

**FACT SHEET**

# Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention and Advocacy in Kwara State

With the support of

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Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) empowers young people through education, advocacy, and digital innovation, driving social change, promoting good governance, combating gender-based violence, and fostering inclusive development.

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# Overview

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a widespread issue in Kwara State, affecting women and girls disproportionately. Despite existing legal frameworks, enforcement remains weak, and cultural norms continue to perpetuate violence. GBV takes multiple forms, including domestic violence, sexual assault, spousal abuse, and online harassment, with significant social and economic consequences.

## Key Statistics

**3,000**  
reported GBV  
cases in Kwara

Prevalence of GBV: Kwara ranks among the top five Nigerian states with the highest GBV cases, recording 3,000 cases in a recent report.



Violence Against Women:

**42.5%**

of women aged 15–49 in Kwara have experienced physical violence since age 15, exceeding the national average of 31.0%.

Violence During  
Pregnancy:

**4.1%**

of women aged 15-49 who have ever been pregnant have experienced physical violence during pregnancy, a rate higher than in Katsina (0.5%), Bayelsa (1.0%), Jigawa (0.0%), Kano (0.0%), and Osun (1.7%), yet slightly lower than the national average of 5.5%.

Spousal Violence:

**34.2%**

of married women in Kwara have experienced emotional violence, 26.4% physical violence, and 2.7% sexual violence from their partners.

Sexual Violence:

**3.6%**

of women aged 15-49 in Kwara have experienced sexual violence, surpassing rates in Abuja (3.0%) and Kano (3.1%).

Perpetrator of GBV:

A significant **74.0%** of women who experienced sexual violence identified a member of their own family as the perpetrator, while 27.6% reported abuse by someone from their husband/partner's family, with other perpetrators including boyfriends (11.5%), friends (11.2%), and neighbours (9.7%). Additionally, authority figures such as religious leaders (2.1%), police officers (0.5%), doctors/medical personnel (0.4%), and social work organizations (0.1%) were reported as perpetrators, whereas only 1.3% of survivors identified their husband/partner, and no cases were reported against lawyers.

## Justify wife beating by women: In Kwara State

**5.7%**

of women justify wife beating if she goes out without informing her husband

**8.5%**

if she neglects the children

**14.0%**

if she argues with him

**21.4%**

if she refuses sex, and 14.2% if she burns the food.



**Justify wife beating by men:** Kwara State 2.7% of men justify wife beating if she goes out without telling him, 4.4% if she neglects the children, and 26.2% if she refuses sex.



**Refusing sex** is the most commonly cited reason for justifying spousal violence, with 21.4% of women and 26.2% of men supporting it.



**Child Marriage:** 10% of girls aged 15-19 in Kwara are married before age 15, higher than the 8.3% regional average.



**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** 58.3% of women aged 15-49 in Kwara have undergone FGM, significantly above the 15.1% national average.



**GBV in school:** A study of GBV in Ilorin shows that 89.1% of public-school students and 84.8% of private school students have experienced at least one form of GBV.



**Online GBV:** Reports show an increasing trend of cyberstalking, doxxing, and non-consensual pornography, putting women and girls at risk. In Nigeria, 23.9% had harassed someone electronically, 39.8% had been victimized, and 21.0% were both victims and perpetrators.



**Poor Culture of reporting:** A recent survey found that 26.3% of respondents prefer seeking justice through traditional or religious leaders rather than formal legal channels.



# Impact of GBV



## a). Physical and Psychological Harm to Survivors

- GBV inflicts severe physical, emotional, and psychological trauma, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- Survivors often face chronic health complications, such as hypertension and other stress-related illnesses.
- The overlapping nature of abuse complicates recovery, leading to long-term emotional distress and difficulty in social reintegration.
- Women subjected to intimate partner violence during pregnancy face a significantly higher risk of adverse outcomes, including a 1.84 times greater likelihood of preterm birth and a 2.73 times higher chance of delivering a low birth weight infant.
- Intimate partner violence (IPV) has profound health consequences for women, including a significant risk of injury. According to the World Health Organization, approximately 42% of women who experience IPV report sustaining injuries as a direct result of the violence.



## b). Economic Consequences

- GBV leads to financial instability, as survivors may be unable to work due to physical injuries or psychological trauma.
- High medical costs for treating injuries and mental health issues place a financial burden on survivors and their families.
- Reduced female workforce participation contributes to slower economic growth, as violence against women hinders productivity and employment.
- Increased legal expenses and social service costs strain both individual households and public resources.

## c). Impact on Families

- GBV disrupts family structures, leading to emotional and psychological strain on survivors and their loved ones.
- Children exposed to GBV whether as victims or witnesses are at higher risk of developing anxiety, depression, and emotional regulation issues.
- Economic instability in GBV-affected households can hinder children's access to education and opportunities, limiting their future potential.
- Secondary trauma affects family members, such as partners and siblings, leading to emotional distress and social withdrawal.





## d). Disruption of Social Harmony and Community Development

- GBV undermines social cohesion, fostering an environment of fear and mistrust within communities.
- The normalization of spousal violence erodes mutual respect and hinders collective efforts to address societal challenges.
- Armed conflicts impact GBV, leading to long-term social and emotional consequences for women and their communities.
- The transgenerational impact of GBV perpetuates cycles of violence, trauma, and inequality.



## e). Negative Effects on Education

- GBV creates an unsafe learning environment, discouraging students especially girls from attending school.
- Affected students often experience decreased academic performance, absenteeism, and higher dropout rates.
- The psychological trauma from GBV leads to mental health issues that hinder students' educational attainment.
- Fear and stigma discourage victims from reporting incidents, limiting access to justice and support systems.

## Key Legal Frameworks for GBV Prevention in Kwara State

### a). Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2020)

- Aims to eliminate all forms of violence against persons, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse.
- Criminalizes offenses such as rape, stalking, spousal battery, harmful traditional practices, and female genital mutilation (FGM).
- Establishes a Sexual Offender Register to track and manage offenders, preventing repeat offenses.

### b). Kwara State Child Rights Law (2007)

- Aligns with international conventions like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- Defines a child as anyone under 16 years old and provides legal protection against abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Prohibits child labour, early marriage, and physical or emotional abuse.

In 2023, the state established the Child Rights Implementation Committee (CRIC) to oversee enforcement in all 16 LGAs.

## c). Nigerian Penal Code

- Section 282 defines rape and establishes strict penalties for sexual violence.
- Section 283 criminalizes sexual assault against minors, carrying a penalty of up to seven years in prison.
- Sections 244 and 245 address bodily harm and grievous hurt, holding perpetrators accountable for physical violence.

## d). Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, Etc.) Act (2015, Amended)

- Section 24 criminalizes cyberstalking, cyberbullying, blackmail, extortion, and revenge porn, with penalties of up to 10 years in prison and/or a fine of N25 million.
- Section 23 prohibits online sexual solicitation of minors, with a 10-year prison sentence and fines up to N15 million.
- Addresses identity theft, online harassment, child pornography, and hate speech, reinforcing protection under Nigeria's Constitution.

# Challenges in Addressing GBV

- **Inadequate Law Enforcement:** Weak enforcement of the VAPP Law and other GBV-related legislation due to lack of training, resources, and slow judicial processes.
- **Cultural and Societal Norms:** Deep-rooted beliefs normalize domestic violence, discourage survivors from reporting, and create a culture of silence.
- **Limited Survivor Support Services:** Few shelters, underfunded Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs), and inadequate access to legal aid and counselling.
- **Economic Dependence of Survivors:** Many women stay in abusive relationships due to financial constraints, lack of employment opportunities, and economic dependence on abusers.
- **Corruption in Law Enforcement:** Some survivors face bribery, bias, or intimidation when seeking justice.
- **Weak Stakeholder Collaboration:** Lack of coordination between government agencies, civil society organizations, traditional rulers, and religious leaders leads to ineffective GBV response.
- **Underreporting:** Fear of stigma and weak legal response discourage survivors from seeking justice, with only 5% of reported cases successfully closed.
- **Funding Gaps:** In 2025, the state's budget for GBV response was cut by 29%, limiting survivor support and justice efforts.



# Path Forward: Strengthening GBV Prevention and Response in the state

- Enhance Law Enforcement: Improve training for police and judicial officers, enforce stricter penalties for offenders, and ensure survivor-centred justice.
- Increase Funding: Expand resources for SARCs, shelters, and survivor support programs.
- Community Education and Behavioural Change: Implement school-based GBV education, media campaigns, and outreach programs to challenge harmful gender norms.
- Strengthen Multi-Sectoral Collaboration: Improve partnerships between government agencies, NGOs, law enforcement, and traditional leaders to develop a coordinated response.
- Address Online GBV: Strengthen digital literacy programs, enforce cybercrime laws, and encourage social media platforms to report online abuse.
- Enhance Survivor Support Services: Expand shelters, counselling centres, and SARCs across all Local Government Areas.
- Empower Women Economically: Provide financial and vocational opportunities to reduce women's dependence on abusers.
- Engage Traditional and Religious Leaders: Mobilize key community figures to advocate against GBV and support policy enforcement.
- Combat Online GBV: Implement digital safety programs and strengthen cybercrime laws to protect women online.

## Role of Traditional Rulers in GBV Prevention and Advocacy

- Integrate anti-GBV messages into community meetings, sermons, and traditional ceremonies.
- Establish confidential GBV response committees: Serve as the first point of intervention for survivors, offering support and guidance within their domains to encourage survivors to report cases without fear of stigma or retaliation.
- Lead community sensitization campaigns to challenge harmful cultural norms that justify GBV and promote gender equality.
- Work closely with law enforcement agencies and legal institutions to ensure timely prosecution of GBV cases and support survivors in seeking justice.
- Engage with policymakers to strengthen the enforcement of existing laws, such as the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law, and push for policy reforms to better protect victims.
- Partner with civil society organizations, healthcare providers, and social workers to provide counselling, medical care, and economic empowerment programs for survivors.
- Mobilize influential leaders to actively condemn GBV, promote positive cultural practices, and foster collective action against gender-based violence.
- Take a stand against practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) by enforcing community-level bans and promoting alternative rites of passage.
- Collaborate with government agencies, NGOs, and international organizations to develop and implement GBV prevention and response initiatives.
- Collect and analyse data on GBV cases within their communities to assess progress, identify gaps, and implement targeted interventions.
- Advocate for girls' education, economic opportunities for women, and leadership roles for women within the community to reduce their vulnerability to violence.

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