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The Roles and Challenges of Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in combating Violence Against Women in Nigeria. A case study of Women's Right Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA).

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to assess the effort of Non-Governmental Organization in combating violence against women in Nigeria using an NGO known as Women Right Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA). This study uses qualitative method in gathering empirical data as well as in the analysis. The interview guide was semi-structured interviews whereby WRAPA's employees working at the organization's head office were interviewed. And also interviewed were the victims of violence against women who themselves were the beneficiaries of WRAPA's projects. Theoretical frameworks applied in this study are social action theory and empowerment theory which will further explain the aspect of gender power relation and the empowerment concepts, as well as the elements of empowerment and the NGOs. The theoretical framework used was to get a deeper understanding of the role of WRAPA helps women in Nigeria to overcome violence. The result showed that WRAPA has played a great role as an NGO in addressing violence against women in Nigeria. Although, most of the violence against women in Nigeria are due to certain traditions and religious practices. For example, most women who are victims cannot report due to the fact that they economically dependents on their husband. So, what WRAPA is doing is to train most women with skills to be self-employed and educate the women on how to resist violence. On the other hand WRAPA faces challenges in terms of culture, weak legal backings on violence against women in Nigeria and lack of funds to build enough homes for women that are faced with violence. For WRAPA to successfully carry out their roles as NGO in Nigeria there should be enough funds to assist the victims of violence and legislation on violence against women must be strengthened and enforced.

Keywords: Violence, Violence against women, gender, NGO, WRAPA, Nigeria

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DEDICATION

This research project is especially dedicated to God Almighty, for whom I hold fervent love and owe much tribute.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEG	Cornell Empowerment Group
CFC	Coalition for Change
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DFID	Department for International Development
GAAIBP	Gender and Affirmative Action Issue Based Project
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
UN	United Nation
UNCED	United Nation Conference on Environment and Development
SOAWR	Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR)
WRAPA	Women's Right Advancement and Protection Alternative
WHO	World Health Organization

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Violence and violence against women

Violence is everywhere in the world today, but in a different form, and violence against women also exists but it is different from context to context even though there have been great change overtime but violence against women still exist (Okolo 2008, p.2).

Violence against women is a manifestation of unbalanced power relations between men and women whom the Marxist assumes originated from a historical period when men began to acquire private property.¹ This manner of incorporation of women in societies placed men above the women in the hierarchy; and this restrains women's attempts to realize their full potential in the time past (Gonzaz 1998,p.84).

Women all over the world experience violence in different ways; tradition and culture which exist in every society are assumed to have played major roles in fostering violence against women for centuries. The various patriarchal theories argue that in the past and present, but less so today, the unequal distribution of power between the sexes has resulted in societies that have been dominated by men and that most women occupy subordinate positions of power, increasing their vulnerability to violence, especially within the family (Martin 1976; Dobash and Dobash 1979)

There is no single society in the world today where women do not experience any kind of violence (United Nations report 2006, p.11). Violence comes in various forms and violence against women in some societies can be alarming and these underscore the need for a global campaign to combat such practices.² Violence against women according to United Nations constitutes a peculiar type of violence “including sexual, physical, or emotional abuse by an intimate partner; physical or sexual abuse by family members or others; sexual harassment and abuse by authority figures (such as teachers, police officers or employers); trafficking for forced labour or sex; and such traditional practices as forced or child marriages, dowry-related violence; and honour killings, when women are murdered in the name of family honour.

¹ <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/index.htm>

Retrieved: August 1, 2010

² World Health Organization (2005) published a detail account of various inhuman treatments meted against women by their intimate partners in a “multi-country study on women health and domestic violence against women”.

Systematic sexual abuse in conflict situations is another form of violence against women” (WHO2005, p.4).

The concept of gender refers to social constructs, established on the basis of a specific society's particular perceptions of the physical differences and the assumed tastes, tendencies and capabilities of men and women.³ Gender refers to physical differences between a man and a woman but the concept of gender goes far beyond the physiological and biological specifics of the two sexes but includes the roles each is expected to play in the society.

“Gender is understood as pervasion patterns of difference in advantage and disadvantage, work and reward, emotion and sexuality, image and identity between male and female created through practical activities and representation that justify this pattern that result in social categories of men and women” (Acker 2005,p.5) Furthermore, Acker contends that gender is a basic principle of social organization that involves distribution of unequal economic and social power in which men dominate. For Acker, gender is closely related to relations of class (Ibid).

Since 90s the concept of gender has received global attention with various international conferences aimed at addressing the issues of gender in a global perspective. These conferences include, UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (known as the "Earth Summit") which took place in Rio de Janeiro in1992.The Summit’s Agenda 21, makes gender issues a top priority. This was followed by another World Conference in 1993 at Vienna known as World Conference on Human Rights which recognized the rights of women and girl-children as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The rights of women and children were further discussed during the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994. And again in 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing focused on gender issues and stressed the need for women empowerment for equitable development. The conference concluded its Beijing summit and set up an agenda to strengthen the status of women and adopted a declaration and platform for action aimed at overcoming the obstacles to gender equity and assuring women's active participation in every area of human endeavour. The conference appealed to all the

³“The concept of gender needs to be understood clearly as a cross-cutting socio-cultural variable. It is an overarching variable in the sense that gender can also be applied to all other cross-cutting variables such as race, class, age, ethnic group, etc.”<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/factsheet2.pdf> retrieved: August10, 2010.

stakeholders, the states, the international community and civil society, NGOs and the private sector, to take steps to address the following areas of concern:⁴

- *The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women.*
- *Inequalities and inadequacies in, and unequal access to, education and training.*
- *Inequalities and inadequacies in, and unequal access to, health care and related services; Violence against women.*
- *The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation.*
- *Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources.*
- *Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making, at all levels.*
- *Insufficient mechanisms, at all levels, to promote the advancement of women.*
- *Lack of respect for, and inadequate promotion and protection of, the human rights of women; Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to, and participation in, all communication systems, especially the media.*
- *Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and the safeguarding of the environment.*
- *Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of, the girl-child.*

Despite the global awareness on the need to eliminate violence against women, many societies still have a lot of practice, based basically on culture and tradition that still do not allow the full attainment of this goal. This ranges from custom which devalue the social status of women and a range of violent discriminating acts against women commonly called, Violence against women. Some studies have asserted that in patriarchal societies the authority of men over women is institutionalized through cultures, traditions and religious beliefs that lead to violence against women (Jewkes et al., 1999; Visaria, 1999; Rao, 1997).

Heise, Ellsberg and Gottemoeller (1999) view violence against women as being the most pervasive form of human rights abuse. The pervasiveness can be understood by the UN (1993) conceptualization violence against women as any act that can, or likely to, physical or psychological harm or suffering to women and this include such acts that may even deprive the liberty of women. The negative impacts of violence against women extends beyond sexual

⁴ UN. 1995. Critical areas of concern. In Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

and medical related problems, to touch the well-being of the women, the welfare of their households and communities, as well as the economic and social aspects of the society at large (PAHCO,2003; Sundar, 2001). Thus, violence against women negatively reduces women's confidence and affects their mental health; this in turn hinders women productivity and their participation in economic activities (Heise et al, 1999; Ganny, 1996; Nosike, 1996).

Ellsberg et al.,(2005,P.6) suggest on the basis of research that various forms of violence against women have been identified as harmful traditional practices directed at women and girls due to their sex, including wife abuse, sexual assault, dowry related murder, marital rape, selective malnourishment of female children, forced prostitution, female genital mutilation, and sexual abuse of female children. Global recognitions of the extent of violence against women have resulted in the United Nations declaration to end all forms of violence against women known as the "Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against women –CEDAW" (Reichert1990, p. 45).

Signatories to the convention are Nations' heads of states and after signing they have the responsibility to pass legislation in their countries to forbid harmful tradition and cultural practices and all manner of violence against women. From this point forward, Governments, Nongovernmental organizations, Civil Society Organizations, and policy makers have come to recognise serious adverse consequences of violence against women on the women's health and to the economy (Pietilä, 2007, p29). In sum, international organizations such as WHO, the ICRC, the UN, other agencies and researchers see violence against women in the same light. They agree that it is gender based violence and common in communities and societies across the world cutting through all social strata, radicalized groups and economic classes(WHO REPORT, 2005).

Various scholars further elaborated on gender based violence directed towards women. Bart and Moran contends that violence against women is "interrelated, coalescing like a girdle to keep women in their place, which is subordination to men" (Bart and Moran1993, p.1). According to Carrillo, physical violence against women takes such forms as battering, incest, assault and rape which are found in every society. Carrillo points out that violence against women also takes such subtle forms as limited employment opportunities for women, lack of access to education, women's social isolation and sexual harassment. Carrillo states further that violence against women disrupts women's lives, denies them of their human rights and undermines their full participation in social life (Carrillo1992, p.55).

Mathur contends that violence against women is gender based violence that has been and still is embedded in the socio-economic and political context of power relations that are produced within class, caste and patriarchal social relations in which men have power and dominate. These forms of violence include exploitation, discrimination, upholding of unequal economic and social structures, threat, forms of religious, cultural and political violence (Mathur 2004, p.125). Furthermore, Mathur states that violence against women is a gender based problem that can be found in every society but that it takes different forms as well as occurs in varying dimensions in different societies (Ibid).

Carrillo (1992, p.55) argues that violence against women also takes such subtle forms as limited employment opportunities for women, lack of access to education and women's social isolation, and that violence against women denies women of their human rights and their full participation in social life.

According to WHO (2005) international organization such as WHO, ICRC, UN, and other agencies and researcher see violence against women in the same light, and they have agreed that it is gender based violence that is common in communities and societies across the world which affect all social strata, radicalized groups and economic classes.

Towards the end of the 20th century the United Nations declared that violence against women tantamount to violations of women's human rights (WHO, 2009). UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG), item number three calls for gender equality and women empowerment (Sachs, 2005:211). In order to attain the goals set by MDG, the United Nations through the Millennium summit call on nongovernmental organizations and communities to join hands together with all those involved in development projects throughout the developing world to constitute a global network to achieve the millennium development goals (Ibid). The summit calls for affirmative action from all the stakeholders. NGOs that are working on the gender related issues all over the world are taking action and press for the abolition of all forms of violence and discrimination against women. In view of this, Nigeria NGOs like their counterparts all over the world have been making frantic efforts to combat violence against women. Thus this research recognizes WRAPA as one of the NGOs in Nigeria working in the field of gender related. Based on this, this study focuses on specifically the role of WRAPA as NGOs in addressing these issues in Nigeria context.

And I am interested in this study due to my personal experience of a violent relationship leading to my inquest on knowing more about violence against women and how gender

equality differs from country to country and that is why I took a master course in gender studies in Sweden.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the roles and challenges of Non-governmental Organization in combating violence against women in Nigeria. A case study of an NGO called Women's Right Advancement and Protection Agency (WRAPA) which is located in Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria. The reason why WRAPA was chosen as my case study is that among all the NGOs in Nigeria WRAPA is one of the NGOs working in the field of gender related issues of which violence against women is one of them, and which is in summit of United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

This study will use the qualitative approach to see what WRAPA has done to help women that have been traumatized through different kinds of violence; investigate the efforts, successes as well as the challenges encountered by WRAPA and other NGOs in Nigeria towards combating violence against women. To achieve the purpose of this study, I will assess specific gender based intervention programs of WRAPA; examine the strength of the organization, investigate victims and community's perception of the impact of WRAPA's intervention project.

I will also determine the threat to their project. Report any cultural specific findings that may impact on the role of WRAPA.

1.3 Research problem and research question

In Nigeria violence against women still occur due to certain traditions and religious practice, for example female genital mutilation, widowhood practices and male-sex preference, and in most religious sphere women are disallowed for being part of the religious activities and most women have to be covered with veils and long gowns before they can go outside their home (Okolo 2008, p.5). Nigeria in particular, the type of socialization women receive is without doubt a possible explanation for the gender based violence in the home that women often suffer. In Nigeria, women are taught from the cradle to be quiet and passive. Women are not allowed to talk when men are talking. Until recently, most women are not expected to take active part in a number of activities outside the home. This is one of the reasons most men in Nigeria believe that a woman's education ends in the kitchen. Okolo (2008) states that women in Nigeria are expected to only cry and not speak out when they are faced with challenges. The long term consequences have been that women operate in the silence thus giving room

for their continued oppression. Since men learn through socialization to be aggressive and dominant they carry this attitude in their homes. As a result, often men harass abuse and batter women while women on the other hand learn to live with assaults and other forms of violent behaviors towards them by their male counterparts (Okolo 2008, p.1). Furthermore, she adds that in Nigerian context it can be argued that capitalism and patriarchy have also contributed to women's subordination beneath men, which result in gender inequality and discrimination both in private and public places (Okolo 2008, p.2).

Violence against women in Nigeria is the way the gender relation is defined between men and women from the cultural perspective, and how women's status is placed in the society in terms of religion, family, law and community, and they are expected to obey certain social norms as well as the existence of little or no opportunities for most women in most communities to participate in most aspects of social life (Odimegwu and Okemgbo 2003, p.225).

Due to these problems various NGOs have emerged to combat violence against women in Nigeria. Hence this research chose to focus on an NGO called Women's Rights Advancement Protective Alternatives (WRAPA). My specific research question is:

What role does NGOs (WRAPA) play in fighting violence against women in Nigeria and what are their challenges?

1.4 Limitation

Like other studies there are inherent limitations affecting this study. Some of which emanate from the country of study; there is no special law in Nigeria that protects women against violence, and no availability of statistics, data and literature on the role of NGOs in addressing violence against women in Nigeria. Interviews were conducted in WRAPA's Head office located in Abuja the capital city of Nigeria in 2010 with three WRAPA officials only. The interview with these three officials was done in their offices separate days and time. There was no independent verification from beneficiaries that is the victims of violence associated with WRAPA. For verification purpose, I returned back to the field in 2011 where the second interview was conducted with victims at WRAPA skills centre in Malumfashi in Katsina State of Nigeria. Because the voice of the victims is necessary to verify the claim of WRAPA on their effort to assist victims of violence against women in Nigeria. After the interviews with the victims, I was able to get a more in-depth understanding on WRAPA's role in fighting violence against women in Nigeria.

1.5 Disposition

Chapter one covers introduction, the purpose of study, the research questions and the limitations. Chapter two is the background which includes presentation of NGOs operating in Nigeria with a focus on Women's Right Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA). Chapter three is the methodology; it describes the method adopted in this study including the ethical consideration and the researcher's position. It continued in chapter four with the theoretical framework of this study which includes social action theory and empowerment theory which will further explain the aspect of gender power relation and the empowerment concepts, as well as the elements of empowerment and the NGOs in order to support the theoretical framework on how the role of WRAPA helps women in Nigeria to overcome violence. Chapter five is the analysis which gives an in-depth discussion on the finding of the study. This paper concludes in chapter six with some remark, recommendations and suggestion for further research.

2 BACKGROUND

The background will provide information about NGOs and the place of NGOs, and the next section will give the description of WRAPA with a map showing location of WRAPA offices in Nigeria. Some pictures which shows victim of violence against women in Nigeria. The last section will be on different project used by WRAPA to helping women with violence.

2.1 The place of Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs)

Any social development problem, like gender related one, is a complex process, and therefore a multi-lateral stakeholder solution is required to address such issues in order to attain long term sustainability (Etuk and Etuk 2011, p. 2). NGOs, also termed, non-profit, voluntary, independent, civil society or citizen organizations function alongside government and profit-based enterprise in the delivery of social services for the well-being of the society and are therefore referred to as the third sector (Ehigiamusoe 1998, p.9). NGOs evolve from experiences, interests, ideas and innate zeal to respond to or remedy the observed phenomena or desire in the society. NGOs could be international, national, regional, or community based depending on its financial resources and networking capability, and the goals behind its formation (Omofonmwan and Odia 2009, p.248). They perform their roles through collaboration and partnership with donor organisation and networking with other NGOs (ibid). The NGOs have been described as one of the most significant forces in the field of development assistance (Todaro & Smith, 2009).

NGOs can represent specific local and international groups with concerns as diverse as providing emergency relief, protecting child health, increasing food production, promoting women right, alleviating poverty, protecting the environment, and providing rural credit to small farmers and local businesses. NGOs build roads, houses, hospitals and schools. NGOs work in family planning clinics and refugee camps and they teach in schools and universities and conduct research on increasing farm yields (Brienkerhoff, Smith and Teegen, 2007). NGOs include religious groups, private foundations and charities, research organizations, and federations of dedicated doctors, nurses, engineers, agricultural scientists, and economist. (ibid).Increasingly, indigenous NGOs is recognized in playing leading roles in development interventions in African societies, (Omofonmwan and Odia, 2009, p.248).

The NGOs have created impacts that reveal the relevance of their partnership, especially as regards the participatory approach to community development; it is reported for example, that the Zimbabwe agricultural success in recent years is attributed to the strong initiative of the local farmers' organizations; also is the Kenya self-help movement (Holmquist, 1984). In Tanzania, extensive CSO lobbying resulted in the abolition of primary school fees at primary school level (Ohiorhenuan, 2003, p.9). Nigeria records a leading number of NGOs involved in developmental pursuit. This is regarded as a positive indication towards poverty alleviation. NGOs can help mobilize resources beyond the state budget for the purpose of development interventions (Adebayo 1997).

Daniel (2002) states that NGOs have certain important advantages, they are less constrained by political imperatives; by working directly with the local people, they are able to avoid the suspicion and cynicism on the part of the poor concerning the sincerity of their projects; and whereas NGOs rely on independent voluntary efforts and influence to promote their values government would rely on authority to achieve outcomes. NGOs depend on both government and foreign aid to function, gender based NGOs inclusive. When writing on some roles NGOs have played in development related issues, remarked on the genuineness of the missions of NGOs. A study such as this brings to light how committed an NGO is to its established objectives, and what are the cost-benefits of continued giving of aid (Adebayo 1997).

There is a growing appreciation within the development community of the merits of conducting evaluation, purposely to know what works; what does not work and the reason why it does not work, for proper accountability and knowledge sharing (Independent Evaluation Group 2006). Therefore, emphasis has shifted from just projects and program

implementation to results and outcome evaluation and so it is reasonable to expect recipient organizations like NGOs to have appropriate accountability and transparency measures. Conducting a study on an NGO can serve as an external evaluation of reported impacts on the target community (ibid).

2.2 The description of Women's Right Advancement and Protection Alternative

The map below shows the head office and other locations of WRAPA in Nigeria; next the practices of violence against women in Nigeria; followed by methods, and project used by WRAPA in her fight to combat and eradicate violence against women in Nigeria.

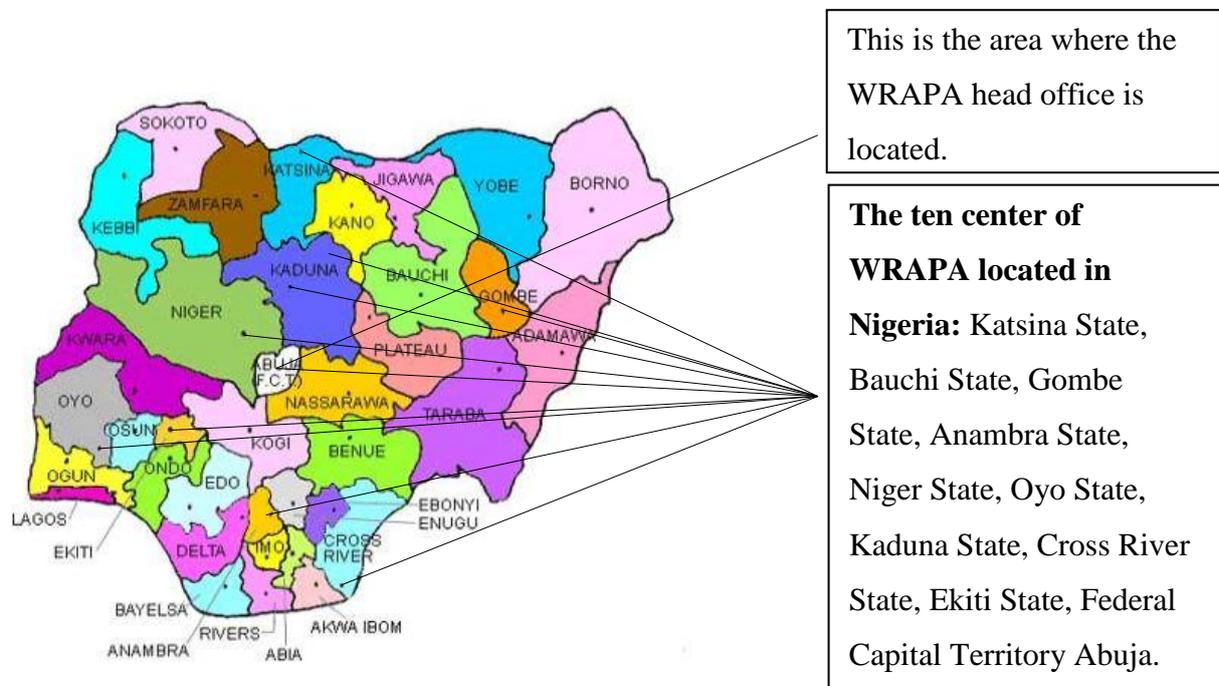


Figure 1: The map of Nigeria showing WRAPA Head Office and their Centres. (<http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPC/doc/Counprof/nigeria/nigeria.htm>).

WRAPA is an acronym for Women's Right Advancement and Protection Alternative, a nongovernmental organization operating in Nigeria which came into existence on March 1999. WRAPA's founder and owner Fatima Abubakar is the wife of Nigeria former head of state Gen. Abdusallami Abubakar and also one of the Chief Judges in the Nigerian Federal High Court. WRAPA works in the field of gender related issues and within eleven years, it has undoubtedly established itself as one of the leading NGOs in the country. WRAPA's concept is to assist the women who are violated by their partners, to campaign against violence directed at women and to enlighten the women to know their rights and to demand for their rights (WRAPA 2008).

WRAPA is a member of a regional NGO coalition known as Solidarity for African Women's Rights-SOAWR, which has been in the forefront of the advocacy and campaign activities around the articulation, adoption, ratification and domestication of the "African Union

Protocol”, the African Charter on Women’s rights. Between 2003 till date WRAPA has engaged Nigeria government and relevant stakeholders in activities aimed at popularizing the AU Protocol through sensitization and advocacy directed at the government and its agencies as well as religion and traditional institutions. The outcome of these activities contributed to Nigeria ratification of the African Protocol on October 2004.

WRAPA is currently engaged in another round of negotiations in parliament aimed at expanding/strengthening alliance to see that the African Protocol on women’s rights become part of the Nigerian constitution. Also WRAPA have been in the struggle for the domestication of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Nigeria through advocacy and sensitization.

WRAPA makes efforts to combat violence against women in Nigeria. In 2008, WRAPA reported that it has intervened in a total of 214 cases. In 2006, WRAPA’s legal teams took various cases of women’s human rights abuses to court. It includes a denial of inheritance, sexual assault, other assaults different from sex, assault leading to divorce, family conflict, harassment, family maintenance, child abuse and neglect, unplanned pregnancy and other forms of violence. Among the cases, denial of inheritance recorded 68 cases representing 31% of the total number of violence cases reported that year; followed by family conflict 50 cases of 23% while other forms of violence came third on the frequency of reported cases having 27 representing 12.6%. (WRAPA, 2008).

2.3 WRAPA’s goals and objectives:

To promote and protect all human rights of women:

- To design, implement and monitor effective policies and programs that will foster the advancement of women.
- To support women in difficult circumstances including victims of gender violence.
- To promote reform of discriminatory laws and policies against women.
- To ensure women’s access to and improve their participation in power structures and decision-making bodies.
- To stimulate, and motivate women at the grassroots to achieve a better and a higher standard of living.
- To sensitize the public on the plight of the underprivileged women.
(www.wrapanigeria.org).

2.4 Practices of violence against women in Nigeria

Nigerian women face various forms of violence in both public and private place. These include physical violence, harmful tradition and cultural practices and discriminations in politics, legislation and employment (Wacol 2008, p.5).

2.4.1 Physical Violence:

There are different kinds of physical violence against women and in Nigeria battering is assumed to be the most common forms of violence against women and it appears that it has been institutionalized in the country (Aimakhu et al. 2004,p.77). For example, Section 55 (1d) of the Penal code, applicable in the Northern Nigeria states, allows the ‘correction’ of children, pupils and wives; as long as it does not amount to grievous hurt (WRAPA 2008, p.11).

The extent of physical violence against women in Nigeria is assumed to be very high but often data are not available to back it up. However, Aimakhu et al., in their hospital studies show that 7.0 percentages of victims of VOW receive treatment from various hospitals in Nigeria nationwide yearly. The percentage of the women battered by their husband was 69.8% and the cause of the problems was attributable to money matters. Example, when women request money from their husbands to purchase family’s needs of which the men sometimes are not prepared to provide, such incessant demand by women most of the time results to battering. Most of these battering could have been avoided presupposing the women were economically independent.

Out of the total number of hospital treated VOW victims, 51.6% of the women were pregnant during the encounter and as a result, 9, 5% had miscarriages while 73.8% delivered their baby alive and few of the cases were reported to the police. Most of the victims do not want to report the cases of physical violence to the police because the victims are concerned about Police mockery and nonchalant attitudes towards women with cases of battering. Nigerian Police do not take such cases seriously, and the same can be said of other professionals such as doctors, social workers, psychologists, attorneys and judges. Police can only take action against the accused (the man) for the purpose of taking bribe from him except when the injuries sustained resulted in “grievous hurt” as established in the Nigerian constitution (WRAPA 2008,p.15). Previous studies assert, the battering of women is never taken seriously in any community across Nigeria (Aimakhu et al.2004, p.58; WRAPA 2007; WACOL 2008, p.78).

And according to WACOL (2008, p.55), the reasons for the high number of unreported genders based violence in the homes includes, women unwilling to report violence cases to the Police to avoid negative publicity and the Nigerian police mockery. To prevent divorce that could lead to the loss of their rights to the custody of their children. Women often lose legal battle to keep custody of their children to the men after divorce because they lack economic power to take care of themselves and the children. Though some women that are desperate to free themselves from marriage bondage are not afraid of the public mockery but corrupt Police officers takes bribe from the accused and stall further investigations. If the woman managed to see the case through to the court, prosecutors also request bribe and if the woman cannot afford the money, the case file will get loss and that will be the end of the case. Therefore, if a woman fears that the matter if reported to the Police would bring her much trouble, she will prefer to endure all manner of insult and maltreatment from the man.

2.4.2 Harmful Traditions and Cultural Practices:

Nigerian women face various harmful traditions and cultural practices; these can be highlighted as follows:

2.4.3 Female Genital Mutilations (FGM):

Its traditional practices of circumcision on women by traditional men or women to uphold their local customs called purifications. The practitioners (societies where female genital mutilations are allowed) believe that it affords female children better hygiene, protection of virginity, prevention of promiscuity and give sexual pleasure for husband, enhancing fertility and above all they believe that it is the right of a woman to be circumcised the same way as men do. The reasons for such practices are numerous and at times defers across communities and across countries the reasons might differ completely. According to the Nigerian Population Commission (NPC) study, an estimated 33% of Nigerian households practice FGM (WRAPA 2008, p.12-13).

2.4.4 Widowhood practices:

It differs from one community to another and completely different across countries in Africa, India, and other places. Nigerian women are obliged by their tradition and culture to honour their dead husbands in different ways. According to Onyeme, Ngozi (2007) women in many communities in Nigeria honour their dead husbands in different ways. For example, there is a community in the Southern part of Nigeria called “Agenebode” Edo state, a woman is expected to put on a single white pant unchanged for a period of twelve months. Also the

woman is not expected to go to any social gathering like church or market for the same length of time and she will be isolated and wears black clothes for the same period. She is expected to be inherited by a member of her late husband's family but she has a choice to accept or reject to be inherited. However, in either of the cases, she is expected to perform some rituals either to be ushered to the new husband or sent back to her parent's house without inheritance. Nevertheless, if she has a male child, the child is entitled to inherit the man's properties but if the child is too young, those properties would have been used up by his uncles before he grows up and at the end he will have nothing to inherit from his father. (Okolo 2008, p41). Generally women wear black clothes and a black headscarf for twelve months when their husband dies. During these periods they are not expected to have sex with any man or think about getting into a relationship with another man. Traditional practices in Africa are so numerous and diverse that no theorist can claim to have a comprehensive list of all that takes place in every community. (Aluko et al, 2007 and Okolo, 2003).

For example, Nigeria Southern state, Edo, if a woman is accused of knowing what killed her husband and she objects to the accusation, she must perform the rituals demanded by the family of the dead husband and sanctioned by the community. The ritual is that the family members of the man bathes the corpse and then collect a cup full of the used water and then give to the woman to drink for her to prove that she is innocent of the charges against her. A similar situation is repeated if a woman is accused of witchcraft, the woman is sent out from her husband's house and to live in isolation in the open square in the village for many days and at the end, her husband may refuse to take her back as a wife. (Bradbury 1957; Okojie 1960 and 1989; Omorodion 1991). Another community in South Eastern Nigeria known as Abariba in Abia state, it is compulsory for the first daughter in a family to marry a man within the community. And as such, she must reject suitors from outside their community so that when her mother dies, the corpse will be carried to the compound of the daughter's husband to be buried in her daughter's kitchen (Okolo 2008, p.44).

In some communities, women are expected to cry aloud continuously until their husbands are buried. If the people around suspect that the woman has not cried enough, she will be suspected of having a hand on what killed the husband. And during the period, the woman may be denied bathe and given little food to eat. After the burial of her husband, she will inherit nothing from the husband except if she has a male child. So to say, instead of inheriting anything, she too is expected to be inherited by a member of the man's family. A similar situation is applicable in some communities in the South Eastern Nigeria but not

generalized. However, honouring the dead is quite common in the south which is mostly Christians and Muslims but not so in the north, which is predominantly Muslims. (Okolo, 2008, p.45).

2.4.5 Early and forceful marriage

In the Northern part of Nigeria, especially among the Muslims, it is a common practice for girls who are far below eighteen to be given out in marriage (Okolo2008, p.92) Muslims prefers their daughters getting married at a very early age but Christians would expect their daughter to get married as from eighteen years but if their daughter stays unmarried above twenty five years they become worried. The preference of girls' early marriages demonstrates that family and societies across Nigeria places women's value on getting married and bearing children. And failure for a girl to get married before the age of twenty five years, many uneducated parents gets worried that something is wrong with their daughter. There is no time limit for a male child to get married but the female is expected to marry and start bearing children as early as 15years or below (Wacol 2008).

2.4.6 Male-child preference

Another form of violence against women in Nigeria is male-child preference. For example, in Nigeria a woman who did not give birth to a male child is in trouble. The woman's position is similar to one in a relationship but without married. The husband of the woman may abuse her frequently, physical and verbal for no reason whatsoever. And if the man dies before the woman, it's most likely that the woman will be ordered by her husband relatives to pack her things and leave if she refuses to be inherited by a member of her husband's family because she had no male child. In South Eastern Nigeria, only male child can guarantee women's rights (Okolo 2008, p.103).

2.5 Forms of discrimination against women in public places

Women in Nigeria face discrimination in politics and legislation on women's rights is weak.

2.5.1 Political Discrimination

In Nigeria, women accept that men are the right candidate to occupy highest political offices and not the women alone but both young and old, boys and girls believe that men are the proper candidate to rule a country. Though women are allowed to contest for seats in all levels of governments, federal, state and local government and could be elected to become either President, Governor or local government chairperson but public perception is that women are weak leaders. And as such, in every election, women politician usually performs poorly.

For example, in the 2007 elections in Nigeria, the number of seats in the Nigeria upper house of Parliament (called the Senate) out of 109 seats vied for between men and women, men won 100 seats representing 91.80% as against women with 9 seats representing 8.20% . In the lower house of parliament (House of Representative) the available seats were 360 and men took 333 seats representing 92.22% as against women with only 36 seats representing 7.78%. Nigeria has 36 states and each state has a Chief Executive or Governor, men won all the 36 states 100% and women 0%. (WRAPA 2008, p.21).

2.5.2 Discrimination Legislation:

Some institutions in Nigeria also institutionalized discrimination against women for example:

Immigration Policy:

Married women are required by law to ask permission from their husband in order to be issued with a travelling document such as International Passport and National ID card. (Wacol 2008).

Police Act provisions:

A woman police who want to get married must have an authorization from the Inspector General of Police (IGP). She must have been a Police woman for not less than three years. And if a woman is married, it is impossible to become a police thereafter. Therefore, any woman who wants to join the Police must do so before she gets married. A woman Police are not allowed to progress up to the rank or the position of Inspector General of Police (IG); and the same applies to other command sectors such as Military, Navy and Air force; women are restricted and as such cannot become the overall boss of any security agency (Wacol, 2008).

Taken suspects on Bail:

In Nigeria, Women are not permitted to sign Police bail bond in order to take accused person out of Police custody (Okolo 2008, p.5). Such legislation indirectly endorsed the notion that man is superior to woman. However, there is an exception, if she is a lawyer or she is occupying important position in the public service, she is allowed to take an accused on bail. But any man can sign bail bond provided he is not less than eighteen years of age. Man does not need to become a lawyer or to occupy any office in the public service (Wacol 2008).

Due to all these legislation against women, some men could abuse their wife with impunity. For example, figure 2 below drawn from WRAPA’s fact sheet in 2009 shows physical abuse of a woman. She was beating and as if beating was not enough, the abuser poured acid on her.

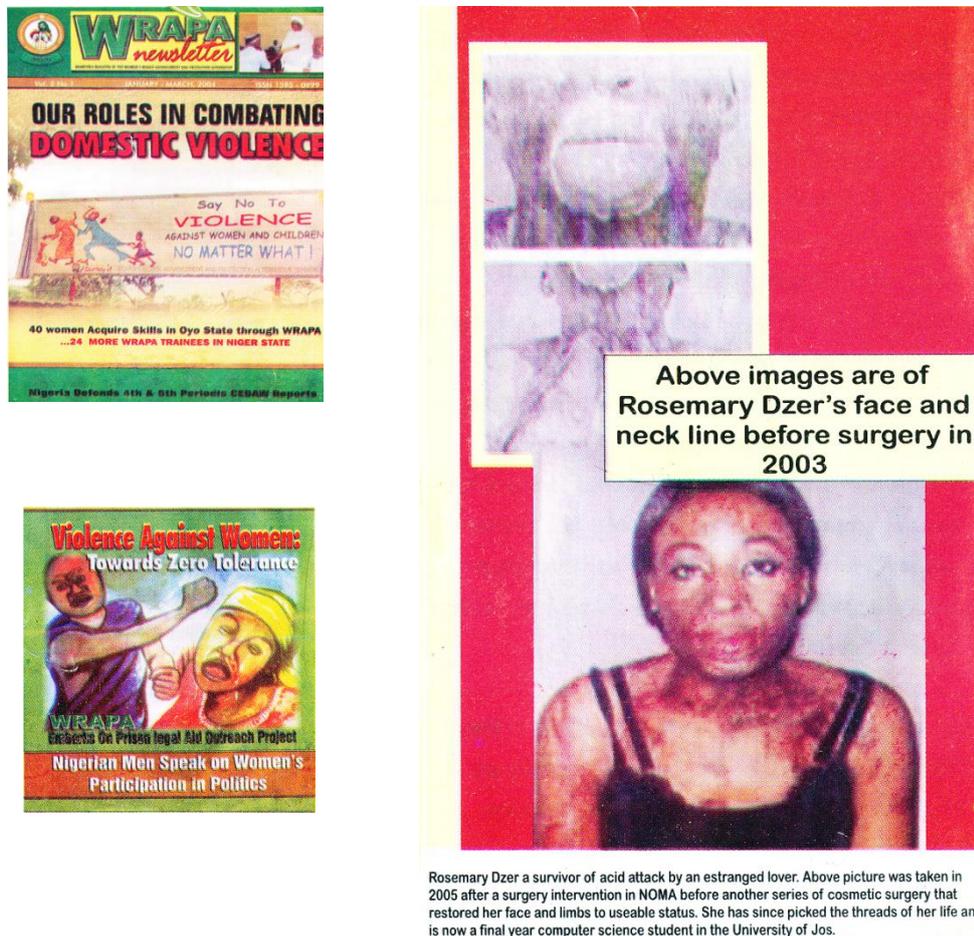


Figure 2: Part of the WRAPA fact sheet on violence against women. (WRAPA, 2009).

2.6 Choice of project

This part discusses WRAPA’s projects to fight violence against women in Nigeria.

2.6.1 Project GAA

The Gender and Affirmative Action Issue Based Project (GAA IBP) is an initiative of coalitions for change (CFC) and funded by the Department for International Developments, UK (DFID). This initiative is to contribute to achieving significant changes in selected institutions which will lead to effective management of public resources and stronger formal accountability advancing gender equity through mechanisms supporting the use of Affirmative Action as a tool for effective resource management and accountability.

The project is steered by a team of governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations specifically established to ensure the actualization of women's rights. The secretariat is located within WRAPA and as such, WRAPA is responsible for the administrative management of the project.

2.6.2 Project "Raising Her Voice (RHV)

RHV is a portfolio of projects in 17 countries across the world and focuses on improving government and transparency by recognizing and increasing the significant contribution poor women can make to public life and in promoting their own rights. In Africa, RHV project is being implemented in 8 countries including Nigeria with the same goal of strengthening national legislation, adequate budgeting and implementation of the all protocols on the rights of women through community popularization and advocacy activities. Oxfam GB is supporting Women's Right Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) to work with the African Union, the Nigerian Government and other CSOs in Nigeria to ultimately enable the domestication of the African Women Protocol in Nigeria by 2012.

2.6.3 Project "Management of Partnerships

Although WRAPA is the only partner signed on to the project in Nigeria, implementation of the programmes has been made easy by the formation of a consortium of 17 leading organizations spread across the six geo-political regions of Nigeria who are supporting WRAPA on the project.

2.6.4 The Ten Centre Project

The many milestones achieved in the promotion of women's rights through legal means and empowerment has created a demand and patronage for the intervention of WRAPA and its services; two critical factors required urgently to break more new grounds are the rapidly growing reputation of WRAPA has attracted an ever increasing number of women who are victims of domestic abuse throughout Nigeria and the Clients are indicating a greater need required for counselling rather than litigation.

To meet this demand, WRAPA in August 2006 obtained a grant from the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Nigeria to set up skills and counselling centre in Malumfashi Community in Katsina State. The Malumfashi Centre was to serve as pilot centre for the establishment of 9 other centres across Nigeria.

Based on the success recorded, in July 2008, WRAPA was supported by the Netherlands Embassy to establish nine (9) others to make a total of ten (10) centres across the six geographical zones in Nigeria for a project span of four years. However, the objective of the skills and counselling centres will be to:

- Empower women through preventive, education, poverty reduction and advancement of their human rights.
- Raise the health status of women through group sessions in HIV prevention and other health information and referring them to appropriate health care providers.
- To sensitize women, girls, boys and men to advocate to community leaders on the rights of women and girls in order to reduce the prevalence of early forced marriages.
- To provide counselling services for women in seeking peaceful and effective ways to resolve rational challenges whether on an individual, couple or family basis.
- To heighten the awareness levels amongst women of their human rights, and to provide redress to violations against their human rights through legal representation.
- To improve women's financial security through the provision of basic literacy classes, computer classes, skills acquisition classes and employment counselling.

However, till date WRAPA have successfully established and commissioned 5 skills and counselling centres in Malumfashi in Katsina State, Bashi-Dass in Bauchi State, Billiri in Gombe State, Ozubulu in Anambra State, and Suleja in Niger State. These five (5) states fall in the 1st phase of the project and centres are functioning smoothly, and have over 50 women benefiting from each of the centres. Malumfashi being the pilot centre have successfully graduated over 100 women who were also trained on entrepreneurial skills with business research and identification, marketing strategies, business plan, sourcing funds and group formation and dynamics. The other five (5) centres of the 2nd phase include: Oyo, Kaduna, Cross River, Ekiti and FCT. WRAPA have also carried out public education session in ten states in Nigeria which includes Abia State, Oyo State, Kano State, Borno State, Akwa Ibom State, Delta State, Benue State, Cross River State, Kaduna State and Federal Capital Territory Abuja on violence against women.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the methods, sampling, data collection, ethical consideration and the position of the researcher. This study uses qualitative method and empirical data gathered through interviews.

3.1 Qualitative methods

This study uses qualitative method and according to Conger, (1999) the fundamental reason for this choice is the exploratory and descriptive nature of investigating organizational role in a cultural society. Some articles have mentioned that experimental and quantitative methods of inquiry are on their own insufficient to answer questions about culture and meaning, and this limitation in the above methods has prompted many seeking explanations in a certain area of interest to resort to qualitative research methods (Goethals, Sorenson and MacGregor, 2004). *“This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people brings to them”*. (Denzin and Lincoln 2000,p.3).

One advantage and interesting feature of qualitative research, is the fact that open-ended questions can be used to flexibly explore unexpected ideas. This feature makes it very sensitive to contextual factors and as such qualitative research method is able to elucidate symbolic dimensions and social meanings capable of yielding empirically supported new ideas and theories provides; and will therefore provide for in-depth and longitudinal explorations of phenomena (Bryman, Bresnen, Beardsworth and Keil, 1988; Alvesson, 1996; Goethals, Sorenson and MacGregor, 2004).

Furthermore, it provides information on the experiences of women on certain issues in identifying factors like social norms, socioeconomic status, gender role, ethnicity and religion which give the interpretation and understanding of the complex reality of certain situation (Mack et al 2005, p.1).

However, qualitative research is not without its limitation. Although in many instances, the results obtained from qualitative data can be extended to people with characteristics similar to those in the study population, but gaining a rich and complex understanding of a specific social context or phenomenon is of precedence over eliciting data for generalization. In this sense, qualitative research differs slightly from other empirical scientific methods (Mack et al, p.2). Therefore, based on this fact, I found a qualitative method suitable, and it will give me

more understanding of the role of WRAPA in combating violence against women in Nigeria which is a social problem that has cultural dimension.

3.1.1 Interviews

The most useful method in answering a research question in qualitative approach is using interviews, and this will help the researcher to get better information (Creswell 2007, p.132). Interviews are a discussion that take place between researcher and respondents in which the researcher will ask a question and allow the respondent to give answers. (Neuman 2006, p.305). An interview with semi-structured interviews using open ended questions. Interviews were conducted with ten (10) informants both men and women. These informants are WRAPA officials in the head office located in Abuja, victims of violence and non victims who are volunteers working for WRAPA. Interviews were conducted with three (3) WRAPA officials at WRAPA head office. Focus group is environment that enables individuals to express themselves freely (Neuman 2006, p.412). Small focus group discussion was conducted with eight (8) victims and non-victims at Malunfashi skill acquisition and counselling centre in Katsina State. The project site was chosen because it was the pilot centre for the Ten Centre Project. I also made careful personal observation as the informants answered the questions.

Due to the ethical consideration in this research and confidentiality the key informants of WRAPA officials from the head office interviewed were designated as K1, K2, and K3 while victims and non-victims who are volunteers who were interviewed at the Malunfashi skill acquisition will be designated B1,B2,B3 and F1,F2, F3,and F4. WRAPA officials in the head office consisted of two women and a man with a vast array of experience and leadership who were assumed to have a strong sense of the problem under study and the ideas used to assist the researchers in sorting out issues and concepts.

K1 is working as a gender officer for WRAPA. She has been working for WRAPA for 5years now. She is 38year old, married with two kids and she is Christian. She has a master's degree in sociology. K2 is the director in charge of WRAPA affairs. She has been working for WRAPA for 10 years. She is 40years, married with four children. She is a Muslim and her education background is master degree in women's studies. K3 is a lawyer and he is in charge of legal matters for WRAPA. He studied law and married with one kid, and he is Christian. Focus group discussion was conducted to gain their reflections on the preliminary research patterns and themes from the interviews. The group consisted of men who are community

elders working for WRAPA as supervisor in the community, and women from the community who were considered women leaders work for WRAPA as volunteers. B1 is a victim of VOW who receives support through WRAPA's project. She is 45 years, married with kids, no education and a Muslim. B2 is 42 years, married, has six children with no education background. She is Christian. B3 she is 48 years married with five kids and Muslim background. F1 is man, married with children with no primary education and a Christian family. F2 is a woman, 52 years, married with children, no education and a Christian. F3 is a man, 52 years, married with children. F4 is a man, 47 years with primary education, married with children.

English was basically the language of communication used in conducting the interviews with WRAPA employees while pidgin type of English was used for group discussion. One person among the discussion group though understands Pidgin English but speaks fluently only in her dialect, Hausa language. It was most enlightening using a pidgin type of English and Hausa because there was better communication between me and the informants. It made the interview more interesting and educative. Through this way, I understand the issues central to violence against women in Nigeria. The interviews for the officials of WRAPA were carried out in the headquarters of the organization. The three respondents were interviewed separately on different days in their offices during their working hours. Each interview lasted between 60 to 80 minutes. The interviews were conducted in 2010.

3.1.2 Reliability and validity

When talking about reliability and validity, it draws an issue of discourse with different views about what is valid and reliable between quantitative and qualitative researchers. "Inductive forms of research emphasize internal validity and in so far as inductive research is less concerned with testing hypothesis than it is with exploring a field, it is less concerned with making generalizable claim" (Matthew & Sutton, 2011, p. 20). This is however why quantitative researchers are more interested in establishing that their research from a sample can be generalized (inferential statistics) to the population from which it is drawn which gives it reliability and validity. However, qualitative research can only generalize its findings to the context that was studied (ibid). Since the interview with the informants was small there is no need generalize. This study relied upon the interviews that were carried out in 2010 and 2011 with the official of WRAPA in their headquarters but victims were interviewed at their projects centres. As I said earlier, the purpose is to understand the role of WRAPA as an NGO in fighting violence against women. Furthermore, reliability of the data was checked after

getting the recorded conversation written in text being the same with that which was given in word from the informants.

3.2 Sample

The sampling technique used to select participants in this study was purposive sampling. Purposive is a type of sampling technique that a researcher used to select participants that is necessary for the research purpose. (Mack et al 2005, p.5). Furthermore, purposive enable the researcher to get more understanding and in-depth of the study (Neuman 2006, p.222). In view of this, a purposive sampling technique was adopted to select people to be interviewed at WRAPA Head office, the ten centre projects specifically because it gives a deeper understanding of WRAPA as an NGO with their work and in-depth understanding and viewpoint of women who are victims of violence that have benefited from WRAPA programmes and project.

3.2.1 Documents

An extensive review of WRAPA's official documents and several visits to their website revealed great information. Data about the ten centre project were gathered from beneficiaries and focal group discussion. Then documents related to the projects and other WRAPA programmes, including project leaflets, correspondence and Web sites were scrutinized. The program documentation was then read to corroborate the information provided in the interviews, to fill in gaps, and to obtain further insight. In most instances there was a high level of agreement among the different sources of information, both oral and written.

Since the central objective of this study concern the role of WRAPA in combating violence against women and especially as regards empowering the women, the respondents were asked to identify the forms of violence against women commonly experienced in their area; felt or perceived impact of WRAPA in the socio-economic development of women; comment freely on the kind of support they want from WRAPA in order to enhance their well-being; to state the impact of the projects WRAPA executed in their communities. Also women beneficiaries of WRAPA programmes were asked to relate their experiences before and after WRAPA intervention.

3.3 Transcription data collection

Field observation notes, audio recordings, and transcripts were generated from the field interviews and discussions. All the interview tapes were transcribed verbatim and field notes used to supplement the interview information. Then a five step qualitative analysis process

was designed to ensure that the patterns and themes which might emerge from the data could be carefully verified. However, Keith (2005) states that the transcribing the notes from the interviews; *coding* the data with key words as a way of identifying commonalities and variations, identifying common and variable patterns within each group as well as across groups. A conscious effort was made to identify the roles of WRAPA as it affects women and the result categorized into themes. Sample of the transcripts were read closely and multiple themes centring on the research objectives were identified.

3.4 Ethical Consideration

The researcher ensured that the collections of information from the informants were carried out ethically. The interviewed persons were informed of the scale of the research and what it was centered on. I obtained informed consent from respondents (Matthew & Sutton, 2011, p.52). It is also vital to protect the researched from any form of harm be it emotional or legal harm and this has been done using confidentiality. No disclosure of informants names in the research.

3.5 The Researcher's Position

I am a Nigerian but married to a Swedish man. I was born and raised in Nigeria. I received a Bachelor of Science degree in sociology from Nigerian University. I came to Lund University to undertake a Master's degree programme in gender studies. I understand violence against women from Nigerian context but I am in relationship in a different society outside my place of birth. Therefore, I have been exposed to assess violence against women from different contexts. Based on this knowledge, I took great interest to look into the role of WRAPA in fighting violence against women in Nigeria.

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical framework which is employed in this study is centred on a social action theory and empowerment theory which provide important information about the role of WRAPA in addressing violence against women in Nigeria in the context of religion and culture. Social action and empowerment theory guide the result and discussion which provide different projects and programmes carried out by WRAPA to provide help to victims of violence. Apart from social action theory and empowerment theory, the empowerment theory further explains the aspect of gender power relation and the empowerment concepts, as well as the elements of

empowerment and the NGOs in order to support the theoretical framework on how the role of WRAPA helps women in Nigeria to overcome violence.

4.1 Social Action Theory

“[I]s a community-oriented model that is used to increase the problem-solving ability of entire communities through achieving concrete changes towards social justice. That is, individuals within communities come together to redress the imbalance of powers or privileges between a disadvantaged group and society at large,./.../.The key concepts include empowerment, critical consciousness, community capacity, social capital, issue selection, and participation and relevance” (Minkler et.al, 2008, p.291).

Empowerment is any act that gives an individual the right and control over their lives and the ability to influence their community. Critical consciousness is a mental state of awareness where the individual recognizes the need for a change and is willing to change and is achieved through forums and discussions. Community capacity is about identification and the ability of the community to resolve social issues and this involves leadership, skills, participation, etc., achieved through workshops. Social capital deals with building relationship between members of a community through networking techniques and social support enhancement. Issue selection focuses on issues relevant to the individuals and community. Participation and relevance involve the community in implementing actions on relevant issues. (Minkler et.al, 2008).

According to Etuk and Etuk(2011) the theoretical approach of the social action theory has been used to explain the process of social development goal setting, development partnership as well as organizing and mobilizing various supports by the citizens and intervention groups Furthermore Etuk and Etuk (2011) argues that the world as a global society is faced with numerous global problems and the leaders of the world are faced with the challenges of moving their individual states to higher or better human society. The global society formed partnerships and organize to take actions and solve development problems, with the hope of attaining set goals. This social action is taken at all levels of society such as community mobilization and participation; capacity building and empowerment; civil society and citizen organization; and any other action taken to bring the social system to another equilibrium state (ibid).

Wallenstein (1992) adds that social-action based approach to development intervention is the empowerment. Minkler, Wallenstein and Wilson (2008) view empowerment as a process that

encourages participation of people, organizations, or communities towards increased individual and collective control; this in effect should bring political efficacy, better quality of life, and addresses social injustices. The process aims at giving people control over their lives and their community and so aims at transforming power relations between the people, the social institutions, and the governmental agencies.

Therefore, social action theory has implication for NGOs role in fighting against violence against women and the activities of WRAPA as NGOs towards addressing violence against women are essential social intervention programmes. Thus any theory for a study of this nature must be such that addresses the intervention and the partnership programmes aimed at achieving development which will lead to changes in social justices for women with violence in Nigeria.

4.2 Empowerment Theory

Empowerment has been described as *“/.../ a construct that links individual strength and competencies, natural helping systems, and proactive behaviours to social policy and social change”*. (Perkins, D and Zimmerman 1995p, 569). The construct connects the well-being of the individuals with the larger socio-political environment; it also connects the socio-economic status of a people to how they are able to come up with mutual assistance in order to create a responsive community. To fully comprehend the empowerment theory is to understand the concept of power and powerlessness (Lord and Hutchison, 1993; Moscovitch and Drover, 1981). Power is *“capacity of some persons and organizations to produce intended, foreseen and unforeseen effects on others”*. (CEG1989, p. 2). The sources of power include Personality, property/wealth, and influential Organizations (Galbraith 1983). Powerlessness can be seen as the expectation of an individual that his own actions will not affect the outcome of events or circumstances of life (Lord and Hutchison, 1993; Keiffer, 1984).

Albee (1981) argues that powerlessness is also perceived as a situation where individuals who have little or no political and economic power cannot gain greater control over their lives and their resource. Using people with disabilities as an example, Asch (1986) articulated powerlessness when he stated that people with disabilities:

“Have so internalized the general negative attitudes towards them because of their disabilities that they cannot believe that collective action can improve their lives. They have seen the problems as inherent in their medical conditions and have not been urged to join

others to demand structural changes that would render the environment useful for them". (Asch 1986,p. 13).

Empowerment is *"process by which individuals and groups gain power, access to resources and control over their own lives. In doing so, they gain the ability to achieve their highest personal and collective aspirations and goals". (Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 1998,p. 91).*

The concept of empowerment *"conveys both a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights". (Rapport's 1987, p.121) Empowerment "lies in the ability of women to control her own destiny". (Malhotra et al 2002 cited in Grown et al 2005,p.3)*

Malthotra et al (2002) asserts that female empowerment is more than just an increase female presence in education,health,employment and land ownership, but also women's participation in decision-making within the political institution through leadership position.

From the above discussion empowerment can be viewed from two perspectives

- Individuality- the acquisition of greater independence and capacity for self-determination, as well as means to allow individuals to broaden their opportunities as seen in the case of WRAPA whose focus is on empowering women individually.
- Collectively - the capacity of a group to influence social change and move towards a fair and equal society, in particular in its relations between men and women (CWD, 2007) as seen in the case of WRAPA involving the leaders of the community whom are mainly men to speak to other men in the communities on the issue of violence against their women.

The empowerment process involves actions, taken by individual, organization or community to achieve a goal or consensus, empowered outcome is the *"operationalization"* of empowerment that allows us to know the consequences of empowering process. The empowerment process might be individual participation in community organization; collective decision and shared leadership in organizations; and community collective action to access economic resources. Empowered outcome situation-specific perceived control and resource mobilization skill in individual; development of networks, evidence of growth and policy leverages by organizations; and evidence of accessible community resources. (Perkins, D and Zimmerman1995).

The empowerment theory has implication for NGOs' role in the fight against violence against women. The theory suggests that empowerment includes a process and structure that enhance members' participations and improve goal achievement for the organization (in this case development NGO); to the community, it also refers to collective action to improve the quality of life (in this case, women who are victims of male violent acts) in a community and the connections between community organization. In other words, this model explains the participation of NGOs with others to achieve set goals, efforts made to gain more access to economic resources, and creating some pertinent understandings of the socio-political environment, which are all basic components of the empowerment construct. Besides, empowerment is a process of change (CEG, 1989).

Change is possible when people take over power. For people to take power they will have to access information about themselves and their environment and exhibit willingness to identify and work with others to bring change (McClelland, 1975). A typical function of NGOs in community participation and this makes empowerment an interactive process whereby women can experience changes individual and socially such as will enable them to act in a manner to achieve influence over the organizations and institutions which affect their lives and the communities in which they live, (Whitmore, 1988).

The empowerment theory explains the rationale for WRAPA's activities in the area of fighting VAW. Based on the theory, WRAPA as an NGO exists as an intervention group working with both government and individuals to address violence against women via its various programmes. The organization, based on the theory, is also involved in a kind of partnership programme to raise awareness and to empower women to resist all forms of violence.

4.2.1 The Gender Power Relations and the Empowerment Concept

To further appreciate the relevancy of the empowerment theory to combating violence against women, it is pertinent to draw out the relationship between empowerment as a social concept and gender based violence as a social problem. *“Men's violence against women, and women's fear of such violence, plays an important part in the maintenance of an unequal gender order”*. (Maria Wendt Höjer, 2002, p.209). However, Jewkes, et al. (2001) states that the dependence of women on men for livelihood is documented as a major issue in the economy of gender based abuse. Ogundipe-Leslie (1985) adds that men are encouraged to abuse women, and women's economic dependency on men also limits women's ability to challenge

the men or the society actions. Nigerian men are often culturally socialized to be suspicious of activities that encourage their female partners to become more powerful. Jewkes, Penn-Kekana and Rose-Junis (2005) states that the existence of strong patriarchal values encourages males to be abusive towards their female partners.

“The pervasive male control of wealth, power and decision making, women’s isolation and lack of support, male peer group norms that condone and legitimize their violence, rigid gender roles, concept of masculinity linked to toughness, male honour or dominance, cultural tolerance of the physical punishment of women and children, and beliefs that men own women, and women’s general lack of access to information, support and services, including criminal justice systems are some of the key issues that make women in Africa vulnerable to violence.”. (Izugbara , Duru and Diana 2008,p.463-464).

Therefore, *“these acts of violence appear to be both a male strategy for sustaining women’s confinement within certain cultural defined boundaries and for dealing with female partners who are perceived as transgressing normative gender standards”*. (Izugbara, Duru and Diana 2008, p.470). Furthermore, Okolo (2008) adds, that in Nigeria context that capitalism and patriarchy have also contributed to women’s subordination beneath men which result into gender inequality and discrimination. Gender inequality that leads to violence against women in Nigeria derives from culture, religious, and tradition beliefs where men have more right than women. (ibid). Gender equality concerns equal right, justices and opportunities for both men and women (Grown et al2005, p.28).Grown et al distinguishes three aspects of gender inequality which includes capability domain, access to resources and opportunity domain and security domain (2005, p.2).

However, it is obvious that any social development action, in this case achieving gender equality by curbing violence against women, is described as the process of organizing human energies and activities at higher levels to achieve greater results; and that development generally is aimed at increasing the utilization of human potential (Jacobs and Cleveland, 1999). Therefore, organizations like NGOs working on gender issues are to provide sources of empowerment for women. They are to emphasize mobilization and raise consciousness among women; this can be done, for instance, by increasing women’s access to productive resources such as land, credit and education, seen as major features that can be developed and empowered so as to enhance women’s chances for self-employment, (Charles et al 2009).

4.2.2 *The Elements of Empowerment and the NGOs*

Empowerment has been described as forming part of the vision to acquire power, to control one's life and making choices (Sen 2000 and Kabeer 2001).

This has been supported by several feminists and development organization and they agree that the process of empowerment should be at four *levels* below (CEG, 1989):

1. "Power over": this involves the relationship of domination or subordination where power is assumed to exist only in limited quantity. This level of power is exerted over someone or, to be mild, allows "someone to be guided". It triggers either passive or active resistance.
2. "Power to": this includes the ability to make decisions, and have the authority to find solutions to problems. This is intellectual abilities (knowledge and know-how) that can be creative as well as have the ability to access and control means of production and benefit (the notion of assets).
3. "Power with": this notion is the social or political power involving the ability to get together to negotiate and defend a common goal (be it individual or collective rights or political ideology, for instance).
4. "Power within": this means self-awareness, or calls it self-esteem, identity or assertiveness (knowing how to be). Here, individuals can influence their lives to create changes (CEG,1989).

Consequently, there arise four *aspects* of empowerment which in analogy can be compared to the four levels of power as follows:

1. Assets: This refers to when women have greater economic power in terms of the means of production including material assets such as finance, land, and technology. also includes good health facilities, leisure time, information and human capacity development. This is falls within "power to".
2. Knowledge and know-how: this is also "power to" (power to). It is the possession of more practical and intellectual knowledge or skills by women to enable them to make the most of the opportunities that arise. Leadership ability, literacy and ability to translate knowledge into action are some important features here.
3. Will: or "power within" (internal power) is the psychological strength or spiritual power – values, self-confidence, self-awareness and choice making are part of this

aspect of empowerment. Women acquire the ability and will to make choices for the future, and face challenges.

4. Capacity: this last aspect means having the opportunity to make decisions, take on responsibility, be free to act as one pleases and use one's resources (assets, knowledge, will). It refers to both the internal power and "power with". (CWD, 2007).

The different elements, (both the levels and aspects), can be visualized using circles to express the very dynamics of empowerment, found in CWD (2007). While this model stipulates that, the changes that take place in the lives of individuals and groups or associations have a relationship or link to the changes in such institutions as the family, the State, religious establishments, educational establishments, the media, NGOs, etc. Put differently, the process of societal change is dependent on individuals and various groups' changes and expressed (CEG 1989). *"Institutions have an influence over the development of individuals' and their organisations' knowledge, assets, will and capacity. This relationship can be seen from the arrows pointing inwards. For example, the family considerably influences the development of an individual's self-confidence and self-perception; NGOs influence the development of individuals' and their organisations' knowledge; the State influences people's ability to form organisations and strengthen their social power. Moreover, individuals and their organizations (groups, associations, etc.) can influence institutions within society and thus contribute to change". (CEG1989, p.14).*

In view of the four aspect and level of empowerment which includes power over, power to, power with and power within and as well as assets, knowledge, know-how, will and capacity by CWD, WRAPA try to educate women to know their right. WRAPA have various projects which women are train in various skills that can help them to be independent and empower them to resist violence.

5 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section will be present result and discussion with views with WRAPA on their role in combating violence against women in Nigeria and the experiences of victims of violence benefited from WRAPA projects.

5.1 Acts of violence against women

The interviews with the three WRAPA officials reveal that the NGO deals with various forms of violence against women. These range from domestic violence to violent cultural practices and public related violence against women as stated in the following excerpts:

- *WRAPA receives 45 cases of gender based violence in the home, daily violence against women at work place like employment discrimination, disinheritance for female, and discriminating laws and regulation and domestic violence like battering, Female genital mutilations, forced marriages, rapes (K1).*
- *Women experience all types of violence in the home example, intimate partner's rape, beating, battering and WRAPA deals with almost all kinds of violence against women generally, so no specific violence that is beyond WRAPA (K2).*
- *Women that are battered by their partners at home, women that are raped, women that are discriminated against in the public places. There is rampant violence against women (K3).*

Interviews with project victims at Malumfashi village also revealed that common cases of violence involving their male partners could be as numerous and serious as physical assaults like being flogged, kicked, slapped, punched, hair being pulled, threatened and being wounded with weapon etc.; verbal assault insulted like being sworn at, ridiculed at and; sexual violence such as being raped and being forced or pressurized by a male partner or husband into having sex, romanced and kissed against their will etc. A beneficiary asserts:

- *It is a common thing for men to maltreat their wives. I have received beating several times even to the point of being hospitalised (B3).*

Other forms of VOW elicited include cultural practices include female genital mutilations, forced marriages and disinheritance for female; while the public related violence are discriminating laws, policies and regulations, trafficking of women, discriminating in employment, discriminating against women with disability, elderly etc.

5.1.1 Sensitizing and awareness campaign

Both oral and literature reveal that WRAPA carries out an enlightenment campaign on women's rights and educate the public on the ills of VAW. Media confirmed by respondent include radio, television, community visit and campaign, group discussion and talks. WRAPA also use the media to inform the public about various projects of WRAPA in order to assist

those who need help; they make known psychological, legal aids and support are available to women:

- *WRAPA is using media to get the message of gender based violence against women out there (K1).*
- *WRAPA's project focuses on enlightenment and the idea is to work with the community leaders and traditional leaders in capacity building.*
- *WRAPA invites professionals like medical doctors from time to time to talk to the women about HIV/AIDS program, psychologist to come and give women a talk and enlighten the women on what to do if they are abused (K2).*

WRAPA sensitize and give counsel to women on their rights as well as the means to secure the rights and seek redress when those rights are denied or violated. Also interesting is the fact that the men also experience a great change in knowledge and attitude towards women. Some extracts to this are:

- *I realized that we men in the society are highly chauvinistic but we welcome the shift in paradigm we learnt from WRAPA (F1).*
- *I wedded my wife in court to protect her, in case I die, from my tradition (F4).*
- *I have learnt my role as a woman in the society and the right I have both as a human and a citizen (B3). I know how better to deal with situation of violent acts or culture and how to find help (B1).*

5.1.2 Socio-economic enhancement

WRAPA uses various projects such as ten centres project and legal aid outreach project to reach out to target groups and this forms WRAPA's strategies as described by the three WRAPA officials:

- *WRAPA is executing projects named 'Ten Centre Project' and then Legal aid clinics and legal aid committees. We train women in the communities to acquire new skills, adult and computer education in order to be economically independent (K1).*
- *WRAPA is really empowering the women in their ten centre project. The centre assists women a lot in skill acquisition, counselling and empowering women into politics and government in Nigeria (K2).*

The project centres visited has the facility to train the women to learn new skills, how to read and write through adult education and also train the women on how to use computer by

providing them with computer education. These projects WRAPA assumes would empower the women to be self-employed as well as give the women a voice in the society. The women and men tend to agree on the role of such project:

- *If my wife makes money and my wife takes care of certain things at home I will be relief and someone family stress is removed (F3).*
- *My life has changed (improved); thanks to this people (WRAPA representatives) (B2).*
- *My business is now better than before because of what I learn (B3).*

Group discussion reveals also that the community has witnessed many women thronging into the centre and willing to learn computer education which before is a thing for those in the urban areas. They also agreed that there is an increase in women participation in economic activities so that they will not burden their husband so much or can be economically independent to some extent, and those women are getting more and more organized by way of forming cooperative groups to assist one another.

5.1.3 Legal aid, counselling, advocacy and other institutional support

Improving women's access to social justice is the major activity of WRAPA especially to the weak and vulnerable as the WRAPA officials claim that:

- *Free services in terms of counselling and legal aid (K1).*
- *Improve access to justice for Nigerian women especially the weak and vulnerable ones such as women in distress, the poor, the marginalized, victims of trafficking, women with disability, elderly, etc. whose knowledge of their rights and or whose capacity to seek redress is limited (K2).*
- *The core value of WRAPA has to do with women's rights. That is to say women enabled to have access to social justice and legal rights. Legal Aid Outreach project and strategic litigation (K3).*
- *We can't take our men to court or police station, but we know what to do and how to get help. It is equally important that our men know the law now and are appreciating us women and the work of this good Samaritans drawing from Christian biblical story and in this case is referring to WRAPA volunteers. As a widow, my husband in-laws did not support in raising their brother's children. Rather they tried to take every land from me. This people talked to me on how to raise money and start my vegetable business and how to relate with my late husband's people (F2).*

The centre's supervisor and the beneficiaries, group discussions and website extract affirm that WRAPA facilitates access to justice for aggrieved women by means of legal representation in courts or legal counselling for appropriate course(s) of action. Furthermore, the centre provides counselling to women ranging from family related issues to even business decision making process as exemplified by this statement. Moreover, WRAPA has recorded and published its involvement in advocacy both locally and internationally to address the issue of gender based violence in Nigeria.

5.1.4 Citizen participation and civil society organisations and partnership

WRAPA registers members through its network and it has volunteers, efficient board members and collaborates with other NGOs and the police to carry out their activities. They have also coordinators station in 36 states of Nigeria including the capital city, Abuja as expressed by the three WRAPA officials in the head office:

- *WRAPA belongs to 55 member NGOs coalition working in the field of Gender related cases in Nigeria. An extensive national network of membership and volunteers spread in all the 36 states and some local governments with tested expertise in legal aid and counselling services. 16000 registered members support our operations through membership fees and dues. WRAPA also gets donations from individuals, corporate organizations and international agencies (K1).*
- *WRAPA's has camp co-coordinator in the 36 states and they work through these co-coordinators as a link to address issues of women's rights. WRAPA has collaborated with other NGOs overtime on the issue of violence against women, inheritance for widows and women's participation (K3).*

Records at WRAPA headquarters show that the organization keeps a register of members, volunteers, sponsors, NGOs, government agencies and other stakeholders for networking in the fight for women. I met their program officer in Abuja confirmed that they get both financial and technical assistance by collaborating with WRAPA to carry out women related intervention project in Cross River State- where the WRAPA direct project is not located for now, but there is plan to have in the next phase. I also found in the project centre office (and confirmed by group discussion) a list of four different women's groups involved in community development programs.

5.1.5 Direct interventions and Perceived impact and successes of WRAPA

The WRAPA officials enumerate the areas that they think that WRAPA has recorded successes as follows:

- *I can tell you that despite the challenges WRAPA is making progress. WRAPA has won several cases: 60 women were provided with legal representations leading to their freedom after spending various time spans in the prisons awaiting trials for trumped up charges. In another instance, 23 women were assisted to secure bail through the provision of linkage to their relations some of who were not aware of the plight of the women. Again, 36 women in Niger state who were repatriated from Thailand have been rehabilitated and reconciled with their families upon the completion of their prison terms. Also, 18 women in very pathetic situations with their children, pregnancies, deformities or life threatening conditions in Nasarawa, Ekiti, Gombe, Katsina, Kano and Jigawa states had their trials and freedom expedited through WRAPA intervention; and 39 inmates were released through the intervention of WRAPA working as a member of ANGOI, a coalition working with the Lagos government to decongest prisons through the release of inmates who have been in prison custody for unduly long periods for minor offenses or on holding charges. WRAPA facilitated the legal processes for their release in collaboration with other NGOs and government” (K3, looking into WRAPA records and reading out the points) 45 women serving various terms have been given economic empowerment training in Plateau state prison (K2).*

WRAPA is fighting for equal rights in access to healthcare, education, and employment for men and women, as well as equal participation in the political and decision-making. This is in line with Grown et al (2005) who are of the view that gender equality concern equal right, justices, and opportunities for both men and women. The group discussion members share more light on gender advocacy of WRAPA such as women right protection laws, litigation and legal aid to women, various forms of institutional support and promoting citizen participation and civil society development to combat violence against women. Furthermore, Malhotra et al (cited in Grown et al, 2005.p.3) asserts that female empowerment is more than just an increased female presence in education, health, employment, and land ownership, but also women’s participation in decision-making within the political institution through leadership position. Therefore, WRAPA programmes have given women opportunity to be part of decision-making and some are even able to demonstrate authority in their groups.

WRAPA is generally perceived as creating significant impacts in combating violence against women and empowering women as well.

5.1.6 Lack of statistics and women's attitude toward violence

Although WRAPA has been viewed as succeeding in the achievement of its objectives in protecting women, it is not without certain challenges which include lack of statistical data, attitudes of the people and constitutional constraints.

Firstly, the three key informants affirmed lack of statistics as a one major setback and one of them has this to say as one reason:

- *WRAPA faces challenges in the area of statistics because women that are violated in their home do not come to report (K2).*

K1 claims that they receive 45 cases daily (as reported earlier in forms of violence against women) the other informants K2 and K3 did not give any figure and each of these informant is the head of a department directly working with the victims of violence against women. The attitude of the women towards reported cases of violence, religious, traditional and cultural restrictions are also considered to pose serious challenge to WRAPA role:

- *Victim's unwillingness to report partners to the Police or to WRAPA is a problem*
- *Religious leaders, community leaders and household heads find it difficult to come out for public discourse on issues about violence against women (K1).*
- *Victims of domestic violence like battering, rape, etc may not want to contact WRAPA but WRAPA's phone number is available with National hospitals in Nigeria. Nurses can inform WRAPA but victims may not want to come out and this is a difficult situation (K2).*

The officials pointed out constitutional constraints that are hindering the efforts of WRAPA to render its service, although the legislature is becoming more and more supportive in changing this:

- *The idea of women still being seen as second class citizens, lack of political will by the government to allocate resources to issues of gender in the budget; legal framework in Nigeria does not protect women's rights. Men in the parliament in 2004 turn down a bill on gender based violence known as harmonization bill that could have made it possible to domesticate AU protocol agreement (K1).*

- *The Nigeria government considers some of the provisions of CEDAW as violence against women by Nigeria perception... In Nigeria, there are laws for criminal related offenses and law courts in the Southern and in the Northern part of the country that can take criminal proceeding and put offenders of VOW on trial. But until now there are no law or policies so to say specifically on women's rights in Nigeria (K3).*

5.2 Existence of violence against women

The results reveal that in Nigeria women face all manner of violence including domestic violence. Women are battered by their partners, female children undergo Female Genital Mutilations, forced marriages in particular teenage marriages are rampant and rapes in the home by the intimate partners are often. Violence against women is not only in marital relationship but practiced within the family, and sanctioned by the societies across Nigeria. As discussed earlier public violence such as discrimination in employment are practiced by all levels of governments in Nigeria starting from the local governments, state governments and federal government and not excluding the private sector. These forms of violence are not limited to a specific group of women in Nigeria but include all women; in essence every woman in the country is likely to be violated in one way or another. The basic explanation for this social phenomenon is traceable to societal values.

Nigerian societies assume and believe that men are superior to women. Hence WRAPA and other NGOs working in the field of gender related cases in Nigeria have come to challenge these societal assumptions and beliefs at least to assist the most vulnerable groups of women as it is assumed that they are the most targeted groups for all manner of violence due to lack of education and economic empowerment. Most women in Nigeria who live in marriage relationships through social orientation grew up to accept that men are superior. WRAPA thinks that given a voice and empowering the women to be self-reliant are the keys through which women can be freed from all forms of violence and as such set itself on a mission by first identifying the forms of violence in the various societies across Nigeria.

The result reveals also that WRAPA as an NGO in Nigeria is working to help women, empowering women in term of social, economic and political aspect because different forms of violence against women in Nigeria is very commonly perpetuated by men through family, religion and tradition. This revelation supports the claim by Izugbara, Duru and Dania (2008) who write that intimate male partners' abuse is reportedly the most common form of violence against women. Women in most Nigerian cultures are regarded as passive objects and if the

women venture to challenge set society gender roles, they risk being abused (Osha 2004; Pearce 2002; Izugbara et al 2008). Therefore, the occurrence of violence against women is a strategy to keep women within culturally defined boundaries, this is more so, by the insecurity of the male population (Abati 2006).

5.2.1 WRAPA's Strategies

It was indicated that 42million people in 2002 have HIV/AIDS which 70% was from Sub-Saharan and 58% was with HIV/AIDS were women “*making African women the group most severely affected by HIV/AIDS worldwide*” (Dunkle et al 2004,p.1415).Therefore, women in abusive homes may have higher risk of HIV/AIDS because this abuse men often cheat on their wives thereby increasing the risk of HIV/AIDS (Dunkle et al 2004, p.1419).And this study was done in South Africa and we have almost the same value system and common factors affect gender based issues.

Therefore, the result shows WRAPA plays a major role in fighting VOW through providing information that educates the society. One of the important attributes of WRAPA's campaign is the use of the professionals like doctors to visit the people in their local settings, to teach them about HIV /AIDS and to enlighten the women to know their rights. The idea of this strategy is that if the women are well informed about their rights, then they will understand the need to report violence against them when it happens and not to keep silent.

Visiting the villages no doubt is a powerful forum for enlightenment campaign since most women in the villages might not have access to the media. Nigerian men are often culturally socialized to suspicious of activities that encourage their female partners to become more powerful (Ogundipe-Leslie 1985), therefore unlearning the men of this ideology and convincing them to support the empowerment of their wives is a giant stride towards the combat of VAW by WRAPA. I will say that the various campaigns do not only sensitize the women but has changed the mindset of most men in the community in Nigeria on how women should be treated in the same way with men. Additionally, when we look around the world today in most developing countries like Nigeria that cultures and religious practices are still an active contributor to violence against women which depriving most women right to seek employment, acquire education and seek political offices.

5.2.2 WRAPA's Activities

WRAPA empowering women to know their right because WRAPA represents a voice for women in Nigeria and WRAPA seeks to put women at the centre of its activities by

empowering women to know their rights, and encourages them to seek economic and political powers like their male counterparts; the new skills women learn will assist the women to be financial independent so that the women will not live in fear of financial uncertainty should they take action to report their partners and it result to divorce or they victimized by their spouses. The result of interaction with women, who benefits from WRAPA projects and are sensitized, suggests that the women beneficiary could quit their marriage now that they are economically independent if they still experience some extreme abuses. This is in line with Minkler et. als (2008) key concepts of social action theory such as critical consciousness whereby the women are mentally aware of the effect of violence on them and willing to change their situation.

5.2.3 WRAPA Supports

Violence against women can result in physical injury, emotional trauma, loss of self-confidence and insecurity. The effects could range from short to long term psychological trauma thereby affecting the woman individually, the family like the care for children, and their contribution to the society at large (Heise et al., 1999; Silverman et al., 2001). Therefore, giving support to victims of gender based violence is very essential to bringing back such victims to full integration into the society. On advocacy the literature from WRAPA website reveals that WRAPA as a member of a regional NGO coalition known as solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) which has been in the forefront of the advocacy and campaign activities around the articulation, adoption, ratification and domestication of African union protocol to the African Charter of Women's rights. The organization has on record that it engages appropriate levels of the government and society in dialogue and advocacy for recognition and inclusion of women and their specific needs in policy and governance. It reports has it that since 2003 till date, WRAPA has engaged Nigeria government and relevant stakeholders in activities aimed at popularizing the AU protocol through sensitization and advocacy directed at the government and its agencies as well as religion and traditional institutions.

This contributed to Nigeria ratifying the African protocol in October 2004. WRAPA is currently engaged in another around of negotiation in parliament aimed at expanding/strengthening alliance to see the Nigeria domestication of African protocol. Also WRAPA have been in the struggle for the domestication of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Nigeria through advocacy and sensitization.

For instance, the Gender and Affirmative Action Issue Based Project (GAA IBP) which is an initiative of coalitions for change (CFC) and funded by the Department for International Developments, UK (DFID) of which WRAPA is the administrative body for Nigeria working with other NGOs, WRAPA has successfully advocated and help to strengthen parliamentarian's capacity to engage in gender sensitive law making that address women priorities. This culminated in the violence against persons (prohibition) bill been passed in the House of Representatives. This is in accordance with Minklers et al (2008) key concepts of social action theory known as Social capital which deals with building relationship between members of a community through networking techniques and social support enhancement.

5.2.4 WRAPA's Network

WRAPA has a sustained structure of members and volunteers to propagate the ideals of women's human rights at the Federal, State and Local Government levels with a mandate to network, and render services that touches the lives of women individually or collectively while respecting the sensitivities of every society. The informants' testimonies show that WRAPA's success story is as a result of dynamic work force and support of the membership of the organization, the volunteer workforce, members' contribution and donations from the Nigerian government and government of other countries and free will donations from the general public. Other contributors are donations from corporate bodies, and above all WRAPA's collaborations with other NGOs in Nigeria and International Organizations.

The field findings reveal that through networks, WRAPA is able to reach out to many local communities and establish interactions with the community leaders, the elders and the religious leaders in order to discuss matters related to violence against women and women's rights. The contact with the leaders WRAPA hopes will have impact and free women from various forms of violence. This can be viewed in relation to the key concept of social action theory on community capacity which is the identification and the ability of the community to resolve social issues and this involves leadership, skills, participation etc. and is achieved through workshops (Minkler et.al2008). This role has encouraged individuals to be socially responsible in contributing to solve society problems. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is also promoted amongst corporate bodies while the civil society is strengthened. According to Etuk and Etuk (2011), the need of multiple stakeholders in social development and the stakeholders have taken action where the government has not done much or is taking a longer time line to achieve significant impacts.

5.2.5 Direct Success and Impact of WRAPA

WRAPA has been involved directly with issues of VOW when it is brought to its knowledge; any situation of threat of violation of women's right through documentation of issues and interaction with all parties, be it in private or public life. An instance is a record provided by officials where WRAPA provided shelter for a woman who was disinherited of late husband's property, while trying to reconcile with the family and preparing for litigation in the event that the family does not welcome dialogue. WRAPA reports, also confirmed by beneficiaries shows that there has been humanitarian support for women and families in difficult circumstances and victims of gender violence through donations from individuals and corporate bodies.

Generally, the community demonstrate a higher level of confidence and commitment in addressing gender related issues. Self-perception, perceptions of gender differences and of the relative importance of men and women has been influenced by the gender based programmes. Now, it appears there is a general understanding of how women can be well treated and valued and men have learnt to see women and man as equal humans without any stereotypes. The male recognized the values of their wives and daughters and how the women can contribute to the family and society. Thus there is a change in attitude and practices. The communities tend to be aware of the socialization processes which could lead to gender inequality and are willing to treat their male and female children equally. That is the children are educated on roles to be generic, not gender specific.

Interesting, it is noteworthy that some key male stakeholders, like the village head are moving forward the gender equality in the face of male resistance. The men now understand that women are to be respected just like men in the society. This is shown in the key concept of social action theory on issue selection, participation and relevance which involved the community in implementing actions on relevant issues on violence (Minkler et.al 2008).

5.2.6 WRAPA Challenges in Aspect of Financial and Cultural

The officials identified funding as being inadequate to carry all functions of WRAPA, for instance:

- *WRAPA Lack funds to provide shelter to accommodate women that are really battered in their homes that need to get out immediately (K1).*

- *WRAPA is not getting sufficient funds to execute many of her projects for example the legal aid clinics and prison legal aid outreach projects needs funding to be able to cover many states in Nigeria K3).*

The WRAPA officials are of the view that funding is important for the success of every organization especially the NGOs because they render free services. They argue that for an NGO to carry out its activities to assist the needy, they need adequate funding. However, they are of the view that WRAPA is a dynamic organization that is well positioned to source out funds for its operations but that due to expansion of their activities, the resources available are not able to meet up with the demand. Therefore, WRAPA needs funds in order to execute various projects that would enable the organization to assist women in distress such as building houses that can accommodate women temporary while making effort to address their problems. Furthermore, the three informants explain that victims are unwilling to report cases of violence to the police or to the NGOs working in the field of gender based violence especially domestic violence due to their mindset and culture.

Different stakeholders: community leaders, religious leaders and elderly people are not willing to have discussions on the issue of violence against women and women's rights due to their perception.

The three informants point out one of the problems in the area of their challenges that Nigeria constitution lacks the legal provisions to effectively protect women against all manner of violence as established by the UN Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women and AU Protocol on Human rights for women. The informant K3 in particular assumes that Nigeria criminal legal code is enough to prosecute the accused and render justice but that is unrealistic. All the informants agreed that women's rights can only be fully protected if Nigeria constitution adopts the legal provisions contained in CEDAW. All these are the aspect in term of challenges facing WRAPA in their role of fight violence against women. However, the informants still identifies successes that WRAPA has achieved within the ten years of their establishment.

In relation to the above result and discussion, there still exist various forms of violence against women due to certain traditional practices. WRAPA as an organization has set goals as revealed in their programs and they tailored their projects to meet those goals in order to combat violence against women.

The achievement of WRAPA shows the organization's readiness to play leading role in combating violence against women through sensitization, advocacy, legal aids, socio-economic enhancement of women, counselling, direct intervention in women cases and other institutional support to empower women.

6 CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has investigated the role of WRAPA as an NGO in combating violence against women in Nigeria. Assessment of specific gender based intervention programs of WRAPA has been carried out. The method used is qualitative approach, drew data from the victims of violence against women as well as beneficiaries of WRAPA's community support projects. Interviews with key personnel of WRAPA give insight to the organizational strength and challenges. Field findings through qualitative research methods helped immensely to bring out cultural issues impacting social intervention as carried out by WRAPA. This study has found out that continued violence against women in Nigeria is due to society construction of gender, and the dominate nature of men in private and public place in Nigeria. Religious and cultural practices continue to support the factor that causes violence.

This study shares the view of Minkler et al (2008) on a social action theory that is the pattern used in the community to solve problems that will bring social changes and justices. In line with the role of WRAPA in fighting violence against women in Nigeria the organization has programme and projects like legal aid, counselling, advocacy and other institutional support that will bring social justice for women in terms of gender equality and empowerment of women in the community.

The empowerment theory used in this study is all encompassing and comprehensively aimed at encouraging women to exercise greater control over their competences, endowments and interests. It is also directed towards gaining increased access to natural, financial, economic and educational and investment resources; it as well involves moving into new roles and positions of women and that of taking decisions and leading in areas earlier traditionally or habitually custodied and enjoyed by men. The theory of empowerment looked at the woman in the society by trying to understand the lived experience of citizens in relation to family, groups, and other aspects of community life.

CWD (2007) states four aspects of empowerment that is power to, knowledge, know-how will and capacity .This four aspects of empowerment is in line with CWD, I will say that

WRAPA is helping women to resist violence by having greater economic power in terms of income, land technology as well as better health, access to loan, information etc. WRAPA also help victims of violence to participate in economic and social activities. WRAPA have various skill acquisition and awareness training for women. Furthermore, WRAPA programmes have given women opportunity to be part of decision making which some of women even demonstrate authority in their groups.

Furthermore, Jewkes, et al. (2001) states that the dependence of women on men for livelihood is documented as a major issue in the economy of gender based abuse. Ogundipe-Leslie (1985) adds that men are encouraged to abuse women, and women economic dependency on men also limits women's ability to challenge the men or the society actions.

Nigerian men are often culturally socialized to be suspicious of activities that encourage their female partners to become more powerful. Jewkes, Penn-Kekana and Rose-Junis (2005) states that the existence of strong patriarchal values encourage males to be abusive towards their female partners. Okolo (2008) adds that in Nigerian context it can be argued that capitalism and patriarchy have also contributed to women's subordination beneath men, which result in gender inequality and discrimination. Gender inequality and discrimination in Nigeria derives from culture, religious, and tradition beliefs where men have more rights than women. For example, in most communities men are allowed to go to school while women should stay at home (Okolo 2008, p.6).

WRAPA are fighting for equal rights in term of employment for men and women, as well as equal participation in the political and decision-making sectors. In promoting gender equality in Nigeria WRAPA carried out the project named the "Ten Centre Project" which WRAPA employees train men and women in the communities to acquire new skills, and computer education in order to be economically independent which will lead to change in society's value because it is necessary step towards gaining human rights and eradicating violence, social domination, discrimination for a better future for as well as the development of equal right in Nigeria.

6.1 Recommendations

The use of radios not only for jingles and advertorials but to come up with specific programmes like short local drama, peer talks by women etc. since most homes have radios. WRAPA offices should be more in rural areas since issues of VAW are prevalent in the area seeing that education, economic and exposure levels are implicated in this problem. Religious

values that make for the restriction of women's freedom should be dropped, so WRAPA should partnership with religious leaders to conduct gender issues in the church with the men that will improve tolerance and communication between men and women. And. Gender studies programme should be include in the primary and secondary level that will help protect and counsel victims gender violence and children from abusive parent which will reduce of gender abuse. Government could also help by taking bold steps to make and enforce legislations that would protect women from violence particularly harmful traditional practices Government should encourage and support the NGOs working in gender related issues with fund in building of more shelter homes for victims of gender based violence.

There should be more in depth research into gender related issues in Nigeria. Intervention, efforts should be geared towards developing programmes that will educate the men as well, because no matter what the women know, if the men are ignorant of the importance of women empowerment it will become anti-developmental due to the level of gender conflict it will generate in a cultural bound society like Nigeria. The scope of this work is qualitative and tends to be descriptive of the specific findings of WRAPA; I recommend quantitative work to strengthen the claims, reliability and expanded scope of work to take into account many NGOs which can lead to generalised results.

6.2 Future Research

Future research should be done to see the role of girl child education and violence against women. If the girl child is educated and grows up to be a woman with adequate information and enlightenments this might mitigate the level of violence against women as most of these victims are not literate especially those in the rural areas. Another major research that can be carried out is to find out if the men who abuse their wives come from homes where their father abused their mother physically. Sometimes men from abusive homes tend to be abusive husbands as the things they have experienced at the formative stage in their lives as growing children become part of their future.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name
2. What is your age?
3. Are you married?
4. Do you have children?
5. Any educational qualification?
6. Employment?
7. What is your working experience?
8. What is your religion?
9. What types of violence do women commonly experienced in Nigeria?
10. What is impact of WRAPA in the socio-economic development of women?
11. What are the legal and institutional framework surrounding WRAPA?
12. What are the constraints and challenges encounter by WRAPA in helping women?
13. Who have experienced violence?
14. What is the impact of projects executed in their community by WRAPA?
15. What are your experiences before and after WRAPA programmes and intervention?