

Gender-Based Sexual Violence against Internally Displaced Persons in Abuja Camp, Nigeria

Clement Ahuruonye CHUKWUNKA
Criminology and Security Studies
National Open University of Nigeria
Jabi, Abuja
cchukwunka@noun.edu.ng
+234 805 427 5654

Abstract

Internally Displaced persons (IDPs) are mostly victims of inhumanity of man against man. The activities of Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen in Northern Nigeria increased the flow of refugee and violent disorder in the region. The study evaluates Internally Displaced persons and gender-based sexual violence against the girl-child in Abuja. The research examines variables such as conditions towards the basic necessities of life, livelihoods, education and other socio-economic rights. Population of the study is all internally displaced people in the four camps within Abuja. . According to the international organization for migration (IOM, 2018), there are 20,924 internal displaced persons in Abuja camps. A sample size of three hundred and Ninety (390) respondents was chosen. The study adopted Maslow Hierarchy of Needs as the theoretical

Framework. Information was collected from Key Informant Interview and In-Depth Interview. Qualitative data were analysed through content analysis, and the quantitative data through simple percentage. Results showed that the majority of the respondents showed varied degrees of psycho-social problems while they all showed various degrees of social needs. It was concluded that the IDPs experienced emotional, psychosocial as well as physical health problems. It recommends that government and relevant non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) should do everything possible to address the health and social support needs of the (IDPs).

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Introduction

Violence against women is a persistent and universal problem occurring in every culture and social group. It has been called “the most pervasive yet least recognized human rights abuse in the world.” Accordingly, the Second World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 and the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1994 gave priority to this issue which jeopardizes women’s lives, bodies, psychological integrity and freedom. Violence against women is often known as ‘gender-based’ violence because it partly stems from women’s subordinate status in society. It includes any act or threat by men or male dominated institutions that inflict physical, sexual, or psychological harm on a woman or girl because of their gender (WHO, 2002). A form of gender-based violence, sexual violence has been defined as “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic a person’s sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm or physical force, by any person regardless of relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.”(Logar, 2000). It takes myriad forms such as sexual assault, rape, forced marriage, genital mutilation, sexual slavery or trafficking. It can happen in a bedroom, alleyway or war zone. Justifications for violence frequently evolve from the interaction between gender and social variables such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class which affect women’s experiences

of violence. Most cultures, traditional beliefs, norms and social institutions legitimize and therefore perpetuate violence against women. The qualities that are considered “male” or “female” are based on two factors such as Masculinity; often associated with characteristics such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, dominance, strength, courage and control, while Femininity, on the other hand, is associated with weakness, gentleness, tolerance, passivity and emotion. These characteristics result from a combination of biological, cultural and social influences and relate to our understanding of power in the society as a whole (Chukwuka, 2018b.).

Gender-based violence includes physical, sexual and psychological violence such as domestic violence; sexual abuse, including rape and sexual abuse of children by family members; forced pregnancy; sexual slavery; traditional practices harmful to women, such as honor killings, burning or acid-attack, female genital mutilation, dowry-related violence; violence in armed conflict, such as murder and rape; and emotional abuse, such as coercion and abusive language. Trafficking of women and girls for prostitution, forced marriage, sexual harassment and intimidation at work are additional examples of violence against women (UNFPA, 2000). The primary inequality that gives rise to gender-based violence is the power inequality between women and men. Gender violence occurs in both the ‘public’ and ‘private’ spheres. Such violence not only occurs in the family and in the general community, but is sometimes also perpetuated by the state through policies or the actions of agents of the state such as the police, military or immigration authorities (Chukwuka & Onwumelu, 2015). The major types of Gender-Based Violence include:

- Overt physical abuse (includes battering, sexual assault, at home or in the workplace)
- Psychological abuse (includes deprivation of liberty, forced marriage, sexual harassment, at home or in the workplace)
- Deprivation of resources needed for physical and psychological well-being (including health care, nutrition, education, means of livelihood)
- Treatment of women as commodities (includes trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation) (Morrison, Smart, & Scot, 2015).

According to Kirchoff & Kirchoff, (1984), Family, Society and the State are the three Gender-Based factors that influence sexual violence. First, family is one of the primary sites of gender violence in society. It prepares its members social life, forms gender stereotypes and perceptions of division of labor between the sexes. It is also the arena where physical abuses (spousal battering, sexual assault, sexual abuse) and/or psychological abuses occur. (Domestic violence can also take such forms as confinement, forced marriage of woman arranged by her family without her consent, threats, insults and neglect; overt control of a woman's sexuality through either forced pregnancy or forced abortion). It is often seen as a 'private' issue and information about it is lacking. Second, the society is another factor where there is sharing of common social, cultural, religious or ethnic belonging. It perpetuates existing family structure and power inequalities in family and society. The society justifies the behaviour of male abusers aimed at establishing control over women in the family, and supports harmful traditional practices such as battering and corporal punishment. The workplace can also be a site of violence, either in governmental service or in a business company; women are vulnerable to sexual aggression (harassment, intimidation) and commercialized violence (trafficking for sexual exploitation). Moreover, the state legitimizes power inequalities in family and society and perpetuates gender based violence through enactment of discriminatory laws and policies or through the discriminatory application of the law. It is responsible for tolerance of gender-violence on an unofficial level (in the family and in the community). It is the state that recognizes the role to sanction certain norms that protect individual life and dignity and maintain collective peace, it is the State's obligation to develop and implement measures that redress gender violence. The concept of gender-based violence is getting bigger from its immediate effects on the woman to a greater effect on the larger community, family, and society. Gender-based violence is not just a 'woman's issue', but an issue that concerns all men and not just individual perpetrators. There are multiple approaches to gender-based violence (human rights, health, and development) and they are being integrated to address the problem (Kirchoff, & Kirchoff, 1984).

Every day, millions of children throughout the world are subjected to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence in different settings, including in their

homes, schools, and communities. As a result, children experience the impacts on their physical and mental health, their education and their overall quality of life. The consequences of violence on children are often intergenerational, with those who have faced violence as a child more likely to become a violent adult. This cycle has a long-term impact on a family's economic well being. Displacement is one of the most widespread and tangible consequences of conflict. Global figures indicate that the number of people displaced annually is abysmally high. In Norwegian Refugee Council (2015), it was reported that an average of 5.2 million was displaced annually in the past 13 years due to insurgency, political instability and terrorist activities of groups such as ISIS and Boko Haram particularly in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. The report also estimated that three quarters of these (IDPs) reside in ten countries of the world, and five of these are located in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the total number of people displaced by conflict in the region is almost 12 million. According to a 2016 report by the United Nations, the Boko Haram insurgency has resulted in severe population displacement, disruption in livelihoods and acute food insecurity in Nigeria. The North-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe have been the worst hit areas. These areas have witnessed several thousand deaths and millions of residents forced to abandon their homes in search of safe haven (International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2018). These predicaments predicted the IDPs to take shelter in official camps, unofficial camps and host communities. This deficit is more apparent in the Great Lakes region of Africa, where Uganda, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have all experienced massive levels of war-induced displacement. Displacement by definition represents a fundamental rupture between individuals and their homeland. It is a profound demonstration of a government's failure to protect or its role as the perpetrator of abuses against its citizens. Whether as refugees who have fled across a border or as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who have remained within the geographical borders of their state, displacement often represents a chronic failure on the part of the government to ensure the safety of its citizens (Hovil, 2012). He categorized the health problems of the internally displaced person into four groups, these include infectious diseases such as: measles, malaria and cerebrospinal meningitis; malnutrition such as kwashiorkor and marasmus;

mental health such as anxiety, depression and post traumatic disorders; and reproductive health such as, sexual harassment, rape, unwanted pregnancies and abortions. The unavailability of good shelter, adequate diet and clothing as well as poor access to healthcare further aggravate the situation (Oladeji, 2017).

The Concept of Gender– Based Violence (GBV)

This is a concept that describes any harm that is perpetrated against one's will. It has a negative impact on the physical, psychological well being, development, and identity of a person. It results from gendered power inequalities that exploit distinctions between males and females. Violence may be physical, psychological, social, economic, or cultural. According to Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (CRWC, 2002) in Chukwunka and Onwumelu, 2015, the common acts of gender–based violence committed against women and girls during armed conflict include violent physical assault, mass murder, gang rapes, early forced marriage, forced pregnancies, enforced sterilization, forced prostitution, slavery, human trafficking, and domestic violence. Men and boys also suffer from gender–based violence such as physical abuse, rape, and forced recruitment. Other acts of gender–based violence which may increase during conflict but particularly affect women and girls are female infanticide, female genital mutilation, and sacrifice killings (Chukwunka & Onwumelu, 2015).

Rape and other forms of Sexual and Gender–Based Violence (SGBV) are increasingly being recognized within the context of gross violations of human rights and as war crimes. This recognition is critical, given the fact that SGBV has been used extensively as a weapon of war within the Great Lakes region. Several factors have led not only to high levels of sexual violence in the region, but also to a chronic deficit in dealing with both the survivors and perpetrators of such violence. The prevalence of conflict in the region is perhaps the most palpable factor—conflicts in which civilians are not only unprotected but also often primary targets of violence. For instance, over the course of 15 years of conflict in the DRC, extraordinarily high numbers of civilians have become victims of rape, with rebels and government forces alike accused of perpetrating sexual crimes. While this situation often reflects a wider culture of

impunity, sexual violence is a particularly hidden crime as victims are reluctant—or unable—to report attacks. It depicts that survivors of sexual violence frequently encounter severe prejudice from members of their families and communities and are therefore reluctant to publicize any attacks. In an enclosed context such as an IDP camp, the impact of stigma is only more powerful—and, worse, the violence is seen as somehow “normal” or at least inevitable. And sexual violence has far-reaching effects beyond its immediate physical and psychological trauma. Within this context, women-headed households are particularly vulnerable. Rape and other forms of sexual violence are human rights violations, and amount to grave breaches of international humanitarian law. If committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population, sexual violence can constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to which Nigeria is a party as of 2001. Rape and sexual violence are also crimes under national law and breach local customs (Chukwuka & Onwumelu, 2015).

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study examines the (IDPs) and gender-based sexual violence against the girl-child in Abuja with the following specific objectives in mind:

1. To explore the psycho-social needs of the internal displaced persons Camps in Abuja
2. To investigate who the perpetrators of sexual violence are in the internal displaced persons Camps in Abuja
3. To examine the prominence of sexual abuse in the internal displaced persons Camps in Abuja
4. To investigate the interventionist mechanisms of the Aid Workers in the Internal Displaced Persons Camps in Abuja
5. To find the demographic characteristics of the internal displaced persons in Abuja

Theoretical framework

The study adapted Maslow Hierarchy of needs as the theoretical Framework. Maslow identified five stages of needs and called the third stage love and belonging which man needed for social relationship. The needs ranked from the lowest to the highest level. These needs include physiological, safety, love and belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization. The first two levels are considered basic needs because they are based on the need for survival and safety. The third stage is the social needs which are termed love and belonging. This stage is not based on basic needs but on psychological or emotional needs of an individual. The primary source of behavior at this stage is the need for emotional connections such as friendships, family, social organizations, romantic attachments or other situations involving interactions with others. These needs are either none existing or inadequate among the camps in Abuja. As a result of the non- existence of these needs in the camps certain interactions result in criminal victimization with the perpetrators in the camps. This recognizes the importance of people's everyday actions in an explanation for the criminal victimization. It assumes that all humans are motivated by the desire to have things that give them pleasure or benefit and to avoid those things and situations that inflict pain. Most important to the explanation for criminal victimization, according to Cohen and Felson, (1979) are the differential opportunities that exist for victimization. The differential opportunities involve direct physical contact between at least one offender and at least one person or object which the offender attempts to take advantage of to commit crime. When people are faced with problems in life, chances are that they have someone who supports and encourages them during a crisis. Individuals need to feel accepted and supported by others in order to avoid problems such as anxiety, depression and loneliness that usually accompany displacement. Individuals are able to cope with distressing situations when they are able to develop strong connections with others such as friends, family, team members and lovers (Ajibade, Nneji, & Bajide 2017).

Research Methodology

Since the population of the study is mixed with literate, semi-literate and non-literate qualitative method research design was used. There are four internally

displaced people’s camps in Abuja namely: Lugbe IDP Camp, Area one IDP Camp, new Kuchingoro IDP Camp and Kuje IDP Camp. According to the international organization for migration (IOM, 2018), there are 20,924 internal displaced persons in Abuja camps. The population for this study includes a random sample of adults aged 15 years and above from two selected internal displaced persons camps. Using the Taro Yamane formula, a sample size of three hundred and Ninety (390) respondents were chosen. The study adopted Snowball and Purposive sampling techniques. Since the population of the study is mixed with literate, semi-literate and non-literate qualitative method research design was used. Data were collected through Key Informant Interview (KII) and In-Depth Interview (IDI). Due to language limitations, two local assistants–male and female who spoke in the local Hausa language and a Christian and Muslim were used. Qualitative data were analysed through content analysis, contingency table, and simple percentage.

Using Taro Yamane’s formula for the population

$$n = N / 1 + N (e)^2$$

Where n = corrected sample size, N = population size (20,924) and e = margin of error (0.05)

$$\text{Therefore } n = 20,924 / 1 + 20,924(0.05)^2$$

$$= 20 / 53.31$$

= 392. A total of 390 respondents were recruited for the study, given a response rate of 99.49%

Data Analysis

Table 1: Socio – Demographic Data (N = 390)

<u>Variables</u>		
		<u>Frequency</u>
<u>Percentage (%)</u>		
<i>Gender</i>		
<i>Male</i>	<i>168</i>	<i>43.1</i>
<i>Female</i>	<i>222</i>	<i>56.9</i>
<i>Age</i>		
<i>15–24</i>	<i>147</i>	<i>37.7</i>
<i>25–34</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>25.9</i>

<i>35-44</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>26.9</i>
<i>45 and above</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>6.9</i>

Religion

<i>Islam</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>32.1</i>
<i>Christianity</i>	<i>228</i>	<i>58.5</i>
<i>Others</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>6.9</i>

Marital Status

<i>Married</i>	<i>209</i>	<i>53.6</i>
<i>Single</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>26.9</i>
<i>Widow/Widower</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>8.9</i>
<i>Divorced</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>7.9</i>

Highest Educational Level

<i>Non-Formal</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>25.4</i>
<i>Primary</i>	<i>145</i>	<i>37.2</i>
<i>Secondary</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>26.4</i>
<i>Tertiary</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>8.5</i>

Employment Status

<i>Employed</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>17.6</i>
<i>Unemployed</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>24.6</i>
<i>Self-employed</i>	<i>162</i>	<i>41.5</i>
<i>Under-employed</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>14.1</i>

Source: Field research 2019

Table 1 depicts the socio-demographic variables of the respondents. 168 (43.1%) of the respondents were males while 222 (56.9%) were females. 147 (37.7%) of the respondents are of ages 15-24, 101 (25.9%) are of ages 25-34 years while 105 (26.9%) are of age 35-44 and 45 above ranked 6.9 %. 228 (58.5%) are Christians while 125 (32.1%) are Muslims. 209 (53.6%) are married with 33 (8.5%) attaining tertiary level of education, 103 (26.4%) attaining secondary level. Table 1 also showed that 67 (17.6%) of the respondents are gainfully employed while 162 (41.5%) were self-employed.

Table 2: Contingency Table (5x3) Lack of Psycho-social needs in the IDPs Camps

Respondents

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Agreed %</i>		<i>Disagreed %</i>		<i>Neutral %</i>	
<i>The Young girls</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>27.7</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>8.3</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>The Young Boys</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>17.7</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>22.2</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>27.6</i>
<i>The Men</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>25.4</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>8.3</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>10.3</i>
<i>The Women</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>19.2</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>16.7</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>27.6</i>

<i>Security Agencies</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>10.0</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>44.4</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>34.5</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>260</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 2 shows the psych-social needs of the respondents. The lack of psycho-social needs such as clean water, poor access to food, rise in social vices and to cope with distressing situations for social support were very highly lacking as indicated by the respondents rating on the table. Many of the respondents mostly indicated all of the Agreed, Disagreed and Neutrality. 72 (27.7%) of young girls agreed absolutely that there is a lack of psycho-social needs in the camps while 6 (8.3%) disagreed. 32 (44.4%) of security agencies also disagreed that the needs are sufficient in terms of food, love and affection all the time.

Content Analysis of the Cases of Sexual Abuses in IDPs camps in Abuja

The survey revealed a rather worrisome trend of discrimination and dehumanisation along gender-based inequalities within the camps. Sexual violence is a characteristic of the four IDPs camps in Abuja where hundreds of women and girls were raped by the security agencies and Aid workers who ought to protect the victims (Oladeji, 2017).

A 35-year old Displaced Woman interviewed has this to say:

'E be say rape na open secret in this camp. When I see a girl wee be like 16 years old, a man waylaid yesterday, I decided to leave this camp because of my young daughters. "Before this crisis be over we go count losses because of our girls being abused everyday" - I fear men, she lamented.

Another respondent succinctly put it thus:

'Sex is a survival factor here. I have no choice but to have it as a coping strategy due to food insecurity. I eat only once a day. I feel helpless, have lost my self-worth and I am facing uncertainty about my future.' The level of hardship experienced in the camp is evidenced to suggest the existence of the practice of "Sex for food" and to purchase basic female sanitary requirements. "I have reports of women being sexually harassed in this camp by security agents, and managers of camps. (KII, FEMALE/17 YEARS)

A man who was distressed by the inadequate facilities in the camp observed in interview that:

“Clean water is not enough for us. See the long queue here?, no access to adequate food, quality of food is inadequate particularly for lactating mothers, young children and the elderly” “Most us do not know where to go when we are sick, health facility in the camp is grossly inadequate for our health; the Doctors are not enough, they are always away and even type of drugs given to us are inferior” (KII, MALE/40 YEARS)

Strategic models in sexual violence prevention

In 1989, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which obliges governments, “to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation” The Committee on the Rights of the Child, which oversees implementation of this convention, has held several thematic discussions on violence against children and called for the UN *Study on violence against children* which was published in 2006.

- a. In Nigeria, Section 17(3) of the 1999 Constitution provides that the States shall direct its policy towards ensuring that:
 - All citizens (children inclusive), without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment;
 - The health, safety and welfare of all persons in employment (children inclusive) are safeguarded and not endangered or abused;
 - That there are adequate medical and health facilities for all persons;
 - That there is equal pay for equal work without discrimination on any account of sex, or any other ground whatsoever;
 - That children and young persons are protected against any form of exploitation whatsoever, and against any moral or material neglect (Chukwunka, 2018a).

b. In addition to the above Constitutional provision, there are also provisions of Federal and State legislations that seek to address other forms of violence against children. The CRA 2003 under

- Sections 21– 40 provides for the protection of children against discriminatory, harmful and exploitative practices. These include the prohibition of child marriage, child betrothal, infliction of skin marks, abduction, forced, exploitative, and hazardous child labour, child hawking, begging for alms, prostitution, unlawful sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual abuse and exploitation prejudicial to the welfare of the child.

c. There are special National and State Legislative Assembly Committees on Women and Children. These Committees are responsible for addressing issues of violence against children in Nigeria both at the National Assembly and in all the 36 State Houses of Assembly.

d. Some of the institutions, groups and Non–Governmental Organizations that play active roles in addressing violence against children include:

- Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF)
- African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) Nigeria Chapter.
- Children’s Rights Advocacy Group of Nigeria (CRAGON)
- Girls’ Power Initiative

e. There are also some legal instruments: The Nigerian criminal law has several provisions protecting children from abuse and sexual exploitation, ranging from physical, sexual, psychological, neglect and all other forms of violence against children.

- Sections 223– 225 of the Criminal Code applicable in Southern Nigeria provide for sanctions against whoever trades in prostitution or facilitates the transport of human beings within or outside Nigeria.

- Sections 278 – 280 of the Penal Code applicable in Northern Nigeria provides for imprisonment for the buying and selling of minors for immoral purposes, buying or disposing of slaves; and unlawful compulsory labour (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs. 2004).

To enhancing the protection of the girl-child sexual violence in Nigeria is a multi-faceted task, requiring cooperation between many parties on a wide range of issues. There is a prevalence of grave violations of children's rights, deserted children who are deprived of their right to education. The rapidly increasing numbers of IDPs will continue to challenge the child protection system in the short and medium term. The trauma of the girl-child is severely impacting the psychological wellbeing of children. It is the State's obligation to develop and implement measures that redress gender violence, in Nigeria despite all the legislations in the country the IDPs are still subjected to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence in different settings in their own country where they are ought to be protected (Chukwunka & Onwumelu, 2015).

Effects of Sexual Violence

The effects of sexual violence are not easily forgotten. The effect of sexual violence is not only psychological or emotional but also impact upon physical, social, interpersonal and financial domains. The victim, who previously experienced the world as basically a safe place, had this assumption shattered. The victims now experience the world as inherently untrustworthy and unsafe (Balsam, Lehavot, & Beadnell, 2011). This could lead to restriction on social activities, including work and community involvement. Victims are also affected with difficulties with communication, intimacy, trust, sexual relations and enjoyment of social activities. Understanding the factors that contribute to these problems could help us to frame our local analysis and questions, determine effective measures, recognize key intervention points, and select appropriate responses (Banyard, Potter, & Turner, 2011). Because so many sexual violence go unreported to police, data on offender and victim characteristics, and locations and times of sexual violence are very limited and may be misleading. These issues and problems amongst others arouse the imaginations of the people to ask 'what are the efforts played by the states and key stakeholders in the care of sexual violence victims'? 'Why is it that forensic service delivery supports and research in the areas of sexual violence are not encouraged in Nigeria'? 'why is it that man is not totally free from fear of being a victim despite a plethora of international and local human rights and human

freedoms developed for all in Nigeria'? These amongst others are the questions which the research is posed to undertake (Berg, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999).

Conclusion

In line with the nature of the study, similar and contrasting perceptions gathered from the respondents would help to nip in the bud this scourge of girl-child sexual abuse in Nigeria. It would also clarify the precipitating factors as well as justifying the role of both the government and human rights advocates in the care of the victims of sexual violence. An appropriate response to the crime of sexual violence will involve, at a minimum, criminal justice, medical, and social service agencies. The most outcome indicators will be to reduce the number of sexual violence against girls and to reduce the number and severity of injuries women suffer during sexual violence. The outcome indicators addressed the victims' emotional needs and also the need for the victims to report sexual assaults, in order to prevent "secondary victimization".

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Self-Efficacy and Attitude of Women Towards Domestic Violence

Adeshina Akinwumi OJO, PhD
Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria.