

Socio-Cultural Factors Associated With Wife Beating in Nigeria: A Review of Key Issues

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ABSTRACT

This review is based on the issues connected with wife beating in Nigeria which are reflections in so many other developing countries in Africa and Asia. Wife beating is one of the many dimensions of gender issues that threatens social freedom of women and increases mental and health burdens among victims, and indirectly affects their children, family members and the society at large. Yet there is a great degree of social acceptance of the issue as a form of chastisement of wives and socio-cultural norm in most of the African countries, especially in the rural areas.

Keywords: Socio-cultural; Factors; Wife Beating

INTRODUCTION

Although wife beating has been documented to be one of the global phenomena that affect women irrespective of their status, boundaries and background, it disproportionately affects women more in rural areas, and in particular those with low educational background and with low income status (Igbokwe, Ukwuma & Onugwu, 2012). The act is mostly perpetrated by husbands against their wives under the justification of putting them under control. The act takes the form of hitting, slapping, pushing, holding down, flogging, acid bath and throwing of objects at the victim (Mutiso, Chessa, Chasire & Kemboi, 2010; Oladepo, Yusuf & Arulogun, 2011).

Wife beating is an extreme expression of power and authority that seriously inhibits women's ability, to enjoy rights and freedom on the basis of equality with men in marriage. It is an exposure of a married woman to a serious physical force or repeated injuries by her husband (Alokan, 2013). It is tied to the patriarchal system of unequal power relationship between men and women in marriage which is reinforced by social learning and gender norms (Uwameiye & Iserameiye, 2013).

However, wife beating appears to be widely prevalent, yet public responses on wife beating ranges from pride, justification, denial, or tacit conceit. Davies cited in Alokan (2013) observed that wife beating may occur in thirty percent of families but is not recognized in the eyes of the public. Pillay (2011) gave an instance that globally it is estimated that, one in every three women world-wide have experienced or will experience some forms of violence from acquaintance in their live time, while as much as sixty percent of women have already experienced physical abuse by a male partner at least once in their lives and most often the violence is completely ignored.

In parts of third world countries such as South Asia and in Africa, wife beating is highly prevalent and reportedly justified as well as condoned (Adebayo, 2013). In South Asia for instance it has been reported that, 60% of women in Bagladesh and Sri Lanka and 50% in Afghanistan live with daily abuse within their homes and it is mostly condoned and accepted justified for some reasons which include bearing more girls, arguing with husband, going out without proper permission from spouse and failing to take proper care of the children (Oyeoku, Meziobi, Ezegbe & Obikwelu, 2015).

In Africa, wife beating is still a serious gender issue constraining women's developmental process. For instance, In Ethiopia WHO 2005 report, shows that about 71% of Ethiopian women who had been married experienced either physical or sexual violence by their partners. Out of them, about 35% had experienced at least one form of severe physical mistreatment, either being hit with a fist or something else, hard kicked, forcefully dragged, flogged, choked, burnt or threatened with weapons and the issue was concealed as a private affair (Gurmu & Endale, 2017).

In Nigeria, wife beating transcends region, religion and ethnicity, with physical abuse affecting as many as 35.1% of Igbo women and 34.3% of Hausa-Fulani women (Oladepo, Yusuf & Arulogun, 2011) and they are unable to seek redress due to traditional beliefs that make the incidence to remain invisible and condone as a social norm (Agbogwe & Igboke, 2015).

However, despite the prevalent rate and the effect of wife beating on victims, their children and the nation in terms of serious repercussions on children's life which has resulted in poor performance in school, risks of abuse, immense economic cost in developing nations for prices and expenditure to prevent, detect and offer health and social services to countless survivors of this issue and the impediment on the victims' ability to care themselves and for their children (Gurmu & Endale, 2017). Scholars are of the views that, public perceptions still condone it; see it as legitimate punishment for women who fail in their duties. These perceptions transcend countries and vary based on individual, location, region and gender. For instance, Ogunmosunle (2012) opines that many Nigerians accept wife beating under certain conditions like disobeying spouse, unfaithfulness and argues with spouse. In fact some men and women in Eastern Nigeria perceive and condoned wife beating as cultural norms even though it affects physical, economical, mental and reproductive wellbeing of the victims (Lika, 2005; Hassan, Seedhom & Mahfouz, 2016,).

This ideology of condoning wife beating as a normal behavior in certain circumstances has contributed to making wife beating remain seriously unchallenged (Luckson, 2014). Community members and family relations who are supposed to intervene when they know about the violence often blame victims for inciting the beating thus, victims may choose to be silent and passive over issues because she might be

blamed. In fact victims of wife beating may not be willing to leave an abusive environment nor stand against it from happening because they are handicapped by the way wife beating is perceived.

THE CONCEPT OF WIFE BEATING

Beating basically denotes a term which involves the unlawful beating of another person or any threatening touch to another person's clothes or body, which in many homes begins with a relatively minor misunderstanding between the parties (Chukwu, Scent, Emeka, Ugochukwu & Okorie, 2014). The term connotes the use of excessive physical force that ultimately results to injury to that person which the great force is being applied upon. When it is directed at the female in a marital relationship it is called wife beating (Dobash & Dobash cited in Muomah, 2010).

According to Suaad (2015), a diverse range of terms has been used to describe wife beating, it can be regarded as an issue for women in a marital or other intimate relationship, sometimes wife abuse, wife battery, partner abuse, physical abuse and domestic violence. Thus, wife beating involves overt physical force or violence perpetrated by a husband on his wife. It is one of the many dimensions of gender issues that takes the form of hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing, dragging, cutting, shooting and throwing of objects (Alokan, 2013). In addition, Laeheim and Boonprakarn (2014) stated that, it is a male behaviour pattern of hurting females or wives physically and mentally in order to show power in controlling them. Victims are wives who are hurt by their husbands physically in order to threaten them to do something without consideration of their wives right. To do this, husband use different forms and levels of intensity which can be physical attack, causing physical wound ranging from minor to more serious one or even death if weapons are used.

Koenig et al (2003), identified common reasons leading to beating of wives in some cases to include lack of submission to spouse, refusal to have sex, argue with spouse, going out without telling spouse and suspected infidelity.

Dobash and Dobash cited in Muomah (2010), maintain that, the history of wife beating is a product of a system, which reflects historical laws about male ownership in marriage, as well as current social gender roles and structures, which secure the dominance of men over women. The author further indicated that wife

beating like most things that came into existence at a particular time in history, is traced to the way women for decade after decade had been conditioned by the religious, socio-cultural and legal concepts that held them to be naturally inferior to men. For instance In Africa, particularly in Nigeria Ameh & Abdul (2005), argue that the section 55 (1) of the Penal Code of Northern Nigeria unwittingly encourages wife beating. It states, "Nothing is an offence which does not amount to infliction of grievous hurt upon any person and which is done by husband for the purpose of correcting his wife, such husband or wife being subject to native law or custom in which such correction is recognized as lawful." This law has been exploited by many husbands to inflict terrible violence on their wives. Writing in the same vein Otufale (2013), submits that wife beating is as a result of the socio-cultural belief system prevalent in relationships between man and woman, where the men are socialized into believing that they are entitled to be superior to the women and should be at the apex of decision making in marriage while the women are to be subordinated to the point of their detriment and to achieve this, husbands are willing to control and coerce their wives by a variety of means to maintain their rights, authorities and positions in the marriage.

Nature, Extent and Dimensions of Wife Beating in Nigeria

Nigeria is a patriarchal society, generally men by culture have rights to dominate, control and take decisions in all affairs especially in marriages and families. Thus, in Nigeria patriarchy environment, rigid cultural practices, bride wealth, perception about womanhood and gender role socialization have promoted and inhibited the act of wife beating, right from pre-colonial to the present time (Arisi & Oramoreghe, 2012). According to Igwe (2015), traditionally in Nigeria as in many other Africa countries, the beating of children by their parents and wives by their husbands are widely sanctioned as acceptable form of discipline. That is, there is nothing wrong in a little strike to correct a wife's mistake. In fact it is a man's duty to call his wife to order else he will be responsible for anything that happens to her as a result of her mistakes.

Accordingly, Esere et al (2009), maintain that the beating of wives in Nigeria is a regular part of most women's experience in marriage and it is predominantly inflicted by men on women

and girls because of their low status in marital right. In addition, the author observed that due to their gender role in marriage Nigeria women are beaten and punished for supposed transgression (not having meal on time to visiting family members without their husbands' permission) by their husbands while some also experience vicious acid attacks with horrific disfigurement which leave them with lifelong pain and damage to their health. According to, Oyediran and Abanihe (2005), upon getting married in Nigeria a women surrenders to her husband exclusive sexual rights and obedience, this invariably gives her husband the right to violate and batter her if he feels that she has not adequately fulfilled her obligations or for other reasons.

The extent and nature of wife beating experiences in Nigeria has been documented by several authors. For instance the project alert a Nigeria based NGO that supported female victims of domestic violence reported that wife beating in Nigeria takes the form of hitting, slapping, flogging, choking, pushing, cutting and acid bath. The author gave an instance that it has been reported that many working class ladies and market women in Lagos are experiencing wife beating by their partners in form of flogging, slapping, choking and pushing and the most alarming is the increase in the rate of wife beating among couples aged 25-40 (Igwe, 2015). Ameh and Abdul (2005), observe in Zaria that many women especially those who are pregnant experience domestic violence, and it takes the form of repeatedly being beaten up, having objects thrown at them, slapped and flogged with a belt or a cane while their spouses were the culprits.

In line with this, Ifezulike cited in Oli (2012), painted a scenario that in Nigeria, a man can inflict punishment on his wife for leaving the house without permission, keeping bad company, drinking alcohol and cooking bad food or cooking late and nothing is wrong with it. Nweji (2014), added that in most cases wives are usually beaten due to their nagging behaviour or for disobeying the husband or when she refuses to stay where her husband wants her to stay and the society sees it as the fault of the woman. Thus the author observed that there is this deep cultural belief in Nigeria that socially accepts beating of wife as a means to discipline them (Nweje, 2014). Within the Igbo's in South East Nigeria it has also been reported that a good number of women are been slapped, kicked and hit while many also have

been pushed because of the general acceptability (Okemgbo, Omideyi & Odimegwu. 2002).

Male Headship in Nigeria and Perception of Wife Beating

Adherence to patriarchal norms is likely to strengthen and influence generally the perception of most men and women to see wife beating as inevitable and justifiable in marriages due to the fact that in patriarchal societies, there is an uneven distribution of power, rights and privileges in marital relations, husbands has right to dominate and control as well as takes decision they considered good for the relationship (Oyediran, 2016). According to Gurmu and Endale (2017), patriarchy with its gender ideology has created a society which puts men in dominant and women in subordinate positions. These social norms are the major instruments of patriarchal societies that perpetuate and maintain the perceptions of male superiority. These patriarchal norms justify the use of force which wife beating is inclusive to protect men's ability to control women. The perceptions most persons have about wife beating in some instances could be thus, the central theme of a patriarchal ideology or the myth that perpetuates male authority through the use of force. In addition Tenkorang et al (2014) argue that, wife beating although detriment to the health and wellbeing of women is often interpreted as a demonstration of a man authority and love for his wife.

Writing in the same vein Luckson (2014), maintained that patriarchal norms encourage the frequency, severity of variation in violence and allows the control of wives through fear and intimidation which might predispose victims and perpetrators to see it as justified. Furthermore, scholars are of the view that, patriarchal socialization portrays women as perpetual minors who can be punished by their fathers, brothers, husbands, in-laws and uncles and are socialized to believe it is for their own good (Zimbabwe human right bulletin, 2011; Badri, 2014).

Writing in the same vein Ahmad, Riaz, Barata and Stewart (2004) argued that, acceptance of wife beating may increase in the patriarchal system because people from patriarchal societies may themselves accept and adhere to patriarchal norms and values. The authors further argued that, patriarchal ideology can influence victims, perpetrators, men and women to accept that, it is normal for a woman to be beaten in some circumstances especially if she goes against

gender role. The authors gave an instance that, the South Asian women who adhered to more patriarchal values were less likely to judge spousal abuse as violence against women compared with those women who disagreed with patriarchal social norms because of the belief they have about manhood. In view of the above, it should be expected that men and women who accept patriarchal norms and values, are less likely to define wife beating as violence against women, less likely to judge such behaviors as serious, less likely to report such behavior to others and indeed less likely to define themselves as victims.

Typically men in most cultures especially in Africa men are given free reign as long as they provide financially for their family, and are accorded more rights and privileges in marriage (Igwe, 2015). Women are expected to attend to house and children and to show their husbands obedience and respect even to the point of seeing wife beating as justifiable. If a man perceives that his wife has somehow failed in her role, stepped beyond her bounds or challenged his rights, then he may react violently to discipline her and in reacting violently may not perceive it as wrong but trying to put his wife under control (Oladeji, 2013). In line with this, Azuh et al (2015) argued that, perceptions of wife beating in certain circumstances may further be reinforced by male headship in the family where women are socialized to accept that they are inferior to men and should accept wife beating as part of chastisement. Thus, persons who support more traditional male control are most likely to have greater perceptions of wife beating as normal and justifiable compared to those with more egalitarian beliefs about gender roles.

Gordon cited in Muomah (2010) described the above, as part of the victimization of women by a cultural ideology which imposed the role of nurturer on women. Women through socialization and other biological functions learn to place the needs of others before their own. If they felt that their abuser was expressing his own emotional pain, they seemed to stay to help their partner and denied their own physical danger. The other types of rationalization are: the denial of the victimizer; in which women do not perceive their batterer's use of violence as a form of abuse. There is also the denial of injury; in which battered women minimize or trivialize the extent of physical or emotional injury they suffer. The denial of victimization also occurs; whereby women do not see themselves as being

abused. Another occurrence is the denial of options; in which women assert that they have no other option than to stay with their abusive partners. Finally, there is appeal to higher loyalties; (either traditional or religious) in which women feel they cannot leave because social or religious ethics demand that they stay with their partner. All these point towards psychological mechanisms acquired by battered women in an attempt to condone violent marriage.

However, Gurmu and Endale (2017) argue that, Patriarchy can also create an enabling environment for social learning of this perception that justify wife beating. For instance leaving in an environment that tolerates or condones wife beating could also influence most men and women to accept beating of wife as a justified and normal behavior in male control society hence increasing the practice. According to Olumeri (2015), when one watches or stays in an abusive environment or where wife beating is tolerated and perceived as a form of patriarchy practice that does not warrant outside scrutiny he/she is likely to harbor such perceptions condoning wife beating and suffers such act especially when there are no punishments and the victim also accepts the violence with submission. In other words when one is exposed to previous wife beating especially when it goes unpunished, she may internalize, legitimize and regard it as normal behaviour in future and in subsequent relationships.

Culture and Perception of the Public towards Wife Beating

The culture of the people could be very influential in shaping men and women perception in condoning and acceptance of wife beating as justified in the society. Che Soh (2010) gave an instance that traditionally in most culture especially in third world countries such as Jordan, when a girl is married she belongs to her husband's family, and that during the marriage she is not supposed to have opinion nor act against her husbands' will and should conform to all his demands and in failing to do that the husband has right to chastise her.

Similarly in Africa including Nigeria, marriage is considered a lifelong contract indissoluble as it is looked upon as a permanent social and spiritual bond between a man and his wife as well as their respective families divorce did not play a significant role (Arugu, 2014). The cultural belief is that upon marriage wives are properties of their husbands and husbands by

virtue of their position as the heads of the family have the right to control and take final decisions including those affecting their wives. Wives by gender role in the relationship are expected to take good care of the children, surrender to their husbands exclusive sexual rights and total obedience by being good wives. This invariably gives husbands the liberty to violate wives if they feel that they have not adequately fulfilled their obligations as wives or for any other reason. This belief finds expression in many ways that men tend to control their wives, which include but not limited to accepting wife beating as a means to chastise wives (Igwe, 2015, Oyediran & Abanihe, 2005).

Within the Igbo culture, womanhood is highly denigrated to humility, passivity, submission and inferiority and traditional norms encourage male domination and power, which could be expressed through violence to sustain the expected gender role (Nwabuike & Tenkorang (2015). Through this culture bride wealth legitimizes marriage and gives husbands right over their wives and children that will be born and the right to care for them. By virtue of this culture the husband owns his wife and has the final say while the wife must be submissive to her husband in all ramifications (Igwe, 2015), and a married woman according to this culture is assessed by her ability to fulfill her obligations to her husband as a wife and as a mother to her children, otherwise she is perceived as a bad woman that deserves to be disciplined and put under control (Abolarin, 2012). In line with this Gurmu and Endale (2017) argue that cultural acceptance of wife beating as a mechanism of managing household conflict and maintaining order in the family system has increased the potential rewards of wife beating. This cultural acceptance could lead the incidence to be perceived as normal behavior in relationships and a less likelihood to resist the act.

Writing in the same vein Llika (2005) added that total submission of a woman to a man in marital relationship is enforced in Igbo land during the performance of marriage rituals. A man pays bride wealth including stipulated items, this gives him entitlement, power and superiority compared to female submissiveness in the marriage and by culture husbands have right to control as well as to care for them. Thus, these cultural beliefs about submissiveness and power in marriage amount to acceptance of wife beating where there is transgression of female subordinated role. Writing in the same vein

Dobash and Dobash (1979) asserted that historically, whatever that happened between spouse was regarded as a private matter and was not a concern to other persons. This cultural ideology still hold in recent times as violence related to marital homes even till date has turned out to be privatized and confined to bedrooms and homes making most people to see it as a normal behavior in relationships. For instance, Emegwa, Lawoko and Jansson (2016) argue that, the common notion is that husband could chastises or divorce a wife on the premises of adultery, public drunkenness, neglecting children, disobeying husband, going out without telling spouse, argues with spouse, refuses to be submissive to spouse, cooks bad food and refusal to have sex with spouse.

However, Muomah (2010) asserted that traditionally in part of Nigeria culture, women divorcees are stigmatized particularly in Igbo land, while men easily settle into another marriage; women may not find another marriage an easy task to embark on as the story of the earlier marriage follows them around. The decision to accept and tolerate husband abuse may be dependent on this issue of stigmatization and of course the welfare of children considering the severe pressure divorce exerts on developing children. Which may result in pathological vulnerabilities? These children, a battered woman believes, shall grow to cushion her from the unpleasant experience. The author further argue that, traditionally, society accords respect and dignity to marital status; therefore some women may hold on to abusive partners because of the “prestige” that goes with marital status. This is very apparent in the way single women of the same age bracket are treated in certain social gatherings and as such women in a battering marriage may accept beating as normal behavior and may be reluctant even to report acts of battering out of fear of losing the marital status and prestige associated with it.

In line with this, Carlson and Worden (2002), argue that, historically in the medieval age, culturally wife beating has often been perceived and condoned as normal behavior in relationship, as it is culturally justifiable for husbands to discipline wives by beating them if they go against their gender role and this perception still holds in recent times. For instance Antai and Antai (2008), reported that, significant proportions of men and women in sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria are still bound by cultural norms to accept and condone wife beating as justifiable punishment for a

woman’s transgression of her normative roles in the society as well as for disobedience and disrespecting her husband’s relatives. In addition, Chuma and Chazovachill (2012) argue that, this perception is more in a cultural milieu that value female obedience and deference to men, violence perpetrated by a husband is often viewed as a normal part of gender relation.

Writing in the same vein, Yigzaw, Berhane, Deyessa and Kaba (2010) also maintain that, in recent time there is a cultural belief condoning more prevalent violent act as inevitable in the family particularly when aroused by a recognizable trigger factor such as infidelity, refusal to adhere to spouse commands, nags, fail to take proper care of the children, refusal to have sex and visit relatives without spouse approval because conflict in marriages is believed to be common and condemning it is like denying reality as long as it is mild and does not inflict injury. Culturally in some instances in Africa a man not-wanting to punish his wife for supposed transgression would be criticized as unmanly and docile. Luckson (2014), also observed that culturally in Zimbabwe it is belief that wife beating is a private affair and husbands’ right to beat their wives if they behave badly since the payment of bride wealth gives husband ownership of his wife. Odimegwu, (2001), in his argument indicated that per some culture wife beating is regarded as a sign of affection and a man not wanting to beat his wife in order to correct her when she makes a mistake does not love her. This belief is made evident in Oyediran and Isiugo-Abanihe’s (2005) study that found that more than half of ever-married women accepted and justified wife beating and hitting as a necessary male ‘duty’ in order to assert manhood within the traditional family. While Abiola, Olusins, Sunday & Sunday (2011), are of the view that wife beating is considered culturally as something that should be condoned to avoid exposure of family problem since no family can really say it does not experience marital problem.

Education and Perception of Wife Beating

Educational factor can also influence the way the public perceives wife beating. For instance illiteracy among men and women could increase their likelihood of perceiving wife beating as justified in the society compared to their literate counterparts due to the fact that, they may not be enlightened and equipped with the right information about wife beating and human right

violations. Jewkes cited in Tenkorang et al (2013), noted that, education confers on individual social empowerment, useful information about life, self-confidence and the ability to use information and resources to one's advantage but when this is lacking one can be ignorant of useful information's that can transform their lives around on the way they see things.

In line with this Uthman and Moradi (2009), argue that limited education can influence people to perceive wife as justified considering the fact that having few years of education may not expose people to new non-conformist ideas. It may even bring conflict between reality and myth of male superiority. Therefore it will be expected that people who are educated are less likely to accept, perpetrate and condone wife beating than those who are not educated.

Economic Factor and Perception of Wife Beating

Economic factors also matter because they can shape the way public looks at or accepts wife beating as justified. For instance, Chuma and Chazovachill (2012) argued that, women's dependence on men and the cultural value of being a proper wife may lead most women to decide that, the trouble of contradicting gender role is worse than staying with a violent partner. The author also argued that, women who depend solely on their husbands for survival are more likely to tolerate beating perpetrated by spouses because poverty can put a severe constrain on women to challenge violence perpetrated against them. The implication of this could be that, poverty limits the ability of most people to see wife beating as abnormal behaviour even though they feel the pains generated by beating perpetrated against them.

According to Fakunmoju, Bammeke, Oyekanim, Temilola & George (2016), due to economic factor many women have continue to bear the major brunt of partner violence in many patriarchal societies, and continue to condone as well as conceal it as private affair because of the mere fact that women are economically dependent on men which made it physically incapable of confronting their abusers even in the face of threatening danger and looming risk of being battered to death by her husband. Similarly, Oyediran (2016), contended that, categories of people vulnerable to accept and justify wife beating under the above circumstance are women who depend on men

and women who do not have autonomy in household decision pertaining to their own health, social activities or visits to parents or relatives, as well as people with rigid believes regarding submissiveness of women, male prestige.

Possible Strategies to Surmount This Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Public Perception of Wife Beating

According to Tenkorang, Nwabunike and Sedziata (2013), to improve on the socio-cultural factors influencing most people to justify wife beating in most cases, there is a need in the improvement in the protection of women's right in modern society and women should be actively involved in socio-economic system as well change in their educational attainment. The authors believe that when women are empowered educationally with right information on human rights and can cater for themselves the odd to adhering to cultural norms that support wife beating will be eradicated. As most women who adhere to these perceptions tent to be ignorant of human rights violations and the dangers that comes with wife beating which affect not only the victim's health, social life and economic activities that jeopardize their ability to be self-reliant and productive but also affects their children, family, community and the society at large (Bradshaw & Linnekaer, 2003).

Writing in the same vein Gurmu and Endale (2017), are of the view that to abolish the underlying factors influencing perceptions condoning wife beating in most society there is a need to assist in designing effective and efficient intervention programmes that could address the perilous subject. Some of the intervention mechanisms that should be included could be promoting gender equity and equality and information and education communication campaigns where the public will be educated about human rights violations. This will enhance men's involvement in the initiatives to abolish wife beating. Also increase women access to educational and employment opportunities are also believed to bring the most significant impacts. These not only can enhance the status of women that shall narrow the gender gap between couples who share household responsibilities and resources but also resist against the violations of their rights. In addition, there is a strong need to revive and strengthen national laws and policies that protect human rights, in particular with a major emphasis on

eradicating some of the cultural beliefs that support wife beating, giving due consideration to traditional and customary rules and regulations that promote gender equity and equality.

Prevalence of Wife Beating Globally

In South Asia, Azhar et al (2014) conducted an exploratory study to investigate the socio-economic factors behind GBV in Sargoha district Pakistan. A total of 100 respondents were randomly selected through purposive and snowball sampling technique. Data generated was analyzed using simple percentage. The study reported that, 56% of the respondents experienced wife beating. The authors concluded that women in Pakistan society are facing serious domestic violence within the private sphere.

Koenig et al (2003) did a descriptive study to assess domestic violence in rural Uganda; evidence from a community based study. A total of 5109 women of reproductive age 15 to 49 were randomly selected. The data was analyzed using simple percentage. The result of the study revealed that 30.4% of women had ever experience physical violence within twelve month, slapping or holding down (23.1%) were the commonest form it took while fewer respondent reported been burn or scalded within twelve months. The authors also reported that the commonest reason given for the violence was the neglect of household, disobeying husband, refusal to have sex, argue with spouse and suspected infidelity. The authors concluded that the results have potential important implications for programs aimed at preventing spouse violence.

Similarly, Mutiso et al (2010) carried out a descriptive study to explore the factors leading to domestic violence in low-income residential areas in Kenya. The study reports that, out of the 90 participants randomly selected through simple random technique for the study, 52% of the women have experienced domestic violence such as slapping, kicking, holding down, pushing and beating with an object. The authors also reported that, those who experienced wife beating were mainly women who had attained primary level of education or were illiterate and were housewives.

In Nigeria, Oladepo et al (2012) conducted a cross sectional study in the three geopolitical Zones (Kaduna, Enugu and Oyo) in Nigeria, among male (1496) and female (1584)

respondents selected through multistage sampling procedure. The authors reported that, respondents who had experienced physical violence were 26.98%, comprising of 11.8% males and 15.1% females. The study also reported that more married female respondents were more likely to experience physical violence than single counterparts. The study showed that, domestic violence still constitutes a problem in Nigeria affecting more women than men. It concluded that there is a high prevalence of domestic violence in Nigeria. The authors recommended the need for efforts to be made towards addressing the factors that promote violence among men and women through increased awareness and education.

Igbokwe et al (2013) adopted a descriptive design to determine domestic violence against women: challenges to health and innovation among 210 respondents accessing health services in 35 public health facility in Nsukka, Enugu state. The respondents were selected through multistage sampling techniques and the data was analyzed using simple percentage. Result of the study showed that 69.5% of women experience wife battery (slapping, kicking and beating). The authors also reported that 94.41% of women in rural areas are more likely to be victims of wife beating by their husbands than women in urban setting, while women with no formal education are more likely than women in the other groups to experience all forms of domestic violence with wife beating occurring in 93.33% of rural women. The authors recommended that parents should ensure adequate education for their girl child up to tertiary level.

Onoh et al (2013) carried out cross sectional study to determine the prevalence, pattern and consequences of partner violence in Abakaliki among 321 women purposely selected for the study. The data generated was analyzed using 2008 EPI info software, the result of the study showed that 44.6% of the women have been beaten by their husband for reasons of cooking bad food, financial problem and not taking proper care of the children. The result also revealed that victims are not in support of reporting it due to fear of more beating, to protect the marriage, belief that it culturally wrong and were advised against it. The authors concluded that wife beating is still rampant in Abakaliki.

Public Reactions to Wife Beating

Hindin (2003) conducted a descriptive study with 5907 women of reproductive age 15-49 years randomly selected with the objective of understanding women's attitudes towards wife beating in Zimbabwe. The data generated was analyzed using SPSS, the result of the study shows that over half of all women in Zimbabwe (53%) believed that wife beating was justified in at least one of the five situations. Respondents were most likely to find wife beating justified if a wife argued with her spouse (36%), neglected her children (30%), or went out without telling her spouse (30%). The study also revealed that among women in partnership, living in rural areas, lower household wealth, younger age, schooling at a lower level than secondary and lower occupational status were associated with women reporting that wife beating is justified. The author concluded that, Zimbabwe has a long way to go in preventing inter-partner violence since this opinion is higher among the younger generation.

Khawaya, Linos & El-Roveiheb (2008), carried out a descriptive study to find out the attitude of men and women towards wife beating in Jordan. The study revealed that, majority of men (60.1%) and women (61.8%) believed that wife beating is justified in at least one of the eight hypotheses on marital situations presented to them. Among women, those that had been victims of intimate partner violence were significantly more likely to report acceptance of wife beating. Among men, acceptance of wife beating is significantly associated with their current age, labour force participation, their views on women's autonomy and their own history as perpetrators of inter personal violence. The authors also reported that acceptance of wife beating by both men and women were strongly associated with previous experience of wife beating.

Gurmu and Endale (2017), conducted a descriptive study using the 2011 Ethiopia demographic and health survey data on 11,097 and 5287 women in their reproductive age 15-49 year living in rural and urban areas to assess the levels and patterns of wife beating refusal and its associated socio-cultural and demographic factors in rural and urban Ethiopia respectively. Result of the study after analyzing data from statistical package for social sciences revealed that the likelihood of refusing wife beating in Ethiopia is significantly higher among urban women (54.2%) than the rural women (24.5%).

The authors also reported that, there is a variation in attitude towards refusing wife beating among different region, increasing educational level, high access to media, age of respondent is associated with high level of refusal of wife beating. The authors concluded that wife beating in Ethiopia is a function of demographic and socio-cultural factors among which age, educational attainment, marital commitment and religious affiliation play significant role.

Yigzaw et al (2010), worked on qualitative study to investigate the perceptions and attitude of people towards gender based violence by their spouses in Ethiopia. Information was elicited from the forty five participants through in-depth interview and five focus group discussions (FGD). The data generated was analyzed using verbatim transcription and open code software. The study reports that there are differences in what counts as an act of spousal violence, the normative expectation that conflicts are inevitable in marriage makes it difficult for society to reject wife beating. The study also shows that, 85% of the women believe a husband is justified in beating his wife for at least one reason (disobeying spouse, burn food, neglect of the children, unfaithfulness and going out without telling). The authors also reported that a good number of respondents considered wife beating to be a symbol of love, and that a husband is responsible for disciplining and putting erring wives on the right tract. The study concluded that, there is insufficient understanding of wife beating in its contemporary use and many people hold a non-disapproving stance regarding beating by their spouses. They concluded by recommending for culturally sensitive information, education and communication intervention.

Chuma and Chazovachii (2012), worked on examining the impact of violence against women's action in reducing violence perpetrated against women in rural areas of Mwenezi district, Zimbabwe in a qualitative research. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 100 women respondents while qualitative information was elicited from the respondents through focused group discussion (FGD) and in-depth interview. The study reports that, domestic violence is still highly prevalent in Zimbabwe because respondents considered domestic violence to be an inevitable and private affair. The study therefore concluded that, the act of domestic violence has had a

negligible impact as women continue to bear the brunt of domestic violence.

In Nigeria, Oyediran (2016), worked on explaining trends and patterns in attitudes towards wife beating among women in Nigeria; analysis of 2003, 2008 and 2013 demographic and health survey data. The study revealed that, in 2003, 2008 and 2013 62.4% of women, 45.7% of women and 37.1% of women respectively reported wife beating would be justified for at least one of the five scenario (goes out without telling him, neglect the children, argues with him, refuses to have sex with him and burns food) presented during interview. The proportion of women who reported that a man is justified for beating his wife in at least one scenario is relatively low in the Southwest but higher in North and Southeast though the significant association were stronger in never married women with no formal education compared to never married women who had primary and post primary education. The authors also reported that the predictors of reporting wife beating as justified among ever married and never married women were associated with region, place, residence, education, religious affiliation and ethnicity and exposure to mass media. The study concluded that a sizeable percentage of Nigeria women justify wife beating.

Emegwa et al (2016), conducted a descriptive study to examine attitudes towards physical intimate partner violence against women among men and women in Nigeria. Data from 33,385 women and 15,486 men from the 2008 Nigerian demographic and health surveys were analyzed using chi-square test and multiple logistic regressions. Results from the study show that although larger proportions of women justified physical violence, certain categories of men such as poor, illiterate men, and men with secondary education justified abuse more than women. Women exposed to wife beating more often than un-exposed peers endorsed wife beating. The authors also reported that the likelihood of endorsing wife beating tended to decrease with increasing age. The authors concluded that the gender differences observed for predictors of attitudes to wife beating suggest a need for gender-tailored interventions to change attitudes toward partner violence in Nigeria.

Oyedoku (2007), conducted a descriptive study to examine the predictors of attitude towards wife battery in among men in Nigeria: evidence

from Nigeria demographic and health survey 2003. Result of the study show acceptability of wife battering among Nigerian men. Twenty-eight per cent of the men interviewed believed that wife-beating is justified if the wife goes out without taking permission from the husband/partner, if the wife neglects the children (28.56%), if the wife argues with husband/partner (24.42%), if the wife refuses to have sex with husband/partner (21.27%), if the wife burns the food (15.39%), and if the food is not cooked on time (16.80%). The author also reported that low level of education, type of earnings for work significantly predict that Nigeria men will hold on to traditional ideas that justify wife beating.

Ajah et al (2014), conducted a cross sectional study to compare the burden and perception of domestic violence among women living in rural and urban Igbo communities of Southeast Nigeria. Information was elicited from respondent through Focused Group Discussions and in-depth interviews. The study reports that out of the 836 respondents who participated in the study, the proportion of women who believe that wife beating was justifiable was significantly higher among rural dwellers (58.5%) than among the urban dwellers (29.6%). The study concludes that, more rural women perceive domestic violence as excusable, factors that sustain domestic violence could be more in rural areas. The study suggested the need for factors that sustain such beliefs to be unveiled and for a comprehensive program to curb domestic violence in rural areas.

Similarly, Llika (2005), carried out a qualitative study to assess the perceptions of the rural Igbo women on spousal violence in Anambra state. The respondents were selected through the various women age grade in Ozubulu, Anambra state Nigeria, information's was elicited from respondents through in-depth interviews and focused group discussions. The study reports that, women generally condoned and are compliant with intimate partner violence, perceiving it as cultural and religious norms. Also the study reveals that, the women felt that reprimands and beating affecting their physical, mental and social wellbeing are normal in marriages. They did not support reporting matter to police or leaving an abusive environment for fear of means of livelihood and concern for children. The study therefore, concludes that, socio-cultural norms and structures favour partner violence in Anambra State. The study

recommended the need for advocacy and concerted action that will involve the educational, health, civil and religious sectors of the society to evolve sustainable structures that will empower women and provide support to enable victims to react appropriately to violence.

Recommendations toward the Reduction of Wife Beating in Nigeria

- The Government needs to come up with a law that works against social-cultural norms that support wife beating in all ramifications. Also the government needs to educate and sensitize community members to shun cultural practices that support wife beating. Come up with the law that can punish any one to beat his wife. The community stakeholders needs to come up with the laws that will eradicate the stereotypes and patriarchal system that tent to give the man absolute power of life and death over the woman, which continuously serves as an impetus for wife beating support. All stakeholders in Nigeria society group, community leaders must embark on awareness creation and education on the negative implications of wife beating on the growth of the society.
- The NGOs that work with community members especially those that work in the area of empowerment should empower the women especially in rural community with useful information that will help them kick against wife beating. The NGOs should empower women economically to be able to resist all forms of beating because when a women has economic empowerment she can take care of herself and children if she makes that decision of leaving an abusive environment and also be able to file a case if it warrant. NGOs should also embark on behavior change communication which consists of campaign carried out to educate and enlighten community members towards helping people unlearn social-cultural norm that support wife beating.
- The religious leaders also have a role to play to end the social belief that support wife beating, this can be achieved through embankment on a rigorous and widespread enlightenment of adherents on the dangers that wife beating portends for the unwholesome development in the society.
- Comprehensive and extensive premarital counseling should be given to intending

couples on how to manage their marital relationship.

CONCLUSION

From reviewed analysis, it is very clearly revealed that women in Nigeria and other parts of the developing area still experience wife beating. It was argued that women in these areas experience wife beating in form of flogging, slapping and beating with belt. The analysis also revealed that people condone wife beating and see it as a social norm because of the influence of social-cultural norms such as cultural practices of seeing women as a minor that can be beaten by husband, father and brothers. The cultural practice permit husband to beat wife by correcting her if she goes against her husband or nag husband. Male headship and level of education were also identified as one of the factors influences most men and women to perceive wife beating as a social norm. The prevalence of these perceptions has serious implications for the development of the society, consequently the government, community leaders, women groups, stakeholders must pay urgent attention towards eradicating the social-cultural norms that support wife beating.

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