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## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG SEMI-URBAN WOMEN IN OGUN STATE: IMPACT FACTORS OF POVERTY AND WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

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### Abstract

*Millions of women, and most especially those living in the semi-urban areas, suffer different degrees and dimensions of domestic violence on regular basis. While many factors have been adduced to these social menaces, the impact factors of poverty and women participation in politics have recently attracted national and global concerns and debates. Hence, this study examined the impact of poverty and political participation on domestic violence among semi-urban women in Ogun State. The research design for this study was a descriptive survey research design, which is always concerned with finding, describing and interpreting events as they exist. A total of 250 respondents were randomly selected from five towns in Ogun State. The main instrument used for data collection was "Semi-Urban Women Domestic Violence, Poverty and Political Participation Questionnaire" (SUW-DVPPPQ,  $r = 0.82$ ). Data were analysed using descriptive frequency table. The study established domestic violence against women. The incidents of domestic violence against women were rampant, domestic violence destroys relationship and families. Poverty affects only those who cannot feed well, brings frustration especially among women. It was recommended that the government in collaboration with marriage counsellors should organize seminars for all the women and men on how to treat and relate with each other. Women should be allowed into politics and given proper orientation on how to relate well with their husbands.*

Keyword: Domestic Violence, Poverty, Women Political Participation, Marriage

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### Introduction

Domestic violence is 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. Domestic violence 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/covert abuse otherwise known as neglect; and economic deprivation (Siemienuk, Krentz, Gish & Gill, 2010).

Poverty is one of the major causes of domestic violence among citizens, after alcoholism. According to Madinah (2018), 34% of domestic violence is caused by poverty. This lends credence to the saying that "a hungry man is an angry man". Looking at the society, the percentage of women who are aware of the occurrences of domestic violence among women is relatively low compared to those who are unaware.

According to a research carried out by the National Office of Information polls as recorded by Agbugah (2015) in a work titled "Poverty is the main cause of violence against women in Nigeria", it is observed that one out of every ten married women has been a



victim of domestic violence while three out of the same ten know someone who has been a victim of domestic violence. The polls identify poverty as the greatest driver for an increase in domestic violence in the society. Many believe that hardship leads to frustration and anger at the slightest provocation, hence, people find themselves resorting to violence as a means of expressing their dissatisfaction with their situation.

Poverty exacerbates the occurrence and severity of violence in those already experiencing it (Verfaillie, 2016). Verfaillie (2016) equally observed that poverty in itself does not necessarily lead to violence but when economic hardship becomes severe, it tends to trigger unpleasant reactions owing to the lack of buoyancy in the economic power of such individual. Economic stress incites violence and stems from violence. Domestic violence amongst semi-urban women has also been traced to the level of political participation by the women. As observed by Boniface (2013), there are emerging trends in women's participation in politics in Africa and women have traditionally been marginalized from the structures of state that determine political and legislative priorities. In recent years, Africa has witnessed rapid escalation in female political representation as compared to low rates that existed in 1960s. Development in Nigerian governance has led to the increase in women participation in politics (Agbalajobi 2010; Hillman, 2017).

The enhancement in educational opportunities for girls and women however, has influenced the participation of women in politics in the recent decades. Women participation in politics has also been enhanced by the growing drive from the civil society in fostering women's participation in leadership. In the recent political dispensation, semi-urban women have been seen in struggles and vigorous bids to outshine and outsmart one another in the political space while the society generally believes that women should be given minimal roles to play in politics. The little space given to them is, however, a subject of struggle and arena where only the strongest, most often the ones with financial power, takes the available space. This in turn brings about domestic violence among the characters or parties involved.

#### Problem Statement

Over the years, issues of domestic violence have been recorded among the semi-urban women. The ambit and the severity of this violence cover different facets and works of life. While they are recorded or triggered at places of work, they are equally seen in public places and within the immediate environment in the neighborhood. Researchers over the years have been able to trace the reason for domestic violence to the level of poverty ravaging the living standard of the semi-urban women. It is also gathered that political participation takes a reasonable part in the occurrence of the domestic violence seen among the women. This research however, seeks to identify how poverty and political participation has influenced domestic violence among semi-urban women in Ogun State.

#### Research Questions

The following research questions will assist the study:

1. How do semi-urban women perceive the concept of domestic violence?
2. What is the perception of semi-urban women of poverty and its indices?
3. How do semi-urban women perceive political participation?
4. What extent would poverty generate domestic violence?
5. What extent would women participation in politics generate domestic violence?
6. What is the combined contribution of poverty and political participation on domestic violence?

#### Methodology

The research design for this study was a descriptive survey research design, which is always concerned with finding, describing and interpreting events as they exist. A total of 250 respondents were randomly selected from five (5) towns in Ogun State. One town was randomly selected from five out of the six Ijebu clans Local Government Areas of Ogun State. The main instrument used for data collection was Semi-Urban Women Domestic Violence, Poverty and Political Participation Questionnaire (SUW-DVPPPQ,  $r = 0.82$ ). Data were analysed using descriptive frequency table.

#### Data Analysis and Results

Research Question 1: How do semi-urban women perceive the concept of domestic violence?



Table 1: Perception of Semi-Urban Women on the Concept of Domestic Violence

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	SD	Decision
1	Incidents of domestic violence against women is rampant	146 (73%)	20 (10%)	4 (2%)	30 (15%)	56.196	The respondents perceived that domestic violence threaten women's personality, confidence and relationship.
2	Domestic violence destroys relationship and families	125 (62.5%)	14 (7%)	13 (6.5%)	46 (23%)	45.569	
3	Women's personality and confidence are not threatened by domestic violence	29 (14.5%)	26 (13%)	54 (27%)	91 (45.5%)	26.048	
4	Verbal abuse is not a violence against the victim	152 (76%)	18 (9%)	13 (6.5%)	17 (8.5%)	58.919	
5	Domestic violence should be endured if its occurrence is less frequent	70 (35%)	41 (20.5%)	78 (39%)	11 (5.5%)	26.391	

As showed in table 1, majority of the respondents agreed that incidents of domestic violence against women is rampant, domestic violence destroys relationship and families, verbal abuse is not a violence against the victim, domestic violence should be endured if its occurrence is less frequent while

55(27.5%) agreed that women's personality and confidence are threatened by domestic violence.

Research Question 2: How do semi-urban women perceive political participation?

Table 2: Perception of Semi-Urban Women on Poverty

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	SD	Decision
6	Large percentage of women in semi-urban are poor	137 (68.5%)	26 (13%)	18 (9%)	19 (9.5%)	50.324	Poverty is strongly rampant and perceived by women
7	Poverty affects only those who cannot feed well	162 (81%)	23 (11.5%)	8 (4%)	7 (3.5%)	63.494	
8	Poverty brings frustration especially among women	102 (51%)	9 (4.5%)	41 (20.5%)	48 (24%)	33.429	
9	Majority of women living are poor	155 (77.5%)	24 (12%)	26 (13%)	5 (2.5%)	60.996	
10	Poverty is a great challenge to women	137 (68.5%)	33 (16.5)	13 (6.5%)	17 (8.5%)	50.784	

Table 2 shows that large percentage of people are poor, poverty affects only those who cannot feed well, poverty brings frustration especially among women, women living are poor and poverty is a great challenge to women.

Research Question 3: How do semi-urban women perceive political participation?

Table 3: Perception of Semi-Urban Women on Political Participation

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	SD	Decision
11	Politics is meant only for men	6 (3.0)	50 (25.0)	42 (21.0)	102 (51.0)	34.263	It results show that politics can be better with women involvement.
12	Women should be given active roles in politics	146 (73.0)	24 (12.0)	10 (5.0)	20 (10.0)	55.659	
13	Politics can be better with women involvement	118 (59.0)	26 (13.0)	2 (1.0)	54 (27.0)	43.417	
14	Politics and government is better handled with both men and women in control	39 (19.5)	132 (66.0)	14 (7.0)	15 (7.5)	48.389	
15	Huge financial base is needed to do well political terrain	110 (55.0)	12 (6.0)	59 (29.5)	19 (9.5)	39.006	



As shown in table 3, majority agreed that women should be given active roles in politics. Politics can be better with women involvement, politics and government is better handled with both men and women in control and huge financial base is needed

to do well in the political terrain. However, 56(28%) of the respondents agreed that politics is meant only for men.

Research Question 4: What extent would poverty generate domestic violence?

Table 4: Impact of Poverty on Domestic Violence

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	SD	Decision
16	Poverty is a major cause of domestic violence	32 (16.0%)	55 (27.5%)	19 (9.5%)	94 (47.0%)	28.487	Poverty has a significant effect on domestic violence
17	Most of the recorded domestic violence are caused by poverty	25 (12.5%)	70 (35.0%)	86 (43.0%)	19 (9.5%)	28.644	
18	With poverty at higher occurrence, domestic violence keeps being recorded	39 (19.3%)	79 (39.5%)	42 (21.0%)	40 (20.0%)	16.778	but not necessary a major cause of domestic violence
19	Hunger and lack will instigate domestic violence any time	152 (76%)	18 (9%)	13 (6.5%)	17 (8.5%)	58.919	
20	Reduction in income will trigger violence against women	146 (73%)	20 (10%)	4 (2%)	30 (15%)	56.196	

As revealed in table 4, with poverty at higher occurrence, domestic violence are frequently recorded. Hunger and lack will instigate domestic violence any time, also reduction in income will always trigger violence against women. However, there were low scores which indicated otherwise.

In addition, 87(43.5%) agreed that poverty is a major cause of domestic violence, 95(47.5%) agreed that most of the recorded domestic violence were caused by poverty.

Research Question 5: What extent would women participation in politics generate domestic violence?

Table 5: Level at which Women Participation in Politics Generates Domestic Violence

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	SD	Decision
21	Women who participate in politics mostly end up been victims of domestic violence	40 (20.0%)	14 (7%)	100 (50.0%)	46 (23%)	31.273	The level of women's participation in politics has some effects on domestic violence
22	Women participation in politics is a means of escape from domestic violence	29 (14.5%)	26 (13%)	54 (27%)	91 (45.5%)	26.048	
23	Women controversial competition in politics is not a form of domestic violence	152 (76%)	13 (6.5%)	18 (9%)	17 (8.5%)	58.919	
24	Domestic violence occurs when women involved in politics decide they know better than their partner	11 (5.5%)	41 (20.5%)	78 (39%)	70 (35%)	26.391	
25	Politically enlightened women are mostly involved in domestic violence	137 (68.5%)	26 (13%)	18 (9%)	19 (9.5%)	50.324	

The results in table 5 shows that women controversial competition in politics is not a form of domestic violence, domestic violence occurs when women involved in politics decide they know better

than their partner and politically enlightened women are mostly involved in domestic violence.

Only 54(27.0%) agreed that women who participate in politics mostly end up been victims of domestic



violence, 55(27.5%) agreed that women participation in politics is a means of escape from domestic

violence.

Research Question 6: What is the combined contribution of poverty and political participation on domestic violence?

Table 6: Level at which women participation in politics generates Domestic Violence

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	SD	Decision
26	Frustrated women in politics will easily engage in violence	137 (68.5%)	26 (13%)	18 (9%)	19 (9.5%)	50.324	Poverty and politics are tools of domestic violence
27	Poverty and less involvement in political participation by women triggers domestic violence	7 (3.5%)	23 (11.5%)	8 (4%)	162 (81%)	64.973	
28	Men easily abuse women when there is weak financial power	102 (51%)	9 (4.5%)	41 (20.5%)	48 (24%)	33.429	
29	Poverty and minimal access to political offices bring domestic violence	155 (77.5%)	24 (12%)	16 (8%)	5 (2.5%)	60.996	
30	Poverty and limited participation in politics by women bring domestic violence	137 (68.5%)	33 (16.5)	13 (6.5%)	17 (8.5%)	50.784	

The result in table 6 on the level at which women participation in politics generates domestic violence revealed that frustrated women in politics will easily engage in violence. Also, men easily abuse women when there is weak financial power, poverty and minimal access to political offices bring domestic violence while and poverty and limited participation in politics by women bring domestic violence with the exception of 30(15%) who agreed that poverty and less involvement in political participation by women triggers domestic violence.

#### Discussion of Findings

On research question 1, the respondents perceived that domestic violence threaten women's personality, confidence and relationship. In support of this view, Madinah (2018), asserted that the percentage of women who are aware of the occurrences of domestic violence among women is relatively low compared to those who are unaware. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) participants report that electoral violence within the family takes the form of psychological, economic and physical violence (Kabeer & Naila, 2010). Research question 2 asked about the perception of semi-urban women of poverty and its indices. The results indicated that

poverty is strongly rampant and perceived by women and its indices was well understood by them. To corroborate this result, Leung (2014) asserted that, sadly, abused women's voices are often not heard, their cries for help either ignored or inadequately addressed.

Research question 3 asked about how the semi-urban women perceive political participation. The results indicated that majority perceived that politics would be better with women involvement. This result was supported by Waylen (2016) which asserted that there have been various degrees of women's participation in Nigeria's politics and governance and varying sets of limiting factors to their full involvement in the mainstream political development of the nation. Research question 4 asked about the extent at which poverty generate domestic violence. The results showed that poverty has a significant effect on domestic violence but not necessary a major cause of domestic violence. This view was in conformity with the study of Mari (2015) which asserted that poverty as lack of access to basic needs/goods is essentially economic or consumption oriented. It explains poverty in material terms and specifically employs consumption-based categories to explain the extent and depth of poverty, and



establish who is and who is not poor. Research question 5 asked about the extent to which women participation in politics generate domestic violence. The results showed that domestic violence occurs when women involved in politics decide they know better than their partner, and were corroborated by the study of Agbalajobi (2010). Research question 6 asked about the combined contribution of poverty and political participation on domestic violence. The study revealed that poverty and politics are tools of domestic. The studies of Leung (2014) and Waylen (2016) have earlier established in research questions 3, 4 and 5.

#### Conclusion and Recommendations

The study established the evidence of domestic violence. The incidence of domestic violence against women were rampant, domestic violence destroys relationship and families. Poverty affects only those who cannot feed well, brings frustration especially among women. Poverty is a great challenge to women. The women controversial competition in politics is not a form of domestic violence but domestic violence occurs when women involved in politics decide they know better than their partner.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that;

- i. Government, in collaboration with marriage counsellors should organize seminars for all the women and men on how to treat and relate with each other.
- ii. Government should proffer solutions to poverty level by organizing sustainable poverty alleviation programmes in semi-urban area.
- iii. Women should be allowed into politics and given proper orientation on how the relate well with their husbands.

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