

SPOUSE ABUSE AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG FEMALE VICTIMS IN GASHUA COMMUNITY OF YOBE STATE

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ABSTRACT

Spouse abuse is among the least reported crimes in Nigeria. Social research in Nigeria has not done enough to study this social vice. This study was carried out to bridge some gap in the neglected areas. Therefore, the study investigated problem of spouse abuse and coping strategies among female victims in Gashua community of Yobe state. The study was guided by a combination of conflict and feminist theories, and adopted descriptive survey design. Data were collected through qualitative method. This involved ten (10) in-depth interviews and ten photographs. The qualitative data were analysed using ethnographic summaries and content analysis. However, the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents were analyzed through frequency and percentage distribution. All respondents agreed that spouse abuse was a common phenomenon in Gashua community, while lack of respect for human dignity; personal experiences and insensitivity to husband responsibilities, were the major causes. Majority of respondents agreed that problem of spouse abuse is a disturbing one because it has increased the cases of divorce, family instability and street children within the community. The entire respondents were worried about spouse abuse because it has encouraged act of prostitution among divorcees, increased social disorder, and badly affected children. Fifty percent of respondent had been physically assaulted in the past by their spouses through beating. Lack of money and food, alcoholism and having quarrel with sister-in-law led to incidences of the physical assault. Thirty percent of respondents have sustained injuries on head, eye and had miscarriage as a result. Analyses show that 70% of respondents had been threatened in the time past with murder, divorce and beating. All the respondents had been verbally assaulted before by their spouses. Strong awareness on dangers inherent in spouse abuse, encouragement to report abuse, interventions by non-government organization, enactments and

implementation of strict laws on spouse abuse and constant appraisal of the problem, are recommended.

Keywords: Spouse abuse, Assault, Beating, Divorce, Gashua Community.

Introduction

The Social problem of spouse abuse is an enormous one in Nigerian Society. It is a problem which cuts across every social class, age, educational status, religion and all other parameters of social classification. It is a problem which has attracted the attentions of human right activists and social crusaders, especially those who are fighting for gender equality in our society.

Problem of spouse abuse occurs in almost every marriage whether covertly or overtly, such abuse may be in forms of physical abuse, psychological abuse and economic abuse (economic exploitation of one's spouse). There are no reliable statistics in Nigeria to show the rates and classifications of abuse or indices of measurement of the problem. However, the rates of occurrence of the problem in daily contacts, media report and evidences from courts of law testify that the problem of spouse abuse has become a colossal one in Nigerian society. It is very necessary, therefore, to investigate the problem of spouse abuse more especially the coping strategies among female victims in Nigeria.

This study, therefore, investigated the problem of spouse abuse and coping strategies among female victims using semi-urban Gashua community in Yobe state as a case Study.

The general objective of this study was to investigate problem of spouse abuse and coping strategies among female victims in Gashua community of Yobe state. However, the following were the specific objectives:

1. To find out various experiences of spouse abuse suffered by female victims
2. To investigate various coping strategies that the victims employed for the abuse

The following were the research questions posed by the study:

1. What were the various experiences of spouse abuse suffered by female victims?
2. What were the various coping strategies that the victims employed for the abuse?

Theoretical Frame Work

Spouse abuse (Intimate Partner Violence) is a highly prevalent and severe problem in societies where it has been studied (Knutson Et al 2009). Spouse abuse has been said to have affected a considerable number of woman each year (Macy, Ermentrout and Rizo, 2012). It is a problem which affects people from all ethnic and socio-economic groups (Nouri et al, 2012). It featured in all countries of the world (Turtakovsky and Mezhibovsk, 2012). It is stunning, underscoring the importance of having every element of society work toward ending it (Valentine, Ochone and Martin, 2012).

Abuse of spouse has been defined as masculine deviance, whereby males use their power and control gained through socialization to dominate women (Bailey, Eisikovits and Buchinder, 2012). It is use of actual or threatened physical, sexual and psychological violence by a current partner (Nouri et al, 2012). It can also be defined as forceful tactic employed by partner to cause physical and /or psychological harm to the victim (Aysa-Lastra et al, 2012). In summary, it has been adjudged as a national problem (Fang and Corso, 2008). The problem of spouse abuse has sources or causes. This led to the review of causes of spouse abuse as reflected in literature.

Vulnerabilities and causes of spouse abuse

Women are particularly vulnerable to spouse abuse during pregnancy and post partum periods. Also, large numbers of women who reported wife assault were in their child bearing years. Moreover, mothers of young children are also more likely to suffer serious physical injuries, and fear for their lives than other abused women, according to Letourneau, Duffy and Buffett-Léger (2012).

Causes of spouse abuse are numerous. The major cause is the cultural acceptability of the problem. Tartakorsky and Mezhibovsky (2012) argued that certain cultural groups accept violence against women as a means of conflict resolution and as a culturally appropriate means of punishing women for their transgression of culturally sanctioned norms of behaviour. The same argument was presented by Al-Badayneh (2012) regarding Jordanian society. According to Al-Badayneh (2012), Jordanian social culture accepts the use of violence with children or women as a kind of discipline, and this acceptance is supported by cultural and social norms. Spouse abuse is deeply rooted in the patriarchal traditions of men controlling their women (Karakurt and Cumle 2012). Patriarchal can result in large differences in gender roles and power relationships and can serve to sanction male domination over women, including domestic violence in many societies (Mahapatra, 2012).

Anger and aggression have been identified as other causes of spouse abuse. O'Donnell et al (2006) observed that middle school aggression is a significant risk factor for partner victimization and perpetration. Anger arousal has also been proposed as a mechanism for partner violence (Kendra, Bell and Grimond, 2012). Similar to anger and aggression is discrimination. Cho (2012) gave a strong study finding that rate of spouse abuse increased with perceived discrimination.

Daily economic hassles have also been identified as cause of spouse abuse (Patel et al, 2012), and results also showed that frequencies of physical and psychological violence against spouse were both positively linked to distress (Fortin et al, 2012). Experiencing child abuse is another important cause of spouse abuse. Whiting et al (2009) argued that there are connections between experiencing abuse as a child and being in a violent-relationship as an adult. Hence, experiencing violence as a child increases the likelihood of violence in one's adult intimate relationship.

Spouse abuse is one of the negative consequences of childhood abuse as noted by Swartz, Mercier and Curran (2012). This is termed intergenerational transmission of violence. It states that 'children, who experience violence at the hands of parents and/or witness parents' violence toward one another, will learn that violence is appropriate in interpersonal settings and will

imitate these early childhood lessons in their adult relationship, as explained by Franklin and Kercher (2012). It is empirical evidence which explains the transmission of physical violence across generation (Dankoski et al, 2006).

Educational level and religious commitment in both women and their spouses also matter. Both were statistically significant predictors of partner abuse (Nouri et al, 2012). Smoking, mental illness, addiction to drugs and alcohol are other factors. Nouri et al (2012) argued that smoking, mental illness and addiction to drugs accounted for the causes of spouse abuse.

Valetine, Ochme and Martin (2012) also argued that wife batterers are more likely to abuse alcohol. Family environmental related factors also play crucial role as causes of spouse abuse. Kang (2012), in his study shows that the family environment differentiates the chances of violence against adults in the family. For instance, living in stable and wealthy families will make violence occur less often as a result of a reduced chance of conflict or struggle.

Classes and types of spouse abuse

Classes of spouse abuse exist. Care and Cusick (2012) identified verbal abuse, economic abuse (controlling money) and isolating a partner from friends, family and outside world as classes of abuse. However, Bair-Meritt et.al (2012) divided spouse abuse into: situational couple violence, involving low severity; mutual violence; intimate terrorism, involving severe abuse, generally male-perpetrated violence motivated by control; violence resistance, involving a partner to resist his/her partner's violence and mutual violence control, involving both partners using severe control. However, Fortin et.al (2012) presented four types of spouse abuse: common couple violence, intimate terrorism, violent-resistance and mutual violent control. These are almost the same as presented by Bair-Meritt et.al (2012).

Effects of spouse abuse

Spouse abuse has numerous and monumental negative impacts or effects on the victims, their children and the public at large. Murray et.al (2012) argued that spouse abuse causes depression and makes child rearing difficult for the victims. Hence, Spouse abuse affects mothers' parenting behaviours and parent-child relationships. Cho (2012) concurred that it is a serious problem for decades, threatening women's mental and physical health. Davins-Pujols et.al (2012) argued that spouse abuse causes depressive symptoms and also have a deeper impact affecting the personality styles of the woman suffering from it. It is linked with anxiety disorders, depressive symptoms and substance abuse disorders (Foran et.al, 2012).

The children of the spouses who engaged in spouse abuse suffer greatly. According to Knutson et.al (2009), such abuse is a threat to the psychological, social and academic well-being of such children. Whiting et.al (2009) claimed that this was so because spouse abuse is significantly related to the abuse of children at home. It is also a risk factor for children's delinquency as observed by Smith and Ireland (2009). It is a predictor of crime and anti-social behaviour during adolescence (Ireland and Smith, 2009).

The reason for this, according to Moyian et al (2010), was that children exposed to domestic violence and/or child abuse are more likely to experience a wide range of adverse psycho-social and behavioural outcomes. Spouse abuse, therefore, has significant psycho-social difficulties in young adulthood including depression, anxiety, aggression and suicide among children of couples who engaged in abusing each other (Hooven et.al, 2012). Miller, McCullough and Johnson (2012) also confirmed that family conflict like spouse abuse was significantly and inversely associated with suicidality among adolescents from such family, and the physical health of the children of the couples who engaged in spouse abuse may also be seriously affected.

Kuhlman, Havell and Graham-Bermann (2012) argued that children exposed to violence and traumatic events of spouse abuse suffered physical and psychological health during adulthood. Such exposure also increased externalizing behaviour problems among children (Renner, 2012). Such experiences cause chaotic and distressing events over which they have very little control or comprehension (Thompson and Trice-Black 2012). Children may also be physically injured in the process of spouse abuse and there are evidences documenting associated negative physical health consequence for such children (Randell et.al, 2012).

The academic or schooling of the children may also be affected by spouse abuse. Knutson et.al (2009) observed that academic well being of children can be seriously affected by spouse abuse. It even affects the pre-school children, as reported by Howell, Miller and Graham-Bermann (2012). Spouse abuse has been identified as a cause of poor parenting. Distressed marital relations have concurrent and longitudinal problems on parenting (Malik and Rohner, (2012) and Murray et.al (2012).

The infants and unborn children also shared from the destructive effects of spouse abuse. According to Tailor and Letourneau (2012), infants (birth to 3 years) particularly tend to be more negatively affected by violence-exposure than older children. Spouse violence or abuse has been argued to be a global social problem because of its potential to physically and psychologically harm unborn babies. It has immediate short and long term effects on the psychological and physical well being of foetus (Abadi et al, 2012).

Problem of spouse abuse also featured in area of public health. Valetine, Ochme and Martin (2012) observed that researchers and government entities have highlighted epidemics of spouse violence at home as a public health tragedy. It is not confined to any segment of society. Al-Badayneh (2012) also supported the view that violence against women or Intimate Partner Violence (spouse abuse) is a social and health problem in all societies and cultures all over the globe. It is a serious and prevalent public health issue (Foran et.al, 2012).

Fang and Corso (2008) argued that spouse abuse causes injuries which always required medical attention and causes thousands of death annually. It has been discovered that women suffer greater injuries from their partner's use of violence in the process of abuse (Hayes, 2012). It is not physical abuse alone but also psychological abuse which affects the health and well-being of such partner (Murphy, Smith and Xenos, 2012). It has damaging effects on women's well-being (Rivera, Zeoli and Sullivan, 2012).

Solving and coping with spouse abuse

Solving the problem of the spouse abuse has been discussed by some experts in the study of domestic violence. O'Donnell et.al (2006) suggested the policy of early intervention. Findings, according to them, suggest the importance of early interventions that help adolescents learn non-violent strategies for resolving conflicts in cross-gender relationships. This includes incorporating violence prevention into range of existing programs and services for youth and adults.

Murphy, Smith and Xenos (2012) also observed similar policy. According to them, adolescence is a sensitive period for learning about relationship, and therefore provides an important window of opportunity for preventive education. Family closeness also plays important role. Aysa-Lastra et al (2012) argued that family members' closeness gives protective factor in domestic abuse. Perpetrators of spouse abuse can also be helped to stop their abuse in order to solve problem of spouse abuse. Rasamen, Holma and Seikkula (2012) argued that therapeutic understanding and support with adequate efforts to make abusers stop and reconsider their behaviour can help stop abuse. Help can equally be given to the victims. Cho (2012) argued that policy makers and practitioners should develop and implement programs and services for victims of spouse abuse.

As a protective measure, Abadi et al (2012) argued that higher education for women and women's employment represent protective measure and conditions against abuse. Franklin and Kercher (2012) also attested to these. The duo argued that being employed protected against several forms of interpersonal violence.

Finally, as a coping strategy, Whiting et al (2012) counseled safety consciousness as coping strategy through the appraisals of threat. There should be constant perception of safety and self regulation from the potential victims. Safety, according to them, is traditionally understood to be freedom from harm or danger and basic requirement for happiness and thriving. Coping strategy also entails separations. It has been adjudged to be a more active coping strategy against spouse abuse (Vatnar and Bjorkly, 2012).

Coping strategies against spouse abuse are very scanty in literature, unlike prevalent, causes effects and solutions, especially among local researchers on domestic violence (spouse abuse included). This study was carried out to bridge some gap in this respect.

Spouse Abuse and Conflict Theory

This study made use of conflict theory which emphasizes the centrality of conflict in social life (Brym et.al 2003). According to Brym et.al (2003), conflict theory stresses how members of privileged groups try to maintain their advantages while subordinate groups struggle to increase theirs. Inequality is the major sources of conflicts. Society is viewed as composed of similar units acting competitively rather than coo-operatively. Conflict, competition and exploitation are said to shape society (Teevan and Hewitt, 1995). According to conflict perspective, groups in society are engaged in a continuous power struggle for control of scarce resources. Conflict may take the form of family discussions about financial matters (Kendall, 2007). Weber (1968/1922), as cited by Kendall (2007), is the ability of a person within a social relationship to carry out his own will despite resistance from others. It is a competition for power which divides their interests. (Coser and Rosenberg, 1982).

According to conflict theory, social and economic relations are not equally beneficial the parties (husband and wife for example). Conflicts and exploitation characterize relations of inequality. Conflict theory is one of the most important and useful of the theoretical perspectives available to students of the family studies (Ferrington and Chertok, 2009). However, conflict theory, in spite of its merit, cannot explain the decision-making process in the family in its entirety (Jenkins, 1980). One of the prominent causes of conflict in the family is role strain. One such strain is work-family conflict which occurs when the demands of work or family make it difficult to fulfill demands in the alternative role (French, Dumani, Allen and Shockley, 2018).

Shockley et.al (2017) argued that managing the work-family interface is more challenging for women than men. Hence, women are more affected when conflict ensues between family and work. Spohn and Kurtz (2011) argued that there is a link between family structure and victimization. The form of families serves to condition victimization. Hence, family structure is a social context for family conflict. Whakaaro (2005) also examined family structure and family change on child outcomes. The research of Whakaaro (2005) explains the impacts of family structure and family change on child outcomes, with a particular focus on parental separation. The research examined how it is attributable to the conflict between parents which often accompanies a parental separation. This occurs where parental relationship is highly conflicted and the children are drawn into the conflict. Whakaaro (2005) argued strongly that there exists a strong interrelation between marital conflict and marital separation.

Vodde (2008) argued that marital conflict can only be derived from a comprehensive theory of conflict without this; important aspects of marital conflict may be overlooked. Conflicts between parents are everyday phenomenon in family life and there are some practical implications which can be identified from this review. The different effects of conflicts, depending on their way of being dealt with, lead to different practical implications (Barthassat, 2014).

One of the implications of conflict is divorce, apart from separation mentioned earlier on. Aghababaei et.al (2017) identified a causal study which indicated a link between divorce and

conflict. Conflict has been observed as a cause of divorce. Violence in the family, in conclusion, is an expression of conflict within the family (Lawson, 2012). As a result of this, conflict, power and violence were focus of researchers in the 2000s (Anderson, 2010).

The study also used feminist theory as a theoretical framework. Feminist theory sees spouse abuse as an expression of gender-based domination of women by men (Lawson, 2012). Feminist theory is a type of conflict theory that examines inequalities in gender-related issues. It uses the conflict approach to examine the maintenance of gender roles and inequalities. Radical feminism, in particular, considers the role of the family in perpetuating male dominance. Feminist theory aims to understand the mechanism and roots of gender inequality. It seeks to promote women's rights (Openstax College, 2013).

Feminist theory looks at the world from the vantage points of women. It is a generalized, wide-ranging system of ideas about social life and human experience developed from women centred perspective. It is (a women-centered) or women centered in two ways. First, the starting point of all its investigation is the situation and experience of women in society. Second, the distinctive vantage points of women (Ritzer, 2008).

Feminism itself is a doctrine suggesting that women are systematically disadvantaged in modern society and it is advocating equal opportunities for men and women. It also means a socio-political theory and practice which aims to free all women from male supremacy and exploitation (Rao, 2012). It also connotes advocacy of social equality for the sexes in opposition to patriarchy and sexism (Macionis and Gerber, 1999).

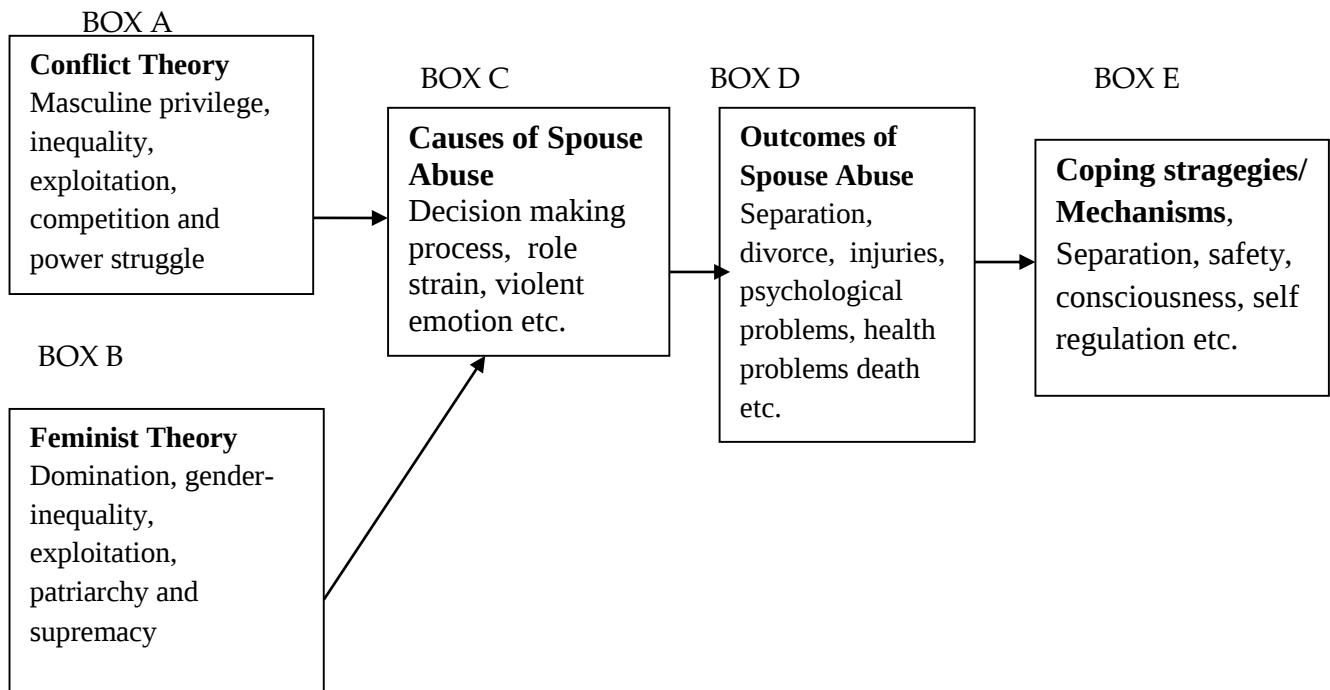
Feminism is classified into three categories: liberal feminism, socialist feminism and radical feminism. Liberal feminism thinks that individuals should be free to develop their own talents and pursue their own interest. Socialist feminism argues that capitalism intensifies patriarchy by concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a small number of men. Radical feminism, however, claims that even a socialist revolution would not end patriarchy. Instead, gender equality can be realized only by eliminating the cultural notion of gender itself (Macionis and Gerber, 1999). Feminist sociology itself encompasses both the micro and the macro levels of analysis. They centre on women's lives. The micro level examines the "re-production" of gender through such things as talk body languages and emotion management. The macro level examines many of constraints and forms of resistance in women's lives in such situational realms as politics, economics, schooling, religion, and the family (Macionis and Gerber, 1999).

Framework for the study

As explained earlier on, this study was anchored on two principal sociological theories-the conflict theory and feminist theory. The theories were selected because they perfectly fit the

study. Based on the two theories, the figure below is the emerging frame work for the study and the explanations on the framework were given to show relevance of the theories to the study.

The emerging frame work shows the interplay of variables. It is a boost to the development of a theoretical model and analytical illustrations used in the explanation of concepts and variables under study.



Emerging Theoretical Frame Work

In the above figure, box A contains concepts under conflict theory. The first concept is masculine privileged. Conflict theory stresses that men have privilege in the society more than women. These privileges give undue advantages to men over women in every society. For instance, men have more privilege and access to societal resources than women do. As a result of this, society is masculine centered.

Non-availability of equal privileges to both men and women in society generated the second concept (inequality). Conflict theory argues that there is a wide gap of inequality between masculine world and feminine world. This inequality manifests in interplay between men folk and women folk in every society. The third is exploitation. Exploitation causes conflict between men and women most of the time, men being perpetrators. Such exploitation usually involves material resources, and in some instances things intangible like time, love, cares and affection. Such exploitation may also involve a partner's faith or subculture (Cares and Cusick, 2012).

Competition is another strong concept under conflict theory. Competition may involve a forceful struggle between men and women. Such competition may cause a deadly conflict. Such competition may ensue when a female spouse is trying to play egalitarianism with her spouse (Karakurt and Cumble, 2012). Finally, power struggle is another concept of conflict theory. Power struggle between married partners is inevitable, most especially when a partner is conscious that the other wants to underplay him/her in relationship. Demonstration of power, overtly or covertly, may be the order of the time in such power struggle relationships.

Feminist theory also has some concepts as reflected in Box B. The first concept under feminist theory is domination. The theory explains that men always dominate women in every relationships or association. According to feminist theorists, perpetual domination of men over women in our society is one of the factors which spur feminism and feminist movement over decades. Tendencies for men to dominate women cause gender inequality. Gender inequality favours men over women in our society. Such gender inequality is visible in politics, education, economy, work place and family. Gender inequality always put women at disadvantages.

Exploitation is another feminist concept. Feminist theories argued that arrangements in society positioned men in such a way that women are exploited by men. The principles inherent in capitalism have unduly encouraged this. For example, some professions are exclusively masculine and the wages systems under capitalism favours men and put women at disadvantage. Hence, the economy system and the other systems are so arrange to give access to men to exploit women. Patriarchy nature of our society is another concept argued by feminist theories. In patriarch society, cultural groups condone violence against women. (Tartakovsky and Mezhibovsky, 2012). It is seen as a means of discipline which is supported by cultural and social norms (Al-Badayneh, 2012). Hence, patriarchy is a root of spouse abuse as argued by Karakurt and Cumble, 2012). Patriarchy creates a wide gap in gender roles and power relationships, and sanctions male domination (Mahapatra, 2012). Hence, patriarchy nature of our society is one of those things the feminists are fighting to eradicate.

Finally, supremacy is another concept. The concept is anchored on the patriarchy belief that everything about men is supreme against those of women. Men supremacy underrates women and subjugates them in our society. This starts from having preference for male child over female child and this continues in other areas of life.

Box C featured the causes of spouse abuse from the light of conflict and feminist theories. Such are many but only three were handpicked for discussion here. The first cause of spouse abuse is in area of decision making process. Decisions have to be made in the family. Such decisions may be on finance, children, material things and many others numerous to mention. However, because of power struggle, competition, domination, supremacy, exploitation etc, men in the

family who are husbands may likely take upper hand and downplay their spouses in such decision makings. This may cause serious conflict and eventually result to spouse abuse.

Role strain is another cause of spouse abuse. This is very imminent in area of family-work strain. Married women may find it very difficult to cope with family life and work life, all together. As a result of work demands, some of the married women's responsibilities at home may be jeopardized. This may not augur well with some of their spouses and the resultant effect may be conflict. Such conflict in the family may be activated by domination, supremacy, exploitation, gender inequality and power struggle, mentioned earlier on.

Violent emotion, especially from men is another cause of spouse abuse. Men, because of feelings of supremacy and domination, often resort to aggression and emotional violence in dealing with situations they confront from their spouses. Such aggression and violent emotion are serious causes of spouse abuse. On many occasions, wives suffer serious body injuries, psychological trauma, and in some cases death may result.

In the figure above, Box D contains the outcomes of spouse abuse. Spouse abuse is a lead cause of separation in marriage. Separation entails spouses living separately. They stop to live together in the same house. It may serve as a waiting period before divorce is secured in court. However, separation period may serve as an avenue for couples to resolve their differences. Divorce is another consequence or outcome of spouse abuse. Divorce is a legal or cultural dissolution of marriage. Constant abuse of spouse is another leading cause of divorce, especially in western countries. However, daily occurrences in the media show it is increasing in Nigerian society. Hence, it is no longer funny hearing many stories of spouse abuse in news and media, nowadays.

Physical injuries are other outcomes of spouse abuse. Women suffer greater injuries from their partners' use of violence (Hayes, 2012). Such problem made spouse abuse a public health issue all over the world (Valetine, et.al, 2012, Al-Badayneh, 2012 and Foran, et.al, 2012). Psychological problems are also caused by spouse abuse. Psychological problems like depression and personality disorders are usually recorded among women who suffer spouse abuse (Dawins-Pujols, et. al 2012).

Both physical injuries and psychological problems seriously affect victims of spouse abuse in areas of their health and well being (Murphy, Smith and Xenos, 2012). It has outrageous effects on women's well being (Rivera, Zeoli and Sullivan, 2012). Finally, death is the most grievous effect of spouse abuse. In some occasions, the abuse may be so severe that it leads to death of victims. Thousands of death among women can be attributed to covert or overt effects of spouse abuse in Nigeria. In many cases, married men were culpable.

Box E features the coping strategies or mechanisms for spouse abuse. Separation is the first coping mechanism. Victims of spouse abuse often separated from their abusive husbands and continue with their normal lives pending the time such conflict is resolved or the marriage is dissolved. Separation may be for short or long period of time. However, it is the most widely used coping mechanism for spouse abuse (Vatnar and Bjorkly, 2012).

Safety consciousness is another coping strategy for spouse abuse. This method involves potential victims constantly appraising threats of abuse. They need to ensure that they are free from harm or danger (Whiting et.al, 2012). Such potential victims need to understand what can cause abuse, and appraise situations and later take actions depending on appraisals.

Finally, self regulation or self restraint is another coping mechanism. This involves potential victims abstaining or restraining themselves from any confrontation or conflict that may consequently lead to abuse. Avoidance of hot arguments or situations that may cause spouse abuse are strictly avoided by the potential victims. However, such may allow perpetual domination and gender inequality between couples, especially from husbands.

In summary, Boxes A and B contain concepts under conflict theory and feminist theory which can lead to causes of spouse abuse as indicated in Box C. Outcomes or effects of spouse abuse featured in Box D and finally, the coping mechanisms/strategies for spouse abuse were highlighted in Box E.

Research Methodology

This study applied descriptive survey design. This involved the collection of information from a sample of individuals (Schutt, 2004). Qualitative technique was adopted in the study because nature of the study called for rigorous in depth investigation and analyses of the problem of spouse abuse. The population of the study was all married women who were the victims of spouse abuse in Gashua community of Yobe State. They were female victims of spouse abuse who had suffered one form of abuse or the other from their husbands in the past.

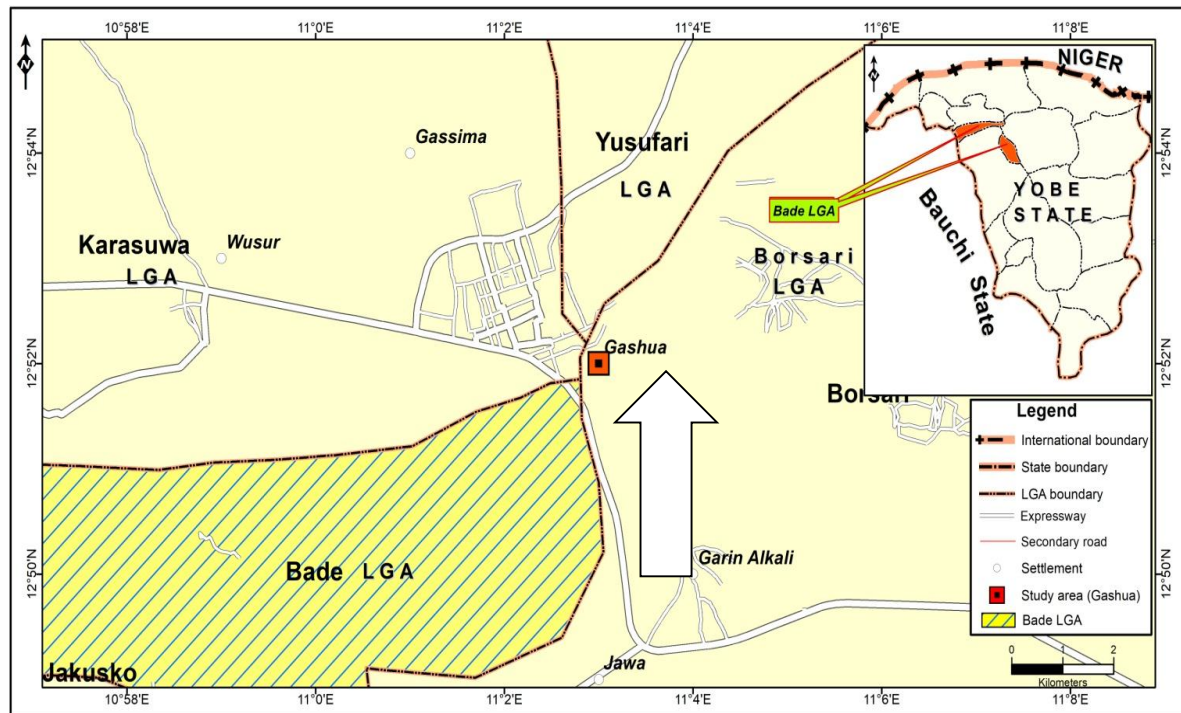
Sampling was necessary, for studying every single instance was beyond means. Sampling served the purpose of improving the quality of the data collection. Because of the fact that the population of study is hidden, snowball sampling method under non-probability sampling technique, was used in selecting the female victims of spouse abuse who participated in the study. Snowball sampling involves using some members of the groups of interest to identify other members (Adler and Clark 1999). It is a method for identifying and sampling the case in a network. It is a form of an analogy to a snowball, which begins small but becomes larger as it is rolled on wet snow and picks up additional snow. Snow ball sampling was utilized because the population for this study was hidden. The victims are hardly known to the public. At the end of the sampling procedure, ten (10) female victims were sampled across the various wards/quarters.

The data were collected through the use of in-depth interview. In-depth interviews were conducted among ten (10) female victims of spouse abuse at the different quarters/wards they were living. In-depth interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to probe deeply the questions raised in the study. Using other means may not give the researcher this opportunity. Hence, the study was purely a qualitative one.

The qualitative data which emerged from in-depth interviews were analyzed through content analysis. The in-depth interviews were translated and transcribed. The qualitative data were coded using open code software package (HYPER RESEARCH) for qualitative data analysis. Data analysis and interpretation were done within Nigeria socio environment which shaped the problem of spouse abuse.

This study observed ethical issues in research. In observation of ethical issues in research, the consents of respondents who participated in the study were obtained before the commencement of interview schedules. The anonymity of respondents was strictly followed. Nothing featured in the interviews that exposed the identities of respondents. The study also observed the ethic of confidentiality. The information supplied by respondents were kept confidential and only used for purpose of the study as explained to them.

The map below is the community where the study was carried out and the sampling population of study drawn.



Arrow indicating the community where the study was carried out

Results And Discussion of Findings

This section contains the results and discussion of findings which emanated among respondents of spouse abuse. In the analyses of the data, the study employs ethnographic summaries, content analysis and frequency distributions.

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

The study considered the variables such as respondents' age, state of origin, town, ward/ quarters, religion, level of education, marital status years in marriage, number of children, profession/job and finally the economic status. The sample size of the respondents studied was ten (10). All the respondents were female. Hence, the variables of their socio-demographic characteristics started with age. Table 4.1 below shows the age distribution of respondents.

Table 1: Age distribution of respondents

Age bracket (years)	Frequency	Percentage
20 – 24	5	50
25 – 29	3	30
30 – 34	1	10
35 – 39	1	10
Total	10	100

A cursory look, from the above table, shows that majority of the victims of spouse abuse were between age bracket of 20 years and 24 years of age. This constituted 50% of the entire sample selected in research field. Thirty Percent were within the age bracket of 25 years and 29years, while 10% were within age brackets of 30 years and 34 years and 35years and 39 years respectively.

Age is an important factor to be considered before marriage. It indicates maturity and ability to cope with demands and responsibilities of marriage. Marriage may not survive if spouses are underage and immature.

However, all the respondents were above 18 years of age, which is considered as legal age in Nigeria. Hence, the issue of child marriage can be technically ruled out.

The study requested respondents to mention their communities and states of origin. All the respondents were indigenes of Gashua in Yobe State. In another analyses, 60% of the respondents resided within Katuzu quarters or ward of Gashua community and the remaining 40% were living within Sabo-Gari of the community.

One of the questions under socio- demographic requested respondents to indicate their religions. Majority of respondents were adherents of Islam (80%); while 20% of them professed Christianity as their religion. The analyses from religion were not least expected because the community was dominated by people who were adherents of Islam. However, there were some Christians living within the community.

The next socio-demographic data investigated in the study was the educational qualifications of respondents interviewed. The table 4:2 below shows the educational qualifications of respondents

Table 2: Educational qualifications of respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
No Education	3	30
Primary school certificate	1	10
Arabic school	5	50
Secondary school certificate	1	10
Total	10	100

Analyses from above table shows that majority of respondents had Arabic education. Thirty percent of them had Arabic education. Ten percent had primary school certificate and 10% had

secondary school certificate. Education is very paramount in handling problem of spouse abuse. Women that are not educated may find it difficult to understand their rights in marriage and where to seek for help when they were abused by their spouses. Abadi et al (2012) argued that higher education for women acts as protective measure and condition against abuse.

The study also considered the marital statuses of respondents. Table 4:3 below shows the analyses of respondents' marital statuses.

Table 3: Marital statuses of respondents

Marital status	Frequency	percentage
Married	9	90
Divorced	1	10
Separated	NIL	NIL
Widow	NIL	NIL
Total	10	100

The above analyses show that 90% of respondents were married; while 10% were divorced from their husbands. None of respondents were separated, or widows.

It has been established in literature that majority of married women are vulnerable to spouse abuse that any category of women. Such married women may be pregnant women, child bearing women or mothers of young children (Letourneau, Duffy and Buffett-leger, (2012). The married women who featured in the study had experienced spouse abuse prior the time of the study. The other woman, who was a divorcee, has divorced her husband as a consequential effect of spouse abuse. This was supported in literature by Aghababaeiet.al (2017). The woman revealed this in the course of in-depth interview.

The study considered the number of years respondents have spent with their spouses. Table 4:4 below shows the analyses of data collated on this.

Table 4: Years respondents have spent in marriage

Years in marriage	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5 years	5	50
6 – 10 years	4	40
11 - 15	Nil	Nil
16 Years and above	1	10
Total	10	100

The analyses from the above table show that 50% of respondents had stayed in marriage between one year and five years. Forty percent of them had been in marriage between six years and ten years, while 10% had been in marriage for the period of sixteen years and above.

This study factored in the numbers of children the respondents had because children are very crucial in every marriage and what happens in such marriage. Table 4:5 below shows the analyses of numbers of children the respondents had.

Table 5: Numbers of children of respondents

Number of Children	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 3 children	80	80
4 – 6 children	1	10
7 – 9 children	1	10
10 – 12 children	Nil	Nil
13 children and above	Nil	Nil
Total	10	100

A cursory look at the table above shows that majority of respondents (80%) had between 1 child and 3 children. Ten percent each had between 4 children, 6 children, 7 children and 9 children respectively.

Children are very crucial in issue of spouse abuse because they are indirect victims of such abuse. According to Knutson et.al (2009), children of abused spouses suffer greatly. It threatens the psychological, social and academic well-being of such children. Spouse abuse is significantly related to the abuse of children at home (Whiting et.al, 2009).

The profession or job of respondents was also considered in the study. Hence, it was requested that respondents indicate their professions or job. Table 4.6 below shows analyses on this.

Table 6: Professions/Jobs of respondents

Professions/Jobs	Frequency	Percentage
Trading	9	90
Teaching	Nil	Nil
Vocational work	Nil	Nil
Other (Home Care)	1	10
Total	10	100

Analyses in the above table show that 90% of respondents were traders and 10% were into other jobs (Home Care) as mentioned in interview guide. Women empowerment in area of gainful employment is a protective measure, as well as condition against abuse (Abadi et.al, 2012), and protection against several forms of interpersonal violence (Kercher, 2012).

Finally, the economic status of respondents was also considered in the study. Table 4.7 below shows the indications made by respondents on their economic statuses.

Table 7: Economic statuses of respondents

Economic Statuses	Frequency	Percentage
High	Nil	Nil
Average	5	50
Low	5	50
Total	10	100

Analyses above show that 50% of respondents indicated their economic status was on average, while another 50% said it was low. Economic statuses of the family determine violence in the family. Living in stable and wealthy families will make violence occur less (Kang, 2012).

Experience of respondents on spouse abuse

One objectives of this study was to investigate experience of respondents on spouse abuse. Therefore, a number of questions were asked from respondents on this.

A cursory look at information given by respondents show that 50% of them had been physically assaulted in the past by their husbands for different reasons which warranted the incidences.

The excerpts below show some of the incidences which led to the assaults.

My husband had beaten me in the past. Whenever he was not having money he will be seriously upset. I asked him for children's school fees that day but he got annoyed and started beating me.

IDI/ 24 years/ Christian/ Gashua/ 07-08-2020

Another respondent related the incidence thus:

He had beaten me in the past. My husband is a hot tempered person. Whenever he collected his salary, he will not give money to buy food stuff. I asked him money for food that day but he became angry and started beating me.

IDI/ 25 years/ Muslim/ Gashua/ 08-08-2020.

Another respondent discussed the incidence thus:

I had a quarrel with my husband's sister. His sister called him on phone and told him about the quarrel. When he came back from work, he started beating me.

IDI/ 26years/ Muslim/ Gashua/ 10-08-2020

Another respondent gave explanation as follows:

My husband is a drunkard. Whenever he became drunk, he will start beating me and causing many troubles at home.

IDI/ 20years/ Muslim/ Gashua/ 07-08- 2020

The incidences explained above featured in literature as a cause of spouse abuse. Valetine, Ochme and Martin (2012) explain that wife beaters are more likely to abuse alcohol.

Finally, a respondent gave her own account of incidence thus:

My husband has assaulted me in the past. I was pregnant that time. My children were hungry and I went to my neighbor to help me with some food. When my husband came back, he met the children and I eating the food, he took the food and threw it away and started beating me

IDI /21 years / Muslim /Gashua /09-08-2020

The above incidence was in tandem with Duffy and Buffett-Leger's (2012) submission that pregnant women are vulnerable to abuse from their husbands and such may cause danger for the pregnant mother and the unborn child.

During the study, respondents were requested to state whether they had sustained injuries in the past as a result of spouse abuse and what they did next after sustaining such injuries.

Analyses show that only 30% (3 respondents) had injuries in the past when their spouses abused them. The extracts were their comments:

Yes, I lost my pregnancy as a result of the beating. I was rushed to hospital for treatment. Unfortunately, I lost the pregnancy.

IDI/ 21years/ Muslim/ Gashua/ 09-08-2020

Another respondent commented thus:

I sustained injury on my head when he hit my head. I ran to his parents to complain and for my safety.

IDI /20 years / Muslim /Gashua /07-08-2020

In another excerpt, another respondent gave a comment thus:

Yes, I sustained injury on my left eye. The eye became reddish and very painful. I had to use hot water to mop the injured eye.

IDI /24 years /Christian /Gashua /07-08-2020

Spouse abuse causes public health problem. It is a public health tragedy, according to Valetine, Oche and Martin (2012). It is both social and health problem (Al- Badayneh, 2012). It is a serious prevalent public health issues (Foran et.al 2012). All the three respondents who sustained injuries justified the finding of Fang and Corso (2008) that spouse abuse causes injuries which always required medical attention for the women involved, or in the case of pregnant women, both mothers and unborn children. According to Abadu et.al (2012), the abuse has immediate, short and long term effects on the psychological and physical well-being of fetus.

The physical injuries suffered by victims of spouse abuse may be as a result of hitting by their husbands (see figure 1); or as a result of choking or strangulating (see Figure 5). Many victims of spouse abuse may be temporarily, or in some serious cases, become maimed in life. Many victims had in the past had their eyes damaged as a result of hitting from their husbands during such assaults. Picture in figure 7 is a good example of such severe injury.

Some women had also suffered abuse from their spouses in the past through solitary confinement (see figure 2). Such solitary confinement can lead to emotional depression for the victims (see Figure 6). In some known cases, such abused women may take to drugs or alcoholism to suppress depression (see Figure 8).

Children of abused women also suffered from such abuse. Knutson et.al (2009) argued that academic wellbeing of children can be affected by spouse abuse. Moylan et.al (2010) also argued that children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to experience adverse psycho-social and behavioral outcomes. Spouse abuse causes psychological and emotional disturbance to the children. For example, figure 9 shows emotionally disturbed daughter around her mother. Hence, both women and their children were usually victims of spouse abuse.

Threatening is one of the ways of abusing spouses. The study therefore investigated whether respondents had been threatened in the past by their spouses and asked to relay the incidences of such threats and whether they were afraid or not, of the threats; what their anxieties were after the threats, and finally what actions or steps they took thereafter.

A cursory look at the data shows that 7 (70%) out of 10 (100%) of respondents had been threatened in the past by their spouses. The excerpts below were their experiences on the issue of such threats:

Yes, my husband had threatened me in the past that if I was not careful with him, he would kill me. I was afraid at his statement because he could actually carry out his threat one day because he is a drunkard and someone like that can commit murder. I went to inform his parents that he was threatening to kill me if I was not careful with him.

IDI /20 years /Muslim /Gashua /07-08-2020

Another respondent gave a comment thus:

Yes, he had threatened me in the past. My husband said anytime I complained against his bad behaviour that he would beat me up to pulp. I was afraid because I knew he could carry out his threat. I did not do anything but I kept quiet and ensured I was careful with dealings with him.

IDI /25 years /Muslim /Gashua /08-08-2020

A respondent also gave her statement as follows:

He (her husband) had threatened me before. I remember when I was in my husband's house; we did not eat any food for three days. I sent one of my sons to my parents to help us with some food. When my husband heard of it, he became angry and threatened to kill me. I was afraid because I knew he meant what he said. I went to my parents to report everything he said so that they would be aware of his threat, in case he carried it out.

IDI /24 years / Muslim /Gashua /07-08-2020

An excerpt below was from another respondent:

Yes, my husband had threatened me before. When he married another wife, things became difficult for us at home and whenever I told him it was as a result of his second marriage he would flare up and started threatening me with divorce. I was not afraid at all but preferred to be divorced to living with such a man who did not care for his family. I did not take any step after the threat but told him if he would not change, he should divorce me.

IDI /22 years /Muslim /Gashua /07-08-2020

A comment below was another one from respondent:

Yes, my husband had threatened me before that he would marry another wife. I was afraid because getting married to another wife will jeopardize the survival of my children. I did not take any steps against him but only informed my parents and I always pray to Allah to help me survive the threat.

IDI /21 years /Muslim /Gashua /09-08-2020

Another respondent gave a similar experience thus:

My husband had threatened me before. Anytime we had misunderstanding, he would ask me to pack all my belongings and leave his house. I was afraid because it is not an easy thing to divorce my husband and stay in my father's house, while my children are there under the custody of another woman. I did not take any step but rather I comforted myself and took solace in God.

IDI /25 years /Muslim /Gashua /08-08-2020

Finally, a respondent had this to say:

My husband had threatened me in the past with divorce. I was afraid because I did not want to leave my children in care of the second wife. I usually informed my parents of all his threat.

IDI /30 years /Muslim /Gashua /10-08-2020

The content analyses of the excerpts on threats show that the respondents affected were threatened with beating, murder and divorce. The three threats were enough to make victims afraid. However, none of them reported the threats, especially beating and killing, to law enforcement agencies for action. Beating and killing are threat to life and they are criminal offences. Majority of them reported to their parents or in-laws which of course, may not be of help to the victims.

Threats in marriage, especially to life, should be taken with all seriousness. Abusive spouses carry out such threats at available opportunity, to subject their spouses under their control (see figure 3).

Verbal abuse was also taken into consideration in this study. Respondents were asked if they had been verbally abused by their spouse in the past, how they felt after the verbal abuse and what they did next.

Respondents were requested to state their experiences. The analyses show that all the respondents (100%) had suffered verbal abuse from their spouses in the past. Excerpts below narrated their experiences:

He had verbally abused me in the past. I told him to buy clothes for me because I was in need of clothes. He said when he married me my parents did not give me anything because they were poor parents, that I should go to my poor parents to buy clothes for me. I felt very bad that day and I prayed to God to give me patience to endure all his bad behaviours.

IDL /30 years /Muslim /Gashua /10-08-2020

Another respondent relayed her experience thus:

Yes, I had suffered from his harsh utterance before. He always told me he was the one that brought me up, that my parents did not give me home trainings. I always felt very bad whenever he said this. I did comfort myself that one day God would plead my case.

IDL /25 years /Muslim /Gashua /09-08-2020

Another respondent told her experience thus:

He had abused me with many provocative comments in the past. For instance, whenever I called his attention to problems to be solved at home, he would tell me I was not educated and what did I know or what knowledge did I have to solve a problem. I always felt very bad but there was nothing I could do to help myself.

IDL /21 years /Muslim /Gashua /09-08-2020

Another respondent commented thus:

Yes, my husband had verbally abused me in the past. I called his attention to something he was doing to the children and me that were bad. For instance, he did not take care of the children at home. But when I told him, he said I should keep my mouth shut and that I could not tell him how to run his family. I felt very bad that day and I preferred divorce to all these problems he was causing.

IDL /24 years /Muslim /Gashua /07-08-2020

An excerpt below was another experience of a respondent:

It is an everyday routine for my husband to be abusing me and my parents with many provocative words. I always felt very bad but kept quiet because of my children.

IDI /25 years /Muslim /Gashua /08-08-2020

Another respondent complained thus:

Yes, he had abused me with harsh and unbearable words time without number. For instance, he said he would not have married a useless woman like me if not to please his parents. He did call me all such filthy names that should not be said. I always felt very sad and many times I reported him to my parents.

IDI /20 years /Muslim /Gashua /07-08-2020

Finally, another respondent relayed her experience as follows:

Yes, my husband had used bad and foul statements on me in the past. Because I came from poor family, he always used this against me. For instance, that the kinds of food he was giving me as husband could not be given to me by my parents.

IDI /24 years /Christian /Gashua /07-08-2020

Verbal abuse constitutes the commonest form of spouse abuse and may go hand in hand with physical abuse. In some cases, harsh words or foul words used against spouses may cause untold depression and emotional problem. In the excerpts narrated above, all respondents felt very bad and very sad. For instance, calling spouse uneducated, abusing their parents or reminding them of their poor backgrounds, can really cause emotional problems for such spouses

Coping strategies for spouse abuse

The second objective of this study was to find out from respondents, coping strategies they implemented against spouse abuse. The excerpts below were coping strategies as offered by respondents:

My coping strategy is prayer. I always prayed to God to help me out whenever he started his problem. I cannot leave my children alone by divorcing him. I am afraid of what will become of my children. So prayer is my coping strategy.

IDI /24 years /Christian /Gashua /07-08-2020

Another respondent gave her coping strategy thus:

Although problems and challenges will come up in marriage but if patience can be applied like the way I normally do, the recurrent abuse can be avoided. Moreover, when wives are supportive to their husbands it will reduce abuse

IDL /35 years /Muslim /Gashua /07-08-2020

Another respondent gave a similar comment:

As a Muslim woman, I am always patient. I need to be patient because when your husband marries another wife all things in the house will change. If there is crisis, people will think the first wife is the cause. Hence, one needs to be very patient with every challenge.

IDL /22 years /Muslim /Gashua /07-08-2020

Another respondent also commented in similar way thus:

I am coping with the help from God. Good advice from my parents also assisted me and the patience that I have.

IDL /21 years /Muslim /Gashua /09-08-2020

Another respondent commented as follows:

I have been patient with every situation before and after the birth of my first child but when I cannot endure it again, he eventually divorced me.

IDL /24 years / Muslim /Gashua /07-08-2020

Another respondent talked of patience as coping strategy thus:

There is no other coping strategy except patience. I am patient because I do not want divorce. I do not want to ruin my children's future because if he marries another woman, I do not know the way the woman will treat my children

IDL /25 years /Muslim /Gashua /08-08-2020

Another respondent explained thus:

I am coping with patience and prayer. There is a saying that a patient dog eats the fattest bone.

IDL /25 years /Muslim /Gashua /07-08-2020

Another respondent gave prayer as coping strategy:

Since he started giving me problem in the house, I have been praying to God to take control of every situation

IDL /30 years /Muslim /Gashua /08-08-2020

Finally, for another respondent below the coping strategy was prayer:

I always prayed to Allah to help me by changing him for better before it is too late for him to amend his ways.

IDL /20 years /Muslim /Gashua /07-08-2020

A critical look at the coping strategies implemented by respondents shows that prayer, advice from parents and patience were the only coping strategies. It can be deduced that patience entails safety consciousness. Safety consciousness, according to Whiting et.al (2012), involves appraisal of threat and giving caution. Separation or divorce is another coping strategy but only one respondent mentioned this. However, it has been adjudged to be an effective way of coping with spouse abuse (Vatnar and Bjorkly, 2012). Prayers can also go a long way as coping strategy because it is believed that it can turn ugly situation around, likewise good and elderly advice from parents. However, there are several other ways of coping with abuse. For instance, becoming economically independent from husbands, women liberation programs and counseling, and other social policy programs for women can go a long way as coping mechanism.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This section summarizes the significant findings from the study, and the implications for victims of spouse abuse. It also contains conclusion and proffered recommendations for action policies.

Summary of results and findings

The findings in the study revealed that spouse abuse was a common phenomenon in Gashua community. Respondents claimed that men were not treating their wives with dignity; an attitude which has become a general attitude of men. Personal experiences of respondent were also considered as reason that spouse abuse is a common social vice as explained by respondents.

The findings also show that respondents affirmed spouse abuse as a disturbing social problem because of high rate of divorce within their community, lack of care for children by fathers, and insensitivity to needs of wives; all engineered the problem of spouse abuse

All the respondents were worried about the escalating rate of spouse abuse. Constant divorce cases within the community and increase in social disorder were cited as the reasons for respondents' worries about rising cases of spouse abuse.

Findings in the study revealed that spouse abuse affects children of couples concerned. Spouse abuse has led to the insensitivity to needs of the children; put children at risk; pushed children into street begging and other social vices. It has led some divorcees into prostitution, thereby putting the community into risk.

We discovered from the findings that 50% of respondents had been physically assaulted in the past by their spouses through beating, because they requested money for children's school fees and food; had brawl with sister-in-law or because their husbands were habitual drunkards. Findings show that 30% of respondents had sustained injuries in time past as a result of spouse abuse. Loss of pregnancy, injuries to head and eye were cited as physical injuries suffered by them.

Threatening is also a form of spouse abuse. Analyses show that 70% of respondents had been threatened in the past by their spouses.

The acts of threat were caused by the complaints of respondents against the behaviours of their spouses i.e. alcoholism, insensitivity to the needs of the family and taking second wife. The analyses show that respondents concerned were threatened with beating, murder, divorce and taking a second wife.

Verbal abuse also formed part of spouse abuse examined in this study. All the respondents (100%) had been verbally abused in the past by their spouses. The acts of verbal abuse came by as a result of respondents requesting their spouse to buy food for their household, clothes for wives and children and other things that needed the attentions of their spouses. Respondents narrated that their husbands had called their parents poor; and the respondents uneducated or not properly trained by their parents, as forms of verbal abuse they had suffered in the past.

Finally, the study discovered that coping strategies of respondents were prayers to God, patience and divorce. Although prayers to God and patience cannot be ruled out as coping strategies, separation or divorce may be needed to avert serious injuries from being inflicted on victims. Other coping strategies are highlighted under recommendations.

Conclusion

We conclude this study based on findings, the problem of spouse abuse is a common social phenomenon in Gashua community and is one that is very disturbing to the community. All the respondents affirmed worry on the problem and its consequential effects on the victims, their

children and the entire community. The coping strategies are not sufficient enough to assist victims of spouse abuse; therefore, more pragmatic steps are needed to assist victims.

Recommendations

The study proffers the following recommendations, based on the findings and conclusion:

In the first place, there is a need to create enough social awareness on spouse abuse and the need for community people to see it as a disturbing social problem. The information regarding the dangers inherent in the act should be shared within the community, and other consequential short term and long term effects should be publicized. There is a need for non-governmental organizations to assist in these regards. There are no serious awareness in this community by such organizations except a family support organization (SARC) in Damaturu which erected a billboard (see figure 10) on awareness against rape. Others are Centre for Community Development and Research Network (CCDRN). This organization deals with livelihood, training and empowerment. Another organization (Plan International) was also in this community. The organization solely protects children and Cooperatzioner Internazionale which deals with food distribution and care of pregnant and lactating women within the community. No private or non-governmental organization deals with prevention or cases of spouse abuse victims. The community leaders and religious leaders should be carried along

Secondly, there are needs to establish help centers for victims of spouse abuse. Such help centres should be equipped and empowered to counsel and give succor to victims and their affected children. The help centres may liaise with other women empowerment organizations which can provide women empowerment assistances to victims in need and provide also, medical assistance for those injured as a result of abuse.

Thirdly, victims of spouse abuse should be encouraged to come out and report such abuse to law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organizations that can provide helps for such victims. For instance, severe injuries and threats to life should not be condoned by the victims. It needs prompt attention of law enforcement agencies for proper intervention under the law.

Fourthly, there is a need to encourage states to enact laws against spouse abuse and other abuses against women. The international laws on these should be domesticated. However, such laws should be implemented and not allowed to be redundant.

Finally, constant appraisal of spouse abuse should be carried out through researches and surveys from time to time within the community of Gashua and other communities. This is very important to keep the trends of this problem and how to tackle it now and in the future. These recommendations and others from other researches, when implemented, will reduce drastically, the problem of spouse abuse in Gashua community and our entire society at large.

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FIGURES



FIGURE 1: A man hitting his wife with fist.
Source: www.shutterstock.com



Figure 2: A woman placed under solitary confinement by her husband.
Source: www.shutterstock.com

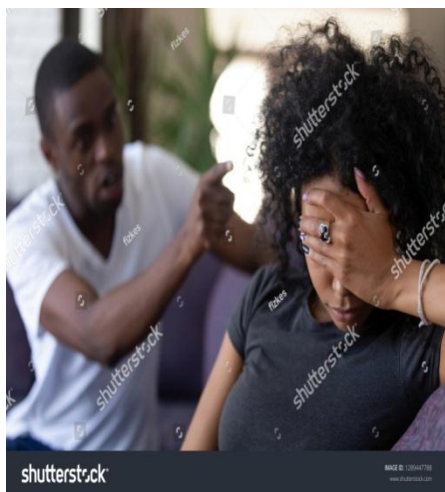


Figure 3: A man threatening his wife.
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Figure 4: A man slapping his wife.
Source: www.shutterstock.com



Figure 5 : A Man choking his wife.
Source: www.shutterstock.com



Figure 6: A woman in a depression
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Figure 8 : A woman taking alcohol and Cigarette to ease off tension and depression from spouse abuse.
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Source: www.shutterstock.com





Figure 9: A woman and her depressed daughter.
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Figure 10: A billboard erected by Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Damaturu.