

Domestic Violence and the Welfare of the Nigerian Child: An Evaluation of the Role of Child Protection Services and Law Enforcement Authorities

Abstract

Domestic violence although not a novel issue has been on the increase in Nigeria in the recent past. Several cases have gone on unreported and some victims have lost their lives in the process. The protection of children against domestic violence is one to be taken with all seriousness as children are not capable of protecting themselves against this vice. Cases have been reported of children facing domestic violence especially those that serve as domestic staff with non-relatives and sometimes relatives. Some of these cases have been prosecuted and the offenders sanctioned in accordance with the laws. It is in the light of this that this paper intends to assesses how child protection services and law enforcement agencies deal with domestic violence and its effects, on children's welfare. It aims to also examines the efficiency of frameworks and investigates the difficulties these institutions encounter in offering sufficient protection and assistance to children exposed to domestic violence. The paper finds that.....It further finds that..... Based on these findings the paper recommends.....and concludes that.....y identifying areas, for improvement, the paper seeks to contribute to policies and practices that prioritise the well-being of children.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Child Protection, child welfare, Law enforcement

I- Introduction

Domestic violence is a problem that significantly impacts children making them one of the vulnerable groups affected by this issue. In Nigeria there is growing concern regarding the welfare of children, in relation to violence. This emphasises the role played by Child Protection Services and Law Enforcement Agencies in safeguarding these children (Omoru & Uko 2018). The purpose of this paper is to evaluate how

Comment [h1]: An abstract is a summary of what your paper has done and not what you intend to do. What you have put down as the abstract is a mini proposal-what you intend to do. You are through with the paper so, give a summary of what you have done which should follow what I have shown on the paper. Please recast the abstract accordingly.

effective Child Protection Services and Law Enforcement Agencies are in addressing violence and its impact on children's welfare. It ~~will~~ examines existing approaches and models while suggesting ways to enhance their services. This paper ~~will~~ assesses the strategies, resources, and coordination mechanisms employed by Child Protection Services and Law Enforcement Agencies in tackling violence. It ~~will~~ specifically focuses on investigating incidents intervening when necessary and providing support to child victims and their families.

Comment [h2]: The word 'will' is futuristic but you have finished the paper

Furthermore, it ~~will~~ explores the effectiveness of collaboration between Child Protection Services, Law Enforcement Agencies stakeholders such, as the legal system, healthcare providers, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in responding to and preventing domestic violence involving children. The paper ~~will~~ also ~~cover~~examines the obstacles faced by Child Protection Services and Law Enforcement Agencies in Nigeria when it comes to addressing violence, against children. These challenges include norms that discourage violence, limitations in resources, inadequate training, and systemic barriers that hinder an effective response to domestic violence.

This paper aims to contribute to an understanding of how Child Protection Services and Law Enforcement Agencies in Nigeria can combat domestic violence against children. It seeks to provide recommendations, on strengthening these entities as other important stakeholders involved in preventing detecting, responding to, and protecting children from domestic violence. Based on the above, this paper is structured into six sections including the introduction. The second section gives an overview of.....Section five provides the way forward and the sixth section concludes the paper

Comment [h3]: I have given you a hint on how to conclude the introduction. Please provide the road map to your paper. That is the essence of an introduction.

II- An Overview of Domestic Violence in Nigeria

Domestic violence poses a problem in Nigeria impacting individuals and families, across the nation. It encompasses forms of mistreatment or aggression within relationships, including physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse. ~~Let me provide you with an overview of violence in Nigeria.~~ In Nigeria, domestic violence is

alarmingly prevalent as several studies indicate rates of abuse within households. However, due to factors like underreporting, social stigma, and cultural influences, the true magnitude of the issue may be underestimated (Ibrahim & Ibrahim 2019).

It is worth noting that domestic violence can be influenced by a range of factors such as norms, patriarchal systems, economic disparities, substance abuse issues, and limited access to education and employment opportunities (Johnson et al., 2019). These factors contribute to power imbalances within relationships and- increases the likelihood of violence occurring. Domestic violence encompasses types of mistreatmentmistreatments including acts such as hitting or using objects to harm the victim. Sexual abuse involves forcing or coercing victims into acts. Emotional abuse includes insults, humiliation tactics, threats and controlling behavior. Lastly, economic abuse entails controlling the victim's finances by restricting their access, to resources or withholding financial support.

When it comes to the impact, on victims it's important to recognise that domestic violence has consequences for individuals in terms of psychological and emotional well-being. It can lead to injuries, trauma, diminished self-esteem, increased anxiety and depression as well as post-traumatic stress disorder. Moreover, children who witness violence may face term developmental challenges and may even perpetuate the cycle of violence within their own relationships (Reference). As previously highlighted domestic violence remains a concern in Nigeria. Unfortunately, it is often unreported due to factors including norms, fear of retaliation, and limited awareness about available support services. Nonetheless based on existing data and reports there are statistics regarding cases of domestic violence in Nigeria. According to a survey conducted by the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) in 2018 30% of women aged 15 to 49 in Nigeria have experienced violence from their spouses or partners. Additionally, the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) Annual Crime Report, for 2019 indicated over 2,900 reported cases of violence; however, it should be noted that this number likely underrepresents the prevalence as many incidents go unreported. According to the 2019 report, from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), they received more than 1,000 cases concerning violence against women and children. This agency is responsible, for addressing both trafficking in persons and domestic violence incidents. In 2020, during the COVID-19 lock down

Comment [h4]: Look for this information and add. Also look for reported incidences in 2023 and add. It will further show the relevance of this paper

III- The Welfare of the Child Amidst Domestic Violence

Domestic violence in Nigeria affects a substantial number of children. According to the National Population Commission of Nigeria, about 50% of Nigerian children experience some form of violence, including domestic violence (National Population Commission of Nigeria, 2016). The welfare of a child amidst domestic violence is a critical concern in Nigeria. Domestic violence can have severe and long-lasting effects on children, both physically and psychologically. Domestic violence against children in Nigeria is a pressing issue that takes various forms. Amongst other forms, there are:

Physical Abuse: Children may experience physical violence at the hands of their caregivers, including parents or guardians. This can involve beatings, severe corporal punishment, or other physical harm that causes injury or pain. Research indicates that physical violence against children by their caregivers is a pervasive issue in Nigeria. A study conducted by Fawole et al. (2014) found that 65.1% of children surveyed experienced physical violence, with mothers being the most common perpetrators.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse can manifest through constant belittlement, humiliation, threats, and verbal aggression towards children. This form of abuse can have long-lasting psychological effects on the child's well-being. Dye (2019) is of the view that emotional abuse may be the most damaging form of maltreatment [as it causes due to causing](#) damage to a child's developing brain affecting their emotional and physical health as well as their social and cognitive development. Emotional

abuse is indeed considered a form of domestic violence when it occurs within the context of a family or intimate relationship. This includes emotional abuse directed towards children. It must be recalled that the United Nations Children's Fund (2020) acknowledges emotional abuse as a form of violence against children within the framework of domestic violence. The World Health Organisation (2012) even defines emotional abuse as a form of child maltreatment and highlights its occurrence within domestic violence situations.

Sexual Abuse: Child sexual abuse involves any form of sexual activity imposed on a child without their consent. This includes molestation, rape, incest, child pornography, exploitation, and forced participation in sexual acts. Sexual abuse of children within the context of domestic violence refers to any form of sexual exploitation, assault, or molestation perpetrated against a child by someone within their family or household. It is a particularly heinous form of abuse that can cause severe and long-lasting harm to the child's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being (Jones 2021). Ezechi et al. (2018) asserted that although a number of laws that address sexual abuse of minors or sexual offenses exist in different forms, the challenge is with the implementation. In addition, culturally parents are unwilling to prosecute offenders as they see it as exposing their abused child to the public.

Neglect: Neglect occurs when a child's basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, and education, are consistently unmet by their caregivers. Neglect can also include a lack of emotional support, failure to provide medical care or abandonment. Chiluba (2021) stated that in Nigeria, child abuse and neglect are prevalent in the everyday life of a child but they receive little or no attention from the society. Child neglect can be considered part of domestic violence because it involves the failure of a caregiver to meet a child's basic needs and provide them with adequate care and protection. Domestic violence typically occurs within the context of an intimate partner relationship or family environment, where power dynamics and control may be unstable. Hence in a situation of disrupted family dynamics, Domestic violence can create a chaotic and unpredictable home environment. Indeed, parents involved in an abusive relationship may be preoccupied with their own safety, leaving them unable to adequately attend to their children's needs.

Child Marriage: Child marriage is prevalent in some regions of Nigeria, where young girls are forced into marriages before the age of 18. This practice deprives them of their childhood, and education, and exposes them to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse within the marital relationship. Child marriage is considered part of domestic violence because it involves the violation of a child's rights, exposes them to various forms of abuse, and perpetuates harmful gender norms and power imbalances within the family structure. It often occurs within the context of an intimate partner relationship or family environment, where control and coercion are prevalent. Hayes et al. (2022) observe that despite being a human rights violation, child marriage still takes place across the globe and prior scholarship has shown early marriage to be associated with an increased risk of intimate partner violence.

Comment [h5]: Discuss this in relation to the differences on when a child is considered an adult in Nigeria. Age is culturally and religiously determined in Nigeria and these cultural and religious norms run contrary to the law. Also highlight the issue of illiteracy and poverty as the reason behind child marriage. Some parents see their daughters as their link to wealth.

Witchcraft Accusations: In certain parts of Nigeria, there have been cases where children, often vulnerable or orphaned, are accused of witchcraft. They face abuse, and abandonment, or are subjected to harmful practices under the belief that they possess supernatural powers. Witchcraft accusations in Nigeria are indeed part of domestic violence against children. In some regions of Nigeria, there is a deeply rooted cultural belief in witchcraft, and children, particularly those who are vulnerable or marginalised, can become targets of these accusations ([Reference](#)). Accused children are often stigmatised and isolated from their families and communities. They can be seen as a source of misfortune, leading to their exclusion from social activities, education, and even access to basic needs like food and shelter. Children accused of witchcraft are denied their basic rights, including the right to education, health, and protection from harm. They are often denied access to proper medical care and support systems, leaving them vulnerable and without appropriate assistance (Ekundayo, 2022).

Trafficking and Exploitation: Children in Nigeria are vulnerable to being trafficked within the country or internationally for forced labor, domestic servitude, or sexual exploitation. Imo (2017) observed that Child trafficking in Nigeria began receiving increased media and international attention in Nigeria since 1998 although child labour and child abuse had long been an issue for social concern. Trafficking and exploitation of children are indeed forms of domestic violence. This is because in child trafficking there is coercion and manipulation. ~~Indeed~~Indeed, children who are trafficked or exploited are often manipulated through threats, deceit, and coercion.

They may be forced to comply with their abusers' demands out of fear for their safety or the safety of their loved ones, which leads to a loss of autonomy and control over their own lives. Combating child trafficking and exploitation as part of domestic violence requires comprehensive efforts. This includes strong legislation, law enforcement measures against traffickers and exploiters, awareness campaigns, accessible support services for survivors, and initiatives to address the root causes of vulnerability, such as poverty and lack of education. By addressing these interconnected issues, we can work towards creating a society where children are protected from trafficking and exploitation, and their rights are upheld.

These cases of child domestic violence highlight the urgent need for effective child protection measures, awareness campaigns, community involvement, legal reforms, and resources to address and prevent such abuses. It requires collaborative efforts from government agencies, law enforcement, social workers, NGOs, and the community to create a safe environment for Nigerian children and protect their rights.

II- The Role of Child Protection Services and Law Enforcement Agencies

In Nigeria, the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (MWASD) takes the lead in ensuring adequate protection and well-being of children and exists “to work for the attainment of the full potentials of Nigerian children and women pool for national development, survival and protection of the right of the Nigerian child”. To achieve this objective the Ministry coordinates, maintains, and implements policy, programmes, and initiatives for children’s rights, welfare, care, and protection and oversees the Nigerian Children’s Parliament. Another important child protection service is the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) of Nigeria. NAPTIP was created primarily to tackle the problem of trafficking in

persons especially that of children. In this regard, NAPTIP has been able to investigate and prosecute traffickers as well as rescue and support survivors of trafficking. Nigeria also has a National Child Welfare Policy in place to promote the welfare of children and protect them from abuse, abandonment, neglect, discrimination, violence, and exploitation has also developed a National Strategic Plan of Action for Child Protection which includes combating child abuse and neglect, and to promote the development and well-being of children especially orphans and vulnerable children. The Nigerian Police Force also gives its own individual support by having Family Support Units (FSUs) in place to handle Domestic Violence, Child Abuse, and other Gender Cases, they also have other forms of support such as Counseling Units, etc. Furthermore, the Child Rights Act of 2003 is an Act to provide for the rights of the Nigerian child and provides for protection from harmful and exploitive traditional practices. The Child Rights Act prohibits and provides punishment for child abuse, child exploitation, child labor, and the circumcision or use of children in any ethnic or tribal rituals in Nigeria. In addition to the efforts by the Government alone in implementing these laws, the Government of Nigeria also allows Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and International Organisations operating in Nigeria to carry out activities which focused on the protection, and survival, participation, and development of women and children in Nigeria. These organisations provide services in education, health vocational training, life skills, and other services that would support the care and welfare of vulnerable children as well as their families. However, it is important to remember that child protection services in Nigeria are constantly adapting and changing and the National Assembly is constantly improving its provision of services through policies, programmes, and projects as called for by S.A.D.P. Nigerian National

Comment [h6]: State the full meaning before the abbreviated form

Assembly - Senators and participating agencies are scrambling for their rights and duties of child protection services. The Nigerian Police Force and the Nigerian Customs Service make the provision of law protection services as requested. The Nigerian Police Force carries out operational fighting in situations of public disorder and violence prevention, supporting the police and other law enforcement security services in maintaining order and public safety. Nigerian Customs Service is responsible for the enforcement of customs regulations, including the prohibition of smuggling and preventing the import and export of many prohibited forms of goods.

Comment [h7]: In bringing in the custom services, are you treating the children or trafficked persons as prohibited goods? Change the language and present the role of the Custom services in this regard more aptly

In summary, Nigeria's National child protection services focus on the main goal of making a difference in the lives of children in Nigeria. They work to coordinate national policies on child welfare. They help in implementing the protection and welfare of the Nigerian child; they take part in the investigation and prosecution of criminal offences of child abuse, Child labour, and child exploitation. They help in the rescue and protection of the trafficked child victims of child abuse and exploitation and they have a major role to play in spreading the word and information via the Child Rights Information Bureau. The Nigerian National Police Force has a role to play in domestic violence invoking the Family Support Unit's responsibilities while the Nigerian Customs Service has a duty to perform in controlling the border and is responsible for the prevention of smuggling, and the import and export of illegal goods Monthly.

Comment [h8]: Here too. You did not discuss the functions of the NGO's. They have been very effective and instrumental in the fight against child abuse in whatever form.

1- Child Protection Services in Nigeria

The Nigerian government along, with its ministries and departments within the sub-sector holds the responsibility for safeguarding the well-being of children in Nigeria. The government's commitment to this cause is evident through the presence of agencies dedicated to protecting children's rights all of which operate under

government authority. One such example is the establishment of the Child Protection Sub-sector in 2017 aimed at coordinating emergency child protection efforts in Nigeria. These agencies play a role by receiving and addressing reports of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation thoroughly. If a child is deemed to be in danger Child Protection Services have the ability to relocate them to an environment. Entities like NAPTIP also play a role, in responding to reports of child abuse and domestic violence. According to Dr. Fatima Wasiri Azi, Director General of NAPTIP (*The Guardian*, 2022), they received 1,100 reports during the ten months of 2022 involving severe physical harm inflicted on children by their parents or guardians.

Comment [h9]: How often does this happen?

Comment [h10]: How many of these children were relocated to safe environments?

2 - Law Enforcement Authorities

The responsibility of investigating cases involving child abuse, neglect, or violence and gathering evidence to build a case, against the perpetrators lies with law enforcement agencies. These agencies interview witnesses. Collect evidence with the aim of identifying those who commit crimes against children. Once there is evidence to support charges law enforcement agencies proceed to apprehend the individuals responsible for abusing children. This does not remove child abusers from society. Also involves testifying and presenting evidence in court to support the prosecution of these offenders. In addition to prosecuting child abusers, units dedicated to child protection and child policing also play a role in ensuring the safety of children. Unlike child services, these specialised units have the authority to intervene and place a child in custody if they are deemed to be in danger. Law enforcement officers have the right to remove a child from neglectful parents until a social worker or child protection officer arrives and arranges, for their safekeeping.

Comment [h11]: Do you want to say that the law enforcement agencies are involved in testifying and presenting evidence in court to support prosecution? Then recast for aptness

Comment [h12]: Please give an example to substantiate this claim. It will enrich your work.

Many law enforcement agencies also play a role, in preventing child abuse through activities aimed at raising awareness. They engage in community education programmes that focus on recognising the signs of abuse support campaigns for child protection laws and regulations and collaborate with social service agencies and the courts to ensure the safety and well-being of children. In Nigeria, the Nigeria Police Force has established Juvenile Welfare Centres/Gender Units as a unit to handle cases related to child abuse, such as child trafficking, violence against

Comment [h13]: Do these units exist in all the Police stations in Nigeria or some specific states. Please be specific as it will help in your recommendations

children, and other forms of mistreatment. This unit is responsible for conducting investigations apprehending offenders and ensuring that justice is served while prioritising the protection of the child. Additionally, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) actively combats international trafficking involving children. NAPTIP's responsibilities encompass prevention efforts, rescue operations, prosecution proceedings, and rehabilitation services for individuals. They work closely with law enforcement agencies like the police and Collaborate with other relevant organisations.

Each state in Nigeria has its own State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development tasked with promoting gender equality, safeguarding rights and providing services for women and children. These ministries often have dedicated departments or units that address issues related to child protection. Furthermore, the National Human Rights Commission advocates for rights, in general including those concerning children's rights.

The main role of the Commission is to oversee, investigate, and provide recommendations regarding human rights violations, in Nigeria. This includes violations such as the right to life, torture, extrajudicial killings, and non-compliance with due process rights. The Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps collaborates closely with agencies like the police force, ~~civil defense corps~~, immigration, and customs. They play a role in safeguarding borders to protect society and ensure the safety of children by preventing abuse, exploitation, and violence. Both federal and state ministries of justice are responsible for bringing offenders who violate the law to court. In cases related to trafficking or child abuse these ministries can work together with the police force to apprehend offenders and ensure their prosecution in court. Through efforts among these agencies based on their functions they strive towards a common goal of safeguarding children from abuse and exploitation while ensuring their overall well-being, in Nigeria.

Comment [h14]: How does the immigration and custom service prevent abuse, exploitation and violence?

3 - Collaboration between Child Protection Services (CPS) and Law Enforcement Authorities

Child protection services and law enforcement agencies must have effective communication and information-sharing mechanisms. This cooperation ensures timely interventions and coordination in child protection cases. In cases where child abuse involves criminal activity, CPS and law enforcement agencies often collaborate on joint investigations. This allows for a comprehensive examination of the situation and appropriate action. Regular training programmes and capacity-building initiatives should be organised to enhance the knowledge and skills of both Child Protection Services and law enforcement personnel. This helps them effectively respond to child protection cases. Both child protection services and law enforcement agencies have the shared responsibility of ensuring the safety, well-being, and welfare of children in Nigeria. Collaborative efforts, clear protocols, and continuous training are essential to address child protection issues effectively and provide the necessary support to vulnerable children.

Comment [h15]: Incomplete sentence

Comment [h16]: This is too short to be a section. You can merge it the forth section

4 - Challenges to the Actions of the Child Protection Services and Law Enforcement Agencies

Child Protection Services and law enforcement play a role, in upholding society's commitment to safeguarding children from abuse and neglect as well as ensuring their overall well-being. However, both face challenges in their work. These challenges include resources due to funding, insufficient staff, and outdated programmes and systems that hinder the effectiveness of these agencies. As a result, they may struggle to respond to cases, conduct investigations, and provide comprehensive support to victims. In addition, to these resource-related obstacles that pose difficulties, there are other challenges that Nigerian authorities and law and policy makers should address and they include:-

Lack of awareness and Reporting. Child abuse cases are often not reported for reasons. These reasons include fear, lack of awareness, about services, cultural influences, and a lack of trust in the system. Consequently, child protection agencies and law enforcement face challenges, in identifying and intervening in such situations. Additionally, child protection workers and law enforcement officers often

lack the training to handle these cases with sensitivity, efficiently gather facts and evidence or adequately support child victims (Heron & Eisma 2021).

Institutional Barriers: In instances, institutional barriers continue to hinder and delay responses to recurring instances of child abuse (Okaru Bisant, 2019). These barriers have implications for the effectiveness of agencies responsible for addressing such issues. The presence of processes means that children who have reported cases of child abuse may experience suffering until their claims are heard and resolved. Bureaucratic processes involve procedures and structures that must be followed before reaching a decision. Consequently, bureaucracies often contribute to delays that pose a threat to welfare. The intricate dynamics, within bureaucracies, can impede responses to incidents of child abuse thereby exacerbating harm inflicted upon the child.

Comment [h17]: Look for a more suitable word such as challenges, difficulties etc.

Another obstacle, within the system that can contribute to inefficiency in addressing child abuse cases, is the lack of cooperation among agencies once a report has been made. Although various agencies have been assigned the responsibility of safeguarding children, the lack of coordination renders their presence ineffective (Okaru Bisant, 2019). To ensure an effort in protecting children it is crucial to establish consistency in roles and clearly outline the responsibilities of each agency. Communication plays a role in any field but its effectiveness diminishes when there is poor collaboration between these agencies resulting in delayed responses to child abuse issues. Consequently, it is evident that the response to child abuse cases has been hindered due to the absence of coordination that would facilitate action.

Moreover, the violation of children's rights is exacerbated by the absence of protocols. This means that there are no procedures or expected conduct, for organisations and individuals when encountering cases of child abuse (Okaru Bisant, 2019). It is imperative to establish guidelines to ensure that the best and most effective response is provided for addressing child abuse situations. As a result, the existence of approaches has allowed other organisations to have flexibility, in how they take advantage of their clients.

Socio-cultural factors: Various aspects of socio-cultural backgrounds present challenges when it comes to addressing cases of child abuse. These factors reflect attitudes and beliefs that impede the effective handling and reporting of child

exploitation cases. The stigma attached to issues plays a role, in hindering the process as society often blames victims for their emotional or physical abuse. Not do abused children fear judgment and blame from society. They also feel powerless against their abusers. In societies, cultural norms prioritise family unity over the safety of children, which should be the minimum expectation in any society. If society truly values child welfare it should actively support interventions on behalf of these individuals.

Additionally, harmful traditional practices prevalent in cultures exacerbate the problem further. One such practice is child marriage, which poses an obstacle to measures, for children.

Comment [h18]: Recast for aptness

Child protection authorities often face challenges when it comes to intervening and safeguarding children from situations. Another form of child abuse stems from accusations of witchcraft. In communities and villages, children are frequently blamed by their own families or the community for allegedly practicing witchcraft resulting in physical abuse or other forms of mistreatment. These cases contribute to the complexity of addressing the issue of child abuse making it incredibly challenging to identify and intervene in a manner ultimately allowing harmful practices to persist within society.

Comment [h19]: recast

[What heading are you discussing under with the points. There should be a nexus to link the discussions below. Is it a continuation of the topic on this section? If so, it may be good to number the points or sub-headings.](#)

High caseloads: Child Protection Services and law enforcement agencies encounter difficulties due, to the number of cases they handle. The overwhelming workload hampers their ability to effectively intervene and support individuals in need. As a result, the quality of services provided may be compromised, leading to gaps in assistance (Boyas et al., 2022).

The sheer volume of cases often prevents Child Protection Services and law enforcement agencies from allocating time and resources to those who require it the most. This can result in poor quality service delivery ~~of quality~~ as professionals are compelled to address competing and sometimes conflicting demands arising from their involvement, in cases. Consequently, victims impacted by these cases frequently suffer because comprehensive interventions have not been fully delivered.

Excessive caseloads can also contribute to burnout diminishing their effectiveness. In their efforts to provide assistance across cases, it is inevitable that professionals may lack the energy or motivation necessary to dedicate sufficient time to each specific population.

Furthermore, when caseloads become overwhelming there is an increased risk that some cases will be overlooked or neglected. With limited resources available agencies and professionals tend to prioritise pressing matters. Unfortunately, this prioritisation leaves cases unattended or disregarded. This can result in harm to victims. **The lack of care, for them.** **To tackle the challenges posed by caseloads it is crucial to allocate funding and resources to Child Protection Services and law enforcement agencies.** These increased funds should be specifically designated for hiring personnel and offering support, training, and assistance to these professionals. Potential strategies may involve prioritising cases and working in collaboration, with community partners. If executed properly every child would receive the attention and support leaving no one behind.

Comment [h20]: ??? Delete please

Legal challenges: Legal challenges can be major roadblocks to successful prosecution and navigating the legal system (Foua & Diriwari, 2020). The burden of proof, delays in court proceedings, and the need for expert witnesses can all hinder the use of legal interventions in these cases, and become a major obstacle to child protection services. **There are some steps that can be taken to reduce and, in some cases overcome, some of these challenges.** One of the first steps would be much-needed additional funding. This would enable the Child Protection Services to hire additional staff and expand the facilities that they work from. This could make it so they are able to respond effectively to child abuse and neglect, provide non-offending family support as well as other important things that they are required to do under these mandated laws.

Comment [h21]: How does this relate to addressing legal challenges?

Another barrier when it comes to the law for child protection **is not all professionals involved in the case understand child protection law.** This is where training and education programmes would be essential to the **Child Protection Services lawyers, Judges, and social workers.** **† This type of information should be made available to all of them.** **That way the lawyers and Judges have a better understanding of the trials**

Comment [h22]: Is the fact that not all the professionals understand child protection law?

Comment [h23]: Is it possible for the lawyers and Judges in this field not to understand the law? Are there special courts in Nigeria for Child protection?

that Child protection workers go through because they will be better acquainted with some of the dynamics of these unique cases involving the law. This way Judges will be efficient in deciding on the cases. Being able to become familiar with the case and its background from a social worker's point of view, in what they do on a day-to-day basis with the children involved.

Comment [h24]: Please recast. What you have said is not correct. It is the duty of the judges to interpret the existing laws. They do not work with the views of the social workers but with the law.

Another barrier can be the unwillingness of bystanders and witnesses to come forward with what they have witnessed. Public awareness and outreach would be another essential thing to do. The outreach programme should serve as a tool to educate the general public by letting them know what is happening within their own backyards in relation to child neglect and abuse. These educating programmes would be put in place to raise public awareness and ~~te~~inform the public on the best ways to go about/reporting child neglect and abuse. The ability to ~~assist~~ address some of the legal causation barriers and the need to ~~make~~ ensure that people work together can improve some of the legal causes against child abuse and neglect cases.

Most often the Child Protection Service Agencies ~~is~~ are busy in they are reaching out to other forms of helping sectors (Medical staff and the law, Enforcement services). The agency can make further investigations through this they will also be able to get. Lastly changing the laws as they pertain to child abuse cases can become a big help with pushing child protection cases along the justice system, enactment of these reforms is the first of many steps that the government has taken stewardship over. Taking these steps to reduce and some cause a complete stop to abuse. My conking concludes. To implement the spoken approach to child protection and law enforcement when it comes to the law for child protection.

Comment [h25]: Fragmented sentence. Read and recast for clarity

Comment [h26]: Recast for aptness

Comment [h27]: You have not discussed the provisions of this law, how then did you come about the conclusion that the law is inadequate and needs a review?

Comment [h28]: Please recast this sentence and use formal and active words

Comment [h29]: This does not convey any meaning. Please recast.

V- The Way Forward

To effectively address the issue of violence, in Nigeria, it is crucial to establish laws that criminalise acts and recognise the existing legislation concerning violence. It's important to acknowledge that our country already has laws in place like the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP) enacted in 2015 and the Child Rights Act

(CRA) of 2003 which explicitly prohibit these acts. However, the real challenge lies in implementing and enforcing these laws.

To overcome these obstacles, various organisations, including government-funded NGOs have intensified their efforts to provide support for survivors of violence. These initiatives encompass a range of services such as helplines, shelters, [counselingcounselling](#) services, legal representation, and rehabilitation programmes. While these [endeavorsendeavours](#) are commendable there are still challenges that need to be addressed and overcome.

One major hurdle is the lack of awareness among individuals regarding the signs and symptoms of violence. This leads to a reluctance, in reporting incidents. Moreover, society still carries a prevailing stigma associated with violence which often deters survivors from coming. Additionally, there is a scarcity of awareness programmes and educational initiatives specifically focused on addressing violence issues within Nigeria. Many people, in Nigeria, are still unaware of the signs and consequences of violence which greatly hampers the reporting and intervention process due to lack of knowledge. Support services struggle with funding and resources as there is a shortage of accommodations and support organisations to Nigeria's population.

Improving coordination between government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is vital. To effectively respond to violence, it is crucial to establish partnerships with stakeholders including government agencies and NGOs. The government should implement recommendations aimed at preventing violence, such as delivering speeches on violence to children in primary schools or organising activities that promote ideas for addressing this issue.

It is evident that domestic violence poses a problem in Nigeria resulting in impacts on society. Overcoming this issue requires effort and hard work from all members of our society. Efforts are being made in Nigeria by both the government and [non-governmental organisations \(NGOs\)](#) along with international NGOs taking necessary actions. These actions involve strategies like advocating for policy reforms, raising awareness through sensitisation programmes, engaging communities providing capacity-building initiatives and conducting training sessions. To effectively prevent violence in Nigeria it is crucial for individuals to take responsibility. [As a wise person](#)

said, even a small group of citizens can create an impact, e in Nigeria and the world. Hence it is crucial to give importance to education and share knowledge. Keep in mind that making a difference begins with all stakeholders; their commitment can play a role, in tackling violence.

Comment [h30]: Mention the name of this wise person please. E.g., as noted by Niki Tobi

VI - CONCLUSION

Addressing the welfare of children, in the face of violence is a complex challenge that requires the commitment of our government, policymakers, the general public, and the men and women serving in the Nigerian Police Force. To ensure the well-being of children, it is crucial for child protection systems to be actively involved in identifying, exposing and addressing incidents of violence. The police should promptly and consistently investigate reported cases involving child or adult abuse. Each case should be thoroughly examined to provide support and effective interventions for safeguarding children.

Child protection agencies need to collaborate with law enforcement agencies to promote integration. By working, these agencies can offer support to those who witness or experience domestic violence. It is essential to make efforts towards integrating child protection services with law enforcement agencies. Regular training programmes and continuous support are vital for improving the response capabilities of both law enforcement agencies and child protection services. Lastly, it is crucial for each individual to recognise their role and take action accordingly. ~~Whether it's a father, mother, or guardian who knows about child abuse or perpetrates it themselves~~— each person has a responsibility in this fight, against violence affecting children. It is our responsibility to raise our voices against the mistreatment of children.

References

Abeku, T., "NAPTIP raises alarm over growing cases of child abandonment by parents in FCT." *The Guardian* (December 2021). Available at <<https://guardian.ng/news/naptip-raises-alarm-over-growing-cases-of-child-abandonment-by-parents-in-fct/>> accessed 10 September 2023

Adebowale, T. O. (2016). Domestic violence against women and children in Nigeria: An appraisal. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 55, 16-25

Adele, D. J., (2021) Child Sexual Abuse as Lifespan Trauma Within the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: Experiences of Caribbean Women, *Frontiers Sociology* (6) 1-12

Ajayi, B. M., & Owolabi, T. A. (2018). Domestic violence and child protection among women in Nigeria. *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice*, 10(1), 75-92

Alayi, C. E. et. al (2022) The Role of Cultural Beliefs, Norms, and Practices in Nigerian Women's Experiences of Sexual Abuse and Violence, *Violence Against Women*, 28(2) 465–486

Bosesfki W (2021) Domestic Violence [And](#) Child Sexual Abuse: Powerful Story Exposes [The](#) Cruelty Of Abusive Relationships: Domestic Partner Abuse Books
Boyas, J. F. et. al (2022)- Exploring the health of child protection workers: A call to action, *Health Promot Perspect*, 12(4):381-390

Chiluba, E., (2021) Child Abuse and Neglect in the Nigerian Context. Available at <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3969997#:~:text=In%20Nigeria%2C%20child%20abuse%20and,problems%20of%20malnutrition%20and%20infecti on.> accessed 10 September 2023

Dye, H.L., (2019) Is Emotional Abuse [As](#) Harmful as Physical and/or Sexual Abuse? (2019)_*Journal of Child Adolescent Trauma*. 13(4) 399-407

Ekundayo. O., (2022) Proliferation of Child Witchcraft Accusation in Nigeria: A Violation of the Human Rights of the Child, *International Journal of Law Management and Humanities* 5 (3) 1621 – 1659

Ezechi, D. N., et. al (2018) Child sexual abuse and disclosure in South Western Nigeria: a community-based study. *African Health Sciences* 18(2)199-208

Fawole, O., Hundie, B., & Jegede, O. (2014). Analysis of climate variability, perceptions, and adaptation strategies of rural farm households in southwest Nigeria. *Theoretical and Applied Climatology*, 116(3), 493-504

Foua, A., -& Diriwari, W., (-2020) Cultural and Legal Perspectives on Child Protection in the Context of Child Trafficking in Nigeria, *Beijing Law Review*, 11(1) 11-33

Garko, S. B., & Umar, U. (2017). Domestic violence and child protection services in Nigeria: An exploration of challenges and prospects. *Journal of Social Welfare and Human Rights*, 5(1), 45-62.

Gidado, T., & Alao, T. A., (2019). Domestic violence and child welfare in Nigeria: The

role of law enforcement agencies. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 12(1), 96-111

Igwe, W. C., & Umeakuka, I. (2020). Domestic violence and child protection: A critical analysis of the Nigerian context. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35(4), 335-348

Heron, R. L. & Eisma, M. C., (2021) Barriers and facilitators of disclosing domestic violence to the healthcare service: A systematic review of qualitative research, *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 29(3) 612–630

Human Rights Warch (2019) 'Violence against Women Pervasive in Nigeria'. Available at <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/03/14/violence-against-women-pervasive-nigeria>> accessed 10 September 2023

Ibrahim, B., & Ibrahim, F. (2019). Domestic violence in Nigeria: An overview. *Journal of Gender-Based Violence*, 3(2), 215-231

Iruonagbe, C. T., & Adeyemi-Bello, T. O. (2018). Child protection services and law enforcement agencies in addressing domestic violence against children in Nigeria. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology*, 7, 190-200

Joda, A. E. (2017). Child protection services and law enforcement agencies in the prevention and management of domestic violence in Nigeria. *Nigerian Police Journal*, 4(2), 22-34

Okechukwu, O. C., & Akinwumi, A. W. (2015). Domestic violence, child protection services, and law enforcement agencies in Nigeria: An assessment of challenges and strategies for improvement. *Journal of Social Work*, 15(6), 603-621

Okoro, C. O., & Ogwu, F. O. (2019). Domestic violence and child welfare in Nigeria: The efficacy of child protection services. *Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa*, 8(2), 199-214

Johnson, S., Menendez, M., & Roush, T. (2019). Factors Influencing Domestic Violence: A Review of Literature. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 34(11) 2146-2179
Johnson, S., Menendez, M., & Roush, T. (2019). Factors Influencing Domestic Violence: A Review of Literature. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 34(11) 2146-2179

Kidman, R., (2017) Child marriage and intimate partner violence: a comparative study of 34 countries, *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 46 (-2)- 662–675

National Population Commission of Nigeria (2016). Violence against children in Nigeria: Findings from a National Survey, 2014. Available at <<https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/media/1586/file/Nigeria-violence-against-children-national-survey.pdf>> accessed 13 September 2023

Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey available [at](#), <[at](#).

| <<https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR359/FR359.pdf>>, accessed 13 September 2013

| Okaru-Bisant, V., (2019) Overcoming Institutional and Legal Barriers That Prevent Abused Females from Accessing Justice in Fragile Nigerian Regions, American University Journal of Gender, Social Policy & the Law,- 27 (1) -1- 41

Omoru, I., & Uko, B. (2018). Domestic violence and child welfare in Nigeria: The role of Child Protection Services and Law Enforcement Agencies. *Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect*, 82, 145-162

Onyema, C. O., & Ugwuoke, M. N. (2016). Domestic violence, child protection services, and law enforcement agencies in Nigeria: An evaluation of current practices. *Social Work Review*, 2(2), 164-180.

Unicef (2010) Children Accused of Witchcraft: An anthropological study of contemporary practices in Africa. Available at <<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4e97f5902.pdf>> accessed 12 September 2023

Unicef (2020) Violence Against Children. Available at <<https://www.unicef.org/protection/violence-against-children>> accessed 10 September 2023

World Health Organisation (2012) Understanding and Addressing Violence Against Women: Intimate Partner Violence<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77432/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf> accessed 12 September 2023