

TRENDS ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (GBVAW) IN KOTANGORA EMIRATE, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate trends on Gender Based Violence against women (GBVaW) in Kontagora Emirate, Niger State, Nigeria and implications on society. The contention of the study is that Gender-based violence Against Women (GBVaW) is negative to societal development. GBV which is violence that is directed against a person based on gender, which includes acts that inflict harm and other deprivations of liberty is negative and undermines societal cohesion, integration and human dignity. Studies have revealed that women are more vulnerable to specific and severe forms of violence, which is also rampant in Kontagora Emirate, Niger State. Individuals, particularly women, local organisations in Nigeria, Niger state, and in Kontagora Emirate, the focus of this study, has play significant roles to tame gender-based violence and have made a series of efforts to protect women from all forms of violence and criminality. The findings of the study were that: first, violence affect women more than men, women, in this case, are affected more because they are the soft target as a result of their vulnerability. Second, women in the Kontagora emirate should recognise their value by operating alongside the resolutions of both local and international organisations, particularly the areas that call for women's protection.

Keywords: GBVaW, Kontagora Emirate, Feminists, Patriarchy,

Introduction

Women in Nigeria, like their counterparts in other parts of the world, suffer gender-based violence regardless of age, class, religion, or social status. Approximately 31% of women in Nigeria have experienced physical violence between the ages of 15 and 49, mostly by intimate partners. The Data Manager, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, Mr. Sunday Agakaba, stated that Nigeria recorded 27,698 cases of sexual and gender-based violence between 2020 and 2023 (Agbakaba, 2023). In a report by Daily Trust, as reported by Abubakar, caption: Niger State records 175 Rape Cases in 19 Months. The Permanent Secretary of the Gender-Based Violence Management Committee in Niger State, Hajiya Kaltum Dauda Rufai, made this known at a one-day anti-gender-based violence close-out workshop organised in Minna, within January 2022 to July 2023, 65 cases of wife battering, 21 cases of forced marriage, and 3,500 cases of withdrawal of girls from school had been recorded. Also speaking on the same issue, Mrs. Anne Nwakupudu of the Rayuwa Sexual Referral Center said that 37 GBV cases were received in one month alone. Kontagora Emirate, the focus of this study, is among the top on the list (Abubakar, 2025).

In a review of Social Norms, Womens Economic Empowerment and Policy, sponsored by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), across six states- Abia, Borno, Edo, Kaduna, Lagos, and Niger to reflect diverse contexts of Gender based violence, women in Niger state have the lowest rate of Education attainment (34.9%) and ownership of bank account (8.3%), the second lowest rates of employment (62.1%) and participation in decision- making (22%), and the second highest prevalence of gender-based violence (45.3%). Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS, 2018). As a result of this, Partners West Africa-Nigeria (PWAN), with the support of the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom government, in 2024 organised a physical awareness campaign to commemorate the 16 days of activism campaign in Kontagora Emirate, Niger State, to educate the public on gender-based violence. This is as a result of the constant reports of gender-based violence in Niger State (Partners West Africa-Nigeria, 2024).

Women in the Emirate are battered with various safety issues ranging from social-conflicts, gender-specific inequalities, poverty, domestic violence, physical abuse, deteriorating health, environmental degradation, early marriage, workplace challenges, threat to cultural values, family, marital and home issues, and poor representation of women in political matters, particularly key areas that affect national development such as economic, socio-cultural, political, and religious life. Coupled with these is the issue of insurgency, kidnapping, and banditry facing the Emirate, which targets girls and women and has exposed them to various forms of physical, emotional, and psychological stress, leading to endless unspeakable sufferings (Usman,2019).

Gender-based violence in the Kontagora Emirate of Niger State affects women in the aspects of the physical, emotional, and psychological stress the surviving victims went through, and because of the mode of brutality employed by the perpetrators of this crime. While some of these women end up with physical damage, some are psychologically and mentally affected and probably end up in refugee camps and internally displaced persons centers (IDPs), some dying in the process, while some of the survivors received permanent disabilities such as psychological trauma. These are bitter experiences that practically remain with the victims throughout their lives (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Unfortunately, all attempts to protect women from all forms of abuse and suffering in the emirate, as gazetted by the Niger State government, non-governmental, and individuals in the emirate, are met with stumbling blocks. This is the precarious picture of women in the Kontagora Emirate, Niger State (Usman, 2019).

It is against this backdrop that this paper is premised on Trend in Gender-Based Violence against Women (GBVaW in Kontagora Emirate, Niger State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

This paper reviews the works of Feminist/Gender Scholars, since the work under study is on gender-based violence in Kontagora Emirate, Niger State, their contributions will be significant to this study.

Gender /Feminist Scholars

Many scholars have contributed to the field of gender and feminist studies; scholars like Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedoan, Adre Lorde, Catherine Mackinnon, Andrea Dworkin, Judith Buttler, Angela Davis, Patricia Hill, Sara Ahmed, Cimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Dorothy Smith, among others. These scholars provide important highlights on the violence and criminality women pass through.

In a country as diverse as Nigeria, and particularly Kontagora Emirate, Niger State, the focus of this paper, several factors tend to support and sustain the argument of violence

against women in the society. Some of these factors include traditions and customs, prevalent religious beliefs and practices, as well as norms and values of the diverse cultures within the country and stereotypical roles assigned to them (Usman, 2019).

Adichie, in the book *“We should all be feminist”*, includes anecdotes and analysis about what it means to be a feminist. She argued that feminists advocate for equity and equality between men and women in all aspects of life. To Adichie, we should all be feminists not only as a commitment to women’s liberation but also as a way of encouraging men to engage in meaningful conversations with women on sexuality, appearance, roles, and success (Chimamanda, 2014). The perspective of Adichie is similar to the belief of the current Governor of Niger State Mohammed Umaru Bago, who reaffirmed his administration’s commitment to promoting women’s inclusion in governance by mandating his party All Progress Congress Niger State that all vice-chairmanship positions in the 2025 local government elections be occupied by women, emphasising his dedication to gender inclusivity and this was achieved (Oladipo, 2025).

The work of the author was very insightful to the study, as it enriches our general knowledge of gender-based violence. The main argument is that everyone should be a feminist. These same scenarios rear their ugly head in Kontagora Emirate, where a particular family believes educating a girl child is a waste of money, energy, and time. To the father of the victim, it is better to marry them off where they will receive adult education. Ironically, the student who scored the highest mark in Kontagora Emirate in the 2024 Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) Examination is a girl from Demonstration School, Federal University of Education Kontagora, receiving awards left and right. Aishat Sulaiman, who wants to study medicine and surgery at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, was promised by the Acting Vice Chancellor of the University, Prof. Faruq Rashed Haruna, to sponsor her academic career. (COEASU, NASU Joint Meeting, Kontagora Chapter, 2024).

Adichie concludes by questioning the culture that discriminates. She submits that culture does not make people; people make culture. A man and woman, who say yes, there is a problem with gender, and it must be fixed, are feminists. (Chimmanmada, 2014). The work of the author was very insightful to the study, as it enriches our general knowledge of gender-based violence. Adichie argument on power imbalance cannot be ignored in Nigeria body politics as well as Kontagora Emirate, Niger State, for instance, the national average of women’s political participation in Nigeria has remained 6.7 percent in elective and appointive positions, which is far below the Global Average of 22.5 percent, African Regional Average of 23.4 percent and West Africa Sub Regional Average of 15percent. However, critics of Adichie’s works questioned the portrayal of certain characters. Some critics also pointed out that Adichie’s work, while addressing the impact of patriarchy, may not fully explore the complexities of gender-based violence within specific cultural contexts, including the roles of religious beliefs and other social factors.

Another work reviewed is Jacqueline Maduneme’s book titled *Ada’s Daughter*. Jacqueline Maduneme recounts her true-life story as a Nigerian girl who endured and overcame gender-based violence, which led to physical and emotional pain and suffering that most anyone would find impossible to process or heal from, her biological father, who molested her sexually (Maduneme, 2011).

This narrative suite the event incident in Niger State where a father who allegedly defiled his three year old daughter and a 50-years –old father of six, Peter Ayemoba were arraigned in magistrate court in Minna for having carnal knowledge of his two daughters as well as a 35-year- old father, Stanley Eze, and his younger brother 32 who had sexual intercourse and incest with an 11-years-old girl who is a daughter to Stanley Eze in Kontagora, Niger State (Pouncing, June 2020).

In the work of Kalra (1996), *Psychological Profile of Men*, she focuses on personality traits and mental characteristics of the perpetrators, as well as social theories which consider external factors in perpetrators' environment, such as family structure, stress, and social learning, which include sudden bursts of anger, poor impulse control, and poor self-esteem as reasons for gender-based violence (Kalra, 1996). His work suggests that a profile of men who abuse their wives has borderline personalities that are developed early in life, which include jealousy, social stress, social learning, power, and control. This trait rears its ugly head among some men in the Kontagora Emirate.

However, feminist theory critics identify some of the gaps in the theory of feminist scholars and conclude that it focuses too much on the negative experiences of women, failing to recognise that some women are living happily with their husbands, and at the same time, some women are also perpetrators of gender violence. For example, the theory tends to portray women as universally good and men as universally bad. Some critics suggest that a main weakness of feminist theory is that it is from a woman-centered viewpoint

Land and Peoples of Kontagora Emirate, Niger State

Geographically, Kontagora Emirate is located in the mid-western part of Niger State, Nigeria. It shares borders with Borgu to the west, while a narrow strip of Nupe land separates it from the railway as far as Zungeru on its southeastern border. To the northeast, it is bordered by Yauri in Kebbi State, and to the south, it is separated from Bida by the River Kaduna. The Emirate consists of the chiefdoms of Wushishi, Sarkin-Bauchi, and Kagara, all administratively grouped into Kontagora, Mariga, Magama, and Rafi local government areas. Its population was estimated at 1,186,500 as of 2020 (Kontagora Emirate Council, 2009). The Emirate is home to many prominent Nigerian ethnicities, such as the Hausa, Fulani, Gwari, Kambari, Gbagyi, Dakakari, Kamuku, Gungawa, Hun-saare Busa, and Koro, who form the majority of numerous indigenous ethnic groups of the Emirate: other tribes like the Yoruba, Igbo, Igala, Igbira, Tiv, Irobo, Isoko, and others also live peacefully with the indigenes (KEC, 2009). Agriculture, from time immemorial, has formed the most dominant economic activity widely practiced in the Kontagora Emirate. Agriculture, to a very large extent, used to be critical in the determination of the settlement pattern of the Emirate. Islam and Christianity are the two major religions widely practiced in the Emirate; however, the majority is Muslims.

Concept of Gender-Based Violence

According to Santrock (2001), in his work, *Developmental Psychology*, gender relates to the sociological aspect of being male or female. Gender, in the words of Ewumi, he refers to how one perceives oneself as well as how society and culture see one as being male or female (Ewumi, 2012). Toyin Falola (2013), views gender as a complex and multifaceted concept that intersects with power dynamics, culture, and social structure. In one of his works, *The Power of Gender The Gender and Power: Women's Labour Rights and Responsibility in Africa*, Falola explores how gender influenced power relations, highlighting the historical roots of inequality experienced by women in Africa and how social institutions reinforce these disparities (Falola, 2016). Falola explores the role of gender in African social spaces, including politics, economy, art, and church leadership. His contributions provide valuable insights into the complexities of gender in Africa, shedding light on the social, cultural, and economic contexts that shape gender dynamics.

Gender-based violence Against Women (GBVaW in Kontagora Emirate

Women and girls in Kontagora Emirate of Niger State are battered by various safety issues ranging from all forms of domestic violence and physical abuse, pervading patriarchal norms, kidnapping, battering, sexual harassment, discrimination, marital and home issues, coupled

with this is the poor representation of women in political matters In Kontagora Emirate, Niger State, 61.9% of women were reported to have encountered domestic violence (Raji, 2018). Most investigations of domestic violence have centered on men as perpetrators of violence; however, this is not to deny that cases of men being victims of domestic violence do not exist (Usman, 2019).

The level of violence against women and girls in some parts of northern Nigeria, particularly Niger State, and Kontagora Emirate, is no longer hidden; it traces can be seen in girls' education, political, economic, and socio-cultural life of the people. For instance, attempts to deny women and girls' education has become the mandate of some criminal elements, such as terrorists, kidnappers, and patriarchies, in an area where girls' education is very low despite, the efforts of the government and private individuals to make education available; these criminals continue to make the learning environment unsafe for learners and teachers (Raji, 2018). Niger State is by no means an outlier. In February 17, 2021, more than forty-one (41) persons from Government Science College, Kagara in Niger State were abducted by terrorists for both economic and ideological reasons.

The concomitant effect of the above challenges made schools unsafe for girls in the Emirate and also painted the state badly, as reported by the Niger State House of Assembly. In the aspect of political marginalisation, for instance, in Niger State, particularly Kontagora Emirate, women are politically relegated to the background without any women in Kontagora Emirate elected to political office at the local, state, and Federal levels. Out of the 27 members in the Niger State Assembly, only one seat is occupied by a woman, Binta Mamman, representing the Gurara constituency. No other woman has been elected into a political position from the Kontagora Emirate, apart from Sa'adatu Kolo, who contested for the House of Representatives seat for Kontagora/ Wushshi/Mariga/Mashegu Federal Constituency in the 2019 elections. The above challenges have really made it difficult for women in the emirate to air their views and opinions on issues affecting their safety and welfare (Kereem, 2024).

Causes of Gender-based Violence in Kontagora Emirate, Niger State

There are many different theories as to the causes of Gender-based violence. These include psychological theories that consider personality traits and mental characteristics of the perpetrators, as well as Social theories that consider external factors in the perpetrator's environment, such as family structure, stress, and social learning. As with many phenomena regarding human experience, no single approach appears to cover all causes (Alokan, 2023).

Niger State Information Board published a result indicating that battering, trafficking, rape, kidnapping, and homicide are the worst forms of domestic violence reported by both government and non-government agencies in the State, and women who are victims of this violence usually suffer physical and mental problems characterized by serious, destructive social consequences, including physical and psychological disorders (Niger State Information Board, 2025). Some of the causes of gender-based violence can be attributed to the following:

1. Psychological/Personality traits: Psychological theories focus on personality traits and mental characteristics of the offenders. Personal traits include sudden bursts of anger, poor impulse control, and poor self-esteem. Various theories suggest that psychopathology and other personality disorders are factors, and that abusers observed or experienced as a child, lead some people to be more violent in adulthood (Kalra, 1990). This can be related to section 55 of the Penal Code, which states that so long as a husband does not inflict grievous harm on his wife for correction, he is not considered to have committed a crime. When you raise children to believe that a woman can be punished physically by his husband, you are definitely raising a monster; not only do they remain in the homes where they are

perpetuated, but they also frequently give rise to violent societies. Supporting this view, Barrister Usman, in an interview, states that this belief has already become a trait and attitude of some men in Kontagora Emirate, arising in their minds that physical discipline is part of correcting their wives when needed. (Usman, 2024).

i) **Jealousy:** Many cases of domestic violence against women occur due to jealousy when the spouse is either suspected of being unfaithful or is planning to leave the relationship. An evolutionary psychology explanation of such cases of domestic violence against women is that they represent male attempts to control female reproduction and ensure sexual exclusivity through violence or the threat of violence. When one partner becomes excessively possessive or controlling due to jealousy, it can escalate into physical, emotional, or verbal abuse (Goetz, 2015). In an interview with Queen Ocholi, a businesswoman in Kontagora local government, she also confirms that some men are jealous of their wives' success, citing an example from her experience with her husband, who was not happy with her progress. On many occasions, they quarreled, which led to physical battering. She hopes one day, her husband will turn over a new leaf (Queen, 2024).

ii) **Social Stress:** Stress may be increased when a person is living in a family situation with increased pressures. Violence is not always caused by stress, but may be one way that some people respond to stress. Couples in poverty may be more likely to experience domestic violence due to increased stress, conflicts about finances, and other aspects (Hassan, 2016). Financial difficulties can lead to tension and conflict within relationships, unemployment and lack of opportunities, frustration, and feelings of powerlessness can contribute to violence, and pressure to conform to traditional gender roles or expectations can lead to violence (Jewkes, 2002). According to Rashidat a widow from Rafi local government under Kontagora emirate, "after the sudden death of my husband, the family of my husband insist that I am a property of the family therefore, according to tradition I must be married off to my husband younger brother, this has affected me psychologically, and make me depress, I lost hope in everything (Rashidat, 2024).

iii) Stereotypical Roles

Stereotypes can lead to power imbalances, unequal distribution of power and control in relationships, which can lead to expectations and pressures, men feeling pressure to conform to traditional masculine norms, and women being expected to conform to traditional feminine roles (Ham, 2000). This can be related to the work of Adichie, "We Should all be Feminists," to her, stereotypical roles are a great injustice. We teach girls to be ambitious but not too much, to aim for success but not to be too successful, because you scare men when you are too ambitious, but men can be overambitious. The language we use against women is the language of ownership rather than the language of partnership. (Adichie, 2014). This statement also supports the view of Queen and Kadijat, who both lament the poor treatment they received from their husband because they are successful women.

V) Poverty

Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure a sustainable livelihood; hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increasing morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environments, and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by a lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social, and cultural life (Ndunga, 2018).

The above narration suits the position of women in the Kontagora Emirate. In the emirate, the number of women living in poverty has increased disproportionately to the number of men, evidence that the input of the girl child into the family income is so high that it becomes economically unwise to allow such child to go to school, especially among some families, women are engaged in generating income by tending farms, hawking food items, helping with household chores and looking after the younger ones or even working as house help for wealthier families in cities to ease the financial burden on their family (Kareem, 2024).

To improve the lives of this women, there is need for educational opportunities, empowering women with knowledge and skills, ensuring access to quality healthcare services, including maternal health and family planning and as well support them in income-generating activities, such as agriculture, entrepreneurship, or vocational training and by improving the access to basic infrastructure like clean water, sanitation, and electricity among others. Achieving this can also limit violence, especially when both the victim and perpetrators of gender-based violence are busy with meaningful activities that will improve their lives (Kareem, 2024).

iv) Childlessness

In an interview with Sikirat,

Niger State, Kontangora in particular, some men beat their wives at the slightest provocation because they have not had any child or male child; they verbally abuse their wives by calling them barren and threatening to return the women to their parents. Equally, women with only female children are abused by their husbands; this is because much importance is usually attached to male children (Sikirat, 2024).

vi) Menace of Fake and Illicit Drugs: Drug addiction is rampant and on the increase among young boys and girls in Kontagora Emirate. They hide under such influence to commit heinous crimes. Even though most of the drugs are taken for human well-being, unfortunately, they have been abused in various ways. In an interview with Akeem, an officer of the Nigerian Drug and Law Enforcement Agency, Kontagora Division, he lamented the rate at which illicit drugs, such as rented apartments in the Emirate, both young boys and girls, including parents, have been arrested for owning prohibited and banned substances capable of causing harm and influencing bad behaviour. Again, Akeem reported that some of the pharmacy, particularly those without license to sell drugs also contribute to proliferation of illicit drugs, which is been abused by both young boys and girls in the emirate, the result of this is that on daily bases, report of rape case, drug abuse, assault, domestic violence and criminal activities are recorded on daily basis.

Implications of Gender-Based Violence against Women (GBVaW in Kontagora Emirate, Niger State

1. Education and School Environment

A timeline of how terrorists and criminals have gone to make schools unsafe, especially for girl-children in northern Nigeria, has shown that, in 2014, 276 female students were abducted in Chibok, in 2018, at Government Girls Science Technical College, Dapchi, 110 girls, aged 11-19, were kidnapped (Raji, 2018). Niger State is by no means an outlier, as more than 41 persons from Government Science College, Kagara in Niger State were abducted by terrorists for both economic and ideological reasons. Just two months into this horrible incident, gunmen raided Government Science College Kagara again, capturing students, teachers, and their family members from the school on the 17th of February, 2021.

Again, dozens of students from an Islamic school in Tegna, Niger State were also abducted by an armed gang on May 30th, 2021. On 21 November 2025, gunmen abducted 315 people from St Mary's School in Papiri, part of Kontagora Emirate; the kidnapped included 303 students and 12 teachers. The fear of losing lives has made both parents and intending students seek admission elsewhere. These have forced the Niger State government on many occasions to close down schools because of the nature of violence. The government does this because bandits and criminals kidnap young school girls, particularly girls who attend schools.

To secure the lives of others, the government closes down schools, which has threatened the educational system of the state, particularly the Kontagora Emirate, which is still battling with functional education and girls' education. On 22nd November, 2025, in a circular from the Niger State Ministry of Tertiary Education, signed by the Permanent Secretary Sirajo Sa'id, subject: Closure of all Tertiary Institutions in Niger State North Senatorial Zone. Similarly, the Niger State government ordered the closure of all Public and Private Primary and Secondary Schools within the Niger North Senatorial Zone with immediate effect following the abduction of pupils at St Mary's Catholic School, Papiri, in Agwara LGA (Tribune, 2025).

The prolonged school closure puts young and adolescent girls at increased risk of child marriage and teenage pregnancy. In the emirate, a lot of female learners have been affected by school closures; early marriage is already widespread in the emirate, with 44% of girls married before the age of 18. In a context where girls' education is already undervalued, and families are forced to make sacrifices due to economic constraints such as prioritising boys' education, the option of marrying girls off to wealthy men is likely to seem more appalling. The emirate is at risk of bearing many of these additional child marriages, if this is not addressed with immediate effect (Usman, 2019).

2. Effects on the Economy of Kontagora Emirate, Niger State

The global cost of Gender-based violence (GBV) is estimated to be at least \$1.5 trillion, equivalent to about 2% of global GDP. GBV often results in injuries, health complications, and mental health issues, leading to increased healthcare costs. These costs include direct expenses for medical treatment, rehabilitation, and mental health services. It can also lead to increased demands on social services and the justice system, including shelters, legal aid, and counseling. These services also incur financial costs, impacting public budgets (The Economic Cost of Violence against Women (UN Women, 2025).

This submission can be related to complaints of the Chairperson of the Niger State House of Assembly Committee on Gender Affairs and Social Development, Binta Mamman, who lamented that the rate of gender-based violence in the State is alarming and money allocated for the rehabilitation, health service, medical treatment and operating IDPs for those affected, particularly women is alarming, women who are supposed to contribute to GDPs of

the state are either in IDPs camps or in the hospitals dealing with mental health and other health issues as a result of violence (Binta,2024).

For example, the poverty level varies from very high in the North, where Niger State has a poverty headcount rate of 66.11% (National Bureau of Statistics 2019). For example in the area of productivity, violence against women leads to physical and psychological trauma, causing women to miss work like the constant attack of bandits on farm land or school, reducing their productivity and contribution to the economy, these results in increased healthcare expenses for survivors, further straining household and national resources, it has also reduced labour force participation, economic empowerment and contribution to the economy, the output of these can lead to poverty.

3. Implications on the Political Consciousness of Women in Kontagora Emirate, Niger State

According to Ojo, Political Consciousness is seen as those actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or to support government policies. It encompasses the many activities used by the citizens to influence the selection of political leaders and the policies they pursue. (Ojo, 2018). In the case of Nigeria, the National Assembly is one of the most potent and important organs of the modern government. However, there is a serious issue of gender imbalance in the membership of the country's parliament, which, of course, is caused by certain factors. In 1999, only sixteen (16) women were elected into the National Assembly, with thirteen (13) in the House of Representatives and three in the Senate. The total number increased to 25 in 2003, with twenty-one (21) in the House and four (4) in the Senate. The highest number of women ever to be elected into the National Assembly is thirty-six (36) in 2007, with twenty-seven (27) in the House and nine (9) in the Senate. Since then, there has been a steady decline to thirty-two (32) in 2011, twenty-two (22) in 2015 (Fadipe, 2024).

The national average of women's political participation in Nigeria has remained 6.7 percent in elective and appointive positions, which is far below the Global Average of 22.5 percent and the African Regional Average of 23.4 percent. For instance, during the government of late Muhammadu Buhari, out of the 36 confirmed ministerial appointments, only seven (7) were women, representing 16.7 percent. Under the government of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, out of the 52 appointed Ministers, only 7 women got ministerial slots (Fadipe, 2024). In the National Assembly, results also show a diminishing number of female lawmakers in the 9th Assembly, 21 women constitute about 6percent of the total numbers, including both the House of Representatives and the Senate, compared to their male counterparts of 440 Legislators. Also, in the current 10th Assembly, in the Senate with a total of 109 seats, women got 3 seats, representing 2.7% with men occupying 97.3%.

In the House of Representatives, with a total of 360 seats, women occupied 16 seats, or approximately 4.7%, and men occupied 344 seats, representing 95.6%. Overall Assembly, which is 469 seats, only 20 seats were occupied by women, representing 4.2%, and men occupied 449 seats, representing 95.8%. This translates to men to women ratio of roughly 22:1 in the Senate and 21:1 in the House of Representatives. This is a pure case of underrepresentation of women in Nigeria's National Assembly and this same pattern is applied to States Assemblies, Particularly in the Northern part of the country, most especially Niger State Assembly, and local governments under the state, particularly Kontagora emirate without a single women representing or occupying any political offices, either at the local, State or Federal level (Usman, 2019).

However, concerted efforts have been made by government and non-governmental organisations to increase the level of participation of women in politics in Niger State in line with the declaration made at the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, which

advocates 30% affirmative action. To arrest this menace in one of his interviewed, the current governor of Niger State, Umaru, Bago declared support for women participation in politics and thereby issued a statement that Niger State under his watch and as leader of All Progressive Congress in the state, his party will reserve the positions of vice chairman and secretary of the 25 local government areas of the state only for women.

Umaru, Bago noted that despite their significant contributions to society, women have long been marginalized in leadership roles. As a strong advocate for women's empowerment, the governor stresses that women are instrumental to national growth and development. He highlighted their ability to drive meaningful progress and transformation when given the opportunity. To Bago, this is not just about fulfilling a quota; it is about recognising the strength, resilience, and intelligence of our women, because women have the capacity and should be given a chance. When included in governance, they bring balance, innovation, and a unique perspective that is crucial for development (Oladapo, 2025).

Summary

This study has looked into the issue of gender-based violence in Kontagora Emirate, Niger State, Nigeria. It looked at the past, present situation and as well project possible solutions to solve the menace of incessant violence against women in the Emirate, especially violence and criminal ranging from social-conflicts, gender specific inequalities, poverty, domestic violence, physical abuse, sexual harassment, rape, deteriorating health, environmental degradation, sexual assault, early marriage, forceful marriage, drug abuse workplace challenges, threat to cultural values, family, marital and home issues, and poor representation of women in political matters, particularly key areas that affect national development such as economic, socio-cultural, political and of cause the new trends of insurgency, kidnapping, and banditry facing the Emirate, which targets girls and women and has exposed them to various forms of physical, emotional and psychological stress.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that there is no doubt that Women in Kontagora emirate, Niger State suffer more from appalling violence and abuse that add to the burdens of stifling patriarchy, kidnapping, and exploitation, including sexual and physical abuse. Many of the women, particularly in the remote villages, have been exploited, abused, and displaced as a result of constant attacks by kidnappers and bandits, while others have suffered physical and domestic abuse in their homes, mostly perpetrated by their husbands or husbands' families.

Another major challenge facing the Kontagora emirate, Niger State, the focus of this paper regarding gender-based violence, is the continued marginalisation of a highly competent and effective segment of her population, and their inability to contribute to national development because of the physical, social, and cultural restrictions placed on them. Women have been most adversely affected by this phenomenon. If this situation is challenged, the emirate will likely achieve true integrated national development, though the principles in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) guarantee the end of discrimination against women, but there are still loopholes that encourage marginalisation and discrimination against women. The emirate still continues to rely on customary law rather than constitutional law and this obstacle can be removed only by massive and repeated effort.

This study therefore, encourage governments in Nigeria, particularly Kontagora emirate, Niger State to partner with both local and international organisations established for the purpose of eradicating gender-based violence as well as incorporate the specific needs of women and girls affected by conflicts in their plans and ensure their full rehabilitation, reintegration, as well as community rehabilitation programmes (socio-economic

infrastructure, micro-finances, capacity-building), attention should also be paid to Programmes to strengthen women participation in politics and local governance, including consideration of an affirmative action policy with quotas.

Finally, to all wife beaters, if your hand is itching, get a drum and beat, treat a woman like a lady, love her like a woman, if you treat her like a queen, she will treat you like a king.

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