

## ***Perception and Attitude of Teachers towards Domestic Violence against Women in Yenagoa Metropolis of Bayelsa State***

**<sup>1</sup>Esther Tamunoiyowuna Bruce-Agbogidi**  
[estherbruce.eb@gmail.com](mailto:estherbruce.eb@gmail.com)

**<sup>1</sup>Stella Binebai Asangolo, Ph.D**  
[asangolostella@gmail.com](mailto:asangolostella@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling  
Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education, Sagbama  
Bayelsa State, Nigeria*

---

### **Abstract**

*The study investigated the perception and attitude of teachers towards domestic violence against women in Yenagoa Metropolis of Bayelsa State. Descriptive survey was adopted. Convenience sampling technique was used. A sample of 342 teachers was selected from a population of all secondary and primary school teachers in Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa State. A questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on Perception and Attitude towards Domestic Violence against Women” (QPADVW) was used to gather data. The validity of the items was verified by two experts in the field of Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established as 0.76 using Cronbach alpha. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequencies and percentages were applied to answer the four research questions which guided the study. Results reveal that teachers in Yenagoa metropolis perceive beating, verbal abuse, threats, false accusation of infidelity and canal knowledge without consent as acts of violence against women. Both males and females have a positive attitude towards violence against women. Based on the findings, recommendations were made including that women should be sensitized to speak out, and institutions should speak against all forms of domestic violence.*

**Keywords:** Domestic, violence, women, gender, perception, attitude

### **Introduction**

Domestic violence involves a situation where an intentional act of violence is meted out on a member of the family, in such a way that the abused suffer pain physically, emotionally or otherwise. The medical literature in Burnett (2018) views domestic violence as an act whereby an abuser victimizes a person with whom he or she has an intimate, romantic or spousal relationship. Domestic violence involves violence against both men and women. It consists of a pattern where coercion is applied by a competent adult or adolescent to establish and maintain power and control over another competent

adult or adolescent. These behaviours, which can include physical violence, psychological abuse, stalking, and non-consensual sexual act can occur alone or in combination, occasionally or repeatedly. Domestic violence is not limited to a few, but happens to families from different social, religious and educational backgrounds. The prevalence of domestic violence in recent times in our society has become alarming and disturbing, especially when the perpetrators and the abused view the phenomenon as an acceptable act. This abnormal and unacceptable thought process of many, especially among the men folk, has led to the prevalence of domestic violence against women in our societies. As rightly put by Omorogiuwa (2017), “some men exhibit elements of self-centeredness, greed, jealousy, wickedness and hatred towards others.” Bayelsa state has its own share of domestic violence against women. Nkemakolam (2019) reports how one Munabo shot his girlfriend to death in Nembe on grounds of suspicion of cheating on him.

The researchers, viewing how detrimental the act of violence against women is to the physical, mental, emotional and psychological health, gained interest in carrying out this study to ascertain whether Bayelsans are aware of what constitute domestic violence against women, and to verify their attitude towards domestic violence against women. The variables of this study include domestic violence, perception, attitude, gender and women.

World Health Organization (2017) views domestic violence (intimate partner violence) as the behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological torture and controlling behaviours. Domestic violence, in Kaur and Garg (2008), is described as the tendency by an adult to misuse power in a relationship to control another. It is an act establishing control and fear in a relationship through violence and other forms of abuse. This perpetrator of violence can apply physical assault, psychological abuse, social abuse, financial abuse, or sexual assault. The frequency of the violence can be regular or occasional. Astbury and Cabral (2000) in Elabani (2015) assert that domestic violence is a “chronic syndrome not limited to episodes of violence but including emotional and psychological abuse used by men to control their female partners”.

On what constitute domestic violence against women, Madhani, Karmaliani, Patel, Bann, McClure, Pasha and Goldenberg (2015) in their study ascertained that nearly half of the study participants considered physical violence, verbal abuse, controlling behaviour by the husband and threatening to leave or remarry as constituting violence against women.

On attitude towards domestic violence against women, 63.9% of women in Agrawal and Banerjee (2010) strongly agreed that there is no excuse for a man to beat his wife,

whereas only 34.9% of men agree also. Women (50.4%) in Agrawal and Banerjee disagree to the statement “woman refusing sex is asking to be beaten” whereas only 25.6% of men disagreed. Women (73.9%) and men (48.8%) in Agrawal and Banerjee agree that women beaten by men should be protected by law. National Family Health Survey (NHFS) in Isaac and Ajayan (2018) reports that 82.2% of women surveyed in Andhra justified violence against women by their husbands. On attitude of the public towards domestic violence against women, UN Women (2016) in a study titled 'violence shift in Georgia' reported that 78.3% of respondents in 2009 were found to perceive domestic violence as a family issue and victims and their relatives were reluctant to report cases to relevant authorities, even when cases were extreme. Many societies view violence within the family as a private matter and therefore not an appropriate focus for intervention or policy (Effah-Chukwuma in Aderinto & Nwokocha, 2007). In a study by Baraldi, Almeida, Perdona, Vieira and Santos (2013), 39 nurses (76.5%) and 127 physicians (74.7%) agreed that perpetrators of violence against women should be arrested for assault.

On gender difference towards domestic violence against women, Basar, Demirci, Cicek and Saglam (2019) reported that 25.7% women and 33.6% men agreed that it is natural for a woman to receive violence if she does not obey her husband. Basar, Demirci, Cicek and Saglam reported that the husband has right to stop his wife from working if the income is sufficient, as 37.8% of women and 56.1% of men agree to it. They further reported that 27% of women and 50.22% of men agree that though the women's idea in the house is important, yet the man should have the final say, and 83.7% of women and 69.9% of men agree to the statement that nothing should be a reason for the man to beat his wife. It is worthy of note from the reviewed studies that despite the fact that societies are aware of acts that constitute domestic violence against women, majority still justify the act, seeing it as something normal. It is based on these facts that the researchers deemed it necessary to carry out this study to examine the perception and attitude of teachers towards domestic violence against women in Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa State.

### **Research questions**

1. What is the Yenagoa residents' perception on what constitute domestic violence against women?
2. What is the attitude of Yenagoa residents towards domestic violence against women?
3. What is the gender difference in perception on what constitute violence against women?
4. What is the gender difference in attitude towards domestic violence against women?

## **Methodology**

Descriptive survey was adopted for the study. This design is applied because, as asserted by Shuttleworth (2008), “it is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way”. The design is necessary because the study concerns itself with finding out the perception and attitude of Bayelsans towards domestic violence against women. The study adopted convenience sampling technique. The target population of this study comprised of all teachers within Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa State. The sample for the study is 342 respondents. Four hundred and fifty (450) copies of the questionnaire were administered, but three hundred and forty-two copies of workable questionnaires were used, because improperly filled copies were discarded.

An instrument titled “Questionnaire on Perception and Attitude towards Domestic Violence against Women” (QPADVW) was developed by the researchers. It contains two sections; Section A contains demographic variables, while section B comprises of items to elicit respondents' views on how they perceive and feel towards domestic violence against women. The respondents were required to respond to the items of the QPADVW on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Section B consists of twenty-six positively worded items to be responded to. In determining the level of agreement or disagreement towards any given act as constituting domestic violence against women, the criterion mean of 2.50 was used to make decisions (any item with mean below 2.5 is termed not accepted by the respondents). The face and content validity of the items were verified by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was analysed applying Cronbach alpha, using SPSS version 23 and the reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.76. For the purpose of answering the questions, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used for analyses. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequencies and percentages were applied to answer the research questions.

## **Presentation of results**

**Question 1:** What is the Yenagoa residents' perception on what constitute domestic violence against women?

Table 1 shows that the respondents in Yenagoa metropolis agreed that beating, slapping, inflicting pain is violence (with a mean of 3.52), verbally abusing is violence (with a mean of 3.15), threatening to leave or abandon is violence (with a mean of 2.99), falsely accusing of infidelity is violence (with a mean of 3.01), carnal knowledge without consent is also violence (with a mean of 2.97).

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics on perception of what constitute domestic violence against women

S/N	Description of items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
1	Beating, slapping, inflicting pain is violence	342	3.52	.79	Agreed
2	Verbally abusing is violence	342	3.15	.83	Agreed
3	Threatening to leave or abandon is violence	342	2.99	.90	Agreed
4	Falsely accusing of infidelity is violence	342	3.01	.94	Agreed
5	Carnal knowledge without consent	342	2.97	.98	Agreed
	Valid N (listwise)	342			

Criterion mean = 2.50

**Question 2:** What is the attitude of respondents towards domestic violence against women?

**Table 2:** Attitude of Bayelsans in Yenagoa towards domestic violence against women

S/N	Description of items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Domestic violence is a private matter	342	1.86	1.03	Disagree
2	Domestic violence is permitted if she provokes him	342	1.82	.90	Disagree
3	Endure violence for sake of children	342	1.81	.94	Disagree
4	Domestic violence in marriage is normal	342	1.50	.80	Disagree
5	He has right to stop her from working or visiting parents	342	1.67	.87	Disagree
6	Justified to be violent if he suspects her of infidelity	342	1.87	.86	Disagree
7	A woman should take legal action	342	2.96	1.04	Agree
8	Woman should report to family and friends	342	2.85	1.01	Agree
9	The woman should remain quiet as the man owns her	342	1.54	.88	Disagree
	Valid N (listwise)	342			

Criterion mean = 2.50

Table 2 reveals that the respondents disagree with domestic violence against women. The participants disagree that domestic violence should be seen as a private matter (mean of 1.86), they disagree that domestic violence should be permitted if she provokes him (mean of 1.82), they disagree that the woman should endure domestic violence because of the children (mean of 1.81), they disagree that domestic violence in marriage is normal (mean of 1.50), they disagree that the man has right to stop her from working or visiting her parents (mean of 1.67), they disagree that the man is justified to be violent if he suspects her of infidelity (mean of 1.87), they support that the woman should take legal action against the abuser (mean of 2.96), they support that the woman report the abuser to family and friends (mean of 2.85), the participants refuse that the woman should remain quiet because the man owns her (mean of 1.54).

**Question 3:** What is the gender difference in their perception on what constitute violence against women?

**Table 3:** Gender difference in perception of what constitute domestic violence against women

S/N	Description of items	Gender	N	Mean	SD	f (%)
1	Beating, slapping, inflicting pain is violence	Male	131	3.44	.77	122 (93.1%)
		Female	211	3.57	.80	198 (93.8%)
2	Verbally abusing is violence	Male	131	2.96	.88	100 (76.4%)
		Female	211	3.26	.78	189 (89.6%)
3	Threatening to leave or abandon is violence	Male	131	2.74	.84	87 (66.4%)
		Female	211	3.15	.90	179 (84.8%)
4	Falsely accusing of infidelity is violence	Male	131	2.80	.96	95 (72.5%)
		Female	211	3.12	.91	172 (81.6%)
5	Carnal knowledge without consent	Male	131	2.70	.94	83 (63.3%)
		Female	211	3.14	.97	175 (83%)

Table 3 reveals that Yenagoa residents (93.1% males and 93.8% females) agree that beating, slapping, inflicting pain is violence; 76.4% males and 89.6% females accept verbal abuse as violence; 66.4% males and 84.8% females agree that threatening to leave or abandon is violence; 72.5% males and 81.6% females accept that falsely accusing of infidelity is violence; and 63.3% males and 83% females agree that carnal knowledge without consent is an act of domestic violence.

**Question 4:** What is the gender difference in attitude towards domestic violence against women?

**Table 4:** Gender difference in attitude towards domestic violence against women

S/N	Description of items	Gender	N	Mean	SD	f (%)
1	Domestic violence is a private matter	Male	131	2.04	1.08	89 (67.9%)
		Female	211	1.75	.98	166 (78.6%)
2	Domestic violence is permitted if she provokes him	Male	131	1.91	.85	99 (75.6%)
		Female	211	1.77	.92	171 (81.1%)
3	Endure violence for the sake of Children	Male	131	1.76	.84	107 (81.7%)
		Female	211	1.83	1.00	154 (73%)
4	Domestic violence in marriage is normal	Male	131	1.61	.79	116 (88.5%)
		Female	211	1.44	.80	186 (88.2%)
5	He has the right to stop her from working or visiting parents	Male	131	1.72	.79	110 (84%)
		Female	211	1.64	.91	176 (83.4%)
6	He is justified to be violent if he suspects her of infidelity	Male	131	1.91	.82	105 (80.2%)
		Female	211	1.85	.88	169 (80.1%)
7	A woman should take legal action	Male	131	2.86	1.03	86 (65.7%)
		Female	211	3.02	1.05	160 (75.8%)
8	Woman should report to family and friends	Male	131	3.00	.92	100 (76.3%)
		Female	211	2.75	1.05	138 (65.4%)
9	The woman should remain quiet as the man owns her	Male	131	1.59	.82	113 (86.3%)
		Female	211	1.50	.91	178 (84.4%)

Table 4 reveals that residents of Yenagoa, from their responses, are against domestic violence, though there is slight gender difference in their attitude towards domestic violence against women. Males 67.9% and females 78.6% disagree that domestic violence is a private matter; 75.6% males and 81.1% female disagree that domestic violence can be accepted if she provokes him; 81.7% males and 73% females disagree that women should endure violence because of children; 88.5% males and 88.5% females refuse to accept that domestic violence is normal in a marriage; 84% males and 83.4% females disagree that men have the right to stop their wives from working or visiting their family; 80.2% males and 80.1% females disagree towards men being violent against their wives on grounds of suspicion of infidelity; 65.7% males and 75.8% females support that an abused woman should take legal action against her partner; 76.3% males and 65.4% females support that abused women should report to their families and friends; while 86.3% males and 84.4% females disagree that the abused women should remain quiet.

### **Discussion of the findings**

Residents of Yenagoa in Bayelsa State agree that beating, slapping, inflicting pain is violence, verbally abusing is violence, threatening to leave or abandon is violence, falsely accusing of infidelity is violence and carnal knowledge without consent are all acts of domestic violence against women. This finding is in agreement with Madhani, Karmaliani, Patel, Bann, McClure, Pasha and Goldenberg (2015) who ascertained that nearly half of their study group accepted these acts as domestic violence against women.

It is ascertained that the respondents disagree that domestic violence is a private affair; this disagrees with the findings of Effah-Chukwuma (2002) in Aderinto and Nwokocha (2007), who ascertained that violence within the family has been regarded as a private matter. It was also established that 84% males and 83.4% females disagree that men have the right to stop their wives from working or visiting their family. This finding contradicts the findings of Basar, Demirci, Cicek and Saglam (2019) who reported that 37.8% of women and 56.1% of men agree that the husband has the right to stop his wife from working if the income is sufficient.

### **Conclusion/recommendations**

Based on the findings, the researchers conclude that domestic violence against women involves an act where an intimate partner engages in any act which hurts the wife physically, emotionally or psychologically. From the investigation it has been ascertained that residents of Yenagoa in Bayelsa state acknowledge slapping, beating, verbal abuse, threats to leave or abandon, falsely accusing of infidelity and having carnal knowledge without consent as acts of violence against women. The residents of Yenagoa condemn all forms of domestic violence and are in support of the abused women reporting to family and friends and to take legal action against the perpetrators. It is worthy of note that even the males are solidly against all forms of domestic violence.

It is therefore recommended that women organizations should carry out sensitization programmes, to enlighten women on the need to speak out when faced with any form of abuse; Churches and other institutions should also speak against all forms of domestic violence, especially against women.

### **References**

- Aderinto, A. A. & Nwokocha, E. E. (2007). Domestic Violence against Women: An investigation in Delta and Edo State. Retrieved from <https://uaps2007.princeton.edu/papers/70609>
- Agrawal, S. & Banerjee, A. (2010). Perception of Violence against Women among Future Health Professionals in an Industrial Township. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, 19(2), 90-93. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3237137/>

- Baraldi, A. C. P., Almeida, A. M., Perdona, G., Vieira, E. M., & Santos, M. A. (2013). Perception and Attitude of Physicians and Nurses about Violence against Women. *Nursing Research and Practice*. Retrieved from <https://www.hindawi.com/journals/nrp/2013/785025/>
- Basar, F., Demirci, N., Cicek, S. & Saglam, H. Y. (2019). Attitude towards Violence against Women and the factors that affect them in Kutahya, Turkey. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 23(1), 16-26. Retrieved from <https://www.ajrh.info/index.php/ajrh/article/view/1704/pdf>
- Burnett, L. B. (2018). Domestic Violence. Retrieved from <https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/805546-overview>
- Elabani, S. M. A. (2015). Attitudes to and Perceptions of Domestic Violence against Women in an Arab Community: A Case Study of Libyan Migrants in the UK. Retrieved from <https://espace.mmu.ac.uk/582276/1/My%20thesis%20%28Autosaved%29%207.7.pdf>
- Isaac, A. & Ajayan, G. (2018). Domestic violence. *The News Minute*. January 17, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/plausible-over-50-south-indian-women-justify-domestic-violence-says-survey-74900>
- Kaur, R. & Garg, S. (2008). Domestic Violence against Women: An Unfinished Agenda. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 33(2), 73-76. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2784629/>
- Madhani, F. I., Karmaliani, R., Patel, C., Bann, C. M., McClure, E. M., Pasha, O. & Goldenberg, R. L. (2015). Women's Perceptions and Experiences of Domestic Violence: An Observational Study from Hyderabad, Pakistan. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 32(1), 76-100. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0886260515585533?journalCode=jiva>
- Nkemakolam, S. (2019). How jealous Bayelsa lover shot girlfriend to death for cheating. Retrieved from <https://punchng.com/jealous-bayelsa-lover-shoots-girlfriend-to-death-for-cheating/>
- Omorogiuwa, T. B. E. (2017). Public Perception of the Impacts of Domestic Violence against Women. *Mediterranean Journal of Social*, 8(1), 293-298. Retrieved from <https://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/9693>
- Shuttleworth, M. (2008). Descriptive Research Design. Retrieved from <https://explorable.com/descriptive-research-design>
- UN women (2016). Violence Reports rise as public attitudes towards domestic violence shift in Georgia. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/3/georgia-violence-reports-rise-as-public-attitudes-towards-domestic-violence-shift>
- World Health Organization (2017). Violence against Women. Retrieved from <https://www.who-int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>