases.

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in (1979) affirms that the principle of fundamental rights and freedom of every human being are guided by a broad concept of human right that stretches beyond civil and political rights to the core issues of

economic survival, health and education that affect the quality of daily life for most women and children (Cook, 1989). United Nation General Assembly (1973) postulates that violence and abusive behaviour continue to be a major cause of death, injury, stress and fear in various families. Domestic violence and abusive behaviour are responsible for poor family relationship, while personality conflicts and troubles within a marriage affect intimate behaviour, (Olson et al., 2006; Sunday et al., 2014).

Family relationship refers to unity which is strengthened by love. The members of the family all have duties and responsibilities toward one another and to the family as a whole (Black & Lobo, 2008; Ekuri & Sanusi, 2016). These duties and responsibilities vary from member to member because of their natural relationships. Such behaviour can be seen in a man that stopped the wife from Government employment and made her to engage in preparation and sales of local wine (*Burukutu*) for many years (Cleaver, 2005). The woman could not further her education after primary school certificate.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of the study was to assess domestic violence against women on family relationship. The specific objectives were to:

1. Assess the effects of spousal abuse against women on family relationship in Benue State;
2. examine the effects of sexual abuse against women on family relationship in Benue State;

3. identify the impact of early marriage of young girls on family relationship in Benue State; and
4. Examine the impact of deprivation of women rights in decision making on family relationship in Benue State.
5. Suggest solutions to the problem of domestic violence against women on family relationship in Benue State.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study provided answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent has spousal abuse against women affected women and family relationship in Benue State?
2. What are the effects of sexual abuse against women on family relationship in Benue State?
3. To what extent has early marriage of young girls affected women on family relationship in Benue State?
4. To what extent has deprivation of women's rights in decision making affected family relationship in Benue State?
5. What should be done to eradicate domestic violence against women on family relationship in Benue State?

### METHOD

For this research study survey design was used. The choice of this design is based on the fact that the entire population cannot be covered, therefore, sample representative is used in this study.

Tarka is the local government area of Benue State-Nigeria. It is one of 23 local governments in Benue state with the administrative headquarters

domiciled in Wannune. It has an area of 371km<sup>2</sup> and a population of about 79, 494 as at the 2006 population census. The postal code of the area is 981. The local government was created on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 1996 by the Late Gen. Sani Abacha's administration presidential proclamation. The local government is named after the Late Chief (Dr.) Joseph Sarwuan Tarka, a renowned Mbakor born front-line Nigerian nationalist and fighter for minority rights.

The population comprised of married men and women. The total number of married men was 19,225 and married women 21,290 which gave the total population of 40,515 (National Population Census, 2006 for Benue State).

The sample size for the study was 100 hundred married men and women, the subjects were picked using stratified random sampling. Four married men were selected in each of the 10 council wards in Tarka Local Government, totaling 40 male respondents, while 6 married women were selected in each of the 10 council wards, totaling 60 female respondents. The researchers deliberately select the number of female respondents to be more than male respondents because of the higher population of married women as shown in the population of the study. Out of the 100 copies of questionnaires distributed, 94 were filled and returned.

The questionnaire had thirty-three items which were divided into three parts.

Section "A" required personal information about the respondents

which contained four items from number one to four. Section “B” answered research question one to twenty-four which focused on effects of domestic violence against women and section “C” was on effects of domestic violence against women on family relationship, which had nine questionnaire items.

Data were analyzed using percentages and tables to obtain the differences in responses of the subjects

from both men and women. The results of the analyzed data were used to answer the research questions. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the demographic variables, mean and standard deviation were used in answering research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient statistics was used to test the four Null-Hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1:** Opinion of respondents on the effects of spousal abuse against women on family relationship

SN	Effects of Spousal Abuse against women on family relationship	Response categories			
		A	Percentage (%)	D	Percentage (%)
1.	Prevent the partner from visiting friends or family, the partner live in isolation	59	62.7	35	37.3
2.	Prevent the partner from going to school or work this leads to depending on spouse	61	64.9	33	41.5
3.	Gives threatening looks when he or she does not agree with something you said or did this create fear in the heart of the partner.	77	81.9	17	18.1
4.	Your partner push, kick, slap, punch or chock makes you to be afraid of self-expression	62	65.9	32	34.1
5.	Threatening with weapon results in injury	60	63.8	34	36.2

Table 1 revealed that 59 respondents, representing 62.7% agreed that spousal abuse against women on family relationship prevented the partner from visiting friends or family, the partner lives in isolation. On the other hand, 35 respondents (37.3%) disagree that spousal abuse against women on

family relationship prevented the partner from visiting friends or family, the partner lives in isolation.

Questionnaire item two responses revealed that 61 respondents (64.9%) agreed that spousal abuse prevent partners from going to school or work. On the contrary 33 respondents (41.5%) disagreed that

spousal abuse prevents the partner from going to school and work.

For questionnaire item three, the responses revealed that 77 respondents representing 81.9% agreed that spouses often gave threatening looks when he or she did not agree with something said and that created fear. On the contrary, 17 respondents (18.1%) disagreed that spousal threatening looks do not instills fears on the woman and strained family relationships.

Questionnaire item four responses revealed that 62 respondents (65.9%) agreed that partners' push kicks, slap, punches or chock makes the spouse to be afraid of self-expression. On the contrary 32 respondents representing 34.10% disagreed to this.

Questionnaire item five responses revealed that 60 respondents (63.8%) agreed that threats with weapons resulted to injury, while on the contrary 34 (36.2%) respondents disagreed that threats from husband to women with weapons do not results to injury.

The level of respondents' opinion on the relationship between effects of spousal abuse against women on family relationship showed that 77 respondents agreed that partners' threatening looks when he/she does not agree with something said and done, creates fear. This opinion attracted the highest response of 81.9%.

**Table 2: Opinion of Respondents on the Effects of Sexual Abuse against Women on Family Relationship**

SN	Effects of Sexual abuse against women on family relationship	Response categories			
		A	Percentage (%)	D	Percentage (%)
1	Forced sex without ones consent leads to physical injury	72	76.5	22	23.5
2.	Use of illegal drugs or abuse alcohol may cause high desire for sex which result in dangerous injury	65	69.2	29	30.8
3.	Forced sex cause the partner to be hospitalized	67	71.3	27	28.3
4.	Forced sex leads to high risks of HIV/AIDS infection	75	79.7	19	20.3
5.	Leads to damage of reproductive organs	54	57.5	40	42.5
6.	Use of weapon to threat partner affects reproductive organs which affect physiological change in the body	55	58.5	39	41.5
Aggregate mean					

The responses for table 2 revealed that 72 respondents representing 76.5% agreed that forced sex without ones' consent lead to physical injury, while on the contrary 22 respondents (23.5%) disagreed that sexual abuse against women do not have negative effects on family relationships.

Responses to questionnaire item seven revealed that 65 respondents representing 69.2% agreed that the use of illegal drugs or abuse of alcohol caused high desire for sex which resulted in dangerous injury and on the contrary, 29 respondents (30.8%) disagreed that the use of illegal drugs or abuse of alcohol does not caused high desire for sex which result to dangerous injury to the woman.

For questionnaire item eight responses, it revealed that 67 respondents (71.3%) agreed that forced sex cause the partner to be hospitalized, while 27 (28.3%) disagreed that forced sex does not cause partner to be hospitalized.

For questionnaire item nine responses revealed that 75 respondents representing 79.7% agreed that forced

sex lead to high risks of HIV/AIDS infection. On the contrary, 19 respondents (20.3%) disagreed that forced sex does not lead to high risks of HIV/AIDS infections.

For questionnaire item ten, the responses revealed that 54 respondents representing 57.5% agreed that forced sexual intercourse lead to damage of reproductive organs, on the contrary, 40 respondents (42.5%) disagreed that forced sexual intercourse does not lead to damage of the reproductive organs.

Responses to questionnaire item eleven revealed that 55 respondents representing 58.5% agreed that use of weapons to threaten partner affect reproductive organs as well as have a physiological change in the body. On the contrary, 39 respondents (41.5%) disagreed that use of weapons to threaten does not have any effects on the reproductive organs.

In the overall, the questionnaire item with the highest responses is item 6, with 76.5% which showed that forced sex without ones consent often lead to physical injury.

**Table 3: Opinion of respondents on the Effects of Early Marriage of Young Women on Family Relationship**

SN	Effects of Child marriage of young women on family relationship	Response categories			
		A	Percentage (%)	D	Percentage (%)
1.	Damage the reproductive organs	68	72.4	26	27.6
2.	Cause the partner to suffer poor Health	67	71.3	27	28.7
3.	Leads to early child birth and difficulty in taking care of the children.	76	80.8	18	19.2
4.	Your partner push, kick, slap or	65	69.2	29	30.8

SN	Effects of Child marriage of young women on family relationship	Response categories			
		A	Percentage (%)	D	Percentage (%)
	chock makes you to be afraid of self expression				
5.	Cause the partner to be hospitalized for physical injury during sex or child birth	68	76.5	22	23.5
6.	Leads to poor relationship with partner.	68	72.4	26	27.6

From Table 3, responses revealed that 68 respondents representing 72.4% agreed that child marriage damaged the reproductive organs and on the contrary 26 (27.6%) respondents disagreed that early marriage does not damage reproductive organs.

For questionnaire item 13, responses revealed that 67 respondents (71.3%) agreed that child marriage cause the partner to suffer poor health and on the contrary, 18 respondents (19.2%) disagreed that early marriage of women does not cause them to suffer poor health.

Questionnaire item fourteen responses revealed that 76 respondents representing 80.8% agreed that early marriage of young women lead to early child birth and difficulty in taking care of the children, and on the contrary 18 respondents (19.2%) disagreed to that notion.

Questionnaire item fifteen responses as presented in Table 4.3.3 revealed that 65 respondents (69.2%) agreed that partners push, kick, slap or chock make women to be afraid of self-expression and 29 respondents (30.8%)

disagreed that partner's push, kicks, slap or chocks does not make women to be afraid of self-expression.

Questionnaire item sixteen responses revealed that 68 (76.5%) of the respondents agreed that early marriage on the part of women cause them to be hospitalized for physical injury during sex or child birth. On the contrary, 22 respondents (23.5%) disagreed that early marriage on the part of young women does not cause them to be hospitalized for physical injury during sex or child birth.

For questionnaire item seventeen, 68 respondents (72.4%) agreed that child marriage of young women lead to poor relationship with partner, and on the other hand, 26 respondents (27.6%) disagreed that early marriage of young women does not lead to poor relationship with partner.

From the Data interpreted in Table 4.3.3 above the questionnaire item with the highest response is questionnaire item 14 which has 80.8%. This showed that their response is significant.

**Table 4: Opinion of respondents on effects of deprivation of women rights in decision making**

S N	Effects of Deprivation of women rights in decision making on family relationship	Response categories			
		A	Percentage (%)	D	Percentage (%)
1.	Collects your salary and gives as need arise	29	30.8	65	69.2
2.	Purchase family items without your knowledge	30	31.9	64	68.1
3.	Decide on family issues without involving you	29	30.8	65	69.2
4.	Deprive you the right to employment	35	37.3	59	62.7
5.	Deprive you the right to plan your birth	27	28.7	67	71.3
6.	Deprive you the freedom to express your human right	24	25.5	70	74.5
7.	Deprive you the right to school	22	23.5	72	76.5
	Aggregate mean				

From the responses presented in Table 4, 29 respondents representing 30.8% agreed that most husbands deprive their women the rights by not giving them the necessary financial support as the need arises. On the contrary, 65 respondents (69.2%) disagreed to the statement.

Questionnaire item 19 responses revealed that 30 respondents (31.9%) agreed that women's rights were deprived when their husbands make purchases for the family without the consent of the woman. On the contrary 64 (68.1) disagreed with the opinion.

For questionnaire item 20, the responses revealed that 29 respondents (30.8%) agreed that decision in family issues without involving woman worked against the women's rights and strained the family relationship. On

the contrary, 65 respondents (69.2%) disagreed to this notion.

Questionnaire item 21 responses revealed that 35 respondents (37.3%) agreed that depriving women from employment was against their basic rights. On the contrary, 59 respondents (62.7%) disagreed that depriving a woman from employment does not deprive them their rights.

Questionnaire item 22 responses revealed that 27 respondents (28.7%) agreed that women were often deprive the right to plan the birth of children, on the contrary, 67 respondents (71.3%) disagreed to this notion that most husbands deprive their women the right to plan the birth of children.

Responses to questionnaire item 23, 24 respondents (25.5%) agreed that most husbands deprived their women the freedom to express



their human rights. On the contrary, 70 respondents (74.5%) disagreed to that statement.

For questionnaire item 24, the responses revealed that 22 respondents (23.5%) agreed that most husbands deprive women of the right to school, while, 72 respondents (76.5%) had a contrary opinion. From the overall responses questionnaire item 24, has the highest responses scores of 76.5% on the opinion on the effects of deprivation of women rights in decision making on family relationship which shows that 72 disagreed.

Four null hypotheses were raised to give statistical validation to the solutions proffered to the research questions of the study. These null hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis I: *The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between the effects of spousal abuse against women and family relationship.*

The responses for research question one were tested statistically and presented in Table 5. to test the statistical backing of the research question.

## TESTING OF THE NULL HYPOTHESES

**Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics on the relationship between the effects of spousal abuse against women and family relationship.**

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Correlation r
Effects of Spousal abuse against women	94	11.40	3.34	0.967
Family relationship	94	8.60	2.73	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

The above table revealed that the variable effects of spousal abuse against women had a mean of 11.40 with a standard deviation of 3.34 and family relationship a mean of 8.60 with a standard deviation of 2.73 and a correlation of 0.967. The PPMC calculated significance (2-tailed) value of 0.000 is less than the 0.001 level of tolerance at a correlation level of 0.967. Details of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) revealed the existence of significant relationship between effects of spousal abuse

against women and family relationship.

The calculated sig (p) value of 0.001 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null-hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between effects of spousal abuse against women and family relationship was rejected.

Hypothesis II: *The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between the effects of sexual abuse against women and family relationship.*

The responses on the relationship between effects of sexual abuse against

women and family relationship were examined and to test the relationship between these variables, the Pearson

Moment Correlation was used and the results presented.

**Table 6. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics on the relationship between the effects of sexual abuse against women and family relationship.**

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Correlation r
Effects of Spousal abuse against women	96	11.98	3.34	0.981
Family relationship	96	8.60	2.73	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

According to the Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics above, significant relationship exist between effects of sexual abuse against women and family relationship. From Table 2 the variable effects of sexual abuse against women had a mean of 11.98 and a standard deviation of 3.34, while family relationship variable had a mean of 8.60 and a standard deviation of 2.73. The correlation coefficient value was 0.98. This is because the calculated significant value of .000 is less than 0.001 level of tolerance at the

correlation level of 0.981, hence the null hypothesis was hereby rejected. Hypothesis III: *There is no significant relationship between the effects of early marriage of young women and family relationship.*

This hypothesis was meant to establish whether there is a significant relationship between effects of early marriage of young women and family relationship. The results are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics between the effects of early marriage of young women and family relationship.**

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Correlation r
Effects of early marriage of young women	94	11.88	3.38	0.973
Family relationship	94	8.60	2.73	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics revealed a means of 11.88 and a standard deviation of 3.38 for the effects of early marriage of young women variable and for the family relationship variable a mean of 8.60 and a standard deviation of 2.73. Correlation r value is 0.973

and the calculated significant (2-tailed) value of 0.001 is smaller than the 0.01 level of tolerance confirming the existence of significant relationship. This revealed that a significant relationship exist between effects of early marriage of young women and family relationship.

Hence the null hypothesis which states that there was no

significant relationship between effects of early marriage of young women and family relationship was hereby rejected.

Hypothesis IV: *There is no significant relationship between the effects of deprivation of women's right in decision making and family relationship*

This hypothesis was meant to test the relationship between effects of deprivation of women's right in decision making and family relationship. The results are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics on the relationship between the effects of deprivation of women's rights in decision making and family relationship.**

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Correlation r
Effects of Deprivation of women's rights in decision making	94	8.95	3.74	0.935
Family relationship	94	8.60	2.73	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

Results of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics revealed that effects of deprivation of women's rights in decision making had a mean of 8.95 and a standard deviation of 3.74 and family relationship variable had a mean of 8.60 and a standard deviation of 2.73. This was as a result of the calculated significant (2-tailed) value of 0.000 is less than the 0.001 level of tolerance while the correlation r value of 0.935 is higher. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This showed that, there is significant relationship between effects of deprivation of women's rights in decision making and family relationship.

### Major Findings Of The Study

The major findings of the study were that there is a:

1. significant relationship between effects of spousal abuse against women and family relationship.

2. significant relationship between effects of sexual abuse against women and family relationship.
3. significant relationship between effects of early marriage of young women and family relationship; and
4. Significant relationship between effects of deprivation of women's right in decision-making and family relationship.

### CONCLUSION

From the data analyzed in this study poor family relationship leads to denial of opportunities, properties, wealth and good health. Once the individual lives under fear, he/she cannot be free to contribute to the development of the family. Drug taking, alcohol and poor economic status are some of the causes of domestic violence against women.

## REFERENCES

- Black, K., & Lobo, M. (2008). A conceptual review of family resilience factors. *Journal of family nursing*, 14(1), 33-55.
- Cleaver, F. (2005). The inequality of social capital and the reproduction of chronic poverty. *World development*, 33(6), 893-906.
- Cook, R. J. (1989). Reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. *Va. J. Int'l L.*, 30, 643.
- Dutton, D. G. (2011). *Rethinking domestic violence*. Ubc Press.
- Ekuri, P. K., & Sanusi, M. (2016). Influence of selected administrative variables on the performance of athletes in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. *Journal of Nigeria Association for Physical Health Education, Recreation, Sports and Dance (JONAPHER-SD)*, 5(2), 56-73.
- Gamble, S. (Ed.). (2004). *The Routledge companion to feminism and postfeminism*. Routledge.
- Mahato, S. K. (2016). Causes and consequences of child marriage: a perspective. *International Journal of Scientific and engineering research*, 7(7), 697-702.
- Marganski, A., & Melander, L. (2018). Intimate partner violence victimization in the cyber and real world: Examining the extent of cyber aggression experiences and its association with in-person dating violence. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 33(7), 1071-1095.
- Olson, D. H., DeFrain, J., & Skogrand, L. (2013). *Marriages and families*. McGraw-Hill US Higher Ed USE.
- Russo, N. F., & Pirlott, A. (2006). Gender-based violence: concepts, methods, and findings. *Annals of the new york academy of sciences*, 1087(1), 178-205.
- Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N., & Shalhūb-Kīfūrkiyān, N. (2009). *Militarization and violence against women in conflict zones in the Middle East: a Palestinian case-study*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shilubane, H. N., & Khoza, L. B. (2014). Violence against women in Limpopo Province, South Africa: women's health issues. *African Journal for Physical Health Education, Recreation and Dance*, 20(sup-1), 83-93.
- Sunday, A. A., Umoinyang, I. E., & Ekuri, P. K. (2014). Exercise in heat: Responses and limitations of the body. *Ilorin Journal of Education (IJE)*, 33, 13-24.
- United Nation General Assembly, (1973) Equal Rights for Women. A call for Action. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against women.
- Yogo N. (2008) Impact of Domestic Violence Against Women. A Case study of BabaI Community, University of Buea, Cameroon. Unpublished material.