IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Domestic violence continues to be a global epidemic that kills, tortures, and maims – physically, sexually, psychologically and economically. It is one of the most pervasive of human rights violations, denying women and girls' equality, security, dignity, self-worth, and their right to enjoy fundamental freedoms and equal opportunities in society. This study investigated the phenomenon of domestic violence and girl-child education in Nigeria. It also examined how violence impacts on equal opportunities for women in society. Using the secondary method of data collection and analysis, the study further adopted the Social Learning Theory as a framework of analysis. It concluded that domestic violence is present in every country, cutting across boundaries of gender, race, culture, class, education, income, ethnicity and age. Even though most societies proscribe violence against women, the reality is that violations against women's human rights are often sanctioned under the garb of cultural practices and norms, or through misinterpretation of religious tenets. Moreover, when the violation takes place within the home, as is very often the case, the abuse is effectively condoned by the tacit silence and the passivity displayed by the state and the law-enforcing machinery. The study recommended a re-orientation for all to ensure gender equality and equal opportunities for women. It also recommended, among others that there should strict enforcement of laws against gender-based violence in Nigeria.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Gender-Based Violence, Violence against Women, Girl-Child Education and Equal Opportunities

Introduction

Globally, domestic violence is a significant problem and one of the most pervasive human rights challenges especially for the most parts of African societies where issues relating to partners violence are largely treated as hidden phenomena (Izugbara et al., 2018). While some intimate relationships can be pleasurable and fulfilling, others may be characterized by assaultive and coercive behaviours including physical, sexual, psychological attacks, and economic coercion which are hazardous to the individual's physical and emotional well-being.

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Domestic violence is a worldwide phenomenon, whose reports and incidence have been on the rise. Generally, women, children and other vulnerable people are often in great danger in the place where they should be safest – within their families. For many, 'home' is where they face a regime of terror and violence at the hands of somebody close to them – somebody they should be able to trust. Those victimized suffer physically, sexually, psychologically and economically. They are unable to make their own decisions, voice their own opinions or protect themselves and their children for fear of further repercussions. Their human rights are denied and their lives are stolen from them by the ever-present threat of violence.

In Nigeria, as in many other countries, domestic violence is sanctioned and widely accepted as s form of discipline (UNICEF, 2010). For instance, the beating of wives and children is widely sanctioned as a form of discipline and in beating their children, parents believe they are instilling discipline in them, much the same way as in husbands beating their wives, who are regarded like children to be prone to indiscipline which must be curbed. According to Oluremi (2015), cases of domestic violence have been on the increase in Nigeria.

Furthermore, girl-child education has become a major global concern, particularly, as it obtains in most developing countries. It is a catch-all term for a complex set of issues and debates surrounding (primary education, secondary, and tertiary and health education in particular) for girls and women. Despite dramatic improvements over the past years, progress towards achieving education for all has stagnated. In total, 263 million children, adolescents and youth were out of school for the school year ending in 2016. As such, Nigeria is at the top of the list of countries with the highest number of children out of school. As Nextier (2019, p. 1) submits, Nigeria has about 13.2 million out-of-school children.

Meanwhile, education is one of the most critical areas of empowerment for women. It is a powerful 'equalizer', opening doors to all to lift themselves out of poverty (Omede & Agahiu, 2016). Consequently, educating a girl is one of the best investments her family, community, and country can make. It means that girl-child education is central to development and improvement of the nation's welfare. Thus, denying the girl-child access to education implies making her a dysfunctional member of the society. This study interrogates the phenomenon of domestic violence and how it affects girl-child education and its consequent implication equal opportunities for women in Nigeria.

Operational Definition of Concepts
i.   **Domestic Violence:** The US office and Violence against Women (OVM) defines domestic violence as a "pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner". The definition adds that domestic violence "can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender", and can take many forms, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, economic and psychological abuse (Office of Violence Against Women, 2018).

Domestic violence can be defined as violence that is perpetrated by intimate partners and other family members, and that is manifested through physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, economic abuse, and acts of omission. It is a pattern of behaviour in which one person uses, or threatens to use, physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse or violence to obtain and maintain power and control over his or her intimate partner. Though all genders are perpetrators and victims, domestic violence here will be understood as gender-based violence against women, perpetrated by men.

ii. **Girl-Child Education:** The girl child is the biological female offspring from birth to 18 years of age. Girl child education is the education given to female children between ages birth to 18 years; it covers early childhood (0-5years) primary (6-12 years) and secondary (12-18 years). During this period, the young child is totally under the care of a guardian who is usually an adult or parents. In this period, the girl child builds and develops her personality and character. She is very dependent on those she admires through observation, repetition and imitation. Through proper education, the girl child develops her physical, mental, social, spiritual and emotional characteristics necessary for her to properly fit into the society.

iii. **Equal Opportunities:** The concept "equal opportunity," refers to a situation in which people in a society or political community have the same opportunities in life as their compatriots, without being discriminated against or treated in an unfair way because of their race, sex, sexuality, religion, or even age. In many plural societies like Nigeria, South Africa and the United States of America, equal opportunities mean the aggregation of policies and practices in employment and other areas that do not discriminate against persons on the basis of race, ethnic origin, age, sex, religion or physical disability. The concept equal opportunities therefore refers to the principle of non-discrimination which emphasises that opportunities in education, employment, advancement, benefits and resource distribution and other areas should be freely available to all citizens, irrespective of their age, sex, ethnic origin, religion, political affiliation or physical disability.

Theoretical Framework

To understand the phenomenon of domestic violence in great detail and in a right perspective, the application a theoretical framework becomes compelling and imperative. This study therefore adopts the Social Learning Theory as the best theory that underscores and explains domestic violence in Nigeria. Before discussing the social learning theory, it is important to explain the concept of socialization, as a learning process. Hamieh & Usta (2011) have define socialisation as a learning process that begins shortly after birth. According to them, through socialization, both genders learn what is right and wrong for both, and degrees of different expectations as a part of learning their gender identity and sex roles. The individuals have an impact of the culture in which

they live and they learn social behaviour by observing and should be imitating other people. More so, Kruttschnitt (2005) believes that there is a connection between violence in a person's family or community of origin and later spousal victimization. Again, Baldry (2003), observes that children who grow up with violence in the home learn early and imbibe powerful lessons about the use of violence in interpersonal relationships to control others, and may be encouraged to follow. Moreover, women are socialized to give priority to family roles, hence, their work related behaviour is also affected. They are also taught to take major responsibilities for the success or failure of their relationship with men.

Furthermore, Bandura (1973) believes that the behaviour of a person is shaped by observing well-known others in early childhood. Thus, early life experiences of a child are believed to shape the child's basic personality, which later forms their future violent adult relationships (Walker, 1979). To Bandura (1984), the social learning theory applied to marital violence centers on the parent - child relationship and the experiences the child undergoes within that arrangement which impacts behaviour in adulthood. Thus, boys who witness their fathers beating their mothers are more likely to batter their own spouses and girls who witness their father beating mother and her mother silently accepting all the violence instills in her a sense of subordination, submissiveness, and subservience that results in her playing an inferior role in society (Dutton & Painter, 1981). Again, Rahmatian, (2009) in his study, revealed that domestic violence occurs at a higher rate in intimate relationships where either the victim or the offender has been exposed to prior domestic violence, as opposed to those that have not been exposed. Of the male offenders, 48 percent reported that a family member had previously engaged in domestic violence, while 67 percent female victims indicated the above formal abuse. Of the offenders' group, 72 percent indicated the first exposure as a juvenile and 28 percent as an adult, while 45 percent of the victims reported their first experience as a witness and 55 percent as a victim. This study supports the social learning theory.

This review indicates that the social learning theory attempts to explain the presence of intergenerational transmission of violence, such as domestic violence. According to Hyde-Nolan & Juliao (2011), it is proposed that, while growing up, children receive response from others about their own behaviours, from which they begin to develop standards for judging their behaviour and seek out models who match these standards. Similarly, Mihalic (1997) found that children who observed and experienced abuse were more likely to be in an abusive intimate relationship as either an abuser or victim after marriage. Social learning theory has been applied extensively to the understanding of aggression and psychological disorders, particularly in the context of behaviour modification. It is the best theory that seeks to explain domestic violence among family members and intimate partners.

Overview of Violence against Women

There is no universally agreed notion of what constitutes violence against women. Scholars and practitioners have no consensus on what constitute violence against women (Mouzos & Makkai, 2017). For example, is pushing a woman or sending harassing text messages violence against women? If a husband verbally insults his wife or controls the purse strings, is this violence against women? More so, Mouzos and Makkai (2017) opine that women who were victimized by a stranger were more likely to regard the behaviour as violent than if they were victimized by someone known to them even though the behaviour may be the same. This lack of agreement about what violence against women undoubtedly contributes to inconsistencies in estimates of prevalence of violence against women. Be that as it may, whether a female is victimized by a stranger or an intimate partner, it is still regarded as violence against women. The perpetrator of the violence does not really matter but what matters most is that a woman has been victimized and the act should be regarded as violent. One of the universally accepted definitions of violence against women is that of the United Nations which defined violence against women as "any act of gender- based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" (United Nations, 2018, p. 2).

Violence against women is a technical term used to collectively refer to violent acts that are primarily or exclusively committed against women. Similar to a hate crime, this type of violence targets a specific group with victim's gender as primary motive. The United Nations General Assembly defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. The 2018 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women noted that this violence could be perpetrated by assailants of either gender, family members or even the 'State' itself (United Nations, 2018). Worldwide governments and organizations actively work to combat violence against women through a variety of programmes.

Kiragu (2016) opined that violence against women by their male partners is widely condoned by many African societies where there is the belief that a husband may chastise his wife by beating her. This has been fostered by the belief in many cultures that men are superior and that women with whom they live are their possessions to be treated as the men considered appropriate (United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, UNCSDHA, 2018). Again, Stewart (2016) stressed the fact that in Africa, violence against women is not only widespread, it is socially acceptable. Hence women may accept violence due to social prejudice and low self-esteem.

Interrogating the origin and causes of violence against women, Ahmad, Riaz, Barata and Stewart (2017) refer to the concept of 'patriarchy' as an ideology that fosters a set of beliefs which justify male domination over women in society.

Patriarchal societies are more likely to have sharply delineated sex roles and while patriarchal beliefs exist in all societies to some degree, patriarchal beliefs are less likely to be found in western societies due to increased autonomy of women and increased access to education and employment. Again, Ahmad et al (2017) noted that women from patriarchal societies may themselves accept and adhere to patriarchal norms and values. Thus, violence against women focuses on the belief system prevalent in relationships between men and women, where the male believes that he is entitled to be superior to the woman. Thus, he is willing to control and coerce the female by a variety of means, including violence, in order to maintain that authority.

Furthermore, Duarte (2017) sees gender violence as a reflection of the societal view of violence and a natural phenomenon that is based on a biological and determinist model in which the "strong" dominate the "weak". In a patriarchal society, women are regarded as the "weaker sex" and their main role is to "reproduce". According to Gouldner and Gouldner (2017), the issue of violence against women will always be a problem for as long as society accepts the over valuation of the masculine gender and tolerates violence.

Greenblatt (2018) contends that culturally sanctioned beliefs about the rights and privileges of husbands have historically legitimized a man's domination over his wife and warranted his use of violence to control her. Men in general, are more accepting of men abusing women, and the most culturally traditional men are the most accepting. Dobash and Dobash (2015), Adams (2017) and Ptacek (2017) are of the opinion that batterers often excuse their violence by pointing to their wives "unwisely" behaviour as their justification.

The United Nations (2016) attribute gender violence to the structural inequality between men and women in the family as well as in the society. According to this report, studies from both the developed and developing countries show violence against women to be a by-product of the social structure in which men make decisions and women are expected to obey. Violence against women is a function of the belief fostered in all countries that men are superior and that the women they live with are their possession and chattels which they may treat as they wish and as they consider appropriate (UN, 2016). More so, the UN (2016, p.5) reports that "violence against women derives essentially from the lower status accorded to women in the family and in the society. Suffice it to add that this is abetted by ignorance, lack of laws to prohibit violence, inadequate efforts by public authorities to enforce existing laws and absence of education and other means to address its causes". Gender based violence is usually linked to male power, privilege and control.

According to Heise (2018), the fear of violence ensures women's submission to male decision-making, and as such, quite a lot of women in their efforts to avoid violence accept insults and misery or escape the marriage. Liu (2016) maintains that violence against women is a measure of a society's inequalities and the historical roots of family violence go back to patriarchy, where the husbands and fathers controlled everything. This may be applicable to Nigeria since the society accepts patriarchal norms.

According to the United Nations (2016), the following categories of women are more likely than others to experience violence: women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, refugee women, women migrants including women migrants workers, women in poverty living in rural or remote communities, destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, female children, women with disabilities, elderly women, displaced women, repatriated women, women in situations of armed conflict, foreign occupation, wars of aggression, civil wars and terrorism.

Be that as it may, Ifezulike (2017) maintains that violence against women in Nigeria takes different dimensions. He identifies rape, wife battery, forced early marriages, female child labour, sexual harassment, female circumcision, marital rape and certain cultural attitudes and practices such as harassment and beating of women by masquerades during festivals as constituting gender violence in Nigeria. He opines that in Nigeria, a man can inflict punishment on the wife for leaving the house without permission, keeping bad company, drinking alcohol and cooking bad food or cooking late. This is quite unacceptable since a woman is supposed to be treated by the husband as his life partner and not as a slave. In Nigeria, the criminal justice system does not respond positively to the plight of these women by punishing the perpetrators of violence against them.

Akinjiola (2018) contends that discrimination has always been an intolerable phenomenon, sometimes subtle and sometimes violent resulting even in death. According to him, gender-related discrimination and harmful traditional practices manifest in all societies and in various forms. He identifies these practices as early marriage, male-child preference, teenage pregnancies, female genital circumcision, widowhood practices, polygyny, inheritance of females, wife battery, sexual harassment and inhibitions put on the way of the womenfolk all in the name of culture and traditions which are ironically expected to be dynamic. In spite of the above insight, Akinjiola (2018) fails to include rape in his discussion of violence against women though he mentioned sexual harassment which is quite different from the concept of rape. Rape as we all know is one of the most common forms of violence against women and should be given serious attention. In Nigeria, cases of rape are reported on a daily basis.

The consequences of violence against women are many. It is noteworthy that violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Violence against women violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedom. In the same vein, the UN (2016) reports that acts or threats of violence, whether occurring within the home or in the community, or perpetrated or condoned by the state, instill fear and insecurity in women's lives. According to this report, the fear of violence, including harassment, is a permanent constraint on the mobility of women and limits their access to resources and basic activities. In addition, high social, health and economic

costs to the individual and society are associated with violence against women. Violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared to men.

Furthermore, the Global Commission on Women's Health, (UNO, 2016) reports that in addition to morbidity and mortality, violence against women leads to psychological trauma, depression, substance abuse, injuries, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infection, suicide and murder. The World Bank in its World Development Report (2018) for the first time assessed the health consequences of gender based violence. Based on the limited data available, it estimated that in industrialized countries, rape and domestic violence take away almost one in every five healthy year of life of women aged 15 to 44 years. According to this report, on a per capita basis, the health burden of domestic violence is about the same for productive age for women in both developed, and developing countries. In the views of Akinjiola (2018), female genital mutilation or circumcision has negative consequences on the victims. He goes on to argue that the harmful practice leads to shock, injuries to the perineum or rectum, haemorrhage, infection and retention of urine and the long-term consequences are chronic pelvic infections, coital difficulties, lack of orgasm, and obstetric complications, permanent frigidity, temporary trauma and psychoses.

Impact of Domestic Violence on Girl-Child Education in Nigeria
Domestic violence, variously known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence and intimate partner violence, is a pattern of abusive behaviour by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family or cohabitation. It has many forms, including physical aggression or assault (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects), or threats thereof; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; controlling or domineering; intimidation; stalking; passive or covert abuse otherwise known as neglect; and economic deprivation (Seimeniuk, Krentz, Gish and Gill, 2010). This implies that the phenomenon of domestic violence manifests physically, sexually, psychologically and economically.

i. Physical Dimension of Domestic Violence
Domestic violence is not an isolated, individual event but rather a pattern of repeated behaviours. Assaults are repeated against the same victim by the same perpetrator. These assaults occur in different forms, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic. Of all the dimensions of domestic violence, the physical aspect of it is most reported and noticed. In her study on the "Impact of Domestic Violence on the Society," Colleen (2009), understood the physical dimension of domestic violence as including anything that causes physical pain such as hitting, biting, or slapping. It also includes denying a partner medical care or forcing a partner to use drugs or alcohol. Similarly, UNICEF (2010), identifies slapping, beating, arm twisting, stabbing, strangling, burning, choking, kicking, threats with an object or weapon, and murder as

some aspects of the physical dimension of domestic violence. In its *Innocenti Digest*, UNICEF also submits that the physical dimension of domestic violence, referring to violence against women, includes traditional practices harmful to women such as female genital mutilation and wife inheritance (the practice of passing a widow, and her property, to her dead husband's brother).

Similarly, Alokan (2013, p.103), identifies "bruises, broken bones, head injuries, lacerations and internal bleeding: as some of the acute effects of the physical dimension of domestic violence, an incident that rquire medical attention and hospitalization. He also submits that female victims who are pregnant during a domestic violence relationship experiences greater risk of miscarriage, pre-term labour, and injury to or death of the foetus. According to Bazza (2010), the pages of most Nigerian newspapers are replete with instances of women who were beaten or hurt by their husbands. Again, she revealed that the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) has interviewed many women victims, the National Orthopedic Hospital, Igbobi, Lagos, as well as Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) have reported such cases too. Similarly, Nwankwo (2003) corroborated that public testimonies before the Civil Resources Development and Documentation Centre Tribunal in Enugu and Abuja since 1996 have revealed other harrowing cases of wife battering in Nigeria. More so, McDonnel (2003, p. 6) argues that Nigerians do not talk about domestic violence "because it seems to be an acceptable part of marriage". She found that 40 percent of urban women in research conducted in Lagos and Ibadan claimed that they have been victims of domestic violence.

It is indicative that domestic violence has adverse effect on school children and particularly, the girl-child. In this vein, Wolfe (1986) posits that children who are victims of domestic violence suffer traumatising events such as injury or death. Again, negative feelings such as withdrawal, depression, abnormal fears, regression, learning problems or a decline in school performance, truancy, bullying, difficulty in building and maintaining relationships, impulsiveness, behavioural problems, denial and emotional problems are coupled with daily activities of children who suffer or witness domestic violence. Similarly, depression has devastating effects on children eating disorders, psychosomatic illness, and difficulties at school and instances in substance abuse. Other problems associated with school children as a result of domestic violence include inattentiveness in class, truancy, low academic performance, timidity, disrespectfulness and exhibition of aggressive behaviour. Another aspect of domestic violence that affect the girl-child is the physical violence occurring between their parents or guardians.

ii. Sexual Dimension of Domestic Violence

Another manifestations of domestic violence is the sexual dimension of the violence. According to Colleen (2009), the sexual dimension of domestic violence includes marital rape, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or something such as one partner treating the other partner in a sexually demeaning manner. Incest is also considered a form of sexual abuse. More so,

UNICEF (2010), views the sexual dimension of domestic violence to involve coerced sex through threats, intimidation or physical force, forcing unwanted sexual acts or forcing sex with others. In spite of this, sexual violence and abuse can be extraordinarily difficult for victims to talk about because of the ways in which this type of violence often is perpetrated. As submitted by Kanchiputu & Mwale (2016), children are exposed to sexual violence such as touching of body sexual organs or sensitive body parts and kissing on the mouth, against their will. They submit that many girls suffer sexual violence from the members of the households like uncles. This simply shows that children are victims of sexual violence in the homes and it negatively affects their feelings and thinking, as well as disposition to education and learning. More so, Bazza (2010) submits that rape and sexual assault is another form of violence against women. This is done through direct violence and forceful sexual intercourse by a male counterpart.

Furthermore, early and forced marriages constitute aspects of the sexual violence against women and the girl-child. Suffice it to add that early marriage is the act of giving out a female child for marriage at a very tender age, mostly when the girl knows nothing about her rights. In Bazza's (2010), she reveals that, in Nigeria and indeed some parts of Africa, early marriage comes in the form of child betrothal, this involves marrying out a girl child immediately after she is delivered. Again, while forced marriage on the other hand is simply marrying out a girl against her wish, it could also be referred to as induced marriage (McDonnel, 2003). In some cases, the girls are withdrawn from school or even denied access to education. There are, thus, cases in which parents have forced their grown daughters into marriages against their wishes either due to cultural, social, economic or political reasons. As Bazza (2010) submits, this difference in age contributes to a woman's powerlessness with respect to sexuality and reproductive health decisions. In this situation of unequal power, resistance to a husband's demand many leads to violence. For instance, an adolescent girl with a much older spouse is much less likely to be able to participate in decisions about when to have children, to be able to negotiate the use of birth control and less able to protect herself from HIV/AIDS, exploitation and maltreatment (Shija, 2001). It is also clear that early/forced marriage limits educational and other opportunities for girls and often leads to early child bearing and increased health risks. Girls under 13 years of age are five times more likely to die in child birth than women in their twenties. They are also higher to obstetric fistula, which can result from prolonged and obstructed labour (Bazza, 2010).

Female Genital Mutilation is another aspect of the sexual dimension of domestic violence against women and the girl-child. As Raffertty (2013) submits, female genital mutilation poses severe risk to the physical and psychological health of girls, constitutes a major violation of their human rights. The investigation also avers that the immediate and long-term health effects include infection, tetanus, bleeding, tearing during child delivery, keloid formation and adverse obstetric and prenatal outcomes. Research indicates that women

who have had genital mutilation have higher levels of chronic infections, severe pain, ulceraction, and death due to excess bleeding and infection, including septic shock, as well as longer-term complications such as menstrual and urinary difficulties.

iii. Psychological Dimension of Domestic Violence

The psychological dimension of domestic violence implies to cause fear by intimidation. As opines by Colleen (2009), the psychological dimension of domestic violence is often used in conjunction with physical or sexual abuse. Thus, the psychological and emotional abuse consists of undermining the self-esteem of one's partner, or upsetting the balance of one's relationship with their children. It may include constant criticism, threats, and jealous control, such as isolating the woman from friends and family. Emotional abuse, also known as emotional battering, may be taken less seriously than physical abuse. However, emotional abuse may leave long-term emotional scars, which could be more damaging than scars caused by physical attacks (Braden-Maguire, 2005). It is widely recognized that emotional abuse contributes to both depression and low self-esteem in battered women. Interestingly enough, research has shown that a battered woman who has killed her spouse will be judged guilty more often when the abuse she has suffered is emotional rather than physical. These results indicate that the use of physical violence by a battered woman is perceived as more justifiable when she has experienced physical abuse (Braden-Maguire, 2005, p. 407).

Similarly, UNICEF (2010), captures the psychological and emotional dimension of domestic violence to includes behaviour that is intended to intimidate and persecute, and takes the form of threats of abandonment or abuse, confinement to the home, surveillance, threats to take away custody of the children, destruction of objects, isolation, verbal aggression and constant humiliation. It also argues that because psychological violence is harder to capture in quantitative studies, a full picture of the deeper and more insidious levels of violence defies quantification.

Furthermore, Cussack (1999) observes that scolding, quarrelling and the denial of food, which are forms of psychological violence impact considerably on the emotional well-being of pupils. He further posits that violence may be psychological which is behaviour that is directed at an emotional level or has emotional impact. Again, Kanchiputu & Mwale (2016) gives examples of emotional violence such as insults, shouts, repeated criticism, frequent blames, threatening, denying of love and affection, and ignoring. According to the scholars, this simply highlights that in homes children are exposed to words and actions that make them feel useless or worthless. While adults use abusive language in order to make children obey their commands, this violence harms children's feelings and thinking.

In their study, Uwameiyi & Iseramaiye (2013) opine that, domestic violence has some serious impact on the mental health of the girl-child which consequently affects her performance in school. More so, the World Health

Organisation (WHO) (2010), explains that abused girls are more likely to suffer depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms. It further pointed out that violence against the girl child affect their ability to learn or even the willingness to takes part in school activities. Also, physical violence such as kicking, rape, slapping, intimidation, oppression sexual harassment, being laughed at, and unfair treatment weather at home or in school can all lead to children running way from school and home, subsequently, exposing them to serious danger. Thus, domestic violence against the girl-child has other serious implication to the girl-child education such as absenteeism in school among pupils and students, and absenteeism leads to dropout.

iv. Economic Dimension of Domestic Violence
The economic dimension of domestic violence implies a situation where one partner is financially dependent on the other, who controls him or her by maintaining complete control over the finances. This is often seen both in marital relationships as well as older children-aging parent relationships. Another way to abuse someone financially would be to deny them the freedom to be gainfully employed. This dimension of domestic violence is readily seen in instances where the victim is solely dependent on his or her abuser, who is their legal sponsor as well as their financial support (Colleen, 2009). In his studies, Alokan (2013, p.103), identifies the financial effect of the economic dimension of domestic violence. According to him, once victims leave their perpetrator, they can be stunned with the reality of the extent to which the abuse has taken away their autonomy. Due to economic abuse and isolation, the victims usually have very little money of their own and few people on whom they can rely when seeking help. This has been shown to be one of the greatest obstacles facing victims of domestic violence, and the strongest fact that can discourage them from leaving their perpetrators.

In addition to lacking financial resources, victims of domestic violence often lack specialized skills, education, and training that are necessary to find gainful employment, and also may have several children to support. In addition, UNICEF (2010), explains that the economic dimension of domestic violence implies includes acts such as the denial of funds, refusal to contribute financially, denial of food and basic needs, and controlling access to health care, employment, etc. Economic abuse involves a very wide range of behaviour and tactics, including the frequency of economic controlling or economically exploitative behaviour and employment sabotage in domestic violence (Adams, 2011).

Furthermore, Colleen (2009) posits that severe violence against both women and children is highest among families with low incomes or with male partners that are either unemployed or have a low paying job. It has been determined that poverty increases a poor woman's vulnerability to partner abuse. Thus, the victims see no way out of their poverty and feel that they must stay with the abusers. The girl-child in particular is vulnerable and many times elopes into an unwanted nor planned marriage, abandoning her studies and further

impoverishing herself and making herself susceptible to further violence. Again, the economic dimension of domestic violence can trigger many different responses in victims, especially the girl-child major consequences of domestic violence victimization include psychological/mental health issues and chronic physical health problems. A girl-child's overwhelming lack of resources or powerlessness can lead to homelessness and poverty.

The economic dimension of domestic violence has adverse effect of the girl-child's accesses to education and better life. In their submission, Uwameiye & Iseramaiye (2016) avers that, access is the opportunity provided for the girl-child to be educated. Access deals with the availability, convenience and ability to be educated. Again, violence such as child labour, forced marriage and using girls as house helps have prevented millions of girls from having access to education which is their fundamental human right. In addition, poverty and the level of education of mothers are some factors hindering females' access to education. In line with that, over 70% of Nigerians live below poverty line (UNICEF, 2010). This has prevented many Nigerian parents, especially large families with limited resources from enrolling their female children in schools while their male counterparts are given preference.

Implications of Domestic Violence on Equal Opportunity for women in Nigeria
Violence free life is the basic requirement of family or intimate members for humanly survival and empowerment. However, Sharma (2016) submits that, domestic violence is omnipresent being a universal invisible reality and an acceptable social behavior quite often justified on various grounds. He maintains that various factors *viz.,* social, cultural, political, economic, and legal are responsible for infliction of domestic violence by different institutions like the family, community and the State. The family having a hierarchal structure and sexual division of labour justifies subordination of female and uses domestic violence as a tool to maintain this composition and its continuance.

The socio-cultural environment in Nigeria explains to a large extent the prevalence of domestic violence in Nigeria and the implications it has on equal opportunities for women. These socio-cultural environment entails the "forces of influence from interactional relationship among people which affect their attitude, behaviour and disposition" (Asenge, Diaka & Tsetim 2017, p. 42). Put differently, the social-cultural environment consists primarily of man created intangible elements which affect people behaviour, relationship, perception and way of life, and their survival and existence. Thus, socio-cultural factors could mean a combination of social and cultural factors as they influence or modify social behaviour within a social milieu.

Suffice it to add that the socio-cultural environment in Nigeria, being a patriarch society, fundamentally underscores and influences family practices, including gender relations. In his submission, by Ogah (2018) avers that, the patriarchal society sets the parameters for women's structurally unequal position in families and markets by condoning gender-differential terms in

inheritance, rights and legal adulthood, and by tactically condoning domestic and sexual violence and sanctioning differential wages for equal or comparable work. Tradition or culture and religion have dictated men and women relationship for centuries and entrenched male domination into the structure of social organization and institution at all levels of leadership. Patriarchy justifies the marginalization of women in education, economy, labour market, politics, business, family, domestic matters and inheritance.

In addition, Anzaa, Udu & Gbari (2018), maintains that a patriarchal society is a male-dominated society where women can only play the second fiddle to men. It is also a society where high-status positions are allocated to males while low-status positions are conferred on females in all fields of human endeavour except domestic chores. It is a society that gives preference to the male child over the female child. Hence in a patriarchal society like Nigeria, a widow without a son may likely suffer more hardships than a widow who has at least a son. This is understandable because in Nigeria, a son is regarded as the future head of the family and is expected to take over the leadership of his father's family after his father's death, especially if the son is an adult. In addition, he is expected to inherit all the landed assets and money.

Furthermore, there are socio-cultural factors that contribute to domestic violence and thus negatively affect the girl-child education. For instance, the society has fixed gender roles and expects people to behave in that very manner, such that, man has been assigned the role of breadwinner and decision maker but if due to any reason he is unable to perform this role then he is put under lot of anxiety resulting in infliction of pain and anxiety. Therefore, lack of satisfactory legal protections and other remedies within the home, low levels of legal literacy among them, insensitive attitudes of judiciary, police and advocates towards victims are relevant factors for perpetuation of domestic violence in Nigeria.

In agreement with Sharma (2016), UNICEF (2010), affirms that the family is often equated with sanctuary – a place where individuals seek love, safety, security and shelter. But evidence abound that it is also a place that imperils lives, and breeds some of the most drastic forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls. Thus, violence in the domestic sphere is usually perpetrated by males who are, or who have been, in positions of trust and intimacy and power – husbands, boyfriends, fathers, fathers-in-law, stepfathers, brothers, uncles, sons, or other relatives. This takes place in situations where a woman may seem free to leave, but is held prisoner by fear of further violence against herself and her children, or by lack of resources, family, legal or community support. It follows therefore that domestic violence which goes to violates the rights of girls and women and negatively affect the girl-child education is perpetrated through social norms, cultural traditions, patriarchal attitudes and ideology, gender stereotypes and discrimination toward girls and women are at the root of gender based social inequalities that benefit men and boys, maintain women's subordinate status in society, heighten the vulnerability

of girls and pose a challenge to achieving gender equality and girl-child education. More so, as a result of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors, girls have fewer opportunities than boys and are less likely than their male peers to have decision-making control over their own lives; key decisions affecting them are all too often made by their fathers, brothers and husbands. Consequently, Uwameiye & Iseramaiye (2016), posit that domestic violence is a problem that limits girl's education, causes poor enrolment and attendants in primary and secondary schools. This is because girls continue to face many obstacles that impede their part to learning. Thus, it is generally believed among some Nigerians that enrolling girls for formal education is a waste of time and resources, as she would be married as sooner or later. To buttress this belief, cultural aspects like forced marriage, inheritance law, sexual harassment, unintended pregnancy and domestic responsibilities tend to conflicts with enrolment and attendance of girls in schools.

In Nigeria, it is observed that the womanhood is reduced to a second-class citizen, hence, there is the commonality of general belief system that the best place for women is in the 'Kitchen' (Godiya 2013). This trend has brought about tremendous misrepresentation of women right at the level of the family down to the circular society. It is a structure of a set of social relations with material base which enables men to dominate women. Women are therefore discriminated in most cases, from acquiring formal education, mistreated and perpetually kept as housewives, the average Nigerian woman is seen as an available object for petty trading, forced marriage, street hawking, subsistent farming and a misfit in the society. Thus, the purported irrelevance associated with the status of women in society has merely reduced an average woman to an inferior commodity (Godiya 2013).

Consequently, the proportion of women in the formal sector is very minimal. The statistics of women in industries and the civil services indicate that women are mostly found in the junior categories in the Federal Civil Service which is the highest employer of labour in the country (Oga, 2018). Thus, the attainment of equal rights by women in social, economic, and political spheres must become a central feature of a democratic and participatory pattern of development. Women make a major contribution to the economic production of their communities and assume primary responsibility for the health of their families. Their active support is crucial to the utilization of development objectives. Thus, there can be no societal transformation without their involvement, support, and leadership (Adams, 2011).

In corroboration, Godiya (2013) affirms that women are mainly involved in petty trading, and farming, despite this, their contribution is not commensurate monetarily. The women's unpaid labour is twice that of men because their unpaid labour cannot even be measured. Women self-advancement has been curtailed by the burden of reproduction, particularly with a very high birth rate as well as the cultural roles associated to women - role of child bearing, child raising and homemaking, Salaam (2003) as cited in. Similarly, Ogah (2018) maintains that Nigerian women, face a lot of discrimination that limit their

opportunities to develop their full potential on the basis of equality with men. They are far from enjoying equal rights in the labour market, due mainly to their domestic burden, low level of educational attainment, poverty, biases against women's employment in certain branches of the economy or types of work and discriminatory salary practices. In some establishments, women are not allowed to get married or pregnant because it is thought that it will reduce their productivity and of course profit. Some women particularly the young ones are only employed as long as they are ready to use their bodies to woo customers for their business organizations.

Suffice it to add that in Nigeria, laws to protect women from violence are inadequate. For example, marital rape is generally not recognized as an offence in any system of law in Nigeria, even when the wife is bruised in the course of forced sexual intercourse. Formal mechanisms to seek redress in cases of domestic violence or rape, through police investigation followed by a court proceeding, are often ineffective. This is particularly the case in rape cases, where police are not adequately trained to handle such cases and the burden of proof remains with the prosecution, requiring a woman to prove that she did not consent, or where a woman's testimony, under Muslim law, is not as valid as that of a man. As a result of the foregoing, women's right issues and situation in Nigeria is not given the seriousness it deserves by both government and individuals.

Closely linked with scarification is the preference of male sons in many of our societies. This is a powerful tradition cherished by even the educated persons (Ogah, 2018). This is made known through conscious and unconscious negligence, deprivation, discriminatory treatment of daughters to the detriment of their physical and mental health. It in no small measure affects females through inequitable allocation of food, education, and health care, a disparity that is often reinforced through life.

Women are crucial to the growth and development of any nation and the world at large. Women constitute half of the world's population and they are homemakers, custodians of social, cultural and fundamental values of the society and permanent change is often best achieved through them. Full community development is impossible without their understanding, cooperation and effect participation. Considering the importance of women as mother, sometimes breadwinners, teachers and guardians, they deserve respect, recognition and better treatment but the opposite is usually the case. As Davies (2015) submits, women are enslaved in a circle of poverty and they surfer from neglect, discrimination and exploitation. They are also subjected to different forms of violence by their male counterparts and an entrenched patriarchal system.

Conclusion and Recommendations
It has been argued that the menace of domestic violence is a global phenomenon and affects all genders, faiths, races and social status. Though it plagued all genders, it is mostly seen as a gender based violence against women, especially

in patriarchal societies where there is male dominance. The various dimensions of domestic violence – physical, sexual, psychological and economic affect the girl-child, most especially because of her weak and vulnerable position, biologically, physically and socio-culturally. Consequently, domestic violence has adversely affected girl-child education in Nigeria and has deep implications for equal opportunities for women in the Nigerian society. This implies that less girls are in school to acquire western education and are thus rendered more vulnerable and disempowered. It was obvious from the study that women lack equal opportunities in effective participation in politics and other public institutions. It was discovered that the Nigerian society is patriarchal and the practice or culture of male dominance has permeated every facet of the society. Similarly, women have over the years suffered discrimination, perpetrated by cultural, religious and biological factors. More so, powerlessness on the part of the women occasioned by low educational status, inferiority complex and a host of other factors combine to deny women the desired opportunities to actively and effectively participate in the public life of the Nigerian society. The number of women in politics and positions of decision making is minimal as a result of the skewed socio-cultural and political environment that favours men against the women counterparts. Obviously, there are no equal opportunities for the sexes and the male gender continues to dominate and violates the female gender in all aspects of the society.

To tame the tide of domestic violence and lack or equal opportunities for women in Nigeria, the following recommendations have been made:

i.   There is need for a re-orientation of both men and women to come to the realisation that all the sexes are human beings and endowed with the same human dignity and rights. Thus, gender equality is a right and any form of discrimination against any group of persons is a violation of human rights and human dignity.

ii. Similarly, awareness should be created by traditional, religious and public institutions that gender equality is also a precondition for advancing development and reducing poverty: Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of whole families and communities, and they improve prospects for the next generation.

iii. There should be strict enforcement of laws and conventions that seek to punish and prohibit domestic violence and all other forms of violations against women and the girl-child. This will serve as a deterrent to domestic violence, especially, gender-based violence.

iv. There should be enhanced educational opportunities, trainings, confidence building mechanisms and economic empowerment for the female gender. This socialisation should be included in the school curricula.

v.   Affirmative action and gender mainstreaming should be emphasised and enforced in all public institutions. This will enhance the opportunities for women to occupy public offices and positions of decision making.

vi. Again, governments at all levels in Nigeria should make and implement policies that will make the education of the girl-child to be mandatory.

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