

Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa (Nigeria)

Report prepared by

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Executive Summary

Sexual violence is a prevalent and mostly gender-based crime in Nigeria. Women and children, particularly young girls, are susceptible to sexual violence at the hands of male perpetrators who take advantage of relational dynamics of trust and power, and prey on social, cultural and economic vulnerabilities. Over the years, the incidence of sexual violence in Nigeria has increased, given prevalent social, political, and economic crises that have exacerbated the relational pressures in private and public spaces. The situation was further worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing response, including lockdowns and government-mandated restrictions on movement. These conditions further exacerbated sexual violence, particularly intimate partner sexual violence. Consequently, the increased prevalence calls for an improved response agenda to protect the rights and interests of vulnerable populations and to address the deep-rooted drivers. This Report presents and analyses baseline data and contextual information on the prevalence, drivers, and impacts of sexual violence in Nigeria; maps key stakeholders involved in prevention, service delivery and advocacy/campaigning on sexual violence; and identifies advocacy priorities and opportunities for adequate response mechanisms in Nigeria.

The report identifies the following three underlying issues that shape the prevalence of and responses to sexual violence in Nigeria: lack of a clear definition of sexual violence in the various legislations; lack of a comprehensive coverage of all classes and statuses of women in a way that meaningfully disaggregates the category of “woman” to include and cater to the needs of all women, regardless of physical, social, cultural or other qualifications and indicators; and the interplay between reporting and response to effectively tackle sexual violence. These issues drive the main inquiry of this report about how to end sexual violence in Nigeria.

Each of the underlying issues is explored in this report through a series of mapping exercises and analyses. First, there is an exploration of the ways in which definitions of sexual violence can conflate the phenomenon and, hence, impact reporting and response. Sexual violence should be defined as a category in itself, distinct from other categories such as domestic violence, gender-based violence, and Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV). Although sexual violence is a sub-set of SGBV, its peculiar qualities, such as the predominant culture of patriarchy, the continued treatment of sex as a taboo, the culture of silence which emboldens perpetrators, fear of stigmatisation, and culture of shame and silence, exacerbate its prevalence as it continues to be conflated with and subsumed under other forms of violence. Consequently, the legislature has a duty to, through legislation, define the forms and classes of sexual offences and establish the framework for effectively addressing sexual violence.

The report also maps the broad range of stakeholders who impact and are impacted by the prevalence of and responses to sexual violence in Nigeria. Primary stakeholders, identified as those directly involved in the act of sexual violence, are at the centre of discussions on how to end and respond to these incidents. It is important to identify the individuals and populations that are susceptible to sexual violence. While women have been recognised as being particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, it is also recognised that all categories of women experience sexual violence, but their experience of sexual violence differs. Therefore, the vulnerabilities of primary stakeholders must be understood and addressed. Secondary stakeholders, on the other hand, are those who shape the ecosystem by their response to sexual violence, either in the private lives of primary stakeholders or as part of a public mechanism that impacts ideas and

actions around sexual violence. Primary and secondary stakeholders connect in various ways that shape perceptions of sexual violence and the actions around its occurrence and prevalence. For example, survivors may be more comfortable reporting cases of sexual violence to friends and family than to the Police, but in order for the justice system to be engaged, the Police must, at some point of the reporting and response process, be engaged. The Police engage lawyers and medical services through direct referrals and these stakeholders also work closely with the Police to ensure that there is a productive and interconnected reporting and response chain. The referral chain is bi-directional in many cases, so that in some instances, it is the police that makes the referrals whilst in other cases, secondary stakeholders such as non-governmental organisations and medical centers make the referrals to the police. Therefore, it is important to empower stakeholders across the entire reporting, response, and referral chain in order to build and strengthen the right institutional framework for tackling sexual violence. Ending sexual violence would require a targeted engagement of stakeholders based on their distinct roles in the ecosystem.

Finally, this report analyses the impediments to sexual violence reporting and response and the interventions that are necessary for addressing those impediments. In order for sexual violence to be seriously tackled and eliminated, there must be improved reporting and response mechanisms that enable survivors seek and find justice in an atmosphere of safety in which they are free from fear, while bringing perpetrators to justice and ending the predatory practices that engender sexual violence. Challenges to reporting keep survivors from coming forward and receiving the help they need, and response challenges impact the ability of secondary stakeholders to provide survivors with the help they need and bring perpetrators to justice. This report describes distinct challenges to reporting and response and describes the kinds of interventions that would be effective for addressing those challenges. Stakeholders must match the right interventions to the challenges they face through effectively designed mechanisms that enhance reporting and improve response.

This careful mapping and analysis generates several important general recommendations, chief among which are: defining sexual violence through, for example, adequate legislation and policy; identifying and protecting *all* classes of women who are vulnerable to sexual violence in order to design suitable response mechanisms; understanding the role of key stakeholders and their impact on sexual violence reporting and response; unravelling the main challenges that impede sexual violence reporting and response; and recognizing the benefits, connections and constraints of various sexual violence response mechanisms.

More specific recommendations include:

- Improved legal coverage of sexual violence across Nigeria through the introduction of comprehensive legislation to ensure that all forms of sexual violence are criminalised and properly addressed
- Improved enforcement of existing anti-sexual violence laws
- Increased resource allocation to secondary stakeholders with clear implementation programmes and influence that can impact sexual violence prevalence and response to improve accessibility of support services to survivors of sexual violence
- Capacity building for law enforcement and other secondary stakeholders whose activities and programmes impact sexual violence reporting and response
- Constructive civic engagement with religious and community leaders through proper enlightenment campaigns and awareness raising programmes

- Designing pro-survivor reporting mechanisms that engage all secondary stakeholders in the referral chain
- Improving coordination and collaboration across the referral chain to ensure that survivors receive the support they need at every stage of the reporting and response process
- Increasing awareness of available legal and response mechanisms through media advocacy
- Enhancing grassroots involvement through financial and technical empowerment and increased awareness of available resources

To achieve the overall aim of ending sexual violence by applying the general and specific recommendations mentioned above, stakeholders must understand the landscape and identify valuable priority partners and priority interventions that can deliver real impact. Priority partners, programmes and activities can provide strategic guidance in the development of adequate and improved sexual violence response in Nigeria. Therefore, there is the need for collaborative and sector-specific action across all identified stakeholders within and outside the referral chain. The fight to end sexual violence is not a futile one, and with such targeted and concerted action, it can be won.

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Overview

Introduction

For more than a decade, the Nigerian government has placed important issues related to the protection of women, including sexual violence, on the public agenda at all levels of government. Following increased advocacy from civil society groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the early 2000s, the government began to pay greater attention to sexual violence as an important issue of public concern (Balogun, 2021). Around this time, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Bill was introduced before the National Assembly in 2005. The Bill was supported and promoted by the National Coalition on Affirmative Action (NCAA), a network of gender activists and women-focused non-governmental organisations from different parts of the country. Although this Bill suffered several setbacks before the National Assembly, the efforts to promote women's rights, including those related to the prevention and response to sexual violence, have continued to gain momentum. For instance, the National Bureau of Statistics, in support of advocacy efforts around the CEDAW Bill, included in its 2008 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) a section on domestic violence that covered, amongst other things, the experience of sexual violence by women, noting the targets, perpetrators and drivers of sexual violence (NDHS 2008).

In 2008, 7% of women in Nigeria reported having ever experienced some form of sexual violence (NDHS 2008); in 2013, the percentage remained the same (NDHS 2013); and in 2018, the number was 9% (NDHS 2018). While it has been recognised that sexual violence remains a significant social challenge in Nigeria (Akpoghome, 2016), limitations in reporting have made it difficult to ascertain the actual incidence and prevalence of sexual violence in the country (Akoja & Anjorin, 2020). Although the past decade and a half have ushered in improved institutional methods and processes for reporting and responding to sexual violence, making it easier to find, analyse and understand data on sexual violence, there remain critical gaps in sexual violence reporting and response.

There was a significant surge in sexual violence incidence and reporting during the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, with the Minister for Women Affairs reporting that there were around 3,600 recorded rape cases during the lockdown (Uwaegbute & Unachukwu, 2022). The Nigerian Human Rights Commission recording more than 11,000 reported rape cases in 2020 alone (Amnesty International, 2021). Consequently, responders and other stakeholders continue to augment their efforts at combatting sexual violence and protecting survivors and vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. To do this, there is the need for accurate and reliable data to develop effective systems for combatting sexual violence, and this data must be comprehensive enough to cover all forms of sexual violence and all vulnerable groups including lesbian, bisexual, queer, trans gender, intersex women, female sex workers, and women living with disabilities (The Initiative for Equal Rights Report, 2021). The available data falls short in three ways: its definition of sexual violence is limited; it does not fully disaggregate the status of women and how this impacts their experience of sexual violence; and it is scattered across different platforms, making wholesale access difficult. This report makes an effort to provide harmonised analytical data on various aspects of the sexual violence status and response, thus addressing this third shortcoming. Below, the first two are discussed with a view to designing more authoritative interventions to combat sexual violence in Nigeria.

Sexual Violence in Nigeria: The State of Play

Defining Sexual Violence

The most prominent form of sexual violence recognised in Nigeria is rape. Rape is defined as having carnal knowledge of a woman without her consent, limiting its commission to heterosexual intercourse involving a specific physical act committed by a man against a woman (Criminal Code, section 357; Penal Code, section 282). In addition to rape, Nigerian criminal law recognises other forms of sexual violence, including indecent assault, incest, defilement, abduction, indecent treatment, sodomy, bestiality, and homosexuality (Okagbue, 1991). Some laws and policies also recognise sexual harassment and female genital mutilation as forms of sexual violence. The Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act, (VAPP) 2015, a federal legislation, adopts a definition that introduces an expansion of the classification of rape in the Criminal and Penal Codes applicable in most States in Nigeria. The data analysis below shows that the VAPP Act has been incorporated into law in 25 out of 36 States, including the Federal Capital Territory. While the VAPP Act has improved on the provisions of the Penal and Criminal Codes with regard to the definition and scope of rape, the Act remains inactive if all States do not enact the VAPP law to be applicable within their territories. Section 1 of the VAPP Act recognises that sex goes beyond the use of the primary sexual organs and extends the scope to the anus and mouth. This definition therefore recognises forceful anal or oral sex under the umbrella of rape, which is not the case under the longstanding criminal and penal codes. This is an improvement on the Criminal Code Act and the Penal Code that requires sexual intercourse. The plurality of the Nigerian legal framework with regards to sexual violence poses a significant barrier in improving the laws to protect women. Furthermore, the VAPP Act recognises female circumcision or genital mutilation as an act of sexual violence and criminalises it as such (Section 6 VAPPA 2015).

The importance of definitions is connected to the attribution of responsibility, particularly criminal responsibility, to perpetrators of recognised acts of sexual violence. In instances where the act does not fall under a legal definition of a criminal act, it becomes difficult to hold perpetrators responsible. It is, therefore, important to promote knowledge and understanding of the legal and policy framework for tackling sexual violence. The existence and content of relevant legislation varies from State to State, and in some instances, research shows that some stakeholders, particularly those who may seek protection under the law, have little or no knowledge of existing legislation. There are federal laws applicable throughout the country and State laws applicable in particular States. This would mean that some States may recognise certain acts as constituting sexual violence while others do not. Some of the existing legislations and policies are itemised in the table below.

FEDERAL	
Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law	
Penal Code	
Criminal Code Act	
Child Rights Act	
STATE	
FCT	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) (2020)
	The Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015

Abia	Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2020) Administration of Criminal Justice Law, 2017
Adamawa	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (awaiting assent) Administration of Criminal Justice Law 2018
Akwa-Ibom	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2020) Criminal Code, Laws of Akwa Ibom State, 2000
Anambra	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2017) Criminal Code, Laws of Anambra State
Bauchi	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2020) Penal Code of 1960, The Laws of Bauchi State Of Nigeria
Bayelsa	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (awaiting assent) Administration of Criminal Justice Law 2019
Benue	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2019) Administration of Criminal Justice Law of Benue State, 2019
Borno	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2021) Penal Code of 1960, The Laws of Borno State of Nigeria
Cross Rivers	Cross River State Administration of Criminal Justice Law No. 16, 2016
Delta	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2020) Administration Of Criminal Justice Law, Delta State 2017
Ebonyi	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2018) Criminal Code Law of Ebonyi State 2009
Edo	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2021)

	Administration of Criminal Justice Law (2016)
Ekiti	Gender-Based Violence Prohibition Amendment Law 2019; Ministry of Education Gender Policies for Schools; Ministry of Justice Gender Policy; Civil Service Workplace Policy against Sexual Harassment; Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law
Enugu	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2019) Administration of Criminal Justice Law 2017
Gombe	Penal Code of 1960, The Laws of Bauchi State
Imo	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2021) Imo State Administration Of Criminal Justice Law, 2020
Jigawa	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2021) Penal Code of 1960, The Laws of Jigawa State
Kaduna	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2018) Kaduna State Administration of Criminal Justice Law, 2017
Kano	Kano State Administration of Criminal Justice Law 2019
Katsina	Administration of Criminal Justice Law (ACJL) 2021
Kebbi	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (Awaiting assent) Administration of Criminal Justice Law 2021 Model Penal Code Law 2021
Kogi	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (awaiting assent) Administration of Criminal Justice Law 2017 Penal Code Law of Kogi State
Kwara	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2020)
Lagos	Lagos State Protection Against Domestic Violence Law 2007;

	Child Rights Law 2007 (Amended 2015); The Criminal Law Of Lagos State 2011
Nassarawa	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2021)
Niger	Niger State Penal Code (Amendment) Law 2000
Ogun	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2018)
Ondo	Violence Against Persons (VAP) Law (2021)
Osun	Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAP) Law 2021; Prohibition of Violence against Women in Osun State Law, 2013; Child Rights Law
Oyo	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (2021)
Plateau	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (Awaiting assent)
Rivers	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law (Awaiting assent)
Sokoto	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law; Penal Code Law, 2019
Taraba	Violence and Discrimination Against Persons Prohibition Law (2021);
Yobe	Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law.
Zamfara	Zamfara: Sharia Penal Code Law 2000, Law No. 10 of 2000

The status of sexual violence under these laws is of particular importance to note because other forms of sexual violence, apart from rape, may not be criminalized. A key factor is that both the Federal and State governments have powers to make laws. The effect of this is that Laws enacted at the State level may differ from laws made at the Federal level, thus resulting in a gap, leaving women vulnerable and giving perpetrators a “get out of jail free” card, depending on the State law under which they are charged. Currently, the VAPP Act co-exists with older and more restrictive provisions such as those in the Criminal Code Act and Penal Code. For example, the Lagos State Domestic Violence Law, which precedes the VAPP Act (national law) on this matter, does not criminalize domestic violence but focuses on the execution of orders (restraining order). Nevertheless, it provides a framework for tackling domestic violence by defining the term more clearly than the position before its enactment, allowing recourse to the criminal law for assault, battery, rape, and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence recognised under the criminal law.

In general, sexual violence has been subsumed under domestic violence or gender-based violence in many analyses, so that it sometimes loses its peculiarity. For instance, many forms of sexual violence are not “domestic”. The NDHS defines domestic violence as “a confrontation between family or household members that typically involves physical harm, sexual assault, or fear of physical harm” and endorses the United Nations definition of gender-based violence as “any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, occurring in public or private life” (NDHS 2008, 261). While the latter is broad enough to cover most of the acts of sexual violence, it may not cover defilement, which is targeted at children, and the former is not broad enough to cover non-familial and -household incidents.

Therefore, sexual violence should be defined to cover a broad range of perpetrators and targets, while also covering all forms of acts and threats of a sexual nature or with consequences of a sexual nature, that impact or would likely negatively impact individuals of a female persuasion physically or psychologically. This would also include acts involving sexual harassment and female genital mutilation, while leaving room for objective qualifications.

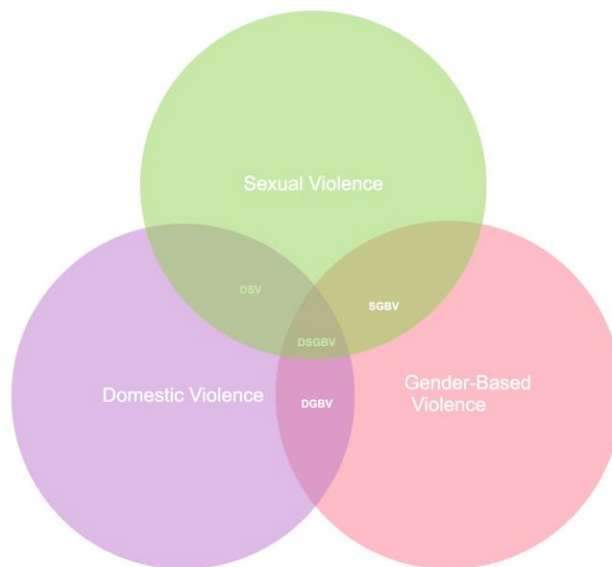


Figure 1: Defining and Conceptualising Sexual Violence

The above depiction shows how different forms of violence can be conflated, especially given the blended nature of the various acts. Stakeholders note that reports of domestic violence will sometimes include reports of sexual violence. Additionally, gender-based violence (GBV) as a category conflates different forms of violence against women, including sexual violence. The United Nations defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (United Nations, 1993, Art. 1). Thus, sexual violence is a sub-category of gender-based violence but not all forms of gender-based violence involve sexual violence. This has led to the specific categorisation of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), which would involve acts of gender-based violence that are sexual or have sexual impact or consequences. The challenge with this categorisation is that it sustains the submersion of sexual violence within the gender-based violence category in ways that could compromise specific sexual violence-related challenges.

These kinds of conflation are not uncommon. For example, a UN brief on gender-based violence in Nigeria reports that “30 per cent of girls and women aged between 15 and 49 reported to have experienced sexual abuse” (United Nations, 2020, 3), citing data from the NDHS 2018, which instead states that, “[p]hysical violence and sexual violence may not occur in isolation; rather, women may experience a combination of different forms of violence. Overall, 33% of women age 15-49 in Nigeria have experienced physical or sexual violence: 24% have experienced only physical violence, 2% have experienced only sexual violence, and 7% have experienced both physical and sexual violence” (NDHS 2018, 430)

These kinds of misconceptions arise from and further perpetuate the inadequacy of the current conceptualisation of sexual violence, which spirals into the design of mechanisms for prohibition and response. If sexual violence is paired with other forms of violence that do not cover all forms of sexual violence or that minimize the focus on sexual violence, there is a tendency to overlook important aspects of sexual violence that may have been marginalised by the current conceptualisation. This could include, for example, sexual violence against girls where there is no obvious form of physical violence or resistance. Therefore, defining sexual violence legally and socially requires a targeted approach that is broad enough to cover all forms of violence against all classes of women but specific enough to recognise and treat sexual violence as a special category.

Disaggregating the Status of Women

Available data shows that violence against women is prevalent across geographical and demographic positions, affecting women of all ages, including young girls; women in rural and urban areas; women from different socio-economic stations; and women across the different geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The national survey recognises and provides data on several categories of women. The table below shows areas where the NDHS categorises sexual violence data and the gaps that remain.

Table 1: Sexual Violence Data Categories and Gaps (showing the percentage of women who have ever experienced sexual violence)

Year	2008	2013	2018
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Age 15-19 – 7% •Age 20-24 – 9% •Age 25 -29 – 8% •Age 30-39 – 6% •Age 40-49 – 6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Age 15-19 – 6% •Age 20-24 – 9% •Age 25-29 - 8% •Age 30-39 – 8% •Age 40-49 – 7% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Age 15-19 - 8% •Age 20-24 11% •Age 25-29 - 9% •Age 30-39 - 11% •Age 40-49 7%
Religion		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Catholic – 11% •Other Christian – 10% •Islam – 5% •Traditionalist – 8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Catholic - 11% •Other Christian – 11% •Islam – 7% •Traditionalist - 2% •Other – 3%

Employment Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Employed (not paid in cash - 11% •Employed (paid in cash) – 7% •Unemployed – 6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Employed (not paid in cash) – 17% •Employed (Paid in cash) – 7% • Unemployed – 6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed (not paid in cash) – 12% • Employed (paid in cash) – 9% • Unemployed – 8%
Marital Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Divorced, Separated or Widowed Women – 11% •Married Women – 6% •Never Married – 9% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Divorced/separated/widowed – 15% •Married or living together – 7% •Never married – 7% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Divorced/separated/widowed - 15% •Married or living together - 9% •Never married – 8%
Number of Children		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •0– 7% •1-2 – 8% •3-4 – 7% •5+ - 7% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •0 – 8% •1-2 - 11% •3-4 – 9% •5+ - 9%
Residence (Rural/Urban)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Urban – 7% •Rural - 8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Urban – 7% •Rural - 8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Urban – 9% •Rural – 10%
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No education – 4% •Primary school education – 9% •Secondary school – 9% •Post-Secondary – 8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No education – 5% •Primary – 10% •Secondary - 8% •Post-secondary – 8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No education – 9% •Primary – 10% •Secondary – 10% •Post-secondary – 7%
Wealth Quintile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lowest- 6% •Second – 5% •Middle – 8% •Fourth – 8% •Highest – 7% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lowest – 6% •Second – 9% •Middle – 9% •Fourth – 7% •Highest - 7% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lowest – 10% •Second – 9% •Middle – 10% •Fourth -10% •Highest -8%
Geopolitical Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •North Central- 8% •North East - 9% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •North Central – 10% •North East - 16% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •North Central – 10% •North East - 16%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •North West - 3% •South West - 3% •South East - 12% •South South – 13% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •North West – 2% •South East - 8% •South South - 10%. •South West- 5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •North West - 5% •South East- 12% • South South 13% •South West - 5%
Physical Ability	No Data Available	No Data Available	No Data Available
Type of Employment	No Data Available	No Data Available	No Data Available
Sexual Orientation	No Data Available	No Data Available	No Data Available

Source: NDHS 2008, 2013, and 2018

The above table shows a wide range of data sets for the categories of women who experience sexual violence, helping to draw patterns on the ways in which certain variables make women susceptible to sexual violence. For example, if women in a particular residential area experience sexual violence more than women in others, then it would be important to understand the causes and channel additional prohibition and response mechanisms to that area. If women within a particular age range appear to be more vulnerable to sexual violence, then prohibition and response mechanisms can be channeled towards protecting women within that age range.

As seen above, subsequent volumes of the survey provide additional categories, thus expanding the assortment of data and providing greater insight into the prevalence and incidence of sexual violence in Nigeria. Nevertheless, there are important categories that do not feature in the data and would help expand the inclusion of certain marginalised women, such as women living with disability, female sex workers, lesbian, bisexual, and intersex women (The Initiative for Equal Rights Report, 2021). By including additional categories, the data on the prevalence and incidence of sexual violence in Nigeria will be more inclusive and diverse, providing accurate guidance for designing more effective interventions.

Objectives and methodology

The aim of this project is to provide recommendations for promoting more effective interventions to end sexual violence in Nigeria, particularly by identifying key advocacy partners and key advocacy priorities for funders. In order to do this, the project:

- + Provides an evaluation of the status of sexual violence in Nigeria
- + Produces a detailed stakeholder mapping of the sexual violence response landscape in Nigeria
- + Adopts a comprehensive analysis of the sexual violence landscape
- + Conducts an evaluation of available response mechanisms

In order to achieve the above objectives, the project adopted the methods described below, keeping in mind the need for a civil, reflective, and profound engagement with the data and the subjects of the research. Given the time and logistical constraints, a proper ethnographic study could not be conducted; however, the research templates and protocols were designed taking into consideration the nature of the

subject matter, the position of the subjects, and the possible limitations of the engagement format employed, such as physical and virtual meetings.

This project employed the following methods:

- + Desk research: a review of relevant laws, policies, scholarly works, and reports on sexual violence, with particular reference to Nigeria and its constituent States, including the Criminal Code; the Penal Code; the Violence Against Women Laws of different States; and Child Protection Laws and Policies, amongst others. National and international data surveys were also used to gather public data on sexual violence incidence and prevalence.
- + In-Depth Interviews: engagement with various stakeholders whose work involves response to sexual violence charges, based on a detailed and coherent interview protocol that was shared with the interview subjects prior to the interview. The protocol was designed based on the data analysis framework (provided below) to streamline the data based on the confines of this study, while allowing flexibility for the interviewees to engage further and provide any information relevant to the study. This aspect of the study was carried out through semi-structured interviews with stakeholders across government MDAs, CSOs and key informants. More than twenty stakeholders across the public (government) and private (non-government) sector in different States of the Federation were contacted.
- + Data Analysis: development of a data analysis framework that presents and examines a deductive coding of the data based on preliminary exploration of the subject matter and the objectives of the study. The framework served as an adaptable guide for the interviews, analysis, design and recommendations of the study, and it is the basis for the evaluation of all the data collected from the study
- + Substantive Evaluation: using the data from the desk research and the interviews, the data analysis framework is utilised to provide the outline for a more detailed evaluation of key areas that form the basis for the recommendations presented at the end of this study.

The 4-pronged methodological approach adopted in this study provides quality contextual data on the prevalence, drivers and impacts of sexual violence in Nigeria; maps key organisations, individuals and stakeholders involved in the mechanisms for tackling sexual violence in Nigeria; provides information on advocacy priorities and opportunities to combat sexual violence; propose a list of advocacy partners whose work will impact sexual violence trends in Nigeria; and supports the development of a baseline that will promote effective response mechanisms.

Conceptual/Data Analysis framework

The objectives of this study, outlined in the call for proposals and approved during the inception of the project, formed the basis for the deductive coding that was used to develop the following framework. The framework adopted a concept-driven code whereby the key concepts identified as central to the objectives of the study were used to develop a set of categories for understanding and analysing the data. While the categories are not exhaustive, they offer an important guide for streamlining the data through interviews and desk research.

The main concepts deduced from the objectives of this study and the preliminary research are: sexual violence acts, stakeholders, response mechanisms, challenges, and recommendations. These concepts are

further categorised to cover prevalent data, opinions and beliefs that elucidate each of the concepts. The following table provides an overview of the relevant concepts and their categories.

Table 2: Sexual Violence Data Coding and Categories

Main Concepts	Categories
Sexual Violence	Domestic
	Non-Domestic
Stakeholders	Primary stakeholders
	Secondary stakeholders
Response Mechanisms	Legal
	Psychosocial
	Medical
	Socio-Economic
Challenges	Reporting
	Response/Service Provision
Recommendations	Priority Partners
	Priority Interventions

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence takes place under different circumstances, and while the nature of the act itself is important, especially for the purpose of legal definition, the context is also important because it provides important information about the drivers, prevalence, targets, and perpetrators of sexual violence. It also impacts the nature of reporting, the availability of resources and responses, and the types of challenges encountered. Sexual violence acts may occur in domestic settings or in non-domestic settings. Significant focus of sexual violence data available in Nigeria is on domestic occurrences, and this impacts reporting patterns and response mechanisms. Non-domestic acts that occur in the workplace and in public spaces such as markets and schools are also prevalent and receive attention, but do not necessarily feature in national data sets. It is, therefore, important, to highlight the categorisation in order to understand how it impacts and is impacted by the current arrangement, availability and accessibility of response mechanisms.

Stakeholders

There are various stakeholders whose actions impact the prevalence and incidence of sexual violence. Primary stakeholders are the targets and the perpetrators, while secondary stakeholders are the response actors and service providers whose actions impact the ways in which sexual violence reporting and response take place. These include religious and cultural communities, law enforcement, civil society organisations that provide services to survivors, and lawyers, amongst others. By identifying and carefully mapping out the stakeholders, this study will provide a framework for exploring the key spheres of influence where interventions will be most beneficial.

Response Mechanisms

The key response mechanisms available to sexual violence survivors are defined by their perceived needs. It is important to understand those needs, the instruments through which they are met, and their

functionality to the survivors. The mechanisms also position primary stakeholders in ways that could impact the prevalence of sexual violence. For instance, legal mechanisms shine a light on the perpetrator, while socio-economic mechanisms are mainly survivor-specific. However, while legal mechanisms are universally applicable to sexual violence, socio-economic mechanisms may not always be central to a particular response.

Challenges

Ending sexual violence is an arduous task, for various reasons, but response mechanisms can target prohibition and remediation. However, there are enduring challenges to initiating and sustaining reporting and response mechanisms. The challenges to reporting are distinct from the challenges facing responders and service providers, so each of these categories requires distinct and targeted approaches that will be mutually reinforcing and aimed towards the broader objective to combat sexual violence.

Recommendations

At the end of this study, the goal is to produce several recommendations that will guide funders in determining key partners and priority areas. As such, the recommendations will be categorised to address each of these objectives.

The above framework formed the basis for the interviews that supplied the empirical data collected for this study. It also provided the preliminary outline for the data analysis and the final evaluation. In developing the framework, the writers were aware that the coding and categorisation are not exhaustive, so during the study, there will be attempts to expand on the framework, where necessary.

Data Analysis

The data from the desk research and the interviews has been analysed below using the data analysis framework provided above. In line with the key objectives of this research, the study evaluates the status of sexual violence in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, conducts a stakeholder mapping of players in the sexual violence space in Nigeria, highlights their various roles and challenges experienced in fulfilling these roles, and discusses recommendations to aid effective responses to sexual violence in Nigeria. The data collected during the interviews complements the desk-based analysis in presenting a robust analysis that is used to propose advocacy priorities and key advocacy areas for engagement in implementing the necessary activities for effectively addressing sexual violence in Nigeria.

Prevalence of Sexual Violence

This study revealed that various acts of sexual violence are commonly reported in Nigerian communities, and some of the most common are incest, rape, sexual assault (including intimate partner violence), and defilement. Other acts that are prevalent but not reported as often include: sexual harassment (groping in the marketplace, inappropriate sexualised behaviour in the workplace and schools), sexual violation of children for ritual purposes, female genital mutilation, and other non-consensual sexual acts. The study also revealed that most acts of sexual violence are perpetrated against women and girls.

It has also been discovered that most of the perpetrators of sexual violence are people known to the targets, particularly close relatives, and there is usually a relationship of trust, control, and power that negates any type of consent. This somewhat blurs the line between domestic violence and sexual violence, placing sexual violence as a category within the domestic violence category, while non-domestic forms of sexual violence are not reported as often.

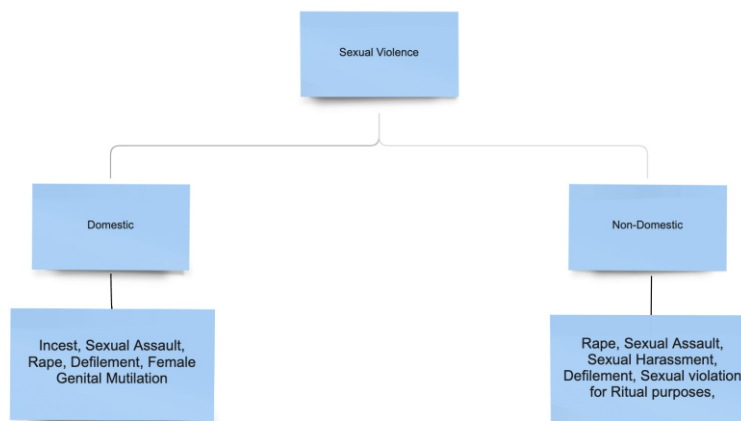


Figure 2: Classifying Sexual Violence

In some communities, incest was reported as the most common form of sexual violence, while in others rape was the most commonly reported form of sexual violence. The conflation of domestic and sexual

violence poses a bi-directional observation. On the one hand, there are no formalised behavioural codes in the domestic setting, making reporting easier for survivors as part of the socialization process. They can easily approach family members, friends, counsellors, or the police. In non-domestic settings, such as schools and offices, there may be reluctance to report formally, especially where there are no trusted reporting mechanisms, and social reporting may not be trusted to handle the parameters of the non-domestic setting. On the other hand, the relationship factor in the domestic setting makes follow-through challenging for many survivors, given the pressures that follow formal consequences for the perpetrator, such as imprisonment. Given this observation, there should be greater focus on reporting mechanisms for non-domestic sexual violence to help vulnerable targets seek help in a safe environment, while response mechanisms must also provide safety nets that protect survivors from the social repercussions of reporting.

Stakeholders

There are primary and secondary stakeholders who impact and are impacted by the prevalence of sexual violence and influence available response mechanisms. While primary stakeholders are directly impacted by sexual violence, secondary stakeholders shape the environment in which sexual violence occurs in ways that determine reporting and response trends, and, by implication, the prevalence of sexual violence. Given the nature of sexual violence, primary stakeholders are generally regarded as private parties, while secondary stakeholders could be private or public parties. Private stakeholders are survivors, perpetrators, socio-cultural and religious communities, and non-governmental organisations, while public stakeholders are government institutions whose work impacts sexual violence prevalence and response.

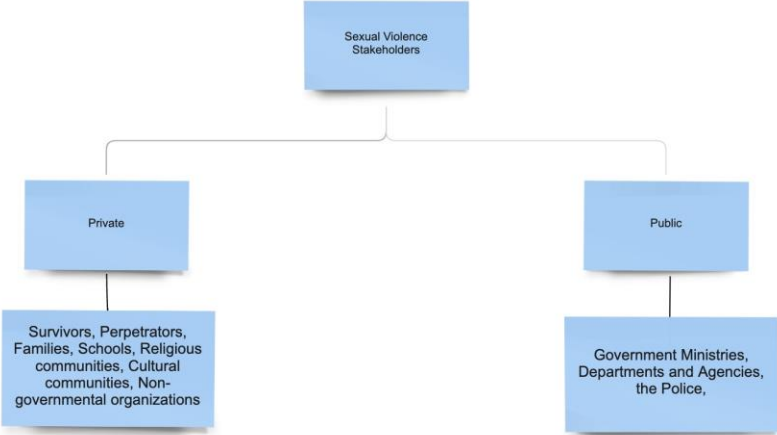


Figure 3: Classifying Sexual Violence Stakeholders

In Nigeria, there is a culture of silence around sex, and this translates to a culture of silence around sexual violence. Given the “private nature of sex”, private individuals and communities are mostly impacted by sexual violence, and there is a reluctance to make reporting public. Consequently, private stakeholders have generally been influential in disrupting the reporting and response rates of sexual violence, while public stakeholders who have the mandate to take legal action, are charged with the responsibility of providing a public framing for reporting and response. In order for progress to be made in halting sexual violence, interventions must involve the engagement of private and public stakeholders.

The data shows that women and children, regardless of social status, are susceptible to sexual violence. There are several socio-economic factors that make women and children particularly susceptible to sexual

violence. Poverty and culture have generally topped the list. Owing to the culture of shame and silence surrounding sex, survivors are generally reluctant to report and to speak about their experience of sexual violence, so abusers and perpetrators capitalise on this. Other factors that predispose women and children to sexual violence are age, disability, unemployment or nature of employment, marriage, religion, and culture. Sexual violence thrives mainly on the dynamics of control, proximity, and power in the relationship between the perpetrator and their target, and it is further engendered by any of the factors highlighted above. The research shows that people with disabilities, children, and teenagers are particularly exploited due to their perceived state of helplessness. Perpetrators often abuse their fiduciary positions, such as their role as teachers, lecturers, elderly relatives, religious leaders, using such positions to exploit those who depend on them for guidance or support.

Research indicates that in most cases, survivors seek out friends or trusted relatives to report their experience of sexual violence; in some cases, they go to recognised NGOs; and they sometimes go to the police. Despite the reported challenges of dealing with law enforcement, the Police feature as a major first responder, as reporting usually involves a chain of private and public stakeholders, going from family members, friends, and NGOs who then assist with reporting to the police.

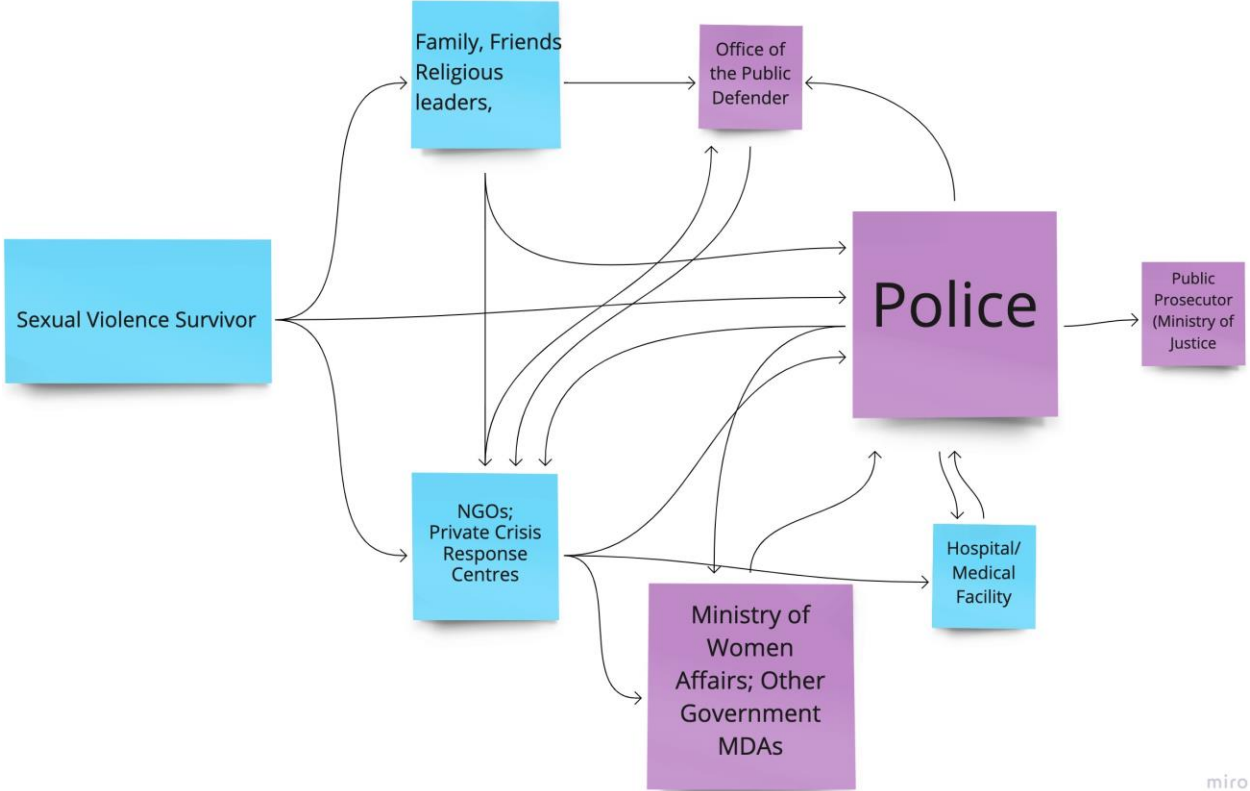


Figure 4: Sexual Violence Reporting and Referral Links

The above diagram shows the common reporting and referral flows among various stakeholders. Survivors usually report to trusted family and friends or they go to recognised NGOs that are known to provide support in sexual violence cases. The main public stakeholder that has direct interface with survivors is the police. Other stakeholders also refer survivors to the police and some, like NGOs, assist with making formal reports to commence the investigation process. Hospitals and medical facilities are also very important to

the reporting and response process because they help to collect forensic evidence to support the subsequent legal case. Where the case goes first to the police, they may make a referral to a hospital or medical facility, and vice versa. While the police are central to the response framework, NGOs are key to both the reporting and response framework, because they provide support services and assist with reporting. As shown from the above diagram, report, referral, and response flows are quite arbitrary, creating an uncoordinated network of communication and engagement. A clear and methodical reporting and response system will help survivors access the help they need to ensure that they get the support they require in a timely manner.

The legislature and judiciary, although not prominent in the referral chain, play significant roles or can play significant roles in ending sexual violence in Nigeria. The research shows some legislative lethargy or apathy towards sexual violence legislation in some parts of the country, especially in the northern parts of the country. This is evident by the reluctance to enact the VAPP Law and the continued reliance on the Penal Code, which is inadequate to cover diverse forms of sexual violence and protect vulnerable groups and survivors. An active legislature is essential, bearing in mind the need to establish a firm policy and legislative framework for the protection, prohibition, investigation, and prosecution of sexual offences as well as effective sentencing of offenders. It is important for the legislature to frame the proper punishment for sexual offenders and limit the discretion of the judiciary to reduce sentences for sexual offences. The provision of Section 460 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, which prevents the Courts from applying a suspended sentence to a person convicted of sexual offences, is an example of legislation which limits the exercise of discretion by the judiciary. Furthermore, the legislature has a duty to, through legislation, define the forms and classes of sexual offences. This will remove all confusion in the mind of investigating officers as to whether an act amounts to sexual offence or not

Regarding judicial intervention, it is important to note that some States within the country, such as Lagos and Ekiti, have established special courts to hear sexual offence matters. In some other States, Judges and magistrates take discretionary steps to expedite such matters in order not to prolong the agonies of the survivors. While this ad hoc development is helpful and important, it does not eliminate the need for the legislature, working with the executive, to take decisive steps in passing laws establishing special courts to handle such matters. This will provide a much-needed harbour at the end of the referral chain that will ensure substantive and procedural justice for survivors.

In relation to the specialised Courts, interactions with stakeholders shows that most States do not have special courts to hear sexual offence cases. The only exception to this is the Family Courts established in various States, which have jurisdiction to hear cases pertaining to minors, including cases of sexual violence or defilement of minors. Judges and magistrates often adopt the practice of hearing sexual offence cases in Chambers, or they take steps to decongest the Courts in order to protect the privacy of the survivors. While the rate of conviction for sexual offences is encouraging in a State like Lagos, the Courts are quite burdened, with a single Court having about 900 to 1000 cases to handle and hearing an average of 20 matters daily. In terms of prosecution, the hands of the judges are often tied as about 20% of survivors do not show up in court. Some disappear without any trace, and others are intimidated or coerced into “forgiving” the perpetrators.

The above interaction between public and private stakeholders reveals the need for strong public institutions that can protect and support survivors of sexual violence while bringing the perpetrators to justice. It also reveals how private institutions can also impact public responses by the strong social and cultural norms and practices that drive human behaviour. Therefore, all stakeholders must be considered in a comprehensive and effective sexual violence reporting and response system.

Another set of key stakeholders with significant impact on reporting and response would be the donors. International, national and local donors that support—and in distinct ways, define—sexual violence responses are key players in the landscape. While the Nigerian government at various levels, has provided some funding for sexual violence response, this has proven insufficient in providing the kind of comprehensive support required and establishing a viable machinery to prevent, investigate, and prosecute sexual violence. Data shared during this study revealed that public and private stakeholders have often had to deploy their personal resources to address the needs of survivors.

To fill the resource gap that currently inhibits the campaign against sexual violence, foreign and international organisations such as the British Council (ROLAC), the European Union, and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) provide capacity building and support in various ways, including for the establishment of sexual assault response centres and the operation of a database of sexual offenders. Furthermore, a number of domestic and international NGOs provide funding and capacity support for both MDAs and civil society within the country; these include Ford foundation, Mac Arthur foundation, LEAP Africa, Global Giving Fund, Action Aid, Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), WAYAMO foundation and Alliance for Africa (AFA). Several United Nations Agencies have also contributed to capacity building for other stakeholders and collaborative research and funding of the fight against sexual violence in Nigeria. UNICEF has funded and collaborated in the fight against sexual violence against children, UNWomen has done same in sexual violence involving women, while the OHRC is currently working on initiatives to address conflict-related acts of sexual violence, especially in the Northern part of Nigeria. Other specialised UN Agencies that have been involved in this regard include the UNDP (which is currently working in Nigeria to build the economic capacity of sexual violence survivors under the UN Spotlight initiative), UNFPA and UNESCO. At the national and sub-national level, donors that provide funding and technical capacity include CEWHIN, WRAHP, WARD-C, and Child Protection Network, amongst others. These CSOs work with both government MDAs and other CSOs, especially those at the grassroots level, providing them with the resources they need to engage in very important social and cultural work that is critical to the fight against social violence.

Foreign and international donors mostly fund domestic NGOs that are based in urban areas, and they work with government agencies and institutions. These domestic secondary stakeholders then disburse resources to grassroots organisations and movements based in rural and underserved urban areas. This, thus, ensures that the resources trickle down to those who, otherwise, would not have access. This type of “top-through-bottom” resource allocation is accompanied by the flow of priorities and programmes that come with the resources. For instance, many foreign and international donors are said to want to fund institutional projects rather than economic projects related to anti-sexual violence actions. However, survivors, and some of the domestic stakeholders recognise that a key barrier to meaningfully engaging survivors is the failure to address their economic vulnerability.

From the above, it is clear how stakeholders can—and do—influence the landscape, and their interactions and engagements further shape the sexual violence landscape in ways that have been interesting to learn and write about.

Response Mechanisms

Public and private stakeholders across the country provide a range of support services to survivors, and they often partner with other stakeholders in their respective thematic areas of competence. The main response mechanisms entail medical, legal, psychosocial, and socio-economic services. Medical services include physical post-traumatic care, pharmaceutical support, forensic testing, and any other health-related support the survivor requires. Legal services include all reporting, investigative and prosecutorial support related to addressing legal aspects of the sexual violence incident, usually to support the pursuit of criminal investigation and prosecution by the State. Psychosocial services include therapeutic psychological support to foster rehabilitation of the survivor and ensure proper reintegration into society. Socio-economic support involves the provision of the necessary social and financial services to help the survivor address existing social and economic needs that may have contributed to the attack or that may have been brought about or exacerbated by the attack, including housing, employment support services, vocational training, and direct financial support. While there can be a sequential arrangement of the services, they do not usually occur in any sequential manner and are influenced by the sequence of reporting and response. Response services can impact each other and while one service may be provided by several stakeholders, there are stakeholders that provide several services, such as NGOs that provide medical, psychosocial, legal and socio-economic support.

RESPONSE MECHANISMS

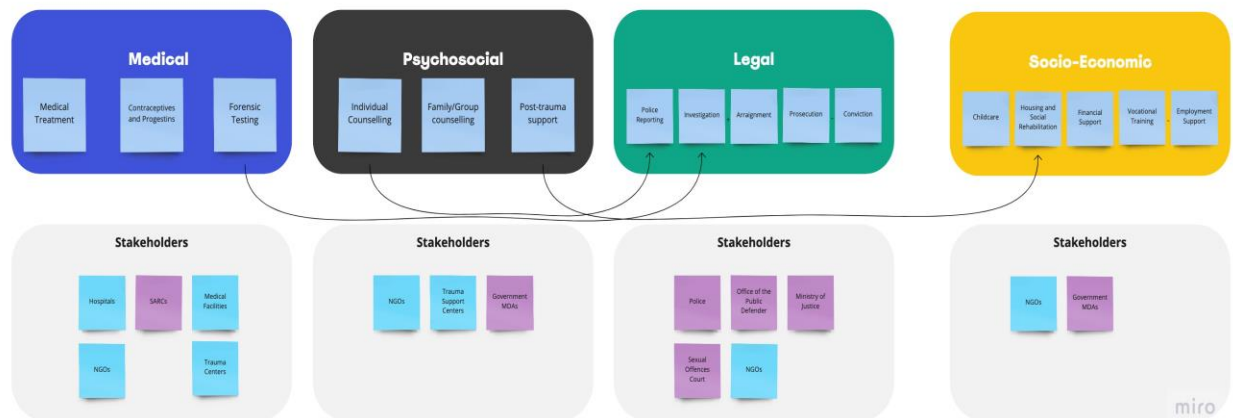


Figure 5: Sexual Violence Response Mechanisms

Stakeholders adopt the 3Rs guidelines of rescue, rehabilitate and reintegrate in responding to the needs of survivors. Some of the known response service providers are listed in the table below. While some service providers specialise in delivering services within a response category, others straddle several categories and provide services across the entire response chain.

Table 3: Sexual Violence Response Stakeholders in Nigeria

Medical	Psychosocial	Legal	Socio-Economic
Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), Lagos State, Ekiti State	Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), Lagos State, Ekiti State	Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), Lagos State, Ekiti State	Real Woman Foundation
The Mirabel Centre, Lagos State	CeeCeeYara, Lagos State	The Gender Desk of the Police Force	WARIF
WARIF, Lagos	Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA), Lagos	The Office of the Public Defender, Lagos	Project Alert
Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON)	Ireti Foundation	Women Advocacy Research and Documentation Center (WARDC)	UNICEF Orphanage, Abuja
	Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON)	International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA)	Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON)
		Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON)	Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA), Lagos State
		Special Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Prosecution Team, Abuja	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Osun State
		National Human Rights Commission	

Socio-economic services are generally not as readily available as other services, even though most survivors are in need of these services. There are few if any government-run homes in many States in the country, and in such cases, survivors have to be placed with volunteers. Many stakeholders rely on philanthropy and fundraising drives to secure the resources required to provide socio-economic support, and sometimes this is done on an ad-hoc basis. Support services are mostly provided by private organisations and NGOs, although in some States, such as in Lagos and Ekiti States, the government has invested in establishing comprehensive response and support mechanisms. The SARCs, established under the Gender-Based Violence Prohibition Laws, are meant to operate as one-stop centres to respond to the varied needs of survivors. However, public stakeholders do not always have sufficient resources to provide the necessary support services to survivors. Consequently, publicly provided support services are absent in many States, and where they are available, public officials may have to rely on out-of-pocket expenses and private fundraising drives to address the resource deficits. Matching the right secondary stakeholders with the right response mechanisms helps match the response mechanisms with the right survivors, thus it is important to develop response mechanisms that are targeted on the supply side and the demand side. This is how survivor-centered response mechanisms are built.

Challenges

There are several challenges that impede the eradication of sexual violence in Nigeria. These challenges can be identified as challenges to reporting and challenges to response mechanisms. Reporting challenges are those obstacles that hold back survivors and their allies from reporting instances of sexual violence, while response challenges are those that restrict the access to and availability of response mechanisms and support services necessary to assist survivors.

Challenges

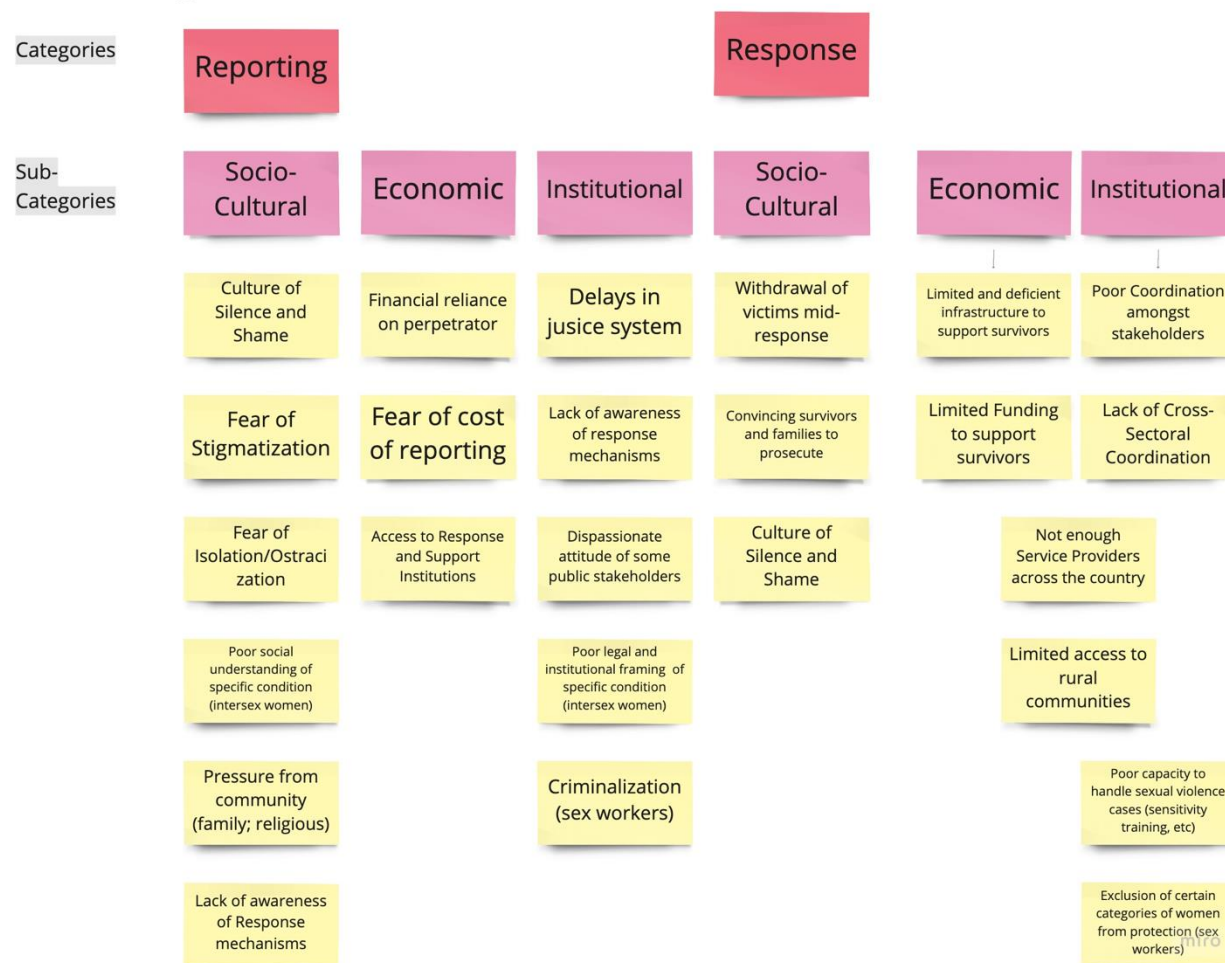


Figure 6: Challenges to Combatting Sexual Violence

Some reporting challenges also impact response mechanisms. For example, the culture of silence and shame around sex and sexual violence that is prevalent in Nigerian society does not end once survivors have reported the incident of sexual violence to a secondary stakeholder. Usually, there are implications for the response process, as survivors' engagement with the response process is ongoing, especially once the criminal justice process is engaged. As noted above, some challenges are cross cutting across categories (reporting and response) and across sub-categories (socio-cultural, economic and institutional). In such instances, the effects can be overpowering for both survivors and response stakeholders.

Generally, to address these challenges, the needs of all stakeholders must be duly considered, and a comprehensive approach employed with the needs of survivors prioritised above all.

Recommendations

Given the above system configuration, particularly the elaboration of challenges within a clear framework, recommendations can be designed to target challenges independently and collectively. The table below contains recommendations that flow from general proposals to specific activities, and it identifies stakeholder groups that can drive the indicated activities.

Table 4: Recommendations for Improving Sexual Violence Reporting and Response

Recommendation	Specific Activity	Outcome	Intended Target Area	Priority Stakeholder(s)
Improved legal coverage across the country	Lobby legislature(s) to pass relevant laws with robust provisions The domestication of the VAPP Act across all States of Nigeria	Proper legal prioritization of sexual violence as a specific legal category	Reporting and Response	NGOs (Advocacy) Legislature (Action)
Improved Implementation of Anti-Sexual Violence Laws	Facilitate the establishment and operation of SARCs across the country	One-Stop centre for responding to sexual violence	Reporting and Response	Government MDAs
Improved access to support services	Funding of identified partners/stakeholders including NGOs and government agencies	Accessibility of services	Reporting and response	NGOs Government MDAs
Capacity Building for Law Enforcement and other Response Stakeholders	Training of law enforcement officers and other first responders	Improved reporting, investigation, and prosecution	Reporting and response	Law enforcement, Government MDAs
Anti-Sexual Violence and Pro-Reporting Advocacy through Community and religious Leaders	Civic engagement with religious and community leaders	Proper enlightenment on Sexual violence, protection of survivors, improved	Reporting and response	Religious organisations, community leaders

		reporting, and prosecution of perpetrators		
Improved Access to and Availability of Response and Support Services	Funding and establishment of institutions providing specific support services such as shelters, psychological support for reintegration	Improved support for survivors Accessibility	Response	Government (Executive) and NDOs
Designing Pro-Survivor Reporting Mechanisms	Training of law enforcement officers and other first responders Executive policy on survivor protection	Increased and improved reporting Eliminate survivor shame, silence, and stigmatization	Reporting and response	Government MDAs
Improved Coordination and Collaboration amongst Stakeholders	A Database with thematic areas of operation of NGOs Establish a central online dashboard to monitor sexual violence and responses	Improved response and service delivery	Reporting and response	NGOs Government MDAs
Improve Awareness of Legal Coverage and Response Mechanisms	Advocacy, campaign, citizens engagement through various media outlets	Improved reporting and prosecution of perpetrators	Reporting and response	NGOs Government MDAs
General Anti-Sexual Violence Social Advocacy	Enlightenment of citizens on woman and children's right Simplification of laws and policies on sexual violence	Increased awareness Increased empathy and societal support for survivors Improved reporting and prosecution	Reporting, support, and response	NGOs Government MDAs

	Engagement with religious organisations and community			
Improved Grassroots Engagement	Financial and technical empowerment of grassroots NGOs Consultative interaction and engagements with community leader and age grade and other grassroots associations	Better awareness and engagement Improved service delivery Improved accessibility to exiting response mechanisms	Reporting, support, and response	NGOs Government MDAs

Opportunities for Improved Engagement

In order to foster an anti-sexual violence culture and enhance reporting and response, it is necessary to engage existing stakeholders working in priority areas. Given the research findings, certain advocacy partners have been identified as essential players and stakeholders in improving the existing response mechanisms and reporting on sexual violence. Below, a selection of priority advocacy partners and priority activities are identified for this purpose.

Table 5: Advocacy Partners

International Advocacy Partners	Key Local Organisations (Civil Society Organisations)	Federal, State Governments, Government Institutions and Agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF) •UN agencies, including UN Women, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA •Spotlight Initiative •British Council through ROLAC, •The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) •Wayamo Foundation •Action Aid •Ford Foundation •Open Society Initiative For West Africa (OSIWA) •The US Embassy •USAID •MacArthur Foundation •Initiative Sankofa D'afrique De L'ouest (ISDAO) •Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice •The Young Feminist Fund - FRIDA •International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) •Alliance for Africa (AFA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Partnership for Justice (the Mirabel Centre) •The CeCe Yara Child Advocacy Centre •Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF) •Women's Rights and Health Project (WRAHP) •Women’s Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON) •Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC) •Centre for Women’s Health and Information (CEWHIN) •Child Protection Network •Women Inspiration Development Center (WIDC) • Intersex Nigeria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •National Human Rights Commission •National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) •Office of the Public Defender (OPD Lagos State) •Lagos State Office for Disability Affairs •Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA) •Lagos State Domestic & Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA formerly DSVRT) •Lagos State Ministry of Youth & Social Development (MYSO) •Office of the first lady of Lagos State •Ekiti State Gender Based Violence Management Committee •Ondo State Ministry of women Affairs and Social Development •Ondo State Agency Against Gender-Based Violence (OSAA-GBV) •Imo State Committee on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (ISCEVAWG)

Organisations	Areas of Collaboration
WAYAMO Foundation	Capacity building, training for prosecutors and journalists reporting sexual crimes.
Alliance for Africa	Advocacy and awareness campaign amongst MDAs; Capacity training for grassroot CSOs; mapping of organization (government and non-government) providing services to survivors of sexual & gender -based violence in south-east Nigeria in order to aid reporting, documentation and management of sexual violence cases in South-East Nigeria
Open Society Initiative for West Africa	Advocacy for criminal justice reform; collaborating with other CSOs for capacity building and empowerment of survivors of gender and sexual violence; provision of legal advise and support;
ActionAid	Collaborating with local CSOs and feminist groups working with women in vulnerable conditions; providing empowerment through local CSOs for women to safeguard their rights; capacity building and empowerment for women and the girl child.
Global Giving	Assisting local CSOs raising funds to finance projects on Women and Girl Child Empowerment, Protection of Human Rights and Justice.
MacArthur Foundation	Funding and Grants for research into issues such as administration of criminal justice, women’s rights, minority groups sexual rights and gender equality.
Ford Foundation	Facilitating and coordination of collaboration between stakeholders in the fight against gender-based violence space; media and legal campaign on gender-based violence; funding of research on women’s rights and gender-based violence.
GIZ	Capacity training for prosecutors on the administration of criminal justice; support and capacity building for CSOs in providing medical services
Rule of Law Advocacy Centre	Aiding States to establish Sexual Assault Referral Centres; Creating awareness on sexual violence; advocacy for the passing of legislation against sexual violence; collaboration with artistes in campaign against sexual assault and violence; capacity building for prosecutors on criminal justice administration.
EU-UN Spotlight Initiative	Working with local CSOs and NGOs to create awareness on and combat all forms of sexual and gender-based violence.
European Union funded Agents for Citizen-driven transformation (ACT)	Capacity building for local CSOs; providing support to build a viable network of CSOs.

Local Organisations	Collaborative work
Child Protection Network Lagos	Network of NGOs; through collective and collaborative efforts work to prevent and respond to cases of abuse against children. Specific activities include – rescue, referrals and rehabilitation of children in abusive situations.
Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF)	Collaborating with local and international partners to create awareness on sexual violence; rescue and providing survivors supports such as safe houses and economic empowerment.
Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC)	Rescue of survivors; provision of free legal services to women, children and other vulnerable groups; collaboration with grassroots NGOs by awarding small grants to aid the fight against sexual violence.
Women’s Rights and Health Project (WRAHP)	Collaboration with and capacity strengthening of other CSOs to end sexual violence in Nigeria; creating awareness on sexual violence and reproductive rights; provision of psycho-social, legal and counselling support services to survivors.
Centre for Women’s Health and Information (CEWHIN)	Advocacy for legislation on women’s rights and prevention of sexual violence; creating health awareness for women; empowerment and training for women.

Summary and Conclusion

The incidence of sexual violence has increased over the years, especially given the prevailing social, political and economic crisis, and the incidence of the Covid -19 pandemic, which resulted in restrictions and lockdowns and thereby led to an increase in intimate partner violence and other forms of sexual violence. Using a 4-pronged methodological approach, this report provides an evaluation of the status of sexual violence in Nigeria, including contextual data on the prevalence, drivers, and impacts of sexual violence; a mapping of key stakeholders, including key advocacy partners, and an outline of key advocacy priorities for funders.

The aim of this report is to take existing data and knowledge and present them in a clear analytical framework that improves understanding and drives action.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Interview Protocol

Stakeholder Information sheet and consent form

This is research carried out on behalf of the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), a grant making foundation that supports local, national, and regional women's organisation in Africa working towards the promotion and realization of women's rights.

In furtherance of its mandate and its 'Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa Initiative' (Project), the AWDF, through its consultants, seeks to do the following: establish baseline data and contextual information on the prevalence, drivers, and impacts of sexual violence in Nigeria; map key organisations, actors and stakeholders involved in the prevention, service delivery and advocacy/campaigning on sexual violence; and identify advocacy priorities and opportunities for adequate response mechanisms in Nigeria.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary and not tied to any obligation from or towards you. While your participation is absolutely valuable to the research, you reserve the right to notify the researcher and withdraw at any stage of the interview or to not answer any of the questions asked.

The purpose of this interaction is to gather data for research purposes. All information is held in the highest confidence and with all necessary respect and regard for your person. Any information provided shall be analyzed alongside other data and shall only be publicized in the final outcome of the research.

Our discussion will last between 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Consent

Your consent is required for this interview. During the interview, I will make an audio recording and take notes in order to capture all the important points we will discuss. The recording will be used strictly for research purposes and no personal details will be disclosed in the research without due permission from you. If you do not wish for the interview to be audio-recorded, I will not record it. Strict confidentiality is assured, and you may retract or redact any statement you make in the course of the interview, and this will be expunged from the recording.

You may call the lead consultant, Dr. Oluwatoyin Adejonwo (08100711580), if you have questions or complaints about being in this study.

By commencing the interview, you hereby give your consent to being interviewed for the above-mentioned study.

INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

Please note that I am not asking about your personal experiences with sexual violence

Status

1. What are some of the common acts of sexual violence that happen in the community where you serve?
2. What factors would you say are responsible for the prevalence of sexual violence

against women in Nigeria?

3. What group of women would you say are more susceptible to this form of violence?

4. What are the situations that pre-dispose women to sexual violence in your community/State?

5. Who are the main perpetrators of sexual violence in your community/State?

6. Do you have any data on the number of cases you attend to on a monthly basis?

7. Who are the major donors/partners/funders of sexual violence-related work in Nigeria?

Response Mechanisms

7. What mechanisms does your establishment have to respond to cases of sexual violence?

8. Where do survivors most commonly first seek help when they are exposed to sexual violence in your State?

9. How would you assess the support that survivors receive from their families and immediate communities?

10. Do you partner with other stakeholders in providing support to survivors?

Processes

support services

11. What services are available to address the legal, physical and mental health, safety, and economic needs of survivors?

12. Who provides these services?

13. How adequate are these services to meet the needs of survivors of sexual violence?

14. Are people typically aware of these services?

Enforcement

15. How would you describe the process of law enforcement in relation to sexual violence in your State?

16. How often do perpetrators of sexual violence get prosecuted and survivors get

justice in your State?

17. What legislation or policies exist in your State to protect women against sexual violence?

18. In general, how would you rate the quality and accessibility of the existing sexual violence services in your community/LGA/State?

Challenges

19. What barriers do victims face in reporting sexual violence in your State?

20. What challenges do you face in providing support and other services related to sexual violence?

21. Are there any significant gaps in the sexual violence response and support in Nigeria?

Recommendations

22. Do you have any recommendations on how to effectively address sexual violence in Nigeria?