



The Culture of Violence against Women and Its Impact on Sustainable Food Security in Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out through collaboration among the authors. Author COA identified the secondary data on women's participation in sedentary farming; wrote on the role of women in food security and some impact of VAW on food security. Author RRA wrote on the issues of culture as relates to VAW globally and in Nigeria; causes and history of VAW globally and in Nigeria; and co-edited the first draft of the manuscript. Author CAO identified and adapted the secondary data on the types, manifestations and impact of VAW on food security, wrote on the theoretical framework and co-edited the first draft and the revision of the manuscript. All the authors contributed to the recommendations on the strategies to reduce VAW, read and approved the final manuscript before submission.

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ABSTRACT

Violence against women (VAW) is a universal phenomenon which has gained a lot of attention from policy makers, donors, researchers and government agencies as well as civil societies.

In spite of the efforts by various international agencies, government and non - governmental organizations (NGOs), VAW has proved difficult to eradicate till date. The situation in Nigeria is especially of great interest considering her position in Africa, where culture plays important role in mode attitudes and behaviours that guide the lives of the people. This paper presents a review of

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scholarly discussions on the issue of VAW across the globe with a focus on Nigeria. Archival materials and secondary data were employed in the paper. The contributions of women to food security include; participation in planting of seeds, weeding, harvesting, storage, processing and marketing of the agricultural product. Sub-Saharan African women have been observed to produce 80-90 per cent of food for consumption. Although men grow mainly field crops, women are usually responsible for processing and raising small livestock, which provides protein. Processing and preparation of ready-to-eat foods, such as making gari or yam flour are exclusively women's jobs. This paper establishes the opinion that VAW has a significant impact on sustainable food security. Bodily injuries as a result of VAW impact negatively on a woman's participation in food production activities. In some cases she may end up in the hospital to receive treatment and thus become too weak to engage in livelihood activities. Sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS may result with devastating effects on the woman's ability to engage in food production and processing activities. The fear instilled in her by threats may hinder her innovativeness. Furthermore, victims of VAW may even develop mental illness, experience higher stress and lower self – esteem, all of which impact negatively on her involvement in food production and processing activities. Educated women are more likely to use modern means of farming and implements which would boost the food production. They would also teach their children to respect womanhood. Education of women would enhance their access to productive resources, information on improved technologies and possibly financial resources. In conclusion, the paper ascertains that VAW limits a woman's full potentials and hinders her full involvement in livelihood activities. Among other strategies for reducing VAW, the paper advocates for women education and for children to be trained and involved in information dissemination on violence prevention activities and promotion of school-based and media campaigns.

Keywords: Culture; violence; women; food Security.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women's role varies depending on the society under which assessment of roles between female and male genders are considered. In both developed and developing nations, women have made significant impact in the society. Nigerian women in particular, as Aluko [1] rightly observed, have engaged themselves in indigenous economic activities right from the pre – colonial period. Their role is usually conceived by the society as complementary to the efforts of men. In some societies, women engage in activities usually considered by men as *menial jobs* [2]. The culture of violence against women has therefore become a common trend and a growing concern in many parts of the world. While it is significant to realize that women contribute largely to food production, particularly, in Africa, the culture of violence has the potential to hinder the positive impact of women to a sustainable food production in the society. Basically, culture depicts certain features peculiar to a group of people who are defined distinctively by their arts, philosophy, and ways of life; language, beliefs and social habits. Culture as a very significant concept, studies all spheres of human life and it is synonymously referred to as "society" [3]

Gender relations depict the role, behaviour, status and sex relationships in a given context [4]. Its nature varies in patrilineal and matrilineal societies. Moreover, gender relation is peculiarly male-dominated in sub-Saharan Africa, where women are submissive to men in decision making, freedom of expression and public life. Such leaning pervades a patrilineal society like Nigeria and some other African society. Generally, men enforce the subordination of women in some developing nations through manifestation of inequalities, stereotypes, discriminatory acts and gender prejudice which hamper development in both patrilineal and matrilineal societies in Africa [1].

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

This paper examines the following objectives:

- i. Describes the concepts of violence against women and food security;
- ii. Traces the historical perspectives of violence against women;
- iii. Identifies types of violence against women;
- iv. Discusses incidences of violence against women around the world and especially in Nigeria;

- v. Highlights the role of women in sustainable food security;
- vi. Assesses the effects of violence against women on sustainable food security and
- vii. Highlights strategies to reduce violence against women.

3. CONCEPT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND FOOD SECURITY

Violence against women exists in different forms, manners and nature in every society and cultural group. The American Psychological Association (APA) defined violence by identifying its forms and manifestations and saw the act of violence as “an extreme form of aggression such as assaults, rape or murder” [5]. The World Health Organization (WHO) also described violence in a broader perspective as:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm... mal - development, deprivation [6]

In the context of this paper, VAW can be seen as a gross misdemeanor against women which manifests in various forms such as: rape, assault, trauma, injury and death. Its causes and impacts on the women, children and society at large cannot be under-estimated.

Household food security is often defined as accessibility by all people at all times to sufficient food required for a healthy and active life in the household. In other words, food security can be considered under four main components: availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability. Families and individuals require both reliable and consistent sources of quality food, as well as sufficient resources to purchase it. People must also have the knowledge and basic sanitary conditions to choose, prepare, and distribute food in a way that results in good nutrition for all family members. Again, the ability to access and utilize food must remain stable and sustained over time [7].

This paper is of the opinion that household food security can be promoted through the following:

- (i) Nutritionally- adequate and safe food supply at household level
- (ii) reasonable degree of stability

in the supply of food during the year and in years ahead and (iii) access by each household to sufficient food to meet the needs of all members. Also, for all households to be food secured, each must have physical and economic access to adequate food. Each household must always have the ability, the knowledge and the resources to produce for all the nutritional requirements of the household members, which means a balanced diet providing all necessary energy, protein and micronutrients.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on the patriarchal theoretical proposition that has its foundation in the works of Max Weber in 1947 [8]. The term was used by Weber to explain the way men in positions of authority especially in communal societies dominate other men. Radical feminist theorists had borrowed Weber's idea to explain the reason for men's domination of women in the society. Walby [9] defined patriarchy as a system of social relational structure in which men dominate, exploit and oppress women. By implication, patriarchy is a social construct in which men and masculine qualities are valued more highly than women and feminine qualities [10].

Walby examined the levels of patriarchal relations in which domination of the women gender is evident in the society. The levels included patriarchal relations in mode of production; relations in paid work; relations in the state and male violence. This paper is hinged on this later level – male violence. This is a patriarchal structure that places women at the receiving end of abuses from men. Male violence against women has been said to be responsible for the highest number of abused cases against women. Walby argued that in most cases violence against women is often legitimated by the state as the state distance itself from such except in extreme cases such as rape, wife beating and sexual harassment. However, in recent times, this neglect by the state has been changed as strict legislations are in place to protect the rights of women in the society especially in the western countries of the world.

5. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN GLOBALLY

Violence against women is as old as the history of mankind. Many ancient societies have

promoted assaults of diverse kinds on women through legislation and liberty granted men over their female counterparts. In ancient Rome, murder and physical punishments were permitted for men by legal and social traditions of that period. Also, the medieval English common law provided that a man cannot be prosecuted for rape because a wife must not and cannot refuse sex demands from her husband [11].

Again, laws prohibiting wife battery and assaults were not enforced strictly in the United States until 1871, when the rights given to men to beat their wives were overruled by courts in Alabama and Massachusetts. Till around 1983, spouse abuse was considered a private matter handled behind the scene until the National Organization for Women (NOW) and women rights' institutions in the U.S started and intensified sponsored campaigns to wage war against intimate violence by creating awareness through public enlightenment programmes [11].

6. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NIGERIA

A silent but clear evidence of violence against women is peculiar to patriarchal societies, where male domination is in vogue. Observing the situation under three indigenous African societies (Yoruba, Fulani and Ijaw communities), where gender differentiation pervades all spheres of life, Akin-Alade [2] noted with passion the far reaching effects of such perversions on the womenfolk. For instance, patriarchy ensures that a woman is not free as she is traded away by the transfer of marriage gifts or bride price which included cattle, goats, baskets of grains, yams and the likes - means of petty accumulation of wealth by her kinsmen. All of these serve as symbolic transfer of her rights and authority to her husband. Moreover, she loses her dignity, freedom, land and even rights over her children who belong to the husband, their father. Talking about the status of women in some Nigerian societies, Akin-Alade, [2] noted:

Her reproductive right is denied. In her husband's house, she is treated as a minor who can be beaten for any misdemeanor and who is expected to show respect to her husband and his relations including children of the household

The extract above illustrated very clearly the manifestation of culture but portrayed a clear

evidence of gender violence against the womenfolk in the societies being reviewed. This example revealed traditional practices embedded with silent forms of maltreatment, abuse of rights, subjugation, deprivation and dominance. Men in such societies had continued to exercise political, economic power and rights over women and children in exclusive manner. However, acts of violence or the threat of it has been considered by Feminists as a way to subjugate women to keep their place and never to challenge the authority of men [2]. Moreover, gender violence occurs in many societies irrespective of age, status, capability, lifestyle or ethnicity. It embraces a wide range of relationships including "heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender relationships and in the extended family" [12].

7. CATEGORIES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Discussions on the occurrence of violence in different parts of the world have brought to the fore vast classifications based on the intensity, manner of occurrence and glaring effects on the concerned. The World Health Organization (WHO) classified violence under four broad divisions based on the relationship between the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) of violence. These include:

- i. Self-directed violence – suicide and self-harm behaviours.
- ii. Interpersonal violence – violence inflicted on one another or a group of individuals such as:
 - a) Family and intimate partners' violence (family members and intimate partners e.g. child abuse or elder abuse, which often takes place in the home).
 - b) Community violence which involves people who are not blood relations but are either acquaintances or strangers. This type of violence occurs in public places outside the home e.g. acts of intimidation, threats, physical or sexual assaults on individuals.
- iii. Collective violence is the type of violence inflicted on large groups of people.
- iv. Other types of violence include: physical, psychological, sexual, deprivation and neglect.

In addition, the Haven Wolverhampton, a charity organization supporting women and children affected by domestic violence and homelessness in United Kingdom (UK), stressed that violence embraced violation of rights and severe forms of abuses of women and children. Such acts are patterned for controlling behaviours by the abusers over their partners or family members.

A unique form of violence towards women is termed: “religious abuse” emanating from religious communities. According to *the Touch*, women in religious societies like Israel are more susceptible to violence because of the general attitudes displayed to the womenfolk whereby total control is demonstrated against women’s religious life and activities [13].

Table 1. Types and manifestations of violence

S/N	Types	Manifestations	Impact
1	Physical	Bodily forms-pushing, shoving, pinning, holding a person down confinement, pinching, hair pulling, slapping, punching, arm twisting, kicking, biting, strangling, choking, burning, over-medication, assault with any object/weapon, stabbing and murder.	Bodily injuries prevent a woman from participating in food production activities. In some cases she may end up in the hospital to receive treatment.
2	Sexual	Forceful sexual activities like touching (kissing, grabbing, folding); forced sexual intercourse, forceful sexual acts involving degrading or painful acts; use of weapon for force compliance; beating parts of the body; exhibitionism (exposing parts of the body to others); denial of a woman’s sexuality, controlling a woman’s sexuality, denial of sexual information and education (such as information on birth control), withholding sexual affection; exposure to Human Immune Virus /Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and sexually - transmitted diseases, Forced abortion, sterilization, forced prostitution, unfounded allegations of promiscuity and infidelity.	This can cause her to be too weak to engage in livelihood activities. Sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS may result with devastating effects on the woman’s ability to engage in food production and processing activities.
3	Psychological	Threats to harm another or self, abandonment, social isolation from family and friend, confinement, verbal aggression, constant humiliation, name calling, frequent criticism, blames, humiliation or belittling before others, silent treatment, jealousy, intimidation, stalking, threat to take the children, threat to commit suicide. Use of spoken or written language to inflict harm n another, cursing, repeated insults, recalling past mistakes, expressing negative expectations, threats of deportation of immigrants	The fear instilled in her by threats may hinder her innovativeness. She may even develop mental illness which would affect her active involvement in productive activities.
4	Spiritual	Use of spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control another, prevention from practicing personal religious beliefs, making fun of spiritual beliefs of another, forcing someone to raise children in another religious or spiritual choice.	Fear of the unknown may lead to depression
5	Cultural	Any harm or practices condoned by culture, religion or tradition e.g. female circumcision, rape marriage, sexual slavery, ‘honour crimes	This can lead to unplanned pregnancy and depression.
6	Financial Abuse	Distinction of personal property, not allowing attendance at school, Controlling choice of occupation, forbidding someone to have access to family income and bank account, giving and receiving justification for all spent, taking money needed for the care of the family, refusal to contribute to family finances, denial of access to basic needs such as food and health care.	She may experience higher stress and lower self – esteem which impact negatively on her involvement in food production and processing activities.
7	Neglect	Not paying bills, not providing needed medication, food and shelter	There would be no strength for her to engage in food production.

Source: Adapted from Violence Prevention Initiative [14] A six year plan. (<http://www.gov.nl.ca/VPI/initiative/index.htm>), 2012 and modified by the authors

This paper strongly believes that although violence and abuse usually occur as intentional behaviours to enforce control over family members, intimate partners and groups of people, the extent of violence against women is practically difficult to measure because several instances of assaults and abuses are never reported. However, the cause(s) of violence is often tied and significantly too, to the occurrences of gender inequality, which is growing at alarming rate in modern societies and across the globe.

Moreover, this paper is of the opinion that violence and abuses exert negative influence on the self-esteem, health status and well-being of the victims irrespective of the frequency of occurrences or manifestations. The violence prevention initiative of the government of Newfoundland and Labrador identified the categories of people who are mostly affected by violence in the society. On its list were: women, children, youth, older persons, and people with disabilities, aboriginal women and other people who are vulnerable to violence because of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical or economic status. The various types of violence covered above are outlined in Table 1:

The Table 1 was adapted from Violence Prevention Initiative. It is worthy to note that the part of the table title 'impact' is part of the authors' contributions as it was not originally on the table.

8. INCIDENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

Waltz and Zimmerman [15] presented an overview of common and most severe forms of violence against women. They also stressed the point that the sensitivity of the subject makes incidences of violence to be under-reported globally. Meanwhile, millions of women are experiencing violence or some living with their dire consequences.

From the Latin American experience violence against women is a common occurrence with high tolerance level. To Rondon [16], violence is seen as both cultural and religious issues tied strongly to the patriarchal system and outright distortion of womanhood by established stereotypes. These manifestations encourage dependence and or overdependence and passivity in women. Such systems pose serious psychological challenges to women and promote increased incidences of drug abuse, which

further expose the women to institution (police) violence.

In the Middle East, particularly in Arab and Islamic countries, it was reported that domestic violence is not considered a significant concern in spite of its occurrences and serious consequences. According to Douki et al. [17], findings of research surveys in Egypt, Palestine, Israel and Tunisia revealed that violence against women is regarded as a private matter and therefore justified by religious injunction. Thus, a 'conspiracy of silence' prevents a disclosure of incidences of wife battering, genital mutilation, wife abuse and 'honour killings' which are considered as consequences of cultural attitudes rather than religious beliefs prevalent in those societies.

In another development, a study was carried out to assess the prevalence and type of domestic violence against pregnant women in Turkey [18]. Out of 475 women sampled, 33.3% (158) respondents reported physical/sexual abuse. The source of violence was attributed to their husbands by 66.5% (105) women. Types of abuse identified in the study included: psychological abuse with 44.9% (71) and physical abuse 55.1% (87) in women.

From the first global report of [19] the extent or prevalence of violence against women was discussed. Intimate partner violence, though under-reported globally, ranked higher with 30% occurrence, while physical or sexual violence affects more than one third majority of women around the world. Other key findings of the report showed that 38% of women were murdered by their intimate partners, 42% have experienced sexual or physical violence with resultant injuries like depression, mental challenges, sexually-transmitted diseases, alcohol disorders, unwanted pregnancies, abortions or pregnancy-related problems, anxiety, deaths, injuries and social malfunctioning. The report further stressed that the fear of being stigmatized prevent many women from reporting any type of violence they experienced from either intimate or non-intimate partners, this situation hinders collection of data for research purposes in many countries.

Moreover, the call to action by WHO earlier released in March, 2013 stressed the need for a zero tolerance for violence against women and perceived the threats of violence as a major universal public health and human rights problem [20].

The 2014 report of the National Crime Records Bureau of India, (NCRB) reported the rising trend of rape in India. About 24,923 rape cases were reported across India in 2012 and 33,764 victims of rape in the country during the year 2013. It was recorded that the annual rape rate in India increased from 1.9 to 2.0 per 100,000 people over 2008-2012 period. This compares to a reported rape rate of 1.2 per 100,000 in Japan, 3.6 per 100,000 in Morocco, 4.6 rapes per 100,000 in Bahrain, 12.3 per 100,000 in Mexico, 24.1 per 100,000 in United Kingdom, 28.6 per 100,000 in United States, 66.5 per 100,000 in Sweden, and world's highest rate of 114.9 rapes per 100,000 in South Africa [21].

The gang rape of a 23-year-old student in a public bus in New Delhi, India on 16 December 2012, drew world-wide attention to an extent that multiple countries were involved at the diplomatic level to resolve the issue [22]. She was with a male friend who was severely beaten with an iron rod during the incident. This same rod was used to penetrate her so severely that the victim's intestines had to be surgically removed, before her death thirteen days after the attack. The Indian Parliament MPs demanded severe punishment for those who carried out the attack while thousands of people, mostly young, participated in a massive demonstration on 22 December in protest. This was followed by the arrest and trial of the six men involved in the rape [21].

In Africa, an intervention study conducted by Fawole et al. [23] among female hawkers in South-Western Nigeria showed that sexual violence was the most common with 30.4% and 15.7% at base line and end-line respectively. The study further revealed that the female hawkers sampled had higher level of knowledge of the types of violence with 99.4% and 76.3% who sought help or redresses. The researchers concluded that multi-disciplinary interventions for women empowerment and involvement and the involvement of stakeholders are highly effective preventive strategies to combat the menace.

Another study [24] on the prevalence and characteristics of intimate partner violence among women of child-bearing age was undertaken in the eastern part of Nigeria. It was shown that over 40% of sampled women experienced violence, while partner's education and type of marriage contacted generated violence. Furthermore, 42.5% experience

violence borne out of reproductive reasons, 56.1% economic demands and 61.2% attributed to alcohol and drug-abuse. The study concluded that intimate partner violence is a prevalent health challenge in eastern Nigeria.

The Haven Wolverhampton (a charity organization) also provided striking statistical data showing that Nigeria has one of the highest levels of occurrences of domestic violence in Africa. It claimed that over two-third women experience psychological, physical and sexual abuse from their husbands. It was also revealed that in both Lagos and Oyo States of Nigeria, 65% of literate women claimed to have been beaten by their partners, while 56% of market women have experienced same.

Ilika [24] reported that a wife could be violated and battered by her husband, if she did not fulfill her sexual obligations. Women generally condone and are complacent with intimate partner violence perceiving it as cultural and religious norms. In another instance, Amnesty International also provided insider information, which traced the root cause of violence against women to the patriarchal gender structure and beliefs in Nigeria [25].

The Lagos State Commissioner for Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation confirmed the increasing rate of domestic violence in Nigeria especially in Lagos where reported cases were said to have increased by over 100% in January 2016 as against January 2015. Analysing the cases, the commissioner reported that while 13 cases of domestic violence were reported through telephone calls in January 2015, the number rose to 96 in January 2016 [26]. High incidences of domestic violence against women have also been recorded in various parts of Nigeria [27]. Moreover there have been several notable reports of incidences of rape and sexual violence on female students by members of the academic staff in several universities [28].

This paper is of the view that, going by these reports and incidences of violence against women, the existence and contributory roles of women as wives and mothers in the society has been downplayed rapidly. There is no doubt that sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape are obvious violations of Article 3 (4) of the protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), Article 2 (d) of The Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

(CEDAW) 1979 and Section 24 of the Violence Against Person Prohibition (VAPP) Act 2014.

What is worst, sexual abuse of female students directly impedes on the progress made in advancing Girl-Child education, in fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals and newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the objectives cited on the AU Agenda 2063 regarding Girl-child education. However, it is essential to consider the role of women on a sustainable society and growing world population.

9. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY

Women play very important role in ensuring that food is available at home at all times. Studies by FAO [29] established that, in sub-Saharan Africa, where women and men farm separate plots, women farmers have traditionally been responsible for food production. Again, sub-Saharan African women have been observed to produce 80-90 per cent of food for consumption while they control less than 2 per cent of the land [30]. Studies carried out by Olumakaiye and Ajayi [31] revealed some of the roles which women in Osun State played which include: food processing activities (33.6%), food products marketing (27.3%), farming activities (29.1%) and labour for farm work (10.0%). They engaged in such activities in order to ensure the availability of food for their household members and the survival of all especially in agrarian economy.

In developing countries like Nigeria, rural women and men play different roles in guaranteeing food security for their households and communities. While men grow mainly field crops, women are usually responsible for growing, processing and raising small livestock, which provides protein. Rural women also carry out most home food processing, which ensures a diverse diet, minimizes losses and provides marketable products. Women are more likely to spend their incomes on food and children's needs. Research has also shown that a child's chances of survival increase by 20% when the mother controls the household budget. Women, therefore, play a decisive role in food security, dietary diversity and children's health. A United Nation's estimate revealed women's domestic food production at 80 per cent in Africa, 60 per cent in Asia and the Pacific and 40 per cent in Latin America [32].

Other research findings by Adisa and Okunade, [33] have indicated that women play a crucial role in food security because of their strategic position in the household and the productive work they do outside the home. In particular, Nigerian women have been found to contribute 70% of agricultural labour force and also produce 80% of food supply to her growing population. The Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CARC) has reported that in addition to producing food, almost 100% of those who process basic food stuff were women and they also undertake 50 – 90% of the marketing.

To buttress the role of women in sustainable food security, Afonja (ed.) [34] summarized the activities of women in the three main geo-political zones of Nigeria as shown in the Table 2.

It can be seen from Table 2 that for sustainable food security in Nigeria, women are in the forefront as they remain the pillars of the nation's food basket. Although Afonja (ed.) [34] did not state the particular women in the Northern area, this paper believes that the women here were those of other ethnic groups like, the Kaje, Idoma and not so much of Hausa/ Fulani women who are often limited by religious inclination in the form of purdah. Even in the Hausa/ Fulani areas, elderly women were allowed to participate in farming and other economic activities.

10. IMPACT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY

Women are an essential part of labour source in the rural economics. It is vital for women to take up additional work in the farms and field to supplement the household income. Women's ability to participate in their daily activities highly depends on their personal security as well as the security of their land and property [35]. Acts of violence can threaten the security of those who are freely engaging in their daily activities and can obstruct free movement. This can restrict women's ability to participate in income generating activities and deprive them of the much needed household income. Furthermore, it can hinder their ability to carry out additional responsibilities of providing for the family and the security of their families, especially the young girls and the older members. Moreover, AIDS, one of the major outcomes of gender-based violence has been documented to have caused a major agricultural labour shortage [36].

Table 2. Women’s participation in sedentary farming

Areas of food production	Yoruba women	Igbo women	Northern women
Root crop production			
a) Clearing the land	Except in some areas, the general practice is to leave arduous farm tasks for men	Women assist men	Women engaged in grain production and selection of “good seeds”
b) Planting		Women are exclusively responsible for planting cassava and subsidiary crops such as maize, cocoyam, various kinds of beans, watermelon, okra and pepper. Although yam is considered as men’s crop, planted by men, but women assist with transportation of yams from barn to farm with sowing	Planting of seeds
c) Weeding		Predominantly women’s work	Some weeding of certain crops are considered women’s work
d) Harvesting	Women assist the men	Women are almost solely responsible for harvesting cassava and subsidiary crops. Women assist men with carrying yam from farm to barn	
e) Storage	Women are mainly responsible for storing food though men build yam storage sheds	Men are mainly responsible for yam storage. Women hired labour to erect fence behind their kitchens for storage of cassava and other subsidiary crops.	Women are responsible for household storage of grains.
f) Processing and preparation of ready-to-eat foods	Such as making gari or yam flour are exclusively women’s jobs. Other processing activities such as fetching water and firewood for fuels are the excluding preserve of women and children.	Mainly women’s job. Women produce gari from cassava and process palm fruits for oil palm and kernel.	Exclusively women’s task
g) Vegetable gardening	Both men and women grow vegetable but harvesting is reserved for women	Vegetables are classified as subsidiary crops and are mostly produce by women	Growing of assorted vegetables and beans in compound farms
h) Hunting and fishing	Men hunt and fish but women process the game and fish by smoking or drying	Predominantly men’s job	Participate in the process e.g. smoking of fish
i) Animal production	Except for large commercial poultry farms, women are mainly responsible for domestic animals	Rearing of small animals within the compound	Rearing of small animals within the compound

Source: Afonja, S. and Aina, O.I. *The food crisis and new patterns of female labour utilization in Agricultural production. In Afonja, S. and Aina, O.I. (eds) Women and social change in Nigeria, Organisation of African. Nigeria University press, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife, Nigeria, 1992. pp. 57 - 59*

Ashimolowo and Otufale [37] in their studies observed that the information on improved technologies that would enhance women’s agricultural practices and boost their agricultural

livelihood activities was denied them by their husbands after the occurrence of domestic violence in the household. In addition, the respondents' mentioned that after women experience domestic violence, their access to productive resources, information on improved technologies and financial resources are limited. Matiya [38] rightly observed that in agrarian society, land remains a key part of identity status, livelihoods, survival and continuous existence of all segments of the society. However, law and cultural collision limit women accessibility to and ownership of land. This view is similar to that of Mutangadura [39].

According to Adesanya, [40] women who suffer from domestic violence experience depression, higher stress and lower self-esteem, more likely to smoke tobacco, drink during pregnancy, receive less emotional support from partners, have depressive symptoms and develop a chronic illness. They usually have unplanned pregnancy, unprotected sex, sexually transmitted infections and intentional termination of pregnancy.

This paper is strongly of the view that women who are victims of VAW usually experience major hurdles, in terms of difficulties in accessing land, credit facilities, market information, technology, and infrastructure. All these are part of factors of production. Deprivation of women to factors of production restricts the extent to which they can participate in productive activities. Furthermore this paper is of the opinion that VAW limits a woman's full potentials and hinders her full involvement in livelihood activities. When battered, she is physically unable to do her job. Emotionally, she withdraws and cannot fit into her group and this leads to a lot of gap in the chain of food production or processing activities.

11. CONCLUSION

It could be concluded that VAW is a major factor limiting the extent to which women can participate in continuous livelihood activities and hence in sustainable food security and should be addressed. Women farmers produce majority of food grown worldwide and they are responsible for hoeing, planting, weeding and harvesting of agricultural products. In spite of their vital role in food production and management of natural resources, women's access to land, control of land, access to credit facilities, technical aid and participation are usually difficult. All these and other forms of VAW hamper women's effective

contributions to sustainable food security in Nigeria.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper is making the following recommendations as the strategies to be employed to reduce VAW:

- i) Women should be educated and encouraged to raise children who are less likely to be violent.
- ii) Information dissemination on violence prevention activities and school-based campaigns should be embarked upon for young girls and boys. For example, the Nigerian Association of University Women (NAUW) Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, Nigeria, has been playing important role in the fight against violence against women as informed by its seminar and workshop activities undertaken to create awareness on how women can improve their lots, they have exposed them to international opportunities to fulfill their potentials and health management lectures have been organized for girls and women at the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB) Branch at regular intervals.
- iii) Government should implement policies to promote equal access to resources by men and women; review laws to reduce gender based violence across nations of the world and promote gender equality in their constitutions.
- iv) Financial support needed to assist women who have experienced violence of any type should be undertaken. This could be facilitated through establishment of emergency relief shelter/ centers to rehabilitate women for empowerment; sometimes court actions could be sought for women to rehabilitate them and efforts should be made to undertake effective follow-up exercises.
- v) Peculiarities of local and national communities should be taken into consideration for adequate treatment of cases of violence either on individual or group basis.
- vi) Intervention strategies should be carried out through counseling sessions and seminar outreaches to train rural women on how to build vibrant relationship with their husbands.

- vii) Training of health workers for effective management of cases of violence is mandatory.
- viii) Advocacy strategy can be employed through organized rally and workshop to celebrate annual International Women's Day and Mothers' Day where an end to all forms of violence and discriminations against women can be projected through organized publicity like media information dissemination through news broadcasts, slogans, bulletins and awareness campaigns should be undertaken on regular basis.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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