TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF SPOUSE ABUSE IN GASHUA COMMUNITY OF YOBE STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract
The problem of spouse abuse is in every society. However, studies on spouse abuse have not been extensively carried out in some communities in Nigeria. This study, therefore, investigated problem of Spouse abuse in Gashua community of Yobe State, Nigeria. The study used survey design and qualitative approach was used to gather data and information from the respondents who participated in the study. Non probability sampling technique was adopted to select the respondents who participated. Seventeen respondents were eventually sampled for the study. Interviews were conducted with respondents. Data show 52.9% male participated in the study; 76.5 of them were Muslims and the entire respondents were selected from nine different wards/quarters in the community. All respondents recognized spouse abuse as a social problem. Cultural sanction of supremacy of man over woman, violation of norms and values of the society; denial of equal right with men; high incidences of spouse abuse; the physical and psychological effects; denial of good life and effects on well-being were cited as reasons spouse abuse is a social problem. The study discovered physical injury, psychological problems, illness, and violation of women rights, social instability, insecurity, poor education, effects on job and effects on children and the entire society as monumental effects of spouse abuse.

The study advocated the strict implementation of the solutions offered by the respondents in this study and the others mentioned in other studies as recommendations to end the problem of spouse abuse in Gashua community and Nigerian society at large.

Keywords: Spouse abuse, violence against women, Intimate partner violence, effects, Gashua community.
Introduction

The social problem of domestic violence especially the problem of spouse abuse is a common phenomenon in Nigerian society and other societies of the world. Different measures have been taken to arrest this ugly family problem with little or in some occasions no effects. The problem has defied different approaches and looks somehow insurmountable. The problem of spouse abuse pervades every structure of the society. It cuts across different socio-economic classes, age, race and religion. The acclaimed religious societies are not spared from this problem.

This study, therefore, investigated problem of spouse abuse: its effects and how the problem can be arrested using a Muslim dominated community of Gashua in Yobe State as a case study. The study sets three objectives which were eventually achieved as follows:

1. To investigate different reasons respondents perceived spouse abuse to be a social problem.
2. To find out the effects of spouse abuse.
3. To seek for the different measures that can be taken to arrest the rising tide of problem of spouse abuse.

Literature Review

Domestic violence against women occurs in all countries and socio-economic groups; however its prevalence and manifestations vary widely (Tartakovsky and Mezhibovsky, 2012). Most of violence against women occurs in form of spouse abuse or intimate partner violence (IPV). Intimate partner violence is a highly prevalent and severe problem in the United State and other various societies where it has been extensively studied (Knutson, et.al 2009). For instance Fang and Corso (2008) pointed out that Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a national problem affecting millions of adults each year in the USA. Intimate Partner Violence or spouse abuse is a serious an prevalent public health issues (Foran et.al, 2012). The incidence is stunning underscorin the importance of having every element of society work toward ending it (Valentine et.al, 2012).

Intimate Partner Violence (spouse abuse) has been socially constructed as a predominantly masculine deviance, whereby male use their power and control gained through socialization to dominate women (Bailey et.al, 2012). It is the use of actual or threatened physical, sexual and psychological violence by a current partner (Nouri et al, 2012). It has been adjudged to be a pattern of physical, emotional and/or sexual violence and economic intimidation by an intimate partner in the context of coercive control (Patel et al, 2012). Spouse abusers often focus on physical violence (Cares and Cusick, 2012). Researchers on Intimate Partner Violence or spouse abuse presented many reasons the men in societies abuse their spouses at homes; although the rate of abuse varies across ethnic groups (Cho, 2012).

One of the prominent causes of spouse abuse is patriarchal nature of our societies. Male violence is deeply embodied in the patriarchal traditions of men controlling their women (Karakurt and Cumble, 2012). This is entrenched in the cultural and social norms (Al-Badayneh, 2012). Certain cultural groups, according to Tartakovsky and Mezhibovsky (2012) accept violence against women as a means of resolving conflict and culturally sanctioned means of punishing women for wrong doing. These groups have their socio-cultural ways of expressing violence against women, for instance high degrees of secretiveness or emphasis on close family ties that debarred women from disclosing abuse (Mahapatra, 2012).
Another identified factor in the literature is school aggression. It is a significant risk factor for partner victimization and perpetration. It has been argued that aggression remains an independent predictor of partner violence perpetration and victimization for males (O’Donell et al, 2006). Child abuse experience is another similar factor which causes spouse abuse. Research has shown strong connections between experiencing abuse at childhood and being in a violent relationship as an adult. Children who experienced violence increase possibility of violence in their adult intimate relationship (Whiting et al, 2009). This has been termed intergenerational transmission of violence from men in families against adult marital or dating partners (Dankoski et al, 2006). In simple explanation, intergenerational transmission of violence means children who experience violence at the hands of parents will demonstrate the same in their adult relationships (Franklin and Kercher, 2012).

Education and religion are other factors. Nouri et al (2012) observed that there was a positive significant link between Intimate Partner Violence and education level of women and the level of religious commitment in both women and their spouses. The incidences of spouse abuse are not common among educated and religious spouses. Anger is another factor that causes spouse abuse. Anger arousal has been proposed as a mechanism that causes spouse abuse. Intimate partner violence does occur through anger (Kendral et.al 2012).

Daily economic hassle is another factor. Patel et al (2012) discovered a strong significant relationship between Intimate Partner Violence (spouse abuse) and the nature and extent of daily hassles among low income class. Distress is another similar factor. Results of findings among men show that frequencies of physical and psychological violence were both positively linked to distress as observed by Fortin et al (2012). Finally, abusers of alcohol are possible to be abusers of spouse. Batterers are likely than others to abuse alcohol (Valentine et.al, 2012). The effects of spouse abuse are very monumental on the victims, children and the entire society. Spouses who were victims of abuse from their partners felt the effects of such abuse directly. Women suffer greater injuries from their partners ‘use of violence. They are likely to suffer also emotional and psychological effects (Hayes, 2012). Partner abuse (spouse abuse) especially psychological abuse affects the health and well-being of the victims (Murphy et.al 2012). It has been identified as a serious problem that threatens women’s mental and physical health (Cho, 2012). Spouse abuse has deeper impacts that affect the personality of the woman suffering from it. It affects the ways of perceiving, thinking, feeling, coping and behaving (Davins - Pujois et al, 2012). In area of health, abused women have higher health care costs than women without a spouse abuse history (Patel et al, 2012). Spouse abuse has become a serious health problem in the world (Al-Badayneh, 2012). The problem is not linked to physical health alone but psychological health problem like anxiety disorders, depressive symptoms and substance abuse disorders (Foran et al, 2012).

Children in the families are among the indirect victims of spouse abuse. Effects of spouse abuse have been identified on unborn children. Spouse abuse can harm foetus physically and psychologically. Its effect on pregnant women may have immediate short and long term effects on the psychological and physical beings of both the pregnant women and their unborn children (Abadi et al 2012).

Spouse abuse can also affect children in the families. Child-witness of spouse violence sometimes experience chaotic, distressing events that they have very little control or understanding. Emotional problems may ensue as a result of this. For instance, it causes depression, anxiety, somatic complaints, sleep disturbances, separation, anxiety and withdrawal (Thompson and Trice-Black). Childhood exposure to spouse abuse causes...
numerous and significant negative outcomes and increases the chances of parents abusing or maltreating their children. It affects the physical health consequences of the children. For instance, it increases likelihood of under immunization and missed routine health supervision visits (Randell et al, 2012). It also hampers good parenting behaviours and relationships of the mothers to their children (Murray et al, 2012). Spouse abuse causes psycho-social difficulties in young adult children like depression, anxiety, aggression and suicide (Hooven et al, 2012). It leads to poor physical and psychological health among children (Kuhlman et al, 2012). Such children are more likely to undergo a wide range of adverse psycho-social and behaviour outcomes (Moylan et al, 2010). These children may exhibit anti social behaviours during both adolescence and adulthood stages (Ireland and Smith, 2009. Knutson et al (2009) and Margolin et al (2009) argued that intimate partner violence or spouse abuse affects the academic well being of children and their academic outcomes in life. Infants are not spared from effects of spouse abuse either. Infants (Birth to 3 years) tend to be negatively affected by spouse abuse than older children through aggression, trauma symptoms and less verbal motor and cognitive abilities (Tailor and Letournean, 2012).

Spouse abuse also causes public problems in every society. It has very serious problems in area of public health tragedy. Researchers and government entities have highlighted the epidemic nature of it (Valetine et al, 2012). It has been adjudged to be a social and health problem in every society and culture of the world (Al-Badayneh, 2012). It is a serious and prevalent public health challenge (Foran et al, 2012).

Researchers on the problem of spouse abuse have proffered some solutions to the problem. Family member closeness has been identified as a factor which can limit the abuse. Family closeness will act as protective factor in abuse (Aysa-Lastra et al, 2012). Safety is another way of preventing spouse abuse. Safety is traditionally understood to be freedom from harm or danger and is a basic requirement for happiness and thriving (Whiting et al, 2012). Adolescent education is another saving factor from spouse abuse. Preventing the development of unhealthy dynamics in adolescent relationships will act as a strong prevention of partner abuse. It is an important window of opportunity for preventative education (Murphy, et al, 2012). Spouse abusers can also be handled therapeutically so that they can stop and reconsider their behaviours. It is another way of solving the problem of spouse abuse (Rasanen et al, 2012). Provision of education and employment can also act as protective conditions against the occurrence of spouse abuse (Lotf et al, 2012). Early intervention programmes also play crucial roles in reducing spouse abuse. Early intervention help adolescent learn non-violent strategies for resolving conflicts in cross-gender relationships (O’ Donell et al, 2012). This may involve group counseling interventions that include both structured activities and play therapy (Thompson and Trice-Black, 2012). At the school level, violence prevention programmes should be included into a range of existing programmes and services for youths and adults (O’Donnell et al, 2012).

Separation or divorce lowers the rate of partner abuse. There was an impact of separation and divorce on Intimate Partner Violence (Spouse abuse) as observed by Vatnar and Bjorkly (2012). Finally, women should be encouraged to seek help from a greater number of confidants to moderate the association between violence and psychological distress to cushion the effects (Forth et al, 2012).
Research Methods
Survey design was adopted for the study. It entails the collection of information from a sample of respondents (Schutt, 2004). Qualitative approach was used. The study area was Gashua community in Bade Local Government area of Yobe State. The population of study was very large. However, samples were taken from the entire population of study because all population cannot be studied. Non-probability sampling technique was adopted and convenience method was used. Seventeen adults were conveniently sampled across nine quarters or wards in Gashua community, namely: A. A Girgir, Katuzu, Lawan Musa, Annex B, Galin Lamido, Lawal Fannami, Sabon Gari, Yankaba and Filin Tanda. A total of seventeen interviews were conducted among the adults selected for the study.

Results and Discussions
This section treats data presentation analyses and interpretation. Percentages were used to analyse the socio-bio data of the respondents. However, data from seventeen interviews conducted were analysed using content analyses. The table below presents the socio-bio data of the respondents.

Table: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47.1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wards/Quarters</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. A Girgir</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katuzu</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawan Musa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annex B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garin Lamido</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawal Fannami</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabon Gari</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yankaba</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filin Tanda</td>
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<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher’s Survey 2019

The first bio-data in the table above is the sex of respondents. The analyses show that nine respondents were male which represented 52.9% and eight respondents were female which represented 47.1% of respondents. Although male respondents were more than the female but both sexes were fairly represented in the study. Spouse abuse is majorly the problem of the feminine world; however, it is mostly perpetrated by the masculine world. Hence, it was appropriate to have the two sexes represented in the study.

Religions of the respondents were also examined. The analyses show that only four respondents were Christians which represented 23.5% of respondents. Thirteen respondents were Muslims which represented 76.5% of respondents. The Muslims who participated in the
study outnumbered Christians. This was not least expected because Gashua community is heavily dominated by Muslims. However, the problem of spouse abuse cut across different religions throughout the world. It is a problem which affects different religion adherents and it is a problem perpetrated by different religion adherents also. The wards or quarters where respondents resided were also part of the socio-bio data. Respondents living in Sabon Gari recorded the highest frequency with 5 respondents which accounted for 29.3% of the entire respondents. Sabon Gari was the most popular within the community. Most of the non-indigenes reside within this quarter. Katuzu and Lawal Fannami had 3 respondents each which represented 17.6% of the entire respondents for each of the two wards/quarters. Finally, A. A Girgir, Lawan Musa, Annex B, Garin Lamido, Yankaba and Filin Tanda had 1 respondent each which represented 5.9% for each of these wards/quarters.

Reasons Respondents Considered Spouse Abuse to be a Social Problem

The first objective of the study was to investigate different reasons respondents perceived spouse abuse to be a social problem. Wrong cultural belief that men have power over women was the first reason mentioned by a respondent. The respondent explained thus:

It is a social problem because there is a cultural prescription which says men have absolute right over women because they paid bride price on them.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 34 years/ Gashua/ 06-01-2020.

Cultural reason has been mentioned in literature as a cause of spouse abuse. For instance, patriarchal tradition allows men to control their women (Karakurt and Cumble, 2012). There are some certain cultural groups which encourage violence against women as a way of resolving conflict (Tartakovsky and Mezhibovsky, 2012). Such cultural groups have ways of expressing violence against women (Mahapatra, 2012). All these were firmly entrenched in the cultural and social norms of our patriarchal society (Al-Badayneh, 2012).

Reason one respondent gave for terming spouse abuse a social problem was because it violated the norms and values of the society. The respondent explained it this way:

Spouse abuse is a social problem because it affects the norms and values of the society. It also affects the health of the victims

IDI/ Female/ Christian/ 28 years/ Gashua/ 06-01-2020.

Another respondent concurred with the above view thus:

Spouse abuse is a social problem because society frowns at it and is against the norms of the society.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 40 years/Gashua/ 06-01-2020.

Spouse abuse is an anti-social norms and no value in the society prescribes spouse to be abused. However, while norms and values of the society are strongly against it, yet cultural belief that man is superior to woman and that woman should be under the control of man undermine these norms and values.

Denial of equal rights with men is another reason cited by a respondent. The opinion is captured below:

Spouse abuse is a social problem because it denies women some fundamental human rights in the society. Hence, it has led to many women movements which press for equal rights with men.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 29 years/ Gashua/ 06-01-2020.
It is not an overstatement that spouse abuse violated the rights of women in society. Such denial of rights occurs in diverse ways, especially ways which often endanger the health and life of women.

Escalation of the rate in which different forms of spouse abuse take place in Gashua Community was another reason given by a respondent. The opinion is captured in this excerpt below:

Spouse abuse is a social problem in the Gashua Community because wives are being abused through verbal, through intimidation, through physical harassment and through sexual assault e.g. marital rapes at alarming rate in the community.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 50 years/ Gashua/ 06-01-2020.

The effects of spouse abuse on the psyches of the victims and its sociological effects were the reasons cited by a respondent. The respondent gave the opinion thus:

I think the reason spouse abuse is a social problem is because of its psychological effects on the women concerned and the sociological effects on the society. Psychological because it diminishes personal integrity, and sociological because it is a public problem.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 45 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

The immediate and long term effects of spouse abuse were another reason given by a respondent for terming spouse abuse as a social problem. The respondent gave this view as follows:

What makes spouse abuse a monumental social problem is the impacts it has on the victims. These can be immediate or long term impacts. Such impacts can affect the mental health of women involved or even cause their death.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 27 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

Another respondent corroborated the above view thus:

Spouse abuse is a social problem because it causes mental harm and suffering to women as a result of coercion, force and the threats used by abusers.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 31 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

Denial of good life and death were other reasons spouse abuse is a social problem as cited by a respondent below:

Spouse abuse is a social problem because it affects the good living of women in our society. It prevents them from having a good life they need to enjoy.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 37 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

Another respondent gave similar opinion thus:

The problem of wife beating has negative effects beyond what can be morally justified. It has a lot of negative effects on women generally.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 20 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

Another respondent concurred thus:

It (spouse abuse) is a social problem because it has bad effects on women’s general well-being and may cause untimely death for women in some severe cases.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 48 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

Another reason spouse abuse was alluded to as social problem is because it causes other social vices. A respondent explained this thus:
Those who abuse their wives encourage many social vices because they are ignorant of the adverse effects of it. Social problems like divorce, run away children and juvenile delinquency, are most of the time, the products of family instability orchestrated by wife battery.
IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 50 years/ Gshua/ 07-01-2020.

Spouse abuse was also considered a social problem because it affects the potential of women. A respondent justified this as follows: 
Abuse of one’s wife is a social problem because it makes it very difficult for such wife to achieve her full potential in life. Abuse is very destructive to women’s potential development.
IDI/Male/ Muslim/ 29 years/ Gashua/ 06-01-2020.

The above was also supported by another respondent who gave a comment thus:
Wife abuse affects all spheres of women’ life: her autonomy, her productivity, her capacity to take good care of herself and her children.
IDI/ Female/ Christian/ 40 years/Gashua/ 06-01-2020.

Another respondent concurred in a similar way:
Wife battery is a social problem because women can have a myriad of devastating consequences on their well being.
IDI/ Male/Muslim/ 38 years/Gashua/ 06-01-2020.

Finally some respondents called spouse abuse a social problem because it affects the general society. A respondent opined thus:
Abusing one’s wife is a serious social problem because it has ripple effects on the entire society. Every member of the society share from its consequences, whether directly or indirectly.
IDI/ Male/ Muslim/38 years/Gashua/ 06-01-2020.

Another respondent concurred on the similar point thus:
Violence against women is a social problem because it is a major threat to society and economic development of our country. Battered women may find it very difficult to contribute their quota to the Nigerian economic development.
IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 25 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

All the reasons presented by respondents for making spouse abuse a social problem were all correct to large extent. It is a social problem because it affects large number of people in the society, it is epidemic. Spouse abuse is also a social problem because it has many bad effects on the victims and the entire society. The consequences of it are unpalatable. Finally, it is a problem all agreed needs to be solved.

**Effects of Spouse Abuse**
The second objective of this study was to find out the effects of spouse abuse. Respondents gave their opinions on the effects of spouse abuse. The first sets of effects are the physical injury and psychological problems. A respondent explained it this way:
There are many bad effects of spouse abuse but the commonest ones are physical injury, shocks, emotional trauma and psychological disorder. All these make the victims to age quickly.
Female/ Muslim/ 34 years/ Sabon Gari ward.

In area of psychological effects, a respondent corroborated such effects thus:

Wife battery is a terrible problem because it severely affects the victims psychologically. For instance it causes inferiority complex, lead to anxiety and serious depression which can even cumulate to serious mental illness.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 27 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020

Another respondent asserted similar view as follows:

Abusing women at homes has serious effects. For example, such women will not have confidence or belief in themselves. They may be depressed and suffer other mental problem.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 40 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

Another respondent gave a supportive opinion on physical injury as an effect of spouse abuse as thus:

Spouse abuse is very bad because the abusers’ intention was to cause destructive pain and suffering to the victims.

IDI/Male/ Muslim/ 37 years/Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

Another respondent gave a supportive opinion in the excerpt below:

Violence against women is a social problem which leads to physical injury, illness and even death. In some cases where their husbands have been infected with sexually transmitted diseases, there is usually possibility of being infected, especially in case of marital rape.

IDI/ Female/ Christian/ 28 years/Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

The opinions of respondents as excerpted from the interviews granted supported the existing literature on the effects of spouse abuse in areas of physical injury, psychological problems and health issues. Hayes (2012) posited that victims of spouse abuse suffer greater injuries, emotional and psychological problems. It affects the health and well-being of the victims (Murphy et al, 2012). It also causes mental health problem (Cho, 2012). It raises the health care costs for the victims (Patel et al, 2012). Furthermore, it leads to anxiety disorders, depressive symptoms and substance abuse disorders (Foran et al, 2012).

Another problem or bad effect of spouse abuse mentioned was that of gross violation of women’s fundamental human rights, even right to their bodies (reproductive health). A respondent had this to say:

Spouse abuse is a serious problem because it affects the fundamental human rights of the women concerned. It is a gross violation of women’s rights in area of health, especially reproductive health if such is caused by issues on reproduction.

IDI/ Female/ Christian/ 48 years/ Gashua/ 06-01-2020.

Social instability and insecurity were other effects of spouse abuse mentioned during the interview by a respondent. The excerpt is captured below:

Violence against wives is very bad because it disrupts the social stability and security. Social stability because family stability will be seriously affected and family stability is the foundation of social stability. It causes insecurity too. Lives of the victims are not secured and it can also cause public fight between two families (the families of the husband and wife involved).

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 27 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

Education and employment of women can be seriously affected by spouse abuse. This is captured in the excerpt below:
Violence against women undermines in some cases, educational and employment opportunities for women. Education of the women victims can be affected and job opportunities affected. Time used nursing the physical and psychological wounds may be responsible for this.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 27 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

Children in the families where spouse abuse occurs face a lot of problems. It is another bad effect of spouse abuse. A comment below was extracted from a respondent to support this:

Violence against women does not only affect women at homes but their children and their families, possibly long-term effects or harms to the children.

IDI/ Female/ Christian/ 48 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

A respondent also mentioned harms to unborn children as one of the effects of spouse abuse on children. The excerpt is captured below:

Beating one’s wife during pregnancy is very dangerous. It increases the likelihood of miscarriage, still birth and abortion, as well as premature labour and also low birth weight.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 31 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

It has been argued that children who witnessed spouse abuse experienced chaotic and distressing events like depression, anxiety, somatic complaints, sleep disturbance, separation and withdrawal (Thompson and Trice-Black). It affects the physical health consequences of the children (Randel et al 2012). The relationships between mothers and their children are also affected (Murray et al 2012). Some psycho-social difficulties like depression aggression and suicide are also the consequential effects of spouse abuse on children (Hooven et al, 2012).

Spouse abuse also affects unborn children. It harms foetus physically and psychologically (Abadi et al, 2012).

The infants are negatively affected by spouse abuse too (Tailor and Letourneau, 2012). In summary, the responses of the participants in the study firmly supported the previous findings of the effects of spouse abuse on children and unborn babies.

Finally, spouse abuse has negative effects on the entire society. A respondent asserted this in the excerpt below:

Spouse abuse does not affect the victims alone. It also affects the well-being of the entire community.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 27 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

The opinion was also supported by another respondent thus:

Violence and abuse affect not just the women involved but also their communities.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 50 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

Finally, another respondent offered similar opinion thus:

Violence against women (Spouse abuse) is a major threat to society and economic development of a country.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 25 years/ Gashua/ 06-01-2020.

The economic potentials of women cannot be underrated. When such potentials are affected by abuse from their husbands the economic development will be affected. It also increases rate of divorce. It has been observed that spouse abuse causes public health strategy. It is a social and health problem in every society (Valentine et al, 2012 and Al-Badayneh, 2012).
The study requested respondents to give their opinions on how the problem of spouse abuse can be handled and minimized in Gashua community. The opinions of respondents were presented one after the other. One respondent gave opinion thus:

Some of the ways I think spouse abuse can be eradicated in Gashua community is that women should be encouraged to speak out their problems and also take their problems to where they can get help e.g. police stations. Another way is engaging respected people in the community to assist the victims.

IDI/ Female/ Christian/ 28 years/ Gashua/ 06-01-2020.

Another respondent offered opinion thus:

Women should be given chances to report cases of abuse. They should be encouraged and counseled to assist them solve the emotional and physical maltreatments they suffer.

IDI/Male/ Muslim/ 40 years/Gashua/ 06-01-2020.

Another respondent opined thus:

Violence against women can be solved through proper education, awareness creation and proper socialization and establishment of women friendly programmes in the society.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 38 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

One respondent also gave a view on how to end spouse abuse thus:

The problem of spouse abuse can be eradicated by providing employment to women, by empowering them socially and providing leadership that is women friendly.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 27 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

A respondent also challenged the religious leaders to help solve the problem thus:

Religious leaders should teach the people of Gashua community on how to respect the interests and rights of women. They need to preach against the culture of the people that do not permit women to live decent and good life.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 34 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

A respondent also argued the solution to the problem thus:

Fighting the problem should begin in early life by educating boys and girls on how to promote respectful relationships and gender equality. It is a best way to sustain progress on prevention and eradication of gender based violence in a community like Gashua.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 50 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

Another respondent gave an opinion as follows:

The problem can be solved by educating people about the value of women towards the development of community. Moreover, awareness should be raised on the poor conditions some women are facing at homes and government should give adequate supports and opportunities to women.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 27 years/ Gashua/ 07-01-2020.

Another respondent gave similar opinion thus:

The problem of spouse abuse can be reduced if women and girls are equipped educationally, politically and socially. They should be empowered through training in special skills to make them independent from abusive partners.

IDI/ Male/Muslim/31 years/ Gashua/ 06-01-2020.
Finally, a respondent asserted solution to the problem thus:

From my own opinion, the problem can be solved by sensitizing the public to the dangers of wife battery, educate them on the values of women and girls to the society and by encouraging women to participate in political and social processes.

IDI/ Female/ Christian/ 48 years/ 07-01-202.

The opinions offered by respondents on how to end problem of spouse abuse were similar to the previous findings. For instance, safety will prevent spouse abuse. Safety is freedom from harm or danger and forms fundamental ways to happiness and thriving (Whiting et al 2012). Safety nets like adequate education, women empowerment, employment opportunities, training and acquisition of skills can prevent and solve the problem of spouse abuse. Women can be independent of their partners through these safety nets because women who dependent on partners for things are at the mercy of their partners and abuse can ensue from this. Early education for boys and girls mentioned by a respondent was also in tandem with previous finding. Adolescent education will prevent the development of unhealthy dynamics which can lead to future partner abuse (Murphy et al, 2012).

Provision of education and employment mentioned by respondents also featured in previous finding (Loft et al, 2012). Moreover, was the early intervention programme (O’ Donell et al, 2012). Group counseling intervention by religious leaders and community leaders advocated for by some respondents can also help as advocated by Thompson and Trace-Black (2012).

Summary of the Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary

The findings from the study reveal that all the respondents concurred that spouse abuse is a social problem. The reasons the respondents gave for ‘naming’ spouse abuse a social problem were: the cultural belief of supremacy of men over women; its violation of norms and values of the society; denial of equal right with men, high rate of the incidence of spouse abuse, its physical and psychological effects, its denial of good life to the victims, its effects on the women’s well-being and its threats to the entire society and country’s development.

In the findings of the study, respondents mentioned physical injury, psychological problems, illness, violation of women’s fundamental human rights, social instability, insecurity, poor education, disruption of jobs/employment chances, effects on the children (born and unborn) and the effects on the entire society as the biting effects of spouse abuse.

On how to prevent and end problem of spouse abuse, the respondents who participated in the study advocated that: women should be encouraged to speak out their predicaments, they should be well educated, awareness on the problem should be created, women friendly programmes should be established, employment and skills acquisition should be provided to women, women empowerment should be encouraged, religious and community leaders should be involved in fight against the abuse, early preventive education should be taught and general public sensitization should be embarked on.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the residents of Gashua community recognized spouse abuse as a social problem. The reasons for it were in tandem with characteristics of a social problem. The respondents were able to tell the effects of spouse abuse on the victims, the children and the entire society. Virtually all the effects mentioned in the study confirmed the existing findings
on the problem as recorded in literature. Finally, the solutions the respondents gave to the problem of spouse abuse were in tandem with the ones in existing findings. Hence, the problem of spouse abuse, its effects and how to tackle it cut across different societies of the world.

**Recommendations**

The study recommends that the solutions provided by respondents on how to prevent and fight the problem of spouse abuse should be strictly implemented as mentioned by them in the study; other recommendations from existing literatures not mentioned in this study should be added. Such will go a long way to prevent and minimize the problem of spouse abuse in Gashua community and other communities in Nigeria.

**References**


