



## Examining the Consequences of Gender-Based Violence on Economic Inclusivity of Women in Sokoto State

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### Abstract

The study investigated the consequences of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) on economic inclusivity of women as reported by selected survivors in Sokoto State of Nigeria. The study explored the experiences of 40 purposively selected women aged, 15 to 45 years from the lists of 1000 survivors (GBV Victims) under the Sokoto State Ministry of Women Affairs who have been victims of Gender Abused/Violence. Qualitative data on GBV experiences and associated factors were collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Descriptive analysis was used for the demographic characteristics of the participants. The transcription of the recorded audio cassettes, together with the recorded field notes, provided data for the thematic analysis. The discussions revealed that the principal consequences of GBV on economic development of women in Sokoto State include loss of jobs, reduced productivity, reduced workforce participation, denied economic inclusiveness, lower educational attainment, extreme economic dependency, total lack of trust, psychological trauma, depression, low self-esteem, and mental illness, which hampers them from relating meaningfully with people around them. The findings also confirmed that the majority of the victims don't report the abuse case to the appropriate authority because they felt if reported, the perpetrators may likely hunt them back and dealt with them decisively. The finding confirmed that communities responses and their lack of sincerity for not taking action against gender-based violence (GBV) abusers have perpetuates a culture of violence, inequality, and impunity thereby escalation of violence, continued victimization of victims, as well as diminishing community cohesion. In order to reduce this ugly act, the paper proffers the following recommendations; Government should raise awareness and education; strengthen legal and judicial systems; provide comprehensive support services; foster community engagement; empower women and girls to mention but a few

**Key Words:** Gender Based Violence, Survivals, Women, Nigeria, Consequences.

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## Introduction

Violence is an action that inflicts pain, destruction, or suffering upon individuals. Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive issue that continues to inflict immense suffering on individuals and societies worldwide. Women are disproportionately affected by GBV, facing various forms of abuse, including physical, sexual, and psychological violence (Arango et al., 2014). Across the globe, GBV remains a significant threat to human rights and gender equality. According to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime (WHO, 2017). These harrowing numbers underline the severity of the issue and call for concerted efforts to combat it.

Africa, like other regions, grapples with high rates of GBV, posing severe challenges to the well-being and progress of its people. Women in Africa face multifaceted forms of violence, from domestic abuse to harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and forced marriages. For instance, a study conducted by the African Development Bank revealed that in some African countries, over 60% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence (AfDB, 2015). Such violence not only infringes upon women's human rights but also obstructs their involvement in socio-economic and political spheres.

Nigeria, as one of Africa's most populous countries, is not interrupted from the scourge of GBV. Despite efforts through international conventions and treaties, GBV continues to plague Nigerian society, impacting countless women. A survey conducted by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reported that between 10-69% of women in Nigeria have been victims of gender-based violence (UNFPA, 2013). Shockingly, GBV leads to the deaths of over a thousand to sixteen hundred women annually, leaving a lasting scar on the nation's progress (Abayomi, 2014; Harvey and Gow, 2019).

Between 1991 and 1995, three global documents were made public specifically addressing states' obligations under International Human Rights Laws to prevent and respond to violence against women. Nigeria is a signatory to this milestone which includes; the Convention on the Elimination of violence against women (CEDAW) 1992, The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women, the 1993 Beijing Platform Declaration and the Beijing Platform for



Action (BPFA) of 1995. (Onyemelukwe, 2016, UN, 2010). Nigeria is a signatory to this milestone which includes; the Convention on the Elimination of violence against women (CEDAW) 1992, The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women, the 1993 Beijing Platform Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) of 1995. (Onyemelukwe, 2016, UN, 2010).

Undoubtedly, the movements against gender violence have shown significant success in many developed nations like the UK, USA, Canada, France, and Germany. However, Nigeria has not been able to effectively combat this issue (Olayode, 2016). Despite being a signatory to relevant conventions and treaties, Nigeria still reports alarming rates of gender-based violence, with 10-69% of women being victims. The impact is devastating, leading to the deaths of over one thousand to one thousand six hundred women annually due to GBV. Shockingly, one out of every three women suffers physical abuse, 59% experiences sexual violence, and 68% endures psychological or emotional abuse, among other forms (UNFPA, 2013; Abayomi, 2014; Harvey and Gow, 2019).

In Sokoto State, these distressing features persist. A staggering 32.8% of married women aged 15-49 have experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence (NDHS, 2018). Furthermore, 8.6% of women aged 15-49 have endured physical violence since the age of 15, while 5.4% have faced genital mutilation, and 0.7% have experienced violence during pregnancy. These circumstances undoubtedly hinder women's economic development. It is on this note, the study aims to examine the consequences of gender-based violence on women's economic inclusivity in Sokoto State. However, other related narrow objectives are to: To find out how various communities in Sokoto State respond to gender-based violence and to investigate the reasons that deter women in Sokoto State from reporting gender-based violence to the appropriate authority

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Gender Based-Violence**



Gender-based violence is a broad term that encompasses domestic violence, intimate partner violence, politically motivated violence, sexual harassment and violence in the workplace (WHO, 2017). These characteristics indicate how gender-based violence is entrenched in the day-to-day lives of women, making it even more difficult to clearly define (Ellsberg and Gottmoeller, 2002: S6). By definition, gender-based violence constitutes any form of violence that affects individuals or groups based on their gender. In other words, it is a form of violence directed against a person because of their gender (USAID, 2009). Gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations (CEDAW, 2002). The European Commission has it that gender-based violence can take different forms and mostly affects women and girls, which can result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm, depending on the society or individual being affected (Glenn, et al. 2009). Notable examples of gender-based violence include domestic violence, sex-based harassment, online violence, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage (Adebayo, 2023). In a similar vein, the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), gender-based violence against women is, “any act 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

Scholars (Kabeer, 2010; Stiglits, 2013; Pouw, and McGregor, 2014), have argued that the targeting of women in GBV can be attributed to deeply ingrained patriarchal attitudes and gender inequalities. Women are often viewed as subordinate to men, leading to their increased vulnerability to violence. This power imbalance is exacerbated by factors such as economic dependence, lack of access to education and healthcare, and discriminatory legal systems to mention but a few (CEDAW, 2002).

### **Economic Inclusivity**

As literature suggest, economic inclusivity is more a framework of understanding than a concept that can be defined, with it mainly being an alternative discourse intrinsic to what genuine human



well-being and progress should involve (Pouw & McGregor, 2014). It is an evolving framework, attempting to broaden the scope for meaningful economic participation and recognition. Some descriptions and new emphases seek to give context to this broadening. For instance, as Stiglitz (2013) states: it is about broadening the growth base; about addressing the social characteristics and economic fundamentals of human well-being, not just welfare. Whereas welfare mainly refers to income, well-being is a more holistic concept, as Coulthard et al. (2011:6) defines it: “an outcome that is continuously generated through conscious and sub-conscious participation in social, economic, political and cultural processes.” The shift to well-being is central to economic inclusivity and coincides with a new emphasis on values in the economy.

Economic inclusivity, also known as inclusive economic growth or inclusive development, refers to an economic system that ensures broad-based participation and benefits for all segments of society, regardless of their socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, or other characteristics (Stiglitz, 2013). The concept revolves around reducing disparities, creating opportunities, and enabling marginalized or disadvantaged groups to fully participate in and benefit from economic activities (World Bank, 2013).

### **Women Economic Inclusiveness**

Women inclusivity, also known as gender inclusivity or gender equality, refers to the principle of ensuring equal opportunities, rights, and participation for women in all aspects of society. It involves creating an environment where women have the same access as men to resources, education, healthcare, economic opportunities, decision-making positions, and social benefits, among others (Stiglitz, *et al*, 2009). According to Kabeer (2010) women economic inclusivity refers to the principle and practice of ensuring equal economic opportunities, access to resources, and participation for women in various economic activities. It aims to address gender disparities in the economy and create an environment where women can fully participate in and benefit from economic growth and development. It is in view of this Pouw and McGregor (2014), Klein (2014), identify the following as key elements of women inclusivity:

1. **Equal Opportunities:** Ensuring that women have the same access to education, employment, and economic opportunities as men.



2. Equal Pay: Ensuring that women receive equal pay for equal work and have fair compensation for their contributions.
3. Empowerment: Providing women with the tools, resources, and support needed to make decisions, achieve their goals, and participate fully in society.
4. Representation: Increasing the presence of women in leadership positions, politics, and decision-making bodies.
5. Safety and Security: Ensuring that women are protected from all forms of violence and discrimination, including gender-based violence.
6. Healthcare: Ensuring access to quality healthcare and reproductive services, addressing specific women's health issues.
7. Legal Rights: Guaranteeing that women have equal legal rights and protection under the law.
8. Education and Skill Development: Promoting education and skill development opportunities for women to enhance their capabilities and potential.

Women inclusivity is a fundamental human rights issue, and achieving it requires the collaborative efforts of governments, organizations, communities, and individuals. By promoting women's inclusivity, societies can foster greater social cohesion, economic prosperity, and sustainable development.

### **Gender-Based Violence and Women's Economic Inclusivity**

Gender-based violence (GBV) has significant and far-reaching effects on women's economic inclusivity. The consequences of GBV can be severe and multifaceted, impacting various aspects of women's economic participation and hindering progress towards achieving economic inclusivity. As stated by Klein, (2014), GBV reduced workforce Participation. Women who experience GBV may be forced to miss work, lose their jobs, or be unable to participate in the labor market due to physical injuries or psychological trauma. This reduced workforce participation hinders their ability to access economic opportunities and advance their careers. To buttresses this point, Stiglitz, (2013), and Pouw, and McGregor (2014) identified lower educational attainment, poverty and economic dependency, limited access to credit and resources as well as persist healthcare crises as the consequential outcomes of gender abused on women.

For instance, they argued that GBV can disrupt women's education by creating barriers to attending school or completing studies which at the long run can limit women's access to better-



paying jobs and higher-income opportunities. GBV can trap women in poverty and economic dependency. It is a glaring fact that women who experience violence may be unable to escape abusive relationships due to financial limitations, making them economically vulnerable. Furthermore, women experiencing GBV may face challenges in accessing credit and resources to start or expand businesses. Financial institutions may perceive them as higher risks, leading to restricted access to capital and financial opportunities. Women who experience GBV often require medical treatment and psychological support, incurring additional health care costs. These expenses can strain household budgets and further limit economic mobility.

According to Kelmendi (2015), women experiencing GBV may face reduced productivity due to physical injuries, emotional distress, and increased absenteeism. This can hinder their career growth and advancement. It is on this note Oladepo, et al, (2011) made a similar submission. In their own word, GBV can instill fear and self-censorship in women, causing them to avoid certain economic activities or opportunities to protect themselves from potential harm. This, according to Ekanem & Ekpenyong (2019), can lead to underreporting which further perpetuating the cycle of violence and limiting access to justice and resources. Zain (2012), and Hunnicutt (2009) assert that GBV reinforces harmful gender stereotypes and norms, perpetuating unequal power dynamics between men and women. This can create hostile environments in workplaces and limit women's access to leadership and decision-making positions.

Based on the forgoing discussed, addressing gender-based violence is crucial for promoting women's economic inclusivity. Effective measures should include comprehensive policies and programs that focus on prevention, protection, and support for survivors. Empowering women economically and providing them with equal opportunities and resources are essential steps toward breaking the cycle of GBV and achieving greater economic inclusivity for women.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The adoption of Feminist Theory as the theoretical framework for this study provides a robust foundation to analyze the intricate dynamics of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and its far-reaching impact on the economic inclusivity of women in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Feminist Theory proves highly apt for this research, as it zeroes in on the pervasive power imbalances

between genders and scrutinizes the societal structures that perpetuate gender-based discrimination and violence. In Sokoto State, the theory's relevance is particularly pronounced due to the deeply ingrained patriarchal norms that persist in the region. These norms foster unequal power relations between men and women. Such inequalities, upheld by cultural traditions, significantly contribute to the prevalence of GBV. Women in many parts of northern Nigeria, including Sokoto State, have historically been marginalized, relegated to the status of the 'inferior' or 'weaker' sex. This gender-based discrimination often finds validation under the guise of cultural practices and religious interpretations.

Feminist Theory offers invaluable insights into how these patriarchal norms, cultural customs, and uneven power dynamics are directly linked to the occurrence of GBV. It allows us to comprehend how these systemic inequalities not only result in instances of violence but also yield dire economic consequences for women. The theory helps uncover the multifaceted impact of GBV, encompassing job losses, diminished productivity, reduced workforce participation, compromised economic inclusivity, decreased educational attainment, heightened economic dependency, and severe psychological repercussions, including trauma, depression, low self-esteem, and even mental illness. By delving into societal attitudes, Feminist Theory allows us to fathom how deeply ingrained beliefs contribute to the barriers women face, perpetuating a culture of violence, inequality, and impunity. While Feminist Theory provides a robust framework for comprehending the intricate dynamics of GBV and its economic consequences, it's essential to acknowledge its limitations. One criticism of this theory is its tendency to predominantly focus on women's experiences, potentially overlooking the broader complexities of gender and power dynamics. Nevertheless, in the context of this study, which specifically explores the repercussions of GBV on women's economic inclusivity in Sokoto State, Feminist Theory closely aligns with the research objectives and the on-ground social realities.

In summary, adopting Feminist Theory for this study enables a nuanced analysis of how deeply ingrained gender-based discrimination and violence, underpinned by patriarchal norms and unequal power dynamics, affect women's economic inclusivity in Sokoto State. This theory provides a powerful lens to comprehend and address the challenges faced by women in the



region, offering crucial insights for policy recommendations and interventions aimed at combating GBV and advancing women's economic empowerment.

## Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach to data collection, which is well-suited for exploring the nuanced aspects of gender-based violence (GBV) that quantitative methods often can't capture (Flick, 2002). Participant selection was purposive, guided by information from the Sokoto State Ministry of Women Affairs, which had over 1,000 active survivors of GBV on its list (Spotlight, 2020). The study involved 40 women aged 15 to 45 living in various rural communities in Sokoto State, all of whom had experienced different forms of violence, including physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. Before commencing the study, permission was obtained from the Commissioner for Women's Affairs, who helped identify GBV survivors. Participants' consent was then sought and secured. Initially, some women were hesitant due to fear and concerns about exposure. However, they were assured of the study's research purposes, as well as their anonymity and confidentiality. Data was collected through four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), each comprising ten participants. A counseling psychologist was present in each session to provide emotional support. The FGDs explored several key topics, including the consequences of GBV on women's socio-economic development, women's understanding of GBV dimensions, community responses to GBV, and the reasons that deter women from reporting GBV. Descriptive analysis was used for demographic characteristics, while thematic analysis was employed for the main data. Transcripts were thoroughly reviewed, with multiple readings to identify major themes, critical phrases, and examples. The experiences of participants were compared and contrasted to uncover patterns and connections, resulting in broader thematic categories. These themes collectively painted a picture of the shared experiences of all women in the study as shown in table 1 below.

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**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Survival**

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1	Sex	Frequency	Percentages
	Male	00	00%
	Female	40	100%



2	age		
	15-25 years	20	50%
	25-35 years	15	37%
	35-45 years	05	13%
3	Marital status		
	Single	20	50%
	Married	02	5%
	Divorced	13	33%
	Widowed	05	12%
4	Religion		
	Islam		100%
	Christianity		00%
5	Level of study		
	Non-formal Edu	38	95%
	Primary Edu	02	5%
	Sec Edu	00	00%
	Tertiary Edu	00	00%
6	Parent Occupation		
	Civil Services	03	8%
	Business	07	17%
	Farming	20	50%
	Unemployed	10	25%

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**Source: Researchers computation**

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The results of the demographic data showed that all of the participants, forty of them representing 100% of the total participants were Muslims and also, all the survivors constituting 100% are women. A greater proportion of respondents, constituting 50% were within the age bracket of 15-25 years, followed by those within the bracket of 25-35 years, constituting 37% and those within the age bracket of 35-45 constituting 13% of the survivors age bracket. Most of the respondents 20 (50%) were single while 13 of the survivors constituting 33% happened to be divorced. 05 of the survivors, constituting 13% are widows and 02 of the survivors constituting 5% were married respectively. Analysis of the occupation of respondents' parents/ guardians revealed that the majority, 20(.50%) were business persons. Civil servants and unemployed accounting for 9(.17%), 3(8%) and 10(25%) respectively. Most of the respondents 38(95%) had



non-formal education, 2 survivals constituting 5% with primary education, while none of the survivals had either attended secondary or tertiary institutions.

## Discussions of Findings

The Findings of the Study are further discussed

### Theme 1: Consequences of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) on -Economic Inclusivity of Women in Sokoto State

This theme aims to find out if GBV has any consequence on the economic inclusiveness of the survivors in Sokoto State. From the results, 90% of the women believed that GBV has a very chronic consequence on their economic inclusivity, while only 10% think otherwise. A discussant responded that:

*When I was abused sexually, I fall sick for several months and I couldn't go out to sell as usual and which affect my income. I am now a complete liability to my parents and unfortunately, they are too old to struggle for themselves.*

Similarly, another discussant states that:

*Before now, I work as a cleaner, and the brother of my boss force himself on me. I reported the case to my boss but he didn't do anything. I quit work and now I am jobless. I couldn't do all I'm doing for myself anymore, and that of my dependents*

Another discussant also states that:

*I went through trauma and I just want to be alone and isolated from people. I hate to participate in any regular activities because I was raped by those I trusted most*

Another discussant also added:

*I hate myself for being a victim to the extent that I felt like killing myself. I don't even take care of myself any longer. I use to think the only option for me is to commit suicide.*

When asked about the challenges they pass through because of GBV, a discussant stated that:



*The major challenge we face includes lifetime injury, unwanted pregnancy, and most often sleep disorder. It took me many months before I start sleeping well. The trauma is too bad to bear*

However, another discussant talked more aggressively when she stated:

*I hate all men, I can't work with a man, and neither can I ever trust them. I was abused by a co-worker, a friend of mine and when I complain to the management, they sack me, saying that I frame him. The most painful of it all is that they refuse to pay me my many months' salary. I just want to kill him.*

Another discussant states that:

*The consequences of GBV will make anyone lose trust, confidence and love. You begin to see every man in the form of a terror. You will also lose your income if care is not taken. Before now, I use to cater for my family, they depend on me, but now, I hardly go out. I have an injury still battling with. It is a sad experience*

## **Theme 2: Why Women Don't Report GBV to the Appropriate Authority?**

A theme was put forward asking why most women don't report cases of GBV to the appropriate authorities when it happens. The majority of them, constituting 80% said that they don't see the seriousness in the authority handling the cases. On several occasions, someone will be attacked, and after she reported the case to the security men, nothing serious will be done. Sometimes it is even more dangerous to report the case because the authority cannot protect you in case the accused come against you. A discussant state that:

*I don't feel; like reporting to the authority because if I do, is like I am endangering my life more and more*

In a similar vein, another discussant states that:

*Reporting the act is like putting shame on myself. Everybody will now know that I was raped by one lunatic. I rather remain silent and avoid the embarrassment*

Another discussant added:



*I did not report it to the authority because the man told me if I did, he will come after me to do it again and then kill me. He threatens me with dead*

Another discussant also narrated that:

*I don't want to be stigmatized. Sometimes, even your own family will start discriminating against you after knowing that you were raped. Family and friends will start distancing themselves from you, separating the children from you. The stigma is even more dangerous and more killing than the act itself.*

Another discussant also added:

*Why should I report to the appropriate authority? Do we even have appropriate authority? How many women were raped, and after the rapist was arrested, only for you to see him walking around majestically. The authorities are corrupt, they collect bribes from the accused. Sometimes, the rapist may even come back to do you more harm because you reported him. the entire system is rotten. I left everything to the almighty and I know one day he will seek revenge for me.*

However, some discussants felt it is normal to report the case to the appropriate authority. A discussant state that:

*I still believe in reporting the act to the appropriate authority. We still have those that do their work with seriousness. They make sure the culprits are brought to the book. I reported my case to the appropriate authority*

When asked why they do think is good to report to the appropriate authority. A discussant state that:

*Reporting will serve as a deterrent to others, especially if he was arrested and prosecuted as expected*

Another discussant also states that:

*If the case is not reported, if nothing is done, we are laying a very bad precedent. We are encouraging others to engage in such an act and that is bad for our society. We must resist by doing the right thing.*



Another discussant states that:

*Women are termed as the weaker sex, just ordinary baggage. Even some cultures see nothing bad in a husband raping a wife*

### **Theme 3: Community Responses on Gender Based Violence**

The discussants were asked to explain how the community responded and reacted to the issue of Gender Based violence. The majority of the discussants constituting 90% believed that the community is not helping the situation while 10% of the discussants argued that the community are doing their best on the issue concerning GBV only that the culture of most of the societies does not empower them to do beyond what they are doing at the moment. A discussant states that:

*Our society doesn't crucify men for beating up their wives. Some even described it as a means of correcting the wrongdoing of a woman. They believed that the beating will teach her how to respect men*

Another discussant also added:

*Rape...lol. If a man you don't know rapes you or forces himself on you, the communities may likely condemn the act, but if your husband, boyfriend or even man friend rapes you or force himself on you and you took the case to the community, they will tell you it is not their case. They will not interfere*

Similarly, a discussant states that:

*Rape is considered a crime in most communities but the perception of what constitutes rape is very poor in many communities. Marital rape, rape by a boyfriend or man friend are not considered rape in many of our communities and therefore it is not a crime*

Another discussant also added:

*Our community's leader don't take the issue that seriously. Imagine we reported a case to the village head but all he could do is to wane the accused not to ever indulge in such an act again. He*



*addresses the issue as if it is not a serious matter. I know of a man that has raped more than five women and he still lives in the same community*

Another discussant also states that:

*How do you expect the community to take it seriously? After all, we are not their children. Besides, even the appropriate authority is not helping the matters. The way and manner they responded to reported cases determine how the community too will react to it. Imagine taking a case to the security men, but all of a sudden you found the criminal walking free after he has bought his way out from detention*

However, a discussant went contrary when she argued that:

*We are just blaming the communities. We know they have not done their best but we should also applaud them where they have performed better. It is not always their fault.*

Another discussant stressed that:

*Our culture limits their performance on this issue. It is believed in most communities that a husband cannot say to have raped his wife and there is nothing anyone can do about it for now*

Another discussant also added that

*In most instances, the village head and various community leaders use to put in their best but in a situation where the accused family or even the accused himself has money, they easily bought their way out.*

Another discussant added:

*In my community, the village head constitutes a body and part of their responsibilities is going into the hinterland advocating against gender abuse of all kinds. They also try to educate people on the danger of intimate partner violence and the punishment if caught indulging in such an act. But what I can add is that they need to do more because if their effort is big enough, people will not say that they are not doing something*



## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has confirmed that GBV is common in Sokoto state and part of the self-reported consequences of GBV in this study include suicidal ideation, fear, reduced access to education, loss of jobs, reduced productivity, reduced workforce participation, denied economic inclusiveness, lower educational attainment, extreme economic dependency, total lack of trust, psychological trauma, depression, low self-esteem, and mental illness. The findings also confirmed that the majority of the victims don't report the abuse case to the appropriate authority because they felt the authority lacks the will to punish and prosecute the abusers. And finally, the finding confirmed that communities responses and their lack of sincerity for not taking action against gender-based violence (GBV) abusers has perpetuates a culture of violence, inequality, and impunity thereby escalation of violence, continued victimization of victims, as well as diminishing community cohesion. Qualitative data on GBV experiences and associated factors were collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Descriptive analysis was used for the demographic characteristics of the participants. The transcription of the recorded audio cassettes, together with the recorded field notes, provided data for the thematic analysis.

## Recommendations

Toward this end, the following recommendations are offered:

### 1. Raise Awareness and Education:

- Implement comprehensive awareness campaigns to educate the community about GBV, its consequences, and the importance of intervention.
- Introduce gender-sensitive education programs in schools and communities to challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes and promote respect and equality.

### 2. Strengthen Legal and Judicial Systems:

- Enforce existing laws and policies related to GBV and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions.
- Train law enforcement and judicial personnel on handling GBV cases sensitively and effectively, providing survivors with a supportive and safe environment to report incidents.

### 3. Provide Comprehensive Support Services:



- Establish accessible and confidential support services for survivors, including crisis hotlines, shelters, counseling, and legal assistance.
- Ensure that support services are tailored to the diverse needs of survivors, including those from marginalized communities.

#### 4. Foster Community Engagement:

- Encourage community members to actively intervene and support survivors when witnessing or becoming aware of GBV incidents.
- Establish community-led initiatives and support groups to promote dialogue and understanding around GBV and its impact on individuals and the community.

#### 5. Empower Women and Girls:

- Promote economic empowerment for women through access to education, training, and resources, enabling them to achieve financial independence and reduce vulnerability to GBV.
- Encourage women's participation in decision-making processes within the community and workplaces, ensuring their voices are heard and respected.

By implementing these recommendations, communities can take significant steps toward eradicating GBV, fostering a culture of respect and equality, and creating an environment that promotes women's safety, well-being, and economic inclusivity. It requires a collective effort from individuals, institutions, and policymakers to build a society where all members can thrive without fear of violence or discrimination.

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